

A person wearing a dark suit and a white shirt is holding a large, glossy red heart with both hands. The heart is the central focus of the image.

Stupid Cupid

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It was official. She was nuts. Or desperate.

Or maybe both.

Yeah, that was it. She was both. What other explanation could there be? After all, Samantha *was* standing on Alex's front porch wearing nothing but her long coat and a smile. Always assuming she could still muster a smile. She was nervous as hell and feeling more than a little ridiculous now that she was standing here.

She sighed. What she was about to do was either utter madness or it would give Cupid a much-needed kick in the ass. She hoped for the latter, otherwise she wasn't the only one who was going to think she was nuts.

Shit.

Maybe she should just hike her freezing butt out of there and go home. If she did, Alex would never know she'd been there and nothing would change. But therein lay the problem, the thought of things continuing on as before was unacceptable. She had to do something.

The bottom line—as scary as her plan was, doing nothing was not an option. And for some crazy reason it was easier to do something totally wild and drastic than to take the baby step of just telling Alex how she felt. Hmm, maybe that was another sign that she was nuts.

Oh well, she'd racked her brains for weeks trying to figure out how to get Alex to see her as something other than just a friend and this was what she'd come up with. Being friends was great, but she wanted more. She had for ages. And now that they were finally both single at the same time, she had to make her move. A guy like Alex wouldn't be on the market for long. Smart, sexy, with eyes the color of a cerulean sky, someone was sure to snap him up if she didn't do something now.

Besides, this whole situation was her own fault, so it was up to her to fix it. She was the one who choked when it came to showing her feelings. She was the one who could never say the words, especially when she really cared. Because the more she cared, the harder it was to open up. Of course, Alex had known her long enough to learn all her quirks but still, she was sure he had no clue she felt this way about him. Well, it was past time to change all that. Time to get rid of her fears and *do* something.

Because the thought of another lonely Valentine's Day was too much. She didn't want to spend it on her own again wishing things were different between them. It was time to take action. No matter what the outcome. She was here, she was as ready as she'd ever be,

and she was definitely dressed for the occasion. She grinned inwardly. Or, undressed, depending on how you looked at it.

Which explained why she was standing there freezing her ass off, dawdling about taking that final step. Basically she was a chicken. A determined chicken, but a chicken none the less.

Okay, woman, just knock on the damn door already. Samantha straightened her shoulders, gave her long brown locks a shake and rapped on the heavy brass knocker.

Silence.

No, no, *no*. This couldn't be happening. He was supposed to be home. He *had* to be home. She'd specifically asked Alex what he was going to do tonight and he'd said he was going to stay home and watch a movie.

Hell. He'd damn well *better* be home. She knocked on the door again. Louder, and with more insistence this time. It'd be just her luck if after finally working up her nerve, he'd decided to go out.

After what seemed like forever, she heard some movement inside. Relief washed over her. He *was* there.

Her temper instantly deflated and trepidation took over with a vengeance. Her heart raced, her hands shook. Even her teeth were chattering. Although, that might have been because it was so blasted cold out.

She worried her lip. Was she making a monumental mistake? Would she regret this? Because one thing was certain, it would change things between them forever. Some things you couldn't take back.

Before she could turn tail and haul her pathetic self out of there the door swung open and the object of her desire greeted her with one of his typically warm smiles. Like balm on a raw wound, it immediately soothed a small portion of her nerves. "Hey, I thought you had plans tonight."

"I did but I decided I had something better to do." *Yeah, like you.*

She took in his tall, blond, gorgeousness. Even unshaven, clad in a well-worn sweatsuit, he had that totally yummy scruffy look that only guys could achieve. It was kind of annoying really. The way men could look so good without even trying. "You going to let me in? I'm freezing out here."

He shook his head as if to clear it and opened the door wider. "Yeah. Of course. Sorry. I just didn't expect to see you tonight."

What would he say if he knew he'd be seeing a lot *more* of her very soon? She stepped past him and stood in the entranceway feeling unsure of what to do next. She suddenly realized that all her planning and energy had been put into just getting herself to his front door. She never stopped to think what she'd do after she got inside. It might not have been a bad idea if she'd actually thought things through as to what she'd do next. Important things like, should she drop her coat here and now or wait a bit? Come to think of it, she'd look kind of strange sitting around still wearing her coat. Damn it. This whole silly plan of hers was falling apart around her ears.

