

A muscular man is shown from the waist down, wearing a blue, form-fitting suit. He is in a dynamic pose, with his legs spread wide and his body angled. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of his muscles. The background is dark.

OPENING THE DOOR

MEGAN HART

OPENING THE DOOR

...In the darkness, she couldn't see his face to figure out if he was joking or not. When they entered the next pool of light from the overhead streetlamp, she stopped and pulled him around to get a good look at his face.

"Are you serious?"

"About sex in a public place?" He gave her one of his patented thigh-spreading grins. "Hell, yeah."

She put her hands on her hips. "About people watching."

"Hey, Josie, I can't help it if people catch a glimpse. That's the risk you take when you're doing it in public."

"How many times have you done this?" she asked suspiciously, and a trifle jealously.

"Dogging?" He paused, making her sweat. "Never. I saw it on the internet."

"I'm not even going to ask how you got on that website." She looked around. They'd walked down the hill from her parents' house and were in front of an old elementary school. In the dark, the playground equipment looked like excavated dinosaur bones.

"How about sex in public?" she whispered.

He pulled her into his arms. "Well, now, I can't say that I've ever actually done that either."

Josie took him by the hand and led him down the concrete path toward the playground. When they left the path, the grass whispered against their feet until they reached the thick covering of wood shavings beneath the swing set.

"I think you're going to get lucky," she told him...

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OPENING THE DOOR

BY

MEGAN HART

AMBER QUILL PRESS, LLC

<http://www.amberquill.com>

OPENING THE DOOR
AN AMBER QUILL PRESS BOOK

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ISBN 1-59279-221-9
Cover Art © 2004 Trace Edward Zaber

Layout and Formatting provided by: ElementalAlchemy.com

PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*For all those who wanted more
of Jack and Josie, here's another piece.*

For DPF, my true friend.

OPENING THE DOOR

Josie woke to the sensation of something wet on her toes. Reflexively, she shot out her foot beneath the covers. It connected with something. Hard.

“Damn, Josie!”

Jack threw off the covers and appeared at the foot of the bed, rubbing his head. “What’re you doing?”

Josie giggled and reached for him. “Sorry, baby. You startled me.”

Jack grumbled, but let her kiss the spot she’d wounded before curling along her body and nestling his head in the curve of her shoulder. “I thought I’d surprise you.”

“You certainly did.”

Waking up with Jack was a pleasure Josie still couldn’t quite get used to. It had been seven months of bliss since they’d taken the leap from friendship to love, and there still wasn’t a day she didn’t look over at him sleeping beside her and send up gratitude.

Sunday morning. No place to go, nothing to do, a warm,

OPENING THE DOOR

comfortable bed and the man she loved beside her. She couldn't ask for anything better than that. Josie let her eyes drift closed again as the rhythm of Jack's breathing soothed her back to sleep.

In another moment, she felt his hand rest on the curve of her stomach. He bunched his fingers on the cotton of the oversize T-shirt she'd worn to bed and pulled the material up over her thighs. With the covers tangled around her ankles, the air was slightly chilly on her skin.

She mumbled a protest, but his kiss on her neck stopped her. She smiled, eyes still closed. He was going to surprise her again.

Jack rubbed small circles on her bare belly with the flat of his palm. His hand was so large it covered her nearly from side to side. His fingers skimmed the edge of her cotton bikini panties.

He slipped lower, over the soft cotton barrier, and cupped her. She shifted her thighs to give him better access. She didn't open her eyes—the better to lose herself in the sensations he was giving her. His fingertip found the small bump of her clit and he began to stroke it in the same, slow circles he'd used on her stomach.

Josie sighed. Jack kissed her neck. His breath was hot on her skin. The tip of his tongue caressed her briefly before she felt the nip of his teeth.

The pattern of his strokes had her on the edge within a minute or two, but he didn't get her off right then. He knew her too well for that. Jack liked to tease. He backed off, changed the rhythm, made the strokes longer and up and down instead of the steady circles he knew she adored. His hand slipped lower, further down the now-damp crotch of her panties. He pressed the heel of his hand against her and let his fingers play along the soft flesh of her inner thigh.

Still, Josie feigned sleep. She knew Jack knew she was awake. It was just more fun to play this way, to see how long it would take before she couldn't stop herself from moaning and reaching for him.

Up again went his hand, this time to dip below the elastic of her panties and slide through the curls beneath. His fingertip found her

OPENING THE DOOR

swollen clit, but he bypassed it to tickle her folds, and press her opening. He didn't push his finger inside, though she waited in breathless anticipation. He smoothed his finger along her flesh. Taunting her.

Josie shifted again and opened herself more to his exploration. Jack didn't take the hint. He kept up slow, gentle stroking, pausing every now and then to lightly touch her nub.

It was driving her crazy, and he knew it. Josie tilted her hips the next time he slipped down, and he gave her what she wanted. His finger slid inside her. First the tip, then the full length. His thumb found her clit and pressed in gentle counterpoint to the slow sliding of his finger.

Josie moaned. Jack had won the game. She didn't care. Losing was actually more fun.

"Tell me what you want," he said.

"Don't you know by now?"

His deep chuckle against her neck made her nipples peak and her pussy contract. Josie put her hand on top of his head and let the scruff of his close-cropped hair scratch at her palm. He nestled his head into her shoulder and curled along her body. She opened her eyes and cocked her head to look at him.

"I know," Jack said. "I just want to hear you say it."

In all their years of friendship, Josie had never known of Jack's fetish for explicit talk. They'd shared a lot of secrets, but until she became his lover, this was one he'd never told.

It still surprised her, how just her speaking could get him so hot. How the tone of her voice, her choice of words, could turn him on as much as her mouth or her hands. She'd never dreamed she'd find as much pleasure in talking as she did in making love, but there it was. Loving Jack had opened up a lot of new doors for her.

"Put your mouth on me," Josie said. Jack's muffled groan made her laugh, until he did as she asked and the laugh became a squeak.

His hands slipped beneath her to cup her ass and he lifted her

OPENING THE DOOR

toward his mouth. His tongue swiped her lightly then swirled on her clit for the briefest of seconds. His breath was hot.

“Put your tongue on my clit.”

It was still difficult to speak aloud sometimes. Telling him what she wanted and needed sounded like dialogue from a bad porn movie. Jack would never laugh at her. He loved it when she talked dirty. But it still took Josie a lot of effort to let go. She tried again, distracted by Jack’s tongue swirling on her button.

“Put your finger inside me.”

“Put your finger inside me, what?”

Again, Josie let out a giggle that became half a gasp when he complied. “Put your finger inside me, Jack.”

She was the one telling him what to do, but that didn’t mean he’d given up control. He slid his finger inside while he kept up the same steady rhythm on her clit with his tongue. The pleasure mounted. She forgot to breathe. She also forgot to speak.

Jack’s lips moved against her flesh, sending another ripple of pleasure through her. “Tell me what you want, Josie.”

It was hard to speak, but she found her voice. It had gone low and husky. “Lick me. Harder. Right there...” Her voice broke as the first waves of climax began to wash over her.

Jack pulled away. His finger stilled. He breathed on her. The sensation was not quite enough to send her over the edge. She remembered to breathe.

“Are you going to come?”

She barely had the air to giggle again, but she did. “Hell, yeah.”

She tilted her head to glance down at him, expecting him to be smiling. He was staring at her seriously. “Good.”

“Jack?”

“Because I want to make you come so hard you scream my name, Josie, and then I’m going to slide up your body and fuck you until you come again.”

OPENING THE DOOR

Though he liked her to be explicit, Josie had never heard Jack talking dirty before. All at once she understood the appeal. Hearing him say aloud what he was thinking made her pussy flutter. Her clit pulsed but didn't begin the final beating spasm of orgasm. Not quite.

Josie hovered on the edge of coming for what felt like an eternity. One kiss, one stroke, one breath and she'd be over the edge, but Jack gave her none of those. She found herself lifting her hips toward him in a silent appeal.

"Tell me what you want, Josie."

"Use your mouth on me," she managed to whisper. The darkness behind her closed eyes swirled with colored lights that moved with the thud of her heart. She imagined she could feel her blood pumping through her body, in her chest, her belly, between her legs. She waited, tense, for his mouth to touch her.

His finger moved slowly, infinitesimally slowly. He twisted it inside her, then slipped another inside to stretch her. And still he didn't touch her clit, though she felt the burning puff of his breath there, where she needed it most.

Her mouth opened, her head tilted back on the pillows. Every fiber of her being strained toward him, toward release. "Please, Jack."

"Please what?"

"Please fuck me with your tongue and make me come, or I'm going to slap you silly!" The words tumbled out of her in a rush, full of need and passion, but also the exasperated humor she knew he expected.

His hand moved. He brushed her upright nub with his lips, then took it between them and tugged ever-so-gently while she gasped and cried out his name. Her head tossed on the pillow. He fucked her faster with his fingers, in and out, while his lips continued to tug softly on her bead. She'd stayed so long on the verge of orgasm her body now stuttered in its response. She was strung high wire tight. Josie's hips rolled and her thighs trembled.

