

*And The Cradle*  
**WILL**  
**ROCK**



*Paris Dixon*

## AND THE CRADLE WILL ROCK

...Wolfe freed himself of the cummerbund and unbuttoned his shirt, revealing a sun-bronzed torso worthy of a tongue bath. A wealth of muscles and firmly cut ridges and valleys testified to the young man's fondness for exercise, making Blythe's mouth water even more. His dark nipples had puckered in desire, begging for attention. An inverted triangle of brown wispy curls in the center of his breastbone made a splendid target for future kisses, as did the thick path of hair that led from his belly button and into his pants. He shrugged the shirt over his shoulders and toyed with his cufflinks, cursing when one of them proved defiant.

Blythe smiled at the colorful tattoo emblazoned on his upper right bicep—an ebony black wolf's head, with fiery red eyes and an unnaturally long and drooling tongue trailing nearly down to his elbow. Despite her horniness, she burst out laughing at the irony, considering the man's surname and her locks of red hair. She felt as if some cosmic entity—likely Venus, the goddess of love—had transported her into an X-rated version of Little Red Riding Hood. Here she was, the heroine in a deliciously naughty fairytale, kneeling before the randy wolf, the hero in this scenario, and she would actually welcome him eating her from head to toe. That is, if she didn't eat every inch of him first.

“A self-portrait, or just wishful thinking on my part?” she said, nodding toward his arm.

Wolfe freed the stubborn cufflink, which he placed on the side table beside its partner, then removed his shirt, tossed it aside, and leaned back against the sofa cushions. “When I dig my tongue into your juicy pussy,” he whispered in a raspy voice, “you'll know the truth...”

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# AND THE CRADLE WILL ROCK

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BY

PARIS DIXON

AMBER QUILL PRESS, LLC

<http://www.amberquill.com>

AND THE CRADLE WILL ROCK  
AN AMBER HEAT BOOK

This book is a work of fiction. All names, characters, locations, and incidents are products of the author's imagination, or have been used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, locales, or events is entirely coincidental.

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Copyright © 2007 by Paris Dixon  
ISBN 978-1-59279- 659-5  
Cover Art © 2007 Trace Edward Zaber

Layout and Formatting provided by: [ElementalAlchemy.com](http://ElementalAlchemy.com)

PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*Thanks to my terrific editor, J. L. Abbott,  
who pointed out all of my laugh-worthy boo-boos and made  
the process a painless joy, as always.*

*Thanks, also, to the folks at Amber Quill Press,  
who helped keep me sane during the endless months of personal  
dilemmas and didn't apply any pressure on me to speed the process.  
Your continual patience is most appreciated.*

*Thanks to the band, Van Halen,  
for inspiring me with yet another one of your song titles.*

*And finally, thanks to all the kind and enthusiastic fans  
whom, after reading Hot For Teacher, demanded "Blythe's story."  
This one is definitely for you guys!*

## Acme Escort Agency

*Allow us to make you feel like the world revolves around you, yet completely safe and relaxed. Professional, young, good-looking males and females providing intelligent, witty, and romantic company for any occasion. We're also trained in alternative therapies and massage, so when you call, ask about our special services and rates. Discretion is our middle name. At Acme, we're at your service—day or night!*

## CHAPTER 1

“She should suck his big cock! Right then, right there!”

A gasp of surprise sped all the way from Richmond, Virginia, shooting through the telephone receiver into the Savannah, Georgia, living room. “Huh? Really?”

“Yes, really. No question about it, babe. Think about it! A good old-fashioned blowjob, right there in the boardroom, *and* during the big meeting!”

“But he’s the—”

“The chairman of the board. Yeah! During the various marketing reports and presentations, all eyes will continually turn to him to view his reactions. That’s perfect! He’s sitting at the head of the table with no one at his side, right? Imagine the possibilities!”

“I’m beginning to do just that...”

“I knew you would.”

Blythe Larson smiled, plopped the receiver on her right shoulder,



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and rubbed at her “phone-sore” left ear. She tugged back the curtains, allowing morning sunlight to bathe the room in warm amber, and continued the conversation that had already lasted more than an hour. Thank goodness for 10-10-987, she thought, which had cut down her long-distance charges by ninety percent. God love the telecommunications mega-genius who had thought up that brilliant marketing and pricing strategy!

“The scenario works on several levels,” continued Blythe, “since Babette needs to get Vinnie under her thumb, to reclaim her modeling agency once and for all. She knows all his stuffed-shirt employees will be looking at him, seeking his approval throughout the meeting. And in this situation, she’s got him exactly where she wants him. At her mercy and—*every* pun intended—by the balls.”

“Yes, that’s certainly true,” said Paige Gillette Martinelli, known to the rest of the world as “Antionette Pope” and recently proclaimed the “Number One Erotic Romance Author of All Time” by a popular romance review magazine.

“Picture it, babe! There’s our favorite hero, the sexy, stubborn, and always-so-in-control Vinnie Scapulletti—the forever-horny bastard that he is!—tugging on his tie and suffering and squirming and sweating and trying not to shoot his hot load while some boring ‘suit’ is giving a presentation at the other end of the boardroom. Babette has all the power in that scene, and Vinnie knows it. He can’t keep his mind on anything but her lips and expert tongue. And when he voices a decision that does *not* favor her return to the modeling agency, a few sharp nips from her teeth could straighten him out. And fast. Or she could be merciful and not bring him to orgasm and embarrass the crap out of him, but *only* if he agrees to the recommendations of the other board members who are in league with her master agenda. Besides, got a better cliffhanger for the end of the chapter?”

“Damn it, Blythe! The solution to my problem was so obvious,

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since the board members start arriving for the meeting during the midst of the argument between Babe and Vinnie. They both need to keep their relationship secret. And she doesn't want to be discovered by the board members who hate her, so—"

"So she slips under the table just as the door opens. When she realizes her dominance in this unique situation, she toys with Vinnie. Then she opens his zipper as she's always prone to do, and the only one who knows she's in the room listening to the private meeting—and doing the oral rumba with his stiffy beneath the table—is Vinnie himself."

"You're right!"

Blythe laughed. "I'm always right regarding the scenes of carnal gratification. I guess it comes with practice."

"Oh, really? Do tell! When was the last time you scrambled under a table at the ad agency to suck a cock?"

"Oh, there have been several occasions when I've *wanted* to do just that with a few of our cute junior ad execs, but..."

"What stopped you?"

"Our boardroom tables are made of glass."

Paige giggled. "All of a sudden afraid of spectators, huh? This from the gal who, senior year in high school, did the full nasty with Clinton Meeker under the bleachers at the football game?"

"His car was parked too damned far away. Besides, with age comes wisdom...or at least 'conservativeism'...is that such a word, Ms. Author?"

"'Conservatism,' actually. And you're wrong. The last thing you'd *ever* be is conservative. Or at least, I hope not. Whatever would I do if that happened? I couldn't ask for a better 'sounding board' or 'test reader' for my work. Thanks for getting me through yet another case of writer's block. The deadline for *Confessions of a Vengeful Vixen* is looming and my editor is starting to put on the pressure. I couldn't

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figure out how to resolve that frustrating scene.”

“You were just too close to the story, that’s all. You couldn’t see the forest for the trees. Or should that be, you couldn’t see the cock for the steamy sex?” Blythe laughed at her own joke, then grabbed her “Life’s A Bitch...And So Am I” coffee mug and gulped down the last cold mouthful of Sanka.

“Regardless,” continued Paige, “now I have that one special twist, the one I *knew* the story was missing, and again, it’s all thanks to you.”

Blythe grinned in pride, pleased with herself for aiding her best friend in her most recent writing dilemma. Paige had always had a way with words—as the millions of “Antionette Pope” fans could attest—while Blythe couldn’t write her way out of a paper bag. But, although she had no talent for actually penning the blockbusters that had each ridden the *New York Times* best-seller list and had made her best gal-pal a superstar in the literary world, Blythe did have a sharp mind for plotting. Additionally, she could easily discover flaws in character motivation, detect when a story had begun to languish in too many minute details, and of greater importance, she had a “gift” for dreaming up the hot and steamy sex scenes, which she happily shared with her friend. Besides, Paige—under her penname “Antionette Pope”—always dedicated the books to her and gave her a sparkling acknowledgment, which was most definitely good enough for Blythe.

“My pleasure, babe. Besides, apart from this ending section, the rest of the book worked perfectly. So perfectly, in fact, that I’m sending you the bill for the case of batteries I went through while reading the draft. And I should probably order another King Dong Vibrator while I’m at it, since mine is now shot from overuse, thanks to *you*.”

Paige burst into another round of giggles. “Okay, it’s a deal. Bill me for the King Dong and a case of Double-Ds and I’ll do my best to explain the purchase to my accountant, and especially to my tolerant hubby. Oh, and speaking of which...”

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“Not again!” interrupted a male voice from the Virginia end of the telephone line, somewhere in the background, but clearly legible. “Are you two crazy sex kittens at it again? Isn’t that five times already this week? I think you should both have phone headsets surgically attached to your eardrums and mouths. And say ‘hey’ from me to the wilder half of the Southern Belle Bitches.”

“Did you hear that, Blythe?” asked Paige. “My own Italian Stallion sends his regards.”

“Yeah, I heard your sexy spouse. And tell him he’s damned lucky to have labeled me the wilder one also, or there would have been hell to pay.”

“I don’t know...these days, Vince might not agree with the ‘wilder’ part.”

“Oh? Whoring it up with your hubby this week? For shame, Paige, for shame. Although I’m not surprised, since ‘S-E-X’ is what brings in the bucks for you. Why not conduct the most research you can with a handsome stud, right? By the way, is he still on break? I thought he was going back to teaching this week.”

“Next week, unfortunately. And I sure will miss him.”

“Miss him? Or miss the ‘Stallion Phallus’? That’s the *ultimate* question.”

Her friend did nothing but giggle again. Of course, Blythe knew her best pal well enough to imagine the red cheeks accompanying the laughter.

“Okay, so I’ve gotta ask, babe. What the hell are you doing talking to me about the aforementioned ‘S-E-X’ when you could be riding the beefy stallion you married? Don’t tell me the honeymoon is already history. It’s been only a few months.”

“Who says I’m not riding him even as we speak?”

“I’d normally be jolly for you, bitch, if I wasn’t so jealous, so don’t piss me off, even in jest. Besides, I still find it amusing, and annoying

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as spit, that you've learned to type your naughty books with only one hand while your other hand is always busy stroking that 'perfectly proportioned penis of passion'—your words, not mine."

"I hate it when my purple prose comes back to haunt me! Now, speaking of *your* love department—"

"I admire the way you always turn the tables from your outrageous sex life to mine."

"Did you find a date for the charity banquet and auction?" finished Paige, ignoring Blythe's sarcastic quip.

"Oh, damn it, why bring that up?" A genuine groan poured out of Blythe's mouth. "It's hopeless. No one's available."

"No one? Come on...with *your* connections? And your big tits?"

"No fucking one at all! And believe me, I've tried...worn the pages of my little black book down to unreadable pages of dust. I stopped just shy of standing on the street and shaking these knockers at passing cars! The single men in this town seem to have vanished overnight, almost as if some Whoring Goddess in the stratosphere decided she needed all the available beefy sperm donors from Savannah for herself." Blythe scratched her head in frustration and eyed the newspaper ad that had caught—and had held, if the truth be told—her attention earlier that day. "Maybe I *should* try Acme," she said, almost in a whisper.

"What's that?"

"Oh, nothing, really, it's just..."

A loud and obnoxious groan washed through the phone lines. "Don't make me guess."

"Oh, hell's bells! It's just something stupid."

"Like what?"

"You know me...always a hare-brained scheme bound to get me into trouble. Like marrying 'Dickless,' for example. Or like—"

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, or like the thousands of pranks you pulled in

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high school, always dragging me into the mess, making me play ‘Ethel Mertz’ to your ‘Lucy Ricardo.’”

Blythe laughed. “Right, like those. So just never mind, *Ethel*, and forget I said anything.”

“The hell I will. And I’m too far away to tickle the truth out of you, *Lucy*, so spill it. What’s on the tip of your tongue that you’re trying so hard *not* to say?”

Feeling like she would burst if she didn’t share her idea with her best gal-pal, Blythe snatched up the crumbled and folded newspaper, her gaze instantly focussing on the section she had outlined earlier with a red marker. “Okay, check out this little ditty I discovered in this morning’s classifieds.”

Because she had read the ad so many times since spotting it, the copy spilled from her mouth almost by memory. Still, she uttered the words with an air of disdain, sarcasm, and—she couldn’t help herself—a hint of optimism.

“‘Allow us to make you feel like the world revolves around you, yet completely safe and relaxed. Professional, young, good-looking males and females providing intelligent, witty, and romantic company for any occasion. We’re also trained in alternative therapies and massage, so when you call, ask about our special services and rates. Discretion is our middle name. At Acme, we’re at your service’”—Blythe paused for dramatic effect—“day or night!”

For what felt an eon, silence filled the phone receiver. Then a burst of delight in a union of a gasp-snort shot through the wires. “It’s kismet, I tell you, kismet!” shrieked Paige.

“What is?”

“The escort ad.”

“Oh, yeah, right. Acme? What the hell kind of name is that? ‘At your service day or night, we do the job and do it right...’” Blythe waited a moment for her friend to get the hint and take a breath, then in

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tandem, they both said the next word into the receiver. “Aaaaaaacme!” Also in unison, they both gave an exaggerated chuckle—“Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk.”

“Best Curly impression I’ve ever heard from the mouths of females.” Paige chortled. “Who would have thought that two prim-and-proper Southern belles—”

“Hey! Speak for yourself!”

“Sorry, I forgot...how about one prim-and-proper Southern belle and one amoral Southern slut?”

“That’s *much* better, babe. I pride myself in my licentious experience. Hell, you created your most infamous female character, Babette Hendricks, based on my naughty antics, and that’s my claim to fame, or shame, whatever the case may be.”

“Anyway, belles or sluts, who would have thought either type would be die-hard fans of The Three Stooges?”

“Yeah, really. But now you can imagine what’s going on in my brain.”

“Sure can. But *don’t* picture a Moe, Larry, or a Curly working for this company and showing up at your door. Instead picture a...hmm...a Biff, Fabio, or a Chad.”

“Good God! Nice monikers! You’ve been writing smut for way too long, girlfriend.”

“Be that as it may, I’m also serious. They’re probably hot, muscular college guys looking to earn extra bucks.”

“Says who?”

“Says me, or how else would the company stay in business? Hmmm?”

“Good point, Miss Marple. Your deduction skills are still in tip-top form. But a college guy?”

“It’s not like you’re as old as Mrs. Robinson seducing *The Graduate*, for shit’s sake. You’re not even thirty yet.”

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“True. Still, the prospect of hiring a younger guy makes a part of me feel as if I’d be robbing the cradle.”

“Yeah, and the cradle *will* rock!”

“Well, younger guys *do* have better stamina, right? And gee, I *am* seriously horny...”

“No shock there.”

“Piss off. But even though I’m so randy at the moment I could screw the entire fleet of the *S. S. Studmuffins*—were a ship like that bound for Savannah! Huh! I wish!—that’s hardly cause to give these—dare I say, *stooges*—a jingle.”

“But you’re also *desperate*, my friend, and that *does* make a big difference.”

“Another good fucking point.”

“And don’t forget, you’re still a knockout, so any college guy the agency sends will likely think he won the sexual lottery.”

“Thanks for saying that, babe. You *are* a true pal.”

“A pal who wants to encourage you to do something, however drastic, just like you encouraged me once upon a time.”

Blythe smiled in remembrance. A little more than a year earlier, she had convinced her somewhat-shy friend to return home to Savannah for their ten-year high school reunion. What Paige didn’t know at the time, however, was that Blythe had played matchmaker. She had sent copies of her friend’s naughty bestsellers to their former English teacher, Vince Martinelli, knowing how her friend had always wanted to “snag him” and suspecting that the studly teacher, who would be in attendance at the event, had always had a “fondness” for his former student. The plan had succeeded better than anyone could have imagined, and just months afterward, Blythe had acted as maid of honor at the couple’s romantic wedding in Virginia. Blythe still patted herself on the back for her scheming genius, one of her finest moments, she thought with no small degree of modesty.



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"If it wasn't for you and your manipulations," continued Paige, "Vince and I wouldn't be together right now."

"Yeah, well, I suppose so, babe...but..."

"Hell, I wouldn't be stroking that *gigantoid* cock with my free hand even as we speak. Just think about that."

"Bitch! And I didn't even get a finder's fee from you *or* the Italian Stallion! But you do have yet another fucking point, which is why you're not only a bitch, but a Bitch Queen!"

"I prefer Bitch Goddess, thank you very much. But seriously, you have to attend the event and face Richard and his new wife, right?"

"You mean 'Dickless' and the second Mrs. 'I-Ain't-Getting-Dick' Whitaker? Probably not even a lick, either, poor gal, knowing him and his phobias about germs. And not to mention all my 'dickless' and 'lickless' ex-in-laws."

Another laugh. "Exactly, so just because you're in between boyfriends at the moment doesn't mean you shouldn't go without a rent-a-stud on your arm. Besides, who's gonna know you 'rented' him, anyway?"

"I will. But again, you do have another damned point." The idea of hiring an escort for a single evening, an honest-to-goodness, no-strings solution to her nagging dilemma, so intrigued Blythe, she fell into a speechless lethargy. So long so that Paige interrupted her frantic musings by calling her name several times. "Oh, yeah, sorry, babe, I'm still here. I was just thinking..."

"About taking my advice?"

"Yeah, that, and also wondering just what type of studs these guys really *do* have at their disposal. After all, your notion about the good-looking college guys is probably death-on. They're likely pleasant looking enough or otherwise they would have christened the company 'Ac-*ne*' instead of 'Ac-*me*.' Stands to reason."

"And?"

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“And what?”

“And you’re undoubtedly also wondering what size wieners they have for you to play with, right?”

“Damn it, wench, you *do* know me all too well.” Blythe sighed. “And I miss you dearly.”

“Miss you, too. Now hang the hell up and call that damned escort service before this upcoming weekend is booked solid and you’re really forced to prowl the streets for a date. What have you got to lose, anyway, apart from a few bucks for their fees? Just fill me in on all the details. You know what I need...face type, body type, hair color, eye color—”

“And their length and girth in exact inches. Yes, yes, I know the drill and my measuring tape is ready. Your alter-ego ‘Antionette Pope’ needs the specific juicy fodder for her next worldwide blockbuster.”

Before her giggling friend could drive her even more batty by spouting additional valid points, Blythe hurriedly said her good-byes, then punched in the telephone number in the ad—which, like the ad copy, she had also relegated to memory.