Alex closed the front door and continued on into the living room, expecting her to follow after him. She toed off her ankle-high boots set to do just that but couldn't seem to make herself move. Instead she stood there nervously squishing her bare toes into the plush carpet.

Alex's voice drifted back to her. "Want something to drink?"

"No thanks."

She should just do it now. Come on hands, *move*.

Nothing happened. Why the hell couldn't she make her hands move?

Finally noticing she hadn't followed, he walked back towards her. She must have looked as uncertain as she felt because he cocked a questioning brow. "You okay? You're acting a bit weird."

You have no idea. "I'm fine."

"No, you're not. Something's wrong." It wasn't a question.

She shook her head. "No, not really."

The poor man looked confused and no wonder, her nervousness must have been screaming out of every pore. "Well, take off your coat and sit down. We can talk about whatever's bugging you."

I'm trying to take my coat off. Can't you tell? Silly her. Of course, he couldn't. Her stupid feet wouldn't budge and she was still frozen in place like a popsicle in a snow bank. But at least her fingers were fiddling with the buttons on her coat now. That was a step in the right direction. "Talking isn't exactly what I wanted to do."

"Since when?"

She ignored the teasing jibe. What she really needed to do was stop dithering and just get on with it. "I had a certain activity in mind."

She'd totally befuddled him now. It was stamped all over his handsome face. "You mean you want to go hiking or something?"

She almost laughed at the ludicrous turn their conversation was taking. Why couldn't she just make herself say what she wanted? "Not exactly."

Talk about a cop-out. She was hopeless.

He laughed. "Are you going to tell me what you want to do or are we going to just stand here and play twenty questions?"

At long last, she managed to start undoing her buttons. Slowly, with nervous determination, she freed them one by one from their buttonhole captivity.

Something about her slow, deliberate movements must have caught his attention because his focus centered entirely on watching her hands as they progressed down her coat. Actually, he looked kind of mesmerized. She could only hope he'd be as captivated by her naked body.

Her fingers started to shake. In literally seconds she would know what she'd come here to find out. He would either recoil in embarrassment, laugh, or take what she was offering with gratifying gusto.

She was obviously hoping for the last response. But whatever happened, she'd already decided, if he wasn't interested, that was fine. They'd go back to being just friends. If it ended up being a one-time thing, that would be okay too. Heck, maybe she'd finally get him out of her system. Or, maybe they'd become friends with benefits. There were worse things. Like their relationship continuing the same way, with her mutely lusting after him and him not having a clue. She had to at least try. She had to find out if those strange looks she'd caught now and again meant something. Meant what she fervently hoped they did.

When she reached the last button, she forced herself not to lose momentum and took firm hold of the edges of her coat. Now was the moment of truth, and the coward in her wondered if she should have wimped out and worn a sexy bra and thong. Too late to change her mind now. May as well give him an eye-full and show him what he'd been missing all these years.

With sheer force of will she followed through with her plan and opened her coat wide.

"Happy Valentine's Day."

* * *

Holy shit, Samantha's naked.

Alex's mouth dropped open. A blaze of emotions zipped through him running the gamut from outright shock to turned-on awe, finally settling on sizzling desire. His eyes slowly raked Samantha's lush body from her ample breasts to her neatly-trimmed bush and back again. God, she was as beautiful on the outside as she was on the inside.

He swallowed hard. And that wasn't the only thing that was hard. He was sure he could hammer nails with his dick right about now. Was he hallucinating? Was this vision before him just wishful thinking? With no blood left in his brain, it was hard to tell.

He tore his gaze away from her gloriously tempting flesh to look deeply into her sea green eyes. Anxiety and hope warred in their turbulent depths showing him just how much courage it had taken her to do this. She was amazing.

And he really, really needed to say something. Anything. He scrambled in vain for something halfway intelligent. Nope. Nothing came to mind. He settled for a straight-to-the-point question. "Is this an invitation?"

Her breath exploded from her lungs as if she'd been holding it. "Dear God, can't you tell? Tell me you can tell, otherwise I'll feel really stupid standing here like this."

Alex was taken aback by her nervous chattering. It was so unlike her and he hated to think he was the cause of it. Quickly stepping closer, he forced himself not to be distracted by the fact that he could simply reach out and touch her delicious nakedness. "You're not stupid. There's only *one* stupid person in this room and you're looking at him. How did I not know you felt this way?"

She cocked her head and grinned wryly. "Because no one sucks at flirting worse than I do?"

He threw back his head and laughed. "You may be right about that."

"I know I am."

