



## Chapter 1

She stared at the photograph, trying hard to feel it, get the meaning, understand. Empathize. Standing alone in the exhibit room, walls covered in pictures taken by people she'd never heard of, names she'd never seen, she shifted her slight weight, though not out of a need to gain a comfortable footing.

The caramel-colored hardwood floors squeaked under her feet. In the silence of the room, the odd noise seemed appropriate.

She crossed her arms over her chest. Although it was mid-July and sweltering in Virginia, the air conditioner chilled her to the bone. She'd wanted to bring a sweater but it would have been too burdensome to carry and keep.

Taking careful steps toward a particularly striking nude bust of a woman captured in a photo, she wanted to reach out and touch it, stroke her fingers down the woman's curves and across her abdomen. How would it feel to her, to have a hand caressing her body, touching her intimately in public?

A slight tingle skipped down her spin and spread over her buttocks, raising her body temperature higher. She peered over one shoulder to see if a guard stood close by, waiting to stop her plan. Her sweaty palms slid down the front of her flowered skirt. Slow, easy footfalls over the crackling floor snagged her attention.

By the time she turned her gaze toward the sound, a man stood there next to her, shoulder-to-shoulder. Not the guard, he wore a crisp, white button-up shirt and khaki pants starched to the nth degree. She wondered what corporate job he was playing hooky from to enjoy a Wednesday afternoon of art.

But then again, maybe he thought the same of her.

Did he wonder why she chose to spend the afternoon in a stodgy, old museum instead of enjoying the outdoors? Or maybe he wondered something else.

Maybe he wanted to know why a man hadn't been at her side already, holding her hand or wrapping his arm around her waist like a possession. She smirked at the thought.

She took in a deep breath, capturing his heady, citrus scent. More than with the picture, she longed to run her finger through his black, slightly shaggy hair. The tiny curls to gave him an almost boyish look. Almost. His large hands and broad shoulders showed that he was all man.

She licked her tongue over dry lips. He chose that moment to turn to her with a smile as wide as the Atlantic plastered on his face.

"Were you going to touch the photograph?" he asked.

His voice matched his towering height. It was deep as though it emanated from the soles of his feet and had an arduous journey through his sinewy body before projecting from his mouth.

"Were you going to tell if I did?" she asked. She pushed her braids off of her shoulder and chewed on her lower lip.

"Ah, a woman who answers a question by asking one." He clasped his hands behind his back and sauntered around her.

"I like that," he whispered close to her ear. She shivered as the fine hairs over her flesh stood on end.

"Your wife must like it too."

He halted his movement when he reached his destination on her other side.

With his arms folded, he asked, "Why do you think I'm married?" His chocolate-colored eyes transformed into a darker shade.

"It's summer. I noticed the tan line around your finger."

He left his arms in the same position, not moving them to verify her claim.

"A woman who answers questions with a question, notices tan lines on ring fingers and is alone in a museum." He shook his head. "You must be full of stories, uh..." He extended his right hand.

She thought for a while, glanced at the photograph of the nude torso and said as she shook his hand, "Emmanuelle."

He glanced at the photograph. Emmanuelle noticed his gaze dropped briefly before he returned his attention to her.

"So is that who you are today? Emmanuel Radnitsky?"

She pulled her hand away from his grasp. "No, I'm just Emmanuelle."

"Well, Just Emmanuelle, you can call me---" he paused before answering,

"Helmut."

That answer got a smile from her. "Like Lang?"

He grinned, showing off his teeth. She noticed his front tooth looked slightly discolored from the rest of his gleaming white ones. Her hand reached up to touch it like she wanted to with the picture but she refrained, reeling in her hand and crossing her arms over her chest again.

"You know he went by the name Man Ray," Helmut said.

She furrowed her eyebrows. Her thoughts still swirled around his tooth and the mystery behind it.

"Who?" she asked.

"Emmanuel Radnitsky."

She nodded. So he knew a little about art. Impressive. He must have done his homework or maybe Helmut actually studied in school instead of cutting classes and wanting to live life. People paid for having that kind of lifestyle.

"So, why photographs? You have a whole building full of art and artifacts." His shoulder connected with hers again, sending wave after wave of electric sensations surging through her body and stopping at the pleasure center of her throbbing clit.

Her nipples hardened and tightened against her lace bra. Her stomach bunched as though in anticipation.

"You can't lie with a picture." She stared at the next photograph in the series.

"A painter can interpret the scene any way he wants. A photographer captures a moment." She glanced at Helmut. "Once you have it, you can't change it."

"Anything can be altered. You interpret your own truth when it suits you." He leaned down next to her ear. "How long are we going to play this game? I need you."

Emmanuelle nudged him with her elbow.

"No. Not yet. You promised. You said that this time we'd play as long as I wanted. I'm not ready to go back yet. Please."

A guard strolled into the room, the floor squeaking with each of his steps.

Emmanuelle took notice of how he eyed them. Heat rose to her chest, traveling up her neck and face.

He had no right to stare at them like they were actors putting on a play. Or maybe he stared in shame knowing what they'd done, what they wanted to do.

It had all started so innocently, this little game that they had been playing. Had it already been six months? Every time she stared into his dark chocolate eyes, she felt like she'd known him for an eternity and more. Perfection like him shouldn't be walking among the unwashed masses like her. He needed to be immortalized, admired.

When the guard walked out of the room, Helmut spoke in a hoarse whisper. "I don't have much time today."

Her eyes asked the question she couldn't pose verbally. Wednesday was their special day. How could he have made other plans? Her heart sank.

What the hell had she expected?

Like he'd called it, this was a game.

But with any game there had to be rules. Maybe she needed to enforce some.

And what? Lose him when he no longer wanted her?

All he said was, "Sorry."

She squeezed here eyes shut, determined not to let a tear fall in front of him. He hadn't even left yet and she already missed him.

"These are the risks we encounter when we..."

She held up her hand. "Please. Don't."

Taking her hand, he held it in both of his. With his newly acquired tan, his skin looked almost as dark as hers. He kissed her knuckles. The warmth of his lips erupted a molten flow from between her legs.

Every pore of her body pulsed for him as though his touch, his kiss, awakened new cells. This man was not a stranger, not to her or her body. He read her like a Gray's Anatomy textbook from cover to cover.

Her vagina ached for him. If he knew how much she needed him, craved him in her life, he wouldn't rush their time together. He would stay. Like the photographs, he would stay.

She rested her forehead on his chest, nuzzling her face under his neck like a cat wanting attention. Even her moans came out like purrs, unintentionally. The warmth of his arm around her shoulder comforted her in the breezy museum.

Frigid air whisked up her skirt and transformed her relaxed countenance into a quivering mass. He held her tighter. She hadn't meant to come off so vulnerable but the security she felt in his arms proved too delicious to release.

Not wanting to let him go, not just yet, she slid her arms around his waist. His height allowed him to rest his chin on top of her head as he rocked her back and forth. The slight swaying made her body hum.

Emmanuelle pressed her chest into his. The added friction against her nipples from her bra and his hard body helped to ease her desire but not by much. After turning her head, she planted little kisses on his bare chest exposed by the vee of his shirt.

The kisses must have awakened his suppressed need. A low rumbled growled in his chest and rose to his throat where it stuck and continued rolling. The sound released a current from between her legs. Between his touch, sounds, scent and the sight of the nude photographs surrounding them, she felt powerless to do anything else but to take this man, here and now.

She wanted them to both be naked, stripped of all of their hang-ups. Her fantasy involved bracing her hands against the wall, facing one of those photographs or maybe a portrait of a nude man or woman or couple. Then he would move behind her, fucking her senseless and into pure bliss. He could do it. With those hands, those eyes and that mouth, he had the tools to make her a satisfied woman and make her forget, most importantly, that she was not even in his league.

Helmut must have recognized her desire. After asking for her to wait in her spot, he darted off to another room. Her mind raced with ideas of what he could be doing. Was he planning something special? Or did he just leave her high and dry in the middle of the museum?

Guessing on his whereabouts did little to slow her racing pulse. The anticipation made her heart pound and forced her to remain in her spot.

Helmut returned moments later. He held her hands and guided her to a bench that sat in the center of the floor.

In the silence of the room, no squeaking floors and no guards, he stared at her like she'd stared at the photographs before he arrived. His large hand smoothed down the side of her face leaving in its wake a trail of newly awakened senses. A finger dipped down and skimmed over her chin then down her neck.

An alarm sounded throughout the museum. The piercing noise made Emmanuelle jump but Helmut remained still.

## Chapter 2

"Don't panic!" shouted a voice from downstairs. "Just head to the exits quickly, we have a situation in one of the bathrooms!"

Helmut's hand traveled down to Emmanuelle's breast. Cupping it, he allowed the weight of it to fill his hand. "Just a few smoke bombs I lit and threw in both bathrooms," he said. "It'll take them a while to find them and get rid of the smoke."

She giggled, understanding his antics to afford them a tiny bit of privacy.

"But I can't stay long."

Her cheerful expression melted from her face. He framed her face with his hands, drew her in close and kissed her, softly at first. It felt as though his lips whispered over hers, so delicate for a man so large. But he never disappointed her whenever he kissed her. It was the reason she had started this twisted relationship with him in the first place.

Suddenly, he pressed his demanding lips fully on hers, making the air leave her mouth as she took in the possessive kiss. Her hands rested on his thighs to brace herself.

Helmut pulled back from her with a slow ease. He swung his leg over so that he now sat straddling the slender bench. Then Emmanuelle took over.

He reclined on the bench but always staring at her with big doe eyes. The innocence his eyes held belied his carnal intent. She undid his pants and, after he raised his hips, she pushed them down to his knees, just far enough so that they wouldn't stain.

She stood with her feet planted on either side of him. His hands, so smooth and warm, touched her thighs and slid under her skirt. At her ass, he cupped it and smiled.

"Good. No panties," he said.

"Just like you like it."

With that and after encasing his penis in a condom, she lowered herself on his erection. Once down to the hilt, she closed her eyes and leaned her head back, feeling the relief wash over her body. Tingles prickled her skin from the top of her head down to the toes in her sandals. She wanted their union, this

connection, to last forever, to be caught on film like the other memorable scenes shown on exhibit. He was a beautiful man, too rich for words. And she was his admirer.

“Babe.” It was all Helmut had to say, punctuating the endearment to show urgency in the situation.

Emmanuelle undulated her hips, feeling him so deep inside of her that her pussy soon constricted itself around him. He moaned in response as he held onto her thighs. His hips made an upward thrust to meet her deprived vagina.

Moments like these she cherished.

Taking his hand, she slid it under her shirt. His nimble fingers pulled down her lace cup. She heard the delicate fabric rip. The sound made her smile.

His fingertips played with her nipple until it both ached and gave her relief. She never knew pain and pleasure could exist, complementing each other so well.

