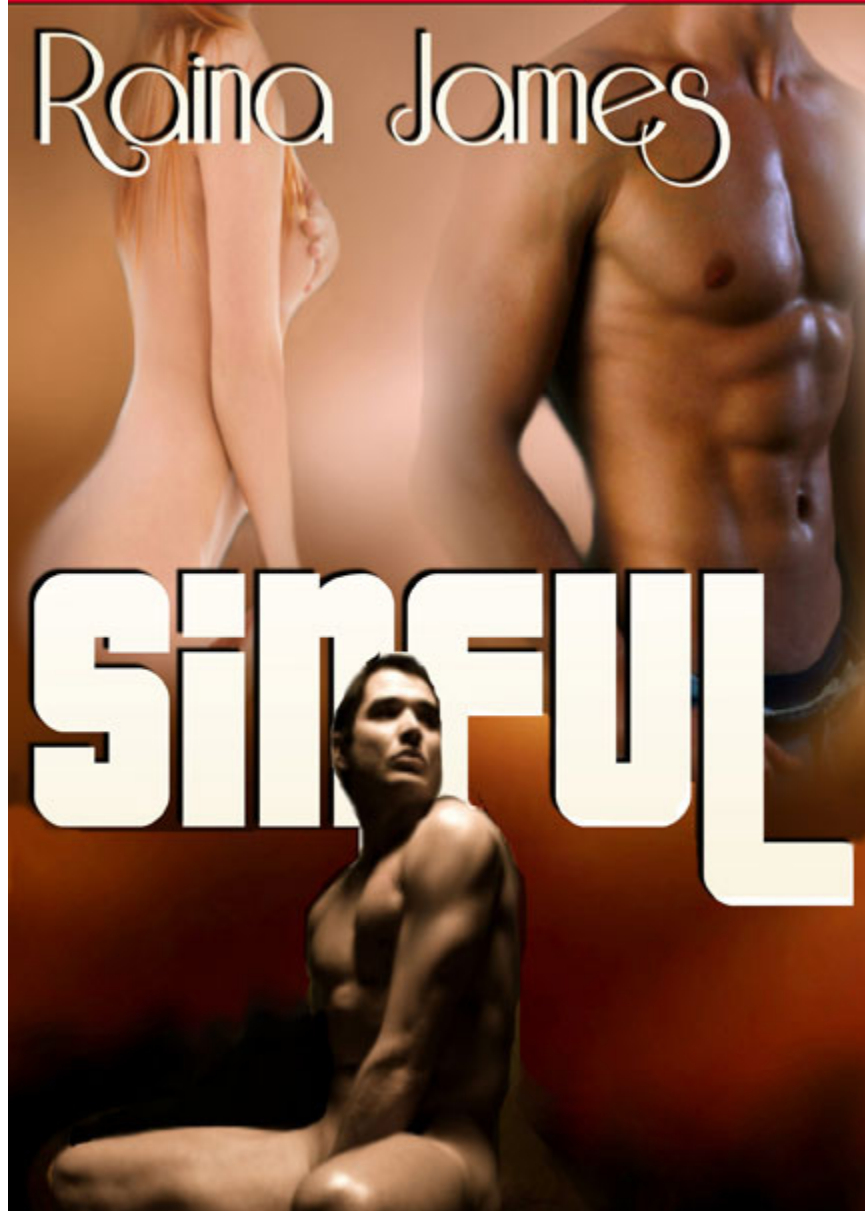


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SINFUL



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DEDICATION

My sister, Tara, for her unwavering support in everything I do.

SINFUL

RAINA JAMES

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Prologue

She didn't know who he was, but she loved him.

Hands glided over her flushed skin, the worship she imagined in his gaze as real as a touch. Fingers plucked at her nipples and she arched her back, pressing her breasts tantalizingly forward. She thought of lips catching one turgid nipple, sucking it deep inside where teeth nipped at the tip and a tongue pressed it against the roof of hot, masculine mouth.

Fingertips traced a thrilling path from her breasts, down her belly, pausing to tease the hollows beside her hipbones. They tangled in the hair of her mound, tugging and spreading to expose her clit to the cool air in the room. The wetness of her desire made her slippery as fingers swirled around and around the tight button, dipping lower to flutter against her slit before returning to push and play with that bud of flesh that demanded all of her attention.

She could almost hear a masculine rumble in her ear, rough words of encouragement, passion, love. Pushing away all other thoughts, she focused on only her desire. Her breasts rose and fell with each ragged breath, each gasped murmur of want, need. The hunger coiled tighter and tighter until she couldn't stand it anymore. Crying out, she clutched the tangled sheets with one hand as the other played between her thighs, trying to hold on to the release that her imaginary lover brought her. Sometimes he seemed more real than the men she knew, the men she saw every day, saw in the nights spent at the club.

Trembling, exhausted, her straining hips fell back against the mattress. Feeling empty, she eased her grip on the sheets and let her other hand fall limp against one splayed thigh.

She thought of the genuine affection she wanted so badly that she had to turn to an imaginary lover to get any satisfaction at all, pale shadow that it was of the real thing. If she weren't so strong in other areas of her life, she'd think it quite pathetic.

Maybe it was.

Her breathing slowed and her heartbeat resumed a steadier rhythm. Why was she so complacent about this? Since when had she ever been content to let events happen to her, rather than making things happen?

If she wanted a man to love her, a man worth *her* love, then it was up to her to find him. She certainly wasn't going to do that if she kept on like this, spending all her time and talent in the club. It wasn't exactly a conducive environment to forming any kind of meaningful, lasting attachment, even if the raunchy, wicked sex shows—and everything else they entailed—were so thrilling that many members found them addictive. Once, that had been enough for her. Not anymore.

Feeling a new determination, she got up from the tangled mess of her bed. Going into the bathroom, she started the shower and stepped in before the water had time to warm.

The plan came to her full-blown, as if her subconscious had just been waiting for the rest of her mind to catch up. First thing in the morning, she'd sever her connection with the club and set the details of her new life in motion. Lord knew she had the money to make it happen.

She sighed as the warming water pounded against the tight muscles of her neck, completing the total body relaxation her faceless, nameless dream man had started. Changing her life was a small price to pay if it meant she could have a man worth loving.

He would be worth it.

Chapter 1

Khariss Lloyd tried to devote her attention to the young woman describing the very-involved details of her upcoming wedding, but couldn't take her eyes off the man standing in the corner of her dance studio. She'd barely had a chance to say hello before the eager bride-to-be and her uncomfortable-looking fiancé snared her.

The man who kept catching her eye spoke on his cell phone, a rueful expression quirking lips that looked like they smiled often. His hair was a warm chestnut brown, cut short but not enough to tame a slight wave that begged to be tousled. He appeared to be the kind of cute boy-next-door who'd grown up to become the handsome married guy down the street who drove his kids to soccer practice and brought his wife daisies wrapped in crinkly green paper. The flicked glance at his left hand as he closed and pocketed his cell phone was wholly unconscious. No ring. Not that that necessarily meant anything.

She liked the fact his eyes had been just slightly above hers when he'd taken her proffered hand in a wide, warm palm. With the low heels on her dancing shoes, that put him at just an inch or two taller than her own five-nine.

This preoccupation with a man was unusual for Khariss, especially a man she wasn't involved in so much as a friendly flirtation with. Yet.

"I thought it would be wonderful to do something really spectacular for our first dance and Mark agreed. Right, honey?" By rote, Khariss gave her professional smile and tried to appear attentive as the young woman gazed expectantly at the man she clutched with

the possessive pride of a successful hunter. Taking his cue, the fiancé nodded and said, “Sure, Alicia. Whatever you want.”

Unlike the man in the corner, whom she found intriguingly mysterious, Khariss had absolutely no trouble pegging Alicia’s fiancé: money, expectations and just the right amount of ambition. Not old money, though. Otherwise, the young couple would have had lessons drummed into them from the moment they toddled into the country club. Comfortably wealthy, then. She also bet that “Honey” thought telling his fiancée she could plan the wedding down to every detail, whatever she wanted for her special day, let him off the hook.

And here he was, signed up for tango lessons. He might as well get his nose pierced now, since it was obviously where he’d be wearing his wedding ring.

“If you’ll excuse me,” Khariss said, smoothly heading off what she could tell would be more effusive descriptions of the marrieds-to-be’s nuptial plans, “I think almost everyone’s here. If we don’t get started, you really will be dancing the night away.”

The woman laughed while Honey gave a somewhat sickly smile.

Khariss made a circuit of the room, advising chatting students to pair up, they were about to begin. When she reached the man in the corner, he was conspicuously alone. He stood, hands in trouser pockets, watching the sun set through one of the windows overlooking the busy street below.

“Is your wife going to be joining us soon?” she asked.

He turned immediately, taking his hands out of his pockets as he did so. “Wife?” His startled expression quickly morphed into friendly amusement. “Oh, no. I’m not married. I was supposed to meet my sister here. Julie O’Donnell.”

“Julie, of course. But when she registered, she said she’d be coming with her husband.”

“Mike, yeah. He got called out of town on business, so Julie asked me to come with her. She didn’t want to start the lessons by herself.”

“That was nice of you.”

He shrugged. "What else is a big brother supposed to do? Besides, she'd planned on taking the lessons so she could dance at our grandparents' sixtieth wedding anniversary. I guess I could stand to learn a few moves too."

"Sixty years. That's impressive."

He smiled fondly. "They're an inspiration all right." He cleared his throat. "Now it looks like I'll have to learn those moves another time. I just called Julie to find out what was keeping her and it turns out my nephew's sick."

"Oh no!"

"I gather it's a stomach bug or something," he reassured her. "Not too serious, but Julie didn't want to leave him with a sitter. She was just about to call me and bail, but I beat her to it."

"Of course she couldn't leave him with a babysitter. What I don't understand is why you can't stay for the lesson yourself."

"Uh, well, I really don't know how to dance." Was that a flush on his cheeks? "I mean, really. And I'd feel foolish doing the moves myself. *Can* you even do them yourself?"

"Of course you can," she said innocently, "but it's always better with a partner."

He reddened more, but his laugh was genuine. "You've got me there."

Khariss was charmed. She couldn't remember the last time she'd met a man capable of blushing. "Actually, it would really help me out if you stayed." At his inquiring expression, she elaborated. "If I have you to demonstrate the steps with me, that means all the men will get to stay with their own partners. Then I can see what they're doing together, and better help them if they need it."

