



BEWITCHING BRECKIN

...She peeled herself off him and he let her, staying close on her heels. She found a box of drapes, tablecloths, and other items she used to create displays in the store. It was all she had, so she hoped it worked. Dumping the contents of the box on the floor, she created a soft pile, hoping there weren't other things mixed in by mistake. She sure didn't want a display stand up her ass when this was done.

"Good. Let's get more comfortable now." Breck's voice was rough when he dropped onto the pile of cloth she'd created and pulled her down with him. His hands were wild, furiously pulling her sweater over her head, then working at the fastenings of her bra before she could mentally catch up. He had her bra off faster than she could blink, and that was impressive considering how many hooks it took to hold it on.

Cupping her breasts in his hands, Breck pushed her back into the soft pile with his body. His thumbs brushed her nipples in a slow dance, sending surges of pure pleasure racing toward her pussy. He certainly knew what he was doing. Her nipples beaded hard beneath his skilled fingers. He bent down to suck one of her nipples into his mouth, his tongue sliding across it with a deliberate slowness that stoked the fire threatening to consume her from the inside out.

Carmen wanted to touch him, too, and see if he looked as good beneath his suit. Her hands worked furiously at his crimson neck tie, the hem of his shirt, wanting all of it off of

him. He sat up just long enough to help her unbutton his shirt and throw it to the floor.

And what a sight greeted her. Breck had a powerful upper body, really cut. He looked even better without the suit.

Damn...

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BEWITCHING BRECKIN

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BEWITCHING BRECKIN
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For Jim....

*A mystical coin dictates the erotic
currency of desire and a smoldering change of fate.
Magical temptation erupts into fiery,
intimate seduction. Fate. Destiny. Chance. All
demand the passionate fee of surrender.
Temptation's Price leads unsuspecting lovers down
the path to sensual, irresistible adventure.*

CHAPTER 1

“We’re closed!” Carmen Fabray yelled to the obnoxious ass tapping incessantly on the door of her floral shop.

Mother’s Day was one of the biggest gigs of the year at all the local florists. A whole week of long days, the phone ringing off the hook, incompetent seasonal help, and a little bit of tequila went into that particular holiday each year. And this year had *not* gone well. One of the drivers had gotten into a fender bender this morning, she’d had to fire one of the seasonal clerks just after lunch, and the order for a funeral arrangement had gotten lost in the shuffle.

She just needed for whoever it was still tapping on her door with sharp, head pounding wraps to stop so she could

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

wind everything down for another year and go home for the night.

Well, that was wishful thinking wasn't it? The wrapping continued and apparently would continue until she went to the door already. *Shit. Probably something else we screwed up today.* Straightening her sweater, Carmen walked around the counter and lifted the shade that hid her from people walking down the street every night when she closed down the shop.

It was a white guy standing there with keys poised in his hand to tap some more. His blue eyes met hers through the glass and though he looked far from happy; she had to admit that as far as irate customers went, the guy was pretty easy on the eye. Tall and blond in an expensive dark suit, he looked like a young Robert Redford.

Well, it was too bad he was here and obviously pissed off, huh?

"I need to talk to someone," his voice was muffled through the glass, "about some flowers that were sent to my girlfriend."

Blowing out an exhale, Carmen pulled her keys out of her pocket and undid the deadbolt. Once she'd unlocked the door, she stepped back to allow him in.

He smelled good. The expensive scent he wore was lemon, basil, and rum, making her pause for a moment as he walked right up to the counter where all the day's receipts were spread out in a semi-organized fashion.

Forget how he smells. The faster you find out who spit in his champagne, the faster you can go home.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

“How can I help you?” Carmen went for professional as she walked around him to the other side of the counter. “An order was sent to your girlfriend?”

The man nodded. “And I need to find out who sent it.”

Okay, so it didn’t sound like her shop had done anything wrong so far. He still wasn’t going to like her answer.

“It’s not our policy to give out customer information to third parties.”

Oh, that earned her a frown.

“Even when that order caused one of the customers to *lose* their girlfriend?”

“What happened?” she had to ask.

“An order of roses was sent from your shop to my girlfriend, supposedly from me, with a card that said...” He reached into the pocket of his jacket, the sound of coins jingling and hitting the floor as he did, pulling out a card with familiar looking roses on it and her store’s logo and address. “It says, ‘Valerie, you and I are finished. I love someone and have for some time. Love, Breckin.’ Like *I* would send this to the woman I’ve been dating seriously for the last few months. Why would I do that? Wouldn’t you want to know who would send something like that to someone you were dating?”

Shit. Someone in her shop had played along with this and she just bet she knew who.

“May I?” Carmen held out her hand for the card.

He handed it to her willingly and sure enough, the fancy scrawl on the card was Bambi’s. The girl had been hired to help out just this week. They always took on seasonal help for

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

the big holidays.

She just hadn't worked out. She'd been more into calling her boyfriend every ten minutes on her cell phone and sucking down diet soda than she had about doing anything resembling a good job. And now to discover the girl had done something like this.

"I'm really sorry," Carmen began. "The handwriting is that of a girl we hired as seasonal help. I fired her earlier today."

"Fuck," he mumbled under his breath, running a hand through his hair in clear agitation.

"Even if I hadn't fired her, I still couldn't give you the information on the customer who put through this order."

Now pretty boy was scowling at her.

"Even in a situation as serious as this?"

"Only if required by law."

His hand pounded the counter that separated them, and Carmen took a step back, a little concerned just now since she'd sent everyone else home earlier and she was alone with this guy. And he seemed really pissed off.

"You don't understand, I think I know who did this. I just need to prove it. If I give you a name, can you at least say yes or no?"

Carmen shook her head, looking down at the heaps of order slips in front her. Hell, she'd never find it if she wanted to.

"No, I can't. I'm really sorry that the order got sent out and I'm sorry for your troubles, but I can't tell you anything."

He exhaled; he tapped his foot. She half expected him to

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

grab up one of the little ceramic winter village houses on the clearance table next her and throw it against the wall, considering the way he was glaring at it.

“Okay, I’d like to speak to the manager. Who’s in charge here? I want to speak to them.”

Here we go.

“I own this store,” she informed him.

That bit of information took some of the wind out of his sails. He held out his hands in front of him in a conciliatory gesture.

“Sorry, okay.”

Carmen didn’t know what else to say. She couldn’t just hand over someone else’s information. Yet she could totally understand the situation he was in. She could just imagine the little woman’s reaction when she’d gotten *that* delivery.

“I just can’t believe this. You know? We live together and now I can’t even get into my own apartment. Just like that. Someone, and I’m pretty sure I know who that someone is, can just call you guys up and send some crap like that and it’s all over.”

“I’m sorry.” Carmen meant it. “While we try to review everything that goes out from the seasonal workers; we sure missed that one. I do apologize. I’d never have allowed that to happen.”

“What would you have done if you’d gotten it?”

Fair question.

“Politely told the person we wouldn’t send something out like that, thank them for calling, and hang up. That’s bad for

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

my business, you understand.”