## CHAPTER 2

*Did I really resort to this level of desperation? Did the last fifteen minutes actually occur?*

Blythe continually asked herself these questions while pacing the living room at breakneck speed, replaying the conversation bit by bit. The entire Acme “booking” process had happened so fast, she’d felt her head spinning by the time she’d hung up the phone. She tried to recollect each phase of the process, wondering if she had forgotten anything of importance. She doubted it, however, since the agency was nothing if not completely thorough with their pointed questions.

Yes, she had given the “date and time of service” needed—this coming Saturday night from seven o’clock until approximately midnight—and she had mentioned the event was a black-tie affair and had specified that the escort should dress accordingly. Next she had provided her personal information—name, address, and credit card information.

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Then she had detailed exactly what type of man appealed to her...

Age range?—early to late twenties.

Body type?—lean and muscular, of course! A man who would look equally stunning in a tuxedo or a swimsuit, or even nothing at all, although she left that last part out of her description.

Hair and eye color?—brown and blue respectively, but the latter didn't really matter.

Oh, and she'd added that facial hair was optional—nothing like a little beard- or mustache-tickle every now and then to bring giggles to her lips.

Yes, she had told the sultry-voiced female “booking agent” basically everything she craved in a man, apart from penis size and shape. Though, recalling once again Acme's attention to detail when taking the booking, she wondered if they would have been able to accommodate her if she *had* specified...

Yet had the process really been that simple? Could she really just hire another human being to do her bidding from one simple phone call and a working credit card?

Apparently so.

And was she really this desperate?

That nasty little thought—no, that actual *fact*—irked her to no end. Hell, at the youngish age of twenty-nine, she should have been able to get dates by the score without having to add yet another item to her already novel-length credit card statements. Ever since high school, her untamed and fiery red locks, her high cheekbones and full non-collagen-inflated lips, her trim and big-breasted physique—especially the latter—had always guaranteed she received eager attention from the opposite sex. But the recent “dry spell” in the dating game had played havoc with her self-esteem. She hadn't lied to Paige earlier—for the past several weeks, the bachelors in this town *did* seem to be on permanent vacation at some mysterious locale and they'd left no

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forwarding address.

Almost subconsciously, she reached for the phone, a large part of her wanting to call Acme and void the “stud order” before she incurred the cancellation fee that went into effect at the end of business today. That odd phenomena known as “Buyer’s Remorse” set in with a vengeance, niggled at her brain like a pesky mosquito.

*Great, just great! Why couldn’t I have felt this way last weekend when I purchased more than \$2000 worth of goddamned clothes and shoes and purses and jewelry that I didn’t really need and really couldn’t afford?*

Her fingers hovered over the telephone for several seconds, while her heart pounded in unison to the ticking of the long-case grandfather clock governing one of the room’s darkened corners.

But then memories of her best friend’s advice took firm control—

*Who’s gonna know? Who’s gonna know? Who’s gonna—*

And the reason she needed a date came barreling back to her with the power of an upper cut to the jaw.

*Richard! Richard “Dickless” Quigley Whitaker!*

Her damned ex-husband and his new wife and his snotty and prudish family, all probably dying to see whether she’d actually arrive at the charity gala and suffer their wrath. And also probably expecting her to come slinking in as a solo act with schemes of begging Richard’s forgiveness and demanding he dump his current wife and take her back to his bed.

*Yeah, right, like I’d be yearning for another term in that sexless prison, playing the dutiful wife with Richard holding a tight rein on the purse strings, my every action, and questioning my every emotion! Like I’d just die if I couldn’t don the apron once again and play cook and housekeeper and hostess and everything else required to be the perfect country-club wife of the perfect upscale and uptight lawyer such as Richard Quigley Whitaker. Fuck that nonsense! Been there, done that,*

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*bought the T-shirt, then shredded it in divorce court, vowing to never put myself through that hell again!*

Still, Richard and his family had always expected her to fail, expected her to eventually crawl back to them on her hands and knees, pleading for another chance. Richard had said as much during one of his many phone calls since their divorce years earlier, phone calls he had made in an unsuccessful campaign to win her back. The bastard had even made several tries as recently as a week before his second wedding.

*Well, fat chance!*

Blythe had never once given in to him, never once considered the nauseating notion. She would *never* return to that type of hell, for any man, let alone Richard. Her puritanical ex-hubby had even demanded that she sever her relationship with Paige once he discovered she wrote “porn”—his word for erotic romance—for a living. That had been the final straw for Blythe, and she had happily moved out of the cushy marriage house and set up this equally cozy yet less grandiose and less emotionally draining bachelorette pad in downtown Savannah. And since receiving the final divorce papers, she had never once looked back.

Until now, that is. But not for want of returning to that nest of vipers posing as a family. Instead, she wanted to show the Whitaker clan not only that they had done nothing to destroy her free spirit—and they *had* tried, for months on end—but that she had survived, had thrived, without them.

And what better way to display her success than to arrive at the gala, dressed in her slinkiest number, her highest heels, and on the arm of a handsome, muscular stud?

That singular bit of reasoning snapped her hand away from the telephone and drove all thoughts of canceling the booking from her mind. Now, she would simply prepare for the weekend, making certain

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her hair appointment, her manicure and pedicure, went without a hitch—and cross her fingers that Acme sent the “stud of all studs” to her doorstep at the appointed hour.

## CHAPTER 3

When she answered the doorbell on Saturday night, her stomach doing flip-flops and somersaults like it had since originally calling Acme, Blythe nearly fainted. Not only had her paid escort arrived nearly ten minutes early for the appointment—unheard of, and most assuredly tip-worthy, in her estimation—but he would have been considered not only “a stud” in the eyes of most women, but a “Stud God.”

She couldn’t believe her good fortune, and it took every last ounce of willpower not to play the fool and pinch her arm right there in front of the man destined to be her date. Or more importantly, her “I don’t need you or your ass-wipe family anymore, ‘Dickless,’ and my hot date proves it” man to save her from weeks or potentially months of unfathomable embarrassment.

She blinked several times, then concentrated on the elegantly attired gentleman standing on her threshold with a smile plastered on his face.



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God damn, if Acme hadn't read her mind and provided her with the exact man of her dreams, then Blythe didn't know who could have done better.

In a way, he looked quite young—perhaps twenty-two or thereabouts—college age, as she expected, yet he also had a rugged aura about him that added emotional years of wisdom to his face. He stood tall, at least six-four in height, with broad shoulders, muscular arms and long legs that perfectly fit his tuxedo's shell, yet he also possessed a lean and sophisticated frame. Rich brown hair with golden highlights, moderately cut yet fashionably disheveled, topped his head, while movie-star features—a straight nose, firm jaw, and full, moist, and ultra sexy lips surrounded by just the hint of five-o'clock shadow—made up his well-defined features.

Plus, he owned the most mesmerizing dark brown eyes—no, black, Blythe corrected herself—she had ever seen. Eyes that could hypnotize her at a glance. Eyes that, in a heartbeat, could coerce her into submission. And she knew that for a fact by the manner in which her knees suddenly felt like gelatin and the way the intake of air caught in her throat. In the past few years since the divorce had left her a free woman, she couldn't ever recall a man affecting her in such a manner, robbing her of breath, no less. That alone impressed her beyond belief.

*Go Acme!*

"Miss Larson?" he ventured, his gruff yet surprisingly soothing tenor tickling the fine hairs on every inch of her body—*every* inch, especially in her most private area.

"Y-yes, that's right. I'm Blythe Larson."

"You look magnificent." With that, he swept from behind his back a single red rose that perfectly matched the deep-necked, majestic crimson gown she had selected for the festive and elegant occasion. Almost as if he—or the "powers that be" at Acme—had read her mind, or had somehow invaded her closet and known exactly what she had set

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aside to wear this evening.

His grand gesture momentarily took her aback. Not only did it make her recall senior-prom night approximately eleven years earlier, but also the courtly flourish by which he'd presented her with the rose had been so unexpected, so different from the way in which her "usual dates" treated her. "How you doin', sweetie?" seemed to have been the typical phrase through the years, before each boyfriend unceremoniously yanked her onto the sofa to ply her with lusty kisses and grope her into compliance. Why the hell did she always fall for a guy who lacked manners and didn't grasp the concept of how to treat a woman like a lady?

He cleared his throat, cutting into her frenetic musings. "My name is Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe."

"Huh? I'm sorry? Shiloh Birm—what?"

"Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe."

"With a moniker like that, you *must* be from the south—"

"Actually, I'm a Yankee."

"Oh?" she asked with a chuckle.

"Born and bred in Pennsylvania, and only recently transplanted to Georgia. And how thrilled I am to make the acquaintance of such an exceptionally lovely Southern belle."

To Blythe's surprise, he actually clicked his heels, then bent forward, took her hand in his, and kissed her knuckle. Were it not for the serious nature of the night's event, she might have laughed at such an archaic gesture, especially from a self-proclaimed "Yankee."

But no, she thought, somehow, some way, the gesture was nothing less than perfectly charming. An old-fashioned show of respect that had been lacking in the men she had known through the years. Plus, all the while he held her hand, he continued to pierce her with that wickedly intoxicating stare that made her wish she had taken a fiftieth or sixtieth glance into the mirror before answering the door.

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Heat inflamed her cheeks and forced her to draw a cleansing, calming breath. She couldn't recall the last time she'd felt like a flustered teenager—and she loved the feeling.

“So it's Shiloh, right, or...I mean...hmm...”

She mentally scolded herself for the way her lips and tongue fumbled for words. *God, pull yourself together, ditz!*

“Do you have a nickname or something...?”

He laughed. “Some people call me ‘Shy’ for short. Or, like some other people, you could call me ‘Wolfe.’”

She pursed her lips. “I guess it all depends on which type of man I prefer at any given moment, huh?”

In reply, he flirtatiously waggled an eyebrow. “And does my appearance meet with your approval?”

*Does Michaelangelo's David represent the finest in a sculpted male nude?* “Ah, yes, most assuredly.”

“Splendid.” He gestured toward the living room. “May I?”

“What? Oh, yes, of course, where are my manners?”

“I hope my early arrival didn't catch you off guard, but then again, you seem more than ready for a night of frivolity. Wherever we are destined this evening, I'm sure you will become the cynosure of all eyes.”

His engaging smile warmed her heart, yet the way his cheeks dimpled almost boyishly reminded her that he was *only* a hired escort, a “boy” she would use only as much as the law proscribed. He wasn't there for her, personally, only to do his job, to earn the fee Acme would pay to him for this evening's service. And, for her part, she had hired him for one reason only—to save her pride, to use him for the sole purpose of making Richard and his relatives erase the notion that she would somehow try to reinstate herself into their hellish clan.

Still, she thought, attempting to avoid his mesmerizing stare to no avail, she *was* a woman. A hot-blooded woman who had not had a real

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date in many weeks, nor an animalistic sex romp in even more. A jaded woman who had not been in the company of a real gentleman for what felt like centuries. And a desperate woman who had resorted to a young “rent-a-stud” to fulfill a specific need. “And The Cradle Will Rock,” a song by her favorite band, Van Halen, starting playing in her addled brain.

Nevertheless, she couldn’t help fantasizing what it might be like to have such a perfect specimen of a man arrive at her condo of his own free will, without being paid to perform the chore. It was enough to make her want to weep out of sudden and absolute loneliness.

“May I get you something to drink?” she asked, spinning from him.

“Did I do something wrong?”

“I’m sorry?”

“Forgive me for saying so, but a moment before you turned, I noticed you frown. You actually looked as if you were about to cry. Did I offend you in some way? If so, please forgive me.”

Blythe refused to look at him until she could blink away the moisture than had threatened to leak from her eyes. “Not in the least.”

“Are you certain?”

An hour earlier, she had fashioned her long, thick hair in an elegant style, the bulk held up in the back with bejeweled antique clips, while a few wispy tendrils of red curls framed each side of her face. Now, she used her hairstyle to fashion a fib. “Just caught something in my eye, is all,” she reassured over her shoulder, making a grand show of brushing the tendrils back toward her ears, then continued her short journey to the liquor cabinet. “What can I get you?”

“Nothing for me, thank you.”

“Oh? Does Acme have a policy regarding their employees drinking while on duty?”

“Acme has nothing to do with it. I’ve just always felt a man should keep his senses and good manners when meeting a lady for the first

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time, and to me, that means no alcohol.”

That comment made her twirl around in curiosity and amusement. “You sure you’re from Pennsylvania and not Pluto?”

He smirked. “Oh, don’t get me wrong. I love an occasional beer, a glass of wine at dinner, perhaps. But I don’t over-indulge, especially on occasions such as this. Just a little quirk of mine, I expect.”

“A unique quirk”—she dropped her voice to a mere whisper—“as the many drunken buffoons who have passed through my life could attest.”

“What was that you said?”

“Nothing, sorry, just talking to myself. Do you mind if *I* have a drink?” She needed one, and fast.

“You’re the client, and your every wish is my command.”

“Really?”

“Yes, *really*,” he said, his tone emphatically serious.

If her escort only knew what she *truly* wished she could do at the moment—with him!

*And the cradle will rock...and the cradle will rock...*

Oh, yes, his good looks and manners had most definitely triggered a response in her, one she felt down to her core. She recalled a phrase from the Acme ad—“Discretion is our middle name”—and for the first time, seriously pondered the meaning behind it, its full implication. Halfheartedly, she eyed the telephone on the coffee table, debating whether to call the agency in order to clarify that statement. And what would Paige think of her unexpected good fortune? Would the young stud mind if she excused herself to call her best friend in Virginia, to gush and giggle like a schoolgirl in heat as she gave a detailed description of what six-foot-four, beefy-and-lean, sexy-as-sin miracle had arrived on her doorstep? Nope, not yet. Not until she had *all* the details of this man, or her erotica-writing friend would *never* forgive her.

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After drawing a whiff of the rose before setting it on the bar, she grabbed a bottle of Absolut. She poured two fingers of vodka into an empty glass, all the while wondering what this handsome stud would do if she ripped that tux from his body with her freshly manicured fingers and reveled in his bare flesh.

*Only doing research for my gal-pal, sweetums, so just show me what you're packing down South and kiss me.*

Yeah, right! That line would go over *quite* well, she thought and almost giggled. Nevertheless, she could clearly envision him lounging on her bed in all his naked glory, his cock fully erect, rock hard, and ready for her pleasure, his large hands massaging the hungry ache from her tense muscles and those moist lips of his baptizing her heated flesh with manic kisses...

*And the cradle will rock...and the cradle will rock...*

Damn it, if it wasn't for the asinine charity banquet, one she had to attend this evening, she might have just turned toward Mr. Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe and shock the stuffing out of him by saying, "To hell with the banquet—let's fuck!"

And while the vodka enflamed her tongue and forged a fiery river to her belly, she battled the urge to do just that. Yes, it had been way too long since a hot-blooded man warmed her mattress, especially a man this gorgeous and courtly, and she couldn't stop her brain from continually replaying her fantasies in an X-rated kaleidoscope of alluring images.

Blythe sensed, right then and there, it would prove a long, arduous, and monumentally frustrating evening.

## CHAPTER 4

The ornately appointed restaurant and banquet hall, a spacious, two-story, modern-day edifice plopped into the highly historic district of Savannah along Riverfront Plaza, teamed with life. Raucous laughter and soft jazz poured from within. Myriad scents of blooming magnolia and nearby honeysuckle, loam and potential seafood from the adjacent Savannah River, and tasty treats from the luxurious establishment itself wafted through the air, assaulting the nostrils in a marriage of bliss to tempt the palate and the soul. Shooting up from the building's front-lined gardens of peonies, camellia, and mistflower, red and blue floodlights crisscrossed the restaurant front, bathing it in varying shades of romantic violet. Bold and beveled gold letters above the twin entrance doors advertised the name "LeRoux Grand" and, in subtext, the guarantee of "Evenings Filled With Unimaginable Delights."

Blythe pondered the significance of that claim as her escort pulled into an empty parking space, turned off the engine, and got out of the

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sleek black Ferrari. Yes, a Ferrari. She still couldn't get over that little surprise. Either Acme provided their employees with the very best, she thought, or Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe earned a fortune with his "talents," whatever they might be she could only imagine...vividly.

He opened the passenger-side door and extended his hand to her. Upon exiting the vehicle and moving into his outstretched arms, she felt herself a princess arriving at a majestic fete, her elegantly attired prince a minion just waiting to obey her every royal command. She loved the feeling, and gratefully took his arm when he offered it to her. As they stepped toward the restaurant, she held her head high and found herself proudly strutting beside this handsome man, all fears she'd previously possessed about Richard and his family miraculously quashed.

The ride from her condo to the restaurant had gone a long way in helping to abate her fears. Wolfe, as she'd chosen to call him, possessed a keen intellect, while his pacific manner and aura of confidence, yet supreme masculinity, assured her in no uncertain terms that she had no cause for anxiety. He would put forth the impeccable image of her "date," or her "paramour," even, if she preferred—*not* a hired escort—and, as Acme guaranteed, satisfy her every need that evening. He also reasoned to her that, since he was new to Savannah, no one would know him, or his profession, thus avoiding unwelcome embarrassment toward the people she needed to impress. She loved that about him, and once again mentally praised Acme for having the acumen to recruit such clever and discreet employees. Not to mention good-looking ones.

Yes, she still couldn't get past that one simple aspect of her escort. Even after the vodka had provided a tranquil buzz, she found it impossible to erase images of sexual frolic with his sublime man from her head. And she had tried, long and hard, by first spiriting down the Ferrari's window and allowing fresh air to bathe her face. Then gulping



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breaths of salty air meant to sober and not entice. Then forcing her thoughts on Savannah street scenes instead of encouraging her lustful fantasies to take control. Nothing, however, seemed to help her in that one regard.

Even now, as she looked at his profile, the restaurant lights giving his features a desirable, sinfully purplish hue, she combated the hungry part of herself that yearned to drag him back to her home, to undress him, and to taste every inch of his flesh. She also couldn't help but notice the way his eyes momentarily turned toward her face, then took a side-trip upon her ample cleavage, giving her the impression that his attraction mirrored hers. And the notion provided her with tingles all along her spine.

*Damn it, Acme, you do know your business all too well!*

With his free arm, Wolfe gestured aside the liveried doorman, then held open the door for her. He tipped his head, and a smile twisted his sensual lips. *"Entres, mon cher."*

She blinked several times, impressed once again by his manners and also his words. *"Merci."*

*"Ah! Parles-tu Français?"*

She laughed. "Hardly. That was the extent of my French. One year in high school, I'm afraid, and that's all I recall." For the first time since those years, Blythe mentally kicked herself for her lack of studying the foreign language.

*"Quel dommage.* To be in the company of such a beautiful woman...well, it makes one literally ache to speak the language of love."

She raised an eyebrow. "And you speak it fluently, no doubt?"

"Four languages in all."

"No kidding?"

"But French is my favorite. And us conversing in the language would have driven your ex-husband wild with outrage. Nonetheless,

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when he's within range, I hope you'll allow me to whisper into your ear—and none too subtly—a few choice phrases that will make him die with envy.”

