



TRIXIE STILLETTO

**SCARECROW &
BETSY MCGEE**

Book II

**MATTRESS
GAMES**

SCARECROW & BETSY MCGEE

BOOK II: MATTRESS GAMES

“Don’t say a word,” Roarke murmured.

His lips were a whisper against Betsy’s ear, and his hands were at her waist. She leaned back. She honestly didn’t know if it were a conscious decision. All Betsy knew was that, when she felt his hard body behind her, she melted from the inside out. His hands, those wonderful strong yet gentle hands, slid from her waist up over the curve of her stomach until they rested just below her breasts. She swore they swelled in anticipation of his touch. She threw her head back a bit on the gasp she couldn’t keep from escaping.

His mouth moved down her neck until he reached the pulse point at its base. He nipped and Betsy felt the touch all the way to her core. She felt the hard length of him as it nestled against her cheeks.

“It’s handy being in a mattress factory, isn’t it?” His whispered words sent a chuckle through her. “Shush. We have to keep this quiet, but I can’t wait another minute to have a taste of you again.”

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Scarecrow & Betsy McGee

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Eight Is Never Enough

SCARECROW & BETSY MCGEE
BOOK II:
MATTRESS GAMES

BY
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*To my critique group,
thanks for giving Betsy and Roarke the once-over.*

To Tom, for all the truly important reasons!

CHAPTER 1

Betsy looked at the address listed in the newspaper ad. Yep, this was the right place. She didn't get it. This was supposed to be a factory, but it was located in a section of Buffalo known as Riverside. Having fallen on hard times over the last two decades, Riverside was now a downward sliding neighborhood of two-family homes, bars and restaurants. The area still had an Italian feel, but she could also detect some Puerto Rican influence.

She gazed again at the two-story faded brick building that looked more like a storefront with apartments above it than a mattress factory. Perhaps this was just the home of the corporate offices and retail sales floor while the actual factory was at another location.

Well, it didn't matter. It wasn't as if she had a lot of choices. The job market in Buffalo wasn't great for a forty-plus year-old divorcée whose rat of an ex-husband had cleaned out their bank accounts before heading to the Caymans with his new twenty-five-year-old bimbo of

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a wife, while dodging all requests for court-ordered alimony.

Betsy took a deep breath, pulled down the front band of her new bra—which wouldn't have made Playtex proud—and made sure her blouse was tucked in all the way around the waistband of her skirt. Time was wasting, and she was getting neither younger nor wealthier. She squared her shoulders and stepped off the curb to cross the street.

At that exact moment, a black muscle car roared to a stop in front of the building. They double-parked blocking the southbound lane of the narrow street, and two men exited the driver and passenger doors. They were wearing suits that looked like they cost more than Betsy's mortgage payment and stood out like sore thumbs in this lower middle-class neighborhood. The driver then opened the back door and a younger man stepped out of the car.

He was good looking, Betsy noted. Not in the same way of her mystery lover from The Triple D Ranch & Spa, but when he looked right at her and smiled, Betsy couldn't help but straighten her posture, stick out her boobs and smile in return. His smile flashed again showing a mouthful of brilliant white teeth this time. He raised his hand in greeting and Betsy was almost blinded by the light flashing from his rings.

There was something familiar about the man. Before Betsy could place him, a woman stuck her head out a second-floor window Betsy hadn't noticed was open. She called something down to the man and he looked away from Betsy. She couldn't understand the words due to the traffic sounds, but the woman's tone was universal. That was one unhappy lady. The man gestured dismissively then strode into the building as if he were doing a tango in a grand ballroom.

It was the gait that did it for Betsy. She'd seen that gait, followed by the smile, numerous times on television. He was Vinnie Gianelli, owner of the Gianelli Mattress Factory. His commercials were loud and raucous, but it was his Italian operatic tenor singing the God-awful

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company slogan that made the spots stand out in Betsy's mind.

Because the Gianelli Mattress Factory was well-known for making your mattress within twenty-four hours of the day you ordered it and promising free, next-day delivery in any part of Buffalo. But the slogan was what made Betsy grimace. At the end of every commercial spot, Vinnie would smile and then do a campy bad impression of Don Corleone saying, "Take a Gianelli Mattress and we'll bring it home to you!"

Betsy sighed again. Well, there were worse things than working for a company with bad taste in advertising campaigns. Betsy watched as the two large men followed their boss inside the building. She took another deep breath and started to cross the street again. The only way she was going to get this job was to fill out her application.

* * *

Roarke Mathews, aka Scarecrow, lowered his binoculars, rubbed his eyes then looked again. "Damn. It's her. What the hell is she doing here?"

"What?" his partner for this stakeout, Libby McClellan, looked over from where she was re-loading a memory stick into one of the high-powered digital cameras they were using to take pictures of every person going in and out of the Gianelli Mattress Factory.

Roarke grunted. "Nothing. But I just may have found us a way inside."

Libby raised one well-shaped eyebrow. "No shit? Who?" She looked down at the street and saw Betsy opening the door to Gianelli's.

"Hey, isn't that the lady from The Triple D?"

"Yes. And I don't want to hear another word on the subject. I'm going to go get in position to grab her after she's done."

