



PHAZE  
HEAT SHEET *Samba*

LEIGH ELLWOOD

*Dulce*

# Dulce

A Phaze Samba Short by

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Phaze

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## One

So this was Caracas at three in the morning.

The wrong side of the tracks, assuming trains chugged through Venezuela *en route* to deforestation elsewhere. Here was a side of town Fodors had clearly missed, a neighborhood set to the soundtrack of screeching Russian-made automobiles and slurred, Spanish curses. Shattered glass sparkled on dirt avenues under yellow lamplight; the salty tang of nearby waters hung thick in the air. Here, surely, was where the kids of Spring Break banded together for safety when the money ran low, when they were too full of pride and independent spirit to call home.

Here was a place the tires of chartered tour buses never tread. One would never see this part of the otherwise glamorous city in the backdrop as Robin Leach waxed gloriously of sangria wishes and churros dreams.

Neil Randall smiled through the windscreen of his helmet at Caracas at three in the morning, thinking of how much Cal Briscoe would have loved this place. Pity that his best friend was unable to accompany him on this trip, choosing instead to do something so out of character as fall in love and get married.

*Que loco*. How crazy, were those the words? Crazy to fall in love and marry after decades of confirmed bachelorhood. Crazy to suggest Neil do the same, to remarry anyway. Shake off the grief and anger, sell the bike, bloom where planted and find a pretty flower to stab repeatedly with his pistil until her petals wilted.

No, those hadn't been Cal's exact words, but they had been *muy loco* nonetheless. All Neil could remember of his last meeting with Cal was tuning out the lecture after the fourth beer and thinking of his passport and keys, both of which pinched his skin through a back denim pocket as he rocked on his ass, eager to leave the bar for this vacation. Nod and drink, nod and drink, until Cal's wife dragged him to the dance floor, where the two joined crotches in a seductive tangle. Cal's words had glance off of him. Neil would not remarry, he decided, yet he fully intended to stab many flowers before the month was over. He would be the plant kingdom's answer to Jack the Ripper, there would be so much stabbing with his rock hard pistil on this trip.

What a trip it had been so far. Even the most arid patches of the continent had provided at least one *flora bonita* to give his cock a good workout. Caracas, he hoped, would prove as bountiful as the Amazonian rainforest. He wanted to limp home with Popsicle sticks taped to his cock like splints, and fondly recall having screwed around as much as his ex-wife did in the ten years they had

been married.

*Sí, muy loco*, as the natives might say. A man would be crazy, too, to ride the coast of South America in full leathers—in *Agosto*—to plow through miles of pussy, but here he was. True, he could have stayed home and sampled the spoils Cal left behind when he married, but that notion held no excitement for him. American women were wonderful lovers, yes, but the temptations of exotic Latin America beckoned strongly. So many countries, so many different flavors. A smile played on Neil's lips—he could still taste Honduras.

Ugh. The heat didn't take a break in the early hours. Neil's temples burned and itched and beaded with sweat underneath his heavy helmet.

He steered his Harley into the gravel lot bordering the pool of the *El Cacto Verde*, drawn by the half-lit sign depicting a smiling cartoon cactus beckoning passersby with a prickly, fingerless hand. Hardly a four-star resort, The Green Cactus looked as though it tried very hard to live up to the name. It was a leprachaun green strip motel nestled like an unsightly mole among the sleek distant landscape of towering resorts, which were no doubt built to purposely block the middle and lower classes from the sun. The building had the look of a teenage beach movie set from the 1960s. Neil had to wonder if morning would bring the requisite villainous real estate developer, itching to evict Franco and Annette so he could tear down the place and erect luxury timeshares and one or two El Starbucks.

He removed his helmet and shook away the discomfort of the ride, feeling as though he had been freed from a microwave only to fall into a kiln. No gust of tropical breeze welcomed him. Nor did any natives...at least, there were none that Neil could discern from the lively crowd gathered poolside. A rusted chain-link fence, sagging in places, surrounded the many college-age kids splashing in the water, which was illuminated by lights fixed in its cement bottom. The kids ranged from lily white to lobster red, all boisterous and clearly American, so Neil surmised as he listened to their racuous banter.

He checked in quickly, paid cash up front for the week, and started past the fence with his key-card in hand—one modernization, he was pleased to see. Perhaps there would be an indoor toilet in his room, too.

He kept his gaze low, avoiding the clandestine stares of doe-eyed co-eds draped across lounge chairs and dampened beach towels, looking close to lifeless in the sticky hot air as they struggled to lift longneck beer bottles to their lips and bob their heads to a distant radio. Pretty though they were, American girls were off limits during this tour. Many of his conquests weren't English-speaking, and had no means of getting to the United States to track him down. He played

safe, but all the same he didn't want trouble following him home.

He checked rusted door numbers along the path past the pool and realized he had walked too far. His room was situated within the courtyard, granting him front row seats to the party. He bit back a curse as he retraced his steps and hung a right at the fence. If anything, perhaps they could provide some entertainment if he was unable to tune them out and sleep. The girls were practically nude, excellent eye candy to picture in his mind while whacking off.

Closer to his room, a young coed paused against a stronger patch of fence, watching him with childlike fascination. Tiny fingers looped around links high above her head; her right pinky clasped around the neck of a brown beer bottle. Standing in this position presented to Neil the picture of a lithe pixie with saucer wide eyes and lips twisted in amused restraint.

Cute, he decided, and obviously American despite the deep tan. Off limits, alas. If she left this supposed college graduation trip without her virtue it wouldn't be by his doing.

She appeared to appraise his appearance, amused no doubt by his jeans and leather jacket.

"Don't think you'll be getting a sunburn now," she told him. "Why the getup?"

Her dishwater blond hair was slicked back behind her ears. Water droplets beaded on her forehead and small bust, which was barely concealed by a blue and white polka dot bikini top. The matching bottom proved an even smaller scrap of material, Neil saw as the girl swayed her hips to the song's beat. The patch covering her crotch tapered back to two thin straps circling her waist, leaving nothing but the promise of seeing more skin if she turned her back.

She wasn't as thick as he liked them, but she was definitely tempting enough to cause Neil to reconsider. He could see a strip of hairless pussy lip peeking from the thong bikini, and imagined her skin tasting like a sticky sweet combination of dried suntan lotion and tropical sunshine.