“Only if you tell me what they mean afterward.”

“Perhaps...perhaps not. That depends...”

“On what?”

“On how naughty the mood.”

Just inside the door before the coat-check room, Blythe stopped dead in her tracks and lowered her voice. “My God, they do *not* pay you enough! Do all the employees at Acme have to undertake such an extensive training course to learn how to say the perfectly right thing at the perfectly right time?”

His smirk went straight to her already tingling labia. “Some things are not taught, they are ingrained. To entice an ex-husband to homicidal thoughts—even one such as yours who lacks any real passion, from what you conveyed in the car—is a simple chore with a few choice words designed for him to overhear. It's not such a chore but a pleasure, actually.”

“Really?”

“Especially since he obviously took for granted a unique and enticing woman such as yourself, a prize worth savoring, the damned fool.”

“Wolfe,” muttered Blythe, stupefied and only half-kidding, “will *you* marry me? Where the hell have *you* been all my life?”

“Where?” His teeth flashed in a joyful and somewhat carnal smile. “Learning to appreciate the qualities of passionate and fiery women while at the same time praying to claim one of them as my very own, should I be so fortunate.”

“Oh, man”—she shook her head and giggled in amazement—“you're good, sweet cheeks! I'll give you that! You're *damned* good at your job!”

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“You ain’t seen nothing yet.” Another flirtatious waggle of his eyebrows nearly made her topple over in her stiletto heels.

Just as Blythe opened her mouth to inquire whether Acme had “a lifetime service plan” and how she could sign up for it, a somewhat whiney, loathsome, and all-too-familiar voice interrupted her.

“Well, if it isn’t Blythe Whitaker. So you *did* decide to show up after all. Some of us were actually taking wagers.”

She pulled a deep breath, not only to steady herself, but also to squelch the instinctive explosion building in her throat, the one that threatened to spew a round of vicious curses like a raging human Vesuvius.

Reluctantly, she turned and spotted him, her ex-hubby, the man whose tuxedo cummerbund couldn’t quite camouflage the bulging belly that divided that five-foot-ten-inch physique directly in the center. The man whose bobbing Adam’s apple jutted over his collar farther than a desperate hitchhiker jerking his thumb beside a congested highway. The man whose large shoe size absolutely obliterated the age-old theory of their length always correlating to another part of the male anatomy. In a flash, Blythe recalled the endless days and nights of a passionless marriage, and almost yawned out of habit.

Instead, she forced a prim smile to her lips and trimmed the sarcasm from her voice to the best of her ability. “It’s Larson.”

He halted in his journey toward her. “Excuse me?”

“Blythe Larson! *Larson!* L-a-r-s-o-n, and—”

“I know how to spell!” Behind the black-rimmed glasses that made him look more like a novice accountant than a seasoned attorney, Richard’s gray, wintry eyes darkened with all the intensity of a summertime forest fire. “You didn’t keep my name? I’m shocked.”

“Shocked, D—Richard?” She barely stopped herself from calling him “Dickless.” “Our marriage didn’t last any longer than the time it would take Wynonna Judd to polish off a mountain of buffalo wings

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and cheese fries, so naturally I would return to my maiden name. Especially after all this time. Therefore, tell the truth...instead of 'shocked,' don't you really mean 'insulted'?"

When his thin lips all but disappeared into his reddening face, Blythe couldn't help but mentally tally a checkmark under her column in this fresh "battle score." It also pleased her when Richard started assessing the tall, young man standing beside her and a spider-web of worry lines appeared on his otherwise smooth forehead. Then a fierce spark behind the spectacles told Blythe that her ex-husband had begun mentally estimating the age difference between herself and her escort. And, when he obviously reached his conclusion, the subsequent crevices in his forehead pleased her even more.

With an air of reluctance, Richard extended his right arm toward Wolfe and cocked a graying caterpillar-like eyebrow. "H-have we met?"

"Doubtful," replied her handsome escort, towering over Richard. He clasped the other man's hand and pumped so boldly and vigorously, that Richard's slightly pudgy body undulated with the waves. Blythe could have kissed her sexy date for displaying his masculine superiority so jovially yet subtly. That simple gesture advertised that, in no way, shape, or form—even spending years at the plush country-club gym—could Richard compete in this particular competition of manhood.

"A Savannah native, are you?" asked Richard, his tone primed for a courtroom's cross-examination. He pried his smaller hand, now reddening from the recent contact, from Wolfe's larger one and rubbed it against his thigh.

"No."

"Here on business perhaps?"

"No."

"On vacation, a holiday, then?"

For a moment, Wolfe gave Blythe a feverish look that might have

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incinerated a woman with less sexual experience. Yet even with her history with the opposite sex, she had a difficult time maintaining her balance in the blaze of his wildly fervent stare.

Wolfe glanced back at Richard, then laughed. "It's *always* a holiday when I'm with *this* enchanting creature."

"Then you know each other?"

"Of course I know him, Richard!" said Blythe, mockingly. "We arrived together, did we not?"

"But I mean, you know each other from before? Exactly how long have you been acquainted with my wife, Mr. Wolfe?"

"Ex-wife," corrected Blythe. "Ex! You mean *you've* forgotten already? Tut, tut, Richard, I figured you'd remember that fact, since you're the one who's already skipped down the aisle a second time with—hmm, what's her name?—Prudish?"

"Her name is Prudence!"

Blythe shrugged and clucked her tongue in feigned self-reprimand. "You say 'potato'—"

"How dare—"

"Yes, it's always a holiday spending time with Blythe," said Wolfe, cutting off Richard's snide remark before a real battle could ensue. He returned his gaze toward Blythe, then dropped his voice to a near growl. "But then, I don't need to tell you that, do I, Mr. Whitaker? After being wed to such a glorious woman, you *must* know the feeling of my current exhilaration, do you not? I'm just thankful you set her free."

"Excuse me?"

Wolfe had the class not to respond with a bold-faced lie. Instead, he lifted Blythe's hand to his moist lips and elegantly kissed her knuckle. For a blissful moment, his intense gaze held her captive; Blythe could almost feel him mentally stripping her of her splendid attire, right there in such hoity-toity surroundings, rudely and without restraint, before

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her ex-husband and a gaggle of passing restaurant employees and patrons. Not only that, but he seemed to mentally fuck her without mercy, and that she knew for certain by the way his grip tightened on her hand and how one side of his lip curled upward ever so slightly in lechery. His ebony eyes bore into her soul, as if pleading for satiation from his sexual anguish. Had she been a virgin, she probably would have blushed a ferocious shade of magenta and fainted dead away, her body combusting on the spot. Instead, she felt the heat only in her crotch, and with manic, primal fervor.

“I-I wouldn’t know anything about your exhilaration...” muttered Richard.

When Blythe turned at the sound of her ex’s voice, she noted how his face had adopted the shade of proper red, the one she had viewed so many times when she confronted him with the topic of “S-E-X”—or rather, the lack thereof during their union. Only this time, however, she couldn’t quite ascertain whether his current blush came from his usual embarrassment over the topic or from some deep-seated outrage.

“You wouldn’t know?” replied Wolfe, his almost-musical voice curdling with the sour, discordant note of disbelief. “A shame, really. Then it’s *your* loss.” He kissed Blythe’s knuckle again before dragging her hand to his rock-solid chest and snuggling it close to him. He used his other hand to casually, yet intimately, brush a stray tendril of flaming red hair from the side of her face; the strands, along with his fingertips, tickled her cheek and gave her gooseflesh.

Being a little over-dramatic, aren’t we? Blythe whimsically thought regarding his actions, yet already pondering how much of a tip to give Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe for this absolutely stellar performance.

But, against the back of her hand, she actually detected his heart pounding through his starched white shirt, viewed the carnal light in his eyes, and she suddenly wondered just how much of her escort’s words and actions were for show or for real. Did Acme only select employees

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who possessed acting ability?

Had Wolfe not smirked at Richard and firmly led her toward the main ballroom, muttering a string of French phrases into her ear, Blythe might have soared into the heavens on a wave of pure ecstasy.

## CHAPTER 5

“If it bothers you, tell me what I can do to help,” said Wolfe, placing his soup spoon on the saucer beside his empty bowl.

Blythe looked up at him, blinking innocently. “If what bothers me?”

His moist lips twisted in a shrewd smirk. He discreetly cocked his head in the direction of a nearby table and lowered his voice so the other three couples at their own table couldn’t overhear his words. “You know what I’m talking about. You’ve barely touched your Vichyssoise.”

“I’ve never been a fan of potato leek soup.”

“Nor the shrimp cocktail or the mesclun greens salad, apparently?”

“Well, no, not really.”

“I see. So you’re a finicky eater. I thought perhaps the rude and continual stares from your ex-in-laws might be destroying your appetite.”

*Bull’s eye! A direct hit to the center of the truth.*



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Feeling more than a little self-conscious, Blythe set aside her own soup spoon and drained her glass of Pinot Gris. Unfortunately, the dry white wine—and the Chardonnay that had been served with the shrimp cocktail, come to think of it—had done absolutely nothing to calm her rattled nerves. Who did she have to murder to get a double shot of vodka? *No, amend that, a quadruple shot!*

She looked back at Wolfe and forced a nonchalant smile. “Them? Oh, who gives a damn about them? No, it’s these hoity-toity surroundings and this food...I’m more of a jeans-and-a-T-shirt and a cheeseburger-and-fries kind of gal.”

“That’s good to know for future reference.”

“*Future reference?*”

“I’m a hopeless optimist.” He smiled wickedly and gave her a sly wink. “And I’m also a jeans-and-T-shirt and a pizza-and-beer kind of guy. Casually attired, junk food junkies, both of us, huh?” He dragged the napkin off his lap, set it on the table, and started to push back his chair. “Nevertheless...”

“Where are you going?” whispered Blythe, grabbing his arm.

“If it’s all the same to you, I think I’ll go have a little chat with the folks at that table before our next course arrives. Someone needs to take them to task for their rudeness.”

“Please don’t!”

Her voice had risen so sharply in volume, that the other six people at their table ceased all conversation and looked directly at her.

Heat poured into her cheeks while her mind raced for a logical explanation regarding her sudden hysteria. “Ah, n-no, darling,” she said to Wolfe, “you don’t need to get my wrap from the car. I’m not as chilly as I was earlier.” She glanced at the high-society strangers who’d been seated at their table. “He’s such a dear. Always worried about my comfort.”

The three women, all of them heavily rouged and at least double

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Blythe's age and dress size, glanced appreciatively and almost adoringly at Wolfe. Then, in near tandem and to Blythe's mild amusement, they each gave their own oblivious partners various looks that silently demanded to know, "Why can't you be more like *him*?"

Blythe turned back to Wolfe and pleaded with her eyes. To her relief, he played along with the impromptu charade. "All right, darling, if you insist. But if you feel a draft later, just give me the word." He settled into his seat, lifted her left hand, and passionately kissed her knuckle. Blythe could almost detect the cumulative sigh of yearning building behind the lips of the three older women.

Surprisingly, Wolfe's kind gaze, along with his gentle touch, had a numbing affect on her, almost as if she had downed the vodka she'd craved only moments earlier. Too bad she couldn't bottle *him*. She'd definitely make a fortune and put the liquor industry out of business. Hell, she'd probably have the financial backing of these three moneyed broads at their table, if their expressions of whimsical desire gave any indication of their approval of Wolfe and his attentive and charming manners.

Now, if only she could devise a way to avoid the fiercely disapproving and unwavering stares still being generated by her ex-in-laws. She didn't even need to look at their table, so keenly she sensed their wicked, vile thoughts being aimed at her, venomous arrows hurled in a continuous barrage of hatred.

But unable to resist, she gave them a swift glance anyway. On Richard's left sat his father, Isham Whitaker, a balding man whose sharp features, hunched shoulders, and wrinkled, mottled skin gave him the aspect of a snapping turtle in a tux. His thin lips, which Richard had inherited, pursed into a fine line, making him appear constipated. *Did someone forget to eat his prunes this morning, old man?*

Isham's wife Marietta, a pale twig of a woman with stark white hair styled in her usual archaic fashion that reminded Blythe of a George

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Washington Halloween wig, fidgeted in her chair yet kept her beady black gaze glued on Blythe. Beneath the prim-and-proper gown of beige—always beige, as if any other color came from the devil himself!—the woman's slight bosom heaved in fury, and her face, as always, bore the expression of someone who'd just discovered horse shit masquerading as her *pâté de foie gras*.

And there on Richard's right sat his new replacement spouse, Prudence, a rather plain wall-flower type who looked as if she'd melt if any of the Whitakers so much as glanced in her direction and offered their patented criticism. She also appeared so uptight, Blythe wondered if anyone with a tractor would be able to tug a needle out of the woman's butt. Still, despite how the recent bride picked at a dinner roll, as if afraid to swallow more than a few morsels or risk an extra trip to the country-club gym, she also cast nasty glances toward Blythe. Her eyes, however, unlike those of her husband's and her in-laws', registered much more than disapproval in their blue depths, but out and out jealousy. Almost murderous in its intensity.

Blythe couldn't help but smile to herself. *Oh, don't fret, sugar lips, Richard is all yours for eternity and beyond, and get used to a Dickless marriage with the Five-Second Man.*

One part of Blythe truly yearned to leap up from her chair and shriek her thoughts to all of them. *So I divorced your only son. So what if I wouldn't take him back? Big deal! Grow up and get over it!* That would certainly guarantee that their pickle-pusses turned purple with rage. Only Wolfe's presence halted the wicked urge.

She knew this night would be uncomfortable, but to this degree? Why should they still bear such obvious hatred for her? They had detested her as a daughter-in-law, even though they had certainly relished making her life a daily misery with incessant demands on her time, perpetually criticizing what she wore and where she went, endlessly condemning her every word, her every action, her clothing,

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her hair, and her friendships. During the brief marriage, her in-laws had only one goal in life—to aid their equally controlling and manipulative son into molding her to be the perfect country-club spouse, the “Stepford Wife”—correction, the “Savannah Wife”—of their dreams. Nevertheless, she had assumed they’d be thanking the heavens to be rid of her rebellious self once and for all.

When she’d divorced Richard, she prayed she’d never again have to suffer that insanity. Yet here they were, making her feel once again that she wasn’t good enough to exist on the same planet. So why? she pondered, glancing at Richard’s parents and doing her best not to vomit at their repugnant faces. Why?

Then the answer hit her. Of course, it was *their* pride, pure and simple. Any failed marriage in the family reflected poorly on them, especially in the eyes of all their snooty friends and business associates. They came from the “old Southern school,” from the days when marriage vows still contained that nasty four-letter-word “obey,” the era when invisible shackles automatically chained a couple together for eternity, despite any misery, loneliness, or mental and physical destruction one might cause the other. Yes, they had detested her as an insubordinate daughter-in-law, but now they hated her tenfold for the “scandal” she had brought into their lives by daring to free herself from a loveless and completely unsatisfying union, the biggest mistake of her life and the ugliest chapter in her history.

Of course, she suspected that having a drool-worthy young escort at her side in the form of Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe did nothing to mitigate their outrage. His presence with her just added fuel to the rumor-fires already ablaze throughout the room and designed to further bring the Whitakers shame amongst their peers.

But that was the very reaction Blythe had wanted from them when calling the Acme Escort Agency and booking a rent-a-stud, wasn’t it? It sure was, so now she had to suffer the consequences, and she had no

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one to blame but herself.

If she could only get through the “auction phase” of this evening without an embarrassing incident, she would consider herself a very lucky woman.

\* \* \*

To Blythe’s relief, the remainder of the dinner ran smoothly. Wolfe, God bless him, kept her engaged in lively conversation, distracting her from the continual stares of her former in-laws and not allowing her to dwell on what might happen with Richard later that evening. Actually, throughout the remaining courses—a light lemon sorbet, a juicy rib eye steak served with a tomato rose and a plump cut-out yam, then a chocolate mousse cake with Crème Anglais and raspberry sauce—Wolfe kept her thoroughly entertained. And not just her, but also the other three couples at their table, whose otherwise stern faces cracked smiles and actually laughed at all of his quips. By the end of the dinner, they seemed glued to his every word, especially during his spirited tales of traveling to Europe and beyond. Blythe was quite impressed. Although she didn’t dare glance across the room, she suspected the escalating merriment from their table had further angered the Whitaker family, a clan in which laughter had always seemed a foreign concept. It was only when the wait-staff began clearing the tables of dirty dishes and pouring everyone a final glass of raspberry fruit wine that Blythe’s fears returned in full force.

Almost immediately, Wolfe seemed to notice the change in her demeanor. He glanced across the room, then brought his mouth close to her ear. “What’s the matter?” he whispered covertly, his breath tickling her cheek. “Are those people continuing to upset you? It’s still not too late for me to head over there and have a chat with them about their lack of manners.”

“No, please, it’s not them.”

“Then why do you look so nervous?”

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"It's just the thought of what's coming next."

He cocked his head. "You mean the charity auction?"

"Excellent deduction."

"Why would that have you so unsettled? Do you have a piece on the auction block that's important to you?"

"A piece?" She laughed without humor. "In a manner of speaking. And to me, it's something quite precious indeed."

"A family heirloom?"

"My parents, rest their souls, would have certainly thought so..."

"You're afraid Richard will do his best to get his hands on the item?"

Blythe shivered at the horrific notion. "You've read my thoughts exactly."

Wolfe smiled. "Easy solution. Why not just remove the item before the auction begins?"

"It's not that simple. I pledged the 'item' years ago, when the last event of this nature took place. Besides, the cause is way too important to me personally—to the entire world, for that matter—for me to back out now."

"Raising money to help find a cure for breast cancer is indeed a meaningful and worthwhile cause, but at what cost to you?"

"Wolfe, when my mother succumbed to this hideous disease, I vowed to do everything in my power to support the fight."

He settled one of his large, comforting hands on top of hers. "I'm sorry, I didn't know."

"The problem is, I'm not an extremely wealthy woman."

"You could have fooled me. You look like a million bucks." The smile accompanying his sweet compliment did nothing to soothe her emotions, although she silently applauded him for trying.

"To confess, I have to thank Richard—or the divorce settlement, if truth be told—for my condo, and I've had my current job at the ad

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agency for only about a year. Actually, since college, it's my first 'real job' that's lasted more than a few weeks. But my lack of mega-millions never mattered when it came to *this* charity event, which is held every few years. Here, I *can* contribute, and I've done so ever since my mother died. And hopefully, should the bidding go in my favor again this year, my financial contribution to the cause will be substantial. It's the least I can do to help the fight, and unfortunately, Richard knows that. And he *will* bid, whether his new wife Pickles or Petunia or Prunella or whatever the hell her name is—"

"Prudence."

"—is here or not. That's why I'm so worried. I know he's just looking for an opportunity to weasel his way back into my life...is seeking yet another method to try to control me."

"I don't understand, Blythe. What will be on the auction block that your ex-husband wants so desperately?"