Turning serious, he ran a finger along her cheek. "You're the bravest person I know. It took guts to do this."

"You have no idea."

"I think I do." His hands slipped inside her coat, pulling her against him, skimming her soft, warm skin as they slid around her back. This was heaven. He leaned in, his mouth just a hairs-breadth away from her luscious mouth, and hesitated, savoring the moment. Then he gently brushed his lips across hers in the lightest of touches. Definitely heaven. "I've been wanting to taste these lips for a long time now."

"Then what are you waiting for?" Her voice quivered.

"Good question." He took her mouth in a sweet kiss. Tentative and searching, it was everything a first kiss should be and more. With complete awe he explored and tasted her soft, full lips. Lips that had called to him for so long, that he never thought to touch with his own. A part of him still couldn't believe he was really kissing her. They'd been friends for so long he'd been convinced she didn't think of him as anything more than that. If he'd had any idea she wanted him as much as he wanted her, nothing would have stopped him. Nothing.

The kiss deepened. Sizzling electricity arced between them and the gentle kiss quickly turned into something more. Long submerged need and lust ate at him. Suppressed feelings of desire surged through him at breakneck speed, and the tender kiss turned hot and urgent. Breath mingled, heat exploded, he wanted to touch her everywhere, but he knew he was going too fast.

He broke the kiss, slightly shaken by its intensity. His breath rasped in his throat. How the hell had he held back from doing this for so long? "You taste better than a dream."

She sighed, her face a picture of pure bliss. "Yeah, you do."

Maybe he wasn't going too fast after all.

Thank God.

He kissed her again, and the passion raging through him ratcheted up even more. Tongues dueled, hands groped. In synch, they moved towards the stairs that led up to his bedroom. Somewhere along the way, her coat hit the floor.

He wanted Samantha so bad he could taste it. "We need a bed."

She nipped his lip. "God, yes."

The back of his foot hit the bottom step, but after years of ironclad restraint he couldn't seem to stop kissing Samantha long enough to actually head upstairs. It was like a dam had

broken open and they couldn't hold back anymore. Kissing and touching was more important than breathing, and waiting even another second was intolerable.

Samantha's hands left his shoulders and wandered down to grab his ass making his cock jump in anticipation. She not-so-gently bit his ear. "You have way too many clothes on."

"I know."

In a frenzied rush they gathered up his sweatshirt and yanked it over his head. Her fingers danced along his newly bared chest exploring his pecs, his abs. Her lips followed their path, kissing and tasting his overheated skin. Every touch radiated directly to his throbbing cock making him pray he didn't embarrass himself before he could even get his pants off.

Abruptly, she moved so that the staircase was behind her. She sat back on a step pulling him down with her, kissing a fiery trail along his collarbone and chest the entire way. He followed her lead, unable to stop touching her. Tasting her. Kissing her. He'd wanted to do this for so long he was like a starving man at a feast, not knowing what to eat first. He finally settled on lavishing all his attention on her breasts, kissing and sucking them with rapt concentration until her nipples were peaks almost as hard as his cock.

She gasped. "Oh God, I don't think I can wait much longer."

"Me neither."

She backed up the stairs and he matched her move for move not willing to be more than a few inches away from her. If they could just get upstairs the bed would be within reach, but it was still too damned far away. Of course, anything further than underneath them was too damned far away. He needed to feel her naked flesh against his. Needed to touch every inch of her. Absorb her heat, her very essence. And he needed to do it now.

She broke the kiss, and half laughing said, "We've got to get up these stairs."

Saner words were never uttered. But despite that neither of them could stop kissing and groping each other long enough to actually do it. Lips caressed everything they could reach. Insatiable fingers stroked and petted eager flesh, but progress up the stairs was minimal.

Again they stopped. Her hands reached into his sweatpants and grasped his rock-hard cock and he almost came from the exquisite sensations her simple touch engendered. Their mouths slammed back together. But still, it wasn't enough. He needed more. Much more.

Damn it! Their first time together was not going to be on his stairs and that was all there was to it.

Forcing himself to stop kissing her, he pulled back from her oh-so-tempting lips and scooped her up in his arms, carrying her the rest of the way to his bed. He dumped her on the soft mattress, the motion causing her breasts to bounce enticingly. Not that he needed any more enticing. He was about ready to blow his load now. His mouth practically watered in anticipation of tasting her breasts again. And that wasn't all he wanted to taste. She was already wet and ready for him. The scent of her arousal was driving him mad. And God, he wanted to taste her there too.

