

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

ELLORA'S CAVE

# *Quickies*

*Naughty Nuptials*

*Wrong Groom*

Kit Tunstall

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



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Wrong Groom

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# *WRONG GROOM*

**Kit Tunstall**

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## **Chapter One**

Jayne Daux led her inebriated friend back to the hotel room Emmy had reserved at the Venetian on the Strip. It was quite a feat to get her to the eighth floor room because both women had imbibed more than a few appletinis at Emmy's bridal shower held in the V Bar downstairs.

"I love you Jayne," said Emmy, giving her an exuberant hug that nearly knocked them both off balance. The petite bride-to-be tottered in her four-inch heels but steadied herself against Jayne.

"I love you too." She was slightly more sober than her friend and managed to steer them to the right room. After all, it was her duty as maid of honor to make sure her friend survived until the wedding. That prevented her from drinking as freely.

"I love Rich so much." Emmy threw her arms wide, nearly taking a dive in the process. "I just love the whole world."

Jayne managed to catch her, supporting her tiny friend with her bigger frame. Next to Emmy, most women seemed large but she seemed huge in comparison. Most days, she tried not to draw comparisons between them but tonight, vulnerable from the alcohol and her own envy of Emmy's happiness, it was impossible to not come up wanting. A size two versus a size eighteen? Of course, she would feel inadequate.

She pushed Emmy gently against the wall so she could search for the keycards to their rooms in the impractical black bag she carried. It matched the plunging, sequined dress perfectly but had just enough space for a credit card, her ID, two keycards and a lipstick.

"You deserve to be as happy as I am." Emmy rubbed her face against the wall as if snuggling the elegantly striped gold and taupe wallpaper.

"I agree."

"Someday you'll meet the right man. He won't care about anything but who you are."

Emmy's comment sobered her up slightly. Jayne retrieved her friend's keycard and slid it through the reader on the first try. She put an arm around Emmy's waist to guide her into the luxurious room and dumped her a little less than gently onto the bed. Normally, her friend wouldn't have broached the topic of her weight and Jayne would never bring it up on her own. "I'm going to my room now. Call me if you need anything."

Without bothering to strip out of the slinky black and silver skirt or red velvet tank top, she kicked off her heels, curled up with the pillow and asked, "Whoever decided I couldn't see Rich before the wedding? It's a stupid tradition."

"It's not just the tradition, remember? His flight didn't arrive from the UK until this afternoon." Her fiancé had spent the last six months working in England, learning the banking industry. He had another six months of his assignment ahead of him but the two lovers decided they couldn't wait any longer to get married and had thrown together the upcoming ceremony in two weeks. "By the time he made it to his bachelor party, he wouldn't have had time to come see you tonight." She pushed the hair off Emmy's face. "You'll see him tomorrow afternoon in the chapel."

"Going to the chapel..." Emmy mumbled the rest of the lyrics into her pillow. That was one area where Jayne had no reason to envy her friend. She sounded like someone torturing a bullfrog whenever she burst into song.

"Good night, Emmy."

"Night, Jayne." Almost immediately, her loud snores filled the room.

Jayne left her friend after covering her with a blanket. As she walked out of the suite and headed to her own room, she decided she wasn't yet ready to retire. It was almost three a.m. but the pleasant buzz she'd been riding the past few hours had mostly dissipated and she wanted it back. After all, she was young, single and in Sin City. It would be criminal not to take advantage of all the delights Vegas had to offer. Secretly,

she hoped to finally have the chance to live out her wildest fantasy—a passionate, no-strings night with a handsome stranger.

Besides, it had been way too long since she'd gotten laid. She might not find a partner but she could at least test the waters.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jayne walked into the Tao Nightclub a few minutes later. The last thing she wanted to do was put a damper on the men's fun. She scanned the room as quickly as she could, looking for remnants of Rich's bachelor party. Though she had never met the groom, she knew several of the men who would have attended, including Emmy's two brothers and cousins. No one looked familiar so she slipped into a free seat on one of the upholstered benches. Two men were a couple of cushions away. She considered making eye contact and trying to strike up a conversation. Her pussy quivered when she imagined what it would be like to have two lovers at one time.

The passionate kiss the men leaned forward to exchange soon broke up that fantasy. With a sigh, Jayne forced herself to look away from the strangely arousing display, not wanting to be a peeping Tom.

As she glanced across the room, her gaze collided with a set of piercing green eyes. They seemed to hold her spellbound and she couldn't break free from his stare. As the man the eyes belonged to raised his glass to her, she smiled a bit uncertainly in return. Even seated, he looked tall, with wavy brown hair, a nice tan and smooth, handsome features. His body looked lean and honed under the dark suit. That man could have his pick of any woman in the place—and there were several hotties still partying—so it seemed unbelievable that he could really be flirting with her.

She tried to dismiss the moment and let her gaze slide away. What she had deemed flirting might not be anything more than drunken friendliness on his part. It was just one of the many frustrating things about men. Jayne had no idea how to properly read their signals.

A server approached and she ordered a Cosmo from the tall, skinny woman. After she left, Jayne continued to look around the room, suddenly feeling out of place. The largest woman might have been a size six. The go-go dancers were probably in the negative sizes. It wasn't a place for a woman who preferred Ben & Jerry's to Jenny Craig.

Jayne attempted to shake herself out of her funk in the few minutes it took for her waitress to return with the drink. She knew she was being too hard on herself. Size eighteen wasn't that large. Most "normal" women wore a size twelve. She knew all the statistics but spouting them didn't do much for her.

"Don't be such an idiot," she said aloud but softly. "I am a beautiful and special woman." The litany felt ridiculous on her tongue and had never worked. It had originated with the fifth counselor her stepmother had taken her to as a teen in order to help her find the emotional roots of her excess weight. Jayne could say it all she wanted but believing it was another story.

Casually, she completed a circuit of the room, slowly letting her gaze return to the spot where she had exchanged glances with that hot man. Her tummy dipped with disappointment when she saw he had gone. So much for that imagined interplay.

"Is this seat taken?"

With a blink, Jayne jerked her gaze upward. It took every ounce of control not to let her mouth gape open when she saw the man from across the room now standing in front of her. He was taller than she had guessed but just as athletic and sexy up close. Reflexively, she looked to her left and right to make sure he wasn't talking to someone else standing behind her. Slowly, she nodded.

"It is?" He frowned, looking genuinely disappointed. "My apologies."

As he started to walk away, Jayne found her voice. "Um, wait...the seat is free."

He turned around and took the spot beside her as though none of the awkwardness had occurred. When he held out his hand, the flash of gold drew her eyes to the Rolex just peeking out from the cuff of his white shirt. She took the hand automatically, nearly



jumping out of her seat at the sparks that arced between them when his palm touched hers.