He left his post and walked to the door of the small apartment they were using, trying to ignore Libby's throaty laughter as it followed him. McClellan was a good investigator and a smart agent. But Scarecrow

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felt weird working with someone. He was a loner. Always had been, always would be.

This just wasn't good. No one in the company knew everything that had happened between him and Betsy McGee. He was determined to keep it that way.

What they did know was bad enough. The other agents on the elite Ranger team that was part of the Security and Safety Agency—acronym S.A.S—had been doing nothing but ribbing him since they'd taken down the diamond smuggling ring. That was because they knew Ms. McGee had rescued him, not once, but twice, before all the shooting was over. He, the Scarecrow, known across the world as one of the meanest and most self-sufficient operatives in any situation, had been rescued by a slightly out-of-shape, divorced, ex-waitress and single mother. He didn't want to think about what his partner would say if she knew the truth—that there had been more than just rescuing going on.

It was what happened after the smuggling operation was cleaned up and he took Betsy McGee back to her cabin that had been causing Roarke uncomfortable flashbacks. That's when he'd lost every ounce of control he valued as much as his weapon and had boinked Betsy like a madman. Even now, two weeks after that fateful night, he swore he could still feel the way her pussy had closed around his cock like a tightly-fitting glove. His cock was already starting to gear up as he remembered.

Mathews shook his head and forced that memory away. Who'd have thought such a woman would make him completely lose his control like that? She wasn't beautiful—at least in the traditional sense. And he'd known a lot of beautiful women in his time. In the light of day, away from the adrenaline high of working deep undercover, Mathews just couldn't understand it. He knew the last thing he wanted to do was get involved with her again. Sure, he had run a check. He

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knew her name, address, phone number, bank account balance and the whereabouts of her ex. It didn't mean anything that her number and address were imprinted on his brain. He had a near photographic memory so there were a lot of numbers stored there.

It also didn't mean anything that he'd driven by her house a couple of times and that he had even called once to hear her voice even though he hadn't said a word.

He got into his silver Camaro and pulled out onto a side street. He'd just wait for her at home. He knew why she was going inside Gianelli's. It made perfect sense. They were hiring factory workers. With her bank account, she was in desperate need of a job. All they had to do was hope she got it. Then he'd just have her keep her eyes open. She wouldn't be in any danger. Not like she'd been at The Triple D.

What he'd felt when she'd dashed out of the woods brandishing that huge limb over her head like an Amazon had been, well, terror...and then relief when no one ended up nailing her with a stray bullet.

There was no way that could happen with this case. It was a simple bit of money laundering. He wouldn't be putting her in the line of fire by asking her to nose around.

The plan was they were only going to make their move on Gianelli when he was moving the next mattress. And so far, he'd done that overnights on Sunday when the factory was closed. All they needed was a little advance notice when the next special mattress was going to be delivered.

That's where having Betsy inside would help. It would be a snap and involve no danger whatsoever.

* * *

Betsy sang along with the radio as she pulled into her driveway. It felt great having a job, and it was a better one than she'd hoped for. She was going to be a beginning secretary in the receiving department for the Gianelli Mattress Factory. Yay! She would get paid ten dollars an

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hour and work from eight-thirty to two-thirty. That meant she'd be able to get Bobby Jr. off to school and be home in time to meet his bus.

Maybe she'd do something special tonight like order a pizza for them to celebrate. She turned off her car and sat for a moment. The interview had been great. Heck, she'd been great.

Even meeting the boss Vinnie Gianelli himself had gone well. He wasn't anything like she'd expected either. From his commercials, she'd expected a smarmy, rough and gruff exterior, but he had been pleasant and urbane. She had seen certificates on his office wall—diplomas from Harvard and some Italian Divinity School.

Just proves that appearances could be very deceptive, she thought.

Although he did look and dress the part of a young Mafia-made man, when Vinnie had welcomed her to the company, he'd been the perfect gentleman. Betsy slapped her forehead with her palm. What did I think, just because he's reputedly in the mob, he'd talk and act like a slug?

Yes, appearances were deceptive. Deception made her think about her adventure two weeks ago—her wild weekend and the few hours of extraordinary lovemaking with a total stranger.

Betsy thought again about her mystery man. It was strange. She should be embarrassed and mad as hell. Here she'd saved his bacon several times and what had she gotten for it? Well, to be truthful, the best sex of her life.

It had been what she'd been going for when she decided to spend the weekend at The Triple D, hadn't it? She'd been trying to break out of her boring, middle-aged, mom role. She'd just like to know his name.

She sighed.

After she'd awakened Saturday morning, she'd perused all the television news programs and bought all the local newspapers looking for information about what she'd participated in. She'd known, of

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course, that it was a big deal at the time. It didn't take a genius to figure that out when she'd seen New York State Troopers, FBI and Marines all in action that night.

Finally, she found a three-paragraph story at the bottom of a page in the *Buffalo News* saying a massive, multi-organizational sting had netted a sizeable shipment of illegal diamonds at The Triple D. The story said arrests were being made, but the subjects' names were being withheld by order of the *Homeland Security Act*. That had made Betsy nervous. But knowing it was a big deal didn't help her when it came to figuring out who her mystery man was. His hair had been a bit too shaggy for a Marine, not long and flowing like a hero in a romance novel, but too long for being on active duty.

