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Samhain Publishing, Ltd.  
512 Forest Lake Drive  
Warner Robins, Georgia 31093

Show Me  
Copyright © 2007 by Jaci Burton  
Cover by Scott Carpenter  
ISBN: 1-59998-526-8  
[www.samhainpublishing.com](http://www.samhainpublishing.com)

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First **Samhain Publishing, Ltd.** electronic publication: July 2007

# Show Me

*Sneak Peek*

*Jaci Burton*

## Dedication

To my friend and critique partner Shelley Bradley, who slaps me good and hard when I need it. Thanks babe.

To Shan, who appreciates a good restaurant scene. Heh.

To Angie and Crissy. Thank you for this.

And as always, to Charlie, for the constant inspiration. Love you.

## Chapter One

“Quit fidgeting,” Melinda said, tapping at Janine’s hand.

“I wasn’t fidgeting.” Janine removed her fingers from the hem of her skirt and clasped her hands together. “I would like to know where we’re going.”

“Someplace fun.” Susan batted her lashes in a very mysterious way. “A place for you to unwind, let your hair down. You are going to *love* this.”

Terri and Melinda exchanged winks, which was never a good sign. Her friends were always the mischief makers, while Janine had been the stand-in-the-background-and-out-of-harm’s-way part of the foursome. She’d known better than to get involved in their wild and crazy schemes. If there was trouble to be found, they could find it, and Janine wanted no part of fun and games that could lead to scandal. She had too much to lose.

Especially now, when everything she did was under such tight scrutiny.

Janine Bartolino had turned thirty today, and her girlfriends were bound and determined to see that she celebrated in a major way. Though she much preferred a nice dinner at one of her favorite trendy Los Angeles restaurants, then back to her place for cocktails, the girls weren’t having any of that. Susan, Terri and Melinda said they had a surprise for her. They were taking her out tonight for something special.

She hated surprises.

They’d had dinner at a nice restaurant, which had been quite enjoyable. She never saw enough of her friends, so getting together was always a treat. She’d known them since college, and though they tried to

get together often, they were all busy with their careers, so trying to plan an outing at a time when everyone was available was a lesson in frustration.

They'd managed to clear their schedules for her birthday, though, and she was grateful for that. She loved catching up. But she was nervous about tonight. What in the world did they have planned?

They'd shocked the hell out of her by picking her up in a limo—a true slice of heaven, there. The champagne had been flowing freely since seven o'clock that night. Good thing she'd eaten a decent dinner or she'd be toast by now. Champagne went to her head fast, the bubbles tickled her nose, and she was already dizzy.

"Almost there. Breathe, Janine."

She resisted the urge to stick out her tongue at Terri. Too juvenile. And she was thirty now.

Thirty. Ugh. It seemed old. She *felt* old. And so tired of all the responsibility heaped onto her shoulders. Maybe she should take her friends' advice and relax a little, just kick back and not worry what everyone thought.

Yeah, right. Like that was going to happen.

She'd been so preoccupied with her own thoughts, she hadn't noticed the limo heading into the Hollywood Hills.

"Where are we going?"

"You already asked that question," Susan said. "A hundred times or more."

Janine rolled her eyes. "You're exaggerating. I did not."

"Fifty times, then. Quit asking. We're not telling. But trust us, you're going to love this."

She highly doubted it. While she enjoyed getting together with the girls to catch up, they didn't run in the same social circles at all. Susan

was a writer, Terri an actress and Melinda a model. They were all gorgeous, well-dressed and comfortable in their own skin.

Janine was...she didn't know what she was.

Other than thirty.

*Quit reminding yourself.*

She was also independently wealthy. And in charge of her family's fortune, with a ton of responsibility weighing on her head.

"Almost there," Terri said. "Look out the window. You can see the house now."

Janine leaned forward. House? They were going to a house?

Whose house?

It was amazing, looming up out of the hillside, all white in a sea of green. The limo pulled up in front of the well lit two story. The house screamed class and sophistication, instantly transporting Janine to another era. Subtle lighting showcased the place perfectly, from the gleaming stucco walls to the red bougainvillea draping over the porch.

"Okay, where the hell are we?"

The driver opened their door. "You'll see," Melinda said, tossing an enigmatic smile over her shoulder. She slid one elegant leg out the door. "Come on."

If this was some kind of surprise party, she was going to be really irritated. She'd made it clear she wanted nothing of the sort. The girls had promised. But since the others had already piled out of the limo, she had no choice but to follow suit.

They'd made her dress up, and not in going-out-to-dinner clothes, either, but in a slinky cocktail dress that hugged her body way too intimately for her own comfort. Black, skintight and revealing a dangerous amount of cleavage, Janine felt underdressed and overexposed. Of course her friends were dressed similarly, not that it

bothered any of them in the least. Then again, they had the bodies for it. Janine always carried that extra five pounds she couldn't seem to get rid of, while the others were tabloid-magazine ready for whatever paparazzi happened to be lurking.

Though she didn't spy any cameras. In fact, no one was out front. It was quiet, the only sounds those of their heels clacking on the walkway and a waterfall in the distance.

As they approached the front door, it opened for them. Janine heard music. It was dark inside, so she couldn't see, but she stilled, almost afraid to move. Terri and Susan looped their arms with hers and dragged her inside.

Her first thought as she stepped into the expansive foyer was a mixture of then and now. Very old Hollywood mixed with the sound and sparkle of today. But not at all garish or disco-like. Instead, it was warm and welcoming. A rollicking beat of rhythm and blues pounded in her ears—sexy, making her pulse thrum with excitement.

But what really got her heart racing was the man walking their way. He wore a dark suit, white shirt halfway unbuttoned, revealing a light dusting of chest hair. He looked like he hadn't shaved today, but instead of looking unkempt, he looked...oh my God he looked sexy as hell. As he drew closer, she noticed he was staring right at her. In this sea of gorgeous women, his whiskey brown eyes were targeting her? And he was smiling. His lips were full and Janine's first thought was of what his mouth could do to a woman.

*"Bon soir, mademoiselles. Welcome to Sneak Peek."*

Holy crap. He had just the hint of a French accent, as if he'd lived in the States for years, but hadn't quite lost the inflection. Why were her panties getting wet? It wasn't like she didn't regularly meet handsome men in her line of work. Good-looking men walked every sidewalk in Los



Angeles. You could run into them at the grocery store and down every aisle, since they were as plentiful as apples. But this one—damn—he hit her hot buttons in a major way.

“I’m Philippe Delacroix, but everyone calls me Del. In fact, if you call me Philippe or, God forbid, Phil, I won’t answer you.”

She smiled at that. He so didn’t look like a Phil.

“I’m part owner of this club along with my friend, Alejandro Diaz, who I’m sure you’ll see around here tonight. Please, come in and make yourselves comfortable.”

Terri, Melinda and Susan said their hellos and rushed in, heading straight for the bar. In a damn hurry, she noted, all of them casting amused glances at Del and then back at her. She didn’t quite know what happened, but it seemed as if they knew where they were going. One minute they were all standing there, the next the other three were gone. Janine found herself unable to move, her feet planted in the middle of the lobby like some mute, immobile dimwit. Del, at least, was polite enough to remain there with her so she didn’t look like an imbecilic wall flower.

He cocked his head to the side. “Your friends left you.”

“Seems that way.”

“You look nervous as hell.”

“That obvious, huh?”

“First time?”

She swallowed. “First time for what?”

“To visit the club.”

She shook her head. “I don’t even know where I am. My friends dragged me here and didn’t tell me where we were going, so I’m sorry to say I have no clue what Sneak Peek is.”

His lips curled in a hint of a smile. “Ah. Nice surprise.”

She glared into the pitch black bar area, wondering where her so-called friends had disappeared to. "If you say so." Turning back to him, she realized he owned this club and she had probably just insulted him. "No offense. I'm sure this is a very nice place, but I'm not big on surprises."

"I can tell. Your body is as tense as a coiled-up snake. We need to relax you."

*We? What is this we?* "I'll be fine. I just need to find my friends."

"You need a drink. How about a tour?"

She definitely needed the drink. And the tour sounded nice. Anything to keep her away from the throng of bodies undulating in the overcrowded bar. Dancing was so not her thing, and knowing her friends, they'd drag her out there to bump and grind with a bunch of strange guys. Oh, God, there wasn't a male stripper review tonight, was there? She could so see Susan, Terri and Melinda thinking *that* was fun, especially tossing her to the wolves...er, naked dudes. Sweaty nude men giving her a birthday spanking. She'd die.

"Come on. You look like you're about to pass out."

Her gaze drifted up at Del, wondering what he saw when he looked down at her. Had she gone pale? Probably too much thought of Chippendale dancers and birthday spankings. She'd always had a way overactive imagination. He took her arm, and as she walked alongside him, she noted how warm his hand was, how easy he seemed to move, with such fluidity and grace. Like a sleek panther, comfortable in his skin.

She'd never once been comfortable in hers. She was jealous of people who were at ease in their environment. Del seemed relaxed, casting a genuine smile at people they passed by. He led her through a doorway and into a very casual room with a couple of beige chairs, a sofa and a

huge mirror lining one wall. There was a bar off to one side, and the other side had tons of electronic equipment.

“Part of my office,” he said, moving to the bar. “What would you like?”

“Rum if you have it. On the rocks would be fine.”

He poured two glasses and handed her one. “I respect a woman who likes her liquor hard. Too many are into those fussy wines.”

She snorted and accepted the glass from him. “Wine gives me a vicious headache the next day. Though I can suffer through it for business dinners.” She was already regretting the champagne, knowing she’d feel the effects later. But it had served its purpose—it had taken the edge off her nervousness, at least for a little while.

He took a long swallow and nodded. “As we all must, on occasion.”

My God, she couldn’t get over how gorgeous he was. He smelled good, too, and not rife with cologne. She inhaled as he drew closer. More like soap. She almost laughed at that. He smelled freshly showered and clean, with an earthy undertone she could only describe as utter male scent. Primitive and oh so sexy.

Where had her mind gone, anyway?

“So you really have no idea what kind of place Sneak Peek is?” he asked, rimming his fingertip around the edge of the glass.

She followed his finger. Even that movement was sexy. God, she was pathetic. “No clue.”

“I’m surprised your friends didn’t warn you.”

There went that half smile again, like he had a secret. A wicked one. *Uh-oh*. “Warn me?”

He took her glass and set it on the small table next to his, then drew his arm around her back and turned her toward the mirror. The mirror was long and tall as the wall in front of her. She looked at herself

standing next to Del, at the way his hand casually rested against her hip, the way his thumb stroked over the fabric of her dress.

She felt what she saw reflected in the mirror—her skin burning up as the thin layer separating her body from his fingers didn't seem like nearly enough armor. She was going up in smoke, on fire from the way he looked at her, the way his eyes went dark, from a light whiskey to a deep brandy.

She started to turn away, but the slightest pressure of his hand held her in place. She realized, then, that she was alone in a room with a complete stranger. Her friends didn't know where she was. She didn't know where she was. Or who she was with.

"You're still tense."

"I'm...I'm sorry." She swept her hand over her hair. One strand had fallen loose, draping over her eye. She smoothed it back into place. "I think I should go find my friends."

"Your friends are fine. And so are you. Do I make you nervous?"

He wasn't tense at all, his body completely relaxed next to hers. "A little."

He moved away, giving her a couple inches of space. "I'm sorry. I can be a bit direct when I'm intrigued with a woman, and I'm used to...a different sort of female who frequents Sneak Peek. I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable."

Okay, now she really wanted to know where she was. "I'm not exactly uncomfortable. Just curious."

He lifted a brow. "How curious?"

"Tell me about your club." Forewarned was forearmed?

A knock at the door prevented his answer. "Come in," he said.

A gorgeous man entered, tall and tan and casting a gracious smile in her direction. Dressed similarly to Del, he moved into the room with the same casual grace. "Sorry, Del, I did not know you were occupied."

"It's all right. This is..." Del turned to Janine. "Damn. I don't even know your name."

"Janine," she said.

The man nodded. "Ah, the lovely Janine. Your friends were wondering where you had disappeared to." He walked over, swept her hand in his and pressed a light kiss to it. "I am Alejandro Diaz, one of the co-owners of the club."

"Oh, yes. Del mentioned you. Very nice to meet you. You said my friends were looking for me?"

"Yes."

"I should go then." She started toward the door, but Alejandro still held her hand. "Totally unnecessary. They were merely worried you had turned tail and left. I believe they said something to the effect of, 'chickening out?'"

That made her pause. "Chickened out? Hmph." She lifted her chin, insulted that her friends would think that of her, even if it was true. Though she still had no idea what she would be chickening out of. And she'd be damned if she'd let her friends goad her.

Del snorted. "You can tell them I'm giving Janine a tour and she's in good hands."

"I'll do that." Alejandro cast a knowing look in Del's direction. "You two have a wonderful evening."

Janine inclined her head. "It was very nice to meet you."

Alejandro shut the door behind him. Janine turned back to Del, who wore a very amused expression on his face.

"What?"

“Your friends thought you’d run.”

She shrugged and took a long swallow of rum. It burned, but it felt good. Courage-inducing. “They’re very adventurous. Me? Not so much.”

“So, you’re the conservative one in the group?”

“I’m hardly conservative.” Boring, maybe, but not conservative. She led a wicked, sexy, adventurous lifestyle—in her fantasies. Her reality was something entirely different.

He drained his glass and set it back on the table. “Why do I get the feeling you’re trying to convince me of something that’s not quite true?”

“My friends, Susan, Terri and Melinda have fascinating lives. One’s an author of mystery books who travels the world researching and doing nationwide book tours. One’s an actress and the other’s a model. Their careers alone are profoundly more exciting than mine.”

“And what do you do?”

“I manage my father’s estate. He’s the late Louis Bartolino.”

“Ah. I’ve heard of your father. My condolences on his death last year.”

She nodded. “Thank you. I took over the Bartolino Foundation after his death. That’s my work.”

Del crossed his arms. “Big job for one person.”

“It can be. I handle it. Nevertheless, it hardly makes me...exciting.”

His lips twitched. “I don’t know about that. I find you intriguing.”

It would be rude to snort. “Right. Of course you do.”

Del picked up their glasses and refilled their drinks. “Being exciting has nothing to do with your career, Janine. It’s an inner quality, a glow.” He walked back to her and handed her the glass, his fingers brushing hers. She felt a zing of electricity.

“You shine like a woman who has a secret.”

“I have no secrets.”

“Is that right. None at all?”

“No.” She sipped the rum, wishing she’d never come in here. Del made her uncomfortable. He was too probing, as if he knew something about her that she didn’t. Which was ridiculous.

“We all have secrets, Janine. Sometimes things even we aren’t aware about ourselves.”

“I’m an open book. Read the society section in the newspaper. You’ll find out anything you want to know about me.”

“That’s surface. Public relations. That’s not who you really are.”

She shook her head, fighting back a laugh. “Really. You’ve known me for ten minutes. Who am I?”

He shrugged and moved away from her. “Not sure. Let’s find out.” He pressed a button next to the mirror and the lights went out.

Janine startled, not sure what was happening. But then the mirror glowed. No, wait. A picture was forming. What the hell was that?

It wasn’t a picture. It was a two-way mirror. On the other side was a room, with a bed and a chair and nothing else.

There was a man and a woman in the room, both young and extremely attractive. The man was tall, well built, with cover model good looks. He was naked from the waist up, wore no shoes, only a pair of jeans with the top button undone. The woman had long blonde hair loosely cascading down her back. She wore only a scarlet red bra that barely contained her copious breasts, and a matching thong. She looked like she worked out, her body in fine shape. She was on her knees in front of the man, dragging the zipper down his jeans.

The blonde licked her lips, anticipation clearly showing on her face.

Janine licked her lips, too, her throat gone dry. What was she looking at? It was an intimate, personal moment between two people. She should turn away, walk out of the room, but she couldn’t move. Her feet seemed to have glued themselves to the floor.

And her body's response to what she saw was off the charts. Her nipples tightened, her breasts felt hot and swollen, and her clit quivered. She was turned on in a major way, and she sent up a thankful prayer for the darkness surrounding her. What would Del think of her?

What kind of place was Sneak Peek?

As if in answer to her unspoken question, Del moved behind her, his body seemingly surrounding her, crowding her personal space. She inhaled, picking up his scent, letting it fill her. His cock was rigid against her ass as he pressed against her, letting his hands rest on her hips.

"Sneak Peek is a sex club, Janine. A club for voyeurs and exhibitionists. If you look across the room you'll see another window. There are over a dozen people watching."

She tore her gaze away from the couple, finding the window Del mentioned. Men and women stood on the other side of a glass enclosure, some fully clothed, others in various states of undress. Some merely observed, while there were some couples fondling each other as they watched.

"The couple you see in the other room are exhibitionists. They enjoy having sex knowing that others are watching. It heightens their pleasure. In this scenario, we're the voyeurs."

Oh, God. She shouldn't be here. Not this kind of place. For so many different reasons. Her head spun in a million directions, the urge to run strong.

But still, she couldn't tear her gaze away from the couple on the other side of the mirror, especially when the woman pulled the man's sizeable cock from his jeans and enveloped it between her full, painted lips. The look of ecstasy on the man's face made Janine's breath catch. The woman's gaze was glued to the man's as she sucked his cock in



deep. With one free hand, the woman tucked her fingers into her own pussy and began to pleasure herself.

Janine's pussy quivered, as if she, too, could feel the sensation of finger fucking herself, could taste the man's thick cock between her lips, could feel the heated gazes of dozens of people watching them. She wanted to close her eyes and pretend she was anywhere but here.

At the same time, she couldn't deny that she wanted to *be* the woman on the other side of the mirror.

## Chapter Two

Del never did the full court press on guests at the club, never insinuated his intentions, always let the women come to him. Frankly, a lot of women came to him. He didn't often have to search them out. He loved women, they knew it, and he could always find someone whose needs met his. That's what Sneak Peek was about—freedom to do whatever people wanted to do. If he and a woman found something in common, and there was mutual agreement, then a night of fun ensued. There were always signals, and he knew when a woman was coming on to him.

Janine hadn't come on to him at all. So what the hell was he doing pursuing her? She was uncomfortable as hell and he'd known it from the minute she'd stepped through the front door.

She'd also looked curious. When he'd spied the four ladies at the door, he'd done the host thing because his partner, Ali, had been otherwise engaged. They always liked to greet people whenever they could, make them feel comfortable and welcome, especially newcomers.

The four women walking in had been knockouts, but his gaze had landed on Janine, because she seemed to stand out. She wasn't even the most beautiful of the group, but there was something about her eyes...

She'd locked onto him right away, too, though he didn't know why. Not that it mattered. He'd read her signal as interest, and since her friends had so conveniently run off and left her with him, he'd grabbed her. And he hadn't yet been able to let go. Pretty damned unusual for

him. Typically he'd make the rounds, and it wasn't until later in the evening, if at all, that he'd hook up with a woman.

Not tonight. He was a fairly good judge of a woman's interest. Janine might not have said it, but she was interested. Her green eyes spoke volumes, and what they said when he'd turned on the two-way mirror expressed more than mere interest. They screamed shock, but also curiosity, and then desire.

Like now. He couldn't see her eyes because he stood behind her, but he picked up the unmistakable scent of aroused female, inhaled it like the sweetest perfume. Her breathing came in short, shallow bursts, as if she was trying her damndest to mask how much the scene in front of her turned her on.

It was a hot scene. Victoria and Jake were regulars, and really got into putting on a show. And Victoria could suck cock like she was born to it, taking Jake's shaft deep.

Del envied Jake at the moment, understood the almost pained look of utter rapture on Jake's face as Victoria deep throated him. Del's cock was hard, pressing against his pants. As close as he was to Janine, she had to be aware of that, a fact he didn't try to hide.

