

MIDNIGHT SHOWCASE

ISSN 1555-5496 Vol. R06-06

I Dream Of Eugene

By

Jamie Hill

MIDNIGHT SHOWCASE

www.midnightshowcase.com <<http://www.midnightshowcase.com/>>

I Dream of Eugene

Published by
Midnight Showcase
PO Box 134
Orr's Island, ME 04066
www.midnightshowcase.com
[<http://www.midnightshowcase.com>](http://www.midnightshowcase.com)

I Dream of Eugene, Copyright © 2006 by Jamie Hill

Names, characters, and incidents depicted in this book are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, organizations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and beyond the intent of the author or the publisher. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISSN 1555-5496 Vol. R06-06

Credits

Cover Layout: Mae Powers
Editor: Zena Quick
Copy Editor: Jane Carver

Printed in the United States of America

I Dream of Eugene

By

Jamie Hill

When Macy Green discovers a dusty old bottle at *Madame Zena's Mystical Shoppe*, she never imagines it might actually be magical. The handsome genie that appears offers her three wishes, but Macy soon discovers it will only take one-one very special wish-to fulfill her heart's true desire.

<http://www.jamiehill.biz/>

I Dream of Eugene

The dusty little store appeared crowded with merchandise, if not shoppers. Macy Green looked over the eclectic collection of oddities in *Madame Zena's Mystical Shoppe*, amazed at the various loads of crap the old woman tried to pass off as antiques. She eyed the dozens of brass items, all badly in need of polish, and a collection of old oriental rugs.

"Suppose these carpets fly?" She fingered one and looked up at her friend Tina, browsing on the other side of the counter.

"Yeah, you bet." Tina chuckled absently, digging through a small jewelry box. She held up a pair of dangly turquoise earrings. "Hey, Mace, look here. Don't these look like real silver?"

"Let me see." Macy took the earrings and studied them closely. "Nah, I don't think so. But they're pretty, and you look good in turquoise. You should get them."

Tina took the earrings back and held them up to her ears, looking at herself in an old mirror on the wall. "I do like them. They make me look like Cher, circa 1970." She flipped her long black hair over one shoulder and raised her eyebrows. "Whadaya think? Gypsy, tramp, or thief?"

Macy laughed at the old song and nodded. "Definitely gypsy. I like the look a lot."

"Okay, I'll get them. But you have to buy something, too."

"Uh, gee, Teen, I don't know." Macy looked skeptically over the rest of the items on the counter. She glanced at the old woman sitting up front and said quietly, "I don't really see anything that's my style."

"Keep looking." Tina wandered through the small store and

I Dream of Eugene

stopped when she got to the back, where a half-drawn curtain attempted to close off the storage room. "Oh Macy, look." She marched into the back room and grabbed a blue bottle off a table.

Macy followed her to the back room and whispered harshly, "What are you doing?"

"This is so cool!" Tina held up the bottle. "Very retro."

"Totally," Macy agreed, secretly admiring the bottle. It was cornflower blue with silver accents, and reminded her of a genie bottle from the days of Aladdin.

"It looks like Jeannie's bottle from the TV show!" Tina waved it at her. "I loved that show. I have to get this."

"Ezz not for sale." The woman from the front counter appeared in the doorway to the storage area. "You not allowed back here. Out! Out!"

"I'm sorry." Tina turned on the charm, and Macy smiled. Her friend was a public relations agent for a very big company in Chicago. If anyone could talk the old woman out of the bottle, Tina Brewster was the woman for the job. "I spotted this beautiful bottle here on the counter, and it just called to me. You have such lovely things in your shop. I'm having trouble deciding what to buy!"

"Ezz not for sale," she repeated and reached for the bottle.

Tina smiled and held it just out of reach. "Madame Zena...you are Madame Zena, aren't you?" The woman nodded, and Tina continued, "I have a real love for things from this era. I'm sure we can agree on a price that will make both of us quite happy."

Madame Zena looked in Tina's eyes and then seemed to study the bottle in her hands. After a moment, she looked back up at Tina and shook her head. "Ezz not for sale." She reached for the bottle, but Tina jerked it backwards.

"Tina," Macy said, embarrassed. Persistence was one thing, but sometimes too much could be foolish. "She doesn't want to sell the bottle. Let's get the earrings and go."

Tina smiled through gritted teeth and said, "But I want it."

Macy gritted her teeth and smiled right back. "You're acting like a spoiled brat. Put the stupid bottle down, and let's go."

She reached for the bottle, and it practically jumped into her hands.

"What the hell?" Macy held on firmly with both hands until the bottle stopped shaking. "That was bizarre."

"What?" Tina asked, irritated. She obviously hadn't noticed the

I Dream of Eugene

shaking that Macy felt.

Perhaps it was all in her mind. Macy gave the bottle a little shake, and it shook back at her. She glanced up at Tina, who seemed oblivious to anything unusual.

“Ah ha.” Madame Zena smiled widely, exposing several missing teeth and a chaw of chewing tobacco. She nodded and winked at Macy. “For you, twenty dollars.”

“For her, twenty dollars?” Tina screeched. “You’ll sell it to her but not me?”

The old woman closed her eyes and shrugged.

Tina looked at Macy and smiled, nodding her head quickly. “Buy it.”

Macy looked at the bottle thoughtfully, wondering exactly what was inside.

Tina nudged her. “Come on.”

“Okay,” Macy agreed and pulled a twenty from her purse. She handed it to the old woman who took it and grabbed Macy’s hand.

“For you, right? No one but you.”

“Yeah, sure.” Macy nodded nervously.

Madame Zena squeezed her hand until it hurt. “Promise me, no one but you.”

Macy and the old woman exchanged glances, and the bottle twitched again. “Sure, of course, I promise,” Macy finally said, and Zena released her hand.

Tina marched smugly to the front and paid for her earrings. Madame Zena wrapped both of their purchases and maintained eye contact with Macy until she and Tina left the store. They headed down the sidewalk, and Macy felt glad to be out in bright daylight again.

“One weird chick.” Tina tossed her hair over her shoulder again. “Let me have the bottle.” She reached for Macy’s package.

“Um, I don’t think so, Teen. I think I want to hold on to it for a bit.”

“What?” Tina stopped walking and stared at her. “Are you letting that batty old broad freak you out? She had it in for me, for some reason. Doesn’t like brunettes or whatever. But I want that bottle.”

Macy chuckled and tugged at her blonde ponytail absently. “I know you do, but I bought it, and I want to hang on to it for a while. If I decide it doesn’t fit in at my place, you’ll be the first to know.”

