

A photograph of a man with long, wavy brown hair, seen from behind, playing a piano. He is shirtless, and his muscular back and arms are visible. The piano is dark, and the keys are white. In the background, there is a bookshelf filled with books. The lighting is warm and focused on the man.

MUSIC MAN

BRIT BLAISE

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by Brit Blaise

Amber Quill Press

www.amberquill.com

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ISBN 1-59279-369-X

Amber Quill Press, LLC

www.amberquill.com

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DEDICATION

*To my critique group, Lex, Bev, Tina and Paula, thanks for
being there.*

CHAPTER 1

Friday afternoon, and the end of a long hard week equaled orgasm time! The special time Jade promised herself. She lit the last candle and stepped into the antique reproduction claw-foot tub. A glass of good wine warmed her blood as she reached for the handheld shower nozzle. Taking a second to wet the sides and bottom of the tub, she settled into its cozy closeness accented by the flickering candles and reached for the remote. With a push of the button, a ballsy blues instrumental began to play. She leaned back, positioning the spray of water over her eager clit.

On a good night, she could have more than twenty orgasms during the forty-five minute song. Each crescendo brought a release, building rather than receding into another. For almost a solid hour, she could enter a state of continuous orgasmic bliss where no man had ever taken her. No man had come close.

Well, almost no man, but she didn't like to think about *him*.

Since she started using her own ingenuity on a nightly basis, she became less anxious to find Mr. Right. Why? Mr. Faucet-head and the music gave her everything she needed.

Only about thirty seconds into the song, the pressure built at the onset of the first crescendo. At the same time, the doorbell rang.

Damn!

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In a flash, Jade lost her momentum. Relaxing her spine into the porcelain, she concentrated harder.

The doorbell rang a second time.

Jade reached for the remote and pumped up the volume.

Loud knocking replaced the pesky bell.

"Whoever you are, go away!" she screamed.

The insistent rapping didn't stop.

Jade turned off the water and climbed out of the tub, grabbing her terrycloth robe when exiting the bathroom.

"Whoever you are, you're going to be so *sorry*," she mumbled.

While slipping into her robe, she padded down the thick carpeted stairs and onto the ceramic tile leading through the foyer toward the front door. Yes, whoever it was, she intended to make them pay for the interruption.

"It's been a long time," a male voice said as soon as she jerked open the door, not bothering with the peephole.

Jade looked at his face as he spoke. Her first thought was to run for her camera. The man had one of the most interesting faces she's seen in long time. Dark angles and shadows with swarthy tanned skinned stretched over strong aristocratic bones. One wouldn't call him traditionally handsome, but in the same breath he could be described as devastatingly gorgeous in an extreme-male, sexy sort of way. His silver-blue eyes narrowed above his five o'clock shadow, making her step back, barely conscious of the instinctive response.

"Who are you?" Even as the words came out of her mouth, the man's shining black hair—too long, by far—reminded her

of a man she once knew. He had the kind of hair one sees on the clutch-cover of a steamy romance novel. "And why are you pounding on my door?"

"I'm your date this evening. I can see you were waiting on bated breath for my arrival." His piecing eyes dared her to deny it.

Jade's first impulse, a pithy retort, didn't make it out of her mouth. She *had* agreed to this ridiculous blind date and couldn't contradict him. "I forgot."

With her second breath, she remembered it was still afternoon, not evening, so why was she defending herself?

"Witty and beautiful ... how lucky for me. I stopped to firm up our plans for this evening. Are you going to invite me in for a moment?"

"I'm not properly dressed." She *almost* wanted to tell him to get lost, but if her best friend found out, Jade would be dead meat. She'd agreed to a blind date, and she would do it, even if the guy was a toad.

Only this guy wasn't even close to being a toad, more like Prince Cum-a-lot from the Kingdom of Wet Dreams. Well over six feet of yummy, melt-in-your-mouth, raw sensuality.

Anyway, Jade believed in keeping her word, even if she'd been coerced into promising.

"This won't take long," he said patiently. "I'm an incurable romantic alone in a strange city and I wanted to make sure our plans were settled to your satisfaction for this evening."

He wanted to make certain she was satisfied?

"Wait here, I need to get dressed," she told him, stepping aside to allow him into her home. "Two minutes."

She raced up the stairs to the sound of blaring music, while trying to remember where this date was supposed to happen. Had her friend, Karen, shared that information? Jade really believed she'd find a way to get out of it. She thought about how the sex-god was dressed, casual, but sexy as anything she'd ever seen. In his tight black jeans and white, silk, loosely tailored shirt, opened to reveal a darkly furred chest, she gave him a ten. Both casual and dressy in a campy, European sort of way. She removed her robe, then threw a satin caftan over her naked body and retrieved the remote to turn off the loud music.

When she came down the stairs, she found him staring up at her, reminding her of Rhett Butler. Or was it the shark from *Jaws*? It was a definite toss up. Either way, she had the feeling she was about to be devoured.

"You don't remember me," he said.

Remember him? No way in *hell* could she ever forget this guy. "We've met? My apologies if I've offended you, but I think you must be mistaken. Trust me, I would remember."

"I'm not offended ... amused maybe. Definitely kicking myself in the proverbial dumb ass for thinking you'd remember me."

Jade restrained from asking, hoping his name would come to her. "What did you need to tell me about this evening?"

He laughed, at first almost a groan, then a full roar. "Damn, you are brutal."

His pale blue eyes rimmed with long dark lashes did look very familiar. What had she said to amuse him? "I'm glad I'm so entertaining."

"It's no more than I deserve. When Karen set this up, I intended to come out on top with you *this* encounter. How foolish of me."

"Do you always talk in circles?"

"We met after a concert you attended with Karen while you were visiting New York City. We spent a weekend enjoying each other's company."

"I've been to New York with Karen only once. I remember the concert well."

What she remembered most was attacking the debuting pianist in his dressing room after the performance and making him her love slave for two straight days. The poor young man ... she had practically raped him. What was his name?

Wait a minute. *No way!*

"Because you enjoyed the pianists' renditions of the blues or because you enjoyed throwing him to the floor and riding his cock until it nearly withered and fell off?"

"Ian Swift," Jade whispered.

"One and the same. I've recovered now, thank you. A year or two of rehabilitation and it almost works as good as new."

She ignored his innuendo. "You seem so different. Filled out and..."

