

VIII

# Smile Like You Mean It



Jolie Du Pré

Swords

*Smile Like You Mean It -  
Tarot: Eight of Swords*

*By*

*Jolie du Pré*

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## *Dedication:*

Thanks to everyone at the Erotica Readers and  
Writers Association, Tina and Stefani at eXtasy Books  
and my darling husband.

## *chapter one*

Mark's place is a shitbox. I lie on his couch, once firm with bold stripes of color, but now lumpy and dingy. Looking around, I see ashtrays full of butts and empty beer cans scattered around. It's dark and it reeks of stale cigarette smoke, like walking into some hole-in-the-wall bar. The curtains are drawn. A hint of sunlight seeps in and I want to open them, but I don't.

"Get up, Hope! You got work." Mark shouts at me from inside his bedroom. Today is Tuesday. Kirby's is closed on Monday, so Mark stayed home last night. It's just him and me in his apartment this morning. No young stud shared his bed.

I sit up, slowly. My head feels like it's been tortured with a hammer and I'm so nauseous that whatever is inside of me could erupt in any second. I glance at the clock. "If you're late again, you're out," my manager had warned me. Now it's 11:50 and work begins at noon. There's no way I'm gonna make

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it.

My eviction was five months ago. I only had half the rent and the owner didn't want to deal with me anymore, put all my shit on the street. Mark needed a roommate, so I begged him to take me in. He agreed as long as I helped with the rent. Now I owe him money. I'm fuckin' up.

"Come on; move your ass!"

"Yeah, okay, getting dressed."

My uniform lies where I left it, in a pile in the corner. The marinara that splattered on my apron is still there. My manager would bitch if she saw it. No matter, I have no time.

I squint when I walk outside into the sunlight. Fourteen tries and my car finally starts. A stupid engine I have no money to fix. Five after twelve and I make up excuses.

As I drive, I see Lonell walking down the street. I pull over and honk my horn. He stops, looks at me and smiles. Black skin, deadly handsome, tattoos up and down each arm, and only twenty-two, with a rap sheet a mile long.

I roll down the window. "You got something? I'm dying."

"Yeah, some real good shit, but I ain't got it wit' me. It's at the crib."

"Fuck!"

"Calm down, baby. It ain't far. Let's go."

"I can't. I got work." I look at the clock. Twelve-

fifteen, what was the point? "Okay, get in."

I needed it and I got dizzy thinking about it. We turn the corner, drive over railroad tracks and past store fronts. Traffic turns congested and music blares out of car radios as we speed by. Dark faces, unemployed, roam the sidewalks. Lonell lives in a brownstone that has been divided into rooming houses. When it was built, it was cool, but it's a pit now. We park the car. People sit on the stairs and he talks to them. Inside, loud music and more people, some on chairs or the couch, others on the floor. Every time I come to his apartment, Lonell is never alone.

"Come on, girl. It's in here."

We're in his bedroom, door closed. Lonell heads for his VCR, pushes open the flap, reaches in and pulls it out. Like a sledgehammer, my heart pounds in my chest.

"Yeah," he says, "this some good shit!"

Lonell lights the pipe and I smoke it. Straight to my brain, the smell of scorched metal fills the room. I smile at him, lit. I want him to join me, but he won't. "I sell the shit, but I don't fuck wit' it," he always says.

I kiss him. His large soft lips cover mine. I'm one of his white girls and I don't know how many he has. Blocking out the thought, I kiss him harder, pressing my body against his.

His tongue is in my mouth and his hands are on

my tits. I reach down and grab his crotch. His large dick is already hard against my hand.

“Get on the bed,” he says, and I do.

He pulls my work shirt off, followed by my bra. Then he puts his mouth on my breast. My hands cradle his bald head as I watch him roll his tongue over my nipple.

Just as he’s about to take off my pants, there’s a knock on the door, a deep voice. “Hey, Lonell?”

“What you need, man? I’m busy.”

“We need to talk, dog.”

“Damn! Wait here, baby,” he says to me. “I’ll be back.”

I lay on his bed topless, staring at the ceiling. Soon, in my haze, I fall asleep.

\* \* \* \*

Mark is in his living room when I return in the early evening.