Just a bit more penetration, a little more pressure, and she'd come

OPENING THE DOOR

so hard she'd scream his name, just like he wanted. If she had the breath to do it, that was.

Jack flicked his tongue along her folds but once again bypassed her need, damn him. He swirled around the hood of her clit but didn't touch the button within. Another swipe of his tongue along the opening to her vagina left her shuddering with a delayed climax. His fingers moved in and out, and twisted inside her. He curled them, found the spongy texture of her g-spot and pressed it.

She was going over. Now, at last, his tongue found her clit and he no longer teased her. Jack's tongue stabbed at her with a pressure she'd have found intolerable in a less-aroused state, but now she screamed with the ecstasy of it. Her entire pelvis flooded with sensation. Everything drew in toward that one small spot...then exploded.

He eased off, slid his fingers out, pressed his lips to her bucking clit and held her until the final raging spasm passed through her. He kissed her gently, then slid up the bed and cradled her in his arms.

Josie couldn't speak for what felt like quite a while. Then she managed a feeble, "Whoa."

Jack's dark eyes glinted. "I take it that was good."

"Don't fish for compliments, Jack." She put a hand up to stroke his close-shaven head. "But, yeah, that was good."

"That's only the first part," he reminded. "Don't forget what else I said I was going to do to you."

Even after the force of her climax, his words made her pussy twitch.

"Are you ready for me?"

"I'm always ready for you." Her voice was teasing, but actually, she wasn't quite certain she was. Her head still swam and her heart still pounded. She took a few deep breaths as her body calmed.

Josie could usually tell within minutes if she'd be able to have another orgasm. Her cunt didn't stop trembling and her clit still buzzed. In the aftermath of what she'd just experienced, though, her entire body still hummed with bliss. Jack put a hand on her mound and simply held

OPENING THE DOOR

her without stroking or pressure. She throbbed under his touch, and Josie took in another deep breath.

"I love you, Josie." Jack whispered the words in her ear as he nuzzled her. His fingers made a lazy, drifting pattern on her skin.

"I love you, too." She sighed with contentment.

Jack rolled on top of her and rested for a moment on his forearms. His cock nudged her opening, and he thrust a bit into her wetness to lubricate his entrance. The tip of him stretched her before he withdrew, slightly changed the angle and seated himself fully inside her with one smooth thrust.

They fit like puzzle pieces. Josie lifted her hips to draw him deeper. She ran her hands over the bulging muscles of his arms, then up to his tautly sculptured shoulders and back. Jack had been blessed with a naturally fit physique that took little work to maintain. She hated him for it when he was eating ice cream and she was nibbling rice cakes. She loved him for it now.

She drew up her knees and hooked her heels over his ass as he slid in and out. She loved the feeling of his muscles working as he moved. She thought he might be urgent to finish, since she'd already had her orgasm, but Jack's rhythm was as steady and slow as the rest of his lovemaking.

They rocked together for a while. Josie floated in a sensuous reverie. Without the pressure to come before he did, she relaxed and opened herself to the feelings she normally missed when concentrating solely on the sensations in her clit.

She bore down as he moved inside her and her pussy gripped him. She concentrated on the feeling of her inner walls hugging his thick cock and how he felt inside her. Sex usually focused mostly on her clit because that's where she needed the stimulation to come. Now, she focused on the other feelings.

Jack lowered himself onto her, and she welcomed his weight by curling her arms around his back. She smoothed her hands down the

OPENING THE DOOR

firm lines, then gripped the curving firmness of his ass with both hands.

Her breasts tingled beneath the pressure of his chest on hers. Her nipples stiffened and rubbed against his as he moved back and forth. His teeth nipped at her neck and throat, and his tongue came after to lick the spots he'd nibbled.

Sweat made their bodies slick, allowing them to move like oiled machinery against one another. His cock slid without effort inside her. The rim of his pelvis rubbed her still-buzzing clit, and desire began to build once more.

As much as she adored the feeling of Jack on top of her, he was a big man. Lovemaking that left her breathless was one thing, but not being able to breathe was another. Josie pushed at Jack's hips and he rolled onto his side. Now he thrust into her from the side, while she lay on her back, her left leg beneath his thigh and her right overtop his. She could breathe. Better still, the new position allowed her to reach down and stroke his balls with one hand while she rubbed her clitoris with the other.

When she touched his sac, Jack moaned her name. Josie smiled, pleased with herself. She'd discovered another benefit to not striving so fiercely for orgasm. She got to pay more attention to the things that got Jack off. She moved her fingers back and forth along the small ridge of flesh at the base of his scrotum. She found the spot that beat along with his heart, and pressed it gently.

"That's good," Jack said. "Right there."

Hearing him speak, his breath ragged, made her swallow hard. His big hand rubbed her belly, then slipped lower to caress her button while he continued to thrust.

They had become a tangle of arms and legs, a pretzel of pleasure. Josie smiled at the thought and opened herself further to his hand and prick, while she pressed gently on his sweet spot.

He was going to come. And surprisingly, she was too. Josie tilted her pelvis upward beneath his fingers, and he penetrated her so deeply

OPENING THE DOOR

she felt his cock head hammering the entrance to her womb. What might have been painful became just one more burst of sensation. At this angle, Jack's shaft rubbed on her g-spot. Bliss began to radiate from the spot in slow, warm waves and, after a moment, the sharper, more biting sparks of orgasm burst in her clit. She cried out.

Jack shuddered and thrust, hard. Josie pushed firmly on the spot under his balls. It beat beneath her fingers, echoing the spasms of his cock as it shot its load deep within her. She let up on the pressure, then pushed again. Jack gave a startled moan and his dick throbbed anew inside her.

Josie's passage clenched down on him, then relaxed. She put her hand on Jack's to stop him from stroking her sensitized flesh any more. Her hips jerked in the final spasms, and she sighed contentedly.

"Where did you learn that?" Jack asked solemnly, after a moment of silence.

"What do you mean?" She rolled her head to look at him.

"I feel like I came twice when you touched me like that."

Josie smiled. "I read it in *Cosmo* while I was at the doctor's office."

Jack slipped out of her and they adjusted themselves to lie together on the bed. "Damn, Josie. I might have to get you a subscription to that magazine."

She laughed and caressed his shoulder. "I'm glad you liked it."

"Did you come again?"

She still wasn't used to a man who actually bothered to ask if she'd been satisfied once, much less again. "Of course I did."

Jack snorted, but looked pleased. "Of course."

"Listen, Jack." Josie turned on her side to cuddle next to him. "It would've been okay if I didn't."

He slipped an arm beneath her head and drew her to his chest. "I just want to make you happy."

Josie hugged him as tightly as she could. "How could you think you don't?"

OPENING THE DOOR

His deep, rumbling laughter reverberated through her chest. “I guess you’re right, considering your last boyfriend...”

She swatted him. “Shut up.”

Jack stretched out his hands behind his head and gave her the grin she knew so well. “I’m just saying...”

She gave a mock shudder. “Well, don’t.”

He squeezed her. “You can go ahead and thank me for taking you away from all that any time, baby.”

Josie rolled her eyes and swung her legs out of bed as the phone rang. “I’ll bow down before you and worship at your feet later, master.”

“Hey, I like the sound of that.”

She laughed at him and picked up the phone from the bedside table. “Jack and Josie’s den of iniquity. Oh, hi, Mom.”

Jack began to laugh and Josie through a pillow at him. “Nothing,” she said in response to her mother’s inquiry. She turned her back to ignore Jack, who had started to make faces.

“How are you, honey?” her mother asked.

Somehow, Josie didn’t think her mother would appreciate hearing she’d just had the greatest sex of her life. “Fine. How about you?”

Her mother began to chatter about life back in Philadelphia, but Josie was having a hard time concentrating because Jack had begun to lick her bare back. She wriggled away from him, and silently cursed their corded phone, which didn’t allow her to move far enough out of his reach.

“...home for the holiday?”

Her mother had paused, waiting for an answer. Josie suddenly realized she was expected to give one. “Um. Yeah. I hadn’t thought much about it.”

Jack sat up and raised his eyebrows at her. “Holiday?” he mouthed, and Josie nodded.

“You are going to make it this year, aren’t you?” Her mother didn’t sound worried. Josie always went home for the holidays. “Your brother

OPENING THE DOOR

and sister are coming. We'll have Uncle Marty and Aunt Bea, of course, and Dad's cousin Bernie. Oh, and the Golds are coming up from Florida! It'll be a full house."

"The Golds?"

Jack's eyes widened. Josie shrugged. Her mother sighed, acting long-suffering, but clearly in her element.

"I told Francine and Ben it had been too long since we got together. They're coming for the whole week. You'll make sure Jack comes, too, won't you?"

"I think Jack's going to have to talk to his parents about that," Josie said, for his benefit, not her mother's.

Jack made a face and clutched his heart, then fell back on the bed. He twitched like a man in the throes of death, then popped up his head to grin at her. "Of course I'll go."

"Jack says of course he'll come, Mom. If you didn't bully him into it, he knows his mother would."

Her mom tutted. "Francine's never bullied that boy in his life. He's spoiled rotten."

"And you love him like he's your own son," Josie said, while Jack made another simpering face and blew kisses at the phone.