There was something else about him that didn't ring of the military. Sure he bit out orders like a drill sergeant, but as far as she could tell, he didn't follow them worth a damn. Come to think of it, that probably ruled out FBI too. From what she'd read in her romances, the Bureau didn't suffer cowboys either.

But Betsy also would bet her next mortgage payment, which thanks to this new job she just might have a prayer of paying, he was definitely an agent. The question she hadn't been able to answer yet was, for whom?

She pulled the keys out of the ignition and decided she wouldn't waste any more time worrying about her mystery man. He probably didn't even live in Buffalo. As much as she'd like a repeat performance of that wonderful night at The Triple D, it was better this way. She didn't know if she had enough flame-retardant panties to see him anymore.

Betsy had a moment's regret. It was for the best she would never see her mystery man again. But a large part of her heart wished that wasn't the way it was going to be. More than the amazing, hot desire she'd forgotten could exist between a man and a woman, the mystery

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man had given Betsy something else. He'd given her self-respect.

She kicked herself when she thought about how she'd let her ex-husband take that away when he left her high and dry. *Never again.* She knew again she was a strong, attractive woman. She could go it alone. She had a feeling it wouldn't be as fun as sharing things with her mystery man, but she could do it. Betsy opened the car door and walked to her house.

She was looking down to put the key in her kitchen door when the hand came around her neck locking her into place against the strong, hard male body behind her.

"Don't scream." His voice was raspy and made her think of sweaty sex on a large, soft rug in front of a stone fireplace. She almost melted into a puddle right at his feet. *He* was here. She relaxed against him and felt the shape of his penis as her hips nestled against him. She almost sighed in relief.

"Don't you think it's time we introduced ourselves?" Betsy was so proud of the way her voice sounded. It had just the right amount of amused interest in it. She hoped it would offset the way her hips were cupping his shape as faithfully as if they were made to be together all night, every night. Or all day for that matter.

She felt him tense and then felt the quiet rumble of his chuckle in his chest.

He released her and she turned to look at him. He looked much better than he had the last time she saw him. Not that he'd been hard on the eyes then. But now, with the bruises from the beating faded, dressed in well-fitting chinos and a red polo shirt, he was like a dessert buffet for her starving eyes. It took every ounce of her control not to smack her lips in anticipation.

She held out her hand. "I'm Betsy McGee, but I'm sure you know that since you found me. You are?"

He only hesitated for a second then wrapped his strong brown hand

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around hers. She felt the tingle shoot up her arm and straight to her pussy.

“Roarke. Roarke Mathews. The pleasure is mine.”

“Roarke.” Betsy’s tongue wanted to wrap around the vowels and consonants. “Well, nice to meet you finally, Roarke.”

He inclined his head. His hair was black as the ace of spades. His eyes—those wonderful eyes she’d dreamed about every day since she’d last seen him—were bluer than the depth of Lake Erie. She almost lost her ability to breathe just at the sight of him. Those eyes of her fantasies darkened and seemed to be moving closer. She closed her eyes. He was going to kiss her and she wanted that touch and more. She wanted it to the exclusion of thought, breath or even answers. For the first time in her life, Betsy felt like a total sensualist. All she wanted was to feel this man touching her, kissing her, stroking himself and her to the ultimate climax.

When his lips met hers, she felt as if the world she hadn’t even realized had been tilted, righted. She was standing in the doorway of her modest home. Her comfortable, if a bit out-dated kitchen, was behind it. It was a place where she’d cried a bucket of tears over her ex-husband’s betrayal. It was the place where she’d vowed to her sleeping son that she would keep their lives sane. And with this one kiss, she was ready to forget it all for the passion his touch evoked. But what a kiss this was. It was all textured and layered. Devastatingly slow, it was if he was making a meal of her lips.

Betsy sighed and let herself go, melting against his hard body, her breasts plastered against his chest. Her hipbones meshed with his. Through her dress she could feel her pussy weeping its need. His cock lay like a live, pulsating rod of steel against her belly. She felt an overwhelming urge to take him in her mouth, to feel her lips spread wide to take him deep into her throat.

Finally, with one last swipe of his tongue across hers, he pulled

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away. She opened her eyes. It seemed to take forever as if her lids were too heavy to move. When she could see again, what she saw took her breath. There was raw desire in his eyes and sweat beading on his top lip. She leaned forward and licked the moisture clean, and he groaned. His hands, clutching her butt, dug in painfully and she felt the upward surge of his pelvis as his groan escaped his mouth.

“God, woman, you undo me. Can we go inside before we get arrested for public indecency?”

So enthralled was Betsy that it took a moment for his words to sink through her passion into her mind.

She nodded her head numbly and reached for the door. How she managed to get the key in the lock she didn't know because she felt his gaze as it swept over her like a physical caress. The door finally opened and she managed to convince her legs to move inside. He followed her with the grace of a hungry panther. And she was dinner. He stalked around her kitchen once. She looked and felt a little ashamed. It screamed suburban mom on a low budget.

She started to apologize, then stopped. No. Her kitchen didn't matter. What did matter was getting some answers.

“So, what brings you to my little haven, Roarke?” Betsy was proud of how calm her voice sounded. He wouldn't be able to tell her heart was still racing like she'd run a marathon. Would he?

