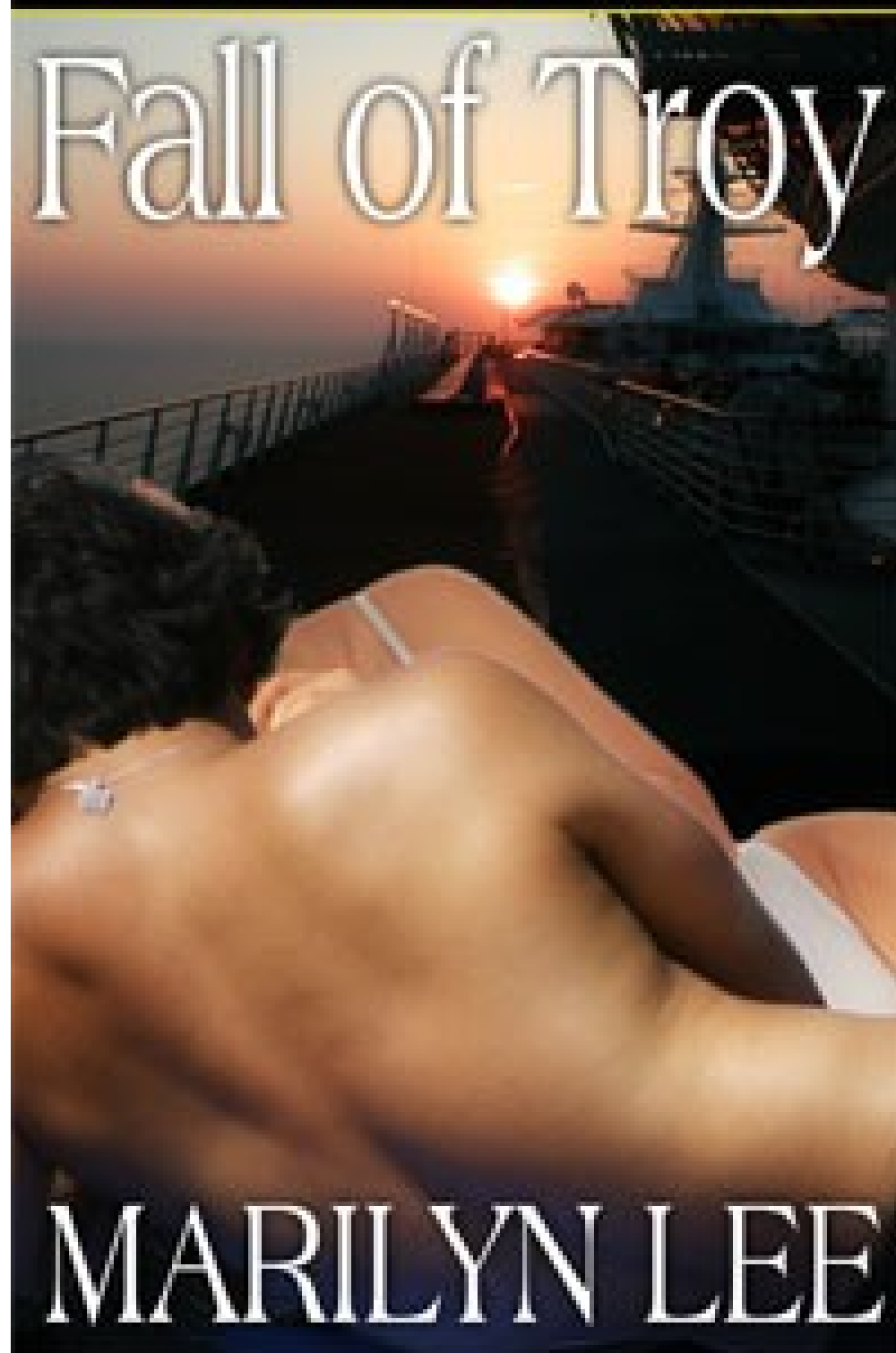


ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

Fall of Troy



MARILYN LEE

The Fall of Troy

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Marilyn Lee

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Edited by Tina Engler

Warning:

The following material contains strong sexual content meant for mature readers. "THE FALL OF TROY" has been rated NC-17, erotic, by two individual reviewers. We strongly suggest storing this electronic file in a place where young readers not meant to view this e-book are unlikely to happen upon it. That said, enjoy...

Chapter 1

Angie Harding stood near the doorway of the ballroom, half hidden by a huge potted plant, surveying the room. Nearly every inch of the dance floor was covered with hard bodied men dirty dancing with lithe, shapely women in various states of undress. Some of the women were topless, some bottomless. But one thing was clear: not a single woman present could even remotely be called full-figured.

What on earth had possessed her? Going on an ordinary cruise expecting to meet a man would have been enough of a stretch. But to pay extra money she really didn't have to come on this particular cruise geared solely towards the most hedonistic singles was pure insanity. With a ship full of perfectly shaped women ready and willing to drop their drawers at a moment's notice, what hope did she, with her large thighs, heavy breasts, and far from flat stomach have of attracting any of these men? Even dressed as she was in a low-cut red dress that exposed nearly all her breasts and ended just below her well-padded rump?

Granted Dan had always loved running his fingers through her thick, dark hair and kissing his way up the length of her long legs from her toes. He had spoiled her with his insatiable appetite for her body. But in the three years since his death, she hadn't met another man who found her sexy. And now that she'd seen the competition, she knew her chances of getting laid while cruising the Delaware River were slim to none.

She sighed. This long weekend cruise was going to take her just where its name promised: nowhere. For all the action she was going to get, she might as well have worn her panties.

Her gaze landed on one couple halfway down the length of the room. She caught her breath and stared. She had a side view of the pair. The woman's skirt was pushed up around her waist; exposing her bare bottom. As Angie watched, she could clearly see a pale flash between the woman's thighs that could only be the man's dick, disappearing into her pussy. They were having sex right there on the dance floor!

And they weren't the only ones. Now that she looked closer, she realized many of the couples were having sex as they danced. Over the insistent beat of the music, a series of moans reached her ears. She glanced to her right and gasped. Not four feet from her, a man stood against the wall. His head was turned to one side. Kneeling between his open legs was a fully nude woman.

She blinked. That was Corrie slurping the man's dick in her mouth like it was a lollipop! The man suddenly reached down and lifted Corrie to her feet, swung her around against the wall, and rolled a condom on his shaft.

Heart thumping and heat rising in her own body, Angie looked on as Corrie rubbed her hand over her mound several times. She then smiled and parted her legs and the outer lips of her sex. Groaning, the man moved in front of her, thrust his hips forward, and sank his length into her.

Corrie moaned and grabbed the man's hard behind. "Oh, yeah. Give me all you got, baby! Feed it all to me."

Against her will, Angie began to breathe rapidly. She watched until she felt a trickle start down the side of her thigh. Good lord, she was getting off just watching them. Only then did she bite her lip and stumble through the door of the ballroom. Out on the deck, with the warm night air brushing against her skin, she made her way to a dim section of the boat and leaned her forehead against the rail.

How was she going to get through the next three days surrounded by so much blatant sex? What on earth had possessed her to leave home without her favorite toy? She'd never needed it more. Her body burned and throbbed. Unable to stand the hunger any longer, she reached a hand between her legs and touched a finger to her clit. She didn't like the idea of resorting to pleasuring herself when she wasn't

alone, but she couldn't withstand her body's need for satisfaction any longer. Having made up her mind, she dipped first one finger and then another in between her legs and began to pump them in and out.

* * * * *

Troy Hunter looked around the ballroom. Rick had not exaggerated when he'd said that anything would go on these Swinging Singles Love Cruises to Nowhere. He'd never seen so many women giving up pussy so easily. The place reeked of sex and the sounds of moans and groans as numerous dicks pounded into countless pussies. He heard an unusually loud moan and glanced around in time to see a big man with his pants down around his legs, drive his cock deep into the upturned anus of a woman on her knees.

The man proceeded to slap the woman's quivering bottom each time he sank his cock back in her. The woman moaned and tossed her head from side to side, shoving her hips back against the man's groin. "Oh, yeah, baby, let me have it all! Oh, yeah, I can take it. I can take it all. Drive it home, baby! Plant that big stick all the way up me. Drill me, baby!"

Even though porno films and anal sex had never particularly appealed to him, his cock stirred. Damn he was ready for some pussy. He was definitely in the right place to get as much as he wanted in the next few days with no strings attached. But he didn't want just any woman. He'd already turned down the advances of several women who'd walked up to him and bared their cunts. Although he'd been tempted, at thirty-eight he was a little too old-fashioned to be attracted to women behaving so shamelessly.

In the nine months since he and Carolyn had broken up, he and Rick had been too busy making preparations to start up their new software engineering business for him to have the time to find another woman. Although he'd had several one-night-stands during that time, he wanted sex on a regular basis with a woman who wouldn't require a commitment he wasn't ready to give.

Not that he had anything against commitments. His father was still happily married to his mother after forty years of marriage. When he met the right woman, the one that captured both his heart and his sole sexual interest, he'd spend the rest of his life trying to make her happy. But for the next few years, he planned to take full advantage of the fact that women generally found him attractive. Somewhere there was a tall, willowy, beautiful, long-legged blond who would be the mother of his kids.

But right now, all he wanted was some pussy. He started to make his way across the room, heading for the exit when he spotted a woman standing behind a large plant near the door. He moved to one side to get a better view of her. She had large breasts, long legs, and big thighs. Although she clearly weighed more than any other woman in the room, the red dress she wore clung to her body. She was what his mother would call big boned. Still, other than a slight swelling over her stomach, which he found strangely erotic, he saw no signs of excess fat.

And she had beautiful hair that framed a face, which while not gorgeous, was definitely charming. She had nice eyes—dark and round. And at the moment those eyes were glued to a couple having sex off to her right.

He saw her lips part and her breasts rapidly rise and fall. She was getting hot watching them. To his surprise, he was getting very hot watching her. When she suddenly turned and hurried from the ballroom, he went after her, his cock straining against the confines of his briefs and trousers.

Out on deck, he paused. Okay, Troy, my boy. Why are you following her? Tall, blonde, and willowy she is not. And for all you know she's going to meet her lover for the evening.

He shrugged. Maybe so. Only one way to find out. He quietly followed the woman hurrying along the

deck in front of him. He could tell from the way the short skirt of her dress clung to her bottom that she wasn't wearing any panties. The thought made his dick harder.

She suddenly stopped in a darkened corner of the deck and leaned against the rail. At first he thought she was seasick, then he realized what she was doing and his cock throbbed. Clearly, she needed a man as much as he needed a woman.

Okay, you need a woman, but do you need this one? There are plenty of blonds back in the ballroom; most of them willowy and very pretty.

He shrugged. She was a lot of woman, but he wanted a lot of loving. And at this particular moment in time, this woman was the object of his desire.

He unzipped his trousers. He reached into his briefs and freed his cock. He covered it with a condom. Moving quietly, he stepped behind her. "Why don't you let me do that for you?" He whispered the words in her ear.

She gasped and jerked her head around to stare at him, a look of horror on her face.

Afraid she was about to run away, he leaned forward and brushed his lips against her forehead. "Don't worry. I'm wearing a condom."

"A condom? But I-I..."

He lifted her dress above her waist, revealing a round, plump rump. Used to women with small, firm butts, he was surprised at the jolt of lust rushing through him as he looked at her bare bottom. Unable to resist, he fondled the big, twin mounds. Her skin felt soft and warm against his palms and he had visions of clutching her butt in his hands as he pushed his aching cock deep in her pussy—again and again—all night long.

"You have such a lovely behind," he told her. "I'm going to fondle it as we make love."

"As we make—but I...I...we're not going to...to..."

"Oh, yes, we are going to make love. Right now. Right here."

"But I...I...we don't even..."

Angie's teeth sank down onto her bottom lip. How could she explain herself? She'd never really know what it was that had possessed her to come on this cruise because she wasn't a one-night-stand kind of girl. She liked sex. Loved it, in fact. But she typically liked to be in a relationship while getting it.

So why the cruise? Curiosity perhaps. And, she conceded, she was very curious. And very horny. Oh, the hell with it.

He glided his hands over her behind again, savoring the weight of it. Damn. He'd never realized how overrated small butts were. "Why fight it? You want a man and I want you," he said hoarsely. "Just close your eyes and let it happen."

To his surprise, the tension left her body and she relaxed, moving her rump against his groin. He began to kiss her neck and lightly caress her body. He slipped a hand around her waist to brush her hand away from her mound. He moved his other hand up her stomach to her breasts.

With his lips buried against her neck, he dipped his hand into the bodice of her dress and gave a slight tug. Her large breasts tumbled out into his eager hand. She moaned as he fingered first one wide nipple and then the other.

She turned her head and he pressed his mouth against her lips. They were soft and sweet, free of lipstick. Grinding her butt against his thighs, she parted her lips and offered him access to her tongue.

Accepting the invitation, he slipped his tongue in her mouth, in search of hers. The tips of their tongues touched and Troy was stunned by the shock of pure pleasure he felt. God, he had to have her.

Using his legs to push hers further apart, he grasped his cock, leaned against her back and began searching for her opening. She reached back, took his aching length in her warm hand and placed it at the entrance of her cunt.

He pushed against her and they both gasped as the head of his dick slowly slid into her pussy. He paused. Damn. She felt so good: tight, wet, and hot. Pushing her long, dark hair aside, he kissed the side of her lovely neck. Breathing deeply, she reached back to cup her hands over his buns. She moaned softly; squeezing her pussy around his cock and pushing her heavy thighs back against him.

He took the hint. Nipping lightly at the back of her neck, he shot his hips forward. Balls deep in her tight, heated passage, he groaned. God, her pussy felt so good surrounding his dick. Grasping her wide hips in his hands, he began moving inside her, slowly at first with long measured strokes designed to insure that she enjoyed their fuck as much as he already did. Then, feeling his desire careening out of control, he picked up the pace, rotating his hips and pushing into her with short, hard strokes.

Within moments, she gasped and tossed her head back against his shoulder. “Oooh...hmm...oooh.” Her pussy began contracting around his cock like a vice. She was coming. Damn. He was close to coming himself. He sucked at her neck and held her big breasts in his palms, rolling the nipples between his fingers. About to explode, he pumped his cock deep within her spasming cunt with hard, desperate thrusts until he shuddered and surrendered to the thundering bliss of his release.

His climax overwhelmed him. He felt a height of pleasure he’d never experienced; a sense of wonder and delight. A need to hold and cherish this lovely woman who’d just pleased him as no other woman ever had. His heart thumped and his legs buckled. Holding her around the waist, he weakly sank onto the deck, still buried inside her. She lay beneath him, her body racked by mini after-shocks of pleasure. He ran his hands down the sides of her thighs, lazily moving his cock inside her.

He’d never been with a full-figured woman before. When he’d followed her from the ballroom, he hadn’t been sure what to expect. He certainly hadn’t been prepared for one of the hottest, most fulfilling quickies he’d had in ages. Although he had no interest in pursuing a relationship with this woman, he sure as hell wanted to spend the night with her.

“Wow. That’s was good,” he whispered, nuzzling her neck.

Her only response was a low, indistinct murmur.

“Really good, but I need more. Come to my cabin with me.”

Chapter Two

Her hunger for cock finally satisfied, sanity quickly returned to Angie. With it came a wave of embarrassment. There she was lying on the deck like a beached whale with a stranger's cock still buried to the hilt in her very satisfied twat. How trashy could she get? True she'd signed up for the cruise with Corrie with the express purpose of getting laid. But she hadn't expected it to happen where anyone could see them or with a man who hadn't even bothered to introduce himself before he dived into her cunt and pounded her into a blistering orgasm in a matter of minutes.

Now he wanted her to go to his cabin with him so he could do God only knew what to her. To her shame, the idea of having this strange man with the pleasing cock do things to her in his cabin appealed to her. A lot. "Yes," she whispered.

He kissed her neck and slowly, almost reluctantly, began to withdraw his cock. She resisted the urge to tighten her pussy around it in an attempt to keep it deep in her. When it cleared her body, she sighed with regret, rolled onto her back and lay with her thighs parted.

She heard him suck in a quick breath as he gazed down at her exposed cunt. The knowledge that he wanted more turned her on.

He rose, extending both hands. She took them and he drew her to feet. Only then did she realize she'd hit the proverbial jackpot. He was well over six feet tall with an athletic build. He had dark hair and eyes. She blinked, unable to believe her luck. This handsome hunk had chosen her out of all the women on the boat to lay? And now he wanted more? She knew she was being shallow, but her body gushed at the thought of being filled with this handsome man's cock again.

He smiled suddenly. "If we're going to spend the night together, I suppose we should at least introduce ourselves." He gave her right hand, which he still held, a gentle squeeze. "I'm Troy."

"Angie," she murmured.

"Hello, Angie."

She licked her lips. "Hi Troy. You must think I'm shame—"

He shook his head and gave her hands a reassuring squeeze. "I don't think anything except that you're here because, like me, you need to unwind a little."

Oh, she'd unwound all right. First she fingered herself in public, then she let a complete stranger walk up behind her and screw her senseless. What must he think of her? "I...I've never done anything even remotely like that. I don't usually go around letting strange men boink me."

"Boink you? Well, believe it or not, I don't usually go around boinking strange women." He grinned. "But then that's probably what made it all the sweeter, don't you think?"

Oh, it had been sweet all right. But he was correct. There was an undeniable thrill attached to being drilled from the back by a stranger whose face she hadn't even seen. She nodded. "Yes."

"Good. We don't need to analyze what just happened between us. It was great and I want it to happen again—for the rest of the night." He released her hands and put an arm around her shoulders, making her catch her breath. "I know you'll be moving on in the morning, but tonight...tonight you belong to me."

"Yes," she breathed, staring up at him. "Oh, yes."

He bent his head and kissed her. "Have you had dinner yet, Angie?"

"No."

“Neither have I. And I’m hungry. For food and for other things.”

She was hungry for other things too. Man, but she was going to have a ball with this man. Her cheeks burned at her thoughts and she averted her gaze.

A gentle finger against her face turned her head back in his direction. “You’re very sweet to blush, but there’s no need. We’re two consenting adults who want to spend the night in each other’s arms. There’s no need to be ashamed.”

Which was just as well since she suddenly seemed to be completely shameless. He eased her heavy breasts back into her bodice before leaning forward to press a quick kiss between her cleavage.

She watched with her bottom lip caught between her teeth when he removed the condom, discarded it in one of the conveniently placed waste cans on the deck, and then slipped his cock into his pants.

“So what do you say? Let’s go have a light meal, then we can eat other things besides food.”

She nodded.

He took her hand in his and led her toward the closest dining room. She looked at him in surprise.

“What’s the matter?”

She had expected him to take her to his cabin where they would order a meal and then go to bed. She shook her head and smiled shyly at him as he seated her at a table near the middle of the room.

“I’m just surprised.”

“About what?”

“Your wanting to spend the night with me.” And not minding being seen with her in public.

“Why?”

“Well, look at me.”

He put his elbows on the table and cupped his face in his palms. “I am looking at you.”

“And?”

“And I like what I see.”

“I’m not exactly a size ten,” she pointed out.

“No, you’re not, but who said you had to be?”

“Most men your size seem to like small, shapely women rather than women my size.”

He leaned back in his chair and shrugged. “In which case, they have plenty to choose from here.”

“What about you?”

“I’m here with you.” He glanced around at the buffet tables behind them. “Let’s eat. Then we’ll go to bed where I will attempt to convince you that you’re the woman I want to spend the night with.”

Her stomach muscles contracted, thinking of lying in bed with him. “Oh, God,” she said softly.

He got up and placed a hand on her shoulder. “Food now, other things later.”

Although hungry, Angie, mindful of the requirements of her latest diet, placed only a few pieces of fruit on her plate. Besides, she was not about to eat too much and get sluggish. She intended to fully enjoy the night with him. To do that, she needed to be wide awake.

He ate lightly too. As he put each piece of fruit in his mouth, he looked directly into her eyes. When

juice from a piece of honeydew melon ran down his lower lip, he slowly licked it away with his tongue. Watching him eat was an incredible turn on. Her hunger forgotten, she leaned forward. Under the cover of the table, she kicked her right shoe off and after a slight hesitation, placed her foot on one of his thighs.

He immediately parted his legs. She bit her lip and slipped her foot between his thighs. His quickened breathing increased hers and she began moving her toes in small, circular motions against his cock and balls, her gaze locking with his.