"I've known him since he was in diapers. How could I not love him?" Ava Levine laughed. "How're the new living arrangements?"

"Fine." Josie bit her lip and turned her back on Jack again. "Great. The new place is a lot bigger."

Her mother's sigh sounded like a tornado even through the phone lines. "And the dating situation?"

"Mom..."

"What? A mother can't ask her only single child if there's a chance she might someday settle down?"

Josie pictured her mother tossing her perfectly manicured hands in the air. She kept her face turned from Jack. "Mom, don't push."

"Who's pushing? I'm just asking. What about Jack? Is he seeing

OPENING THE DOOR

anyone nice? Francine said he hasn't brought anyone home to meet them in ages."

Josie took a deep breath. "Mom, there's something—"

"Oh, doll, your dad just got in. I need to get him to run to the store with me. Love to Jack!"

Just like that, her mother rang off. Josie put the phone back in its cradle and rubbed her temples. Her mother was a force of nature not to be trifled with.

"You didn't tell them yet, did you?"

She met Jack's accusing face. "They know we're living together. I just let them have the idea it's like before."

"Room mates."

Josie shrugged and bit her lip again. "Yes. Jack, you know my parents. They'd plotz if they thought I was living with a man...I mean living in sin with a man."

Jack harrumphed and sat up against the headboard, his arms crossed on his chest. "Your parents love me."

"Sure they do. As my friend. As the son of their best friends. But as my lover?" Josie shuddered, with no mockery this time. "Can you imagine?"

"Josephine Levine, are you ashamed of me?" Jack asked sternly.

For one minute she thought he was really insulted, but then she looked closer at the twinkle in his eyes. "Have you told your parents?"

He had the grace to look shame-faced. "Hell, no! Can you imagine what my mother would say?"

Josie let her head fall back and a deep sigh escape. "Home for the holiday. Oh. My. God."

Jack pulled her back down beside him. "C'mon. It might be fun."

Josie loved her family, her siblings, her nieces and nephews. She loved her parents, too. But the thought of spending an entire week with them...in one house... She let out a groan that had nothing to do with sex.

OPENING THE DOOR

“Fun is a relative term when it comes to my relatives.”

“Don’t forget my folks.” Jack pitched his voice high and gave it a nasally accent. “Good Lawd, Jackie! When are you gonna settle down and make me a gramma, already?”

“Your mom needed more kids.”

Jack was adopted. He laughed. “Don’t I know it.”

Francine Gold was the stereotypical Jewish Bubbe with white curly hair and a gold lamé track suit. Josie had always thought of her as a second mother. Which meant she completely understood how Jack felt.

“It’s only four days,” she said at last.

Jack hummed Darth Vader’s theme song. “Four days with both our mothers. In one house.”

“At least there’ll be plenty of wine.” Josie moaned and covered her eyes. “We’ll be doing a mitzvah.”

“Josie, this is more than just a good deed. This is like, automatic entry into the Book of Life.”

She laughed at his exaggeration, then kissed him. “Distract me until then.”

He raised an eyebrow at her. “Okay, but promise me you’ll tell them before we get there.”

“I will if you will.”

Jack reached down and hooked his little finger around hers like they’d done when they were kids. “Pinky swear?”

“Pinky swear.”

Jack pulled her on top of him and covered her face with kisses. “Let’s get back to distracting each other.”

* * *

The phone had been ringing off the hook all morning. She’d have let voicemail take care of it, but that would only mean she’d need to return all the calls later, and later she wouldn’t have time. She’d have to take a half day to get down to her parents’ house before the holiday

OPENING THE DOOR

started, and she had tons of work to get done before then.

“Good morning. This is Josephine Levine.” She expected one of her clients.

Instead, her mother’s exasperated voice greeted her. “Josie! Thank goodness. I’m glad I caught you. I’ve been trying to reach you at the apartment for days!”

Guilt picked at Josie. Jack had kicked the phone off the hook while they’d been making love, and it had been two days before either of them realized nobody could get through.

Ava didn’t wait for an explanation. “Listen, Jojo, I’m going crazy here. Aunt Flo has nowhere to go for Passover this year, and Dad said she could come here. Of course, I don’t mind. I love your Aunt Flo, but you know she won’t come without Pansy and Apricot.”

Josie winced at her mother’s childhood nickname for her. “Mom. Breathe.”

Ava sighed. “Those dogs are like Flo’s children. I can’t ask her to leave them home. But you know Bernie and his allergies, and Bea with her bad back. And with all the kids, where am I going to put them all?”

Josie smiled. Her mother didn’t need her help. Her mother could have organized Attila the Hun’s elephant-mounted hordes without batting an eyelash or breaking a nail. Josie tapped her pencil on the list of things she still needed to do before leaving work tomorrow. “Mom, I’ve got to go.”

“But what about you? And Jack, too? We’re going to be packed to the brim this holiday. Not that I mind, of course. You know I love a house full of people more than anything. But it’s a lot of work, I don’t mind telling you.”

“Mom—”

“Our family is growing and growing.” Ava paused significantly. “Your brother and sister are married, and now they have the kids—”

“Mom, enough.” Josie took a deep breath. “There’s something I have to tell you.”

OPENING THE DOOR

“So, tell me already?”

“Jack and I...” Josie paused. “Jack and I will be sleeping together.”

“Josephine, you’re a treasure. That’ll solve all my problems. I’ll put Aunt Flo in the back downstairs bedroom with the dogs. Bernie can go on the third floor and the kids in the playroom. Marty and Bea can take your old room, Seth and Rachael and the baby can stay in Seth’s old room, and Miriam and Brian can stay in her old room. The Golds will go in the guest room. You and Jack will sleep in the basement. It’s perfect!”

“No, Mom, I—”

“Later, doll. I have to run to the supermarket! I want to get some of that chopped liver your brother likes so much. See you tomorrow. You’ll be here before dinner, right?”

“Right.” Josie sighed and listened to the dial tone for a moment before putting the phone back in its cradle. Then she laughed. Most young women would have sent their parents into a tizzy by suggesting she’d sleep with a man she was bringing home. Her mother, on the other hand, was thanking her. Of course, if it had been any man other than Jack, her mother would have swooned.

But it was Jack. Josie tilted back in her desk chair, her eyes half-closed. She was in love with her best friend, and it was better than anything she’d ever dreamed of.

As children, they’d played tag and hide-and-seek. In high school, he’d been her date when soccer stud Billy Long dumped her the afternoon before the junior prom. She’d cried on his shoulder and he’d offered to beat up the guy who’d hurt her so badly. In college, he’d visited for weekends and sent her dorm-mates into a flirting frenzy. After that, they’d kept in touch regularly, never going more than a week or two without calling, and when he’d finally moved to Harrisburg to follow a job, they hadn’t been apart for more than a few days at a time.

She’d spent more time with Jack than she ever had with any

OPENING THE DOOR

boyfriend. She'd shared more with him. Given more of herself to him. Despite all that, becoming lovers had opened a side of him she'd never seen.

This morning she'd wakened to find a lacy black garter belt, crotchless panties and matching bra laid out on the bed beside her. Sexy, seamed stockings completed the ensemble, which had come with a note. *Wear me.* Josie liked nice underwear, but comfort usually came before fashion. She'd worn the lingerie anyway.

Now she shifted her thighs against one another and shivered at the sensation of her flesh so bare beneath her skirt. The garter belt was surprisingly comfortable, stretchy and soft instead of scratchy like she'd expected. The stockings were whisper-thin, and when she slid her legs together it felt like she was rubbing herself with silk.

Her phone rang. Startled, she thumped her chair back down solidly on the floor and picked it up. "Josephine Levine."

"Are you wearing them?"

Josie turned in her chair and locked her office door. "Yes."

Jack's deep rumble stroked her ear through the phone. "How do they feel?"

"Good." His voice sent a spear of desire straight to her crotchless clit. Josie put her feet up on the desk, and tilted her chair back again.

"I've been thinking about you all morning. I bet you look so hot."

Josie looked down at the black skirt she'd worn today. It was shorter than she normally chose for work, and the heels of her shoes a good two inches higher. "You know it, baby."

Jack gave a whispery groan that made her pulse pound. "Tell me."

"I'm wearing a silky blue blouse, open at the throat. My skirt comes to the middle of my thighs."

"Shoes?" He sounded hopeful, and Josie grinned.

"Black patent leather. Three inch heels. Ankle strap."

He made a soft sound like he was licking his lips, and Josie shifted in her chair to let her knees fall slightly apart. Jack sighed. She heard

OPENING THE DOOR

the crackle of static from his cell phone.

“Pull your skirt up so the tops of your stockings show.”

She did. “Are you driving?”

“I’m on my way to a sales call. Don’t ruin the mood.”

She laughed, loving that even the sexiest moments between them were filled with humor. “The tops of these stockings are lace.”

“I know. Tell me about the panties. I bet your pretty, pink clit is showing right now, isn’t it? Is it standing up for me?”

Oh, he was a master at talking dirty. Josie had a lot to learn from him. His words had taken her breath, but she managed to whisper, “Yes.”

“Touch it for me.”

Josie cradled the phone against her ear and stroked her forefinger across her now-aroused button. It grew warm beneath her touch. She moved her finger in small circles that soon had her biting her lip to hold back a moan.