He nodded. “Too bad she didn’t get you then.”

So it was another *she* who’d sent that order, huh?

“If you don’t mind my asking,” Carmen began because he apparently still wanted to talk, “why would your lady friend believe you would send something like that anyway?”

Now she’d made him uncomfortable. It was hard to keep a straight face when he tugged on the collar of his starched white shirt like it was choking him. It took a good three seconds for him to meet her gaze after that. Her grandma had always told her the guilty couldn’t look the righteous in the eye, and she’d always found that to be true.

“Who knows?” He took the card she held out to him back, stuffed it in his pocket.

But you do know, don’t you?

“I just thought of something.”

Why, yes, he had. He must have. His blue eyes lit up like Christmas lights.

“You fired the girl who processed this order, right?”

Oh, she knew where this train of thought was headed.

“No,” she cut it off. “I’m not going to give you *that* girl’s contact information either. I don’t have the right to do that.”

“You fired her. What’s the big deal?”

“What’s the big deal?” Was he kidding? What if he had some sort of psychotic episode and they found her in a Dumpster the next day? “I can’t give out information on any of my employees, past or present, to any third party without their permission. For obvious reasons.”

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

He just stared at her now. Stared at her hard.

“Now what do I do? What a fucking mess. She’s moving out of our apartment, right now as I’m standing here...”

“Look, I know this isn’t my business, but why not just try to talk to her? I’m sure if you talk to her you can make her see this is just a stupid prank.”

The man nodded but didn’t say anything. He bent to pick up whatever he’d dropped when he pulled the card from his pocket. When he rose again, he studied what appeared to be three coins in the palm of his hand. Very old coins and familiar looking.

“I’ll put together a dozen red roses for you—”

“She already has red roses.”

“Okay, something else,” she told him, not missing the sarcasm in his tone. “I’ve got lots of nice stuff. You can take something with you, on the house, and go talk to her and make her see this is all ridiculous.”

He didn’t look convinced, but he nodded after a moment.

“What does she like?” Carmen asked. “Favorite flowers, colors?”

“Orchids, lilies. She likes shades of purple, I guess.”

“Very good.” Lilies she had, and it would make her feel better do *something* for him since the offending order had come from her shop. “I’ll put something together that she’ll love. I’ll hurry.”

When she smiled at him, he smiled back. That was a big improvement. He didn’t look ready to go raging bull in her china shop now. Good.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

Besides, that smile of his was something else. If she thought he looked good before, she really did now. He had a sexy mouth and his eyes were the bright blue of a summer sea. Warm now as they moved over her face.

He looked great in a suit, too. His shoulders were wide as church doors, filling out the coat nicely, and he was nearly a foot taller than she, though that didn't take much. She was only five feet tall.

Stop that, girl. Focus. He had one woman to win back and one apparently from his past sending flowers with fake notes trying to break up his relationship. He didn't need anyone else.

The lilies she had in the assembly room at the back of the shop. But she needed boxes. Big boxes for lilies that needed more room than roses. She'd have to bring one up from the basement since they'd used their stash upstairs today.

"As you can imagine from today, we're running low on boxes. I'm just going to run downstairs and bring up a few. I'll be right back."

He nodded and she reached back into her pocket for her keys. When she unlocked that door and opened it, she turned back to the man waiting.

"The lock on this door doesn't work properly and there's no way to open it from the other side." Reaching to the floor, she grabbed the wooden wedge and shoved it under the door to hold it open. "If this should close behind me, if you'd please open it again, I'd be grateful."

"Sure." He seemed only half aware that she was even speaking to him.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

Carmen hurried down into the basement that she used for storage and wasn't happy with the mess she found there. It was like that every year after the Mother's Day rush, and it meant more work. It would take an entire day to put everything back in order and put up the stacks of boxes and supplies.

At least she found the flower boxes she needed pretty quickly in the light from upstairs. The quicker she got Bobby Redford upstairs off to win back his lady, the sooner she could go home for a soak in the tub.

The boxes she needed were on a shelf just above her head. She pulled a few out, only something had been left on top of the stack. It missed her head by maybe an inch and crashed to the floor. She heard the startling sound of breaking glass. Carmen squealed in fright, staring down at the remains of a cheap bottle of champagne.

Heavy footsteps came rumbling down the stairs to the basement and with a great *whoosh* the door slammed shut and she was left in total darkness. The footsteps stopped in an instant.

"Please tell me you're not standing on the stairs." Carmen prayed she would just be talking to herself.

"Okay, I won't tell you," his deep voice pierced the silence of the basement.

Shit.

They were locked in the basement.

CHAPTER 2

Carmen pulled the chain to give them light from the single bare bulb in the low ceiling of the basement. She watched him make his way back up the stairs to the door and winced as he tried to open the door in vain.

“Do you have the key to this door?” he shouted.

“I do but it won’t do us any good.”

Slowly he came back down the stairs and now the frown was back. She wanted his smile just now.

“What do you mean it won’t do us any good?”

Carmen blew out a long exhale first.

“Remember I asked you to open the door again if it should shut behind me when I came down?”

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

He nodded, but the blank expression he wore told her hadn't heard a word. Men!

"There's a reason for that. The lock is one way. You can't open the door from this side."

He stared at her like she had two heads now. "Why?"

Could she possibly have anything else go wrong today?

"I just haven't taken the time to get it fixed. We just moved into this building back in April and between the move, settling in, and now Mother's Day..."

"Where is the exit down here?"

"There's no door down here."

"Isn't that some sort of code violation?"

"It is but I inherited it. The guy who rented this space before built a wall where the door used to be. What I take issue with is the fact that I have to wait for the building owner to get around to putting the door back in."

He shook his head. "What sort of place was here before you moved here?"

"A leather shop," Carmen told him. "No door, no way out. Makes you wonder what he did down here."

"No kidding. But what I want to know is what *we're* going to do down here."

Not a bad question.

He patted the jacket of his suit. Apparently not finding what he was looking for, he threw his hands up.

"My phone's in my car." His deep sigh was a big sound in the silence around them. "I guess it's too much to hope that you have a phone down here."

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

“Have I gotten anything right since we met?” she wanted to know.

“Yes or no?”

Carmen shook her head.

“What are we supposed to do now?” His voice was sharp. “How do we get out of here? This won’t be the first place someone comes looking for me. How about you?”

“I live alone.” She *loved* admitting to that. Not. “Worst case scenario, we have to wait until someone comes into the shop in the morning.”

“You’re not open tomorrow according to the sign on your door. It’s Sunday and Mother’s Day.”

“A lady comes in to clean the shop on Sunday mornings. She’ll be here. I talked to her today.”

He nodded. One of those this-is-just-fucking-great nods.

“My girlfriend is moving out and I’m locked in a basement.”

“I did try to warn you about the door.”

“Yes, just before you came down here and start crashing and screaming. What was that all about?”

Carmen stepped to the side to give him a clear view of what was left of the champagne bottle and its contents that had spread out over the floor.