“Where ya been?” he asks.

“Ah...work.”

“You weren’t at work. I called. Now your ass is fired.”

I knew that.

“I need someone who’ll pay me my fucking money. You gotta go. Tommy’s coming tomorrow.”

“Tommy? Come on, Mark! I need a place to crash. I’ll work it out.”



"You had your chance. Forget about the money. Just pack your shit and leave. I want you out in the morning." Mark walks into his bedroom and slams the door, leaving me alone in the living room.

He's right. I did have my chance.

Tears well up in my eyes as I change my clothes and throw the few things that I own into a bag. Mark drinks like a fish and snorts coke, but somehow he holds it together. He has a job, and he pays the rent on his apartment even without money from me. I don't try to change his mind. With nine dollars and eighty cents in my pocket, all the money to my name, I get in my car and drive.

## *chapter Two*

Oak Lawn is a lily-white community with perfect lawns. Jean, my sister, has lived there for ten years. Her husband, a fire fighter, treats her like a queen, and he adores their only child, a daughter, Michelle.

I haven't seen Jean in three years, not since she kicked me out. I don't know what brought me back to her home, but that's where I end up. I park my car on the street, embarrassed. This neighborhood's got brand new SUVs and mini vans, not junky cars that are ten years old.

I ring the bell.

"It's Hope!" Little Michelle answers the door, but she's not so little now. Only three the last time I saw her, yet she still remembers me. I fight back tears.

"Go back and finish your dinner." It's Jean, staring me in the face. "What are you doing here?"

"Uh, hi. Can I come in?"

She gets right to the point. "You can't stay here."

You know I don't allow drugs in my home."

"Jean, please, can't I just talk to you?"

"You're lucky Don is at the fire house, because he'd throw you right off this porch if he were here."

"Please, Jean?"

She stares at me for what seems like an eternity.  
"All right, come in. But just for a minute."

I take a seat. The house is picture perfect, clean and nicely decorated. It feels good to be in it.

Michelle walks up to me and hangs onto my leg.  
"Where have you been? I've missed you."

I can't stop the tears now. Michelle is this beautiful, smart little girl whose life I had missed.

Jean is not fazed. She takes a seat in the chair across from me. "Leave your aunt alone. She's tired. Did you finish your dinner? Go finish your dinner."

As soon as Michelle is out of the room, Jean looks me up and down. "Are you on drugs?"

I wipe the tears from my eyes. "What? No."

"Look at you. You're way too skinny. When did you eat last?"

It had been two days since I ate, but I didn't want to tell her that.

"Look at those dark circles under your eyes and your hair is so stringy and greasy. You used to have such beautiful blond hair. You're on drugs. Don't lie to me."

"Jean, you don't understand..."

"No, you don't understand. Are you working?"

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I say nothing, unable to tell another lie.

"Of course not," Jean sighs. "Hope, we've been through this before, remember? I've made a nice home here and you're not going to ruin it. We tried to help you. We really did. You were okay for a while. But then you went right back to the drugs. Jesus, I heard you even got arrested."

"Yeah, went back to rehab, got myself a place and a job."

"So, you're clean?" she smirks. "So what's the problem? Why are you here?"

"Jean, please. I lost my job and I don't have a place to stay. I need help, Jean."

"Are you using again?"

I look at her, but I don't speak.

"Answer me!" she screams.

"Yeah," I say softly, "yeah."

Jean gets up, walks to her front door and opens it. "Then I can't help you. Please leave. I don't want to see you here again."

\* \* \* \*

Back in my car I break down, bawling like a baby. I'm weak. It's pulling at me and I can't ignore it.

I'm low on gas. Knowing I'll never make it, I stop at a station and put five dollars' worth into my tank. Then I return to the city, to Lonell.

\* \* \* \*

It's dusk and faintly light when I arrive at the brownstone. Police cars and people surround it. Behind tape I see Lonell, lying on the ground, dead. I'm frozen.

"What happened?" a woman asks.

"They shot his ass when he was comin' in," a man replies.

I stumble along the sidewalk, losing focus. Darrell sees me walking and comes up to me, along with one of his homies.