Even while she was appalled by her wanton behavior, she couldn't stop. Didn't want to stop. When the cruise was over and she was back home she'd be ashamed. For tonight at least, she was going to be completely uninhibited.

"Lift your foot for a moment."

She did and she heard the unmistakable sound of his zip going down. "Okay."

When she touched her foot to him again, this time it touched his warm, bare flesh. Oh. Nice. Very nice.

He smiled at her and she noticed an enchanting dimple in his left cheek. "Damn, that feels good."

"Oh, yes. It does," she whispered, flicking her big toe lightly against his cock.

"I think someone is ready to go to bed."

"Really?" Feigning surprise, she cast a quick look around. "Who?"

He laughed. "Let's go to bed and I'll show you."

"Let's go," she said, all traces of humor vanishing. She gave his cock and balls one more caress before pushing her foot back into her two-inch heel.

He came around the table to pull out her chair. When she rose, he took her hand in his. "I'm going to spend the entire night making love to you."

"That...that sounds like a plan I can get behind." She giggled, feeling almost high with the thought of the pleasure ahead of her. "Or in this case, underneath."

He bent and lightly brushed his mouth against her parted lips. "Let's go to my cabin and I'll show you some of my favorite positions."

She nodded, breathless at the thought of feeling his cock inside her again. She didn't much care what position he wanted. She just wanted him.

As they walked along the deck to his cabin, they encountered several couples lying on chaise lounges, going at each other like animals in heat. To her amazement, Corrie occupied one of the loungers...and not with the man from the ballroom. Now she sat atop a big ebony hunk, happily bouncing up and down on what looked like a very nice piece of meat while her lover held her small breasts in his hands.

They both looked happy. Judging by the sounds they were making, him low, deep groans, and her, long soulful gasps, they were enjoying the hell out of each other.

"You know him?"

Angie started and realized she'd been staring. She couldn't help it. Watching a sleek, dark cock rapidly disappear into Corrie's pale, slender body fascinated her.

She flushed and looked up at the man at her side. "What?"

"I asked if you knew him."

“Oh. No. I know her.”

He turned her to face him. “Would you like to know him?”

For a brief moment, she wondered what it would be like to be in Corrie’s place, thrusting herself mindlessly down onto that glistening ebony cock. An erotic thrill danced through her body at the delicious image her mind conjured up. She didn’t doubt for a moment that it would be an experience she would enjoy and a memory she would cherish. But she expected her night with Troy to provide all the delightful memories she could handle.

She shook her head. “I’d like to know you.”

He grinned and, wrapping an arm around her waist, pressed a hot, searing kiss against her mouth, rubbing his groin slowly, sensually, against hers. “Right answer.”

His cabin was a big one with a huge bed and a private balcony. He put the Do Not Disturb sign on the outside of the door and turned to look at her. “Now, Angie. Why don’t you show me what you’re working with?”

Chapter Three

She licked her lips and swallowed quickly. “Show you what I’m working wi— you mean you want me to take off my clothes?”

He arched a brow at her, smiling slightly. “Clothes?”

She swallowed. Okay. She secretly acknowledged that clothes might be a bad choice of words. After all, there was nothing under the too tight, too short dress other than her less than perfect body. “Now?”

He nodded, kicking off his shoes and slipping off his socks. Catching her gaze, he unzipped his pants and quickly stepped out of them and his briefs. He then unbuttoned his shirt and stood in front of her naked, his cock semi-erect. “No time like the present.”

What a stud. Hard, chiseled muscles, wide shoulders, sculptured abs, long, muscular thighs, and an absolutely delicious looking cock: hard, thick, and long. She licked her lips again. What an absolutely lovely piece of meat. No wonder he’d been able to satisfy her so quickly.

Nevertheless, letting him spill her breasts out and expose her butt on the dimly lit deck was one thing. Undressing before him in the full glare of the well-lit room was a whole other ballgame. “I...” she nodded towards the lamps on either side of the bed. “Will you dim them?”

“Oh, absolutely...not.”

She blinked. “Why not?”

He pushed himself away from the door and crossed the floor to stand in front of her. When she averted her gaze, he lifted her chin. “Because I want to see you naked.”

“Oh. Okay, but we should dim the lights.”

“Why?”

“Why? Because I’m not exactly a size ten, as you can see for yourself. My body isn’t going to be what you’re probably used to seeing.”

“We’ve already been there and talked about that.” He cupped her face between his palms and moved closer so she could feel his cock pressing against her body. “There are lots of size sixes, eights, and tens in the ballroom. If I wanted any of them, I wouldn’t have followed you.”

“You followed me?”

“Yes.” He leaned forward and began kissing her cheeks. “I saw you in the ballroom and was intrigued.”

“Intrigued?” she whispered. “Really?”

“Really. And when you left, so did I. I’ve already seen and held your breasts and your lovely behind. Now I want to see the rest of you. So how about we take this dress off?” Without waiting for her response, he slid down the zip of her dress. He moved his lips from her cheeks to her shoulders.

She sucked in her breath and closed her eyes as he peeled the dress off her shoulders and let it fall down her body to tangle at her feet. He showered her with hot, sweet kisses, moving his lips from her shoulders down to her breasts. When he took one of them into his mouth and sucked on it, her whole body trembled, moisture pooling between her suddenly trembling legs.

She clutched at his shoulders and moved her hips helplessly against his. Just feeling his hard cock made her toes curl. “Oooh.”

“You like that?”

“Oooh.”

He lifted his head and looked down at her. “I like it too.” He touched her cheeks. “I think I’m going to like you too.”

She stared wordlessly up at him, begging him with her eyes and her body to put his cock in her.

Instead, he stepped back and looked at her.

She flinched and overcame the urge to cover her body. Okay, so her stomach wasn’t flat and her thighs were thick, her hips wide, and her butt way bigger than any he’d probably ever seen. He knew she was a big woman and he’d followed her from the ballroom anyway. She forced herself to meet his gaze. To her delighted surprise, she saw raw desire in the dark eyes staring back at her.

“You have nothing to be ashamed of, Angie. You have a lovely, sexy body.”

Lovely? Sexy? She’d never expected to hear those words again in connection with her less than perfectly shaped body. Not from a man who looked like that .

He took her hand in his. “Come on.”

Expecting to be led to the bed, she was stunned when he urged her across the room to the door. “I don’t understand. You’re not asking me to leave?”

“Hell no! I’m going to make love to you.”

“Standing up?”

“Yes. Have you ever done it standing completely upright?”

“No.”

“Then get ready for a new experience.” He pushed her gently against the door. “Don’t move.” He retrieved a condom from his nightstand and slowly rolled it over his cock, staring into her eyes as he did.

She gasped and caught her bottom lip between her teeth. She was so horny she was almost ready to grab his cock and stuff it ruthlessly into her body.

“Ready?”

She nodded. “I am so ready.”

“Then here we come.”

“We?” She blinked at him, her heart suddenly thumping in panic. Surely he didn’t expect her to engage in a threesome? She glanced fearfully around, half expecting to see another man emerge from the bathroom.

He laughed and joined her at the door. “No need to look like that.” He hefted his dick in his hand. “I meant me and him. Are you ready for us?”

She let out a breath of relief. “Lord, yes!”

“Good because we’re sure ready for you.” Pressing her back against the door, he put his arms around her and began kissing her.

His lips moved slowly over hers, as if he wanted to savor the taste, the feel, and the texture of her mouth. He nibbled at her lips, sucked her tongue, all the while rubbing his now fully erect shaft against her cunt as he deepened his kisses.

“Oh, God, I am going to fully enjoy this long, sweet night with you,” he whispered. Grasping his cock

in his hand, he found her opening and began a slow, exquisite slide into her wet channel.

She closed her eyes and shuddered. His slowly descending shaft felt so good. She was eager and hungry to feel the full weight and length of it buried deep in her cunt. When she jerked her body to hasten the process, he grabbed her hips and held them still. "No. No, don't move yet. I want to go in slowly. I want to enjoy every second of filling you up with my cock."

She could only moan, her body tightening around the hard, hot dick gradually conquering her pussy. After what seemed an eternity, he slid the last few inches home, bringing his crotch to rest against hers. Fully seated in her, he lifted her chin. "Oh, damn. You feel so good...your pussy...your breasts...your lips...your whole body." He kissed her as he began to move in her.

She shuddered, delighting in being full of hard cock again. She slipped her arms around his neck and parted her lips under his. Their tongues touched and the world began spinning. "Oooh...oooh...yes," she gasped.

"Yes," he echoed. Sighing, he withdrew all but the big head of his shaft before thrusting the entire thick length back into her with one powerful stroke that left her breathless and tethering on the brink of ecstasy.

She had loved Dan with all her heart and thoroughly enjoyed their love life. Sex with him had always been good and satisfying. But his cock hadn't been as big or as thick as Troy's. Her pussy hadn't had to stretch to fully accommodate his dick as it did now with Troy. Sex with Troy was staggering in its total sensuality. It numbed her senses. Made all thought impossible, but Lord, she felt.

Every part of her body and mind tingled and burned with a level of pleasure she'd never experienced before. Wonderful, delicious currents sizzled through her universe, igniting undreamed of passions and needs. She had never felt this deep, almost painful bliss that now shot through her, threatening to overwhelm her. It was too much. Too good. She couldn't bare it.

Moaning and tossing her head from side to side, she pushed weakly at his shoulders. "Please. No more."

"Almost there, sweet. Hold on a little longer." Then, cupping her behind in his hands, he began to fuck her hard and forcefully. With his big hands fondling her behind and his cock creating a thousand sensual fires in her pussy, she exploded.

Her whole body shook with the force of her orgasm. Clutching at his shoulders to keep from falling, she gushed juices all over his pummeling cock. He shuddered, gripped her behind hard enough to leave marks, and drove his cock into her in a series of piston like movements that caused another, unexpected eruption in her pussy. She came again, only vaguely aware that he was climaxing too.

He held her tight, straining to bury every inch of his thick cock deep in her body as he came. "Oh shit," he moaned. His whole body shook. Since it was his strength that held them both on their feet, when his legs bucked, they both collapsed to their knees, and fell against the door of the cabin.

He leaned his forehead against her shoulder, clutching her behind; the head of his dick still inside her. "Shit!"

She crashed down to earth with a bang. "What? What's wrong? Didn't you enjoy it?"

He lifted his head and stared at her. "Are you kidding?" He cupped her face in his hands and gently, tenderly kissed her. "That was the absolutely most incredible fuck I've ever had. Enjoy doesn't begin to describe how good it was."

She tingled with pleasure. "You mean that?"

“Hell yes.” He drew back slightly and touched a finger to her clit. “You bottle this sweet pussy of yours,” he murmured, kissing her softly on the lips, “and you’d be rich in no time. You are absolutely exquisite.”

She didn’t for a moment believe him. Her mother always said men thought with their dicks, not with their heads or their hearts. And she was certain it was his dick talking. Still, warmed by his praise, she touched the shaft of his dick. “Ditto for this bad boy. He doesn’t take any prisoners.”

He laughed and pushed his cock a quarter of the way into her body, causing her to inhale sharply and bite her lip. Smiling, he caressed her stomach.

She cringed, averting her gaze.

“Don’t look away. I want to look at you.”

She bought her gaze back to his.

His eyes narrowed uncomprehendingly. “What’s the matter?”

“You’re touching what’s the matter.”

His hand stilled on her belly. “This?”

“Yes! I wish you wouldn’t look at it or touch it.”

“Why not?”

“Isn’t it obvious? I’ve tried for years to flatten this dang thing, but nothing works.”

“Really? Well, I wouldn’t worry about it, if I were you.”

She tapped a fist against his flat stomach. “That’s easy for you to say. Look at your stomach. It’s perfect: flat and sculptured.”

He pushed a few more inches of cock into her.

She gasped and shuddered.

“I’d rather look at yours,” he told her. “Mine does nothing for me.”

“I don’t see how mine can either.”

“You don’t? Well, it does. When I saw you in the ballroom, one of the first things I noticed was your stomach. ”

“And you weren’t turned off?”

He wiggled his hips, feeding another inch or two of cock into her flesh. “Does this feel like I’m turned off?”

“No,” she admitted, slipping her hands around to his buns. They were hard and tight and she loved touching and caressing them.

“You know what? I like your stomach just the way it is. It’s kind of sexy the way it swells like a tiny little hill. Hell, I like your whole body.” He leaned forward and kissed her quickly. “Especially your sweet pussy.”

He put his hands on her sides, and urged her to her feet. Somehow he managed to keep his dick embedded in her as they both rose. “Let’s go to bed.”

She frowned at him, feigning disapproval. “You know it’s going to be difficult to walk stuffed so full of cock.”

He nipped her shoulder. "Are you complaining?"

"No!"

"Good because you'd better get used to it because I'm not coming out of this pussy until the night is over. How do you feel about an all-nighter?"

She smiled. "I like the idea," she admitted.

"Then let's go to bed. I want to love you again. This time I want to lie between your beautiful thighs and pound your pussy until we both go out of our minds."

"Oh, God!" She pushed her hips forward, swallowing the rest of him deep inside her. "That sounds so good."

"It's going to feel good too," he promised. "For both of us." He kissed her and pulled out of her. "But first we're going to need another rubber."

She leaned forward and brushed her lips against his nipples. "We're going to need lots of rubbers before the night is over."

Chapter Four

After three years of abstinence (a year and a half of which had been forced), Angie woke the next morning feeling like the proverbial million bucks. Before she opened her eyes, she knew she was alone in the bed. Each time she'd awoken throughout the night, she'd felt some part of Troy's body against hers...a hand touching her breasts, his lips brushing her neck, a leg thrown across hers.

Sighing with remembered pleasure, she opened her eyes and slowly sat up. The first thing she saw was a vase on the nightstand next to her filled with red roses. Smiling, she eagerly reached for the card.

A,

Thanks for an absolutely spectacular and unforgettable night.

T

Her smile vanished. If he'd enjoyed their night together so much, why hadn't he awoken her to say goodbye before he'd left the cabin? A slight aroma of onions reached her nose. She turned and saw a covered tray on the other nightstand.

She uncovered the warming tray and discovered home fries, eggs, link sausages, toast, and orange juice. She hesitated. Her latest diet called for a shake for breakfast and lunch and then a sensible dinner.

Still, after all that glorious sex, she was ravenous. And really, who could be expected to stay on a diet while on a cruise? She got out of bed and draped Troy's discarded shirt over her shoulders so she could inhale his scent. Climbing back onto the bed and leaning against the pillow where Troy had lain, she picked up one of the sausages.

It was thick and plump and reminded her slightly of Troy's cock. Of course, that delicious morsel was much longer and thicker and harder, but...she ran her tongue along the length of the meat and bit into it. As the juices filled her mouth, she thought of doing the same to Troy's cock until he came in her mouth and shuddered.

She should have sucked his dick the night before when she'd had the chance. Sighing for missed opportunities, she settled against the pillows and ate every morsel of food on the tray.

Afterwards, she considered waiting in the cabin in the hopes that Troy would return and want to make love with her one last time. But his prolonged absence spoke volumes. He clearly expected her to be gone when he returned. She took a quick shower before pouring herself back into the red dress.

Determined to be thankful for a night of joy she hadn't expected, she made her way back to the cabin she shared with Corrie. She opened the door and froze with her hand on the lock.

Inside, in her direct line of sight, Corrie lay on the bed nearest the door. The ebony hunk she'd been screwing on the lounge the night before lay between her sprawled legs, his hard buns clenching wildly. They were both groaning and moaning and Corrie was tossing her head from side to side and clutching at the man's shoulders. They were clearly in the final throes of an ecstatic fuck.

Angie's breath caught, stunned. She didn't know why she was surprised given the cruise they were on, but she hadn't expected this in their shared cabin. She knew she should leave the room, but she couldn't seem to move. Perversely, she couldn't look away from the sexy scene unfolding in front of her either.

The man reached under Corrie and cupped her small buns in his big hands. Dipping his head to suck at a small pink nipple, he groaned and began drilling his cock into Corrie with hard, powerful thrusts that made Angie lick her lips.

God, that must feel like heaven. Angie felt moisture trickle down her thigh. The man groaned low and

deep in his chest, tossed his head back, and jabbed his cock into Corrie with a series of quick thrusts. Then he suddenly stopped pumping his hips, shuddered, and fell onto Corrie. He and Corrie lay grinding their groins against each other for several moments before he slowly sat up. Angie stared. His big dick made a slight noise as it left Corrie's body. He kissed Corrie's cheek, leapt off the bed, and started across the room towards Angie.

As he approached, she couldn't keep her gaze from going to his dick: it was still semi hard and glistened with their combined juices. It was a deep chocolate color with a big, pink head. It looked like a tasty mouthful. But where was his condom?

He reached down and picked up his pants from the floor. He left the room without speaking to her, his pants thrown over his arm.

Forcing herself not to look after him, Angie stepped into the room and closed the door. She wrinkled her nose. The smell of stale sex hung heavy in the air. They must have been at it all night long.

People in glass houses, shouldn't go tossing stones, she reminded herself. After all, she and Troy had screwed each other until her twat went dry and his cock was sore.

She locked the door and looked at Corrie, who had rolled over onto her stomach. "Don't you think you'd better get up and get it out of you?"

"Get what out of me?" she asked sleepily without lifting her head. "Without Jermaine's cock in me, I feel so empty."

Angie walked over to her closet. She took off her dress, tossed it over a chair, and slipped on a swimsuit with a short skirt bottom that nicely covered her large behind. She put a short toweling robe on over it, picked up her swim bag, and headed for the door. "His condom. He didn't have it on when he left. It must have come off inside you. You'd better get up and get it out."

The ensuing silence unnerved her. She turned back to the bed. "Hello? Anybody home?"

Corrie sighed and sat up. "Okay, I don't want a lecture. Okay?"

"Why should I lecture you?"

"Because you sometimes forget that I'm your friend, not your little sister."

"Okay. You say that to say what?"

"He wasn't wearing a condom."

"What? Are you telling me you let a strange man screw you without a condom? Corrie! When we decided to come on this cruise, we both agreed no matter how horny we were, we wouldn't have sex without a condom!"

She ran a hand through her hair. "I know what we promised, but Ange, you have no idea how good his cock feels inside me. He wanted to come in me and I wanted him to, so I let him fuck me without a condom. Okay? I know I shouldn't have, but I swear he's the best lover in the world."

Maybe Corrie's lover was the second best. No one was ever going to convince her that the title of world's greatest lover didn't belong to Troy with his luscious, pussy-pleasing cock. Still, she wouldn't have let him near her without a condom.

"Before you say anything else, he's my fantasy lover, Ange. I wanted to experience being filled with his sperm. How could I say no and deny us both our fantasies?"

She knew Corrie had always had a thing for black men. She sighed. No use in beating a dead horse.

"Okay, but you'd better see the ship's doctor and get a morning after pill or something. Just in case."

Corrie slid down in bed. "I will. Later. Right now I just want to lie here and enjoy the afterglow." She grinned.

"Okay. End of lecture. I'll see you later."

"Maybe. After getting a little shut-eye, I'm going to find Jermaine. I intend to spend as much time with him as possible."

She knew the feeling. Too bad she wouldn't get to spend any more time with Troy. She left the cabin. Her destination was any empty lounge in a quiet corner on a deck where she could read a little, sleep a little, and think about Troy a little.

She found a group of four loungers on one of the lower decks, all of which were empty. Mindful of all the copulating couples from the night before, she spread a large, thick towel out before taking off her robe and stretching out.

Although her lounge was in the shade at the moment, she knew that wouldn't last. She applied suntan lotion, put on a hat and sunglasses, and opened her book.

Fifteen minutes later, she was rereading the first page for what felt like the fiftieth time. Every few moments, a picture of Troy's handsome face seemed to superimpose itself between her and the words on the page. But that was over. Sighing, she settled more comfortably against the lounge and began reading again.

* * * * *

"Hey sexy. Do you have any plans for the rest of the day and night?"

About to climb out of the pool on the observation deck, Troy paused. Standing in front of the ladder was one of the most stunning women he'd ever seen, wearing what surely must be the most revealing bikini ever made. The black bikini was really just a few, skimpy pieces of string that barely covered her nipples and actually showed the outer lips of her pussy. She had long, curly blond hair and beautiful blue eyes. Her breasts were small, but firm; her legs long, her waist tiny. She had a cute, pert little butt. And to top it off, she had an amazing smile. She epitomized his ideal woman, the type he meant to marry one day and settle down with.

