



Bridget Midway

Chances

By Bridget Midway

Erotiqué Press
Contemporary Romance

Chances

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Erotiqué Press
9735 Country Meadows Lane 1-D
Laurel, MD 20723

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ISBN: 1-59080-456-2 E-book
www erotiquepress.com

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First Erotiqué Press production: November 2005
Cover Art © Karen Syed

Erotiqué Press is a division of Echelon Press Publishing.

Produced in the USA

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One

He wouldn't have given Brad Pitt a run for his money in the looks department, Christa thought as she stared at him from across the crowded ballroom. The lone party guest, dressed in slacks, a crisp white button-up shirt and a dark jacket, chatted with two other guys who sported red T-shirts and jeans to a company party. What were they thinking?

But then again, what was she thinking when she decided to come to this party knowing Jim, her Jim, wouldn't be here either? She breathed a sigh of relief with the realization that in that motley crew of three none of them was Jim.

She mingled in a sea of co-workers, both from within her department and from other offices, some even from other states. In a world where computers ran everything and a simple click of the mouse made and broke deals, seeing the number of people Christa dealt with on a daily basis but, had never seen their faces, astonished her.

Working with faceless voices seemed par for the course these days. A person Christa talked to on the phone every day, or corresponded with via e-mail, could be someone she might never see and would never meet in the course of her career. However, one person, one man, had Christa's body humming whenever she thought about him, which happened every hour on the hour.

Jim. A solid name for a man who'd made her laugh on more than one occasion over the phone. He also made her cross her legs to extinguish the molten lava swirling in her pussy. On a couple

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of occasions, she actually had to remove her soaked panties and toss them in the ladies bathroom garbage can. She'd convinced herself that the janitorial staff probably reported a freak loose on the property whenever they picked up the trash.

The wetness that gushed whenever she talked to Jim had nothing to do with what he would say. He was always a perfect gentleman on the phone, although very quick with a joke or two, both naughty and tame.

Working in shipping, a direct relationship with her department, her job really, Christa had to speak to him every day. His deep voice rumbled through the phone but managed to feel like a hand gently caressing her, stroking her hair, touching her back, parting her thighs. If he stood anywhere near her and spoke, no way could she miss him.

Thinking about him now, imagining what he would look like, how he would be, Christa smoothed her hands down her red dress. Perfect for the warm summer months, the lightweight dress dipped down low in the front to give her a good business party-amount of cleavage, not too much to be considered obscene and just enough to be flattering. Too bad she couldn't show the dress off to him personally.

Lights bounced off the two twirling mirrored globes hanging over the makeshift dance floor. Cheesy, but for a party in July, and considering the Baby Boomers in her office had set up the affair, the dated decorations fit right in with what Christa had expected to see.

Disco lights meant nothing without their accompanying soundtrack. Thumping music from the seventies and eighties filled the open room. The party would have been laughable if Christa hadn't been there attending it and looking to have a good time.

Multiple chattering conversations pervaded the room until the

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only distinctive sounds were laughter and ice cubes tinkling against glasses. Closing her eyes, she imagined lying in bed, basking in an afterglow that would light her up like a firecracker, sharing laughter from little in-jokes between her and her mysterious Jim, and holding drinks in their hands.

Christa licked her tongue over her lips. She decided a drink would be appropriate to take the edge off while she waited for something to happen. Anything would have been better than nothing. Since she couldn't have her fantasy man, then expecting the unexpected would have to do.

Standing at the bar, she requested an Amaretto Sour. Since the company footed the bill for this shindig she wanted to enjoy herself. As though he cued it, a fantasy man stepped into the room just as an up-tempo song played.

A tall, dark-skinned black man sauntered into the room as though he owned the place. When he smiled, she saw something gleaming. Perfect white smile? She hoped.

"I guess every woman is eyeing that brother," a voice said from behind her.

Turning, Christa saw her friend and co-worker, Jocelyn, standing with a drink in her hand. The bartender cut Christa a furtive gaze, then glanced at Jocelyn, as though trying to tell her with his eyes and facial expression that her dear friend had just boosted her Amaretto Sour.

"I guess I should have been watching something else when I was looking at him," Christa said.

This time the bartender put the glass in Christa's hand. For that, she put a couple of bills in his tip jar. At least someone looked out for her.

"Who is he?" Christa asked.

"Haven't you seen him around the building before?" Jocelyn positioned herself next to Christa.

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Standing a few inches shorter, Jocelyn must have noticed the height difference. She straightened her posture, threw her shoulders back, and held up her chin. She looked like she was standing at attention or about to be shot by a firing squad. The sight made Christa chuckle.

"He kind of looks familiar." Christa took a sip of her drink.

The sweetness of the liquor played on her tongue. She held the amber liquid in her mouth before swallowing. Smooth. Sweet. Just like the brother who'd brought the party to a screeching halt just by walking in the door.

"That's Monty Bilson." Jocelyn polished off her drink and set it on the bar. "In the short time he's been with the company, he's been hitting it with a woman on almost every floor of our building. Twenty-five floors. Dude has been busy."

Christa crossed her arm over her chest as she stared at him. Though most women would run from a cat like Monty, Christa felt intrigued. The last thing she needed to do was start a serious relationship right now.

Jim's absence could work in her favor. She had already become enamored with his charm, wit, and sexy voice. For her, it would have been a hop, skip, and a jump into a relationship.

She wanted to move up in the company and a promotion meant moving out of middle-of-the road Norfolk, Virginia and going to Alexandria.

As though she'd read Christa's mind, Jocelyn brought herself up on her tiptoes and said, "After that breakup with Cyril, you could probably use some disposable dick."

Christa's cheeks flashed with embarrassment. She glanced at the bartender to make sure the man hadn't heard her loud-mouthed friend's candid statement.

Playing off the truth in Jocelyn's suggestion by waving off her friend, Christa said, "The breakup was bad enough. I don't

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need an immediate substitute to take that asshole's place."

"Are you kidding me?" Jocelyn's voice reached a pitch that should have cracked some of the tiny mirrors on the disco balls over the dance floor. "You're the same woman who told me that your boy never went downtown, and I don't mean in Norfolk, either, and that he always came as soon as he entered you? Honey, you're delusional."

Christa finished off her drink in one gulp and demanded another. She deserved this type of embarrassment for sharing her personal life with a woman who had been affectionately nicknamed 'The Mouth of the South'.

When Christa had finally broken up with Cyril after two very long years together, she needed to confide in someone about some intimate details of their relationship. She couldn't exactly tell her mother how Cyril gave her the sloppiest kisses known to womankind. Christa used to own a Saint Bernard that loved to lick her face. The dog had been conservative with its saliva in comparison to Cyril's slushy mouth.

Christa could still remember the shocked expression on Jocelyn's face when she'd admitted that although Christa and Cyril had sex three to four times a week, a lot compared to most couples, it was the worst sex she'd ever had. To say he was in and out of Christa in a flash would be putting it lightly. For as bad as he was, she was surprised he wanted to have sex so often.

No, what surprised her more was that she let him, not wanting to hurt his feelings. He defined the word average. Although not unattractive, Cyril couldn't compare to Monty.