"There's a reason for wearing this much clothing when you ride a motorcycle," he told her, "even in the heat of summer."

Her lids lowered demurely. The added lazy tilt of her smile lent her face a dreamy expression. The faint aroma of weed wafted in from poolside, and Neil surmised the girl probably had a hit sometime in the evening. "Sounds interesting," she purred, her voice taking on a sudden husky quality. "Wouldn't mind hearing why."

The key-card was slick in his hand. His thumbpad slid rapidly over the raised, emblazoned cactus logo, back and forth until he thought he could wipe the image clean. He wouldn't mind repeating this action against her clit, pushing his fingers through the chain links and stroking her tiny pink bud until she screamed her release and dribbled down the fence. Maybe, too, he could undo his pants and thrust his cock through a hole in order to get to her hole. He pictured the girl with her ass

against him, her arms flying backward to grasp the fence for support as he fucked her, the thin metal leaving marks in her creamy flesh. He could hear the shrill jingle of loosened chain links collapsing, falling victim to their passion.

No. She was a slip of a girl, probably some barely legal heiress blowing her great-grandfather's hard earned tobacco fortune, slumming at *El Cacto Verde* to piss off somebody. Or to see how the other life lived.

Oh, but he wanted to tear away that thong and sample her other half.

*No, no focus. Eat where the locals eat.*

"No, you wouldn't," he said finally. He would be good tonight...rather, this morning. Caracas was a big city, and he did have some action lined up for later. "It's not exactly a sexy tale." He tried to nod a courteous goodnight but the girl crooked her neck in invitation.

"Come on over." The girl's pout was a full-fledged assault, complete with batting eyelashes and hunched shoulders to better accentuate what cleavage there was to flaunt. "I bet your bike's covered in dust from at least six countries, and for all I know you had to outrun bullets in three. How you could not have an interesting story to tell?"

"That's okay. I should get some sleep." *Though I wouldn't mind forsaking sleep to fuck you, so I can prove to my cunt of an ex-wife that I still have what it takes.*

"Sleep when you're dead."

"Like Warren Zevon?"

The girl frowned as the reference sailed over her head. Neil let a smile escape. "Now if you don't know who he is, I can't join you on principle."

"No, I know the song, I'm just messing with you," she wheedled. "Come on over. There's no curfew. I won't tell your mom if you have a beer or a toke, either," she teased. Over the crowd and the music, he could hear the irritating *crack* of tiny chewing gum bubbles exploding between her teeth.

"Really, thank you, but..." The lock's red light continued to glow, preventing him access, and he tried the card again. Maybe this was a sign. Perhaps God, assuming He existed, had delivered this young American piece to clean the palate before his planned meeting with Chelsea.

Let there be pussy, and let it be good.

The girl bounced on the balls of her feet, clearly having had more than her share of free beer.

"Get out of those hot clothes and unwind in the hottub with me."

He edged closer to the fence, near enough to smell her. He could add chlorine to the list of possible flavors, the aroma clung to her hair. "What's your name, darlin'?"

"I'll give you a hint," she said. "I was named for a famous TV star. Your turn."

"Okay," he said. "Here's your hint: I was named for a dead relative." And with a coy smile he bade her good night again and turned back to the door.

"Get back here!"

"Okay," he conceded. Her petulance was charming, he had to admit. "Let me get settled and I'll meet you out there." A soak would do him some good. He would unwind with the girl, nothing more. He was horny, yes, but he possessed self-control.

Good thing, too, because a girl like this wouldn't know what hit her if turned on the charm. He would unwind, but she would unravel.

And beg for more.

## Two

At the far end of the pool, bordered in chipped blue tile, was a bubbling, in-ground hottub into which laughing and drunken bodies piled in and out at various intervals, save for one. As Neil approached, stripped to his boxers, he saw his new friend cast a murderous glance at the twined couple next to her, jockeying for the superior underwater sex position.

Despite their preoccupations, they got the message immediately and exited to continue their exhibitionism elsewhere. Neil teetered on the tub's edge and curled his toes into a forceful jet. White suds subsided to reveal that the young woman had forsaken her top. Thick, dark rose nipples cut the water's edge. Further inspection of the tub revealed the thong was also no longer in use.

Idly she stroked one breast and cast him a seductive smile. "You're not shocked, I hope?" Her voice rang with mock innocence.

"Pleasantly surprised is more like it."

"It's fairly liberal here. You can practically walk around naked in some parts of the city. I love it."

"I certainly don't object. The human body is a beautiful thing. Case in point." Neil hooked both thumbs under the band of shorts and pushed them to his ankles. He looked up just in time to see all evidence of bravado disappear from the girl's face. Saucer-wide green eyes now fixed on his ripped abdomen and thick cock, which dangled a fair length between his thighs. The tip of a pink tongue darted between her lips to lick away the sudden dryness.

"Are you shocked?" he asked, trying not to smile.

She swallowed visibly, but quickly recovered with a telling grin. "Pleasantly surprised is more like it."

He glanced around the courtyard and noticed nobody else within range had batted an eye at his nudity, as if seeing an *Americano Grande* at *El Cacto Verde* was a common occurrence. He was reminded of a scene in *The Last Picture Show*, when Cybill Shepherd was goaded into stripping naked before many scrutinizing eyes and diving into the school swimming pool. Some kind of club initiation, he couldn't remember the details. He had clearly passed this round of general approval, either that or nobody cared. More kids arrived with beer and the party continued. He remained a horndog fast approaching middle age, preparing to seduce a girl young enough to be his daughter. Hmm. Was he really planning to do that? The idea on the walk over had been to yank her chain for a bit and bolt before she got too hot and bothered. His rule on enjoying American tail would not be broken, and he could console himself with a few good strokes before bed. What was it about this

girl that niggled at him to bend? The few American women he'd met on the trip hadn't enticed him so. He'd only just met her!

He shook off the thought, determined to stick to his intentions. "Well, next time I'll try harder," he said, and eased into the swirling water. Immersed to his shoulders, Neil took a concrete slab opposite her and let the heat relax his bunched muscles. His new friend studied his every move, as if calculating the sexual possibilities in the enclosed space.