She looked him straight in the eye. "Me."

## CHAPTER 6

Wolfe's square and shadowed jaw nearly dropped to his lap. "You? Again, I don't understand."

"The auction this evening is for both dances and *dates* with some of Savannah's eligible females. That includes me. And as long as they'll have me volunteer, it's my standing 'donation' to this important charity."

He issued a low whistle from between his puckered lips. "Wow! I had no idea what exactly was being auctioned off this evening. No wonder you've been on edge. With your beauty and personality, you'll be the top 'prize' of the evening."

"Thanks for saying that."

"Well, though the concept of the auction is a bit odd, logic dictates that the results have been acceptable, or they would have stopped doing it."

"Usually very profitable indeed. It gives the pompous and old-



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moneyed ‘Donald Trump wannabes’ of this town a chance to brush off the cobwebs and unlock their wallets once every few years to help the fight against breast cancer. Plus, it gives gals like me—the ones of moderate means who yearn to do something for the cause but can’t afford to contribute financially—a chance to do our part without forcing us into bankruptcy.”

“So you’re sure Richard will bid for you?”

“Oh, he will. Trust me! That’s the main reason I became so desperate and called Acme, the reason you’re here with me right now. If Richard somehow wins the auction tonight, I need him to at least *think* that I have someone else, someone like you, keeping a watchful eye on my whereabouts this evening and every evening afterward. I need him to know for certain that I’ve moved on with my life, that he will *never* be able to possess me, no matter how much money he bids.”

“Possess you? But he’s married again.”

“And your point?”

“Seriously, would he be so insensitive, so devoid of character, as to even bid for you in front of his new wife?”

“Oh, he doesn’t care about her or her feelings. She’s just another one of his possessions. I suppose I should feel sorry for her, since I certainly know what she’s going through. Nevertheless, ‘Insensitivity’ is Richard’s middle name. It will simply be a matter of pride with him, as it is with all members of that family.”

“Why pride? He can’t accept the divorce?”

“He can’t accept the *defeat*, and the blow to his ego, not to mention the scandal I caused at the precious country club by leaving him. And in his warped mind, I still belong to him, and only him. In this very banquet hall a few years ago is where Richard and I actually met, so I know he will do everything he can not to let me forget that night.”

“He bid for you that evening, I take it?”

“And won the full-blown date with me. I suppose I was thankful at

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the time, since that night he seemed to be the only man in this room not eligible for Medicare.”

Wolfe smiled. “So you breathed a sigh of relief, I’m sure.”

“Exactly. And what can I say? He was a young, successful lawyer from one of Savannah’s oldest and most respected families, certainly not *too* wretched to look at...well, he ended up wooing me in a moment of emotional weakness. I jumped in with both feet, thinking marriage might be a grand adventure.”

“And it wasn’t?”

“Have you ever known disappointment, the type that just makes you want to scream your outrage at the world and wonder why you wasted your time in the first place?”

“The marriage was that bad, huh?”

“The grand adventure turned out to be a grand fiasco. A major disappointment.” She smirked. “I once told my friend that being married to Richard—with me aching for fun and my expectations being set on high—was like anxiously awaiting a Three Stooges marathon to come on TV, and when it does, it happens to be a marathon featuring *Shemp*!”

Wolfe laughed. “Could be worse...”

“Oh, really? In what way?”

“Could have been a marathon featuring Joe Besser.”

Blythe arched an eyebrow at him. “You’re a Stooges fan?”

“A Curly fan, specifically.” To her amusement, Wolfe issued a very convincing, “nyuk, nyuk, nyuk,” that would have put most Curly impressionists to shame. “And who isn’t, toots?”

“Wow. You just earned major points in my book, mister! No only fluent at French, but Stoooge-ese. Very impressive.”

“I try, I try.” His smile quickly faded. “Although I can understand your disappointment, I wouldn’t go so far as to say marriage, in general, is a horrid institution. You just need to find the right

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‘someone,’ and voila, the adventure of a lifetime begins.”

“Or I just have to quit trying to be someone I’m not.”

He eyed her for a long moment. “You *should* be a professional baseball player, because I swear, you’re batting a thousand this evening. Again, you’ve left me confused.”

“Oh sorry, it’s a long story, but the bottom line is that I’ve always been a bit—hmm, shall we say, flighty? A bit wild, actually.”

His eyebrows bunched together. “You?”

She sniffed. “I admire the shocked expression on your gorgeous face. You get additional points for that, sweetie. But yes, it’s true. Believe it or not, I’ve never been the type of gal who could tolerate being tied down for long, or worse, being forced into a role that doesn’t suit me.”

“Then I take it you and Richard didn’t get along.”

“That’s putting it mildly. I love heavy metal, he loves opera. I love soap operas, he loves stock reports. I love laughing, he loves pouting. I love voicing the truth, he loves lies and deception. And to top it off, I love sex, and he...well...he loves the *notion* of it.”

Wolfe chuckled. “Yes, it does sound like a ‘Shemp marathon’ to me. A match made in Hades.”

“Oh, the relationship was doomed from the start, but I was too stupid to comprehend it. Or too blind at the time. You see, Richard appeared during a period in my life where I was pondering whether something was wrong with me, why I couldn’t settle down and find satisfaction in both my personal and professional lives. A large part of me wanted to be more like my best girlfriend, Paige. She’s always been so damned grounded, almost to a fault. She never took any leaps without first checking for a safety net, and she buckled down and achieved great success in the literary world because of it. Oh, I envy her so much sometimes, despite my love for her.” She shrugged. “I suppose I sound like a real bitch, huh?”

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"You sound human."

"Really?"

"I think all of us, at one time or another, has done a bit of soul-searching, and has yearned to take a different approach to life, especially when we feel dissatisfied even in the slightest with our existence." He brushed a tendril of hair back from her face, and once again, Blythe welcomed the contact, the intimacy of the act itself. "When we look, I mean, *really* look at the world around us, we can sometimes see life slipping by at lightning speed. Then we start to recall the opportunities presented to us, which we ultimately rejected, and remember different crossroads that emerged along the way and how we dismissed one in favor of another rosier-looking route. And when dissatisfaction with our lives, even boredom, washes over us in stark reality, we feel like we've taken the wrong road, that we're the *only one* missing that elusive key to happiness our friends and colleagues, even complete strangers, seem to be experiencing at every turn."

"Damn, that is *exactly* how I felt. How I still *do* feel at times, especially when seeing other people and how they live." She glanced around the room at all the various couples in attendance, all donned in their expensive tuxedos, gowns, and jewels, and most of them smiling and seemingly carefree. "How they seem so happy and successful and so...*settled*..."

"Ah, yes, but appearances can be deceiving, my dear, and that's the kicker. There's always a hidden truth, and that's what we refuse to see when viewing others from afar. We buy into the romance of those carefully fashioned appearances. Nevertheless, the periods of discontentment become the moments in our lives when we attempt to reinvent ourselves. Sometimes it works out for the better and—"

"And sometimes it's a 'Shemp marathon,'" Blythe finished for him, meeting his sincere gaze. "And I have the divorce papers to prove it."

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No, the life of being an always-polished, always-silent, and always-subservient house-frau to any man was not for me, so I guess I'm destined to be the same flighty, wild broad I've always been."

"And that's a bad thing? I'm quite amazed Richard didn't think you vivacious, amusing, and utterly enchanting."

"The words he said on more than one occasion, unfortunately, were 'annoying', 'opinionated,' and 'defiant.' Be that as it may, I was also a 'possession' that got away from him. And when a Whitaker believes they own something, well..."

Wolfe gave her hand a reassuring squeeze, then threaded his fingers through hers. Another adorable act of intimacy that sent a wave of luscious chills down Blythe's spine. She loved the feeling. She also couldn't believe she had just poured out some of her deepest emotions to a virtual stranger. But for some odd reason, she completely trusted Wolfe. Indeed, this man had comprehended her emotional dilemmas, both past and present, and after purging her thoughts to his sympathetic ear, she felt at least partially cleansed.

"Regardless," she continued, "that whole 'psychotic episode of my life' isn't that far behind me, and Richard refuses to let me forget it. He knows that, from time to time, I still yearn to be something I'm not, and during those occasions, he has tried to lure me back. But I won't give in to him, thankfully, since I don't love him. Never did, actually. But I guess I should also just face the fact that I'll probably never mature like my friend Paige, and I'll probably never settle down to a *normal* life."

"Depends on how you define 'normal.'" He laughed. "And as far as not maturing, not necessarily. Each of us grows at our own pace. Sometimes it just takes another crossroad to lead us down the path of finding our true selves, our perfect place in life. But of greater importance, sometimes we find a path that leads us to the 'perfect someone' I mentioned earlier, the one who can accept us and love us as we *already* are."

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Blythe stared at him in awe. “How did you get so much wisdom in so few years?”

He didn’t respond, just leaned his head closer to hers and dropped his voice even more. “Do yourself a favor—no, correct that—do the *world* a favor, Blythe Larson. Never change who you are. There *is* a place on Earth for—and I quote—‘flighty, wild broads.’ I, for one, find you so refreshingly unique, your frankness exciting, and your entire being captivating beyond imagination. And for what it’s worth, it would greatly sadden me if you lost any part of your true self.”

The comment caused her heart to thump a savage rumba. Never had a man affected her so profoundly with his words, let alone his good looks. And affected her not just in the physical sense, but also in the emotional one. “You are so damned scrumptious, sugar,” she whispered, affecting an exaggerated Southern drawl. “I could eat you up right here.”

“In front of all these pretentious snobs? For shame!” The left side of his mouth turned upward, cutting a dimple into his cheek, while his dark eyes twinkled in that sexy way Blythe had surprisingly come to cherish in the past few hours. “Besides, *ma chérie*, you’ve just had a six-course meal. Wherever will you put another morsel in that wickedly desirable body of yours?”

“Oh, make no mistake, honey, when I crave a delicacy, I will always make room for it. And if I burst, well, *c’est la vie*.”

“Really? Then make room for this...”

Without further warning, his moist lips covered hers in a delicate kiss that exhilarated and reawakened both her imagination and her libido. Blythe returned his kiss, the tip of her tongue eagerly brushing against his. As she had felt since first laying eyes on him, she longed to probe even deeper into his mouth. To wrap her arms around him and crush him against her needy body. To explore every inch of his muscular physique with her trembling hands and darting tongue. Hell,

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she would have fucked him in a heartbeat right then and there and for all eternity—

Had her brain not reminded her of their location.

And as if to back up the reminder, the light, piped-in jazz music that had played throughout dinner faded into nothingness, while shuffling and footfalls and throat-clearing from the podium at the front of the room signaled the beginning of the night's main event.

She stabbed the plush carpeting with her stiletto heels and silently cursed the auctioneer's timing.

But when Wolfe pulled his mouth off hers and she viewed the tender expression on his face and the lustful fire burning in his black eyes, she wanted only to sing a chorus of thanks. And perhaps, for good measure, a chorus of Van Halen's "And The Cradle Will Rock."

*Damn, this man was good! Go Acme!*

## CHAPTER 7

Her stomach all atwitter, Blythe stood at the side of the stage, awaiting her moment to parade before potential bidders. Although she couldn't help wondering what Richard would do when it became her turn to move front and center as the next "item" up for bid, that hadn't caused her current state of anxiety. No, recollections of Wolfe's sweet and surprisingly passionate kiss had done that, dispatching a platoon of butterflies into her stomach, and the more she dwelled on the memory, the fluttery sensation eventually affected her entire body. She actually felt dizzy with desire for him, and her legs started to wobble. To prevent herself from tottering over, she momentarily pressed her palms on a side table and drew deep breaths. The fragrant aroma of red and yellow roses, commanding the table's center within a stately antique vase, only made her queasier. She forced herself upright, leaned against the wall, and tried to focus on the proceedings.

"Do I hear two thousand? Yes, we have two thousand! Thank you,



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kind sir. How about twenty-five hundred? Twenty-five? Anyone? Anyone? Yes? Thank you, my good man, twenty-five it is. Now do I hear three thousand? Three thousand to spend a magical evening with Miss Charlotte Sue Danbury, one of Savannah's prettiest belles? Three thousand? Why, surely a mere three thousand isn't asking too much from you eager bidders..."

The auctioneer, a wispy, white-haired gent who strongly reminded Blythe of the effeminate character named Beverly Leslie from the popular television show *Will and Grace*, droned on and on relentlessly, gavel in hand, begging for higher contributions. Thankfully, his rather timid, mild-mannered babble didn't have the overbearing, fast-talking urgency of an auctioneer at a backwoods estate sale.

Nevertheless, part of Blythe felt like a piece of livestock, or worse, a slave confronting the auction block. Her saner mind, however, reminded her that this was all for "fun," all for a worthy charity, and she could swallow her pride again this year and suffer with the two-dozen other young women "on offer" in order to help raise capital.

The gavel cracked like a gunshot against the auction block, shocking Blythe out of her reverie.

"Sold! Thank you, thank you, Mr. Ernest Trunkle, my fine friend. For thirty-five hundred dollars you've just won a pleasurable evening with our smiling Georgia peach, Miss Charlotte Sue Danbury. Isn't she a dazzler, folks? Give them both a big round of applause for their contributions!"

Handclaps clogged the air, muffling the pounding of Blythe's heart in her eardrums. She glanced out at the audience and located Wolfe, sitting at their table, his gaze glued on her and a reassuring smile on his lips. Thank goodness for his presence this evening, she thought.

*But can I happily live the rest of my life without him in it?*

The startling mental question unnerved her down to the very tips of her crimson high-heeled shoes, almost as much as the current

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proceedings and the remembrances of Wolfe's kiss. Had one desperate and whimsical phone call to a company named Acme really provided her with this unexpected emotional dilemma? Yes, damn it! She had almost forgotten that the handsome man was nothing more than a paid escort. And if she grew addicted to him—a likely prospect, she surmised, with his good looks and courtly manners, his endless charm and engaging intellect drawing her like a lodestone—she would drain her already meager bank account quicker than a horny teenager ejaculates when losing his virginity!

*No, this can't be. I can't be falling for this man. This incredibly sexy, ultra manly, sensitive, educated, humorous, and to-die-for stud-muffin extraordinaire.*

Could she?

Blythe cursed, wishing she had brought her cell phone. She had a burning need to call Virginia and beg advice from her best gal-pal. Paige had gone through something similar last year when she reconnected with Vince at their high school reunion, and Blythe needed to hear once again exactly how her friend felt when viewing the man of her dreams. She needed to know if what she, herself, felt this very moment—the lawless butterflies in her belly, the gelatin-like limbs, the sensation akin to vertigo, the manic need to race to the table, grab Wolfe's hand, and drag him back to her condo for some “alone time”—mirrored Paige's experience in any way, shape, or form.

Damn it, she needed to know if what she felt was love!

*No! Impossible!* She had called Acme for a no-emotional-attachments event, a scheme designed to secure the wall between herself and a badgering ex-husband who refused to take “no” for an answer.

But the escort who had arrived at her door...well, she had certainly felt “lust at first sight” when meeting him this evening, but love? Who knew? Dear God, Wolfe was the epitome of everything she had ever

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wanted in a man, everything she craved in a lover, everything she had yearned for in a spouse. Yes, Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe was so much more than she had ever expected.

Yet he got paid for his services.

*Oh, how in the hell could this have happened to me? How in the hell could—*

“And now, gentleman, the next lovely lady up for bid is Savannah’s very own Blythe Whitaker.”

Applause swept through the room, and also yanked Blythe out of her frantic musing. The last three girls awaiting their turn on stage gently urged her forward, then instinct took control and she ascended the steps.

“All right, gentlemen,” continued the auctioneer, “you may remember Blythe Whitaker from her previous years volunteering at this charity ball and—”

“It’s Larson,” interrupted Blythe, irked at the error.

The white-haired gentleman nearly jumped at the sound of her voice. He spun away from the podium to look at her, his brow scrunching and shrinking his eyes to blue pinpoints of confusion. “Excuse me?”

“It’s Larson. Blythe Larson.”

“But it can’t be,” said the auctioneer, covering the microphone with his shaky hand and eyeing the paper on the podium. “The name is listed as Whitaker and—”

“Trust me, sugar. The name’s Larson, not Whitaker.”

“I don’t understand how this could have happened—”

“Perhaps you didn’t get the memo, darlin’. It’s a concept known as ‘divorce.’ D-I-V-O-R-C-E...there’s even a sprightly song about it. Shall I sing it for you?”

“S-sing? No one told me anything about a solo performance this evening—”

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Blythe would have kicked the silly little man in the seat of his pants if she hadn't been wearing such high heels.

"Oh, for the love of Pete!" She shook her head in annoyance, swept his hand away from the microphone, and bent toward the mouthpiece. "There's been a slight change in the program, ladies and gentlemen. The name is Larson," she said in her most pleasant voice, yet defiantly glared at Richard's table.

Her ex-husband looked as angry as a hornet. And the splotches of red on his cheeks confirmed Blythe's suspicions that he had probably bribed someone to change the announcement list with the hopes that she would just shrug it off and not embarrass herself before the audience. Puerile games—so like Richard! Well, "Dickless" didn't know her half as well as he thought he did!

"Yes, the name is Blythe Larson, folks, *Miss* Blythe Larson. L-A-R-S-O-N...Larson, not Whitaker. And it will *never* be Whitaker again, so make no mistake about it."

Through the resulting whispers and susurrations cut a mirthful and approving chuckle. Blythe glanced toward the sound and saw a grinning Wolfe giving her two thumbs up.

Although feeling slightly flush, she lifted her head and smiled proudly at him, then turned to the befuddled auctioneer and gestured him back to the microphone. "Shall we get this over with now that the correct introduction has been made?"

He blinked several times, then addressed the crowd. "I-I apologize, folks...oh, dear me...someone put down the wrong name on my list and—"

"Hey, Flustered Freddie," whispered Blythe. "Let's move on, sugar. We haven't got all night. My feet are itching to dance."

"Dance? Ah, oh my, yes, dance. Bidding for dances. All right, then, gentlemen, let's start the bidding for the first dance with Ms. Whit—err, I mean *Miss Larson*"—when he turned his head and eyed her

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almost fearfully, Blythe smiled and winked her approval—"at one hundred dollars, shall we? Do I hear one hundred for a chance to accompany this lovely young woman on the dance floor? I see a hand—yes, one hundred. Do I hear two hundred? Two? Yes, we have two. Do I hear three hundred? Three! Four hundred? Ah, yes, four it is..."

Blythe couldn't believe she had just caused a stir on the auction block, but damn it, Richard had resorted to a childish tactic to ostensibly reclaim his "ownership" of her and—double damn him!—it had pissed her off. She only hoped she had finally put him in his place, that he would allow the matter to drop and—

"Six hundred!" With fury apparent on his thin-lipped and crimson-colored face, Richard stood and jerked his hand into the air like a saluting Nazi.