Christa shivered when she remembered the lovemaking sessions where Cyril hadn't kissed her or had barely looked at her. Foreplay for him consisted of him rubbing his hand on her thigh while they were in bed, him giving her 'the eye', which looked exactly like his expression when he woke up in the mornings, and

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telling her that she looked nice. He never said she was sexy, hot, or even pretty. Nice.

Her stomach knotted at the thought of his technique. His cock barely hard, he would position himself between her legs and try desperately to enter her. Once inside, Christa found it amazing that it would take him only three thrusts before he came. After each time he would say he was sorry he came so fast and it was because she was so sexy he couldn't wait to come. That excuse had worked with her the first year of their relationship. The last year she'd hung in there just to see if it could get any worse.

Her rock bottom came when Cyril suggested that they bring in another person in their bedroom to spice up the relationship.

Christa had blasted, "Why? So you can give another woman a hot thirty second ride?"

Then he shocked her by admitting the third party he wanted was another man, and Cyril had expected to be a full participant. His bisexual tendencies prompted Christa to pack up her stuff and go.

Now a free woman, she wanted to experience all that life had to offer. Nothing held her down...except the desire to find the owner of that smooth, seductive voice.

What she longed for now involved finding a man who could take possession of her body like she had been made for him. She didn't want timid hands with stiff fingers attempting to stimulate her breasts. Big hands with strong fingers would do for her body. And if she saw another limp dick again, she would lock herself in her house and never see the light of day for the rest of her life...or until she needed a man again to scratch that itch. Whichever came first.

Watching Monty, Christa felt that he could be her ticket to her new sexual liberation. He would be perfect. She could have sex with him, great sex if her mouthy friend was right, and not feel

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guilty about getting a job in another city. He would be on to other conquests, and Christa could get her desired multiple orgasms, and then some, out of her system until she could find a stable partner wherever she went.

The downside would be that everyone in her office building would know her business if she started any kind of relationship with him. But as her grandmother used to say, you have to break some eggs to make an omelet.

Actually the true downside would be Jim. Solely from their conversations, they managed to forge a solid friendship. Strange. Christa never imagined becoming friends with a man she'd only talked to on the phone, especially since they never had phone sex, never talked dirty...well, not completely.

One time she and Jim did dance on the line of indecency.

"I can get the shipment to you in about two days," Jim had said. "Will that be good for you?"

"Is that the best you can do?" she'd asked.

At the time, Christa hadn't noticed her voice dipping down. She could easily define it as a bedroom voice. Smooth, smoky, with a longing that begged for a man to send it to higher octaves, screaming for more pleasure, and calling his name.

"I thought you would like a little teasing," he'd shot back, his voice matching in soulful intensity. "I can get you whatever you want, whenever you want. You just have to tell me how you like it."

Then, and now, Christa laughed.

"I want the full package. I don't want you holding back on me. Just keep it coming until I tell you to stop."

Then Jim had laughed. "Honey, I don't think you need that many boxes of toner, do you?"

But they both knew what they were doing. Jim had been smart enough, and strong enough, to stop the playful banter before

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they both got out of control.

Would it have been so bad to be out of control? She was single. Jim had said he was single now. What had stopped her from seeing the man in the flesh long before today?

As she watched couples standing side by side, the men's hands placed possessively and intimately on the smalls of their women's backs, she'd remembered. She had no use or desire to have a long-distance, part-time relationship. Although she didn't need a man constantly by her side, it would have been nice to be able to pick up the phone and have him be with her at least within thirty minutes and not the two-hour drive that Jim would have had to make.

As much as she desired Jim, or at least his voice and his personality, she needed something more that was actually less substantial. Just a fling. She never thought she would be that type of woman. But she decided that instead of breaking her heart again, she could endure the rumors if her needs got satisfied. In her mind, she'd more than earned that right.

"I'm telling you this now, girl," Jocelyn began, "if you don't jump on the brother, I am. He is too fine to go to waste tonight, and you are too horny to let him go."

This time not only had the bartender heard Jocelyn's proclamation but a couple of men standing at the bar overheard her too, evidently, from their chuckles.

"Will you do something about the volume control on your voice, especially when you're talking about my love life or lack thereof?" Christa ground between her teeth.

"Okay, okay, sorry." Jocelyn drew out the word 'sorry' in a singsong way that bristled the hairs on the back of Christa's neck.

Christa directed her attention back to her main objective tonight. Operation: Bed Monty. She smoothed her hand through her blown-straight hair, then adjusted the top of her dress to show

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off more cleavage. Nothing wrong with showing off her best assets.

When she turned, she noticed her friend was also preening. Jocelyn, with a skin tone a shade lighter than Monty's, licked her tongue over her lips, then adjusted her already short skirt to an impossibly shorter level by raising it up on her waist.

The aroma of Christa's vanilla-scented body spray wafted up to her face. The smell reminded her of a Christmas sugar cookie. And she hoped Monty would want to take a bite.

He sauntered across the floor to the bar. The overhead lighting shined off his shaved head as he approached her.

He certainly looked the part of a fantasy man. Tall, big hands, even bigger feet. But Christa's heart maintained a steady rhythm even as he stood next to her. Control. She chalked up her cool demeanor to being able to act aloof. However, if Monty had the voice of her Jim, her real fantasy man, then she would jump on him right here and now.

Monty placed his hands on the bar. "Hit a brother up with some Bud," he said to the bartender. Then he looked at Christa. His melted dark chocolate-colored eyes bathed over her body as though he could see her naked. "What's up?"

She smiled as a response.

No. His voice, although a nice baritone, couldn't compare to Jim's. Nights full of imagining what the man behind the voice looked like consumed her. In this day and age when there were cameras in cars, watches, and cell phones, she was surprised that she and Jim hadn't exchanged pictures already. What did he look like? If he looked better than Monty then she would be in trouble. Maybe that would be the threesome she could have: her, Monty, and Jim.

Up close, Christa studied Monty's striking cheekbones, strong warrior chin, and superstar smile. When Monty grinned, Christa

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caught a glimpse of what had glinted in his mouth from across the room: a gold-capped tooth. On other men it would have looked like something out of a junior pimp kit. Monty carried the adornment off as though he created and patented it.

His camel colored Polo shirt and matching slacks complemented his dark skin tone. Could the brother be any more perfect? He started to make Christa wonder, Jim, who?

The man eyed the tip jar, then glanced at Christa. "When something's good, you should let that person know." With that statement, he pulled a twenty-dollar bill from his pocket and tucked it in the jar.

The bartender's eyes grew wide at the more than generous tip for one bottle of domestic beer. He thanked Monty even as the man turned away.

Balling her hands together around her drink glass and steeling her nerves to talk to him, Christa cleared her throat. What would she say? "Hi, I think you're attractive and I would really like to sleep with you." Yes, that was always a great opener. But then again, she wasn't looking for boyfriend material. She wanted to be as hedonistic as possible. It was her turn and her right.

Surprising her by turning his attention to her, Monty touched the back of her hand. "I hope you're not leaving any time soon." He glanced over her shoulder. "There's some managers I need to talk to but I would really like to get to know you. Will you be here for a while?"

Christa nodded, but remained silent as though he'd taken away her ability to speak.

"Good. I would hate to think that I almost missed out on an opportunity to meet someone like you," he said, and punctuated his remark with a wink.

Christa's heart woke up and thudded. She downed more of her drink just to settle it.