He rose briefly to grab a standard white hotel towel from the back of a nearby lounge chair, and draped it over his shoulders so he could rest his neck comfortably against the tub's edge. He did not know to whom it belonged, and everybody around him was too drunk and high to notice or care. "I hope I'm not intruding on your friends." Neil crooked his neck toward the pool. The laughter gradually died, replaced by a smattering of wolf whistles and appreciative murmurs. Neil saw a thin girl with long, black hair straddling the edge of the diving board, toes skimming the water. She, like just about everybody else there, was fixed on the matted wet head lolling side to side between her thighs.

The boy was eating her pussy, and doing a good job of it if the girl's staccato, ecstatic moaning was any indication.

"Friends?" A derisive sound sputtered from his tubmate's lower lip. "I don't even know these people. They came as a group on some post-college binge, making noise at all hours. But, they have beer and weed, and they like to share, so who am I to be inhospitable?" Behind her a blue cooler was within her reach. She stretched back and plucked two longneck Coronas for them.

"Nice, drinks and a show." Neil cocked a brow. "So, you're the hotel's official welcome wagon then? You don't look local, and you sound like you're from Jersey."

"Long Island, but that's beside the point. I live here, now, at the hotel."

"Really? So you're also a masochist."

"An ex-patriate."

"I see." A cute one at that, one whose waif-like beauty continued to compromise his plans. His hardened cock swayed in the sudsy water, aching to be surrendered to those dainty hands and pursed lips. "I'm sure there's an interesting story there."

She shrugged, then wrenched the cap from her beer and tossed it like a skimming stone against the concrete. Neil watched the silver fleck glance against a chair leg and roll into a patch of grass.

"I came to Venezuela under similar circumstances, celebrating getting my degree, and liked it so much that I stayed. That was four years ago. Made sense to me, since my degree's in Spanish, and soaking up the sun here beats teaching ungrateful inner city kids how to conjugate verbs."

"If I know New York, they'll have to do better than that to get by in some neighborhoods. Bet your parents weren't too thrilled."

"What could they say? I was an adult, I paid my way, and I'm living in this shithole so I can double the payments on my loans." She tongued the rim of her bottle, dipped past the neck and released it with an audible *pop*. Neil couldn't remember having seen anything sexier on this trip, considering what he had seen. And done.

"And when you're debt free, what then? El Hilton?"

She giggled. "An apartment, at the very least. There are some nice places to rent around here. I could find a roommate no problem. Always somebody here looking for an American to help them with their English."

"What do you here that trumps the security of a 401k and insurance from New York City Schools?"

"Whatever I can, for now. Waitressing, help on charter boat tours, anything tourist related. I get referrals to escort English tourists who don't speak the language. That pays well, and it keeps me in food and tampons until I can find work teaching English in a private school. I'm what you call low-maintenance, but I have no desire to leech off of anybody. I like to take care of myself."

A rare species if ever one existed, by Neil's view anyway. Many women he had known in his life were content to be trophies. The ex-wife especially had been the complete opposite of what he perceived his tubmate to be, preferring to live the good life on Neil's pay and taking advantage of his celebrity connections...and his frequent absences while touring. How many of his so-called friends had passed her around from bed to shower to wherever while he was working to sustain her lifestyle? One had been too many. At least Cal had been a true friend, rebuffing her advances.

"Are you from New York, too?" she asked.

"Jersey." He winked.

"You didn't ride that hog all the way, did you?"

"I had it shipped to a friend's in Belize and flew there. Rode the rest of way. No bullets."

"Bumming around the continent a la Kerouac?"

"Somewhat. I'm celebrating my divorce with a world tour, leaving a girl in every port."

"Leaving or fucking?"

Neil offered a coy smile. "I don't kiss and tell."

She laughed. "Sounds like fun, anyway. I take it there's no benefits package to that, either, unless you finished work and are spending your retirement."

Neil shot her a haughty glance. "You think I look old enough to be retired?"

She made a point of leaning forward and squinting for a better look at his face. "Well, maybe it's all the mileage across the continent that lends you the rugged, wrinkled look."

"Maybe it's the beer and weed." Neil raked a hand over his close-cropped hair, feeling for the thinning spot in the back. True, he tended to see more gray every time he checked a mirror, but he liked to think he looked pretty good for a guy in his early forties.

She offered no confirmation of that outside of a curious smile.

"Anyway," Neil said, "I have enough to get by, and work waiting for me when I get home. And I brought coupons with me, so I'm good."

"I see." She nodded slowly, pursing her lips in understanding. "Why do you wear full leathers in the summer in South America?"

"The sun may be hot, but shorts and a tank top won't protect you from all sorts of shit that could get caught in your tires and hit you when you're speeding down a gravel road." *Quid pro quo*, Clarice. "You planning on coming back to the States?"

Her expression was wry. "Depends. Is the war over?"

"War's not at home."

"It was brewing in my home when I was going to school. Probably why my dad wasn't so torn apart when I didn't come back." She rolled her eyes.

"I'm sure he misses you, maybe he's too full of masculine pride to admit it. I get that way sometimes." Whom was he kidding, he was that way now. Too full of macho pride to go home and find emotional closure with Sunny, but rather transfer the anger he felt through meaningless sex. Fun, meaningless sex, anyway. Fun, meaningless, boring anonymous sex.

When did it suddenly become boring? Neil pulled on the beer bottle and hoped for a mood swing.

"You alright?" she asked him.

"Fine." Neil shook his head, trying to release the negativity. "Sometimes I think too much, is all."

"Is the current administration out of the White House yet? Then I'll come home."

"I'll tell you in November." Neil glanced again at the diving board lovers, who had moved during the course of his conversation. The girl now grasped the ladder railing at the shallow end, the young man behind her. Though only his torso could be seen, it was obvious by the way his hips undulated and his hands slid underneath to cup her breasts that the boy was fucking her. Beyond them, a full-fledged orgy was in progress on the lounge chairs. Discarded swimsuits splattered against the concrete, bare limbs tangled and digits protruded through plastic slats. Mouths sucked

tits, clits and cocks, yet from his vantage point Neil couldn't tell who was fucking whom in that mess.

Suddenly his companion pitched forward and straddled his lap, pressing his cock between them. "Quite an inspiring sight, you think?" she asked.

"Very much so." Neil peered down the shadowed valley created as her nipples brushed against his. Her skin felt like silk, and his own nipples tightened as she wriggled against him for comfort. He stretched his arms to either side, scratching at the crumbling lip of the hottub, fighting the urge to plunge them back into the water and cup her buttocks. She was light and willing, and it wouldn't take much to lift her onto his cock and watch her ride the waves.