When he still seemed hesitant, she said with a sly smile and a wink, "Wouldn't it be nice to be able to show up your sister at your grandparents' big bash?"

He laughed again. "Okay, you've sold me. Just tell me where to stand."

Taking his arm, Khariss led him to the wall of mirrors at the front of the studio. “Thanks, you’re a lifesaver—?”

“Dylan,” he said, his eyes a dark, twinkling brown as they looked into hers. “Dylan Sanders.”

* * * *

Dylan went down the stairs to the first floor and out into the warm summer night. Hands back in his pockets, he absently jangled his keys as he walked to the parking lot a block down from Dance! Dance! Dance!, Khariss Lloyd’s studio.

Although it was a weeknight, vehicles lined the curbs on either side of the street, others trolling hopefully between them in search of any empty spots. He wished them luck. Known for its specialty boutiques, art galleries, coffee bars, restaurants and a couple of upscale clubs, it was always hard to find street parking in this district, no matter the time of day or night. With the office building that housed the brokerage where he worked just minutes away, he’d grown familiar with the scene over the past few years.

Should he have asked Khariss out for a cup of coffee? No. As the owner of her business, she’d probably already put in a long day before teaching the evening class to a bunch of novice ballroom dancers. She’d felt amazingly lithe in his arms. She also hadn’t made him feel the slightest bit awkward when he misstepped or moved out of sync with the lush Latin music that rolled out of the sound system. She’d simply smiled, gently corrected him and arranged his hands to her satisfaction, one on her back, the other holding hers in a commanding grip. An image of Khariss arranging his hands on various other parts of her body popped into his mind. Predictably, his cock hardened. It had happened more than once that night. Half his positioning problems could be blamed on his efforts to conceal the very interested erection from the woman pressed so snugly against him as they went through the moves of the sultry dance.

On the upside, she *had* teased him about how some things were just better with a partner. Not exactly the comment of an uninterested woman.

Khariss was nothing like the women he normally dated.

Pretty, smart, shy, quiet, reserved, restrained—all of them words used to describe the women he dated. At least, those were the words his sisters had used. He'd never noticed. Those just happened to be the women he went to school with or, after he'd graduated, ran into at work or met through friends.

Khariss, on the other hand, was an elegant knockout. Nothing shy or restrained about her, either, from what he could tell. She laughed easily, unselfconsciously, and invited everyone else to laugh with her. Her face was as smooth and classic as a cameo, with creamy skin and a generous mouth. Deep blue eyes were as rich as the dark auburn hair pulled back in a twist. She had a typical dancer's physique, long and lean and graceful as a willow. But she had strength, too. The supple muscles of her back had been evident under his palm, as had the flex and pull of the muscles in her calves and thighs revealed by the high slit in her skirt as she demonstrated tango positions to her students.

Just thinking about it made his mouth water.

Taking his keys out of his pocket, Dylan left the sidewalk and made his way through the rows of cars to his silver-grey Lexus. Pausing, he bounced the keys thoughtfully in his palm. He wondered if Khariss had felt the instant spark of attraction that jolted him when they'd shaken hands at the door to the studio. She'd turned away to greet the couple behind him pretty quickly. Yet she'd also made an effort to get him to stay for the class. She could have merely been being polite, a businesswoman holding on to a client, but he didn't think so. Even with the keys jangling in the cup of his hand, he could still feel the tingle of sensation that had settled under his skin as soon as he'd touched her.

Abruptly, he thumbed the key fob to unlock the Lexus, opened the door and slid behind the wheel. It took him a moment to find a comfortable position as he adjusted the trousers to afford his still stiff flesh a bit more breathing room. He'd give it a few days then he'd call Khariss Lloyd and see about getting that cup of coffee. Coffee, dinner, a walk in the park—whatever she wanted, he was game.

Chapter 2

Dylan eased into the room and sat on the end of a bench filled with moms and dads waiting for their children to finish their dance class. Many tapped their feet or twitched fingers on knees in time to the music that rapped out of the sound system with staccato precision.

This main-floor dance studio was very different from its upstairs counterpart, which leaned more toward strip flooring and neutral-toned walls above wooden panels. This one had walls painted in brilliant colors decorated with the stylized outlines of people performing recognizable dances. There was a ballerina in a frilly tutu, a man in a cowboy hat swinging around a woman in a flouncy, knee-length skirt, and even the spare lines of a couple strikingly posed in a form from the tango. The wall that faced the sidewalk was all windows, so passersby could watch the dancers as they practiced. Another featured double ballet barres, obviously to accommodate dancers of different ages and heights. And, of course, there was the expected mirrored wall.

Khariss and a lean young black man in jeans and a striped shirt that reached almost to his knees commanded attention in the middle of the room. Surrounded by about a dozen children clapping along with the beat, Khariss and her partner performed in chaotic synchronicity, feet stomping, elbows snapping and hips twisting. Laughing, Khariss stopped her own moves to direct the children, none of whom appeared older than seven, to form a ragged line. As she did that, the young man went over to the console and started the hip hop track at the beginning, adjusting the volume down as he did so.

“Okay, everyone,” Khariss said, raising her voice to speak over the music. “Now it’s your turn. Julius, if you don’t mind?”

The young man took up a position in front of the children and slowly repeated the dance moves he and Khariss had performed with rapid-fire skill, explaining how to replicate each motion as he did so. Khariss, looking young and fresh herself in loose yoga pants and a swinging ponytail, moved down the line, helping one child regain her balance, another to lift his knee just so.

“Then you just put it all together,” the young man said in a surprisingly deep voice, matching words to action, counting the meter aloud. The children mimicked his dance moves like so many goslings marching after their gander dad.

The class continued in that way for about another fifteen minutes before Khariss stopped the music and selected another track. “Two minutes for wild and wacky, gang,” she announced, before the distinct, squeaky refrain of *The Chicken Dance* came over the speakers. The children squealed and went into a frenzy of flapping arms and “wack, wack, wack” fingers. Dylan’s niece, Megan, spotted him as she spun on her toes and threw him an excited wave. Khariss noticed, following Megan’s wave to meet Dylan’s eyes. She returned his smile with interest.

Finally, the track ended and Khariss stopped the children with upheld hands. “Let’s give Elizabeth’s big brother a hand for coming by to help us with our dancing today.”

The children clapped and called out a chorus of, “Thanks, Julius!” Then they were off, high-pitched voices babbling as they raced to meet their waiting parents.

Dylan stood just in time to catch an armful of little girl. Hoisting Megan up for a smacking kiss on the cheek, he said, “Wow, I didn’t know you could dance so well. Can I be your date for the prom?”

“Uncle Dylan,” she giggled, wrapping thin arms around his neck so she could rub her nose against his. “You’re so silly. Where’s Mommy?”

“She said there was something wrong with her car, so she asked me to come pick you up. Is that okay?”

“Well, I guess,” she said with a mock sniff before adding cagily, “if you buy me an ice cream.”

Helpless to do anything else, as he generally was with his legion of female relatives, Dylan agreed easily, setting her to the task of changing out of her dance slippers into running shoes.

“Hi there,” a sweet contralto voice said almost in his ear.

The smile was on his face before he turned to greet Khariss. “Hi, yourself.”

“I didn’t expect to see you here today. Where’s Megan’s mom?”

Dylan shrugged. “Car trouble.” Although he detected the tiniest whiff of conspiracy. First, Julie’s husband was suddenly “called out of town” before they could begin dance lessons. Then, just days later, Melissa’s car starts acting up and who does she call but big brother Dylan to pick up Megan from a dance class he didn’t even know she’d been taking. Both destinations involved this studio and its lovely proprietress. His sisters were anything but subtle.

“Ah. Are you planning to work on more of your mad tango skills for next week’s class?”

Before he could answer, a tiny voice piped up, “Uncle Dylan’s taking me for ice cream, Miss Lloyd. Wanna come?”

“Oh, I don’t know—”

“Sure, why don’t you join us,” Dylan said. “Unless you have a class?”

“No, I’m done for the day. This is it for me on Saturdays.”

“Great. We’re just going to that parlor down the block—”

“Mmmm,” Megan interrupted. “Bubblegum ice cream with chocolate sprinkles *and* candy hearts.”

“She’s so predictable. But you can have it any way you want.” He felt himself flushing at the inadvertent double entendre. *Way to make her think you’re a creep, buddy.*

Khariss laughed. “You’ve convinced me. If you don’t mind waiting, I’ll just pop up to my apartment and get changed.”

“Sure thing.”

* * * *

Khariss peeled off the stretchy pink tee and tossed it in the hamper, then skimmed off her yoga pants. The matched sports bra and panties she wore when teaching followed in short order and she was in and out of the shower in five minutes.

Dylan Sanders’ appeal was just as delicious on a Saturday morning as it had been a few nights before. And he was definitely interested. Two trips to her studio in one week, both coming to the rescue of his female relatives. Khariss smiled. It didn’t take a genius to figure out that Melissa Peterson and Julie O’Donnell had set their brother up.

Khariss went through her drawers, selecting a silky, shell-pink panty-and-bra set to replace the utilitarian cotton she danced in. Next came fitted khaki shorts and a thin-strapped white tank top covered with a loose white cotton shirt left unbuttoned.

She liked Dylan’s sisters. She’d met Melissa when Megan joined her Saturday morning Introduction to Dance class about a month and a half ago. A few weeks after that, Julie had stopped by to talk to her about taking lessons in the evening. Dylan’s youngest sister had decided on the tango, calling it both sexy and impressive. The women were attractive and outgoing, easily speaking of their families and their lives.

She envied them that comfort in togetherness. Her own parents were cool and distant, more than content to leave the rearing of their only child to a nanny, tutors and then boarding schools. She knew that wasn’t the case with all families in their social sphere, so they couldn’t blame their disconnect on that. Khariss being Khariss, she’d been determined to go her own way, and she had. Big time. Her

parents still didn't understand her choices. She doubted they ever would.

Khariss delayed only long enough to stroke a thin coat of mascara on her lashes and apply a clear gloss to her mouth, then slipped on her sandals and hurried down to meet Dylan and Megan.

She'd already seen how sweet he was with his family. He also had a quiet humor that appealed to her. And blushes simply made his good, solid features even more attractive.

In the entrance hall, Megan greeted her with an excited, "Let's go!" Dylan's eyes went briefly to the long, tanned length of her legs, and Khariss warmed under the gleam of interest he didn't bother to hide. Khariss brushed against him when he held the door for her and Megan, enjoying his scent of warm male and subtle aftershave.

She had a feeling that Dylan Sanders might just be exactly the kind of man she'd been looking for.