"You had no idea Sneak Peek was a sex club, did you?"

It took her a moment to answer, and when she did, her tone had dropped, her answer spilling out in a low, whispered breath that rumbled in his balls.

"No clue."

"Why did your friends bring you here?"

"I have no idea. A joke, I guess."

She wasn't laughing. She was barely breathing as she watched the couple through the window. Her entire body was tense, but was it nervousness or excitement? He pressed his fingers into her hips, staying

close to her. She didn't pull away, a good sign. He liked the feel of her, the lush curve of her hips. She was built like a woman. She'd said her friends were the beautiful ones. He disagreed. They were all stick thin, and for the love of Christ, they all needed to eat a cheeseburger before they wasted away. He liked women with some flesh on them.

"They're doing this willingly?" she asked. "Having sex, knowing others are watching them."

"Yes. That's how they get off, the excitement of being watched."

He felt her shudder.

"This is unbelievable. I didn't even know places like this existed."

That's what he liked to hear. Sneak Peek was exclusive. He and Ali didn't have to advertise, their club was only for those who knew about it, recommended it to others who wanted a voyeuristic or exhibitionist adventure.

"I shouldn't be here," she said, finally dragging her gaze away from the couple.

"Why not?" Del didn't turn on the light.

"What if someone sees me here? Someone I know, who could leak it to the press. Do you know what that could do to my reputation?"

He laughed. "Your reputation is safe, as is the character of all our clients. Sneak Peek is discreet, has been since we opened. There are no cameras allowed here. No press is ever permitted inside or within the gates of our property. We have a very high class establishment, we cater to our clients and assure anonymity.

"You're safe here, Janine."

She wrapped her arms around her middle, half turning back to the window. "This isn't my kind of lifestyle. I don't...do this."

He smiled, though he knew she couldn't see his face in the darkened room. "You aren't required to *do* anything here other than enjoy yourself. That's likely why your friends brought you."

"I have no idea why they brought me here, what they were thinking. This is ridiculous. I need to go find them."

He moved to the wall and flipped on the switch, darkening the mirror and bringing up the lights in the room. "As you wish."

She blinked, then frowned. "I'm sorry. This has nothing to do with you. I mean no insult to you or to your club."

This time he knew she could see his face, and the corners of his lips lifted. "None taken. Come on. Let's locate your friends."

He led her out of the room and down the hall, back toward the lobby. "We'll start at the bar, since they headed that way when we first came in."

She stopped and turned to him. "You don't need to stay with me. I can find them by myself."

He arched a brow. "Are you trying to dump me?"

Her eyes went wide. "Oh, no. Not at all. But I'm certain you have other things you need to do."

"I was teasing you. And don't worry about me. I do whatever I want." And what he really wanted to do was Janine. She might act shocked and appalled, but her body's reaction had told another story. He wasn't finished with her yet. "I'd like to stay with you, make sure you're reunited safely with your friends. It's the least I can do. Besides, if they're not in the bar, you're not familiar with the club. You wouldn't know where to go to look for them. And I did promise you a tour."

She tilted her head. "All right. Thank you."

They entered the bar, which was actually a huge dance club. Music blared from the speakers, bodies were packed wall to wall. Del nodded to

the bouncer as they entered through the open doorway. Business was booming, a very good thing.

Del laid his hand on the small of Janine's back, guiding her through the mob of people packed into the aisles. She looked for her friends, he followed along, trying to direct her through the walkways. Since he was taller, he had a better viewpoint for the seating areas.

"I don't see them," she said as they reached the other end of the bar.

"I didn't either." He searched the upper tiers where tables were situated, not seeing them there, either. "Come on." He took her hand and pulled her toward the dance floor.

She stood firm. "I...I don't dance."

"This is the best way to search for them on the dance floor. You can handle one dance, right?"

She sucked her bottom lip between her teeth. His cock responded with a resounding twitch.

"I suppose so."

"Come on. I'll try not to step on your toes." He grinned and led her onto the dance floor. As soon as they made their way into the middle of the throng, the music changed to something slow and sexy.

Perfect. He pulled Janine against him, wrapping one arm around her waist and gathering the fingers of one of her hands in his. Their gazes met. Hers was wide eyed and uncertain, and he found he liked her a little off-balance.

Their hips met, and Del led her in the slow, rhythmic beat.

She frowned. "You can dance."

He turned her, then tilted her in a half dip. She followed every move without stumbling. "So can you."

"I didn't say I couldn't. I just don't like to."

"Why not?"

She shrugged, but didn't answer. Instead, her gaze searched the dance floor, which gave him a chance to look at her, to enjoy feeling her body pressed up to his.

They fit well, her full breasts pillowed against his chest, her hips nestled inside his, making him wonder how her naked skin would feel sliding against his, her legs wrapped around him, his cock tucked inside her enveloping heat.

Not a good idea to be thinking about that. She'd made it clear she didn't belong here, that this wasn't her scene. Still, she was lying. To herself, maybe, as well as to him.

And Del loved a challenge. He didn't mind taking it one step at a time. Right now, she wasn't even stiff and unyielding in his arms, but letting him lead her in the dance, flowing in his arms, her body melding with his.

Why didn't she like to dance? She flowed into it, as if it were as natural to her as breathing.

Yeah, he liked the feel of her. He drew her closer, his lips brushing her earlobe.

"Do you see them?"

"No. I don't think they're in here anymore."

"Then I'll take you on that tour I promised, and we'll see if we can find them."

He lingered at her neck and inhaled, realizing she wore no perfume. He preferred a woman who relied on her natural scent instead of choking perfume or cologne. Janine smelled like her shampoo, and her own sweet skin. He resisted the urge to lick the pulse beating along the column of her throat, as tantalizing as that was.

She swallowed and tilted her head back to look up at him. "Shall we go, then?"

“Are you sure you can handle it, or would you rather wait here while I go search for your friends?”

Her lips pursed as if he’d insulted her. Good.

“I can handle it.”

“You might see some things similar to what you saw in my office.”

She lifted her chin. “I said I could handle it. I’m hardly a virgin.”

He smiled. “Good to know.”

“Are you baiting me, Del?”

“Probably. I can’t help myself. I don’t think you’re as offended by what you saw as you’d like me to believe.” He tucked her hand in the crook of his arm and led her off the dance floor, weaving them through the thick crowd and out the doorway.

“I never said I was offended,” she said as soon as they cleared the noisy room. “I said it wasn’t my cup of tea.”

“Uh huh.”

“Really. I’m sure whatever it is everyone does here is fine. It’s just not for me.”

“So you say.”

She looked over at him. “You’re very annoying.”

“Not the first time I’ve heard that.”

Despite her obvious irritation, the corners of her lips lifted.

“And you find it very hard to resist my incredible charm.”

“I don’t know about that. I find you all too resistible.”

“We’ll see.” He moved through a doorway and into the private playrooms. People passed them in the halls, some half-dressed, hair mussed and a just-fucked smile on their faces. He nodded as they passed by, envying their satisfaction. His dick was twitching. Janine had affected him, and the smell of sex was strong here.

He opened a door and they entered a darkened room.



“What’s this?” she asked, her voice lowering to a whisper.

“A scene. We can check for your friends here. They might have stopped in to watch.”

He closed the door behind them, wondering how long it would take before Janine would want to bolt. This one was two men, one woman, and instead of a mirror to look through and watch, people crowded into the room with the threesome. Del led her to a spot against the wall, not more than ten feet from where the ménage was taking place.

Janine pressed her body back against his, as if by doing so she could get away from what she saw. But she didn’t turn away or avert her gaze. Del stepped to her side and she backed against the wall.

He wanted to look at her face.

Her eyes were wide, but her expression wasn’t one of disgust or horror.

The woman on display kneeled on the bed, her mouth engulfing a thick cock, her legs spread and taking another dick in her pussy. Just as Del suspected, Janine was entranced by what she saw. She swallowed, her mouth open, her pink tongue flicking out to lick over her bottom lip. He watched her breasts rise and fall with her rapid breaths, her hands clench at her sides, then rub against her dress. She shifted on one foot, then the other, as if she couldn’t quite stand still.

Around them were the sounds of heavy breathing. Some of the guests touched themselves, or rubbed against their partner’s genitals.

Foreplay. And Janine had to hear and see what was going on around her. She wasn’t unaffected.

He knew all the signs. Despite her insistence that voyeurism wasn’t her thing, he could tell she was turned on. He’d bet his ownership in Sneak Peek that her nipples were tight and her pussy was wet. If he slid his hand up under her dress and started rubbing her clit, would she let

him? Would she turn from voyeur to exhibitionist? His cock hardened at the thought.

The moaning and sucking sounds grew louder as the frenzy intensified. The woman took the cock deep in her mouth, wrapping both hands around the thick shaft. When she withdrew, she stroked it and licked the wide purple head, then swirled her tongue over it, capturing the white pearly liquid escaping the tip. The man at her head grasped the back of the woman's neck and directed her mouth back over his cock, while the man behind her gave her a hard fucking, spreading her ass cheeks apart so he could show the woman's pussy and his dick sliding into it.

Janine was focused on the threesome, not searching for her friends. She hadn't once surveyed the other people gathered in the room watching the scene.

"Do you see your friends in here?" he asked.

It took her a few seconds to tear her gaze away from the ménage. "What? Oh." Only then did she look around the room, scanning the two dozen or so people. "No. They're not here."

"Would you like to stay and watch the scene play out?"

She shook her head, but she was watching the threesome the entire time. He led her out the door, but he sensed her reluctance. Too bad, because it looked like a triple orgasm was imminent. That was a great scene.

"So, they weren't in there. Next room," he said.

"There's more?" She blew out a breath.

He tried not to laugh. "If you'd like, I can just check the rooms and you can wait outside. I did meet your friends so I know what they look like."

"No, that's okay. You only saw them for a few seconds. You might not notice them in a crowded room. I'd better go in with you."

"Janine! There you are."

He and Janine both turned. The woman walking down the hall was one that had come in with Janine tonight.

"Susan. Where the hell did you all disappear to?" Janine hurried to her friend.

Susan's face flushed with color. "We've been here and there. We've just been popping in and out of rooms, checking out the action." Susan looked around Janine at Del. "I see you've been doing the same thing with your friend here. Isn't this place great?"

"Oh yeah," Janine said, half turning to cast a sideways glance at Del. "Just great."

"Come on, Janine. You have to admit this is one hell of a party. Sneak Peek is wild!"

"Wild. Yes. Definitely."

Susan rolled her eyes. "I can tell you aren't yet into the spirit of fun." She looked at Del. "Has she gone hot and crazy and started ripping her clothes off yet?"

Del rubbed his nose. "Uh, not exactly."

"Danced on a tabletop?"

He snorted. "Not yet, but I'd pay money to see it."

Susan laughed. "I like you. You'd be a good influence on her."

"Susan, really," Janine said. "Where are your other two partners in slime?"

"Orgy room. It's amazing in there. Talk about eye candy." She held out her hand. "Come on, I'll take you there."

"I don't think so. I...have this god-awful headache. From the champagne, I think."

Susan frowned. "Oh, honey. I'm so sorry."

"Yeah, I think I'm going to call it a night. Say my goodbyes to the girls. I'll catch a cab home."

"Are you sure?"

She nodded. "Definitely. You go have fun."

Susan grinned. "I intend to." She hugged Janine. "Love you, honey. Happy birthday."

After Susan walked away, Del said. "It's your birthday?"

"Yes. My thirtieth."

"Happy birthday."

"Thank you."

"Sorry about your headache."

"I'll be all right. I had champagne earlier and it always gives me a headache. I should have known better."

He directed her down the hall. "I'll have a cab brought to the club for you."

"Thank you."

She didn't have a headache and he knew it. She'd loved what she'd seen of the club so far, so why did she balk at her friend's invitation to see more of it? What was she afraid of?

He took her back into his office. "Have a seat." He picked up the phone. "Mike, bring the car around front. I'd like you to drive a VIP guest home. Give me a call when it's ready."

After he hung up, Janine said, "You could just call a taxi for me."

"It's the least I can do for the birthday girl."

Her face tinged with pink and she looked down at her hands clasped in her lap.

Del sat on the corner of his desk, studying her. She was such a contrast. A sensual beauty, yet a lot of reticence about her, as if there was something she wanted but was afraid to ask for it.

“Janine.”

She looked up. “Yes?”

“What is it about enjoying your own pleasure that scares you so much?”

Her brows knit together. “I don’t understand your question.”

“I could tell you were aroused by what you saw tonight, yet you keep denying that Sneak Peek has any appeal for you.”

“I think you’re presuming too much. You know nothing about me or how I feel about this place.”

Ignoring her comment, he said, “We all have a dark side, you know.”

“I don’t.”

“I think you’re lying. The big question is, are you lying just to me, or to yourself, too.”

“That’s almost insulting.”

He smirked. “Almost, but not quite? Because there’s a tinge of truth in what I said?”

She stood and smoothed her dress. “I’ll just wait out front.”

She started for the door, but before she got there, Del said, “I’ll bet you masturbate all the time.”

She paused, turned to him. “What?”

“In your fantasies, you envision yourself being watched as you touch yourself. You also like to watch others having sex. It turns you on so much, makes you so wet, it gets you off like a rocket. I’ll bet you’re a screamer when you come, hoping someone will hear you. You want people to see you with your legs spread, your fingers fucking your pussy, rubbing your clit, tweaking your nipples.”

She didn't answer, but her face and neck were bright pink. And she was still immobile, hadn't walked out of the room.

He smiled. "No, I don't have hidden cameras in your bedroom. I just know you."

"How?"

He'd barely heard the word, she'd whispered it with such a soft voice.

"I know what you need."

She shook her head. "No, you don't. You don't know me at all. I live a life above reproach. I'm in the public eye. I could never do...this. My family's reputation is everything to me. My father's legacy is what I work to maintain."

"Your father's legacy would be safe if you went out and had a little fun, explored what you like."

"No. I can't."

His phone rang, signaling the car was ready. He took a card from his pocket and walked over to her, slipping it in her hand. "Call me if you change your mind and want to explore that dark side. Stop looking over your shoulder, afraid of your own shadow. There's a life you're missing out on."

She turned and left the room without saying a word to him.

Del sat behind his desk and dragged his fingers through his hair.

*Smooth move, Delacroix. And you call yourself a ladies man.* The most intriguing woman he'd met in years and he'd just insulted her, then let her walk out of his life.

Maybe he was losing his touch.

Janine closed her front door, kicked off her shoes and walked straight into her bedroom, tossing her things onto her dresser.

“Dark side. As if he knows anything at all about me.” She stalked into the dressing area and shrugged out of her dress, hung it up, then did her before bed routine, brushing her teeth, washing her face and taking down her hair. After ruthlessly combing out the hairspray, she felt better. A little bit, anyway. She walked into the bedroom and passed by the dresser, noticing the card Del had given her.

*Call me if you change your mind and want to explore that dark side.*

She was still irritated by Del’s words. What did he know of her life? How dare he presume to make judgments about her?

Naked, she slid under the covers and pushed the button on the television remote, then turned off her bedside lamp. There was a DVD already in the player and she pressed the play button. The screen brought up a scene very similar to the one that occurred in the last room she and Del had been in tonight. People standing around watching a woman getting fucked by two men. It was one of her favorites.

And no doubt why Del’s words had made her so uncomfortable.

It was if he’d seen right through her—as if he knew her, everything about her—about her fantasies. As if he knew her weaknesses.

No. not weaknesses. Choices. She’d chosen the life she lived, she wasn’t imprisoned by it. How ridiculous to think otherwise.

The couple on the screen mimicked what she’d seen live tonight. God, that had been exciting, standing in the same room where a threesome was occurring, being able to watch it live instead of on a television screen. She’d had to resist raising her dress and touching herself right there. Because if someone in the room had recognized her, caught her masturbating in public...

Despite the horror a reality like that would bring, the fantasy was something entirely different. She would have loved nothing more than to lean against the wall tonight, spread her legs and lift her dress, let Del

see her black thong panties. They were so wet...soaked, actually. Could he smell the aroused scent of her pussy? He'd stayed close to her the entire time. She knew he was attracted to her. It was a heady experience, having a man like Del's interest. Not at all typical of the type of guy she usually dated. She usually went for the buttoned up businessman, not the laid back, kind of rough looking type. Yet she couldn't help but imagine what his beard stubble would feel like against her thighs while he was between her legs licking her pussy.

A rush of heat made her nipples tingle. What she needed was a good orgasm to relieve the stress, then sleep. Tomorrow she'd forget all about tonight's disaster.

She tugged her bottom lip between her teeth and kicked the covers off, pushing them to the end of the bed. Planting her feet flat on the mattress, she guided her fingers between her legs. She focused on the television, on the woman who was the center of attention in a crowd of people.

"Yes, watch me," she whispered, becoming the woman in the video, then the woman she'd seen in the room at Sneak Peek tonight, anywhere where she could be seen. "Look at my pussy, watch me touch myself."

Sensation rolled and centered between her legs, every nerve ending bundled with tension. What would it be like to be that focus of attention, to know others watched her have sex?

Despite her determination to forget all about Del, her fantasies went haywire and she was propelled back to Sneak Peak, into that room where others stood against the wall. Only this time, she was the naked woman in the center of the room, and the man with her was Del.

She sighed, closed her eyes and let her fingers drift over her pussy, circling her clit. Only her hands became Del's hands, larger, rougher



with a more determined stroke over her soft flesh. He would take charge, know what she liked, where she needed to be touched.

“Here?”

She heard his voice against her ear, his warm breath at her neck. She shivered as he swept his hand over her clit. “Yes, right there.”

When he paused, his hand pressing down on that tight bundle of nerves, her hips shot off the bed, wanting more of that exquisite pleasure.

Oh, this wasn’t going to take long. She was too primed, too ready for the explosion. But she wanted it to last, loved his touch. It had been too long since a man had touched her, had petted her naked skin. And it had never happened in front of an audience like this.

She took a moment to glance over at the crowd—shadows mostly—all she could see in the darkened recesses of the room, but she knew they were there, watching her, watching the two of them. She spread her legs wider, wanting them to see everything, to know what she was feeling.

Del climbed onto the bed behind her and held her up so she could watch them. Now she was the voyeur, because the people around her were touching themselves, touching each other, turned on by watching her. It only added to her frenzy.

“Yes, come with me. Make me come.” It was dual pleasure, the ultimate fantasy. They were all going to make each other come. Del moved to her side and she reached for his cock, wrapping her fingers around the heated steel of his flesh. She began to stroke it up and down in rhythm to the others masturbating. Surges of pleasure flowed within her, concentrating directly on her clit and pussy.

She wanted to be fucked. She wanted Del to really be here, sinking his cock deep in her, so her pussy would grip it tight when she came. She wanted him to fuck her until she couldn’t breathe anymore.

But that wasn't reality. She was in a fantasy, a delicious fantasy that was taking her to the height of pleasure, and she couldn't hold back any longer.

"Faster." She looked down at Del's hand, at the way he moved it in soft circles over her clit, then dipped down in the cleft of her pussy and finger fucked her. He ground his palm against the hard knot and she splintered, pulsing against his fingers, pouring her juices over him. Wave after wave crashed over her as she gripped his cock, watched him come all over her belly and hip, her gaze flitting from Del to the others in the room.

It was a heady, amazing experience, and over all too soon, leaving her shattered, spent, and once again alone in the reality of her bedroom.

Exhausted, she turned off the movie and television and lay in the darkness, pulling the covers up over her.

The orgasm should have relieved her stress, cleared her mind so she could sleep. Instead, she felt more pent up, her thoughts refusing to scatter.

As she closed her eyes, the image of Del was still imprinted firmly in her mind.

She couldn't. She wouldn't dare.

It wasn't going to happen.