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"What do you think? Hot, right?" Jocelyn asked, with an enthusiastic nod.

"He's...something."

Christa turned to watch him walk away. Damn, even his firm ass deserved attention.

"He certainly knows the right things to say at the right time."

Not that that was a bad thing. Nothing wrong with a confident, savvy man. But there was something about Monty that made her skin tingle, and not necessarily in a good way. Maybe she was just being overly sensitive since her breakup.

"I heard he's got a big dick and brother knows how to use it."

"Damn, what did she say?" one of the men standing in a group near them asked the other guys with him.

Jocelyn ignored the stares and hitched her small purse on her shoulder. "Look, I have to go to the little girl's room. You coming?"

Christa shook her head. "I'll wait for you here." Or ditch you and get Monty so I can leave.

Jocelyn nodded and strolled to the bathroom on the other side of the room.

Christa sighed. Coming to the party hadn't started out as a hook-up venture, although the night's events offered her the opportunity. Not having Jim there would make her Monty plan easy and possible.

She asked for a ginger ale this time. Before Monty returned, she wanted to sober up a little.

As though on cue, she felt someone behind her. She barely noticed the man who slipped next to her...until she heard his voice.

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Two

"Gin and tonic."

Those words erupted a hot stream of juices to pool in her panties. Only one person could do that to her.

Jim.

What the hell was he doing here? He'd told her several times over the last couple of weeks that he couldn't make it to the party, that he had a family obligation to take care of and couldn't get out of it.

Christa didn't care. More curious than upset, she took in a deep breath. Not much time to make herself even more presentable, she straightened out the front of her dress, brushed her hair down with her hand, and licked her lips, tasting both the remnants of the Amaretto Sour and the sweet ginger ale she'd just downed.

If she didn't look at this man soon, Christa thought for sure her heart would stop beating all together, because as it was, it hammered like a voodoo priest pounding on his drum.

She smiled and turned only to catch the not-Brad standing next to her. The wild heartbeat rhythm stopped. She blinked as though the image she saw before her would have changed.

About four inches shorter than her five-foot-ten height, he smiled as he accepted his drink. The sight of his straight, white teeth and genuine smile forced Christa to respond in kind. At least he and Monty had great smiles. But the differences smacked her in her face.

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Not wanting to wait to get the introductions over with, Christa made the first move.

"Hi," she said, then extended her hand. "I believe we know each other."

He lifted his graying eyebrows in a comical way. "Really? That's a new line I haven't heard. Just tell me if we know each other from a past life or something recent so I'll know if I need to buy you a drink or call The National Enquirer."

The voice and the sense of humor clued her in that this was her fantasy man even if he wasn't in her expected fantasy man package.

"I'm Christa."

The expression on Jim's face changed. Staring at her for a moment, he blinked before finally allowing a smile to come through his shocked appearance. Her pounding heart, coupled with the drumming beat from the music, sounded in her ears and commandeered her head.

He accepted her hand. His warm grip enveloped her hand in a powerful yet easy hold. Before she knew it, he pulled her close and encased Christa in a hug.

Through his suit jacket she touched his strong back. The width and muscle of it surprised her at first. But the longer Christa hugged him and took in his musky, woodsy scent, the more she wanted to stay in his arms.

"So you're the voice that's kept me awake." Jim pulled back from her. "At work, of course."

She laughed. Before she could stop herself, she blurted, "You sound taller on the phone." Realizing how odd that sounded, Christa squeezed her eyes shut and covered them with her hand. She was sure he thought she was a bubble-headed idiot. How can one judge a person's height over the phone?

"That's okay. I didn't think you were black."

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The same way a person can judge one's race, she concluded. His infectious cheery disposition put Christa at ease, although she still was bowled over at how different he looked from what she'd imagined.

Not expecting a shorter, heavier, older man with a shaved head, she couldn't say the real thing didn't dishearten her. Never one to think of herself as shallow, Christa couldn't see herself having sex with this man, even though she enjoyed talking to him. If that were the case, why did her stomach suddenly feel like butterflies occupied the space?

Aside from the height and age differences, other problems preventing her from fucking this man. Christa wanted a steady partner, a fuck buddy. She couldn't have that with Jim since he lived over two hours away in North Carolina. But she also wasn't willing to break in a new lover.

Monty had to be tried and tested. With so many differences between her and Jim, Christa suspected that there would be an awkward physical adjustment to get used to one another.

"Is that all you're drinking?" he asked and pointed to the half-empty glass of amber soda.

"I wanted to lay off of the booze for a while. Didn't want to get too drunk." She crossed her arms over her chest.

"Damn. And I was looking to take advantage of you. How am I supposed to do that when you're sober?" He chuckled.

No matter what she may have thought about his appearance now, Christa still found him the same charming man from over the phone. She laughed with him.

"Besides, there are too many supervisors and managers here. I don't want to make a fool of myself," she said.

"Understandable. See, I'm lucky. No one pays attention to our offices in North Carolina. We're the armpit of the company. If I get drunk and make a fool of myself, no one will even know

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who I am." He took a sip of his drink to punctuate his point. "Good thing I don't plan on getting drunk. It's taken us how many years to finally meet each other?"

Christa thought for a while, although she had the information on the tip of her tongue. She knew Jim had been the man who, for three years, had kept her smiling at work with his calls and e-mails. Instead she paused before she answered.

"What? Two, maybe three years?" she said.

"That long, huh? All that time and this is the first we've met each other." He shook his head.

From his expression, though, Christa gathered something deeper. Was that regret covering his face? Jim looked as though he wished he could have changed something within that time.

Christa wished she had, too. She wished she hadn't met Cyril. She wished she didn't have this aching need for sexual satisfaction. And she wished her situation with Jim could have been different.

"By the way, you look absolutely stunning tonight," Jim said.

His gaze scanned her from her hair down to her dress. The hair she had gotten styled at the beauty parlor just that afternoon. And she'd been dieting for the last four months to get into her dress.

When he brought his gaze back up, she hadn't expected her breath to catch just from looking into his clear blue eyes. She thought Monty's eyes demanded attention. Jim's gaze sucked her in and held her like a warm embrace.

"Want to sit down and talk for a while? We don't seem to talk enough at work as it is," he kidded.

"I know. We barely say two words to each other when we're working." Christa breathed a sigh of relief when their familiar repartee returned.

Finding an empty table nearby, Christa walked in front of

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Jim. Her knees buckled when she felt his large hand on the small of her back. That familiar touch felt both warm and comforting, like it belonged there. She felt like one of the couples there at the party. How did Jim manage to do that?

Once seated, no time lapsed before they started talking just like they had over the phone.

"Why didn't you tell me you were coming to the party? I wasn't even looking for you all night," Christa said without breaking her stare.

"My family plans fell through. My brother and his family decided to intrude on my life next weekend instead of this one. So I got all gussied up and high-tailed it to the party, hoping to see you."

She gripped her glass so he couldn't see her hands shaking.

"I never imagined you would look like this," Jim said.

His gaze turned down to the table, as he rolled the glass between his two hands.

"Is the real me a good thing or a bad thing?" she asked. Christa nibbled her bottom lip in anticipation of the answer.

He brought his gaze up. With an expression full of sincerity, Jim replied, "Oh, it's very good."

"But you thought I was white."

