



ACCIDENTALLY YOURS

...His touch sent bolts of pure desire shooting through her blood like lightning. Her nipples beaded hard, and her panties were a damp sticky nuisance clinging to her as she walked.

The minute they reached her apartment and the door closed behind them, he grabbed her upper arms roughly in his hands and his mouth came down to claim hers.

His kiss, his taste was just as intoxicating as it had been earlier in the day when he'd kissed her at lunch. Nick taste like cool night air and deep desire.

The kiss quickly grew heated and passionate. Their breaths mingled as their tongues dueled in an age-old dance. Nick's hands skimmed up her arms and smoothed her hair back from her face with a whisper-soft touch.

All thoughts of the potion and how she came to be here with Nick were gone as she closed her arms around him and pulled him tightly against her. When Nick began grinding his hips against hers, she moaned into his mouth, recognizing it as a sound of pure need. Had that sound come from her?

Pulling back from her, Nick looked deep into her eyes. His own blue eyes had darkened with desire, the color of the sky on a late summer evening.

"Claire, are you sure about this?" his voice was a rough whisper.

His question, under the circumstances, with the potion she'd used on him, surprised her.

The sound of her own heartbeat thundered in her ears as she gazed up into his face.

Claire nodded. "I want this."

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For Jim...

CHAPTER 1

Claire Hopkins paused for a moment to read the store's name, "Everyday Magic," painted in cheery purple lettering on the glass door. She passed the trendy corner shop every day on her way to the movie set, and just like every other day, she was late for work. But she decided at the last minute to do this, to go into the store. As she pushed the door open to walk inside, Claire got the theme to the old television show *Bewitched* playing in chirpy electronic notes.

Cute.

Claire had been in many cities and towns working on one movie or another over the last five years. As a hairstylist, she visited lots of shops. But it was the first time she'd seen one quite like this. The local paper had mentioned that it catered exclusively to Wiccans and others who were interested in magic or the occult. That wasn't so out of the ordinary. It was the stories of the incredible things happening to its patrons since its grand opening that had caught her eye.

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One man's male pattern baldness had been cured overnight. A woman who'd seen fertility specialists for several years with no results got pregnant within a month of making a purchase. Claire's personal favorite was the man who'd used some magical charm he'd bought here to make his neighbor's dog stop barking and keeping him awake at night.

Claire knew very little about anything magical. She certainly wouldn't have given a thought to walking into a store like this one just to look around without a good reason.

Oh, she had a good reason for checking out this store.

Even knowing what she did about it, Claire still might not have visited this morning if not for her conversation with the new makeup artist on the set yesterday. The other woman received at least a dozen calls on her cell phone from her mother, and Claire had completely sympathized with the woman's irritation. Family could place one in some pretty uncomfortable predicaments. Claire happened to be in one right now.

The makeup artist and she had talked a little while. The woman immediately put her at ease, and before she knew it, Claire started explaining the situation with her sister.

Her sister and her sister's boyfriend, both of whom were working on the same movie with them, were on the outs at the moment. Megan had moved into the apartment Claire had rented for the shoot for the last two weeks and it was driving her nuts. The gossip, late night crying jags, hours of listening to Megan's ideas of what went wrong in the relationship. It had gotten old pretty damned fast.

They'd broken up for a stupid reason anyway in Claire's opinion. So what if Roger was a manic compulsive? There were worse things, right? It wasn't like he was into drugs or gambling. Or something more serious than making sure his trailer door was locked twenty-two times before he left to go anywhere.

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As it turned out, her new makeup artist friend was a Wiccan, and she was the one who'd told Claire all about the shop she felt lost in now. Why didn't Claire visit the store? Maybe she could look for a book of love spells or perhaps a charm she could use to get Megan and Roger back together.

Claire had politely thanked the makeup artist for her advice and then had privately laughed at the idea on her way back to the apartment. Like *she* would know how to cast a spell even if she knew one. Claire couldn't even follow the recipe on the frozen dinners she ate most nights. It should be easy to tear back the corner of a cardboard box and microwave it for five minutes, but somehow she always managed to muck *that* up.

On the other hand, Megan *had* kept her up until the wee hours of the morning, *this morning*, sobbing because Roger had gone out on a date with one of the extras.

After a night like that, visiting the magic store hadn't seemed like a bad idea after all.

"May I help you?"

Here we go.

A lovely woman with pretty dark hair and a long flowing dress stood smiling at Claire in the center of the shop. Her accent had a European lilt to it, but Claire couldn't place it. She'd never been good with accents.

She had no idea what she was going to say either.

"I...need some help," Claire admitted, deciding truth was best. "My sister and her boyfriend broke up a few weeks ago and she is just miserable. She really wants him back."

The woman's smile was gentle and she nodded. "Why did they part?"

Claire snickered. "It was a fight over personal habits, nothing serious really."

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“Ah, and did the boyfriend want to end the relationship?”

Claire didn't think so. “No, but I think he's given up hope that they will ever get back together. He had a date last night with someone else.”

Again the woman nodded. “Very kind of you to want to help your sister.”

As easy as it would have been to let the woman think that, for some reason Claire felt compelled to correct that particular perception.

“I'm not really. My sister is staying with me and she's driving me crazy. Sure, I want her to be happy, but I also want her back at *his* place. You know?”

The woman laughed, a high, melodic sound that put Claire at ease. “I like your honesty.” She crooked a finger at Claire. “I think I can help you. Come with me. I have just the thing.”

Okay, that was easy. Claire followed her toward the back of the shop, stopping at the counter as the woman vanished through a curtain of beaded strings into a back room. When the woman returned, she held a glass jar with a cork top in her hands. The liquid contents of the jar were dark blue in color and seemed alive. Was that stuff moving in the jar?

“What's that?” Claire couldn't help asking.

“A potion,” the woman explained, “that is both powerful and short-lived.”

Claire just knew she was standing there like a moron in a horror movie staring at that jar, but she couldn't seem to help it. Whatever was in that jar did seem alive. And if it helped get Megan back with Roger and out of her hair...

“What does it do?” Claire asked.

“Add this potion to your sister's tea or food. Use no more than a tablespoon.”

The woman's cautionary tone wasn't lost on Claire.

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“Right. Or she’d be able to taste it.”

“No,” the woman spoke slowly. “It would be unwise to use more because of its power.”

“Whoa, so what happens when I add it to Megan’s food?” Claire wanted to know.

“You add this to your sister’s food only when you know for certain that the first man who will see her is the boyfriend. Whoever first sees the person after they’ve taken the potion will fall desperately in love—and lust—with them.”

The woman’s smile had a wicked quality to it that made Claire a little wary. She had to make sure that Roger was the first man who saw Megan after she took the potion? Well, she supposed she could call and invite Roger to lunch and not tell Megan about it. Claire got along with him well enough. He’d probably show up. But it was the desperately in love and lust part she was getting hung up on. How powerful was this stuff? They weren’t going to just jump all over each other with her watching, were they?

