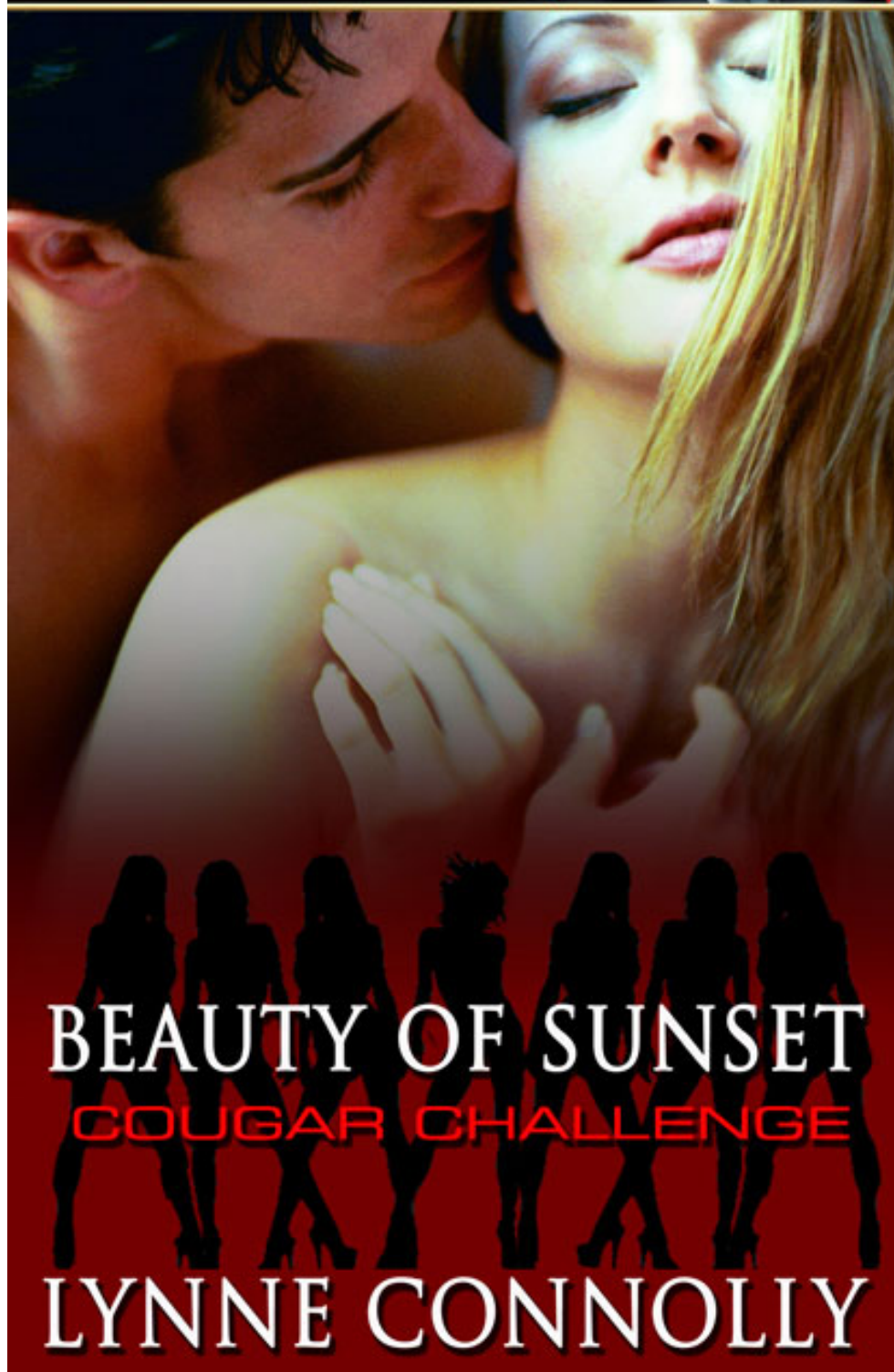


ELLORA'S CAVE *Sophisticate*



BEAUTY OF SUNSET

COUGAR CHALLENGE

LYNNE CONNOLLY

Beauty of Sunset

Lynne Connolly

Book two of the Cougar Challenge series.