"I knew you were beautiful," he countered.

The heat that filled her chest rose up to her neck and face until she knew her cheeks had to be a nice, bright pink hue.

During their short conversation, Jim hung onto every word, as though he had half expected her to reveal a hot stock tip. Having a man listen to her that way made her tingle all over, but this time in a good way, a very good way.

Christa crossed her legs when she felt a smoldering heat. Staring at Jim, she tried to figure out what it was about him that made her feel this way. How could this man make her feel like

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she was the only beautiful woman on the face of the earth?

"So are you still looking at being a big company woman?" he asked.

Before she answered, her gaze went down to her arm. It was then that she noticed he was smoothing his fingertips over her arm. The delicate touch raised the hairs over her body. Then she felt her nipples tighten against her bra.

"I didn't go to school for all of those years for nothing," she said after swallowing hard.

She tightened her thighs together to douse the growing heat.

"I don't know. A lot can be said for my little office in the Carolinas. It's laid-back, easygoing. No one bothers you. It's a little piece of paradise."

"But it's too slow. I need a faster pace. I need something that's going to keep up with me."

His hand stopped on her arm.

Glaring at her, his crystal blue eyes looking icy, he said, "You think you'll find what you want in Richmond or Alexandria or wherever else you want to go to?"

She removed her hand from the table. "It's all about location."

Jim snickered. "It always has been with us, hasn't it?"

Christa didn't like the conversation they weren't having. She suspected Jim must have thought the worst of her. But she hadn't lied to him. She'd always been up front about her goals. But she knew he wasn't asking about a job. He wanted to know their fate.

He took in a deep breath. On the exhalation he said, "I know I'm probably not what you'd expected to see."

She put her hand on top of his. "Jim, it's not like that. I—"

"It isn't? What is it, then?"

"You know I had that bad relationship with Cyril."

He nodded.

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"I don't want to jump right into another relationship, especially with a man who's—"

"What?" he asked, cutting her off.

"So far away," she replied simply.

Jim blinked. "So the only thing keeping us apart is distance? Man, that sounded redundant."

That got her to smile.

He held her hands. Her heart accelerated.

"What is it that you want, Christa?"

No time for subtleties. Since he asked, she had to be completely honest. What she desired involved carnal passions beyond what she suspected Jim could give her. She also didn't want any attachments. With Jim, she would get attached.

"I want to be happy. And my happiness, for once, is going to revolve around me and that's all."

"Sounds like you have it all worked out."

The disappointment in his voice wasn't lost on her. Hell, the longer she sat and talked to Jim the more she became disappointed in her own self.

"The last time we talked, you said you were coming to this party by yourself," Jim began. "Is that still the case?"

Christa leaned forward before she answered. "Yes, I came alone."

"Then maybe we could—"

"Hey, Christa, you have got to get out on the dance floor, girl," Jocelyn said as she continued to gyrate and grind to the sounds of Kool and the Gang. During one of her twirls she faced Jim. "Who's this?" she asked Christa in a blunt manner.

"Jocelyn, this is Jim. He works for the company, too." Christa made the introductions and hoped her nearly inebriated friend wouldn't recognize that this Jim was the same Jim Christa had been pining over for months.

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"Nice to meet you," Jim said and shook Jocelyn's hand.

Those four words were enough for Jocelyn to know who he was. Her eyes went wide and she split her gaze between the two.

"So you're Jim. I've heard so much about you." Jocelyn cocked her head.

Christa wanted to pluck it right off of Jocelyn's shoulders. Jim may not be the man she ended up with tonight, but she would be damned if she let Jocelyn make a fool of Jim or herself.

"I hope it's all been good," Jim said.

"It was up until this point."

Christa jabbed Jocelyn in her arm.

The DJ played a slow song.

"It's about time they played something slow," Jocelyn said. She waved her hand in front of her face to cool down.

Jim took Christa's hand. "Would you like to—"

"I told you I would be back," Monty said, cutting Jim off. "Excuse me, partner. This woman owes me a dance."

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Three

Before Christa could say anything, Jocelyn jumped into the mix. "You go dance with Monty, Christa. I'll take care of your friend."

With no chance to object or agree, Monty pulled Christa onto the dance floor. Monty, with his incredible height, loomed over her as he snaked his arms around her waist. His hands rested on her hips. To steady herself, she put her hands on his arms and leaned into him.

In the arms of an incredibly good-looking man, whom every woman and some men stared at, Christa only thought of Jim.

With her face close to his chest, she inhaled deeply. She blew out a long breath when she didn't take in the same intoxicating aroma that had clung to Jim.

"I'm Monty, by the way," he whispered in her ear. "I just realized that I pulled you out here to dance and I never even told you my name."

She smiled. It slipped her mind that although she'd talked about him she hadn't been introduced to him either.

"Christa," she offered.

"I know."

She lifted her head to look into his eyes.

"I've seen you around the office." He cocked a smile at the corner of his mouth. "I've asked about you. And Shorty over there told me a little about you."

Christa glanced behind her to see Jocelyn dancing with Jim.

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They stood a good foot apart as Jocelyn kept one hand on Jim's shoulder and the other in his hand.

Safe. Seeing them like that comforted Christa. But she had no right to be jealous. She'd released her claims on the man by saying that minutes and miles kept her from pursuing anything further with him.

"You want to know about me?" Monty asked pointedly.

Christa directed her attention back to him. "I know you've gotten a reputation around the office building."

He licked his lips. "Do you believe the rumors?"

"Should I?"

His hands slipped down to right above the swell of her ass. Her body prickled from the touch.

"Just believe what you see in front of you and what your heart tells you." Monty dipped his head down, resting it next to her face. "I like the smell of vanilla."

She pressed her body close to his. Her hardened nipples brushed roughly against the lace of her bra. Although her body responded to this man's touch, her heart screamed for something more.

Shut up, heart. I'll satisfy you later.

"What else do you like?" she asked, feeling brazen from the alcohol mixed with desire.

"Do you really want to know?"

The tone of his voice didn't stir her like Jim's, but what he said did.

Unable to speak, Christa nodded.

"After this dance we can discuss it...privately."

She turned her head up to voice an objection but Monty cut her off.

"After the dance," he repeated.

If she had to wait, he had better be worth it. She'd left a good

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man to taste this rumored perfection.

* * *

The way Jocelyn stared at Jim with a wary eye didn't escape from notice. She'd been giving him the evil eye since they'd stepped out to dance. But he wasn't sure why he was the target of her anger. He didn't know her. But he wanted to get to know Christa more.

Christa's beauty had struck him immediately. Thank goodness they were in public. He wanted so much to reach out and touch more of her honey-brown skin. Feeling her arm made his penis so hard that he was thankful they were seated.

The fact that she was black did surprise him. He'd pictured her looking differently. Always a brunette in his fantasies, he imagined her being about his height, not taller, and maybe five years younger than him. She looked more like ten to fifteen years younger, maybe more.

Neither her age nor her color bothered him. What made him bristle, was watching Christa dance with the guy he suspected she wanted to be with, instead of him. He looked like he was one of those fast-trackers.

"You know she likes you, right?" Jocelyn began.

Hearing her friend's voice broke Jim's concentration from staring at Christa and Mr. Wonderful dancing. "What?"

