

# **One Red Rose**

## **Lia Connor**

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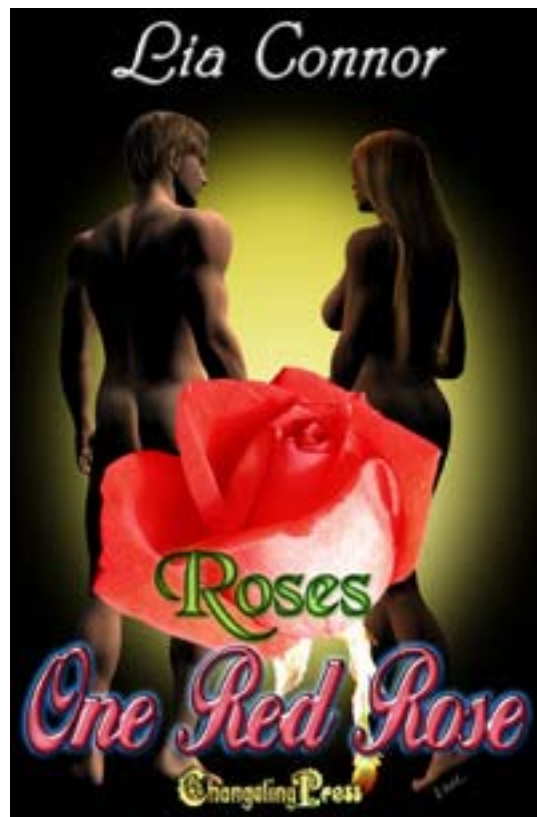
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## Prologue

Rosalie rippled from head to toe with pleasure, undulating on the thousand-count Egyptian cotton sheets. *Oh, now, this... this is luxury. Just about two inches away from Heaven, I'd say. Too bad two inches is too damn far away from the mark. Still, I can't deny I've had a good time...*

But as the afterglow faded, she felt a familiar sense of unhappiness come creeping in. She'd failed -- again.

The evening had started off full of promise. Dinner at Masa -- "A Japanese Omakase Experience." There were only twenty-six seats, and they booked two months in advance. How he'd managed a table on such short notice she didn't know -- or care to ask. The taste of *Junmai Daiginjo-shu*, a sake advertised as "the pinnacle of the brewer's art," still lingered in her mouth.

After dinner her date of the evening had taken her to his home. Home? More like a mansion -- just this side of palatial -- where he'd made love to her for hours... and hours... and hours.

A wonderful evening. It should have been enough. Had she been any other woman, it would have been enough. She should have been counting herself as very satisfied right now. But she wasn't any other woman. She was Rosalie -- a sex nymph. She hadn't been normal since she'd been cursed more than five millennia ago, in the time of the ancient gods.

Though the old gods were long gone, the curse remained firmly in place. Eros was not to be dallied with. His enchantments were powerful, and lasted beyond his demise. She was still under a nightly compulsion to seek out the one man who would be perfect for her in all respects -- although, since she liked sex, it wasn't a terribly trying curse.

Rosalie giggled to herself as she stretched again, arching her back. Her bed partner, John, she thought his name was, mumbled in his sleep and turned his head on his pillow. Rosalie patted his ass fondly.

Whatever his name was, she had to give him credit. He'd tried his best, after all. Poor guy couldn't help it if he wasn't exactly what she needed in her bed, much less her life. *If he'd even come close, I wouldn't even be able to think right now, much less analyze.*

Rosalie sighed and burrowed deeper under the expensive padded silk comforter, gliding her fingers along its elegant Asian craftsmanship. *He has everything, too. Looks, money, brains -- so why isn't he the one?*

*I think they're still torturing me for walking away from the Pantheon. Well, me and all my sisters.* Rosalie wasn't alone in her quest, oh, no. There were two dozen of them, women she counted as sisters, each of them searching for the perfect mate to give the gift of immortality. To make that person like them. But each man had to be perfect. The one she sought had to be perfect for her. He had to be worthy...

She'd just have to keep looking.

Such was the life of a Muse of Sex. She could inspire men to great heights, but could they accomplish the tasks she set for them? Not very damned likely. John had almost gotten there, but close only counted with horseshoes and hand grenades.

The covers had fallen back, revealing her partner's perfectly sculpted ass. Rosalie bent and dropped a light kiss on his warm skin, one that would give him a lifelong gift. He'd remember the inspiration she'd given him that night, but his memories of her would soften, like an erotic dream, one that faded like the colors in an abstract painting.

Rosalie slipped out from the bed and padded over to find the black slip of a dress that she'd worn to meet him -- a Vera Wang original. She shimmied into the smooth silk, tucking her scrap of a bra into the tiny beaded purse she carried, leaving her midnight blue thong behind. They were ruined, anyway, shredded beyond repair.

She'd asked for him to tear them, of course. He had good, strong hands.

Her stiletto heels went on last -- Manolo Blahniks -- "fuck me" heels if there were ever a pair made. Rosalie shook her head, running all ten fingers through her hair to

give it an attractively tousled look. Her lips would be swollen from kissing and her cheeks blushing with beard-burn. She knew she would appear to be well-fucked. She might as well take advantage of the look.