When Edie Howard meets cosmetic surgeon John Sung, she can't think of anything except getting the younger man naked. Her friends on the Tempt the Cougar blog remind Edie of her promise—to seduce a younger man. It's time for Edie to take action.

Dr. John Sung takes one look at Edie and knows he can't operate on her. He signs off as her doctor and makes her a bet—if he can make her love her body as it is, she won't have any surgery.

John's bet involves close examinations—and torrid, sleepless nights. Their passion is far more than either expects, and John begins to wonder if he'll ever get enough of this woman. Edie just counts her blessings and hopes their age difference won't drive John away.

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Beauty of Sunset

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BEAUTY OF SUNSET

Lynne Connolly

Dedication

To all the ladies of the Tempt the Cougar blog and their creators. To Sam, Dalton, Desiree, Mari F and Mari C. And last, but by no means least, Ciana, for bringing us together. This is the most fun ever!

Author Note

You'll find the women of *Cougar Challenge* and the Tempt the Cougar blog at www.temptthecougar.blogspot.com.

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Chapter One

Tempt the Cougar Blog:

We've been talking about younger men for a while now. I've known a few, from male models who can't see further than their own beautiful asses to photographers who demand favors for good pictures. But I've never been to bed with one. They prefer the young vulnerable wannabes, the ones who can't fight back. I've always despised younger men.

But you girls have given me a new way of looking at it. I think you're right. There are some great younger men out there. You know that a few years back my husband traded me in for a younger model. I know, I know, some of you have the same experience but this bastard keeps waving her in my face.

Time I did something about it. I'm seeing a plastic surgeon next week. It's taken me a long time to get to this point but I'm taking the plunge. Then watch me.

Comments

Cam: Are you sure you want to do this, honey? Being in the fashion industry makes you super-conscious, I know that, but you've held your own for this long why change it now? I'll call you.

Edie had faced many mirrors in her time, especially naked, but this one was different. This time it was all about her instead of the clothes she wore—or didn't wear. That made a change.

People didn't understand that essential difference—they weren't looking at her, they were looking at Sunset, supermodel, and the Dior or the Calvin Klein or the Gaultier she was wearing, not at Edie Howard. She didn't even use her first name professionally. She was Sunset or Adelaide, not Edie the little girl from Coventry, England, scared of her own shadow.

So here she was facing another mirror in another large bare room with white walls and large mirrors. The décor had been like this in the designer ateliers so that the

master and his acolytes could see the toiles and the gorgeous fabrics clearly. Here it was to see the patient. Her.

She stripped out of the surgical gown and kicked it aside as she took a step closer to the mirror. Time to see herself clearly. Maybe for the last time.

Time had etched lines next to her eyes and between her nose and mouth. Until recently she'd regarded them as well-earned trophies. Her breasts still held up well, though, and despite two children having nestled inside it her stomach remained firm and only slightly rounded.

At least they were allowed curves in her day.

She twisted to view her ass. Not bad for an old broad. It could still do with some refining though. She doubted Victoria's Secret would want her in its spectacular. Once they would have paid her a shipload of cash and bestowed as many freebies as she wanted on her but these days she bought her own underwear.

She preferred it that way. The modeling profession had been dirty enough in her day but she'd remained in control of her career.

Until this. Maybe she was wrong, maybe she shouldn't do this. Doubt assailed her again as she looked at the body in the mirror, a body most women her age would be proud of, but used to assessing her body as if it were a separate entity, Sunset rather than Edie, she could see the flaws. And maybe just maybe she could shove it to the man she'd thought she'd loved who hadn't hesitated to trade her in when a younger more amenable Sunset clone walked by. A shame the bastard seemed to get more handsome with age. The suave cool features, the dark hair which she suspected owed as much to the bottle as her autumn-tinted locks and every line added character instead of age.