"I am Patrick."

"Jayne Daux." She still couldn't quite believe he was sitting there, conjured as if by magic and it took her a moment to remember to let go of his hand. Sternly, she tried to compose herself and stop acting like an awestruck teenage girl.

Patrick laughed. "Jane Doe, huh? I see you want anonymity."

She shrugged, not bothering to explain it was her real name. Her mother and father had thought it clever to pair Jayne with their last name, hence she was forever cursed to be "Jane Doe" because of it.

"What brings you to Vegas?"

"A wedding," she said.

"Yours?" he asked with an arched brow before sipping the amber liquid from his crystal glass.

"Hardly." She nearly died when an unladylike snort escaped her.

"I would guess you don't hold much esteem for the institution?"

"It's fine for some, I guess." Jayne ruthlessly squashed the little-girl voice in her head that tried to remind her of all the years she'd spent planning a fantasy wedding that seemed unlikely to take place. Far better to be pragmatic about not getting married and embrace it. After all, with sixty percent of marriages ending in divorce, what was the point?

"Neither do I. Having experienced it once was enough for me."

She nodded. "Why are you here?"

Patrick's luscious-looking lips bowed into a rueful smile. "For a wedding—not my own," he added with a sparkle in his eye.

Jayne glanced at his left hand, finding it bare of a ring. "Divorced?"

"Yes." Patrick seemed to lean in closer than necessary when he put his empty glass on the long table in front of the bench. "You?" His breath washed across her cheek and he made no effort to move back.

"Not even close."

"Smart woman."

The conversation stuttered for a moment and Jayne cast about for something witty to say. Her brain seemed to be made of slush and she cursed the number of drinks she'd had. If ever there was a time to be clearheaded, it was now. "Would you like to dance?" Her eyes widened when she issued the invitation. What the hell was she thinking? Though she could dance passably, the last thing she wanted to do was press her body against his and so vividly reinforce how big she was.

"Yes." He took her hand, not giving her a chance to retract the invitation. Jayne tried to convince herself all would be well. Patrick already knew she was bigger than the stick women in the club. He'd have to be blind not to notice the discrepancy. The fact that he'd approached her had to mean something. Pressing her body against his probably wouldn't send him running away.

To her surprise, he bypassed the dance floor and led her up the staircase. As they neared the open door of the balcony, the cool desert wind beckoned, blowing against her flushed face in a welcoming caress. She followed him outside, averting her eyes politely from the couples in various clutches congregated around the balcony. Few eyes focused on the gorgeous view of Vegas.

The music was still audible but muted, allowing for conversation. Patrick didn't seem to want to talk as he took her into his arms. Jayne held herself stiffly, trying to keep her large breasts and her stomach from resting against his frame. When he started massaging the small of her back, she found it impossible to maintain her stiffness. With a small whimper of defeat, she melted against him.

"That's much better," he said through the thick fall of hair covering her ear.

"It's a lovely night." The inane observation was silly, especially considering her view was basically the cut of his dark suit. At five-nine, she was tall but he made her feel almost petite.

"Much lovelier now." The hand he'd had on her lower back inched downward. He paused at the curve of her hip, as if waiting to see if she would stop him.

Jayne held her breath, indecision making the choice for her. When she didn't speak up or step away, Patrick rested his hand on her buttocks, squeezing lightly. She shivered at the contact.

"Cold?" The huskiness in his tone revealed his own excitement.

"Hot," she said brazenly.

Patrick pulled her closer, moving both hands to massage her ass. "I couldn't agree more."

Jayne swore she had to be dreaming as Patrick eased her against the wall, somewhat in shadows. He kept a hand possessively on her right butt cheek but brought the other one around to rest just under her breast. She tipped back her head as he lowered his, parting her lips in invitation. His mouth was firm and sure against hers, his lips forming to hers as though they had been molded to fit together. She sighed into his mouth, overwhelmed by how perfect the kiss was.

Patrick slipped his tongue inside, stroking hers in a languorous fashion. Jayne darted her tongue around his, parrying and thrusting with lustful intensity. When he lifted his head, she whimpered at the lost contact.

He cupped her breast, his thumb stroking a circle just outside the boundary of her nipple. "I'd like to say something but I don't know whether to be blunt, or if I should tiptoe around it for a bit first."

Instinctively, Jayne tensed, preparing herself for a commentary on her body. It wouldn't be the first time a man had said something cruel in the heat of the moment, perhaps thinking he was doing her a favor by pointing out her flaws—as though she

remained unaware of them. "I prefer honesty," she said coolly, already mentally disengaging from the handsome stranger who still held her so intimately.

"I want to have sex with you."

## **Chapter Two**

Her eyes widened and she blinked. “What?” It wasn’t outside the realm of possibility, especially considering the proof of arousal pressed against her stomach but when she had been preparing herself for rejection, she couldn’t quite wrap her mind around what he was saying so candidly. “I think I misheard.”

A slow, sexy grin curved his lips upward. “No, you didn’t. I want to take you up to your room—or mine—and strip off that dress. When I see what’s underneath, I want to take that off too.” He dipped his head to bring his mouth closer to her ear as a couple wandered by them. “My hands are aching to hold your luscious breasts and my cock is twitching just thinking about how it will feel to be inside your hot, wet heat.”

Jayne’s mouth was dry as the desert surrounding the oasis that was Las Vegas. She longed for something to drink. More than that, she longed to make his words a reality. “All right.”

He brushed his lips against her cheek. “I didn’t frighten you away with my frankness?”

She tipped her head back to meet his gaze. “Not at all. It’s refreshing.”

As Patrick curved his arm around her waist, Jayne fell into step with him, moving in harmonious rhythm as they reentered the club and walked through it, dodging people at every turn. “I think it’s either all the whiskey I drank at the bachelor party, or maybe it’s just this place. Whatever the reason, I’m not usually so brash back home in Boston.”

“That’s a pity.” Jayne didn’t admit she wasn’t either. Never in thirty-four years had she indulged in a one-night stand. It was about time she did and what better place than here, with the perfect partner? “It might work every time.”

They stopped to wait for the elevator, sharing the space with a couple embracing passionately. "I'm just happy it worked tonight."

"So am I." As they stepped onto the elevator, she fished inside her dinky purse for the keycard to her room. "I'm on eight."

"Ten." He shrugged. "You're closer."

By mutual agreement, they reached for the eight button at the same time. Jayne's body hummed with anticipation as the lift whisked them higher. Patrick maintained a slight distance between them until the fourth floor, where they lost their riding companions. As soon as the doors closed behind them, he pressed his body against hers, his cock pushing insistently into her lower back. With one big hand, he cupped her breast, squeezing the soft globe gently. "I can't wait to get you out of these clothes."