Focus, boy. Remember the plan. Plenty of hot *señoritas* to be had in Caracas for meaningless sex, starting with Chelsea. Even if this girl wasn't going anywhere, her mannerisms did remind him a bit of Sunny. That quirky twist of her lip, her pealing laughter. But, he'd had his fill of American women. When he could muster the self-control to say goodnight, the girl would have Sunny to thank for missing out on a prime cut of cock.

*You're the one who's missing out, Sunny. You bitch.* Neil swallowed his bitterness, masking it with an appreciative glance at his new friend's assets. Clearly the ride through Central America and the Colombian coast hadn't helped him to discern why his wife felt the need to stray. Was he that much of an asshole?

And Neil sighed audibly, watching the young woman's skin above her breastbone prickle. Maybe he had been an asshole at times, but he was never around for Sunny to see it.

"Shall we join them?" she suggested.

Neil shook his head, surprised that thoughts of his dead marriage hadn't softened his cock.

Quite the contrary, the movement against his skin kept him stone, but not willing to jump into a pile of strangers, or into this vixen. Never mind that he jumped a fair number of strangers already since Belize. "I'm not into group scenes, not since my early touring days. If you're a good girl, though, I'll tell you about time about twenty years ago when I was on this tour bus headed for Nashville..."

"I can assure you I am very good," she broke in. "Were you a musician or a roadie?"

"I am a musician, a drummer."

"Play for anybody famous?"

He opened his mouth to answer, but the tinny melody of the orgy's radio caught his attention.

As he listened closely, the lyrics hit his consciousness and he laughed out loud. Was there no authentic culture to be had in Caracas, even at three in the morning? Couldn't he be treated to explosive brass and a wailing, maracas-shaking Venezuelan diva instead of a Brady Garriston tune?

One of the very songs on which he had played the drums?

*Solid gold becomes everything I touch and see/Can't help it if life's too damn good to me.*

"You know this song?" he asked her, and added when she nodded, "I played the drums on this track, twenty years ago. And I have to tell you, this song didn't annoy me as much back then as it does now."

She rubbed his arms. Neil felt the tiny hairs stand on end. "You have the arms for it, drumming, at least. Brady Garriston's cool. You still play for him?"

"I'm actually a studio musician these days. I try not to tour anymore, and I haven't played with Brady in years. I work more with his regular bassist, and with a jazz singer named Chelsea."

She reared back and laughed. "Oh, yes. I know all about her. Can't turn a corner without seeing a poster of her face plastered on a building. Is she back in town?"

"Here for the summer. We have a date to meet." Neil thought of the former Maria Josefa Torres, who had rechristened herself after the famous New York hotel to mask her Latin heritage and secure a recording contract. Many years later saw the singer embracing her roots with the growing interest in Latin performers. From what Neil knew of his intended lover, Venezuela had long since forgiven her neglect. The checks she'd written to various charitable organizations adopting her stage name were a big help.

"You gonna fuck her, Drummer Boy?"

Neil only raised an eyebrow and aped her twisted smile. Her response was to press her pussy harder against his cock. Even through the rough pulsating water jets he could feel her pussy lips sliding up and down his shaft. Her eyes closed and lips parted slightly as she tilted back her head, blindly steering her clit into position.

"You could fuck me here, now, if you want," she purred.

*But I won't.* If only she were a native, a naive, brown-skinned naiad with no aspirations for the land of the free, he'd have her pinned against the concrete. "I could," he said, "but I just realized I still don't know your name."

"That bothers you?"

"It's starting to, believe it or not." Damn this spontaneous bout of conscience.

She continued to grind against him. Neil felt the first tingle of an orgasm tightening his balls.

"I never told you because you never guessed," she whispered, kissing his neck. The stench of beer and weed was doubly pronounced.

"Nor did you, my name, that is."

"Billy Jim Joe Bob, Uncle Sam, Taylor Tyler Todd, John Paul George Ringo. Am I close?"

"Hardly." With growing reluctance, he gently pushed her away and whispered his name in her ear, not before he landed a chaste kiss on her forehead. "Good night, Gertude Stein. Take care of your lost generation writhing in the deep end."

With that, he sprang from the hottub and snapped open his makeshift pillow to wrap around his waist. He was through the gate cordoning off the pool area when he heard her exclaim, "If you don't come back here, you're the one who's lost."

Neil didn't respond, nor did he turn back to look at her. Wet, plodding footsteps brought him back to the seedy isolation of his room, where he pressed against the locked door and stroked his aching cock until he came. He might have enjoyed the sensation more had not that damn Brady Garriston song continued to loop through his mind, an unwanted earworm that overpowered his own resounding cries of release.

*Glad life's good for somebody*, he thought, now recalling how the singer had suffered a rapturous fate similar to Cal's—true fucking love. All he had were questionable accommodations in the armpit of Venezuela and the ghost of his ex-wife testing his confidence and morals. Or, maybe it was guilt, or jealousy, or want. There was no absolutely no reason he couldn't have enjoyed the sexual pleasures of...

Of whom?

He kicked around the towel that had fallen to the floor. Pinching his toes between a patch of white, he lifted it within reach and wiped the cum from his hands.

Pulling back one curtain, he cranked open one squeaking jalousie window and the noise outside amplified. He watched as the orgy gradually wound down to a group afterglow soak in the hottub. Occasionally a man would make a move on his friend, only to be pushed roughly away. Finally, the girl rose with a splash and retreated, not bothering to dress. Piercing whistles and catcalls followed, in English and broken Spanish. *Dulce, dulce, venga aqui*. Come back, sweetheart. Neil pressed his forehead against the window's screen, silently willing her back, silently cursing Sunny.

*Come back, sweetheart. Let me prove to you that I'm not lost.*

Deep down inside, however, he knew he was lying.

## Three

Sunlight cut through the sliver of window he left exposed. He couldn't recall exactly when sleep claimed him, but he did wake dried, semi-clothed and snuggled under a sheet riddled with cigarette burns. The music in his head was gone, but unfortunately the same could not be said for the throbbing in his other head.