Tina pouted for a moment until a good-looking guy in a silver

I Dream of Eugene

BMW cruised past them slowly. She made eye contact with him and licked her lips, laughing when he swerved to miss a parked car.

"You're terrible." Macy stopped at her own little Toyota and inserted her key to unlock the door.

"Some guys are too easy." Tina chuckled and pointed a finger at Macy. "Think about the bottle. You know how great it would look at my place."

"I'll think about it, I promise. See you later."

"Call me tomorrow." Tina waved and stepped over to her own jazzy little sports car. She was in it and driving off before Macy even got her seatbelt fastened.

Macy sighed as her car chugged and sputtered before the engine turned over. She bet Tina never prayed for her car to start when she turned her key. Tina had been luckier in life than Macy, and while they were friends, they weren't exactly on the same level. Macy worked as a secretary at the P.R. firm where Tina shined, and while secretaries made comfortable salaries, Macy's barely covered the rent and expenses of her a-bit-too-lavish lifestyle. Her wardrobe chewed up a good chunk of her take-home pay, but she justified that easily: working at a high class firm required dressing a certain way. Macy did her best to keep up. She couldn't afford a new car, so she prayed every time she turned the key.

She made it home and parked on the street below her window as she always did. Macy lifted her package gently and hurried up the two flights of stairs to her apartment. She unlocked the door and locked it again quickly behind her, setting her purse down and holding the package in front of her. She unwrapped it gently, pulling the pretty blue bottle out and staring at the object.

The bottle jumped, and she almost dropped it.

"What the fuck is going on?" Macy muttered, trying to peer inside the bottle. She couldn't see anything through the cloudy glass, but she knew something was inside. She *sensed* something in there, but how could that be? Tina didn't seem to notice anything unusual, but Madame Zena definitely did. Macy felt sure the fact that *she* noticed it was the reason the woman sold her the bottle.

So what would she do with it? She set the bottle on her kitchen table and took a step back. It just sat there. If she expected any tricks, she was disappointed. But then, the stopper remained attached. Macy glanced at the top of the bottle, wondering if she really wanted to remove it. She wanted to, but she didn't want to. She felt nervous and

I Dream of Eugene

excited and, suddenly, extremely stupid. What did she think might happen? Barbara Eden popping out seemed highly unlikely, and Macy laughed at her own nervousness.

“This is ridiculous,” she said aloud, and reached for the bottle. She tugged at the stopper, but it stuck firmly. She tightened her grasp and tugged harder.

Finally, it loosened, and Macy pulled it out. She looked in the bottle, but still couldn’t see anything. She set it back on the table with the top next to it and stared at the bottle. She stared harder, took a step closer, then a step back. Nothing happened. Macy didn’t take her eyes off the bottle for another full minute before laughing nervously and dropping onto her sofa. She rubbed her face with her hands and chuckled to herself. Madame Zena apparently meant to freak her out.

Macy opened her eyes and discovered a filmy blue smoke in the room. She gasped as the smoke swirled into a shape, and suddenly a man stood in front of her. Squealing, she leaned back into the sofa and tucked her knees to her chest.

“Greetings, Mistress,” the vision said, and Macy clamped her hands over her eyes.

She tried to calm herself and slow her breathing before she peeked out to discover if she still saw anything. She did, and the thing she saw had the shape of a very fine man. Macy dropped her hands and stared at him. He stood several inches taller than her, with neatly trimmed black hair and a Van Dyke beard on a very handsome face. His deep brown eyes watched her with amusement.

They stared at each other silently for a moment before Macy forced herself to break away from his magnetic gaze and glance over the rest of him. His firm, tanned body rippled with muscles, and he wore only a small blue vest and billowy white silk pants drawn tight at his waist and ankles.

“No fez?” The comment slipped out of Macy’s mouth before she could stop herself. She looked at his face, sincerely hoping he had a sense of humor.

He stared at her a moment before smiling. “I could never get into the fez. Hats don’t do a thing for me.”

He took a step closer to her.

Macy scrambled off the sofa and kept some distance between them. He seemed friendly enough, but the whole situation was slightly unusual-unusual hell, she decided...fucking nuts. “Who are you?”

I Dream of Eugene

He offered her a small bow. "I am Eugene, at your service, Mistress."

"Eugene?" She repeated aloud. "As in 'Genie'? Genie in a bottle?"

He scowled and replied, "I prefer Eugene, Mistress. And yes, obviously, I came from the bottle."

Macy squeezed her arms around herself and shivered. "I think I'm the one who's been hitting the bottle. Funny, I don't remember drinking anything."

Eugene smiled. "You obviously weren't expecting me. Whoever gave you the bottle didn't tell you what might be inside?"

"I, uh, bought it at this weird little shop downtown. I had no idea what was inside."

"You bought it?" He raised his eyebrows. "Then I truly am in your debt."

He reached for her hand and kissed the back of it gently.

Macy wanted to pull her hand back, but his felt warm and welcoming, so she left it. He looked even more handsome up close, and she noticed a gold hoop in his left ear. She tried to remember the saying about pierced ears to determine a guy's sexual preference-"left is right, and right is wrong." She bit back a chuckle and wondered why she thought the man standing in front of her might be gay. His pants were a little fruity, but the rest of him oozed masculinity, earring or no earring.

"You have a question for me?" He watched her intently.

"Yes. No!" She couldn't ask him if he was gay. She didn't even know why she wondered such a thing! She had a hell of a bigger problem than that. A strange man stood in her apartment, and he hadn't come in through the door...he came in through a puff of smoke. "Yes." Macy reconsidered. "What are you doing here?"

He kissed the back of her hand one more time before releasing her and crossing his arms. He bowed to her again and said, "Your wish is my command."

"Excuse me?" Macy stared blankly.

He put his hands on his hips and smirked. "Aw, come on. Don't tell me you haven't seen the movies. *Arabian Nights*? *Aladdin*?"

"Well, sure. But they were just movies."

He shrugged. "Maybe, maybe not. There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio...than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Macy stared at him. "You're quoting Hamlet?"

I Dream of Eugene

"Shakespeare," he corrected.

"I know." She nodded. "Shakespeare wrote Hamlet, and Hamlet said that."

"He got published? Really?" Eugene grinned. "I wasn't aware of that. I knew Bill when he worked as a starving artist. He always threw around fancy phrases like that."

Macy dropped back onto the edge of the sofa. "You *knew* Shakespeare?"

He shrugged. "I've known lots of people. Right now, my focus is on you. I guess I need to explain the rules."

"I guess you do," she agreed, her head spinning.

"I'm here to grant you three wishes. The usual caveats apply, of course. I can't make anyone fall in love with you, and I can't kill anyone."