He thought briefly of Angie and their night together. Although she was sweet and sexy as hell, he wasn't ready to settle down. Even if he was prepared to get serious, she wasn't his type. And he had a feeling, this cruise notwithstanding, that she wasn't really a swinging single. Besides, he'd made it clear that he only intended to spend one night with her. He was free to spend the afternoon and possibly the night with this absolutely lovely vision of womanhood.

"No."

She smiled. "Want some company and a little pussy?"

"A little pussy?" Did that mean she only wanted a little cock? He shook his head. "I want a lot of pussy."

Her smile widened. "Then why don't you step out of that pool, out of those briefs, and come get some?"

With his cock hardening in his briefs, he climbed out of the pool, and walked towards her. She lifted her head, offering him her lips. As he bent to kiss her, a vision of Angie's face flashed through his mind. He pushed it away and rubbed his cock against the blonde's almost bare pussy.

She sneaked a hand between their bodies and he felt her small fingers clutching his cock. "Oh, wow! You're a big one." She pulled away from him. "Really big. I like men with big dicks."

She pushed the small strip of material running between her legs aside, exposing her cunt. "Let me have a taste of that big dick of yours."

He stared at her. "Now?" He glanced around at the many faces of the people lying on deck chairs, watching them. Several of the men had their hands in their swimming briefs as they watched. Some of the women were pulling off their bottoms and looking around for willing men. "Here?"

"Right here, baby! Let me have it."

He shook his head. "Not out here."

"Why not? Feeling shy?"

"No, but I have no desire to provide live porno action either."

"Okay. In that case, let's go to my cabin." She extended her hand.

He took her hand in his and pulled her into his arms. "Are you going to talk? Or are we going to go somewhere and take care of business?"

* * * * *

Angie awoke several hours later with a start. Her book had fallen out of her hand and a man with dark hair and eyes stood over her, smiling. "Hi. I'm Frank."

"Uh...Angie."

"Hi, Angie."

"Uh...hi."

His eyes flicked slowly over her, making her feel as if she were naked. "I was wondering. Are you looking for someone to spend a few hours with?"

"What?" She blinked up at him. "Oh. No. I..."

His only attire was a pair of swimming briefs that sported a slight, but noticeable bulge. Still grinning, he popped out a smallish, pink cock. "How about joining me in my stateroom?"

Just yesterday, after over eighteen months without a man in her bed, she would have been flattered. She almost certainly would have agreed. But having had the blunt taken off of her sexual hunger, she knew coming on this cruise had been a mistake. She wasn't about to spend the next two days hopping into bed with every man who waved a dick at her. Not that she expected too many men to lust after her. Besides, after having spent the night with Troy, she couldn't see being satisfied with having this Frank make love to her.

"What do you say, Angie? I know there are guys on board with...larger cocks, but I can promise you that I'm a considerate lover. I'll make sure you're satisfied."

She blushed. "No! It has nothing to do with the size of your...that has nothing to do with it." But it was difficult to get excited by Frank's shaft after having been filled with Troy's thick length.

"If you like, I'll join you on the lounge."

"Oh, no! No. Thanks, but—"

"Oh, come on. Give me a chance!"

"She's with me."

Her head snapped around and her heart thumped wildly. Troy had quietly approached from the opposite direction. She stared at him hungrily. Today he wore a pair of shorts, a pullover, and tennis shoes.

Troy and her would-be-suitor studied each other in silence for several moments. The man frowned at Troy, still holding his cock in his hand. "Oh, she is? Why didn't you tell that blond bombshell I saw you drooling over earlier at the pool that she was with you?" he demanded.

Angie saw Troy's eyes narrow. "Why don't you put that toy away and get lost? She's with me."

The man turned to look at her. "You sure we can't spend a few hours together?"

She nodded. "Yes, I'm sure."

"I know he has a bigger cock, but—"

"It's not that!" she insisted, feeling her face burn with shame.

"You're sure?"

She nodded.

He sighed and walked away.

God, how embarrassing. This way of life was definitely not for her. She stared after Frank, so she wouldn't have to look at Troy. Of course he'd been with another woman. He'd probably been drunk or stoned the night before when he'd spent the night with her. He'd obviously come to his senses and gone looking for a more suitable woman.

"You want to talk about it?"

She shrugged and looked at him. "About what?"

He pulled the nearest lounge closer to hers and flopped down into it. "About the woman he mentioned."

She shook her head and lay back on the lounge, averting her gaze. "No."

"Why not?"

"Why should I want to talk about her? We had...we had sex last night. We both knew it was only for the night. You don't have to explain that you were with another woman. It's what I expected." So why did she feel so depressed?

He reached out and took her hand in his. "It might be what you expected—it's what I expected, but..." He squeezed her hand. "It's not what happened."

She looked at him. "You don't have to lie."

"That's right and I'm not."

"Troy, he saw you with her."

"At the pool. He doesn't know what happened once we left the pool area."

"Neither do I. And you know what? I don't need or want to know."

"I want to tell you."

She sighed. "Fine. What did happen?"

"Nothing much."

She nodded. "Yeah. Right. You were alone with an eager blond bombshell and nothing happened? That's what you expect me to believe?"

"Look, I admit I was propositioned and I went back to her stateroom with her. Who wouldn't? She was

gorgeous.”

She blew out a breath. “Yeah, I already heard how gorgeous she was.”

“But you haven’t heard what happened after we were alone.”

“And?”

“It’s strange. She’s the type of woman I’ve always been attracted to, but once she undressed, the magic vanished.”

“Why?”

“I saw that her behind was way too small for my taste.” He grinned at her. “As I discovered last night, I’m into big butts.”

And he expected her to believe that? “You don’t have to explain.”

He laughed, shaking his head. “What you mean is you don’t believe me.”

“Does it matter what I believe?”

He stared at her in silence for several moments. “It shouldn’t, but for some crazy reason it does. I need you to believe me. And it is the truth. I kissed her. I undressed her, but I did not sleep with her.”

“Why not?”

“I kept thinking about last night with you and comparing her to you.”

“Comparing me to a blonde bombshell?” She forced a laugh. “That must have been a pretty picture. Did you lose your lunch?”

He shook his head, his eyes narrowed. “What is it with you, Angie? I happen to have twenty-twenty vision. I know what you look like naked and I know what she looked like. There was no comparison.”

“That’s exactly what I mean, Troy. How could there—”

“There was no comparison—in your favor. I thought of you and the long night we spent together. Being with you was unlike anything I’ve ever felt. I knew being with her wasn’t going to compare. So I left her in her stateroom, naked, calling me every name in the book and came looking for you.”

She stared at him, her eyes widening. “You’re serious.”

“Yes, I am. No way sleeping with her was going to compare to what we shared last night. Instead of settling for second best, I decided to find you.”

Angie knew she was staring at him, her jaw hanging open a bit. She didn’t have bad self-esteem, but then again when she’d signed up for this cruise she hadn’t aspired to being with a man who looked like Troy. She’d known that most men like him would lust after perfectly shaped women, so she’d unthinkingly accepted that fact and had never been bothered about it. Instead she’d assumed she would end up with a normal looking, average man.

The only exception to Angie’s leave-the-too-good-looking-guys-alone had been her late husband Dan. But Dan...well she’d never expected to find a man like Dan again. Not that she and Troy were in a relationship exactly. And not that she was comparing the two. They were both handsome, and they both had dark hair and eyes, but Troy and Dan were otherwise very different looking. “Oh.”

His eyes flicked over her. “What about you? Have you been with anyone today?”

“No! I told you I’d never done anything like this before. I shouldn’t have come on this cruise.”

“Does that mean you regret last night?”

When it was time to go home and never see him again, she would probably regret it plenty. “No.”

“Neither do I.” He smiled at her. “The only thing I regret is spending most of the day away from you.”

Oh, man, was he a silver-tongued devil.

He grinned. “Will you have dinner with me? Dance with me in the moonlight? Spend the night with me?”

Her throat felt dry and there was this incredible knot of sheer joy in her heart. She nodded. “Yes.”

He tilted his head to one side and smiled at her. “To which question?”

“All of them. Any of them.”

“Are you sure? I plan to do all sorts of wicked things to you.”

“Oh? Such as?”

His eyebrows rose. “I plan to suck your breasts and your toes, kiss that big, beautiful rump of yours, nibble at your stomach, eat your pussy, and...boink you senseless.”

“Oh...lord. That sounds so delicious.”

He leaned over and kissed her. A rush of heat flashed through her body at the touch of his mouth. He kissed her like a man who hadn't kissed a woman in ages, biting and nibbling at her lips and tongue as if he couldn't get enough of her. She parted her lips and caressed his face.

He rolled over and suddenly he was lying on top of her. She felt his cock hardening. Just the feel of it was enough to dampen the bottom of her swimsuit. She shifted her body, eager to feel him between her thighs.

With the little bit of reason she had left, she knew she didn't want him to screw her there on the chair in broad daylight where everyone passing by could see her behaving like a nymphomaniac in heat. She suddenly understood why Corrie had let a virtual stranger screw her without a condom. Because she knew if Troy wanted to eat her cunt while she sucked his cock in full view of anyone who chanced to pass them, she'd be hard-pressed to refuse.

To her relief, after a few heated kisses, he groaned and rolled back onto his lounge. He lay for several moments with his eyes briefly closed before he looked at her. He nodded at the book that had fallen onto the side of her lounge. “What are you reading?”

She picked up the book and showed him the cover. “The latest Star Trek novel.”

He arched a brow. “Don't tell me you like sci-fi novels.”

She shook her head. “I don't really, but I'm a big fan of all the Trek series. And I enjoyed reading the books.”

“Small world, I'm a Trek fan myself. Which series is your favorite?”

“The original. I fell madly in love with Captain Kirk the first time I saw him.”

He shook his head. “I prefer Deep Space Nine. I loved the continuing story lines and the great cast. It reminded me of Gunsmoke.”

She sat forward. “You like Gunsmoke too? That is my absolute all time favorite TV western.”

He grinned at her. “Let me guess why: you took one look at the big marshal and fell madly in love.”

She parted her lips and widened her eyes in feigned surprise, fanning herself with her fingers.

“However did you guess?”

“Male intuition. What did you like about him?”

She touched the tip of her tongue to her top lip. “What was not to like? He was tall, dark, and gorgeous.”

He grinned. “You like tall, dark men? I can do tall and dark.”

“And what do you know? I like you too,” she admitted.

He leaned over and rewarded her with a sweet, lingering kiss. He laughed. “Damn, Angie, I like you.”

She grinned. “I like you too.”

“I like you...lots.”

“Same here.”

He lowered his head and brushed his mouth against hers. “We have a couple of hours before the first dinner seating. What say we go back to my stateroom?” he said thickly. “And I’ll show you just how much I like you, Angie. I’ve been thinking about you and our night together all day.”

She pushed against his shoulder and stared at him. “You have?”

“Yes. And now,” he murmured, “I need some pussy.”

“Oh, well, that’s all right because I need some cock.”

He rolled over and lay on top of her. “How much?”

She ran her fingers through his hair, raining kisses along his jaw. “Lots and lots of cock. My pussy’s been burning and itching all day for your cock.”

“Shit. You keep this up and I’m going to have to get a quick taste right here and now.”

She shivered and pushed against his shoulders. “It’s still daylight. I don’t want people to see us...boinking each other.”

He lifted his head and grinned down at her. “Each other? You plan to boink me, do you?”

A sudden vision of Corrie bouncing up and down on her lover’s cock danced in her head. Why should skinny blondes have all the fun? “Oh, yeah—until your boinker goes limp.”

“It takes a lot to satisfy me. Every time I think of you, my...boinker gets hard. I wouldn’t count on it going limp anytime soon.”

She gave him a sassy smile. “I’ll bet you say that to all the girls.”

He ground his groin against her, making them both shudder. “Only to the ones with big butts that I can’t wait to fondle.”

She knew she had no right to ask, but the question popped out. “And how many big behind lovers have you had?”

“None. Maybe that’s why I find you so enticing.”

“Enticing?”

“Enticing, fascinating, alluring...call it what you want. God, you turn me on.” He rolled off of her and extended a hand to help her to her feet. “Come on. I need some pussy.”

She pulled back, his unabashed desire for her giving her courage. “You need some pussy as in any pussy will do?”

He pulled her to her feet and slipped his arms around her. "Isn't it obvious by now that the only pussy I'm interested in on this ship belongs to you?"

"You like my pussy?"

"I love your pussy. Now you want to stop talking so much and give me some?"

"Oh, God, Troy," she smiled. "I'll give you as much as you want."

He grinned, that sexy dimple of his popping back out. "Then you'd better get ready for another long night. As long as I'm awake, I'm going to want to be inside you."

"Promises, sweet promises," she teased and meekly allowed him to lead her back to his cabin.

Chapter Five

Troy studied Angie's face in the moonlight as she sat across the small table from him on the private balcony of his stateroom. She had such lovely hair—thick, dark, and lustrous. Her dark eyes were intriguing. Her lips, although not particularly full or sensual, were warm and very sweet. All in all, she was not a pretty woman. So why did he find her so attractive? So desirable? To the exclusion of every other woman on the ship?

After making love twice, they'd showered and dressed, then come out here to the balcony to dance before having dinner. He'd suggested that they spend time in one of the nightclubs aboard ship or visit the casino. He'd been secretly pleased when she'd smiled shyly and told him she'd rather be alone with him.

He'd been pleasantly surprised to find that she shared his love of country music. Now as one of his many Hank Williams tapes played in the background, he found himself wanting to take her to the annual all day country music show he went to every year. There they could don cowboy hats and boots and do country line dances. After the show ended, they could walk hand in hand in the moonlight to the ferry that would take them back across the river. Of course, they would stop frequently to kiss.

He sighed. Okay, Troy, try and get a grip on reality, here. This is about sex, not a relationship. You're fantasizing about a relationship. Worse yet you're fantasizing about a relationship like a sixteen-year-old girl would.

"Troy, what are you thinking about?"

He grunted. Pushing the remnants of their meal aside, he smiled at her. "That I want to know more about you."

"What do you want to know?"

"Everything. Start by telling me about your husband."

A serene smile curved her lips. "He was a wonderful man. Warm, sweet, handsome, kind, considerate, and funny."

"Okay. So tell me about his good points."

Her smile widened. "I know he sounds too good to be true, but that's how he was. Oh, Troy, he was wonderful. We met our last year in college. He pursued me from the start. Which was so incredible."

"Why incredible?"

She shrugged, not particularly wanting to remind him of her weight if he didn't have a problem with it. But he'd asked the question, so she figured he deserved the answer. "I come from a family of large women. My mother, grandmother, great grandmother—they were all large." She paused and bit her lip. "I've been overweight my whole life."

He sensed weariness and hurt behind the words. Something in his heart twisted. "Angie, some men like their women with a little meat on their bones," he murmured.

"Yeah? Well, before Dan and I met, I had a very limited social life. All the guys I knew kept telling me what a wonderful personality I had, but none of them wanted to go out with me. I tried all the usual venues—church, bars, parties, you name it. No one was interested in me because of my weight." She grinned, shaking her head. "I couldn't buy a date, let alone get one. Then I met Dan. He changed everything for me. He made me feel as if I was the most desirable woman he'd ever met."

Troy nodded. Although she sounded surprised, he could totally understand her husband having felt that way about her. Hell, he already felt the same way about her. There was a pleasing, uninhibited quality

about Angie that drew him to her almost against his will.

She sighed, clearly lost in happy memories.

He was silent for a while, not wanting to intrude. And, stupid as it was, he felt a tinge of jealousy shoot through him. "And?"

She looked up. "It was hard for me to believe that this tall, dark, adorable man could really love me. But he did. He said he knew right away that we were soul mates who were meant to spend the rest of our lives together." She smiled at the memory. "We got married a year after graduation and we had four and a half glorious years together."

Her eyes suddenly filled with tears, but the tears never fell. "Then one day I got a call at work telling me he'd been in a car accident. I had to drive past the accident scene to get to the hospital. It was awful. And I think I knew then that he wasn't going to make it. Still, I expected to be able to tell him one last time how much I loved him. But he was dead by the time I arrived at the hospital," she whispered.

She looked up at Troy, her dark eyes full of pain and unmistakable anguish. He reached across the table and clasped her hands in his. "I'm sorry. How long ago?"

"Three years." She smiled without humor. "The last three years have been the most miserable of my whole life." One tear finally rolled down her cheek. "He was my life. It's been so hard trying to go on without him. Sometimes I still wake up at night and expect to find him in bed beside me. And when I realize he's not there and he's never going to be again..." She shrugged. "There's this awful, aching emptiness that I can't explain or bear. It eats at me and sometimes I just want to curl up into a ball and disappear," she quietly finished.

Angie felt the need to cry in truth, so she looked away, embarrassed and wishing she'd never discussed Dan with him. Troy released her hands and moved around the small table. He urged her to her feet and took her in his arms, burying his face against her neck. "Oh sweet. I'm so sorry. Don't cry. Please." He rubbed her back, feeling like a jerk. "I didn't mean to make you relive painful memories."

She clung to him, comforted by the warmth of him, her cheek pressed against his shoulder. "I loved him so much," she whispered. "And I miss him and need him still."

He kissed her hair. "I'm so sorry," he murmured. Even as Troy whispered the words against her ear, he realized they weren't altogether true and felt like an even bigger jerk because of it. But if Angie's husband hadn't died, she wouldn't have come on this cruise. And he would never have met her. How could he regret meeting her?

Much to Angie's embarrassment, Troy's comforting words and embrace were the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. When her bottom lip began to quiver against her volition, she knew she was a goner. Worse yet, once the tears came, she couldn't seem to stop crying. She cried quietly, never the type to make a big show.

"Oh sweet," he rasped out. "Please don't cry." The need to comfort her twisted his heart again, guided his motions. She reminded him of a brave, wounded soldier. Taking her hand, Troy led her into the stateroom. She continued to quietly cry as he undressed her and urged her into bed. He then removed his clothes and climbed into bed with her. He pushed her gently onto her back and lay on top of her. He caressed her, kissing her face and neck. "It's all right, sweet," he murmured. "It's all right."

Although his cock hardened at the feel of her nude body under his and he longed to make love to her again, he realized what she needed then was comfort, not sex. But if he kept lying on her, that's all he'd want. He rolled off of her, slipped his body behind her, and held her. "It's all right, Angie."

She turned in his arms, clinging to him. He clenched his jaw in an effort to steel himself as he felt her

hair-covered crotch pressing against his cock. "It's all right," he whispered. "Cry if you need to."

Troy held her like that until she quieted down, until he felt no more tears. Then he eased away from her and lay on his back, staring up at the ceiling, his cock throbbing with need. What a jerk he was. Here she was, wounded and hurting, and all he could think about was mounting her. Damn, but he wanted to make love to her again.

He woke in the middle of the night to find her soft hands caressing his cock and his balls. "Angie?" he said thickly.

"Troy, I need you," she whispered. "Please."

She rubbed her body against his and he felt her dampness. She was wet, ready for him and his cock. "Yes, sweet."

He put on a condom before guiding her onto her back. He spent several moments, kissing her breasts and caressing her. The sound of her sighs and the feel of her soft, warm flesh under his hands excited his passions. Giving into his increasing hunger for her, he slipped between her thighs. She widened her legs and he slowly pressed his cock into her tight, heated passage.

She moaned and lifted her hips to meet his downward thrust. "Oh, Troy. Yes. Yes, Troy!"

Curling his fingers in her hair so he could immobilize her head, which she'd began twisting from side to side, he took her sweet lips in a series of slow, sensuous kisses. "God, Angie, you are so sweet," he groaned against her mouth. He rotated his hips and sent his cock surging back within the warm confines of her moist tunnel. "Oh God, I can't get enough of you."

Their lovemaking was unhurried and totally satisfying. They each took the time to discover what pleased and turned the other on. He found that she really got off when he sucked on her breasts, running his tongue around her nipples as he thrust his cock as deep into her as he could. And he let her know he liked being touched and having his nipples and balls massaged.

When she began to suck on his nipples, a lightning-hot surge of passion flared in him. Feeling her soft hands on his rump sent an extra charge of desire down his body and into his cock. He shuddered and exploded in her.

She clutched onto him, holding him close as he strained to pump the last drop of cum out of his cock. Then she kissed his neck and shoulders and stroked his body as he collapsed on top of her.

"Oh shit," he panted. "Making love to you is getting better all the time."

She laughed, sounding satisfied. "One does the best one can."

"Shit," he muttered again.