"I'm looking forward to it." She was excited about the coming encounter but nausea churned in her stomach. It would be a new experience to bare her body to a man she didn't know. The handful of lovers she'd had previously had all been friends first and their relationships had been well established before getting physical. Jayne had always given the men in her life ample opportunity to be on familiar terms with her first, so that if they found the outside disappointing, at least they would know the person she was. It had been her way of compensating. With Patrick, he would be accepting or rejecting her strictly on the basis of her physical form. The prospect was daunting.

At her room, she slid in the keycard and preceded him inside. Jayne tossed her purse on the ornate table by the door and turned on the light for the entryway. The sleeping area remained shrouded in shadows.

She turned to him, cocking her head. "Since we're being blunt, do you have protection?"

Patrick patted his pocket. "Sure do."

Relaxing marginally, she kicked off the stunning black heels that had been killing her feet half the night. Suddenly nervous, she walked to the phone. "Shall I call for something? Champagne?"

He shook his head, following her. Jayne tried to hide her anxiety behind boldness. With sure hands, she stripped away his suit jacket as soon as he came into range. Simultaneously, she stretched upward to capture his lips for a deep kiss. Now three inches shorter without the heels, he really did tower over her.

With expertise she didn't know she had, Jayne licked and teased his mouth and lips, alternately sucking on his tongue before nipping him. She kept her hands moving ceaselessly, first working at the knot precariously holding his crooked tie and then assigning her fingers the task of unbuttoning his shirt.

His cufflinks proved a challenge, forcing Jayne to break the kiss. She lowered her mouth to his chest, running her tongue across his skin in random patterns. Without looking down, she managed to undo each cufflink and button. Feeling an unreasoning sense of accomplishment, she dropped the shirt onto the floor and stretched to place the cufflinks on the dresser.

"You move fast, Jayne."

She smiled, looking up at him coyly through the fall of her lashes. "Sometimes...when I know what I want."

Patrick chuckled, though he sounded strained. A flush to his cheeks betrayed the state she had worked him into and she knew her face must reflect the same level of arousal. Unable to stop herself, she took a step closer, grasping the hair on his chest with her hands. Lightly, she scratched her manicured nails over one of his nipples, smiling with satisfaction at his harsh inhalation.

Jayne dipped her head to soothe the raw flesh with her tongue. Patrick tangled his hands into her elaborate coif, discarding pins with haste. She nipped his nipple in retaliation when he tugged her hair too hard.

"God, baby, do that again."

She arched a brow, amused that he found the act arousing. Gently, she bit him again and then gasped when he tangled his hand in her loose hair, pushing her face tighter against his chest.

“Harder.”

Jayne sucked the nipple and surrounding flesh into her mouth, biting down on the bud with as much force as she dared. Patrick groaned but she didn't stop. There had been only a tiny measure of pain in the sound but far more enjoyment. She stopped biting for a moment to tease the nipple, stroking gently with her tongue. As she nurtured that one, she raked her nails across his neglected nipple, enjoying the way his body trembled. When she bit him again, Patrick said her name in what sounded more like a hoarse grunt than a word.

Bolstered by his response, she moved her hands to his waistband, undoing the leather belt quickly. Her fingers were nimble over the zipper and button of his trousers and she stripped them to his feet in seconds. Before continuing, Jayne took a step back. It seemed like her fingers stumbled over the simple process of undoing the button on her dress but the zipper slid down easily. She stepped out of it, feeling self-conscious of her voluptuousness. Patrick drew in a deep breath but she didn't wait to find out if it was one of appreciation or disappointment.

Dropping to her knees, she brought a hand up to his black briefs. His cock pulsed visibly through the fabric and she couldn't resist stroking the length of him. “I can't wait to taste you.” She looked up at him from her subservient position, licking her lips. Patrick had tossed back his head and seemed on the verge of losing control. Jayne squeezed his cock head, grazing the tip with her nails. “You're so big. I bet your cock is going to fill me to the limit.” The seductive way she purred the words hid the fact that she wasn't accustomed to such forthright carnal talk, in or out of the bedroom. Something about the man standing in front of her liberated her.

“Let's find out.” The chords in his throat distended when he spoke, as though it was difficult to force out the words.

With a tsk of her tongue, she shook her head. “Not just yet. I'm going to suck you first.”



"Jayne...let me..." He broke off as she lowered his briefs to meet his pants. "Seriously, I want to give you some attention."

"You'll have your opportunity." Not giving him a chance to lodge any more protests, Jayne put her mouth around his cock. The thick shaft pulsed in her mouth, and she swirled her tongue around the mushroomlike head. In the brief glimpse she'd had before taking him into her mouth, she had noticed his cock sprang from the thick growth of pubic hair shielding his testicles, straight and true, like an oak thrusting upward from the ground. Knowing that glorious member was in her mouth, at her mercy, sent a shiver of delight up her spine.

She inhaled deeply, suctioning air around the head. He jerked in response and she repeated the action. Patrick was stiff with tension and arousal, his entire body emitting waves of anticipation. Jayne swirled her tongue around the corona, warming him up.

Patrick put his hand against the back of her head, grasping a handful of her hair. "You're killing me."

"Just a little death." She breathed against his cock with each word, enjoying the way his body twitched. Jayne slid her mouth down the shaft, relaxing her throat as his cock head reached the back of her mouth. With one hand, she cupped his balls, rolling them in her hand with gentle pressure. She used the other hand to brace herself, cupping his ass. He groaned when she held all of him in her mouth and she let the moment lengthen until she could practically feel his body vibrating.

Jayne began sucking his cock, alternating the force of her suction as she worked the length of him, moving her head forward and back. Patrick arched against her face as she sucked. She scraped her teeth ever-so gently along the sides of his shaft, making him moan. His tight grip on her hair almost made her eyes water but she pushed past the discomfort to focus on her self-appointed task.

Working his balls, she thrust her mouth against him, taking in all of his cock and then withdrawing until she held just the bulbous head between her lips. Jayne flicked her tongue against the bundle of nerves at the head, making Patrick groan with

pleasure. Once again, she took his full length, swallowing as much as she could greedily. His pre-ejaculate streamed into her mouth and she savored the salty tang.

"I'm about to come."

In response, she increased suction, crying out with surprise when Patrick jerked away from her. Jayne sat back on her heels, staring up at him with confusion and a touch of hurt. He twisted partially from her with his shoulders slumped. His ragged inhalations filled the room and it took him several moments before he turned back to her.

Jayne almost recoiled when he brushed his hand against her cheek.