"Older," he supplied. "Seven years ago I was a twenty-three-year-old nerd in thick glasses who played piano every waking minute."

Jade couldn't believe how much he'd changed by adding about forty pounds of sinewy muscle to his tall lanky frame and losing the Clark Kent frames and attitude. Everything

about him had filled in and out. "And you actually *wanted* to see me again? I would have thought—"

"You left an impression," he said, taking a step closer. "When I ran into Karen here in Phoenix, she suggested we get together. She mentioned you've become a bit of a recluse, although I called her a liar. The Jade Thiele I met backstage in New York City would have a difficult time without a man at her disposal."

"Guess again," she said and meant it. "I don't need a man. In fact, I can honestly say I've never had a man satisfy me as well as I can take care of myself."

"You busted my balls years ago, now you're crushing what's left of them."

"Ian, on a scale of one to ten, you were a definite ten, as I recall. I, however, don't have a good track record. We don't have to do this if I'm too honest for your taste. I get a lot of that."

"I'm a closet masochist, so naturally I can't wait to see where this goes. And I figure I owe you. You made the first night of a beginning career a more memorable occasion—most unforgettable. Probably more memorable than you even know. Karen gave my career a jump-start with her glowing review for national television. I always figured you might have had a hand in it."

Jade felt her face warm along with everything else. She had raved to Karen about Ian Swift's musical talent, about the way he'd almost brought her to orgasm several times with his music during the concert. In point of fact, her experience with him led to her current sexual experimentation and

research. "I don't think I influenced Karen. She has a mind of her own. You might be interested to know my research started with your music. I believe I owe it to you to say 'thank you.'"

"Karen told me you're a research scientist. I didn't realize you dealt with music."

"Music is only part of what I do. I'm writing my thesis on the effects of music on female sexuality."

"Tough gig, but I guess someone has to do it."

Jade stopped short of rolling her eyes. She'd heard that and more about her work.

"So if you credit me with the start of your research, are you saying you got off when I played that night in New York? Is that why you were insatiable?"

"That evening was my first experience with the power the blues had to—turn me—affected me. Each woman has her own tastes as to what kind of music has the capability of making her sex life more interesting."

"And you were turned on by my performance? In that case, let me tune you up a little," he said, walking toward the grand piano in her living room without waiting to be invited. "I distinctly recall you saying you didn't play with anything *other* than yourself."

"I said that to you seven years ago? I still don't play a musical instrument. The piano belonged to my father."

Ian stretched his long fingers and sat on the bench. "You may be overdressed for this piece. I think I can help with your research and heal my wounded ego at the same time."

Jade started to smile. He deserved a chance, especially since he really had been incredible seven years before. "How should I be dressed?"

"In as little as possible. Cloth impedes the sound waves flowing over the surface of the skin."

"Is that so?"

"I've done a little research myself."

Jade felt a smile warming her face and spreading like wild fire. He might be teasing, but she knew he could deliver. "I'm beginning to remember more clearly now."

Ian stood, kicked off his shoes and unbuttoned his shirt. His tanned skin glowed in the light streaming through the gauze curtains. "Join me on the piano," he said in a husky voice.

"You know I don't play."

"I didn't say join me *playing* piano, I said *on* the piano. I want you naked and sitting in front of me while I play for you."

He unzipped his pants, and he wasn't wearing underwear. His thick cock jutted out toward the keyboard, inviting her to move faster. While she shucked her caftan, he sheathed his beautiful cock with a condom. What a shame. She would have loved a closer look. Much closer.

"Show me exactly where you want me," she said, clutching the caftan in her hand. No way was she putting her naked ass on her father's piano. He'd come back from the grave to haunt her.

Ian laid his jeans on the stool and sat on them. Evidently he didn't want her father haunting *him* either.

"Sit right here." He patted the piano in front of his face. "And place a leg on either side of me." He pointed to either end of the keyboard. "Here and here."

Jade's eager sex clenched with anticipation. "This position might put me at a disadvantage," she said, sitting on the caftan. The silky material on the glossy wooden surface acted like ice skates for her rear. She slid in front of him with ease.

"It might put you at the juncture of a Grand Staff and f-major."

"As long as it's not f-minor, I think I can keep up." Jade tried to position her legs on either side of him. At five-feet, nine-inches tall, her legs comfortably stretched all the way to the end, but when she tried to lay back, her feet slipped onto the keys, making a discordant racket.

"You're limiting my chords."

"Just play."

The first strains of a sensual rhythm-and-blues tune produced a thrum in her sex so strong, she arched and fell back on her elbows, groaning with desire. She pushed off the candelabra and it clanged onto the floor. She flung her arms open wide, grabbing either side of the piano for leverage. With her legs spread in front of his face, the air on her swollen clit produced an unbearable ache inside her. If she had her trusty shower nozzle right now, she'd already be coming.

The music built, and she went with it. When Ian's mouth closed over her clit, it took only a second to bring the first contraction. Ian pulled back and played harder, effectively taking her higher.

"Touch yourself for me," he growled over the peaking notes and steady runs, then slowed the tempo when she reached down to circle her swollen clit. He lulled her into a blissful float of ecstasy.

The second crescendo built more slowly with deliberate teasing notes. "Slide down on top of me," he told her and pushed back the stool as he continued to play.

Jade sat erect and grabbed his strong shoulders. After placing her feet on the stool, she began to lower herself on top of him. While going down, she caught his stiff cock with her hand, directing him to her core. As hot as he'd made her, it still took time to adjust to him filling her. Face to face, his eyes burned into her. The sounds he produced made her alternately clench and release in small bursts of pleasure all the way down until fully impaled. She was so full of him, she didn't think it possible to move within the close space of the piano at her back and his arms moving around her while he continued to play.

She knew the song well, and the impending upsurge in tempo. She felt it building inside and squeezed him with the walls of her sex, so hard he moaned in her ear. Jade kissed him so he could feel even more what he was doing to her. She tasted herself on his lips and hesitated with surprise before throwing herself into the kiss. Memories of his kisses fused with the music. How did she forget this man? Had she really? His kiss was like an old and very familiar dream, fulfilling and just plain *right* in every way possible. Already on the wings of orgasm, she went over the top again with her mouth fused to his full firm lips.

"You're killing me," he whispered when she pulled away. "This is more than I could have imagined and I have a vivid imagination."

"I think you're holding up well," she whispered and began to move.