Conjured images of past conquests did nothing to encourage orgasm, leaving Neil to wonder what would occur first if he remained jerking off in the shower—pruned skin or carpal tunnel syndrome. Squeezing his eyes shut, he pictured Chelsea's curvy body, her ample bosom and rounded bottom. Nothing.

He thought about the girl, La Dulce, fondly recalling her bravado and her disaffected attitude. She seemed like the kind of girl who could keep him on his toes, and in bed.

So why did he sleep alone last night? It wasn't like there was an equipment malfunction preventing him from doing anything.

More like a mind fuck. Neil wondered if the demise of his marriage had unconsciously put him off American gals for good, if not just temporarily. Would he be forced to return home to live the life of a monk with a raging hard-on?

He had money, though. He could live anywhere he wanted. Surely South America needed drummers. He could get by on bongos if necessary.

Neil shook his head, determined not to let regrets weigh him down. He would call Chelsea and hook up with her. If he happened to run into La Dulce during his stay, maybe she wouldn't remember anything, hopefully she had been just pickled enough.

If only he could do the same, forget, instead of stroke his cock in the shower and try to solve the riddle of her name.

A famous television actress...putting La Dulce at around twenty-five years might narrow it down to the late seventies or early eighties. Mary, Rhoda, Edith, Gloria, Maude, Diane, Carla, Ellie Mae...names chugged along a mental conveyor belt, never mind that he was really thinking of television characters.

Ginger or Mary-Ann? Mary-Ann or Jeannie? Samantha or Mrs. Kravitz? Marsha Marsha Marsha...and Julie Newmar as the Beaver. Or was she Hot Lips Houlihan?

That *dulce* had some hot lips.

A flash of his tubmate's bare pussy lips, distorted in the swirling water, resurfaced as he finally came. He sprayed the tile of the shower and exhaled slowly, letting the crackling chime of his cell

phone draw him back into consciousness.

A specific number, Neil knew by the ringtone. "The Good Life" by Brady Garriston sounded tinny and distant from his tiny phone, resting in the other room.

Definitely time to change the tune, and his life.

## *Four*

He followed Chelsea's directions to the letter, a grand feat considering the shitty reception on his cell phone. The requisite number of turns down various narrow byways led him easily to *Cafe Las Palmas*, their rendezvous point, and he parked in the nearest available space by the restaurant. Neil groaned, taking in the pastel edifice, emblazoned with tropical imagery and stereotyped Latina cartoon characters—the curvy vixen struggling to balance a Carmen Miranda headdress, the short, dark oogling men surrounding her. All were strumming guitars under a loping palm tree about to drop a coconut on each head. The restaurant's entrance was guarded by a gigantic concrete bull upon which two small children sat while their mother giddily snapped a photo.

*Ay, yi, yi.*

A lanky, dark boy with bangs covering his eyes guided him to Chelsea's circular booth, flanked by palm trees in large green tubs. Behind her not an inch of wall space could be seen for all the knickknacks, photographs and assorted junk nailed to it. Apparently the owner of *Las Palmas* had learned restaurant decor from the masters, *Señors* Bennigan and Fuddrucker.

Neil's breath hitched in his throat as he greeted his date. In her alleged early forties, Chelsea had everybody fooled. She looked beautiful, her caramel skin devoid of wrinkles and any evidence that she was older than her publicity machine claimed. She was more slender than he had remembered, though thankfully the world-renowned full bosom and well-rounded rump—which Neil acknowledged silently yet appreciatively as she stood to hug him—remained intact. Her strapless yellow dress—a bit too dressy for the restaurant's brassy Musak and straw baskets of tortilla chips—set off nicely the highlights in her copper brown hair and dark red nails and lipstick.

"I told you I wanted to go somewhere authentic," he chided. He had intended to sound more blunt, but it seemed impossible to be angry with a gorgeous, impetuous creature as Chelsea.

"¿Ah, *porquÉ se queja?*" she pouted, and Neil leaned back in surprise after kissing her. As long as he had known Chelsea, nary a word of Spanish had escaped her lips. Never a hint of accent, either, as she'd done well to disguise it during her career. Perhaps it was the environment that allowed her to be camouflaged.

"Why do you complain?" she repeated in English. "You won't find better food in all of Caracas. Come, sit with me." She eased down and patted the curved bench.

Neil complied and grumbled, "I feel like I should be wearing mouse ears. I want to eat where the locals go, not where the cruise ships dump off their guests to get a snack before the midnight buffet."

"I'll think you'll find that Caracas is pretty much like any large city in the States." The accent was gone; the Americanized version of his friend had returned. Was this bad news? "They have all the fast food chains and then some. I like *Las Palmas* because they know how to treat a star."

"I'm sure you're worshipped like the goddess you are wherever you go in the city."

"True." Chelsea nodded, then giggled. "I guess you could say this is one of many shrines." An elegant wave of her hand directed Neil's attention to a large framed caricature above her head—a colored charcoal representation of Chelsea in a long evening gown, her assets exaggerated in a manner only such drawings could show. Dotted elsewhere on the wall were photographs of Chelsea at various stages of her career, some publicity poses, and some news clippings with other famous faces.

Neil unfolded his napkin and signalled for the waiter. "Fine, we'll eat here, but at the first sign of mariachi players we're leaving."

"That's Mexico, darling."

Dinner progressed smoothly. They gossiped about mutual friends, traded news of recent projects, and toasted everything and everybody they could think of with drink after drink. After his third rocks margarita Neil stilled to relish the pleasant tingling sensation shooting down his limbs. By the fourth the tingling escalated to a throbbing that taunted his libido. His nipples tightened and itched underneath his Polo shirt, and he pressed his thighs together to quash the ache in his balls.

Chelsea chattered on, unaware of the effect she was having on him.

Was it her, though? If he were to be touched now, fondled, by a hand tipped with blood red polish, would the ache subside and encourage desire?

A flash of red caught his eye, and Neil did a doubletake, nearly wrenching his neck.

"You okay, *querida*?" Chelsea asked. "You turned all serious."

"Hm? Oh, no. Thought I saw somebody who looked...like..." his mind searched for a name, "Cal."

Chelsea snorted. "Cal. Did you know he moved to that hick town in Virginia where Brady Garriston has a home? Set up a jazz combo and does local gigs and weddings, I mean come on! That's so beneath him."

"He's happy," was all Neil offered. He'd do the same. What waited for him in New York except an address to which he had to send alimony payments?