"What's the matter, big boy? You gotta go?" she teased.

He laughed and buried his face in her hair. "Oh, damn, Angie. Angie, you are so sweet."

She held him, her body cradling and accepting his weight, her soft warm hands caressing him. "Troy. My sweet, sweet, Troy," she whispered, kissing his hair.

Her sweet Troy? Damn, he liked the sound of that. He buried his face against her neck. What he felt for her transcended the great sex they'd just had. He felt a sudden, disturbing need to try and fill the void her husband's death had created in her life. He suspected, that if he weren't very careful, he could easily lose his perspective and fall hard for her.

And what would be so bad about that, Troy Boy? You could do a lot worse than to fall for a woman who makes you feel protective and who ignites and fulfills your sexual desires.

If he'd met her a year or two later, he would have willingly surrendered to the feelings she invoked in him. But not now. Not until he was ready to get serious. Nevertheless, one question reverberated in his mind: How the hell was he supposed to walk away from her after the cruise and never see her again?

The thought sent a shiver through him.

"Troy? What's the matter?"

"Nothing." He pressed closed to her. He smiled hesitantly. "Nothing."

"You're shivering."

"Just touch me...hold me..."

"Gladly," she whispered.

Her lips touched his and a sense of warmth and belonging enveloped him. He closed his eyes. How could he give this up? How could he give Angie up?

Chapter Six

Troy was annoyed to find Angie gone when he woke the next morning. Before heading to the shower, he ordered a dozen red roses sent to her cabin. After he dressed, he decided to call her. The phone rang several times before it was answered.

"I'm kind of busy now. Can't this wait?"

Although the voice was feminine, it did not belong to Angie. "Is Angie there?"

"The last time I checked, there was only me and this absolutely gorgeous ebony hunk who's fucking me. As soon as he pulls his big cock out of me, I might check. Until then, fuck off!"

The receiver was slammed in his ear. Troy blinked. "Nice talking to you too," he muttered and put his own receiver down.

Eager to see Angie, he went in search of her. The first spot he checked was the lower deck where he'd found her the day before. She wasn't there. He made a circuit of the whole deck without finding her. Where the hell was she?

He came across Rick lounging by one of the pools on the lower decks. "Hey, Troy, haven't seen you since we set sail. Take a load off and tell me what you've been up to. How many blonde bimbos have you fucked?"

He paused by Rick's lounge, but didn't sit. "None."

Rick grinned up at him. "Okay, so what color hair did your bimbos have?"

"I haven't been with any," he said shortly.

Rick lowered his sunglasses and stared at him. "You're kidding me, right? Are you telling me with all these women just begging to give it up, you haven't had any action?"

He and Rick had been friends since college and generally could talk about anything, their love lives included. But there was no way he was going to tell Rick about Angie and have him think she was cheap.

"I haven't slept with any bimbos, though I've had a few offers."

Rick laughed. "I'll bet you have. I spent last night with these two gorgeous blondes."

He arched a brow at Rick. "Two women? You spent the night with two women?"

"Hey, they both wanted me and I couldn't decide between them so I had them both. What a night."

He nodded. "I'll bet."

He grinned. "Suffice it to say that I am bushed."

"Hmm."

"Where are you heading?" He glanced at his watch. "I'm scheduled to meet my two blonde honeys from last night soon. Want to meet them?"

"No thanks. I'm looking for the woman I spent the last two nights with."

"I thought you said you hadn't seen any action."

"I said I hadn't been with any bimbos. She's not a bimbo."

Rick nodded to the lounge next to him. "Really? You met a woman on this ship who isn't a bimbo? Is there such a mythical creature aboard?"

“Yes.”

Their eyes met. “Tell me about her.”

Troy shook his head. He wanted to find her, not talk about her. “Right now I need to find her. I’ll see you later.”

After an hour of searching, he was at the point of having her paged. He decided to wait until he’d eaten. He rounded the corner of one of the upper decks that offered outside dining and came to an abrupt halt.

Angie sat at a table near the railing, sipping an orange juice. She wasn’t alone. The man who’d tried to get her into bed the day before sat across from her. They both had dirty dishes with remnants of food in front of them. They’d clearly had breakfast together.

His stomach twisted into knots and a blast of anger filled him. He stormed across the deck to the table. He clenched his hands into fists. Otherwise, he’d have hauled the man to his feet and decked him.

“How many times do I have to tell you that she’s with me?” Troy seethed.

The man rose to his feet. “Are the two of you married or engaged? If not, she’s free to be with whomever she likes. And at the moment, that would be me.”

“Well, it won’t be you when you’re picking your teeth up off the deck!”

“Troy!” Angie got up and grabbed his hand. “What do you think you’re doing?”

“Stay out of this!”

She yanked at his hand. “Excuse me? Stay out of this? I could tell you the same thing.”

He kept his gaze on the man’s face. “Can we talk about this later, Angie?”

The man looked at Angie. “You want to talk to this jerk?”

Her silence lasted long enough to make Troy uncomfortable. Finally, she shrugged. “Yes. Troy and I need to talk. Thanks for keeping me company, Frank.”

The man hesitated for a moment, before shrugging and walking away.

Furious, Troy turned his gaze to Angie. “What was that all about?”

“For your information, Troy, he was apologizing for his behavior yesterday.”

He ignored the unmistakable censure in her voice. What did she expect him to apologize for? “And you accepted and then went on to have breakfast with him?” He paused. He wasn’t sure when she’d left his stateroom. “It was just breakfast. Wasn’t it?”

She wasn’t sure what to make of his behavior. “Feeling a little territorial today, aren’t we?”

He stared down at her through narrowed eyes. “What were you doing with him? And why didn’t you wake me before you left? You think I mean for you to spend any of your time with other men?”

He stopped abruptly. Damn, but he was losing it. He and Carolyn had broken up for two major reasons: she wanted to get married, like yesterday, and she’d become too damned possessive. But at least it had taken her a year and a half to think she owned him. He was behaving that way with Angie after only two days. And, worse, this with a woman he would never see after tomorrow.

Her dark eyes practically danced with laughter. Her obvious amusement annoyed the hell out of him. “You said you wanted to spend the night with me. We did. I didn’t figure you’d still want me around—like the last time,” she said gently. “Because this is another day.”

His nostrils flared. “A day I expected you to spend with me.”

She blinked up at him. "You never asked, Troy. Was I supposed to be able to read your mind?"

"I didn't think I had to ask. Not after last night."

"Last night was...Troy, are you married?"

"No! If I was, I sure as hell wouldn't be on this damned boat."

"Are you involved with anyone special?"

"No. I don't cheat. If I was involved with anyone, I wouldn't be here."

"Have you ever been married?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I'm not ready."

"My father was married and had two kids by the time he was thirty."

He could guess what was coming and he wasn't in the mood to defend his present lack of desire for marriage. "I'm not your father, Angie," he said coolly.

Her body stilled. She had developed feelings for him, possibly the stupidest move in her entire life. She had to get away from him before it got worse. Like now. "No, Troy, you're not," she said quietly. "So don't try to tell me what to do or who to see." She tossed her napkin aside, stood up, and walked away.

He stared after her, clenching his hands into fists. He knew she expected him to follow her, but hell would freeze over before he did. He'd never had a problem getting sex from any woman he wanted it from. If she was no longer interested in him, he'd find another woman who was.

She was several hundred yards along the deck when hell froze over.

"Angie!" Tossing his pride aside, his teeth gritting, Troy went after her. He easily caught up with her. Catching her hand in his, he stopped her.

She looked weary. And a touch angry. "Yes?"

He stared down into her dark eyes. Eyes that usually looked glazed over with passion whenever she gazed up at him now glittered with angry highlights. "I don't want to fight. We have one day and one night of this cruise left. I want to spend every moment of that time with you."

"And what if I don't want to spend anymore time with you?"

He felt as if he'd been sucker punched. He released her hand and stepped back. "What?"

She knew her next words were unintentionally cruel, but she also realized they needed to be said. She had to get away from him. Troy wouldn't want her for a partner in real life and she couldn't bear to spend another moment with him knowing that. "You heard me, Troy. I came on this cruise for one thing: sex. And thanks to you, I've had plenty."

He ran a hand through his hair. "You've had...what the hell is that supposed to mean?"

She held firm on the outside, felt like hell on the inside. "It means I've had enough. I'm going to spend the rest of the day right here reading my book."

"And tonight?"

"Tonight, I'm sleeping alone, Troy."

"You don't want to make love anymore? Okay." He shrugged. "We can spend the night together

without making love.”

She bit her lip. “No, we can’t.”

His nostrils flared. “You think I’m some boy who can’t control himself?” he growled.

“I don’t think anything except that I’ll be spending the night in my own cabin. Alone.” Her face softened suddenly and she stretched up and kissed his cheek. Troy might not want her in real life, but he’d still given her a gift she’d always be grateful to him for. “Thanks for helping me get my self-confidence back,” she whispered meaningfully. “Now that I know I can still attract men, I’m going to wait for another Dan to come along.” She smiled, a bit nostalgically. “I may have a long wait and it might get lonely, but it’ll be worth it when I meet him.”

His muscles clenched. So he was supposed to compete with a dead man? He silently reminded himself he’d only wanted her for one more night. But still... “Angie...”

She sighed, the heaving of her breasts snagging his attention. “Troy, we weren’t going to see each other after tomorrow anyway. I’d just as well say goodbye now.”

True, but it didn’t sit well with him. “Well damn that’s nice, Angie. But what about what I want?” he asked angrily.

“And what would that be?”

He didn’t know. He felt like an animal trapped into a corner. “To spend the night with you,” he growled.

“You’re a handsome man on a ship full of beautiful women. You won’t have any trouble finding one who’ll be delighted to spend the night with you.”

His eyes narrowed. “You think this is just about sex?”

She looked away. “Yes, actually, I do.”

It wasn’t. Troy didn’t know what it was, but he had to keep her near him. “Well, it’s not. I’m not going to deny that I adore making love to you. I know you already know that. But I promise you I can control myself. If you don’t want to make love tonight, we don’t have to. But I do want to spend the night with you, Angie.”

She took a deep breath, steeling herself. The longer she stood here, the more miserable she became.

“Well, it’s not going to happen,” she said quietly but firmly. “I should never have come here. I want to meet a man like Dan, a man who’ll want me for myself, not just because I let him...screw me every fifteen minutes.”

Heat flashed up the back of his neck. “It’s not just sex, Angie. We’ve talked, you know we have a lot of common interests.”

“Maybe so, Troy, but all we’ve done is have sex. I want and need more.”

“You want and need more?” He groaned. “For God’s sake, Angie, we’re talking about one lousy night and part of the day tomorrow.”

She blushed, knowing precisely what he’d meant. And that was precisely why she felt the way that she did. She had developed feelings for a man she had no business wishing for. “It’s one lousy day and night I want to spend getting back my self-respect,” she said quietly.

“Angie, nothing happened between us that you need to be ashamed of! Neither of us are married and ___”

She held up a palm. "But I want to be married. I liked being married, Troy."

He stared at her. "What? Angie, we've known each other a few days. You can hardly expect me to be ready for anything ser—"

"I don't expect anything from you, Troy. I'm just telling you what I need. When I meet the right man, I'll be ready to get married again like a shot. But that's not going to happen if I keep hopping into the sack with you. Talking about Dan last night made me realize again how much I lost when he died. I lost something that's not easily replaced, but I want it back."

"Angie—"

"Oh, don't worry, Troy," she said a bit sadly. "I don't expect you to give it to me."

His muscles clenched hotter. "What the hell's that supposed to mean? You think I'm incapable of making and keeping a commitment?"

"The point is you don't want one. Not that I came on this cruise looking for one."

"Good, because you're not getting one from me."

She bit her lip and looked away. "Well, I guess that's plain enough, Troy."

He sighed and shook his head. "Wait a minute. That came out all wrong. What I meant—"

She took a deep breath. "I don't care what you meant. Please. It's hard enough walking away from you without your making it harder. Please. Just leave me alone."

He stared at her, feeling helpless. He didn't know what to say or do to make her change her mind. Then it hit him—she wasn't going to change her mind—especially not after that crack about her not getting a commitment from him. He'd really dug a deep hole with that remark. "I'm sorry you regret meeting me."

She closed her eyes for a moment, and he couldn't help but to wonder what she'd been thinking. When her eyes opened, she had an iron clamp on her emotions again. "I don't regret meeting you, Troy. I just can't afford to start liking you anymore than I already do."

His jaw clenched. "It's not all on your side, you know. I like you too."

She looked away. "I don't know if I believe that. Even if I did, it wouldn't make any difference," she whispered. She glanced back and met his gaze, deciding to lay it all on the line. Why not? At this point there was nothing left to lose. "Every time we sleep together, you capture a piece of my heart. You look surprised. Believe me...so am I. I never expected to feel this way again after Dan. But I do. Every time I see you, I fall a little harder for you. You already own half of my heart. I'm half a breath away from falling completely in love with you. Is that what you want?" she finished softly.

Part of him liked the idea that this sweet, passionate woman was halfway in love with him. But women in love had a way of wanting to tie a man down. And he knew he wasn't ready for that yet.

"When you think about your future, do you see yourself being married to some fat chick with a big butt who drops her drawers every time you wink at her?"

How was he supposed to answer that? If he said yes, she'd expect a commitment he had no intentions of giving. If he said no...she'd walk out of his life. Forever.

He remained silent and watched Angie walk away. When she disappeared around a curve in the ship, he turned and headed in the opposite direction. Damn her! Damn all women! Why the hell did they always want more than a man was willing to give? Why couldn't they just go with the flow and enjoy the moment? Why did everything have to come down to love and commitment when all he wanted was

to spend just one more day and night with her in paradise?

He went back to his stateroom, changed into swimming briefs, and swam until he could barely lift his arms and legs. Then, warding off the advances of several women, he returned to his cabin and fell across the bed. Although tired, he was too agitated to sleep. He couldn't stop thinking of Angie. Why the hell couldn't she spend just one more night with him?

Why the hell was he lying here feeling sorry for himself because she'd had enough of him? As she said, there was a ship full of beautiful woman ready and willing to hop into bed with him. So why didn't he get up and get one of them?

He thought of the blonde who'd approached him at the pool and shook his head. She wasn't likely to ever want to see him again. But there was always Rick's two blondes. No. He wasn't into threesomes. He didn't believe in sharing his woman either. Either she was his alone, or he didn't need or want her. That still left a ship full of willing women, though.

The solution to forgetting Angie was simple; spend the night with another woman. It was a simple solution, but for the moment it was beyond him. With a growl, he rolled over onto his stomach and buried his face in the pillow.

Chapter Seven

“Are you sure you don’t want to come?”

Angie looked up from her computer. Corrie, dressed in a skin tight, sheer black dress stood in the doorway of their basement office. All her slim curves were clearly outlined under the dress. The term “dressed to kill” came to mind.

This was the first time Corrie had gone out since they had both returned from the cruise with battered hearts. Angie smiled. “I’m not in the partying mood, but I’m glad to see you are.”

Corrie nodded. “Yeah, I am. Okay, so he said he’d call and didn’t.”

“It’s his lost, Corrie.”

She bit her lip. “I know, but I was so sure he’d call. I mean, he didn’t let me out of his sight after the first time we made love. He said we were perfect together. So why the hell didn’t he call?”

Probably for the same reason Troy hadn’t called her: he didn’t want a real relationship. Both men had wanted sex and she and Corrie had been only too willing to give it. As her mother was fond of saying, why buy the orchard if you can get the peaches for free?

“Why would they call? I mean look how we behaved, Corrie! We had sex with them in public areas.”

“We didn’t have it by ourselves!”

“No, but you know the double standard. It’s okay for them, but not for us. Corrie, you’re going to have to get over your Jermaine.”

Corrie came into the room. “You’re a fine one to talk. It’s been over three months since our little March Madness cruise and you’ve barely stepped outside this house. Even though that Frank guy tracked you down like a bloodhound. Don’t try and tell me you’re not carrying a torch for your tall, dark, and well-hung stud.”

She would try to tell her no such thing. The fact that Frank had managed to find her only made Troy’s failure to do the same hurt that much more. Clearly, she hadn’t moved him with her near declaration of love. She blushed at the memory. Maybe that had scared him off. “I’ve accepted that I’m never going to see him again.” She paused, swallowing slowly. God, how she regretted not having spent the last night on the ship with him.

“Then why haven’t you gone out with this Frank who thought enough of you to track you down?”

“He’s not my type.” She liked her men tall, dark, and well hung—like Troy. Troy? She didn’t even know his last name.

“Hey, Ange, life goes on.”

She nodded. “I know. It’s going on for me. It’s just that I’m smarting a little bit. But I’m fine.”

“You fell in love with him,” Corrie said gently.

“Can you fall in love in the space of a few days with a man you never really knew?”

“Why not if it can happen at first sight? Why don’t you get dressed and come to the party with me? We’ll meet some men and get laid.”

The thought of welcoming another man into her arms so soon after falling for Troy held little appeal. She knew that, eventually, she’d want and need another lover. But not for a while yet. She glanced back at one of the three computer monitors behind her. “I’d just as soon finish writing the code for this web site, then I’m going to hit the sack.”

“Ange, you have to get the guy out of your system.”

She sighed, rubbing her temples. “I know and I will. It’s just going to take a little while. That’s all. Don’t worry about me. I’m fine. Really.”

“Angel!”

“No. Really. I’m fine.” She smiled. “Oh, before you go, I do have something to show you.” She picked up a business directory from her desk and opened it to the page where a bookmark rested. “Take a look and tell me what you think.”

Corrie leaned over her shoulder and studied the quarter page ad, entitled: Web Designs For You.

Websites and graphics designed at reasonable prices. Please visit our online office to see links to sites we’ve designed. To discuss your business website design requirements contact AHarding@webnet.com or phone us between the hours of 8:30-5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

Angie grinned. “So. What do you think?”

“It looks great!” Corrie grinned back. “Now all we have to do is sit back and wait for the orders to come rolling in.”

“I wish.” She shook her head. “You know I really wish I hadn’t blown so much money on that silly cruise—”

“Silly cruise? Oh, come on, Ange. Admit it: you’re glad you went and met tall, dark, and well-hung.”

Angie laughed, conceding the point. “Okay. I don’t really regret meeting him. I just wish I hadn’t fallen for him or that he’d fallen for me a little bit.”

“Well, if nothing else, you did finally realize what I’ve been telling you all along: there are still guys out there who like their women full-figured and voluptuous.” Corrie smiled. “You’re beautiful, Ange.”

“Full-figured and voluptuous?” She nodded. “You make me sound like Miss America.”

“Hey! Skinny gals ain’t got nothing on you!”

Too bad Troy hadn’t shared that sentiment. “You’re full of hot air,” she said, smiling. She picked up a piece of paper. “On the bright side, I just got this email from a new firm who needs a rush job on a website.”

Corrie read the note and looked up at her. “Rush job? Great. Rush job means more money. Before long, we’ll be up to our pencil-arched eyebrows in business.” She smiled, then looked absently down at the paper in her hand. “Rick Markham. Nice name. I wonder what he looks like.” She grinned. “I don’t suppose he’s black, is he?”

Angie shrugged. “I haven’t met him, but I don’t think so.”

“When are you meeting him?”

“I’m meeting him and his partner for lunch on Monday at Danni’s. Want to come?”

Corrie shook her head. “No. I’ll stay here and mind the office while you go out and earn the bacon. Who knows, maybe you and this Rick guy will hit it off.”

Angie rolled her eyes. “Let’s keep a grip on reality here, Corrie. I know there are some men out there who like large women, but not all of them. Besides, I intend to concentrate on business for the next few months. Then I’ll think about men again.”

Corrie sighed, angry at Troy. “Oh, honey, he wasn’t good enough for you.”

Angie shrugged, giving Corrie a weak grin. "And what do you know? He didn't get me."

* * * * *

"Troy? Talk to me. Tell me what're thinking."

Troy tightened his embrace around the woman in his arms. With his eyes closed and the weight of her body against his as they slowly circled the dance floor, he could pretend that she was the woman he wanted to be with.

"Troy?"

He reluctantly opened his eyes and stared down into the blue eyes of the woman smiling up at him.

"Yes, Julie?"

"You're so quiet. What's wrong?" She touched his face. "You obviously don't feel like painting the town tonight." She pressed her lower body tight against his. "You want to go back to my place and get comfortable?"