“I guess I can invite him to lunch without her knowing it and without him knowing that she will be there,” Claire thought out loud. “But then what happens? Do I need to split right away? Put tarps down? What?”

The woman laughed again, harder this time. Claire wasn’t trying to be a comedienne. She really wanted to know what to expect.

“It will be easy to excuse yourself,” the woman told her. “I don’t think you will need tarps, however. It is not an animalistic thing. But it is very passionate and very real for the person caught up in the magic.”

“My sister?”

“No, the boyfriend,” the woman explained. “Your sister will feel no different. It will be him who is consumed by the spell of the potion. That’s why it is important not to use too much.”

Claire made a mental note to use less than a tablespoon the first

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time out. Just to be safe. Besides, the potion was in a container about the size of a jelly jar. If she didn't use enough the first time, she'd have enough to try again.

"How long does it last?"

"It will last a full lunar cycle. The potion works best when the moon is full, but it is not necessary."

What was it about the full moon that was supposed to be so special?

So it would last a month. Good. That should be more than enough time for them to work everything out.

If it even worked...

Claire pushed that thought aside. The woman before her who held the jar seemed quite confident in what she said. That or she put on one hell of a show.

"How much does it cost?" Claire asked finally.

"For you?" The woman's lovely face curved up into a warm smile. "Twenty dollars."

For you? What did that mean?

"I'm sorry if my question confused you. The real cost of using the potion is different for everyone."

"Wouldn't that be for the person actually taking it?" Claire pointed out.

The woman's smile remained as she walked around the counter to the cash register and began pushing its buttons with her beautiful, airbrushed nails.

"Not necessarily."

Did the woman think *she* was going to use it, too? Right. After her last boyfriend left her for an up and coming starlet, Claire had sworn off dating. At least she wouldn't date anyone in the movie industry ever again. That was just asking for trouble.

Claire dug a twenty dollar bill out of her purse and slid it across the counter to the woman, who placed the jar with the potion in a small

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paper bag. One last question lingered in her mind. Might as well ask while she was there.

“Have you ever used this potion?” Claire asked. “Or knew anyone who did?”

The woman’s smile widened significantly. “Yes, on both counts. The effects for my personal use were...quite pleasant.”

Handing Claire the bag, the woman wished her a nice afternoon and disappeared again through the beaded curtain. Claire grinned as she walked out of the store.

It worked that well, did it? She hoped that woman wasn’t just feeding her a line. If what she said was true, Claire would have her apartment and her life back by tomorrow.

Damn. Maybe she needed to keep some in her purse. If she ever met a wealthy hunk—who had nothing whatsoever to do with the movie industry—she’d give it a try herself.

CHAPTER 2

“So you went by the store, huh?”

Claire grinned at Maddy, the makeup artist who’d planted the idea in her head to even go to the occult shop, and nodded.

Maddy left the cowboy extra in his chair and rushed over to Claire, beaming.

“What did you get?”

Claire pulled out her cell phone, her compact. Finally, she fished the paper bag out of her purse excitedly.

“She said it was a potion.”

She pulled out the jar and held it up.

“Doesn’t that stuff look like it’s moving?” Claire asked her.

Maddy’s brows lowered as she studied the jar.

“Did she tell you what it was?”

“A potion,” Claire repeated.

“No, did she tell you what it was called or what was in it?”

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Shit, was I supposed to ask?

Claire sighed. "No. Just what I was supposed to do with it."

Maddy nodded, but it was pretty obvious what she was thinking even though Claire didn't know her very well.

"I know." Claire set the jar down on the counter and blew out an exhale. "I should have asked you to go with me. I don't know what I'm doing."

Maddy chuckled. "It's okay. I just hope she didn't take you for a ride."

Snatching up the jar, Maddy yanked out the cork and lifted the contents to her nose.

"It's some kind of jelly, isn't it?" Claire wanted to know.

"No, there might be something to this," Maddy said after a moment, inhaling deeply. "Ashwinder eggs... There might be something to this after all. Now what did she tell you?"

"Well, she said I need to mix this with Megan's food or tea and then Roger has to be the very next person she sees," Claire explained.

"You have a plan?" Maddy's expression was expectant.

"Sure. I'm going to have lunch with Megan tomorrow. It's not like that's a problem. Every day I go back to the apartment, she's waiting, and we talk about 'the incident.'" Claire rolled her eyes. "I'll just ask Roger to have lunch with me and arrange for him to come over like fifteen minutes after she arrives. That should give her time to eat enough of the stuff to pull it off. Do you think?"

"Hmmm," Maddy replaced the jar on the counter and pushed the cork back in the top firmly. "I would think that would work. How much did she tell you to use?"

"No more than a tablespoon." Claire remembered that clearly.

"Wow, pretty potent." Maddy handed the jar back to Claire. "I'd use it in something like soup. Nothing tomato based."

Claire and Megan had eaten soup a couple of times last week. That

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would work.

“I was even thinking—”

“Pardon me, ladies.”

It was Nick Brandt who’d interrupted Claire. *Nick Brandt.*

Okay, so she’d sworn off dating in the movie industry. That was easy to do because for a hair stylist, dating in the industry usually meant a grip, a camera guy, someone on one of the crews. Not someone like Nick Brandt.

She didn’t even know what he was saying to Maddy. Claire just stood there staring, and she knew she was doing it, but that didn’t stop her. Hell, he had to be used to it.

Nick Brandt wasn’t a newcomer to the industry by any means and was a damned good actor. He’d built his career with a wide variety of well-chosen parts and his versatility was remarkable. He’d been in the right place at the right time with the leading male role in *Kelly’s Promise* last year. It had swept the Oscars, the Baftas, and made him a household name.

Why he wasn’t a big name before that was a mystery to Claire. *I mean, look at him!* Nick Brandt was as gorgeous in person as he was on film. He was tall, very muscular for this film, which was good since he was playing a cowboy. His hair was its natural sandy blond for this movie, his skin was deeply tanned. He was in costume with his cowboy garb and hat, his gun belt and boots.

But even if he’d been playing an emaciated, white junkie, it wouldn’t have mattered. Nick was just striking. There was no other way to put it. The features of his face were sharp, symmetrical. His eyes were vivid blue and incredibly sexy. Just the quick glance he threw her way while he talked to Maddy about shooting schedules had moisture gathering in her panties. Most men she went out with didn’t manage that for several dates if at all.

And his mouth. Oy! The man had a full lower lip that she wanted to

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chew on. The thoughts of that mouth on hers, or anywhere on her, were unimaginable. Maybe she was just going on some of the sexier roles he'd played on screen, but Claire couldn't help believe he'd be one hell of a lover.

"Who's your friend?" his voice pierced her thoughts.

Does he mean me?

"This is Claire..." Maddy started out.

Shit, she'd never told Maddy her last name.

"Hopkins," Claire finished. "Claire Hopkins."