## Chapter Three

Two days. It had been two days and she still couldn't get Del out of her mind. Or that damn club, either.

His card still sat on her dresser, and every morning and every night when she walked by it, she was reminded of her experience there.

She had to push it all out of her thoughts. A place like that wasn't for her. He wasn't for her. She was too often in the public eye, always written up and photographed for the newspaper's society page. What would happen if she was discovered to be frequenting a voyeurism and exhibitionism club? The scandal would ruin the foundation. Her father would roll over in his grave. The Bartolino name would be shamed.

Sometimes it didn't matter what her needs and desires were. She had to think of the family name first. Her father had always taught her that the foundation came first, that name was everything. When he knew he was sick and wasn't going to recover, he told her over and over again that reporters were vicious, that they would use anything they could against her. That she should find a nice, rich, stable man with no skeletons in his closet and get married, raise a family and carry on the foundation's work.

Her father had mapped out her future for her. She was all that was left of the Bartolinos. She'd never let him down by besmirching the family name.

And yet, Del continued to creep into her thoughts. Wicked sexy, gorgeous, seemingly so carefree. She envied him.

But dammit, how could Del seem to know so much about her, how could he have spent so little time with her, yet have such an intimate knowledge of her sexual desires?

*I know what you need.*

His words haunted her.

She shuddered, then cast the thoughts aside. Tonight was not a night to be thinking about Del. Or about sex. Not at a black tie dinner, dance and silent auction for the Bartolino Foundation's favorite children's hospital charity. She was "on" tonight and in charge, and there were five hundred guests who'd paid two thousand dollars a plate about to enter the ballroom at one of the most prestigious Beverly Hills hotels. She was determined to make this the most successful year ever.

The doors opened, the crowds spilled in, and Janine engaged herself in playing hostess. She knew almost everyone in attendance, people who were prominent in the community, the top of the social ladder in either business, politics or the entertainment field. She felt at ease with all of them, having done this since she was a child and accompanying her parents to events like this.

She had been trained well. Even after her mother passed away when Janine was twelve, she had started acting as hostess at her father's side. He had always told her how much he depended on her, how one day she would take over the foundation and run it.

And now, she was. She'd never considered it a burden, though she'd often wished for brothers and sisters so she wouldn't be so lonely.

On a night like this she missed her father. Now she had no family left, and for the first time since his passing she really felt that sense of being utterly alone in the world. Good thing she had competent staff at the foundation to assist her.

She sighed, then turned and smiled at one of the chief benefactors of the foundation. Stefan Montrose, in his fifties, divorced three times, a notorious womanizer, tabloid fodder, and constantly trying to get her into his bed.

He lifted her hand and pressed a kiss to her knuckles.

“You look amazing tonight, Janine.”

“Thank you, Stefan. So do you. And where is your lady du jour?”

He shrugged. “Powdering her nose or whatever it is the women do en masse when four or five of them run off together. And where is your date for the evening?”

“I don’t have one. I’m much too busy to entertain someone.”

“Ah. Too bad. If I’d known, I’d have been more than happy to act as your escort.”

Oh, right. Like she didn’t have enough to worry about without having to constantly fight off Stefan’s hands wandering down the front of her dress, and hoping a reporter wouldn’t get a picture of it. “That’s very nice of you, Stefan, but I’m sure your little black book is already overflowing. I’m not interested in being added to the list.”

He laughed. “I’d give it all up for you, Janine.”

“And I’ll bet you really do say that to all the girls.”

“You know me all too well. How sad.”

Despite her knowledge of Stefan’s motives, she couldn’t help but like him. He might be transparent, but he was honest about his intentions. “You’ll have to work harder to be mysterious.”

“I’ll try, but I think your father ruined all chances I had with you by spilling all my sordid secrets.”

She nodded. “I’m afraid so. He left no stone unturned. Really, Stefan, I’m amazed you don’t make the front of *The Enquirer* every week.”

“It’s a goal of mine, didn’t I tell you? I want to be scandal monger of the year.”

She couldn’t hold the snort inside. “If anyone can do it, you can.”

“Thanks, Janine. I think I’ll go find my date now. At least she still has illusions about me.”

“Your secret is safe with me.”

Stefan kissed her cheek and moved off into the crowd.

“One of your many admirers?”

Janine whirled at the voice behind her. Her smile died as recognition dawned.

“Del? What are you doing here?”

His lips curled. “I was invited.”

She frowned. “You were? By whom?”

He shrugged. “By whomever does those things for your foundation, I imagine.”

Just looking at him made her mouth water. Dressed casually at the club, he was delectable and sexy. In black tux, he was devastating. This was a man who could be comfortable dressed to the nines or lazing about in jeans. And he still sported that scruffy unshaven look, even in his tux. God, he was handsome. His dark eyes that seemed to be able to see through her just made her melt.

Then recognition dawned as she remembered his introduction the other night. “Delacroix Motors. Foreign imports.”

He nodded. “Yes.”

That’s why he was on the guest list. Very important businessman. Lucrative company, too. The foundation had worked with his company before, and Delacroix had always been extremely generous. She didn’t know why she hadn’t made the connection the other night. Probably

because she didn't expect the head of Delacroix Motors to have anything to do with owning and operating a sex club.

"What?" Del asked.

"I'm just...stunned."

"Why?"

"Because you're a prominent member of the community. And you own a..."

"Club for voyeurs and exhibitionists?"

"Shhh." She dragged him over to a corner of the room, out of earshot of the other guests. "I can't believe you're so blasé about this."

His lips curled. "That's because I don't give a shit what people think. You should try it sometime."

"Easy for you to say. If anyone found out I was there the other night—"

"What? The world would stop turning? The stars would fall from the sky? The global markets would all crash?"

She sniffed. "That's not funny."

"Nothing would happen, Janine. You're entitled to a life."

"Not that kind of a life."

"Why not?"

"Because the newspapers would drool over news like that. They'd love nothing more than to dig up some dirt about me, to muddy the pristine reputation of the foundation."

Del shook his head. "You're way too paranoid."

"Not at all. I've seen it happen. When you're in the limelight, the paparazzi stalk you just waiting for you to slip."

He turned around. "Nobody's even looking in our direction, not the slightest bit interested in you and I talking."

"That's because they wouldn't expect anything to happen here."

Del arched a brow. "Kind of gives one ideas, doesn't it?"

Despite her irritation, she flushed with heat. "It doesn't give me any ideas."

"That's okay. I have plenty for both of us. Come on. Let's dance."

"I told you I don't...Del!"

Too late. He'd grabbed her hand and tugged her through the crowd and toward the dance floor. Short of causing a scene by digging in her heels and wrenching away from his grip, she was stuck having to go along with him. Dammit.

The dance floor was crowded, as well it should be. She'd hired a fabulous orchestra, the strains of violins playing a slow, seductive melody. Del pulled her to the middle of the floor and drew her against him.

"You look beautiful in gold," he said, once again showing his prowess as a dancer, gliding her with no effort through the dance. "You dress to show off your body."

She looked down at the dress, glittering, floor-length and hugging her curves. She loved this dress because it sparkled. She loved the slit in the middle because it showed off a little leg, her best feature, and hoped it would detract attention away from the fullness of her hips. Did she buy it to exhibit her body? Hardly. She'd never thought about that. This event was for the foundation, not to catch a man.

"I do not."

"There's nothing wrong with showing off your assets. You have a beautiful body."

"You're full of shit."

"And you need to work on your self esteem. Maybe you need to spend more time looking in the mirror. Naked."



"I don't have body image issues. Nor do I spend my time staring at myself naked in the mirror."

"Try it sometime," he said, his gaze roaming toward her breasts. "You might enjoy it."

She shook her head. "You and I are from completely different worlds, Del."

"I don't think so. I live in the same world you do. I run a successful business, am publicly involved in the community, but no one knows what I do for fun. I'm very discreet, but I enjoy my pleasures. I've spent several years as the owner of Sneak Peek while still maintaining Delacroix Motors, and guess what? No one has ever found out, because it's none of their business and I make sure to keep it that way."

"Lucky for you that you have that anonymity."

"And I think you want what I have to offer. You're just afraid to take that step."

"I'm not afraid. I'm just not interested."

The smile he cast wasn't smug, exactly...more triumphant. "You're worried. You think people watch you all the time. Look around. No one is paying attention to us."

She did. As Del turned her, she gazed at the others on the dance floor. None of them looked at her. They were focused on their partners. And beyond the dance floor, people were talking amongst themselves or busying themselves at the back tables where the silent auction was going on.

Still, she felt eyes on her. Why? Why couldn't she let go, as Del suggested?

"I could touch you intimately right here on the dance floor and no one would notice."

Her breath caught and she shook her head, her traitorous body responding to his suggestion with a quiver of anticipation. “No.”

“The lights are low over the dance floor, the crowd noisy. People are packed in and enjoying each other. If I moved my hand like this...” His hand at her back traveled down, over her buttocks, gently caressing her. Janine sucked in her bottom lip as he palmed her ass and pulled her tighter into his embrace.

“It’s just a dance, Janine. Relax and enjoy it.”

He moved her through the steps, but her mind was lost as his hand grazed the curve of her hip, then across the front, dipping down to the slit in her dress. Okay, so it was dark on the dance floor but—

Oh, God. His hand made contact with her skin, his fingers creeping along her bare thigh. Part of her wanted to push him back, to walk away. But the other part of her, the part that kept her on the dance floor, was excited. Her pussy moistened, her nipples beading against the fabric of her dress. He wasn’t stopping there either. As he drew her closer, he brushed her panties with the tips of his fingers.

“Del, stop.” Whose breathless voice was that? Surely not hers.

“Do you really want me to stop?” He was so close his breath tickled her ear. “No one can see us, *ma beauté*. It’s just you, and me. Doesn’t it excite you knowing that I can touch you like this in a room full of people? That no one will know?”

He didn’t wait for her answer, not that she could speak, anyway. Her protest had been weak at best, and now she had no voice at all. Her gaze was on him and him alone, her body concentrating on his touch as he rimmed the hem of her panties—so, so close to her pussy. She trembled in his arms as he rocked them back and forth to the music. They weren’t even moving anymore. Did people notice?

Did she care?

Not anymore. Not when the tip of his finger traced upward, sliding along her clit. She sucked in a little gasp, and was met with a wicked smile in return.

“You’re wet.”

She nodded.

“I wonder how fast I could make you come, Janine?”

Pretty damn fast considering what that single touch had done to her. He shifted, making motions as if they were still dancing. His fingers danced too, up and down her swollen, trembling cleft, pressing along her agitated clit. She widened her stance, giving him access, wishing she hadn’t worn panties so she could feel his fingers on her flesh. Gone was the reticence, the shock, the wondering what others would think. Del had her mesmerized and fully under his control with the magic of his touch. Thankfully, he did look around the room. Maybe he was checking to make sure they were safe and secure, that prying eyes didn’t catch on to what he was doing. She could care less. She was single-minded in purpose now, and that was only to continue the amazing sensations of his fingers dipping into her crevice, promising delicious rewards.

She wanted that reward, clenched her fingers into the fabric of his tux jacket. He leaned against her and she felt the hard ridge of his cock against her hip. Oh how she wanted to rest her palm there, to stroke along his ridged length. She swallowed, wishing she could wrap her legs around his waist and feel him plunge inside her. She was so wet now, trembling with sensation overload, with the reality of this fantasy come to life.

“Yes,” he said, moving his fingers in a torturous circle around the nub, then leaned forward to whisper in her ear again. “Come for me. Right here.”

Oh, God. She really was going to. Right here, in public. Her fantasy was about to come true. The tight coil of sensation built and she couldn't hold back.

*Look at me, people. I'm coming.* Her body burst in climax and she shook in his arms. She fought for silence, clamping her lips together to fight back a moan. Del tightened his hold around her, palmed her pussy, dipping inside her panties to slide along her wet slit as she shuddered through the wild orgasm that threatened to drop her to the ground. If not for Del holding her, she wasn't sure what she would have done.

Panting, struggling to look normal, she closed her legs and Del withdrew his hand, then brought his fingers to his mouth and tasted her.

"So sweet. Just as I imagined you'd be. It's a damn good thing I have a tux jacket to hide my hard-on. Goddamn, Janine."

He sucked in a breath and twirled her around the floor as if nothing had just happened. Inside, she was still quaking from the aftereffects of one tremendous orgasm.

Nothing? Dear God, what had she done? She'd completely lost her mind. A mind that was still half in a sensual haze of pleasure.

Horried, she glanced around the dance floor, but the couples weren't even looking their way.

"No one knows. Just you and me," he said, his gaze dark.

"I can't believe I did that."

He led her off the dance floor and to the table where drinks were served, grabbing two glasses of champagne and offering one to her. She took it and forced herself not to gulp it down. Her throat was dry as a desert from panting her way through her orgasm.

"Are you sure that champagne won't give you a headache?" he teased, obviously remembering her excuse from the other night at the club.

"I'll chance it." The champagne tasted fabulous, cool and refreshing, clearing her head. How could she do that? She was in charge of this entire event, and she'd just had almost-sex on a crowded dance floor. What if someone had gone looking for her? Good God she was losing her grip on reality.

"Now you're second-guessing yourself," he said, his wry grin annoying as hell.

"Quit reading my mind. It pisses me off."

He laughed. "You think too much. You need to turn your mind off and just let yourself enjoy."

"I can't. I have too many responsibilities."

"I'll tell you what. Go play nice hostess. But when the event is over, meet me outside."

"Why?"

"Because we're going to play tonight."

He didn't ask. Did she need him to? Despite the orgasm he'd given her on the dance floor, she wanted more. She wanted *him*. Inside her. She wanted to know where this was going to go. But here and now? No, she couldn't do that.

But doing anything with Del was risky. Anything public, anyway. She could, of course, date him, do things normal couples would do. But somehow she didn't think that's what he had in mind. He asked things of her that were impossible to give. Then again, maybe she was off-base about his intent. Maybe that's all he wanted, was to spend time with her in the way that couples normally spent time with each other. Dinner, movies and the like.

Right. And there really was a tooth fairy. She knew that's not what he wanted from her, and she had good reason for her trepidation.

*But when was the last time you felt this alive? When was the last time your body throbbed like this?*

“All right.” The words spilled from her lips before she had the chance to take them back.

He nodded. “I’ll be out front waiting when the event is over. Black Navigator.” He turned and walked away, disappearing into the crowd.

Janine finally exhaled, then wondered what she’d just agreed to.

## Chapter Four

Four hours later and Del's cock was still hard. Jesus, it wasn't like this was his first experience with a woman, or that he'd never had risky encounters before.

What was it about Janine that made her so different from other women, that made being with her such a turn on? Maybe because the other women had been so willing and eager, experienced at this game, and Janine was so hesitant? Maybe that was it, the lure, the challenge.

He hadn't been challenged in far too long. Not that he was bored. Hell, he loved the game and never tired of it. But with Janine...there was just something about her. Something fresh and innocent—almost...untouched about her. Because she was new at this. She hadn't done it. But she really wanted to.

In a way, that made her a virgin. And damn if that didn't turn him on.

*You're such a fucking pervert, Delacroix.*

He'd waited through the endless hours of dinner, small talk and the auction, until the ballroom was almost empty, knowing Janine wouldn't leave until the last of her guests was gone. When he was certain she was almost finished, he left, had his car brought around, then pulled up to the front of the hotel and parked there, waiting.

Would she show, or would she change her mind?

After almost thirty minutes, he was about to give up, but then a flash of gold at the revolving doors caught his eye. A swish of flowing gown,

and there she was, strolling through the doors like Cinderella leaving the ball.

One look at her and his pulse started to race. She really did wear the look of a princess well, from her hair piled on top of her head, to the way the gown flowed around her legs. She wore a wrap covering her bare shoulders, but that only added to the allure. She glowed from head to foot, and he wanted to see more of her skin.

She spotted his car, stalled for a fraction of a second, then, when he stepped out and moved to the passenger's side to open her door, started walking toward him.

"I wasn't sure you'd come," he said.

"I wasn't sure I would, either."

"Don't be afraid, princess. I won't bite." As he held her hand and helped her slide into the front seat, he added, "Unless you ask me to."

She slanted a wary glance at him and he closed the door, moving around to the driver's side.

"Where are we going?" she asked as he put the car into gear.

He moved onto the boulevard. "For a drive." He pressed the button and opened the moon roof. "It's a beautiful night. You can actually see the stars."

She tilted her head back, allowing him to ogle the soft column of her throat. "So you can. But that still doesn't tell me where we're going."

"It's a surprise. Trust me."

She was silent then while they drove out of the city and climbed into the hills. He knew exactly where he wanted to take her. The perfect spot for what he had in mind.

"How did the fundraiser go?" he asked, hoping to put her at ease with banal conversation.



“Great. We raised more money than last year, and that’s always the goal.”

“You do a wonderful job with the foundation. Your father would be proud.”

“It was his life’s work. I can only hope to do half as well as he did.”

He got the idea Janine was worried she couldn’t measure up. She needn’t be. The foundation was a well oiled machine. It practically ran itself and was operated by competent staff. “You need to relax.”

She stared ahead, but her lips curled in a half smile. “Probably.”

“Have more fun.”

“So my friends keep telling me.”

“You should listen to them.”

“Look where that brought me.”

“To Sneak Peek?”

“Yes.”

“And that’s a bad thing?”

“The jury’s still out on that one.”

He pulled up the long drive, then stopped at the end of the bluff. “I’ll have to hope for an innocent verdict, then.”

She looked turned to him. “Where are we?”

“Lover’s Lane.”

Rolling her eyes, she said, “Seriously.”

“A private overlook. Now quit asking questions and look.”

He loved this view, and hoped it caught her the same way it had him. She finally turned away from him and looked through the windshield. Then her eyes widened.

“Oh, my. It’s lovely.”

They could see all of the city below them. It was clear, she could see the bright lights for miles. And above them, the stars were lit like brilliant sparklers over a stark black backdrop.

Janine undid her seatbelt, kicked off her shoes and stood in the seat, climbing through the moon roof to gaze at the stars.

“It’s gorgeous, Del.”

He grinned. He’d been right bringing her here, knowing she’d appreciate getting away from the cluttered city. Not every woman could understand the beauty, but somehow he’d known Janine would. He popped open his door and climbed out on the side so he could see her, planting his arms on the roof. “Thought you might enjoy it.”

“It’s stunning.”

Silhouetted against the night sky, her hair shone as if the stars had fallen on it, darkness with golden brilliance. He wanted to remove every pin from her hair and see what it looked like tumbled against her face. Impulse won out, and he reached across the vehicle, pulling one loose strand across her cheek.

Janine followed the movement with her eyes, and her non-verbal response told him everything he needed to know. He climbed down, popped open the back of the Lincoln, then walked around to the passenger side, opened the door and swept her into his arms.

She didn’t speak this time, didn’t protest or ask what he was doing.

He’d already taken out the third row of seats so there was plenty of room. He sat her in the back on the plush carpet, then pushed the back seats forward, making even more room for them, climbing in and tugging her forward.

Now he had all the time in the world. He reached for the back of her hair and started pulling pins. Janine watched him in silence as he drew

her hair forward, combing it with his fingers until it fell in soft sable waves around her shoulders.

A golden goddess. Seductive and innocent. One powerful punch to his senses. “You take my breath away.”

“I’ll bet you say that to all the girls,” she said, her lashes sweeping down to caress her cheeks.

He tipped her chin up with his fingers, forcing her gaze to meet his. “I’ve never said that to any woman before.” And that was true. He leaned in and swept his lips against hers. She tasted like strawberries and champagne, sweet and tart, just like the woman. He slid his tongue between her parted lips and licked along the velvet softness of her mouth. When she moaned in response, he gathered her into his arms and dragged her against him, plunging his fingers into the wild softness of her hair.