If Melissa and Julie wanted to push her together with him, they wouldn't have to try very hard.

Chapter 3

Khariss carried two glasses of wine into her living room from the kitchen. Dylan sat on her couch, seemingly filling up a good portion of it with his long limbs and broad shoulders. Dinner at one of the district's outdoor patios had been followed by a walk along the thronging streets near her studio. It was exciting being out and about on a busy Saturday night, people-watching with an appealing, intelligent man. They'd talked about books, movies, their favorite vacation spots, even the current municipal election. The more time she spent with him, the more Khariss appreciated Dylan's quick wit. It was good-natured, insightful, maybe a little wicked, but not cutting or derogatory. From what she could determine, he was a nice, normal man with a nice, normal job—a junior financial adviser in a well-known firm—pretty much nice everything. And oh, how she wanted nice. Especially when it came with dark-chocolate eyes and tousled brown hair that framed an attractive, very masculine face.

“Normally I'd be annoyed at my sisters, but I'm not exactly in a position to complain,” Dylan said as he accepted a glass of wine. Khariss sat in the corner of the couch beside him and tucked her bare feet up under her. Before going to dinner, they'd stopped back at her place so she could change into slim trousers for the evening, but she'd kept the casual tank and white blouse.

“Annoyed?”

He grinned over the rim of his glass. “For setting me up. Meddling. Being matchmakers.”

“Oh, is that what they were doing?” she said innocently, taking a sip of the fruity white wine in her own glass.

“Definitely. We’re just lucky my mother didn’t get in on the action.”

“Hmmm. I did have a teeny, tiny suspicion that something might be going on when we dropped Megan off. It was pretty obvious that Melissa’s husband didn’t have a clue what you were talking about when you asked her how the car was.”

“Lucky thing Stu’s used to getting his feet tromped on like that. They’ve been together since high school. I think by now he’s either built up a resistance to pain or damn strong arches.”

She chuckled. “Do I detect a note of commiseration in your voice?”

“A bit. She took up that habit pretty young, but at least I don’t get my feet mashed very often anymore. Unlike Stu, she knows I won’t hesitate to toss her into her own pool. Big brother’s prerogative.”

Khariss couldn’t stop a tiny sigh of envy. “It must be nice, having such a close family.”

“Yeah,” he mused, leaning back in his own corner of the couch and comfortably stretching out his legs, stacking his ankles. He cradled the wine glass easily in the long fingers of one hand, balancing its base on his firm stomach as he laid the other arm along the back of the couch. “It is. Don’t get me wrong, it can be annoying as hell sometimes having the women in your family trying to order your life. But I know their hearts are in the right place. I think since my dad died ...” He shrugged. “Well, let’s just say that it’s a lot easier to appreciate what you have and not sweat the small stuff.”

Khariss made a small sound as she took another sip of her wine. “A lot of people wouldn’t.”

“I’m not a lot of people. I make up my own mind.” His matter-of-fact tone told her he really wasn’t bothered by other people’s opinions. She didn’t know if he was that self-confident or simply easy-going. Not that it mattered. His attitude appealed to her. Yet another positive mark in his favor.

“And your family? Do you have brothers and sisters?”

“Nope,” she said. “Just little old me. Frankly, I think that was more than my parents could handle.”

“Are you saying you were a bad little girl?”

She laughed. “Oh, you have no idea. Definitely a bad girl.”

The way his cheeks pinkened slightly at his own boldness decided her. She leaned forward and put her wine glass on the coffee table. “My parents despaired of me long ago. Nothing but the best guardians, tutors, boarding schools ... and I still wouldn’t conform.”

“Boarding schools?” Dylan let her take his glass and set it beside hers.

“Hmmm, yes. My parents are Peter and Eloise Lloyd.”

“*Peter* Lloyd?” He glanced around her apartment, as if noticing it for the first time. Not that her wealth was obvious. It was small, but everything in it was top of the line. The artwork on the walls was original, not prints, the carpet, hand-woven, the furniture, crafted rather than assembly-line fare.

She used his distraction to ease closer, until she pressed against his side. “Yup. I’m one of *those* Lloyds. Do you mind?”

His arm came off the back of the couch to gather her closer. “No. Why would I mind?”

Khariss toyed with the buttons on his shirt. “Some men do.” And some men, she didn’t say, were more interested than ever when they found out about her family.

Dylan harrumphed. “Khariss, I already said I’m not most people. That goes for the men, too. I make up my own mind.”

As if to prove it, he bent his head and took her lips in a bold kiss. She let him have the lead, enjoying the way his tongue teased along the seam of her mouth. He groaned softly when she opened for him, inviting him inside to tangle in sinuous play. She stroked her hands over his chest, savoring the feel of his muscles under his cotton shirt as her palms glided down to his flat stomach and up again. She twined her hands around his neck and he leaned farther back until she lay stretched out almost on top of him. He growled as her breasts pressed

into his chest, and she felt the insistent throb of his erection prodding her belly.

She settled more comfortably along his length and brought her hands down to the first button on his shirt. Freeing it with an easy twitch, she moved to the next one. She'd started on the third when he caught her wrists, stopping her. Reluctantly leaving her lips, he bent his forehead to hers and gasped for air. Actually, they both struggled to catch their breath, and Khariss felt exhilaration race through her veins.

"What?" she said. "What is it?"

He shook his head slightly. "I don't want to rush you," he said, sounding like he was forcing the words out. "We should take things slow. I've got a feeling that we could ... have something." He paused again, taking a deep breath. "Have something good together. I don't want to blow it."

Khariss felt her excitement coalesce into a hot, burning knot of need low in her belly. She'd never been so turned on in her life. He was so sweet. So thoughtful. She had to have him. Now. "I think we could have something good together, too. You're not going to blow it." She pressed a fierce kiss to his lips, trying to put every ounce of the desire she felt into it. "Trust me. I don't think you could if you tried."

Easing away, she stood up and offered him her hand. "Come with me, Dylan. I need you."

* * * *

Dylan watched Khariss for a long moment. Her auburn curls had straggled down from the clip she'd secured them in before leaving for dinner. The neck of her loose white blouse trailed over one shoulder, exposing the creamy soft curve of it. Her cheeks could have been wind burned they were so flushed, and her green eyes glittered with

hunger as she watched him closely, waiting for his reaction. She was stunning.

This beautiful, wonderful woman wanted him. He took her hand and stood up.

“I need you, too,” he said hoarsely.

She led him into her bedroom. Instead of turning on the overhead light, she clicked on the bedside lamp. Then she faced Dylan and lifted her hands to her shirt. He could only watch dumbly as she loosened the buttons and dropped the blouse to the floor. Her nipples formed obvious sharp points under her tank top, as if she wasn’t even wearing a bra. His cock twitched at the thought. Next, her hands moved to her waistband. Unfastening the slim pants, she skimmed them down her legs and stepped out of them, revealing a tiny strip of pale pink silk at the vee of her thighs. He could see the curls of her sex through the sheer fabric. When she pulled her tank top over her head, the feminine muscles in her tight abdomen clenched under the faint shadow of her ribs. Her matching pink bra was just as sheer, so much so that her nipples could have been berries under the blush-toned silk. He wanted to suck her through the silk, twirl his tongue around those berries and taste her.

Fighting the urge to simply take her down to the bed and sink balls deep into her, he surveyed her from head to toe. She was slender, but by no means skinny. A healthy, mature woman. The curve of her hips was unmistakable, and her breasts formed lush half-circles above the edge of the bra. Then she took off the bra and panties and he could barely think.

“Dylan,” she said.

“Hmmm.”

Putting one hand on her cocked hip, she quirked her brow. “Aren’t you feeling a bit overdressed?”

Taking her hint, he stripped off his clothes with passion-fueled speed. He had none of her finesse. He could hold himself back enough not to jump on her like a horny eighteen-year-old, but if she

wanted his clothes off, by damn, he'd set a record for going from shirt to skin.

"Come here," she instructed, her tone that of a woman who knew what she wanted and wasn't shy about asking for it.

Interest spiked his lust higher. He'd never been with a woman who'd taken the lead before. He thought he might like it. His cock was sure of it.

He stepped forward, until they almost touched. Her height made it so much easier when she tipped her face up. He only needed to bend his chin a fraction of an inch for their lips to meet. This time, they both groaned. His hands settled of their own volition on the curve of her waist, fingers gently kneading her resilient flesh.

Khariss's hand found its way between their bodies until she held him in the palm of her hand and squeezed. She caught his gasp in her mouth. Her fingers moved over him, learning him, and her palm rolled over the head of his cock. It jumped in her hand. He must have made some sound, because Khariss murmured soothingly. Using his cock as a leash, she guided him down with her on the bed.

Pushing him to his back, she splayed a thigh over his as she continued to play with his ever-hardening cock and balls. All the while, her luscious kisses teased and tantalized. As she sucked his tongue into her mouth, he couldn't help but imagine what it would feel like to have his cock sliding between her wet lips, her talented tongue swirling around his taut flesh. He groaned again, and Khariss made a purring sound of pleasure.

When he felt like he couldn't wait another second, he grasped her hips and tried to urge her all the way over him.

Khariss resisted. After a moment, he realized that she had stopped the handjob to speak shakily into his ear. This fresh evidence of her arousal pushed his excitement up another notch, something he would have thought impossible without coming.

"Dylan, baby. I—I haven't been with another man in almost a year," she said.

“A year?” He was shocked. Khariss was the kind of woman men would do practically anything to have. He knew he would.

“What, you think I routinely take a guy to my bed on the first date?” She sounded hurt.

“No! No, not at all.” Roughly, he stroked the hair away from her face and placed a gentle kiss on her passion-swollen lips. “Never. I’m just surprised that some lucky bastard hasn’t snapped you up already.”

She softened against his side and returned his kiss. “I’ve just been waiting for the right man.”

“And,” he said slowly, “you think I might be the right man?”

“Yes. I do.” Utter sincerity shone in her eyes.

“Then I’m honored.”

Khariss glanced down, as if suddenly shy. “I’ve been tested and I’m safe,” she said quietly. “It’s also a safe time of the month for me.”

Dylan’s heart pounded in his chest. “Actually, I haven’t been with a woman in a long time.” He thought for a moment, and added, “It’s probably been about a year for me, too. I tend to get busy with work, and my nieces and nephews, and ...” he trailed off. “I guess I just haven’t met anyone I wanted to get involved with either. Until you.”