“Open up the front of your blouse. Your breasts must look so fine in that bra. I wish I were there to suck your nipples.”

She wished the same thing. With her free hand, Josie did as Jack had told her. Her flesh was creamy white against the black lace. Her nipples pushed at the front, and she ran her palm over one before tweaking it between her thumb and finger. Her pussy was slick with her arousal, and she slid a finger down to bring some of her moisture up to her clit.

Another crackle of static reminded her where Jack was. “Don’t wreck.”

He chuckled. “I pulled over. I’m in a parking lot. I’ve got my prick in my hand right now, Josie, wishing it were in your mouth.”

A mental image filled her head. Jack, his tie loosened and his suit pants undone, his thick, long penis gripped firmly in his fist. He wouldn’t be wearing his earring on the job, but his eyes would be shaded by mirrored sunglasses. She pictured the way his tongue would

OPENING THE DOOR

snake across his full mouth as he concentrated on pleasuring himself. In her mind, his strokes grew faster, and so did hers.

Her fingers danced on her bud, stroking and pinching. "I'm going to come."

His groan sent her toward the edge even faster. "Me, too. Talk to me, Josie. What are you thinking about?"

"I'm thinking about you kneeling here in front of me," she whispered, even in her arousal aware she was still at work. "You put your face between my legs, and you lick my pussy until I come."

Jack gave a wordless groan she recognized. "And then what?"

"And then you'd fill me up with your cock and fuck me."

As she said the words, her body shook with climax. His muffled cry told her he'd come, too. Josie pressed her palm to her beating clit as the shudders wracked her. At last, she was still. She pulled her skirt back down and put her feet on the floor. "Jack?"

"I'm here." She heard the smile in his voice. "Oh, shit. I'm going to be late. I'll see you tonight. I love you."

The words never failed to move her. "Love you, too. See you later."

He disconnected, and she hung up the phone. *There's something to be said about middle-of-the-day sex*, she mused as she bent back to tackle her To Do list. It made going to work a whole lot more fun.

* * *

"Are you planning on moving back home for good or just going for a few days?" Jack watched Josie carrying the last load toward his car.

She looked down at what she had in her arms. "I need my body pillow and my bed pillow. Sleeping on the futon is not going to be fun."

He wagged his eyebrows at her. "I'll make it fun."

"Don't be so sure," she replied. "You know Mom will have the old army cot set up for you."

Jack took the bag she'd slung over her shoulder and shoved it into

OPENING THE DOOR

the trunk. “You didn’t tell her yet, did you?”

“I tried to. But you know my mom. It’s hard to get a word in edgewise.” Josie stuffed her pillows on top of the suitcases and closed the trunk, then turned to face him sternly. “Did you tell your parents?”

Jack made a show of looking at his watchless wrist. “Oh, man. Look at the time. We’d better get on the road. Traffic is going to be nuts.”

“Jack.” Josie reached for his arm. “Maybe we don’t need to tell them for a while.”

He linked his fingers through hers. “Why don’t you want to tell them?”

“I don’t know.” She sighed. “I guess I just want this to be ours for a while longer. Just ours. I don’t want to share it with anyone.”

He nodded and pulled her close for a hug. “We share it with our downstairs neighbors about five times a week and twice on Sundays, Josie.”

Their downstairs neighbor, a cranky Goth artist who insisted on being called Mina in homage to Bram Stoker’s heroine, had taken to pounding on her ceiling whenever they made the least bit of noise. They’d been making quite a bit of noise since they’d moved in.

Josie sighed. “Once we share it with family, though, it’ll get too big.”

“I didn’t think it could be too big.”

“Jack, I’m serious.”

He squeezed her. “I know you are, baby.”

She tilted her head to look up at him. “They’ll start making insinuations about getting married, having kids. All that stuff.”

He got a funny look on his face. “And?”

She shrugged. “I’m not ready for all that speculation.”

“We’ve been together for seven months. You’re going to have to tell them some time.”

“Oh, listen to you,” she countered. “You haven’t told your folks

OPENING THE DOOR

either!”

He grinned without shame. “You’re right.”

She looked at the car, filled with their luggage. “If we tell them now, they won’t let us sleep together, you know.”

“Then we won’t tell them!” Jack’s protest made her laugh. “Not until it’s time to go home. Okay?”

“Okay. Let’s go.”

She was silent on the drive. Thinking. There was really no reason not to tell her family she and Jack were now a couple. She looked over at him, his fingers tapping on the steering wheel along with the music from the radio. Her love for him made anything she’d ever felt for any other man seem like a school girl crush. She couldn’t imagine the rest of her life without him.

And still, she wanted to keep him to herself for a while longer. It was selfish. She knew that, but as soon as they told their families, the speculation would start. When were they going to get married? Settle down? Have kids?

For now, Josie only wanted to ride what they had, enjoy it. Love Jack without thinking too hard about the future.

“Penny for your thoughts,” Jack said. “Fifty cents to act them out.”

“I’m worth more than fifty cents,” she replied archly.

“Baby, you worth at least a buck-fitty.”

His mock gangsta rap attitude made her laugh. “Gee, thanks.”

“Seriously, Josie. What are you so quiet about?”

“You want to know a reason why I love you so much?” she said. “Because you’d even bother to ask.”

He reached for her hand. “Why wouldn’t I?”

“Believe me, Jack. There are plenty of guys who wouldn’t give a damn what their girlfriend was thinking about.”

“Girlfriend.” He snorted.

She looked at him. “What’s funny about that?”

“It just sounds funny. Girlfriend. Like we’re in junior high. Will

OPENING THE DOOR

you be my girlfriend? Yes, no, maybe. Circle one.”

“Well, whatever you want to call me, most guys wouldn’t care what I was thinking about.”

They rode in silence for a moment more. Then he said, “*Lover.*”

“What?”

“*Lover.* That’s what I’d call you. Or my woman.”

She had to look at him hard to see if he was being silly. “Your woman?”

He shot her a glance as he eased into the line of traffic entering the Pennsylvania Turnpike. “Yeah. My wo-man.”

Josie rolled her eyes, but was secretly pleased in a strange way. “Wo-man, huh?”

“Yeah, because when I see you, I say, ‘Whoa, man!’”

“Jack!” She began to laugh. “You are too much.”

He took her hand and put it near his crotch. “Never too much for you, baby.”

Just like that, she was wet for him. All it took was a simple cocky grin, a suggestive phrase, and she was imagining taking him in her mouth. A moan slipped from her mouth before she could catch it.

He glanced at her again. “Josie?”

She rubbed her fingers on the soft, worn denim of his jeans and was rewarded with a hardening bulge. “Watch the road.”

She unbuckled her seatbelt and slid across the seat toward him. His zipper stuck but she tugged, then folded open his jeans. As usual, he wore dark boxer briefs. His erection pushed at the front, and she slid him free. He pulsed in her hand. She leaned over and took him into her mouth.

He muttered a curse that had her smiling around his cock. She sucked lightly on the tip, then slid her mouth down as far as she could. The position was awkward and she couldn’t get him too far into her mouth without his zipper branding her cheek, so she concentrated on the head. A slippery jewel of precome glimmered, and she used her

OPENING THE DOOR

finger to rub it into his skin.

He shifted to allow her better access. His hand cupped the back of her head. She took him deeper, then withdrew to roll her tongue around his cock head. He groaned, and she lifted her head to remind him, "Watch the road!"

"I'm watching, I'm watching. Don't worry, I won't do a Parenthood."

She remembered the scene from the Steve Martin flick, when the couple crashed their van because the wife was giving the husband a blow job. "I sure hope not."

She bent back to her task. Josie had never minded oral sex, not like some of her female friends who moaned and groaned about the effort it took to give a good blow job. Josie figured if she was going to let a man go down on her, she should at least consider returning the favor.

But sucking Jack wasn't about returning favors. She did it for the pure and simple pleasure of it. She loved making love to him, loved giving him pleasure. She got off just knowing what she was doing was going to make him come.

The soothing noise of the engine helped her find the rhythm. She clenched her thighs together, a trick she'd mastered a long time ago to get herself off when touching herself wasn't an option. It took a while, and it didn't always work, but she thought right now it might.

The car rocked along the smooth pavement. Josie's clit rubbed at the front of her panties with each squeeze of her thighs. She loved Jack with her mouth, and as the first bright sparks of orgasm began to tingle in her pussy, she felt him convulse under her tongue.

She took him as deep as she could. His hand tightened on her head. She took everything he had as her body twitched with climax. She held him in her mouth for a moment, until he let go of her hair, and then she tucked him back inside his jeans and sat back in her seat.

"That was nice." Jack ran a hand over his head.

Josie smiled and reached across to squeeze his shoulder. "Just say

OPENING THE DOOR

whoa.”

* * *

By the time Jack pulled into the driveway, shadows had begun to pool beneath the huge trees lining the street. Inside the large, three-story house, golden pools of light filled the windows. Josie could see people moving inside.

“Looks like we’re the last ones here.”

Jack pocketed the keys.

“Are you ready?” Josie gave him a grin.

Jack pretended to shudder. “I think so.”