There was nothing tentative about her response to his kiss. She wrapped her tongue around his, licking as if she were dying for a taste of him. His cock hardened and pressed against his pants, his thoughts running wild. Her tongue was soft, wet, hot, and he could already imagine her licking his cock head and taking his shaft in her mouth, could already envision her on her knees while he wrapped her silken tendrils around his hand and helped guide her movements.

She pressed her palms against his chest and for a moment he thought she was going to push him away. But she slid them upward, trying to remove his jacket. He broke the kiss, shrugging out of the jacket and removing his tie. Her eyes were glittering with desire, reflecting the same brilliance of the stars, completely mesmerizing him with her siren’s beauty.

He reached behind her to pull her against him again, this time locating the zipper on her dress. When he started to tug, she stilled, drew back, her eyes widening.

“Out here?”

“Yes.”

She looked around. The tailgate was open, they were outside, and he knew her question.

“Yes, Janine. Out here. I want you naked under the stars.”

Her lips were parted, her breathing quick and hard. She nodded, and he resumed unzipping her dress, then peeled it down to her waist, baring her breasts. Perfect, with ripe, dark nipples that were already peaked and begging for his lips to surround them.

She tilted her head and arched her back, an unconscious movement, but an invitation nonetheless. He leaned forward and grasped one breast in his hand, then licked around the dark nipple before capturing the bud between his lips and sucking on it.

Janine gasped, then cupped the back of his neck and held on as he licked her, toying with her nipple until it was hard and glistening with his saliva. He moved to the other breast, loving the feel of her pliant flesh in his hand, the way she was so responsive to his touch, his mouth, letting him know with her soft whimpers and her movements that she liked what he did to her.

“Del.” His name was a soft whisper on her lips, and it made his balls quiver.

“Yeah, babe. I know.” He pushed her back so she was lying down, then dragged the heavy dress off, leaving her clad in only her panties. The sexy little thing that barely covered her mound, the one he’d rubbed against on the dance floor. He draped her dress over the back of the front

seat, then parted her legs, sweeping his hands down her thighs. She trembled.

“Shhh, relax.”

“I...can’t.”

“Sure you can.” He crawled between her legs, kissed her knees on the way down, then her inner thighs, finally settling on that spot that he’d wanted to be near all night long. She smelled musky, sweet, hot and turned on, and he recalled the taste of her on his fingers after she’d climaxed on the dance floor. He’d damn near come in his pants doing it to her, feeling her shudder and quake in his arms. She’d given him everything.

He wanted more. He buried his face against her panties and blew a warm breath against the silk.

“Oh, God, Del. Please.”

He liked listening to her voice. He liked the sounds she made, even just hearing her breathe. All of it told him what she was feeling. He wanted her relaxed—he wanted her to come again.

He reached for the tiny strings at her hips and drew them down her thighs, keeping his gaze focused on her face as he pulled them over her legs and feet, then tossed them aside. Then he dragged her legs apart and looked at her pussy, watching her blush all over.

“Don’t be embarrassed. This is where you get to show off your beautiful body.”

“You’re still clothed.”

“I can fix that.”

He unbuttoned his shirt, enjoying the way she watched him undress, the hunger in her eyes as she watched every button come undone until he shrugged out of his shirt. When he pulled the zipper down and dropped his pants, her eyes widened. He hurried through the rest of it,

toeing off his shoes, then pulling off his socks and tossing everything into the front seat.

“Dear God you have a beautiful body.”

He grinned. “Thanks. So do you.”

She hesitated for a second, as if she wanted to deny his compliment, but then said, “Thank you.”

“That’s my girl.” She started to reach for him, but he laid a hand on her shoulder and held her in place. “Stay where you are. I want to lick your pussy and hear you scream.”

“Del. You make me crazy.”

“That’s the idea.”

“Don’t you want to...”

He smiled. “Oh, hell yeah. I’m going to fuck you, Janine. More than once tonight. I can’t wait to get my dick inside your tight pussy. But first, you’re going to come for me. Then after you’re hot, wet, still quivering from your orgasm, I’m going to get you up on your hands and knees and pound my cock inside you until we both scream.”

She spread her legs wide, clearly liking the plans he’d laid out for their evening. “Hurry.”

Now she was talking. He slid onto his stomach and hooked his arms around her thighs, licking along the soft curve where her thigh met her buttocks. Janine lifted, then moaned when he moved his tongue around her swollen pussy lips. God, she was so wet already, her sweet juices pouring from her. What would it be like when she came? Would she flood his face? He could already imagine lapping up her cream as she forced his face into her cunt, desperate to continue the sensation of her climax. He wanted that for her.

Her pussy was bare except for a thatch of hair above her sex, giving him nothing but soft skin to play with. He licked from her cleft to her clit,

swirling his tongue around the hood, then flattening it there. She liked it, because she shuddered and moaned and held onto the back of his head. He liked a woman who gave direction, even nonverbal. His cock, raging hard, was pressed between his body and the Navigator's carpet, and he rubbed against it. The friction was a turn on, reminding him that soon he'd be sheathed inside Janine's tight pussy.

And if the indications she gave him were right, it would be soon. She started to lift her hips, holding his tongue closer to her clit as she undulated. He let her direct the rhythm, and he licked around her button, then slid two fingers into her cunt.

"Oh, God, yes. Just like that."

Now they were getting somewhere. He withdrew, then plunged again, faster and faster, and licking with a rapid pace that made her thrash her body from side to side.

"I'm going to come, Del."

He murmured against her pussy and pressed his face closer, this time using his mouth to surround her clit and suck.

She cried out, shuddering as she lifted her hips against his face. Her pussy gripped his fingers in a tight hold and convulsed around them as she rode the rocking wave of climax. Finally, she relaxed, and he licked her with gentle swipes of his tongue, taking her down a notch until her breathing settled.

Del crawled over her and pressed his lips to hers, letting her take a taste of her own come.

She rubbed her finger over his lips, then brought his mouth to hers and kissed him deep, entwining her arms around him to pull him closer. The depth of her kiss spoke of emotion, of a thankfulness he didn't quite understand. Surely she'd been pleased before. But maybe not well? If

that was the case, he was more determined than ever to make this good for her.

But all thought fled from his mind, traveling straight to his dick when her soft fingers wrapped around his shaft and squeezed, then began to stroke.

“Janine.” He moved to her throat, to the soft expanse of skin he’d glimpsed earlier when she’d tilted her head back to gaze at the stars. He kissed her there, lingering at the pulse point that pounded with a fast rhythm.

She played with his cock as if they had all the time in the world, tormenting his shaft with smooth movements. She swirled her thumb over the crest and he jerked in her hand, feeling the spill of hot precome. She took her thumb into her mouth and sucked, and he groaned in utter pleasure that she would be willing to taste him like that.

“My turn,” she said. “Get out of the vehicle and stand.”

Not so shy now, was she? He was more than happy to comply, anxious to see what she had in mind.

He slid out of the Navigator, his bare feet hitting a carpet of thick, cool grass. She climbed out after him and held onto his hands, then dropped to her knees. He looked to the heavens and thanked the stars for a perfect night and an equally perfect woman to spend it with.

Janine wrapped both hands around him, twisting them around his cock in an expert fashion that made his gut twist.

“Goddamn, Janine. That feels good.”

“I watch a lot of porn,” she said, her lips lifting in a wry smile. “I’ve always wanted to do that.”

He laughed. She was amazing. Shy, yet honest and openly curious. He would imagine she didn’t get to practice her moves on a lot of men. She didn’t strike him as the experimental sort. If she was wary what



people thought, she probably didn't often let loose. Except, maybe, with him?

He liked the thought of that.

"Play away. I'm all yours."

She did, capturing his cock between her lips and sliding her tongue around the seam. God, that drove him crazy. Now he could fulfill his fantasy, watching her lips surround him as she sucked him fully into her mouth, drawing him into the moist, hot cavern, all the way to the back of her throat.

Then she swallowed, squeezing his cockhead.

"Christ."

This was no inexperienced virgin, and if she got all this knowledge by watching porn, he'd have to thank the moviemakers, because she was a goddamn expert at it. She rolled her tongue over the head, then took him deep again, then all the way out to stroke him, sliding her hands over his saliva-drenched shaft. The combination of chilly breeze and her hot mouth was like cool heaven and blistering hell.

And speaking of hell, she dropped her hands, engulfing him again, licking and sucking him, obviously enjoying her play. Her mouth was like hellfire and he'd gladly stay there forever and take his punishment.

But when she cupped his balls, continuing to suck him into the vortex of her searing mouth, he knew he was either going to remain there and erupt, or something would have to change. And despite the pleasure he got from what she was doing, he didn't want to come in her mouth. Not this time.

"Enough." He pulled her to her feet and swept her into his arms, slanting his lips over hers. She clung to him, grasping his hair with greedy fingers that spoke of building need.

He deposited her back in the SUV, then climbed in after her, reaching over the front seat and fumbling through his jacket pocket until he found the foil packet. He tore it open and placed the condom on.

“On your hands and knees,” he said, his hand already on her buttocks to hold her in place.

She positioned herself, craning her neck around to watch as he nudged her legs apart with his knee, then moved between her thighs. He placed his cock at her pussy, leaned back a little so he could see where their bodies met, then inched inside her.

So tight, her pussy lips spread like a molten welcome mat. Her heat even seeped through the condom. Janine tilted her head, her gorgeous hair spreading all over her back. He wound the soft waves around his fist and gave them a gentle tug as he seated himself fully inside her.

She gasped, then moaned, arching back to meet his thrusts.

A wind kicked up and blew into the back of the Navigator, cooling their heated bodies. Del drove deeper, then withdrew, each time tugging harder on Janine’s hair. She responded with moans that let him know she liked what he was doing. Soon she was pushing back to meet each of his thrusts, shoving against his cock in a wordless request for more.

“That’s it. Fuck me,” he said, leaning back to watch her pussy swallow his dick.

The night was quiet, the only sounds the rustling trees and his cock slipping in and out of Janine’s wet pussy.

“Can you hear me fucking you?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“What if someone comes by and sees us?”

“I don’t care. Fuck me harder.”

She’d reached the point where she didn’t care who saw them, where pleasure and sensation had taken over. Just where he wanted her,

because he was at the same place. He let go of her hair and gripped her hips, digging his fingers into her flesh. He reared back and slammed into her, burying his cock to the hilt. His balls slapped against her, tightening, filling with the come he would soon spill. A bolt of lightning shot up his spine and he fought to control the rushing tide slamming against him.

“I want to feel you come around my dick, Janine. Touch yourself for me. Let me see it.” He drew her up so her back was against his chest and clasped his arm around her waist, then started driving up and into her.

She reached down and covered her pussy with the palm of her hand. Fuck, that was hot, seeing her touch herself. He leaned over her shoulder and watched, listening to her draw panting breaths, then let out desperate moans as she brought herself ever closer to the finish. He knew that rush of sensation, could feel the blood pooling in his balls, the taut line stretching every nerve ending, and knew he was close.

“Come for me, here outside. Let me hear you scream. I want to know that you don’t care who hears you.”

“Yes. Yes, I’m going to come,” she whispered, her hand moving in a rapid rhythm as she strummed her clit. She let her head rest on his shoulder, her body tensing. “Now, Del. I’m going to come now.”

She stilled, bent her shoulders forward, then let out a cry that was the sweetest music he’d ever heard. It was loud and shuddering, her pussy tightening around him as her cream poured over his balls.

Del followed, groaning against her shoulder and neck as he jettisoned come over and over, pulsing out all he had until he was completely drained, physically and emotionally. He’d wondered exactly how to approach Janine, not sure how she was going to react to all this. She hadn’t disappointed, in fact hadn’t seemed at all reserved about being in

public. She'd thrown herself full body into their play, had been everything he'd wanted, and more.

He knew there was a tigress lurking within the meek kitten.

He let go of Janine and she collapsed forward. He withdrew and took care of the condom, then crawled beside her, gathering her into his arms to stroke her hair and kiss her forehead.

It was then that she looked behind them and noticed the house.

"Oh, my God, Del. There's a house behind us."

"Uh huh."

"I didn't notice that when we drove up. What if someone heard us? What if they were watching us?"

He shrugged. "What if they did?"

"They could call the police. We should get out of here." She started to sit up, but Del held her tight in his embrace.

"Don't worry about it."

"Easy for you to say. You don't care about being caught in a compromising position." She pushed away from him and started to crawl out of the back of the SUV.

"You really have a hangup about this, don't you?"

Janine was already back in the passenger seat, grabbing for her dress. "I told you. I have a lot at risk here. God, I can't believe I didn't check our surroundings first. You make me lose my mind."

He slid off the tailgate and moved to the driver's seat, flinging his clothes into the back. "Lose your mind, huh? I'll take that as a compliment."

She slanted a glance in his direction. "You're going to drive naked?"

He turned the ignition, pressed a button on the center console and put the car in reverse. Janine looked over her shoulder as the garage door on the house behind them lifted.

Her eyes widened in panic. “Oh, shit! Someone’s opening the door.”

He flung his arm over the headrest and blew out a sigh. “Would you relax? I’m the one opening the garage door. The house is mine.”

## Chapter Five

Del made her feel like a dimwit. He could have told her the house was his before she'd launched herself into a full blown panic attack. Instead, he'd backed right into the garage with that smug smile of his plastered to his face.

Dickhead.

He'd pulled into the garage and they went inside to clean up a bit. His house was amazing. Two levels, though she'd only seen the downstairs. For some reason she expected modern, with chrome and leather everywhere. Instead, it was very warm and inviting, with cushiony sofas in the living room, fully stocked bookshelves and a huge picture window that overlooked the bluff where they'd made love. A fireplace stood off to the side of the room, and scattered everywhere were thick rugs that tickled her toes.

"Nice place," she said when she stepped out of the downstairs bathroom.

"Thanks."

She grabbed her dress and stepped into it. Del, who seemed quite comfortable wandering around naked, crossed his arms and arched a brow.

"What are you doing?"

"Getting dressed. It's time for me to go home. I have an early appointment tomorrow with some of the foundation members."

"Running, are you?"

"Of course not. I had a great time."

“And?”

She pulled the dress up over her bare breasts, grateful to be covered again. She felt...vulnerable when she was naked, especially since Del hadn't bothered to close the drapes on the living room window. “And what?”

He walked over to her and zipped up her dress. His fingers brushed her skin, the contact electric. The man was damaging to her senses. Not good. Not good at all. Being around him made her mind turn to mush, affected her judgment. “I'm not sure what you want from me, Del.”

“What do *you* want, Janine?”

That was a loaded question. She'd like to pretend tonight hadn't happened, that she hadn't taken leave of her common sense and had an orgasm in a room filled with hundreds of people, that she hadn't had sex outside where anyone could have heard them, seen them. They might have even been followed.

“I just need to get home.”

His fingers slipped away from her skin. “I'll get dressed and drive you back to the hotel.”

She shivered at the loss of contact, then waited for him while he went upstairs and changed. When he came back down a few minutes later, he had on a pair of jeans and a cashmere sweater. Once again, he looked devastating. He was sexy no matter what he wore.

They drove back to the hotel in virtual silence. Janine suspected that Del had wanted her to stay the night, but she couldn't. This just wasn't going to work out. Being with Del made her uncomfortable, but not in the way she expected. She was out of her element—she was scared. Afraid, because she might enjoy this a little too much, like she could get used to this kind of fun. And this wasn't the kind of lifestyle she could lead. She knew she had to explain this to him.

"I had a wonderful time tonight, but the wild woman you're looking for isn't me."

"You underestimate yourself," he said, watching the road, not her.

"I can't afford to take risks like that. I have too much at stake."

This time he did glance at her. "You need to trust me. I'd never put your reputation in danger. Don't forget, I have as much to lose as you do. I run a legitimate business, yet I also manage to own a club that caters to sexual adventures. If I can pull it off without discovery, I think I can take care of your anonymity."

He made it sound so easy. Was it?

He pulled into the hotel parking garage and Janine directed him to her car. He parked next to hers and turned off the ignition, then half-turned in his seat to face her.

"It's up to you. I won't pressure or force you into doing anything you don't want to do."

She'd been staring down at her lap, at her hands that were so tightly clasped together her knuckles were white.

*God, Janine. Relax.* That had always been her problem. She never let go. Maybe it was time she did.

"I'm tempted."

"I like you tempted." He reached for a curling end of her hair and let it slide through her fingers. She met his probing gaze, mesmerized by his dark eyes.

"I enjoyed tonight. I would like to see you again, but if the press found out about what we were doing, if I was ever caught in the act, the foundation would suffer greatly."

"It won't happen."

"You don't know that for certain. You can't guarantee it."

He shrugged. "True enough. You'll just have to trust me."



That word again. How could she trust someone she barely knew? Of course she'd had no problem fucking him, and that required an element of trust, didn't it?

And she was tired of her staid, boring, safe life. Being with Del made her feel alive. She wanted this.

"Okay."

He cupped her cheek in the palm of his hand. "Okay, what?"

"We'll try this."

His half smile made her belly quiver. He leaned across the seat and brushed his lips across hers. Even that made her wet.

He got out of the SUV and moved around to her side, opened the door and helped her out, then slid his arms around her waist. She looked up at him, mesmerized by the dark promise in his eyes.

"Good. Now go get in your car, go home and get some rest, and do your work thing. I'll call you tomorrow."

She sighed. "Good night, Del."

He released her and waited until she had backed out of her parking space and pulled away. She watched him out of her rearview mirror, leaning against his vehicle, his arms crossed, a satisfied smile on his face.

She hoped she'd made the right decision. Somehow she felt like she'd just placed her future in Del's hands.

\*

They were dating. Honest to God dating. In public. It hadn't occurred to Janine that she could actually go out with Del in the normal sense, but of course she could. They didn't have to meet in clandestine fashion. Philippe Delacroix of Delacroix Motors was a great catch. The society

page splashed pictures of them all over the place. Going out to dinner, attending theater and charity events together, any place where there was an event and she and Del went, they ended up having their picture taken.

And it was all on the up and up. Nothing sordid at all.

Del knew exactly how to manipulate the press. In fact, he was a master at it. Soon enough, she and Del being seen together was old news. Janine was in awe over the way he worked the media. And the great thing about it was the only thing the press saw was them as a couple. Dancing together, heads bent whispering, maybe holding hands, but other than that, everything was aboveboard and proper. Absolutely perfect.

But he'd been driving her crazy for the past two weeks, because that's all he'd been doing with her—escorting her to these public events, then taking her home. Dropping her off at her front doorstep, and giving her a chaste kiss goodnight.

What the hell was up with that? What about wild public sex? He hadn't even taken her back to Sneak Peek.

Had his interest in her waned after they'd had sex?

She was beginning to grow irritated. What kind of game was he playing? She wasn't the type of woman to throw herself at a man, so she hadn't asked him what was up or tried to make any moves on him. Besides, she really had enjoyed just going out with him. He was a wonderful date, they ran in many of the same circles and the press loved him. He was their golden boy—rich, successful, gorgeous and gave a lot of his money to charitable causes. In their eyes, he was above reproach.

Ha! If only they knew what he did in his private time. Though lately she'd wondered *who* he'd been doing in his private time, because it certainly hadn't been her. Then she'd mentally slap herself, because he'd

been spending all his private time with her. And if she wasn't getting any, then he wasn't either. Or at least that's what she assumed.

Ugh. No wonder she didn't date much. So complicated.

Janine stared down at the paperwork on her desk, not at all interested in muddling through it. Her mind was occupied with all things Del. Honestly, she wasn't a teenager and shouldn't be spending her valuable work hours thinking about a man. Especially a man who was obviously becoming less and less interested in her—sexually, anyway. What an enigma he was.

"Janine, you have a call on line two. It's Del."