He pinched her distended nipple. She gasped then settled into a low moan that sounded in concert with the shrill alarm.

“You’re beautiful,” she began. “You’re perfect. Too good for me.”

“Don’t you say that,” he snapped between panting breaths. “Don’t ever say that.”

She took that moment to close her eyes. Normally, she loved staring at him but she couldn’t bear to catch his disappointed expression at her admission.

She knew the reality of the situation. Her mama didn’t raise an idiot. The sex had been exciting but that was all they had between each other, hot sex. When he got bored with her, when she no longer tempted him with unusual venues to make love in, he would leave her...just like the others had.

The thought made her instinctually grab a handful of his thick hair as she rode him faster and harder. Her braids hung down the side of her face as she hovered over his.

“Open your eyes,” he demanded.

Waiting a beat, she finally gazed at him. As soon as she caught his stare, his hands gripped her hips.



Helmut said nothing, only allowing his intense stare to speak for him. What his harsh gaze screamed to her was that he was a man who got what he wanted.

Right now, he wanted her.

But what would it be tomorrow? Would he still want to meet her in public places, fuck her brains out and move on? It had worked before but something in his mood had changed.

The alarm stopped, prompting Emmanuelle to go faster. It was as though their timer had gone off. Helmut sat up, grabbed her buttocks and kissed her neck and the part of her bare chest exposed through her t-shirt.

He whispered, "We'll be immortalized."

He nodded upward. She directed her attention to what he looked at and found a security camera. Instead of shrieking in horror and embarrassment, she smiled.

She held his shoulders and ground her fingernails into him. She hoped she hadn't scratched him through his shirt like she'd done before.

When she let out a long groan as the days of accumulating want and desire purged from her body, he responded in kind. His body contracted, the muscles in his arms and stomach twitching and bunching like they had been touched with an electric current.

Emmanuelle didn't want to let him go. She wanted this moment to last. He cherished her like no one had. So why couldn't she be open with him? Why had she let her life be a secret for so long?

"Fuck, you drive me crazy," Helmut said between gritted teeth. "Why? Why?"

She knew what he was asking but the answer would have taken more than one afternoon to explain. Then again, she would have to understand herself before offering any explanation. The pounding steps heading up the stairs signaled that their time had ended. Before getting off of his lap, she kissed him, letting her tongue slide into his hot mouth for a brief moment. She stood and smoothed down her skirt while Helmut straightened himself out behind her.

Just as he finished fastening his belt, a guard appeared. "Everything's okay, folks," he announced. "Kids playing pranks I guess."

Again, she nodded. Helmut waved but his back was to the guard. When the guard walked away, Helmut approached Emmanuelle.

"I have to---"

"I know."

"My boss gets pissed when I get back late from lunch."

She smiled as a response.

"Can I walk you out?"

She shook her head, gave him a sweet peck on his cheek and returned to her original spot in front of the photographs.

"I'm tired of playing these games," he said, the roughness of his voice making her blink. "I want to be with you for more than just one day a week and for more than just, well, this."

Until she could get her vocal chords to cooperate, she shook her head. "Ever hear of the phrase 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it?'" She wanted to kick herself for such a juvenile line but what else could she say? She couldn't admit the truth, that he'd captured her heart from the moment she'd met him. With news like that he would have stomped on her heart and laughed at her.

After a long, frustrated sigh, he glanced down at his watch. "I have to go." He cupped her cheek. "I want to know more about you."

Taking his hand into both of hers, she removed it from her face leaving the spot cold. "Take what you have and enjoy it. Why rock the boat?"

"Because you don't know what you'll get when you make waves."

With hard steps, he headed to the exit.

"Library next week?" she called after him.

He turned back to her but waited before answering. Maybe he caught the fear that masked her determined expression. She had to stop chewing on her bottom lip when she got nervous. The gesture always gave her away.

"You know I'll be there," he finally answered before going.

Once he was out of her sight, she released a long breath. She returned her attention to the pictures. Yes, moments, not her heart, needed to be captured...and not by that man. Unfortunately she had already fallen for him.

### **Chapter 3**

A constant clicking by his ear dragged Tag from his daydream. "Earth to Tag," his buddy, Fred, said as he continued snapping his thin fingers in Tag's face.

"Are you all right, dude? You seem a little spacey since your lunch break."

Tag shook his head.

Just an hour ago he had assumed the role of Helmut and had made fast, mad, passionate love to a woman. She'd captured his heart in the few months they'd been meeting in different locations all over the Hampton Roads area of Virginia.

He couldn't recall how they met, which bothered him. So consumed by her, he wanted to know everything about her like where she grew up, who were her role models, and how she got that tiny scar on her left ring finger. Thinking about it made him glance down at his left hand, scanning his ring finger, the same one she'd claimed she'd spied a tan line around. All part of the act, he surmised.

Tag hadn't been and wouldn't be altar-bound in his lifetime, at least not yet. But maybe there was a reason she'd said it. Was she really married and just projecting on him? Did she want to get married? Did she want to marry him?

But one thing truly plagued his thoughts around her.

What the hell was her real name?

"You're doing it again," Fred said and plopped down in the futon Tag had in his office. "You're getting all spacey again."

"Just thinking about something." Tag leaned back in the black, cloth-covered swivel chair behind his desk.

"I guess when you're the boss, you're always thinking, huh?"

Tag hated lying to his mystery woman about having to go back to work. He could have stayed with her all afternoon, convince her to take him back to her place and let him love her the way he really wanted, slow and easy instead of rushed and frantic.

Sure, there had been an appeal to the adrenaline-filled sex marathons they'd performed. But now he was ready for more. If she wasn't ready to do that, then maybe he needed to move on.

No. No maybe. He needed to bounce. Tag wasn't a kid anymore cutting lawns for beer money. He ran a successful landscaping and tree trimming service. He had a lot he could offer to the right woman. Deep down he wanted to give himself all to her. Just her.

"Hope you're thinking about the upcoming convention," Fred said as he tossed a colorful koosh ball up and down over his face, catching it before it bounced off of his nose. "A week of talking about fertilizers, weed killers and mulch."

"So a week of bullshit, right?" Tag said with a snicker.

Fred laughed with him. "Basically. So you have the reservation number?"

Shit! Tag knew there was something he had been forgetting all week. Damn it, he really needed to think about getting an administrative assistant here in the office. He could definitely use one.

"You forgot, didn't you?" Fred held the ball in his hand. "Shit, Tag, the place is probably all booked up by now. It's summer time so you know all the hotels down at the beach are slammed. I'm not staying at some crap motel down the street."

"We're right here in Virginia Beach. We could just drive back and forth. It's only thirty-five minutes or so away."

Even though he made the proposition, Tag scrambled on his computer to find the hotel and make some quick reservations. If he knew Fred, and he'd known the man for over eleven years, he knew his buddy would be drinking heavily.

Tag cringed thinking of being Fred's chauffeur and babysitter, carting his skinny butt whenever he got too drunk to drive or even walk. Tag needed a room at the hotel to at least house Fred. He didn't mind making the daily trip.

"You want to hit that tourist traffic every day? Bullshit!"

"It'll be okay. I'm making them now. And if there's no room, I'll set us up somewhere close."

"Come on, man. I don't want to stay somewhere close. I need to be right there in the same hotel. I don't want to drive or walk back and forth."

The whiney tone of Fred's voice struck a sour chord in Tag. He liked Fred, and he'd been one of the first employees to join Super Trimmers when Tag started it.

But the man had obviously forgotten who ran this company.

"Just remember who's paying for this excursion. We don't have to go at all," Tag said as he stared at the man. "You can sit your ass here and burn up in the sun while I have you on hedge-trimming duty. You want that?"

"No." Fred cast his gaze down to the floor.

Tag could almost see Fred's bottom lip poking out like a scolded child.

"What are you doing sitting in my office anyway? The day isn't over. Go gas up all of the trucks and make sure they're stocked."

Fred flashed a surprised and almost hurt look when Tag made the demand.

Those types of jobs were relegated to the newbies. But Fred needed to be knocked down a peg or two and Tag knew this would do it.

Fred scratched his fingers through his dishwater blond hair and sprang from the black futon. Tag had spent many a night on that thing when he'd been kicked out of his apartment for spending every dime keeping his business up and running. Now that the business side of his life had settled down, he needed to work on the private side. His dream woman's place of choice to meet had always been right around the oceanfront area. It made him wonder if she lived or worked there.

"You know what you need?" Fred posed before exiting.

"Harder working employees?" Tag shot back then smirked.

"Not funny, dude. You need to get laid. How long has it been over with between you and Chelsea?"

“Courtney.”

“Yeah, Courtney.”

“Almost two years.” Tag sighed at the number.

But Fred didn’t know about the last six months where Tag had found his dream lover...if only he knew her name.

“Maybe this trip’ll do you good. You can find some nice out-of-town snatch to hit and quit when she goes back home.”

“Nice, Fred. Real classy.”

“Hey, I’m just talking about hitting the skins. You aint got to get serious. It’s just sex, man.”

With that prophetic if not pathetic line, Fred left Tag alone with his thoughts and a thick phonebook on his lap.

#### **Chapter 4**

*God, what the hell am I doing?* What Tag had done with her, today Emmanuelle, next week she would be someone else, had been crazy, foolish in this day and age. But from the first time they started this strange relationship, something about her made him trust she wouldn’t hurt him, not physically.

Her soft brown eyes drew him in first.

Then her inviting smile captured his heart. He’d never felt the pull to a woman like the way he’d been with her. Every time he stood close to her his heart pounded with a purpose, his pulse raced, every nerve felt raw as though, if he had been touched, he would snap.

And the sex blew his mind. She did everything with him aside from already having risky sex in a public place. He remembered one of their first times together. It’d happened during another conference down at the oceanfront right at the start of spring.

Fred had been content to waste his night away in the hotel bar. But Tag had wanted to clear his head. Too many memories of his failed relationship with a long-time girlfriend haunted him especially when the weather warmed and everyone walked around half-dressed.

He'd strolled down to a nearby ice cream stand. When he'd spotted a woman standing outside in line his breath caught. She wore a short denim skirt and a halter top that showed off her flawless coffee bean-colored skin. Back then she didn't have braids like she'd had today. At that time her jet-black hair was straight and brushed the tops of her shoulders.

As though he'd called her name or whistled, neither of which he had done, she turned around and stared directly at him. As soon as her gaze connected with his, Tag's cock swelled under his shorts. Even thinking about her now, thinking of that moment, he had to brush his hand down over himself to calm his eager need.

Cemented to his spot, he watched her get to the counter and place her order.

After getting her ice cream she sauntered to him. Her legs went from the ground to the stars. She carried a cone in each hand. When she'd reached him, she held one up.

"I thought you looked hot," she'd said. Her voice held a low timbre that still made him quiver every time he heard her. "So I brought you this."