Macy stared at him dumbly. "Three wishes?"

"You're quick," he teased her. "Do I need to repeat the parts about love and death?"

"No." She waved a hand. "I get that. I just can't believe this is happening to me."

"Believe it," he told her and smiled.

She smiled back and stood to face him. "You're pulling my leg, aren't you?"

He raised his hands. "I'm not touching you, Mistress, I promise."

Macy rolled her eyes. "That's not what I meant. Are you fooling with me? Joking? Teasing?"

"If it was a joke, how did I get here?"

Good question, she thought. Could it be true? Could she really have three wishes?

"What the hell." She tossed her hands up. "Let's test this sucker out. I want to be rich, I know that much. That's my first wish."

"Mistress," Eugene touched her shoulder. "I must advise you to think *very carefully* about whatever you wish for. Things are not always as they seem."

"What do you mean?"

"How do you say it...?" He searched for words. "The grass is not always greener on the other side."

She smiled at that. "It's a hell of a lot greener with money than without. I'm sick of pinching pennies and clipping coupons. I want to be rich."

"But have you given careful consideration to all the—"

I Dream of Eugene

"Are these *my* three wishes, or aren't they? Maybe it's a bunch of crap, and there really are no wishes!"

"I assure you..."

She interrupted him again. "Then do as I ask! I want to be rich. *I wish that I were rich.*"

Eugene looked at her sadly, brought his hands to a praying position in front of him and bowed his head. "May it be so."

Macy's phone rang. She shot an irritated glance at Eugene before lifting the receiver. "Yeah, hello?"

"Macy," Tina gushed. "Have you seen the TV? They just announced the lottery numbers, and I think you may have them."

"How do you know?" Macy asked carefully.

"You play the same damn numbers every week. Your birthday, your mother's birthday, your brother's birthday, blah blah blah. 8-17-24-28-30-31."

"Those are my numbers!" Macy squealed.

"I told you!" Tina squealed back.

"Holy cow." Macy hopped up and down.

"Put that ticket someplace safe! The lottery office won't be open until Monday. We'll take the day off, and I'll drive you there."

"That gives me a day and a half to figure this out," Macy said. "I don't want anyone to know about it yet."

"Are you kidding? This is great P.R.! The firm is going to go nuts."

"Tina, please. Let me think about this a little more."

"Yeah, whatever, sweetie."

"Tina, I mean it. I need to think about this before I tell anybody."

"Okay, go think and dream about everything you're going to buy. I'll talk to you later."

"Later, right," Macy hung up the phone and grinned at Eugene. "You did it."

He held his hands out and nodded his head to her. "Your wish is my command."

"Woo hoo!" she squealed, and grabbed him around the neck for a hug. His body stiffened for a moment, and Macy wondered if she should have grabbed him, but then he relaxed and hugged her back. "This is unbelievable."

He smiled as she released him and spun around the room. "I'm rich. I'm really rich."

"A hundred million dollars, more or less."

I Dream of Eugene

She stared at him. "A hundred million dollars? Holy shit!" She dropped back onto the sofa.

The phone rang again, and Macy snatched it up. "Hello?"

"Macy, baby," her mother screamed. "You won the lottery!"

"Mom, how did you find out about this already?"

"Tina called your brother, and Teddy called me. We're so excited."

"I'll bet." Macy thought to herself that she might kill Tina. She *asked* her-no, *told* her not to say anything to anyone.

"So how much do you think you're going to get after taxes? Are you going to get it all at once, or in payments? It's going to make a difference, you know, on what you're able to buy and when. If you take payments, you get more money, but it's spread out. The lump sum would be a little less cash, but we'd have it all at once."

"We?" Macy repeated. This didn't sound good.

"I'm just trying to be helpful, honey. You're going to need some advisors to handle an amount of money that big."

"You're right, Mom, I will." And it won't be you, or Teddy, or even Tina, she thought to herself.

"You know how much your Uncle Steve has been suffering. This money could really turn things around for him."

"Uncle Steve?" Macy said, thinking of her mother's brother. He suffered because he drank too much and considered playing the ponies a career. "Mother, Uncle Steve is going to burn through whatever money I give him."

"So are you saying you're not going to remember your family when you come into this fortune? You'll be richer than you could ever imagine, and you're going to begrudge your aunts, uncles and cousins a little happiness?"

Aunts, uncles and cousins, for Pete's sake. Her mother must be making a list right now of everyone to share Macy's money with. "I'm not saying anything, Mom. I haven't had time to think about this yet. Please, just give me some time."

"Oh, Tina's on the TV," her mother hollered. "Channel Six. Turn it on. She looks so good."

Macy shook her head as she reached for the remote control and punched it on to Channel Six. Tina appeared, speaking with reporters about how she and Macy went into Joe's Shop Mart and bought the lottery tickets. A photo of Macy flashed on the screen.

"Christ," she muttered. "I've got to go, Mom. I'll talk to you

I Dream of Eugene

later.”

“Okay, but remember...”

Macy punched the off button and tossed the phone down. She didn’t need any more of her mother’s advice right now. “This is unbelievable.”

“It sure is.” Eugene took the remote control from her hand and sat down on the sofa, punching buttons and changing channels. “Cool.”

Macy smiled and sat next to him. “Have you ever seen TV before?”

“Of course, I have,” he scoffed. “But this device is something new.”

“In the last thirty years or so.” She took the remote back. “How long have you been in that bottle?”

He looked at her and shrugged. “Time flies. Usually I come out, grant three wishes, and go right back in.”

“Wow,” Macy thought about that, and then looked back at the TV screen. “I can’t believe she’s telling people, after I asked her not to.”

“This person is a friend of yours?”

“My *best* friend.” Macy emphasized the word.

He appeared confused. “Why would your best friend go against your wishes?”

She sighed. “Because with Tina, you always know who comes first. Tina looks out for number one. She’s nothing if not consistent.”

Eugene seemed to ponder that as the doorbell buzzed. “What now?” Macy wondered aloud. She went to the door and opened it to her sweet little old next-door neighbor. “Hi, Mrs. Gleason.”

“Macy, darling, we heard your wonderful news.” She thrust a plate of chocolate chip cookies into Macy’s hands. “I brought you some cookies. I know how much you like them.”

“Uh, yeah, I sure do. Thanks a lot.” She started to close the door when Mrs. Gleason wedged her foot in the jamb.

“I should be getting back, you know how Mr. Gleason hasn’t been well. He needs surgery, but Medicare won’t cover it.”