Her meaning was clear. She wanted to make love. So did he—just not to her. After a month of lying sleepless thinking of Angie, he'd had a couple of one-night stands. Then he'd spotted Julie at a nightclub where he'd allowed Rick to drag him.

Julie was one of the few full-figured women there. He'd hoped she could help him forget Angie, so he'd monopolized her for the rest of the evening. Although he'd taken her out several times since then, he'd made no attempt to get her into bed. When he closed his eyes and kissed her, it was Angie's sweet lips he tasted, her hands he imagined he felt holding him.

But it was probably time he made a real effort to get Angie out of his system once and for all. He smiled at her. "Actually, I'm feeling rather tired. I think I'd better take you home."

She accompanied him to his car in silence. Once inside, she waited until he was driving down the highway before she spoke again. "Are you sure you won't come in when we get to my place?"

"I'm a little tired."

Silence met his reply and he reached over and turned on the stereo. A sad country song filled the interior of the car.

She sighed softly. "Troy, do you have to?"

"Sorry. No." He quickly changed the station to soft jazz. Unlike Angie, Julie did not share his taste for country music.

"Thanks."

They drove in silence for several miles before she put her hand to rest on his knee. He breathed in quickly when she slowly trailed her fingers up the inside of one thigh. She cupped her soft palm between his legs, making his cock spring to life.

He parted his legs slightly and made no protest when she slipped his zipper down. The feel of her fingers closing around his shaft, sent a jolt of lust through him. "Damn that feels nice," he told her.

"Yes, it does." She hefted his cock into her hand. "Wow! Come up to my apartment, Troy, and I'll give you a night you won't soon forget."

The thought of sliding his aching cock into a welcoming woman and fondling her behind was tempting. Too tempting to resist. "Thank you. I'd like that."

She gave his cock a gentle squeeze. "So would I."

Alone in her bedroom, he undressed quickly, his cock hard and throbbing. Unlike, Angie, Julie showed no hesitation in disrobing in front of him. In fact, while he stood naked and aroused, a condom on his cock, she did a slow, sensuous striptease for him.

He watched, his cock getting harder with every bump and grind of her wide hips. She was slightly heavier than Angie, but her breasts were smaller, her stomach bigger, and her butt not as enticing. She was so much less inhibited than Angie. Still, given half a chance, he would take Angie every time.

He dismissed the thought. He hadn't been given the chance. He was here with Julie. Not Angela.

Finally, the last piece of her clothing, her silk panties, was tossed across the room and she stood before him naked. He stood gazing at her. Her mound was hidden by a mass of curls. God, he needed some pussy. He sank onto the edge of the bed and extended a hand towards her. "Julie?"

Smiling, she hurried across the room and stood between his legs. He put his arms around her and began kissing his way up her body. When he reached her mouth, he tipped up her chin and brushed his mouth lightly against hers.

She showed an inclination to want to kiss insistently and repeatedly. But he was more interested in having sex with her than in making love to her. Pulling his mouth away from her clinging lips, he drew her down to the bed.

He touched her clit. It was warm and tight. He dipped a finger in her cunt. She was moist and hot. "Ready?" he asked softly.

She moaned and pushed her hips up against his hand. "Oh. Oh, yes. Give me the real thing, Troy." She reached for his cock. "Give me some of that big dick."

Kissing her breasts, he climbed on top of her. "Are you sure you're ready?" he asked. He was ready, but they hadn't had any real foreplay.

"Yes! I've been ready for this moment since I first saw you. Give me some dick, Troy. Please."

He pressed between her legs, rubbed his cock up and down the length of her slit and then quickly shoved against her. He closed his eyes and sank quickly into her. When she lifted her hips in an effort to speed up their coupling, he made no protest. He had no desire to linger in her. He wanted sex for sex's sake with her.

Still, he made a conscious effort to make sure he satisfied her. It wasn't her fault that she wasn't Angie. She was sweet and deserved to be treated with respect. He forced himself to slow down and hold off on his own release until she began moaning and shuddering under him. Only then did he let himself go.

He clutched her to him, running his hands down the sides of her thighs. "Oh, God, Angie! It's been so long." Unable to hold on any longer, he exploded and collapsed on her, still moaning.

* * * * *

"You want to tell me about her?"

Troy sighed and looked across the dim living room where Julie sat on her sofa, a sheer negligee wrapped around her otherwise naked body. Her dark blue eyes looked part angry, part hurt. And he couldn't blame her. He'd actually called out Angie's name when he'd come. He was lucky she hadn't screamed at him and slapped him.

He resisted the urge to play dumb. "I suppose you mean..."

"I mean Angie," she said coldly. "Whoever she is."

"She's...ah...there's really nothing to tell."

“You can say that? After calling out her name as you came?”

“I’m sorry. I—”

“I don’t want to hear you’re sorry. I want to know about the woman standing between us. I always knew when you kissed me, that you weren’t really kissing me. But tonight...to call out her name while making love...but then you weren’t really making love to me.” Her nostrils flared. “Were you?”

He groaned silently. God save him from women who wanted to analyze the hell out of him. “I said I was sorry and I am. What else can I say?” He spread his hands. “I know it’s not something you can easily forgive, but she’s not someone I’m involved with.”

“And I’m just supposed to accept and believe that?”

“Why not? It happens to be true.”

“Then tell me about her. What’s she like? How long did you two date? Where is she now?”

He shook his head. “I have no idea where she is. I haven’t seen her for several months.” And they hadn’t actually dated. But he wasn’t going to admit that and have her think Angie was easy.

“Then what’s the problem? Is it because of my...size?” For the first time, her uninhibited self-confidence faltered a bit. “Did you have to close your eyes to shut out the sight of my body?” she whispered.

“No!” He sat forward. “No, Julie! You have a beautiful body. It was your size that attracted me in the first place. I like my women to look like women.” At least he did since he’d met Angie. Or maybe it wasn’t really his taste in women that had changed. Maybe he just liked Angie because of who she was and not because of her size.

She accepted that. “Then what’s the problem? Are you in love with her?”

“No!”

“Then what? Talk to me, Troy. I’m trying to understand what’s going on with you. I need answers to my questions so I can know if there can be anything worthwhile between us. Anything worth saving.”

He sighed, took a deep breath, and decided to be completely straight with her. “Okay. Although I’m not in love with her and I haven’t seen her in ages, I do think about her a lot.”

“No shit, Sherlock. I figured that out when you screamed out her name instead of mine. So tell me something I don’t already know. Like why you haven’t told me about her before.”

“There was nothing to tell. I met her several months ago on a cruise. We spent a few nights together.”

“And?”

“And nothing. We went our separate ways after the cruise and I haven’t seen her since.”

She stared at him. “You mean you fell in love with her after only a few days?”

“I am not in love with her,” he ground out.

“Then why haven’t you forgotten her?”

He shook his head and, defeated, sighed. “Hell, I don’t know.”

“Then this is our last date.”

The thought didn’t upset him nearly as much as it should have. “It doesn’t have to be,” he said softly.

“Yes. It does. I don’t want to be with a man who wants to be with someone else.”

"I'm not seeing her now. I haven't seen her for over three months. I'm trying to forget her."

"Why? If you're having problems forgetting her, then maybe that means she's important in your life."

"She wants to get serious and I'm not ready for that."

"Is she a big woman?"

"Yes."

"Great. So I'm a double substitute. Just what I always wanted to be. Thanks a lot."

"It's not like that, Julie."

"Of course it is. You think because I'm a big woman I don't mind being used?"

"Used? How have I used you? Coming here and making love was your idea. You insisted."

"Oh, yeah. I forgot. I twisted your arm and forced myself on you."

He blushed. "I didn't mean that. If you're willing to try, we can get through this."

"I don't think so. Every time we had sex from now on, I'd tense up, waiting for you to call out her name instead of mine. And that's more trouble than I want from a relationship."

"You're overreacting, Julie," he growled.

"Really? Maybe so, but I don't want to see you anymore, Troy."

Were all full-figured woman so damned touchy? he thought grouchily. "What?"

"It's over." Julie stood up, closing her negligee over her breasts. "I'm sure you can find your way out."

He ran a hand through his hair, shrugged, and headed across the room. At the door, he paused and looked over his shoulder at her. "I am sorry, Julie. I never meant to hurt you."

"Thankfully you haven't. And I have no intentions of letting you hang around long enough to hurt me."

Chapter Eight

The next afternoon, Troy looked up when Rick walked into the office they shared. He knew that look on Rick's face. During the last twelve months when they'd been trying to get their own software design business off the ground, not much had gone smoothly. That was part of the reason he'd allowed Rick to talk him into going on the cruise where he'd met Angie.

He gave himself a mental shake. He was not going to start thinking about her again. Thoughts of her had already cost him a possible relationship with Julie. Enough was enough. He pushed away from his computer. "What now?"

Rick sank into the chair next to his desk. "Our website isn't going to be ready on time after all."

"What? Rick, we need the site up and running to attract new business."

Rick held up his hands. "Hey, bud. You're preaching to the choir."

"So what's the problem?"

"The problem is Mark had an accident. He's in the hospital. He's going to be all right, but he's going to be there awhile."

Troy ran a hand through his hair. "Any chance his partner can keep us on track?"

"No. He just handles the business end. He doesn't actually know much about designing websites."

He felt like punching something. "Great. Where does that leave us then?" He slammed a clenched fist down onto his desk. "Damn! Nothing is going right anymore."

Rick looked at him. "Things with Julie aren't going well, I assume."

He shook his head. "You assume correctly."

"So?"

"She doesn't want to see me again."

Rick shrugged. "Personally, I don't see the loss."

"What?"

"Oh, come on, Troy! What is it with you lately? Every woman you've taken out lately has been a little on the...hefty side, shall we say. Admittedly, Julie is a knockout looks wise, but like I said, she's a little...well, large. What happened to your long-legged, slender blondes?"

It seemed ages ago that he'd fantasized about such women. "Rick, I don't want to talk about my love life. I want to talk about Hunter and Markham Associates. Remember the business we're trying to get off the ground? I gave up a very well paying job to go solo. I need this to work."

"Relax, Troy. This is going to work. And let's not forget that I too gave up a lot to try this with you."

"So what are we going to do about our site?"

Rick grinned. "Oh, ye of little faith. I got it covered. We have a lunch meeting with a firm called "Web Designs For You" tomorrow."

"Web Designs For You? I've never heard of them. Who owns the firm?"

"An Angela Harding and a Corria Allen. I spoke to Ms. Harding and she assured me they can get the job done quickly." He reached into his inside jacket pocket and handed Troy a business card with a web address URL written on the back. "Take a look at their site. I checked their references and it seems they do good work."

He nodded. "Okay. Fine."

* * * * *

Troy arrived at the waterfront restaurant early for the lunch date with Angela Harding. He was given a table near the window. Once he was seated, he ordered a tonic water and sat studying the menu. He decided on a porterhouse steak and put the menu aside. Sipping his drink, he glanced idly around. He spotted a full-figured woman with long dark hair entering with a man and felt his heartbeat increase rapidly.

The woman turned and he saw her face. It wasn't Angie. His heartbeat returned to normal. Troy Boy, you'd better get a handle on this Angie business. When she wanted to get serious, you practically ran away from her. So get over her. She's history.

He glanced at his watch. 12:59. About time Angela Harding arrived. Not to mention Rick. He slipped his drink and looked around again. A woman with long dark hair wearing a dark conservative business suit with a briefcase over one shoulder strolled into the room and paused to talk to the maitre d'. She was full-figured and he immediately thought of Angie.

All right, Troy, don't start again.

He kept his gaze on her. When the maitre d' suddenly looked toward his table, the woman turned to look in his direction. He found himself looking into a pair of dark, beautiful eyes. Angie! His heart thumped, the muscles in his stomach clenched, and his throat felt dry. His Angie was Angela Harding?

After the first startled glance at him, she followed the maitre d' across the room, her expression impersonal. He rose as she and the maitre d' stopped at his table.

"Mr. Hunter, Ms. Harding."

The maitre d' seated her and withdrew.

For several moments they stared at each other in silence. There was a lump in his throat that felt as if it would choke him. He swallowed several times and wet his dry lips. "Angie."

"You're the Hunter behind Hunter and Markham?"

"Angie. Damn, it's good to see you."

She surprised him by reaching across the table to extend her hand. "Angela Harding, Mr. Hunter."

He took her hand. When he would have enclosed it in both of his, she quickly withdrew it.

She looked away. "I expected to meet Mr. Markham. Will he be arriving soon?"

"I haven't got a clue. He was supposed to be here by now." He sat back against his chair, staring at her.

She chewed that over for a minute then said, "In that case, why don't we start?" While he continued to stare at her in silence, she pulled out a laptop and her fingers began flying over the keys. After a few minutes, she turned the screen towards him. "Here's a few preliminary pages we've designed. While they are prelims, I think you'll find that they encompass all the key elements that Mr. Markham mentioned in our conversations.

"We've paid particular attention to ease of navigation as well as a simplified layout that will accomplish your two most important stated goals: enabling customers and potential customers to always know where they are on the site while having the ability to easily and readily submit their requirements online with as little inconvenience to them as possible."

She wanted this meeting to be strictly business while she pretended they'd never stayed up all night

making love? he thought angrily. As if they'd never meant anything to each other? Fine. He forced his gaze away from her face and onto the laptop screen. He studied the pages before him for several minutes while consulting his handheld to make sure that all the pages she'd designed met their requirements. They did. Roughly, but then they were prelims.

"So what do you think?"

That he wanted to send her roses, take her to dinner somewhere romantic, then take her home, and spend the night making love to and with her. He looked up at her. He could hardly say that to this woman. This was not the same woman who'd told him she was nearly in love with him. This woman was all business.

"Everything seems to be just as we want it," he murmured.

"Great." She flashed him a brief, impersonal smile. "Then perhaps you'd like to take a look at the contract we've drawn up."

He inclined his head slightly and she pulled a contract from her briefcase and handed it to him. He read through the document. Everything seemed to be in order—except the price. He looked up at her. "Your fee seems a little excessive for a company who advertises affordability as one of its selling points."

She flashed that cool smile at him. "That is one of our selling points—when we are not working under extreme deadlines, which is not the case here, Mr. Hunter. Mr. Markham indicated that you'd need the designs ASAP, which means we have to put other projects on hold to work on yours. Naturally, under those circumstances, we require additional compensation. Even so, we feel that our services are still very reasonable."

She paused and looked at him. "Of course if you disagree, we would still expect to be paid for the work we've already done, Mr. Hunter."

Troy clenched his jaw. If she called him Mr. Hunter one more time...

He shook his head. "No. You're right. We need the site up as soon as possible."

Angie nodded. "In that case, if you'll look at paragraph 3 of the contract you'll notice we require a 50% deposit at this time with the rest of our fee being due on delivery of the completed and approved website."

He glanced briefly at the contract before looking at her.

She delicately cleared her throat. "The contract is a standard one drawn up by a lawyer. I think you'll find everything in order. Of course, if you want to run it by your own lawyer before you sign—"

He shook his head. He'd spent a year and a half as a paralegal after graduating from college. "That won't be necessary." He signed both copies of the contract and handed one back to her along with a check.

Angie accepted both, anxious to leave. "Thank you." She forced a smile. "Do you have any questions?"

Oh, he had plenty of questions. Like how could she not feel anything after having made love to him so passionately? But he was not going to give her the satisfaction of behaving in anything less than a businesslike manner. "No."

She put her laptop away and stood up. "In that case, I'll get back to the office and get to work."

He rose too, surprised. "Back to your office? Right now? We haven't ordered yet. We were supposed to have lunch."

"That's not necessary now that we've concluded our business," she said a bit breathlessly.

“Angie, wait a minute—”

For a microsecond, she let down her guard and he found himself looking into the dark eyes he could happily drown in. “It was nice to see you again.” Her voice was soft and warm as it had been when she’d called him her sweet Troy.

He took a calming breath, then blew it out. “Angie, we need to talk.”

She shook her head, her expression hardening again. “No, we don’t. We said everything of a personal nature that we needed to several months ago. This is business, Mr. Hunter.”

“I know what this is,” he ground out, “but you can’t pretend that we’ve never meant anything to each other.”

“Who’s pretending?” Angie asked, a bit exasperated. She sighed. “I told you how I felt and you let me know you didn’t share my feelings in no uncertain terms. We went our separate ways with no intention of ever seeing each other again. End of story.”

He heard the undercurrent of pain in her voice and winced. “Angie, you’re jumping to conclusions. You don’t know how I feel.”

“And you know what, Mr. Hunter? How you feel or felt is totally irrelevant. We have nothing else to say to each other.” She hesitated. “Goodbye,” she said quietly.

Feeling as if he were making yet another mistake, Troy watched her walk away. He sank back in his seat, aware that his hands shook. Damn her! He glanced around for the waiter and lifted his hand.

“Sir? Are you ready to order?”

“I need a drink. Gin and tonic.”

“Would you like to order your meal now?”

He turned to look up at the waiter. He had to pause and take a breath to keep from snapping at the man. “I want the drink I just ordered. I’ll let you know when I want something else.”

“Yes sir.”

When the waiter placed the drink in front of him, he picked it up. He had it halfway to his mouth before he slammed it down on the table hard enough to make the drink spill out of the glass. He hadn’t had a drink since he’d been pulled over for suspicion of DUI five years earlier after attending Rick’s thirty-third birthday party. Although he’d passed the sobriety test, the experience had been so unpleasant that he’d decided that he didn’t need or want to drink anymore.

Damn if he was going to let her drive him to drink. He waved the waiter over.

“Sir?”

“Take this drink away and bring me another tonic water and a porterhouse with steak fries.”

“Anything else, sir?”

His cell phone rang. “No. Thank you.” He answered the phone. “Yes?”

“Troy, listen. I’m stuck in a traffic jam you wouldn’t believe. I tried to reach Web Designs For You by phone, but the secretary said neither partner was there. Can you handle the meeting with Angela Hunter?”

“I have handled the meeting with her. She showed me the preliminary site. It looked great. I signed the contract and gave her a deposit. Meeting adjourned.”

“Ah...okay. You want to tell me what’s wrong?”

His jaw clenched. “Nothing’s wrong.”

“Hey, Troy, I can hear that something’s wrong. What is it?”

“Nothing.”

Rick sighed. “Okay. Where are you?”

“At Danni’s.”

“Great. Let me have a word with Angela.”

“I said the meeting already adjourned. She left.”

“Already? Troy, it’s only twenty after. What did you two do, inhale your meal?”

“She left without eating.”

“Why?”

“I assume because she wanted to get started right away. Now if you don’t mind, here comes my steak. I’ll see you when I get back to the office.”

“Okay, but I’m going to want to know what’s wrong when I see you.”

“Nothing’s wrong,” he growled, then cut the connection. He hesitated, consulted his handheld, and then made a quick call.

Chapter Nine

Angie's heart was beating so hard and fast that she could barely breathe. Tears stung her eyes as she forced herself to walk away from Troy. She kept her composure until she made it to the ladies' room. Once there, she locked herself inside the first available stall, leaned her forehead against the door, and let the tears spill down her cheeks.

She allowed herself a few minutes to sob silently. Then she shook her head, wiped her cheeks, and pulled herself together. Leaving the stall, she washed her face and reapplied her makeup. The temptation to glance into the main dining room to see if Troy was still there was huge. She ignored it and quickly left.

She didn't doubt for a moment that he'd be willing to pursue a purely sexual relationship with her if she allowed it. But she needed more. And she wasn't going to settle for less than she deserved, even if every part of her body cried out for him. Even if her treacherous heart wanted to accept whatever crumbs of attention he might be willing to toss her way.

The fact that Frank had sought her out without having slept with her was proof that she'd been selling herself short. Okay, so she wasn't a size ten and she wasn't a beauty. Neither failing had been sufficient enough to stop Frank from asking her out several times. For that matter, Troy had been taken enough with her just as she was to be jealous of her having a platonic breakfast with Frank.

Corrie was right. It was time she got back into circulation. The next time a man asked her out, she wouldn't refuse just so she could sit at home and reminiscence about the lovely nights she'd spent in Troy's arms. Those nights with Troy had been a sweet fantasy come true, but now it was time to get back to reality.

The first order of business was getting Troy out of her system. Unfortunately, she'd found that was easier said than done. Still it had to be done.

Angie straightened her shoulders. She would do it.

* * * * *

Angie stopped at the bank to deposit the check Troy had given her before heading back to work. The office she shared with Corrie was located in the basement of the two-storied, three-bedroom twin house where she and Dan had moved just three months before his death.