Again he changed the tempo of the music, taking the keys with force and power. He played like a maniac, while Jade opened to the feeling in a way she'd never experienced. It seemed as if a great bubble of pleasure yawned inside her, inviting him deeper, where no man had gone before. The music swelled, and so did she without control, without time and space to bind her. His thick root anchored her to the center of the Earth, as the sounds he created gave her energy and impetus to achieve the impossible.

This time when she reached the peak, she entered a secret door where she floated and pulsed on an invisible cloud. She stayed there for so long, she almost didn't comprehend the music had stopped until Ian lifted her and roughly scraped back the stool. Still in the throes of the longest, strongest orgasm known to womankind, she wrapped her legs around him, holding onto him as he walked. He pressed her against the wall and began to pound into her.

When the pressure built again, she didn't know if she'd survive going higher. How could higher than *this* exist? Three long, hard strokes showed her that she didn't have a clue.

Ian came with a roar and took her with him. Delicious, so intensely exquisite, another contraction hit her, effectively nailing her to the wall. She spread out her arms, palms flat against the surface, and gave him freedom to pump into her

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at will. When he finally released her after an eternity, she slid down the wall, forming a puddle of spent flesh on the floor at his feet.

"Do you remember me now?"

CHAPTER 2

Ian knew he'd be fighting an uphill battle, but when Jade didn't know him, he almost became the shy virgin geek again. In concert, women threw their underwear and key-cards at him, but here was a woman impervious to his charms. The woman he wanted.

When Jade had lain naked on the piano in front of him, he'd nearly lost the control onto which he had hung with a tenuous thread. For so long she had been his ultimate fantasy, his release in a crowded world full of strangers wanting a piece of him.

Her pale translucent skin had shimmered against the piano's black lacquer. The sight of her writhing to his music nearly blasted him over the top, but he held on, knowing he might get only one chance to prove himself. And as she gazed up, her sassy red tresses snaking across the piano's dark surface and her green eyes glazed over with sated passion, he felt omnipotent!

Vindicated!

At long last.

Now, what he didn't expect, however, began to happen. His cock began to rise like the Phoenix from the ashes.

Jade watched it grow and met his eyes with wonder.

"Strong like bull," he said, teasingly.

She gave a solemn nod.

Ian had obsessed about this woman for so long, he wouldn't be satisfied after only a single time inside her. He

wondered if he could ever get enough of her. If being with her was always like he'd just experienced, he'd be in deep trouble if he couldn't win her heart. Instead of getting over her, he discovered she was his drug of choice. He couldn't get enough, fast enough, and the high she gave him didn't compare with any life experience in his thirty years.

Jade took hold of his hand, leveraging up to her feet, then pulled him in the direction of the stairs. He followed, feeling the gentle sway of her naked hips when they brushed against him. She brought him into a spacious, dimly lit bedroom, smelling of exotic fragrances. Jasmine and something he couldn't name spoke of seduction. She lit candles, giving the room a shrine-like feel.

"I need a shower," she said, pulling him toward the glass shower in the candlelit corner of the bathroom.

She adjusted the water and nudged him under the gentle rain, coming from a showerhead the size of Rhode Island. When she started to remove his condom, he wanted to protest. But the second it came off, she tossed it aside and fell to her knees in front of him.

Jade kissed the head of his throbbing cock with her open mouth. While water poured down upon them, she ran her tongue along his seam, first one way, then the other. She nibbled on the tag of skin under his sensitive head, flicking it with her tongue. He watched her in fascination. Only when she started to swallow him did he look away. The sight of his cock disappearing into her mouth nearly sent him over the edge. He leaned toward the back wall, touching his forehead against the cool porcelain tile while trying to breathe calmly.

She eased him in and out of her throat several times before he knew he couldn't last another siege of her constricting gorge. He tried to push back, but she only sucked harder in response.

Ian exploded with a vengeance, while Jade milked him dry.

Eventually he found his voice. "I wish you could understand what you do for me. You are the Ginger to my Fred, the Bacall to my Bogie. You complete me like nobody can. I'm in the dark without you."

Still on her knees, Jade stared up at him. Her expression showed how uncomfortable his declaration had made her.

Ian didn't know what to do. He hadn't meant to speak so soon—much too soon. Damn!

He looked away from her eyes, trying to pretend he hadn't foolishly spoken out of his ass. "About our date tonight, it's a concert at Alton Park. I'm late for rehearsal, so I'll send a car." He opened the shower door and reached for a towel. "I hope you can come ... I know you can *come*, I meant I hope you'll be there."

He left her sitting on the floor of her shower, her green eyes wide and questioning.

* * * *

An hour later, Ian couldn't remember how he'd gotten out of Jade's house. If she didn't come to his concert, he wasn't certain he could keep himself from going back to grovel at her feet. He'd shown her what they were missing, now she had to meet him halfway.

"Where do you want these flowers, Mr. Swift?" his young assistant asked.

"Let's put them on either end of the platform, and the corsage should be delivered to my guest in the front row, if she's able to com—attend. Is everything else ready?"

"Your guest may not come, sir?"

There was that word again. "I'm not sure."

"I'll watch for her."

"There's no need. I've sent a car for her. The driver will call if she can't make it, and if that happens, I'll let you know."

"Thank you, Mr. Swift."

The same time his assistant left, his manager, Charlene, walked inside his trailer. "How did it go with the love of your life?"

"I wish I had good news. I'm not sure. It certainly didn't go like I imagined. I wanted to tell her about my plans for the evening and she thought I was there to start up where we left off years ago, or maybe I led her to that conclusion. Anyway, I didn't correct her."

"I don't like the sound of this. Ian, if you get your heart broken again, I'm going to be pissed with this foolish woman, whoever she is. I don't do *pissed* well."

Ian looked at his watch. "If she wasn't going to make it, I would have already heard."

Charlene wished him luck and left, shaking her perky blonde head. Ian agreed he needed luck. If only he wasn't in love with Jade Thiele, his life would be perfect. She, however, had ruined him for any other woman.

His assistant opened the door. "Show time. And *she's* here. She's beautiful, but not at all what I expected."

Ian smiled, enjoying a temporary reprieve and a spark of hope. He checked himself in the mirror, then walked outside. Tonight he would play for Jade.

Only her.