The problem remaining, though, was that she was hungry -- she needed more. Something else to feed her never-ending appetite for sex. A quick cab ride and she'd be in the heart of downtown Manhattan, at the B.B. King Blues Club, where hopefully she could find someone who'd sweep her off her pointed heels.

The next man around the corner could be *the one*...

## Chapter One

"Tisha, it's all right." Rosalie spoke into her cherry red Motorola RAZR cell phone, bright as the crimson paint glimmering on her nails.

"I'm gonna lose my job," Tisha moaned.

"Oh, take it easy. You're the best the agency's got. No one's firing you."

"Yeah, but I'm letting them down..."

Rosalie *tsked* as she cradled the phone next to her ear. "You have the flu. You're in bed with a fever of over a hundred degrees, hon. There's no way anyone could expect you to make your date tonight. It'll be no problem for me to step in."

"We could both get into so much trouble..."

"Nonsense. Not with me on the case. I'm no amateur."

"I must be out of my mind to even consider this. But I don't know what else to do. Just remember... no sex on the job. The agency's very strict about that. We could lose our business license."

"Yes, Tisha, I know. All he wants is a dinner date while he's in town on business." *Right...* She laughed. "What kind of business brings a man in for a quick weekend and requires some arm candy while he's here?"

"He's an attorney," Tisha croaked, her voice sounding hoarse and sore enough to make Rosalie wince with sympathy. "That's the way things are with a lot of them. Fly in, enjoy some fine company, fly back out. But I promise you, this isn't about sex. That's a no-go. Company policy."

*Then it's a good thing I don't work for the company.* "Don't you worry about me," Rosalie said soothingly. "Now you stop talking, do you understand? You're just going to make your throat worse. I can handle one date with a fat-cat from out of town."

"You're the best, Rosie," Tisha whispered hoarsely, what little voice she had fading fast.

"I know I am." Rosalie leaned against the wall, examining her fingernails. She really did love her friend, and Tisha had helped her out a time or two. She could stand to repay some of the favors. "Now what did I just tell you?"

"One more thing," Tisha managed. "Carry a red rose with you. That's how he'll know you're there to meet him."

"Isn't bringing flowers usually the man's job?"

Tisha laughed, barely a whisper. "Don't you worry, you'll get a bouquet. But you carry that rose, understand? Otherwise he'll... he'll..." Her voice faded out into a squeak.

Rosalie shook her head in pity. "I warned you," she said, kindly as a sister would. "Now you rest up, all right? Rosie's gonna take care of this man tonight." *You better believe I will.* "Bye now, sweetie." Rosalie clicked the END button on her cell and tossed it onto a small side table elegantly carved from deep, rich mahogany. Well. This was an unexpected surprise, but she couldn't say she was sorry, oh, no.

This was a chance she'd been waiting for ever since she'd met Tisha, bless her heart.

She had to get ready. Everything had to be perfect for the night ahead. So much to do, and so little time! As Rosalie crossed the room, heading for her closet, she got a glimpse of herself in one of the many mirrors hanging on her walls.

Stopping for a moment, she saw herself framed in gilt: a trim body with full, rounded breasts and generous hips, a fall of rich golden brown hair that reached down to curl over her chest, and sparkling dark eyes in a heart-shaped face with full lips made for kissing. Her skin, palest of café au lait browns, reflected her Moorish heritage.

It was good to be alive. It was even better to be a Muse. Not one of that ancient Greek crowd, oh, no. Rosalie was a Muse of Sex, and she loved to ply her trade. She'd considered escort agencies before, but the decent and well-paying ones were all too

“hands-off” for her taste, and the ones that were all about sex catered to men she wouldn’t wipe her feet on.

Normally she spent her nights off lounging in one bar or another, from dungeons to tea rooms, just waiting for the right man to walk by, to catch his eye and reel him in... and the sex, she could say, was always “inspired.”

During the week, she worked as a phone sex operator. Not as much fun, but hey, it did pay the bills, and even a Muse had to eat. Plus, she didn’t want to think about not having a roof over her head. Especially the roof she had now, covering a spacious penthouse on the top floor of one of the most expensive pieces of real estate in the city. Some phone-sex operators didn’t make all that much, but Rosalie? She knew how to work her customers for every dime.

She loved every second of this life, too. She’d won -- and lost -- several fortunes over the centuries. Just at the moment she was sitting pretty.

*Carry a red rose, huh?* Rosalie plucked a crimson blossom from one of the vases of fresh-cut flowers she summoned up daily and kept in her suite. She twirled the stem, a wicked smile on her face. *Watch out, Mister Whoever-You-Are. You’ve never seen anything like me yet, and you never will again.*



## Chapter Two

Rosalie decided she was impressed by her date's choice of venue. Le Bernardin, eh? One of the most exclusive restaurants in New York, if Rosalie knew her five-star guides. Which she did. By heart. She'd been here once or twice before, draped on the arm of one handsome man or another, but there was no harm in re-visiting an old favorite.

Besides which, they had *the* most exquisite appetizers she had ever known. Sitting outside on a park bench, facing a most enticing view, Rosalie closed her eyes in momentary bliss merely thinking about their tangy tamari couscous, and their succulent oysters floating in the highest quality butter. Good thing she didn't have to worry about putting on weight. No, she could eat all she liked and never have to struggle into one of her designer dresses.