“Yeah, I remember you mentioned that.” Macy put her hand on the door. Mr. Gleason weighed about five hundred pounds, and Medicare wouldn’t cover the stomach stapling procedure his doctor recommended. Macy felt sorry for the Gleasons, but it really wasn’t her problem. “Thanks again for the cookies, I should go.”

I Dream of Eugene

"I only thought if you won all that money like the TV said you did, maybe you could-"

Macy interrupted. "Mrs. Gleason, I just found out about the lottery a few minutes ago. I don't have any details yet. Perhaps when I've gotten more information, I might be able to help you out, but right now I don't know and can't make any promises."

The woman wagged her finger at Macy. "You just remember who your friends are, little missy."

"Oh, yes, ma'am." Macy shoved the woman's foot out and closed her door, locking the deadbolt securely. She turned around to Eugene, who flipped through the TV channels as quickly as he could. "This is unreal."

He looked up, and Macy realized she still held the remote control. "Hey, how did you do that?"

He stood up, ignoring the question. "Are those cookies?" Eugene lifted the plastic wrap and took one, nibbling on it. "Mmmm, chocolate chip, my favorite."

Macy stared at him. "So...you...eat?"

He grinned and helped himself to another cookie. "Of course, I eat. Actually, I'm starving."

"I'm sorry. I don't have much in the fridge. We could order in. Do you like pizza or Chinese food?"

Eugene's eyes lit up. "I *love* Chinese food. Sweet and Sour Pork, Kung Pao Chicken, Wonton Soup, Crab Rangoon, Fried Egg Rolls."

"Holy cow," Macy chuckled. "You want all that?"

"I haven't had any good Chinese in such a long time." He raised his eyebrows at her "Besides, it's not like you can't afford it."

"I suppose so." Macy called her neighborhood restaurant and ordered all of Eugene's favorites delivered, deciding it was the least she could do. While they waited, he amused himself with the TV, and she answered the phone.

"Is this Macy Green?" the caller asked.

"Yes, who's speaking please?"

"You don't know me, but my name is Susan Sparks. I live over on Central Avenue. My husband and I have a six year old son born with Muscular Dystrophy."

"I'm sorry to hear that, Mrs. Sparks. What can I do for you?"

"Well, little Jason is getting along pretty good, but there is this experimental treatment that we'd like to consider-"

"And let me guess, your insurance company won't pay because

I Dream of Eugene

it's experimental?"

"That's right! With just twenty-five thousand dollars, we could--"

"I'm sorry. I'm not able to take requests for money right now." Macy started to hang up, but hesitated as she heard the woman screaming at her.

"Twenty-five thousand dollars is nothing to you. How can you turn your back on my little boy?"

Macy cringed and hung up the phone. She took a few more calls that were similar in nature before she took her phone off the hook.

"Good idea." Eugene nodded.

"I can't believe how people come crawling out of the woodwork when someone comes into a little money."

"It's not exactly *a little* money, though, is it?" he asked her.

"Well, no, but a person has to draw the line somewhere. How am I supposed to choose who to help and who not to help? Everyone seems to have a sad story."

The doorbell buzzed, and Macy peeked through the peephole before opening up to the familiar little Asian deliveryman. He grinned at her. "Hey, I hear you hit it real lucky today."

"That's what everyone is telling me. I'm not so sure about it, myself." She stacked the food on her table and pulled out two twenties to pay the thirty-two dollar tab.

"Thank you." The man waved at her and started to leave.

"Hey, my change?" Macy called after him.

He scowled at her. "You win lottery and won't even give me tip?" He began cursing in a language Macy could not understand, and tossed her eight dollars back at her.

"You can have this," she offered three ones to him, her customary tip.

He cursed and spat on the ground in the hallway before stomping off without the bills.

Macy closed the door and locked it then leaned up against it. "Good Lord," she muttered, the realization of her situation finally sinking in.

Eugene stopped opening cartons to smile at her. "Sucks, huh?"

"Oh, yeah." She slumped down at the table next to him. "Everyone wants something from me. I haven't seen a dime yet, and I'm supposed to share with everyone I meet?"

"That's right." He searched her cabinets and came up with plates and silverware. "Why don't you put it out of your mind for awhile

I Dream of Eugene

and enjoy your dinner? I know I'm going to."

He started shoveling food on to their plates, stopping every so often to taste and roll his eyes upwards. "This is fantastic."

Macy crossed her arms on the table. "I'm not hungry anymore. He spat at me."

"Rude," Eugene agreed. "You're supposed to put it out of your mind though. Here, taste this." He held his fork up to her mouth and gave her a bite of pork. "Didn't I tell you?" Eugene smiled and nodded.

"It is good."

"Come on..." He offered her another bite.

Macy took it and smiled at him. "I could use something to drink. How about you?"

When he nodded, she continued, "I think I've got some wine." She went to the cabinet and pulled out a bottle, popped it open, and poured two glasses. "We're not going to let it breathe. We're going to drink it *now*." She raised her glass to him.

"To wealth," Eugene offered.

"Wealth, hmpf..." Macy knocked back her glass of wine. She wanted to be rich. He tried to warn her about making a hasty decision, but she felt so sure she knew what she wanted. "Is this what you thought would happen?" she asked him as he continued to eat. "Did you know people would be bugging me for money like this?"

Eugene shrugged as he ate. "Wealth is a pretty common request. Almost everybody chooses it as one of their three wishes. I've seen a lot in the past six hundred years or so."

Macy choked on the wonton she nibbled, and washed it down with another glass of wine. "Six hundred years? Is that how old you are?"

He shrugged again, a habit Macy found endearing. Everything seemed natural to him; nothing much seemed to phase or surprise him. "Who keeps track? It's been a hell of a long ride, I know that much."

"How long are you...?" Macy wasn't sure of the proper wording. "How long will you be...?"

"Stuck in the bottle?" he finished the thought for her, and shrugged again. "Who knows? It's not such a bad life. I get to meet a lot of interesting people. Most of them I'm ready to part company with by the third wish. People can be dicks."

Macy choked again, and took another swig of wine. She grinned

I Dream of Eugene

at Eugene. “That’s pretty modern language for a guy who knew Bill Shakespeare.”

He grinned back. “I catch on quickly and have tried to evolve over the years. Sometimes it’s a long spell in between masters, and then I have a lot to catch up on.”

She looked into his eyes. “Is that what I am? Your master?”

He bowed his head to her. “Of course, Mistress. Your wish is my command.”

She shoved back her wineglass, thinking if she drank any more, she might wish to see *exactly what kind* of commands he would fulfill for her. She started to say something when her doorbell buzzed. “Oh, what now?” Macy tried to stand but felt lightheaded and sat back down quickly.