With the lights in his eyes, he could see only her shadow in the chair. He sat at his piano, stretched his fingers, then began to play. Music flowed from his heart and out through his fingertips. When he finished after two encores, he could honestly say he'd never played better.

"And I thought you were good years ago," Jade said once the crowd around him thinned and he could get to her. "I didn't have a clue."

"I was inspired. Would you like to see my tour bus?" She was a vision. And, he wanted her. Right now.

She raised a delicate ginger brow and moved closer. "You get straight to the point, don't you? Will that make me a groupie?"

"I'm not the one to ask. I've never invited a woman on the bus who wasn't already a co-worker, and never for intimate reasons."

Jade gave a single solemn nod and accepted the hand he extended to her.

Once inside his spacious bus, she immediately slid into his arms. Ian smiled—*she* got straight to the point, too.

"You really were wonderful," she said, "and not just the music. It's been so long since I've been close to anyone, I'd forgotten ... no that's not really true ... I *never* experienced

what you did to me earlier today. And then as you played, I didn't just come close, I came—I almost fell out of my chair. Wouldn't that have been lovely?"

He wanted to tell her he played only for her, but he was afraid to get too serious and push her away again with sophomoric declarations of affection. "Our experience earlier was my inspiration. I pretended to touch you, and the keys were magic for me."

"Touch me and see if you can play *me* like that," she offered, running her hand along his jaw and back to the leather tether holding his hair. A tug sent it spilling down his back.

Ian locked the door, wishing for a "Do Not Disturb" sign to caution anyone from interrupting them. She was giving him another chance to swing her around to his way of thinking. Another chance to do the impossible—to win her heart by using her responsive body against her. The body that first showed him what it meant to be a man.

"Your pleasure," he told her, "is at *your* command. Tell me exactly what you want and I will do my best to deliver."

Her green eyes darkened as she considered his words while running her fingers through his hair. "No foreplay. Your music was all the foreplay I needed. I want you quick and hard, filling me until I don't know where I begin and where you end."

"Perfect." He shrugged out of his loose-fitting shirt, tossing it aside.

She wore a little, black sleeveless dress, which fit her like a silky glove. After turning her shapely butt to him, she lifted her thick red hair. "Unzip me?"

His hands trembled. It wouldn't be good for her to see. She might guess how much this meant to him. Maybe too much. It scared him to think of how much, of how his music could be affected if she rejected him again.

The zipper slid down without a hitch, and she undulated out of the dress, allowing it to drop around her high-heeled mules. His breath caught in his throat. She was naked under the dress, her pale skin translucent and begging to be explored. The tiny dimples at the top of her ass wanted kissing. He dropped to his knees, grabbing her hips with both hands, and placed an open-mouth kiss there.

"No," she told him and turned to face him. "You have to hurry, Ian. I need you now. Right now."

He stood, releasing his zipper and stepping out of his loafers and pants in a fluid motion that he wouldn't have been able to accomplish if he tried twice. His cock bobbed in the air between them for only a second before he stabbed it where he wanted to bury it. At the same time, he caught her under both ass checks and lifted. Her arms flew around his neck as she arched into him. Without hesitation, his cock found her sweet core, and he thrust upward while allowing her weight to carry her down. The feeling of skin against skin almost undid him.

How could he have forgotten a condom?

The momentum as she plunged down hard brought him to a throbbing, near-painful precipice. The tight walls of her hot

pussy gripped him like a vise. He instinctively wanted to pound into her, but he needed a second or he would come right then. His balls bunched up so tightly against his body, it hurt. Somehow he walked the few steps to the rear of the bus and sat on the bed with her still tight against him, buried to the hilt. He worked backward on the top of the bed, trying not to come prematurely. Trying to slow his erratic breathing.

"A condom," he breathed.

"Too late," she whispered back.

Once she had leverage, she began to move on top of him, and finally his balls loosened to where he knew he wasn't about to embarrass himself. When he gained confidence he wouldn't come too soon, he flipped her over and began to hammer into her.

"Yes!" she screamed. "More. Harder. Perfect."

He gave her more, so much more than he would have believed, considering how badly he started. She got off in seconds, but he didn't slow until he felt her contracting two more times. The third time he went with her, pumping his seed deep into her womb, as close to heaven as he'd ever come.

He rolled over with the walls of her tight sex still holding onto him, clutching and milking him. He wanted to stay there forever.

* * * *

Jade awakened to feel Ian growing thick and hard inside her. His steady breath made her wonder if he was still

sleeping or he realized what was happening again. She squeezed with the strong walls of her sex.

He groaned loudly. "I think I'm dreaming. Nothing in this world has ever felt this fine. It *must* be a dream."

Jade agreed. Nothing had ever felt so good. Too good. The kind of thing that would mess with her mind, and make her want this—him—forever. Impossible under the circumstances. He had to know they didn't have a future.

Nothing had changed in the past seven years. If anything, it would be worse for Ian if she allowed herself to think of a "forever after" now.

His long, thick cock grew so hard, she felt impaled, yet it was so right, perfect. The most uniquely faultless and sublime feeling she'd ever experienced. She would miss this—and him—as long as she lived. If only...

He turned her over and began to move, leisurely pulling the length of his root out of her, then easing it back again. And just like that, the pressure to climax was there for her, so exquisite it was painful pleasure. Hot tears leaked out the corners of her eyes as she exploded.

And she thought she didn't need a man? What a fool!

CHAPTER 3

Sunday

Ian would be leaving in the morning en route to his next concert in Nevada. Jade didn't want to think about it. She'd been *with* him for almost twelve hours straight before they came up for air. Then they toured the city and wound up back at her house, where he gave her another private performance on her father's grand piano. She didn't think he could top his first one, but somehow he managed to surprise her.

He was upstairs still sleeping as she made breakfast for him. Another first. She didn't cook—ever—if she could avoid it. Now, she didn't mind. She told herself it was only to keep up his strength so he could give her more of the same in the time they had left. But that wasn't it. In fact, she didn't know if she could handle *more*. In the past thirty-six hours, she'd gone from multi-orgasmic to off-the-charts orgasmic.

"Is that bacon I smell?" Ian's voice gave her a start, in more ways than one. *Who knew?*

She turned to look at him, fresh from a shower with a towel wrapped around his muscled waist. His gorgeous long black hair hung in wet ringlets against his tanned skin. Jade felt her heart thump inside her chest.