"Hey, Hope. Vice Lords been chasin' that muthafucka for a while, baby. You all right? What you need?"

"You know damn well what I need!" I scream. "All I have is four dollars and some change, man. That's all I got."

"It's cool, baby! I'll let you slide this time."

He hands me the rock and I grab it out of his hand. My pipe's in my car. I head for it.

"Yo!" Darrell calls to me. "I got some Remy back at the house. You want some?"

I turn to look at him, "Fuck off!" I say.

I hear him talk to his boy as I leave. "That's one a Lonell's crack hos, dog. Fuck that hype."

\* \* \* \*

My head is spinning and I can't get my car started. So I walk away from the cops surrounding the brownstone. But I'm a strung-out white girl in the hood, and soon a police car pulls up beside me.

"What? What did I do?" I ask.

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm walking, can't I walk?" I reach into my pocket and put my hand on the rock and the pipe. It's too late to hide it or throw it away. I just wanna smoke, right there in front of them, and put myself out of my misery.

"Put your hands against the car." The cop is behind me, patting me down, searching my pockets.

Handcuffs are on and I'm in the car, headed back to jail. I lean the back of my head against the seat. Lonell's dead, just the way I wish I was.

\* \* \* \*

Cook County, what can I say? I sit here going insane. Jail is no place for an addict. I'm sick. I wanna pound the walls and pull my hair out 'cause I need it, but I can't get it.

Shelia's my cellmate. She's in here 'cause she forged some checks. I just wanna smack her face in because she cries all damn day. I think she misses her kids, but I can't stand the noises she makes.

Dinner is in an hour. I don't even want it. The food tastes like it's been sitting around for days. I don't eat

enough, so I'm constipated, which is fine 'cause you can't take a shit in private anyway.

I got no money for bail or a lawyer, so I sit and wait for my court date. Here for three fuckin' weeks until it comes.

I don't leave my cell much. I just keep to myself and watch my ass in case someone tries to fuck with me.

## *chapter Three*

I got out two months ago, and now I'm living in a shelter. Been drug free since jail, and I'm completing the court rehabilitation program. I owe it to my lawyer, Karen. Public defenders don't give a shit. They're overworked and underpaid. But she turned out not to be as bad as I thought. She's the one who told me about Cary House. It's all women, no men. I guess that's kinda nice. I've met some cool people here, like Chris, my drug counselor.

We're sitting in her office. She has a stress ball that she lets me grip. Kinda stupid, but it works. Today I don't feel like squeezing it, so I throw it up in the air and catch it.

"Nice catch!" Chris says. "You're looking good. How many pounds have you gained?"

"I don't know, 'bout fifteen. I'm turning into a cow, right?"

She laughs. "No, you look good. You're healthy."

"I feel pretty good. Been thinking about Lonell,



though. What's that on your desk?"

"Oh, these are Tarot cards. A friend of mine gave them to me."

"What are Tarot cards?"

"Well...one thing they're used for is to examine a person's life."

"Looks like some new age shit."

She laughs. "I'm not a reader, but they're of interest to me. This one is the Eight of Swords. I've been thinking about your situation in relation to it. Look at the card. The woman is in a blindfold, wrapped in a rope and surrounded by swords. She looks like she's trapped, but she really isn't, because in reality she could free herself. She could escape the situation if she put her mind to it. Hope, you have the power to leave the track you've been on, and what's so wonderful is that you're doing that right now. You've made a lot of progress here at Cary House."

"Yeah, I guess I have."

"You know that we're completely committed to helping you stay on your feet, and I'm always here for you."

"Yeah?"

"Yes. Anytime."

I look at her and I want to hug her, but I don't. So I stare at the floor, steady, like an anchor. It's safer that way. I feel like I want to trust her, but not completely yet.

"Hey, smile for me," she says.

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I look at her and I try to smile, but I hate feeling dorky. I'd rather smile when I feel like it.

"Smile like you mean it."

She makes me laugh when she says stuff like that, and I guess she really does care. I relax; my smile big.

\* \* \* \*

Amber's another reason I like Cary. She's been here about eight months. Her parents are loaded, so she's a rich chick, but she was a heroin addict, started when she was fifteen. Her folks blew her off for seven years, but now they're talking to her again. She's been to jail and lived on the street before she came here. Fucked a lot of guys for money.