She held out a nervous hand to Nick, and he took it. But instead of the hand shake she'd expected, he used her hand to pull her closer. Then he surprised her by brushing a light kiss on her cheek. It was enough to send a jolt of pure electricity coursing through her.

"Nice to meet you, Claire." Nick's handsome face split into a grin as his gaze swept over her quickly. "Are you with the production?"

Claire nodded, still staring. "I'm one of the hair stylists."

"That's why I haven't seen you before." Nick pulled off the cowboy hat he wore and ran a hand through the flattened sandy locks of his hair. "You couldn't help *me* very much with this mess."

"You might be surprised," Claire countered.

Did I just say that out loud?

Well, couldn't that be taken a lot of different ways?

Nick's smile widened, telling her how he took it and just how she really meant it. How long had it been since she'd been laid? And why wouldn't he think that she was flirting? He probably had women throwing themselves at him wherever he went.

Maddy's eyebrows shot up.

Time to go.

"I have to get started," Claire said quickly. "Very nice to meet you, Mr. Brandt. Thank you, Maddy."

Grabbing her jar and her purse, she made her way out the door just

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as fast as she could.

CHAPTER 3

“Roger didn’t go out last night, that’s something.”

Claire wasn’t even listening to her sister, Megan, who sat eating at the small kitchen table. She did jump at the knock on her apartment door. Good, good. *Here we go.*

It was twelve-fifteen. Roger was here right on time. Good!

Claire had put almost a tablespoon of the potion in the chicken noodle soup. She’d watched Megan eat the soup. Now Roger would see Megan, they’d get on it, and her apartment was all hers again by tonight.

Hopefully. If she could get them out of it.

Dropping the peanut butter and jelly sandwich onto her plate, Claire dashed to the door. Swiping at her mouth with her fingers to make sure she didn’t have food hanging off her face, Claire slowly opened the door and smiled.

It wasn’t Roger, however, standing on the other side of that door.

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Claire's heart began to slam in her chest as she stared at Nick Brandt.

What the hell was *he* doing here?

"Hi." Nick grinned at her in a way that had her head spinning. Was that really *him* at *her* door?

"Hi." Claire had a death grip on the doorknob and shock rooted her to the spot.

"Is this, ah, a bad time?"

Not for you.

Claire almost invited him in and then she remembered the potion and it stopped her cold. She couldn't let him see Megan. That would blow everything with her sister and Roger. Granted, having Nick Brandt lusting after her would probably make Megan quite happy.

Deep down, Claire knew that wouldn't make *her* happy.

Selfish thing that she was, she glanced back at Megan who sat sipping soup in the kitchen.

"I'll be right back," Claire told her sister.

"Who is it?"

Claire didn't answer her sister as she stepped out into the hallway and pulled the door closed behind her.

"My sister and her boyfriend have been fighting." The best lies were always close to the truth. "She's a little upset and he's on his way over. Sorry."

"It's okay."

Claire loved the sound of his voice, its deep, gravelly quality.

Then she noticed her compact and her cell phone clutched in his hand.

"You left these yesterday," Nick caught the line of her gaze. "I told Maddy I'd return them to you."

"Because I couldn't take the shine off my nose and I couldn't call for backup?" Claire teased him before she could stop herself.

The grin was back, wide and gorgeous.

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Where was this flirty attitude of hers coming from? Claire didn't flirt. Not well, anyway.

"You don't need any help, Claire."

"You should see me when my nose is powdered."

She did it again. What was it about this man?

"Anyway, thank you for bringing these back," she told him. "You didn't have to go out of your way."

Claire reached for her belongings and her fingers brushed his. It was the merest whisper of a touch, but it sent a flood of sensations rushing through her body. It had been so long since she'd felt any sort of physical excitement. And she'd never felt it as powerfully as she did at the moment.

She didn't want to look up and meet Nick's gaze. Yes, she'd find excitement there in his eyes, lust. But a quick fuck was probably all he was looking for, and she was smart enough to know that. This wasn't a big deal to him.

When she finally did look up into his eyes, Claire saw heat and passion. Yet, the you-want-me-and-you-know-it quality she'd expected to see there in his face was absent. If she didn't know he was an actor, and a damned good one, she might have taken a chance with him to see what would happen.

As it was, she knew better. It would probably be fun to spend the night with him. But then what?

Depression sets in.

At least, if Roger would get his ass over there, she could be depressed in her apartment. Without her sister. That would be great.

"Thank you," Claire told him, backing away. "I'd better get back to Meg before Roger gets here."

"What are you doing for dinner tonight?" None of the heat faded from his intense blue eyes.

"I have plans," Claire said quickly.

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“Like what?”

The question took her completely off guard.

“Excuse me?”

“Just seems a little odd,” Nick spoke slowly. “I go this way every evening to get to my apartment and I never see you outside of this building. I’m not much of a cook so I’m usually heading back downtown for something to eat each night. I’ve never seen you out and the main street is all there is to this town.”

Not much of a cook, huh? They had that in common.

And it did explain how he knew where she was staying. She’d never really told anyone on the set where her apartment was. There was no reason to.

Claire felt her cheeks heat up at having him call her on the excuse she’d given him.

“I don’t have plans,” Claire admitted. “But I don’t think this is a good idea. Thank you for the invitation.”

His gaze locked with hers; the intensity in his eyes unrelenting.

“Why?”

“Why don’t I think this is a good idea?” Claire asked. “Where do I start? You’re Nick Brandt for crying out loud.”

Was that disappointment she read in his face?

“I’m just a man. I act for a living.”

“Well, I haven’t had very good experience with actors,” Claire told him.

“Have you been out with many?”

Damn him! That was one hell of a position to put her in. If she said yes, she sounded like a tramp. And if she said no, which was the truthful answer, well, he’d just keep up this ridiculous conversation.

“What difference does it make?” Claire took another step back toward her door. “This isn’t a good idea.”

Claire meant to end it at that, as much as she didn’t want to, and

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back into her apartment with her compact and cell phone.

Before she could take another step, Nick reached for her and easily pulled her into his arms. He covered her mouth with his before she could say a word, damn him. Somewhere in the recesses of her mind, Claire knew she should object. She knew she should push Nick away or smack the shit out of him.

And Roger would be there any moment, or should be. If she weren't careful, Claire knew this little scene would fuck up her plans to get her sister out of her apartment.

But as his tongue stroked hers so intimately, drawing forth responses she'd never experienced before, Claire knew that she wasn't going to slap him and she didn't give a rat's ass if Roger showed up this very moment.

God he knew how to kiss...

Claire inhaled his scent, an earthy smell that had her mouth watering. All thought was pushed aside as he stroked his lips over hers and gently conquered her mouth. Nick held her tightly against the hard length of his body. Her juices flowed, wetting her panties as he rocked his arousal against her.

Damn it, she could *not* get involved with Nick Brandt. She just couldn't.

She really wanted to.