"Christa. She digs you, but just as a friend."

"Is that right?" Jim would humor her, but this really wasn't the conversation he wanted to have with this woman. "I like her, too. She's smart. She's got a great personality. And she's funny."

"She's also gone through a really bad relationship with a guy who was below average." Jocelyn screwed up her face when she released the news.

"In what regard?" he asked. Not wanting to be sucked into the story, Jim couldn't help but ask.

Bridget Midway

"Looks."

Jim knew where this was headed. He glanced over at the man dancing with Christa. Then he brought his attention back to Jocelyn.

She said, "And he wasn't good in the sack either."

He blinked at her candor. "Too much information."

"Just telling it like it is. Besides, I was just letting you know, so that you won't be disappointed when she leaves with Monty tonight. I saw you staring at her. Let me give you a bit of advice." Jocelyn stumbled forward, causing Jim to steady her by holding her shoulder. "She's a little out of your league."

He had to bite the inside of his cheek to keep from laughing. When the feeling subsided, he cleared his throat. Thankfully, the song they were dancing to ended.

"Thank you for the dance and the advice. But if there's anything that Christa wants to tell me, she'll do it herself." After a kiss to the back of Jocelyn's hand, Jim headed to the bathroom.

That was a first, a blow-off from a woman's friend. To hear that Christa had a lackluster love life didn't shock him. They had talked before about how horrible her last boyfriend had treated her, although Christa never went into details.

If he was with her, Jim would do whatever he could to keep her happy, including making love to her however she wanted. If she wanted nice, slow, easy lovemaking, he would do it. If she liked it fast and rough, he could go for that, too. Bottom line was that he wanted to be with her. Now she just needed to realize how good he could be for her instead of Mr. Tall-Dark-And-Tan.

Just needing to cool off, Jim splashed some water on his face, then dried it with a rough paper towel. As he brought it down from his face, the door to the men's bathroom opened. In walked the man who had held Christa in his arms.

Gritting his teeth, Jim tossed the used wad into a nearby

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trashcan, then washed his hands. Christa's dance partner sidled next to him at another sink.

"How are you doing, partner?" he asked.

"Doing fine." Jim stared at him in the mirror, catching his smug expression.

"Lots of fine women here tonight."

"I noticed. Didn't know we had such attractive coworkers." Jim wanted to stress the word coworker so that maybe it would turn this guy off from her.

Instead he said, "Yeah, that little honey-dip I was dancing with was all over me. Don't mean to hurt your feelings, buddy, but she's got my name written all over her."

Jim gritted his teeth to hear this jerk talk about her that way. "Funny," he began, "I don't remember seeing the word 'asshole' on her forehead or arm. Is your name written somewhere else on her?"

"Oh, you're making jokes?" The man chuckled. "Here's what you need to do. You go home with your tired jokes. I'll take Christa and pound that sweet ass until she forgets your name, my name, and her name."

Jim, although he stood a foot shorter than him, still stepped up to the man and squared off against him. "If I hear that you've hurt her in any way, shape, or form, I will come after you and shoot your dick off."

The man opened his mouth to argue, but Jim turned the hot water on full blast so that it bounced from the sink and splashed over the guy's shirt and pants.

"Mother fucker!" he screamed as Jim walked out.

Jim ducked through the crowd, looking for Christa. Even if what Jocelyn and the asshole said were true, Jim still saw Christa as his friend. She deserved to hear what had been said about her.

Seeing her standing alone by the bar, Jim barreled toward her.

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Before he could reach her, Jocelyn stood in his path.

"Care for another dance?" she asked, her speech slurring a bit more than before.

"No. No, thanks." He tried stepping around her but she managed to wrap her arms around his shoulders, probably to steady herself more than anything else. "Maybe I should call you a cab."

"Yeah, maybe you should." She hiccupped. "Besides, I was going to spend the night in Christa's room but it looks like she's a little busy."

Jim peered over Jocelyn to catch Christa and the man from the bathroom walking off somewhere.

"Damn!" he said between gritted teeth.

"Don't worry. I'm still here."

"Great. Nice consolation prize."

Jim's heart ached more that Christa was making a mistake by going off with the man, but also because she hadn't given him a second glance. She was big girl. If this was the life she wanted, the type of man she wanted, he would let her go. He would just have to be happy to be her friend.

God, he hoped she had made the right decision.

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Four

As smooth as Monty had been inside at the party, outside in the back of the building where he'd taken Christa to be alone, he shown himself to be a wild animal, and a clumsy one at that. His frantic heat overwhelmed her as he cornered her against the concrete wall and crushed his mouth on hers.

Remember, this is what you wanted, right? Uninhibited sex with the perfect guy?

Trying to keep up, Christa put her hands on his shoulders and attempted to match his ferocity by shoving her tongue into his mouth. Instead he pushed her tongue back with his. His snaky tongue slithered into her mouth, gagging her. He'd slept with a bunch of women in her office building by kissing like this?

His large hand grabbed her breast through her top. He squeezed it like a melon. Maybe he wanted to see if she was ripe. Squeezing her stomach, Christa did everything she could not to laugh.

"Damn, you are hot," he said when he finally came up for air. "When I watched you coming in and out of the building, I knew you would be."

Christa took in large gulps of air during the break. So this was real passion, huh? Monty pressed his body against hers. His hardened cock pushed against her stomach. Jocelyn hadn't been kidding about his reported size. It felt like the length of him went from just below her navel to right below her breasts.

The guy must have been reading her mind, or noticing the

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way she gazed down, then licked her lips. Monty grabbed her hand and placed it right at his erection.

"Feel that, baby?" he growled. "It's all for you."

And apparently his dick belonged to the rest of the women in her building, too. Not only did his length impress her, but his girth caused her pussy to twitch in anticipation. Could he get that inside of her and make her feel good? If Christa believed Jocelyn, the man knew what to do with all of this equipment and would know how to please her. But if he fucked the way he kissed, she had a lot to worry about in the next few minutes.

"Yeah, you look like one of those nice church girls," he said, lowering his voice at an attempt to sound sexy. "I know you church-going women are the freakiest ones out there." He cocked a wicked smile. "Tell me, Christina."

"Christa," she corrected. She should have left right then and there, but she allowed him to finish running his tired lines.

"Yeah. So, you like to get down? Are you a little freak in the bedroom?"

She smiled as a way of answering. She'd brought chocolate syrup to bed once when she was with Cyril. Once the apparently cold chocolate hit Cyril's bird chest, he'd yelped and that ended her foray into freakiness. But she was down for anything. Anything.

"Why don't you show me what you can do with that pretty little mouth of yours." He put his hands on her shoulders.

From his anticipatory expression, she knew what he wanted.

Christa glanced up when she heard a slight buzzing sound. The streetlight at the corner of the building made the sound while crickets in the park next door to the hotel and conference center chirped.

Christa swallowed and settled onto her knees.

"Yeah, that's it."

She gazed up and saw him nodding his approval. Slow to

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move, Monty took her hands and placed them at his waistband. Thank God they stood at the corner of the building where the streetlight couldn't illuminate them entirely.

She slipped his belt through the buckle, then worked on his pants.

"Nice," he moaned. "Looking good."