“I’m glad.” Khariss’s hand resumed its slow play and he helplessly arched into her strokes. “So, since we’re both safe, then,” she nibbled his bottom lip, “if you want, you don’t have to wear a condom.”

This time, he didn’t try to stop the impulse. He gripped Khariss’s hips and hauled her over him. She gave a small squeak of surprise as he guided her knees to straddle his waist. His cock felt like it had picked up a permanent vibration, an electric current that flowed from his balls to the small of his back and coursed up his spine. He’d *never* made love to a woman without a condom. Just the thought of it now, with Khariss...

Khariss’s squeak turned to a breathless laugh, then a moan as she positioned him at her entrance and sank down. She settled into a quick, hard rhythm that stole his breath. He didn’t care. What little

intelligence he had left that wasn't concentrating on the sensations shooting through his bloodstream focused on the way her breasts bounced with the vigor of her movements and her teeth worried her lower lip. The wet sounds of her pussy gliding up and down his cock made sweat break out on his forehead. Struggling to hold back his own release, Dylan worked a hand between them and rotated his thumb in the slick juice around her clit. Khariss threw her head back and pumped her hips over him, faster, harder.

"Oh, Dylan," she gasped. "Oh, baby, that feels so good. Yes. There. Exactly there."

Her hand shot out to grab his, pressing it tight against her clit and he felt the ripple of her orgasm start to milk his shaft. It was too much. He thrust up into her one last time, pressing his heels and head into the mattress as he yelled out her name, his seed roaring out of his cock into her wet, welcoming haven.

Chapter 4

Khariss glanced over her shoulder at Dylan to give him a sexy, teasing smile. Her heart raced so fast it was all she could do to keep her breaths even and concentrate on not tripping over her heels as she led him down what appeared to be a deserted alley between two office buildings.

Part of her thought she was crazy for what she was about to do. But the rest of her knew that Dylan needed to have all the facts if she hoped to have a future with him. If he found out about her past from someone else, he'd be hurt, maybe even angry. She just hoped the man she'd fallen in love with over the past three weeks would understand this part of her former life.

Dylan's palm felt warm and solid against hers, and she couldn't help curling her fingers in a gentle caress over the back of his hand, lightly stroking the sprinkling of hair there. His lips quirked in the ready grin she'd come to know so well, his eyes full of laughing questions as he let her tow him along. "Where are we going?"

The alley was cleaner than the average city sidewalk, free of detritus both animate and inanimate. No homeless people crouched in soggy cardboard boxes here. Between O'Grady's security team and the well-hidden surveillance cameras, not so much as a rat could scurry down the darkened corridor unnoticed—or unhindered.

"Someplace I think you just might like."

"Yeah?" Intrigue touched the timbre of Dylan's voice. He made a surprised sound when she pulled him to a stop in front of the door flush-mounted against the brick wall on their left. It was installed in

such a way that one had to be standing right in front of it to notice it. There was no handle, just a flat, imposing panel of dark metal.

Khariss paused for a moment, giving the camera she knew was trained on them a moment to capture their images for the security guard manning the desk. She let go of Dylan's hand to open her clutch purse and pull out the thin, matte-black plastic card tucked into the zippered pocket. He watched with interest as she swiped it through a discreet scanner. Something clicked inside the door and it swung inwards.

Khariss took Dylan's hand again and guided him through the portal, sensing his curious glance as the door automatically swung closed, the lock engaging with a barely audible snick. They were in a dark corridor lit by muted lights just brilliant enough to bring out the mica sparkles in the expensive-looking floor tiles. The hallway ended in another dark door, this one graced with a curve of silver for a handle. A slow throb, more felt than heard, filled the air around them. She had to admit that if someone were leading her down this aisle for the first time, she'd be more than a little unnerved.

"It's all right," Khariss said to Dylan. He didn't seem concerned, but she prayed she hadn't made a mistake in bringing him here. The last thing she wanted to do was screw things up with Dylan.

She should have known him better by now. She was reminded of that when he laughed softly and squeezed her fingers. "I know. I'm always all right with you. Lead on, Jane Bond. Now I *really* want to know what this place is."

Relief rushed through her. Khariss couldn't help herself. Stopping, she turned to Dylan and leaned full-length against him, urging him back against one dark wall. He didn't know about the concealed cameras but she did, and it shot an extra zing of excitement through her veins. Tonight, the high, strappy black heels she wore made them the same height, perfect to mesh her mouth with his. Her tongue darted against his lips, all the urging he needed to open and let her in. With hungry licks, she lured him to stroke his way into her mouth,

loving the way he followed her lead. Restlessly, Khariss twisted her hips against his, rubbing her belly against his hardening cock. His palms quickly went from her hips down to the short hem of her skirt, then just below that to the bare flesh of her thighs. Khariss moaned softly. It was so easy to get lost in him. But she had an agenda tonight.

Reluctantly, she eased away until she could think again. It pleased her to notice the aroused flush on his cheekbones and the way his tongue glided slowly over his bottom lip, as if savoring the lingering taste of her.

“Maybe we should come back another time and you can show me whatever you had in mind then,” Dylan said, tracing her neckline with one fingertip, his chocolate-brown eyes smoldering with promise. “We could go back to my place instead, and I can show you what *I* have in mind.”

Khariss shook her head slowly. They’d come this far. Another few steps and they’d be in the club. She’d fully intended to leave this part of her life behind but maybe ... Maybe, with Dylan, she didn’t have to.

“Definitely later, Dylan. Right now, though, why don’t we go into the club? We’ll have one drink, and if you still want to go, we’ll leave. All right?”

Dylan stopped teasing her neckline and leaned close to give her a quick kiss on the lips. “Okay, sweetheart. One drink.” He tucked her hand in the crook of his elbow. “Lead on.” He surveyed the deceptively plain corridor and the mysterious door. “So this is a club? I had no idea there was one in this building.”

“It’s a very exclusive club.”

“You mean one of those places where people go to see and be seen?”

“Yes, but not quite in the way you mean, I think.”

With a last encouraging smile, part nerves, part anticipation, she pushed open the door.

* * * *

As soon as the door opened, a wall of sound hit them. It wasn't particularly loud, in the way that a dance club might have been. It was just everywhere. He couldn't name the track, but the music was rich, throbbing, powerful. Exciting. The club was as dimly lit as the corridor, almost like a theater. In fact, the seating area appeared to wrap around a stage of some kind instead of a dance floor. The club was packed, not an unoccupied table in sight. He checked the stage again, free of musicians or instruments. It reminded him, almost, of a strip club stage. The quality of the patrons, a mix of men and women who appeared well-dressed and mostly sober, made him dismiss that thought.

"Khariss."

The sound of another man's voice calling his lover's name instantly drew Dylan's attention away from his inspection of the club. A tall blond man in a closely fitted suit had stopped beside Khariss and bent to kiss her cheek. He lingered, his head tilted intimately to hers as he spoke quietly into her ear. Khariss smiled. For the first time in his life, Dylan felt the tug of jealousy.

As if sensing his bridling emotions, Khariss hugged his elbow close against her side. He could feel the weight of her breast resting on his forearm and felt unaccountably soothed.

"Dylan, this is O'Grady," she said. "He runs the club."

Dylan forced a smile and shook the other man's hand. Normally, he would have appreciated the other man's handshake, neither too limp nor unnecessarily hard. Confident, but not overbearing. The half-hard cock barely concealed by the drape of Dylan's suit jacket reminded him why he likely felt less than charitable at the moment. Frustrated libido did that to a guy. He forced a friendly smile. "Nice to meet you."

“Welcome to Club Sin,” O’Grady answered. “I’m glad to see Khariss back here, and with someone, too.”

Dylan quirked an eyebrow, but before he could comment, Khariss said, “Do you think you can find us somewhere to sit?”

“For you, anything. Private room or table?”

“Table, please.”

As if in answer to some signal too subtle for Dylan to note, a young waiter dressed in black trousers and a black silk dress shirt appeared at O’Grady’s shoulder. “Mark, please show Khariss and her guest to my table,” O’Grady instructed him.

“We’ll talk later, O’Grady,” Khariss said as she and Dylan started after the waiter. O’Grady nodded in acknowledgment.

Caught up in wondering about the other man’s interest in Khariss, it wasn’t until they were seated that Dylan again paid attention to their surroundings. O’Grady’s booth was a plushly-padded bench curved in a half-circle around a cloth-draped table. The back of the bench was high enough that it would take a player in the NBA to see over the top of it. Something about its design seemed to affect the acoustics around them, deadening the club’s music to a manageable level that they could comfortably talk over. Khariss settled close against his side, twining her fingers through his against his thigh. Distractedly, Dylan ordered a beer and Khariss a glass of white wine, which the waiter delivered in short order.

“So how do you know O’Grady?” Dylan said when they were alone.

Khariss glanced down, teeth briefly worrying her lower lip before she answered. “I’ve been a member of the club for a long time. And I used to work here.”

“Yeah? Waitressing?” Dylan was puzzled. What was the big deal? Why did Khariss seem nervous? Her attitude was a definite departure from the self-possessed businesswoman he knew.

“No.” She met his eyes, her chin tilting a bit, almost in challenge. “As a dancer. Then a...choreographer.”

Dylan had already noted the dearth of gleaming silver poles and topless young women wobbling on clear plastic platform heels. Not that he would care if she had been an exotic dancer. He'd been waiting for Khariss and not even realized it. No way would he let anything come between him and a future with this woman. For some reason, though, Khariss visibly tensed as she sat beside him. Obviously, he'd missed something.

"You *are* a dancer and choreographer," he said. "You have your own studio. You had to get your start somewhere, right? And this looks like a pretty nice place." He let go of Khariss's hand to put his arm around her shoulders. "What's wrong, sweetheart? What are you trying to tell me?"

The lights went out.

* * * *

The music faded away until the only sound was a room full of people trying to be quiet. The silence went on for long moments, not broken by so much as a muffled cough. The room was taut with expectation. She wondered if Dylan felt it or if he was just curious about why the lights had gone out and the music had stopped. She was glad he didn't ask her what was going on. She hadn't realized how hard it would be to tell him what she used to do. He still didn't understand, but he would. Any moment now. She steeled herself for his reaction, good or bad, when he finally realized what was happening. If she'd misread him...

A slow, measured click, click, click broke the silence. The people around them seemed to inhale as one. Anticipation. How delicious. Khariss stirred restlessly against Dylan's side and shivered as she felt her thighs rub together.