"Karen stocked my refrigerator yesterday while we were otherwise occupied. I don't know what she was thinking ... she knows I don't *do* domestic. She's playing match-maker."

"Maybe she knows you better than you do yourself. Sometimes friends are insightful like that."

"Are you hungry?"

Ian rubbed his long skillful fingers across his thickly whiskered jaw. His silver-blue eyes darkened and he ran his tongue over his full lips. "Famished. How about you?"

Jade couldn't believe it, but she wanted him to ravish her right then across the kitchen table. It took all the power she had not to turn off the stove and jump him. "I want you to eat this food before anything else comes up. You need to keep up your strength."

Ian leaned back and pulled aside the bath towel. "Something has already come up. It would be a shame to waste it."

Jade watched his beautiful cock jutting into the air. She had to get closer to it. To touch it, to wrap her fingers around it. "Yes, it would be a shame."

She reached for the dial at the back of the stove...

* * * *

An hour later, the bacon was beyond help and the coffee too strong, but Jade couldn't have cared less. Ian stood at the stove in his towel, cooking something that smelled delicious. If she could get off the floor, maybe she'd take a look.

"Here," he said, finally reaching for her. "You look like a puddle of flesh."

"A puddle of 'spent' flesh. You are ruining me. I'll never forget this weekend as long as I live. I had no idea it was even possible to have so many orgasms."

"For a woman whose job it is to study human sexuality, you live a very sheltered life."

Jade thought about it. Ian was right. She was a first-class nerd. No wonder she'd never married. Never even considered it, except maybe once, when she had first met *him*. "You've given me a lot to think about."

He huffed and pulled her naked body into his arms. "I'm glad you noticed how hard I've been trying to get your attention."

"You get my attention any harder and I don't think I'll live to see another day, big boy."

"You are exaggerating, but keep it up. I like to hear it."

"Ian, you don't need me to stroke your ego. I've seen how women throw themselves at you. I imagine you could fill books with all of your sexual exploits. A person doesn't get as good as you are in bed without lots of practice."

"I admit, after my first ... after I became popular and starting touring with my music, I went a little wild. I enjoyed what was freely offered to me. But in the last two years. I've been unfulfilled, unhappy leading a life of decadent excesses. I don't expect you to understand. I'm not sure *I* do."

Jade was afraid of where the conversation might be heading. Except for right after they'd made love in the shower the other afternoon, Ian had refrained from becoming too serious. She wanted to hear "serious," yet at the same time, she didn't.

Ian lowered his head and captured her lips with his. His kiss at first was gentle and reassuring, but a sense of urgency having nothing to do with sex replaced his easy touch. He forced her lips apart and thrust his tongue into her mouth, his accompanying moan traveling down her throat and along her

spine. This kiss opened her. Not only her mouth, but she felt it in her deepest parts—her cells—her soul. In that moment, she understood she'd never be the same again. All her life had led to this one perfect pinnacle of time and space. Everything else that followed would be anticlimactic.

She loved him. Not just loved him; he was her missing half, the piece of the puzzle she hadn't known existed. Until now.

Right then.

Forever.

"Marry me?" he whispered.

Jade thought she'd imagined the words. She opened her lids to see his eyes blazing into her. Yes! She wanted to marry him. Yes! She wanted to spend all of eternity at his side!

"I can't."

The pain in his eyes choked her, overwhelmed her. Tears started to slide down her face as she watched him blink—wince, really—and pull away. She didn't let go until he pushed harder. Ian kept his face from her as he walked out of her kitchen and up the stairs.

She wanted to race after him to tell him she was sorry.
She was.

So sorry it ate her heart out of her chest. The very physical pain of it took her breath away.

She sank to the floor in the spot where she'd stood in his arms. If only she had the strength to say yes. She *wanted* to marry him. If only she could without hurting him in the end.

When Ian came back downstairs, he paused in the kitchen doorway. His face was ashen, his eyes unreadable. "I don't understand how you can do this to us. You know I can't stay here to pursue you at leisure. Evidently, I can't reach you. You are my soul and I'm nothing more than a weekend diversion. I'd say 'one last fuck for the road,' but I don't think I'd survive it."

Jade agreed. If he so much as touched her, she would confess she loved him and beg him to take her with him. She'd be his groupie, his sex slave—anything.

When she didn't say anything, Ian looked away, but not before she saw his eyes mist over. She couldn't hold back the scream of pain. As he walked away—out of her life—forever, she collapsed on the cold tile floor in hysterics.

* * * *

It was hours later before Jade pulled herself from the floor, making her way to the upstairs bathroom. At her beautiful, red, claw-foot tub, she picked up the handheld showerhead she adored so much. In a fit of rage and frustration, she smashed it against the faucet, over and over until the top clanged off into the tub.

Though she had destroyed the showerhead and pricey faucet, she felt better. But "better" than *completely* devastated" was still at the bottom of the happiness gauge.

Ian Swift had changed her life. Damn! Why did he have to show her what she'd been missing, would continue to miss now that her eyes had been opened for as long as she lived?

* * * *

Ian finished his last concert in Phoenix and walked to his bus, knowing when he opened the door he'd smell her scent.

His manager, Charlene, met him at the door. "*She* was in the audience, sitting in the last row."

At first, Ian experienced a ray of hope, until he realized it might have nothing to do with *him*—the man. How many women were attracted to the *performer*, but the man was only the clay receptacle for the golden image, the persona.

"It doesn't matter," he growled. "She's made her decision and there's nothing I can do."

"You're giving up too easily," Charlene said and reached out to stop him. "Let me talk to her. Maybe I can help."

"Let it go. I gave it my best and let's just leave it at that. I can't keep torturing myself like this. I don't think my music will survive it. You heard me tonight."

Charlene looked away. Ian didn't need to be told how badly he'd played.

"We have one more leg of this tour in Nevada," Charlene said. "After that, let's take some time off so you can recharge your batteries. I don't want this temporary setback to affect your future. Trust me, you're young. You'll meet someone. Someone who appreciates you and is willing to show it."

"That's what I told myself years ago when I first met her."

* * * *

"What have you done?" Karen demanded at the end of Ian's concert. "This is criminal. If I'd known you'd destroy

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him, I would never have helped him contact you. He was playing funeral dirges, for God's sake. How could you?"

Jade couldn't reply with the thick knot in the back of her throat choking her. She couldn't breathe, she couldn't see through the cloud of tears, and she wished she was dead.