"What do you say? Dinner?" Nick whispered roughly in her ear. His tongue darted out and traced the shell of her ear. When his teeth nipped at her lobe, her entire body shivered with desire.

"Just dinner?" She'd meant to sound sarcastic, unaffected. Her shaky voice sounded anything but flippant.

"Let's start with dinner."

"Whoa, what's this?"

Claire pulled back at the sound of Roger's voice in the hallway, but Nick didn't release her. He only loosened his grip on her.

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“Roger,” Claire tried to sound normal but didn’t quite make it. “You’re late.”

“For what?”

Nick’s body shook with his quiet laughter. She just might slap him after all.

“Megan wants to talk to you.” Claire tipped her head toward her apartment door. “She’s, ah, waiting for you in the kitchen.”

Roger had always been a hard one for Claire to read, but she didn’t think she mistook the relief in his expression. So he wanted to talk to Megan? Good.

Nodding, he opened the door and ducked into Claire’s apartment.

Taking advantage of the fact that Nick was distracted, Claire pushed away from him.

“I *have* to go,” Claire told him.

She really did because she wanted to make sure this potion would work and that Megan would move out and back in with Roger.

“I’ll be back to pick you up around six,” Nick told her meaningfully.

Claire cocked a brow at him. “I never agreed to that.”

All at once the cockiness was gone and Nick’s expression grew serious.

“You’re right.” A corner of his sensual mouth curved up into a sexy half-smile. “That’s no way to ask.”

Nick reached for her hand and, for whatever reason, she let him take it. Bringing the back of her hand to his lips, he gently brushed a kiss on her skin. Pulses of pleasure shot through her at that small, intimate gesture.

“I’d love to have you join me for dinner, Ms. Hopkins.”

“Hey!” She could have sworn that she’d seen him do that in one of his movies. “Have I seen that somewhere before?”

“No,” he said flatly. “And you didn’t answer my question.”

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Wow, he could have taken insult to her question. Instead he was pressing her for an answer.

“Oh, all right!” Claire pulled her hand free of his light grip, headed toward her apartment door. “I still think it’s a bad idea.”

“I promise. I have good table manners.”

Nick winked at her as she opened the door to her apartment and dashed inside.

Once she’d closed the door behind her, she leaned back against it. Her heart was still slamming in her chest.

She’d just been kissing Nick Brandt.

The quiet of the room pulled her momentarily out of her thoughts. Where were Roger and Megan?

Oh, there they were. Making out on her sofa. Son-of-a-bitch, the stuff *did* work. Thank God!

Out of the corner of her eye, Megan spotted Claire and broke up the lip lock.

“Claire, where have you been?”

“Smooching out in the hall with Nick Brandt,” Roger’s voice was muffled against Megan’s throat.

“What?”

Claire shook her head. “You guys need to get a room.”

Roger rose from the couch on that note, the grin on his face downright lascivious. “There’s an idea. Let’s get out of here.”

Oh, yeah!

Roger dashed past Claire to the door, trying to drag Megan behind him, but somehow her sister pulled free.

“Wait! I’ve got to get my purse.” Megan dashed back to the couch.

Roger was already out the door when Megan grabbed Claire’s sleeve, purse in hand now. Her sister’s smile was wide.

“What was he talking about?” Megan asked. “Nick Brandt?”

Claire shrugged. “Nothing. I’ll tell you later.”

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“Oh, and Claire?”

Geez, will you just go already?

“Yes?”

“You know that jelly I used to make our sandwiches with? You might want to check that. It tasted funny.”

Shock rooted Claire to the spot as she watched Megan run out the door to her man. This should have been a moment of great joy. Megan was out of her apartment and as much as she loved her, that was a wonderful thing.

Instead her heart was in her throat.

It couldn't be.

Claire made a beeline for the kitchen and instantly spotted the jar she'd bought at the Wiccan shop, the cork top next to it on the counter, and a butter knife on top of that.

Oh, crap. Let's think this through.

Megan had made them sandwiches to go with the soup. Claire had eaten some of her sandwich. And if Megan had used *that* jelly...

Then Claire had opened the door and found Nick Brandt there...

Oh, shit. The potion.

No wonder he'd been so adamant about dinner. He was under a spell.

Well, so much for that fantasy.

It had been a good thing that she hadn't answered the door for Roger then.

Now what did she do? She couldn't go out with Nick tonight. Not knowing what she did. It wasn't real. He probably wouldn't have given her a second glance if she hadn't taken the potion.

Claire sank into one of the kitchen chairs, the taste of Nick still filling her mouth. She liked that taste.

So what if she *did* go out with him? From what the woman in the shop had told her, he wouldn't give up for a full lunar cycle. Why not

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just enjoy it? It was Nick Brandt and he was lusting after *her*. How many people got an opportunity like that?

As long as Claire realized it was finite, she couldn't get hurt, right? Why shouldn't she enjoy herself?

CHAPTER 4

Nick smiled at Claire Hopkins who sat across the table from him sipping her diet soda. She was pretty in a way that wasn't surgically enhanced or artificial at all. She had big dark eyes that were spaced wide apart and slanted up at the corners slightly. Her nose was narrow and straight, her cheeks high. It was her mouth that captured his imagination. Hers were full lips, painted red, and all natural. He was dying to taste them again.

"Am I behaving so far?" Nick wanted to find out why she'd been reluctant to go out with him. "Pretty good?"

Again that eyebrow came up, dark as the long silky locks of her hair.

"So far."

"So tell me about those other actors."

"You don't hold anything back do you?" Claire asked.

Nick shook his head. When he wanted something, no, he held

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nothing back. And for reasons that surprised him, he wanted Claire. He had from the moment he saw her.

Nick had been divorced for almost ten years and shared custody of his son with his ex-wife, whom he got along with a lot better now that they weren't married. He hadn't dated a lot since the divorce. A couple of one-nighters, a couple of short-term relationships. Those were mostly to hold off the loneliness. The older he got, and he was in his late thirties now, the less he minded being alone.

And in the last couple of years, his career had really taken off. He'd always heard it took just one movie to hit the right note to hit the A list, and, by God, he'd done that. He'd had more offers of movie roles in high budget films in the last month than he could ever possibly take in two lifetimes. He had lots of money now, his choice of scripts. Nick had all that an actor could ask for.

Since all that had happened, he hadn't time to think about being alone.

With the woman sitting across the table from him, staring at him with those deep, dark eyes, he was thinking about it now.

"It was one actor." Her nostrils flared slightly.

"And that was so bad that you don't want to give me a chance?" Nick couldn't resist asking.

Claire placed her glass on the table before her and leaned toward him. It gave him a very enticing view of the cleavage her low cut blouse offered. Nick's mouth watered.

"A chance at what, Nick?" The lightest smile formed on her lips. "This is dinner. One dinner. Even if we go somewhere and boink later, you and I know both know that we'll never see each other again after this movie wraps. So talking about me giving you a chance is a bit dramatic. Don't you think?"

Nick couldn't hide his laughter at that. "Boink?"