A shame. She often thought the Rubenesque look would be good on her for a change of pace. As it was, she remained the well-rounded but still slim woman she had been many millennia ago, her hips and breasts generous but her waist small and her legs trim. Only her hair had changed over the centuries, from curls to braids and back again, though she preferred her locks the way she wore them now -- a long, straight fall over her breasts, coyly hiding her face.

In her hands, she held a single red rose, stripped of its thorns. She'd cut them all away herself, so as not to prick her fingers while she waited. Attention to detail was important in all matters, even the smallest of things.

What would this man be like, the one she waited on? Tall and handsome, or short and square? Would he be charming, or gruff? Casual, or formal? Men came in so many flavors and styles, and while she had sampled them all, each new encounter sent a thrill of anticipation through her veins.

It was merely a date, a paid date at that, and a favor for a friend. But could the fine hand of Fate be at work? What if the man she met tonight was the one?

Rosalie lifted the rose to her face and inhaled its delicate perfume. She smiled, relishing the building anticipation. He should be there any minute now... any minute...

\* \* \*

Tor eased his way out of his 2005 Corvette, handing the keys to a valet who looked as if he'd seen it all, and not even a 'Vette had the power to faze him. "Careful with this one," he requested politely, offering the young man a crisp hundred-dollar bill. With a nod, the valet disappeared inside his car and the engine purred to life.

Okay. That was that, then. Now all he had to do was approach the restaurant and meet the woman of his dreams... or the woman he could pretend, just for one night, was the object of all his fantasies. A few diners stood outside, dressed in elegant apparel that cost enough to feed not one but several families for weeks, but he didn't see the woman who was supposed to be his date.

She was supposed to be carrying a single red rose, wasn't she?

Tor scanned the select crowd until two men parted, saying goodnight, and as they cleared the way he saw her. *Her*, with the rose.

His lips parted at the sight of the woman. A small and slender figure of a lady, the light on her golden brown hair gleaming like a falling star. "Holy shit," he whispered as she lifted her face in profile to the glorious sunset. He'd never seen anyone so beautiful in his life. Hers could have been the face of Helen of Troy, or Aphrodite herself. Hell, they wouldn't have compared. Supermodels wouldn't have stood a chance. He had paintings of the ancient Greek goddesses decorating the walls of his office, and none of them could hold a candle.

This woman was perfection, plain and simple -- and she was waiting for him? His paid dinner date?

Tor stood up straighter, neatening his tie and running a hand over the lapels of his Armani suit coat. He walked toward the bench where *she* sat, consciously projecting the image of the man he'd made himself into -- a man who could afford what he

wanted, even a mind-bogglingly pricey dinner at one of the best restaurants in town and the company of a beautiful woman to share it with.

As he drew closer, the woman turned her head to face him. His first full sight of her face nearly took Tor's breath away. She was even more beautiful than she had appeared before. Not all women looked as good up close as they did from a distance, but she did. She looked like sex incarnate, from her glistening ruby lips to the sparkle of humor in her huge, perfect dark cobalt-blue eyes.

She licked those lips with the tip of a dainty pink tongue as he approached, and coyly cradled a red rose to her breasts. The twin globes swelled out of the crimson silk dress she wore, the cleavage showing just enough to make Tor's mouth water.

And all he could do was *talk* with her? Damn!

"You're Tor?" she asked in a throaty voice, rich as the thirty-year-old whiskey he'd tossed back like water before leaving for this date. "I've been waiting for you. You've been a bad boy to leave me all by myself for so long."

Fuck if he didn't want to go down on his knees in front of this woman and apologize. Kiss her tiny feet even, encased as they were in crimson stilettos with heels that had to be at least five inches long and needle-tipped. "Bad manners, I know," he said instead, although he still had to fight back the urge.

The woman smiled as if she knew *exactly* what he'd been thinking. She offered her hand to him for a kiss. "Good," she purred. "The evening's looking up already."

Tor took her tiny fingers in his own and pressed his lips to them, loving the fearlessness of her approach. He was a big man, well over six feet, and that might have intimidated some women, but she had more balls than most men and she wasn't afraid to put them on display.

She was gorgeous, sure, and anyone would fall madly in lust with this woman, but Tor was beginning to think he *liked* her.

"Mmm, a gentleman," she said with a small, chiming laugh as he drew his hand back. "There are so few of them left these days. My name is Rosalie, but you," she said, leaning close, as if it were a secret, "can call me Rose."

Tor breathed in as she bent close to him. Fuck, she even smelled like a bunch of fresh-cut roses, fresh and floral, with a hint -- no, more than just a hint, more like a splash -- of pure woman. The scent went right from his head to his cock, which began to swell embarrassingly within his pants.

He adjusted himself as best as he could without being too obvious. "Shall we go inside? I've rented the outdoor terrace. I thought we'd enjoy the privacy." Offering his arm, he waited to see if she'd take it. God, what was a gorgeous woman like her doing working for an escort service?

The woman's smile became a grin, impish as a pixie and twice as beautiful as the rose she held. She passed the flower to him, then stood, sliding her arm into his own. "If you're ready, I am." She gave his biceps a slight squeeze. "It's all up to you, of course."