Click. Click. Click. Gradually, the lights around the stage began to brighten, revealing a woman in a severe business suit and sensible shoes walking slowly toward the audience from the curtained back of

the stage. The front of the stage had been transformed into what appeared to be a section of a bathroom, complete with vanity and chair and a large glass-sided shower stall. The woman, her dark blond hair beginning to straggle out of a French twist, could have been any one of a thousand latte-fueled females returning from a hard day at the office.

Khariss saw Dylan blink in surprise. He glanced at her, started to speak, but she pressed a finger to his lips and nodded at the stage. *Watch*, she mouthed. He subsided, making himself comfortable on the bench and hugging Khariss in the cradle of his arm.

The only sound in the room was the woman's heels coming down on the slick surface of the stage. When she reached the "bathroom," she sighed and paused to stretch, hands at the small of her back, arching as anyone would who had been trapped in a cubicle all day perched on a squeaky computer chair with no ergonomics whatsoever. Casually, she opened the shower door and twisted the knobs to get the water running. Instantly, steam began to curl through the air. Sitting on the vanity chair, she pulled off her shoes and rubbed her feet. The music began as soon as she reached under her strict black skirt and skimmed the first silky stocking down one long leg.

Khariss watched Dylan as he watched the woman stripping in preparation for her shower. He and the rest of the audience were fascinated voyeurs to an intimate, private ritual. When Khariss next looked at the performer, the woman wore nothing more than a pair of plain white cotton panties. She skimmed those off with a single efficient motion and moved to the shower. The "steam" had fogged up the glass on all sides, so that when she stepped inside and closed the door, her image blurred but didn't disappear. Her beautiful, long-limbed, bountifully curved form was still very visible to the audience.

As was the taller form of the man who seemed to form from mist and shadow in the shower beside her.

The music throbbed through the room as the woman turned to face the man, their shapes coming together, a slender, porcelain-pale sylph

against a darker-skinned, heavily muscled satyr. Even blurred, the steam-shrouded scene was clear enough for the audience to watch as the man masterfully guided her thigh up to his waist and thrust his hips forward. Her head fell back on an open-mouthed, unheard cry of ecstasy. Man and woman writhed together under the falling water as they mated in primal passion, almost violent as they rocked against each other. The stark difference between the exhausted office worker and the sultry siren in the shower made the scene shocking in itself. And irresistibly compelling.

Suddenly, the man yanked himself away from his lover and spun her around to put her back to him. The walls of the shower rattled as he forced her against the steamy glass. Her hard, pointed nipples and flushed aureoles pressed against the glass, bright red spots in the pale circles of her breasts. The man's large hands, fingers widespread, hid them from view as he cupped and kneaded them, gripped them, caressed them. His legs dark columns between her thighs, he positioned himself perfectly and entered his little lover from behind. Each thrust of his hips pressed her pubis against the glass, light blond curls playing peek-a-boo through the mist. The man's dripping wet head of black hair dropped to the curve of her neck, shielding even the hint of his features as he fucked her.

Khariss stole a glance at Dylan, hoping his expression wasn't one of disgust or outrage that she had brought him to a club like this, a hedonist's paradise, a sensual playground. A sex club.

Dylan wasn't watching the stage. His eyes were riveted on a couple at a nearby booth. Three people, actually. A man sat sprawled comfortably on the padded bench, an attractive woman on the cushions at his side. In fact, their positions weren't unlike Khariss and Dylan's.

What was different, however, was the young man crouched between the other man's knees.

Khariss recognized Mark, the young waiter who had shown them to O'Grady's table. His lips were wrapped tightly around the older

man's cock, his head bobbing steadily as he alternately sucked and laved the stiff flesh with his tongue. While the older man kept slitted eyes on the stage show, the woman with him slid one thigh over his and rubbed herself against him. With one hand, she caressed Mark's face and hair as he devoted himself to sucking her partner off. The young waiter soon stopped licking and settled in for long, luscious pulls on the cock, his cheeks hollowing as he sucked and sucked until the other man squeezed his eyes shut and visibly quaked. Mark's throat convulsed as he swallowed the man's release and the woman pressed soothing kisses on her partner's throat and cheek. By the time the music began to fade, Mark had tucked the other man's softening penis back in his pants. Without a word, he stood up, unloaded the drinks from the tray he'd set on the couple's table, and walked away.

Stage show forgotten, Khariss focused on Dylan. He didn't appear to be repulsed. He looked...hungry. Khariss felt her belly tighten in excited reaction as she realized he was turned on. Aroused. Intrigued. He'd just watched one man suck another one off in a public place and it had fired him up. She knew everything about him, knew he'd never been with a man. But maybe he wanted to. She wondered.

The music faded completely as the show on the stage ended with the dousing of the lights. Khariss didn't have to see it to know that the performers had thoroughly enjoyed themselves in the shower as they'd entertained the audience. She'd been there herself.

"So," drawled a familiar voice. "What did you think of the show?"

* * * *

Dylan blinked as if waking from a dream. A secret, long-held, fantasy-type dream. Slowly, he processed what was happening around him. The lights had come up and O'Grady had slid into the booth on Khariss's other side. Dylan shifted uncomfortably, and not just because his cock felt like an iron pipe against his thigh. Something in

O'Grady's eyes told Dylan the other man liked what he saw. And that would be him.

He needed to get out of here. He needed to think.

He had a hard time looking away from O'Grady's intense stare, but he did it. Leaning closer to Khariss, he kissed her bare shoulder. "One drink, you said. Ready to go?"

O'Grady accepted their goodbyes with a knowing smile.

They barely made it to the car in the underground lot before Dylan hoisted Khariss up in his arms, elbows hooked under her knees, spreading her thighs wide. He stumbled a bit, caught his balance and leaned against the side of his car. Khariss's tongue plunged into his mouth as her fingers wrestled with his belt buckle. Making small, eager sounds, she whipped the smooth leather out of the buckle, popped the button and dragged down his zipper with a loud rip.

Later, he'd have time to worry about the surveillance cameras that were sure to be positioned in the underground garage and wonder if they'd unwittingly given some rent-a-cop a free show. Now, all he could think about was Khariss's hand wrapped around his rod and—God! — thrusting into her wet, welcoming pussy.

Khariss mumbled something between pants and nipping kisses against his lips.

"What?" he asked, barely able to form the word.

"Car. Door. Locked."

Belatedly understanding, he fumbled in his pocket for the key fob and thumbed the remote lock, twice, unlocking all the doors at once. Khariss climbed down him to stand on shaky heels as she yanked open one of the rear doors. Then she crawled in. She'd barely gotten both knees on the rear seat before he'd flipped up her skirt and followed her in. The scrap of emerald green panties was a thin strip of satin up the middle of her ass. One knee pressed into the seat cushion, the other foot firmly on the concrete floor, he bent down and bit one ripe ass cheek. Khariss gave a small shriek and tossed her hair out of

the way to look back at him over her shoulder. He grinned. Her answering smile was just as full of laughter.

“I’m glad you liked the show,” she said.

Dylan bit her again then licked to soothe away the sting, his answer muffled against her sweet flesh. “Who wouldn’t?”

Khariss swayed back against him, pressing her bottom against his teeth, enticing him to nip her again. “Oh,” she said, her voice shaky. “A lot of people.”

“I keep telling you, I’m not a lot of people.”

With every breath he inhaled more of her hot, spicy scent. It drove him wild. Pulling her damp panties out of the way, he sank two fingers into her, all the way down to the third knuckle. She groaned as his fingers slid into her without hindrance, gliding easily through her juices. He couldn’t wait. Too impatient to even take her panties off, he simply trapped the crotch of them against her inner thigh. Then, taking his cock in one hand, he guided himself to her slit and plunged in. They both cried out. He let go of the panties to grab hold of her hips and the added tension of the elastic fabric against his shaft made Khariss feel that much tighter.

This was no slow, steady rise to release. All he could do was buck and grind, faster and faster. As he pumped into her, he crawled all the way into the back seat, planting both knees between her spread thighs, pushing Khariss further into the car until her head touched the door on the other side. She lifted a hand to brace herself against it, using it for leverage as she thrust back against his rolling hips.

“You really did like what you saw, Dylan. Didn’t you?” The hard jabs of his cock made her voice sound breathless, ragged. He didn’t know how she could even talk. “Was it the stage show, when that big hunk of a man took that little beauty in the shower?”

Dylan bit out a curse and pressed his face against her neck, dragging her unique scent into his nose. He roughly pushed the front of her panties out of the way so he could reach her clit. She gasped as he pinched it between two fingers, but didn’t let it distract her. “Or

was it the other show?” Fuck, she was relentless! “When that hottie of a waiter sucked that big cock deep, deep into his throat.” Dylan practically hunched into her, his fingers slipping around her juicy clit as he rammed into her harder than he’d ever fucked a woman in his life. His balls felt like they were going to explode, and still he held back, waiting...

“Just imagine what it would have felt like if it was *your* cock he’d been sucking off.”

Dylan came with a roar.

Chapter 5

Khariss couldn't believe she'd said that to him. *"Just imagine what it would have felt like if it was your cock he'd been sucking off."*

He'd come so hard, it was more than apparent he'd liked the idea. Afterwards, he'd seemed almost shy. He'd tenderly adjusted her panties back into place, smoothed her skirt down and helped her from the backseat. After settling her in the passenger seat, he got behind the wheel and drove them back to his apartment—all without saying a word or meeting her eyes. She thought it a positive sign that he hadn't taken her straight home. His silence worried her, though, especially when the first thing he did when they got to his place was take a shower. Alone.

She waited until he'd finished before heading into the bathroom to take one of her own. By the time she came out, the lights were off and he'd gone to bed.

Well, that was an obvious signal. Dylan must be truly disgusted with her. You couldn't blame a man for using what was offered when he was so turned on he couldn't see straight. She of all people knew that you didn't have to care about someone to fuck them. Khariss sighed unhappily. At least she'd clipped her hair up to keep it dry. She looked at the dress and underwear crumpled in her hand. She really hated putting dirty clothes back on after a shower. But needs must... She dropped her damp towel on the chair in the corner of Dylan's room, separated out her panties and bra to stick in her purse and started to shimmy back into the little green slip dress.

"What are you doing?"

At the sound of his low question, Khariss glanced up to see his shadowed figure rising from the bed.

“Oh, well.” Khariss picked up the barely visible towel and started folding it. “I’d better be getting back to my place. I—” She swallowed past the lump in her throat. She couldn’t even come up with a social lie to make her getaway less awkward.