She squeezed his hand. “Let’s go!”

The minute they stepped through the front door, they were descended upon.

“Aunt Josie! Uncle Jack!” five small voices cried, and her nieces and nephews flung themselves at her knees.

Jack scooped up the smallest child, two-year-old Sam, and swung the little boy into the air. “Hey, Sammy!”

Sam’s dark brown eyes crinkled with joy as he giggled, and the other kids began clamoring for their turn.

“Me, too!”

“Swing me Uncle Jack!”

“Me, too! Me, too!”

He was so good with kids. For a startling moment, Josie pictured Jack cradling an infant. *Our child*. She met his eyes across the top of Sam’s curly dark head, and time seemed to stop for a minute as she thought about what it would be like to have a baby with Jack.

Then the hall exploded into a cacophony of hugging, kissing and greeting. Francine Gold plastered smooches all over Josie’s face before turning to Jack and pulling him down to leave pink lipstick prints all over his cheeks.

“What’s with the baldy still?” She rubbed the cropped scruff of his

OPENING THE DOOR

hair. "You have such lovely hair, Jack."

"Yeah, for a Brillo pad," he said.

Francine tutted. "Oh, hush. It's good to see you."

Jack's father came and slapped Jack heartily on the shoulder and shook his hand before embracing Josie. "How's my girl?"

"I'm great, Ben." Josie gave the older man an affectionate squeeze. "It's good to see you."

Ava swooped into the hall, wiping her hands on her apron. Flour dusted one cheek, and her glasses were askew. "You made it!"

Josie's father Dan peeked around the corner of the dining room doorway. "Does this mean we can finally eat?"

"Hi, Dad." Josie wove her way through the crowd to give him a kiss. "Sorry we're late. Traffic."

Her dad jerked his head toward the table glittering with china and silverware. "We were afraid we'd have to start without you."

Ava flapped her apron at her husband. "As if we could start without Josie and Jack!"

The other relatives and Josie's siblings began to filter into the dining room from the rest of the house. There were more kisses and hugs, more exclamations, but at last they all seated themselves at the table. Josie got up to help her mom and the other women serve.

"Holy cow, Mom. Will you have anything left for tomorrow night's Seder?" Josie looked around the kitchen. Every inch of counter and table space was covered with plates and containers of food.

"You know your mom," said her sister-in-law Rachael. "She's always afraid she won't have enough for everyone to eat."

Ava gave her daughter-in-law a glance. "Do I hear you complaining?"

Rachael laughed and gave Ava a hug around the shoulders. "Absolutely not. Any meal I don't have to cook is my favorite."

Her parents had invited many more people for tomorrow night's Seder, but tonight dinner was just for family. Josie looked around the

OPENING THE DOOR

table at the faces of the people she loved best, and her heart swelled with emotion. She looked down to the end of the table, where Jack sat in deep conversation with her brother Seth. The Golds had been part of their family for so long. Josie wondered how she could ever have thought she'd end up with someone else.

They ate, they drank, they laughed at stories and jokes. Children grew tired and were packed off to bath and bed, and still the food kept coming. At last, Josie pushed away from table with a sigh.

"No more!" she cried. "I won't be able to eat for a week!"

"Don't scare your mother like that," her dad said.

Josie got up and stretched. "I don't know about anybody else, but I need to go for a walk. I'll help with the dishes when I get back, Mom."

Ava grinned. "Not to worry, doll. I hired help this year."

That surprised her. "You did?"

Ava shrugged. "After all these years of your dad telling me I should get some help so I could spend time with the family instead of getting dishpan hands, I took him up on it. You remember Avery Compton, don't you?"

"From next door?" Josie recalled a tiny girl with blonde pigtails and permanently scraped knees.

"She's home for spring break from college and she's bringing a friend to come over and clean up."

Josie mentally staggered. "College? Wow."

"See?" Ava said with a significant look and a wag of her finger. "Time flies. None of us are getting any younger."

"Walk time," Josie replied, not wanting to listen to another lecture from her mom about when she was going to settle down.

"I'll go with you," Jack said. "I need some exercise, too."

"You watch out for Josie," Francine said. "It's dark out there and dangerous for a young woman walking alone."

Once again, Josie locked eyes with Jack. His mouth quirked into a grin that turned her insides into liquid heat.

OPENING THE DOOR

"I'll take care of her, Mom. I always do."

What was it about sexual innuendo that made it sexier when it was forbidden? Josie didn't know, but the hidden meaning in his words had her breath catch in her throat.

Together they went out the front door and down the sidewalk. The April air was still cool at night, though the days had started to warm considerably. Josie paused to peer down at the dirt along the walk.

"Everything's starting to bloom."

Jack took her hand. "It will be summer before we know it."

"You're not going to start, too, are you?" Josie giggled. "What's this fetish with time you and my mom have?"

"I have a fetish," Jack replied. "But it has nothing to do with time."

That sounded promising. "Oh, really?"

He swung their linked hands. "Oh, no, baby. It's all about dogging."

She might have expected a lot of things, but not that. "What on earth is that?"

"Dogging is having sex in public places," Jack explained so matter-of-factly he might have been discussing how to buy stocks. "In cars or whatever. And sometimes, people watch and join in."

"Ew, Jack! That's nasty!"

In the darkness, she couldn't see his face to figure out if he was joking or not. When they entered the next pool of light from the overhead streetlamp, she stopped and pulled him around to get a good look at his face.

"Are you serious?"

"About sex in a public place?" He gave her one of his patented thigh-spreading grins. "Hell, yeah."

She put her hands on her hips. "About people watching."

"Hey, Josie, I can't help it if people catch a glimpse. That's the risk you take when you're doing it in public."

"How many times have you done this?" she asked suspiciously, and a trifle jealously.

OPENING THE DOOR

“Dogging?” He paused, making her sweat. “Never. I saw it on the internet.”

“I’m not even going to ask how you got on that website.” She looked around. They’d walked down the hill from her parents’ house and were in front of an old elementary school. In the dark, the playground equipment looked like excavated dinosaur bones.

“How about sex in public?” she whispered.

He pulled her into his arms. “Well, now, I can’t say that I’ve ever actually done that either.”

Josie took him by the hand and led him down the concrete path toward the playground. When they left the path, the grass whispered against their feet until they reached the thick covering of wood shavings beneath the swing set.

“I think you’re going to get lucky,” she told him.

Josie chose the largest swing and settled Jack into it. This part of the playground was not only nearly pitch black, but also secluded behind the other equipment. Not even anyone walking by on the sidewalk would be able to see them. Still, the knowledge they were out in public added to the thrill of unsnapping his jeans and unzipping his zipper.

Josie lifted her skirt and slid her panties down, then tucked them into her pocket for safekeeping. The chilly air made gooseflesh break out on her legs and arms, but she was hot between her legs.

“Josie, you’re a dirty, dirty girl.”

“And you love it.”

She caught the flash of his teeth in the darkness as he grinned. “I sure do.”

Now came the tricky part. As kids, they’d ridden double on these very swings, one person on the seat and the other facing him on his lap. The question was, would they still be able to do it that way?

She grabbed hold of the swing’s chain with one hand and slid her leg around Jack’s waist. Jack’s hands gripped and lifted her buttocks,

OPENING THE DOOR

helping her as she held herself up on the chain to slide her other leg around. For a moment she hovered, hands clenching the chains, and then she found his cock with her slick tunnel and lowered herself onto Jack's lap.

She wiggled a little until he slid inside her all the way, then let go of the chains and put her hands on his shoulders. Jack still had his hands under her ass. His feet were planted solidly on the ground while she crossed her ankles behind his back. She was suspended, impaled on his prick.

His mouth found hers. His tongue dove deep inside, stroking her. He put the swing in motion, slowly but steadily. Every movement back and forth rocked her clit against his firm belly and thrust his cock deeper inside her.

His teeth nibbled at hers lips, then found her ear and the soft flesh of her neck and throat. "Hang on."

She gripped him more tightly with her arms and legs. Jack slid his hands out from under her and held onto the chains. Then he really began to swing.

He pushed off from the ground, lifted his muscular legs and tilted his body back. Josie let out a muffled squeal and clung to him. For a moment, the sensation was so unsettling she forgot to concentrate on the pleasure radiating from her clitoris and vagina. Jack wouldn't let her fall. The thought calmed her and she relaxed enough to focus again on the way his stomach rubbed her clit back and forth with every swing.

In this position, he couldn't slide in and out as far as he would normally, but the swing did all the work for them. They swung back and Jack's knees curled to push his feet off the ground. Forward and he straightened his legs to get them airborne. Pumping the swing as he was pumping her.

They weren't swinging terribly high; they'd certainly gone higher and faster when they were kids. It was high enough. They were flying,

OPENING THE DOOR

together. Weightless.

The air rushed past her face and cooled her heated cheeks. Her fingers began to ache from hanging on to the chain. Her thighs burned from the chain cutting into her flesh. She'd be lucky if she could stand when this was done, but Josie couldn't, at that moment, care.

His pumps became staggered, less smooth. His breath panted in her ear. He breathed her name.

She needed just little more pressure. A few more pumps. Just...a little more....