"When do you start your new job?" Amber asks me. We're sitting in the lounge. They've made it nice for us, comfortable chairs and stuff to read. We all pitch in to keep it clean. Amber is carrying a sketchbook. It's with her all the time.

"In two days. This time I'm not gonna mess up."

"No, I won't let you. What restaurant is it again?"

"Arnie's."

"Yeah, I like working at the art store. My parents are looking into a studio for me. They've got some nice ones on the North Side. Hey, I'd like to show you my latest sketch? It's you."

"Me?"

"Yeah, I drew you."

I look at the sketch. It's me. It looks exactly like me, but I'm naked. She got everything right--my tits, my bush. "This is really good, but where are my clothes?" I try to joke, but suddenly my insides are burning. It all feels so weird.

"You look like that, don't you?" She looks into my face, but I quickly look away.

"I think it's time for dinner," I say. "We should go."

"Okay, let's go," she says, closing her book and jumping out of her seat. "I don't want to miss the mushy beans!"

She walks ahead of me and I watch her leave. I've never had a girl draw me naked before and now my mind is kind of messed up by it. She's healthy now, kicked her habit. Sometimes she draws, under the sunlight, by a window, the rays on her long red hair.

Truth is, I think Amber is beautiful. But I've never told her that.

## *Chapter Four*

**A**mber invites me to her art show. It's outdoors; the sun is shining. I look at her work. Young women and men drawn in charcoal. It's good. Behind a tree, she stands away from the others and motions for me to come over to her.

She's wearing turquoise flip-flops and a turquoise dress that sticks to her body. Her breasts are large, and she doesn't wear a bra. I don't think she's wearing underwear either, because I can see the shape of her ass. Amber's a free spirit, especially when it comes to her clothes. She never wears make-up, not that she needs it. And her hair is so long and straight it falls down to her butt.

"So, do you like what you've seen?"

"Yeah, your stuff is cool, Amber."

She comes closer to me, looking into my face, with her big hazel eyes. I sense that she's going to kiss me, and she does. Her lips are on mine and she's pressed

her body against me, her breasts smashed against my chest. She smells fresh, like morning air. I breathe her in.

She pulls away. "Do you want me to stop?"

I look at her, but I don't answer. I can't. She has her hands on my waist, and now my pussy aches.

She grins. "I didn't think so." Then she puts her lips on mine again, and pulls me even closer.

"Has anyone seen Amber?" We hear someone shout.

"I've got to go, hon. The artist is being summoned! I'll have to sneak into your room and continue this tonight."

I watch her run off. I feel my heart beating; I'm wet under my arms and even more wet between my legs. I stand still for a few minutes, trying to relax. This is a different sort of high, but I like it.

\* \* \* \*

It's almost midnight and I'm exhausted. Erin, another resident here, has been talking to me non-stop. She's a nice girl, so I try to pretend like I'm interested, but I can't stop thinking about Amber. She's tied up with the show and hasn't come back yet.

I can't keep my eyes open anymore, so I say good-bye to Erin and go to bed. In the middle of the night, soft lips on my forehead wake me up. Amber has climbed on top of me.

“Amber...”

“Shhh...we don’t want to wake Delores.”

Delores is my roommate. She could sleep through a train wreck, so I knew she wouldn’t wake up, but I was still nervous.

Amber kisses me. She’s got her tongue inside my mouth, and I can no longer hold back. I put my hands in her hair and roll my tongue over hers. Then I gently squeeze her ass. I never thought I could get turned on by a chick, but that’s what’s happening.

All I’m wearing is a nightshirt. I never wear underwear to bed; it’s too uncomfortable. Amber has pulled the covers off of me, and now her hand is under my shirt and she’s touching my pussy.

“Mmmm...you’re so wet,” she whispers to me.

Her fingers are inside of me, and she’s moving them in and out. I start to moan, so Amber puts her hand over my mouth. Then she kisses my neck. When I spread my legs wider, she pushes her fingers even deeper inside of me.

