



Third Time's The Charm
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Warning:

The following material contains graphic sexual content and strong language meant for mature readers.

When the elevator came to a halt and the lights went out, Lynn Taylor gritted her teeth and said, "This is going too far, don't you think?"

The elevator's only other occupant snorted in the darkness. "Are you blaming me for this? Did I cause the latest stock market crash, too? Maybe this is your fault. Maybe you set this up because you want me back."

"I want you back like I want a dozen donuts. It sounds like a good idea and the initial rush is fantastic, but then you're left with that sick feeling and the realization that you should have had a V-8." Lynn blew out her breath and then said, "Okay, it's not your fault. It's not my fault. It's bad luck and poor building maintenance. Our only fault here is in not moving out of these apartments fast enough."

She groped forward, arms outstretched, until she found the control panel. She started hitting buttons at random in the vain hope that one of them would do something.

"Good, try to get the emergency phone," Nick said. "It should be below the buttons."

Right. I knew that, Lynn thought. She felt her way down and located the box with the phone and pulled it free. Then she swore. "No dial tone."

"No problem," he said in the calm, commanding tone of voice he was probably used to using in emergencies. "Don't panic. Do you have your cell phone with you?"

Lynn pictured her cell phone, tucked inside her briefcase, sitting on her kitchen counter. It might as well have been on Pluto. "No."

"No? Christ, Lynn, when are you going to start being more careful? I bought that for you so you wouldn't ever be stuck in a situation like this and couldn't get help."

She felt her face stretch into an evil smile. "Well, where's your cell phone, Mr. Prepared?"

"I dropped it yesterday. I was going to pick up a replacement on my way home from work and decided to stop off at the apartment first." She heard him move in the darkness and then felt his hands close over her shoulders. "Sorry. I shouldn't have said that. It's not my job to keep you safe anymore, is it?"

"It was never your job." She shouldn't have let him pull her back to rest against his chest, shouldn't have relaxed into him when he did. But old habits died hard, and Nick Logan was a very hard habit to kick. She'd tried twice during their on-again, off-again relationship over the last year and hadn't really succeeded yet.

Lynn thought about the first time she'd seen him, holding the elevator for her a few weeks after she'd moved into this building, short dark hair and warm brown eyes, smiling that smile she could never resist, his muscular body solid and inviting. His personality had seemed to fill the space and she'd been drawn forward, into the elevator, into conversation, and within a week, into his bedroom.

She should have taken up smoking instead. There were programs proven to break people of that habit. There was no Quit Nick Logan solution.

"You okay?" His voice was low, his mouth far too close to her ear.

"Fine." The word sounded strained, which probably told Nick entirely too much.

"You can blame me if it makes you feel better." His hands stroked gently along her arms and Lynn knew he wasn't talking about being stuck in the elevator.

"That would be unfair. It's not your fault. It's not anybody's fault, we just want different things."

"Maybe not so different." He kissed the side of her neck and Lynn shivered while a familiar weakness stole over her. "I want you. You still want me. That's something."

"Yes, but we can't spend our lives in bed. Sooner or later we have to deal with reality."

“Reality is overrated. And we could try.” Nick’s hands moved very slowly up her arms again and down over her breasts, giving her plenty of time to anticipate his touch and move away if she didn’t want it.

Unfortunately, she did want it. His palms warm and sure against her nipples made her close her eyes in pleasure. But it didn’t change anything. “We’re too different.”

“Different can be good. My parts go out, yours go in.”

His “out” part was hard and distinct against her butt and Lynn couldn’t help smiling. His hands moved over her breasts again, slow, gentle, warm, and so familiar. So right. Why was it that every other man on the planet felt wrong in comparison? Nobody else smiled like Nick, or made her coffee the right way, or knew how to make her laugh, or just felt right being there next to her.

Yes, and nobody else can piss you off like Nick, either, Lynn reminded herself.

“I think we should try again,” Nick said and Lynn straightened up in shock.

“You have to be kidding me.”

“I’m dead serious. I know where I went wrong. I’m overprotective. I leave the seat up.”

Lynn snorted. “Try again.”

“All right, how’s this. I shut you out. My hours are crazy, my job sucks, I see terrible things and I come home and I see you and I want to keep you out of it. I don’t want you to see the things I see or know about them. I want you safe and happy and so I shut you out, and I hurt you doing it. And I make you nuts being overprotective because I can’t stand the thought that someday I might get a call and find out that the victim is you.”

Lynn felt her jaw drop.

“I’m sorry, Lynn.” The sincerity in his voice was unmistakable, his tone raw. “I know that dating a cop is the pits. I know that if you’re crazy enough to marry me, the chances of making it work are terrible because the job puts a hell of a strain on relationships and the divorce rates are astronomical.”

“If you’re proposing, the romance is lacking,” Lynn said. But she didn’t move away from him. She turned in his arms and pressed her cheek against his chest, needing to be closer.

“I miss you. I need you. I know I pushed you away and it’s my fault you walked, but I want another chance, Lynn. Third time’s the charm. This time I intend to get it right.”

She closed her eyes and let the sound of his voice, the rhythm of his heartbeat, the clean masculine scent of him and the familiar shape and feel of his body against hers fill her senses. “I miss you, too,” she admitted.