“Ignore it,” Eugene advised, cleaning his plate.

She smiled. “Really? Do you think I should?”

He shrugged. “Why not?”

The buzzer became insistent then the knocking began. No, pounding. “Mace? Open up! It’s me!”

Eugene sipped his wine and looked at her. “Who would ‘me’ be? Your boyfriend, perhaps?”

“No.” She slumped over the table. “I don’t have a boyfriend. It’s my brother, Teddy. I’m sure he has a list of his wants and needs in one hand and a plan in the other.”

Eugene stood up and offered Macy his hand. “Then let’s get out of here.”

She put her hand in his. “There’s only the one door and a rickety fire escape.”

He pulled her close to him. “With your permission, I can take us somewhere.”

Macy’s eyes widened. “Well, okay...” She inhaled as Eugene pressed her body against his and suddenly felt like they were floating. “Does this count as one of my three wishes?” she murmured, their faces practically nose-to-nose.

He released his grip as they landed on a sunny beach, but held on to her hand. “Of course not. This was my idea.”

She glanced around the deserted beach. “Oh, it’s beautiful! A little sunshine and solitude is exactly what I need right now.”

Eugene snapped his fingers, and two lounge chairs appeared with a table between them, sporting a pitcher of icy lemonade and two glasses. Macy laughed and dropped into one of the chairs. “Were you

I Dream of Eugene

reading my mind?" she asked him slyly.

He smiled as he slid into the other chair and poured them each a drink. "If I could read minds, we might have achieved a different destination, Mistress."

Macy blushed and took the glass from him. How could he know that? Maybe he *could* read minds. But she felt loose and comfortable and didn't really care. "This is so perfect." She glanced around. "I just hope it remains secluded. After my picture flashed on TV, everyone is going to recognize me as the woman with the money."

"Not around here." Eugene shook his head. "In fact, I can guarantee you no one here has ever heard of the Illinois State Lottery.

That got her attention. "Where are we, Eugene?"

He leaned back in the beach chair and closed his eyes, smiling. "Pompeii."

"Pompeii?" Macy looked around again. "But it's so beautiful! I thought it was more of an archaeological site these days, what with all the volcanic ash and the ruins."

He glanced over at her and smiled. "It is. But this is Pompeii before Mount Vesuvius erupted."

Macy's jaw dropped open. "We went back in time?"

He shrugged and laid back. "Relax." He reached out and squeezed her hand. "You wanted to get away from it all."

"I didn't mean away from my *century*," she squealed.

"Relax," he repeated calmly, continuing to squeeze her hand. "Anytime you want to go home, just say the word."

"Really?" That calmed her a little bit.

"Absolutely." He ran his thumb over the palm of her hand, and Macy leaned back, enjoying the sunshine and the feeling of her hand in his.

"There now, isn't that better?" His thumb caressed her with smooth, powerful strokes.

"Oh, yeah." Macy felt much more relaxed, and the wine made her head pleasantly fuzzy. That had the added feature of disabling the filter between her brain and her mouth. "It's too bad these chairs aren't big enough for two."

Whoops, did she say that out loud?

With a snap of his fingers, Eugene sat next to her, sharing a larger, more luxurious lounger. "Your wish is my command," he whispered.

"Was that my second wish?"

I Dream of Eugene

He smiled. "Of course not. You'll know when you use your second wish. Maybe this was my wish."

His lips met hers, and they kissed gently. Macy moaned and opened her mouth slightly, and Eugene took full advantage. His tongue slipped between her lips, exploring and tasting what felt like every inch of the inside of her mouth. She moaned again at the sensuality of it, and he pulled back slowly.

"Do you want me to stop, Mistress?"

"God, no," she told him honestly. "I should tell you to stop calling me 'mistress', but dammit, that turns me on, too. No, Eugene, I don't want you to stop. I want you to do more...much more."

He smiled and pressed his mouth against hers hungrily. He sucked her tongue into his mouth and let his hands roam over her body.

"Yes," Macy whimpered.

Eugene pulled back and let his kisses slide down her throat and on to her neck. "Tell me, Mistress. Tell me what you want me to do to you."

"Everything." She sighed and shivered.

He smiled and continued to work his mouth lower. He freed Macy of her blouse, and she undid the hook of her bra. She didn't know if he'd seen a fastener like it before, and she wasn't in a patient mood. She wanted his mouth on her breasts *now*.

"You're so beautiful, Mistress." He blew on her nipples lightly to pebble them before sucking each one into his mouth.

Macy groaned at the sensation, and wanting to feel flesh beneath her hands, peeled back his vest. To her surprise, she found his left nipple pierced with a gold hoop matching the one in his ear.

"That is incredibly sexy," she whispered, fingering the tight nipple.

"Would you take it into your mouth, Mistress?"

Macy felt a gush of wetness between her legs. "God, yes."

He pressed his body against hers, and she played with the little ring gently with her tongue before sucking his nipple into her mouth.

"I love it," she whispered, and, as his body shifted, she felt something else she was quite sure she would love. "You're hard," she told him, getting into the 'mistress' routine. "I want to see your erection."

"Yes, Mistress." He reached for the band of his trousers and shoved them to his feet. His cock jutted forward, as long, full, and

I Dream of Eugene

thick as Macy had ever seen. She licked her lips in anticipation.

"You also are quite beautiful," she told him, drooling to get her mouth on his huge cock. "I want you in my mouth. Can you arrange it so your face is between my legs?"

"Absolutely." Eugene snapped his fingers, and Macy lay naked, upside down beneath him. The tip of his cock dripped milky liquid, and she lapped it up. "Does this please you, Mistress?"

"Very much," she gasped as he buried his face between her legs and sucked her clit into his mouth. The pressure built intensely, and she tried to focus on his throbbing cock, licking it from base to tip and back again, but before she had a chance to really get started, she came in an orgasm so intense she thought she might burst. "Sweet Jesus!" she cried out, and Eugene chuckled.

"You taste good, Mistress. May I continue tasting?"

Macy wrapped her legs around his head and forced him back down in reply. He quickly brought her to two more climaxes, each more powerful than the last, using his tongue and fingers to ravage her intimately and thoroughly. As she floated down from her last delightful spiral, she felt his balls draw up and sensed his imminent release.

"Come on, baby," she mumbled with her mouth full. She felt his stream shoot down her throat, and she continued to massage and suck until his gyrations ceased.

Eugene flopped off of her and landed at her side.

"Wow," she sighed.

"Yeah, wow."

She smiled and tugged at him until he faced the same direction as she and put her head on his chest. Eugene wrapped his arms around her and held her firmly. Macy giggled.