“I didn’t see it until it was too late. It scared me. I’m sorry.”

She waited for him to really take her head off, but instead he ran a hand over his mouth and chin in agitation.

“Is that real booze and, if so, do you have any more of

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

that? I could use a drink about now.”

“Sure.” It wasn’t a bad idea. It would bring him down a little from his girlfriend situation, and it would help her get through being locked in her basement with him. She’d really wanted that luxurious bath tonight.

“So what’s your name?” he asked while she pulled a new bottle of champagne from the box on the lowest shelf.

“Carmen Fabray.” She held out the bottle to him. “What’s yours?”

“Breckin Nash. Call me Breck.”

She could tell the last part he rattled off out of habit.

“I don’t I have a bottle opener down here, now that I think about it.” She sure didn’t want to have to tell him they couldn’t open that now.

He made quick time of the pretty red foil covering the top. Nice long fingers.

“I have that covered.” Reaching into the pocket of his slacks, he pulled out one of those Swiss army knife sets. A nice big one with a corkscrew. “So you put these in gift baskets?”

Carmen nodded, reaching for the broom and dustpan in the corner to start on the mess she’d made. “I have sparkling cider, too, if you’d prefer.”

“This will do just fine. Cups?”

“I think there are some old party supplies in a box beneath the stairs.”

Breck found plastic cups under the stairs while she swept up the broken glass and soaked up the spill with an old table

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

cloth she'd found from the previous store.

He filled a cup with champagne and handed it to her before filling another for himself. Then Breck began to pace back and forth like a caged animal while he sipped absently from his cup. His hair was now in disheveled spikes on his head and the muscles at his nice angular jaw were tight.

"If she even thinks about taking my plasma..."

"Plasma? As in blood or television?"

That earned her a smirk as she tried the champagne. It wasn't really good champagne but it was decent. It burned into her empty stomach like a cup of fire. She knew better than to drink with nothing on her stomach, but she was only going to have one.

And that while she prayed that someone rescued her from the basement where she was trapped with Breck the Bobby Redford look-a-like.

"You know what?" He didn't stop pacing. "Let's not talk about this. Her. No good. I can't do anything until we get out of this basement, right?"

"That would appear to be the case." What else could she say?

"There's no other possible way out?"

"Not that I'm aware of."

"Shit." Now he stopped long enough to refill his plastic cup with more cheap champagne. "Okay. What do we talk about?"

Carmen had been in customer service a long time. Long enough to know people loved to talk about themselves more

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

than anything.

“So talk about you,” she encouraged him. “What do you do?”

“I teach history at Woods University.” He took another drink, set his cup on a stack of boxes by the stairs. He shrugged out of his suit coat and tossed it over the hand rail of the stairs where it leveled off at the bottom. “This is my second year here. I just made tenure.”

Carmen sort of knew what tenure meant, but before she could comment on it, she spotted three somethings falling from a pocket in his jacket to clink on the floor. The coins again. This time she stepped closer to get a better look at them.

No wonder they looked familiar. She’d donated them to his university only a few weeks before when she’d been settling her grandmother’s estate. They’d been in her family for years.

“What?” he asked as he bent to scoop up the coins.

“I know those coins.”

That got his attention. Those sky blue eyes were riveted on her now and it made her feel a little self-conscious. She knew he was only interested in what she knew about the coins. But to have a man who looked like *that* staring at her so intently, well, she wasn’t used to that. It made her a little lightheaded.

“You do? How?”

“They were my grandmother’s.”

Holding them out in his palm, he only had three of them, he approached her. She really did like the way he smelled as

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

he stopped at her side, really close. She usually didn't like anyone in her personal space but under the circumstances, she'd go with it. Long enough to talk about the coins anyway.

"How unexpected."

"Unexpected? That an old black woman has rare Dutch coins?"

"I didn't mean that." His eyes searched her face for a just a moment and, close as he was, her breath caught. The guy was just *too* nice looking. "I meant that it's unexpected to be trapped in the basement of a floral shop with the very person who donated these coins to the university. What are the odds?"

What were the odds indeed?

"What can you tell me about them? Especially this one." He pushed the oldest coin away from the others with his long fingers. "This is an incredibly rare Dutch Indian coin."

"I know. There's quite a story behind that coin."

His face split into a wide grin. *Damn*. What that grin did to her insides.

"We've got time," he told her.

"True." She couldn't argue that. Still she had to laugh at having to tell someone the story of the damned coin that had haunted her all of her life. "According to the story that my great-grandmother first told me, that coin belonged to an ancestor of mine, a Dutch fellow who came to Africa as part of the Dutch East India Company. The Dutch had been there about a hundred years before he got there somewhere in the 1700s. They weren't exactly welcome during any of that time."

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

“No, they weren’t,” he chimed in, reminding her that she didn’t have to cover the history of everything with him since he probably already knew it.

“He fell in love with another of my ancestors, a native of the area named Meela.”

“She was a Hottentot no doubt.”

Carmen nodded. He *would* know that.

“Neither her family nor his people approved of their relationship. Her family finally disowned her and she lived with him among the Dutch until war broke out. He was afraid she would be harmed, so he sent her to another village to hide. He gave her the coin you have in your hand.” She pointed to it on his fingers. “He told her as long as she kept that coin he would come back to her. That he was her true love.”

“And did he?” Breck asked.

She rolled her eyes at him. “Would I be here if he hadn’t? Didn’t I mention they were my ancestors?”

“Right, right.”

“Ever since that time, for over two hundred and fifty years, that coin has been passed to the oldest female of each generation. It’s been passed along with the promise that with that coin would come the love of her life as long as she kept it.”

Breck nodded. She tossed back the last of her champagne and walked over to the bottle for a refill herself. One more she could handle.

“So why was it given to the university?”

Carmen turned back to see a sly smile on his face.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

“If it’s such a bringer of love and luck, why was it given up?”

“It’s just a silly folk tale. It doesn’t mean anything.” How many times had she uttered those words?

“So let me guess. You were the oldest female of your generation in the family?”

“You guess right. But it means little to me. Just a sentimental old trinket.”

“It didn’t work, huh?”

Damn him.

“I wouldn’t know. I’ve never accepted it.”

“Maybe that’s why you live alone?”

So, he’d remembered that part, had he? She didn’t know whether to be pleased or pissed.

“Let’s not go there,” she told him with what she hoped was a warning look.

His smile just widened.

“What? You’re an academic. You can’t tell me you believe in this sort of thing.”

He walked back to the same stack of boxes where she stood and reached for his cup. The fingers of his other hand curled around the coins before he placed them in the pocket of his slacks this time. She swore she could feel the heat of his body.

“I’ve seen a lot of strange things in my work. I’ve learned not to easily dismiss them.”

“You keep it,” Carmen told him. “Maybe it will bring you some good luck and things will work out with your lady

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

friend.”

“No, let’s think this through.” He chuckled, sipping his champagne. “It’s given to the oldest female of each generation in *your* family. That means it probably wouldn’t work for me. I doubt the Holy Grail would work in my situation at this point.”