“Aren't you at least interested in what happened with the deal at the ranch?”

Betsy nodded. “Sure. I read the tiny bit they had in the newspaper. The reporter should've called me. I could've told them more than he got. What are you, Roarke? A special agent with the FBI?”

“No.”

“I didn't think so.” Betsy bit her lip. “I know...I read a couple of months ago they were starting a new super agency for homeland security. Do you work for them?”

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Roarke frowned. "I knew you were just a bit too quick for my own good the moment you knocked me down in the bar."

Betsy smiled.

Roarke prowled again. He picked up a picture of her son, looked at it, set it down, then started to move again. Standing still, leaning against her kitchen sink, was one of the hardest things Betsy had ever done. She knew who was in charge and it wasn't her. She just had to remind herself of the principles of prey. When a predator was stalking you, the best bet was just to play dead.

"Technically, yes. I'm with the Security And Safety Agency now."

Betsy nodded. "That's right. You guys are deep undercover and report to the Homeland Security Agency, right?"

"That's right. We can work any and all types of crimes. We're not limited to domestic or international venues like some other agencies."

Betsy smiled. "Wow. I was impressed even when I thought I'd helped out a special agent of the FBI. Now I'm even more impressed. But if you're here to thank me for helping you out, that's not necessary. Although it would've been nice to have wakened up with you, instead of an empty cabin."

She held up her hand when he started to protest. "No, I know. You left me your card with a phone number on it. That was sweet."

Roarke had the grace to look embarrassed. But Betsy was feeling gracious. It was hard to be bitchy when you were so damn glad to see someone. Anyway, she'd wanted adventure that weekend. That's why she'd gone to the stupid ranch in the first place. She just hadn't quite expected that kind of adventure.

"Why did you come find me now?" she asked.

He looked away and fiddled with one of the plate warmers sitting on the countertop. "I have a proposition to make," he finally said.

His voice was like warm cream poured over her body. And it responded with appropriate quickness. "Oh my. I mean, okay. I mean,

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my son will be home in about a half-hour.”

Roarke looked first turned on, then amused.

“Although I want to take you up on that idea,” he murmured, moving so he stood right in front of her.

She couldn’t breathe without inhaling the enticing, warm scent of him. The melting continued deep inside her body at an alarming rate. A few more minutes and she would be nothing more than a puddle at his feet. *But what a way to go.*

“But that’s not the kind of proposal I was talking about.”

Betsy’s burgeoning desire popped like a balloon flitting around a parking lot. “Oh.”

“Yes, oh,” Roarke said. Then he pulled her into his arms again and Betsy gasped at the feelings rushing through her. “On second thought, damn my proposition. Yours is much better.”

She opened her mouth to protest and forgot what she was going to say. This man took kissing to a higher level than she ever believed possible. In fact, Betsy hadn’t been stretched to such a breaking point just by a meeting of lips and tongues in longer than she cared to remember.

His hands moved from her shoulders down her spine to her hips where he pulled her tighter against his lower belly. She wished with all her might that there were no clothes between them. No barriers between them at all. As if he could read her mind, his fingers went to the buttons of her blouse. Soon it was open, and his fingertips were tracing across the tops of her breasts. She looked up, praying she wouldn’t see disappointment, or worse, in his eyes. He was a man who was probably used to women who spent all their days concentrating on making their bodies into something a man could dream about. She was a woman who struggled to keep herself and her son afloat.

No matter how many walks around the block she took with the dog, she could never lose the roundness she’d carried around her hips since

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puberty. She knew her breasts were fighting a sometimes-losing battle with gravity. But ignoring the problem was part of how she'd reached this point in her life. She wouldn't ignore things any more, but she also wouldn't fixate on things like having a twenty-year-old model's body either. If he found her unattractive, so be it. Her life would go on.

But what she saw in his eyes when she looked up stole her breath. There was the hard glare of undeniable desire. More...there was reverence.

"God, you're an amazing delight to me," he murmured. His fingers traced down the slope of her breast, nudging first one nipple through the material of her bra and then drifting over to the other. The bra she'd felt earlier was a long way from a sexy foundation now felt as sensuous as the finest silk.

His lips followed his fingers as he kissed and licked his way across her chest.

"How could any man walk away from this?" he queried.

Betsy was beyond answering as desire stole her breath and voice.

The sound of the loud screech of school bus brakes intruded on them like a bucket of cold water.

"That's Bobby, Junior. The bus is early," Betsy gasped pulling away from Roarke. "It stops at the corner. We've got about five minutes until he comes through the door."

She turned her back to Roarke, knowing if she looked in his face and saw the desire from earlier, she'd be tempted to pull him to her bedroom, lock the door and let her son fend for himself.

Only when she'd buttoned her blouse and taken a few calming breaths did she turn back to look at Roarke. It was a bit exhilarating to see he was struggling to control his desire as hard she was.

"I guess we have to get back to your proposition, huh?" she asked.

Roarke ran a hand over his face once, twice, and then nodded. "You're right. I know you got a job today at Gianelli's Mattress

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Factory. We need you to keep your eyes and ears open.”

“Please don’t tell me there’s something illegal going on there,” she said on a groan.

“Afraid so. He’s running money.”