"He's left me in the lurch, is what. I have to find a new bassist when I go back into the studio, while Cal plucks all sorts of everything in BFE." There was no mistaking the innuendo in Chelsea's voice, and Neil chose to keep quiet. He'd heard the rumors, too, about Brady and Cal's marital

arrangements. Shouldn't have been too surprising, as neither man was a choir boy to start. They were happy, only that mattered.

Neil wouldn't mind being happy like that...on a permanent basis.

He sipped his drink and pictured himself lying naked, his hardening cock resting against one thigh as his companion's red fingernails scraped the delicate skin covering his balls. He imagined the heft of them in Chelsea's tiny palm, felt her squeeze gently before taking the tip of his cock in her mouth. He watched her skin pale on contact, and her long hair retract into a blonde bob cut...

"What was that, *querida*? Honestly, what is wrong with you tonight?"

Neil's heart constricted at Chelsea's touch. His throat dried, and he croaked for something less potent.

"A girl will be by with tea," Chelsea said. "They circle the dining room."

"That'll be fine. You look great," he told her for what was probably the hundredth time since they sat down. Chelsea absorbed the compliment as if hearing it for the first time. She straightened in her seat, rolling back her shoulders to display herself.

"Yoga. Three times a week, it does wonders."

"I can see that." Yet, in the back of his mind he could only see La Dulce, working his cock like an ice cream cone.

"You should try it. Be great to ease those muscles of yours. You probably get so tense after riding that motorbike everywhere."

"I tried the hotel's hottub last night. That helped." Something else would have worked better.

"Well, you could try mine later tonight. I'd love for you to see the house," Chelsea suggested quickly.

There was no need to translate Chelsea's English. Neil knew what the woman wanted to show him. He relaxed in his seat, parting his knees enough to let Chelsea curl a hand around his thigh. A thumb brushed against the stiff denim, setting off sparks guaranteed to get him even stiffer.

Instead, though his pants remained a bit tight in the crotch, the earlier sensations of arousal began to subside. How could this happen? Hadn't he wanted a night with Chelsea?

She asked him where he was staying, grimacing as he revealed the name of the motel. "That rent by the hour fleabag?"

"How do you know about it?" Neil teased.

Chelsea only pursed her lips and reached for his hand. "*Querida*, you can stay with me."

He should have been happy to hear the invitation, ready to pay the check and whisk her back to her seaside palace and fuck her all night. Instead, his mind wandered back to last night's pool

party, and the words came automatically, "I like it there."

"*Querida...*" she chided, and tightened her grip. He looked down to see her thumb was stroking his knuckle. Rather intimately. "I've been worried about you, you know, after what happened with Sunny."

"I lived. I am living." *I'm trying.*

"I heard from Richard you did quite a bit of living when you stayed with him in Belize."

Chelsea arched a brow. Neil had to chuckle, recalling quickly the anonymous pleasures enjoyed before he mounted his bike for the great adventure. Lucky for him he was able to sit on the saddle comfortably the first day, he had been so sore.

"You hadn't called, and when you took off on that damned bike I didn't know how to contact you. I called Cal and Rick, and they hadn't heard from you..."

"That wasn't necessary. You had to know I'd track you down once I got here."

"I know." She pouted. "And I'm glad you're here. We're going to have a wonderful time tonight, and it's good that you're taking this trip. You need to take the time to forget everything."

She leaned closer and whispered in his ear, "And I can help you forget, *no?*"

Neil opened his mouth to speak, but another voice sounded.

"What, no leathers for protection?"

He looked up, startled, at their approaching visitor. Tonight she wore the uniform of a waitress—red T-shirt and cutoff denim shorts over flesh-colored tights, a tag pinned to her breast that announced her name was Candace. His earlier hot flash.

Candace?

Neil winced, then nodded. Television actress. Candace Bergen.

Candy. *Dulce.*

*Sweet.*

"Refill your drink?" Candy held up the tea pitcher she was toting.

"Please." Chelsea spoke with force, and shoved Neil's empty glass to the edge of the table.

Candy complied quietly, shooting Neil a curious glance. "You'll have to forgive me, sir, you look a bit lost."

"Well," Neil said with a clandestine wink, "this isn't November, so I know we're not in the States. And given how I'm sweating now, I know I'm somewhere hot."

"It could get hotter." With that innuendo hanging in the air, Candy strutted to another table to see to her customers. Neil watched her ass move underneath the tight denim, distracted by Chelsea.

"What the hell was that all about?"

"Hm?" Neil broke off visual contact and smiled at his companion. "Nothing, just catching up with an old friend."

"Uh-huh." Chelsea folded her arms across the table, tapping her long nails. "A friend?"

He shrugged. "Not really. I met her last night. Rather, this morning."

Chelsea made a sucking noise between her lips. "She could be your daughter."

"If I were a sexual prodigy, perhaps." He raised an eyebrow. Was that jealousy deepening the color her skin now? "I had an interesting conversation with her last night, is all." No sense in mentioning the pool's dress code, or lack thereof.

"I can't see what you could talk about with a girl like that, how many Girl Scout badges she has?" Chelsea bit.

Neil looked at his date. Chelsea's attitude was suddenly amusing to him now, and a bit annoying. What reason did she have to be irritated all of a sudden? A woman of her confidence and beauty and fame had no cause to feel threatened by a waitress, Chelsea could have any man in the restaurant, in Caracas. Tonight, she would have him.

And yet, Neil wasn't as excited about the prospect of savoring Chelsea's charms as he had been days ago. Any man not turned on by one of the most glamorous singers in the world would have to be a...

Neil sighed. A fool, a simple, lost fool.

Candy reappeared just as he set his utensils in the middle of his emptied plate. As she moved to claim the dirty plates her hand came to brush against his. There was the familiar zing Chelsea had been unable to produce. Any closer and his hard-on would be knocking the underside of the table, struggling to be free.

"How was it?" Candy asked.

"Incredible." Neil's voice was dreamy.

"Well, I'll be sure to tell the cook."

Neil's felt a flush, then a swat across his thigh as Chelsea shifted next to him, closer to exhibit her territorial nature.

"Save room for dessert?" Candy sang.

"No, thank you," Chelsea answered in a clipped tone. "Just the check."