She began to quiver at the same time she felt him throb inside her. He let go of the swing with one hand and used it to clasp her to him, tight, and he bit down on the curve of her shoulder.

Her neck hurt, her hands hurt, her thighs hurt, but the ecstasy thrumming through her canceled out the pain. If anything, the myriad of small hurts made the pleasure even sweeter.

Slowly, the swing stopped. Jack hugged her and nuzzled the spot he'd bitten. She let go of the chains and put her arms around his shoulders again.

"I can't move," she said after a minute.

Jack's deep, rumbling chuckle tickled her ears. "My ass feels like it's on fire. And I don't mean that in a good way."

"Seriously, Jack. I can't move."

"Not a problem." Jack got to his feet and supported her weight on his hands until she could unwrap her legs from around his waist.

Her skirt fell around her ankles and she plucked her panties from her pocket and slipped them back on. She winced a little. Because she was on the pill and both of them had tested clean for everything known to man, they'd stopped using condoms several months ago. At times like this, though, she would have appreciated the protection a condom provided from embarrassing sexual evidence...but then again, if they'd still been relying on rubbers, it would have been unlikely they'd have just made love on playground swing.

OPENING THE DOOR

“You okay?”

She loved the way he was always so concerned about her. “Great. You?”

She heard the zip and snap of his pants. “Never better.”

“We’d better get back.”

She found herself engulfed in his embrace. She leaned against his broad chest and drank in the scent of him. His arms were warm. She rubbed her cheek against the softness of his shirt and gave a huge, contented sigh. Jack smoothed his hand over her back, then squeezed.

They didn’t say anything, but then, they didn’t have to.

* * *

Josie woke up with a crick in her neck and an aching back, despite the pillows she’d surrounded herself with. The windowless family room was still black, but the thumps and thuds overhead told her morning had arrived. Jack’s soft snuffles kept her from dozing off again. At home, she’d have elbowed him to turn over, but with him stretched out on the army cot a few feet away, all she could do was lob a pillow at him and hope it struck.

In another minute it didn’t matter because the bright overhead lights came on and five pairs of small feet thundered down the stairs. Josie had just enough time to shield her eyes from the glare before her nieces and nephews hurtled into the room and onto the futon. It creaked alarmingly under their combined, wriggling weight.

“Kids, don’t damage Aunt Josie.” Mim had followed the kids. “Good, you’re up.”

Jack had buried his head beneath his pillow, and his reply was muffled. “We are now!”

Josie curled up with Max on her left and Sam on her right. The girls, Hannah, Sarah and Rebecca bounced up and down and giggled. “Morning.”

“I tried to keep them upstairs as long as I could,” her sister Miriam

OPENING THE DOOR

said. "But they were dying to get down to see you."

"No problem." Josie snuggled with her nephews for another moment before tumbling them off her in a fit of giggles. She got up and stretched out the soreness in her back.

"What'd you do to your hands?" Mim sounded concerned, and Josie looked at the scrape marks the chains had made last night.

"Nothing," she said vaguely. "Hey, Mim, how about we take the kids to the zoo today?"

"We?"

"Me and Jack."

Jack stuck his head out from under the pillow. "What are you volunteering me for?"

"The zoo." Josie bent to push Sarah's tangled hair out of her face.

Jack yawned and sat up, scrubbing his face. "Do I have a choice?"

"Nope." Josie staggered under the weight of her nephews and nieces clambering on top of her, shouting. "Unless you want to stay here and make matzo balls."

"Zoo it is." Jack got up and rolled his neck on his shoulders, then cracked his back. "Lemme grab a shower."

He left the room to use the small bathroom. Mim's eyes followed him as she shoed the kids toward the family room's couch and television. When they'd been settled in front of some inane cartoon adventure Josie didn't recognize, her sister turned to her.

"What on earth is wrong with you?"

Josie had been fumbling in her suitcase for a toothbrush and shampoo. Her sister's question made her look up, confused. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that guy has a body on him that could make a nun horny. I mean what's wrong with you that you haven't snapped him off the market already?"

Josie bit back a smile. "Mim, that's none of your business."

Mim rolled her eyes and gave Josie the big-sister death look. "Don't

OPENING THE DOOR

tell me you have somebody else.”

“Actually, no.”

“Then what’s up?”

Josie shook her head. “Fine, fine. Have it your way. The truth is, Jack and I have been humping like bunnies since September. We mostly do it twice a day, although sometimes we take a day off. My hands are scraped up, in fact, because last night on our walk we stopped and had mind-blowing sex on a swing at the playground.”

Mim frowned. “Yeah, right. On a swing? You expect me to believe that?”

Josie shrugged. “It’s true.”

“Okay, fine.” Mim threw up her hands in a gesture so like their mother’s Josie had to grin. “Tell all kinds of stories. I’m just telling you, you have a prime catch right under your nose and you don’t seem to be aware of it.”

“Believe me, Mim,” Josie said solemnly. “I’m totally aware.”

Mim gave a snort of total disbelief. “A swing. Where’d you read about that, *Playgirl* magazine?”

“Mommy, what’s *Playgirl* magazine?” Hannah asked.

“Never mind.” Mim shot Josie a look. “C’mon, precious. Let’s go get ready to go to the zoo.”

Josie stared after her sister for a moment, then just shook her head. Apparently, sometimes truth really was stranger than fiction. Then she went in search of a shower.

* * *

The day at the zoo passed quickly enough. Josie and Jack were heroes to her frazzled siblings, who’d welcomed the break from their spawn, and heroes to the kids, who’d run their aunt and “uncle” ragged. When they finally brought the children in the house, little Sam snuggled asleep on Jack’s shoulder, everything had already been prepared for the first Seder.

OPENING THE DOOR

The house had been full yesterday, but with more friends and family invited for the special Passover dinner, it was now bursting. Three leaves had been put into the table that had been Ava's grandmother's. A folding table, made fancy with a white cloth and drapes over the chairs had been set up for the overflow, and the kids had their own small table off to the side.

Everything gleamed and glittered. Flowers gave the tables a festive air. Josie breathed in the delicious scents of good home cooking—matzo ball soup, roast turkey, brisket.

"Time to get started, everyone!" Dan Levine's booming voice got everyone moving to find their place cards, charmingly scrawled in Hannah's childish hand.

This time, Jack and Josie's places were next to each other. The table was crowded, with chairs so close, once they sat down, it was almost impossible to get back up without moving the person on either side. Josie didn't mind. She was sitting on the end next to the wall. Jack, on the other hand, was between her and Mrs. Bergdorf, who smelled like mothballs.

When everyone had squeezed into their places, Dan began the Seder. Wine flowed as the participants followed the custom of consuming a minimum of four cups of wine. By the time it was time to eat dinner, Josie had a nice, tipsy buzz.

She was leaning her head against the wall, just enjoying the bustle and conversation, when Jack's elbow knocked his fork onto the floor at her feet.

"I'll get it," he said casually, and disappeared under the tablecloth hiding her lap.

He was only down there long enough to pick up the fork, but on his way back up he managed to slid her skirt up over her thighs and plant a kiss on the exposed flesh.

He reappeared above the table, fork in hand, his face as neutral as though he'd done nothing untoward. Josie's cheeks had heated.

OPENING THE DOOR

“More wine, Josephine?” Aunt Bea asked. “You look flushed. Are you all right?”

“Fine,” Josie managed to croak.

She nudged Jack under the table. With his head still turned away from her, his hand swiveled around and caressed her thigh. Beneath the cover of the long tablecloth, nobody would possibly have any idea what he was doing. But Josie did.

Dinner continued with more songs and prayers, but for once, Josie barely joined in. Jack’s hand on her was too distracting. He wasn’t touching her center, but he was close enough to make her think about him touching her there, and the thought was enough to make her slick with arousal.

At last, dinner was over, dessert consumed, and the door had been opened for Elijah. Seth, who’d snuck out during dessert, appeared in the doorway clothed in biblical garb and a white wig and beard, and gave special Passover chocolates to the kids. The adults drank a final glass of wine, the children found the hidden piece of matzo and earned their gifts, and the Seder was finished.

Josie and Jack were among the last to leave the table, since they’d been seated so far to the back. The entire time her family and friends got up and made their various ways home, to the living room for coffee, or to bed, Josie sat and felt Jack’s hand on her thigh.

When at last they, too, could leave the table, her legs were shaky and her pulse pounding. She’d have sworn his fingers had left a permanent imprint on her skin.

She was so aroused she thought all he’d need to do was kiss her, and she’d splinter into climax. There’d be no kissing of that nature right now, of course. She felt awful even imagining it, what with Aunt Flo regaling them with stories about her dogs and Uncle Marty telling knock-knock jokes.

Somehow, Josie made it through the rest of the evening. Everything had become super bright, super clear. She sat next to Jack on the living

OPENING THE DOOR

room sofa, her entire side alight with the sensation of his body pressing against hers. She talked, she laughed, she responded...but all she was thinking about was getting Jack naked.

What Jack was thinking about, she couldn't tell. He reached casually across her to grab a handful of carrots from the veggie tray, and his arm "accidentally" brushed her breasts. He nudged her with his thigh. He every so often stretched out his arms and ran a surreptitious finger along the back of her neck, right where he knew she loved it the most. In short, he was being devilishly seductive. On purpose. She wanted to slap him, but she wanted to make love to him more. She'd slap him after.