His girlfriend was moving out right now according to him, and his absence would be taken as proof of indifference. Yeah, he was probably right.

“The coin must have worked some of the time for it to have been passed from one generation to another without being lost or handed over to a third party until now.”

“Trying to make me feel guilty?” Carmen snorted. “My great-grandmother was the queen of laying guilt and when she passed, my grandmother took up the slack. If they couldn’t make me believe in *the coin* enough to keep it and wait for Prince Charming to show up, I’m pretty sure you can’t.”

“I’m not trying to make you feel guilty about this,” he pointed out. “About Valerie, maybe. Depends on what’s missing when I get back.”

He smiled as he spoke and that was a good sign. His cheeks were a little flushed now. Probably because he was pouring his third cup of the champagne.

“About the coin, we don’t know each other so I have no reason to make you feel *guilty* about it. However, how do you know that in giving it away, or trying to, that you haven’t fulfilled its promise?”

“What?” Where was he going with this?

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

Maybe you could follow him if you put the cup down. She was nearly done with her second cup and was more than a little light-headed. She'd drunk it way too fast.

"I'm saying, even though you gave it away and wouldn't claim it, perhaps it will find a way to bring you Prince Charming anyway."

Okay, she understood that well enough.

"That did cross my mind. That's why I gave it to the university. So it would get tucked away in a nice museum or collection where it belongs and leave me alone. If I find Prince Charming, it will be my good luck, not because of that coin in your pocket."

Breck moved a little closer, forcing her to look up at him.

"It's not in a museum now, is it?" his asked quietly.

Well, no. It wasn't right now, but it was supposed to be. Damn it.

"Why do *you* have it?" she had to ask.

Carmen watched him finish off the bottle of champagne, pouring the rest into his cup and her own. Not only was she not stopping him, she held her cup up to help him out.

"Our department head asked me if I'd be interested in those three coins. I've written a few papers on the taking of Negapatnam by the Dutch. They took it from the Portugese in 1658 and this coin was minted only a few years later unless I miss my guess. It's a dump copper VOC coin, very rare."

"So what will do you with it?" she had to ask.

"My next research trip to Europe, I'll take it by some coin experts and get some more information on it. Boring stuff."

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

“See it’s boring.” She finished off her cup of champagne, resolving in her foggy brain to stop drinking about now. “And out of my life, right?”

“But it’s not,” he pointed out. “You gave it to the university and the department head assigned it to me. I ended up here at your floral shop, locked with you in your basement no less.”

“So?” He couldn’t be serious in his train of thought. “You think the coin brought *you* back to me?”

Pulling it out of his pocket and holding up under the bare bulb that lit the basement, his grin turned wicked. His smile was a little crooked. She liked that.

“Couldn’t I be Prince Charming?” he asked.

“You’ve had too much champagne.”

“And you”—he stuffed the coin back in his pants pocket and turned to pull a new bottle from the box on the nearby shelf—“haven’t had enough.”

CHAPTER 3

“Why are you looking at me like that?” she asked him a couple of hours and another bottle of champagne later. Most of it he’d drunk himself.

Breck liked the way her dark eyes twinkled in challenge as she rose from her seat on a short stack of boxes. There was also some interest there, too, if he wasn’t mistaken. Maybe wishful thinking on his part, but somehow he didn’t think so.

Oh, hell. What was he thinking? He had an amazingly, beautiful former model girlfriend moving out of his apartment right now and the woman whose shop was partly responsible for that was turning him on in a very real way.

“Like what?” Getting his pocket knife back out to open a

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

third bottle of champagne, he grinned at her.

Now her chin tipped up. Damn, she really was gorgeous. And the irony was that she was the total opposite of the women he normally went for. Instead of leggy, slim and blonde, she was dark and full bodied. Her skin was warm chocolate, her shiny hair dark as midnight, and her body was all lush curves. A body that could fill a man's hands and then some.

Carmen had a beautiful face. Large dark eyes, full lips. Her features had the grace of the ancient Egyptian queens whose statues he'd always admired.

Once he had the bottle open, he held it out to her and she countered with a somewhat confident, "No."

"Why not?"

"I've had too much already. You should probably stop, too."

"Ah." She thought he was drunk or heading there.

Thing was, it took a hell of a lot to get him even mildly drunk and that was more of a curse than a blessing. Breck hadn't had the easiest of lives, and it would have helped on a couple of the rough spots if he could have at least drunk himself into a temporary stupor. It didn't stop him from trying. The best he could do was to barely take the edge off, and he'd just about reached that now.

At this particular moment, maybe it wasn't such a disadvantage that he was perpetually sober. He certainly didn't wish he were drunk just now. So what if Valerie left? If he were honest, he'd have to admit he was more pissed at the

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

embarrassment he'd suffered because of the ill-intentioned note in the flowers he didn't send than he was broken up at the loss of his latest shallow, trophy girlfriend. The way she'd been complaining about having to attend boring faculty dinners with boring faculty wives and husbands, not to mention the endless parade of grad students in their apartment, they probably hadn't been far from being finished without the events of today.

What had started out as a bitch of an evening wasn't turning out to be bad at all. Sure he was locked in a basement. But he was locked in the basement with a beautiful woman. Being trapped here with Queen Latifah herself couldn't possibly be better.

The only possible con was really his new television. If Valerie thought she was unhappy now, she was going to be miserable if that was missing from his apartment when he got back.

Deliberately pouring another cup of champagne, he felt Carmen's eyes on him. When he met her gaze, he couldn't help but stare at her mouth. He found himself wondering if she tasted as sweet as she looked. The more time he spent with her, the more he felt inexplicably drawn to the dark beauty.

"Going back to what we were talking about earlier..." He wasn't about to let her completely off the hook.

"What?"

"About the coin that's supposed to be yours."

"Not that again." She chuckled. "Come on. I don't believe in it. It's just a story. I told you that."

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

“Okay, so if *I’m* not your idea of Prince Charming,” he couldn’t resist teasing her, “then who would he be?”

“I can’t believe you’re back on the whole coin thing.” Carmen grinned at that, a stunning smile. “I’m not saying he wouldn’t look like you.”

She trailed off a little uncomfortably on that. So she liked how he looked, too. Yes, this evening could be very interesting. Checking his watch, he saw it was only a little after nine o’clock. Very early. Especially if there wasn’t a real chance of getting out of the basement until morning.

“So he might look like me, but he’d be different how?”

“Well, I don’t know you so how can I say he would be different from you or like you.”

She was smart, too. Usually not a strict requirement in a lady for him. Any of his girlfriends could work for NASA and the other pros he worked with would still consider themselves to be superior to her.

Still, he couldn’t remember the last time he actually enjoyed a conversation with a woman who wasn’t his academic peer. For the last couple of hours they’d talked about everything from her store to his upbringing in New England, normally very boring chitchat. Yet, the time had flown by as it if were nothing. He was enjoying himself immensely and getting harder by the minute.