Candy pulled a flat billfold from her back pocket and handed it to him. "Your waiter's on break, so he gave me this. I'll just take it when you're ready." With that, she finished clearing the table, allowing Neil a parting shot through the dip in her shirt collar, and left.

Neil regarded his date with a cool, half-smile. "So, what is for dessert if we're not having it

here?"

Chelsea waved a hand. "*Querida*, you know I don't eat anything with refined sugar. I have an image to maintain. My *culo* is big enough as it is, thanks to genetics. I don't need to add to it."

"Well, some men like a little padding. More cushion for the..."

Chelsea made a sound that sounded like a sheep's bray. "I know, I know." With a wicked smile, she eased her shoulder back to enhance her heavy breasts and pushed them toward Neil. "What do you like? You like a bit of cushion?"

*I like them blonde and petite.* He did now, anyway. Rather than answer, he reached for his wallet with one hand and opened the billfold with the other.

There, beside the bill, was a handwritten note. He turned the folder toward him so Chelsea couldn't see it.

*You look absolutely miserable, the note read. Come have dessert. I leave in five.*

Underneath that was a hotel keycard with Candy's room number scrawled across the top.

"So..." He felt Chelsea brush against his free hand. "How about we head for the hottub? And afterward, we burn off that dinner."

Neil pulled out two bills, fifty thousand Bolivars each, and deftly tucked the note into his pocket. "Actually, Chelsea, I'm thinking I'm in the mood for something sweet.

## *Five*

*What the hell am I doing?*

He sat back on the bike and took a deep breath, then turned the key to kill the engine. The dizzying sensation of top-shelf margaritas had subsided, yet the sour taste lingered. *SeÑor Cacto* looked down on him with his same silly, gaping smile; Neil couldn't decide if the hotel's mascot cheered him on or taunted him for making a big mistake.

He had just blown off a Venezuelan goddess, a would-be lover, to meet up with a total stranger. Granted, Candy had some kind of affect on him that was arousing and curious, but his desire to know more of it came at the expense of an old friendship. Chelsea would never speak to him again, professionally or otherwise.

With Chelsea, he had been guaranteed a night of passion. Here, he did not know what to expect. What did he think was going to happen when he opened Candy's door? The girl had seen him with the richest woman in town. Maybe she assumed he had money. Maybe she was waiting for him with a tire tool pinned behind her back so she could nab his wallet and keys.

Neil sighed. Why not? A conk on the head might do him some good. Just plain head would be better, though.

Gah! Neil shifted on the saddle. He was getting a hard-on in the parking lot! Was it the unknown factor that excited him more than Chelsea had?

A myriad of thoughts swam into consciousness—last night's pool party, and Candy in the hot tub with her bohemian outlook on life and petite body crushed against his.

Then another pool party, nearly twenty years back. A stop on tour. Band and crew splashing around the hotel pool in the middle night, drunk and comparing notes, trying to one-up each other in a game of sexual knowledge. He had been so young then, so inexperienced compared to his peers. "How did you know the time was right?" he had asked Cal Briscoe. "When you want to be with a girl?"

Cal pulled from his beer bottle, swallowing hard before answering. "I dunno, it's a gut feeling.

Like when you're a kid and you want to be like the older kids and jump off the high dive, but the first few times you can't."

Everybody within earshot had chuckled at that, interpreting the analogy amongst themselves.

"But one day you're standing on that board," Cal continued, "and you know you're ready to jump. That's all it is."

Slowly Neil returned to the present, fixed on the small window attached to Candy's room. The

curtains fluttered momentarily; he saw a flash of red shirt.

He pocketed his keys.

He pulled off his gloves. His hands trembled. Underneath his jacket his heart beat faster. The last time he had felt like this...

...was his first time. He hadn't known what to expect then, either.

The keycard worked on the first try. Neil entered a dimmed room fragranced with sandalwood candles. It took a few seconds for his vision to adjust, but he quickly found Candy reclined on a bed draped with a non-hotel issue comforter. She had changed into a white shirt, no pants. Long, lean legs dangled over one side of the bed.

Two steps into the room, he hovered over her.

The next sound he heard was the *thwap* of the high dive springboard as he jumped.

\* \* \*

"Did you hear that?" Candy looked past him.

"I felt it." Neil brushed his lips against her neck, and eased her into a prone position. Candy seemed to forget what had distracted her, and she eagerly met his lips in passionate lock. Several seconds later, he released with a big smile.

"You certainly live up to your name. Yummy."

"Other parts are sweeter." Candy wriggled underneath him, thrusting her hips upward in a not-so-subtle gesture.

They undressed slowly, silently, gazes locked and smoldering. Neil momentarily caught their images in the mirror opposite the bed and liked the progressing visual. Candy's brown, pert bottom filled one corner; it was proportioned nicely with the rest of her, and Neil had no doubts that she would be a perfect fit.

No tire tool to be seen, either. This was a good sign.

Neil kissed an open-mouthed trail down her body, nipping the hollow of her throat, the underside of one breast, her navel, before settling himself between her parted thighs. Kneeling before the side of the bed, he gently stroked the waiting, swelling pair of pussy lips before him, teasing the slit and moistening core before prying the folds to reveal a perfectly pink clit.

He pursed his lips over them and planted a gentle kiss. Sweet and ripe it was, a taste to savor.

Candy quivered on either side of him, and he obliged her desire with deeper attention. He licked her labial folds with broad, quick strokes, dipping low between intervals to probe her slick opening and lap up her juices. Every move upward brought renewed attention to her clit, and Candy squirmed with every touch.

He glanced up her body, watching her back arch and her eyes flutter. Candy fondled her breasts in circular motion and bit her lip, moaning. "Right there, right there," she whispered, leaving Neil to discern through vocal clues the true sweet spot.

Seconds after finding it, it took only a rapid swirling of his tongue to bring her to a shuddering climax. Neil wedged his hands underneath Candy's petite ass and lifted her slightly, softening the attention to her clit yet maintaining enough pressure to prolong her pleasure. Resting his nose against her cleft, he studied every twitch and turn as she came, enjoying her response. He hadn't been so observant during his trip, never bothering to ask his partner del día if she was having a good time.

Candy, he didn't have to ask. She tucked her chin to her chest and smiled down at him. "Could I have a taste now?"