Dylan’s hand closed on her shoulder. “Don’t go.” He turned her to face him. “Please, stay. I’m sorry. I promise I won’t ...” His voice trailed off and his hand dropped to his side. Her heart sank. Obviously, he couldn’t even stand to touch her. He was just too much of a gentleman to make her go home alone at this time of night. But then he said, “I promise I won’t touch you if you don’t want me to. I know you must be upset with me right now.”

Khariss frowned. “Upset? With *you*?”

Her eyes had adjusted to the darkened room enough that she could almost make out his expression as he roughly dragged one hand through his hair. Whatever he felt, it wasn’t anger or disgust, that much was apparent. “Yes, with me. For being so rough. In the car. I must have hurt you.”

“No,” she blurted out, dropping the towel as she reached for him. “You didn’t hurt me at all. You were wonderful. Wild, passionate, excited beyond bearing. Wonderful.”

He stood stiffly in her arms for a moment before gathering her close and burying his face in the crook of her neck. “Really? Are you sure?”

She couldn’t hold the laugh back as she gave him an extra squeeze. “Of course. Dylan, you are always wonderful, whether the loving is soft and tender or hard and fast.”

He lifted his head to study her face, as if gauging her sincerity, and she kissed him. Softly moving her lips over his, she tried to put everything she felt into the kiss: love, passion, respect. As if he understood that this kiss was about emotion, not physical passion, he didn’t try to deepen it or turn it carnal. He simply let her dictate the

kiss, drawing it out and ending it when she was ready. Her eyes gazed straight into his when she said, “Dylan, I love you.”

His breath left him on a soft exhale and his arms tightened convulsively around her. “You do?”

She nodded.

“Well, that’s a relief, since I love you, too.”

Grinning, he tumbled her onto the bed and stripped her slip dress off over her head. He urged her under the covers and got in beside her, wasting little time in pulling her back into his arms. Content to snuggle close, Khariss traced her fingers through the soft-crisp hair on the forearm he’d secured around her waist. His flannel sleeping pants felt cozy against the backs of her thighs, an interesting contrast to the solid masculine contours beneath the soft fabric. She would have liked nothing more than to fall asleep like this, wrapped in the knowledge of his love. But she had to know.

“Did you really like what you saw tonight, Dylan?”

He snorted softly. “I think you know that I did.”

“Then you weren’t disgusted?”

“No, not disgusted.” He paused. “More surprised. I hadn’t realized there were clubs like that, where anyone could just go in and get, ah, a blowjob in public or see a show like that. Well, except a strip club, I guess. A cheap and sleazy one.”

“Club Sin is *not* cheap and sleazy.”

“I’m sorry, sweetheart. I didn’t mean that. I meant Club Sin looked nothing like that, so it was a surprise to see such blatantly erotic things there.”

“Erotic, yes. It’s definitely that.” Khariss rolled in his arms to face him. “Also, not just anyone can go in. It is very, very exclusive. Membership is only by referral, and applicants undergo a rigorous background check before their name is considered by a ten-person panel of other members. Then an applicant must be unanimously approved before membership is granted. Since some of the members

come from the highest levels of society and business, Club Sin takes their privacy seriously.”

“And you went through all this to become a member?”

“No. I didn’t have to.”

“Because you worked there?”

“No.” She bit her lip before adding, “Because I was one of the owners before I sold my interest in the club last year to open my dance studio.”

“Whoa.”

“Yeah. I know.”

“Know what?”

“It’s a weird kind of thing to learn about the woman you’re dating.”

“First, we’re not dating. That sounds so high school.” He kissed her temple. “I don’t know what to call what we have, but it is a hell of a lot more than mere ‘dating.’ Second, there’s absolutely nothing weird about you.”

“Good to know. Then what did you mean by, ‘Whoa’?”

“I meant, whoa, what an amazing thing to be involved in. Not exactly like opening up an ice cream stand. Or a dance studio, either. How did it come about?”

Khariss shrugged. “O’Grady and I grew up in the same circles. His home life wasn’t any better than mine. Worse, actually. He’s had nothing to do with his family in years. Anyway, Club Sin was O’Grady’s idea. He approached me and some mutual acquaintances about becoming partners. At that time in my life, I was up for pretty much anything that my parents wouldn’t approve of. Stupid, I know, but I was much younger then. Besides, it was fun.”

“If it was so fun, why’d you sell your share of the club last year?”

“Because I realized I’d never meet a man like you there.”

He pulled a little bit away, his expression puzzled. “Like me?”

“A man I could love who would love me.”

“And there aren’t any men like that at Club Sin?”

“Dylan. Of course not. You only went because I took you. Club Sin is all about one thing: Carnal pleasure. I wanted more.”

“So,” he said slowly, “does that mean you’re disappointed that I liked what I saw?”

“Disappointed that the most wonderful man I know is adventurous, wickedly sexy and full of passion? Are you kidding? Dylan, you are so much *more* than I had ever hoped to find. Do you know how lucky I feel?”

“Lucky, huh?”

Khariss ran her tongue along his lips and drew him into a heartfelt kiss. “The luckiest woman ever.”

His hips pulsed against hers, and she could feel his cock harden more with each gentle nudge. “I’m feeling pretty lucky right now myself.”

“Feeling lucky, or feeling like *getting* lucky?”

“Who says I can’t be both?”

“Oh, not me, lover.” The loose tie on his sleeping pants put up little resistance as she tugged it free and began to edge the waistband over his hips. She let the hair trail under his navel lead her fingers to his throbbing, very hard penis. Her fingers curled around him, but they stilled before he could do more than pant a breath or two.

“Dylan.” Her serious tone made him focus about two feet higher than his dick. “Does it really not bother you that I used to be involved—and I mean involved, in every way—in Club Sin?”

Dylan stroked her hair away from her face and smiled into her eyes. “Khariss, it doesn’t bother me in the least. Don’t you think I like passionate, sexy and adventurous, too? I love you. I want to be with you. *That’s* what matters to me. Nothing else.”

Khariss closed her eyes, thanking whatever power had brought this man into her life. “In that case,” she purred, “why don’t you bring your passionate, sexy, adventurous self a little bit closer?”

“Only one way to do that,” he groaned, rolling to settle easily between her welcoming thighs.

She scratched her nails down his back to cup his ass. “I know.” She didn’t have to pull too hard to get him to do exactly what she wanted.

Chapter 6

As soon as the doors on the private elevator glided shut, Khariss turned to Dylan. Sliding her arms around his waist under his coat, she cuddled against him. Automatically, he hugged her closer. Kissing the faint dimple in his chin, she tilted her head the bare distance needed to meet his eyes.

“We don’t have to do this.”

“I know.”

“O’Grady will understand. We can just go right back down to the car and head to my place, your place, wherever you want to—”

Dylan silenced her with a kiss, one broad palm cradling the back of her head. She barely noticed the smooth motion of the elevator car coming to a halt, or the doors sliding open to reveal the front foyer of O’Grady’s penthouse suite. Dylan ended the kiss with a last tickle of his tongue over her bottom lip. “I know,” he repeated softly against her mouth. “We’re adventurous, remember?”

Still feeling a bit shaky, Khariss let him guide her into O’Grady’s suite. It wasn’t all nerves that stirred up a kaleidoscope of butterflies in her belly and made her knees feel as substantial as air. Anticipation did that to her, too.

Dylan whistled softly through his teeth. “Nice hole in the wall.”

She tried to see the apartment through his eyes. Casual elegance typified O’Grady’s suite. The sable-toned leather furniture in the sunken conversation pit was plush and comfortable. Thick area rugs and objets d’art occupied spaces seemingly without purpose throughout the room, yet it all worked. The suite didn’t have doors, just openings to hallways or other areas of the expansive suite. A

dining area sat to one side. Wooden cabinets and glossy black appliances could be seen in the kitchen through one archway and a wide, horizontal cutaway pass-through. The focal point of the main room was a wide fireplace topped by a circular column of rounded stone for a chimney. It served as a separation point between the conversation area and the few steps up to a smaller seating area in front of a wall of windows overlooking a patio. This high up, only a few other tall buildings were visible from where they stood and the glow of the city at night wasn't as obvious, making the stars seem like tiny diamonds sprinkled on a blue-black silk sheet.

While Dylan knew Khariss had money, she suspected it was more an awareness than true understanding. She lived simply, compared to the way she'd grown up. She owned the building that housed her dance studio and apartment, but aside from that and the lessons and gear she provided for many of the children in her classes, she tried to live on the proceeds of her business.

Dylan, by comparison, had grown up with more family than money. They hadn't been poor, but they hadn't been free from financial concerns, either. Dylan had worked his way through college. Once he'd graduated and gone to work in the business world, much of his income had gone to helping his sisters with their own school costs.

For a moment, she feared O'Grady's obvious wealth might intimidate her lover. Again, he proved her fears groundless.

"I've always wanted a place with a fireplace. How 'bout you?"

Khariss grinned and kissed his cheek. "Sure. A fireplace would be nice."

Taking Dylan's coat, she led him down the three steps into the conversation pit and tossed it and her delicate floral-print wrap over the back of one of the couches. His hand pressed warm and solid in hers when she started across the sunken area to a hallway that began beside the wall of windows.

"I guess you know your way."

“Yes. I haven’t been here for a long time, but O’Grady’s lived here for about five years or so. It hasn’t changed much.”

O’Grady’s bedroom didn’t have a door, either. The hallway ended and his personal retreat began. Khariss flicked a switch by the door. Subdued lighting from concealed fixtures warmed the room, enough to illuminate it, but not brilliantly so.

Like the rest of the suite they’d seen, O’Grady’s bedroom was quietly elegant, but masculine, just like the man who lived here. Instead of being pushed against a plain wall, the low, king-sized bed took up the floor space in front of another wall of glass. A long bolster lay against a short headboard, on top of a rich brown spread, and a number of plump pillows tumbled against it. Two of the room’s walls were panelled in some kind of dark wood, but one only for half its length. Blocks of translucent glass made up the other half, curving around the corner and out of sight to what Khariss remembered as the attached bathroom. On the same wall, at the other end, an arch led into the dressing room. Aside from the nightstands on either side of the bed, the room was bare. The remaining wall featured a massive mirror that would have done justice to Khariss’s studio. Positioned opposite the floor-to-ceiling window, with the bed and tables low in the reflection, it seemed as if the bedroom was exposed to the night on two sides.

Khariss slanted Dylan a look. He took in the room with obvious interest, his eyes going from window to mirror to bed.

O’Grady would be up soon, she thought. It might be easier for Dylan if he relaxed before their soon-to-be lover joined them.