Her grin widened.

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Hell, yeah, he'd like to have her in his bed. And apparently that's all she thought this was about. He should have been happy as hell because if she wasn't at least somewhat agreeable to the possibility of being in his bed, she wouldn't be sitting there smiling at him.

That alone was a heady damned feeling.

Only trouble was, Claire was the total opposite of every other woman he'd encountered over the last two years. They offered sex because they were in love with whomever they'd made him out to be in their minds, and they were desperate to be part of his life. Or they pretended to be what Claire really was just to pique his interest.

And it wasn't an arrogance thing for Nick. It made him feel used if anything.

Claire? She had already written him off as a popular actor who would just use her to get laid. She was like them in not seeing the man he really was.

But she *was* different. Special. Claire presented a challenge. It made him want her even more.

"Claire, what did I do to give you such a bad opinion of me?" Nick grinned back at her. "Besides being an actor, I mean? Am I a bad kisser?"

Claire rolled her eyes. "There's that."

"You think I'm a bad kisser?"

"No." Those pretty, fair cheeks colored at that. "But you didn't earn any points by grabbing me in the hallway like you did."

"But I'm a good kisser?" Nick teased.

Claire laughed. "I'm not feeding your ego."

"Is that kiss why you think I'm just out to boink you?"

She laughed and the pink staining her cheeks deepened at the question.

"Why wouldn't I think that?"

Nick didn't miss the seriousness of her tone. And she had a good

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point.

“True. I can see why you’d think that.”

Nick was certainly thinking about it now. Nick wanted to know if her face flushed just like that when she was about to come.

“But you don’t know me, Claire. I’m really a nice guy.”

That wiped the smile from her face. Her dark eyes locked with his.

“You probably are, but what does that change really?” Claire’s voice dropped.

“You can’t make assumptions,” Nick answered honestly. “Neither of us can go into this with the mindset that we know exactly how it will go.”

“First of all there is no *this*. And, yes, I can.”

Damn, what had that other guy done to her then?

“Look, why are we even talking about this?” Claire smiled again, but it didn’t reach her eyes. “It’s pointless.”

“Because I want you.”

Nick couldn’t believe he’d said it out loud. Well, he had and it was done. And he meant it.

If Claire was shocked by his words, it didn’t show. She simply nodded and lifted her glass of soda for another drink.

“I guess you hear that all the time?” Nick had to ask.

The dark eyes that swung back up to his face were sober, serious. Now why did she look sad?

“No, far from it. It’s a long story.”

Nick shrugged. “I’ve got time.”

“You’d never believe me.”

“What did that guy do anyway?” Nick was trying to understand. That was the entire point right? Some other guy had hurt her and that’s why they were having this entire out-there conversation.

Claire nodded again to herself. Like she’d made up her mind about something. What, he had no idea. He felt like they were reading from

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totally different scripts.

“Look, can we get out of here?”

Okay, that took Nick off guard.

“You changed your mind about dinner?” he asked cautiously.

“My stomach is in knots. I won’t be able to eat.”

He didn’t know about her stomach. But those perky little breasts caught his eye, rising and falling fast with her breath.

“You want me to take you home?”

“Or we can go to your place. It doesn’t matter.”

What the fuck? She just wanted to leave and go at it?

Nick’s growling stomach lost the battle against his cock that was hard and throbbing beneath the table. He didn’t have a damn clue what was really going on here. All he knew was that this little lady had just made him an offer, and he wouldn’t refuse.

Nick also didn’t intend to give her time to change her mind.

“Let’s go,” he said.

CHAPTER 5

Of course neither of them had a car. It was a long walk out of town to her apartment, and that's where they ended up because it was the first place they reached. It was an uncomfortable silence for Claire, but she didn't say anything. What was there to say after all? She'd unwittingly cast a spell on Nick Brandt that made him lust after her, pursue her.

Now he was all hers. And what was she doing?

What any hot-blooded woman would do. She was going to fucking enjoy it!

Nick had maintained a respectful distance between them until they reached the apartment building. She'd started only a little when she felt his hand on her waist on the way up the stairs. It was the first intimate touch between them since his kiss in the hallway and it sent bolts of pure desire shooting through her blood like lightning. Her nipples beaded hard, and her panties were a damp sticky nuisance clinging to

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her as she walked.

The minute they reached her apartment and the door closed behind them, he grabbed her upper arms roughly in his hands and his mouth came down to claim hers.

His kiss, his taste was just as intoxicating as it had been earlier in the day when he'd kissed her at lunch. Nick tasted like cool night air and deep desire.

The kiss quickly grew heated and passionate. Their breaths mingled as their tongues dueled in an age-old dance. Nick's hands skimmed up her arms and smoothed her hair back from her face with a whisper-soft touch.

All thoughts of the potion and how she came to be here with Nick were gone as she closed her arms around him and pulled him tightly against her. When Nick began grinding his hips against hers, she moaned into his mouth, recognizing it as a sound of pure need. Had that sound come from her?

Pulling back from her, Nick looked deep into her eyes. His own blue eyes had darkened with desire, the color of the sky on a late summer evening.

"Claire, are you sure about this?" his voice was a rough whisper.

His question, under the circumstances, with the potion she'd used on him, surprised her.

The sound of her own heartbeat thundered in her ears as she gazed up into his face.

Claire nodded. "I want this."

"Then let's boink."

She burst out laughing at the devilish grin on his face as he scooped her up in his strong arms. Claire pointed him in the right direction and her heart raced with excitement as he carried her through the door of her bedroom and slammed the door shut with his foot. As carefree as the moment was, Nick placed her on her feet by the bed with great care.

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Then the rush was on to remove their clothing. Claire's hands were shaking as they grabbed the hem of her blouse and pulled it over her head. She heard a ripping sound and looked up to see Nick tearing at his clothes with abandon. That was more like it. The spell was really at work now. The man looked out of control.

Stop that. Don't think about that. Enjoy this.

When she went to unhook her bra, his gaze darted after the movement.

"Let me do that," Nick said.

Now he moved with unbearable slowness as he undressed her. His hands moved so lightly and gently that she barely felt their touch. He took her breath away, kissing each new area of her skin as he revealed it. Soft, enticing caresses played over her skin, and she relaxed into his slow seduction. The desire in his eyes was so easy to read, and real or not, it caused the passion within her to ignite in a way that it never had before.

With her breasts revealed, Nick went down on his knees before her and pressed his gorgeous mouth to her nipple. Gathering her to him, Nick buried his face between her breasts and Claire heard the sharp intake of his breath as he inhaled her scent. Claire let her fingers sink into the silky locks of his blond hair, and he moaned at her touch.

Nick had large hands, rough from his work in the movie. They felt so good as they covered her breasts, squeezing and plumping them. He guided one pouting nipple to his mouth, and Claire's fingers tightened in his hair when he caressed her with his tongue and teeth. White-hot sparks coursed through her body when he widened his mouth and took as much of her in as he could. Her pussy clenched in need, her juices flowing, while he suckled against her with an endless hunger.