He accepted the plain vanilla ice cream cone with chocolate syrup drizzled over the mound. "Thank you. But what if I told you I'm lactose intolerant?"

She swiped her pink tongue over the frozen treat and Tag's hard-on raged even more, swelling to a painful extent as it pressed against the zipper of his shorts.

"Are you?" she asked.

He smiled.

"A woman who answers a question with a question. She must hold some mystery." He licked the frozen dessert.

The sweetness of the homemade ice cream along with its cooling properties soothed his mouth and heated flesh. "No. Not lactose intolerant."

Then she smiled.

“Good. I would hate to have to give your treat to someone else.”

It had only been his second time seeing this gorgeous creature, this enigma. But every time she came near him, the rest of the world went away. No sounds, no smells, no sights. Just her.

“So what are you doing down here tonight?” he’d asked as they began a leisurely stroll down the boardwalk.

“Trolling for men. Thank God you came by. Prospects weren’t looking too good,” she replied.

Her pink tongue slithered over the cinnamon-colored waffle cone, then over her bare knuckles to retrieve the steadily melting ice cream that dribbled over her.

Tag had never wanted to be an ice cream cone more in his entire life.

Each pass of her tongue made his cock twitch. Did she know how incredibly sexy she was? He noticed how men and some women walking past them stared at her, admired her, envied Tag who had her by his side.

“You weren’t really looking for other men, were you?” he asked, not concerned about the sound of jealousy in his voice.

“No. But I am glad you showed.” A twinkle lit her full, chocolate eyes. “I enjoyed lunch the other day.”

He smiled. The risky sex in the public park still made his heart pound. Sweat beaded on the back of his neck until he had to billow his t-shirt to cool off.

“I did too.” He walked closer to her and brushed his arm against hers.

Her soft skin made him tingle all over.

“So what are you doing down here?” he asked again.

“You tell me what you’re doing here first.” She nudged his arm with her pointy elbow.

He let out a long breath. Tag had never been one to rule over a woman in a relationship but this had been a first for him. This mysterious creature had managed to take control over all aspects of their strange arrangements including what they talked about. But it suited him. At least he got to be with her.



"I'm here for a conference," Tag replied as he followed her off of the boardwalk and onto the beach.

She removed her sandals and he took off his flip-flops. He shoved the duo in his back pocket while still downing his cone.

"Ah ha! I knew you were a corporate type."

"Not really. It's not as heavy as you think. So what is it that you do?"

She occupied her mouth with the cone instead of answering. Although he loved seeing her lips wrap around the wide opening as she licked the white, foamy ice cream, he wanted to know more about her.

"What is your name?" he asked.

Her gaze turned to the crashing waves. They pounded the shore and broke the silence between them.

"Call me Oceania," she responded. Then she nibbled around the top of her cone.

Tag still remembered then how his heart both pounded but sank at her admission. Although she excited him, the secrecy around her bothered him.

Most men wouldn't care. Here she was giving him the green light to have a non-committed sexual relationship and he wanted more.

"Okay, Oceania," he began, determined to play her game. "Call me Captain Ahab."

She snickered. "You're going to show me your Moby Dick?"

"Only if you want."

She took his free hand in hers. The warmth of her hand and the connection sent a spark through his body that pumped his dick to strain against his khaki shorts.

"I know a great spot for looking at the ocean."

She pulled him further down the beach. The sand still retained the heat of the sun, warming his feet while the rest of his body blazed from gazing at her. Once

the streetlights stop and the darkness began, she stopped a few feet in, assuring that they wouldn't be seen.

"Sit," she commanded.

Tag couldn't see her face. The moonlight showed off her silhouette of curves and swells that rivaled any ocean. Without question, he sank into the sand with his knees propped up and the heel of his hand braced behind him and embedded in the warm sand.

Without warning, she put her feet on either side of him, her cunt, hidden behind her denim skirt, right in his face. She dropped down to her knees so that she sat on top of his erection.

"So did it help?" she asked, her voice tumbling almost as seductive as the rolling waves.

Tag had to think for a moment and imagine what she must have been talking about. "Did what help?"

"The ice cream." She crunched on the last bit of her cone. Once done, she continued. "Are you cool now?"

He nodded.

Although ice cream melted on his hand, he lost interest in the cone. All that consumed him were her hot thighs, heat germinating from her pussy, which he could feel through his shorts, and her hands resting on his shoulders.

"Did you say yes? I can't hear you over the waves and I can barely see your face," she said. She surfed her fingertips down the side of his face. "I can feel you though."

Tag tossed the rest of his cone aside and enveloped this hot woman in his arms.

Even in the dark, they knew how to find each other's mouths. Her full lips crushed against his until he felt like he would lose his breath. Turning his head to the other side, Tag managed to take in some air without disconnecting from the kiss.

Her hand snaked up the back of his head and she grasped a handful of his hair.

With a hard yank she pulled his head back. In response, he grabbed her breast through her halter top. Her fleshy mound fit perfectly in his hand. Not too much so that he felt like he had to keep his hand moving around to touch every part of it. And not so small that it disappeared in his grasp when he held it. No, her nipple met with the center of his palm every time he held her breast. He wondered, though, if she fit some other lucky guy's hand.

She let go of his hair and resumed her hold on his shoulders. Using a bit of force, she pushed him back onto the sand. The gritty bits scrubbed against the back of his neck and went down his shorts. But for her, for this moment, he would endure the discomfort for the pleasantly expected reward.

Oceania kissed down his neck.

Her soft hair feathered over his face, neck and arms as she made her way down his body. At his shorts, she didn't stop. Didn't hesitate for one moment. She undid his shorts and pulled them down. To help, Tag brought his hips up. His body trembled in anticipation.

Once down, she crawled over him, simulating the ocean waves, bathing him with her warm body. The sounds of crashing waves and his heart pounding like a jackhammer filled his ears as he desperately tried to focus on this sensual creature.

Darkness covered them. Only the full moonlight gave him a glimmer of light, let him see her silhouette. Her hand wrapped around his hardened shaft.

Unprepared for the touch, Tag gasped.

Before he could utter a word, her lips crushed against his mouth. Softness.

Pillowly softness met his lips. He closed his eyes and savored the passionate expression. While her tongue explored his mouth, her hand squeezed his shaft.

With a slow, deliberate motion, she stroked him up and down, pulsing her fist at the tip.

"Lie back," she commanded.

Hearing her over the waves surprised him. But every part of his being paid close attention to her. He heard every breath she made. He felt her muscles move in her legs and arms as she made her way down his body. And although it was

physically impossible, Tag imagined he heard her pussy juices flowing into her thong panties.

Oceania kissed down his body. Each place her lips connected on his flesh became heated as though she'd branded him. Once he made it to a light, he would have to check and see if charred lip prints didn't cover his body from his chin down to his navel.

Now straddling his legs, his shorts wrapped around his knees, Tag lay at her mercy. Being the good keeper that she was, she didn't make him suffer. Instead she leaned over and ever so lightly licked the tip of his penis. Tag sucked air through his teeth and nearly jackknifed upward. But he settled himself back down as her tongue swirled around his sensitive tip.

Reaching his hand down, his fingers sought and found her head. He ran his fingers through her soft hair then fisted it as soon as her mouth covered his erection halfway. She held him there, nearly torturing him. If he could have crawled out of his skin and watched the display he would have. But for now he just enjoyed the feeling. She lowered her head until she had him submerged in her hot, wet mouth.

"Oh, fuck!" Tag said through clenched teeth.

Like the ice cream cone she'd just eaten, she held the base of his dick as her other hand cradled his balls. Her tongue snaked around his rigid length like a snake moving over a dew-covered log.

Although it was her first time giving him a blow job, she handled him like she'd done it before. Everything about her seemed so familiar.

Closing his eyes, Tag let his head fall back as he enjoyed her mouth, her hands, her attention. Moving his hips up and down, he gyrated his hips to fuck her mouth until the intense pleasure became too much.

"Ohhh, yes, uh, baby!" Tag had to catch himself before he called her the name she'd made up. The moment felt so real and so right, it just didn't seem right to call her something phony.

His sac emptied and his hot come shot into her mouth. Between the beating waves hitting the shore, he heard her swallowing, capturing every bit of juice he offered her until he felt physically drained.

Tag plopped down on his back.

The warm sand tickled the back of his neck. Now that she'd just blown his mind, the sand, the sounds, the feelings all magnified until he felt like he could feel each and every grain that touched his skin. The sounds of the ocean and seagulls that dared to fly at night made his head throb. A cool breeze blew over his body, cooling down his enflamed penis.

When he opened his eyes, he found a shadow looming over his face. Instead of jumping in surprise, he knew it was his dream woman. She planted a sweet kiss on his lips, allowing him to taste the salty bitterness of his own come.

When she broke from the kiss, he held her hand and said, "Come back to my room with me."

He couldn't see her facial expression but from the way she jerked her hand from his he knew that his idea didn't sit well with her.

"I can't." She stood and brushed the sand from her legs.

"Why? Do you snore or something?" It was a stupid joke but he needed something to lighten the mood.

"You'll never have me in a hotel room. It's not possible."

Before he could press any further, his dream woman, Oceania this time, disappeared into the darkness. Sitting at his desk now, thinking back on that memory, Tag still shook his head about what she'd said. Why couldn't they stay in a hotel just once? Did they always have to have sex in public places?

Maybe that was how she got off. And although the arrangement had lured him initially, it wasn't something he wanted to keep doing. He had to break it off.

But if he saw her again, talked to her, touched her, he wouldn't be able to walk away. As much as he hated the idea, Tag knew the best way to end it would be to just disappear. He'd never been one to walk away from any confrontation. But this time he knew he would be fighting a losing battle.

## Chapter 5

“Beulah, do you hear me?” How could Bea not hear her co-worker. Every guest in every room of the Cavalier Hotel could hear her. Forticia’s voice carried more than a cargo ship. Bea pushed her cart full of cleaners, clean sheets and towels, and a bag full of mints to place on each pillow down the hall to the next room.

“Yeah, Tishia, I hear you,” Bea finally replied.

She didn’t want to answer the woman. She wanted to be somewhere else, be someone else, not just some part-time housekeeper at a fancy hotel.

No man wanted to spend the rest of his life, or even a night, with a Beulah. But they would for an Emmanuelle or an Oceania or whoever else she could make up on the fly.

“This is the last floor we have to do, right?” Forticia asked before pounding on a room door.

“This is it.” Bea did a much gentler knock, announced, begrudgingly, that she was with housekeeping then waited.

“Then I’d say we cut out a little early and do some partying tonight. Neither one of us have to get up early in the morning, so let’s just do this.” To punctuate her idea, Forticia clapped her hands to an imaginary song that must have been running through the woman’s head and she swayed her hips back and forth.