Fuck him. He wasn't worth it. But as much as she knew that, she couldn't block the raw hurt that nobody but she knew about. Not her first two husbands, still her friends, not her family. Nobody except Cam and now the other women on the blog. They said she should be what she was, not turn herself into a Stepford Wife.

She wished she had half Cam's confidence. A makeup artist and friend of many years' standing she'd been the only one horrified when Edie had mentioned the possibility of plastic surgery. Everybody else had been all for it, encouraging her to take the plunge.

Except Cam and the other women on the Tempt the Cougar blog.

She turned back to the mirror and only then saw the man who'd silently appeared in the open doorway. She didn't even pretend to be startled. Why should she? After the chaos of changing rooms at big runway shows, she could hardly pretend to be shocked by one man staring at her naked body. However gorgeous that man was.

She'd seen photographs of John Sung, plastic surgeon extraordinaire, but she'd never knowingly been the recipient of that dark intense stare emphasized by his heavy black-framed glasses. No one had ever looked at her like that with a hunger she could almost touch. She'd seen desire before; she'd even seen possession but not starvation.

Not for her surely. John Sung had to be significantly younger than she.

This man reminded her of nobody she'd known before. This was something new. A shudder passed through her and, strangely, embarrassment. He was looking at *her*, Edie, not Adelaide nor even Sunset. And Edie was embarrassed.

She snatched up the robe and shrugged into it, pulling the belt tight around her waist and turned to face him, tilting up her chin. Only then did he speak.

"You are the most beautiful creature I have ever seen in my life. I can't do this to you. Wait here."

He spun around and left the room.

Chapter Two

Dr. Sung refused to treat Edie and referred her to the man with whom he shared a business, but not a medical list. Just as well really because after that zing between them she'd felt even worse about the procedure. Procedures.

So after an hour with the efficient but clinical Dr. Roubiere, Edie was unaccountably distracted and exhausted. She went home and stood in the shower for half an hour, washing away the lines Roubiere had made on her body telling her what he'd do if she went ahead, where he'd operate.

She traced one of the blue lines just under her breast. He wanted to lift them, maybe remove some of the bulk as he put it. She touched her legs at the lines he'd put there to show her where she'd have minimal marks for a while if she had liposuction on her thighs. Return her to the pre-baby model shape. She'd always regarded her body as her income, an instrument she used to get what she wanted, never part of her. So why did this latest effort feel like a personal criticism, a step too far?

Maybe she was just depressed today. It happened.

A little cheering up. That was what she needed. She reached across to the glass shelves and opened the plastic box labeled "cotton" that didn't actually hold anything of the kind. It was just the convenient holder for her waterproof toy.

She held the silver marvel in her hand, enjoying the way the smooth oval fit so well there. With a twist she turned it on and it pulsed slowly. Another twist took it to three-quarters strength, a buzz she sometimes used to ease aching muscles after a day in high heels.

That wasn't what she had in mind today. She eased it over the lines now at last fading under the relentless beat of the overhead fitting. If she went ahead with the procedure, she wouldn't feel much there anymore. The surgery would destroy nerve-

endings but Dr. Roubiere had assured her he'd minimize the damage inside and out and he was good. That was why she'd chosen them.

But she didn't think about Roubiere now. She let her mind pass on to the tall devastating figure of his partner, the surgeon who'd refused to take her as his patient. What was his first name? It didn't matter, not for this. Sung would do. She had no idea what had caused his outburst but that didn't matter now. He'd help her ease her tension now although he'd never have any idea that he did. Sung would sing for her.

She smiled at her stupid pun, feeling her tension ease further. She slid the small vibrator down her body over her stomach, slightly rounded these days, not hollow as it once had been. It shook a little. Tummy tuck planned, she eased the bullet over the line Roubiere had drawn and watched it melt and disappear down the drain.

Sliding the sleek silver cylinder further down, she teased herself with a slow advance, going further still until she nudged her clit, that peeked through the curls she allowed herself these days. In her model days she'd shaved it all off but now she allowed herself the indulgence of a neatly trimmed bikini-waxed thatch. Now it nestled sweetly between her thighs, honey blonde, hiding secrets she'd never shown to the public. She'd always drawn the line at full nudity. Expensive lingerie had cupped her, revealing evening dresses threatened to expose her but she'd kept her cunt to herself, always. And her husbands, lovers and doctors.