He felt an answering roar to her challenge. This woman wasn't about polite conversation over a table full of good food and finer wine. Regardless of her company's policies, he had a feeling she *was* all about sex. From the way she was feeling up his arm, not being gentle or subtle in the slightest, he knew she'd like it rough, hard and fast, balls to the wall, no holds barred, with plenty of screaming and nails raking down his back, and oh, God, he was harder now than he had been before.

"I see you have a little problem there," she said, her eyes sparkling with mirth. "Do you know, I've suddenly lost my appetite for polite company and overpriced meals." Her hand tightened on his arm. "I'm hungry for something else entirely."

*Oh... God.* Tor felt an impending impulsion in his balls. A lady like Rose could bowl him over in a heartbeat, and had managed the feat with just a look and a glance.

Rose seemed to know it, too. She leaned forward, stroking his hand with ruby-tipped nails, and whispered, "Do you really want to stay here and share a bottle of Chateau Margaux, Tor? Or do you want to go somewhere a little more private so that we can enjoy ourselves the way I know you want to?" She almost seemed to glow in the light of the setting sun. "The way I want to."

Tor's heart gave a bound and his prick jumped inside his pants. "But the agency said no sex. It was a rule." *Damn! Shit, fuck, damn! Why did I have to go and remind her? Just when I was about to get my hands on those mouth-watering...*

Rose winked at him, looping an invisible length of cord around him and drawing him even closer to her. "What fun is life if you play by the rules?"

Tor stared at her, then broke into a soft chuckle. Rose gave him a knowing look and pressed against him, sinuous as a cat. "What do you say?" she asked, as if she knew he'd watched her slim throat work as she spoke, and was already fantasizing about kissing every square inch of that coffee-creamy skin.

"I say let's get out of here," he said, mentally forgoing his own hunger for anything except Rose. "Dinner be damned." He leaned closer. "There's something else I want to eat."

"Mmm." Rose gave him a knowing look, a look he'd seen on women's faces before, but one that never had hit home quite as hard. A look that said *I have you right where I want you*. And he didn't mind a bit. "I was hoping you'd say that. Shall we go?"

Tor slipped his hand into Rose's. "Let's get the fuck out of here." This woman was the very definition of Sex, and pretty soon, he'd have himself a taste.

## Chapter Three

Tor. Rosalie liked the name. Probably short for Torrance or something like that, but what did she care about names? He was a solid hunk of a man with shoulders that bulged in his expensively hand-tailored suit, long muscled legs, trim hips, and oh, sweet Eros, was he tall. Rosalie loved all kinds of men, from the big to the small, so long as what they were packing between their legs was enough to satisfy her -- and from the bulge he'd been trying to be discreet about ever since he'd first seen her, Tor was more than enough of a man to suit her tastes.

But forget the preludes to a kiss. She wanted Tor, and she wanted him now.

They left the restaurant without any food -- odd, considering she usually liked to be wined and dined, but for once, Rosalie didn't care about food or drink -- and went straight back to her place. Oh, but Tor drove a sweet car -- a red Corvette convertible with black leather interior and a hell of a torque. For her part, Rosalie didn't believe all that nonsense people spouted about cars and penis envy. In her experience, the more a man showed off, the more he had to offer.

And she wanted all that Tor could give her.

He shut the door to her penthouse suite behind them, and stood there looking lost for a moment, as if he wasn't exactly sure where to begin. Rosalie smiled, knowing she looked predatory, and began slinking toward him on her best "fuck-me" heels, glad she'd worn them. Pressing up against Tor, she reached up to wind her arms around his neck, appreciatively feeling the muscles in his chest as she passed them by.

"Kiss me," she crooned, giving him her best sultry pout. "I'll think you don't love me anymore if you don't."

"Then let me put your fears to rest." Tor bent down and pressed his lips to hers, sealing them together. His tongue flickered out to taste her, and he made a surprised

noise when he tasted the cinnamon clove lipstick. *Wait until he gets past that to the real me*, Rosalie thought.

His tongue slid further into her mouth, slick and twisty, instantly picking up on the way she liked things -- rough and dirty. He played by the rules she set without saying a word, clashing against her, forcing her mouth wider open, pushing her to take more and still more, knowing she loved it.

Mouth open, drinking in the power that came from such an amazing kiss, Rosalie knew this man, whether he was from out of town or from Mars, was a keeper. By nature of her curse she never saw a man more than once, but she would bend the rules for this Tor, even if it turned out he wasn't the one she'd been hunting for so long. She'd just have to plant the urge in his mind for him to drive back in when she hungered for a taste of him.

And she hadn't even seen what that mouth of his could do on her pussy yet. All the same, she was already getting wet for him, feeling the scarlet thong she wore start to soak with the juices dripping out of her core. She raised one leg and hooked it over his hip, making sure that the smell of her desire wafted up for him to scent. It must have, because he moaned into the kiss and began to grasp at her back, fingers hunting for the fastening to the little red dress that she wore.

"Off," he gasped, pulling away from the kiss. "I want to see you naked, woman. Rose. I have to get my hands on all that beautiful skin, bare."

"Then far be it from me to say no." Rosalie knew her way around the outfit better than he did, but where was the fun in getting undressed by herself? Wiggling around in his arms, making sure to bump his cock with the curve of her ass, she presented her back to Tor and gave her shoulders a lazy, sexy roll. "Go to it."