Considering that her regular fuck buddy stood her up, Bea gave the offer some thought. How could he have not shown up to the library today? Bea had been ready for him too. The last few times with him had been intense, not only sexually but also emotionally. His questions increased with each meeting. Who was she? What did she do? What was her name? None of that mattered when they kissed, when they fucked.

But something had changed.

The way he’d looked at her last week made her think that he did care, that she did matter. Well, she thought that before he stood her up. Not like she didn’t deserve it. What man would want to keep fucking a ghost?

No matter. After she’d waited over an hour for her champion, something inside of her snapped, or rather broke.

“Nah, I’m going to pass. I’m going to just head home and chill.” Home was the last place Bea wanted to be but what other choices did she have?

She didn’t want to go out and meet some guy. She would feel like she was cheating on...on...damn it! Now Bea wanted to know his name. Her carefully constructed plan of fuck ‘em and keep ‘em was slowly unraveling. How could men be so nonchalant about sex but women couldn’t. At least Bea couldn’t be that way.

Forticia sucked her teeth and cocked her head.

“You don’t never want to do nothing.”

The way her friend butchered the English language made Bea wince. But the pain of her slang hurt her a lot less than when her sexy, mysterious friend failed to show up for their library date.

Bea had stood in the reference section for over an hour. He knew the spot. They had talked about going there before. The first fifteen minutes, Bea chalked up his tardiness to traffic. During the summer especially around the beach area, traffic was murder. But then after thirty minutes she knew he wouldn’t be showing.

Refusing to feel anything about the moment, Bea had gone home, changed and went straight to work. No use crying over an enigma. No, he wasn’t a mystery.

That was the problem.

He wanted to lay his whole life on the table for her. Every time he started to share something about himself, she’d cut him off. No use getting to know him.

He would leave eventually.

And she was right.

Bea knocked on the door again.

“You have fun tonight. Tell me all about it tomorrow.”

“That’s all right. I’m going to find me a fine brother and ride his big, black stick until a sista can’t walk straight.” Forticia opened the door of the room she would be cleaning.

A woman and her young child walked by Bea and her friend. Bea heard the woman gasp when Forticia made her proclamation. Instead of apologizing for her friend, Bea ducked into the room she would be cleaning.

A maid.

Yes, that was all she was. Beulah the maid. What man would want to fuck a woman who sounded like that? Bea had no problems snagging the low-rent guys, guys still working the same job they'd had since high school and still living at home with their mothers.

And although Bea did housekeeping for one of the most prestigious, if not the oldest, hotels in Virginia Beach, she was nothing like the slackers who had been hawking her since she hit puberty. Living on her own now, Bea's heart swelled with pride over her accomplishments in college. On her last semester, a summer one so that she could graduate even earlier, she was gearing up for a new career.

And now that she thought about it, her mystery man not showing up today opened her eyes to something important. Bea wanted to be an elementary school teacher. With her proclivities to all things sexually kinky, she feared she might get caught one day and lose her job as well as her mother's respect. No, that man, whatever his name was, did her a favor.

After taking a deep breath, Bea opened the hotel room door. Time to meet real life head on.

\* \* \*

"Great," Fred began. "Another speech about mulching."

Although Fred sat next to Tag, his voice was loud enough to be heard by everyone at their table and a few other people at a table next to them. The boredom mixed with sarcasm couldn't be missed in Fred's tone.

Yes, the conference was a snoozer.

Yes, Tag was also bored out of his mind. But he had to do something to distract him from thinking about Oceania, Emmanuelle or whoever she decided to be for the brief moments they were together. Not showing up at the library had to have been the hardest thing he ever did. Now he understood what addicts felt like weaning themselves from drugs or whatever so consumed them that it became unhealthy. His stomach ached all morning as he contemplated his decision.



He wanted to see her again. One part of his conscience said to hell with who she was. She was giving him the best sex of his life. But his more rational side yearned to know her as a person. What were her dreams? What did she want out of life? Did she like baseball as much as he did?

“So your partner tells me that you’re a local boy,” a man sitting next to Tag said, snapping Tag from his thoughts.

“Partner?” Tag questioned.

The man’s gaze cut next to Tag then back.

Tag turned and watched as his employee blew his hot breath on a spoon and dangled it from the end of his nose. Classy.

“He’s not my partner,” Tag said. “Although, he has been with my company since the very beginning. He’s looking to branch out on his own someday.”

The man’s eyes widened. “He told you this?”

Tag ruttled his eyebrows, confused at the man’s shocked expression. “Sure. He wanted to know the ups and downs of the business. He’s my friend. Why wouldn’t I help him?”

“He’ll become competition. And aren’t you afraid of losing such a great employee?”

The man’s gaze went to Fred again. But this time the man sighed. Tag turned to see what had him so distraught. Blinking his eyes a few times, Tag had to make sure he wasn’t imagining watching Fred make a miniature Eiffel Tower out of sugar cubes, spoons, forks, salt and pepper shakers and toothpicks.

Tag kicked his employee under the table.

“Christ, dude! What the---”

Through gritted teeth and with a low voice, Tag said, “Take that shit down or, swear to God, I’ll sit on your chest and remove your eyebrows with a blowtorch.”

Like King Kong demolishing a city under his massive hands, Fred took one swipe of his structure, making it topple to the tabletop.

After returning his attention to the guy next to him, Tag said, "Competition is going to crop up whether I know the person or not. The best I can do is be the best I can be. I offer competitive rates, a guarantee and personalized follow-ups. Most of the larger landscapers can't offer that."

The man smiled.

"You're right. And I like you." He held out his hand.

"The name's Boyd Benson."

"Tag Pomertoy." As Tag shook his hand, he asked jokingly,

"Any relation to the Benson family that owns that chain of drugstores around town?"

Boyd's smile widened. "As a matter of fact, I am."

Tag's smile dropped briefly but he recovered quickly enough, he hoped, that the slip would go unnoticed. Although Tag loved doing the residential properties, going corporate would put him on the map. Maybe with the extra money, women like his mystery lover would give him the time of day.

"I've been looking around for a new landscaping service. And since you're the only guy here who actually bothered to put on a tie, I thought you might be the type of person who could handle my business."

Fred had laughed at Tag that morning when he'd come down for breakfast wearing a white button-up shirt, a red tie and slacks.

"Dude, it's not a funeral," Fred had said.

"If we don't make some good contacts, it could be the death of my business."

Who knew that a little thing like appearance would be the edge over so many other established and bigger landscaping services. "I'd like to set up an appointment with you to talk more about your services," Boyd began. "Maybe take you around and show you some of my stores so you can tell me what you can do for me."

"That would be awesome."

Tag winced at his Beach Boy response. He was no longer a kid doing this as a side job. This was his career, his business, his life. He needed to take it seriously.

"I mean I would like that."

"You have a card? I'll get my assistant to set up an appointment."

"I sure do."

Tag touched his pants pockets but all he felt were his thighs. At that moment, his heart started racing. He curved to one side and felt his back pocket. Again nothing. Then both hands rested on his chest hoping beyond hope that he may have put his wallet in his shirt pocket, knowing that he wouldn't have in a million years.

"Seems I must have left my wallet in my room," Tag said and chuckled. He leaned over to Fred. "You don't happen to have one of our business cards handy, do you?"

Fred's confused expression answered for him.

"Never mind. Give me my extra room key. I forgot my wallet."

"Dude, you had better hurry before housekeeping gets to your room and cleans you out." Fred handed Tag a blue plastic card shaped like a credit card.

"If you'll give me five minutes, I'll be right back," Tag said to Boyd.

"I'll be here for about another fifteen minutes and then I have to go."

Tag wasted no time in bolting from his seat and scurrying through the conference room to get to the elevator. It was no wonder he had left his wallet in his room. If his head could detach, he would have left that too.

Ever since the last time he and his mystery woman were together, he couldn't think of anything else but her. She consumed his thoughts. He should have been a man and gone to the library just one last time, give her his goodbye.

But he knew that looking into those soft brown eyes again, would have been swept him up in the moment. He would have allowed her to take charge of the situation like always. This time he had to take the lead. He couldn't be with a woman who didn't want to open up to him.

And now that it looked like his business could be taking off, he could concentrate on that instead of wondering how this force of nature managed to take his breath away every time he saw her.

\* \* \*

Bea had finished cleaning the bathroom and now had the bed stripped of linens. The soft whir of the vacuum cleaner next door signaled that Forticia, as usual, had her room nearly finished whereas Bea had another good thirty minutes left.

Bea dragged from one task to another while she thought of her mystery lover. Tired of wondering where he'd gone and why he didn't show up, she thought only of the good things. His eyes, his hands, his mouth.

A smile slithered across her face as she balled the sheets and prepared to dump them in her basket. She stopped at the basket. Taking a deep inhalation, Bea caught a familiar scent.

Him. The same musky cologne her fuck buddy normally wore permeated the sheets. She didn't think the scent was that popular but maybe it was. After taking one last whiff, she deposited the pile into her basket.

She shouldn't have taken another smell. The olfactory memory triggered a slow drip between her thighs. She ignored the feeling of her panties gradually becoming soaked as she picked up new clean sheets.

"He's just a man, Bea," she said to herself.

"You can find plenty all over town. Don't get hung up on just this one."

She plopped the pillows onto the chair, which already had a comforter piled on top, and tucked the end of the fitted sheet on one side. When she moved over to the other, her gaze fell on something she hadn't noticed before, a brown leather wallet sat on the nightstand.

Trouble, trouble, she thought to herself.

She'd seen enough hidden camera shows to know that something so obvious as a wallet on a nightstand was too suspicious. To cut down on temptation, she pretended the item wasn't there. All she needed was for the guest to cry robbery. She would be the prime suspect. Yeah, an arrest charge would look great on her resume when she went for those teaching jobs.

Moving faster, Bea made the bed in lightning speed. She needed to get out of the room and away from the wallet, unless...

As she tucked the last pillow into the comforter a thought hit her. The familiar smell, men's clothing in the room. What if this was her mystery man's room?

Sure it was far-fetched.

As big as the city of Virginia Beach was, having him here in the hotel and moreover having him be in this room would be a one in a million shot. But then again, the one time they'd met he did say he was attending a conference.

The Cavalier was hosting a lot of conferences this week.

Her gaze fell on the wallet again. She stared at it so much that she imagined it smiled back at her, winked at her, toyed with her. "Come get me," she could hear it say.

"Nope. I'm not touching it. No way. No how."

Bea took one last look around the room before she plugged in her vacuum to finish. As she unraveled the cord, she thought of something.

Her boss, Gretchen, was making the rounds that day, following behind the two of them to see if they cleaned to her specifications. Gretchen was known to take things here and there and right under the noses of her bosses too.

Only one thing to do.

Bea couldn't have this poor man's wallet stolen by some sorry bitch. She had to take it to security. That was it. She trusted those guys. More than once they got her out of some serious jams. If they knew the risk she'd played when she first met her man, the guards would have locked her in a broom closet and not let her out for several years.