"What?" He grinned at her.

"The first time I saw you, I wondered if you might be gay." She added quickly, "Not that there's anything wrong with that."

"Hope I proved you wrong on that point."

"Oh, yeah. Well, you proved that you're bisexual, at least. Those pants are still questionable."

He laughed aloud. "They're really comfortable! You should try them sometime."

"I prefer jeans."

He ran a hand over her bare ass. "I prefer you *out* of jeans. You're truly beautiful, Macy."

I Dream of Eugene

She smiled at him. "I think that's the first time you've called me by my name."

He shrugged. "It's not against the rules. You seemed to be getting off on the 'mistress' thing. I wanted to make you happy."

Macy grinned and pressed her body into his. "That you did. Very happy. Extremely happy."

He nudged his penis against her thigh, and she felt him growing hard again. "I believe I could make you happier, Macy."

She looked into his eyes and smiled softly. "Whatever you want, you've got. If you want me to call you 'master' this time, I'd be happy to. I want to make *you* happy, Eugene."

"You've already made me happy." He raised both her hands over her head and gripped them with one of his own. "I don't want you to call me 'master'. Call me Gene, and I'll call you Macy."

She squirmed as he cupped her mound with his free hand and pushed her legs apart. "Oh, yes..." Macy sighed. "Make love to me, Gene. I want to feel you inside me."

"Gladly." He thrust and filled her to the hilt in one smooth movement.

"Oh, yes!" she squealed, her sensitive body reacting to his delightful invasion. "I'm going to come quickly."

He put his forehead on hers and slowed his hip thrusts to an agonizing pace. "I want to watch you come, Macy. You're so beautiful. I want to watch your face erupt in ecstasy."

She panted as he tormented her. "You make me come like no one ever has before. You fill me up, Gene, and make me just want to burst!"

He released her hands, and she clawed at his back. "Come on, Macy." His thrusts turned into pounding waves, over and over again until she drew up and cried out her pleasure.

"That's it!" he encouraged. "Come on, baby!"

She sobbed when her climax finally subsided.

"Macy!" He stopped and held her face in his hands. "Did I hurt you?"

"No, no." She shook her head. "It was so perfect and so beautiful! It only hurts when I think it might not last forever."

He smiled at her, and their lips met in a soft kiss. Clutching the back of his head, she kept him close where she wanted him.

"Kiss me," he murmured, their lips touching. "Kiss me again, and I'm going to come."

I Dream of Eugene

“Come inside me,” she replied, pulling his tongue into her mouth. “Fuck me with your tongue and your cock, and come inside me.”

Eugene groaned and shuddered his release as he emptied into her. Macy arched her back and came with him, another ferocious swirl of intense passion locking them together until they were both drained and exhausted.

He collapsed on top of her then started to rise.

“Don’t go,” she whispered.

“I’m crushing you.”

“I’m not ready to let you go,” she answered, and he nodded that he understood.

He buried his face in her neck, and they snuggled together as the sun went down.

* * * *

“Ready for me to move?” he finally asked when darkness surrounded them.

“No,” she wrapped her legs around his body. “Don’t leave me.”

“Macy...” he started to say something, but trailed off. He finally said “Part of me is going, whether I like it or not.” They glanced between their bodies at his waning penis.

Macy looked back into his eyes and asked quietly “If I never make my last wish, does that mean you’ll have to stay?”

He grinned at her. “Well, hmmm. I’m not sure about that. No one has ever *not* used all three wishes before.”

“They say there’s a first time for everything.” She grinned back at him, glancing down at his cock. “There’s really nothing you can do about that?”

Eugene smiled and snapped his fingers. His erection instantly engorged and filled her. “Maybe there’s one thing...”

“Oh, yeah.” Macy closed her eyes and clutched at him. “That’s the perfect thing.”

* * * *

She woke in her own bed. For one frantic instant, Macy thought it had all been a dream. “Gene?” she cried out.

“I’m here.” He rolled over and pulled her into his arms. “Bad dream?”

She nuzzled her face into his chest, shaking her head. “I just thought...I was afraid...”

“You were afraid *I* had been the dream?” He completed her thought. He had a way of doing that.

I Dream of Eugene

She nodded, clutching him tightly.

He smiled and kissed her forehead. "Crazy as it may seem, I'm not a dream. None of this has been a dream. If you listen carefully, you'll hear a constant stream of knocks on the front door."

"Are you serious?" She looked up at him.

He nodded. "They knock for awhile then go away. Last time I looked, there were reporters out in front of the building."

"Damn." Macy buried her face in her hands. "What have I done? You tried to warn me..."

"I told you, I've seen it before. It's a new experience for you."

"An experience I wish I didn't have to go through. God, I wish I'd never asked to win the lottery."

He folded his hands into a praying position and bowed his head. "May it be so."

Macy stared at him. "Don't tell me-my second wish?"

"Yep." Eugene smiled and pulled her closer to snuggle.

Macy jerked away and sat up. "You told me I would know when I used my next wish!"

He sat up and smiled at her patiently. "You knew."

"You undid it, just like that?"

"Yep. Just like it never happened." He looked pleased with himself. "Tina, your mother, your brother-nobody will remember a thing because none of it took place."

"Gene," she pouted. "I'm right back where I started, and I wasted my first two wishes."

"If you choose to look at it that way." He shrugged. "I choose to think you've learned a valuable lesson. I know you'll make that last wish count."

Macy tugged the sheet from her bed and wrapped it around her as she got up. "I wasn't going to use my last wish, remember?"

He looked at her sadly. "You have to use it, Macy. I wouldn't know what to do otherwise."

"You could stay here with me."

"I can't. It just wouldn't work."

"It worked pretty well for Jeannie and Major Nelson."

"Television." Eugene rolled his eyes. "That show set the image of genies back a thousand years. In the *Tales of the Arabian Nights*, we were strong and fearsome. Then one blonde babe comes along, and all of a sudden genies are ditzy and stupid."

"I don't think of you that way." She looked into his eyes.

I Dream of Eugene

He smiled. "I know. You're different from any master I've ever had, and it would be easy-and incredibly desirable-to stay here with you. But I don't think that's the kind of relationship you're looking for. I know I'm not."

Tears rolled down Macy's cheeks. "I don't understand. I thought what we had felt wonderful."

He stood up and faced her. "It *is* wonderful Macy, never doubt that. But I'm holding out hope that somewhere down the line I'll find a partner who's my equal. I don't want to have a master for the rest of my life, and I don't think you want to *be* one."

She thought about that as the phone rang. She looked at Eugene as she lifted the receiver.

"Remember," he whispered, "the lottery never happened."