His hands were steady and sure as he drew down the single zipper that fastened her dress. He slid his fingers beneath the spaghetti straps that circled her shoulders, and whispered, "God, you're so beautiful," as he slipped them off. The red silk dropped with a rustling whisper, falling at her feet in a puddle of fine fabric, leaving her bare of anything except her thong and a red lace demi-cup bra.

"This, too?" he asked, fingering the clasp.

Rosalie nodded, tilting her head back to give him her best seductive smile. "I want to be naked for you," she whispered throatily. "I want you to see me nude."

"Oh, God," he groaned. A little clumsier now, in a hurry, Tor fumbled at the catch on Rosalie's bra until it came loose in his hands. The garment fell away from Rosalie's breasts and she let it drop, raising one arm to cover her nipples, sensing that what this man really wanted was a look at the classics.

She wasn't wrong. "Turn around," he rasped. "Let me see you."

Coy as a maiden, ripe as Persephone, Rosalie turned to face Tor, arm still over her breasts and one hand splayed across her pussy and the soaked thong. He gazed at her with something like wonder, and reached out to brush her face with one hand. "Gorgeous," he breathed, as if he were praying to her. "Who are you, really? Ishtar?"

Rosalie raised one eyebrow, but Tor had already moved on -- thank the gods. For such a big man he could move quickly as a fox, and he'd dropped to his knees in front of her. "I have to have a taste," he said, his words running together in his haste. "Let me put my mouth on you."

"The thong is in the way," Rosalie teased. "But..."

She was pleased to see that, once again, Tor was not slow on the uptake. Taking hold of the two fragments of lace that banded around the lower part of Rosalie's hips, he tore at the fabric, rending it in two. Her thong fluttered down to join the dress, wet through with her cream. The smell of it hit them both at the same time, sending shivers through Rosalie's body and giving Tor the look of a wild man.

"To taste this," he said hoarsely, "would be better than water in the desert to a man dying of thirst."

Rosalie touched his thick blond hair. "What are you waiting for, then?" she asked huskily. "Touch me. Taste me. Lick me."

"Your wish," he said, "is my command." He buried his face in her pussy, and Rosalie had to gasp as that talented tongue came out once again, licking her slit from top to bottom before plunging inside, drinking down her juices as if she were the rarest



of fragrant fruits. The low, appreciative moans he gave as he sampled the fine texture of her pussy made Rosalie shake with pleasure, and the way his mouth felt on her bare nether lips... oh, she could already tell he would make one amazing fuck.

One taste didn't seem to be enough to satisfy Tor. He kept after Rosalie, plunging his tongue into her channel, then replacing it with one of his fingers, thrusting in and out of her as he teased, then twined around the swollen bud of her clitoris, enflaming it to the point of bursting.

Rosalie couldn't stop herself from crying out as he tormented her sweetly, resting her hands on his shoulders and then gripping hard. She'd met dozens of men who were good at cunnilingus, but no one who had mastered the art like her Tor seemed to have. He drove her wild from top to bottom with his lips, his tongue and his fingers, turning her pussy into a burning inferno, a volcano of passion that had to erupt -- and did, with a blaze of light behind her eyes that left her half-blind for wonderfully endless seconds, rocking against him and crying out at the top of her voice.

As she swayed, still caught up in the last tingles of her orgasm yet burning for more, Tor stood and swept Rosalie up in his arms. "Bed," he ordered in the shell of one ear. "I want to fuck you, and I want to do it right. Where's your bed?"

Ooh, but she loved a forceful man. Rosalie threw an arm around Tor's neck and kissed him deeply, licking away her own cream, loving the taste and wanting to drink him dry. "In the room to your left," she said, twining around him in his arms. "And I want you to fuck me right. Take me to bed, Tor."

He was a strong man, carrying her as if she weighed no more than a feather. Smart too, she noticed again as he made straight for the correct door, pushing it open with one of his feet. Rosalie closed her eyes and called on a little magic before he hit the light switch, and...

When the lamps switched on, their glow was soft and amber, warm as honey and just as soothing. Her bed, satin sheets and comforter neatly made up and ready to be rolled on, was covered in crimson rose petals. Champagne chilled in a bucket by the bedside table, along with two long-stemmed glasses.

Tor looked down at Rosalie, giving her a savage smile, one that promised he was going to fuck her through the mattress and into the floor. "You planned all this," he accused with a wolf's grin. "You knew you were bringing someone back here tonight."

"Not just anyone," Rosalie said, rising up to lick his ear, one long pointed stripe from tip to lobe, "but you. I only wanted you tonight."

"Good. Because I'm the only man you're going to have." Tor lowered her almost all the way to the bed, then tossed her onto the rose petals.

He stood back, breath catching in his throat as Rosalie took control of herself quickly and spread out for his inspection, her breasts rising and falling with each breath, the nipples hard and swollen into rosy buds, and her legs parted with her shaven, gleaming pussy bared for his pleasure.

"I could eat you up," he rasped.

Rosalie lowered her eyelids. "What's stopping you?"

"These," he answered, tugging at the lapel of his suit.

"Mmm." Rosalie arched on the petals, raising her hips a little. "Then what do you say you get rid of those, and come nail me to the bed? I want you, Tor. Want you like I've never wanted any other man."