"Jen, I'm back," she called out as she passed the small space where their secretary sat just outside the area where she and Corrie worked. "Where's Corrie?"

"She headed out for a late lunch, Ange. But she took her laptop with her, so she may not come back into the office today."

Angie nodded. "Okay. I'm going to get to work on the Hunter-Markham account. I don't want to be disturbed unless it's really important."

"Gotcha."

She slipped out of her heels and jacket. She poured herself a cup of coffee and settled down to work. An hour later, she sat in front of her computer, having accomplished absolutely nothing. She couldn't stop thinking about Troy. To see him after so many months and to feel all the desire and need overwhelm her again was disheartening. Was she ever going to not want him?

"Hellooo."

Startled, she turned to find Jen standing less than two feet away from her. "Oh. Sorry. I...I was engrossed in my...who are the flowers for?"

Grinning, Jen extended the huge bouquet of roses she held. "Aren't they lovely?"

"They sure are. Whose world have you been rocking?"

Jen grimaced. "Don't I wish. They're for you."

Angie pointed toward herself. "Me?"

Jen nodded and put the flowers on the desk near her computer. "Well, aren't you going to read the card?"

She stared at the flowers, biting her lip. Could they possibly be from Troy? No, that wasn't likely. Maybe they were from Frank. She couldn't imagine anyone else sending her flowers. Certainly not red roses. Then again, Troy had sent her red roses on the cruise.

"Go on, Ange. I'm about to die of curiosity."

"O-Okay," she said a bit hesitantly. She pulled the card from the middle of the roses. The breath caught in the back of her throat and her eyes filled with tears as she read the card.

Angie,

We have to talk. I need to see you.

Troy

"So? Who sent them?"

She blinked away tears and turned back to her computer. "Troy Hunter."

"Oh." Jen sounded disappointed, not realizing they had more of a history than having met only once earlier today. "So what...he just wanted to thank you in advance or something?" She shrugged. "Oh. Well, back to work."

Now there was an idea, Angie thought. She could actually do some work instead of daydreaming. She took a deep breath and forced herself to begin working. She could think about Troy later. When she lay sleepless in bed.

"Are you all right?"

Angie nodded and forced a smile. "I'm fine, Jen. Just a little tired."

"Can I get you a cup of coffee?"

She shook her head. "No. I'm fine. Really. But thanks."

* * * * *

"Are you going to tell me about her or not?"

Troy ran a hand through his hair and reluctantly turned to face Rick, who sat in the chair in front of his desk. "No."

"Will you at least admit that she's the same woman you've been eating your heart out for since the cruise?"

He frowned. He wasn't sure how Rick had determined that Angela Harding and his Angie from the cruise were the same woman. But he didn't want to talk about her. And if Rick dared to imply she was a bimbo, he was going to be picking himself up off the floor in short order. "I'm not admitting anything except that we both should be working instead of talking about my personal life."

"The thing is, Troy, you don't really have a personal life anymore. For a while there, I thought you

might be getting serious with Julie, but now she's history. She is history, isn't she?"

He nodded slowly, surprised that he felt no particular regret for his failed relationship with Julie. Having seen Angie again, he knew that Julie could never have meant anything to him. "Yes. It's over."

"And I'll bet that doesn't bother you."

"You'd rather my heart was broken?"

"There wasn't much chance of her breaking your heart. How could she when another woman already had your heart?"

About to take issue with Rick's statement, he shrugged instead. Why bother? If Rick wanted to think he was in love with her, so be it.

"You know, Troy, I think maybe you need to think about settling down."

He silently groaned. He didn't want to settle down just yet. Maybe. But when he did, he couldn't imagine being happy with anyone other than Angie. Only now he was no longer sure she was interested in him.

He pinched the bridge of his nose. "I don't recall asking for your advice Rick, and I don't want it. Okay? Do me a favor and stay out of my personal life."

"Get one and I'll be glad to stay out of it!" Rick shot back.

"Will you give it a rest?" he grumbled.

"Okay, Troy, but at the rate you're going, you're going to be useless as a partner. "

He slammed a clenched fist down on his desk. "I'll hold up my end of the deal. Just stay out of my personal life!"

* * * * *

"I don't understand why you're not dating, Angie. I know you're busy trying to get your business off to a good start, but you shouldn't ignore your personal needs in the process."

Angie stared at her reflection in the vanity mirror as she talked to her mother on the telephone. Her mother and father saw her through the eyes of doting parents. Both thought she had to fight the men off. And this despite the fact that she could count the number of dates she'd had in the last year on one hand. They had blinders on big time.

"Mom, I don't have much time for dating," she began, paused, took a deep breath, and spoke quickly. "Actually, Mom, I met a man on a cruise I took several months ago and—"

"He must be special. I can hear it in your voice that he's special." She smiled. "So tell me about him."

She could imagine her parents' reaction if they ever learned how she'd behaved on that cruise. "He...I really did like him, but I haven't seen him since then."

"Why not?"

She shrugged, hoping the gesture looked casual. "He didn't share my feelings."

"He didn't?" Her mother sounded shocked.

She looked over at the flesh colored object on her nightstand. "But it's all right, Mom."

"How can it be all right if you're in love with a man who doesn't love you?"

She swallowed several times. "Mom, don't worry about me. When the time is right, I'll meet someone

who shares my feelings.” Until then, she had her toy.

“Are you dating?”

Angie sighed. “Not at the moment, but when I have more time, I will. Listen, it’s late and I have a busy day tomorrow, so I’m going to hit the sack. Tell Dad I love him and I love you too, Mom.”

“We love you too, Ange. Good night, darling.”

“Night, Mom.”

She hung up the phone, took off her sheer nightgown, turned down her bedroom light, and crawled into bed. She reached over and picked up the flesh colored penis from her nightstand. Breathing deeply, she covered the thick length with oil and turned it on low. Parting her thighs, she lay back and drew the soft rod slowly along the length of her slit several times.

“Hmm.” Now that felt nice. Nowhere near as nice as the real thing, but it would do until she could do better. Sighing, she applied the buzzing head to the lips of her vagina.

She touched her breasts as she lightly ran the soft, jelly-like penis up and down the lips of her pussy. She started to feel warmth inside of her. Nice indeed. She adjusted the vibrations to medium and touched the tip to her clit. A jolt of pleasure resulted. She gasped.

Closing her eyes, she plunged the shaft into her pussy. Oh. Nice. She turned over onto her stomach with the penis still inside of her and began thrusting herself down on the vibrating, twisting shaft. Each time she felt the vibrator sink into her cunt, she moaned and pretended she was lying on top of Troy, fucking herself on his cock.

After several minutes of mindless gyrating and thrusting down on the wildly twirling shaft, her cunt clenched and pulsed, her stomach muscles tightened, and she came.

Sighing softly, she pulled the shaft from her saturated tunnel and tossed it into her nightstand drawer. She’d thoroughly clean it tomorrow. Now she just wanted to sleep. She turned off the lights and curled up with a pillow clutched against her chest. The ache in her was body satisfied, but the one in her heart remained unappeased. To ease that, she needed a man named Troy.

* * * * *

Troy couldn’t ever remember being so nervous. He’d never felt so gauche and unsure of himself, even as a fifteen-year-old on his first solo date. He glanced out his car window at the house he’d been sitting outside of for more than half an hour. It was now or never. He ran a hand through his hair, blew out a deep breath, and straightened his tie.

He got out of his car and quickly walked up the path to the door of the well-kept twin house on the quiet, tree-lined street. Wetting his lips and swallowing several times, he rang the bell.

It seemed to take an inordinate amount of time before he saw the light go on through the top panes of the decorative steel door. “Yes? Who is it?”

The voice was hushed, but he’d know that voice anywhere. His heart rate picked up but he kept his voice steady and firm. “Angie, it’s Troy.”

He heard what he thought was a quick inhalation. “Troy. What are you doing here? It’s nearly twelve in the morning.”

“I know it’s late and I should have called, but I need to talk to you. Please.”

“Troy, there’s nothing to—”

“Please, Angie.”

Silence. A lot of it. He sighed and began to turn away.

The door opened and he whirled back around. He caught his breath.

She stood in the doorway. Her long hair hung around her face in a dark, luxurious curtain. She wore a short, thigh-length sheer robe, under which he could see an equally sheer nightgown. The bottom ended halfway up her big, beautiful thighs, while the top stretched over her breasts.

One look at her and his dick hardened. Everything he’d planned to say and do was forgotten. “Oh, damn, Angie, I’ve missed you.”

He walked forward, reaching for her. He fully expected her to back away from him. Instead, she made a small, incoherent sound and allowed him to enclose her in his arms. Pushing the door closed with his foot, he tipped up her chin and brought his hungry mouth crashing down on hers. Her lips parted under his and he pulled her tongue into his mouth, greedily sucking on it.

He cupped her face between his hands and kissed her until his lungs felt as if they would burst from lack of air. Only then did he lift his head and look down at her.

Her eyes fluttered open and she stared up at him. “Why did you come?”

He caressed her cheeks. “Because I couldn’t stay away. Angie, I haven’t stopped thinking about you since the last time we saw each other.”

“Yeah. Right, Troy.” She pulled away from him. “I’m so unforgettable that you didn’t even bother to ask for my phone number. You had no intentions of seeing me after the cruise was over.”

“All right,” he admitted softly. “At the time I didn’t. But then I didn’t realize how much I would miss you either.”

She glanced away. “Miss me, Troy, or miss my pussy?” she murmured.

He shook his head. Damn her! Why did she always have to make everything so damn hard? Didn’t she realize how hard this was for him? “Let me clue you in on something, Angie,” he said, his jaw clenching. “I have never had a problem getting pussy from any woman I wanted it from. If all I missed was pussy, it’s readily and freely available.”

Her nostrils flared, the idea of him with another woman as upsetting as it was heart-wrenching. “Never had a problem? Well, there’s a first time for everything, Troy.” She reached passed him and pulled the door open. “Staring now. Good night.”

He stared at her.

She stared back, her chin tilted, her eyes cold. She was going to make him beg.

Swearing softly under his breath, he shoved the door shut and sighed. “Okay, Angie. You win. What do you want me to say? What do you want me to do?”

“Who says I want anything from you, Troy? I didn’t seek you out. You came to me.”

“And now you intend to make me swallow my pride?”

“You know what, Troy? I don’t give a damn about your pride!”

Now it was his nostrils that were flaring. “Then let me keep it intact.”

“You and your pride can get out of my house and my life!”

“Angie...I can’t forget you,” he said gruffly. “He extended a hand to her. ”Please.“

She looked away, shaking her head. "I still want what I want, Troy."

He pushed away from the door and put his arms around her, burying his face in her hair. "And I still want you as much as I did the first time I saw you. More now than ever. I can't begin to tell you how much I've missed you."

"Try anyway."

He lifted his head and looked down at her. "Let me stay and I'll spend the night doing just that."

She closed her eyes briefly. "And in the morning? Then what?"

"Can't we worry about that in the morning? Right now, I need you, Angie, like I've never needed another woman. I know that's not quite what you want to hear, but I can promise you that if you let me stay, there won't be anyone else. I'll be yours for as long as you want me."

She drew back and stared at him. "You'll be my what, Troy? My lover?"

"Yes."

"I told you I want a husband."

He sighed. "I know, but until you find one...why can't we make each other happy?" He opened her robe, exposing her large, beautiful breasts. He cupped them in his hands, massaging and caressing them. "Angie, I need to love you," he said hoarsely.

Even as she moaned and stumbled into his arms, she lifted her face to his. "Love is something two people who care about each other make. Do you want to love me or fuck me, Troy?" she challenged.

"It depends," he said coolly. "Which do you prefer?"

To his surprise, she sighed, shook her head, and then yanked his shirt free of his pants. He trembled as she ran her hands over his stomach and up his chest. "I think I'll take one of each."

Some of the tension in his shoulders dissipated. "Just one of each? My balls are awfully blue."

She treated him to a wicked smile, her dark eyes dancing with desire. "They won't be when I'm finished with you." She took his hand in hers and led him up the wide staircase to her bedroom.

Chapter Ten

Troy's heart hammered in his chest and his hands shook as he pulled off his clothes. Angie, having discarded her sheer nightgown and robe, sat on the big bed in the dimly lit bedroom watching, her bottom lip caught between her teeth.

When he was nude, he moved across the room to stand in front of her, his cock already fully erect. He leaned down and kissed her. Her lips parted under the pressure from his. The muscles in his stomach tightened and clenched when she reached out and began fondling his cock.

"Angie." Using his weight as a lever, he pushed forward, propelling her onto her back. When she lay flat, he quickly spread his body on top of hers, rubbing his aching cock against her mound. "Oh, God," he groaned. "I need you."

Her soft warm hands encircled his body, caressing and touching, holding him as she offered her sweet lips. "Troy." She stroked her hands down his back to clutch his buns. She shifted her body under his and his aching cock slipped between her thighs. "Please."

She applied gentle pressure against his dick and he shuddered and nearly came. Although he longed to drive his cock into her pussy with one greedy plunge, he was determined to make this night special for her. She had to understand that it wasn't just about sex. That meant holding onto his self-control until he was sure she was satisfied.

He drew out of her arms and sat back on his heels. "Condom?"

Her eyes fluttered open and she stared up at him. "What? Oh, Troy! Please don't tell me you didn't bring one."

"Oh, damn. I didn't. Does that mean you don't have one either?"

"Of course I don't have one. You think I just have them lying around? Why didn't you bring one?"

"Because I came to talk."

She lifted a hand and touched his cock, making it throb. "At twelve in the morning?"

He hissed. "It took me awhile to get up my nerve to ring your bell. I thought you'd refuse to see me."

"I should have. But tonight...right now..." Her fingers closed around his cock. "I just want you." She squeezed him. "Now."

His eyes drank in the sight of her. "I want you too, baby, but are you prepared to continue without a condom?"

She licked her lips. "Are you?"

He stretched his body out on hers. He showered her face and neck with kisses, trailing his lips down her throat to her breasts. He spent time licking and sucking at one large mound before turning his attention to the other. He lifted his head and looked down at her. "What I would like is to shove my cock into your sweet pussy and keep driving it in and out until I lose my mind. You have no idea what a turn-on the thought of coming in your unprotected pussy is."

She smiled. "Oh, I don't know about that. I could really get behind the idea of nothing between my pussy and your big, luscious cock."

He groaned. "Damn I'd love that, but we're both too old to behave so irresponsibly."

As he rolled off her, he spotted a small bowl on her nightstand. He lifted slightly and saw that it was filled with melting ice cream. He sat up and picked up the bowl. "Hungry?"

“A little.” She flushed. “A lot, but not for ice cream.”

“Well, if you don’t want it, I think I’ll have some.” Smiling, he leaned over her and began spooning the ice cream on her.

She let out a startled squeak. “Hey!”

“Hey yourself.”

She giggled as he spooned ice cream along her neck, on her breasts, down and across her stomach. Parting the pretty pink lips of her vagina, he poured the remaining ice cream into her cunt.

“Oooh!”

He put the empty bowl on the nightstand and, kneeling on his knees beside her, he peppered her lips with soft, feather light kisses. “You are so beautiful,” he murmured. “Beautiful and desirable.”

“Oh, Troy,” she breathed out. “I’m on fire.”

“So am I.” Stroking the side of her thigh, he leisurely began to lick the sticky, melting ice cream from her neck. “And I’m going to put the fire out for you, sweet.”

By the time he reached her nipples, she was moaning softly, her hands touching and caressing any and every part of his body she could reach. Because he knew how sensitive she was about her stomach, he spent several moments, licking, kissing, and nipping at the soft swelling mound. “I love your stomach,” he whispered, his cheek pressed against it. “I love the way it swells. I love that it’s soft and warm. I love everything about your body.”

“Hmmm. Oooh.”

He rose and reached for both pillows on the bed. “Lift your behind for me, sweet,” he urged.

When she obeyed, her eyes still closed, he pushed the pillows under her rear end and moved between her thighs. He pressed several quick kisses against her mound.

She moaned, lifting her hips slightly.

He settled between her thighs and gently parted the lips of her cunt. His nostrils flared and his cock hardened as he breathed in the unmistakable, musky aroma of her aroused pussy.

He touched the tip of his tongue against her clit.

“Ooooh.”

Smiling, he kissed the small, warm knob. He licked it clean of ice cream before he snaked his tongue inside her moist, hot flesh. Her hips jerked and she moaned. Wrapping an arm around one of her thighs, he took a deep breath, and eagerly began to eat her pussy, alternating between sucking her and licking his tongue along the entire length of her slit. He bit gently at her fragrant flesh, easing first one finger, then a second one into her. It only took a few minutes of finger fucking her and lapping at her cunt before she began shuddering. Her hips jerked wildly, her muscles squeezed and clamped down on his fingers as if it were his cock.

“Good...good...so good. So...oh my God...Trooooy!”

Pushing his face between her trembling legs, she came, overwhelming him with her scent. Removing his fingers from her, he closed his mouth over her quivering pussy. When her juices gushed from her climaxing tunnel, he eagerly lapped them up, savoring the taste of her hot, tangy fluids against his tongue as if it were fine wine. Snaking his tongue as deep into her as he could, he lost himself in the moist heat and scent of her cunt. He had never tasted or smelled anything so sweet or fragrant.

“Troy!”

After licking her clean of her juices, he pressed a final, greedy kiss against her pussy. With his cock about to burst, he rose and slid his body up hers. He rolled them onto their sides and pressed close, rubbing his aching cock against her thigh. “Touch me, sweet. Hold my cock. Damn, it’s aching. Touch me.”

Still trembling and moaning, she reached for his cock with both hands. He found her mouth and kissed her hungrily as she began pumping and massaging him. He was so horny that he came quickly, covering her hands and thighs with a load of semen.

Turning a warm, intimate smile on him, she slowly spread his cum over her stomach and her mound. She saved a last drop on her finger, which she popped into her mouth. “Hmm. Salty, but finger lickin’ good,” she told him wickedly. “One of these days, I’m going to have to get a big dip directly from the source.”

He groaned. “Anytime you want, sweet. Just say the word and my cock’s yours to do with as you like.”

“Hmm. If I weren’t so tired, I’d take you up on that generous offer. Right now, I need to sleep. But that was nice, Troy,” she murmured, burrowing against him.

It had been nice, but nowhere near as nice as a torrid fuck would have been or having her suck him dry. Still, any sex with her was better than with any other woman. He put his arms around her and held her. “It was, but next time I’m gonna need a healthy dose of your hot pussy,” he murmured.

She stiffened against him. His own body tensed. If she told him there would be no next time...

“Hmm.” She snipped his shoulder. “Just to make sure you don’t overdose, you’d better get a prescription and I’ll see what I can do about having it filled.”

He laughed and tipped up her chin to stare down into her dark eyes. The sudden, inexplicable desire to tell her he loved her stunned him. He didn’t love her, he told himself. He liked her. Way more than he was comfortable with. He wanted her—all the time and with a need he could no longer ignore or deny. He needed her pussy almost as much as he needed to breathe. Okay, so he wanted more from her than just sex. He wanted to be with her, to romance her, take her out dancing, watch Star Trek with her, have her sing I Will Always Love You to him, just sit looking at her. But he did not love her.

“Angie, I...”

“Hmm?”

He stroked her hair. “I...I missed you.”

She turned a sweet, warm smile on him. “I missed you too, Troy.”

“I was a fool to let you get away. I—”

She pressed a finger against his lips. “Hush. Before you say something you don’t mean.”

He removed the finger. “I mean whatever I say to you.”

She shook her head. “That’s your cock talking.”

“No, it is not!” He touched her face. “If I let my cock dictate to me, I would never have let you walk away from me on the cruise. I should have run you down, tossed you on the nearest lounge, and ravished you until you begged to become my love slave.”

“Yeah? You and what army?” she demanded, sleepily. “I gave my pussy freely to you on the cruise because I’d developed quite a taste for you and that big cock of yours, but don’t make the mistake of

thinking you can take it.”

“So you’re saying what?”

“That if you keep talking, I’m going to take some cock!” she warned.

“Oh. I see,” he teased. “It’s okay for you to talk of taking my cock, but not okay for me to talk of taking your pussy?”

“That’s the idea, big boy,” she murmured, pressing her face against his shoulder. “You got complaints? Write your congressman.”

He laughed and held her close. “Damn, Angie, but it’s good to be with you again.”

“Same here, big boy.”

Kissing and caressing each other lazily, they drifted off to sleep.