"Six hundred!" repeated the auctioneer. "Yes, we have six hundred dollars for the first dance with Miss Larson. Now, do I hear seven?"

Oh, please, dear God, someone else bid...now...please...

"Ah, I see seven! Going once? Going twice? Sold, to the handsome young gentleman at Table Fifteen."

So glued on Richard's determined countenance as he reseated himself, Blythe realized seconds later that the auctioneer had mentioned her own table number. Surprised, she turned toward Wolfe, his mouth wreathed in a victorious smile. The three couples seated around him offered him congratulations while Blythe whistled a sigh of relief...and gratitude.

Wolfe had actually bid on her? *The sexy sweetheart!*

But could he afford it? Images of his spiffy black Ferrari sprang to mind and answered her question.

*Still, he might be at the end of his credit-card rope, like me...*

"Now, then, gentlemen, how about the second dance with Miss Larson. Do I hear one hundred? One! Now two hundred—" The

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auctioneer pointed to Richard, and another wave of panic swept over Blythe. "Oh, *that's* an eager bid, sir. Two hundred it is! Do I hear three? Three hundred to the man in the back. How about four?" Another gesture toward Richard; more panic. "Four it is! Five? Oh, yes, five. Six? You again, sir? Very good. Do I hear seven? Seven! How about eight? And yet again, sir. Eight it is. Eight hundred...going once...going twice..."

"One thousand!" came a voice from the side. *Wolfe again!*

"One thousand? Very good, sir. One thousand. Going once...going twice...sold to the same dashing gentleman at Table Fifteen. Thank you again, kind sir."

"No, thank *you*," shouted Wolfe, then presented Blythe with a killer smile.

Her entire body tingled. She couldn't believe this was happening.

"Now then, for the final dance with Miss Larson, do I hear—"

"One thousand!" trumpeted Richard.

"Ah, one th-thousand...to start? For the third and final dance with Miss Larson? All right, folks, one thousand it is, I guess. Now do I hear—"

"Two!"

*Wolfe yet again! God, I am falling in love...*

"Three!" came from Richard, once again leaping out of his chair, his new wife tugging on his sleeve. The woman looked mortified with embarrassment. But Richard yanked his arm out of her reach and sneered at the auctioneer.

With a grin of pure mischief on his handsome face, Wolfe slowly climbed to his feet, thrust out his magnificent chest, and looked directly at Richard. "Ten thousand!"

The audience, including the auctioneer, issued a universal gasp. Blythe, however, held her breath, spellbound at the sight of the two men squaring off a few yards away. One trembled with rage and self-

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doubt, those at his table issuing commands for him to cease and desist; the other stood poised and sure of himself, like a Greek god hungry for battle, with those surrounding him urging him on to win the day.

The auctioneer came out of his shock. "T-ten thousand is the bid, folks. Ten thousand. A record for a single dance if I *ever* heard one. Ten thousand going once...going twice..."

When Richard's mottled face suddenly drained of color and an unexpected smirk touched his mouth, Blythe instantly knew two things—he had given up the current battle, yet he had also blueprinted another tactic to win the war. She had seen that look on several occasions when viewing him in the courtroom, and now she could only imagine what the ruthless and scheming lawyer in him had planned.

He bowed toward Wolfe, a sign to the crowd that he had relented.

The auctioneer smacked the gavel against the block. "Sold to the young man for—dear me—ten thousand dollars!"

The resulting applause and shouts of congratulations toward Wolfe literally shook the entire banquet hall. Blythe felt the tremors though the stage floor, although she couldn't quite ascertain if her legs quivered more from the noise or because of the joy she felt when her drop-dead-gorgeous escort beamed at her in another victory.

"I must say, folks," said the auctioneer, "this is an exciting evening indeed. And I'm almost afraid to continue before I take my heart medication." A ripple of laughter poured from the crowd, giving the auctioneer time to yank a kerchief from his pocket and wipe his dripping forehead. "Now then, for Miss Larson's final contribution to this worthy charity, a full *evening* in her company, let's start the bidding at the usual one thousand dollars, shall we?"

"Let's not," uttered Richard, still standing and facing Wolfe, a shrewd smile on his face. "Let's start at *twenty* thousand!"

Another collective gasp from the crowd. People stirred in their chairs, settled their glasses of liquor on the tables as if in fear of

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dropping them, and gaped in riveted silence at the two men dueling dollars before the stage. Even the restaurant staff had ceased their duties, freezing in mid-action like mannequin waiters, bartenders, and busboys.

“Tw-twenty?” asked the auctioneer, shaking his head as if making certain he had heard correctly.

“Yes, twenty!” proclaimed Richard with the air of a rich man who knew he had only to snap his fingers for millions to miraculously appear.

Blythe couldn’t stop the groan that seeped from her lips. So *that* was Richard’s new tactic—making certain his young rival had spent an exorbitant amount of money on the dance “prizes” so, chances are, he wouldn’t have enough for the “full evening with Blythe” prize. *Damn you and your fortune, ‘Dickless’!*

She spun toward Wolfe, all hope fading in her heart. Yes, how could a man so young, even an escort obviously paid a small fortune for his “talents,” whatever they may be, hope to compete in the “wallet-size stakes” against a man like Richard Whitaker? And why would he? After all, she hardly knew him. And she couldn’t imagine anyone donating such a large sum, despite the worthwhile charity, to spend an evening with her, except for Richard, of course, with his ulterior motives and his burning, unquenchable need to save his pride. Indeed, she still couldn’t quite get over the fact that, for a few measly dances, Wolfe had already pledged more than twenty times the money that she had put on her credit card for his escort services, so she expected nothing more.

*Admit defeat, you sweet, sexy man, and thank you for trying...*

“Fifty thousand!”

When she heard those two words trumpet from Wolfe’s mouth, Blythe’s jaw nearly plummeted to the stage. The mesmerized crowd obviously shared her surprise, since most of them leaned forward in



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their seats, their mouths dangling open and their eyes creating a sea of Ping-Pong-ball-like orbs.

“D-did I hear you correctly, s-sir?” asked the auctioneer, his whispery voice actually squeaking in astonishment.

Wolfe nodded. “You did indeed, my good man,” he replied with complete confidence, his voice loaded with challenge. His large hands gripped the lapels on his spotless jacket and he stood even taller and more erect. Blythe half-expected him to rip open his starched white shirt to display a huge red “S” emblazoned on his chest.

“Sixty!” shrieked Richard in outrage.

Behind him, his wife buried her face in the dinner napkin and seemed to shrink in her chair. His father ordered him to “stop the insanity,” and his mother said something through clenched dentures about him “playing the fool over that harlot.”

Richard had always been a bit of a mama’s boy, as Blythe could never forget, and the old woman’s stern reprimand seemed to bring him to his senses. For an uneasy minute, he looked at his parents. Their white faces had wrinkled in horror and shame as if they realized their son’s actions had demoted them to the bottom rung of the almighty social ladder, and Richard’s shoulders slumped. With the wordless cry of a petulant child blasting from his lips, he spun on his heels and stampeded from the room, the crowd never taking their eyes off him until he kicked open the door and slammed it shut behind him.

Dead silence filled the banquet hall, except for the weak twitter of Prudence Whitaker’s pathetic sobs into her napkin and the banging of Blythe’s heart against her ribcage.

The auctioneer cleared his throat and pressed his lips against the microphone. “I-I guess the original bid of f-fifty thousand stands, unless someone else has a...err...no...” He whacked his gavel against the block. “Oh forget it! We’ve achieved a new record! Sold to the young man at Table Fifteen for fifty thousand dollars!”

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The crowd exploded in a round of catcalls and applause. Had Wolfe not leapt onto the stage to grab Blythe's arm, she would have fainted dead on the spot.

## CHAPTER 8

“You are one *very* lucky woman,” whispered a heavily bejeweled woman into Blythe’s ear, “to have a man in your life so enamored with you, especially one so gorgeous.”

Still numb from the shock of what had occurred, Blythe could only nod. For the past twenty minutes, ever since the final three bachelorettes had been “sold” and the auctioneer himself, shaking and mopping his sweating face with his kerchief, had raced from the stage toward the bar, she had heard numerous comments of a similar nature. Beside her at the table sat Wolfe, politely thanking people who offered praise and, somewhat bashfully, shaking their hands.

A short time later, the tide of well-wishers began to trickle off, and only then did Blythe get an opportunity to talk to him with some degree of privacy. “What in the hell just happened? What got into you? What will Acme say? Oh my God, will they bill *me* for this? Or can *you* afford it yourself? Don’t you realize how much money you’ve pledged

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before all of these witnesses—”

His fingers against her lips stopped her from continuing. “It was worth every penny, and I still haven’t even claimed my dances or my future evening in your company.” His laughter went straight to her heart and groin.

“But Wolfe—”

“Later.”

“But—”

He gestured toward the stage, where a small music ensemble had finished setting up its equipment and prepared to begin playing. “I think you owe me several dances, don’t you? Three, to be exact.” He got up from his chair and held out his hand. “Shall we?”

“I just don’t understand—”

“Don’t tell me you’re a welsher, daring to take back what I paid so dearly to receive?”

“No, it’s just that...” She giggled at his sad, puppy-dog expression, then accepted his hand and stood. “You’ll answer my questions later, though, right?”

“That depends.”

“On what?”

“On how good you dance, sweetheart. You never know, I just may demand a refund.”

When the band launched into a version of “Strangers in the Night,” Wolfe dragged Blythe into his strong arms and snuggled her against the solid wall of his chest. She couldn’t recall ever feeling more protected and secure in a man’s embrace, and as they swayed to the music amid the other couples, she looked into his dark eyes and saw a look of pure contentment.

And something more—animalistic lust?

Yes, definitely lust, she decided, when one of his hands settled just above her derrière and he guided her even closer against him. His gaze

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traveled downward, settling on her cleavage, and she quickly detected a hardness forming against her lower belly—a sizable one at that. It took all of her willpower to stop from reaching between their bodies for a thorough exploration of his crotch. Knowing that this man wanted her with the same degree of eagerness as she yearned for him made Blythe quiver from head to toe.

She suddenly remembered her solution to Paige's writing block earlier that week, suggesting that the character of Babette should crawl under the boardroom table to give Vinnie, her fictional lover, a clandestine blowjob during a company meeting. Blythe eyed the large, round dinner table a few feet away, then the sexy man pressed against her, and debated whether she could somehow slip below to secretly give him the satisfaction he so richly deserved. Oh God, the notion was too damned tempting. He had saved her from potential disaster this evening, paid a small fortune in the process, and he had earned every lick, every tickle, every orgasm her mouth could deliver to him.

But no, as much as she could have merrily stripped him of the tuxedo right here on the dance floor and jumped his bones in front of all these high-society Yahoos, she opted instead for decorum. Or at least for the moment, she amended, depending if she could resist touching and tasting what felt like a very impressive cock stabbing her belly. The sexy, dimpled smile on her partner's face implied that Wolfe had read her thoughts, and he lowered his lips toward hers.

As if out of nowhere, a hand appeared on Wolfe's shoulder. Annoyed at the interruption, Blythe turned to find Richard standing beside them.

"May I cut in?"

"Are you still here?" asked Wolfe, snuggling against Blythe and seemingly undisturbed by the intrusion. "And no, you may not cut in."

"But I need to have a few words with her and—"

"Use a telephone. Or have your divorce lawyer contact hers if you

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need to relay any information to her.”

“Listen here, pal, I don’t know who the hell you are, but how dare you—”

“I’m not your pal. And I dare because I won this beautiful woman fair and square this evening. Once upon a time you had your chance with her, and obviously flubbed it or she would still be your wife. Frankly, Mr. Whitaker, you’re infringing on my precious time with her. So I suggest you grow up, admit that this lady wants nothing more to do with you, and seek out another dance partner. Preferably one who can stomach your childish antics.”

“You son of a bitch!” Richard took off his glasses and pocketed them, then swatted Wolfe’s upper arm with the back of his hand. Blythe imagined, had this been the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, Richard would have used a white glove to call his enemy out for a sword duel.

She gripped Wolfe’s forearms. “Please, not here.”

“Don’t worry, sweetheart,” said Wolfe, still unperturbed by Richard’s bluster, although the other couples on the dance floor backed away from the escalating tension, giving the potential brawlers a wide berth. “I wouldn’t lower myself for the likes of him.”

Blythe saw Richard’s fist coming toward the side of her escort’s face. “Look out!”

Wolfe had obviously anticipated the action, since in the blink of an eye, he had lifted his own arm and captured Richard’s small fist in his large hand. Only then did Wolfe release Blythe and use his free arm to push her behind him and out of harm’s way. Shrieking in pain, Richard sank to his knees as Wolfe continued to squeeze the man’s fist and twist sideways.

The band ceased playing in a shock of discordant notes, and a bedlam of confused voices erupted through the banquet hall. Several men broke away from their dance partners and stepped forward, obviously with the intention of breaking up the fight.

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Wolfe lifted his free hand and halted them. "It's all right, folks, don't worry, things are under control."

"Let me go, you bastard!" demanded Richard, his face scrunched in agony. "Let me go or I'll sue your sorry ass! I swear, I'll take you for everything you own, damn it! I'll make you sorry you ever messed with me! I'll make you sorry for what you did this evening! I'll—"

"Mr. Whitaker, your threats mean nothing to me, so just shut your yap and listen carefully," said Wolfe, his voice calm and controlled. "Can you do that?"

"Fuck you! I'll see you in prison and—"

"I guess not." Wolfe twisted the man's arm even more, and another cry of pain shot from Richard's drooling mouth. "Are you ready to shut up now and listen?"

Richard said nothing, just gasped and shot daggers of hatred from his icy gray eyes.

"Thank you." Wolfe leaned forward and lowered his voice even more, as if trying to maintain a sense of decorum in the midst of the chaos. "I will let you go, but only after you give me your word that you will quit acting like a drunken buffoon and leave this lady in peace before you bring her or your family further humiliation this evening. Do you promise?"

For a moment, Blythe saw defiance play across Richard's red face and she worried that Wolfe would actually have to snap the man's wrist before he complied with the simple request. But then, to her relief, her ex-husband nodded.

"All right, all right," barked Richard. "Just let go before you rip off my arm, you fucking goon, or I'll call the police and—"

"Using profanity in front of all of these nice people isn't acting like a gentleman, Mr. Whitaker. Now promise you'll pull yourself together and, for pity's sake, show a little dignity. Plus, stop talking about lawsuits and police, since you're the one who threw the first punch, and

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I'm sure many people here will vouch for me. Do you really want to take this any farther? For the sake of your family's reputation and your self-respect, I suggest you think long and hard about that."

"Yes, yes, I promise, now let me—"

Before Richard could finish the sentence, Wolfe released the man's fist. He stood erect and glared down at his conquered opponent. His posture brooked no argument that he would retaliate should Richard foolishly continue the fight.

In a gesture that surprised Blythe, Wolfe extended a hand toward her ex-husband. "Let me help you up—"

Richard swatted aside the hand and clambered up from the dance floor without any assistance. He huffed and puffed, rubbing at his sore arm and wrist, but showed no additional signs of aggression. The man would have been an idiot to do so, and he seemed to finally comprehend that. But when he glanced toward Blythe, he opened his mouth to speak.

Wolfe stepped in front of her again, a six-foot-four barricade of pure muscle and masculinity. "Ah, ah, Mr. Whitaker, you made a promise before all these witnesses that you will leave this lady in peace. Now please keep your word."

"But she's—"

"Your wife is leaving, Mr. Whitaker, and you have no further business here."

"She's my ex-wife, Sherlock, and surely one word between us is—"

"I'm talking about your *current* wife, you ignorant fool." Wolfe pointed to where Prudence Whitaker raced across the banquet hall toward the door, her head down and her face red with disgrace. His elderly parents trotted behind her as if a fire nipped at their heels. "Your business is now with your family, not Miss Larson."

Richard's face drained of color, while his pudgy body trembled. He studied the disapproving faces of the dozens of people surrounding the



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dance floor, cast one more murderous glance at Wolfe, then started toward the door. Partygoers who stood in his way hastily stepped aside and gave him a wide path, as if not wanting any part of him to contaminate them.

Wolfe took a deep breath, then smiled and turned toward the stage, where he addressed the sax player. "Music, please. We haven't finished the first dance with the lovely ladies who so graciously and generously contributed their time to this worthy charity."

The bandleader nodded his approval, then gave a cue and the ensemble sprang into their rendition of "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." The other couples, now shaking their heads, breathing sighs of relief, and smiling, took hold of each other and resumed dancing.

Blythe looked at Wolfe in complete astonishment. Not only sexy as sin, but a gentleman through and through. He hadn't even broken a sweat during the contretemps, hadn't lost his temper, hadn't even raised his voice. If she had read about someone like him in one of Paige's erotic novels she would have never believed a man such as this existed. But here he stood, grinning and extending his hands toward her and proving her wrong.

And at this very moment, she realized she no longer needed her best friend's advice. Yes, she was *definitely* in love. Madly in love, for the first time in her twenty-nine years. In love with a capital "L."

Now, as she again snuggled into his muscular arms and moved to the music, all she wanted to do was show this wickedly wonderful man just exactly what she felt toward him.

"Wolfe, I think—"

"I've got an idea, sweetheart," he interrupted. "I don't recall any rules from the auctioneer that specified my three dances had to be performed right here in the banquet hall, do you?"

Once again, he seemed to have read her mind, and she giggled in delight. "Even if there were rules, I've been known to break most of

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'em."

His lips met hers in a searing kiss, a kiss loaded with the promise for complete satiation throughout the remainder of the evening.

And she could hardly wait for him to keep his promise.

## CHAPTER 9

Although Wolfe never held the speed limit as gospel on the journey back to the condo, the ride seemed an eternity to Blythe. They exchanged few words between them, preferring instead to let their lust-filled eyes do all the talking, and their lips met in hot kisses at every insufferable stoplight. On more than one occasion, cars beeped from behind to indicate “green lights” and, only then, did their lips and tongues reluctantly separate. Blythe couldn’t stop her left hand from roaming over his muscular thigh, flat belly, and right pectoral. And several times she had impatiently groped the lengthy and rock-hard pole at his groin, which in and of itself must have made it difficult for Wolfe to maneuver the Ferrari through the Savannah streets. How they actually made it back to her condo in one piece, Blythe didn’t even bother to question. She just thanked the heavens they had finally done so without causing an accident or getting pulled over for a speeding ticket.

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Without a word, they practically sprinted up to her third floor unit, taking the stairs in lieu of waiting for the building's notoriously slow elevator. Blythe had located her keys while still in the car so as not to waste additional time, and within seconds of reaching her door, she had it open and ushered him into her living room.