In one swift movement, he whipped off his sweatpants and crawled on top of her. After a deep, lingering kiss on the mouth, he nibbled his way down her neck, across her breasts, pausing long enough to suckle each nipple until she squirmed. He grinned, knowing she was getting as desperate as he was. He tongued the belly piercing that had taunted him for months, then dallied around her mons. Pulling back, he gazed at her pretty pussy.

She panted. "Don't stop."

"I couldn't stop if I tried. I was just enjoying the view." He spread her legs and trailed a lazy finger across her hot, wet folds. "And maybe contemplating the best way to torture you for making me wait this long." He kissed his way up the satiny-soft skin of her inner thigh, savoring the feel of it beneath his greedy lips.

She whimpered. "I don't think I can handle much more. God, I want you inside me, Alex. *Now.*"

He chuckled. "I didn't know you were so demanding in the bedroom."

"There are a lot of things you don't know about me."

"Yeah, like how you feel when my cock is buried deep inside you."

"Yeah, like that." She reached down and pulled his face back up to hers. "So what's the hold up?"

He slicked his fingers back and forth across her sensitive clit. "I want a taste of this."

She moaned. "I want that too. Next time. Right now I just want you to fill me up and fuck me senseless."

Who was he to argue with a request like that? They could take their time exploring each other later. Once the edge was off. "Your wish is my command."

A condom. I need a condom.

He yanked open the bedside drawer, nabbed one with frantic fingers that sent the box flying. The wrapper quickly followed. He'd never put a condom on so fast in his life and he was more than a little surprised at his dexterity considering his hands were shaking with urgency.

Hooking her knees over his shoulders, he impaled her with one quick thrust. Her tight core surrounded him. He groaned. God, she felt beyond incredible. And her answering groan told him she was just as close as he was. Her body already milked his, quivering, pulling him even deeper. He teetered at the very pinnacle. No way he was going to be able to make this last. Next time. He'd take it slow next time.

He began to thrust in earnest, focusing on holding back as long as he could. But he knew he was in trouble when the familiar tingles radiated out from his balls and torpedoed straight up his spine. He couldn't hold off any longer and he could have cried with relief when he realized he didn't have to. With a shout that was probably heard in Alaska Samantha came and he let himself go, riding the same crest of dizzying ecstasy to the very edge and over. Not stopping until they were both completely spent.

He collapsed on top of her. He'd have been embarrassed at the lightning speed with which this round was over if she hadn't been right there with him. Breathing hard, he rasped into her ear. "Damn woman, you about killed me."

She chuckled. "I'd say I'm sorry, but I'm really not."

He rolled off and pulled her into his arms, his hand automatically stroking her silky hip. "Why didn't we do this sooner?"

"Because we're both stupid?"

He nuzzled her hair, taking in its fresh lemony scent. "That must be it."

Contented silence filled the room while they both caught their breath. He'd never felt so comfortable with a woman in his life. Maybe it was because they were good friends first and foremost. Or maybe it was because it was Samantha. Whatever it was, he knew one thing for sure. Now that he had her, he would never let her go.

Suddenly remembering how they got here in the first place, he grinned. "Happy Valentine's Day, Sweetheart. That was a hell of a lot better than any damned card."

Samantha giggled her agreement. "Yeah, well I'd decided stupid Cupid needed a push."

He wasn't doing his job."

His hand sought her breast and cupped the soft flesh he found there. "Maybe *you* should take on the job. You're a lot better at it than he is."

Looking smugly satisfied with herself, she agreed. "Maybe I should. Then again..." she reached over and stroked his more-than-a-little-interested cock back to life, "...I'm kind of busy right now."

He growled and pulled her on top of him. "Definitely too busy. And I plan on keeping you busy for a long, long time to come."

Samantha straddled his now fully engorged cock, running her slick heat along his length with obvious relish. "Mmmm. Good plan." She suddenly stopped moving, mischievous joy danced in her eyes. Leaning back, she cupped his balls with deft fingers sending a blast of sheer ecstasy through his cock. "And speaking of coming..."

Biography

By day Anara Bella is a writer, but by night she's the Domestic Avenger. Able to leap humungous dust balls in a single bound, ignore dirt and clutter with the utmost of ease, stop imminent starvation by whipping up meals from almost-bare cupboards in the blink of an eye. Okay, so those aren't really super powers but they're definitely helpful abilities. Especially when she's trying to eek out the time to write the next few words on her latest story.

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