“Oh,” Betsy said. “Why don’t you just arrest him then?”

“Because we think he’s counterfeiting too. We need to catch him at it to make the charges stick.”

Betsy nodded. “And you think they’re doing it somewhere in the factory?”

“That’s what our best intel says. We want to catch them when they’re actually moving the money out. They do it on weekends when the factory is closed. We want someone inside to try to find out when it’s going to happen next so we can have some warning.”

Betsy chewed on the inside of her bottom lip then sighed. “I guess that means I can’t count on having this job forever then, huh?”

“Well, I don’t know about that,” he said. “Our info could be wrong. If it’s just a normal mattress factory, we won’t do anything.”

“But your gut tells you it isn’t normal, correct?”

Roarke nodded. “That’s right. I just can’t prove it yet.” He paused. “Look, I know it’s a lot to ask. I don’t want you to get into trouble. I just know, from the other weekend at the ranch, that you’re quick on your feet and pick up on a lot of things most people don’t. So, when you’re working at the factory, just listen.”

Betsy nodded. “If this is just money laundering and counterfeiting, why is S.A.S. involved? Is there more to this? Something to do with national security?”

Roarke sighed. “I can’t tell you that right now. It’s classified. Just keep your ears open, okay?”

Betsy nodded. “Okay. But how should I contact you if I learn something? Should I call the number on the card you gave me?”

“You can always call that number. But you shouldn’t have to for

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this job. I'll be seeing you every day."

Before Betsy could answer, the front door swung open and she heard the excited cry of her son. She turned back and found the kitchen was empty. Roarke was gone.

What was a woman to do when a man just kept disappearing in thin air on her?

CHAPTER 2

It was the end of her first week at Gianelli's, and Betsy knew full well why Roarke wanted her to keep her eyes and ears open. Things were getting stuffed here and it wasn't just mattresses. So far, though, she hadn't been able to give Roarke the information he needed to close down the operation. She was hoping things would be different before the night was over. Because this morning, she'd learned there was going to be a late night delivery at the factory. She and Roarke planned to still be on site when the delivery arrived.

Now came the tricky part. The plan was simple—perhaps too simple. She would hide in the ladies room while everyone left the building. After the last security sweep for the day, around six, she would leave her hiding spot and turn off the security system. Roarke and his team would slip into the back factory entrance and reset the system.

Then they were going to wait inside. Roarke had warned that it

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could be a long wait since the factory was officially closed for the holiday weekend.

Betsy sighed and felt her adrenaline kick in as she heard the door slam behind the guard. She left the restroom where she'd been hiding and decoded the security panel for the entire building. Bobby was spending this weekend doing his Scout trip. He wouldn't be returning until five o'clock Sunday. That meant she could spend the entire time waiting with Roarke for the caper to go down.

She felt a shiver race down her spine and knew immediately Roarke was behind her. How did he do that?

"Don't say a word," he murmured.

His lips were a whisper against her ear, and his hands were at her waist. She leaned back. She honestly didn't know if it were a conscious decision. All Betsy knew was that, when she felt his hard body behind her, she melted from the inside out. His hands, those wonderful strong yet gentle hands, slid from her waist up over the curve of her stomach until they rested just below her breasts. She swore they swelled in anticipation of his touch. She threw her head back a bit on the gasp she couldn't keep from escaping.

His mouth moved down her neck until he reached the pulse point at its base. He nipped and Betsy felt the touch all the way to her core. Her clit swelled. It was thrilling, especially since she could tell he was excited as well. She felt the hard length of his penis as it nestled against her cheeks.

When he exchanged bites for lingering sucks on her neck, she put her hands over his own and moved them until he was covering her breasts. He squeezed gently and Betsy's moan escaped.

"Shhhh," he whispered. "We don't want the guys in the truck hearing us."

Betsy gasped. That was the best she could do. His talented fingers were driving her insane. They traced over the bottom of her breasts. It

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shouldn't be sending shock waves through her. The touch was so light it was almost as if a feather was brushing her. And there was the fact she had on a sturdy cotton blouse and the nylon from her bra. But the way the pleasure was zinging through her bloodstream, it was as if his skin was touching hers. Her nipples were turgid with the desire to feel his fingers warming them, as her fleshy mounds swelled with desire.

All the while his hands were doing their delicate dance over her breasts his mouth was taking her up the slow walk to heaven against her neck and nape. When he bit on the place where neck and shoulder met, she shuddered and twisted her head around towards him. His lips trailed upward to nibble along her jaw line.

Betsy was awash in sensation. She didn't care that they were standing in a darkened salesroom decorated like a normal bedroom, waiting for a crime to be committed. She didn't care there were agents posted everywhere outside the building, other agents listening to every creak, every footfall, and every gasp of breath. All she cared about were the riotous nerves and desire flooding her body, making her flush with need and power.

She turned and his arms fit around her waist, her breasts crushed against his chest. She saw the glitter of desire in his beautiful eyes seconds before his lips took hers in a kiss that stole from her what little breath remained in her lungs.

She felt small and feminine, exquisitely desirable—three things she hadn't felt in far too many years, if ever. But in Roarke's arms, she felt all those. She also felt powerful. His desire was a visible stamp in his eyes, in the way his hands moved up and down her spine and cupped the globes of her butt, in the press of his hard cock against her. She wrapped her arms tighter around his neck and held on for dear life.