She smiled and looked up, only to find Monty staring off to the side. Redirecting her attention, she blinked a few times to make sure her eyes weren't playing tricks on her for the second time this evening. Here she was on her knees in front of this man, about to give him oral sex, and he was staring at the reflection of the two of them in the darkened window.

Glaring at Monty, she watched him smoothing his hands down the front of his shirt. Then he tilted his head back and licked his lips slowly, all the while still staring at their reflection. All of that primping couldn't have been for her.

Keeping her hands on his pants so as not to stir suspicion, Christa ducked her head down so that she could no longer see herself in the reflective glass. Monty still stared. Actually from his self-satisfied grin, he seemed happier now that she was out of the picture.

Was this what she wanted? Hell no!

"I'm out of here," she said and bolted to her feet.

"Hey, wait. Where do you think you're going?" Monty grabbed her arm.

"You aren't into me. You love yourself, and I don't want to get in between your love affair with you and the mirror, so I'm splitting." She wriggled her arm from his vise-like grasp.

"What? You think you can do better than me?" He laughed.

"Yeah, why don't you go get that short dude in there that's been eyeing you all night? You two deserve each other."

"At least he knows how to treat a woman."

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It hit her then as soon as she'd said it. In the short time they were physically together, Jim had treated her like a queen. He looked at her in her eyes when they talked. He seemed genuinely concerned about her. And bottom line, he did like her. What the hell was she doing out here with this piece of nothing when there was a wonderful man inside?

Christa turned her back on Monty as she struggled to get to the door.

"Go on then. I didn't want to fuck your tired ass anyway," Monty screamed after her. "I wanted you because I hadn't done a bitch on the twenty-first floor yet."

Christa's hand froze over the doorknob. To know she was only going to be a conquest, hurt. Why had she been so willing to humiliate herself for sex?

Turning on her heel, she sauntered back to Monty.

"That's right, bitch," he said with a self-satisfied nod. "You realize now that you're giving up something good, right?"

Christa nodded. "You're right." When she stood directly in front of him, she reared her hand back and slapped him across his face. When Monty recovered, she slapped him again. "Don't you ever call me a bitch again! And the next time you see me walking in and out of the building, look the other way."

She stormed back to the door to head back to the party. With any luck she could find Jim and apologize for thinking he could be anything less than number one.

Scanning the room, she didn't see him. Had he left? Did he see her walk out with Monty and make his own conclusion?

Christa scurried through the hoards of people grouped together but couldn't find him. Her body went cold. She didn't get to say goodbye. Years of talking, of friendship, of longing, all gone because Christa wanted to be selfish. Damn her itch. She needed to just let it itch for a while to punish herself.

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"Last dance, folks," the DJ announced over the microphone.
"Grab someone special."

Christa let out a long breath. She couldn't even find Jocelyn to confide to her what all had happened tonight. She had no one.

Standing to the side of the dance floor, she clutched her purse. No use staying any longer. When she turned to go, she saw Jim standing behind her.

Her mouth hung open as she stared at him. This time she looked at him with new eyes. The strength it took for him to stand there and stare back at her made him seem taller than his natural height. Gone was the cold glare. His gaze now held the warmth it had before.

Christa walked up to him since he stood solid in his spot.

"I've made a mistake."

He nodded.

"And I'm sorry. I didn't want to hurt you. It's just that I—"

"For once," Jim began, "let's stop talking. You want to dance? It's the last one."

Feeling like this last dance would be their last connection, Christa agreed readily. He took her hand in a forceful move that unexpectedly started her heart fluttering. Once in the middle of the floor, when he turned around, she froze. The age difference didn't bother her. The different races didn't concern her either. The height difference became apparent.

Christa lifted her foot and reached back to remove her black stiletto.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"I was going to take off my shoes so that we could be closer in height."

He touched her arm to stop her. When Christa stared at him, his blue eyes enraptured her until she could do nothing but stand still.

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"Don't take them off. Do you know how sexy your legs look in them?"

With those words, she lowered her foot, wrapped her arms around his broad shoulders, and leaned into him. As soon as his hands settled on her waist, Christa closed her eyes. She couldn't tell whose heart beat the hardest, his or hers.

Pretty soon the sound of the music drowned away until all she heard in her head was the pounding of their two beating hearts and his humming in her ear. It made her insides quiver.

Jim's hands moved around to her back. As Christa had only imagined, his large hands with their thick fingers, slid up her spine over her silk dress until she felt naked.

His hands held her in a way that made her feel secure, the way a man should make a woman feel, the way a lover should act. Christa couldn't deny the heat erupting from her pussy each time he smoothed his hand over her newly sensitive skin.

Her clitoris throbbed. Her new black lace thong underwear had to have been reduced to a black, wet, lacy patch of fabric by now. She let out a long breath and held him tighter.

At the end of the song, Christa released him. "Thank you." She kissed his cheek, feeling nothing but smooth skin. Her tongue snaked its way from her mouth to touch his flesh, tasting his saltiness.

Jim held her hand and kissed the back of it while staring at her. His confidence overwhelmed her. Soon Christa started to feel small and he had become seven feet tall.

In a more intimate move, he turned her hand over, spread her fingers open to display her palm, and he placed it against his firm lips. The gesture dripped with sexual heat, until it made Christa gasp upon initial contact.

After the last dance, people began to filter out of the room. Christa asked Jim if he wanted to have coffee in her hotel room.

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"It's the least I can do for the way I've acted tonight."

She hadn't thought about getting the room up until a week before the party. She knew she would be doing some drinking and didn't need to drive.

Jim agreed and walked her to the elevator, his hand steadily holding the small of her back. Soon she forgot that it was there. The touch felt so right.

Once in her room, Christa picked up the hotel pre-packed coffee next to the maker and read the directions.

Sheepishly she admitted, "I don't drink coffee."

Jim grinned as he slipped off his jacket. "Good, because I didn't want coffee."

She dropped the packet onto the dresser and went to him, drawn like a magnet, unable to break from his pull. She stepped out of her shoes as she got closer to him. That elicited a chuckle from him.

"They're cute but they're killing my feet." Christa made the admission once she stood in front of him.

Being slightly lower, she stood nearly face to face with him. It was then she admired his strong jaw line, his Roman nose, and his perfectly shaped goatee. Upon closer inspection, Christa couldn't help but to be taken in by his raw sexuality. From his look, to his attitude, to the way he treated her, he exuded a sensuality that she had never encountered in other men.

Again, without hesitation, she blurted, "You're sexy." And this time she didn't want to take the words back.

"Funny. I was just about to say that to you."

He pulled her close and kissed her. The connection of his lips to hers weakened her knees until she had to hold onto his shoulders for support. His tongue slipped easily into Christa's welcoming mouth. Now this was the way a man should kiss a woman.

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In reaction, she held him tighter, gripping his shoulders through his pressed white shirt. The kiss beat anything she could have imagined. Gentle and firm all at once, his passionate gesture erupted goose bumps over her flesh. Christa had to have this man, not a fantasy.

"I know you're not looking for someone permanent," Jim began breathlessly. "Just let me give you tonight."

Christa didn't have to respond. Her body more than answered for her.

Once Jim and Christa removed each other's clothes, he being careful of her delicate dress, and Christa taking care not to pull off any buttons from his shirt or trousers, they slipped into bed.

"Here," he began, "there is no height difference."