Her secretary sounded excited. Janine rolled her eyes. Everyone at the office was thrilled about her dating Del. He'd made a few appearances at the office and had the ladies charmed and drooling. Of course.

"Thanks, Fiona." She looked at the phone, deciding to make him wait for a few seconds, wondering what event he'd ask her to this time. Finally, she pressed the button and picked up. "Hi Del."

"Hey, gorgeous. What are you up to today?"

"Paperwork."

"Sounds boring. How about dinner tonight?"

She really should tell him no—play hard to get. Then again, she hadn't seen him in a few days and she was tired of being holed up in her house. "Sure. What did you have in mind?"

"There's a great new restaurant in Beverly Hills. La Belle Eau."

Brows raised, she said, "I've heard of it. Very exclusive."

"Yeah. It's been packed solid every night since it opened. I got us reservations at eight. Wear something sexy."

"Yes, master."

He laughed. "I have a surprise for you, too."

She arched a brow. "What kind of surprise?"

“You’ll see. I’ll be at your place at seven. See you then.”

She hung up, then stared at the phone. A surprise. Good God, what could he possibly have in mind? Trepidation warred with excitement. Though she’d thoroughly enjoyed going out with him, she was ready for more, and was hoping his surprise tonight had something to do with the ‘more’ she was looking for.

With renewed enthusiasm, she tackled the paperwork on her desk. She wanted to leave work early today and prepare for tonight.

True to his word, Del arrived at seven with a gift bag in his hand.

“You look gorgeous,” he said as he swept through her front door, pulled her into his arms and kissed her. Her breath caught at the feel of his lips pressed up against hers. Her body went into immediate overdrive—heating, pulsing, remembering what it felt like to be touched by him.

When he pulled away and she managed to catch her breath, she accepted the bag he held out.

“Thank you.”

“Don’t thank me yet,” he said, his lips pulling into a wicked smile.

“Uh oh. Is it a ticking time bomb?”

“Maybe.” He slid onto her couch. Dressed in black pants that looked impeccably tailored, a white shirt that hugged his well toned chest, finishing the look off with a dark jacket, he was once again utterly edible. She wished they were staying in tonight and having sex instead of going out.

*Single-minded much, Janine?*

She sat next to him and laid the gift bag on her lap, looked at it, then back at him.

“Go ahead. Open it. I promise nothing in there will bite you.”

“Good to know.” She reached in and pulled out the tissue paper, then looked in the bag. It was a pair of panties. Black panties. Satin, with lacy strings. Pretty. She pulled them out, but there was something different about them. The crotch was different. It was thicker, though there wasn’t much to the crotch to begin with.

“What are these?”

She found out in a hurry when the panties moved in her hand. Or, rather, vibrated.

“Oh, my. How did that happen?”

Del pulled a tiny remote from his jacket pocket. “I did it.”

“Are you serious? Remote control vibrating underwear?”

“Yes. Put them on.”

“Now?”

“Of course. You’re going to wear them to dinner.”

To dinner. A new restaurant in Beverly Hills. One that no doubt would be solidly packed. It was Friday night after all. When Del had mentioned the restaurant, she’d known right off which one he was talking about. Trendy, upscale, everyone had been talking about it for the two months it had been open. Janine figured she’d eat there after the buzz died down.

And speaking of buzz...

“You want me to wear these in public?” The thought of Del holding the remote to these panties in a public place was enough to make her face warm.

“Stand up, Janine.”

Intrigued, she did.

“Spread your legs.”

Del knelt on the floor at her feet, tilting his head back to look at her. Her body flushed with heat when he skimmed his hands up her

thighs and under her dress. He stopped at her hips and pulled her panties down. She shivered at the sensation of the material scraping her legs, of baring her pussy for him. She stepped out of the panties, then into the ones Del had bought for her.

"I can't believe I'm doing this."

"You're going to enjoy it." He took his time pulling the new panties over her hips, but didn't linger where she really wanted him to. In fact, he didn't even lift her dress up, just put the panties in place, smoothed her dress, then stood. "That should do it. Comfortable?"

She was, actually. Whatever battery was in there was covered by the padding within the panty. She nodded. "It's fine."

"Are you excited?"

"Dubious."

He snorted. "Trust me."

"Famous last words."

They drove to the restaurant and Janine kept waiting for him to push the remote controlling the tiny vibrator in the panties. He didn't, which only ratcheted up her anticipation as they pulled in front of the place. Del handed the keys to the valet so he could park the car, then held out his arm for her and they strolled inside.

There was a line outside, but Del bypassed it and walked straight to the desk and gave his name. They were seated right away, in a booth in the corner near the window.

La Belle Eau was gorgeous on the inside. Dark and romantic, with black and white place settings and crisp white tablecloths. And, as Del had mentioned, utterly packed. Waiters scurried from table to table seeing to the patrons' needs. She and Del had no more settled into their booth than their waiter arrived to take their drink order and present

them with menus, citing the specials of the day. He brought their drinks right away and left them to linger over the menus.

"I can't believe you got us in here," she said, then took a sip of her cocktail.

He eyed her over his wine glass. "I know the owner. We went to school together in France."

"Ah, no wonder. It's a nice place and he seems to be doing well with it. I've heard people raving about it."

"He stayed in France after I left for the States. He went to the cooking school there. Graduated top of the class. His family were all chefs, too, so he comes from a good background. I think he'll make a go of it."

Their waiter came by and asked for their selection. Del brushed him off, said they wanted to enjoy their drinks for a while first. Janine couldn't help but squirm in her seat as she felt the pressure of her panties, wondering if Del had just been teasing her about using the remote in his pocket tonight.

Surely he wouldn't do that here, in this trendy, crowded restaurant. He hadn't yet, so maybe he was just teasing her. Just knowing she wore the panties and he held the remote was enough to moisten her and make her nipples hard.

"You're fidgeting."

Her gaze shot to Del. "I am not."

"Yeah, you are. Relax."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"You know why not." She cast a look at his coat pocket.

"My jacket makes you nervous?"

She rolled her eyes. "You know what I'm talking about."

He tipped his glass and took a swallow of wine, but didn't answer her, which made her even more anxious.

He wasn't going to do anything. He'd just made her wear the panties to drive up her anticipation for later. Then, when they were riding in the car or stopped someplace and alone, he'd hit the remote and make her crazy. She finally let go of her anxiety and they talked about their week at work. The waiter came by and they ordered their meal and more drinks, and Del told her about a new delivery of cars that had come in earlier in the week.

She was listening until she felt a tiny buzz between her legs. It was so faint she was certain her mind had conjured it up, so she dismissed it while Del continued talking.

But there it was again, a pleasant tingle right in the vicinity of her clit. This time, the sensation lasted a few seconds longer. And she was certain she hadn't imagined it. She waited for it to stop, and when it did, she cast a questioning glance at Del, who smiled at her.

"Did you like that?" he asked.

"It was...interesting."

"But did you enjoy it?"

She shrugged, not wanting to give him any encouragement to continue. "It was okay."

The vibration intensified and her eyes widened. She froze until it stopped, then shuddered as the aftereffects of the pleasurable sensations continued to zing through her nerve endings. She leaned forward so no one could hear her whispering. "Del. Stop that."

He leaned back in his chair, an annoying smile gracing his handsome face. "Oh, I don't think so."

Again her panties started to vibrate, this time with more pronounced quivers. And it didn't stop. Janine began to pant as lightning pulses



rolled across her clit. She felt it deep in her pussy and she fought back a moan. Her panties were moist and sticking to her skin. She cast a pleading look at Del.

“Relax, *bébé*.”

Relax? She could come just like that, and he wanted her to relax? She gripped the edges of the table. Throbbing beats jetted between her legs—first slow, then fast. Harder, then softer, almost the same as if he were rubbing her there.

“Spread your legs for me.”

He was making her crazy. She looked around, wondering if anyone noticed her squirming in her chair. But she did as he asked, widening her legs a little. He looked down at her spread thighs and smiled.

“No one’s watching,” he said. “But what if they were? Would you like that?”

“No.” She was panting now as he drove up the vibration another notch. She shifted and the panties moved with her, adjusting the spot where they rubbed against her clit. “Oh, God.”

She pressed back against the chair and lifted her hips, wanting to slide her hand between her legs and rub.

“Your cheeks are flushed.”

Her gaze shot to his. “They are?”

He nodded, his lips curling upward in a smile she wanted to both slap and lick. She was irritated and turned on, and didn’t know which was worse.

“You can deny with your words, but your body tells me the truth. You’re enjoying this. I’ll bet your panties are soaked.”

He was whispering to her, leaning forward so only she could hear him. His lips touched her ear and she heard him inhale, then exhale, his warm breath caressing her neck.

“I can smell you, that sweet scent of aroused female. Did you know my dick is hard?”

He was killing her.

“I could take out my cock right now and jack off just thinking about the pleasure you’re getting wearing those panties. You know the tablecloth at these tables goes all the way to the floor. My chair is against the wall. No one would even know.”

Her gaze gravitated to his crotch. He slid his hand to his thigh, then over, lightly rubbing the telltale bulge in his pants. She bit back a groan and her panties flooded. When she looked up at him again, she sucked in her lower lip. In return, the vibration intensified.

“Del, please, don’t do this to me.”

“Oh, I’m going to do it to you. I want you to come for me, Janine. Right here, in front of all these people.”

She shook her head, glanced over the crowd, then back at him. “I can’t do this.”

“You can. You want to. Let yourself go.”

She was already so far gone, between the thought of how incredibly naughty and exciting this was, to the pleasure spiraling nearly out of control between her legs. Her heart pounded, her pulse raced, and her skin flushed with heat. Her breathing came in short bursts as she tried to ride out the incredible pulses soaring through her. She didn’t know if she could fight them off without reaching down to rip off her panties. Now that would cause a scene—and that she didn’t want.

“We’re two lovers having an intimate dinner. No one is watching. Only you and I know that I’m giving you pleasure, that you’re about to come all over those skimpy little panties.”

The dark promise in his words only fueled the fire raging through her already stoked up senses.

“Imagine how sweet it will be to climax right here at the table, to know that you came in this trendy, full-to-capacity restaurant. Live out your fantasies, Janine. Come for me.”

She couldn't fight the lure any longer. She turned to him, met his gaze, and as he increased the vibration and it soared across her swollen, sensitized clit, she climaxed.

She gripped his hand and squeezed. Her lips parted and she panted through an enormous orgasm, letting out a tiny moan as the rush of sensations poured through her. Del tilted his head and watched her, rubbing his hand over his cock as she shuddered through the aftereffects. She wished she could jump up right now and straddle him, impale herself over his cock. Her pussy throbbed with the need to feel him inside her.

“I really want to fuck you right now,” he said. “My dick is so damn hard.”

She was trembling, could still feel her pussy quaking from her climax.

Del kissed her lips, sliding ever so softly across her mouth, the tip of his tongue licking at hers.

“Damn, that was the hottest thing I've ever seen.”

It was the hottest thing she'd ever done. He turned the vibrator off and she settled, trying to regain her composure.

Good timing, too, because the waiter approached bearing a tray with their food.

What if that had happened when she was in the throes of climax? The risks she took with Del were incredible. She lost her mind around him. She had to be more careful.

Then again, she'd just had a delicious orgasm, in public. She was living out her fantasies, just as he said.

She slanted a look at him. He smiled, nodded to her plate and winked.

“Enjoy your dinner, Janine.”

## Chapter Six

Del disengaged himself with as much delicacy as he could from the two women trying to wrap their bodies around him. He was also acutely aware of Ali's amused glance from across the crowded bar. He was going to take a ton of ribbing about this.

"As much as I'd love to ladies, I have a prior engagement this evening." He smiled and kissed each of their cheeks.

"Aww, Del, come on," Alicia said, affecting a pronounced pout. "We haven't played in too long. I thought we'd do the ménage room tonight."

Now that he'd untangled himself from the March twins' clutches, he breathed a sigh of relief, but still maintained the politeness his position as owner required. "You make it sound so tempting. But I already promised my evening to another."

"Some other time then?" Amy asked, thrusting her barely clad double D's out at him as if to say *surely you're not turning these down*.

"Definitely."

He'd barely turned on his heel before the luscious twins were swarmed by other guys wanting in on the action. They wouldn't be missing his attentions at all.

He strolled out of the bar, already knowing Ali would follow. By the time he reached the office, his partner was on his heels.

"You rejected the twins?" Ali asked, closing the door after him.

Del poured a drink, raised his brow and at Ali's nod, poured another. He handed it off. "Yes, I turned down the twins. What's wrong with that?"

“Nothing, other than I think you may have gone insane. Should I call a doctor? Do you have a fever?”

“Funny.”

“Have you taken leave of your senses, my friend?”

“No. I have other plans for the evening.”

Ali arched a dark brow. “With whom?”

“Janine.”

“You’ve been seeing much of this woman. That is unusual for you.”

“You monitoring my social calendar now? Are you reporting back to my mother in France?”

Ali snorted. “I don’t think your mother would like what I would have to tell her about your social activities.”

“Any more than yours would.”

“Ah, but I have settled down now, remember?”

“How could I forget? You and Shanna parading around Sneak Peek, arms wrapped around each other, practically having sex in the lobby...”

“Now you’re exaggerating.”

“Am I? Our clients are starting to complain about all the exhibitionism.”

Ali snorted. “Our clients would never complain about that. And love is very nice. You should try it sometime.”

“I’m having too much fun just fucking around, but thanks. I think the two of you have enough love for the entire place.”

“Famous last words. I never thought I would find love. But it found me. Perhaps the reason you are seeing so much of Janine, that you are even turning down the twins, is that love is knocking upon your door.”

Del rolled his eyes. “Now you *are* starting to sound like my mother. Are you sure she hasn’t called you?”

Ali laughed. "I think you are trying to change the subject. You feel something for this woman."

"Yeah, I do. She makes my dick hard."

"Ah. Denial. I remember the feeling. You do it so well."

Del took a long swallow, letting the alcohol burn its way down his esophagus before answering. "I'm not denying she makes my dick hard."

"You are avoiding the subject of love."

"I don't love her. I just like fucking her."

"We shall see what happens, won't we?"

Now it was Del's turn to shake his head. "I think love has ruined you. I might have to find a new partner."

Ali stood, ignoring Del's teasing. "I think your downfall is inevitable. The fact you have spent almost a month exclusively with this woman, you haven't engaged any other woman at the club since the night you met Janine, and you even walked away from the twins tonight, is very telling. Very telling indeed."

Sometimes he hated that his friend and partner knew him so well. "Go play with your fiancée, Ali."

Ali wagged his brows. "I intend to. Have fun with Janine. Someday soon I intend to say 'I told you so'."

After the door closed behind him, Del stood and turned to the mirror behind his desk.

Love. No way. Not him. He wasn't ready for that whole settling down thing yet. Hell, he might never be ready. His life was perfect the way it was. Why change it? He enjoyed a multitude of women, none of them ever pressured him for a commitment, and the thought of spending the rest of his life with just one woman had always made his stomach clench.

Not that he had any problem with marriage. His parents had a great one. They loved each other and had made great role models for happily ever after. And when he was done being single, he'd get married, do the whole kids and white picket fence thing.

When he was ready.

But so far no one woman had given him that urge.

The intercom on his desk buzzed, rescuing him from thoughts of love and marriage. He leaned over and pushed the button. "Yeah."

"Del, Janine is here."

He smiled. "Thanks, Steve. Send her into my office."

Aware of his jacked-up pulse and the rush of adrenaline that had hit him as soon as Steve announced Janine had arrived, Del shook his head. Yeah. She didn't affect him much, did she?

Maybe he was in denial, and Janine had come to mean more to him than he thought. He hadn't even realized that he'd stopped seeing other women since the night he'd met her, that he hadn't had sex with anyone but her. More importantly, that he hadn't *wanted* to fuck any woman but her.

Ah, hell. He dragged his hand through his hair and pondered what it meant, if anything. Maybe it meant nothing at all and he'd let his conversation with Ali affect him.

She knocked on the door and he shook his head. He walked over and opened it, grinning at her. "You don't need to knock, babe."

She looked up at him through her dark lashes. "You might have been in a meeting."

"Always so polite, aren't you?" He held the door open and she walked in. "And you look like a knockout tonight."

He loved the way the color hit right away on her high cheekbones. "Thank you. So do you."



He was wearing jeans and a polo shirt. Hardly anything special. On the other hand, she wore a short black skirt and a tight, body-hugging top, meant to show off her killer curves. The shoes had at least three inches on the heel, making her tanned, shapely legs look even longer than they were. Men's tongues must have been hanging all over the hallways as she made her way to his office. He liked the thought of that, because tonight she belonged only to him.

"My dick's getting hard already."

She laid her purse on his desk, tilted her head and glanced at his crotch. "Is it?" She strolled toward him, slung one arm around his neck and planted her palm against his hardening cock, then smiled. "So it is."

When she began to rub her hand up and down against him, he wrapped his arm around her and jerked her closer. "Be careful."

"Why?"

"Because I don't have much patience tonight."

"So, what you're saying is that you want me. Right now."

"Yes."

She squeezed his shaft. "And that you're not in the mood to play games."

"No, I'm not."

"You want to fuck me."

"Yes."

She tilted her head back, her lips parted, her eyes drifting partway closed in a way he found oh so sexy. "Then do it."

"I want others to watch us fuck."

Her brows lifted. He waited for her to object, but she shrugged. "Whatever you want. I just want your cock inside me. I'm wet, my pussy's hot and I need to come."

He'd already had the scene set up, but she'd somehow taken control. Or rather, taken his self-control. He'd planned a slow seduction, to take his time with her. Obviously, Janine had ripped away his senses and there was no time for foreplay. She was ready. And so was he.

Her lips were parted, her breathing shallow. He covered her mouth and she opened for him, sliding her tongue in to lick at his. He groaned, and she reciprocated with a whimper, grasping his hair and tugging to signal her demand for more. He felt her need and it mirrored his own, ratcheting up his desire to a quick frenzied pitch. There was a wild hunger inside her and he intended to satisfy it.

He took her hand and led her from the room, a short trip down the hall and into another room. He closed and locked the door behind him. This room was similar to his office, except it was devoid of almost all furniture. An easy chair in the corner was the only furnishing. A small room, the only adornment was a full mirror along one wall and lush, thick carpet under their feet.

Del pulled Janine toward the mirror, placing her in front of it, then pushed a button to the side of the mirror. The lights went out and the mirror reflected the other side. A man and a woman stood in another room. No other people were in the room.

The woman was striking, with long, straight raven hair that fell almost to her buttocks. The man was tall, muscular, his skin dark and gleaming in the overhead lights. Del had chosen the couple not only because of their adventurous spirit, but also because he thought Janine might find them both appealing.

They were both naked and stood in front of the mirror, staring back at Del and Janine.

"Rose and Joaquin are here for our pleasure tonight," he explained. "They can see and hear us, just as we can see and hear them. They're

friends of mine and very discreet, so you don't need to worry about anything."

"So they *can* see us."

"Yes, we can," Joaquin said, his hand on Rose's shoulders. "You are very beautiful, Janine. But you are still clothed." Joaquin looked to Del. "She needs to be naked."

Rose smiled as Joaquin's hands drifted down and swept over her breasts. Del heard Janine's rush of indrawn breath.

Del mirrored Joaquin's movements, moving his own palms over Janine's breasts.

"You're right. This would be much better on Janine's soft skin." He slid his palms further down, stopping at the hem of her top, then drew it upward. Janine lifted her arms and Del pulled the top over her head. She didn't have a bra on.

"So sexy," he whispered against the side of her head, then let his thumbs drift down over her nipples.

Janine didn't say a word. Nor did she tilt her head back to look at him. Her gaze was riveted on Rose and Joaquin, to the way Joaquin's large hands covered Rose's small breasts, the way his thumb and forefingers grasped Rose's dark nipples and pinched.