"Get me home before I collapse in front of everyone."

For a second, Karen hesitated. "You need to see a shrink. That man loves you and you love him. Why are you being so damned stubborn?"

"Not now, Karen."

"Fine! But sooner or later you're going to realize what you've done."

"What makes you think I don't already know?"

CHAPTER 4

Four months later

Karen shoved the newspaper under Jade's nose. "Did you see this?"

"I don't have my glasses," Jade said, pulling back the paper to arm's length. "And it's cruel of you to take that tone with me so early in the morning."

"If you'd eat better, I wouldn't have to come here so early to force food down your throat."

"It's Ian," Jade gasped. "He's getting married? No. Not after I finally made up my mind to tell him I love him."

"He's marrying his manager. She's fifty-years-old, if she's a day."

"He's marrying someone twenty years older than he is? Impossible! How could he? He's throwing his life away. Do you think he really loves her?"

"And to think you refused to marry him because you're only fourteen years older. It serves you right."

"I'm pregnant," Jade said, barely above a whisper.

Karen gasped. "How can you be pregnant? You can't have a baby at forty-four. Can you?"

"The doctor says it happens all the time. I've called a realtor to list my house. That should net me enough money to live on and care for the baby in a small apartment. I'll find a job working from home. If I have to, I can supplement my income with my retirement money. Lord knows, until now, I never had anything to spend money on except this house."

"Do you hear what you're saying? Retirement money? A baby? What's wrong with this picture?"

"Trust me, I didn't do it on purpose. I almost fainted when the doctor told me."

"Ian Swift?"

"Who else? Honestly!"

"Just asking. Are you going to tell him?"

"I was ... but now..." Jade waved the paper in front of Karen's nose. "Ian's new wife won't be impressed. And I have no clue what Ian will do. A performer's life isn't conducive to raising a family."

"You were thinking of Ian, of having a family with him, before this?" Karen ripped the paper out of Jade's hands and crumpled it into a ball.

"I want to read it," Jade insisted. "Let me get my glasses."

"You don't need glasses. You need to get your ass on the phone and call him. Right now. I can't believe this. This will teach me for being a meddling friend."

"It's not your fault Ian and I had unprotected sex."

"That's not—never mind. Is the baby okay? I mean, isn't the doctor worried about your age?"

Jade didn't want to go there. Her age was the root of all the problems she had with Ian. She wouldn't let him marry her because she thought she couldn't have his babies. To make matters worse, the doctor had suggested seeing if the baby had birth defects, but she'd refused. "I'm supposed to stay calm and serene and not have upsetting news thrown in my face."

"Don't say that!"

"I'm fine." Jade didn't feel fine. She felt miserable. So miserable she was on the verge of a crying jag or throwing up, whichever came first.

"You don't look fine."

Jade couldn't answer. She dashed to the nearest bathroom.

Behind her, Karen cursed.

What did *she* have to curse about? *She* wasn't pregnant and alone.

* * * *

Ian's cell rang, waking him from the first restful sleep he'd had in days.

"Hello?"

"Ian, this is Karen Wright. Do you know how I can get hold of your manager ... right now?"

"I'm fine, Karen, and how are you? How is our mutual friend doing these days?"

"I don't have time for small talk. I need to speak to your manager and I need to do it fast."

"She's on safari in Africa. She's out of touch."

"No! The bitch!"

Ian held the phone away from his ear. "Would you mind telling me what this is about? I wasn't aware you were on first name basis with her."

"Sorry, Ian. That just slipped out. I really need her right now. I can't believe she skipped out."

"Skipped out on what? What have the two of you done?"

"Your manager and I may have inadvertently hurt Jade. Ian, you need to come to Phoenix. Where are you? Get on the next plane."

"I'm in San Diego, less than an hour away, but I can't do that. I promised myself I wouldn't be the first to make the next move. If Jade doesn't do it, it's not going to happen for us."

"But you don't understand. Everything has changed. You have to come. Your manager and I have royally screwed this up. We tried to fix you guys up and it's backfired. Please, you *have* to come."

"Sorry," Ian said and closed his phone.

When the cell rang seconds later, he didn't answer it. And when it rang shortly afterward, it surprised him to hear it ringing at the bottom of the toilet. Well not "ringing" really, but it *was* making noise.

* * * *

Jade couldn't catch a break. In less than twenty-four hours, she'd gone from deciding to call Ian and spill the beans to hoping his fifty-year-old slut of a fiancée hung him up by his substantial balls.

Balls filled with magic baby-making juices.

When the realtor called to say she had someone interested in seeing the house, Jade wanted to scream. Instead, she simply said the house would be ready to show. Of course, that meant cleaning when she didn't feel well enough. Out of desperation, she did the best she could in the little time she had.

When the doorbell sounded, she didn't hesitate. The sight of Ian on her doorstep, however, thoroughly shocked her.

"Why are you here?" Her words came out clipped and biting.

He shook his head. "Damned if I know. I had a hysterical call from your friend Karen and got worried about you." He stepped inside without invitation.

"I didn't mean to sound as if I'm not glad to see you." Then and there she decided to say what came to her mind, without editing or tempering her words. "I've dreamed of you coming. Of throwing myself into your arms."

"What's stopping you?"

"Your fiancée. I saw the announcement of your impending marriage in our local paper. Congratulations. I'm sorry Karen attempted a last-ditch effort to get us together by calling you. I told her I planned to call you before I learned about your wife to be."

"I'm tempted to talk about my *impending* marriage, but I really would like to hear what you wanted to say to me in this 'planned' call you failed to make."

"It doesn't matter now. Why would you be engaged to a woman twenty years older than you? Damn you!" It galled her to think he was with a woman that old.

"Is this a 'Sybil' kind of thing? Give me a reason for hope, then tear me down again?"

"Reason to hope? You hope *we*, you and I, have a future together?"

Jade couldn't stop herself—she had to kiss him. To touch him. She flew into his arms, much like her dream. He

captured her mouth and kissed her thoroughly, completely. She burrowed into him, anxious for his taste and the feelings his kiss produced. She tingled from head to toe and back again.

"I'm probably going to regret this," he muttered before he swept her into his arms.

"No, wait. I have something I need to say."

Ian lowered her to her feet. "This better not be another kiss-off."

"Are you engaged or not?"

"That's what I want to know."

"I'm talking about you and your manager. Are the two of you engaged?"