* * * * *

As she dressed for work the next morning, Angie bitterly regretted her weakness of the night before. She’d been a fool for Troy again. He turned up at her door without warning, admitted he didn’t want to be committed to her, and still she couldn’t spread her legs fast enough for him. She’d even been on the verge of letting him screw her without a condom.

“Well, this is it,” she told her reflection in her vanity mirror. “I’ve had it with you. He doesn’t want to commit, let him get his pussy somewhere else.” The thought of him inside another woman made her sick, but she hardened herself. “And just maybe you’ll get your cock somewhere else.”

Yeah. Right. She’d go to another man when hell froze over. But he didn’t have to know that. She thought of how he’d trembled in her arms, how tender he’d been. Telling her how beautiful she was, how much he loved her body just as it was, holding and kissing her until she fell asleep...

Her breath caught when she realized that it hadn’t been strictly sex for him. He had to feel some of what she felt. So it was up to her to make him admit it. But how?

She smiled suddenly, remembering his reaction on having previously found her having breakfast with Frank. It was time Troy Hunter learned hell had no fury like a woman determined to make a man admit his feelings for her.

Still grinning, she picked up her briefcase and left her bedroom for the basement office. Jen and Corrie were both already there.

“Morning,” she called, settling down at her computer.

“Good one to you,” Jen called back.

Corrie turned to grin at her. “Somebody had a good night, I see.”

She forced herself not to blush. She and Corrie had been through too much together for her to be easily embarrassed. “A very good night,” she admitted. “What about you?”

Corrie shrugged and turned back to her computer. “I stayed up late working.”

“No date?”

“I had one, but I cancelled it.” Corrie turned back to face her. “It’s going to take a while to get over Jermane. Every time I see a tall black man, my heart starts beating to beat the band. And when I realize it’s not him, I feel so...let down. Empty. I think I went and fell in love with him.”

She sighed. She knew the feeling. “Is there anything I can...do?”

Corrie shook her head. “No. I just need a little time.” She smiled suddenly. “But I’m glad your Troy has finally seen the light.”

She shrugged. “He hasn’t—yet. He still wants no commitments.”

Corrie gaped at her. “And you’re okay with that?”

“No. I’m going to have to change his mind.”

Corrie leaned forward. “Yeah? What are you going to do?”

Angie grinned. “He has a jealous streak two miles wide. I’ll just have to exploit it.”

“How? With Frank?”

She shook her head. “No. Not with Frank.” She had a feeling that given just a little encouragement, Frank could easily become a stalker. No way was she was going to try to use him. Besides the fact that it wasn’t nice. “I was thinking of hiring a male escort and let Troy think he’s my new man.”

“Sounds wicked and yummy.” Corrie arched a brow. “And expensive.”

“I know, but it’s all I can think to do.”

“Is he worth all the trouble?”

She remembered their night together. How wonderful it had been to fall asleep in his arms and be awakened at dawn to find him between her legs, kissing her pussy.

“How about a little lovin’ to start the morning off right?” he’d whispered.

She’d eagerly parted her legs and he’d given her a slow, but utterly delectable finger and tongue fuck. Then he’d rolled her over onto her stomach, put his cock between her buns and rubbed back and forth until she’d felt him coming on her back.

They’d kissed and fallen back to sleep. When she had awoken again, he’d been gone. “Yes, he’s worth it,” she told Corrie.

“Then you go, girl!”

Later that afternoon, she was alone in the office, trying to get up the nerve to call the first of the escort services she’d chosen. When Jen came into the room, she jumped guiltily, and slammed the telephone directory shut. “Jen! You startled me!”

“Sorry.” She glanced at the directory. “Can I look up something for you?”

“No! Thanks. No.”

“Ookay. Ah, Mr. Markham is here to see you.”

She looked at Jen in surprise. “Rick Markham?”

Jen nodded. “Shall I send him in or tell him you’re busy?”

“No. I’ll be out to the reception room in a moment.” She shoved her feet into her heels, reluctantly pulled the jacket of her dark suit on, and followed Jen to the small reception area at the front of the office.

A tall man with blond hair and dark green eyes rose as she approached. He smiled, extending his hand. “Rick Markham.”

She smiled. “Angela Harding.” She nodded at the chair he’d vacated and they both sat. “What can I do for you, Mr. Markham?”

"I think we need to talk, Angie."

Her smile vanished. She had no idea what he was about to say, but something inside of her tummy clenched and knotted. "If you don't mind, I'd, uh, prefer to be addressed as Ms. Harding, Mr. Markham," she said dumbly.

His eyebrows shot up. "That sounds a little formal."

"Our relationship is formal."

He half turned in his chair so that he was looking directly at her. "Your friends and the guys you meet on love boats call you Angie, don't they?"

She rose and put several feet between them. Her breath came out in a rush. "I don't understand."

He shook his head and slowly rose. "Please don't be alarmed. As you know Troy Hunter and I are partners."

"Mr. Hunter. Yes. We, uh, met yesterday at Danni's."

"Hmm, I'm thinking you two had met before then. Like several months ago on a cruise to nowhere but love. You were on that cruise, weren't you?"

She didn't answer.

"I'll take that as a yes. Now that I've met you, I can see why he couldn't forget you."

She felt betrayed. Troy had told him about her? "Is that...is that what he told you?"

"No, he didn't. I can't get him to talk about you."

Her hand swept about absently. "Then I fail to see what you're doing here."

Rick studied her face. "I think it's time you and I had a heart-to-heart talk."

She bit down onto her lip. "We don't have anything but business to discuss, Mr. Markham."

He sighed. "I was hoping you wouldn't say that. You see, Troy is more than my business partner. He's my best friend."

And he had told this man...this stranger about their short-lived relationship? Maybe even about spending the night with her? She nervously twirled several strands of hair around her fingers. "How would that be of concern to me, Mr. Markham?"

"I think you and I can help each other. I know this might sound strange, but if you'd just give me a half an hour of your time, I can explain."

Angie hesitated. "I doubt that very much."

Rick smiled slightly. "How can you be so sure before you've heard me out?" He held up his palms. "Trust me, I don't think you'll be sorry if you'll agree to hear me out."

She licked her lips. "Okay, but—"

"All I need is a few minutes of your time. If you still want me to leave after that, I will. Deal?"

She sighed. "I really—"

"Oh, come on. What do you have to lose accept a few minutes?"

She hesitated, but in the end nodded. "Okay. I'll hear you out. Then I'll want you to leave."

He smiled. "We'll see."

Chapter Eleven

Troy rose slowly from his desk and crossed his office to stare down at Rick, who sat in the lone chair in front of his desk. "You have a date tonight with who?"

Rick behaved as though nothing was amiss. "Angie Harding."

Troy clenched his hands into fists at his side. "What's going on here, Rick? What are you trying to prove?"

His eyebrows shot up. "Prove? Nothing. When I realized I needed to talk to her or her partner, I stopped by their office after lunch. You know I've never met her, so I'd never realized how very attractive a large woman could be. We got to talking and one thing led to another and the next thing I knew we had a date." He smiled, displaying neat white teeth.

Troy wanted to smash those neat white teeth. He felt the blood rush to his head. He went back to his seat and took several slow deep breaths. "One thing led to another? What the hell does that mean?" he growled.

Rick shrugged. "You know."

"No," he ground out. "No, I don't know! Did you...touch her?"

"Why do you ask? She told me you didn't want to get serious and that there was nothing between you two but sex." He waved a hand about dismissively.

Troy wanted to break that hand. "She said what?" he barked.

"Well, isn't that how it is between you? You go to her when you want sex, but you don't want her thinking she has a real chance with you."

He slammed a fist down on his desk. "No, that is not how it is between us! You think I just want to use her for sex?"

"Doesn't matter what I think, Troy. It's what she thinks that counts."

"She doesn't think that. She knows better than that."

Rick's face scrunched up. "Yeah? Exactly how? Have you told her how you feel?"

"How I feel is none of your damned business!"

"You're right. And who I go out with is none of yours." Rick grinned. "She told me I reminded her of her late husband."

Oh that was just too much. Troy's nostrils flared. "How the hell can you remind her of him? You're blonde, he was dark. He was sweet, kind, funny, and perfect. And I'm sure he didn't go around stabbing his friends in the back. You are nothing like him!"

Rick shrugged, ignoring the last statement. "Oh, I don't know. She just said I reminded her of him. She made it sound like a compliment. Don't tell me she told you the same thing?" he asked, feigning hurt.

"No!"

"No? Well, in any case, I asked her if you'd mind our going out together and she said no. So I asked her out. There's the story."

Troy wanted to kill that story. About to explode, he forced himself to take several deep breaths. This was obviously a plot of Angie's to whip him into shape. Well, it wouldn't work. He wasn't going to allow her to goad him into something he wasn't ready for.

He shrugged, trying to project an air of nonchalance he didn't quite feel. "Fine. She's free to see whomever she likes. If that includes you, so be it."

Rick nodded. "I told her you'd say that."

The desire to smash his fist in Rick's overly confident face was difficult to overcome. "If you don't mind, I'd just as soon not talk about her," he growled.

"Is there something you want to tell me about how you feel about her? You know if it was serious between you two, I wouldn't go anywhere near her. But if you're not serious, why shouldn't I see her?"

Because she's mine! he wailed on the inside. "No reason at all," he bit out. Troy glanced at his watch. "Now, if you don't mind, I think I'll get back to work."

"Fine, but I think you should know that when I told her about the cocktail sip next weekend, she asked if she could come. Of course I said yes. So after our clients are gone, we'll stay for dinner and then maybe go somewhere to dance."

"Why the hell should I care what you do or who you do it with?"

"Okay, just thought you should know. I wanted to be fair."

"Fine. You've been fair. Pat yourself on the damn back and leave me to get back to work."

"You're sure you don't mind?"

"I'm positive."

Long after Rick strolled out of his office—whistling no less!—Troy sat staring out of the window. His chest felt tight and his heart ached.

How could she? How could she make a date with Rick or any other man after spending the night with him? The day that had dawned so bright and blissful because he'd spent the night before with Angie, now felt heavy and oppressive.

Damn her! If she thought he was going to sit still and allow her to sleep with Rick or any other man, she'd better think again. But he wasn't going to give her the satisfaction of knowing that he was jealous.

Later that night as he was about to leave the office, the front door opened and Angie walked in. She wore a sleek black dress that clung to her breasts and swirled around her calves when she moved. She looked absolutely stunning.

She paused when she saw him, then shrugged, and smiled. "Hi, Troy."

"Angie! What are you doing here?"

"What am I...oh. I'm here to pick up Rick."

Just for a moment, he longed to sweep her into his arms and tell her she was his and he wouldn't stand for her seeing other men. But that would be playing into her hands. And he had no intentions of doing that.

He nodded towards the closed door behind the empty reception desk. "Rick's office is the first one on your right."

She smiled. "We have a date tonight."

He nodded. "I know. He told me."

She stared expectantly up at him. "He thought you might mind, but I told him you wouldn't."

He closed his briefcase. "And you were right. We've both free to see whomever we like."

Her shoulders slumped, though he didn't see that. "That's right."

"So. Ah, listen. I have to go. Have a good time." He flashed her a smile and hurried quickly from the office.

In his car in the parking lot, he leaned his forehead against the steering wheel. Don't lose it, now, Troy. Nothing is going to happen between her and Rick tonight. Nothing.

Nevertheless, he had trouble sleeping that night. He spent several hours resisting the urge to call Rick's apartment to see if he was home before finally falling asleep.

* * * * *

"And pray tell, how was your date last night?"

Angie looked up as Corrie waltzed into their work area with a huge smile on her beautiful face. "Never mind about me. What about you? Corrie, you look...happy."

"I am happy!" She hugged herself. "Oh, Ange! You'll never guess what happened."

She smiled into Corrie's sparkling eyes. "Oh, it's just a shot in the dark, but I'm thinking you must have heard from a tall, dark, hunk by the name of Jermane."

Corrie laughed and rushed across the room to hug her. "Yes! How did you know?"

"Are you kidding? You're grinning like the Cheshire Cat. So tell me. What did he say? What took him so long to call?"

"He lost my number."

"So how did he find you?"

"He hired a private detective! Showed me the receipt and everything. Oh, Ange! Isn't that the most romantic thing you've ever heard?"

She nodded. "Actually, I think it is." She swallowed over the lump in her throat. "He must really like you."

"Oh, Ange. I...I think he might more than like me."

Angie smiled. "Oh Corrie, that's wonderful. I'm so happy for you."

"He lives fifty minutes away, in the next development just off I-95. He's picking me up after work and we're going to spend the night together. Isn't that wonderful?"

"Yes. Yes, it is!"

"Now, if we can just whip your guy into shape."

She sighed. "That might not be as easy as I thought it would be."

"He won't be able to hold out against you."

"Why not?"

"Why not? Look at you—you're beautiful."

"Beautiful? You're either drunk or blinded by love," she muttered.

Corrie laughed. "I think I'm both and Ange, it's wonderful."

* * * * *

Angie found it difficult to concentrate on work that day. Just before twelve, she decided she'd pick up a sandwich from the deli in the next block and spend an hour at a park three blocks away. Since both Corrie and Jen were out of the office, she put on the answering machine.

As she crossed the floor to the door, it opened and Troy walked in. He looked as though he hadn't slept well last night. Good.

Her heart started beating against her chest so hard, she was nearly breathless. But she didn't let it show as she offered him a cool smile. "Troy, what a surprise. What can I do for you?"

He glanced at her and leaned back against the closed door. "I came to ask you to have lunch with me."

He wanted to take her out! She resisted the urge to giggle. "That's very nice. When did you have in mind?"

"Now," he barked.

She jumped. Nope. Definitely not sleeping well. "Oh. I'd love to have lunch with you—another time. I'm afraid I can't make it today."

He grunted. "Why not?"

"I already have plans."

"With Rick? I see." His eyes narrowed. "He came into the office today in a very good mood."

"Did he? Well, we had a nice time last night. He's a very...interesting man."

"Did you two..."

One of her eyebrows rose and fell. "If you're wondering whether or not we spent the night together..."

"I'm not!"

"Good because it's none of your concern." She forced a smile. "Nevertheless, I hope you'll ask me out to lunch again some time."

His nostrils flared. "So you can turn me down again? Don't count on it, Angie."

"You're overreacting," she breathed out.

Troy turned and left without another word. She sank down at the receptionist desk, abruptly no longer interested in going to the park or in eating. She hesitated before picking up the phone.

"Hunter and Markham Associates," a pleasant voice announced in her ear.

"This is Angela Harding. I'd like to speak to Mr. Markham, please."

When she heard Rick's voice on the line, she spoke. "Troy just left here. He asked me out to lunch."

"And you said?"

"That I had other plans. And he assumed I meant that I had a date with you."

"How did he react to that thought?"

"Fine," she said gloomily.

"Chin up, Angie. Don't lose hope."

That was easier said than done, but it was all she could do. "Chin up," she repeated on a sigh.

"In the meantime, I'm on my way."

Her forehead crinkled. "You're on your way? Here?"

“Yes. You did imply we had a lunch date. Why not make it true?”

She hesitated. “Oh. Well...I am rather busy.”

He laughed. “I’m on my way. Please be ready.”

* * * * *

A week later, as Troy stood across The Garden Room of Romano’s watching Angela cling to Rick’s arm, his insides twisted into painful knots. She wore a dark blue dress that hugged her breasts before falling into graceful folds around her beautiful calves. The thought that Rick might be taking the dress off of her later that night sent him storming across the room towards them.

“Angie! I need to talk to you.”

She turned to look at him, a brief, impersonal smile on her face. “Troy. Rick and I were just about to leave. Can’t it wait?”

“No,” he seethed. “It can’t.”

She glanced at Rick. “Do you mind?”

He shook his blonde head. “I’ll have a drink in the bar while you have a word with Troy. Okay?”

She nodded. “Okay.” She watched Rick walk away before turning to face him. “What did you want to talk about, Troy?”

His hand slashed through the air. “I’ve had enough of this nonsense.”

She blinked. “What nonsense?”

He gritted his teeth. Goddamn but she could make him crazy like no other woman! “This whole ridiculous nonsense of your pretending to date Rick. Hasn’t this gone on long enough? What are you doing here with my partner and so-called best friend?”

She crossed her arms over her breasts. “You said you didn’t want to be tied down.”

He shook his head. “And you think Rick is ready to settle down?” he asked incredulously.

She shrugged. “I don’t know and frankly I don’t care.”

“What?”

“Who says I want anything from him other than his body?” She flashed him a cool smile and started away.

He reached out, caught her arm, and turned her back around to face him. “What? You’re telling me you plan to sleep with him?”

“How do you know we haven’t already slept together?” she whispered.

He didn’t. And the thought had been eating at him nearly every waking moment for the last week and a half. He swallowed against the lump in his throat. “Have you?” he asked hoarsely.

She hated doing this to him, but it needed to be done. Rick had convinced her of that fact, if nothing else. “No, but only because we’re waiting for the right moment.”

Troy’s body stilled. “You plan to sleep with him?”

She shrugged. “If he’s willing, why not?”

“Because if all you want is sex, I’ll give you as much as you want.” He used his free hand to run it down her backside and squeeze.

She shuddered, but shook her head and tugged at her arm. “You’re going to leave bruises.”

He released her arm, but stepped in front of her. “Angie, I know what you’re trying to do and you should know by now that it’s not going to work.”

“What won’t work?”

“Using Rick to try to make me jealous.”

“You’re flattering yourself, Troy. Being with you has reawakened my sexual appetite. I want sex—pure and simple. I can’t do sex with no strings attached with you. You know I have...feelings that get deeper every time we sleep together. But I can do meaningless sex with Rick very easily—and often.”

His nostrils flared. “He’s not going to sleep with you.”

She lifted her chin, her dark eyes glinting angrily at him. “Why not? As you pointed out not all men are turned off by full-figured women.”

“That’s not what I meant!” He touched her arm. “You know it’s not.”

“Then what did you mean?”

He glanced around them, aware that more than one person stared in their direction. Troy, tonight is supposed to be about business. Not about trying to keep Angie out of Rick’s bed. “He won’t sleep with you.” At least he wouldn’t if he didn’t want his head knocked off.

“Then you have nothing to worry about, Troy.” She turned a bit on her heel. “Good night.”

“Angie! Wait a minute.”

She stopped, turning back around to face him. “Yes?” Her dark eyes roamed over his face. “Is there some reason I shouldn’t leave with him, shouldn’t sleep with him tonight?”

He looked frantic. “I don’t want you to.”

“I know you don’t, but why don’t you want me to?” she murmured.

“You know I want you.”

“Yes, I do know that, Troy. And you know I want more than that. If you’re not prepared to give it to me, why don’t you just leave me alone?”

He touched her arm. “Angie, I could...we could be...happy together. You know that.”

She shook her head. “No, I don’t.”

His eyes bore into hers. “You have to know it whenever we’re together. Whenever we make love.”

Angie sighed. “You mean that you could be happy, Troy. I admit that you could and do satisfy me physically every time we make love, but that’s not enough.”

“Why the hell not?” He bit back the urge to say she always seemed plenty happy when they made love.

“Because I know there’s something more, something better,” she said softly. “I know how utterly fulfilling a real, total, complete commitment feels. I knew I could and did fulfill all Dan’s needs and he mine.”

He sucked in a breath and spoke quickly. “You do that for me too, Angie.”

Her eyes narrowed. “Then why can’t you do it for me, Troy?” she demanded. “Do you want to be with other women?”

“When we made love the last time, did it feel like I wanted to be with other women?” he asked

hoarsely.

“No, but I don’t know what you want from me.”

“I just want to be with you.”

“Regardless of what my needs are?”

“No.”

“Then why are we having this conversation? You know what my needs are.” Her lips trembled. “Why can’t you fulfill them?”

The pain in her eyes and voice touched a cord somewhere deep inside him. He slid his hand down her arm and linked his fingers with hers. “Don’t you think I want to make you happy?”

“I don’t know. Do you?” she challenged.

He lifted her hand to his mouth and kissed her fingers. “Yes! I do.”

“Then what’s the problem?”

“There is no problem. I’m just not ready to make this big commitment that you seem to want...now.”

She pulled her hand away. “Fine. Then leave me alone now. Because I am ready—now.”

He threw up his hands, exasperated. “How is spending the night with Rick going to change anything?”

Her chin went up a notch. “I’m getting you out of my system, Troy. Even if I have to sleep with every willing man in the city to do it.”

He recaptured her hand. “Angie! You just met Rick. I know you’re not going to sleep with him.”