"Oh, yes, Joaquin," Rose said, her eyelids drifting closed. "Harder."

Janine shuddered.

Del stepped back and drew the zipper down on Janine's skirt, then bent down and pulled the skirt to the floor. He held onto her hand while she stepped out of the skirt.

"No panties either." His woman had come dressed for sex tonight. He swept his hands along her ankles, moving upward along her calves, her knees, her thighs, breathing in her musky scent as he stood.

“You must undress too,” Rose said, her gaze on Del. “I want to see your hard cock.”

This was going to be fun.

Janine couldn’t breathe. She was on definite sensory overload. Between Rose and Joaquin—they had such incredible bodies, and their sexual chemistry was overwhelming—plus having Del behind her, she might just self combust.

Now Janine did a half turn to watch Del. He stood and pulled his polo shirt off and cast it into the chair in the corner. His eyes darkened and he quirked a smile as he kicked off his shoes, then drew the zipper down on his jeans. When he tugged them down, his cock sprang out, hard and pressing up against his belly. Janine’s eyes widened with pleasure.

He moved forward and turned her around to face the mirror. His cock pressed against her buttocks, thick and hard and she swore she could feel it pulsing. God, she wanted it in her. Now.

“Yes,” Rose said, then licked her lips. “You are more than ready for fucking.”

“You like his cock?” Joaquin asked.

Rose nodded.

“You want to watch him fuck his woman while I do you tonight?”

Joaquin’s fingers disappeared behind Rose. Janine saw them slip between Rose’s legs, then between her pussy lips. Rose gasped as Joaquin finger fucked her. Janine’s pussy quivered as if she could actually feel the sensation.

She nearly cried out as Del’s hand slid between the cheeks of her ass, his warm fingers searching her pussy lips. She kept her focus on Rose’s pussy, desperately seeking what she saw. When Del slid two fingers into

her pussy, she cried out. Being able to see it, to feel it at the same time, was phenomenal.

“Is she wet?” Joaquin asked.

“Dripping,” Del answered.

“Let me see.”

Del turned her, guided her so her back was to the mirror. Janine was so turned on she felt dizzy.

“Bend over, baby.”

*Oh my God.* Her ass was nearly pressed up to the mirror. She bent down, aware that Joaquin was looking directly at her pussy, could see her anus, could see Del’s fingers buried inside her, fucking her hard and fast. She should be mortified, but the only emotion she could summon was pure exhilaration. She’d never been so excited.

“Suck my cock, Rose.”

“You’ll want to watch this,” Del said. He withdrew his fingers and pulled her upright, turning her around so she could see.

Rose dropped to her knees and placed her full lips around Joaquin’s cock. Her tongue darted out, licking the underside of his shaft. Then his shaft began to disappear, her throat undulating as she swallowed him like a python. Joaquin held the back of her head, forcing her to take more and more of him, a look of utter ecstasy on his face.

Janine glanced over at Del. He had fisted his cock and was stroking it as he watched Rose and Joaquin. Dear God it was hot watching him masturbate.

“Fuck her,” Joaquin said to Del, his voice thick with arousal. “I want to see her face. I want to see your cock going in and out of her while I fuck Rose.”

Joaquin pulled Rose in front of him and faced her toward the mirror. Del did the same, placing Janine as a—ironically enough—mirror image

to Rose. Then he moved behind her. He nudged her legs apart and caressed her buttocks as he spread them, positioning her where he wanted her. It was as if she were watching a choreographed dance, both parties moving in tandem, making almost exactly the same moves. It really was like watching Del and herself in a mirror, but with the thrill and excitement of being able to see another couple have sex. Rose's gaze met hers and Janine saw in Rose's eyes the glittering pleasure sizzling through her own body.

Del wrapped one arm around her waist and moved up behind her, his cock nudging her sex. Her body throbbed in response to the heat of his body against her, to the soft head of his cock sliding with a teasing caress between her wet folds. She wanted him inside her, wanted to feel the pressure, the thrust, that feeling of being filled by him.

"Are you ready?" Joaquin looked at Del.

"Now."

Del thrust, burying his cock inside her. Janine jumped, startled by the sudden invasion, then melted as her walls surrounded him. Heat fused her from her feet up to her neck, the pinpricks of goose bumps raising on her skin despite the warmth of the room.

Rose's eyes widened as, at the same time, Joaquin drove inside her. She leaned back against Joaquin, giving Janine a view of his shaft moving between her spread pussy lips. Rose's face showed rapture.

Janine knew what that felt like as Del speared her with plunging strokes. Deep, hard, he held her tight against him and thrust to the hilt, then eased almost all the way out. Now it was her turn to palm the glass mirror, touching her hands where Rose's were, as if they held onto each other for support.

"Do you like watching them fuck?" Del asked her, his voice tight with strain as he tunneled up inside her with slow, deliberate movements.

“Yes.”

He bent down, pulling her back against him now, tilting her hips forward. His hand found her clit and began to rub in unhurried, gentle motions.

“Spread your legs, baby. Let Rose and Joaquin see what I’m doing to you.”

She couldn’t stand this. Being able to see and to feel was sensory overload. Joaquin lifted Rose in his powerful arms, and onto his cock, then thrust upward again, repeating the motions. She held onto his arms and rode him, tilting her head back and moaning. His cock was wet with her pussy juices, her sex swollen from his punishing thrusts. Finally, she slid her hand down and rubbed her clit, her eyes locked on Janine. Her lips were parted, her breasts rising and falling with her labored breaths.

As her moans grew louder, Janine knew Rose was close to letting go. Janine felt her own spasms like an oncoming train, and she could do nothing to hold them back.

“I’m coming!” Rose cried, shuddering in Joaquin’s arms. Joaquin grimaced and pumped like a madman against her.

Janine felt her own body tightening with impending climax. She wanted to come, too, wanted her completion in tandem with Rose’s. Del pressed harder against her clit, increased his thrusts, and she burst into orgasm, gripping his arm and digging her nails into his skin. Sensation rushed through her and she cried out, closing her eyes as Del tensed against her. Now it was just the two of them and she let the ecstatic agony soar through her nerve endings. Her entire body shook with the force of the convulsions. Del wrapped both his arms around her and held her, groaning against her neck as he pulsed inside her with his own climax.

They were both panting, Del's hot breath ruffling her hair against her cheek. She couldn't speak, didn't even want to look at the couple in the other room. Del withdrew and turned her around to face him, planting his lips on hers in a soul shattering kiss. He kissed her with depth, with surprising emotion, pulling her as close to him as he could get. When they finally came up for air, he lifted her into his arms, moved to the button on the mirror and pushed it. The room went dark. The mirror image disappeared and Del slid down to the floor with her still nestled in his embrace.

She smoothed her hands over his sweat-dampened skin, pressed kisses to his chest, his neck, the side of his mouth, feeling his heart return to normal under her palm.

"You okay?" He smoothed his hand across her damp hair.

"Yes, I'm fine." She loved that he cared enough to ask.

"How about we get dressed and go back to my place."

She leaned back, searching his face, though the room was so dark she couldn't see a thing. "Do you have something in mind?"

"Yeah. You. Me. Alone. This scene was great, but I'm ready to have you to myself."

She smiled in the darkness, and her heart swelled with an emotion she couldn't identify. But it made her warm from the inside out. "What a great idea."



## Chapter Seven

The Bartolino Foundation's horse race for charity was one of the biggest outdoor fundraisers of the year, and always left Janine a nervous wreck. It was highly touted, and since it was southern California, well attended by a horde of celebrities. And that meant tons of publicity. Camera lights had been shining all day and flashbulbs had already popped so often in her face she was afraid she was going to be rendered permanently blind. And her smile was permanently frozen to her face. But the ticket sales were through the roof and the press the foundation was going to get out of this would be tremendous. She made a mental note to suggest public relations staff get a bonus this year. They had really outdone themselves for this event.

Tramping around dirt and hay in a skirt and heels though, now that was difficult. But she wanted to personally thank the sponsors, the horse owners and everyone who had agreed to participate. Which was time consuming, but necessary. She'd been so busy she hadn't seen Del since they arrived at the race track together this morning, which had been approximately seven hours ago. He'd helped her out so much, acted as a fantastic host, even taking on responsibility for entertaining some of the blue haired ladies, who found him absolutely charming as he led them to their box seats.

Del, charming. Imagine that. Lethally charming, in fact, and she was afraid he'd charmed her heart right away from her. These past few weeks she hadn't held onto her guard. She'd let go, lived the kind of life she'd only dreamed about. Oh, sure. She'd gone into this thinking it was a fun

sexual adventure, never knowing she was going to lose her heart in the process.

Del was everything she could ever want in a man. Gorgeous, intelligent, fun to be with, successful, a wonderful companion and without a doubt the best sexual partner she'd ever had. She'd been living out her fantasies in ways she'd never expected. But every day she spent with him left her in agony, because she wanted more. He was a drug in her system, and she had no idea how this was going to end up.

Surely they had no future together.

Or did they? He seemed fine with the way things were at the moment, but as far as she knew he could be seeing ten other women. Though she wouldn't know since she'd never asked him. And she knew why she'd never asked, because she didn't want to know the answer.

*Coward.* He'd spent every night with her for the past two weeks. Either he had the stamina of a bull or they were officially a couple. Or were they? She didn't know what they were. Officially or unofficially. She should stop worrying about it and just enjoy the time they spent together.

Why did she have to angst over everything?

She headed into the dark barn, enticed by the cool air and the smell of fresh hay. She loved horses, always had, though she didn't get to ride as often as she used to. The sounds of the animals in the barn always drew her. Besides, she felt the need to get away for a few minutes and catch her breath before going back out there. Surely she could take five minutes before someone needed her for something, couldn't she?

She wandered the length of the barn and admired the horseflesh. No one else was in there, fortunately, allowing her the time to herself. She stopped at the stall of a beautiful chestnut, who stuck his head out and inspected her.

“Aren’t you just the prettiest thing in here?” she said, wanting to run her hand over his beautiful coat, but knowing better.

“No comparison. You’re prettier.”

She whirled at the sound of Del’s voice, then on instinct walked into his arms. He kissed her with a fierceness that made her heart kick up. He tightened his hold around her and lifted her off the ground. When he released her lips and set her down, she was out of breath, her body warm and needy. Being with him was like an instant turn on. Just having him in her sights made her body temperature rise, her pulse kick up, her breasts swell.

So this was desire. She’d never felt it like this for another man, this instantaneous rush of arousal. It was a unique, heady experience.

“I’ve missed you today,” she admitted.

“I’ve been entertaining your guests,” he said with a smile.

“So I’ve noticed. And thank you.”

“My pleasure. Another successful charity event, I see.”

She nodded. “I hope so.”

He slid his knuckles across her cheek. “Quit worrying.”

“It’s what I do best,” she said, allowing a faint smile.

He walked her backward, between two stalls. “No, it’s not what you do best. I know where you excel.”

Her body went from warm to red hot in an instant, already knowing what he had in mind. She didn’t know if the rush of heat coursing through her was excitement or utter terror. “Del, not here. Not now.”

His brows arched in that devilish way that never failed to make her panties wet. “Like I said, you worry too much. Quit thinking about everyone else and start thinking about yourself and what you want. You want a quickie, knowing thousands of people are out there and could walk in here.”

“No. I’m working.”

He kept moving. Her back hit the wall of the barn.

“Five minutes. My dick’s already hard. I want to be inside you, fucking you, my dick moving in and out of your wet pussy. You are wet, aren’t you?”

Her pussy quivered, moistened. God, the way he got to her, excited her. The thought of doing it here in the barn, just as he described... “Damn you, Del.”

“That means yes.” She only caught a glimpse of his triumphant smile before he covered her lips with his, his tongue sliding inside her mouth and searching for hers. Intense, demanding, just like his hands moving over her body. He lifted one of her legs and positioned it over his hip, then unzipped his pants. Everything was hurried, a rush of whispers and tangled bodies. Janine drank it all in...the danger, the thrill, and how it made her nipples hard, straining against her satin bra.

“Hurry. Fuck me. I need you inside me now.”

“Christ.” He gave her what she asked for, pulling her panties to the side and shoving his cock inside her with one hard thrust. She fought back a scream and bit down on her bottom lip as he pumped his cock inside her with furious, solid strokes. And every time he thrust himself fully inside her, he’d grind against her clit.

She wasn’t going to last. Her pussy gripped his shaft and ripples sailed through her. She felt like she was climbing through a spinning vortex.

“Baby, let go,” he whispered, his fingers digging into her ass cheeks as he tilted her pelvis toward him, pushed in and ground against her, circling his pelvis around her clit.

She held onto his shoulders and buried her face against his chest, holding back the torrential cry as she climaxed, shaking and shuddering.

God, she wanted to scream at the intensity of the sensations, but she couldn't. But Del groaned, coming in a hard burst inside her, his body trembling too.

Out of breath, she could only hold onto him, their faces buried together as they hid in the dark corner of the barn.

That's when the photographer snapped their picture. She heard the popping sound, saw the flash of lights, but she kept her face averted, not knowing what else to do as the photographer snapped one, two, three photographs. Then she heard the sound of pounding footsteps as he ran.

Too stunned to move, Janine stayed frozen.

"Fuck!" Del swore. "I'll go after him."

Janine held tight to Del's arm, panic tightening her throat. Then reality struck. "Don't. I don't want him to see us. I don't want anyone to see us. It's bad enough everyone will by tomorrow."

They disengaged, righting their clothing in a hurry. Del pushed back, looking at her.

Janine didn't know what to do, what to say. Someone had just taken their picture, while Del's cock was still inside her. At a charity fundraiser for the Bartolino Foundation. Shame washed over her at the thought of how she'd disgraced her father's company. Why, why did she let Del talk her into this? She knew better. Not here and not now. Why didn't she push him away and say no? There were other times, other places, for this kind of fun. This one had disaster written all over it and she should have listened to that tiny voice inside her head telling her it had been a bad idea.

She shook her head, unable to find the words to describe the impending devastation. Tears pooled in her eyes, but she held them back. The last thing she needed was to fall apart in public.

"My staff will be looking for me," was all she could manage, her voice the barest of whispers. "I should go."

She pushed past Del.

"Janine." He grasped her arm, stilled her.

She turned, looked up at him, refusing to acknowledge the shock and misery on his face. He couldn't possibly feel as bad as she did about this. He was a man. Men lived for this. He ate up this kind of lifestyle, this thrill. "Don't."

"I'm so sorry, babe. I'll fix this."

He looked as miserable as she felt. And yes, she wanted that, wanted to throw herself into his arms, burst into tears and handle this with him. She wanted to walk out with him, finish her day and then go home with him tonight and figure this out together. But that's not how her life worked, that wasn't how she had been taught to deal with problems. Besides, he didn't understand the impact this would have on the foundation. She'd have to work this out on her own.

"You can't." She shrugged, not knowing what else to say. "It's done. We're done."

He frowned, as if he didn't understand what she'd just said. "You don't mean that. I really can take care of this. Trust me."

His words called to mind something he'd said when they first met. Her blood boiled. Everything rushed at her at once and she couldn't hold back the tidal wave of emotion, lashing out at the only person standing there to take it. She tilted her head back to meet his gaze. Ignoring his pleading eyes, she said, "Trust you? Trust. You. That worked out so well for me, didn't it? I did trust you, Del, and now my picture is going to be splashed all over the society page tomorrow, in the midst of a sex act in this barn, with you. I should have said no when you suggested it, and I

didn't. Now my stupid decision is going to cost the foundation its reputation."

She pushed away from him, shaking her head as she paced back and forth. "I'm so incredibly stupid. I need to walk away from this before I sink in any deeper, before I can't get out of it. It's over, Del."

"Janine—"

She held out her hand. "Please don't. We're not good for each other. This isn't working. I should have never done anything with you. I was fine before I met you."

He crossed his arms, his gaze narrowing. "Were you? You were miserable and lonely."

"I was happy. You don't know me."

"Now you're lying to yourself."

"Don't presume to tell me how I feel. You've already presumed, and assumed, way too much about me. But I'll give you this much—the mistake was mine and it was a big one. I don't belong with you. Your lifestyle isn't one I can live with, so I'd appreciate if you'd stay the hell away from me."

His lips were set in a tight line. Now he was angry. Oh, that was funny, considering he had nothing to lose and she was about to lose everything. Before she really caused a scene, she walked out of the barn, determined not to think about all of this until later. Right now the foundation needed her to be strong, and the foundation was all that mattered.

She'd promised her father she'd take care of it. Dammit!

Too bad she hadn't been thinking about the foundation when she decided to take Del up on his offer of fun and games. She'd made a vow to run the foundation the same way he always had, keeping its reputation clean and above reproach.

She'd failed. The one and only thing her father had counted on her for, and she couldn't live up to his expectations. Because she'd fallen in love with the wrong man, and because of that had made all the wrong decisions.

Her heart tore in two. On one side stood her father and the foundation, what they stood for, everything the Bartolino family had always been. On the other side stood Del; the excitement and warmth she'd grown to love experiencing from him. How could she walk away from him, from everything he'd shown her? He'd given her a new life, a chance to become the woman she'd always known she could be. If only she'd been a little more cautious...

Water under the bridge. She hadn't been careful enough. Now she had to live with the consequences. Tears came again, and she blinked them back, wanting to slide down against the barn wall and sob. God, she was miserable, missed Del already. Why couldn't she just fall apart, why couldn't she have let him help her?

Because she realized no one could help her. Not even Del. Distance was the best way. Apart, they could both weather this through. Together it would be a nightmare.

She put on her sunglasses and plastered on a smile as a couple of the committee members headed her way.

She'd fall apart when she got home.

"What crawled up your ass today?"

Del snapped his gaze toward Ali, who leaned casually against the doorway to his office. "Nothing. I'm working out a problem."

"What kind of problem?"

He inhaled, blew it out, then said, "Shut the door."



Ali stepped in and Del filled him in on the happenings at today's horse show. By the time he was finished, Ali's expression was grave.

"That is very bad news, my friend," Ali said. "What can you do about it?"

"Not sure. But I can't let those photographs come out tomorrow. Janine will be ruined."

Ali leaned back in the chair. "Will she be recognized from the photographs?"

Del shrugged. "Not sure."

"What about you?"

"I don't care about me, you know that. Hell, it would be great press for the club. But I can't let this happen to Janine. It's my fault." Fuck. Sometimes he took too many chances. He shouldn't have done it, shouldn't have put Janine in that position.

Sometimes he really was a dick.

Ali arched a brow. "You never cared about a woman's reputation before. You've always made it clear that what you do with a woman is consensual, and if you're caught in public that's just the way it is."

"I've never cared—" He stopped himself before he completed the sentence, but the words had already tumbled out.

"You love her."

"Shit." With a sigh, Del nodded. "Yeah, I guess I do."

"Why?"

"Why?" He'd never thought about why before. Hell, he'd never realized he loved her until just this moment. "Because she's beautiful, intelligent, capable, she runs a successful corporation and loves giving to the less fortunate, she's sexy as hell and I think she's fearless. Though she doesn't realize that last part yet."

Ali grinned. "You sing her praises well. Can I say 'I told you so' now?"

“Help me solve this problem and you can say it every day for the rest of our lives.”

“That’s an offer I don’t wish to refuse. The first thing you need to determine is if the photographer has pictures of your faces.”

Del thought for a moment, trying to remember the moment when the flashes of light went off. Hell, that was kind of hard to do considering he’d just had an orgasm, was spent and panting, his face buried in Janine’s neck.

He sat up, wracking his brain, remembering positioning. “No, he didn’t. My face was in Janine’s neck, and her face was buried on my shoulder. No way did he get our faces in those shots he took.”

“That’s very good. So the only thing he has is your bodies entangled. But no proof as to who you are. You can deny it.”