Bea stormed to the nightstand and stopped. She stared at the wallet again. Stealing her nerves, she took a deep breath and finally picked it up.

"I'll just take it to Omar and Trent," she said. "They'll know what to do with it."

Her thumb flipped the open edge. She so desperately wanted to quiet that voice in her head that said that this belonged to her lover. Impossible. He wouldn't be here. And if he were, what would the odds be that he would have this room?

Clutching the smooth leather in both of her hands, she squeezed her eyes shut then opened the wallet like a book. Peering one eye open, she saw the Virginia state driver's license tucked in the front pocket. Only the top of the man's head could be seen.

"Don't do it, girl. Just let it go."

But she couldn't. Bea had gone this far. She couldn't stop herself.

As soon as her thumb touched the hard plastic, a voice startled her.

"Oh my God!" a man's voice said.

"I didn't take anything!" Bea screamed as she dropped the wallet to the floor and flipped around. "I was going to take it to security. I swear. I just---"

Words caught in her throat as soon as she saw who stood behind her.

"Emmanuelle?" he said.

## **Chapter 6**

Bea stood petrified in her spot. She'd imagined what it would have been like for him to be there but never thought it could happen. He stared at her for a long moment as though trying to figure out if she were real. Or maybe he was deciding on whether or not to call the police. He had caught her red-handed going through his wallet.

Instead he rushed to the door. Leaving her again? Her heart sank when she heard the door close. Then she caught his reflection in the mirror coming back to her. Time slowed until he faced her again.

She managed to catch his crisp white shirt and tie before her gaze locked onto his. Swallowing hard, Bea waited for his verbal assault.

"I thought about you all day," he said as he enveloped her in his arms.

His lips pressed against hers in an eager kiss, one that she returned fully. His impatient hands roamed her body, down her face, across her shoulders, over her

breasts and to her hips. The familiar touch turned her bones into jelly. If she hadn't clamped her hands onto his shoulders she would have fallen to the floor.

As it was, he lifted her into his arms, his hands cupping her ass as he carried her to the dresser. Thank God she decided to wear the dress janitorial outfit today instead of the pants. He hiked her dress up to her waist, all the while still kissing and caressing her.

"Sorry I didn't meet you today," he said between kisses.

Too strangled and surprised to talk, Bea simply nodded.

"I wanted to."

She nodded again. This time she helped loosen his tie while his fingers made short work of her panties.

"I forgot my wallet when I---"

"I wasn't going to steal anything," she managed to say this time. "I was going to give it to security."

"I don't care." He threw her panties to the floor.

She sat with her bare ass on the cold, wooden, waist-high dresser.

"All I know is that you're here and I can't get you out of my system, no matter how hard I try."

Bea slipped off his tie and pulled his shirttail from his pants. Just as she moved her hands down to his zipper she heard the vacuum next door stop.

"Oh shit!" she said.

"What?"

"My friend, she's done cleaning the room next to us."

"So." He kissed her neck.

Bea tilted her head back and enjoyed the feeling of his hot mouth pressed against her skin. "So she'll be over to see me."

"The door's locked." Since she didn't undo his zipper, he did it himself.

"She has a key and she knows I'm in here."

All Bea heard was the clink of his pants hitting the floor. Then she felt the smooth head of his cock sliding between her juicy nether lips.

"I thought you liked being watched." He rumbled a sexy laugh.

"I could get in trouble. Lose my job."

"We'll just have to cross that bridge when we get to it."

Before she could object any further, he plunged inside of her. The familiar feeling of his thickness sent waves of pleasure all over her body. He pounded inside of her, making the dresser beat against the wall.

Bea should have cared but she missed him. She loved having him inside of her again. Although she wanted to be mad at him for not meeting her, how could she? It wasn't like she'd been upfront and open with him.

She wrapped her legs around his waist and dug her fingernails into his shoulders. Bea had to enjoy this moment because after this, she had no idea what would happen. Could she finally open up to him? Would he want to stick around to listen?

He kissed her again, sliding his tongue into her mouth. His nimble fingers opened the top of her dress, unbuttoning it down to her waist. He reached his hand inside and massaged her breast.

"I missed feeling you," he growled between kisses. "One day and I missed this."

He gazed into her eyes.

"I missed you."

Bea melted. The climax she'd been trying to hold back forced its way through until every muscle in her body constricted around him. She clamped her arms around his shoulders, drew her legs in tighter around his waist and milked his cock with her pussy.

It didn't take long for him to follow suit. He pounded into her harder and faster until he let out a long, low moan.



A soft knock sounded at the door as they held each other.

"Girl, are you all right?" Forticia asked.

Bea, out of breath but satisfied, smiled. "Something didn't agree with me at lunch. I'll finish up here and meet you later."

There was a pause before Forticia answered. "Okay. But if you need me, hit a sista up on her celly."

"Okay."

Bea waited a beat before she spoke. But her man had ideas of his own.

"My name is Tag Pomertoy," he began. "I'm thirty-three years old. I have one sister and two brothers."

As he continued talking, Bea got what he was doing. "Let me up. I have to go."

"No. Not until you hear me out. Not until you know the real me and I get to know the real you---" he dropped his gaze down "---Beulah."

The mention of her name had her kicking him back from her. She managed to wriggle off of the dresser.

"So is that your real name or did you borrow someone's uniform today?" Tag asked.

"With a name like Tag, are you seriously making fun of my name?" She adjusted her breasts back in the bra cups then buttoned up as fast as her fingers would move.

"I wasn't making fun of you." Tag pulled up his pants but didn't fasten them yet. "I want to know the real you. That's why I didn't show up at the library to meet you. I've said this before and I'll say it again. I'm tired of these games. I want to know who you are."

"No!" Bea stormed to the door but Tag blocked her.

"Why won't you tell me anything about you?" he asked as he kept a tight hold of his pants.

“Why do you care? You made it obvious that you didn’t want a thing to do with me when you ditched me today. So you see me and your dick gets hard and all of the sudden you want me again.”

“Bullshit! That’s not what this is about.”

Bea had never seen his eyes get so wide and wild looking. Either he was telling the truth or he was a hell of an actor. God, Bea hoped beyond hope that he was being honest. Raising his free hand to her face, he cupped her cheek. His hand felt as warm as the very first time they’d met.

“What are you so afraid of?” he asked, his voice softer now. “You can’t be afraid of me after everything we’ve done.”

She took his hand in hers, removing it from her face. “I’m afraid that when we walk out of that door that you’re going to go one way and I’m going to go the other and whatever we had will be something we joke about with our friends.”

“Have you? Have you told your friends about us?”

She stared at him for a while before answering.

“No.” She let go of his hand. “Have you?”

“I don’t share my personal life with my friends.”

Staring into his eyes, Bea’s heart thrummed. He seemed perfect. Too perfect. It didn’t help that he said all of the right things. What started out as harmless fun turned out to be something more. Did she actually care for him? No. She didn’t and she couldn’t. She’d been reckless before but she had to straighten up and fly right.

“Or maybe you won’t say anything now because you know what I do for a living,” she began.

His eyebrows furrowed. Finally he started zipping up his pants and securing his belt. The fun was officially over.

“That’s not true.” He shook his head to punctuate the fact.

“Oh no? Look at how you’re dressed. And you’re not in this swank hotel for no reason.”

"I'm here for a conference. And I'm dressed this way to impress...impress---"

Bea thought his eyes were wide before. Now they looked like they would pop out of his head and roll on the floor.

"Oh shit! I left Benson downstairs." He darted to the door nearly toppling her cart. Then he stopped and swung around to Bea again but darted passed her to where she had been standing before when he'd first entered the room. Bending over, he scooped up his wallet she'd dropped to the floor. "Almost forgot the real reason I came in here in the first place."

Coasting by her again, she caught his familiar musky scent, this time his aroma was mixed with her fragrance. Damn it. They even smelled good together!

Tag got to the door again and stopped. This time when he swung around he stared directly into Bea's eyes.

"I'm a jerk," he announced as he made his way back to her.

"Forget the deal. We need to work this out."

Bea dropped her gaze and shook her head. "There's nothing to work out."

With her gaze down to the floor, she spotted her panties still in a wad by a small trashcan. As delicately as she could, she crouched down and picked up the moist bundle. Instead of putting them back on, she shoved them into her pocket.

"You go make your deal. Handle your business." She grasped the handle on her cart and pushed it toward the door.

"I could care less about the deal right now. Let's talk."

Reaching out, Tag tried to hold her arm but she shied away from him.

"I have to get back to work." She opened the door. "And so do you. Handle your business."

"Wait!" Tag wriggled his body between the doorway and the cart to get next to her. "Come back to my room after your shift. Come see me."

As her mouth formed the word 'No' Tag placed his lips on hers to silence her.

Though sweet and passionate all at once, Bea's throat tightened. She knew, or rather she wanted, this to be their last contact.

From the desperate look in his eyes, she knew his business, whatever it was, was just as important to him as her degree and future career meant to her. She couldn't stand in the way of that. When he broke from the kiss, he gazed at her,

"Promise me you'll come back to my room after your shift. I'll be waiting for you, and we can talk then."

Yeah, talk, she thought.

It was the one time Bea didn't want to have sex with him.

Instead of answering, she offered a smile. The smile was meant as a sweet goodbye but Tag must have interpreted it to mean that she would be returning from the way his face lit up.

"I'll see you tonight." He darted to the stairs instead of the elevator.

The meeting he was missing must have been important...more important than being with her.

With Tag gone, Bea finished cleaning his room. She still had a job to do and it was the least she could do considering she had planned on standing him up as he'd done to her. But this time she had a good reason. She loved a man who didn't know the real person inside. Sure, that was her fault. But she couldn't change time now. Meeting Tag tonight in his room would be a mistake. It would be like this afternoon. Hot, passionate, wildly uninhibited sex.

Damn. She would definitely miss him.

She would miss Tag.

\* \* \*

Tag ran past the exiting conference attendees as he entered the ballroom.

Although he should have been thinking about Boyd Benson, he could not get the ideal of Beulah out of his head. The only reason he darted downstairs to meet with Benson wasn't to save a possible client. Tag needed some space between himself and the beautiful creature upstairs who had, at first, seemed so strong and unflappable, but now seemed fragile.

When he got to his table the only people left were Fred and a waitress who seemed to enjoy Fred's second mini sculpture.

"Where's Benson?" Tag asked as he scanned the room.

"Who?" Fred asked but not taking his eyes off of the buxom blond almost sitting on his lap.

"The guy I was talking to earlier. Where did he go?"

"Oh, he split like five minutes after you went up to your room. Dude, what took you so long? Did the maid steal your wallet for real?" Fred tore his stare from the waitress's cleavage and almost seemed sincere when he'd asked him the question. Almost.

"Did he leave his card?"

"Who?"

Fuck! Fred had to stop toking once in a while.