The next thing she knew, the world twirled on her and she was somehow lying on her back. She felt a brand new mattress behind her and grinned.

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“It’s handy being in a mattress factory, isn’t it?” His whispered words sent a chuckle through her. “Shush. We have to keep this quiet, but I can’t wait another minute to have a taste of you again.”

Betsy’s answer was quiet but very satisfying as she swept her hand down his chest, over his flat abs, down past his belt to where she could feel his cock behind the zipper of his pants. He was ready. She traced the shape of him and grinned at his short, in-drawn breath. Her fingers moved and she lowered his zipper, one tab at a time. While her fingers were occupied, she used the time to trace the lines of his neck and face with her lips and tongue. She could taste his uniquely male scent and just the faintest touch of soap from his shower earlier that day at the base of his Adam’s apple. When she placed the wide, flat part of her tongue just there and traced her way toward his chin, she was rewarded by the rapid up and down motion of his throat.

His hands gripped tighter around her waist, and she managed to keep her chuckle of delight from escaping. By the time his zipper was undone, she was lying on top of him, her mouth making a feast of his mouth and flexing against his wildly thrusting pelvis.

They were on a new mattress, stuffed with God knew what, in a darkened warehouse. They were minutes away from having to jump up and get to work.

But Betsy had a lot of pent-up needs to work out. The few hours she’d spent with Roarke had awakened a sleeping dominatrix inside her she hadn’t known existed.

What’s more, she had changed that weekend. She was living for the now. That meant grabbing these kinds of opportunities with both hands.

There was something she’d read about in the book of erotica for women she’d purchased after her weekend at the ranch. It had been so scandalous, even after meeting Roarke, that she thought she’d never have the nerve—or frankly the chance—to practice this technique. Here was her opportunity.

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She moved down his body until her mouth hovered over his cotton-covered cock. It was fully erect and she caught her breath at the sight of it straining against the material. She caressed him, delighting in his involuntary shiver of desire.

When she thought neither could stand any more of her teasing, she pulled his black jockeys down and freed his cock.

“Oh my,” she whispered. It was like a huge, hot ice cream cone with just a touch of nectar slipping down its crown. “Yum,” she said after she licked the droplets away. “My favorite flavor too.”

He groaned and fisted a clump of her hair. She grinned and bent to her task. She was going to make this a night neither would forget.

She closed her eyes, remembering how the author had described this particular technique. Using the tip of her tongue to start, she began to trace her way from near his balls on a slight diagonal to the tip. She took her time. The author of the book had been adamant that speed was the devil for this particular maneuver.

Once at the top of his erection, she resisted the overwhelming urge to play in his slit, and focused on her goal.

Down she went on the other side of him until she reached his base again. Then, she tied the two long, wet lines together with a horizontal lick. She felt his cock quiver momentarily before she whispered against him, “That’s A for Awesome!”

The book had said to try to make it as far through the alphabet as you could before allowing your lover his release. The book had also promised that neither partner would be sorry with the results. Roarke made it through to J before his cum jerked out in splattering waves. She could still feel the thunderous beat of his heart long moments later when her head rested against his chest, his hands stroking up and down her spine.

“My God, that was incredible,” he gasped.

Betsy smiled. She felt like she had climbed the highest mountain.

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She was so happy she'd been able to make this controlled, virile man lose himself for a moment that it was almost as good as the orgasms he'd given her in their short relationships.

But she knew their intimate time was ending. Now knowing what he did and who he worked for, Betsy also knew this could be their last time together. She was glad she'd made it one they both would remember.

She stopped her hand, which had been tracing the line of hair down his stomach, when his body tensed. He had an earpiece connected to the team that would be doing the takedown in his right ear.

"It's starting," he whispered. "A tractor trailer followed by Gianelli's car turned down the street."

She moved off him and righted her clothes. He did the same.

"Where do you want me?" she whispered. He hesitated. She had an idea he was going to tell her to go stay in the office out of harm's way. Of course, what he told her and what she did could be two different things.

"Stay here," he said proving her instincts were wrong, and right. He reached down to the leg of his black pants, and undid a Velcro patch she hadn't noticed earlier. He pulled out a small, lethal looking handgun and checked the clip.

"Is that for me?" she asked, feeling apprehension kick in. She wasn't afraid of guns because both her husband and father had taught her the basics of firing and cleaning, but she couldn't imagine using one now.

"What? No. I want you to stay in here. It's the safest place for you. I'll come back when we've got everything tied up. Just stay in here. When it's all clear, I'll let you know and you can go home."

Just like that he was gone.

Betsy sank down on the mattress they had just christened. She was being silly, but she was getting a little dizzy trying to keep up with this

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man. He was here and then he was gone. Well, at least when he was with her, he made it memorable—in more ways than one.

Well, I wanted adventure, she thought. “I’m sure getting it,” she murmured.

She stood and stretched, looking around her. There were some floor level security lights about fifty feet apart near the baseboard. She tilted her head and looked at one to her left. There was something weird about the way it was shining against the wood, like it wasn’t level or something. She got down on her knees to examine it closer.

At that moment, she heard a loud bang and the entire place went as black as a tomb.