She backed away a couple of steps, telling him that she was aware of him the same as he was of her. Her hands were busy. She was fidgeting a lot. All signs in his favor as far as he was concerned.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

“Okay, forget me. What do you like in a guy?”

That earned him a chuckle.

“You know, it’s been so long since I even had a date that I honestly don’t remember.”

Breck took a step toward her, never picking up his cup of champagne. He wasn’t interested in it anymore.

“How long?”

She shrugged. “A couple of years. Most it was spent starting up this joint. When you own a business, you really don’t have time for much else.”

He took another step closer. Now he could smell her perfume again, a hint of violets warmed by her body heat and it captured his senses.

“I can imagine from everything you’ve told me.”

“Okay, just stop right there.” She held up a hand to ward him off. “I know we’re trapped down here and most of that’s my fault. I’m sorry about your girlfriend and I know you’ve got to be upset about that. On top of that you’ve had some champagne and—”

“So have you.” He knew she had to be more than a little tipsy by now. “What’s your point?”

“My point is you don’t want to just go and start hitting on me as a rebound type thing, okay? Wouldn’t be good for either of us.”

Breck shook his head at her, smiling.

“I’m not doing a rebound type of thing, Carmen.” Honestly, he didn’t know why he was so drawn to her. He couldn’t remember the last time he’d been so captivated by a

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

woman. "I'm not drunk either, if that's what you're thinking."

Skepticism darkened her expression. "You're bored then?"

"Oh, no. I can't remember the last time I had such a good conversation with someone that didn't involve my work."

"Talk. We can *talk*. But that's it. Got it?"

"What else could we do?"

"Don't go there."

Breck laughed at the serious look on her face, he couldn't help it.

"I mean it," she warned.

"I'm sorry," he told her and meant it. "I won't ravish you in your own basement simply because I could. So don't worry."

Hell, he wanted to and that wasn't like him. Breck liked to think he was more civilized than that.

And he couldn't tell if it was fear or desire he read in her lovely features. He hoped it was the latter, because he didn't want to scare her.

"I *will* be honest and say I find you very attractive," he said.

"That's quick, considering you weren't happy with me a couple of hours ago."

"I wasn't unhappy with you *per se*. But maybe you've got something there. Perhaps your coin has something to do with it."

"Will you forget the damned coin?" There was a slight tremor in her voice.

But the look in her eyes told him that she was far from

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

terrified of him.

“Want to really prove that the coin is a hoax?”

“No.” She wasn’t backing away. “Maybe.”

“Kiss me.”

“Are you out of your mind?” Yet her voice was more too-low-for-the-waiter-to-hear than so-loud-the-whole-restaurant-looks.

“Not at all. Let’s just get it over with and rule it out. Then you never have to think about it again. You kiss me and feel nothing, you know I’m not Prince Charming and that it all really is a joke.”

She cocked a dark brow at him on that.

“What about you?”

Breck winked at her. “You can’t get rid of *me* that easily.”

“One kiss?”

“One kiss.

“Why not?” she asked finally. “In the state I’m in, I probably shouldn’t.”

He could tell she had a buzz going, but she wasn’t drunk. Her speech wasn’t slurred, she wasn’t weaving on her feet.

“It’s probably the state you’re in causing you to agree with me.”

“True enough.”

Like a vision from an incredible dream, Carmen moved closer to him until she was less than a foot away. He could already imagine the softness of her pressed against him. Her full breasts filled out the lovely sweater she wore. Her skirt was loose and flowing, a floral print that was old-fashioned

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

feminine and made him burn to know what was beneath.

The gentle heat of her body had him going up in flames. Breck didn't think he could get any harder than he was now. Especially when she looked up at him, staring hard at his mouth.

“Are we going to do this thing or what?” she asked.

It was only in that moment, he realized the trap he'd set for himself. How would he possibly be able to keep this to just one kiss?

CHAPTER 4

Carmen knew she was drunk or crazy to agree to kiss the man, particularly when she already didn't believe in the coin her grandmother had wanted her to have. The coin didn't have any mystical powers. Men met women and they got it on. That had been happening long before her ancestors decided their little coin had a say in it.

No way she believed that coin had brought Breck to her. She really *was* crazy if she believed that.

Then why was she going to kiss him?

Because you want to and he just gave you an excuse.

Because she couldn't wait to touch him, she pressed her palms to the muscled wall of his chest and then slid them up.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

Breck remained motionless as her fingers slid up the back of his neck. His hair was silky and warm to the touch. His blue eyes darkened and he moaned when she pressed herself lightly against him.

“Are you ready?”

“What do you think?” she asked.

Breck lowered his head and covered her mouth with his. It started out as an innocent enough kiss, but something inside her clicked at the unique taste of the him and the feel of him in her arms. There was something so familiar and good about him. She opened her lips to him easily, allowed his tongue to stroke hers with an intimacy she hadn't know for a very long time.

Carmen inhaled the wonderful scent of him, basil, rum, and aroused male. Either she'd had more champagne than she thought, or her head was spinning from the way his lips smoothed over hers. All at once, he pulled her against him so tightly that it nearly forced the air from her lungs, and she let him. His cock was hard and hot against her belly, and she ground gently against him. Her panties were getting wetter by the second from the juices flowing freely now from her growing excitement.

The coin forgotten, she grabbed at him with the same fervor he displayed. Somewhere in the back of her mind, she knew she shouldn't be doing the nasty with a guy she didn't even know, but that's just where this was headed. And she wanted him. It felt good. Being with Breck felt more right than the three lovers she'd had so far in her life.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

“Still think your coin is a myth?” his voice was a whisper. His tongue traced the outline of her ear, nipping at her lobe with his teeth in a way that made her quiver inside.

“I’m not sure.” She undulated her hips against him now, wanting him badly.

“Good.” His hands were all over her body and his touch was hot. “Because I don’t think I can stop.”

“Me either,” she managed, panting.

“Where?”

Shit, they were in a basement with a concrete floor.

She peeled herself off him and he let her, staying close on her heels. She found a box of drapes, tablecloths, and other items she used to create displays in the store. It was all she had, so she hoped it worked. Dumping the contents of the box on the floor, she created a soft pile, hoping there weren’t other things mixed in by mistake. She sure didn’t want a display stand up her ass when this was done.

“Good. Let’s get more comfortable now.” Breck’s voice was rough when he dropped onto the pile of cloth she’d created and pulled her down with him. His hands were wild, furiously pulling her sweater over her head, then working at the fastenings of her bra before she could mentally catch up. He had her bra off faster than she could blink, and that was impressive considering how many hooks it took to hold it on.

Cupping her breasts in his hands, Breck pushed her back into the soft pile with his body. His thumbs brushed her nipples in a slow dance, sending surges of pure pleasure racing toward her pussy. He certainly knew what he was doing. Her

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

nipples beaded hard beneath his skilled fingers. He bent down to suck one of her nipples into his mouth, his tongue sliding across it with a deliberate slowness that stoked the fire threatening to consume her from the inside out.