"I'm sorry. I just didn't want it to be that way. I want to be inside you." The red stain on his cheeks seemed to come from embarrassment rather than exertion. "You make me feel like a horny teenager all over again. Only problem is, I'm afraid my hair trigger won't reset as fast as it did back then and you deserve better than that."

Charmed by the admission, Jayne smiled. She rubbed her cheek against his hand and then rose to her feet. "How do you want it to be?"

"Me inside you." He reached for her, putting his arms around her. Without a trace of hesitation, Patrick captured her mouth for a kiss, plunging his tongue inside her moist depths. Jayne returned it enthusiastically. Her pussy ached with the need for release and she shifted impatiently.

Apparently, Patrick wouldn't be rushed. He released her mouth and paused to take off his shoes, socks and pants. Then he stared at her corset with a look of deep concentration. "How do you get this thing off?"

"There's a button under here." Jayne showed him by folding down the edge of the corset. When she started to undo the cleverly hidden closure that kept the strip of satin around her torso, he pushed away her hand.

"My turn to do the undressing," he said for an explanation. His hands, seemingly more suited to a task like building a house, had no trouble with the delicate button.

Once he had dispensed with that, Patrick found the zipper at the side and divested her of the garment.

She shivered, stomach clenched with dread, as she stood before him in the plunging velvet bra, matching lace and velvet panties and black pantyhose. Jayne hated to reveal herself so vividly. When he walked over to turn on the lamp by the bedside, the light made her vulnerability all the worse. She followed quickly, reaching to turn off the light he'd just turned on. Patrick intercepted her hand with a frown of confusion. "I like it dim. It's...cozier." It sounded lame even to her ears and she could tell he didn't believe her.

Patrick pulled her away from the lamp, leaving it on. "I want to see you. Every last inch."

It should have been sexy but the words just increased her anxiety. She always made love with the lights out. Until Patrick, no man had ever countered her unspoken edict.

Torn between fear and excitement, Jayne tried to remain relaxed as Patrick undid the clasp of her bra. The velvet underwire style opened, spilling forth her large breasts. With more haste than finesse, he tossed the undergarment aside and reached forward like a little boy eager to get his hands on sweets. She gasped when he took her breasts in his hands, pushing them together as he massaged the tender tissue.

"They're perfect, Jayne. Big, glorious and tipped with the most perfect pink buds." Patrick dipped his head to flick his tongue across one. "I could spend hours just feasting on your breasts."

A film of perspiration broke out on her body as he guided her back to the bed. Jayne sprawled across it, pushing aside worries of her appearance as he positioned his body above hers, his mouth at her breast. While he sucked one nipple, he paid equal attention to her other breast. His fingers worked magic on her skin, stroking, tugging and coaxing the bud to a hardened state she had never attained.

It was amazing to lose herself in his touch. At some point, Jayne realized she hadn't worried about whether her body secretly repulsed him for several minutes. It was a personal best for her and she strove to stay lost in sensation.

Eventually, Patrick seemed to get enough of her breasts, at least temporarily. He withdrew from her and Jayne turned to lie on her side so she could see what he was doing. She watched him walk to his clothes and search in his pants. When he walked back to her with a small strip of condoms, her thighs quivered with anticipation. Her pussy grew slicker yet with a new wave of arousal and she shifted impatiently. She patted the bed when he stood above her without moving.

"You are really incredible, Jayne." He tossed the condoms on the soft coverlet before bending over her. She caught her breath when he pulled down her pantyhose, lifting each leg to help him remove the thin silk. She couldn't help arching her hips upward as he stroked the sides of her pussy through the crotch. Patrick seemed to delight in his unhurried tactile exploration of the lace pattern, spending an inordinate amount of time running his thumb along the seam where lace met the velvet panel above her mound. She cried out when he pressed his thumb into the center of her slit, unerringly finding her clit. "So incredible."

Jayne writhed impatiently. "Please, Patrick."

With a chuckle, he stripped her of the panties. Jayne held her breath when he caressed the outside of her pussy with two fingers. She arched her hips to take the digits inside when he neared her opening. He evaded the maneuver by sliding his fingers north, once again seeking out her clit. She gasped when he circled the aching bud with his forefinger and then gasped again when he abruptly dipped his thumb inside her pussy. She watched through heavy eyes as he brought it to his mouth to lick off her essence.

"Mmm." He closed his eyes for a moment, as if savoring the taste. When the lids fluttered open, his eyes seemed like smoldering emeralds. "You're wet and ready, aren't you, baby?"

"I've been ready since our eyes met."

Patrick laughed but it was a strained sound that betrayed how much his apparent control was costing him. "If I'd had my way, I would have walked over to you, pinned you to that bench and fucked you senseless in front of everyone."

An intense jolt of pleasure shot through her as her mind supplied a visual to accompany his words. She giggled, imagining the shocked onlookers. If the bookmakers took the bet, she'd lay odds that not one of them would have looked away from such a startling sight as two people fucking in the middle of a trendy club.

In seconds, Patrick had torn open the condom and slid it on his cock. Jayne parted her thighs as he knelt between them. A last-minute dart of doubt tried to pierce the euphoric haze surrounding her but she successfully quashed it. Maybe all the years she'd spent working on her self-image were finally paying off.

Or maybe Patrick had made her so hot she couldn't think straight. It was a heady feeling.

Not as heady as having him surge inside her. Jayne's pussy stretched to accommodate his cock and aside from a twinge of discomfort, her body gave little indication that it had been more than two years since she'd had sex with a man. Her body fell into the age-old rhythm, following the pace he set. Patrick seemed to know instinctively when to vary his speed, or rotate his hips slightly to give her more stimulation. As she neared climax, he pushed her over the edge by bringing a hand between their bodies to squeeze her clit. With a shout of satisfaction, she convulsed around him. Her orgasm must have triggered his, because his cock twitched inside her several times, at first frenetically and then gradually slowing. The warmth of his ejaculate through the condom soothed her and she squeezed her muscles to milk every drop.

When it was over, they lay together, their harsh breathing slowing to normal. Jayne put her arms around Patrick, content in a way she had never been. She had no idea what time it was and didn't care. Even knowing he would probably leave sometime

during the night and she would never see him again couldn't totally spoil the blissful aftermath. Sleep stole over her and she tried to fight it, not wanting to relinquish the night with Patrick just yet. Satisfaction and physical exhaustion, coupled with the unaccustomed amount of alcohol she had imbibed, combined to undo her resolve and her eyes closed. She was aware of slipping into slumber but powerless to fight it.