"Isn't she a little old for me?"

"Oh God, no. You think *she's* too old for you? But I thought—aren't you engaged to your manager?"

"Your good friend Karen and my manager hatched a crazy scheme to make you believe I was about to be married. And since you are dwelling on how old my manager is, I think they figured out why you wouldn't marry me. Don't tell me you've been rejecting me because you thought I was too young for you. What are you ... thirty-five, thirty-six?"

"Forty-four," she said barely above a whisper and watched his face. It *did* matter ... his face told her so. Suddenly she felt like a deflated balloon.

"No!" he insisted. "You just surprised me. I never would have believed it. Answer my question—is that why I didn't stand a chance with you?"

"Of course, that's why. I'm fourteen years older than you! Even seven years ago I thought I was getting too old to be starting a family. You do want children, don't you?"

"I've never given it a lot of thought. I suppose I do. Or not."

"Which is it? You *do* or you don't?"

"I just spent three hours in an airport, waiting for a standby flight. Then I rushed straight here, thinking something was seriously wrong, and you want me to decide on the spur of the moment if I want to have children or not?"

Jade shook her head. "No, I don't want you to decide right now. I was only asking if you already had an opinion one way or the other."

Ian took a step back. "Before we start something again, I have to know ... do I have a chance with you?"

"You definitely have a chance." Taking his hand, she led him toward the piano. "Play for me? And I'll sit on your lap—naked—like before." So nervous he'd refuse, Jade nearly burped up her tea and crackers.

"What would you like me to play?"

"Mostly me ... the accompaniment is incidental..."

Ian began to undress, taking his time while he raised his polo shirt, all the time watching her response. He wasn't as tanned and toned to perfection as four months earlier, which told her volumes. And he was nervous, too, by the way his long graceful fingers shook while lowering the zipper on his trousers. At the same time, he stepped out of his loafers, but Jade wasn't interested in shoes. The long, thick cock jutting

out proudly had her complete attention. She'd never thought she'd see that part of him again.

Ian ran his fingers down the length of it, holding it out to her.

"I think it's grown," Jade said in awe.

"Just happy to see you. You're overdressed for this piece I'm about to play."

Jade suddenly felt self-conscious. She wasn't wearing maternity clothes yet, but the baby was definitely showing his or her presence. "I can't wait," she told him, slipping her sweat pants and panties to the floor in one swoop. "The piano."

As soon as Ian sat on the stool, Jade threw a leg over him, straddling his lap.

"What about protection?" he asked.

"Trust me, it's not an issue."

He reached down and touched where she ached for him. "I don't think you're ready for this. I'm not sure how gentle I can be, since I feel anything but."

Jade understood. Ordinarily she'd agree. But she hadn't asked the doctor about having sex—she'd had no reason to—so she wasn't sure how aggressive they should get. Not with Ian's huge tool.

"Play," she said.

The first chord sent a fissure of sensation down her spine to her waiting core, releasing a rush of moisture and heat and producing a need to be filled by him. The more chords, the more ready she was for him.

She pulled her sweatshirt over her head without interrupting his music. Only the sharp hiss between his teeth told her his appreciation of her naked breasts pressed against him.

"Speaking of growing..."

"I've put on a little weight," she whispered. How had she forgotten about the increase in her breasts? For the first time, she actually needed to wear a bra.

"Kiss me," Ian said.

She rose up on her knees, delivering an open-mouthed kiss to his waiting lips. His tongue danced over hers, while his fingers flew over the keys, urging her on.

She wanted him, needed him.

Slipping her hand between them, she guided him to her core and began a slow spiral down on top of him.

Stretching.

Breathing.

A pulse beating inside her thickened and magnified with each inch of him she took into her. The tempo grew with the sound of his music, making it impossible for her to hold back. A contraction hit her so hard, she bucked through her release. Ian groaned from the grip she had on his thick root. He stood with her still attached, sat her on the piano in front of him, then slid himself in and out so they both could see. The sight and feel of what he was doing brought back the pressure.

Ian slowed, bringing out his cock until only the tip was holding her. He paused until she started to squirm impatiently. The horizontal and prolonged push inside sent Jade to the edge each time.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I've wanted this too long." Ian grabbed hold of her hips and repeatedly pumped into her.

"Thank goodness my clients didn't have children," a female voice said, sounding piqued.

"The realtor!" Jade peeked over Ian's wide shoulder to see three people standing in the doorway of her living room. "I think we must have left the front door hanging open."

"You're selling your house?" Ian questioned.

"That's all you have to say?" the realtor demanded.

A little blonde woman grabbed the hand of the man standing beside her. "I think this is a sign, a fertility omen."

"You have no idea," Jade muttered. "Can you reach our clothes, Ian?"

"Ian Swift Are you Ian Swift the pianist?" The man, evidently a fan, came nearer.

Ian turned his head to acknowledge him. "If you wouldn't mind giving us a minute to collect ourselves, I'd be happy to speak to you. Right at the moment, we're rather indisposed."

"Of course. Imagine that. Ian Swift in the buff. I just bought your latest CD. It's in the car, isn't it, hon?" the man asked his blonde mate.

"I think so," the perky little fertility expert agreed. "Let's get it autographed."

Jade wanted to die. Poor Ian. They'd just become tabloid fodder. She had been so busy watching the pandemonium that it surprised her to see Ian frowning at her.

"What? You're the one who left the door open, not me."

His eyes narrowed and he blatantly stared down at her belly. "When were you going to tell me? Or is that why you

said you planned on calling? Not because you wanted me, but because you needed a father for your baby?"

"Your baby, too. I didn't make it alone."

"But if you weren't pregnant, would you have called?"

Jade didn't know what to say. Would she have called? Maybe—probably, but not so soon.

"Don't bother. I can tell from the look on your face I was just an afterthought." He gathered his clothes, then stepped into his trousers before padding away barefoot with both shoes dangling from his hand.

"But—"

He raised his free hand over his shoulder. "Not now! I'll call you later."

He would call? When? Jade grabbed her clothes and raced up the stairs to her bedroom before the potential buyers came back. The last thing she needed was to give another X-rated show.

When someone knocked on her door only minutes later, she hoped Ian had returned. Instead, she found the realtor.

"I've sold your house."

Great, the fertility palace was now off the market and her life was in the toilet.