Carmen wanted to touch him, too, and see if he looked as good beneath his suit. Her hands worked furiously at his crimson neck tie, the hem of his shirt, wanting all of it off of him. He sat up just long enough to help her unbutton his shirt and throw it to the floor.

And what a sight greeted her. Breck had a powerful upper body, really cut. He looked even better without the suit.

Damn.

He eased down again to brush a kiss against her nipple. Now, he wasn't lingering. Gathering her to him, he buried his face between the full mounds of her breasts. His large hands plumped and squeezed them, lifting one to his lips. He sucked the pouting nipple between his lips and began to caress her with his tongue, tugging at her with his teeth until Carmen thought she would go insane. Her hands speared into his blond hair while he suckled her with a demanding hunger that had her twining around his body. Wrapping her legs about his hips, she put herself in a great position to rub her cunt against him so she could relieve the incredible craving building there. Breck ground the hard, hot ridge of his erection against her, making her desire spiral out of control.

His hands were a lot steadier than hers when he unfastened her skirt and slid it along with her panties over her hips and thighs. She couldn't breathe, just helplessly watched his head

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

dip to brush a kiss to the soft swell of her tummy. She knew what he meant to do. Damn, how long had it been since a man had gone down on her?

His blue eyes glittered in the dim light provided by the bare bulb above them. Carmen trembling in anticipation, breathlessly waiting.

“Let’s see what you taste like.” Breck’s low, smooth voice brushed her with warmth. He inhaled deeply and pulled one of her legs up over his shoulder.

Carmen’s nails dug into the flesh of his shoulders and arms. Apparently Breck took that as permission. Parting her swollen lips with his fingers, he began to lick her in a way that nearly made her lose it and come at the first wet touch. His tongue was a teasing flame that roamed from her opening to her clit. He lingered there, smashing her sanity with wicked little flicks.

Breck licked her again and again, until she couldn’t remember who or where she was. He stopped only now and again to suck on her clit and pussy lips. He gave her clit a lot of attention, teasing it with hot kisses and licks, using his lips, tongue and teeth until she was a moaning mass of want beneath him. The wet sounds of his loving filled the small basement room and it made her crazy.

Her pussy walls clenched, and Breck apparently sensed that because he began to spear his long tongue into her entrance, fucking her with it. In and out it slid, over and over. Carmen moaned when his fingers took over the task of teasing her clit. Blood rushed to her pussy, filling her with heat and

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

driving her insatiable need to climax to an unbearable level.

“I’m going to come!” Orgasm ripped through her like an explosion and a flood of heat rushed through her body like a river of molten lava. Her high cry filled the room that spun around her. Tremors racked her entire being, shaking her for long moments while Breck kept fucking her with his skillful tongue.

When the spasms finally began to fade, Breck yanked at the fastenings of his slacks and she helped him push them down his long, sinewy body. In the blink of an eye, he was above her again, wild as a storm. His hands and mouth were all over her and she loved it.

Carmen should have been drained from the powerful experience she’d just had, yet pleasure was riding her hard again already. She was free with her own hands, loving the fact that he was all hard muscle. The way he moaned when she touched his cock or grabbed the hard planes of his ass excited her more by the second.

When he pulled her as flat as he could beneath him on the great pile of cloth, she gasped. He held her by the ankles in his firm, powerful grip. His gaze fastened on her with sensual intent and her heart began to pound all the harder. Spreading her legs wide apart, he gave her quite a view of his ready cock, and she couldn’t wait for it. She wanted it filling her greedy cunt. Impressed with the sheer size of him, she literally squirmed in anticipation.

She wanted that. Him. *Now*.

Pressing himself against the soaking entrance of her cunt,

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

Breck sank into her slowly, releasing her ankles. Her pussy stretched and burned to make room for him, and Carmen pulled him down to her so she could wrap her body around him. She moaned and writhed at the exquisite pleasure that she hadn't experienced for so long, enjoying his carnal invasion of her. She felt overfilled and he was only halfway sheathed inside her.

"Damn, that's good," Carmen whispered as he pushed even closer to her core.

"It is."

But he didn't stop to make small talk. He kept on pushing himself inside her with an insistent rhythm until he reached her very core. Hell, *she* was beyond talking now and couldn't wait any more for his loving. When Breck began to thrust into her, she lifted her hips to meet him each time, loving the glide and pull of his heated flesh in her cunt. Carmen hooked her ankles at his lower back, her thighs clenching about his slim waist. He quickly established a delicious rhythm, his strokes hitting all the pleasure spots in her pussy as he thrust in and out.

The scent of sex hung in the air around them and beads of sweat dotted her forehead, running down her sides in her excitement. Breck's lips claimed hers in a hard, branding kiss, taking her cries into his mouth as his movements gained in power and speed. They were all over the pile of cloth and off it, writhing together and moaning at each powerful sensation.

When Carmen couldn't last any more, she came again hard, and this time the whole world faded away while he

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

drove more fiercely into her. She screamed, bucking beneath him as wave after wave of intense ecstasy claimed her. Lost in the all consuming orgasm she reached, she didn't immediately realize Breck's body had tightened inside her, his balls hard as stone as they slapped against her wet flesh with each thrust. Her pussy tightened around him like a fist when he came, throwing back his head and shouting in a way that let her know he was riding the same sexual high she was on. He thrust a few more times, his breath coming fast while her body milked him of everything he had.

She welcomed the feel of his warm, hard body when he collapsed on top of her, enjoying the way their hearts pounded together from the best bout of loving she'd ever had. She felt warm and drowsy, completely satisfied.

And that was strange, especially when considering she'd just fucked a virtual stranger, without a condom no less, in the basement of her floral shop. *Really bright*. Sure she was on the pill, but still...

Funny thing was, he sure hadn't felt like a stranger when she'd made love with him. Breck felt like an old lover she'd been with many times, though she didn't dare tell *him* that. He'd just bring up the junk about the coin again.

And she wasn't going to give *that* any credence. No way. A very weird set of circumstances had brought them together in her basement, but that was called cause and effect, not magic.

"So," he whispered close to her ear, pressing kisses into her hair. "What were we trying to prove again?"

CHAPTER 5

“Don’t start talking about that coin again,” she warned him jokingly.

“That’s right.” Lifting himself up, he propped his head on one of his hands so that his handsome face lingered just above hers. “We were trying to prove whether or not your coin sent me to you. Whether or not I’m your Prince Charming.”

“As I recall, Prince Charming is supposed to be available,” she threw in before she could stop herself.

You’re responsible, to an extent, for the rift with his girlfriend and you want a feel for how stable a relationship it is? Please, girl.

He smiled at her. And couldn’t a woman get lost in a

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

gorgeous smile like that?

"I can pretty much guarantee you that I'm very available at this moment."

She had to come back to reality. She knew the words to this song. When they got out of the basement, he'd end up talking to Ms. Valerie at some point and they'd work things out. The best she could hope for was never to run into Breck again. Worst case scenario, he'd call or show up for that whole awkward "see ya around" spiel.