## **Chapter Three**

Patrick woke sometime later, still holding Jayne. She snored softly, oblivious to everything. Staring down at her beautiful face, his cock swelled with renewed arousal. A man driven by his senses, her perfection nearly overwhelmed him. Soft and smooth everywhere, with generous curves and a womanly frame, he could spend years getting acquainted with her body and never grow tired of it.

It killed him that she didn't see how beautiful she was. Jayne had made every effort to hide her self-consciousness but he'd seen through her façade. Everything she'd done, from turning the focus on him, to trying to put out the lights, had screamed that she wanted to hide from him. Patrick was thrilled she had wanted him enough to get past her issues but he yearned to show her just how sexy she was.

He stroked his fingers lightly across her stomach, smiling when she twitched in her sleep. He traced a circle around her bellybutton and she grunted. When Patrick moved his fingers up to her breast, lightly trailing his forefinger around her nipple, she made an indecipherable noise and turned over from her side to her stomach.

Undeterred by her remaining asleep, he shifted positions so he could lean over her. She jumped when he wafted a breath of hot air across her skin. Patrick blew again, concentrating on her lower back. Jayne tensed when he grazed her spine with his lips but didn't appear to wake. He ran his tongue across her lower back and down the cleft of her buttocks. Her harsh inhalation broke the silence, indicating he had succeeded in rousing her. One goal accomplished, he turned to the next, which was to arouse her.

She stiffened when he flicked his tongue across her anus. When her cheeks clenched around his tongue, he laughed. Determined to breach her defenses, he swirled his tongue around the puckered bud. She cried out with shock when he dipped his tongue inside, trying to rise to a sitting position. Patrick put a hand between her shoulder

blades to discourage her from rising, while continuing to work at her back passage. He stroked the sides of her buttocks with his tongue, pleased when she gradually relaxed.

As her tension eased, he drew circles on her back, while moving his tongue lower. He chuckled again when she thrust her bottom into the air, giving him better access to her pussy. She was sweet, yet tangy, on his tongue and he lapped greedily. She squirmed, moaning each time he darted his tongue in and out of her opening. When he stretched his tongue higher, seeking out her clit, she thrust back to meet him. Patrick circled his tongue around the tight bud, enjoying her soft sighs. Unable to resist her heady flavor, he plunged his tongue into her again, thrusting in and out of her in mimicry of the way he wanted to drive his cock inside her.

She rolled onto her back and Patrick barely broke rhythm. Once she had settled, legs splayed, he grasped her soft thighs, kneading them as he sucked on her clit. Jayne arched off the bed, her hands balled around handfuls of the coverlet. Her obvious pleasure fed his own and he had to mentally count to ten to keep from blowing everything by driving his cock into her wet heat then and there.

Diligently, Patrick licked her pussy, sucking on her clit as he pushed two fingers into her snug sheath. She bucked her hips against his hand and face, guttural groans falling from her lips. He let out a groan of his own when she squeezed her thighs tightly around his head. Her pussy convulsed around his fingers and she whimpered, seemingly too out of breath to manage anything more taxing.

Patrick didn't give her a chance to compose herself or withdraw back into her shell. Tongue extended, he licked a trail from her neatly trimmed pussy to her left breast. He fastened his lips around the globe, sucking the nipple and part of the areola inside his mouth. While flicking his tongue across the hard bead, he thrust his fingers in and out of her pussy at a slow pace. His intent wasn't to make her come again—yet—but just to keep her stimulated.

"What are you doing to me, Patrick?" she asked hoarsely.

He lifted his mouth from her breast to look into her eyes. "I'm seducing you, baby."



Jayne blinked. "You've already had me."

"Not the right way." He lowered his head again, once more taking a generous mouthful of her breast, this time focusing his attention on the right one. Simultaneously, he wriggled his fingers inside her, probing as deeply as he could.

"What's that mean?" She let out a startled yelp, indicating he had found a particularly sensitive spot.

Ignoring her question, he raked his teeth across her nipple, pleased when she arched her back. Patrick swept his tongue around the hard pearl, finding her tastier than any ice cream. He had started out with the intent of seducing her senses but that didn't mean he couldn't enjoy his work. His cock ached, pulsing in time with the contractions of her pussy around his fingers as her body strove for orgasm.

When she buried her fingers in his hair, Patrick allowed her to pull his head up toward her mouth. He paused along the way to suck on her throat. She whimpered when he drew in a bit of flesh at the bend of her neck to nip it. Jayne's creamy skin had a faint taste of perspiration as he ran his tongue from her throat to her mouth, where he spent long minutes licking each plump contour. Finally, he responded to the invitation she issued with her open mouth and darted his tongue inside. Her unique taste got to him, making the blood rush through his head.

His thinking clouded by the intoxicating taste of her mouth, it took Patrick a moment to realize she had pushed away the hand he'd had in her slit, wrapped her thighs around his hips and was working on slipping a condom over his cock. Patrick tensed, trying to resist. "No."

She arched a brow and finished sheathing him in latex before asking, "Why not?"

Shaking his head, he pulled back from the wet heat trying to draw him in. "I want it to be special for you."

"It is, Patrick." She clutched his biceps and he couldn't keep resisting when she tightened her thighs to pull him closer. "This has been one of the best nights of my life. Please fuck me again."

The request melted his resolve. His cock swelled, the head nestling into her opening. Patrick sank inside her as she lifted her hips and he couldn't remember how to breathe for a second. It had been only a few hours but he had forgotten just how amazing she felt—hot, tight and so wet he could thrust into her for hours. Her soft body cushioned his and he experienced renewed appreciation for her beauty. His friends had sometimes mocked his taste in women but he pitied them for their ignorance. They would never know the delicious thrill of a voluptuous woman's embrace, of the softness of her skin and the erotic sensation of generous curves that welcomed him.

Their pace was slow, as if time had no meaning. Patrick lost himself in Jayne's wide blue eyes, enthralled by the depth of pleasure reflected through her veil of thick, black lashes. "You have the most beautiful eyes." He smiled when her cheeks flushed. "They remind me of the ocean in August, crashing against the sand at my parents' place in Nantucket."

She cleared her throat. "You don't have to work at seducing me anymore, hon."

He buried his face against the silkiness of her black hair, inhaling the fruity scent. Doing his best to memorize everything about the woman in his arms, he focused on all aspects of her. It was unlikely that he would ever see her again after tonight and he wanted to remember Jayne Daux. She was an unforgettable woman.

Her breathless cries and convulsing womb signaled her release, allowing Patrick to give in to the orgasm washing through him. His body shook under the onslaught and he nearly lost the ability to hold himself up on his arms for a moment. He couldn't help whispering her name repeatedly as he spilled his seed into the thin barrier of latex separating them. How he longed to feel her pussy clenching around his bare cock but it was too risky to do something like that with a one-night stand. If only he could see her again. But that was impossible. They were both in town for just a couple of days. He had no idea where she was from, or how far apart they lived. His own uncertainty kept him from suggesting any sort of serious relationship as they lay together in the sweet

bliss of afterglow. Instead, he just held her, holding back the words his heart wanted him to utter.