Christa nodded, unconcerned now about any differences between them. She wanted to feel him inside of her, have him give her pleasure she knew he could bring her. He wanted to feel her, too, but in a different way.

With only his fingertips, he floated them down Christa's body, over her shoulders, down her hardened nipples where he teasingly feathered over them, down between her breasts, over her stomach, and dusted down each leg. All at once, he awakened her nerves, her body, making her more sensitive to everything: touch, smell, sounds.

Once sheathed with a condom, he entered her, slow and easy, as though he wanted to experience every nuance of her cunt. The groan he made once he got down to the hilt made Christa even slicker.

Now it was her turn to touch him, caress him as he'd done to her. Only she didn't want to be faint and light, and gentle as he'd been. Christa wanted to feel him, grab him, create indelible sense memories so she would never forget him.

She wrapped her legs around him. His strong thighs pressed

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against her inner thighs. Her hands explored his face and neck. Christa allowed them to smooth over his head, feel the prickles of hairs growing back over it, and let them tickle her palms.

She coasted her hands down to his small ears, then over his bushy eyebrows. His gaze bore a steely stare into hers until she felt powerless to look anywhere else. Christa's hands cupped Jim's ass as he made easy thrusts inside of her. But she wanted more. She needed more from him.

Without disconnecting, she pushed Jim onto his side and eventually rolled him onto his back. Sitting on top of him, her legs astride, she enjoyed more of his body. The deeper penetration made her moan in a guttural manner, creating a noise she'd never made before.

Jim's tree trunk-sized chest heaved as he panted. She took his hands in hers. Calluses covered the palms and a few fingers, the mark of a hard-working man. She placed them on her breasts, wanting to feel their roughness against her skin. Her nipples brushed against them, making her body sizzle. While he palmed her, she smoothed her hands over his muscled arms.

"We fit together," he commented between gritted teeth. "Your tits are the perfect size for my hands." He eased one hand down her waist to grab her ass. "This fits nicely, too. Face it. You're made for me."

He lifted his hips from the bed to get a deeper penetration, and she put her hands to his chest for support and desire to continue touching him. With a growl Jim squeezed her hips. Tremors shook his body until he became tight and convulsed all at once.

Hearing him, feeling him, sensing his needs, wants, and desires, Christa let her senses tumble madly together until she exploded, releasing all of her pent-up emotion and draining every bit of ecstasy she had been saving for this man, this moment.

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She kissed him hungrily, nipping his bottom lip as though trying to convince herself that he was real, that this incredible event had just happened. He wrapped his arms around her, maybe to just hold her or to calm her newly ravenous demeanor.

As he stroked her dark brown hair that fell into her face, he asked, "Any regrets?"

Christa smiled. "Yeah. I regret that I didn't take a chance and try to meet you sooner."

He chuckled. Wrapping his arm around her, he kissed her forehead. As Christa lay in his arms, she didn't want to think about what would happen after tonight. But she would have to because after making love to Jim, there was no way she wanted him out of her life. Damn. She never wanted to get attached to him.

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Five

Beautiful. Jim stared at Christa lying beside him, still asleep. The slight smile on her face told him he'd pleased her. Knowing he gave her sweet dreams plastered a smile on his face.

In the light of the early morning sun, Christa's golden skin glowed. Unable to resist, he smoothed his hand over her hair. The softness tickled his rough palm. He coasted his hand over her shoulders and down the valley of her back, he admired the silkiness of her flesh. Her skin reminded him velvety rose petals.

He couldn't resist and kissed her shoulder. She stirred but remained sleeping. His hand continued its trek down her back until he reached her ass. And what an ass. Removing the sheets from her hot body, he stared at her high, rounded backside. With a gentle tug with his foot, he pulled the rest of the covers off of her body. He stared at the long legs. Perfection.

How the hell had he been so lucky to not only get her as a friend but to make love to her, too? He'd thought for sure when he'd seen her walk off with that asshole that he didn't stand a chance with her. Thankfully, after getting her drunk friend in her cab last night, Jim had to go back inside to say goodbye to a couple of his buddies before he left.

When he'd seen Christa frantically searching the place, he'd hoped she'd been looking for him. Locking gazes on hers, he'd been ecstatic to know he had been the object of her hunt.

Her look of shame, disappointment, and hopefulness had said it all. He didn't need to hear what she did and didn't do with the

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other guy. The point was that she was here with him. He gazed at her body again. Yes, she was here with him.

Her sweet aroma of sex and sugar captured his senses. From taking in her scent to touching her and now staring at her body, his cock slowly swelled again. God, she made him feel young. Hell, she made him feel again!

Jim never thought he would feel this way about a woman again. Content to being a great dad, an even better grandfather, and a spectacular fisherman, he had resigned to living the rest of his life as a happy, carefree bachelor. How had this woman snagged his heart? And how could he let her go in a few hours?

But then again, what could he do? She was bound and determined to live that corporate life, with or without him, although a small part of him wanted her to need him, want him.

He pressed his lips against her forehead, then kissed the tip of her nose, then to her full, pillowy lips. He could have camped out at her succulent mouth. The kiss on her lips finally woke her.

Blinking several times to focus, she stared at Jim. When a smile drifted up, he breathed a sigh of relief. He didn't want her having regrets about the night before, and he didn't want her reaction to him to be blamed on alcohol.

"Morning," she mumbled.

"A very good morning." He kissed her lips again while his hand stayed on her bare back.

"How long have you been watching me?"

Before answering, he studied her again, gazing deep into her coffee-colored eyes. "Doesn't seem like long enough."

Her smile widened showing off her impressive white teeth. "I had a really good time last night."

Jim let his smile be his response.

"So what happens now?" she asked.

"Guess I can't convince you to move to Williamston, can I?"

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He kissed her shoulder again while he waited for her answer.

"Um, no," she responded and followed it with a moan. "Come to Norfolk."

"I can't be so far from my family." He feathered kisses down the center of her back until he reached her plump ass. "You don't think we can make this work?"

She didn't answer. Then again, he didn't need to hear her say it wouldn't work. That would have crushed him.

Sliding between her legs as she remained on her stomach, he palmed her backside. Her cheeks filled his hands and made his cock engorge even more. If he couldn't have her for just the weekends, he had to take what he could. He would have to make this memory last.

He spread her cheeks apart and gazed at her puckered hole. Her breaths came out shallow and fast. Her need became palpable under his touch. Bending his head, he swiped her with his tongue, tasting nothing but saltiness but extracting a sensual response from her where her body writhed in pleasure and she clawed the bed.

When he couldn't resist the tempting scent wafting from her sweet pussy any longer, he raised her hips then dipped his head down and licked her puffy labia. Her body jerked.

"Don't stop," she begged.

He complied. Parting her delicate folds, he took no time in diving his tongue inside of her. Better than a salt-covered piece of watermelon, she tasted sweet and brackish at the same time. He pushed his tongue inside of her as far as he could go, which made her moan in ecstasy. Raising her hips higher, he stopped for a moment when he saw her fingers working her clitoris.

Damn, this woman knew what she wanted and how to get it. As she worried her pleasure nub, he continued probing his tongue inside of her while his thumb circled her anus. Once he dipped his thumb inside of the tight hole, her body shook. She screamed in

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pleasure as she grinded her pussy into his face. Why the hell did she have to live so far away?