Her heart tripped in her chest and a spike of desire shot through her, making her belly clench, stilling the butterflies for an instant before the fluttery sensation moved lower. She thought of male hands coursing over male flesh, of Dylan’s face filled with desire. Oh, this was going to be so good.

* * * *

Dylan's eyes went back to the bed. His imagination supplied an image of him and Khariss and O'Grady mussing up the tidy display of pillows and spread and he felt his cock start to fill. It had been on its way to hard since he'd picked up Khariss. But then, that was its usual state around her. On the walk from the parking garage to the club, down the corridor to the private elevator, on the ride up in the car, through it all he'd felt the anticipation zinging through him. It had done nothing to take the edge off his arousal, qualms or no qualms. Despite what he'd told Khariss, he was nervous. Never would he have imagined himself with another man. At least, never seriously. He would have banished that kind of thought in an instant before he'd met Khariss. She'd opened up a whole new world to him. An exciting world. One he wanted to share with her, explore with her, savor with her.

He was going to marry her if he got half a chance.

"Well." Khariss's soft voice drew his attention away from the bed. "Why don't we get comfortable?"

With the smooth flexibility honed by years of stretching, dancing and exercise, Khariss lifted her feet one at a time. A flick of her fingers released the tiny straps as she slipped off her high heels. The motion did interesting things to the short, swishy hem of the heather-purple silk slip dress that just reached the top of her thighs. Her eyes never leaving his, Khariss tossed the shoes aside then ran her hands teasingly up her sides. Her nipples pebbled noticeably under the thin fabric.

Dylan inhaled deeply as he resisted the urge to help her with the dress. Her expression told him she knew exactly what he was thinking, and it pleased her. Khariss eased the spaghetti straps over the curve of her smooth shoulders. A sexy shimmy, and the silk puddled around her bare feet.

"Damn," he muttered.

It had been obvious she wasn't wearing a bra under the scrap of silk. He hadn't realized she wasn't wearing *anything* under it. And thank God for that, he thought irreverently. If he had known, they wouldn't have made it down the block, let alone up to O'Grady's penthouse.

A clear diamond pendant on a tiny gold chain dangled enticingly between her breasts as she drew in a deep breath of her own. Dylan's eyes followed her hands on their tantalizing journey back to her breasts. Cradling them in her palms, she used thumbs and forefingers to tease and twist her nipples, teasing and twisting him into knots as she did so. They quickly flushed with color, as red as berries and just as sweet. The witch!

"It stings, Dylan," she said, never stopping her play. "I can hardly wait to feel your lips on me. I want your tongue to lick the sting away."

His breath hitched and his mouth watered. She was so sexy.

Khariss took a step back, then another. As if tethered to her by an invisible string, Dylan followed, matching her pace for pace until the back of her knees hit the bed and she sank gracefully down onto the mattress. Finally, she released her reddened nipples and scooted back on the bed to stretch along one side of it, her elbows propping her up as she watched him with predatory eyes.

"Strip for me, Dylan."

He came to attention at the tone of command in her voice. He loved it when she did that. His striptease was far less seductive than hers as he rushed to loosen his tie, undo buttons, jerk down his zipper, but he didn't care. All he cared about was getting skin to skin with Khariss as soon as possible.

Naked, he crawled onto the bed and gathered Khariss in his arms, sliding down her body until he could nudge a thigh between hers and rest his head on her breasts. He stayed there for a moment, quiet, comforted, as she stroked the loose curls at the nape of his neck.

"Shhhh. I'm right here," she said.

The spicy-sweet feminine scent of her filled his nostrils and he drew in a deep breath through his nose. Almost without volition, his tongue stroked the smooth skin of her breast. Shifting her slightly in his arms to get better access, he continued to lap at her, tongue curling around a taut nipple, drawing a pleased moan from Khariss.

“Oh, you are so good at that,” she crooned. Like a little cat, she ran her nails up and down his back, trailing the sharp little tips over his buttocks and along his thighs.

His cock pressed insistently against her leg until she caught him in her palm. Rather than the firm glide and pull he expected, she simply held him as she would clasp his hand. Eventually, her fingers began to move, but slowly, easing down his shaft to toy with his balls, rolling them gently. He didn’t know why, but that more than anything helped him get a grip on his arousal.

“Isn’t this a nice sight to come home to.”

Dylan stiffened as O’Grady’s wry comment brought him back to where they were. A glance over his shoulder showed the other man leaning casually against the wall just inside the room. He wore black from head-to-toe, from his polished shoes to the silk tie cinched around his neck. It was impossible to tell how long he’d been there, but the huge erection pressing boldly behind his zipper said long enough. Dylan felt his cheeks flush as he stared at the bulge, then met O’Grady’s hot gaze.

Khariss didn’t seem bothered in the least. She continued her teasing massage of Dylan’s cock and balls as she said, “Surely you didn’t expect us to share tea and cookies while we waited for you.”

O’Grady chuckled. “Oh, no, definitely not that. Maybe the cognac, though. It’s a good year.”

“Dylan, don’t listen to him.” Khariss feathered a kiss along his temple that had the instant effect of draining most of the renewed tension out of him. “I know for a fact,” she said in a mock whisper that the other man couldn’t help but overhear, “that he’s perfectly loving the sight of your sweet ass right now.”

O'Grady stepped up to the edge of the bed and his lips spread in a slow smile. "Definitely." He exchanged a glance with Khariss then moved around the bed to the arch bordered by the glass blocks, shrugging off his suit jacket as he went. "If you'll excuse me. I won't be a moment."

Dylan, eyes narrowed, watched him go.

"Dylan," Khariss said. "Are you sure this is what you want?"

He thought about the hard flesh fighting to escape O'Grady's pants, the heat in the other man's eyes as he assessed Dylan's body and obviously approved of what he saw. Grinning crookedly, he flexed his hips, pushing his stiff cock into her hand. "Yes. I'm sure, Khariss. This is what I want."

Laughing softly at his wicked expression, Khariss repositioned herself until they were face to face and she could give him a long, wet kiss.

A few moments later, O'Grady joined them. He'd traded his black-on-black suit for a sable-brown robe made of some kind of soft, slightly shiny fabric. The dark color made his blond hair look like old gold in the soft lighting, especially against the healthy tan of his skin. A fine stubble, grown back by evening from a morning shave, rode his chin and cheeks like a golden haze.

Feeling awkward, Dylan stood to face the other man while Khariss reclined comfortably against the bolster to watch. O'Grady's eyes were penetrating as they moved over Dylan's body, almost as intimate as a touch. Maybe more so. The sense of awkwardness didn't stop Dylan's cock from bobbing with interest under the combined scrutiny of man and woman. Fully aware of his novice status in this situation, Dylan waited to see what was expected of him.

Grady began to circle him, commenting, "Khariss said you've never had a man."

Dylan shook his head no.

"Have you taken one?"

He couldn't stop the soft snort, intensely aware as the other man moved closer. "No."

O'Grady nipped his shoulder. "Then I'll go easy on you. Just this once."

Dylan caught the pleased glint in the other man's eye.

"Two rules," O'Grady said.

"Rules?"

"Of course. It's for your safety, your peace of mind. And mine. This is meant to be fun, Dylan. And there's no fun if just one of us is enjoying it."

The hand he ran down Dylan's flank was harder than Khariss's, bigger, rougher. Definitely a man's hand. An excited shudder ran through him. "Rules?" he repeated, the word sounding a little strangled even to his own ears.

"First rule: If you want me to stop, just say this word." He leaned forward and whispered in Dylan's ear. Dylan couldn't stop the laugh from barking out. O'Grady pinched his ass cheek in friendly admonishment. "Think you can remember that, bro?"

"Yeah, I'll remember."

"Good. You can use it at any time. Don't forget. I might be disappointed, but I'll stop."

Dylan nodded.

"Second rule: You can't come until I say so."

"What?"

O'Grady dragged his fingers down Dylan's spine and toyed with the fine hairs at the small of his back. The sensation was so titillating he wanted to squirm away and closer at the same time. "Until I say so," O'Grady pressed. "Got it?"

"Yes," he gasped. "No coming until you say I can."

Dylan was acutely aware of Khariss on the bed, watching the other man's hands touch him as familiarly as hers did. O'Grady came around to face him, and Dylan noticed that they were almost the same

height. The other man just had such a forceful personality that he only seemed much bigger.

O'Grady's hands went to the loosely tied belt on his robe and tugged it free. The sides of the sable-brown fabric fell apart, framing well-defined pecs and abs. The light brown curls on his chest appeared almost pale against the rich tan of his skin. They swirled around the dark brown disks of his masculine areolas and trailed down his flat stomach to join with the darker hair at the base of his cock, which jutted solidly up from its nest. Unselfconsciously, O'Grady took his dick in his fist and pumped it several times. A few drops of pre-cum formed on the tip and he used his thumb to rub it around the tiny slit. Dylan felt his own cock throb in sympathetic pleasure. O'Grady took something from his pocket then shrugged off the robe entirely. He held out his hand to Dylan, offering him the foil-wrapped packet he'd retrieved.

"Put it on me."

Dylan took the package and used his teeth to open it, just as he would for himself. He hesitated for only an instant before pressing the latex over the glistening head of the other man's cock and rolling it on. O'Grady felt as hard as iron, hot to the touch. He grunted as Dylan's fingers lingered, making sure the condom was fully deployed. Before Dylan could pull away, O'Grady's hand wrapped around his so they both held his condom-covered shaft. He bent his head to Dylan's and took his mouth, tongue thrusting inside. His kiss wasn't like a woman's at all. It was hard and soft at the same time, as passionate as Khariss's, if not as loving. But Dylan didn't need that from this man. He closed his eyes and enjoyed his first kiss from a male lover.

O'Grady pulled back, his breathing a little ragged, but still far more controlled than Dylan's.

"I'd love to see what your mouth would feel like doing cock." He released Dylan then urged him to face the wall beside the massive mirror. "Brace yourself," he murmured in Dylan's ear, guiding his

hands into position against the wall. Dylan gasped and flinched slightly as O'Grady leaned into him, the slight coolness of the condom over his cock feeling alien as his erection settled between Dylan's thighs.

"Perfect fit," he muttered in Dylan's ear. Dylan wasn't listening, though, because O'Grady's arms were around his waist, one hand fisting his cock, the other tugging his balls almost roughly in counterpoint. Oh, fuck, Dylan thought. No woman had *ever* handled him like this. But a man knew exactly how much force he could take. Helplessly, his hips began to thrust with O'Grady's rhythm.