Macy nodded and said "Hello?"

"Hey, Mace, it's Tina. Hope I didn't wake you."

"No, I'm up." She watched as Eugene moved closer to her and began to kiss her neck.

"Great. So are you up for brunch at Mascotti's? I'm starving."

Macy stifled a groan as Eugene suckled her neck and pushed the sheet down with his hand. He caressed one breast and rubbed his thumb gently over her nipple. "I-uh-don't think I can make it today." She could barely speak, let alone think about food.

"Oh, okay then." Tina sounded disappointed. "I guess I'll talk to you later."

"Sure, yeah. Later." Macy pushed the disconnect button and dropped the phone on her bed. She captured Eugene's mouth with her own, and they shared a tender and passionate kiss. "I don't want to think about later," she sighed.

"Then don't." He brushed her hair back from her face. "Let's make today about you and me."

She smiled at him. "I'm not wishing for anything, mind you, but that beach sure was nice."

Eugene grinned back and snapped his fingers. They stood on the beach in Pompeii as the waves crashed up around their ankles.

"We're naked!" Macy squealed.

"Ain't life grand?" He lifted her up and swung her around, stopping long enough to suckle each breast before laying her back in the sand and spreading her legs.

"The water is so warm," Macy murmured as the tide ebbed and flowed around her.

I Dream of Eugene

"And you are so hot." He let his tongue glide through her slick folds, and Macy gasped as he flicked her clit ever so lightly. His beard felt rough in contrast to his soft smooth tongue, and Macy bucked her hips to the delicious sensations. She climaxed intensely after just a few minutes, and before she stopped shuddering, Eugene climbed up and penetrated her with his stiff and ready cock.

"Yes!" she wailed and wrapped her legs around his tight ass. "Oh, God, yes! I'm going to come again, Gene."

"Come on." He stuck his tongue in her mouth, and Macy tasted her own juices on him. The thrilling jolt of that sent her rocketing over the edge again, and as she cried out, she felt his hot stream pulsing into her in waves.

They rode out the crest of the explosion clinging to each other tightly. When they stopped convulsing, Eugene put his forehead against hers, and Macy looked deeply into his eyes. She knew she could never let this man go. She wasn't sure how to accomplish it, but she wanted him, just as he was right now, with her forever.

"You complete me," she finally said to him softly.

He kissed the tip of her nose. "That's the sweetest thing anyone ever said to me."

She looked at him sincerely. "I mean it, Gene. I need you. I want you in my life. I love you."

He rubbed a thumb over her cheek and smiled slyly. "You're just saying that because I can do this." He snapped his fingers, and his cock became hard instantly. He thrust into her, and she groaned.

"My sweet lord, that is nice." Macy gasped. She placed a hand on his chest and told him, "But stop. I don't love you because you're magical. I love you because of the way you make me feel when I'm with you." She looked into his eyes. "Do you understand that? It's not the magic. It's you."

A tear glistened in Eugene's eye, and he blinked it away quickly.

Macy swiped at the tear gently with her thumb and then sucked the thumb into her mouth. "I dare you to say you don't love me."

Another tear rolled down his cheek, and Macy kissed that one away. "I dare you to say you can live without me."

She could see Eugene desperately trying to get a grip on his emotions. She began to writhe underneath him, and he joined her rhythm. "Love me, Gene," she panted as they rocked back and forth. "I just want you to love me."

"I love you," he cried out as an earth-shattering orgasm ripped

I Dream of Eugene

through both of them. Macy could feel what happened inside him just as if he were part of her. She clung to him as their bodies pulsed in unison, until she didn't have the strength to tremble anymore. They lay sprawled out on the beach and let the water wash over them, still joined as one, for a long, long time.

* * * *

"There has to be a way we can do this," Macy insisted for the hundredth time later that afternoon. They were back in her apartment, wrapped together wearing only a quilt, eating leftover Chinese food on the sofa.

"You need to get some money," he reminded her. "If we word your request the right way, no one will have to know about it, and you can be set for life. That's what you need right now."

"You're what I need right now. I don't care about the money anymore."

He shook his head. "We've been through this. There's no way I can stay and be your genie. It wouldn't be right."

Macy growled in frustration and yanked at her hair. "I don't want you to be my genie. I want you to be my husband."

Eugene glanced at her. "What kind of a husband would I make? I don't know how to do anything."

She gave a sultry chuckle and said, "I beg to differ, my love. You know how to do *everything*, and I've got the aching muscles to prove it."

He grinned. "There you go, confusing me with the magic again. If I were a mere mortal, I couldn't have gone nearly as many rounds as I did today; admit it."

She leaned in and kissed his forehead. "You're probably right. But one round with you is all the magic I need, baby. You're everything to me."

He looked thoughtful as he set a food container on the coffee table. "I don't know what I'd be like as a mortal."

"You'd be great," she said offhandedly.

"Do you mean that?"

"What?" Macy asked, confused.

"If I were a mortal, I could stay here with you. We could grow old together. Have babies, even."

Her eyes began to sparkle. "Really?"

He nodded slowly.

She thought about that. "You wouldn't be, like, six hundred years

I Dream of Eugene

old, would you? These things always seem to have a catch.”

Eugene laughed. “No, I’d be the age I am now. I’d grow old from here, at the same rate you would.”

She frowned again. “I couldn’t ask you to do that. As a genie, you’re immortal. You never have to grow old. You could move on to your next master or mistress...” She made a face. “And probably have great sex with her, too.”

“Unless *he’s* like the majority of my former masters, six hundred pounds of evil, nasty bastard. I assure you, there hasn’t been much sex over the years.”

“But you’re immortal,” Macy insisted.

He caught her hands up in his and kissed her palms. “What good is immortality if I don’t have the love of my life to share it with? We could have everything, you and I. We might have sixty years together, or we might have sixty minutes. But I swear to you, Macy, one hour with you would be better than a life of immortality without you.”

Both of them were crying as they came together and kissed.

“You’d really do this for me?” she finally asked.

“For us,” he corrected.

“I love you.” She looked into his eyes, and he smiled.

“I love you too. Let’s do it.”

Macy looked down. “We’re naked. You’re going to need some clothes.”

Eugene stood up and snapped his fingers. They were both dressed in their regular clothing.

She chuckled at him. “You might want to save those pants for loungewear.” She grabbed a catalog off her coffee table and showed him the man on the front. “You need something like this: jeans, a t-shirt and a button-down shirt to go over it.”

Eugene shrugged and snapped his fingers. He wore the outfit from the catalog.

“I like it.” Macy smiled. She slid her hand inside the partially buttoned shirt and rubbed her thumb over the nipple ring visible through his t-shirt. “This is so sexy.”