She could do nothing more than flip on a light switch before Wolfe pounced into action. When he reached around from behind and covered her aching breasts with his palms, she lost control of her purse and keys and they jangled onto the carpet. He kicked the door closed with his foot, then pressed his groin against her ass, where he wedged his thick hardness between her cheeks. Meanwhile, his lips created a moist trail over one of her exposed shoulders and to her neck. She tilted her head to the side, giving him free access. Finally, the tip of his tongue ventured into her ear canal and made her shiver. She gripped the back of his hands and squeezed encouragement, all the while wiggling her hips and savoring his cock as best she could through their layers of clothing.

"Which way to the bedroom?" he whispered.

"No time for that!" She broke free of his hold, then turned and shoved him backward onto her sectional sofa.

Smiling and leering at her, he yanked at his bow tie and toed off his shoes, while Blythe kicked her stilettos clear across the room before sinking to her knees between his spread legs. With no hesitation whatsoever, she skirted up his cummerbund, then mouthed his erection through the tuxedo trousers while tugging at the clasp and zipper.

Wolfe freed himself of the cummerbund altogether and unbuttoned his shirt, revealing a sun-bronzed torso worthy of a tongue bath. A wealth of muscles and firmly cut ridges and valleys testified to the young man's fondness for exercise, making Blythe's mouth water even more. His dark nipples had puckered in desire, begging for attention. An inverted triangle of brown wispy curls in the center of his

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breastbone made a splendid target for future kisses, as did the thick path of hair that led from his belly button and into his pants. He shrugged the shirt over his shoulders and toyed with his cufflinks, cursing when one of them proved defiant.

Blythe smiled at the colorful tattoo emblazoned on his upper right bicep—an ebony-black wolf's head, with fiery red eyes and an unnaturally long and drooling tongue trailing nearly down to his elbow. Despite her horniness, she burst out laughing at the irony, considering the man's surname and her locks of red hair. She felt as if some cosmic entity—likely Venus, the goddess of love—had transported her into an X-rated version of Little Red Riding Hood. Here she was, the heroine in a deliciously naughty fairytale, kneeling before the randy wolf, the hero in this scenario, and she would actually welcome him eating her from head to toe. That is, if she didn't eat every inch of him first.

"A self-portrait, or just wishful thinking on my part?" she said, nodding toward his arm.

Wolfe freed the stubborn cufflink, which he placed on the side table beside its partner, then removed his shirt, tossed it aside, and leaned back against the sofa cushions. "When I dig my tongue into your juicy pussy," he whispered in a raspy voice, "you'll know the truth. Tell me...do you have your own self-portrait painted somewhere on your body, something depicting your talents, perhaps?"

"Sorry, no," she countered, shivering in yearning and licking her lips. "But once I get your cock in my mouth, you'll understand why my best friend uses my antics as her inspiration when writing erotica."

The deep chuckle that poured from his mouth made his chest muscles bulge enticingly. "Then by all means, show me if what she writes is pure fiction or fiction based on fact."

For a long moment, she ran her shaky hands over that luscious chest and flat belly, loving the opposing textures of soft skin, coarse hair, and solid muscle. She impishly pinched his nipples before returning to her

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original, and more urgent, task. After separating the folds of his trousers, she dug inside and located the prize—a grand prize, she decided, by the outline of the bulge in his black bikini briefs. She tugged down the elastic, discovering that the trail of hair from his navel led to a lush pubic forest, and from his underwear sprang the most beautiful cock Blythe had ever seen.

The fat crimson head, partially covered with a darker-colored foreskin, shimmered in pre-cum dampness. Like a billy club, his fuck-stick bluntly slapped against his ridged belly and bounced up and down with the beat of his pulse. A network of red-purple veins marked its surface, a roadmap for Blythe's tongue to eagerly follow.

As she kissed and licked her way up and down the lengthy shaft, she breathed deeply of his manly musk, which made her pussy weep in need. She used her hands to fondle and stroke him, then tugged upward until the foreskin buried the crown beneath its folds and created a small tunnel of flesh. She dug the tip of her tongue into the crevice and stabbed the cock head hidden below, painting circles around the slit. The sweet-salty droplets of his juice made her ache for more, and she eventually slid down the prepuce and engulfed the thick, moist crown between her lips. Her tongue went wild on his throbbing hardness, and Wolfe moaned his gratification. She sucked more and more of his nectar into her mouth, and before long, her tongue seemed to actually buzz with his manly tang.

Wolfe reached around to the back of her head and removed the bejeweled clasps that held her hair in place. When her locks cascaded around her face, he sighed approvingly and twirled several curls in his hands.

She took her mouth off his penis and shook her head, making certain the lengthy and heavy auburn strands brushed over his exposed crotch and belly.

“You like my hair?”

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He laughed in delight. “With that curtain of tresses, you remind me of Tawny Kitaen in that famous Whitesnake video.”

“The one who did the splits on the hood of a car, flung her lion’s mane of hair in all directions, and made all the young boys worldwide burst in their pants?”

“That’s the gal.”

She smiled and shook her head again. “And that’s a true compliment.”

“Your hair...it looks so damned sexy.” He paused and shivered. “And feels so damned terrific against my dick.”

“Really?” She flipped her head to the side and swatted his bare flesh with the thick curls. This time, almost boyish giggles shot from his mouth in a rat-a-tat of mirth and widened her smile. “Ticklish, are we, lover?”

“Hardly.”

“Not at all?”

Viewing a challenge in his expression, she reached down and tugged off his socks. Shit, even his large feet, with the long, perfectly chiseled toes and the dusting of hair on the instep, held a manly beauty Blythe had rarely seen. She used her manicured nails to lightly tickle the soul of his right foot from heel to toe. When she received no response from him, she tried his other foot and redoubled her efforts.

“You’re wasting your time,” he said, chuckling, obviously not from her roaming fingers, but from her growing desperation to prove him a liar. “My body’s not at all sensitive. But you? Let’s find out...” He bent forward and gently stroked her sides, then traced the underside of her breasts with his nimble fingers.

She looked him square in the eye and didn’t even flinch, only smirked.

He whistled in amazement. “I’m shocked. I thought all dainty, prim-and-proper Southern belles were supposed to be so ticklish and

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sensitive.”

“A dainty, prim-and-proper Southern belle? There’s your first mistake, sugar. There’s nothing dainty or prim-and-proper about me, as if you haven’t noticed by now”—she paused to point his cock toward the ceiling and, slowly and seductively, lick it from fat base to shiny tip—“and the only thing ticklish about me is my funny bone. Sensitive, however, is another matter. But you’ll just have to find out for yourself where that word applies when it comes to this body...like I’m about to do to you.”

With that, Blythe slipped him back into her mouth. She relaxed her throat muscles, checked her gag reflex, and managed to deep-throat him almost to the very root. So close, in fact, that his aromatic pubic hair teased the tip of her nose. She kept his throbbing flesh captive for countless seconds, his drooling knob wedged in her throat, and occasionally waggled her head from side to side. He clutched handfuls of her hair and gasped, his belly muscles flexing in waves of pleasure. She released him, then lovingly sucked him for several minutes, her goal always to devour his entire shaft with each downward plunge. Unfortunately, she quickly realized that, no matter her experience, her valiant efforts, or how much she stretched her mouth, his impressive length prohibited a full deep-throat, especially at this angle. Nevertheless, she had fun attempting the feat. Plus, she always welcomed a sexual challenge and planned to give it her best shot throughout the rest of the night.

She took a break from her merriment in order to catch her breath. “So you said my hair feels good on your skin, huh?”

He nodded, his eyes sparking in anticipation.

Instead of simply stroking him, she kissed and licked his phallus, making the taut flesh shiny with saliva and pre-cum, then twirled locks of her long hair around it, as a stylist might wrap tresses around a plump roller. She imprisoned his pole in the bands of her red curls,



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allowing them to come undone on their own before repeating the process.

“Shit!” he said, his chest heaving and the skin on his arms momentarily turning to gooseflesh. “That hair...damn, it feels like you’re brushing my cock with the finest silk.”

Blythe giggled before licking the fresh pre-cum off his crown and sucking the knob for a few seconds, draining him of even more. Another wave of shivers raced through Wolfe’s body. His legs trembled, and she felt his toes curl in ecstasy against her buttocks.

Gathering another thick lock of her hair, she lassoed his cock once again, this time just beneath the sensitive crown. She used the strands of her hair like a rope, tugging the magnificent erection away from his body so it pointed skyward. It looked like a tower of flesh being hydraulically lifted into place by a team of lewd engineers. Without warning, she released her hair, and his shaft slapped and bounced against his belly. She repeated the procedure several more times, licking the escaping juice from his slit between each occasion. Eventually, his chuckles had morphed into nothing but moans and whimpers. She lost count of how many times she performed the trick, but when she finished, it pleased her to see Wolfe’s body writhing and the crystalline fluid oozing freely from his slit, which she hungrily lapped up and relished.

It also pleased her that this was the first penis she’d had in many years lengthy enough for her to play with in this fashion. She loved cock-play, loved touching, sucking, and riding them, and this man had a fantastically imposing one. Damn, his surname should have been “Horse” instead of “Wolfe.” She had never had this type of fun with most of her other lovers, especially Richard. Not only did her ex-husband have a rather stumpy penis—one of the reasons she had nicknamed him “Dickless”—but when it came to sex, he had always been outwardly disgusted by any creative initiative on her part. His idea

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of lovemaking had been “don’t talk, don’t touch, just let me slide in, slide out, then sleep since I have a big court date tomorrow”—the other reason for his nickname.

But this young stud was another story entirely, and she meant to have as much fun as possible. She gave his cock another long and loving suck, then rested back on her haunches.

“Lift your ass.”

When he did as instructed, she slid the trousers and underwear down his hips and thighs, then freed his sinewy, hairy legs from the material. Now, she received a clear view of his testicles—plump, fur-covered nuggets full of the tasty liquid she craved. She bathed his balls in saliva, gently sucking one, then the other, then cramming both into her mouth. All the while, she used locks of her hair to tease his cock, thighs, and belly. When she let the sodden orbs spill from her mouth, more shivers assailed Wolfe’s body, and his handsome face had crunched into an expression of blissful agony.

*Now, for even more fun...*

Although she loved having such power over this decidedly manly man sitting before her completely naked, totally at her mercy while she had yet to undress, she also wanted to make him squirm even more, to raise the level of his sexual torture. She reached behind and lowered her gown’s zipper, unclasped her bra, then tugged down her already low neckline and plucked out her tits for his viewing pleasure.

He blinked several times. “Damn, they’re...as beautiful...as I imagined,” he said, the hoarseness of his deep voice and the heaviness of his breathing pleasing Blythe more than his words.

He leaned forward and covered her breasts with his large hands, gently fondling the globes yet grinding her pointy and sensitive nipples against his palms.

“You like my tits?”

“No...love them.” He started to apply additional pressure. “God,

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how I want to taste them—”

“Not yet. This is the time for *my* fun.”

“But—”

She grabbed his wrists, and as much as it killed her to sever the welcome contact of his warm hands against her aching peaks, she meant to finish what she started. Hell, since she had paid Acme for this man’s company, she meant to have her way with him in any fashion she saw fit. Besides, the ad copy had stated, “Discretion is our middle name,” so she aimed to get her money’s worth from this gorgeous fantasy man. “Don’t forget Acme’s claim.”

“Huh? Claim?” His brow furrowed, almost as if he had no idea what she was talking about.

“The first line of the ad?—‘Allow us to make you feel like the world revolves around you’?”

“What? Oh, yes, Acme...that ad...what about it?”

“Well, at this moment, the world *does* revolve around me, and I’m in charge here.”

He smirked. “And as the queen of your own world, what exactly do you want from your very willing servant?”

“This.”

She took hold of his cock with both hands and slid at least half of it into her mouth, this time sucking greedily and pumping him as fast as she could.

Grunting, Wolfe collapsed onto the sofa, and the hands that had so recently clutched her breasts now gripped the cushions as if he struggled for dear life. “Fuck! Oh, God! Fuck!”

In less than a minute, she felt his dick expand and lengthen even more, if that were even possible. His sighs and gasps became a steady cadence, a sexual mantra, and she knew she had brought him to the edge. And she urged him there as quickly as possible. It had been too long...way too long...

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A twitch of his erection proved her only warning before he exploded in her mouth. Hot, creamy seed coated her tongue and spilled into her throat. Blythe swallowed one, two, then three mouthfuls of his mildly salty essence before he began to taper off.

Nevertheless, she continued milking the twitching shaft, stroking and sucking and savoring the taste of his output, unable to remember when last she had enjoyed an eruption so inspiringly abundant and utterly delicious. Certainly never from a man so damned handsome, so damned manly, and so damned sexy.

And she knew right then and there, she would never be able to get enough of him.

Yes, as she'd thought earlier in the evening, she could very well grow addicted to this man, and as she continued lapping up his luscious offering, she fleetingly wondered just how much of a price cut Acme would give her for a standing order of Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe.

## CHAPTER 10

“I guess you *are* a bit sensitive and ticklish after all, hmm?” said Blythe, then went back to sucking his big cock.

Still shivering and squirming on the sofa, Wolfe cradled her face in his hands. “Damn it, sweetheart, you proved it...you proved it...”

“Proved what?” she asked, lacquering her lips with the remaining drops of ejaculate from the crown of his still-quivering penis.

He stroked her cheeks with his fingertips. “Now...now I know why your friend...Antoinette Pope...uses you as her...story inspiration.”

She licked her lips, then sucked the knob of his cock, draining him of yet another drop of cum and making him gasp.

Damn it, she thought, noting how his erection had showed no signs of deflating. There was certainly something to be said for being with a virile, younger man. Not since high school had she had a lover who stayed so exceptionally hard after such a powerful orgasm.

“And now I know why Acme keeps you in their employ and pays

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you so much. And let me tell you, sweetie, they are *not* paying you enough. Not that I want a higher bill in the future, but...”

“Pays me? A higher bill...?” Again, Wolfe’s handsome face twisted in confusion. A dusting of pink touched his cheeks. “Oh, yes...pays me...Acme...yes...” He released a long, satisfied breath, then covered his eyes with the back of his right arm, almost as if avoiding her gaze.

But Blythe didn’t let that bother her, especially with a rock-hard penis still throbbing against her fingers and obviously aching for further stimulation. She deep-throated him several times for good measure, then leaned forward and sandwiched his shaft between her breasts.

The change in sexual play made him lower his arm, and when he viewed her actions, a salacious smile curled his lips. “How did you know that all night I’ve imagined fucking your tits?”

“I didn’t miss your frequent glances toward my cleavage. You were hardly circumspect about it, big guy, practically taking snapshots.”

“If only.”

Wolfe settled his hands on top of hers and pressed her breasts even tighter against his rod. He started bucking his hips, and for several minutes, the head of his cock appeared and disappeared into the valley of her cleavage. With the tip of her tongue, Blythe tried to capture new beads of his pre-cum every time the crown emerged, and for the most part, she succeeded to her satisfaction.

All at once, Wolfe’s tempo began to escalate, and his body started trembling. “Hell, just the sight of those magnificent tits...the feel of them against my dick...I’m almost to the point of shooting again.”

Blythe released her breasts and licked his cock from root to tip. “Not until the time is right, lover, once I can *properly* prepare you.”

The look on Wolfe’s face proved too delicious for words and made her giggle. Obviously he desperately wanted to bathe her breasts with his hot seed, but the promise of unspecified foreplay probably had him

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too intrigued to argue. For a moment, he said nothing, just gave her a shrewd perusal that advertised his own future schemes. Silent promises of retaliation that made Blythe quiver and ache.

“Listen, sweetheart,” he said, bending forward and snatching her wrists, giving her a playfully rough taste of her own medicine, “let’s get one thing straight.”

“Oh, yeah? What’s that, Horse-Dick?” she asked, putting her mouth within tasting distance of his alluring lips and contemplating the splendor of the nickname she had just bestowed on him. So much better and more promising than “Dickless.”

“Before the night is through,” he whispered against her mouth, “I *will* be fucking those big and beautiful tits of yours. Are we clear on that?”

“Yes, I think we’re *perfectly* clear,” answered Blythe, her pussy pounding a wanton rhythm and her nipples yearning for his undivided attention.

Her mouth met his in a spirited session of mutual pledge, tongues plunging and dueling, lips trembling and encouraging. She admired the fact that he didn’t back away from her, that he accepted her mouth, so recently saturated with his palatable seed, and had obviously adjudged it pleasant to kiss. Most of her former lovers did not do that, and she gave Wolfe additional points for his uninhibited outlook.

*Man, oh, man, this stud has certainly wracked up a ton of points this evening...*

Reluctantly, she broke the contact of their mouths and winked at him. “But I plan to get my money’s worth of you—and that fucking delicious cock.”

His sensuous smile turned stiffly carnal—and wolfish. “And I plan to do the same to your cunt and whichever other parts of you dare to get in my way! And with more than fifty thousand dollars recently donated to a worthy charity, I certainly plan to claim that juicy and tasty

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prize...in fucking spades.”

Yes, more than fifty thousand dollars. Damn it! Blythe had nearly forgotten about that, so consumed she had been with making certain her own outpouring of credit-card cash satisfied her every whim.

Although she viewed the determined look on his face and shivered in uncontrollable arousal, she managed to climb to her feet without teetering over. With anxious hands, she helped the naked, horse-hung stud up from the sofa, then swiftly guided him to the bedroom and—somehow, God knew how—also managed to maintain her frail sanity.

\* \* \*

He has expert hands, Blythe thought after experiencing his satisfactory manipulations. Yes, the hands of a sexual maestro, hands well attuned to services of this carnal nature, disentangled her of the crimson ball gown and sheer undergarments, then went to work on parts of her body shrieking for gratification.

He perched her on the edge of her vanity table. Her bare buttocks knocked over tubes of lipstick, eyeliner, and the nearly empty bottle of her favorite Le Baiser Du Dragon perfume, and tingled from the cool smoothness of the polished wood. One of Wolfe’s long fingers—no, two—no, three—slid into her drenched pussy, which clenched around his probing digits of its own volition. With his other hand, he focused on her breasts...teasing, groping...caressing, clutching...toying, kneading...whatever satisfied his mood at any given nanosecond. His moist and sensual mouth followed suit on her boobs, belly, and neck, and all of this just as they had barely entered the bedroom.

“You want me to fuck you *senseless*, don’t you?” he asked into her ear. “To fuck you *unconscious*?”

Her mind whirled in pleasure. “Yes...no...damn it...not yet!”

“What’s the problem?”

“I wanted...I planned to have my...my way with you...and nothing more...for a while...until I was ready...ready...” The moist walls of



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her channel tried to capture his pistoning fingers to no avail.

“And what’s to say your plans and mine can’t *combine* to make a spectacular show?”

She had no response for that bit of prurient logic.

His mouth suckled her left breast. In concurrence, his fingers probed even deeper into her needy core, stabbed again and again, and Blythe shouted her ecstasy, damn the neighbors on all sides of her condo unit. Hell, in the past few years, if they hadn’t gotten used to her habits by now, then screw ’em. The same way she wanted to royally screw this perfect beast of a man who rubbed his delectable bare flesh against hers and made her see entire constellations behind her eyelids without even reaching orgasm.