CHAPTER 5

Ian didn't know which way was up. In a matter of a couple of days, he discovered Jade was older than he believed and her age was the reason she dismissed him without reason. Best of all, he learned he was going to be a father with the woman he loved beyond reason. If only he could get beyond the crush to his blasted ego. He really didn't doubt she loved him, but it smarted she couldn't commit to him as a man first, then as a father for their child.

Why was age such a stumbling block for Jade? That was the unanswered question, one he intended to ferret out of her.

He dialed her number, not expecting her to answer so quickly.

"Ian, I'm sorry. I should have told you how much I loved you the night we made the baby. I did, you know. When you asked me to marry you, my heart said 'yes,' but my dumb-ass mouth said 'no.' I'm sorry."

"This isn't Ian," he said, disguising his voice and listened to her gasp.

"For real?"

"Not for real. We need to talk on neutral and public territory where we won't be tempted to touch each other. I'll pick you up in about twenty minutes."

* * * *

Jade was waiting outside by the curb, sitting with her head buried in her hands. She looked so frail and helpless, Ian's heart broke. It couldn't be easy for her to learn she was pregnant at forty-four. It probably worried her a good deal. He knew, right then, he shouldn't take his frustration out on her.

"Where are we going?" she asked, slipping in the door as soon as he pulled to a stop.

"I don't know. Around the block. I just need to keep my mind on talking and nothing else. You really wanted to say 'yes' when I first asked you to marry me? And I'm not talking about four months ago. I mean seven years ago when I asked you." Ian backed out of driveway and tried to concentrate on the road in front of him when he wanted her so much it hurt.

"Yes, I was ready to settle down and get married, but I figured you might think my biological clock had more to do with it than what I felt for you. You were so young and inexperienced. I didn't know if I could trust you knew your own mind."

"I knew at twenty-three you were the woman for me. I never once wavered from my conviction. I wish I would have known the difference in our ages was such an issue for you. I never dreamed you were that much older. Not that it matters." He pulled to the side of the road. "You were my first love and I want you to be my last."

"Your first?" Jade gasped.

"My very first. Not to mention you were a hard act to follow. Nobody ever measured up to my first experience. How

many people can say that?" Ian brushed a red wispy curl from her cheek, then turned back to focus on the road.

She caught his hand and brought it to her lips. "You're the nearest I've ever been to heaven on earth. I'm sorry I wasn't brave enough to let you know seven years ago—or four months ago. *Epecially* four months ago."

Ian gripped the wheel so tightly his knuckles turned white. "Are you brave enough now? Will you be my wife?"

"Will you believe I'm marrying you because of my feelings for you and not because I'm carrying your child?"

"I'll try not to doubt you. Since you're responsible, however, you'll need to work hard to show me—prove it to me."

"Yes, I'll marry you, Ian Swift."

Ian gave a quick glance to his rearview mirror before pulling to the right and parking the car. "Thank God, otherwise I didn't know what I'd do with the house I bought."

"You bought a house?"

"One with a naked lady on a grand piano."

"*You* bought my house? Ian you didn't have to do that. I plan to travel with you until Ian Jr. goes to school."

"I'm sentimental about it. Plus, the realtor said you needed the money. How could I refuse?"

"But if we're married, then what's mine is yours."

Ian smiled. He *had* her. Now he could make her squirm—just a little. "And vice versa?"

"Of course."

"My mother was a countess. Twenty years older than my father and extremely wealthy. She outlived my father by

three years. She died thinking I'd found the woman I would one day marry. You."

"Oh, my God! I think I may have met your mother. There was a woman at my mother's funeral I didn't know. She told me she came so I wouldn't be so alone. And someone paid for all my mother's funeral expenses, anonymously. I always figured it was one of my mother's friends. It would have been such a burden for me. I remember thinking how she looked familiar, since it was shortly after our time together in New York."

"I have my mother's eyes and coloring." Ian pulled his wallet from his pocket and flipped it open to a picture of his parents.

Jade touched her finger to the picture. "It's her. Why would your mother have been so kind to me? I was a stranger."

"I told her about you. And she had already been diagnosed with cancer, so she knew I wouldn't have told her unless I was serious about you. She also knew that, once I make up my mind, I never change it. The poor woman suffered through my obstinacy. She probably wanted to meet you and do something for you in case she didn't get to see us together."

"I'm so sorry, I didn't know." Jade paused and narrowed her eyes. "When you say 'extremely wealthy,' what does that mean?"

Ian pulled a velvet bag from his pocket and opened the drawstring. "*This*, for starters." He poured a seven-karat, canary diamond ring into his hand and reached for Jade's

finger. "It means we need to be careful not to raise a spoiled child, who knows we can afford to give him everything he could possibly want." He slipped the ring on her finger. "This was my mother's, and her mother's before her."

Jade stared in awe at the sparkling jewel. "Are you titled, too?"

"Just a little one, to match the little castle on the little estate in the little country that for years belonged to my ancestors."

"This is scaring me."

"I knew it would. Perhaps we could go to my new house where I can play *you* on the piano?"

"Could you hurry?"

* * * *

Five months later

"What do you think of naming our little boy after you?" Jade asked her beaming husband.

"That depends. What do you think about naming our daughter after you?"

"I'd rather name her after your mother. I feel terrible she died thinking I didn't love you enough to marry you."

"Ian and Isabell, it is. It seems fitting for twins to have names starting with the same letter. My mother would have loved this, and you. She showed you that, even though you didn't know it until years after the fact."

"Ian and Isabell," Jade repeated.

Music Man
by Brit Blaise

What a wonderful life her babies would have with Ian as their father. In the five months they'd been married, she loved him more each day.

She could only imagine how much *more* she would be loving him in about six weeks!

Brit Blaise

Brit Blaise lives and writes in hot and steamy Phoenix, Arizona, where she owns a mountainside home among the Saguaro cacti, rattlesnakes, smoldering temperatures and lots of real cowboys. She has a husband, three children and two Labradors. Brit loves the history and adventure of the sunny southwest even if she doesn't love the heat (that kind anyway).

Brit started seriously writing in 2002. Her first contemporary comedy was a finalist in the 2002 Realizing the Dream Contest by Phoenix Desert Rose and since then she's added to her list of achievements.

She enjoys writing and reading above all else, but her hobbies include needlework, quilting, gardening and arena football. Go Phoenix Rattlers! She likes to hear from readers; you can visit her website at www.Britblaise.com.

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