Claire loosened her hold on his hair when he pulled his head back, wondering if she'd pulled too hard. His dark blue eyes met hers, and just the sight of his tongue teasing the sensitive tip of her breast made

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the craving between her thighs gnaw and grow.

“You like that?”

What? He expected her to speak? She could barely breathe.

Claire nodded, wantonly pushed herself back toward his mouth.

But Nick evaded the breast she offered him and dove for the other one instead, giving it the same devastating treatment as he had the first. Claire’s knees gave way and Nick pulled her down to straddle his lap. The incredible heat of his body seeped through the thick denim of her jeans, and Claire couldn’t resist the urge to rub herself against him.

“Let’s get rid of these. Shall we?” he asked.

Nick’s hands were unsteady as they unfastened her jeans. Her knees were just as shaky as she rose from his lap so he could push them and her panties down with care over her hips and thighs. Bracing herself on his broad shoulders, she kicked off her sandals and stepped out of the rest of her clothing.

Nick leaned forward to press a kiss to the soft swell of her tummy, and she shivered in delight. When he lifted one of her legs up over his shoulder, shivering turned into trembling. White hot flashes of desire raced through her body as she gazed down into his handsome face and knew what he intended to do.

“I can’t wait to taste you, Claire.” His voice sounded deep and sinful.

I can’t wait for you to. But she couldn’t speak. Claire moaned when he parted her with his fingers, but words at the moment? No way. She was beyond that.

Taking her breathy sighs as permission, Nick pressed his mouth into her dark patch of curls and licked her. His tongue roamed from her opening up to her clit where he lingered, flicking against that sensitive nub.

Over and over he licked at her, halting now and again to suckle her labia or clit. Her clit he gave special attention to with hot kisses and

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licks, his lips and tongue smashing her sanity. It was a good thing he held her up because Claire was writhing, her knees weak. Nick held her against his busy mouth, and the soft wet sounds filling the room pushed her desire higher.

Claire's pussy walls clenched, and Nick must have felt it. He thrust his tongue into her opening like a cock, and Claire gasped at how marvelously long it was. In and out his tongue worked, fucking her, and his fingers began to toy with her swollen, sensitive clit. Claire's fingers gripped his shoulders hard, and blood raced through her body as she struggled to stay upright, struggled to breathe. She was closer to coming by the second.

"Nick!"

Claire cried out as the orgasm ripped through her like a hurricane. Her entire body flushed from her face to her cunt. Her blood felt like it was on fire. Claire's legs finally gave way, and she would have hit the floor if not for Nick's strong arms there to catch her. The tremors shook her for what seemed like forever, and her cries filled the room that darkened for a few moments around her.

"You taste better than anything I could have imagined, Claire."

God, she loved the way he said her name.

"Want a taste?"

Nick didn't wait for permission. He claimed her mouth with a possessive kiss that wiped her mind clean of anything but him.

Not possessive. It's the potion, damn it. Don't even start thinking there is anything else.

But, damn, it was the best sex she'd ever had, and they'd just gotten started.

With no idea how they got there, Claire found herself beneath him on her bed. Nick's hands and mouth were all over her body. That seemed like a good idea and so she let her hands roam over the smooth muscles of his long body. And, oh, wasn't it satisfying how he moaned

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or gasped when she found a particular area that he liked?

Nick rose above her, parting her thighs with his own. Claire glanced down to see his cock, poised and ready. On seeing the size of him, Claire felt exhilarated. She definitely hadn't had anything like that before. It would be a tight fit, and she couldn't wait.

The swollen head of his cock pushed against her wet flesh and she moaned as it began to sink into her. The hot column of his flesh stretched and burned her as he slid into her channel as far as he could go. He filled her completely and it was unlike anything she'd ever felt before. The walls of her pussy clenched around him in need, but he didn't move.

Nick held himself just above her and he was gazing down into her face.

"What?" she managed to ask, lifting her hips wantonly, trying to provoke him into movement.

"You're beautiful, Claire." A bead of his perspiration fell from his forehead to dot her shoulder. "I just wanted to look at you."

"Can you do more than look now?" Claire half-laughed. She was in need here.

"You mean get on with it?" Nick teased, his breath coming fast.

Claire nodded, and he chuckled at that.

Nick lowered his mouth to hers, the kiss slow and deep, before he began to move within her.

They moaned together at the indescribable sensation. Rocking back and forth together, they both let go and surrendered to the powerful desire, real or induced, that claimed them. Claire wrapped her legs about his waist, pulling him back to her each time he withdrew. Nick thrust in and out of her, reaching deeper inside her somehow with each stroke.

The smell of sex surrounded them, and Claire's hands and legs slid on his slick flesh. Their cries and moans filled the room around them as

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they writhed in the tangle of sheets on the bed. When Nick's thrusts came harder and faster, Claire surrendered to him and just hung on as he pushed her passion up to unbelievable heights.

Claire bucked beneath him, screaming as she came. Nick held on as spasm after spasm of unimaginable ecstasy wracked her before he let go. Nick's body went taut above her, and his arms closed around her so tightly she could barely breathe. He threw his head back and yelled when he came, while Claire's body pulsed around him, milking him of his seed.

Nick fell on her, his weight burying her in the soft mattress. She didn't care. She wrapped her arms around him, her fingers toying with the silky strands of his hair. Her heartbeat pounded in her ears, and the sound of their breathing filled the quiet around them.

"How was that?" Nick's voice was low, deep.

"Perfect," Claire answered.

The whole thing was perfect. Nick, his loving.

It just wasn't real.

Well, at the moment it was. So Claire drifted off to sleep in his arms.

CHAPTER 6

The phone rang some time later and woke them up. Nick squinted at the LCD display on the phone on the bedside table and read the number out to Claire who lay snuggled at his side.

“Don’t even think about answering that.” Claire’s voice was scratchy from sleep. “It’s my sister.”

Nick lay back down at her side as the phone continued to ring.

“Thought you were trying to help her out?”

“Trying to help her out of my apartment.”

“What was that?” Nick had to ask.

Claire propped herself on an elbow above him, grinning sheepishly.

“I didn’t mean that the way it sounded.” She brushed a lock of hair from his forehead with her fingers. Nick liked her hands, they were slender and elegant.

“It’s just that Megan and Roger broke up two weeks ago and when that happened, she moved in here with me.” The color in her face

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deepened a little more. “She’s my sister and I love her. But there is only so much rehashing of the break-up that I can take.”

Nick chuckled and noticed the phone stopped ringing. “I understand. I have younger brothers.”

He reached up to trace the curve of her cheek, letting his fingers drift down the slim column of her throat and down over her chest to one plump breast. Nick grinned when her nipple drew up into a pretty point.

“You know it’s not a good time to be thinking about this, but we didn’t use anything...” Nick pointed out.