Jim didn't want to lose this woman, but he knew she couldn't be contained in the slow and easy life in Carolina. So he would just have to enjoy her now.

"Now, baby, now," she exclaimed.

He didn't have to ask her to clarify. Reaching for his wallet in his pants, he dug through it searching for another condom.

"Shit!" he said through gritted teeth. "I'm out."

"My purse." She pointed to a small black handbag on the dresser.

"Don't move!"

Hopping from the bed, he hurried to her purse but knew not to go inside. Being married for almost twenty years taught him that. Never go into a woman's purse.

"Just go in there and take it out," she said.

He should have known Christa would have been the exception to the rule. He opened the small clutch and didn't have to search long before coming across three linked condoms in a tan-and-white wrapper.

He ripped one off, opened it, and slid it over his length. As he climbed back on the bed, Christa started to prop herself on her hands and knees.

"No. Stay where you are," Jim said.

To keep her in the position, he put his hand to the small of her back. Positioning her leg between his knees, he helped curve her hips around until she was almost lying on her side while her chest remained flat to the mattress. Then he brought himself up on his knees.

Holding his shaft, he teased her by sliding his sensitive tip up and down between her slick folds. The way his heart pounded in anticipation, he feared the damn organ would explode before he

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could even go inside.

Sliding inside of her, he savored her tightness with every succulent inch. The feeling of entering her would stay with him forever and a day. Her warmth transformed into a blazing heat the deeper he got. Her thick walls clamped down around him until he didn't feel trapped. He felt welcomed, needed, wanted, desired.

His thrusts were slow and easy at first. The more she reacted with her moans and movements, the faster he went. A cool sheen of sweat covered him from his head down to his thighs. He didn't think this incredible feeling could get any better. Then Christa did something that blew his mind.

With just a slight movement, she cocked her hip up higher giving him a deeper access and pushing her fleshy backside against him.

"Soft ass," he said. "So deep." He held onto her hips. "Keep it right there."

"Baby, you're hitting my spot!" Christa fisted the bed linens in her hands.

Her quivering body signaled the onset of an orgasm. Jim made his thrusts faster. She pushed back into him more. The feeling drove him crazy. But he would hold off until she came. He loved hearing her call his name when she hit her peak.

"Ohhh, fuck! Yes! Yes! Yes!"

If the rest of the hotel guests weren't awake by now, they would be after Christa's exclamation.

"Jim! So damn good!" She let out a howling scream that prompted his own climax.

Jim had tried holding out, but with all of the sensations going on around him, he couldn't help but follow suit. He slowed his rhythm down until he stopped, but left his satisfied meaty shaft inside of her.

Turning her head, she said, "Sure you don't want to come to

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the big city?"

He smiled. "Sure you don't want to relax down in the country?"

Leaning over her body, he kissed the side of her face then her shoulder. With careful ease, Jim pulled out of her and headed to the bathroom to dispose of the filled condom. Afterward, he stood in the doorway and watched a sated Christa lying on her side in bed. He thought she glowed earlier. Now she looked like a bronzed statue.

"I shouldn't have done that," Jim began.

She furrowed her eyebrows. "Done what?"

"Made love to you again." He shook his head. "Makes it even harder to see you go."

She got out of bed and sauntered to him, her hips carrying a seductive sway with each confident step.

She took his hand. "Come take a shower with me. I'll have you reduced to a puddle of tears before I let you go," she said jokingly.

But he held her hand and stayed in his position, which made her turn to him. He opened his mouth but nothing came out. So she filled in what she knew he wanted to say.

"I know. But it's not possible," she said. "Unless something changes, I—"

"I know," he said, cutting her off. "Unless something changes."

He left the conversation like that. Open. Unanswered questions. He would have to either hope for a miracle or just be satisfied with what he had experienced. And since he and God hadn't spoken in a long time, Jim squeezed Christa's hand and decided to fill up his memory bank with another great moment.

Chances

Six

Jim kept his head down as he stared at the same line of numbers on the spreadsheet for the last fifteen minutes, maybe more. Every day, since that day he and Christa had made love, she invaded his thoughts.

Going back home tore up his insides. When he'd kissed her goodbye it really felt like a goodbye kiss. Conversations between them increased until the longing they both felt grew to an enormous proportion that couldn't be contained on the phone or by e-mail. This relationship could only be satisfied in person.

But that couldn't occur either. Not as often as they wanted. He lived too far away. She was starting to do some training in Richmond that kept her away from her regular duties for weeks at a time.

Although he missed her, Jim was thankful that he had at least made love to her once. He had made her scream and call his name in ecstasy. He smiled to himself. His cock started to bulge when he thought of her.

"Hey," his coworker said and knocked against the doorframe to get Jim's attention. "Meeting in the auditorium. Some big announcement or something."

"Be there in a second." Jim cleaned off his desk, but really he was buying time to allow his erection to subside.

Once it was down he ambled to the auditorium and sat in the back. The manager of his office stood in front of everyone. He waited until everyone was seated before speaking.

Bridget Midway

"As you know the company is going through a reorganization," the manager began.

"Sounds like more layoffs to me," one person commented from the crowd.

"Actually it isn't. New jobs have been created and as a matter of fact, starting today we're going to have someone working out of our office. Please come on up."

When Jim saw the woman standing up in the front row, his heart leap into his throat.

Christa.

She stood next to his manager at the podium. The manager talked about how Christa would become the new liaison between Jim's office and two other North Carolina offices but her home base would be his office.

After the announcements, and once everyone said their congratulations to her, Jim went up to her and took her hand in his. The familiar softness hit him immediately.

"Hi," he said.

"Hello." She smiled.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I wanted it to be a surprise."

"It worked." He pulled her in for a hug.

She still smelled of vanilla. The longer he held her, the harder her nipples became until they stabbed him in his chest, another feeling he'd missed.

"Upset you're not in Richmond or Alexandria?" he asked.

She shook her head. "I wanted my skills to be used. Besides, what I have is a management-type position. I get my own company car, expense account, office," she grinned, "and staff."

Without her having to say it, Jim beamed. "Would I be working with you a lot?"

"As often as I can arrange it. I would have to work very

Chances

closely with your department."

He shook his head. "There's no one I would rather work with than you."

"There's going to be a lot of long nights."

"Good."

"Lots of overtime."

"Even better."

"I'll definitely interrupt your sleep."

"That's the icing on the cake."

Looking around to see if the room was empty, Jim brought Christa forward and kissed her. Her full lips surrounded his.

She nodded. "Yeah, the right chance at the right time." She smoothed her fingers down his face. "I love you, Jim."

Feeling light-headed after hearing her declaration, Jim said, "I love you, too."

"You're no Brad Pitt. But I guess you'll do." Christa laughed.

"I'm just glad you took a chance."

Bridget Midway

About the Author:

Bridget Midway writes what you all fantasize about...but won't admit! This award-winning author enjoys making her readers fan themselves down after a hot, sexy scene as much as she enjoys making them laugh and sigh. Bridget writes erotica, erotic romances, futuristic romances, and humorous contemporary stories, all with multicultural characters and/or interracial romances. For more information about this author, check out her website at www.BridgetMidway.com. Or if you want to read what's going on in her head, read her blog at <http://bridgetmidway.blogspot.com/>