He slid a hand under her chin and lifted it to meet his kiss. His mouth moved over hers, warm, tempting, seducing her into opening her mouth for his tongue. When she did, the kiss escalated from temptation to devastation. He devoured her lips, his hands hard and hot on her body as they sank together to the elevator floor.

It had been too damn long. Lynn shuddered with want and tugged at his shirt, got it loose and ran her hands under it, hungry for the feel of his bare skin. He pulled her shirt up and broke the kiss long enough to pull it over her head, rolled with her so that she was laying on her back and grazed the curve of her breast with his teeth.

She buried her fingers in his hair and moved restlessly underneath him, until he planted one knee between her legs and pressed into her. She felt swollen with need, aching for his touch to relieve the pressure.

“You feel so good.” His hands moved over her, rubbing her nipples, cupping her breasts, sliding down her ribcage and her belly before hooking into the waistband of her pants. Nick lifted her up just enough to pull pants and panties down her hips and then all the way to her ankles.

Then his hand was between her legs, cupping her mound, moving over her and Lynn made a low sound of frustration, rocking her hips into his hand in an effort to guide him where she wanted him to go.

“Is this what you need?” His voice was a dark whisper.

He parted her folds and drove two fingers into her and Lynn let out a moan. "Yes."

Nick touching her, penetrating her, looming over her in the dark was enough to make her dizzy with need, frantic with heat. His thumb rubbed over her clit and then his mouth replaced it, drawing on the sensitive nub of flesh while his fingers moved inside her and Lynn came with a liquid rush.

"My turn." She heard his zipper lower and the fabric rustle as he worked his pants down far enough to free his cock. He stretched out beside her and tugged her on top of him. "Floor's hard. Don't want to hurt you."

"Overprotective," she said, but without heat as she spread her legs and let her knees rest on either side of his hips. Her breasts pushed into his chest, the thin fabric of her bra the only barrier between them with his shirt pulled up out of the way. His cock nudged her opening, thick and hard where she was slick and soft.

"Take me inside you, Lynn." His voice was low and rough with desire, and Lynn knew he was asking for more than sex. Now was the time to turn back if she couldn't give him the chance he wanted.

She thought about what it would mean if it was really, truly, finally over between them. No more falling into bed with him, no more waking up with him. No more Nick hard and hot inside her. No more arguments or making up. No more catching his eye and sharing a silent joke that nobody else was in on. The thought of no more Nick in her life made her cold inside and she knew it was hopeless.

"I should have taken up smoking," she told him. Then she lifted her hips and lowered herself onto his cock, impaling her pussy, feeling him slide into her inch by inch until he filled her.

"Bad for you," he said, closing his hands over her hips and holding her still as they both took a minute to adjust. "Those things will take years off your life."

"So will you." Lynn tightened her inner muscles around his cock and laughed when he groaned.

“I think that’s mutual. You’re killing me.” He lifted her hips slightly and thrust up into her, hard and fast and deep. “I can’t go slow, Lynn.”

“I don’t want slow.” She rocked into his thrusts, meeting him, taking him deeper, wanting him as deep inside her as he could go, and felt the beginnings of another orgasm building.

The tension spiraled with each thrust and she moved harder against him, wanting more pressure, and he gave it to her. She felt his cock throb and knew he was as close as she was.

The next thrust sent her off, her muscles tightening convulsively around his cock and she came again. She felt him spurting inside her, a jet of liquid heat that heightened her pleasure and drew the orgasm out.

She collapsed on him, panting, and felt him holding her close, his lips moving over her hair, his cock still buried deep inside her.

“I love you, Lynn.”

“I love you, too.” She kissed his chest and cuddled into him, feeling at peace for the first time in six long, painful weeks.

“Do me a favor,” he said, stroking her back. “The next time I piss you off, don’t stay away so long. I had to pull a lot of strings to arrange this.”

She lifted her head and stared at him, even though she knew it was useless and she couldn’t see him in the dark. “You did set this up.”

“You wouldn’t talk to me.” His hands cupped the bare curve of her ass and squeezed. “I knew you might not forgive me, you might not want to try again. I knew it might really be over. But I had to know for sure, and I couldn’t think of another way to find out.”

“You could have sent flowers.”

“I did. You left them on my doorstep.”

That was true. He’d tried repeatedly to talk to her, on the phone, in person, passing her in the hall, and she hadn’t given him an opportunity. She’d been afraid that if she listened to him, she’d be drawn back into the same cycle of kissing and making up while the larger problem between them lay unresolved until the next argument brought it back to the surface.

This time was different, however. This time, the real problem that drove them apart was out in the open and acknowledged. Nick had finally opened up to her, and she knew he hadn't done that lightly.

He would still work late and miss dates and she'd still sit up worrying until she heard from him. She didn't kid herself that it would be easy, but she knew to the depths of her soul it was worth the effort. She couldn't cut him out of her life anymore than she could cut him out of her heart.

Lynn shifted on top of him and let her hands follow the line of his shoulders, luxuriating in the feel of his skin under her hands and his cock still hard inside her. "Just out of curiosity, since you arranged this private moment, how much time do we have before we're 'rescued'?"

"Long enough for you to go for thirds." Nick's mouth captured hers again he rocked his hips into hers in a sensual promise.

"Mmm. Good," she sighed against his lips. "I hear the third time's the charm."