## **Chapter Four**

"Jayne!"

She jumped, focusing her eyes on Emmy, whose expression revealed she had been trying to get her attention for quite some time. Heat suffused her face when she realized she had been daydreaming about last night. Even worse, she'd been dwelling on the note she'd awakened to, where Patrick left his cell number and implied he wanted to see her again. She had been busy trying to work out the logistics of that. "Yes, what?"

"Do you know if the staff put out the right centerpieces? Yesterday, they had a hideous shade of orange mixed in with the white and coral flowers."

Jayne picked up the hairbrush on the vanity and began smoothing the long fall of Emmy's brown hair, which trailed down her back from the elegant knot atop her head. "They hadn't finished setting up everything but the centerpieces were out. They looked right when I checked out the ballroom before coming here to help you get ready."

"Thank goodness." Her shoulders, bared by the cut of the strapless princess dress, seemed to relax. "I tell you, I had no idea how stressful it would be to throw together a last-minute wedding like this. Maybe we should have waited until Rich finishes his internship and had the wedding in Boston like his mother wanted."

She shrugged, not looking up from smoothing the wrinkles from the back of Emmy's dress. "It might have been practical but you didn't want to wait for him, did you?"

"No." She let out a sigh that could have rivaled any schoolgirl, thinking of her crush. "He's so wonderful. I can't wait for you to meet him."

"I'd like that. All you've done is talk about him ever since you came back." Emmy had met Rich while she was visiting her father, an expatriate living in London. Theirs had evidently been a whirlwind romance and he had proposed before she flew back

two weeks ago. Jayne emitted her own envious sigh, wishing something equally romantic could happen to her. For a moment, her mind conjured images of Patrick but she tried to ignore the thoughts. Last night had been wonderful and if she were lucky, they might have another night or two together in Vegas but she should resign herself to knowing that was all they could have.

“Did I tell you Rich’s family flew in for the wedding? I thought his mother wouldn’t come, because she was so angry that we were getting married like this, after only having known each other six weeks.”

Jayne patted Emmy’s shoulder, knowing how anxious she had been. “What changed her mind?”

She shrugged. “I guess Rich convinced her how in love we are.” Emmy turned her head away from the mirror to look up at Jayne from her perch on the padded stool. “His parents are even letting us use their Nantucket cottage for our honeymoon.”

She froze, trying to sound casual, though alarm bells rang in her mind. “Where is Rich from again?”

Emmy shook her head. “Honestly, you’re not here today, are you? I must have said Boston a hundred times in the last few days. You should remember that I’m going back to London with Rich but after his internship, we’re settling in Boston.”

On autopilot, she dropped the section of lace she’d been fluffing. “Excuse me. I have to check something.”

“What?” Emmy’s mouth moved like a fish’s out of water as Jayne rushed past her. “Jayne, what’s wrong?” she called.

Jayne kept going, heading straight for the ballroom reserved for the post-ceremony reception. They had still been setting up everything for the wedding when she had been in the Longhi room earlier to check the centerpieces. One of Emmy’s decorations included snapshots of her and Rich blown up to poster-size and mounted on the walls, to give their friends and family a sense of their courtship.

As she had expected, the staff, under the direction of the private coordinator Emmy had hired, were in the process of mounting the last few pictures. Multiple images of the happy couple already adorned the walls and Jayne's stomach churned with nausea when she saw the smiling face of the future groom. He looked different with the petite Emmy, against a European backdrop, than he had last night in her hotel room as he made love to her until she was limp but she couldn't deny Rich was Patrick.

She rushed from the ballroom, unable to stand the sight of Emmy and Patrick together. Anger and disgust thrummed through her. She had slept with her best friend's fiancé. God, how could Emmy ever forgive her? It crossed her mind not to confess to her friend. If she could just keep it all to herself, Emmy would never know.

The thought of keeping such an enormous secret had Jayne falling against a wall, doubling over from pain in her chest. She couldn't do it. She couldn't let Emmy blindly marry a man who would cheat on her the night before the wedding.

Blood pounded in her head and she was enraged with Patrick, or Rich...or whatever he went by. Why hadn't she realized he was a sleaze? Emmy had always been slightly naïve about people but Jayne seemed to have been born with natural cynicism. She always expected the worst to happen, so why had Patrick blindsided her?

Still feeling sick, Jayne stood up. She walked back toward the rooms set aside for the wedding party to use before the ceremony, scheduled to start in less than an hour at the Venetian Wedding Chapel. All too soon, she reached the brides' room and entered. To her relief, Emmy was still alone and was absorbed in fiddling with her hair.

She looked up with a puzzled expression at her return. "Where did you rush off to, Jayne?"

Jayne walked over to her and knelt beside the stool, barely noticing the way the fabric of her dress tightened uncomfortably around her hips. "I had to check on something."

"Well, what?" asked her friend, exasperation evident.

"Your pictures in the ballroom."

Emmy's eyes widened. "Oh no. The studio screwed them up, didn't they? I knew better than to do it all online. I should have gone in person —"

She cut into Emmy's panicked outburst. "They're fine." Jayne bent her head. "God, I don't know how to tell you this." She felt even worse when Emmy leaned forward to hug her.

"Whatever it is, I'm here for you. Just tell me."

Tears stung her eyes and her voice was a rough croak when she blurted out, "I slept with a man I didn't know last night."

Emmy blinked. "You?" She blinked again, sitting back. "Wow. That's not like you."

"I know."

She patted Jayne's shoulder. "It will be all right. We all do stupid things, you know? I ended up in bed with Rich on our first date. I couldn't believe it was happening at the time but I couldn't help myself."

So, the jerk always moved quickly. Anger reinforced her resolve and she looked into Emmy's eyes during her confession. "It was Rich. I didn't know it then but I slept with your fiancé."

Her pale face drained of all color and Emmy seemed to wilt. She bent over the vanity table. "What?" she asked in a whisper.

"I'm sorry." The tears broke past the dam that had held them in check, coursing down Jayne's face. "I really didn't know. I never —"

Emmy gained her feet abruptly, tossing her hairbrush at the mirror. The tinkle of glass was nothing compared to the loud shout her diminutive friend achieved. "How could you do that to me, Jayne? How could you two go behind my back? You're my best friend." She scooped up a bottle of moisturizer from the assortment of cosmetics spread on the table, pitching it against the wall.