"Boyd Benson! Are you fucking listening to me?"

"Hey, hey! Slow down, partner. Whatever it is, it'll be okay."

Twice in one day he'd let Beulah down. How the hell could he have left her to chase after this account? He should have stayed. He should have told Benson that he would get in touch with him. He should have told Beulah he loved her.

He had to find her. Racing through the hotel like a spinning tornado, Tag asked every employee if they had seen Beulah. Either they were telling the truth when they'd reported not seeing her or they were covering up for her.

Maybe she didn't want to see him anymore. He wouldn't blame her. But he deserved one last meeting. Just one. Retreating to his room, Tag hoped beyond hope that she would come to him that night. The ball was in her court now. He would just have to wait and see.

\* \* \*

Bea pushed her cart into the janitorial area then rested against the counter. She'd put in an hour of overtime cleaning out the bathrooms in the office just to avoid the end of her shift. If she was still working, she wouldn't be able to see Tag. At least that's what she reasoned to herself.

Dressed in a short, asymmetrical skirt and a halter top held together by a sliver of string, Forticia bounded into the back area.

"You still here?" she asked Bea who kept her head down, her gaze to the floor.

"No need to rush home when there's nothing to rush home to," Bea said in a whisper.

"So get off your ass and come on out with me." Forticia eased over to Bea and said under her breath, "Or go back upstairs and finish doing the damn thing with whoever you were with earlier."

"How did you---" Bea's eyes widened and she snapped her head up.

"Honey, I could hear you outside of the door. I'm sure the whole fifth floor could hear you." She snickered. "Sounds like he worked your ass."

Damn, Tag did that. Yes, indeed. It had nothing to do with the size of his penis or what he did with his hands. He made her feel special with his whole package, from the way he looked at her to the way he kissed her to how he held her. What started off as a simple fuck wasn't turning out to be that simple.

"I didn't know you were a freak like that, Bea." Her friend jabbed Bea's side.

"I'm not. Not anymore." Bea gathered her things. "What I did," Bea paused, almost saying 'this afternoon' but thinking back to the last few months, she had to include those times too, "was a mistake. Please don't say anything to anyone about this."

"On my word, girl." Forticia held up her hand like a skanky Girl Scout.

"I lost my head. But I won't be doing that again." Bea got her purse from her locker and slammed it. "Have a good time tonight. I'll see you later."

As for Tag, she hoped she wouldn't see him again. But tonight she would bury her face in her pillow and mourn the best relationship she ever had with a man she barely knew.

## Chapter 7

Tag chewed on his lower lip as he bounced his knee and waited for someone on the other line to answer his simple question, Did Beulah get his flowers? He didn't know her last name. Since she stood him up two nights ago, even after he'd begged her to come back to his room, he thought of nothing else but her.

He even paid for an extra night just in case she'd changed her mind. But she hadn't. Beulah was doing what he had attempted to do to her, purge him out of her system by avoiding him all together. He thought it would be easy to leave her, as easy as it was to leave Chelsea. No, Courtney.

"Sorry for the wait, sir," a frantic woman's voice said in the middle of a Musak version of "My Heart Will Go On". "We're still checking on your order."

"I'll wait," he snapped. For Beulah, he would wait.

Tag's gaze fell onto his desk when he heard the annoying buzz of his second line ringing. Damn it! He should have hired that assistant. With no one else in the office, he could either let the damn phone ring or keep business going as usual.

"Fuck!" he screamed. Putting his line on hold, he switched over to the second line, spat out the name of his business then put the caller on hold without hearing the person utter a word.

By the time he got back to his other line, he heard an even more annoying noise.

A dial tone.

Tag slammed the receiver onto its cradle. His fingers drummed his desktop as he thought of ways to get Beulah's attention. Walking around the hotel for two days didn't do it. Either she'd tipped her coworkers to not tell him of her whereabouts or there was a really big stalking issue in the hotel. No one was

talking. His last resort would be to go to all of their old haunts: the museum, the library, the city park, the zoo. Just thinking about the locations and where they had sex brought life to his cock, dormant for the last couple of days.

His phone rang again. Tag's attention dropped to it. He glanced at the second line, remembering that he had someone on hold. The caller on the first line must have grown tired of waiting for him. The light no longer blinked.

Tag took a deep, cleansing breath before returning to the second line. With a smile on his face, he stated the name of his business while thinking of ways to find Beulah. Money talked. Someone would tell him where she was for a price.

"I'm looking for the owner," a man stated.

"Speaking." Tag sat up straight as though the caller sat across from him. He took customer complaints very seriously. If a customer wasn't happy then business would go under quick.

"You're a hard man to get a hold of," the man said with a chuckle.

"This is Boyd Benson. We spoke during the conference. I happen to see one of your trucks drive by me and got your number from it."

"Oh, good, Mr. Benson. I tried to get a hold of you after you left." A lie but he needed to still act like he wanted this man's business.

"I'm not accustomed to be left waiting."

Tag winced at the dig at his professionalism. He gritted his teeth as he repeated in his head how the customer was always right.

"I understand. But I'm glad you called me," Tag said, hoping to save face.

"And I'm also not used to chasing down businesses. Usually businesses are hunting me down."

Tag's free hand balled into a fist.

Usually easygoing, Tag could take criticisms. But now he couldn't bear it. His gaze fell onto the old couch in his office, the one he used to sleep on when he had no place to live.



Work devoured his life. Because of his need to succeed, he missed out on important things like relationships, love. The unspoken arrangement he'd had with Beulah seemed perfect until one thing got into the way: his heart.

"Mr. Benson, you're right," Tag began. "A man of your stature shouldn't have to chase down vendors to service you. I'd be more than happy to set up an appointment to sit and talk to you face-to-face about what my business can do for you. Or I can mail some brochures or e-mail you some information, direct you to our website. But right now I have some personal matters to take care of so I can't give you my full attention."

"Are you brushing me off again?" Irritation laced Benson's voice. "If you can't give me your time now, don't expect it in the future."

The threat lingered between the lines until Tag broke the silence.

"Then I thank you for your time."

Once he disconnected the call, a weight lifted from his shoulders. He'd been hiding behind his business for far too long. Time to get out and start living. First step would be to find his Beulah.

Stepping around his desk, Tag headed to his office door to go back to the hotel to find her when his phone rang again.

"Man, Benson doesn't give up, does he?" Tag ran back to the phone after several stutter steps. "Yeah!" he exclaimed, not feeling the need to be polite anymore.

Silence filled the phone and Tag almost hung it up again until he heard something that sounded like a coo from a dove.

"Anyone there?" he asked.

"Uh, you said I could call any of the phone numbers on the card."

Tag nearly dropped to his knees when he heard Beulah's voice. On every bouquet delivered to the hotel for Beulah, he included his business card with notes that asked her to call him at any time. So she had gotten the flowers...and the message.

She continued. "Am I calling you at a bad time?"

"No, of course not. How are you?"

After waiting a beat, she replied, "Scared."

God, he wanted to hold her. "I need you to do something for me." Tag didn't want to ruin something great. "I'm going to give you an address and I want you to meet me there tomorrow at eleven-thirty. Will you do that?"

Tag felt his heart drop when she didn't answer right away. She sighed and the sound made him breathe in relief. At least she hadn't left him.

"Where do you want me to meet you?" she asked.

He scrambled for a business card on his desk and read off the address.

"What is this place?"

He smiled. "Find it and you'll see."

"Where should I meet you when I get there?"

The curious lilt to her voice tickled the inside of his stomach.

"Just walk inside. I'm sure you'll see me. Promise me you'll be there. I really need to see you."

"I promise. I'll be there. I need to talk to you anyway."

The long pause gave Tag a shiver down his spine, one that jumpstarted his heart.

"Beulah," he began. He took her long sigh to be a response to using her name.

"I won't disappoint you."

Tag thought he heard a gasp before she disconnected the call.

## Chapter 8

Bea's knees knocked as she drove her car up and down the street. Her gaze dropped down to the digital clock on her dashboard flashing in neon green.

Eleven-twenty-six.

She didn't want to get there too early and look eager. But then again, if she got there late Tag might leave. But if he left, would that have been a bad thing? She had planned on talking to him especially after running into him at the hotel.

Running into him. Sounded so casual like two friends meeting up after not seeing each other for several years.

They had sex.

Made love.

Fucked.

They did it all. As soon as he touched her, Bea felt new life filling her body. The feeling scared her. Work should have made her feel fulfilled. Her education should have satisfied her. All she wanted from Tag was meaningless sex with an anonymous stranger. She couldn't even do that right.

Now she had to break it off with him. With how she felt about him, there would be no way she could carry on the way she had been and start a career as a school teacher. Bea slowed almost to a stop in front of the building.

She verified the address, staring at the brass numbers nailed above the door to what she wrote on the piece of paper. A car horn blared snapping her out of her trance as she lurched forward.

She drove around to the back of the building and parked. After stepping out, she smoothed her hands down her dress. Pale lavender flowers covered her sundress. She took a deep breath, prayed that she would be able to keep breathing and headed to the door.

The outside the place Tag had her going to looked like a pub. Dark wood framed the heavy-looking door. A sign over the door read Mystics.

Knowing Tag, he would probably flip the script on her. Instead of her shocking him, he would be the one taking her to the back of whatever this place was and fucking her brains out. Well he had another thing coming if he thought that.

Bea wouldn't be reverting back to her old ways. From now on, she would be straight-laced and quiet.

She grasped the brass handle and squeaked the door open. For as dark and sinister as the outside looked, the inside surprised Bea, mainly because the place wasn't what she was expecting.

Scanning the room, Bea noticed the small, round wooden tables scattered throughout the quaint restaurant. Caramel colored hardwood floors supported her as she stood her ground, taking in the place. A few diners sat at various tables, occasionally gazing at her as she stood motionless.

Aromas of grilled meats and vegetables filled the air. When the scent hit her nose her stomach growled, reminding her that she needed to eat above all else.

Bea's gaze caught two things: a hostess walking up to her with a big grin and a statuesque man standing from his table. The man got her attention.

Wearing neatly pressed black slacks and a sky blue button-up shirt, Tag looked good enough to fuck right there in the restaurant. When he smiled at her, Bea ignored whatever the hostess was saying and headed straight to the man.

Don't fuck him.

Don't fuck him.

Don't fuck him.

She bit the inside of her bottom lip to keep from smiling. But he did nothing to hide the fact that he enjoyed seeing her. His smile went from one ear to the other. He acted as though she had the winning lottery ticket tucked in her cleavage and she asked him to fish it out with his teeth.

The thought caused a small trickle between her legs, dampening her panties.

Don't think about fucking him.

Don't think about fucking him.

Bea took a deep breath to blurt out the opening to her goodbye speech but Tag moved his way over to the empty chair that sat across from him and eased it back, scraping the wooden legs against the hardwood floor.