"No, no, no. No moving, Dylan. You're a long way from coming."

Dylan startled when O'Grady raised his voice, only belatedly understanding who he really addressed when he said, "Darling, get the black jar out of the nightstand. No, the other one. That's it. Now bring it and your sweet self here."

Dylan watched under his lashes as Khariss left the bed and walked toward them with long-legged grace. She held out the requested jar and O'Grady released Dylan's sac to take it. When Khariss started to return to the bed, O'Grady said, "Hold on, darling. I'm going to need a hand here." He tilted Dylan's cock suggestively. Without instruction, Khariss went to her knees and eased between Dylan and the wall, balancing herself against his thighs. He felt her panting, excited breaths ruffling the dark pubic hair around his cock and bit his lip. What were they doing to him?

O'Grady leaned close enough to scruff the beginnings of his returning beard against Dylan's neck, gaining his immediate attention. "Turn your head the other way," he instructed. "Watch the mirror."

He rolled his head to the side and realized he could see everything: O'Grady's leanly muscular frame snugged up against his, buttocks round and high in the starlight coming in from the windows behind the bed; him, palms braced against the wall as he waited for O'Grady's commands; Khariss, on her knees like a supplicant as she

stared at the masculine fingers wrapped around Dylan's naked cock. With a slight waggle of O'Grady's hand, Dylan's cockhead nudged against her parted lips. Without further prompting, she sucked first the plum-shaped head then, when O'Grady moved his hand, the rock-hard shaft deep into her mouth.

Dylan jolted. "Shit! Oh, fuck!" His hands fisted against the wall and he continued to curse as Khariss's tongue and lips and teeth all came into play. Her nails scraped the sensitive skin of his inner thighs and he felt his knees weaken. She'd sucked him off before, much to their mutual delight, but the feel of O'Grady's hard body touching his while she did it torqued it up another notch for him.

O'Grady's chuckle was dark and diabolical in his ear. "Remember, you can't come until I say so."

Dylan leaned his forehead against the wall, helpless to resist rolling it just enough to the side so he could watch Khariss work his cock as O'Grady twisted the lid off his mysterious black jar. He dipped his fingers in it, pulled them out coated in lube and used it to slick up his cock, even though the condom was already lubricated. Meeting Dylan's eyes in the mirror, he quirked his lips. "I said I'd be careful with you. No need to look so worried."

Lazily he worked his fingers up and down his shaft until it shone. Then he dipped his fingers once more into the jar before tossing it casually onto the carpet. Without further ado, he parted Dylan's ass cheeks and used the lube-slicked fingers to prod and pleasure the tight bud of his anus. It was almost too much. Dylan was beyond swearing. Khariss's mouth felt like heaven on his cock and O'Grady's fingers...the other man prodded a blunt fingertip against his anus and it gave way, taking the slickened digit without apparent trouble. Dylan definitely noticed when O'Grady added a second finger to the exploration. O'Grady laid his head against Dylan's sweating back, both men watching in the mirror as Khariss gave him the blowjob of his life.

O'Grady seemed to be timing the thrusts of his fingers with Khariss's pulls on Dylan's cock. Then a third finger forged into his ass. Dylan really felt it now. It hurt, but not as much as it felt sooooo good.

"Are you ready?" O'Grady sucked Dylan's earlobe into his mouth and nibbled the edge of it with strong white teeth. "Ready to take me, Dylan? 'Cause I'm ready to sink balls deep into this virgin ass of yours."

Dylan could barely think, let alone agree, but somehow he managed. "Yeah. Take me."

Abruptly, O'Grady pulled his fingers free and pressed the broad, blunt tip of his cock to the relaxed rim of Dylan's anus. With slow, steady pressure, he pushed. And pushed. A loud, masculine groan filled the room. Dylan didn't know if it came from him or O'Grady. Didn't care. O'Grady was relentless. Gripping Dylan's hips with hard fingers, he forged ahead, inch by slow inch. He stopped, backed out a bit then thrust forward with a short thrust. He repeated the motion until he sank all the way in, his belly slapping against Dylan's buttocks.

It wasn't until O'Grady rubbed the heel of his palm in circles on Dylan's stomach that he realized he was trembling. He settled under the soothing touch, but only for as long as it took him to focus once more on the double-edged pleasure of Khariss's mouth and O'Grady's cock.

Obviously sensing just how on the edge he was, O'Grady asked, "Can you hold on?"

Gritting his teeth, Dylan nodded.

"Thank God." He began to thrust in earnest. Reaching around Dylan's hip, he cupped the back of Khariss's head and held her steady as his ramming cock pounded into Dylan with deliberate force, each jab pistoning his cock in and out of Khariss's willing mouth. Dylan couldn't take his eyes away from the mirror. O'Grady's shaft was brick red even through the condom, and Khariss tilted her head to get

a better angle as Dylan's cock prodded the top of her throat with every one of O'Grady's hard thrusts.

"O'Grady," Dylan gasped. He tried again, louder. "O'Grady!"

The other man grunted.

"I can't hold out much longer. I've gotta come."

O'Grady gave a sharp shake of his head. "Not yet. Hold on... just a little... bit... longer."

Dylan would have thought it impossible, but O'Grady stepped up his pace, still holding Khariss as he wrapped a hard-muscled arm around Dylan's chest for more leverage and raced to his own release. He let go with a yell, the orgasm powerful enough that the muscles all over his body flexed, in such sharp relief in the mirror and moonlight they could have been carved from marble. An endless moment later, he slumped against Dylan's sweat-slick back, harsh pants racking him as he struggled for control. At last, he pulled away, his cock sliding easily out of Dylan's ass with a sucking sound.

"Okay," he said, his voice low, but regaining control. "Take her now."

Dylan didn't need to be told twice. Jerking his hips away from Khariss, unceremoniously yanking his cock from her mouth, he scooped her up and crossed to the bed in three long strides. Falling onto it, he fell into her, his cock instantly finding her dripping pussy as she wrapped strong thighs around his hips.

He felt wild. Khariss didn't seem to mind in the least, clawing and scratching at his back as he spread her knees and pushed them almost to her shoulders, jerking his hips into her again and again. Her breasts bounced crazily with each thrust, the nipples more elongated than he'd ever seen them. He wanted to suck on them, bite them, but he couldn't think beyond the hot coil that wound more tightly around his innards with every slap of his hips. If his balls were any harder, they'd explode. His ass burned from O'Grady's possession, and his cock burned for Khariss.

Dylan felt his seed start to spurt, each pulse drawing a guttural sound of pained pleasure from his throat until it was one long, loud groan of release. Khariss's pussy clenched rhythmically along his shaft and she screamed out her own pleasure.

When at last he became aware again, Dylan realized he still crouched over Khariss, her legs dangling limply over his arms as she wearily traced her fingers through the wet curls of his chest hair. Tendrils of red-tinted mahogany hair clung to the sides of her sweat-shiny face, and he thought she was so beautiful she glowed.

He tried to say her name. Cleared his throat, tried again. "Khariss. Love you."

She gave him a smile of sleepy satiation. "Love you, too."

Satisfied, Dylan clumsily freed his arms to fall onto the mattress beside her. Somehow, the coverlet had disappeared and they lay on bare sheets. The pillows, he noted distantly, were AWOL, too. A warm weight settled on the bed on his other side and hands eased the coverlet over them.

"Get some sleep," O'Grady murmured as he made himself comfortable, close enough to share body heat, but not enough to crowd. Dylan heard the other man's stifled yawn, then a low chuckle filled with promise. "I'll wake you later."

* * * *

Dylan flipped the signal and turned his car onto Khariss's street. His features flickered in and out of shadow as they passed the streetlights. The stark planes alternating with soft darkness made him equally beautiful to her. She lifted his hand to her lips and placed a light kiss on his knuckles.

She would forever count herself fortunate that she'd earned the love of a man like Dylan. To her, he was perfect. Absolutely.

She didn't know if they'd ever again have an encounter like the one they'd just shared with O'Grady. Maybe they would, maybe they

wouldn't. Whatever happened, they'd decide what they wanted together.

"There's something I was wondering."

Dylan took his eyes away from the road for an instant to meet her quizzical eyes before returning his focus to the twin cones of brilliance spearing the night in front of his car. "Yeah? What's that?"

"What was the word?"

"Word?"

"You know. The word O'Grady gave you to tell him to stop. The safe word."

"Oh, that." Dylan laughed as he drove down the narrow alley beside her building to reach the tiny lot behind it. He parked the car and turned off the ignition. Turning to her, he leaned close to whisper, as O'Grady had done to him, one word: "Uncle."

Epilogue

The silver-haired couple glided with surprising ease on the otherwise empty dance floor, despite their obvious age. They moved as one, a man and woman who had been together for so long that they could instinctively predict each other's every step and match it. He was dapper in a tailored black tuxedo that couldn't conceal the faint paunch of his belly or the softening of his neck above the stiff white collar and bronze bowtie. She was a figure of elegance in a matching bronze floor-length gown, a string of champagne-hued pearls secured around her throat with a topaz-studded clasp. They reached a turn in the dance, and she kicked out one low-heeled foot, revealing the discreet slit in her slender skirt that accommodated the precise forms of the classic tango. They had eyes for no one else in the room.

Dylan's hand rode Khariss's hip as they stood on the edge of the dance floor with the hundred or so other family members and friends watching his grandparents dance as perfectly as any professional team, although their partnership was held together by the more enduring ties of love and time.

Dylan's whisper puffed warm air against her earlobe as he asked, "Shall we join them?"

Khariss smiled and rested her temple against his cheek. "No. This is their dance. I'll take a rain check, though."

"Say, in sixty years?"

She took advantage of shadows around the glittering dance floor to exchange a tender kiss with the wonderful man she was going to marry in a few months.

"That sounds just about perfect."

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Raised in an Air Force family, Raina lived in such diverse places as Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Gander, Newfoundland, before leaving the nest and settling down near Ottawa, Ontario.

Some skepticism about the earning value of an English degree made Raina turn to a career in journalism. While almost two decades in newspapers in Canada's capital has made her revise that opinion, there's still no thrill quite like getting the paper to press on a heavy news day with an early deadline.

At home, when not riding herd on her four children — two girls and two boys — or trying to squeeze in some writing time, Raina can most often be found reading the work of her favorite authors, new and old.

Raina is a great believer in happy endings, as anyone who reads her work will attest. After all, what's the point of writing fiction if you can't put a little joy in people's lives?



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