Her frazzled mind calculated and weighed his words for untold seconds, until her own sexual logic—carnal necessity—took full control. “Yes, fuck me! Fuck me now!”

“I’m a slave to your every whim.”

Wolfe lifted her into his muscular arms long enough for Blythe to tongue the wolf tattoo, then he casually tossed her onto the queen-sized mattress. She plummeted onto her back, her sizable breasts bouncing in the glow of her bedside table lamp, and her legs automatically spread, as if he had somehow mentally commanded her position in order to take full advantage. Within seconds, he crawled onto the bed to join her, his head appearing between her legs. His dark eyes twinkled with lustful merriment, sending her another promise of complete satiation.

Just as she glanced once again at his vivid and dramatic tattoo, he dug his tongue into her pussy. No, she thought frantically, her mind a whirlwind of beastly images and notions, “dug” wasn’t entirely accurate...“speared her” seemed the more appropriate term, and over and over again he employed another magnificent part of his body, a part she had yet to experience in its entirety. Until now.

His tongue, which felt as lengthy as his cock, seemed to curl and

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dance rings around her inner regions, touching sections of her most private passage no other lovers had been able to reach with this particular appendage, nor had seemed to comprehend or revere. He claimed her in ways unimaginable, in ways no other lover had attempted to conquer, and she welcomed the luxurious and proficient contact. Handfuls of his rich brown hair appeared in her fisted hands, and she grabbed his head and pressed his mouth closer to her shrieking core.

He continually moaned his satisfaction, like a hedonist savoring a rich Epicurean feast. His fingertips stroked her inner thighs, tickled and probed her anal cavity, or wedded with his lush tongue inside her convulsing pussy. Against her engorged clit, his upper lip quivered and delicately caressed, while his half-day whisker stubble acted like sexual sandpaper against her sensitive flesh, aiding his efforts to launch her into the stratosphere.

Almost involuntarily, she humped his mouth several times and erupted with a howl of satisfaction. From her nether regions, hot blood blasted through her veins and into her quaking limbs, immersing her entire body into a state of satiated numbness. It felt as if a million tongues and fingers flickered over every inch of her skin, every pore tingling from the loving contact and every hair on her body lifting upward in salute.

“I guess I located your sensitive spot after all,” said Wolfe against her pussy lips, his resonant chuckles teasing her still-tingling clit with lavish vibrations.

He buried his nose in her pubic triangle and dug his tongue into her for the last delectable time, then finally came up for air. Blythe attempted to focus on him, and it took a moment before her eyes stopped seeing double of his handsome face. In the soft light, his lips and chin shimmered with her juices, which he lapped up or brushed over her inner thighs. Smiling like a lecherous lunatic, he eyed her tits,

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then began to crawl upward on the bed—a wolf slowly sizing up its chosen prey. He intermittently licked paths of lust over her quivering belly, the taut flesh over her ribcage, and finally his face hovered over her breasts. His torrid breath horripilated her skin, and her puckering nipples almost hurt from brushes with his exhalations.

“Here’s where I get my money’s worth,” he said, his rough voice sending additional tremors of desire through her.

The quick swipe of his tongue over each of her aching nipples made her groan with unbridled lust. He straddled her waist, then slid his dripping, wickedly hard cock into the valley between her breasts. His large hands molded her plump tits around his rod, making them look like ass cheeks. He bent down to kiss her, his tongue sharing the taste of her recent climax, then sat up straight and started bucking his hips.

Once again, the fat, crimson head of his cock appeared and disappeared at escalating intervals from her cleavage. With her fingers, Blythe scooped up the drops of pre-cum that formed on the slit of his dick or those he left behind on her skin, and she moistened her hard nipples with the warm juice or used it to paint her lips. The bulging muscles in his chest, belly, and arms mesmerized her, and more than once she groped them with her trembling hands or smeared them with his own abundant pre-cum.

Giggling, she attempted on several occasions to capture the head of his cock as it popped out from her sandwiched breasts.

“You want to suck me again, don’t you?” he asked, smirking.

“I can’t *wait* to have that tasty dick in my mouth again.”

“Really?” His dark eyes sparkling with challenge, he let go of her breasts, then brought his moist penis toward her lips. “Then I suppose you have to capture it first.”

Blythe opened her mouth and tried to clamp her lips around it, but he pulled back at the last second and went back to fucking her boobs with renewed enthusiasm.

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“Sorry, no prize for the little lady.”

“You barely gave me a chance,” she responded, presenting him with a faux pout. “Not fair!”

The sexy smirk on his lips told her in no uncertain terms that he would indeed provide her with another chance to win their naughty contest of wills. He continued to slide in and out of her gathered tits, now slick with his pre-cum, and on several occasions, stopped his frolic to give her additional opportunities. On each try she missed snagging the plump knob, although she once captured a fresh bead of his escaping juices with the tip of her tongue and savored her marginal prize.

On another attempt, however, when he came even closer and wagged his hips several times, making his cock playfully slap her cheeks, she used her hands, seized the stiff rod, and pounced.

Once she had several inches of his thick erection in her mouth, she moved her hands to his firm buttocks and yanked him forward. Her throat opened up to him, and damn it, she finally engulfed every centimeter of his exceptionally long cock into her mouth. To further confirm her victory, she pressed her nose against his pubic bush and wiggled her head.

“Fuck!” he gasped. “No woman has...has ever been able...been able to do that.”

Reluctantly, she slowly let him slide out of her throat and gave the knob a hard suck before it popped from her lips. “I guess your opinions about dainty, prim-and-proper Southern belles have definitely changed, yes?”

“But you...you cheated! You used your hands...that wasn’t in the rules.”

“That’s right. And you fucked me with your tongue and not your dick.”

“Are you complaining?”

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“Shit, no. But when it comes to the rules in sex games, if it ain’t stated, then it’s all’s fair in love and—” She laughed. “Love and deep-throating.”

He laughed in return. “Okay, I’ll give you that!”

Wolfe again leaned down and claimed her mouth with his, and his tongue delved almost as deep as his cock had done a moment earlier. The deep-throat achievement on her part with his erection, the winning of their naughty contest, had apparently added fuel to his libido’s fire, since when he went back to sliding his shaft between her breasts, his tempo accelerated at a rapid pace.

Once his neck muscles scrunched tight and new veins seemed to appear on his perspiring upper arms and torso, Blythe knew he neared the brink of exploding. To urge him there, she ran her hands up, down, and around his belly and chest, evenly spreading the sweat and making his flesh shimmer as if it had been greased in oil. But when she slid her hands around to his buttocks, spread his cheeks, and tickled his anus with the manicured nails of her index fingers, he threw back his head and grunted.

He blasted her upper chest, shoulders, and lower face with ivory-white streamers of his hot seed. Blythe opened her mouth and actually captured part of his second launch, while the remainder clung to her chin; she lapped up as much of the juice as possible, savored, and swallowed before dragging him forward. Finally, with no resistance on his part, she had free access to his sublime cock, still spouting salty pearls of milk at an extraordinary rate. She took him into her mouth and sucked like a starving woman, draining him of the remaining jets and final droplets.

Moans of satisfaction poured up from deep within her. Could a man’s essence taste any better than it did less than an hour earlier? she wondered.

She would have normally thought not, but now, as she swirled his

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last creamy offering in her mouth and relished its tang before swallowing it, she had to completely disagree.

## CHAPTER 11

In the wake of his explosive orgasm, Wolfe stretched out on top of her, and his muscular and perspiring body went slack. The head of his dick, which had finally lost some of its rigidity—but surprisingly, not completely all, Blythe realized in joy—caressed the moist folds of her tunnel entrance.

Reveling in the warmth of his splendid nudity, she clawed his buttocks with her fingernails and relished the dusting of hair on his cheeks. Concurrently, she explored the backs of his long legs with her feet, digging her heels into the hairy flesh.

“You’re an extremely naughty vixen, aren’t you?” Wolfe whispered against her cheek, his voice coarse and his breathing jagged from the carnal regalement. “Hungry for jizz much, sweetheart?”

Blythe laughed. “I’m such a lewd slut, aren’t I? Once again, not the prim-and-proper Southern flower you envisioned.”

“Yes, expertly and gloriously lewd...” His torrid breath against her

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face generated goose bumps on her arms. He kissed his way to her left ear and dug his tongue into the hole, redoubling her shivers. "Your ex-husband is indeed a fool for not appreciating your many talents. And I'm a very lucky man for it."

"I confess," she said, wrapping her legs around his waist and imagining him imprisoned there for all eternity, "when I'm attracted to a man, especially one so fucking sexy, I can never quite resist sampling a bit of his—well—let's call it, 'warm goodness.'"

His throaty chuckle reverberated through her. Raising his head to look in her eyes, he smirked and arched a brow. "Or should that be 'gooey warmth'?"

"Either term, the taste of cum gets me so damned hot."

"That's fortunate to know," he said, almost in a growl.

"Is that so. Why?"

"Since the evening's still young, I have additional plans, all revolving around keeping you hot...divinely hot..." A devilish twinkle lit his dark eyes. He lifted a hand to her chin, and with his index and middle finger, scooped up some of his remaining semen. "*Scorching* hot, if possible."

Eyeing the tempting droplets being presented to her a few inches away, Blythe giggled and licked her lips in anticipation. Before she could devour his fingers, however, he shocked her by bringing them to his own mouth, where he settled the seed near the tip of his tongue...a pool of shimmering ivory on a pallet of luscious pink.

She hungrily pulled his face down to hers and slid her tongue into his mouth, sharing the savory essence with him. Never before had one of her lovers enticed her in such a manner, and she decided she loved the taste of cum even more when fed to her in this libidinous fashion.

After untold minutes of deep-kissing and tongue-dueling, Wolfe tugged his mouth away from hers. "Scorching hot yet?"

Blythe gasped for air and ran her heels back down his legs. "Oh,



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God...I'm...I'm getting there..." She hadn't lied; the volcanic intensity of his kiss, the flavor of his salty juice in her mouth, and the light stroking and incessant prodding of his semi-hard cock against the entrance to her pussy lips all conspired to turn her into a horny hellcat. A horny hellcat that had not emerged in weeks and weeks and weeks of sexual deprivation...

"I guess the fire needs a bit more stoking, huh?"

To her amazement, Wolfe lowered his face to her breastbone and lapped up more of his spilled seed. When he raised his head, his grinning lips shone with frothy whiteness. Unable to resist the wicked temptation, she lovingly licked the milk from his lips, then molded her mouth to his and sucked his tongue free of the new offering. During the prolonged and delicious kiss, she felt the ardent throbbing of his newfound erection against her flesh, the way the crown drew damp trails of her own warm juices across her inner thighs and engorged clit.

Within seconds, the furnace Wolfe had sought to ignite within her seemed to detonate. Blood gushed through her body at an alarming pace, and with a strength she didn't know she possessed, Blythe rolled their writhing, groping, and clawing bodies to the other side of the bed. She landed on top of his hirsute frame and instinctively slammed her groin against his, praying for good aim.

Bull's eye on the first attempt! The tip of his cock entered her vagina, and she slid downward to capture his entire shaft within her. Even as her walls gripped and massaged his rod of their own free will, she felt him fattening and lengthening and solidifying even more, until it seemed his plump crown actually entered her aching womb. She couldn't recall being filled so extensively by any former lover; then again, she'd never had a man so terrifically endowed sharing her bed before, either. After planting her hands on his muscular shoulders, she started bouncing up and down on the slippery penis and soon found herself involuntarily screeching like the horny hellcat she had predicted

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would emerge.

Wolfe clamped her ass cheeks in his meaty hands and bucked upward, meeting each of her downward plunges and always filling her to the hilt. At times, he used his superior strength to hold her steady, then lethargically wagged his hips from side to side, causing his erection to tease her at varying angles, delightfully stretching her pussy walls, and coercing waves of molten tingles to flood her quivering belly and limbs. Although she at first tried to count the number of mini-climaxes that threatened to rob her of sanity, she eventually lost herself to the mind-numbing sensations and gave up.

On several occasions, Wolfe withdrew his cock, slathered his fingers with their merged juices, and returned to fucking her while making her anal cavity slick with the moisture. While his tool thrust back inside her quivering pussy, his index fingers gently probed her ass, eventually finger-fucking her to the same cadence as he pummeled her heated cunt. His adept manipulations soared to new heights when he also took turns rapaciously suckling each of her peaked nipples or rubbing his beard-stubbed face against the sensitive flesh of her jiggling breasts.

As Blythe started viewing new stars behind her closed eyelids, she realized she had never felt so magnificently fucked in her entire life. And by the way Wolfe deftly explored her fiery depths with his shaft, the way his fingers tickled and teased, the way his countless and heated kisses on her bosom or her lips conveyed his determination to pleasure her, she had never felt so “claimed” by any man.

A fleeting thought raced through her mind—did he make all of his “clients” feel so special, so worthy of such extensive and ardent lovemaking?

Blythe would never know, and damn it, she didn’t *want* to know! She didn’t even want to imagine him being with other women. She just wanted to lose herself in his intense masculinity, to ride his rock-solid

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cock for as long as possible, and to fantasize about being his one and only lover for all eternity.

The speed of his lovemaking, his claiming of her, increased to a frantic tempo. He started fucking her from side to side, and his fingers dipped knuckle-deep into her ass. His mouth worked her tits into spheres of tingling flesh, and her nipples actually felt on fire with his saliva.

Whimpers soon replaced the shrieks pouring from her throat, while the strength in her arms completely abandoned her, making her collapse on top of his bucking and sinewy frame. Her cheek landed in the forest of his chest hair, delightfully damp with perspiration. She panted against his breastbone, her teeth gnawing and leaving moist red marks in the bronzed flesh. All the while, the muscles in her lower body began to spasm, entrapping his pistoning cock and digits.

As if inherently knowing that she neared the brink of climax, Wolfe dragged his full shaft from out of her tunnel, then slowly buried himself into her a final time and firmly held her against him. He waggled his hips ever so slightly, mirroring the way she had previously held his entire penis prisoner within her mouth and shook her head to give him the ultimate deep-throat treatment. His methods worked just as well on her—

And to stupefying effect.

From out of her womb launched a holocaust of fiery shivers, more profound than anything Blythe had ever experienced. For glorious seconds, the waves rocketed through her shuddering body, their magnitude savage and barbaric, which left her head thunderstruck in rapture and her limbs seemingly gutted of muscles and bones. A multicolored supernova of stars claimed her vision, and when the air exploded from her lungs and her heart thudded against her lover's bulging chest, she transiently wondered if anyone could die from such excruciatingly intense carnal gratification.

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If so, then what a beautiful way to die!

So immersed in her “sexual death,” Blythe only marginally realized that Wolfe had yanked his rod from out of her pussy to spatter her entire backside and ass cheeks with his hot seed. She did, however, notice and welcome his shaft return to her horribly empty hole. She came out of her lethargy long enough to gather strength and bury her face in his neck as well as cuddle against him. With his semi-erect penis resting inside her core, she drifted into the warmth of slumber.

But not before muttering her words of love for him...or perhaps that had happened only in a dream...she couldn't be certain...

## CHAPTER 12

A shaft of golden morning sunlight infiltrated the slit in the bedroom curtains, drawing a blazing, cockeyed line across the face of her slumbering escort. Blythe had awoken nearly a half-hour earlier, discovering that sometime during the night she had dislodged herself from the cock buried inside her and now rested at Wolfe's side, his strong arm wrapped around her shoulder. One of her legs had curled between his hairy ones, and one of her hands lay in the center of his chest, rising and falling with every steady breath he took.

Even though the call of nature urged her to the bathroom to seek relief for her near-to-bursting bladder, she didn't want to move. She just wanted to stare at his handsome profile, savor his masculine scent, bask in the warmth of his nudity, and celebrate his powerful and comforting heartbeat against her wrist for as long as possible. On several occasions, her fingers had started to move of their own volition, as if itching to comb his crisp chest hair or trace the outer edges of his

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nipples, perhaps even follow the trail of fur from his navel to his crotch, but she stopped each exploration. She didn't dare wake him. If she did, she would have to face the fact that the moment his eyelids snapped open, he would likely grab his clothes and immediately exit her apartment and her life, probably forever. She didn't want to think about him leaving her in order to prepare for his next "appointment," to rebuild his incredible stamina for the next client he would undoubtedly satisfy as expertly as he did her. Instead, for the past fifteen minutes, she had squeezed her thighs together and pleaded with her bladder for patience, thus buying her extra seconds with the sexy man who had unexpectedly sent her world spinning off its axis.

Her bladder, however, eventually proved too stubborn to ignore.

Using as much stealth as possible, Blythe untangled their lower limbs and loathly inched away from the blissful sanctuary of his arm. When she finally crawled off the disheveled bed, she took a moment to eye his exposed groin. His cock lay stretched across one of his brawny thighs, its crown hidden beneath the layers of gathered foreskin. Being the first time she had viewed his organ in its flaccid state, she couldn't help thinking it looked like a plump, flesh-colored peapod. She longed with all of her heart to shuck it open with her mouth, to rouse it from its current state of dormancy and tongue-tease it into the grand and pulsating tool that had provided so much pleasure. To suck and fuck it throughout the morning, the afternoon, the evening...damn it, to the very end of time.

More pressure built in her groin, fierce and persistent "this is your final warning" cramps, forcing her to drag herself away from the exquisite sight of Wolfe's nakedness. With a curse on her breath, she grabbed the red satin dressing gown draping the back of her vanity chair and tiptoed out of the bedroom and across the hallway. "All right, all right," she whispered to her mutinous bladder, "your timing sucks, big time!"

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After relieving herself, brushing her teeth, and finger-combing her hair, she donned the dressing gown and returned to the hallway. Before she reentered the bedroom, however, she paused when a small, bright red object caught her eye from the living room. She meandered to the bar and plucked up the single rose Wolfe had presented to her the previous evening. In her giddiness upon meeting him, she had neglected to put the flower in water. Though still somewhat fresh, signs of wilting had already begun to mar the edges of the delicate petals.

Tears of despair suddenly sprang to her eyes. She had prayed she would at least have this gift, her sole memento of a passion-filled night, for many days to come, and another curse spilled from her mouth.

With the rose still in hand and the aromatic petals pressed against her lips, Blythe started toward the kitchen to get a vase. She stopped short before the bookcase in the corner, where the colorful spines of Paige's best-selling erotic novels popped out at her from among the other tomes.

A fleeting thought struck. What if she used one of Paige books to house...?

No, she decided before the idea could fully develop. Never in her life had she resorted to lovesick schoolgirl nonsense, like keeping a dried flower pressed inside the pages of a romance book for all eternity.

But then again, before last evening, she had never met someone like Wolfe, a desirable and magnificent creature so damned worthy of remembering.