The reminder sent her back to Sung although he'd never be her doctor now. He stood behind her clad in nothing—no make that tight boxers, lovingly revealing a long hard cock, the water drenching the underwear so it was almost transparent. She licked her lips. She'd love to take that treat into her mouth, suck it right down and make him come, refuse to release him, taste the reward he'd give her. But not today. Today he took the bullet from her hand, eased it down between her folds, now wet with more than water, slick with her arousal. Her clit was throbbing, begging for attention but Sung wouldn't touch it not yet. His body pressed close behind hers, his strong mobile hands working her teasing her.

He pushed ever closer to her opening, sliding the vibrator up one side of her labia and down the other. It wasn't her holding the bullet now it was him. He moved it past her opening along, around, setting up a circular route until with a vicious twist that drove the bullet up to full capacity he pushed it right inside her.

Her hand went to her clit, unable to stand his teasing anymore but in her mind, he pushed it away and took over himself. She could almost hear his voice telling her to hold on, to let him do it all. So she did. Her fingers became his.

The vibrator had worked its way up to her sweet spot deep inside. She'd always been afraid to let it go that far before, worried she might not get it out but she was so wet now she had difficulty keeping it in. It was barely two inches long but it reached spots few other devices could.

Sung's fingers flicked and tweaked but orgasm remained frustratingly distant just out of reach. If she didn't come now she'd burst.

She reached forward keeping her eyes closed. She didn't need to see to flick the switch that changed the water stream from directly overhead to body wash. If she bent her knees and moved slightly forward – like that – the hard rain drummed over her clit.

"Fuck, oh fuck!" Her cry came from somewhere deep inside as everything exploded. Her clit sent pulses deep inside her body her cunt throbbed and clenched around the bullet sending her into overdrive turning her restless body into pounding waves of orgasm.

Edie stood shaking with one hand against the tiled wall to steady herself, the other fishing inside her pussy for the bullet. It came out easily, nestled in her hand as she held it under the water to clean it.

She rinsed off and exited the shower wrapping herself in thick fluffy towels. She lingered in the bathroom letting her imagination wander again. Now she wanted to slide into bed next to someone, let him hold her and talk over the events of the day before she explored him, maybe fuck him again.

Yeah like that was going to happen.

Chapter Three

Tempt the Cougar blog:

I walked away but I can't stop thinking about him. I'm like a lovesick teenager and I can't help wondering if I did the right thing.

Camille: Honey if you're still wondering then there's business between you. He's not your doctor anymore so anything you do is up to you. Maybe he's wondering the same who knows?

Edie: I think I'll leave it like it is. Probably ships passing in the night or something like that.

A week later Edie stood contemplating a splash of paint on canvas. She usually liked modern art but this exhibition had left her cold. Even though the splash was a particularly bright blue. Maybe she was getting old or something. She'd felt enervated for a while now.

Then a sense a feeling of warmth swept through her and a voice deep and somehow intimate came from behind her. "Good evening."

She caught her breath, breathed out slowly and turned around. "Hi."

John Sung, mouthwatering in a charcoal gray dress shirt unbuttoned at the neck and black pants that she knew had to be designer, probably Ralph Lauren from the cut. His coal-black hair was cut short to shadow the shape of his skull and his clean-cut cheekbones pushed against the gleaming olive skin just below the almond-shaped eyes.

As before, he watched her with a single-minded intensity. She shuddered and resisted clasping her arms around her body in a protective gesture. She hadn't felt this vulnerable for years. Forever.

Stupid. She shook her hair back off her face and held out her hand. "Nice to see you again."

A brief touch of his fingers then he was gone but she felt the tingle of the contact and wondered at it.

"Do you like them?"

She glanced around and gave a small shake of her head. "They're perfectly fine but not precisely my thing."

"Me too."