My pussy feels like a volcano, and I don’t care if Delores wakes up or not. My legs are as wide as I can get them as I grind hard on her hand. She frees my mouth and kisses it. I’m so hot. I feel like I’m going to erupt, and I do, creaming all over her fingers. Amber’s hand is over my mouth again, muffling my cries. Fuck! I’ve never come that hard in my life.

She lies beside me and holds me. Delores lets out a loud snore and we both try not to laugh.

"I'll see you tomorrow," Amber whispers in my ear.

She puts the covers over me and kisses me on the cheek. Then she walks to the door and slips out, barely making a sound.

## *chapter Five*

They don't know that Amber and I are fucking, that I'm addicted to her like the rocks that used to fry my brain. When I go to sleep, she's in my dreams. When I wake up, I need her touch.

I want to be alone with her all the time. It's too risky in the rooms, 'cause the shelter doesn't allow sex. So if we feel like spending money, we sneak off to a motel room after our jobs are over. If we don't feel like spending money, we'll go into a bathroom at some fast food place and lock the door. I'm not too keen on that option, 'cause I don't like staring at a toilet when I'm trying to kiss her.

But now we don't have to do any of that because we're moving out of the shelter. And we knew that as soon as we got the chance to leave, we'd find an apartment and move in together. It's about two miles away. The rent is cheap, but it's not a dump.

At thrift stores, we buy things for our place. Amber has a great eye and knows how to do stuff with very



little money.

I've been staring at her all day while we shop. Sometimes I feel like a dude around her, like this is my woman and I want to take care of her.

It kills me the way she wears her dresses. Today it's a dark blue one. You can't see through it, and nobody knows she's naked underneath. But I know.

When we get to the apartment, I'm gonna fuck her brains out.

\* \* \* \*

"Can you believe we're finally here?" Amber asks as we eat our dinner at our kitchen table.

"Hurry up. I've got plans for you."

"Oh, is that so? And what would those be?"

She brushes her hair out of her face, her elbow resting on the table. She's got her chin on her hand and she's staring at me. It's come to the point that if she just looks at me in a certain way I start to cream. I stand up out of my seat. "Get in that bedroom right now!"

"But I have two strawberries I still need to eat," she says with an innocent grin.

"I'm counting to five. If I get to five and you're still sitting there, I'm gonna rip that dress right off of you."

"No, no. I like this dress!" She stuffs the strawberries in her mouth, red juice all over her lips.

“Okay, finished!” She gets up out of her chair and runs into the bedroom.

When I enter the room, her dress is already off and she’s lying on the bed naked, face down. She’s giggling into the pillow as I take off my clothes and throw them to the floor.

I climb on top of her and move her hair off her back so that I can kiss her skin. My lips move slowly down her spine until I get to the top of her butt. What I like most about Amber is how soft she is, all over. I grab her ass and squeeze it, and then I just want to bite it. So I do, very gently. She giggles some more when I do that, and then I’m licking the crease and going down so that I can get at her cunt.

That’s when she turns over and I’m staring at those tits, the biggest nipples I’ve ever seen. She’s so hot they’re sticking straight up. I pinch them while I kiss her lips. I can taste the strawberries. Her breath is ragged. I know she’s hot. I know she wants to come.

“How wet is that pussy?” I ask her. I could touch it, but I want her to tell me. I want to hear it.

“Go see for yourself,” she says.

I don’t rush to it. I take my time, kissing her stomach softly until I reach her patch of red hair. I can smell her. I want it. I never thought my face would ever be in a woman’s bush, but it’s in Amber’s all the time.

I drop down, nuzzle between her legs and push my face against her pussy, smearing it with her juices.

Her sweet musk pulls me in. I like to be sucked, but she likes to get licked, so as she's moving up and down against my face, my tongue is lapping at her swollen clit. She's quiet. She doesn't make noises like I do. But when she comes she squirts like a water gun. That's how I know.

## *chapter six*

I'm in the kitchen baking brownies. I never bake, but I thought it would be a nice treat for us. Amber comes home and doesn't say anything to me. Instead she walks into the living room and sits in our big chair that we found at one of the thrift stores. She looks exhausted, like she's been crying all day.

"Do you want a brownie?" I ask her.