It was, she realized to her surprise, the truth. Somehow this stranger had worked his way under her skin. Maybe it was the skilled way his tongue manipulated her pussy, or maybe it was his unabashed worship of her, but he'd already replaced her previous favorite.

Rosalie growled low in her throat. "No more waiting," she ordered. "Get those clothes off now, do you hear me? Right this minute."

Tor's eyes gleamed at her. "Fast as I can, woman." He pulled at his tie, yanking it off and throwing the strip of silk into the corner of her bedroom. "Fast as I can. Oh, God, if you're going to do that you'll make me come just from watching you..."

Rosalie chuckled as she continued to finger herself, running her thumb in circles around her swollen clit. "Then you'd better hurry and get in here, hadn't you?"

Tor, as Rosalie discovered to her pleasure, could be *very* fast when he had something he wanted in his sights. His designer jacket, shirt and pants came off like lightning, each one tossed aside to land where it might. He paused to stand in front of her in his midnight blue silk boxers, stroking the hard shaft that tented them out. "You did this to me," he said, his voice low and raw as unbrushed silk. "Every bit of this is for you."

Rosalie withdrew her fingers from her pussy and brought them up to her mouth, licking the tips. She twined her tongue around one and grinned at him, daring him, urging him on. "Put it to a good use, then."

Boxers had never been shed so fast in Rosalie's previous experience. And then, oh yes, at last, Tor was crawling up the bed toward her, stopping only for a brief kiss and nip at her folds before draping himself on top of her and supporting his weight on his arms. He frowned. "You're too short for this position," he complained.

It was true -- his cock was nowhere near where it needed to be, and even though Rosalie still had her stiletto heels on, they didn't help her lying on her back. "I have a better idea," she said, rubbing her hands against the delicious muscle of his chest. "Roll over, and let me ride you."

Tor's teeth flashed in a savage smile, and then he seized her again, rolling and flipping them until she was on top. "My turn to call the shots," he said, positioning Rosalie's body over his cock, and beginning the first push deep inside her.

Oh, hell, *yes*, she did love a forceful man. Rosalie moaned with wanton pleasure as Tor's cock penetrated her core, her juices coating his member with slickness from the thick head all the way to his balls. Tor groaned. "You'll drive me crazy, woman," he managed to say.

"Oh, yes. But isn't this worth it?"

"Fucking right." Tor stopped when Rosalie was resting fully on him, his cock entirely inside her. "We fit just right. Like we were made for each other," he said in wonder. "You can take all of me."

“And more,” she said, rocking slightly back and forth, making him groan and grasp her hips more tightly still. She’d have bruises, and she’d cherish each and every one of them. “Now fuck me, Tor. Fuck me hard. Oh, yes, that’s the way. Good, good, oh, gods, good, just the way I like it...”

Rosalie took over some of the glorious work, helping to raise and lower herself on Tor’s magnificent cock, one of the best she’d ever seen and definitely the finest to ever pierce her core. He’d turned out to be a master at raw, raunchy sex as well, angling them so that he hit her G-spot on every stroke. She cried out as he touched her deeper than any man ever had before, bumping her cervix and filling her with such a wide breadth that she burned -- but how delicious it all was!

She would have gone on forever if she could have, but as she came a second time, she felt her muscles quake around Tor’s cock. She threw her head back and howled. Tor’s fingers tightened almost painfully on her hips and he let out a shout of triumph, his body stretching and bowing. A flood of semen burst from his cock, painting her white from the inside out.

Tor held Rosalie upright until both of them had finished shaking with the aftershocks of climax, then carefully pulled her off his member and drew her down by his side. Satiated for once in her very long life, Rosalie pillowed her head on Tor’s wonderfully hard chest and hummed with satisfaction.

“Do you know,” he asked at last, his voice drowsy, “how hot you are? You were? God, woman, you kept those shoes on the whole time.”

Her shoes! With the sharp heels! “Did I hurt you?” she asked in alarm, rising up.

Tor chuckled and drew her back down. “No, beautiful, I’m fine. Not a scratch. And how could I be anything but good after the way you treated me? All I expected out of tonight was a red rose and a light dinner with a pretty face. But what you did for me... I could almost worship you for bringing me back to this place and doing what we’ve done together. Hell with that, I *do* worship you.” He kissed the corner of her forehead, combing a hand through her tangled golden brown hair. “You’re a goddess.”

Rosalie closed her eyes in bliss. "Tor," she started, "there's something I'm going to tell you about me. Two things, in fact, but you have to keep quiet about them. Do you promise?"

He nodded. She could feel it, along with his hand rubbing circles on her back. "For one thing, I was a substitute at the restaurant tonight. Your date, Tisha, is home in bed, sick. I stepped in."

Tor laughed, a rich ripple of sound. "Sorry to hear she's ill, but I can't say I'm sorry you showed up instead. So what's the second thing?"

Rosalie hesitated. She'd never let anyone know about her true nature before, but this man had been the fuck of a hundred lives and more. She knew it for a certainty. This man, Tor, was her True Mate. The one man she'd been seeking for ages upon ages, and now that she had him, she wasn't about to let him go.

But more... for what he'd done, and what he'd given unto her, the gift of love and sex and for being who and what he was... if anyone deserved to know the truth, to be lured back into her bed time and time again, it was Tor.