Del wrinkled his nose. “Yeah, we could, but not my preference. I’d rather do something else.”

“Such as?”

He thought about it for a few minutes, then remembered who had been at the charity horse race today. But would she go for it? As much as she loved publicity, it would still be a huge risk.

Of course she would. He grinned and looked at Ali. “I have a great idea.”

He picked up the phone.

## Chapter Eight

Janine didn't want to open her drapes, afraid to see the first rays of dawn seeping through, signaling the end of life as she knew it.

"Dramatic much, Janine?" She rolled her eyes, stood and moved to the coffeemaker, refilling her empty cup. She'd tried to sleep, but hadn't managed more than tossing from one side of the bed to the other. Quiet crying, wishing Del was there with her, which only made her feel more miserable and led to even more insomnia. Anxiety had won and she'd finally crawled out of bed at three in the morning to make coffee. Pacing while standing seemed much more effective.

After the horse race ended yesterday, she'd met with her staff, debriefed, then told her assistant something urgent had come up and she would need to reschedule all her appointments for the following day. Not that anyone would want to meet with her after the pictures appeared in the newspaper, anyway, but she figured she might as well do it in advance and save herself at least a little humiliation.

She glanced up at the clock. Six a.m. The newspaper would be arriving shortly. With a heavy sigh, she trudged upstairs and into the bathroom, took a shower, then did her hair and makeup and walked into her closet to choose an appropriate outfit. Reporters would show up soon enough and she wanted to be presentable when they did. She dressed in a pair of black slacks and a cream sleeveless top, hoping to look respectable.

Respectable. Ha. That term would never be associated with her again.

Why had she taken Del up on his offer in the first place? She'd lived thirty years of her life without ever living out her fantasies, and in the space of a few weeks had completely deviated. As she put on her earrings, she looked at herself in the mirror, remembering every intimate detail of what she and Del had shared.

Warm pleasure mixed with mortification. Her heart wrapped around thoughts of Del even as her mind tainted everything they'd done. No matter what her heart wanted, she should have never besmirched the family name with her sick, perverted fantasies.

Visuals of everything she and Del had shared together entered her mind. The night of the charity ball, then outside in his SUV. At the restaurant, at Sneak Peek, so many others. Even just times they shared alone. Every single episode played through her head like a movie, each scene vivid and evoking heated passion and playful fun. What was wrong with a little harmless sex? Had they hurt anyone doing what they did? What they'd shared was between the two of them and no one else, meant for their pleasure alone.

She crossed her arms, then shook her head, frowning at her reflection. No. Her fantasies *weren't* sick and perverted. She was normal. She'd had feelings for Del. And dammit, he'd had feelings for her, too. Their relationship had been leading somewhere beyond just fun exhibitionism and voyeurism.

Hadn't it? Or had she conjured all that up in her own head? Del had made her no promises other than wild and crazy sex. Had she read more into their relationship? Had she foolishly fallen in love with him, and her feelings hadn't been reciprocated?

What did it matter anyway? It was over. She'd made it clear to him yesterday in the barn. God, had she made it clear. She blinked back

tears remembering that conversation, at the way she'd treated him as if this had been all his fault.

She missed him, wished she could talk to him right now.

Yeah, she wasn't conflicted much. She'd pushed him away and now she wanted him back. He was probably glad to be rid of her. And it was probably for the best, anyway. They were ill-matched, had been from the beginning. Great chemistry did not make a forever match.

So why did she feel so damn miserable? Disgusted with herself, she turned away from the mirror and slipped on her watch and a bracelet. No other adornment. Keep it simple. Then she walked downstairs, thoughts pummeling her head nonstop.

Her father would never have forgiven her. Thank God he wasn't alive to see what was going to happen to the foundation. She'd resign, of course, and turn over the reins to her vice chairman. She didn't look forward to having that meeting with the board of directors, having to explain her actions. Nausea rose, but she fought it down.

The foundation would be in good hands, would continue to run smoothly. They would weather this scandal, with her stepping down as soon as possible.

She fought back tears, tired of crying, refusing to feel sorry for herself anymore. She looked down at her watch.

Six thirty. The newspaper was probably at the front door. Her stomach clenched in an agonizing knot, but she had never been the type to avoid the inevitable. She strolled to the door and opened it, afraid reporters would already be amassed and ready to snap her picture, bombard her with questions.

No one was there yet to snap her picture. But the newspaper awaited her, glaring up at her with a sickening finality. She swallowed, bent down and retrieved it, then shut and locked the door, turning around and

leaning against it. She took a minute to calm her raging heartbeat, catch her breath, then opened the paper, discarding everything with the exception of the section containing the society pages. With ruthless intent she flipped open the pages, sliding down the door to sit on the floor. Her legs shook so much she couldn't stand any longer.

She spread the pages open, her gaze scanning every picture. There was the charity horse race with corresponding photographs. She felt dizzy, her breaths coming in too fast now. Hyperventilating was a really bad idea, so she mentally slowed down each breath. Panic wasn't going to help her anyway, couldn't avoid the inevitable.

She looked. Looked again. Read the article. Nothing about her and Del. Only the work of the foundation, the success of the charity horse race, how much money had been raised and pictures of a few of the celebrities in attendance.

That was it.

That was it?

What the hell? She dropped the paper and stared straight ahead, not understanding.

Where were the pictures of her and Del? The photographer had taken them and run. He had to want to use them for—

Then it hit her. Of course. Dread made her stomach feel as if lead had been dropped in there. He hadn't sold the photographs to the main newspaper. He'd sold them to the tabloids.

Oh, God.

She managed to stand, her legs even shakier than before, kicked the newspapers out of the way and hurried into the kitchen, grabbing her keys.

She had to know, had to see them.

This was going to be oh so much worse. The society page in the newspaper was bad enough, but to be in the tabloids? It was so sordid.

Clutching her stomach, she went to the garage, hit the button to lift the door and started her car, hurrying down the driveway. Okay, where to find them? Her brain wasn't working! She had to think. She didn't buy the damn things, where were they?

Tabloids would be on sale at the grocery store down the road. She remembered seeing them there. The new weekly issues should be there this morning. Would it even be there? Of course it would. This was news, scandal even. Panic stricken, she drove the short distance and parked, tossed on her sunglasses and sauntered into the store, zooming into the magazine aisle.

There were at least seven tabloids there. All she did was glance at the titles of the magazines. She didn't even look at them, just grabbed one copy of each and went to the express checkout lane, hoping her face wasn't plastered across the front page of any of them. She purposely kept her head down and paid cash. After she checked out, she went to her car and pulled them all out of the bag, scanning the covers.

There, in one of the sleazy, best-selling rags, was her picture. It was grainy and dark, but was her and Del, embracing in the barn. She recognized the skirt she'd worn yesterday.

The headline was slapped across the top in bright black letters: "Candy Arroyo Does It Again! Hot Encounter With Her Latest Squeeze At Charity Horse Show!"

What? Candy Arroyo? The actress? Janine squinted, looked at the picture again. The woman's face was turned toward the camera, a look of utter ecstasy on her face.

It *was* Candy Arroyo! That picture wasn't her and Del at all, now that she looked closer at it. She flipped through the magazine until she found

the spread. More pictures. Of Candy, and her latest boyfriend. Both dressed very similarly to what she and Del had worn yesterday. So the pictures of Del and her could even be included in this spread, though she didn't think so. Had someone else scooped the photographer who'd taken the photos of her and Del with even clearer pictures showing Candy's face?

Shock made goose bumps stand up on her skin. Then a giddy, melty feeling warmed her all over, followed by a huge kick of regret as she realized what had been done on her behalf.

She so didn't deserve this.

Dear God. This whole thing had been a setup. To shove the photos of Del and her out of the limelight.

And she knew who'd done it.

*Trust me.*

Del had asked her to. And she hadn't.

Now she really did feel sick. Tears welled and spilled down her cheeks. She gripped the steering wheel, wanting to break down and sob.

*You idiot.* She slapped at the steering wheel, welcoming the sharp pain in her hands. She'd been so set on doing this on her own, to play the martyr and take her punishment instead of working with Del on a solution.

He'd solved the problem without her. He'd fixed it, just as he said he would. And she'd walked away from him. After insulting him, of course.

She didn't deserve a second chance with him, wouldn't blame him if he refused to talk to her.

But she was damn sure going to his house right now and beg his forgiveness.

He'd just saved her ass, her career, her company, even after all she'd said to him. But why? Why would he have done that for her, when he



could have just walked away, blown her off as a rich bitch princess who couldn't handle the pressure?

She started the car and drove, swiping away the tears.

It was time for her to grow up, to stop worrying what everyone else thought, or might think. She'd been having a wonderful time with Del, until she'd ruined it. No one else had turned this into a disaster, had put a wedge between them.

She had.

Heart in her throat, she pulled into his driveway and shut off the engine, pocketed her keys and walked up to his front door. God, she hoped he was home. And that he was alone. She rang the doorbell, feeling dizzy and sick to her stomach, praying that he would at least give her a chance to apologize before slamming the door in her face.

He answered the door wearing shorts, no shirt, his hair a mess, a day's growth of beard on his face. He leaned against the doorway, obviously waiting for her to speak.

"Good morning."

"Mornin'," he said, his face giving nothing away. No emotion, no sense of whether he was happy to see her, or unhappy she'd showed up at his door.

Nothing. She, who had given speeches in front of thousands, couldn't find the words to apologize to the man she loved.

*Say something, moron!* "Can I come in?"

He tilted his head. "You didn't bring breakfast with you."

At least he was speaking to her, hadn't shut the door in her face. "Sorry. It was an impulse drive."

He shrugged. "That's okay." He stepped aside and she walked in, wringing her hands and feeling a surge of hope. She was nervous, didn't

know what to say to him. She turned as soon as he shut the door. "I'm an ass."

He arched a brow. "You are?"

"Yes, and you know it. I'm so sorry."

His lips curled upward in a hint of a smile. "I take it you've seen the tabloids."

She nodded. "I should have trusted you."

He led her into his living room. "Yeah, you should have. I told you I'd take care of it."

"I know. I was in shock. I didn't think there was any way out." She slid onto the couch. "It's not a valid excuse. I'm so sorry, Del. I treated you so badly yesterday."

He shrugged. "Don't worry about it."

"Don't make excuses for me. I behaved like a shrew. And I should have believed you."

He sat next to her. Close to her. Then he picked up a strand of her hair, letting it slide through his fingers. She loved when he did that. It was so...possessive. Her heart began to race again, only this time the adrenaline rush wasn't from anxiety.

"I'd never leave you to face something like this alone, Janine. When we have sex together, we face the repercussions together."

"Is that how it is with...other women you've been with?"

"No. It's never been that way before. You're special."

"Why?" She threw it out there, needing to know the answer.

"Because I'm in love with you."

Her racing heart slammed on the brakes, crashing against her chest. "You love me?"

"Yes. *Je t'aime*, Janine."

Oh, God. In French, too. And that one she understood. She might fall over. “I love you, too.”

He grinned. “Then you need to start trusting in me. I’ll never let you dangle off the cliff alone.”

She was crying now, and didn’t care. Happiness had taken hold and wouldn’t let go. “I told you I was an ass. And I worry too much about propriety and what’s best for the foundation instead of what’s best for me.”

“And what is best for you?”

She crawled onto his lap. “You’re what’s best for me.”

“Sounds like you’re finally getting your priorities straight.” He lifted her and carried her upstairs to his bedroom, depositing her on his bed. They both undressed, putting on a show for each other. Janine took the longest since she had more clothes on, which was fine with her. She stared down at his naked form, his cock erect and ready for her, and that emboldened her. She stood on the bed and stripped for Del, loving the way his gaze followed her every movement as she took off her clothing and tossed each piece to the floor. When she was naked, he crawled on the bed and swept his hands up her legs, her thighs, grasping her buttocks and pulling her toward him.

When he planted his mouth over her pussy, she cried out, shocked, yet oh so ready to feel his lips against her pussy. His mouth was hot, wet, his tongue rolling over the sensitive parts of her. The mattress was unsteady and she had to hold onto his head for support, because her legs were shaky and her body was trembling, too.

“Del.” His tongue was magic, licking around her clit, diving into her pussy and making her crazy. She needed this release, desperate to let go of the tension that had held her in a tight vise the past day. And he was

relentless in his quest, his fingers digging into the flesh of her buttocks and refusing to let her go. He licked her slow and easy, and she watched.

God, she loved watching. It heightened her senses, made everything she felt so much stronger. Seeing Del's tongue licking around her clit, and being able to feel the sensations, made her want more. And more. She tilted her hips, fisted his hair and dragged her swollen flesh over his tongue.

She came, bursting with pleasure as she shuddered against his rolling tongue and lips, warm cream spilling from her. Del held her tight against his face and slid his tongue inside her pussy to capture every drop.

Janine collapsed onto the bed and Del crawled up her body, kissing her stomach, her ribs, lingering at her breasts to plant kisses on her nipples, licking and sucking them until they stood high and wet and hard. She shivered as he covered her with his big body.

"Are you cold?" He looked down at her, his lips glistening with her juices.

She shook her head. "No. I'm hot."

He nudged her legs apart and flexed forward, his cockhead resting at the entrance to her pussy. "Don't I know it."

She lifted her head, kissed him, rimming his lips with her tongue before settling back down on the bed. "I love you, Del."

"I love you, too." He surged forward, his cock sliding easily inside her.

She wrapped her legs around him and welcomed him home, lifting her hips to meet every slow thrust of his cock. This was magic, this slow lovemaking in the darkened room. They didn't have the drapes open, no one could see them. It was just the two of them, alone, sharing their love, sharing kisses, murmuring soft words. His hands moved along her ribs, her hips, then back up again to smooth along her breasts. He touched

her everywhere, spoke to her in a mixture of English and French, and her mind and body filled with love.

It was unhurried, emotional, and when she came, she sighed out his name and held tight as he groaned and spilled inside her with a shudder. Del rolled to his side and took her with him, his lips slanting across hers in a kiss that spoke of passion and tenderness.

Wrapped up in his arms was total bliss. "I don't think I ever want to leave this position."

He caressed her back. "You don't have to. We have all day."

She sighed. "So how did you do it?"

"With Candy?" He grinned. "She frequents Sneak Peek. A total exhibitionist, and she loves publicity. It was easy. I suggested and she went for it. We took pictures and made sure the tabloids got hold of them. I just made sure she and her guy wore the same clothes we had on yesterday."

She wasn't even going to ask how they managed to get the same clothing. Del was amazing.

"You're right. I should have trusted you to take care of it. I'll never forget that again."

He leaned in and kissed her, softly, and with a promise of so much more. "I'll never let you."

"I've done this alone for a long time, Del. My entire life, and especially since my father died."

"You don't have to be alone anymore. You have me."

"I've never had anyone before." It was frightening, exhilarating, daunting. "And you're...a handful."

He took her wrist and pulled her hand down to his already hardening cock. "I'll take that as a compliment."

She laughed.

“We’ve only scratched the surface, baby. There’s so much we still have to explore together. Remember, you must live to enjoy life.”

She squeezed his cock, stroked it, and felt life surging within her hand.

With Del, she intended to really begin to live her life, as she’d never lived it before. And she was going to stop looking over her shoulder to see if anyone was watching. Because she just didn’t care anymore. Not as long as she had Del by her side.

“I’ll trust you to show me all the ways there are to enjoy life,” she said, then leaned in and kissed him.

## About the Author

To learn more about Jaci Burton, please visit [www.jaciburton.com](http://www.jaciburton.com). Send an email to Jaci Burton at [jaci@jaciburton.com](mailto:jaci@jaciburton.com) or join her Yahoo! group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/jaciburtonsparadise> to join in the fun with other readers as well as her newsletter at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/jaciburtonjournal> for updates about future releases.

Look for these titles by Jaci Burton

*Now Available:*

Rescue Me  
Nothing Personal



*Friendship crosses boundaries and love becomes a triangle.  
Can Jana learn to trust—through submission?*

## Lisa's Gift

© 2007 Mackenzie McKade

When opportunity knocks, Jana Ryan knows it's time to face her demons and return to the city she ran fast and far away from. Her homecoming isn't exactly what she expects—she finds Lisa, her best friend, in a rather erotic position with the one man Jana has dreamt of since high school.

The redheaded beauty is everything Lisa promised Nicolas Marchetti. Jana is sexy and exquisite and he can't wait to sexually dominate both women. The triangle with the gorgeous redhead and beautiful blonde is every man's fantasy. Yet there's something about Jana that makes him want her and her alone. His attraction to her is unsettling—it goes beyond the physical.

Only by conquering the trials ahead of them, can Jana and Nicolas find their way into each other's arms. Forever.

Enjoy the following excerpt for *Lisa's Gift*:

Jana glanced back at Nicolas. He was staring at her. "What?"

"Do you want me to tell you what I see in you?" From the hungry look on his face she would rather not.

"No."

Again, he leaned back in the booth. That mischievous grin she remembered back when she used to watch him with his friends slipped across his face. "Scared?"

Hell *yes* she was scared. She had always wanted this man. The years hadn't changed anything. "Not interested." She played indifferent,

reaching for her wine and taking a sip. Then she released a heavy sigh to drive the point home.

A light danced across his features as his grin grew. “Liar.”

“Whatever.” She brushed him off with a tilt of her head. But if she thought that her impassive behavior was going to stop him, she should have thought again as she took another drink of her wine.

“You are scared—scared of the attraction between us.”

When his foot slid up her leg, Jana choked on the alcohol that chose that moment to go down the wrong way. Air. She needed air as her windpipe closed.

Within a heartbeat, Nicolas was by her side. “Gentle breaths.” He patted her back. “One and then another.”

*I’m dying.* She wheezed in a breath that went nowhere. She inhaled again, making a rather unbecoming sound like a cross between a snore and an asthmatic attack. The whole time Nicolas was there, talking, touching her softly.

It took a moment, but finally Jana could breathe again. Her eyes were misty and nose running as she excused herself and hurried toward the bathroom.

*What the fuck!* She leaned against the counter and stared at herself in the mirror. It was no mistake that Nicolas was coming on to her. And there was no mistake that Lisa didn’t mind. How Jana wished she could deny that he made her body burn. She had fantasized about being with him since she was just a teenager. What would it be like to make love to Nicolas Marchetti?

She couldn’t—could she?

*Nah...* She shook her head. It would be weird. He was Lisa’s boyfriend. But the fact was, she needed to feel the touch of a man. She wanted to find someone to love.

Nicolas just wasn’t the man for her.

Jana grabbed a tissue, dabbed her eyes, then blew her nose with a loud snort.

She needed a plan to get through dinner and then go home alone.

Concerned, Nicolas watched the bathroom door, and was relieved once Jana exited. He stood as she approached. Her eyes were swollen, her adorable nose red. "Are you okay?"

"Fine." Sitting at one end of the crescent-shaped booth, she refused to scoot over, forcing him to sit at the other side. "The wine just went down the wrong pipe." Picking up her glass, she hesitated then set it back down.

He slid clear around on the semi-circular seat until he was within touching distance from her. Her mouth went dry. She glanced at him, feeling her palms start to sweat.

The salad had arrived in her absence, and he busied himself tossing it, mixing the dressing and cheese, before placing a generous helping on her plate.

When he attempted eye contact she glanced away. She had grown distant, not that she had previously been warm by a long shot. He was back at ground zero.

Serving himself a heap of salad, he picked up his fork. "Where were we? Ah... Yes. I was just about to tell you what I see in you."

"I wish you wouldn't," she said, looking down into her plate as she stabbed at a piece of lettuce.

"Strength," he offered the single word.

Her head shot up. "*Strength?*" Their eyes met and he felt her surprise. Obviously she'd expected something superficial. Like how her eyes sparkled beneath the light like two crystals, or perhaps how silky her hair looked draped across her shoulders like a red curtain.