Jayne cringed from Emmy. Her anger was frightening, especially since Emmy was usually collected and calm when faced with anything upsetting. She had never been

one to throw things and scream. If not for the tears ruining her bridal makeup, she would have appeared just enraged. Jayne knew her well enough to know Emmy was only finding a physical outlet for her pain, because it was too great to hold inside.

She maintained her silence as Emmy ranted, just standing back from the chaos. It wasn't until the door slammed against the wall and the groom came rushing through that she took her gaze from her friend. "You," she snarled as soon as she saw Rich rushing toward Emmy.

"Emmy, what's going on in here?" Rich reached his bride, pulling a compact from her hand. "What's wrong?"

Jayne winced when Emmy slapped Rich hard enough to have the sound reverberate throughout the room.

"You lying, cheating bastard."

Rich frowned. "What? Are you crazy, Emmy?"

Emmy jerked away from him. "How dare you sleep with my friend the night before our wedding?"

Reeling backward, Rich's eyes settled on Jayne and he seemed confused. "What...her?"

"Yes, her." Emmy stamped her foot. "Why the pretense of wanting to settle down and raise a family if you were just going to sleep around?"

He shook his head. "Honey, I've never seen this woman before in my life and I haven't been with any woman since I met you. And it was a long damn time before you that I last had a lover." Rich glared at Jayne. "I don't know what your friend is trying to pull but I never touched her."

"You liar." It was all Jayne could do not to slap him herself. In the cold light of day, Patrick was completely different. His face even looked harder and his eyes, though green, weren't vibrant as they had been last night. How could she have found him so



attractive before, when he left her cold now? It must be the harsh light of truth illuminating her thought processes.

Emmy seemed torn. "Jayne wouldn't lie."

"Neither would I," he said quietly, with so much sincerity that Jayne almost believed him. He looked back at her again, still befuddled. "No offense, lady but you aren't the type of girl I go for. You're more my..." He trailed off, a smile slowly forming on his face. "Wait right here."

"Where are you going?" Emmy reached out to try to stop him from leaving and Jayne shook her head in amazement at his departure. Did he really think he could just walk out on the situation and leave it all for her and Emmy to clean up?

Emmy looked at Jayne, her gaze searching. "You are telling me the truth, aren't you?"

Jayne nodded, wishing she had been lying when she saw the agony in her friend's eyes.

The return of Rich interrupted their exchange and he seemed excited. "I know what happened."

"So do I," said Jayne. She wouldn't waver. It might be easier to pretend it had never happened but Emmy deserved a faithful husband.

As another man entered the room, Rich put an arm around his shoulders and dragged him forward. "Is this the guy you were with last night?"

Jayne's mouth dropped open and it took her a moment to comprehend that her vision wasn't blurred. Twins! Dear God, they were nearly identical. In appearance, they were clones, though Patrick's eyes were warmer and his face more filled out. "Patrick?"

"Jayne?" He seemed confused. "What's going on? One minute, I'm squeezing into that darn tux and the next, Rich's telling me to get my butt into the brides' room."

Emmy gasped and it was a happy sound. She threw herself against Rich. "Oh, thank goodness."

Jayne looked down, embarrassed and uncertain how to proceed. "I am so sorry, Emmy...Rich. I had no idea you had a brother. A twin brother." To her relief, Emmy let go of Rich to come over for a hug.

"It's okay. I should have mentioned Rich has a twin but it just didn't occur to me. I guess it's 'cause I was so busy with the wedding, and I'd never met Patrick until this morning..." She withdrew, turning back to the two men. "You two clear out now and leave us to finish getting ready. And if you see the missing bridesmaids, send them in."

Rich was drawing his brother toward the door but Patrick's gaze hadn't left Jayne's. "Seriously, what is going on?"

"Come on, bro, I'll tell you while we get dressed."

The celebrant nodded to the bride and groom, who turned to face those assembled for the ceremony. "I present to you Richard and Emmy Maynard."

Jayne wasn't sure if she or Patrick clapped louder. Fortunately, he seemed to have taken the incident in stride and had even teased her about not being able to tell him apart from another man when they had reunited at the ceremony. She traded a glance with him from her side of the aisle, where she stood off to Emmy's side. Her body hummed with anticipation while she waited for him to take her arm and lead her from the chapel as they followed the bride and groom.

They walked to the Longhi room together, arm in arm. Her bliss from the previous night had returned, lending everything a rosy air. She remained bubbly with optimism as they entered the room. Even when the throng of people separated them, she was bolstered each time she met Patrick's gaze across the crowded room.

The first pinprick in her bubble of happiness appeared in the form of her stepmother. Jayne's stomach churned with nausea when she almost walked right into the smaller woman. Stella took an exaggerated step back. "I know you're not very graceful but please watch your step, dear."

That same tinkling laugh that always followed her digs grated on Jayne's nerves. She wanted to reply in a blithe manner, or even to just walk away from the woman who had made her teen years hell, but she couldn't seem to move her feet. Why did Stella always reduce her to this state?

What remained of her buoyant mood fled when the two stepsisters appeared on either side of Stella, completing the Trio of Evil, as she had dubbed them within days of meeting them. Stacia and Daisy were beautiful young women with willowy frames and shiny blonde hair – everything Jayne wasn't.

She attempted to be polite, greeting the women. "What are you doing here?" she asked after the requisite exchange of pleasantries.

"I couldn't miss dear little Emmy's wedding," said Stella. "She was over so often before you two left for college that I feel like she was one of my daughters."

Jayne took a sip of champagne to hide her grimace. She knew Emmy wouldn't have invited Stella or the stepsisters, so how had the other women found out? "How did you hear of it?"

"Emmy's mother. I ran into her at the spa. She invited me straightaway, as soon as she heard my invitation must have gotten lost." The flash in Stella's eyes indicated she knew she had been shunned. Maybe that's why she had flown from Beverly Hills to Vegas. Her own perversity had driven her to the act.

"It's lovely to see you." Somehow, Jayne managed to keep her tone civil. It was the same cool, distant voice she always used with Stella. They had never gotten along but all pretense of a warm relationship had lapsed the day her father died. Even at his funeral, they had been cold with each other. Jayne had only seen her stepmother a few times in the intervening years and each occasion was an ordeal.

"Speaking of weddings, did you get the card I sent to your little apartment in the Bronx?"

Jayne nodded, ignoring the insult directed toward her apartment. It was actually a roomy two-bedroom but Stella didn't believe any address outside of Manhattan could be anything but a hovel. "Congratulations are in order for you, Daisy?"

Daisy smiled and somehow it had the effect of making her seem even colder. "The wedding is late this year. I do hope you'll send a gift."