"It's about what I am," she began, running her fingers over one of his hard male nipples, eliciting a rough breath. "You see, Tor, I'm not exactly your average woman..."

## Chapter Four

"Have another drink?" Rosalie offered, indicating the row of elegant cut-glass bottles that stood on the shelf in her bedroom -- oh, to hell with niceties, call it a boudoir. That's what it was now. She'd changed things around to prove to Tor that she was what she claimed to be, a creature who not only dabbled in magic, but actually *was* magic. That had probably been a bit of a mistake. He'd almost run out into the night, stark naked or not.

Sighing, she lay on her stomach, still nude except for her stiletto heels, kicking them in the air above the curve of her ass. "You really should have a sip, cowboy," she teased. "It's fitting before you hit the trail."

Tor gave her a fierce look, somewhere between aggravated as hell and amused as fuck, which Rosalie took as a good sign. "I will have a drink, thanks," he said a little stiffly, reaching for the first decanter within easy grasping reach.

"Ah, ah, ah," Rosalie cautioned. "That's the cheap stuff. I keep it for affairs that don't work out. One for the road before they hit the road, so to speak. For you, the good stuff. The blue bottle on the far left. Forty-year-old Laphroaig. Sinister, but it tastes like heaven." Her words earned her another *look*, which -- she couldn't help it -- made her giggle out loud.

"You think this is funny, huh?" Tor reached for his empty glass and poured two fingers of fine aged Scotch into the tumbler, then set it down and turned around to face Rosalie, arms crossed over his chest. "So what is this to you, some kind of a joke? See how many rubes you can fool with your little game?"

Rosalie shrugged, raising herself up so that her breasts pouted at him, plump and full, ripe as fruit ready for the picking. "Do you think this is all an illusion?" she asked, gesturing around herself at the room. She'd changed her bedroom's look to that

of a Wild West whorehouse, complete with heavy red velvet curtains and a thick, soft hand-made rug on the wooden boards of the floor. There was even a gleaming brass spittoon in one corner, although she was pretty damn glad no one would be using it.

Even her dress had changed, where it lay in its pile, from a simple red slip to a frothy mass of crimson ruffles and lace, along with thigh-high stockings, garters, and a discarded corset. The torn thong panties, though, those she had kept safe. If nothing else happened, if Tor really did leave her after he'd finished his drink, she wanted those for a souvenir.

*And I was so close, she thought mournfully. I finally find the one, and he thinks I'm crazy -- or that he's nuts himself, either one...*

*And what a fine pair of nuts he has, too. I'll be damned if I'm letting this one go.*

She sat up, posing for him like a pin-up girl, the kind soldiers only dreamed about getting their hands on. One arm supporting her weight on the bed, she brought the other hand down to toy with her pussy. It still gleamed with the juices from their lovemaking, and the aroma was nothing less than divine. Tor, in the middle of tossing back a healthy swig of fine Scotch, almost choked at the sight of her. He swallowed hard, his eyes watering, and stared.

"How could a woman so gorgeous be so..." He broke off, searching for a word.

"So good at lying?" Rosalie prompted. "Is that what you were going to say? It's no lie, Tor. None of this is. I am who I said I am -- a Muse. A Muse of Sex. I've been hunting for ages to find the right man, my perfect man, and that man is you. Do you have any idea how many men would love to be in your shoes right now?" She winked flirtatiously at his bare feet. By the gods, the man even had good toes. "So to speak."

Tor ran a hand over his face. "I wasn't going to call you a liar," he said tiredly, then half-laughed. "I was going to say you were crazy. But all of this, it seems so real." He reached out to feel the textured wallpaper and held his hand above the burning gaslight in its crenellated glass holder, pulling back when the heat made him wince. "I know I'm not crazy," he rationalized. "Therefore, either you have to be, or all this has to be real."

Rosalie shifted, opening her legs a little to slide one crimson-nailed finger into the slit of her pussy. She felt and saw Tor's eyes drawn to her as she began to stroke herself slowly, up and down. "Everything here is real," she soothed. "You could even prove it by an experiment if you wanted to. By logic. I have had sex with Rose, Rose is a Muse, therefore I have had sex with a Muse. I have had sex with Rose, Rose is amazing, therefore I am amazed by Rose." She added a second finger, opening her pussy for his hungry eyes to feast on. "I want to have sex with Rose again, Rose is willing, therefore I will have more sex with Rose..."

She saw Tor's jaw muscles working. "It's not that easy, Rose."

"Rosalie, Rose, Rosie. What's in a name?" She lifted her fingers briefly to her nose and inhaled the smell of herself and of Tor's own seed. "It all smells just as sweet."

"And I'm not crazy," Tor said slowly, approaching her as if he couldn't quite help himself.

Rosalie urged him on by sitting back on her ass, spreading her legs and bracing them on her stilettos, knees raised up. Her full breasts, swollen from making love and red from whisker-burn, rested heavily on her chest as she lay on her elbows.

"You haven't lost your mind," she soothed. "Just let go of what that mind is telling you, Tor. Accept and believe that this is all real. I'm the woman for you, just as you're the man for me. And you want me, don't you, Tor? You want this body that I'm offering up like a five-star meal. You want my wit and my pussy, my brains and my body, and the only price you'll have to pay is belief." She tossed her hair, letting it cascade over her shoulders and breasts. "If you want all of this, Tor, it can be yours. Just come and take it."