“As long as you didn’t give me any acting cooties, we’re good. I’m covered.”

“Acting cooties, huh?” Nick grinned at her. “Not likely. I haven’t even been on a date in two years.”

Claire nodded. Nick liked the way her lips were swollen from his kisses.

“I guess you’ve been too busy,” she pointed out.

“And uninterested.” Nick leaned forward to press a light kiss to the nipple he’d teased. “Until now.”

“Right.”

Was that resignation in her voice? She didn’t believe him?

“Claire, I get the feeling that you think I have awful intentions here,” Nick was blunt.

Claire wasn’t looking him in the eye now, and he didn’t like it.

“I know. I’m sorry. It’s not what you think.”

“Then what is it?” Nick wanted to know. “I’m not looking for a fuck buddy for the shoot, Claire. At my age I’m looking for a little more than that.”

Claire nodded, still looking down.

“Look at me.”

Her eyes met his in an instant.

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“What would it take to convince you that I just might be serious about this?” Nick asked.

He watched her throat work as she swallowed. Hard.

“Time.”

It was a fair answer. Maybe he was being too pushy. Whatever happened in her past, she’d share with him once she knew him better. Once she trusted him. Time was a reasonable thing to ask for.

But Claire made him impatient. She made him want.

“I got you. We just met,” he pointed out. “We just boinked.”

Claire smiled at that.

“Time I’ve got,” he said gently, brushing a long lock of dark hair behind her ear.

“Time we’ve got.”

The smile that formed on that pretty mouth had a decidedly wicked quality to it. When she slid down toward the end of the bed, he had a damned good idea of what she meant to do.

Nick’s cock was hard and ready when she took it into her hands, teasing him with soft caresses at first. Her hands were like silky flames, and it was all he could do to lie still while her fingers wrapped around his dick and began to stroke him, smashing his self-control.

She licked her lips, and her dark eyes met his. The desire he read there was satisfying, and the only thing he was certain of with Claire. She wanted him and craved him as he did her. His optimism about the situation soared as he watched the sensual glide of her tongue over her full lower lip. His cock jerked in her hand as a shot of lust ripped through him.

Her soft tongue touched the head of his cock, swirled around it. When her lips opened over the mushroom-shaped top and she surrounded him with her mouth, Nick fought to keep his hips on the bed. He could have spilled his seed right then and there.

Claire had only begun. And she had no mercy.

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His breath hissed out between his teeth as he fought for control.

“Claire!”

Nick’s hands sank into the dark silk of her hair as he watched himself slide along the wet curves of her lips. Her tongue was a wicked flame that stroked him heatedly. Nick watched her taste him, take him with ever deepening strokes. The only thing he had strength left to do was to hold back his release and watch helplessly as she pulled him inside of the snug, hot cavern of her mouth and then let him slide back out.

When the head of his cock touched the back of her throat, and her moan vibrated around his sensitive flesh, Nick couldn’t take any more. Claire was killing him.

He grabbed her upper arms and pulled her over him, seating her on top of his face. Claire squeaked above him in surprise as he buried his mouth against her. Her legs quivered on either side of his face as licked and tongue fucked her until she came, screaming his name.

She slumped above him, but Nick wasn’t done with her just yet.

Sliding under her, Nick positioned her trembling body over his cock that was throbbing and hard. His balls knotted in need as he slid into her slick, warm heat to the hilt.

“Ride me, Claire.”

He guided her with his hands. She recovered from her release quickly and began to ride him with abandon. Nick grew harder within her, wanted more, as she undulated over him. He moaned beneath her, hips bucking up to meet her as his fingers dug into the flesh of her hips.

It took everything that he had, but Nick fought off his own release as Claire’s body grew taut above him. With long powerful strokes, he pushed her closer to release. His patience was rewarded when she threw her head back and screamed again, her hot juices bathing his cock as he kept up a steady driving rhythm within her.

His own orgasm shook him scant seconds after that, and he thrashed

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on the bed beneath Claire from the power of it. While he was barely aware that she'd collapsed on top of him, Nick liked the feel of her slim body. Her arms curved around him, her fingers twined in his hair. Nick liked that a lot.

Nick wrapped his arms around her, pulled her close.

"Claire?"

"Hmm?" A sleepy murmur was all he got.

"You'll try to run from me the first chance you get," Nick told her, not caring if she was awake enough to understand him perfectly. "But I'll find you. You won't get rid of me that easily. Not now."

Claire only snuggled closer, her head nestled on her shoulder.

His mind made up, Nick joined her in sleep.

CHAPTER 7

The commercial for Nick's latest movie flashed on the screen of the small portable television and Claire smiled. He looked so handsome in his cowboy hat, fighting for justice in the old west. She watched enviously as he swept the heroine into his arms for the end of the trailer.

Claire remembered what it felt like to be in his arms. She thought about that night with him every day.

That was why she'd left the set of the movie the next day. They'd made love once more that morning. Then he'd gone off to work expecting her to be there when he returned, but had only found an empty apartment.

That had been three months ago.

Nick had been so much more than she'd expected. It would have been better if he'd been a mindless, shallow playboy, but he'd been anything but that. The things he'd said to her about a future, about

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taking chances? The words were burned in her mind even now. A complete month with him, the duration of the potion she'd unwittingly used on him, would have completely destroyed her.

Hell, the one night she'd had with him had destroyed her.

"You never told me what happened with him, Claire."

Claire glanced over her shoulder at her sister and shrugged. "Nothing."

"We've got to go." Megan stood up from the chair behind her on the patio and another colorful plume of fireworks lit up the night sky in blue and white. "Happy fourth of July, kiddo."

Claire rose to give her sister and Roger a hug. "You, too. Congratulations again."

Megan's face lit up at the reminder of her engagement to Roger.

"Thank you."

Claire watched Megan and Roger walk off the patio of the house she'd rented for the latest movie she was working on.

Well, she had to realize that she'd gotten what she deserved in her selfishness. It served her right to have Nick Brandt break her heart in her journey to get her sister, who just wanted a sympathetic ear, out of her apartment.

At least she hadn't ruined things for them. Megan and Roger were back together and going to be married. That was something.

Claire snapped off the television and picked it up to carry it into the kitchen. It was time for some ice cream and wallowing in self-pity.

"The fireworks aren't over yet, Claire."

Claire froze at the sound of Nick's voice behind her in the darkness. Nah, that couldn't have been him.

Yet when she turned toward the source of that voice, there he was. Nick Brandt in the shadows, standing at the edge of her patio.

"What are you doing here?" was all that came to her mind to say.

"Megan told me where to find you." His arms were folded across

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the broad expanse of his chest, but he didn't look menacing at all. He did look handsome in the snug-fitting jeans and light blue dress shirt he wore. "At least someone made it easy for me."

Why on earth was he still looking for her? The lunar cycle was over. The potion should have worn off by now.

"I thought you were somewhere in Canada working on something," Claire pointed out.

"I was, but the production has been held up a few weeks. Liza Archer had some plastic surgery go wrong."