"Of course." She hid a dart of pain behind the fluted glass as she drained the last of the champagne. Why did these three still have the power to hurt her?

"I know you'll be much too busy to come."

"Yes. My job keeps me hopping."

"You're a secretary, aren't you?" asked Stacia with false sweetness.

"Assistant Director of IT for a major hospital, actually, but it's almost like being a secretary," she said with only a hint of mocking.

Stella looked her up and down. "I imagine it doesn't give you much time to get to the gym."

She looked away from Stella, in Daisy's direction. "Is your fiancé here?"

"No, he had to attend a business meeting in Prague."

Jayne nodded. "I'm sorry to hear that. It would have been nice to meet him." She began to look around the room, hoping to make eye contact with anyone in order to have an excuse to move on.

"My boyfriend is in the Bahamas, doing a photo shoot. He's representing one of the hottest designers of the year," said Stacia, her mouth curled into an unattractive sneer.

Jayne was certain she disappointed her stepsister by not asking the name of the designer. "Well, if you'll excuse me, I should see if Emmy needs anything." As she brushed past Stella, her stepmother caught her arm in a tight grip. She braced herself for whatever they wanted to say, praying they would get it over with quickly.

"Where is your date, dear Jayne?" Stella smirked and Daisy actually giggled, as if the idea was laughable.

"Are you still with Penrod, that scientist you were dating for so long?" asked Stacia.

"Perry," she corrected with quiet dignity. "No, we haven't been together for some time." It had been three years since they'd split, so it must have been longer than that since she'd seen the Trio of Evil.

Stella clicked her tongue. "Let me offer you advice, Jayne. You have to lose some weight. I know a good plastic surgeon who can do a tummy tuck, breast reduction and rhinoplasty. Within a year, if you work at it, you could be passably pretty. Maybe it will be your wedding someday." She tilted her head. "If you keep up your unhealthy lifestyle, you'll never find a man."

Jayne pursed her lips. She knew better than to argue, that the tirade would end faster if she maintained silence but she couldn't resist the compulsion to speak. "Why do you care, Stella? We never see each other. I'm no longer around you to embarrass you with my appearance, so why are you still doing this?"

Stella blinked. "I promised your father I'd watch out for you."

She snorted. "Yeah, thanks." Jayne started to walk past the three of them but froze when her stepsisters giggled.

"I told you she wouldn't have a date," said Daisy.

Stacia frowned. "Of course she doesn't, so don't make it sound like I was suggesting she would."

With a shake of her head, Jayne took a couple of steps, moving from the Trio of Evil straight into Patrick's arms. She looked up at him with a smile, feeling most of the sting of hurt dissipating under the calming light of his eyes. "I missed you," she whispered.

Stella managed to snatch her tentative happiness once more. Her trilling laugh caused Jayne to stiffen her spine when her stepmother approached.

"My goodness, Jayne, aren't you clumsy today?" She laughed again. "I did warn her to watch her step but she has no grace. Mr...?"

Patrick ignored the hand Stella extended in favor of shifting Jayne to one arm. "Patrick Maynard."

"The groom's brother?" Stacia fluttered her eyelashes at him.

He nodded and Jayne held her breath, waiting to see if he would find Stacia and Daisy as irresistible as every other man seemed to.

"Well, thank you for carrying familial duty above and beyond." Stella smiled in Jayne's direction but her glinting eyes held no warmth. "I'm so glad Jayne has had someone to keep her company today."

"Oh, it was no problem." Patrick put his hand on Jayne's buttocks. "Being with Jayne is a pleasure."

Daisy arched a brow. "Really? I grew up with her and I just can't imagine that."

Patrick smiled as he squeezed her bottom tenderly. "Perhaps that's because you're a shallow bitch who wouldn't know a genuine person if they fell on you." He inclined his head to Stella. "It was enlightening meeting you, ma'am, but we must go. There are still pictures to take and Emmy has to throw the bouquet before I can steal Jayne away and spend the night making love to her."

Jayne's eyes widened, though not as much as The Trio of Evil's. She couldn't contain a startled laugh at their identical gasps of shock and it turned to a giggle as Patrick drew her away.

"Jayne, you know those women aren't worth anything, don't you? Their opinion doesn't mean a damn thing," he said as he led her from the ballroom to a private alcove set up for pictures.

She nodded. "My head knows it but they still get to me."

He stopped in the hallway, turning her to face him. "You are beautiful, inside and out. They're just jealous."

Jayne shook her head, unable to hide her disbelief. "Why would any of them be jealous of me?"

Patrick bent his head to kiss her before answering. "Because you are a wonderful person and they aren't. They don't know how to be real like you, so they try to bring you down to their level. When you fail to respond to their taunts in a satisfying manner, they just get worse."

Impressed, she nodded. "It's like you lived with them yourself."

Patrick shook his head. "Fortunately, I've never endured it firsthand but I've seen several patients at my counseling practice who lived through similar experiences. The important thing is that you don't let them change you, or make you unhappy."

She hugged him. "At this moment, I don't think I could be unhappy if I tried, Patrick."

With impatience, they made it through the photo session and then it was finally time for Emmy to toss the bouquet before the newlyweds left for Nantucket. By mutual agreement, she and Patrick had set that as the point where they could officially retire to one of their rooms and spend the night in carnal bliss.

With some prodding from Emmy and Patrick, Jayne joined the gaggle of single women waiting to catch the bouquet. Stacia was nearby but she ignored her. She was annoyed to see Daisy in the crowd but her stepsister was an idiot. It wouldn't occur to her to sit out the bouquet toss since she was engaged.

Emmy climbed onto a chair with Rich's assistance, her back to the women. "Ready, girls?"

Jayne joined in with the rest to reply with an enthusiastic, "Yes."

"Here it comes." Emmy dramatically covered her eyes with her free hand before tossing the bouquet. It sailed through the crowd, over the heads of the grasping girls, including Stacia and Daisy. To Jayne's surprise, the bouquet seemed to fall into her hands as if propelled by magic.

She looked up, finding Patrick unerringly through the girls surrounding her with congratulations and hugs. There were a lot of details to work out yet, such as how they would build a relationship when he lived in Boston and she lived in New York but her heart had her convinced they would figure it out.

Staring into Patrick's eyes, the bride's words seemed prophetic to Jayne when Emmy shouted, "Jayne's going to be the next one married."



## **About the Author**

Kit Tunstall lives in Idaho with her husband, son and dog-children. She started reading at the age of three and hasn't stopped since. Love of the written word, and a smart marriage to a supportive man, led her to a full-time career in writing. Romances have always intrigued her, and erotic romance is a natural extension because it more completely explores the emotions between the hero and heroine. That, and it sure is fun to write.

Kit welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

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