Tor reached the end of the bed and stretched out a hand, fingering Rosalie's pussy as tenderly as if it were a red, red rose with delicate petals unfurling under his touch. Rosalie moaned softly, dropping her head back on her neck. Now that she knew this man to be her mate, his touch felt even better than before.

Oh, she *had* to keep him. And with luck, with any luck...



"What does this mean for me?" Tor asked, slowly getting down on his hands and knees. He seized Rosalie's legs and pulled on them, scooting her down. His breath was warm on her pussy when he spoke. "What happens if I walk out this door?"

"Nothing," Rosalie managed to say, through she ached for Tor's lips and tongue on her, inside her, tasting her, touching her, taking her. "Nothing at all, ever again. You might find other women, but you'll always remember me."

"So you're the one, huh?" Tor flickered out his tongue for a tiny sip of Rosalie's nectar. "You're the lady everyone has always said was out there for me, and here I've found you. All I had to do was take a short flight, and lo and behold, here you were. Waiting for me, just me, holding a single red rose."

"It was Fate," Rosalie whispered. "Tor, please! Take me. Take me hard and bad and rough. I don't care how. Just do something, please. Believe in me and love me."

"Love you," he said before lavishing a long, wet lick on her slit, twining his tongue around her clit at the apex of his stroke. "Do you, Rosalie? Love me, I mean."

"I couldn't *not*," she gasped. "I loved you from the moment I laid eyes on you, and I would have wanted to keep you even if you weren't the One Man for me."

Tor chuckled, soft and low. "That makes a difference, then," he said, spreading her legs wide with his hands. "All the difference in the world, pretty Rose. I'm not some prize you wanted just to say you had it. You wanted me, just me, for myself. Is that right?"

All Rosalie could do was nod.

"Well then," Tor murmured, lowering his face to her pussy, "I think we can come to some sort of arrangement, woman... Muse... lover."

## Epilogue

A knock sounded on the door to Tor's office. "Come in," he called as he packed the last of his law books. Accepting a position in a major New York law firm was a hell of a jump, but he didn't regret his decision for one moment. With her connections, Rose, his Muse, had helped him land a sweet-ass deal. He was in line for full partnership.

"After all," she'd said, lifting her glass of champagne to him the last time he'd visited, "I'm accustomed to being kept in high style. I want a man who can give me everything I want."

They'd made love, this time on a bed of lilies.

What she needed most, though, was sex. Tor planned on being the one giving it to her, whenever she wanted. No more day jobs for his lady, and no more weekends hanging out at bars looking for someone to ply her magic on. She belonged to him now, just as surely as he'd belonged to her from the first moment he'd seen her face.

"I said, come in!" he repeated himself, shuffling his files into another box. "Who's there?"

"Just me." Riker, one of Tor's partners, leaned in the door with an easy grin on his face and his tie halfway undone. "So you're really doing this, huh? Moving to the big city to live with the woman of your dreams?"

"You've seen her picture." Tor pointed to the gold-framed photo on his desk. It'd be the last thing he packed. He wanted to see that gorgeous face looking at him until the very final minute. Fuck, he might carry it with him on the plane. "For a woman like my Rose, wouldn't you give up everything you owned to be with her?"

"You're a lucky man, I'm not gonna deny that." Riker looked wistful. "I know you don't kiss and tell, but the sex has got to be amazing. How'd you two meet, anyway?"

"Long story," Tor said, with a secret grin to himself. "Why do you ask?"

Riker ran a hand through his short blond hair, ruffling it up. He shrugged. "It gets lonely around here sometimes. I put in a lot of overtime. Don't have anyone waiting at home except a bowl of goldfish. And because I work so much, I don't have time to meet anyone." His expression changed to sheepish. "I just wondered if your Rose had a sister, or a friend maybe."

Tor sat back and eyed Riker from head to foot. Tall and handsome, on his way up in the corporate world. He'd be a catch for anyone who crossed his path, and Rose *had* mentioned there were other Sex Muses out there, ones she sometimes had lunch with...

"Tell you what," he said, picking up his beloved woman's photo and brushing her cheek. "You come visit us some weekend. I bet there's a woman we could introduce you to."

Riker brightened. "Really? That'd be fantastic. Thanks, man -- and hey, good luck!" He thumped the doorframe good-naturedly and took off. A lawyer's work was never done -- that was, unless he was moving across the state lines to be with the woman he adored.

Tor caressed Rose's photographed face again, aching with love for her. Love, and a healthy dose of lust for her nubile, limber body the color of coffee with three extra creams thrown in. Mmm... cream. "What do you say, sweetheart?" he asked the picture softly. "Think we can find someone to give Riker a chance?"

In the picture, Rose's eyes sparkled. She gave him a wink. Tor chuckled. "That's my girl," he said, caressing the picture of the only goddess he'd ever need. "That's my gorgeous girl."

**The End... for now.**

## **Lia Connor**

Lia Connor is currently of mysteriously unfixed abode, but can often be found wrestling with her attack kitten somewhere in the South. Her laptop and chocolate are her best friends. She loves to write about all things paranormal, especially spicy interracial stories with hot, hot sex. You can reach Lia at [liaconnor@hotmail.com](mailto:liaconnor@hotmail.com).