CHAPTER 3

Betsy froze, her heart pounding furiously. She didn't like being down on her hands and knees between the mattresses. She started to back up, figuring one of two things would happen—she'd either back into a mattress or the wall.

Before she'd gone more than a foot, she heard the sound of hurried footsteps coming her way. She froze again, this time hardly daring to breathe.

"It's right over here, boss," said a voice she didn't recognize.

"Well, hurry up and get it. I want us out of here before the Feds finish their mop-up."

That voice Betsy did recognize. It was Vinnie Gianelli. Where was Roarke?

Before she could react, a bright light shone in her face, blinding her for a moment.

"Well, look what I found. It's your new employee, boss."

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Betsy blinked.

"Well, Ms. McGee, I was afraid you were going to be too nosy for your own good. But I never thought for a moment it would happen this soon," Gianelli said.

Betsy thought quickly. Could she bluff her way out of this? Could she stall until Roarke came back?

"Boy, am I glad to see you guys," she began. "I somehow got locked in here."

Vinnie laughed. It wasn't a reassuring sound. "Right. And we just make mattresses, don't we, Bruno?"

The man he called Bruno laughed. The sound sent chills down her spine. "Yeah, boss, mattresses. That's all we do."

"Well, take her, Bruno. She may come in handy."

Bruno reached forward to grab her arm. It was a long shot, but she had to do something. She wasn't about to go along without a fight with these goons.

She went into action.

* * *

"Where's Gianelli?" Roarke asked McCellan when the shooting stopped. Their team had worked with few flaws considering the truck had not just been loaded with mattresses, but had come with six, unexpected, armed guards.

McClellan looked around. "I thought Alpha squad had him pinned down."

Roarke took in the situation. "He got away."

"That's right," said Peter Melrose, Roarke's supervisor, as he rushed over to them. "And he must have the plates with him because they aren't in the truck or Gianelli's car."

McClellan cursed. "Think he's headed for the border?"

Melrose was already talking on the cell phone. Roarke stood with his arms folded across his chest. He felt a tingle down his spine.

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“Damn. He’s still in the store.” He ran to the shipping door, yelling as he moved, “Get some people around to the front of the building. If he’s going to make a run for it, it’ll be out that way.”

He knew McClellan, after a moment’s pause, was following. He knew where Gianelli was, and he had a bad feeling it was in the exact spot where he’d left Betsy. He also knew there wasn’t much hope she’d managed to find a hiding place.

This was all his fault. He’d ordered her to stay where he left her. She wasn’t supposed to be in danger. This was worse than at The Triple D. Gianelli was desperate. There was no telling what he and his goon squad would do when cornered, and Betsy had been left there like sitting duck. Roarke was determined he wasn’t going to let anything happen to her.

“And tell them Gianelli’s probably got a civilian hostage,” he yelled back to Melrose.

* * *

Roarke and McClellan moved as fast as possible, but they also had to be careful. Their team had shut off all the power to the building when things started happening, and the two agents were now working through the part of the showroom that had no windows. They couldn’t even use the natural outside lighting. He knew where to go, but he didn’t want to go rushing in like a bull. They were about three feet away from the entrance to the show bedroom when he heard the voices.

He stopped and McClellan halted right beside him.

Gianelli’s words were chilling to Roarke. “Well, take her, Bruno. She may come in handy.”

He moved forward, intent on only one thing—rescuing Betsy. What he heard next was amazing.

“Eewww! Aaah! Chook!”

He heard McClellan’s whispered question through their inter-squad audio. “What the hell?”

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He wasn't waiting any longer. "Now," he yelled to his partner.

They charged through the opening and stopped dead just inside. Roarke shook his head. It must have been a trick due to the lack of light in the room because he couldn't be seeing what he thought he was seeing.

At that moment, all the lights in the building flashed on. McClellan started laughing and tried to make it sound like a cough.

"What the hell are you doing?" he asked Betsy, pleased with how controlled his voice sounded.

"It's about time you guys got here. These two were trying to sneak out the front door," Betsy said.

Roarke looked at Vinnie Gianelli, who lay on the mattress curled up like a little boy. His sidekick, Bruno Spagnoli, was on the floor crying like a baby.

"What did you do to them?" Roarke asked.

"Well, I poked Bruno in the eyes, and kicked Vinnie in the balls," Betsy said. There were no tears of hysterics in her voice or fear in her eyes. She looked like she was discussing the weather or the price of cannoli.

McClellan's cough became a full-fledged laugh. "Just like they teach at the Academy."

Betsy smiled. "Why, thank you. Now that the lights are on, come over here. I think I might have found something interesting."

She stepped over to the wall and leaned down on one knee. Her fingers probed at the baseboard until it popped open. "Ah-ha. I knew that was weird. It's some kind of hollow spot in the wall."

Roarke leaned down beside her. "Here, let me." He reached in the depression and pulled out a small package in bubble wrap.

"What's that?" Betsy asked.

"I think it's what we need to put these guys away for a long, long time," Roarke answered as the rest of his team filed in. "Thanks to our

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civilian here, we've got all the evidence we need."

* * *

Bobby had just rushed out to catch the bus when Roarke showed up at her kitchen door Monday morning.

"Hi there," she said, when she opened the door.