The salad was good, fresh and crisp, the dressing not too tart he noticed as he took a bite. He would have to remember to compliment Antonio later tonight.

Nicolas let her think about what he said before he continued. "Look at what you have achieved in such a short period of time." He picked up the basket the waiter had set before them and offered her a breadstick, but she shook her head. "You've been alone since you were eighteen. Moved to a different state. Started a new life where you had no friends or family to rely on. You have a college degree and have a brilliant career ahead of you. How many people can say that?"

A warm sensation filled him when she smiled. "A lot of people have degrees."

"True. But not all of them have put themselves through school," he countered taking a sip of his wine.

She stabbed another piece of lettuce with her fork, but didn't put it in her mouth. Instead she shrugged. "I was given a scholarship."

"You earned that scholarship. Even so you did this by yourself—alone." He placed his hand over hers. "Jana, Lisa says you are a strong, beautiful person. I know she's right."

A soft expression fell across her once-tight features as she extracted her hand. "Thank you." She grinned, dropping her gaze once again to her salad plate.

"What?"

Continuing to smile, she met his eyes. "You're not exactly what I thought you were."

He pulled his brows together. "What did you think I was?"

"Well, arrogant for one."

Nicolas feigned surprise as he flinched at her words.

She giggled, the sound like bells swaying in the breeze. "Superficial and a whoremonger."

He pressed his palms to his heart. "I'm hurt."

"As if," she said. Her eyes danced with laughter for the first time that night.

"Well perhaps whoremonger is accurate, because I sure want to taste your lips right now." An ache began between his thighs, tightening and pressing against his black slacks. His sight was riveted on her full lips. How soft would they be against his? Would she whimper softly beneath his attack?

"Nicolas. I'm sorry, but I'm simply not attracted to you." She swallowed hard, giving away the fact she lied. "If I've done anything to mislead you, I apologize." Her hands left the table.

It was a challenge he couldn't ignore.

"The thought of me pressing my lips to yours, of my tongue delving between them doesn't make your nipples hard?" He waited only briefly before saying, "Tell me your breasts aren't heavy. That a slight tingle hasn't begun slowly filtering through them, aching for me to stroke them? Place my hot...wet...mouth on them?"

He trapped her gaze with his and paused. "Tell me you're not moist just thinking of how my hands would feel caressing your body, stroking the flame that burns in your belly, building it into a raging wildfire. Because that's exactly what I would do to you."

With his last words her eyelashes lowered halfway, the thick fringe hiding how her eyes had grown steamy. The increased rise and fall of her chest was a dead giveaway that he had aroused her.

He continued.

"I would touch every inch of your body with my hands and mouth. I'd make you scream for me to take you. Then when every nerve ending grew so raw that your skin was alive, I would enter your pussy slowly until you tossed back your head and screamed my name."

“Nicolas,” he said his name in a whisper. “Your orgasm would explode as I filled you.”

“Stop.” She breathed the word.

What the hell had he done? His cock was rock hard. His palms itched to touch her. His mouth watered to taste her. This was torture and he had driven himself to this unbearable point. He couldn’t find the strength to release her from the hold he knew he had on her.

“Stop? Or do you really want me to lay you on this table in front of all these people? Grab your ankles, slowly parting your legs, before I bury my face between your thighs, licking and sucking your clit?”

Jana gulped down a gush of air. “Fuck.” She squirmed in her chair.

“Oh, doll, I will do more than fuck you,” he promised, the idea sending his hormones into a frenzy of desire.

“No. I didn’t mean— Oh shit! Just stop, Nicolas, stop.” She pressed her palm to her mouth. She mumbled through her fingers, “This isn’t right. You’re sleeping with Lisa.”

Nicolas’s hand slipped beneath the table. He cupped his hard erection as his eyelids grew heavy. *God, I wish this was your hand, doll.* “Lisa and I have an agreement.” He ran his fingers across his engorged cock. “There is no commitment between us.” He reached for her hand, removing it from her full lips, and she didn’t fight him. Instead her hand trembled. What would she do if he placed her hand between his legs, showed her how she affected him? He scooted closer to her.

Jana was almost his. He could feel her surrender in the softness of her skin, the way her fingers intertwined with his.

The server arrived with their main course and the moment was lost.

She jerked away from his touch. A light blush crossed her cheeks as her spaghetti was placed before her.

Damn!

But the evening was still young and Lisa had promised to stay away the entire night.

Don't get mad...get sexy!

## The Reinvention of Chastity

© 2007 Eve Vaughn

Plain Jane paralegal Chastity Bryant has had a raving crush on her boss Sebastian Rossi since meeting him. Always willing to jump at his beck and call, Chastity's world comes crashing in on her one morning when she overhears him laughing about her less than exciting life. To top it off, he freely admits that he's used her crush to his advantage!

After a pep talk from her friends, they devise a plan to teach the arrogant Sebastian a lesson. Armed with a new look and a new attitude, Chastity sets out to seduce her hunky boss and bring him to his knees.

Sebastian Rossi has always been able to depend on two things in life: his successful law practice and his dependable employee, Chastity. But his whole world is turned upside down when she walks into his office looking like she just stepped off the cover of a magazine. Now, all he can think about is her. He doesn't know what brought about the change, but one thing is certain, he'll stop at nothing to possess her.

Things are going according to plan for Chastity, but the only thing she hadn't counted on was falling in love.

Enjoy the following excerpt for *The Reinvention of Chastity*:

It was official.

Sebastian wanted Chastity Bryant. He'd reached his boiling point and could no longer deny what had begun from the moment she stepped into his office with her glamorous new look two months ago.

It grew more difficult with each passing day to watch her stroll around the office looking drop-dead gorgeous. It wasn't just her looks



either. Chastity now exuded a confidence that hadn't been there before, and he found it sexy as hell. He couldn't get a proper night's sleep from thoughts of her. He'd wake up in the middle of the night, body drenched with sweat after dreaming about burying himself between silky, chocolate thighs.

Whenever she walked past him, he couldn't tear his eyes away from her slow, rhythmic movements that seemed to scream, "jump me". He'd already lost count of how many times his dick got hard with just the mere mention of her name. Sebastian wanted to run his hands over her body just to see if that rich, dark skin of hers was as soft as it looked.

Once, he'd caught her nibbling on her bottom lip and he literally had to stop himself from grabbing her and tasting it for himself. Sebastian would sit at his desk for hours trying to concentrate on his work when all he could think about was stripping Chastity's clothes off, one article at a time—tasting every delectable inch of her.

Tossing his pen aside, he stood up in frustration. It was already past twelve. He might as well grab something to eat since he wasn't getting any work done. On his way out of the office he knew he'd pass by Chastity's desk.

His plan to keep walking without looking her way went down the tubes when he spied Jeremy leaning over her desk. Chastity gave his friend the big smile she used to give him. Her eyes twinkled with apparent amusement at whatever Jeremy was saying. The deep dimples in her cheeks gave her a look of sweet innocence.

Since her makeover, Chastity had taken to wearing low cut tops and today was no exception. The sexy décolletage on display was enough to set his pulse racing. His fingers itched to trace the tops of those generous mounds. She wore her hair pulled back into a ponytail tied with a pink satin ribbon. Although he preferred her hair flowing around her shoulders, she looked lovely.

An irrational burst of envy soared through his body, making him clench his fists. Unable to help himself, he walked over to them. "What are you two grinning about over here?" Sebastian cursed inwardly. He didn't mean for his voice to sound so harsh.

They looked up at him, Jeremy eyeing him with mild curiosity and Chastity looking slightly resentful, as though he'd intruded on a private conversation. Jeremy straightened up, an easy smile splitting his face. "What's up, Seb?"

"I was on my way to lunch actually."

The blond frowned. "I thought you had a business lunch with one of your clients."

"They had to reschedule," he lied. He wasn't about to admit that he canceled his appointment because his head was in his pants. "You didn't answer my question."

Jeremy frowned. "What question?"

Sebastian hated repeating himself, especially over something as trivial as this. "What were you two grinning about?"

"Just small talk. Chastity and I were on our way to lunch as well."

Sebastian's blood thundered. He wanted to knock Jeremy on his ass. He remembered his friend telling him of his interest in Chastity, but that didn't stop the green-eyed monster from rearing its head. A demon must have possessed him because he couldn't help saying, "Since we're all headed for lunch, let's all go together." His eyes never left Chastity's face.

Her lips tightened slightly before she turned her head away. She didn't seem pleased.

Tough.

"We were only going to the Gallery Mall, nothing fancy," Jeremy said, almost as if to put him off.

"I don't need anything fancy. You don't mind my tagging along, do you?" Sebastian knew very well that he was putting them in a position

where they couldn't refuse without looking like a couple of jerks. The look on Jeremy's face spoke volumes. Chastity's face, however, was unreadable and he wondered what was going on in that beautiful head of hers. "Do you mind, Chastity?"

She looked up at Jeremy with a smile, not bothering to answer Sebastian's question. "I'm going to the restroom before we go."

Jeremy smiled back. "No problem. Take your time."

Both men watched her retreating figure, her curvaceous bottom swaying from side to side with each step she took. God, he wanted her. When she was out of earshot, Jeremy turned on him, blue eyes blazing. "What the hell was that about?"

"What do you mean? I thought you said you didn't mind my joining you two."

"You know damn well I couldn't say otherwise."

"Why couldn't you? I would have."

"Don't play dumb with me, Romeo."

Sebastian shrugged. "Who's playing dumb? Haven't we had lunch together on numerous occasions?"

"Not with Chastity."

"Okay, fine. What's wrong with a little friendly competition?"

For a second, it looked like Jeremy wanted to deck him before his face relaxed into a smile. "You're a son of a bitch."

Sebastian laughed. "And don't you forget it."

"She's going to see right through this new interest you have in her. You never gave two flying fucks about her before this sudden change."

"Neither did you."

"Okay, so we're both bastards."

Sebastian cocked an eyebrow and held out his hand. "May the better bastard win?" Even as they shook hands, Sebastian guaranteed himself the victory.

The three of them decided to have a meal at a small tavern not too far from the office instead of trekking all the way downtown to the Gallery Mall. When shown to a booth, Jeremy slid in next to Chastity and Sebastian took the seat directly across from her. That was fine with him. This way, he could face her, and she'd have no choice but to look at him as well. He wouldn't allow her to ignore him, if he had any say in the matter.

The look of agitation on her pretty face told him that he was getting to her as well. Good. He wanted her to be as aware of him as he was of her.

"I think the Cobb salad looks good. Have you eaten here before, Jeremy?" she asked, turning to the blond. Sebastian knew exactly what Chastity was up to, but if she wanted to play games, she'd soon learn just how competitive he could be.

Fixing his gaze on his prey, he said, "Chastity, why don't you try the Oysters Casino. A nice little aphrodisiac, don't you think?"

She only spared him a brief glance before her eyes darted away again. She fluttered thick lashes at Jeremy as if he were some kind of rock star. "I'm not really in the mood for anything heavy. What do you think, Jeremy?"

"Hmm, I think I'll have a hamburger and fries. Probably not the healthiest choice, but I'll just have to hit the gym a little harder tonight."

"I think I'm going to stick to the salad. My ass is big enough as it is." She closed the menu with a sigh.

Jeremy grinned at her wolfishly. "At the risk of sounding like a lecher, I think your ass is just fine."

Chastity giggled, dimples popping out. Before Sebastian realized what was going on, his lunch mates fell into a deep conversation, completely excluding him. His fury grew with each passing second. By the time the waitress took their orders, he was ready to strangle them both. He knew

what Jeremy was up to, but what was up with Chastity's cold shoulder act? No woman had ever treated him like this before and it was driving him bananas. He hated being ignored, especially when it was by someone he wanted so damn much.

*It was nothing personal, just a business arrangement.*

## Nothing Personal

© 2007 Jaci Burton

Ryan McKay is a multi-millionaire with a problem. He needs a bride to fulfill the terms of his grandfather's will. Unfortunately, the one he chose just bailed on him and he's hours away from losing his company. Enter Faith Lewis—his demure, devoted assistant. Ryan convinces Faith to step in and marry him, assuring her their marriage is merely a business deal. Ryan is certain he can keep this strictly impersonal. After all, he's the product of a loveless marriage and for years has sealed his own heart in an icy stone. Despite Faith's warmth, compassion and allure, he's convinced he's immune to her charms.

Faith will do anything for her boss, but—marry him? The shy virgin sees herself as plain and unattractive, a product of a bitter mother who drummed into her head that she wasn't worthy of a man's love. But she agrees to help Ryan fulfill the terms of his grandfather's will, hoping she doesn't lose her heart to him in the process.

But love rarely listens to logic, and what follows is anything but business.

Enjoy the following excerpt for *Nothing Personal*:

She tried to stand patiently while Ryan slowly slipped each satin covered pearl button from its tiny loophole. But his touch did things to her sense of equilibrium. She shivered each time his warm knuckles brushed the bare skin of her back.

"Are you cold?" Ryan's voice whispered softly against her ear.

"Not really."

“You’re shivering.”

“Um...yes.”

“Why?”

“I don’t know.” *Liar.*

Ryan’s hands stilled. “Does my touch bother you?”

His touch most definitely bothered her. But not in the way he thought.

“No, it’s fine. Go ahead.”

She steeled herself against any more outward signs of his effect on her. It wouldn’t do at all to fall into bed with him, no matter how much his skin on hers made her tingle. She’d made a bargain for two months and needed that time to get to know her new husband.

These were new sensations, new feelings, and her senses were already on overload from the day’s events. She couldn’t handle much more without a complete meltdown.

But then his hands moved lower as he freed the buttons near her bottom. The chills returned.

“I think there’s enough undone now that I can get out of this thing,” she stammered.

“Just a few more,” he said, ignoring her request. Obviously his touch on her skin didn’t affect him at all. “Do you need me to help you take it off?”

“No!” Faith cringed, not meaning for her denial to sound so forceful. She turned to Ryan. His gray eyes darkened like smoldering storm clouds. Maybe he wasn’t so oblivious to the contact between them. “What I meant to say was, I can get this off by myself. But thank you, anyway.”

He threw her a crooked smile. Now that her dress was all but slipping off her body, why didn’t he leave?

“I’ll just wait here while you change, in case you need me again. No need wandering the halls half-naked for help.”

Half-naked. Her cheeks flushed with heat. The dress was completely open in the back, and she had her hands firmly pressed against her chest to keep it from dropping to the floor. "It's almost falling off me right now, Ryan. I hardly think I'll need any more assistance. But thank you for your help. Goodnight."

Hoping he'd grab a clue that she wanted to be alone to undress, she fled to the dressing area.

*The satin nightgown.* She had no other choice. It was either that or eat her sandwich naked. Bet Ryan would like that. The way his eyes had gleamed when he saw her in her wedding gown led her to believe there might be a spark of interest.

She pushed the thought aside. Ridiculous. Ryan McKay had never been interested in her. Why would he be? She was nothing like the women he escorted. Not even close.

Attempting to redirect her thoughts to her hunger, she removed her underthings and slipped the gown over her head. Unable to resist, she ran her hands down the cool satin. A quick glance in the mirror shocked her. The gown molded to her body like a lover's hand, clearly showcasing every minimal asset she had.

Why hadn't she heard the door close? Surely Ryan had left by now. Faith waited a few more seconds for the sound of the door closing, but didn't hear anything.

"Ryan?"

"Yeah?"

He was still there but his voice was muffled.

"What are you doing?"

"Eating."

"Oh." She peered around the doorway into the bedroom. He sat at the table next to her bed, eating one of the sandwiches Leland had fixed for her.



“You haven’t eaten yet, Faith. Come out and have one of these sandwiches.”

“No, that’s okay. I’m not that hungry, really.” Right. She was surprised Ryan couldn’t hear her stomach grumbling in the other room.

“Don’t be ridiculous. Come out here now and eat with me.”

Fortunately the gown had a matching satin wrap that she quickly donned. Hunger won out over modesty. She wanted to get some food before he ate it all. She tightened the belt on the robe and entered the bedroom.

As she crossed in front of him, his eyes widened. Faith clutched the edges of the robe over her chest, feeling less than adequate in a gown that should have been worn by a goddess like Erica, not by her. She didn’t do it justice.

“Hungry?” he asked.

Faith nodded. “Starving. I hadn’t realized that I hadn’t eaten until Leland mentioned something about food.”

Ryan smiled. “I know. When I saw the food on the table my stomach reminded me I hadn’t eaten since breakfast. You don’t mind, do you?”

“Why would I mind?” She grabbed a sandwich and tried not to shove it in her mouth. With as much dignity as she could muster considering the depth of her hunger, she took a bite of the delicious turkey sandwich.

He sipped a glass of tea and watched her eat. At first she was self-conscious, but then her appetite took over and she downed the sandwich in no time flat.

Satisfied, Faith sat back and took a drink. And still he stared at her.

“Is something wrong?” She knew he wanted to say something, but didn’t. She chewed her lip in anticipation.

Without a word he reached across the table and drew his thumb against the corner of her mouth, then slowly dragged it across her

bottom lip. Faith watched in rapture as he brought his thumb to his mouth and licked it with agonizing slowness.

“You had mayonnaise on the corner of your lip,” he said, his voice low and oh-so-sexy.

Was he deliberately trying to drive her crazy? She grabbed the napkin and swept it across her mouth. “Thank you.”

His dark eyes warmed her. “It was my pleasure.”

She couldn’t tear her gaze away from him, despite knowing she should stop whatever was happening between them. She simply could not deal with any more today.

Thankfully, Ryan stood. “I’m sure you’re tired. I’ll let you get some sleep.”

Faith rose from the table, nodding. “Thank you for your help with the dress.”

“You’re welcome,” he said and stepped toward her, taking her hands in his. He pulled her against his chest and slid his arms around her back.

The crisp hairs of his chest rubbed her breasts. The thin silk of the gown and robe did little to keep the heat of his body from hers. Her nipples hardened against him, the rush of desire almost dropping her. Her limbs turned to gelatin and she felt weightless and lightheaded.

“Two months, Faith,” he said softly as his head dipped towards her. “That’s a very long time. Are you sure?”

This wasn’t fair. No one had ever held her like this, made her feel such uncontrollable need. She wanted so much to experience these feelings, to step toward that desire and know what she hadn’t known before. Blood pounded at her temples and liquid heat pooled deep within her. She was certain Ryan could sense her reaction because he tightened his hold on her, his hands softly kneading the muscles of her back, gradually sliding lower and lower.

"I...it's...you agreed to it." Pitiful excuse.

"I know. How stupid of me."

The smoke-filled depth of his eyes drew her in, hypnotizing her senses, rushing over her like a wildfire out of control.

If his lips drew any closer they'd touch hers. Faith was sure she'd die if they did. She was already losing control, inhaling his scent with rapid breaths, his hands burning against the silk of her gown, drawing her ever nearer to the heat of his lips.

Then just as suddenly as it started, the storming inferno was over. Ryan stepped back, his lips parted as the hint of a smile crossed his features.

"Tomorrow, you move into my bedroom. Goodnight, Faith."

He turned around and walked out, closing the door behind him.

Faith stood in the middle of the room, wondering what had just happened. Her breathing still hadn't returned to normal. The rhythm of her heart continued to pound its staccato beat. She still felt him, smelled him, all but tasted him on her lips as the memory of his thumb against her mouth singed her skin.

Despite her thoughts about needing to wait, wanting to wait, she had been ready to leap into her husband's arms.

She thought she had more self-control than that. It was obvious her inexperience was no match for the powerful charm of Ryan McKay. She'd have to be extra careful over the next couple months and try to keep her distance from him. Too much of his overpowering sexuality and she'd self combust. Clearly, she was not ready at all for an intimate encounter with Ryan.

Two months wasn't nearly long enough.

And yet, two months was a very long time.

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