"No, you don't," he broke in on her thoughts. "Whatever you're thinking can't be good. So stop."

"I'm trying to be realistic for the first time this evening, Breck. You've already got a woman. And another one waiting in the wings to be next, sending flowers in your name. Am I right?"

"No, you're not. I don't have a woman. And the other one isn't waiting in the wings. She's still pissed at me for how my time with *her* ended."

"What happened there?" she had to ask.

"I was supposed to marry her apparently. I'm not sure her father realizes that we've broken up, judging from our conversation the last time I saw him."

"So you have *women* and you go through them fast, huh?"

"It's not like that. I don't have women. A woman. I don't."

"You can't say that."

"Yes, I can. If Valerie meant so much to me, would I be here making love to you?"

"I don't know. Would you?"

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

Brushing her still damp cheek with moist lips, he shook his head.

"I really couldn't. A lot of my relationships have been pretty shallow and short-lived, but it wasn't because I was a pussy hound or anything. Preoccupied and boring, I'll admit to being sometimes. Unfaithful? I'm not good at that. I don't do guilt well."

Carmen nodded but couldn't return his smile.

"You haven't talked to her yet. How can you say it's over?"

"It was over the moment you touched me, Carmen." Already she could feel his body stirring. His cock jerked against the slick flesh of her inner thigh. "You've got looks, you've got brains. And you've got a passion unlike anything I've ever experienced before. Together we were... Didn't you feel it?"

The familiarity? Oh, yeah. She'd felt it.

"You did, didn't you?" he pressed.

"I'm not committing to anything. And I don't believe in that coin."

"Forget the coin."

His hands began roaming over her body again, the hot ridge of his cock burning her skin now. Carmen swallowed hard, already losing nagging doubt to each pleasurable touch.

"You're amazing, Carmen." His hands smoothed over her skin, nearly as hot as her flesh that hadn't had time to cool. "I've never met or had a woman like you."

Already her pussy ached in need for him. As if he hadn't

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

just given it a good pounding. He made her feel special in a way no other man ever had with his adoring glances and reverent touch. Sliding her hand up the hot, hairy surface of his thigh, she reached the hard sack of his balls, drawing a deep groan from him when she gently squeezed.

She'd see what else he was good at. The man had an incredible body and sure as hell knew how to use it. Carmen wanted to explore his body the way he had hers. She wanted to know every inch of him in case she never got another chance. Breck had made her feel more alive as a woman than she had in all of her thirty-three years.

Carmen leaned up to press her mouth to his, tasting herself on his lips. Twining her tongue with his, she kissed him with everything she had, shivering with desire when he moaned into her mouth.

Breck did just what she thought he would and tried to take control. His large hands slid up to her breasts, his fingers finding her nipples and plucking at them gently. Damn, he was good. The powerful sensations shot straight to her pussy.

She managed to pull free of his hands, climbing out from beneath him and pushing him onto his back. *Now who's in control, Bobby?*

She knelt on the pile of cloth between his legs and Breck grinned at her.

“What are you up to?”

“Why don't you just relax?” she told him. “We've still got a while before we're rescued.”

His cock stood proud and tall against his belly now,

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

jerking as she stared at it. Wrapping her fingers around his silky, hot shaft, Carmen cradled his balls in her other hand and massaged them lightly. Breck's eyes were dark blue with lust while he watched her.

Brushing her hair back to hang over one shoulder, Carmen pressed her lips to the mushroom shaped head of his cock and sucked him into her mouth. His eyes slid closed, his long fingers sinking into her hair as she began pumping her mouth up and down on his shaft.

"Carmen, damn." His hips rose to meet her mouth each time she slid down, feeding her more of his cock.

Winding her tongue around the head of his cock, she tasted the salty wetness from the tip and then took him even deeper. She loved his sharp intake of breath at that. He groaned and thrust at her, but she was the one in control. Carmen took her sweet time laving him, exploring every ridge and plane of him with her tongue. The unique taste of him filled her mouth and stirred the craving building anew in her lower body.

"I can't take any more of that." Breck's voice was ragged and rough. "I need to fuck you."

She smiled around his cock, shaking her head. Carmen wasn't ready to relinquish her control just yet.

Breck didn't give her a choice. Sliding from her mouth, he hauled her up and rolled her onto her back. And she, of course, was all too happy to be there. She let him push her thighs apart and then he probed her entrance with his cock. The head of it slid back and forth on the juices there from the first round.

She was hungry for more.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

He pushed inside her and the wetness of her pussy made it incredibly easy for him to slide home. Carmen cried out at the surprise and delight of having the fullness of him back inside her.

“I love how good you feel.” Breck just as easily slid back out of her. Her pussy tried in vain to squeeze around him, to hold him inside her. “I love the way it feels to be inside you. I want to take you, harder this time.”

A shot of pure lust speared down to her cunt. He was asking her if it would be okay? Hell, yeah. Raising her hips, she encouraged her lover without words to do as he wanted. As she wanted.

“Bring it on,” Carmen whispered. “Do it.”

His weight came down on her, burying her in the flattening pile, and his mouth slanted over hers. His tongue pushed past her lips at the same moment his cock returned to her center, hard. She cried out into his mouth.

His thick shaft withdrew and drove in again with the same force, making Carmen want to scream. She fought the urge, catching his lower lip between her teeth instead, nipping at him as she pushed her pelvis up to meet each and every one of his thrusts. Her inner walls squeezed and milked him as he plunged harder and faster, pushing her ever closer to the brink of release.

They moaned and grunted into each other’s mouths while the demanding rhythm of Breck’s cock went on. They didn’t break the kiss until they had to come up for air, lost in each other and the lust that consumed them both. Breck’s eyes

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

gleamed with determination as he pushed into her hard, moving her inch by inch along the hard floor with the power of his loving.

Carmen hung onto him, wanting everything he had to offer. When she came, she sank her teeth into Breck's shoulder before throwing back her head and screaming out in ecstasy. He rewarded her with a series of sharp thrusts that went on and on. By the time she'd come out of the lusty high to realize that, his body went taut above her. Throwing his head back, he shuddered and jerked. He kept driving up into her middle, holding her in a hard, vice-like grip until he was finally spent.

Breck collapsed on top of her again and this time she didn't say anything. She didn't want to talk. She just wanted to enjoy the feel of him all around her, inside her.

Carmen tried to tell herself that she should enjoy her time with him because once they got out of the basement, it would be the last. She had to think that way. That was just reality.

Her heart whispered one hopeful wish in the moments before she drifted off to sleep. A wish that somehow, she'd get to keep Breckin for herself.

CHAPTER 6

Carmen checked the clock on her wall for the hundredth time. Now it was six o'clock and twenty-four hours had passed since she'd let Breckin Nash into her shop.

Well, what the hell had she expected? That he should have shown up by now at her apartment after tracking her down? That he'd be carrying flowers and kneeling before her like some real life prince?

Right.