He pulled her into his arms and their lips meshed in a breath-stealing kiss.

It was strange—her standing in her nightgown, since she hadn't had time to get dressed this morning, and him dressed. She soon forgot any thoughts of embarrassment when his tongue began its duel with her own.

Not breaking their kiss, he lifted her feet off the floor. She could feel the hard shape of his cock through their clothes against her abdomen. She shifted a bit, pulling back and he quickly caught on, cupping her ass in his hands and helping to lift her higher against him. When she wrapped her legs around his butt, their bodies were in perfect alignment. The rasp of the material of his pants against her aroused, uncovered pussy was delicious torment.

"When I saw you sitting at the table, I hoped you wouldn't be dressed," he murmured, taking his mouth only inches from hers. "God, you're like a drug in my blood stream. I can't stop thinking about how it feels to be buried in your wonderful pussy."

She groaned her agreement. "The only problem is you've got too many clothes on," she found the breath to gasp.

He grunted and carried her over to the kitchen table. The remnants of Johnny's madcap breakfast and dash to school were still scattered about, but Betsy didn't care. Apparently neither did Roarke. He swept the bowls and boxes onto the floor. He laid her down and unbuckled and unzipped his pants.

He moved forward and Betsy could feel the tip of him poised at her lips.

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"I promise, next time we're going to be in a real bed."

Betsy grinned. "Whatever. Wherever." She tensed the muscles in her thighs, pulling him ever closer to her.

He flexed his hips and she felt him slide inside her wet canal. But instead of thrusting all the way home, he stopped. Betsy felt like crying she wanted him inside her so badly.

She whimpered and tried to suck him deeper by contracting her vaginal muscles. He resisted their pull. "No. I want to make this good for you," he said and began nibbling on her lips. He started at the corner of her mouth and licked his way across her top lip, slowly, tenderly, as if he were worshipping her.

When he reached the other side, he traced his way back. Betsy felt as if every nerve ending in her body were centered in her lips and pussy.

"Oh, God," Betsy cried. "I'm coming."

At her words, he finally thrust his cock all the way home inside her. His thrust increased her tremors and shot her back over the top again. She felt her vision going gray at the same time she felt his cream shooting inside her.

When they had rested, he picked her up and carried her upstairs, finding her bedroom. It was while they were lying in bed, facing one another, that he gave her all the details of their case.

"The box we found in the floorboard was a sample of twenty- and ten-dollar plates Vinnie had been using to print his money," Roarke said.

"That's good, isn't it?" Betsy asked.

"It's very good," Roarke answered. "There's more though. The box also contained a computer disk. It had the names and numbers of all of Vinnie's contacts. He'd been working with some people who are supporting terrorist organizations. One who we think was planning to try and flood the world's financial markets with fake U.S. currency to

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create a panic.”

“Wow! All that was happening at the factory?” Betsy asked.

“Yeah. We think it’s just the tip of the iceberg,” Roarke said.

“So are all those people going to be out of work?”

“Yes. Unless someone else comes in and wants to run a legitimate mattress factory.” Roarke paused. “I don’t want to intrude on your personal business, but doesn’t your ex-husband help you out at all here?”

Betsy sighed. “No. He took everything and ran off with his receptionist. I think they’re out of the country. I’ve hired a lawyer and he wants to hire a private detective to find Robert, my ex, but I don’t have the money.”

Roarke didn’t respond, just stroked her arm. She felt a change come over him and she had a feeling he was about to do something that would just ruin her mood. She tried to circumvent the change.

“I’m not worried about me. Heck, I carried this family financially all those years Robert was in school. Believe me, I can do it again. I’m just concerned about all those other poor people out of work. What a shock that’s going to be.”

Roarke relaxed a little. “Yes, well, it can’t be helped. We had to stop Gianelli before he completed the deal with the terrorists.”

He kissed her and started stroking his hand over her breasts. Betsy felt her desire starting to warm.

“Well, enough about business. I think there’re one or two other things we can talk about,” she said.

“Oh? Just talk?”

“Well, actually, I was thinking more about doing,” she replied.

Roarke grinned. “I like the way you think. You know, ever since we tried out one of Vinnie’s mattresses, I’ve been wanting to return the favor for you.”

Betsy’s eyelashes fluttered closed. He pushed her over onto her

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back and moved down the bed so he was lying between her thighs.

“Is that right?”

She felt his breath against her outer lips.

“That’s right,” he said right before she felt the stroke of his tongue go right up one side of her pussy. “Can you say, A is for amazing?”

Betsy laughed then moaned on his downward stroke.

TO BE CONTINUED...

TRIXIE STILLETTO

“Life is a smorgasbord of men. I believe in diving in like a starving woman hitting an all-you-can-eat buffet!

“Seriously, I love men and have been fortunate enough to work, and play (thank God) with some of the most intriguing ones on this fair earth. There’s a little piece of each one in every hero I create. I’ve had all manner of odd jobs, such as waitress, cook and bottle washer for an all-night dive, truck driver, and, of course, writer. I write erotic romances because it’s much more fun to keep the bedroom door wide open.

“My philosophy in life is simple. Love what you do and who you’re with and they’ll love you in return. Come and join me as I dive into the next delicious dessert.”

* * *

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