"Have a seat," he said.

Acting as though his gentlemanly gesture didn't just make her stomach flip, she let out a long sigh and plopped down in the seat. With a gentle nudge, he helped her move closer to the table. Then he surprised her by positioning his head next to hers and whispering in her ear, "You look wonderful today. And you smell great."

She tried hiding her gasp with a fake cough once she felt his hot breath warming her ear. But even she couldn't be that smooth. Tag took his seat and continued smiling. Why was he so damn happy? Didn't he know the end was near? This was it. The end of the road. Time to get off the ride and let someone else get on.

Only Bea didn't want to let on another rider. She liked Tag, liked the way he made her feel and everything else about him.

She opened her mouth to dismiss him again when a perky waiter interrupted her to ask about drinks. Once their orders were given and he scurried away, Bea steeled her nerves to tell Tag what she needed to tell him.

"We need to talk," she finally said.

"Wait." He held up his finger and with the other hand felt on the seat of a chair that sat on the other side of him.

Bea heard the crinkling sound of the plastic wrap before she saw the beautiful bouquet of red, yellow and white roses all mixed together. Again, she couldn't hide the catch in her breath when she saw the arrangement. Her heart pounded so hard that her hands shook with each beat.

"I hope you're not allergic," he said with a chuckle. "I just assumed you would like roses since there's not a lot I know about you."

His smirk held its own conversation. Although the sweet rose scent tickled Bea's nose, she set the bouquet on the table beside her place setting.

"What are you doing?" she asked, arms folded over her chest.

"It isn't obvious?" Tag wiped his hand on his pants then presented it to her.

"Hi, my name is Tag." Because she slowed to reciprocate, he continued. "Do you go by Beulah or something else?"

Not sure of the game he was playing, Bea finally took his hand.

The warmth seared her flesh and fiery heat crawled up her arm until her body felt engulfed with her poor pussy doing a sad job of trying to at least douse her lower body area.

“Hi, Tag.” Bea pulled her hand from his hoping that would slow her raging heart. “I don’t know what you’re doing and I don’t like it.”

His smile melted. “All I’m doing is taking a beautiful woman out to lunch.” He brought his menu up to his face. “Know what you want yet?”

Yeah.

You naked and fucking me on top of this table.

Instead of saying the words aloud, Bea brought the menu up and looked for the soup and salad sections. “Something light. Maybe the chicken BLT salad with ranch dressing.”

Tag closed his menu and set it off to the side. His stare, now so cold, shouldn’t have turned her on. Feathery tingles went up her arms and down her back.

The waiter’s returned gave Bea a welcomed relief.

“Have you two decided on what you want?” he asked and volleyed his head back and forth between the two of them.

“Yes,” Bea began. “I’ll---”

But Tag quickly interrupted. “The lady will have your chicken BLT salad with ranch dressing on the side.” He stared at her. “I know how you like to control things.”

Bea couldn’t decide if the statement was a dig or an astute compliment so she kept silent not wanting to do the ‘sistagirl headroll’ just yet. Tag had to be up to something. The restaurant. The flowers. The polite gestures. If Bea didn’t know any better she could have sworn he was trying to...oh no. He couldn’t be.

“And I’ll have the surf n’ turf with corn-on-the-cob and rice pilaf.” Tag collected the menus and handed them to the waiter.

Bea waited until the man disappeared before addressing him.

“Bea.” She said

Tag blinked. “What?”

“My friends call me Bea, short for Beulah, which I hate.”

That admission got a smile from him again.

“So why have it on your nametag, Bea?”

Damn it! Just hearing him call her by her real name started the flow from her cunt again. To tamp it, she crossed her legs.

“There’s another Bea that works at the hotel. Her real name is Bea and the hotel didn’t want to get the two of us confused in case a guest had a complaint so they made me put my full first name on my tag.” With her gaze turned down, moving from the white tablecloth to the rose stems poking out of the end of the wrapping, Bea could no longer hold back what she wanted to say.

When she opened her mouth, Tag filled the silence. “You like sports? I’m a huge college football fan. Go Hokies.”

“No. I don’t like sports.” It was a lie but the more she could separate them, the easier this would be.

“Surprising, since I know how much you like to play games.”

The second dig made Bea glare at him.

“What are you talking about? You get me out here and you’re pulling out my chair and giving me flowers and ordering for me like a---”

“Date,” he said, cutting her off. “Yes, Bea, we’re on a date. An honest to goodness date. I chose a time and a place. You met me here. I brought roses, and now all I’m trying to do is get to know you better. Is that such a bad thing?”

Bea leaned closer to him and lowered her voice.

“What we were doing before, was that such a bad thing?”

Tag put his hand over hers. "No. That's why we're here like this. I want to get to know you, the real you and not some made up persona. What does Bea like? What does Bea want? What makes you laugh and cry?"

Flattening her palm to the table, Bea slipped her hand from under his. "Do you remember the first time we saw each other?"

Tag's smile broadened.

"Do I ever! The park over by the lake. You had on this smoking dress that---"

When Bea shook her head Tag stopped his trip down memory lane.

"I'm not talking about the first time we hit it. About a year ago I was cleaning your hotel room. You were there for some conference or something. You walked in while I was making your bed and you barely acknowledged me. But I remembered you. I saw you and thought that you looked amazing. I wanted you so much but as a maid, you never looked twice at me. It was only when I became Rain for that first time in the park, because it did rain while we had sex against that rock, that you saw me. And then as Oceania and Porche and Brook and Emmanuelle."

The expression on Tag's face changed from happy to contemplative.

"It was coincidence that you were at the park the day I was there. And we looked at each other just like we always do. And you saw me this time. I wasn't some gal cleaning your toilet. I was a woman you so desperately wanted. And you were the man I needed. We never asked of anything from each other except to give each other an orgasm. And it should have stayed that way."

This time Tag shook his head.

"You're wrong, about me, about the situation, about everything. Look, I'm sorry if I didn't acknowledge you a year ago. To be honest, I wasn't looking at a lot of women then because of something going on in my life. I had just broken up with my girlfriend so a relationship was the last thing on my mind."

"And this is what I mean. We should have kept what we had simple. Just sex and that's it."

"No. The reason my last relationship broke up was because she wanted more than I was willing to give. I wasn't ready. Then I meet you and that type of relationship seemed okay to have then. No strings. No commitments. Just fun.



But then everything changed. Suddenly I want to reveal my entire life to you, share things. You're smart and funny and adventurous."

Bea bolted to her feet, afraid of what he might say next.

"Sorry to disappoint you. You're not who I want anymore."

"Bullshit. You wouldn't be here if you weren't interested."

"I'm not." Her gaze remained on the floor as she spoke. "I just wanted to be woman enough to tell you goodbye and good luck in your life." She hung her purse on her shoulder. "Sorry to have wasted your time. Could you tell the waiter to cancel my order?"

"Wait!"

As fast as her feet could carry her, Bea ran outside and hustled to her car. Telling him goodbye should have been easy. So why the hell were her eyes stinging and her throat scratching?

At her car, Bea struggled with her keys. When she finally found it and managed to get it in the lock with her trembling hands, her bouquet of roses, held in Tag's tight grip, slammed against the roof of her car in front of her.

"You forgot something," he said from behind her.

Feeling his chest heaving against her back made her blood race through her veins.

"Don't you understand what no means?" she said trying to sound as hard as she could. If she had to look in his eyes, she would have crumbled.

"Why don't you turn around and explain it to me."

Steeling her nerves, she did. With careful steps she pivoted in her tight spot between the car and his body. She brought her gaze up and stared at him squarely in the eyes, a feat considering how bone-free she felt.

"I don't want you. I only used you for sex and that's it. And now I'm done with you." The harsh words almost sounded convincing. Almost. If only she hadn't been panting when she uttered the words he wouldn't have had the inclination to move closer to her.

"Looks like you need a fix." He moved his body closer to her.

"Besides, if this is goodbye then you need your goodbye kiss. You have to at least offer me that. Please?"

Bea wished she could say no while looking into his eyes but she was powerless to do anything but comply.

"One kiss," she said.

"On the lips."

"Fine."

As he lowered his head, Bea prepared for her world to be rocked. The man kissed like he invented the gesture. She felt the heat from his mouth over her lips. In anticipation, she closed her eyes. Then suddenly the hot breath that warmed her lips moved.

Opening her eyes, she found Tag on his knees in front of her. His hands touched her legs and eased up her skirt.

"What the hell are you doing?" With her hands over her skirt, she stopped his overly-eager hands.

"You said I could kiss your lips. You just didn't say which." He winked.

"Tag, don't be cute. You can't do that."

He stared up at her.

"Not here."

Those two words signaled Tag to keep going. Springing to his feet, he took her hand and brought her over to the front of her car. Since a row of bushes sat in front of her car and a large, green dumpster sat beside it, they were now hidden more than before.

It didn't matter. Once she saw Tag on his knees she forgot all of the promises she'd made to herself.

Setting her on the car hood, Tag reached under her skirt and pulled off her panties in one smooth motion. "You're so wet."

Bea braced her hands on the hot hood as she watched his head move down between her thighs. As soon as the tip of his tongue touched her clit she arched her back. Her hand hooked the back of his head, for once not wanting to let him go.

Tag dipped his tongue inside of her, causing her muscles in her body to contract.

“Oh God! Oh God! Please!” What came out like pleas for more sexual attention were really cries to stop him.

The more Tag pleased her the more she wanted him. She wanted to know why it was that he and his last girlfriend had broken up. But she was relieved that the man she was so attracted to hadn't been attached to anyone. She did worry about the fact that she could have been sleeping with someone else's man or worse yet, someone's husband.

One final plunge inside of her vagina sprang Bea from the hood as she felt wave after wave of an intense orgasm rock her body. Tag planted small kisses along her inner thighs before standing up. He took her hands and helped her to her feet.

“Come home with me,” Tag said in a low moan. “I don't know if you have to go back to work or what you were doing today but I need you. I promised myself that I wouldn't touch you today.”

The same promise Bea had made to herself. “But as soon as I saw you, I couldn't help myself. It's like we're drawn together. We belong together.”

From behind her Bea heard, “Bea Henderson? Is that you?”

## Chapter 9

Bea heard the voice but her body wouldn't turn around. No way in the world could that be the principal of the middle school where she wanted to work.

"Smile, baby," Tag said under his breath while he still smiled. "Whoever she is, she's headed this way."

Bea finally turned around and nearly tripped on her panties that were on the ground. As the gray-haired woman got closer, Bea abandoned the lacey garment and put on a happy face.

She held out her hand to the woman who literally held Bea's career in her wrinkled hand.

"Mrs. Phillipa. Pleasure to see you again," Bea said in her most professional voice.

"I didn't know you ate at Mystic's. Great place to eat, isn't it?"

Or get eaten.