Neil nuzzled into the juncture of her thigh. He stroked her soaked pussy and licked the essence off his fingers. "If you don't mind my going back for seconds."

He backed away as Candy rolled onto her stomach and rose on all fours. Neil flopped onto the bed diagonally and guided her to straddle him until her hovering pussy was within his line of sight. Her labia were puffy and glistening, good enough to eat. Slowly he guided her ass closer and resumed licking her as she cuffed his shaft and took oral possession of his cock.

If she had a specific technique, he couldn't discern it for his own work on Candy. He could feel her lips close on him, and take his cock deep into her throat and out again. The sensation warmed his body and spurred him to attack Candy with continued fervor. He tongued her slit and bent her low to reach her anus, detecting a surprise moan at contact.

He felt her release him entirely. "Oh, God, that's so good!" she cried.

His head fell back and he gasped, but didn't miss a beat as his fingered the puckered eye and breached it gently. "You like that, huh? Anybody ever do that to you?"

Neil watched her head shake from side to side. "Let me do it to you," she said.

"Gladly." It took a few seconds to disentangle from each other, but Candy soon had Neil bent and grasping the headboard, his ass high in air. He craned his neck as far as possible to watch Candy bury her face between his buttocks. The teasing touch of her tongue against his anus sent shockwaves up his spine. His knees wobbled and threatened his balance, more so when he leaned to support his weight on one braced arm so he could stroke his cock. Precum bubbled and slid between his fingerpads as he fondled his circumcised head. He couldn't wait to feel his shaft inside her.

Candy licked upward against one cheek and bent over Neil, crushing her body against his back.

"Just as much fun giving," she said.

"You know what's better?"

Candy's laugh was deep and vibrated through him. "I have an idea," she said, and slid down next to him. She rolled onto her back and stretched to the side, grasping at the end table's drawer handle. After two misses, Neil helped her search for the strip of condoms, pulling them from underneath the standard hotel issue, Spanish language Gideon Bible.

Neil tore away one packet and rolled the rubber down his aching shaft. "I'm thinking there's some kind of statement you're making there," he said.

Candy drew up her knees and let them fall apart so that they nearly touched the mattress. "If I wanted to make a statement, I'd use the rubbers as a bookmark."

Neil eased between her thighs and positioned himself against her. Let there be pussy...and there was, with one upward stroke. Candy gasped at his length and he stilled once he was in to the hilt to give her time to adjust.

Once she did, he lowered himself and thrust into her gently. She was very wet, yet still tight enough to allow the friction needs to tighten his scrotum and guide him toward orgasm.

He pumped into her, exhaling loudly with each thrust. Candy's body rocked with his, her breasts vibrating from the force. Her hands slid up his arms, testing the muscles as they braced the mattress, and twined around his neck as she suddenly spasmed.

"I think you found something," she squealed, and Neil realized he hit the correct spot. He continued that angle of thrust, tilting his hips until he elicited a stronger reaction from her. Somehow, his own immediate satisfaction seemed secondary. His pleasure was dependent upon hers, she mattered. Nobody else had before. He wanted to keep doing this until she begged for him to stop. Then he wanted to just lie next to her and talk about her life in the city, her ideas and opinions. He wanted to get to know her, the first woman on this trip who didn't prompt him to think of putting one over on Sunny while he fucked her. Then, fucking was vengeance, with every thrust translated to mean take that.

Here, there was only Candy, and the hope of more sweets.

Much as he wanted to prolong this passion, however, the pull in his scrotum was too great to ignore. He had barely sent Candy over the edge when he followed her, pitching back to cry his release.

Then he kissed her cheek and settled next to her, drawing her close. Candy sighed contentedly and draped an arm over his side, tracing circles in the sweat beading on his lower back.

"That," she said, "was delicious."

"I thought that was my line," he said.

"You can say it next time."

Neil liked the sound of that. "*Muchas gracias*."

"*De nada*."

"I don't mean just for the sex, either," he said. "I mean for making it mean something for me besides revenge."

Candy shot him a look of mock surprise. "You mean I don't get to call your ex-wife and crow about your insatiable prowess? Well, damn. And I'd planned to use long words she'd have to look up in the dictionary."

Neil chuckled. "You can tell me. I wouldn't mind hearing more words, long or otherwise, from you. That is, if you don't mind the company."

"Not at all, if you don't mind postponing the rest of your tour for a while. I prefer long conversations."

"Good thing I have all the time in the world." He cupped Candy's behind as she snuggled into him. This was nice. Neil couldn't remember feeling so comfortable in years. Often he had held a woman, debating silently how long to remain before making his escape. Now, he just wanted to fall asleep in Candy's arms.

If only his blasted cell phone would let him. Brady's song chirped, muted, under a pile of clothing. Candy broke away to retrieve his pants, and he checked the number in the Caller ID display.

He snorted. "Speak of the devil."

"I'll use long words," Candy teased.

Brady switched off the sound. "I set that song to a few people, including my ex-wife's number," he explained. "As much as I don't like it, I figured why not associate it with at least one person who clearly lived the good life at my expense?"

Candy frowned. "Isn't that a tad masochistic? Why not something more appropriate, like 'Bitch' or 'You Give Love a Bad Name'?"

"This song didn't cost as much to download." Neil chucked the phone back on the floor, where it landed on the rumpled pile of clothing. Candy leaned over the side, then rolled back to him.

"You're not going to answer it?"

"I have no reason to talk to her anymore."

"I suspect one day you'll have to face her again," Candy said. "You may look calm now, but I'll bet there's still closure to be had."

"Maybe," Neil said, kissing her quiet. "Maybe I will see her again...in November for the next election. You still registered to vote in New York?" She nodded. "Wanna come with?"

"Hell, yes. What do we do until then?"

Neil smiled.

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*Leigh Ellwood is an award-winning author, proud to have two series with Phaze. The Dareville stories (Truth or Dare, Dare Me, and the upcoming Daring Young Man) are set in the fictional town of Dareville, Virginia and feature a delightful cast of characters - Dare Me won the 2005 Love Romances Golden Rose Award for Best Erotic Novel, and placed second in the first ERWI Fruity Awards for Best Pansexual Novel. The Cards series features the first M/M erotic romances written for Phaze - Jack of Hearts, Jack of Diamonds, and the upcoming Jack of Clubs. Leigh continues to write erotic romance, and lives in Virginia with her family.*

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