“Why not? I let you screw me the night we met. And I’ve already known him well over a week.”

“That was different,” he growled.

She nodded. “Yes. And so is this. He reminds me of Dan. When I close my eyes, I’ll pretend he’s Dan.”

“Pretend he’s Dan?” He stared at her. “Is that what you did when we made love? Did you pretend I was Dan?”

“Does it matter?”

“Yes, it matters! I am not Dan!”

She snatched her hand from his. “Damn straight you’re not!”

He felt as if she’d knocked the air out of his lungs. “What? You want me to compete with your perfect Dan?”

“No! I want you to leave me the hell alone!” She turned and walked quickly away.

He started after her, then came to an abrupt halt.

Okay, Troy Boy. Don’t lose it. She’s messing with your head. So you’re not perfect like Dan. That hasn’t stopped her from falling for you. She’s just admitted she’s practically in love with you. There’s no way she wants you to leave her alone and there’s sure as hell no way she’s going to sleep with Rick. And even if she were so inclined, he wouldn’t. He knows enough of how you feel about her not to sleep with her.

Troy let her go and forced himself to mingle. When he glanced up and saw her and Rick heading for

the exit an hour later, he gritted his teeth, but didn't follow them. Rick would not touch her.

He wasn't so sure several hours later, when neither she nor Rick answered their phones. And when he drove past Rick's condo, his car wasn't there. Firmly in the grip of a jealous rage he could barely control, he drove to her house.

His heart beat an angry tattoo against his chest. Not only was Rick's car parked in her driveway, but the light in the second floor front room, her bedroom, was out. His hands shook so hard, he turned his engine off and sat forward, his head pressed against his steering wheel.

He sat outside her house for over an hour, until twelve-thirty when he finally realized that Rick really was going to spend the night. He began to sweat. Rick was actually sleeping with his woman—his Angie. Even now Rick, who never went anywhere without several condoms, was probably in her pussy—a pussy that was rightfully his. And his alone.

He drove home and fell across his bed fully dressed, the muscles in his stomach clenching, his chest feeling as if a giant band had been wrapped tightly around it making it difficult to breathe. How could they do this to him? How?

He tried to sleep, but he couldn't stop thinking about Rick and Angie together. The knowledge that he'd driven her into Rick's arms made it worse. All she'd asked from him was a commitment. Why hadn't he given it to her? It wasn't as if he wanted to see or sleep with anyone else. He'd lost all desire for other women after making love to her for the first time.

The thought of one day settling down with a tall, willowy blonde no longer held any appeal. There was only one woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with and have bear his children. Now, thanks to his stupidity and pride, he was going to have to try to romance her away from Rick. After he decked him.

The fact that he didn't even consider not trying to win her back, knowing she'd slept with Rick, was the surest indicator he needed that his fancy free days were over. His heart belonged to Angie. And come hell or high water, he was going to get her back.

Now.

Right now.

Chapter Twelve

After speeding over to Angie's house, Troy sat outside for several minutes, breathing in deeply, trying to get his temper under control. He glanced out of his car window and saw that her bedroom light was still out. It was now nearly three a.m. She and Rick were probably sleeping after spending hours in each other's arms.

Well it was time to get the hell up. He got out of his car and stormed up the path to her front door. Boy, wouldn't he love to kick it in and give Rick a backhand he'd never forget! Backhand hell. He was going to knock him flat on his ass.

He pressed his finger against the bell and held it there. He could hear the loud, clear peeling in the quiet night. He clenched his other hand into a fist. He was about to start pounding on the door when he saw a light go on in the foyer. He kept his finger on the bell.

Moments later the door was wrenched open. Rick, dressed in a pair of briefs, stood there grinning at him. "Troy. What are you doing here?"

"I've come to kick your ass!"

"I was afraid of that. But before you lose it completely, let me tell you that this is not what it looks like." Rick lifted his hands and backed away from the door. "Now, don't lose your temper, Troy."

He followed Rick inside and slammed the door shut. "Don't lose my temper?" He advanced on Rick, who backed against the nearest wall. "You, my so called best friend, sleep with my woman and then tell me not to lose my temper?"

"Your woman? That's news to me, Troy. Last I heard you weren't ready to commit."

At the sound of Angie's voice, he swung around. She stood at the top of the steps. Her hair was down and she wore a cotton nightshirt that ended halfway up her thighs. God, she looked lovely.

Forgetting his desire to deck Rick, he walked over to the stairs and stared up at her. "Angie! How could you do this?" His voice shook. He stopped. He sounded desperate and needy. Hell, he was desperate and needy. "How could you sleep with him knowing how I feel?"

Her eyes widened. "But that's just it, Troy. I don't know how you feel. You've never bothered to tell me anything except that you're not ready to give me what I need from you."

He sucked in a breath. He could barely breathe. He felt as if his heart was shredding. "You shouldn't have done this, Angie!"

She lifted her chin. "Why not?"

He ran up the stairs and clutched her arms. "Because you're mine! You are mine, Angie. Mine."

She pulled away from him. "I am not yours. You've made it plain that you're not interested in anything but an occasional fling."

"That's not true." He swallowed slowly. "You know it's not."

She hesitated. "How could I know that?"

His nostrils flared. "Fine. I admit that I haven't been as forthcoming as I should have been. What do you want from me?"

"The truth!"

He spread his hands. "I...okay. What's the use? I can't help how I feel."

“And how is that? What do you feel, Troy?” she whispered.

He shrugged, glancing away. “I love you,” he murmured.

“Oh, my God, Troy!” Her eyes welled with tears that quickly spilled down her cheeks. “Do you mean that?”

He pulled her in his arms and buried his face in her hair. “It’s all right. You don’t have to cry. You shouldn’t have slept with him, but I can overlook it and forgive you.” His teeth gritted. God he had it bad.

She stiffened and pulled away from him. Her dark eyes glittered angrily as she wiped at her damp cheeks. “I don’t need your forgiveness, you big, clueless jerk! I did not sleep with him!”

“What?” He turned and looked down the foyer.

Rick, still leaning against the wall, shook his head. “Come on, Troy! Get real, man. Where are those supposed brains of yours? Do you really think I’d betray you by sleeping with your woman?”

He shrugged. “I never told you how I felt about her.”

Rick sighed, long and martyr-like. “You didn’t have to, man. I’ve known ever since we came back from the cruise that you were in love with her.”

“Really?” Angie’s voice fairly dripped with acid. “I wish someone had told me he was in love with me.”

“I think this is my cue to skidoo,” Rick said. “Back to the living room sofa for me.”

Back to the sofa? Troy blew out a breath. He’d been right after all. Angie and Rick’s so called dates had been designed to bring him to heel. And bring him to heel they had. He’d been played like a damn fiddle. But, strangely, he no longer cared. Not as long as Angie was the one wielding the bow.

Troy watched Rick disappear down the hall before he turned back to face Angie. “Would you like some cheese to go with all your whining?” he asked, smiling.

“What I would like is some cock.” Lifting her nightshirt, she took his right hand and pressed it against her pussy. “You know where I can get some?”

His cock hardened as he dipped a finger into her warm channel. He leaned forward and kissed her soft lips. “Depends,” he teased. “You got a prescription?”

“Yes,” she breathed the word against his lips.

“Where is it?”

She pulled away and nodded towards her bedroom. “I’ll show you.”

He followed, pulling his clothes off as he went. By the time they reached the middle of the room, they were both naked. She lay on the bed, staring up at him with dark eyes full of desire. “Well? What are you waiting for? An engraved invitation?” She tapped a finger against her dark mound. “Well, here it is. Come and get it.”

He joined her on the bed, slowly running his hands over her body. “You are so beautiful,” he whispered, kissing her shoulders.

She ran her hands through his hair. “Oh, Troy, I wish I was beautiful and slender for you.”

He lifted his head and stared down at her. “You are beautiful. And as for being slender, I love that there’s was so much of you. Everything is big: your breasts, your legs, and of course, your lovely behind. Everything except your pussy, which is exquisitely small and tight.”

He slid his body over hers and kissed her slowly, warmly. "I adore you, Angie Harding—just the way you are. I wouldn't trade a single ounce of you for a million bucks."

"It's just as well, since I'm sure no one is waiting in line to give you a dollar, let alone a million bucks for me," she teased.

He laughed and hugged her. "Good. That means I get to keep you all to myself."

She stroked her hands down his back to his buns and his cock hardened. "Troy, are you sure you want me...all of me...just as I am?"

"Yes!" He lifted his head and sighed. "I know I'm not Dan, but I'm just as capable of loving you as he was."

She caressed his face. "I don't want you to be him, Troy. I loved him with all my heart...just as I love you. I don't expect you to be another Dan. I love you, Troy—just as you are. I only want and need a man who loves me just as I am."

"That would be me," he murmured.

Angie smiled. "Troy, my sweet, sweet, Troy. Make love to me."

"Actually, I thought you might want to make love to me." He released her and rolled onto his back. As he did, his cock popped up.

Her eyes gleamed and she licked her lips. "I don't have a condom."

He reached out and touched her mound. "Why do we need one? I haven't been with anyone without wearing one in years. Have you?"

She shrugged. "No."

His eyes roamed over her body. "If you don't mind the idea of having my baby," he murmured, "then we don't need one, do we? We're committed to each other now."

"I've been committed to you since the moment we first made love." She stroked his face. "Make love to me, my Troy."

He grasped his cock in one hand and held it up. "Stop talking and climb aboard, sweet."

Angie grinned, then moved over him and lowered her body to his. As the head of his cock slipped into her body, he gripped her hips. Groaning, he pulled them down so that she was completely impaled on his cock. "Shit!"

She leaned down and kissed his lips as he gasped for breath, fighting for control. "You like that, big boy? There's more coming. Lot's more coming, my Troy. Next stop...paradise."

He shuddered and nearly came. God, it had been so long since he'd been in her sweet, heated pussy. And he'd never been skin to skin with her like this. He wanted to talk to her, tease her, whisper how much he needed her as they made love. But the sensations emanating from his cock engulfed him, overwhelmed his senses, and shut out the world. There was just him and the beautiful woman he loved, gyrating her hips and gleefully riding his cock, cupping his balls, nibbling at his nipples. He couldn't think, could only feel. He couldn't hold on.

He gripped her behind and held her still, as he pumped his cock up into her pussy, over and over, harder and harder until he blew his load. As he did, he was relieved to feel her cunt began to quiver and spasm around him. The intensity of his climax left him emotionally drained, but he kept thrusting into her until she gasped and collapsed onto his body.

They lay there for several long moments, trembling and shuddering together. Finally, the ability to think coherently returned. He stroked a hand down her back. “Ah, shit that was good!”

“Too good,” she murmured, rubbing her cheek against his shoulder.

He laughed, cupping a hand against the back of her neck. “Angie, you are everything I ever wanted in a woman.”

“Really?” She climbed off of him and lay beside him. “I think you mean that.”

“I do.”

She propped her chin on her elbow. “Then why was it so hard for you to admit how you feel?”

He sighed and turned to face her. “When we met, I didn’t plan on settling down for another year or two. Falling in love was not in my immediate game plan. I knew I liked you more than any woman I’d ever met, but...I didn’t want to settle down.” He sighed. “Sounds kinda stupid now that I say it out loud,” he grumbled.

She grinned. “Why didn’t you want to settle down?”

“Have you ever heard a country song, I think it’s called Long Line of Love?”

She nodded. “Yes. The guy talks about how his father and grandfather are still in love with his mother and grandmother.”

“Well that’s the view Hunter men have of love and marriage. When we fall in love, it’s with the idea of staying married and in love for life. My father is still in love with my mother after forty years of marriage. I wanted to play around for a year or two before I settled down for life.”

“With a blond bombshell?”

He grimaced. “That was the original plan—until I met you.”

“And now?”

“How could I possibly be turned on by any other woman, after meeting and falling for you?”

She smiled and rubbed her cheek against his shoulder. “I never thought I’d hear you say that.”

Troy groaned, completely and utterly defeated. “How could I say anything else? I want and need you like I never thought possible. Now I want to know you’ll be my woman for the rest of our lives.”

She began fondling his cock. “Your woman, Troy?”

He shuddered and let loose another groan. “Woman, you won’t be satisfied until I completely cave in, will you? Fine. I don’t just want you to be my woman. I want you to be my wife.”

Angie’s hand stilled on his cock. Her head shot up and she stared at him with wide eyes. She hadn’t quite expected that. Not yet. “Oh, God! Troy, are you...”

He captured her hand and kissed it. “Will you marry me, Angie Harding?”

After several moment of silence, she smiled suddenly, her eyes bright. “Marry you? Well, gee, Troy, that’s a tough call. For how long?”

He pinched one of her nipples. “Forever, wise guy.”

“Forever?” She frowned. “That’s an awfully long time. I don’t know if I’m ready to commit to you for that long.” She began massaging his cock again. “I was thinking in terms of maybe three, four, five years tops.”

“I am not in the mood to be teased, Angie,” he warned, in a mock serious voice. His cock had come to full attention under the gentle, insistent massage of her warm hands.

She grinned suddenly, rolling onto her back. “Tell you what. I’ll take it under advisement while you refill my prescription.”

He smiled and lay on top of her. “Refill coming up.” He sank his cock deep into her with one lusty, powerful thrust. He lay unmoving for several sweet moments, taking the time to enjoy the knowledge that this passionate, beautiful woman finally belonged exclusively to him.

“Hmm. Troy, this feels so...wonderful...so incredible.”

“Oh, yes, sweet,” he said hoarsely. “Oh, yes.”

He began moving with quick, relentless thrusts, sinking deep within her quivering walls with every luscious movement. She matched the wild rhythm of her hips to his and he was soon tethering on the brink of another fiery orgasm. “Oh, shit, Angie, this is good,” he rasped.

She shuddered and clung to him. She ground her crotch up against his, her fingers digging into his buns as she shattered under him. “Oh, God, Troy! It’s extra good. Double shit!”

Epilogue

“You look so happy.”

“I am happy, mom.”

“Oh, I knew you’d find another winner. Look at him, he’s perfect and he and your father like each other.”

Angie, making a conscious effort not to hold her aching back, looked away from her mother, who sat next to her on the sofa in her and Troy’s newly decorated living room. Beyond the glass doors, on the patio, Troy and her father, both wearing the twin white chef’s hats she’d bought them, were engaged in one of their shared favorite pastimes: barbecuing. As usual, they were engaged in a good-natured argument over whether or not the chicken was too done or just right.

As she stood there watching them, a bemused smile on her face, Troy paused and looked around. Their gazes met and he grinned at her, then mouthed the words, I love you, Angie Hunter.

Angie Hunter. Even after eight months, it had a nice ring to it. Her smile turned into a wide, foolish grin. Right back at you, she mouthed and turned to her mother. “He is perfect, isn’t he?”

Her mother touched her stomach with a gentle hand. “And how are you?”

Angie looked down at her stomach. At six months pregnant, her stomach was already enormous. Her smile wavered. “I’m all right. Just feeling tired, big, and very, very fat.”

Her mother gave her an understanding smile and a gentle hug. “You know you are very, very beautiful, darling.”

She nibbled on her bottom lip. “You think so?”

“I know so. And apparently so does, Troy. Look at him, he can’t keep his eyes off you.”

She followed her mother’s gaze and saw that Troy was indeed looking at her again. “He probably can’t believe how big I’ve become,” she said morosely. The further along in her pregnancy she got, the less attractive and the more in need of reassurance she felt.

Her mother laughed and gave her yet another hug. “That’s the look of a man very much in love, darling.” Her mother’s smile took on a wicked glint. “And in lust. Are you two still...?” She paused and arched a brow at Angie.

Angie, blushing, stared at her mother in surprise. “Mom!”

“No need to look so shocked,” she said, still grinning. “A man that good looking must surely have a... robust sexual appetite.”

Actually, his sexual appetite was beyond robust. It was huge. And much to Angie’s delight, marriage hadn’t decreased it one iota. Her mother was still looking at her, clearly waiting for an answer. “It’s... he...we’re compatible,” she hedged.

“Ah.” Arlene Harding nodded. “You have a robust appetite too.”

“Well...ah...you could say that,” she deadpanned and they both laughed.

Ten minutes later, Troy’s parents arrived, and the six of them had a long, laughter-filled meal on the patio. Much later when both their parents had left, Troy insisted Angie go to bed.

She frowned. “After I clean up. You shopped, and cooked, it’s only fair that I clean up.”

He turned her towards the door leading to the hallway and tapped her on her behind. “I am perfectly

capable of cleaning up. Now off to bed with you.”

She cast him a quick smile over her shoulder. “My, aren’t we the domesticated one?” she teased.

“Yes we are and we are loving every minute of it,” he grinned.

Yeah, she decided. He did love it and so did she.

A few minutes later after she’d showered, she slid into a short nightgown and climbed into bed. Laying there and staring at her huge stomach, she smiled when Troy joined her half an hour later.

“That was quick,” she said.

He smiled back as he padded across the room. He leaned down and kissed her gently. “Hey. I’m a man. I can help earn the bacon, shop for it, cook it, clean up after it, and still lust after my beautiful, adorable wife.”

She feigned a fierce frown. “Beautiful and adorable? You been hitting the cherry lemon-aid again?”

Laughing, he sat on the side of the bed. He placed his hand on her bulging stomach. “How are you feeling?”

“Fat,” she said immediately.

“You, Angie Hunter, are incredibly beautiful.” He moved his hands down to the hem of her gown and lifted it. He pushed it gently above her waist and leaned down to plant a warm kiss against her pussy.

A tingle danced along her nerve endings and desire stirred in her. Sucking in a deep breath, she leaned back against the bed and parted her legs slightly.

He lifted his head and looked at her, his eyes dark with love and desire. “Are you feeling up to this?” he murmured.

Her heart thumped. Even after so many months of marriage, the thought of making love with Troy still set her heart thumping wildly. She wanted him, but most of the time she felt too tired for intercourse, even lying on her side with him behind her. “Definitely.” Her eyebrows shot up teasingly. “My pussy is feeling so neglected.”

“Really?” He rose suddenly and stripped off his clothes. When he joined her on the bed, he grabbed several pillows and eased them under her hips. “Let me help you out there, sweetheart.”

“Troy? I’m not up to pleasing you,” she protested weakly.

He parted her thighs and lay on the bed on his stomach. “Don’t worry about me. I’ll be pleased if you are.”

Before she could protest, he bent his head and tenderly began kissing and licking her pussy lips and her clit. When he gently inserted a finger into her cunt, she gasped softly and gave up her thoughts of protesting. Several long moments later, her orgasm washed over her. She shuddered and moaned out his name as she came.

He continued to kiss and stroke her for several moments after her climax. Only after she quieted down, did he rise and turn out the lights. Then he lay behind her, his lips pressed against her neck, his arms around her. “I love you,” he whispered softly.

She smiled sleepily and pressed back against him. “I love you too, big boy,” she murmured. She rubbed her butt against his semi-hard cock. “Give me a few minutes and my lips will say thanks and hello to that big, sweet boy nestled against my behind.”

He eased his crotch away from her rear end and kissed her neck lightly. “Don’t worry about me. Just go

to sleep, sweetheart. I know how much making love zaps your strength. I'm fine."

"Troy, you're not fine," she protested. "You have needs too."

"Yes, I do, and chief among them is the need to know you're happy, safe, and satisfied."

She turned in his arms. "I'm having the baby of the man I love more than anything in the world, who just happens to be my husband. And I am so happy that I feel silly...giddy with it." She rubbed her cheek against his chest. "Thank you, my sweet, sweet, Troy."

"For what?"

"For loving me and making me so happy."

He tipped up her chin and pressed a warm, sweet kiss against her lips. "You remember that country song, Long Line of Love?"

"Hmm."

"Well, we Hunter men don't love and leave the women we love and marry. I plan to spend the rest of my life making sure you and our baby will always feel loved, safe, and happy."

"Oh, Troy, I feel that and so much more with you. And I want you to feel the same way." She reached down and cupped his cock in her hands.

"I do. Never doubt that I do." He eased her hands away from his cock. "Tomorrow, when you're rested, and if you're feeling up to it, we can resume where we left off."

"But what about you and tonight?"

"I'm fine. Now go to sleep, love."

"I love you so much," she whispered.

With his arms around her, she drifted off to sleep, secure in the knowledge that she was deeply loved and that their baby would be born to parents who would surround her with the love they shared.

Angie smiled. The cruise to nowhere had taken her everywhere.