"Actually, I didn't get a chance. I, uh---"

"She was so worried about her car," Tag said, saving her, "that she came out here to check on it." Then he extended his hand to the petite woman. "Hi, I'm Tag Pomertoy, a friend of Bea's."

He glanced at her to get her response. Bea remained still. The skeleton in her closet and her potential new boss were there together. If she could cut this conversation short, Tag wouldn't have to know any more about her personal life than the fact that she and this woman knew each other.

But the man wouldn't let up.

"Bea has done nothing but talk about you," Tag said.

Bea wanted to jab Tag in his ribs for making such a proclamation.

"Really," Mrs. Phillipa said. "I knew you wanted to work at Beach Middle School but I didn't know it was something that consumed your thoughts."

"Being a teacher is all I ever wanted," Bea said. "And I would love to work for you, Mrs. Phillipa."

"Then be prepared for your interview in two days, although from your student teaching days and what I've read of your school transcripts, I don't see where there would be a problem. You'd be taking over Hope Listonburg's class."

Although Bea had never met the woman Mrs. Phillipa had mentioned, she definitely knew the name. Who wouldn't? Listonburg's name had been on the local and national news for weeks. And judging from Phillipa's glare, she didn't need to have another scandal under her nose again.

"See you in a couple of days." The principal turned to Tag. "Very nice meeting you." She shook his hand before taking small steps to her car.

As soon as her future employer was out of earshot, Bea unlocked her car door without acknowledging Tag.

"So a teacher, huh? I didn't know that about you."

He held her door open while Bea settled in her car and strapped the seatbelt around herself.

"There are a lot of things you don't know about me." Bea started her car, suddenly feeling ashamed of what she'd just done. Oral sex in public. For sure a big no-no for a middle school teacher.

"Where have I heard that name before, Hope Listonburg? Maybe someone I went to school with or maybe---"

"Or the teacher busted recently for videotaping herself having sex with two men at once and putting it on the Internet where one of her students' parents saw it., she was a consenting adult with two other adults and she lost her job."

The smile disappeared from Tag's face as the realization set in.

"You weren't caught today. I made sure of that."

"I know. Thank you. But this has to stop. If I'm going to be a teacher, I have to act differently. And I can't keep seeing you anymore because I can't control myself around you. I want to be known as a great teacher and not for being the topic of a sordid headline."

She grabbed the inside handle on the door and slammed it shut. But Tag wasn't willing to let her go with the last word. Tapping on her glass as she put her car in reverse, Bea waited a beat before finally powering down her window.

"Just because something happened with one teacher doesn't mean you should change your life. And I sure as hell hope you aren't changing the way you are for a job. I thought you were a lot stronger than that."

"I guess that proves you don't know me at all." She started to back away slowly.

"If you decide that you want to be the real you with me, give me a call. You have my number."

Bea sped off almost running into two cars coming down the street. If tears hadn't blurred her vision, she would have seen them coming. But then again, she never expected Tag to react this way about her. It had to be more than just sex for him.

As she thought about their unorthodox relationship, it had been more than just being about sex for her too.

\* \* \*

Two weeks. A couple of weeks had gone by and Tag hadn't heard from or seen her. He kept the flower deliveries to her job going until he finally got a call from the delivery shop that Bea no longer worked at the Cavalier Hotel.

Tag wondered whether she finally gotten the teaching job or if his constant show of affection caused her to lose her job. He torpedoed the tennis ball in his hand across the office, bouncing it off of the wall. When it came back to him, ultimately rolling under his desk, he retrieved it, and then repeated the same gesture again and again.

Pounding the ball against the wall was a whole lot better than pounding his head against it. He'd scared her. Tag kicked himself for going way too fast with Bea.

He should have let her go at her own pace. Damn it. Why was he always screwing up with women? He's either way too slow or too fast. With the last bounce against the wall, Fred entered the office.

"Whoa! Hold on, Nolan Ryan. Ease up on the hundred mile an hour pitches, dude." Fred snatched the ball in mid-bounce and set it on Tag's desk. After plopping down on the futon couch, he asked, "So who is she?"

Tag snickered off the question.

"There is no 'she'. You don't know what the hell you're talking about."

"Right. Sure. You only hurl that ball when you're pissed off at someone. The last time you did it you and Chelsea were on the outs."

"Courtney."

"Whatever. So, dude, who's the piece of ass you've been hitting?" The glare Tag gave Fred was enough for the man to recoil.

"Man, I must have said the wrong thing. You look like you want to bite my head off."

"It's quitting time, Fred. Shouldn't you be going out and getting drunk somewhere?"

"Which is why I'm here, my friend. Come with me to Humpbacks. It's all you can eat wing night and pitchers are two bucks." Fred stood from the sofa with a look on his face that said he hoped his friend would be joining him.

But instead, Tag swiveled around to face the window that looked over the park next door to his office building. His back now faced Fred.

"Go. Have a great time. I'll talk to you later."

Fred sighed.

"Okay. But if you change your mind, you know where you can find me." Tag heard the door open and close as he continued staring out at the green park.

When he heard his door open and close again, he pumped up his chest preparing to lay into his party-persistent friend.

"Fred, I told you I didn't want to go out tonight so just go and have fun," Tag said without turning around. When he didn't hear one of Fred's sarcastic retorts or the door opening again, he turned around.

Tag's jaw crashed through his desk and down to the floor when he saw Bea standing in his office. She must have just come from working. Wearing a very

businesslike gray skirt and a white wraparound top with gray pumps, she looked professional. Hot but professional.

Tag stood although in his current hardened state he should have remained seated. But he wanted to show himself to her, the good, the bad and the aroused.

He started to ask, "What are you---"

"I got the teaching job," Bea said, interrupting him.

"That's great." He wanted to be happy for her but it was that damn job and her perception of how she should be while working it that kept her from him.

"I didn't know you worked here." She scanned his small office and even giggled when she saw his half-naked picture of Pamela Anderson that advertised the ills of eating meat.

"Yep, I mow lawns for a living," Tag said. "I'm not anyone special."

Bea took slow steps toward him. "That's a shame. The man I came to see is special. He made me realize that living my life in a free, open and honest way is the best way to be."

Tag stepped around his desk. "Does that mean you're giving up your job as a teacher?"

She shook her head. "No. I know that I can have a happy, healthy sex life without feeling like I could be persecuted for being me." Her stare melted his heart. "I just hope I'm not too late. I've missed you these past weeks."

Tag wanted to tease her for a bit, tell her a lie about him meeting someone else.

But gazing into her brown eyes and seeing her so perfect, her long, dark brown hair with its loose, wavy curls framing her face, he couldn't do that to her.

"I could fall for you hard if you let me," he admitted.

"My name is Beulah Henderson. My friends call me Bea. And I'll let you do anything you want to me."

Scooping her into his arms, Tag carried her to the futon and smothered her in kisses. "No more sex in public. I understand how you feel about not wanting to



have the same problems as Listonburg. I would never do anything that would hurt you."

She put her hand to his chest and pushed him back. "No sex in public? Then why am I even here?" She winked playfully.

"Okay, no more sex in public until we get to know each other better. Deal?"

Bea hiked her skirt up and straddled Tag's lap, facing him. "Deal. So let's get started. Each truth gets you closer to sex."

Tag rested his hands on her hips. "Okay, shoot."

"What happened with your front tooth? Why is one a different shade than the others?"

"One got knocked out when I played baseball as a teenager. Mom got it replaced but she couldn't afford the very best so she got what she could. I'm going to eventually get it replaced." While Tag spoke, Bea unbuttoned his shirt.

"No, don't. I like that imperfect part of you." She kissed him as though she needed to prove her point.

When they broke from the kiss, Tag asked, "Where did the name Beulah come from?"

"Great, great grandmother. My mom expects me to name my first daughter after my great, great grandmother on my father's side."

Tag undid her top, opening up her blouse. Seeing her breasts encased in her lacey pink bra engorged his cock. He hoped she asked him questions quick to undo his pants.

"What was her name?" he asked.

"Ethel." She grimaced but did undo his pants.

Tag reached under her skirt to pull down her panties but found out as soon as he touched her pussy that she'd come to his office without wearing them.

"I know how much you like it when I do that."

Not able to hold off from being inside of her, Tag lifted her and impaled her tight pussy with his erect dick. He missed the feeling of being inside of her, so much so that for a moment he had to just hold her while she made gentle rocking motions on him.

“What do you like?” he asked with a haggard breath.

“Sports.”

Tag stared at her to see if she was telling the truth. From her mischievous smile he knew he'd tapped into her true self now.

“I lied before when I said I didn't like sports. I love it, especially, ohhh, college football.”

“Christ, you're perfect.” Grabbing one of her lace cups housing her magnificent tit, Tag ripped it down and suckled her, twirling his tongue around her nipple.

“You may not like me after I tell you this.”

Tag broke from her tit long enough to gaze into her eyes. What could she be admitting that would bother him?

“I'm a Tarheel fan.”

“I got you to come back to me. I can convert you to becoming a Hokie fan.”

He smiled.

She rode him faster and harder. “I---I---I don't think so.”

Her hot, thick walls tightened around his shaft. Tag held on for as long as he could but since he could feel her orgasm coming he couldn't stop himself.

“Oh baby! God, yes! Yes! Yes!”

His sperm shot inside of her. Watching her climax almost made him want to come again. She threw her head back as she ground her fingers into his shoulders. He held her hips down as her body shook from the aftershock. She was beautiful.

“Come home with me. I won't accept no for an answer.” Tag smoothed her hair from her face.

"I will if you do a couple of things for me."

"You just have to control this relationship even now, huh?"

"What is it?" He snickered.

"I would love to spend the weekend with you."

"Done."

"But I don't have any clothes with me."

"Good. You won't need them. I'll keep you naked all weekend long and we'll just eat and talk and make love." He beamed.

She kissed him on his cheek.

"What else would you like?"

"Call me---" she paused.

Tag swallowed hoping she wouldn't be reverting back to her old ways.

"Don't stop calling me Bea all weekend. I love hearing you say my name."

"Anything you want, Bea." He kissed her, one so soft and gentle he felt her quivering mid-kiss. "By the way, I have a huge backyard with a pool and a picnic table and lots of trees."

"Maybe we can christen those spots another time. This weekend I just want to spend getting to know you without the thrill that we could be watched. But keep that pool open."

Tag would keep everything open for her, his Bea.

The End

**Author Bio**

Before you can say, "She can't go there with that story!" Bridget Midway is already taking you there and then some. Currently living in Virginia, Bridget writes erotica and erotic romances with multi-racial characters and usually with interracial romances. Differences should be celebrated, shared and explored, not seen as taboo. When she's not writing she's writing and writing and, oh, writing some more. To read about her upcoming events, read her latest news and reviews, participate in her contests or read exclusive excerpts, go to her website at [www.BridgetMidway.com](http://www.BridgetMidway.com). She also enjoys hearing from readers.