Yes, perhaps in this situation, a bit of lovesick schoolgirl nonsense wouldn't be such nonsense after all. When days grew lonely, when the next dating fiasco with another loser robbed her of the hope of locating that "special someone" Wolfe had talked about at the banquet, the rose would serve as a firm reminder that there really *were* some decent gentlemen like him left in this world.

Shit! How could she have allowed herself to get swept up in a

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fantasy evening with a “rental hunk”? A man several years her junior, no less? A man who would likely carve a special place into another woman’s heart as early as this evening?

What a fool she’d been. What a Goddamned fool! Well, she had no one to blame but herself. The Whitakers didn’t own a monopoly on pride. Only because of her own stupid self-esteem issues, the need to prove her independence to Richard, had she gotten herself into this mess. And how ironic, she mused, that in less than twenty-four hours, she no longer felt herself independent at all, but completely committed, both emotionally and physically, to the one man she could never have.

More tears flooded her eyes. Yes, she would likely never see Wolfe again, unless she found an unlimited source of income to pay for his services. And what were the chances that Acme could even adhere to her needs, her growing obsession, especially when an escort such as Wolfe—gorgeous beyond belief, intelligent, funny, even-tempered, and an adept lover—would be booked solid? Hell, his bank account itself proved that the man likely never spent an evening without sharing his “special gifts” with whatever lucky woman happened to hire him and...

Another thought hit her with the power of a sledgehammer—

*How odd that I was able to get someone as perfect as him—or rather, that “perfect someone”—on such short notice!*

Yes, thought Blythe, shaking her head in confusion, how very odd indeed. So much for her theory about his escort schedule. Although a plausible explanation for her good fortune also came to mind—a cancellation of another booking had simply made her the luckiest woman alive.

*Yes, that had to be the answer, damn it...damn it all to hell!*

With her nostrils buried in the rose petals, Blythe rested her forehead against the side of the bookshelf and allowed the moisture to freely escape from her eyes.

She nearly jumped when two strong arms encircled her waist and



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Wolfe's body pressed against her backside. "Sweetheart, what's the matter?"

Without a word—even if she'd tried, she couldn't have spoken for the gigantic lump in her throat—Blythe settled the rose on the bookshelf and turned. She wept against his chest and dug her fingers into the flesh of his back and upper arms, gripping the taut muscles in a desperate quest for solace.

For several minutes, he lovingly caressed her, molded her body to his, and whispered calming words in her ear. "Please, Blythe, tell me what's wrong."

"I-I can't..."

"But if I don't know the reason for your tears, then how can I make them vanish?"

"If only t-that were possible..."

"It might be, but if you don't tell me the problem, then I won't know how I can help."

A wave of miserable bitterness washed over her and loosened her tongue. "I can't afford you!"

"Excuse me?"

"Only Acme can solve my problem, and they're not likely to do that, or how else would they stay in business?"

The muscles in his arms and torso tensed. "Oh, yes, Acme...I had nearly forgotten about that—"

"Forgotten? About Acme? About your *job*? How is that even possible? Your employers, and not to mention your other *clients*"—she practically spat out the last word, so vile it tasted as it leapt off her tongue—"are obviously very happy with you and your 'performances,' considering your apparent income."

"But Blythe—"

"And then there's little ol' me, a woman already flirting with the limit on her credit card. I doubt Acme offers special discounts to

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bitchy, desperate, and lonely divorcees who become obsessed with one of their employees. Hell, they must have faced this situation before with charming and sexy studs like you in their employ and jealous clients like me falling for them.”

“Falling—for me? That’s wonderful and—”

“Double hell it is, since Acme probably has an entire legion of lawyers on retainer, all well-versed in stalking laws, standing at the ready and just aching to shove a protection order in my face. Yes, I highly doubt Acme will help me! Therefore, I can’t afford to keep you here any longer! So there, Mr. Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe, do you still think you can make it all better? Huh? Can you?”

With her voice rising in volume and her tone sounding hysterical to her own ears, Blythe pushed herself out of his arms and turned away from him. If she viewed the strange and insufferable twinkle in his eyes any longer, or continued to caress his delectable flesh and remain in such close proximity to carnal temptation, someone—very likely her best friend Paige—would be signing the papers to have her shipped off to the loony bin in no time flat. She could just picture it now...

*“Welcome to Insanity Acres, Miss Larson. Yes, just swallow these pills and allow us to fasten the buckles on your straightjacket. Then we’ll escort you to your rubber room before the lobotomy doctors see if they can cure your outrageous and unnatural delusions of having a relationship with Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe! Step this way...that’s right, you poor dear lunatic....step right this way to your new home...”*

Blythe could almost hear the words in her head just as clearly as she could picture some buxom and beefy Nurse Nellie in a starched white uniform hovering over her with sneering lips and a platoon of equally beefy orderlies flanking her for support.

Good God, maybe she really *was* insane after all...insane with ungovernable lust for this sexy man.

Wolfe’s hands on her shoulders yanked Blythe back to the moment.

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She shrugged off his touch and eyed the rose she had left on the bookshelf. Yes, she would keep the rose long after it died, cherishing the remembrance of the magnificent evening for as long as she lived. But for now, she needed to make a clean break from him before this went any further, as much as it killed her to send him away.

“Wolfe, please leave before Acme bills me for an extra day of your time...or I’m forced to do something criminal.”

“Criminal? Like what?”

“Like...like...burning your tuxedo and flushing your car keys down the toilet so you’ll *have* to remain here or otherwise flee in all your naked glory! Or like tying you to my bed with my pantyhose and barricading the doors so that a rep from Acme, or even Savannah’s S.W.A.T. team, won’t be able to break in and tear you away from me, that’s what!”

“Sounds interesting...and not altogether unpleasant...”

Did she actually detect amusement in his voice? Certainly she had loved his sense of humor last evening, but now? Didn’t he realize the height of her current desperation or the depth of her feelings for him?

“You actually find this funny? *Funny?*”

He sighed. “Blythe, if you would only listen to what I have to tell you—”

“Please, just get dressed and go, before I do something I’ll regret. I don’t *want* to spend the rest of my life in a funny farm, drooling into a paper cup twenty-four/seven. I don’t *want* to be locked behind bars, trying to excel at my job in the prison laundry and fighting off the advances of Rosie O’Donnell lookalikes who want to claim me as their ‘special bitch.’ I don’t *want* to storm Acme with an Uzi and demand they give me the bargain basement discount—”

His explosion of laughter pounded her eardrums. He clasped her shoulders and spun her around. “Will you please shut your pretty mouth and listen to me?”

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“What’s the point?”

“The point, you wild and crazy broad, is that Acme does not exist! Or at least, it doesn’t in *my* world.”

“What the hell are you talking about?”

“I don’t work for Acme. I’m *not* a professional escort, that’s what.”

“Huh? Wait a minute...I paid for you...you arrived at my door last night as prearranged...they charged my credit card and...”

“Sure about that?”

“Yes, I gave the booking agent my information and credit card number and—”

“But have you checked whether the credit card was actually charged?”

She blinked several times. “Well, no, I haven’t. Still, they will likely charge me now, probably double or triple, for all the time I spent with—”

“They won’t. Didn’t you hear me? Acme is *not* involved in what happened yesterday. Someone intervened behind your back, canceling your ‘stud order’ and giving me the chance to finally meet you.”

With her mind awash in utter bewilderment, Blythe barely noticed him reaching over her shoulder. He plucked a hardcover book from the shelf and showed it to her—*Confessions of a High-School Seductress* by Antionette Pope, the first release in Paige’s extraordinarily successful erotica series.

“Haven’t you figured it out yet? Our mutual friend, Paige Martinelli, set this whole scheme in motion, with my urging, of course. But I have *nothing* to do with Acme.”

“What the—? How the—? Why the—?” Blythe’s mouth couldn’t formulate the proper questions, and her knees felt like rubber—probably leftover rubber from the construction of the rubber room she had imagined only moments earlier.

As if sensing her about to buckle over, Wolfe swept her into his

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sinewy arms and deposited her on the nearby sofa, where he plopped down beside her, one bare foot tucked beneath his equally bare thigh.

"After your phone conversation with her the other day, Paige called me and said the time was ripe for putting her longtime plan into action."

"Longtime plan?"

"After you placed the order with the agency, she canceled the booking the following day and sent me in place of the actual escort."

"W-why?"

"She said something about how she and Vince 'owed you a finder's fee' for what you did for her a year ago. And she planned to give you—and I quote—'tit for tat, a taste of your own beautiful deception.'"

Then it all became shockingly clear. Her best gal-pal was getting even with her for the elaborate and secretive matchmaking she had done, which quickly led to Paige and Vince's festive wedding. No wonder Wolfe showed signs of bashfulness and confusion on this very couch last evening when she mentioned the Acme Agency and talked about specifics regarding their ad copy. At the time, she had chalked his addle-minded responses up to either shame over his profession or the heat of the moment during their sex play.

"You don't know what the Acme ad even says, do you?"

He shook his head and a rueful smile touched his lips. "Sorry, no...Paige just gave me the gist of it, but she couldn't recall the actual words. And neither of us thought to call Acme or search for the ad, since we figured it wouldn't matter."

Another recollection rushed back to Blythe. "Oh, shit, I didn't even think of it until this very second. Last night, you actually mentioned the name Antionette Pope. I *never once* told you her pen name, only that I had a friend named Paige who was a successful author. I didn't catch it at the time—"

"And when I made that slip, I was afraid the jig was up. And by that

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time, I really wanted to tell you the truth about who I was anyway, but didn't quite know how to do so without interrupting what proved to be a...very entertaining evening. I hope you can forgive me for my small deception in Paige's scheme. At first, I thought the role-playing would be nothing but some good clean fun, but once I met you, got to really know you, I—damn it, I didn't want to chance making you angry. To chance you kicking me out of here and out of your life forever. I've wanted to meet you for so long, and you proved just as wonderful as Paige said you were."

"Wait! You wanted to meet me?"

"Ever since watching Paige and Vince's wedding video. I couldn't keep my eyes off that sexy maid of honor who practically stole the show from the bride and groom. I could have kicked myself for missing the actual wedding, but I was in Europe at the time and it couldn't be helped. Anyway, Paige sensed my interest in you—probably since my tongue hit the floor every time you appeared in a video clip. And from that point on, she talked about you constantly, about your drive, your fire, your zest for life, and how your ex-husband had tried to change you, to mold you into something you were not. The notion pissed me off enough to listen to her plan, the necessity of showing your ex-husband that you didn't need him in the slightest. I admit to being flattered that Paige thought I could succeed in my task to please you, and to make 'Dickless' fume with jealousy."

"And that you did, without a doubt."

"Regardless, I just knew, if only I had a chance to meet you in person, that perhaps...perhaps..." His cheeks reddened and those boyish dimples sliced into his cheeks.

"Perhaps what?" asked Blythe, her stomach once again welcoming in the butterflies that had assailed her the previous evening.

"That perhaps you and I would have a lot in common as Paige believed, and that some spark between us would actually ignite." He

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glanced at the couch, then toward the bedroom door. “I think we’ve definitely proved a spark exists. And we certainly have a lot in common, much more than you and your ex-husband had. But the big question here is, can you ever forgive me?”

A million questions raced through Blythe’s head. “Who are you, then?”

“Oh, everything I told you about myself last night was the God’s honest truth, from my bizarre name to my birthplace to my travels and everything else. I fibbed only about the Acme Agency. Or rather, I allowed you to *believe* I came from Acme. And that was only because of Paige’s threat of—let me see if I can recall her exact words—‘chopping off my head and other protruding parts of my body if I dare to screw this up and make her best friend miserable.’” He covered his crotch with his hands and gave a comical shiver. “I must say, she’s a very persuasive woman, downright scary when she’s determined to have her way, and she apparently loves you with all her heart. But I must also say that I was all too eager for this ‘secret assignment,’ as she deemed it.”

“How in the hell do you even know Paige and Vince?”

“Our paths crossed in two ways. For one, he was my English professor in Virginia. I started socializing with him and Paige soon after I graduated. And the other connection is my father—”

“A recent graduate certainly can’t afford a Ferrari, not to mention all the funds you pledged to the charity—”

“You didn’t let me finish. I was going to say that my family isn’t entirely without capital. My father, you see, just happens to own a company that he’s grooming me to run. Chesterfield Press in New York. Sound familiar?”

“Paige’s publisher!”

“Exactly. So, a double connection. That’s how I got completely roped into this scheme. Paige assured me I shouldn’t worry, that once

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you learned the truth, you'd be fine with it and chalk it up to her getting—how did she put it?—‘deliciously even with you.’ I have to admit, I was on pins and needles flying down here yesterday morning, renting the car and checking into my suite at the Ambassador Hotel, all the while praying the scheme wouldn't fail.”

“So Paige masterminded everything?”

“With Vince's help, of course. She said it was ‘a present from Ethel Mertz to Lucy Ricardo,’ if that makes any sense to you.”

Blythe nearly laughed, but managed to contain the impulse.

Wolfe's fingers coiled around a lock of her hair. “Again I have to stress, after seeing you on that video, I became a very willing participant in this caper. So please, if you must murder someone, don't just kill Paige and Vince, kill me also.”

With the shock at her friend's elaborate and loving hoax wearing away, and with the reality of the situation finally etching itself into her brain, Blythe nearly launched off the sofa on a rocket of absolute joy.

But for a moment, she didn't convey her thoughts or elation. Instead, with hands on her hips, she stood over the naked young stud, huffing and puffing and doing her damndest to scare the snot out of him. Hell, it was the least she could do to pay *him* back for his role in the “Escort Escapades,” which had led to this morning of unnecessary tears and depression galore.

Still, she couldn't maintain the act for long, not once her gaze started journeying over his splendid physique, finally settling on the part of him that had provided so much tasty gratification last evening.

Blythe nearly broke a smile when she focused on his handsome face, that rueful smirk still twisting his luscious lips and those alluring dimples just begging for hot kisses. “Kill you? Let me tell you something Mr. Shiloh Birmingham Wolfe, I may *indeed* kill you!” She reached down and snatched his wrists, yanking him up from the sofa. “But only after we shower.”



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“Shower? Then what?”

“Then I’m going to fuck you to death.”

His sexy, full-toothed grin of relief made her clit tingle with impatience. “I take it all is forgiven?” he asked, his rich tenor bearing a note of skepticism.

She wrapped her fingers around his fat cock and, within seconds, stroked him to a stupendous erection. “That all depends,” she finally replied, fingering the veins running up and down his lengthy shaft and flicking her thumbs below the ridge where the dusky foreskin connected to the crimson crown.

“Oh?” A growl of pleasure poured up from his chest. “Depends on what?”

“On several very important issues.”

“Such as?”

She tongued his wolf tattoo while playfully twisting his cock with one hand and tickling his balls with the other. “Are you really a Stooges fan?”

He laughed. “Why cert’ny, toots!” He followed the statement with another flawless, “Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk.”

Blythe flicked her tongue over his left nipple, then his right one, leaving them both as hard as his penis. “And are you *really* a jeans-and-a-T-shirt, pizza-and-beer kind of guy?”

“Indubitably.”

“Hmm...” She opened the bottom half of her satin robe and slid his penis inside, wedging the knob between her legs so it poked her hardening nub. “And can you *really* afford all the money you pledged last evening?”

“Every single penny,” he replied, using his talented tongue to draw a line of saliva from the base of her neck and toward her right ear. “And then some. Now, is that all that remains of this agonizingly slow inquisition before we head to the shower in preparation for my

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‘impending demise’?’

She moaned her satisfaction when his tongue slipped into her ear canal and his chuckle thundered through her body. “Just one final thing...how the hell old are you, Mr. Wolfe?”

“Relax, Miss Larson—and I repeat, *Miss* L-A-R-S-O-N, as you so beautifully announced to all the snobs last night—I’m hardly jail-bait. I just turned twenty-five, to be exact.”

“That’s still almost five years difference between us,” she said, spreading her legs far enough apart to brush the head of his cock over her drooling pussy lips.

He untied her robe and slipped it off her body, where it puddled at their feet. “And that’s a problem? Hardly an insurmountable dilemma.”

“I don’t know, part of me will always feel as if I’m robbing the cradle.”

“Oh, yes, perhaps true.” After kissing her shoulders, he pulled back and focused his gaze on her breasts. His lecherous smile and the twinkle in his ebony eyes shot flames of desire into Blythe’s womb, making her tremble in hopeless need. “But just *imagine* how that cradle will rock...”

## PARIS DIXON

Paris Dixon was born and raised in the “steamy South”—Savannah, GA., to be exact—an undisclosed number of years ago. According to Paris, having grown up in a city filled with countless historical homes and avenues where hanging moss lazily sways from live oaks did much for her vivid imagination, especially after majoring in history in college. Her period of focus has always been the antebellum era of American History.

*“The decades prior to the Civil War,” says Paris, “have always fascinated me. This was a time when dresses became wider, tempers ran shorter, and a horrific institution called ‘slavery’ was the norm. I’ve often wondered what might have occurred within the walls of some of Savannah’s grand estates and plantation houses when a combination of humid-heavy summers and society’s strict mores played havoc with the urges of handsome young gentlemen and their nubile ladyloves. As personal accounts of the period clearly indicate, courting lovers of the era were wont to raise a glass of mint julep on their shady verandahs and complain about the weather while batting eyelashes at one another in the company of matronly chaperones. But what happened during these heat-filled summers when these passionate young adults with raging hormones decided to ditch these observant sentinels in favor of some ‘alone time’? Unfortunately, I suspect some of the more fascinating history of mankind never made it into the history books.”*

Paris is the award-winning author of several erotica books. Her contemporary erotic romances *King For A Day*, *News At 11*, and the novella *Hot For Teacher*, are now available, as well as her award-winning paranormal erotica novella *Passion Knows No Boundaries* and

the erotic dark fantasy novel *The Essence Of Magic*. More than a dozen other stories of erotic romance, including a highly anticipated series of novellas called *Scarlet Damnation* featuring a vampire heavy metal group, are either in the works or are already scheduled for release in the near future.

Additionally, Paris sometimes collaborates on various books in the erotic suspense genre with award-winning author Catherine Snodgrass under the pen name Caitlyn Willows. *White Lies* is available now from this writing team.

Paris loves to hear from her readers, so feel free to email her at [parisdixon@hotmail.com](mailto:parisdixon@hotmail.com). You can also visit her main website at <http://bythunder.org/ParisDixon> or the website devoted to the fictional band Scarlet Damnation at <http://bythunder.org/ScarletDamnation>, and you can join her newsletter by sending an email to [parisdixon-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:parisdixon-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

\* \* \*

***Don't miss Sisters of the Secret Confederacy by Paris Dixon,  
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*Desdra Von Cleef has a deep, dark secret, one that she has taken great care to hide from all but her closest comrades. But war soon envelops Georgia, and only when General Sherman's Northern troops burn Atlanta and march toward Savannah does Desdra and her lonely, war-widowed "sisters" dare to reveal their true natures to save their homes.*

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