Claire chuckled at that. Liza Archer was a legendary actress and beauty, but well-known for her surgical enhancements.

"I'll bet the tabloids are all over that one."

Nick nodded, but the amusement faded from his face quickly.

"I wasn't surprised that you'd play hard to get, Claire, but damn."

She sat the little television set back on the table next to her. Well, what did she say now? How on earth could she tell him what happened? He'd never believe her.

"There is no way I can explain this, Nick. I'm not even sure what happened," Claire offered. It was pretty weak.

"I have a theory." Nick unfolded his arms to reveal a small glass jar in his hand. A very familiar, half-empty jar with dark colored contents.

Claire's heart slammed in her chest.

"Where did you get that?" She had to know.

"Well, it was one of the few things left in your apartment the next day when I went back to see your pretty face. I didn't find you, but I found your sister. She was there to get her things since she was moving back in with her fellow."

Guilt was really weighing on her now.

"That was one good thing I did in all of this, huh? At least they are together."

"She wasn't rushing around trying to get her things so they could

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boink, believe me.” A corner of his mouth lifted into a mischievous smile. “Your little jar of voodoo just about put poor old Roger in traction.”

“What?”

Nick chuckled. “Well, his back was out for a few days anyway.”

“Boinking?” Claire couldn’t resist asking.

He nodded.

“Megan told you that?”

“No, but I managed to figure it out.”

Nick came a little closer. Beams of light from the house lit up his handsome face, and Claire’s heart started hammering. Nick Brandt was here of his own free will. To see *her*.

“Managed to figure it out,” Claire repeated his words slowly. “How? Are you researching for a role as a criminal profiler or something?”

With his free hand, Nick traced the line of her cheek with his finger.

“The lady at the magic shop was really helpful,” Nick explained. “With her help I was able to figure out what is in this little jar and what you used it for.”

“Nick, I am so sorry. I never meant to use that on you. I didn’t even know it would actually work. Megan made this sandwich and —”

“On me?”

Claire nodded. “Megan made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to go with the soup I’d put the potion in. I didn’t know she’d used that in the sandwich. So I ate some of it, then I answered the door and you were there...”

Nick’s gaze was intense. “You think I was there because I was under some spell because you ate a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.”

It did sound completely crazy.

“Yes,” she admitted.

“And how long is it supposed to last?”

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“A full lunar cycle.”

“So it basically lasts a month, right?”

Claire nodded again.

“That was how long ago?”

The fireworks in the sky drowned out her sigh. God, she wanted to believe he was here for her, but she was afraid to.

“Claire, I don’t care what’s in this jar. I didn’t show up at your apartment that day because of any sort of witchcraft. I came there because I met you the day before talking to Maddy and thought...”

“Thought what?”

“I thought you were someone I’d like to know better.”

Nick’s gaze slowly moved down her body and even slower on the way back up.

“What do you think now?” Claire asked when his met hers again.

She watched in stunned silence as he pulled the cork top off the jar and tossed it aside. Using two fingers, Nick scooped out a good sized dollop of the jelly and put it in his mouth. He made a great show of licking his fingers as she stared at him with her mouth hanging open.

“I think I’d like to see if this stuff works.” Nick’s expression had a predatory quality to it now. “If it does, you should be my love slave for the next month, right?”

Claire kept staring at him, speechless. Well, he’d taken the potion and she was the first person to see him.

She waited to feel something magical.

And then she definitely felt something magical when Nick’s mouth slanted down over hers, possessive and demanding. His cool control was gone as the jar smashed on the patio and his fingers made fast work of undoing the buttons of her blouse, unhooking her bra.

His hands were everywhere, pulling up her thin summer skirt and delving into her panties. Claire let her tongue twine with his and she gasped into his mouth when his fingers sank into her cleft from behind.

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They were out on the patio of her rented house. Anyone could be watching.

“Ah, Nick?” Claire broke the kiss long enough to speak. “Shouldn’t we get inside?”

“No.” His lips seared the side of throat. “I’ve waited long enough. I had to wait weeks for that damned film to wrap. I’m not waiting any more. I have to have you. Here. Now.”

Nick held her to him with one hand and used the other to pull frantically at his jeans and shirt. In seconds he had his pants off, and he pulled her down to straddle his lap on the patio.

Claire gasped when his cock pressed against her wet flesh. Nick rocked them back and forth until she was gasping in pleasure at the friction he created.

Nick pressed his face into her breasts, searching with his lips until he found a nipple, then he suckled at it until she wanted to howl out her longing. He bit her just a little, the slightest of pain to heighten her pleasure. Claire held her head to him, her fingers sinking into his hair.

“Damn, I love that,” he spoke around the tight peak of her breast.

Nick lifted her and positioned her over his cock. Claire pushed herself down on him, wanting him to fill her, as his fingers dug into her hips. His eyes locked with hers as their breaths shuddered and more fireworks lit up the sky in the distance. He thrust up and pulled her down at the same time until he was balls-deep inside her.

“Oh, Claire,” he whispered. “I’ve wanted you so much.”

Claire couldn’t speak as he filled and stretched her cunt. She rode him and kissed his mouth. They moved slowly at first with the cool night air surrounding them. But the rhythm of their lovemaking soon gained speed until Nick was pounding hungrily into her with powerful thrusts that took her breath. He made her want more. She’d never get enough of him.

The boards of the patio creaked from the strength of their thrusts,

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and Claire felt her pussy walls clenching around him like a fist. His head thrown back, Nick's fingers dug into her flesh as he neared release.

He must have realized that she was close, too, because his arms tightened around her like bands of steel, and his movements in her were hard and deep. Claire cried out at the depth of his penetration, wanting more, needing more.

She came only seconds before he did, her hot juices covering him as he shot his sperm into her. Claire pulled his head to her chest and held him against her hammering heart. Nick was here with her. He was hers, and there was no supernatural force keeping him here.

"That was so wonderful," Claire said when she could manage. Then she noticed the night had gone quiet around them. She only saw dark sky and clouds. "The fireworks are over."

Nick pulled her into his arms and rose shakily to his feet.

"Not by a long shot," Nick told her, grinning. "And this time I might just tie you to the bed to make sure you don't leave me."

Claire smiled up at him, wrapping an arm around his neck. "I can't. I'm your love slave, remember?"

"Does that mean you are willing to give me a chance now, Claire?" Nick's expression grew serious.

"Yes." And she meant it. Even if she was under a spell, it was a spell he'd cast on her because he wanted her. "I'll take a chance on you, Nick."

His smile was back, and he squeezed her tightly.

"Then let's go inside and get more comfortable," he told her.

Leaving the broken jar and television behind, they headed for Claire's bed.

ISABELLA JORDAN

Isabella Jordan is a lucky lady who spends her days with her family, doing volunteer work and writing. She loves creating new stories of all kinds and chatting with readers and friends. Visit her online at <http://isabellajordan.com>.

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