He smiled back and returned the favor, rubbing one of her nipples through her tank top. “I think we need to get you one, too.”

“Ooh, maybe so,” Macy agreed. “But first things first. You’ll need more than one outfit.”

“True.”

“So whatever you need, maybe you should...” she snapped her

I Dream of Eugene

fingers and grinned.

"Ah, I get it." He nodded, thought about it for a moment and then snapped. The front room filled with suitcases and trunks.

"Holy cow, baby," she exclaimed. "We're going to need a bigger place."

"Not a bad idea, there will be two of us living here." He reached for her and caressed her stomach. "For now, anyway."

Macy leaned in to him and sighed. "Is this really happening? It feels too good to be true."

"It's true." He kissed her. "Are you ready?"

"I'm ready if you're ready. It's going to be the biggest adjustment for you. No more snapping when you want something. You'll have to get up and do it yourself."

"I think I'm up to the task." He nuzzled her cheek.

"No more Pompeii. Are you sure you don't want to jet off to there one more time? Or somewhere else..."

He cupped her face in his hands. "I'm right where I want to be. Surely you have romantic beaches in this time period somewhere? You and I can take a real jet and find one."

"I like the sound of that," she agreed.

"Then let's do this. I need you to repeat after me: I wish Eugene were a mortal man."

"That's it?" She felt very nervous.

"That's it. Don't add anything or leave anything out. I wish Eugene were a mortal man."

Macy repeated, "I wish Eugene were a mortal man."

He folded his hands as in prayer and bowed his head. "May it be so."

Then he looked up, and they stared at each other.

"Did it work?" she asked softly.

"I don't know," he replied just as softly. He held up his hand apprehensively and said, "Let's watch TV." He snapped his fingers, and nothing happened.

They grinned at each other.

"Let's go to Pompeii," he said and snapped again. Nothing happened.

"It worked," Macy whispered.

"It worked!" He swept her into his arms and spun her around. They kissed before he sat her down and dug in the pocket of his jeans for something. "Dang, these are tight," he muttered.

I Dream of Eugene

"I like them that way," she teased.

Eugene grinned again and, finding what he searched for, dropped to one knee. "Now that we know it worked, I believe this is the next order of business. I've never done this before, so forgive me if I'm not sure of the correct method." He held out a shiny silver ring with a huge diamond solitaire, and Macy gasped. "Macy Green, will you marry me?"

"Where did you get that?" She asked, flabbergasted. She'd been hoping for this, but never imagined it would happen so quickly.

He smiled. "I still have a few tricks up my sleeve. But that wasn't an answer. Please don't keep me hanging here."

She wiggled her ring finger, and he slid the diamond on. A perfect fit. Macy held out her hands to him, and Eugene stood and folded into her arms. "Of course, I'll marry you. I love you very much."

He sighed with relief and kissed her. Macy opened her mouth to welcome his tongue, and the kiss deepened. They were just about to drop on to the sofa when the doorbell buzzed.

"What now?" she muttered.

"Ignore it," he said, and kissed her again.

Macy sank back into the kiss, preparing to do just that, when she heard Tina's voice. "Mace, you in there?"

She pulled away and looked at Eugene. "It's Tina."

He smiled and shrugged. "We have the rest of our lives to do this."

With that, she grinned, straightened her clothes, and tried to make her way to the door around all the luggage. "God, you brought a lot of clothes."

"These are not all full of clothes," he told her, and popped one trunk open. It was full of money.

Macy's eyes widened, and she looked at him.

Eugene grinned and closed the lid quickly. "But we need to be careful who we share that information with."

She nodded slowly, and tried to erase the look of shock from her face as she opened the front door. "Hey," she greeted Tina.

"Well, you're home." Tina took a step inside and looked around at all the luggage. "Going somewhere...like the moon?"

"Of course not." Macy gathered her composure and closed the front door. "Actually, someone is moving in. Tina, I'd like you to meet Eugene."

I Dream of Eugene

He stepped out where she could see him, and Tina's jaw dropped open. "Hello, gorgeous! Where have you been all my life?"

Macy's heart sank. Gene *was* gorgeous; she should have known Tina would make a play for him. But now that Gene was a free man, what would he do about it? She looked at him warily.

He smiled and stepped up, sliding his arms around Macy from behind and drawing her close to him. "Good question. I guess I've been waiting for Macy to show up." He kissed her cheek, and Macy's heart melted. It seemed nothing but a mere puddle when he added "But I don't have to tell *you* what a great person Macy is. She told me you're her best friend so you know that already."

Tina looked at him coolly, watching the way he held Macy protectively. She gave them both the once-over and then slowly smiled. "You look good together. You look happy."

"We're very happy," Macy agreed and sighed. She held out her ring finger and wiggled it.

"Oh, Macy." Tina squealed and grabbed Macy's hand. "That's so beautiful! But isn't it a bit sudden?"

"It doesn't feel sudden." Macy looked at Eugene lovingly.

"It feels perfect," Eugene agreed.

Tina looked at them again, and then said, "You sly devil. You didn't say a word about him when we were shopping yesterday."

"Was that just yesterday?" Macy wondered. She'd been to Pompeii twice since then and to Heaven more times than she could count.

"Speaking of yesterday, have you changed your mind and decided to let me have that bottle?" Tina crossed her arms.

Macy looked at Eugene nervously. He smiled and said, "Sure, why not? We're going to redecorate, if not move completely, and I don't think it's going to fit in with our new lifestyle."

Macy smiled and shrugged. "Whatever you think, babe."

He went to retrieve the bottle, capped it securely, and handed it to Tina.

She smiled at him. "Thank you. I wanted to take Macy out for a bite to eat. Perhaps you'd like to join us? I suppose we should get to know each other better if we're going to be Macy's two best friends."

He glanced Macy's way. "I could eat."

She rolled her eyes at him and mouthed, "We just ate."

He shrugged and smiled.

"You'd better watch it, or you're going to get fat," she whispered

I Dream of Eugene

and poked him in the belly.

He grabbed her and kissed the side of her head, whispering in her ear “I expect to be getting plenty of exercise. Lots and lots and lots, beginning the minute we get home from dinner.”

She melted into his arms for one quick embrace then pulled back. Her vision misted with tears of happiness, and she felt like she could float away. “Whatever you say,” she murmured.

Eugene led her toward the door, opened it, and motioned to the women chivalrously. “Shall we?”

“You bet.” Tina stepped out in front of him. “So tell me, are there any more like you at home?”

He grinned and winked at Macy. “You’d be amazed if I told you.”

END