Finally, everyone who wasn't sleeping over went home. Everyone else went to bed. They were left alone.

"My back is killing me," Jack said so nonchalantly she knew he had something up his sleeve. "I was thinking about going in the hot tub. Want to come?"

Boy, did she. Josie narrowed her eyes at him, but couldn't come right out and accuse him of doing his best to seduce her the entire night. Not when she didn't really mind.

"Sure," she said instead, in case anyone happened to be listening. "Sounds great."

Her parents had installed the five-person spa unit a few summers before. It had been a big hit with kids and older folks, but they had it to themselves tonight. The open roof of the gazebo allowed them to see the stars, while the latticed sides provided a privacy Josie knew they were going to need. They changed quickly and she followed Jack outside and watched his ass, clad only in a pair of black, form-fitting trunks, in appreciation.

He paused on the stairs to the tub and wiggled his butt for her. "Like what you see?"

"I like it better without the bathing suit."

"That can be arranged." He threw a wicked grin over his shoulder,

OPENING THE DOOR

then slipped his suit down over his thighs and hung it neatly on the hooks along the gazebo wall. "That better?"

"You're so bad."

"I know," he replied without a hint of guilt.

Josie watched him sink into the steaming water, then pulled off her own simple once-piece bathing suit and climbed into the water. It was almost too hot at first, but as soon as her body adjusted, she let out a long, contented sigh. The jets pounded her back in all the right places. The futon in the family room was large enough, just not very comfortable.

"Bliss," she murmured. "Pure bliss."

Jack slid over next to her and pulled her close. "Better than this?"

He kissed her, slowly and thoroughly, and when he was done, Josie was hotter than the water. "Nothing's better than that."

He kissed her again. She became aware that his hand had moved from her hip to the juncture of her thighs, and she spread her legs for him. He didn't touch her, not right away, but the swirling water did. It licked and stroked at her like a nimble tongue. She'd been aroused all night, and needed little extra stimulation to get even closer.

Jack cupped her breast, then rolled the nipple softly between his fingers. He gave it a gentle tweak that had her gasping against his mouth, and he chuckled. "You're so hot."

"Because of you." She pulled his mouth back to hers. Her tongue slid between his lips, and she took charge of the kiss.

His head tilted back. Josie let the water lift her as she slid onto his lap. Her pussy pressed against his stomach. The length of his erection slid between the crease of her buttocks to the bottom of her back. She rocked forward, pressing herself against him. He cupped her ass and held her close, then lifted her a little to bring his cock between them. Now his penis nestled against her clit and along her open folds. His hands moved her back and forth and up down in the water. Her clit rubbed on his penis, and in moments her slickness coated him.

OPENING THE DOOR

He moved to position himself inside her, but Josie stopped him. She smiled at the questioning look in his eyes, then moved off his lap. She floated to the other side of the tub and knelt on the built-in seat. The curved plastic dipped low enough that she could lean forward and rest her elbows on the tub's side while the rest of her body stayed underwater. She looked over her shoulder and wiggled her ass at him.

“C’mon.”

He did with a speed that amused her. He gripped her hips and put one knee next to hers on the seat, then pushed his cock inside her. The water rushed over them, caressing them. Her breasts tingled from the extra sensations. She shifted a little, tilted her pelvis just a touch, then reached down and fiddled with the directional jet.

The water shot out and rushed past her already engorged clit. The force of it made her give a low cry. She gripped the tub's sides with both hands while her heart and clit both pounded at the extra stimulation. Jack echoed her cry and bent low over her back. The water bubbled all around them.

He stopped moving for a moment. His hands tightened on her hips. The water rocked them so he barely had to thrust. Her clitoris throbbed at the tickling, teasing touch of the water jetting between her legs. When he began to move again, her first orgasm arced through her like sparks from a shorted wire. Another built almost immediately from the water jet's stimulation. Jack's thrusts moved her body, kept her clit from being directly in the spray, teased her, and still she cascaded into another frenzy of erotic sensation.

Jack surprised her when he stopped again. “I have to get out, Josie. It's too hot in here.”

She nodded, not quite able to speak. Jack slid out of her, then got out of the tub altogether. She got out, too, grateful for the cool night air sliding across her sensitized body. She looked around the concrete slab, the splintery gazebo walls. “What now?”

Jack took the towel he'd brought out and spread it on the concrete.

OPENING THE DOOR

Then he lay on his back. Josie straddled him. He slid in as effortlessly as he had before. She waited a moment before beginning to move.

“I hope nobody decides to come out for a midnight soak.”

Jack grinned up at her. Even in the dim light, she could see his normally tawny cheeks were flushed. “They’ll get quite a surprise.”

The urgency had worn off a bit, especially since she’d had two orgasms already. Josie was discovering she liked making love to Jack this way, with her pleasure taken care of. She began to roll her hips, then leaned forward to kiss him while she moved on him. His hands caressed her back, her shoulders, her hips and rear. He guided her pace, but didn’t force her. They moved as one, in tune, in sync, perfectly.

She stopped kissing him so she could look into his dark eyes. He’d begun to bite his lower lip, a sign she knew. He was going to come soon. She could have tried for a third orgasm, forced her body to another burst of ecstasy, but she didn’t bother. She was fulfilled. It was time for her to concentrate on Jack.

She slowed the pace and varied her thrusts. She lifted herself nearly all the way off his cock, then slid down, slowly, and twisted her hips. She pushed back on her heels and used her feet to lift her up and down while she steadied herself with her hands on his chest. She pinched his flat, taut nipples, one after the other, in time with the pace of her lovemaking.

His breath caught in his chest. His hips lifted off the ground, moving her. Josie clenched her inner muscles as she slid up and down. Twisting her back, she reached around between Jack’s legs and let her fingers trail along the soft sac of his balls. They tightened beneath her touch. His cock throbbed within her.

She bent back to him again and caught his last strangled cry in her mouth as she kissed him. His final thrust pushed her against him so fiercely their teeth crashed together. Pain flared in her lip and she let out a muffled “Ouch!”

“You bit me,” Josie said. She held up her fingers, which were

OPENING THE DOOR

spotted with red from where she'd touched her lip. She began to laugh. "Geez, Jack."

He wiped the small drops of blood from her lip and pulled her down to kiss him again. "Sorry, baby. You got me carried away."

When he got to his feet, she saw one elbow was scraped raw from contact with the rough cement. "We're the walking wounded!"

"Hazards of the sport," Jack said. "Next time I'm going to wear my protective gear."

"You're a goofball." Josie stood on her tiptoes to kiss him. "But I love you anyway."

Jack smoothed her wet hair off her forehead. "Do you, Josie?"

"Of course I do." She tilted her head to look at him. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing." He smiled, not his usual cocky grin, but a softer curving of his lips. "Just making sure."

She looped her arms around his waist and put her head on his chest, content to feel the beat of his heart on her cheek. "How could I not, after all this time?"

He squeezed her. She felt the point of his chin rest on top of her head. "Sometimes I feel like this is just a dream, and when I wake up, we'll be back to playing the Game."

She thought of the contest they used to share, to see who could win the most points by getting members of the opposite sex to flirt with them. "This isn't the Game."

"Good thing," Jack said. "'Cause I totally just scored."

Josie waited until he'd turned to step back into his swimming trunks before she locker-room towel-snapped him.

* * *

"Bring up the folding chairs," Ava ordered Seth. She turned to Mim. "Grab the extra tablecloth from the cabinet. We'll put the second folding table over here."

OPENING THE DOOR

Josie grinned as Mim made a face behind their mother's back. "Mom, how many people did you invite?"

Ava shook her head. "Don't ask."

Jack peeked in the doorway. "Ava, where do you want this sliced turkey?"

Ava gave orders and the house bustled. In the whirlwind of activity, Josie had little time to spend with Jack. He cornered her in the den and stole a kiss, but that was the extent of their contact.

"What's going on with you?" Mim asked suspiciously as she and Josie peeled mounds of potatoes for dinner.

Ava, fully convinced the Y-chromosome was incompatible with culinary skill, had chased all the men outside to play flag football with the kids. Josie looked out the kitchen window as Jack allowed her nieces and nephews to tackle him to the ground. She couldn't help smiling.

"What do you mean?" she asked her sister.

"You and Jack. You barely speak to him. You won't look him in the eye. You guys have been friends too long, Josie. I remember when he used to come over here with his Superman cape and you'd be Wonder Woman. Did you have a fight?"

"No." Josie dumped her potato peelings into the garbage and looked up at her sister. "Mim, you know sometimes relationships change."

Mim's brow furrowed. "Yes."

"And Jack and I have been friends forever. But we're not kids anymore. We're grownups."

Now Mim put down her paring knife and gave her younger sister a hard stare. "Yes."

Josie wanted to tell her sister. She really did. She wanted to giggle over her relationship with Jack like they'd used to do when they were in high school, talking about their crushes. Mim would be happy for her, and yet, Josie hesitated.