"No."

"What's wrong?"

She doesn't answer me.

"Amber, what is it?"

"Sometimes I feel so empty," she says.

"What do you mean? Why?"

"Working at the art store is a joke. It's not what I really want to do."

"I know. But we talked about a Master's program and trying to get into some more shows?"

"You know I've barely sold any of my work, and I'll never get into the school at the Art Institute. I'll have to move away from here."

"Amber, I told you I'd follow you anywhere. Apply to those other schools."

"I'm just so tired, Hope. You're the only thing that makes me happy right now." She gets up, goes into our bedroom and closes the door.

\* \* \* \*

Amber has gotten deeper into the depression; either she's crying or she's quiet, like a shell. Whenever I've been depressed I don't want anyone around me, but Amber lets me hold her, so that's what I do.

The problem is I'm not home much. My life is different now.

When I was living at Cary, Chris referred me to a support group for drug addicts, and I've stuck with it. I've never fucked up at Arnie's; in fact I've done so well they promoted me to Dining Room Manager. But the hours are long, and I can't always be there to keep Amber from falling apart.

Chris tried to help, but Amber won't respond. When she talks, she only wants to talk to me.

Today she refused to go to work again, and she tried to get me to stay home, too. I mean, I don't do that shit anymore. These days I always show up for work and I'm always on time. So I had to leave her at home. I was worried about her all fucking day, couldn't even think straight. I'd call to check in, but she wouldn't answer the phone.

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When I came home she hadn't moved, in that same spot on the bed all day.

\* \* \* \*

Under a bunch of discarded papers I found it, a needle thrown into our kitchen trash can. All I can do is look at it. My heart feels like it's falling to my feet.

Amber's not home. She's not at work, so I don't know where she is. I sit here, waiting for her.

Two hours later, she shows up. People knew when I was on crack, but heroin is a weird fucking drug. I had no clue.

"Amber!" I scream. I'm holding the needle in my hand.

She's standing there, staring at me.

"What the fuck is this?"

"Please don't yell at me," she says.

"I don't want it. Tell me you don't want it!"

She doesn't say anything.

"Amber...shit...talk to me!"

"I want it," she says.

Dead silence. I know she wants it, but I didn't want to hear it.

"Don't leave me," she says. Tears fall down her face.

"Amber, I won't leave you." Now I'm crying too.  
"But you've got to let me help you, honey. I love you. Will you try?"

"Yes...I'll try."

## *Epilogue*

We're sitting outside of the clinic at a picnic table. It's warm and the flowers are just beginning to bud. Several other picnic tables surround us, occupied with visitors and residents. The sun is shining, so everything is bright. The grass is still a deep green, not yet burnt by a summer's heat.

I like the way Amber's hair blows gently in the wind. She's been at rehab for about three months. I miss her, but things are going good for her here. It's expensive, but Amber's folks agreed to pay for the whole thing.

"I only have about twenty-five minutes before I have to go back in," Amber says.

"You look really good, baby. I miss you."

"They think I'll be well enough to leave in about two weeks."

"I know. I'm counting the days. Hey, I've got something for you." I reach into my pocket and pull



out a box. I'm feeling like a dude again, but this is something that I've thought about for a long time. I open the box.

"Rings! Are you asking me to marry you?"

"Something like that. Look, you're the one who turned me out, remember? There's no going back now."

We both laugh.

"Let's move to England. We can get married like Elton John!" Amber says.

"England? Hell, no. I'm afraid to fly."

"You are? You never told me that."

"Well...you've got the rest of your life to find out interesting things about me. That is if you say yes."

"Ummm, let me think. Okay, yes!"

She grabs the box and takes the rings out. We put them on our fingers.

"These are beautiful! Where did you find them?"

"I had them made."

"Cool. Shall we kiss?"

"In front of all these people?"

"Yes, but only if you give me a long, juicy one."

And that's exactly what I do.

*END*

## *About the Author*

Jolie du Pré's erotica has appeared on the Web, including Scarlet Letters and the Galleries of the Erotica Readers and Writers Association, and in print in *Hot & Bothered 4*, *Down & Dirty Volume 2*, and *Best Bondage Erotica 2*.