All that romantic shit was in her head. What had really happened is that she'd let the guy into her floral shop to complain and they'd ended up locked in her basement. They'd gotten drunk on champagne, ate a couple of boxes of

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

chocolate, and fucked like rabbits all night until Irina, the lady who cleaned for her after hours, arrived to let them out.

To keep down the gossip, she'd had Breck wait until she could sneak him out unseen. She'd been all gooey and excited like a girl with her first lover, shoving him out the front door on a Sunday morning while he was trying to kiss her.

It wasn't until she got home that she realized that little ruse was all for nothing. She'd put her sweater on inside out and her hair was in a state. Once she got in front of a mirror, she saw that she really looked like a woman who'd been loved all night.

She'd showered, had lunch. And then over the last few hours, she'd come down off her cloud.

What the hell had she been thinking? He had a great time with her last night, but that was probably as far as it would ever go. Breck had probably made up with his Valerie by now, or was being consoled by the other one who sent her the flowers from Carmen's shop. He was probably getting busy right now and she was sitting in her apartment consumed by it like a gullible jackass.

Hell, if she hadn't been so sore in so many telling places, she could almost convince herself that it had been one hell of a dream.

And the irony of it all? When she'd gone back down to the basement to make sure any evidence of what she'd been doing down there was gone, she found the one coin. The coin that her grandmother could never get her to take.

So much for Prince Charming.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

Taking a deep breath, she snapped the television off. She'd been watching it without really watching it for the last two hours. That was pointless. The coin sat there on her coffee table, challenging her while she stared at it like an idiot.

She went to the kitchen for a glass of iced tea. She searched her cabinets for something to eat for dinner.

Then she ended up right back in her chair staring at that coin.

If she were psychic at all, she just bet she could hear her grandmothers laughing their asses off at her right now wherever they were.

Grabbing the coin off the table, Carmen squeezed it between her fingers. She squeezed her eyes shut just as hard.

"All right, damn it. Bring him to me, then. I dare you. Bring Breck back to me."

She opened her eyes.

Nothing.

"I'm such a fucking idiot," she admonished herself, slamming the coin back down on the table.

She'd just reached her kitchen again when someone pounded on her door.

Her heart began to pound furiously in her chest.

Calm down. It's not going to be him.

Slowly she made her way to her front door, straightening her shirt before she reached for the knob with a trembling hand. It was probably one of her neighbors, she decided.

Carmen opened the door and there he stood, Breck in all his glory, grinning at her.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

Don't jump to conclusions.

"Forget your coin?" she asked, trying to look at him with disinterest and knowing she was probably doing a piss poor job.

Breck hauled her against him with a speed that made her head spin. His warm hands framed her face as he bent his head and claimed her mouth with a kiss of such passion she didn't think she was breathing when he was done. His hands slid up into her hair when Carmen opened her mouth to him.

Well, this is no dream. This was what she'd loved about last night.

"You didn't come for the coin?" she whispered.

"I came for you," he said, pushing his way into her apartment and slamming the door behind him.

Breck went wild, exploring her mouth with his tongue and grinding his hips against her belly as his hands worked to pull her shirt over her head. His fingers tore the fastenings of her bra apart in his haste to pull it off her.

Her full breasts spilled out and he lowered his head and caught one nipple in his mouth, sucking it hard. His tongue soothed her, his arms tightening around her to hold her against him. Her arms were caught so she grabbed for his ass since that was all she could do. His low moan at her touch made her pussy spasm with excitement.

His greedy mouth started suckling the other breast. He released her, his hands getting busy on the fastening of her jean. They were down to her ankles with her panties inside in record time.

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

“Spread your legs,” he demanded.

She did what he wanted and he dropped to his knees before her. Breck pushed his mouth into her pussy and began to lick her with abandon. Her hands clutched his hair frantically while he devastated her with his mouth. He sucked on her clit, flicking against it with his tongue until her thighs began to tremble and her knees gave way.

He caught her easily and lowered her onto the floor, his hands cupping her ass while they situated themselves on the large braid rug beneath them. His mouth never left her cunt, never ceased in his efforts to destroy her sanity. He slid a single finger into her, wriggling deep until he found her G-spot and Carmen thought she'd come right there. He worried and stroked that sensitive spot inside her while his tongue laved her clit with abandon. She was on the edge of coming, her pussy walls clenching on his finger like a fist, when he stopped, pulling away to furiously yank at the opening of his jeans. With her help, those were shoved down his hips in great haste.

His cock was hard and ready, sliding in to her center easily on the juices he'd enticed. He filled her again, the completion her body had been craving since last night. He quickly established a hard, driving rhythm that had her frantic to meet each thrust. She came hard, hauling him down close to her so she could dig her nails into his back while the cream of her climax bathed his cock.

Breck wasn't done with her yet. He continued making love to her like a man possessed, and she wound herself around

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

him like a vine to enjoy every second of it. The force of his thrusts moved them across the rug, and Carmen held him close to her, never wanting to let him go. His desperation for her only made her want him more.

At this point she could have cared less how he got there. Whether it was the coin or some jealous plot, it didn't matter now. He was there with her now and she didn't want any of it to end.

They came within seconds of each other, their yells and cries of pleasure blending in the quiet of her living room. They moved together mindlessly until neither of them could move any more.

Rolling onto his back and taking Carmen with him, Breck cradled her against his heart. His hands smoothed her hair as she willed her breathing to slow.

"I didn't even think about that damned coin," he said as if she'd just asked the question she'd asked when she answered the door. "All of my business with Valerie is finished and it took me a damned long time to track you down. It's not like you're listed in the phone book you know. I couldn't even get anything on Google."

She hadn't thought of that. Still, it didn't keep her from being happy as hell that he came for her.

"How did you find me?"

"The old guy who works at the grocery across from your shop. I convinced him that I had good intentions and he finally told me where he thought you lived."

Carmen shook her head at that. He had to be talking about

BEWITCHING BRECKIN

old man Winston. And if that was true, it didn't happen quite that way.

"What did you buy him?" she asked teasingly.

That earned her a deep sigh.

"A box of cigars."

Carmen clapped her hands, laughing.

"I knew it!"

"I'd have bought him an entire cigar store if that's what it took to find you."

"I'd have been back at the store in the morning," she pointed out.

That had him chuckling.

"So what happens now?" she had to ask.

"Well, I was wondering about those other coins you donated to Woods'," he replied. "Any of them do anything?"

She punched him playfully in the ribs.

"Stop!"

"I can't now that I've found you." Gently lifting one of her hands, he laid it over his chest by her cheek. Over his beating heart. "I really do think there's some truth to that family legend of yours."

And just maybe there was, she decided, snuggling against him. Maybe there really was.

ISABELLA JORDAN

Isabella Jordan is a lucky lady who spends her days with her family, doing volunteer work and writing. She loves creating new stories of all kinds and chatting with readers and friends. Visit her online at <http://isabellajordan.com>.

* * *

***Don't miss Sache's Consort, by Isabella Jordan,
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