She watched as Jack bent to show little Sam how to throw the

OPENING THE DOOR

football, and tenderness filled her. Surprising tears filled her eyes at the depth of her feelings. She swiped at her eyes, embarrassed to be acting so corny.

“Jojo, what’s wrong?” Mim sounded concerned. “Why are you crying?”

Josie laughed. “Oh, Mim. I’m not. It’s just that—”

Mim frowned and took Josie’s hand. “Whatever it is, you can tell me. Are you pregnant?”

“What?” Josie spluttered. “No!”

“Sick?”

“No, Mim. Listen—”

Mim sighed. “So it is a problem with Jack.”

“It’s not a problem, Mim.” Again, Josie opened her mouth to tell her sister that she and Jack were lovers. Before she could, the back door swung open and the troops tramped into the kitchen, declaring they were starving and needed food.

Ava, who’d been busy arranging the tables and chairs to accommodate all the extra people she’d invited, swooped in to prepare lunch and direct traffic. The chaos swirled around Josie, and she sighed. Her news would have to wait for another time.

She caught sight of Jack, his dark eyes twinkling as he snatched a leftover piece of roast beef from Ava’s platter. He caught Josie’s eye, and they shared a smile before Ava distracted him with a scolding.

With so much going on, Mim didn’t have time to cross-examine Josie again. The day passed too quickly, especially when guests started arriving in the late afternoon for what her mother called a pre-Seder nosh.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen so much food in my entire life.” Jack nodded toward the living room, where the coffee and end tables had been loaded with trays of snacks.

“Sure you have. At your mother’s house,” Josie countered. She stepped out of the way as the children, who seemed to have multiplied,

OPENING THE DOOR

thundered through the house.

“Oh, yeah.” Jack grinned. “Want something to eat?”

Josie put a hand to her belly. “I’m saving myself for dinner.”

“I’ll be glad to help you with dessert.” Jack bent low to whisper in her ear.

Josie’s entire body hummed at the sensation of his lips brushing her ear. She nudged him with her elbow. “I’ll bet.”

He chuckled and nuzzled her neck. Everything else in the house, in the world, faded away. Josie leaned against his broad chest and drank in his scent with her eyes closed. When she opened them, he had stopped smiling and stared at her seriously.

“What?” she asked.

He pushed a tendril of hair away from her eyes. “I just like looking at you.”

“Aunt Josie?”

She looked down to the small boy at her leg. “Hi, Sammy.”

He held up an action figure that had lost a leg. “Fix?”

“Sure, honey.” She fiddled with the broken toy, then handed it back. “All better?”

Her nephew nodded then lifted his arms in silent command. Jack picked him up. Sam showed Jack the toy.

“Aunt Josie fix.”

“Your Aunt Josie is pretty amazing isn’t she, Sam?”

Sam smiled. “Mazin’!”

“Do you want to know how much I love Aunt Josie?”

Sam’s small face scrunched with thought. “How much?”

“To the moon and back, little guy.” Jack’s eyes caught hers again.

“Me, too,” Sam said, struggling to get down. He scampered off.

“Walk with me outside,” Jack said quietly, just as Ava’s voice reverberated throughout the house.

“Dinner time!”

“After dinner,” he amended.

OPENING THE DOOR

“It’s a promise.” Josie squeezed his hand, and they headed off for the dining room.

The second night’s Seder was no less elaborate than the first. Ava and Dan had invited many of their friends and neighbors in addition to the family, and there wasn’t an inch to spare at any of the tables. Josie watched her parents fondly as they led the group in the prayers and rituals that had been practiced for so many years. It was good to be a part of a family, especially one that loved and respected each other the way hers did. She knew many families who had constant strife. She was lucky.

She looked over at Jack’s parents, already so much a part of her family. Francine nodded thoughtfully at something Jack was saying, and Ben amused the children with a magic trick. Jack favored his parents’ easy manner and sense of humor. He was as much their son as he could have been had he been born to them instead of adopted. Francine had often remarked Josie was like the daughter she’d never been able to have. What would Jack’s mother say about Jack and Josie being in love?

“Psst.” Seth got Josie’s attention. “Can you be Elijah tonight?”

Josie smiled at her brother. “Pressure too much for you?”

He returned the grin. “No, but I think Sam’s on to me. He won’t suspect you.”

“Sure.” While the rest of the horde was engaged in eating and talking, Josie excused herself quietly and went to the garage where the Elijah costume was kept.

As she pulled on the long brown robe, the garage door opened. Expecting to see one of the children, Josie turned, but it was Jack. “You scared me!”

“Sorry.” He didn’t sound sorry. “I saw you sneak away. I thought I’d come see what you were up to.”

“Seth asked me to be Elijah. Help me get this wig on.”

“You’d better hurry,” Jack said. “They’re going to open the door in

OPENING THE DOOR

about three minutes.”

“Oops!” Giggling, Josie scrambled into the wig and beard, then ducked out through the door to the outside. She ran around the front walk toward the door they’d be opening as part of the Seder ritual.

She peeked in through the dining room windows and waited for her father to get up to open the door. Dan was still talking. She had a few minutes to spare.

“Josie, wait a minute. I want to talk to you.”

She turned, not certain what to expect, but stunned to see the look on Jack’s face. “What’s wrong?”

He looked like he’d just seen a ghost. In the small golden squares of light spilling from the dining room windows, Jack’s skin had a decidedly paler cast to it than normal. Josie stepped toward him.

“Jack?”

His eyes cut to the windows, where her dad was still talking. “I love you.”

“I love you, too.” Unease settled in the pit of her stomach. “Why do I feel a ‘but’ coming on?”

“No but.” Now he gave her the grin she was used to, though it shone at half-wattage. He ran a hand over his head and bit at his lower lip. “Josie...”

She’d never seen him at such a loss for words. Josie pulled off the wig and beard and clutched them in her hand. She waited for him to speak.

“This isn’t the right time.” He looked back toward the house. “I’m an idiot, Josie. I’m sorry.”

Nervousness made her snappish. “What the hell is going on, Jack? What’s the matter? Oh, God.” She swallowed. “You came out here to tell me you don’t want to be with me any more, didn’t you?”

“No!” Jack’s voice was loud enough to be heard inside, if anyone was listening. “Of course not!”

“Then what?” Belligerently, Josie put her hands on her hips. “I hate

OPENING THE DOOR

when you do this to me, Jack!”

She’d put him on the defensive. “Do what?”

She waved her hands. “This! How you always manage to sneak in some heavy-duty news at the wrong time, so you don’t have to tell me the truth right away! Like when you crashed my car, and you tried to tell me just before I was going in for that important job interview.”

“That was one time.”

She narrowed her eyes at him. “If you’ve got something to say to me, Jacob Gold, you’d better say it now, before that door opens and I become Elijah.”

Jack took a deep breath. “I didn’t want it to be like this.”

“Jack,” she began warningly.

He stunned her into utter silence when he went to one knee in front of her and took her hand. The dark velvet box in his hand made her mouth drop open. The breath hissed from her lungs.

“Josie, I love you. I’ve loved you for so long I can’t even remember a time when I didn’t. I don’t want to imagine being without you.” He cracked open the box to reveal the glittering diamond ring inside. “Will you marry me?”

The front door opened at that moment, spilling bright light and squawking children out on the stoop. The wig and beard fell from Josie’s limp fingers as she put her hand over the one Jack held. From the corner of her eye she saw her family and friends pushing out onto the porch to welcome Elijah, and she had time to smile at the surprise they were going to have instead.

“Of course I will,” she told Jack.

From the stoop she heard her mother murmur, “Look at the lovebirds.”

Mim cried out, “I knew it!”

Francine began to sob with joy, or so Josie hoped, and the children hooted and hollered for their candy. She ignored all of them.

The only thing that mattered was the man in front of her. The man

OPENING THE DOOR

she loved. Jack got to his feet and swept her into his arms. His kiss was the sweetest thing she'd ever known.

"The door's open," Jack whispered against her mouth, as though he'd only now just noticed.

"I know." She kissed him again. "Now all we have to do is walk through it."

As usual, she didn't have to explain what she meant. He already knew. Josie glanced toward the windows, where at least a dozen people were pretending not to watch.

"It's going to be interesting," she said with a sigh.

Jack looked at their audience. "Yeah. But we'll make it. Together."

Then he kissed her again, and Josie didn't bother to worry anymore.

MEGAN HART

Megan Hart began her writing career in grammar school when she plagiarized a short story by Ray Bradbury. She soon realized that making up her own stories was better than copying other people's, and she's been writing ever since.

Megan's award-winning short fiction has appeared in such diverse publications as *Hustler*, *On Our Backs* and *The Reaper*. Her novels include every genre of romance, from historical to steamy futuristic SF. In addition to her short erotic fiction for the Amber Kisses imprint, look for her other Amber Quill novels: *Riverboat Bride*, *Lonesome Bride*, *Convicted!* and *Love Match*.

Megan's current projects include a fantasy series, a futuristic trilogy and a dramatic suspense novel. Her dream is to have a movie made of every one of her novels, starring herself as the heroine and Keanu Reeves as the hero. Megan lives in the deep, dark woods of Pennsylvania with her husband and two monsters...er...children.

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* * *

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