She couldn't walk away again. Remembering the advice the blog girls had given her she decided to take the plunge. Business between them was far from over she knew that now. "I live fairly close. Come back for coffee?"

"I'd be glad to."

An old invitation but sometimes it meant just that. She could throw him out if she chickened out but at least she'd know him better, get him out of her system. Or they might just take things a bit further. She'd play it by ear.

Once outside the gallery they passed the inevitable gamut of photographers who were more interested in the young heiress who'd just entered the gallery, and walked away from the event where John lifted his hand and hailed a passing cab. "Dreadful weren't they?"

She laughed. "Yes but it wouldn't have been good to say it there. That artist is the latest sensation."

He shrugged. "I couldn't live with one of those daubs for long. They'll be decorating some swish offices downtown before too long."

That was so much what she was thinking she had to suppress her laugh. He helped her into the cab and she gave her address and leaned back. "Not your offices though."

“What?” She turned her head to see him staring at her. “Oh yes. Not fucking likely. Pure crap. Pretty colored crap but if I had to look at it every day I’d probably go insane.”

She laughed knowing what he meant. She kept her apartment clean and filled with only the things she needed or she liked. Only a few people saw it these days so she kept it exactly as she wanted it.

The taxi dropped them at her building and she let Sung—John—pay. Fighting over a few dollars didn’t seem worth it especially with her stomach tying itself in knots. The night she’d allowed her fantasy to win played through her again sending thrills through her. And he hadn’t even touched her. Probably wouldn’t.

They stood either side of the elevator as if avoiding touch and he stood back and let her exit first when they reached her floor. She unlocked the door and passed through turning on the floor lights and touching the dimmer. Not too intimate just lower than full-on.

“Nice.” He stood in the center of the large room and turned around. She’d left the mezzanine in shadow but its depths added richness to the effect. She’d kept colors muted and cool, comfortable and soothing rather than challenging. This was her home now.

“Thanks. My last husband liked the French Empire style. Fussy, lots of gold, you know the type.”

He laughed. “Yeah. I’ve visited places like that. This is more to my taste. Understated. Classy.”

She smiled as she walked through to the kitchen area and found the coffeemaker. “Do you want something fancy, cappuccino or latte?” Her huge machine did it all.

“No just coffee, black, no sugar.”

Typical. Most men asked for it like that but she’d bet a few secretly went for double shot Americano when nobody was looking. Somehow this man seemed the black coffee type. “Make yourself at home.”

She wasn't. She took hers with cream. Plenty of it. She put the cups on a tray and carried them through.

He'd settled on a wide sofa facing the window. Lights twinkled in a cityscape she'd dreamed about as a little girl in small-town England. Now she was here. Having that view reminded her every day how lucky she was. It helped. Sometimes.

She put the tray down on the glass coffee table and sat next to him. They didn't have to touch on this wide sofa but somehow she ended closer than she'd planned. He sat, his arms spread over the back and arm, more relaxed than she'd imagined him.

"Do you want to know why I wouldn't take you as a patient?"

Yes. She swallowed and touched her throat. "Why?"

His glasses glinted as he turned away from the view to look at her. Behind the lenses his eyes gleamed with truth. "Because I can't take a scalpel to you. You're too perfect to be touched. I can't do it."

She frowned squinting at him. "Are you sure you were looking at the right woman? Maybe one time I might have agreed with you but you have to know that I'm forty-five years old. My years of perfection are behind me."

"I don't think so. You carry your life with you and you'll only grow better with age. Your bone structure is awesome."

"Is that a medical term?"

"Abso-fucking-lutely." He huffed a laugh but didn't sound amused. "Operating on you would be like smoothing the statue of the Venus de Milo back to a blurry approximation of what it should be."

"You're dissing plastic surgery? Don't you make your living at it?"

His lips twisted in a wry smile. "Sure. But we don't just do vanity stuff. And even then, it isn't always about vanity. Some women make their living from keeping their beauty. Actresses over forty have difficulty getting good leading roles or they did

before the cosmetic surgeon got to work. Pop stars need to be honed and buffed weeks after giving birth or leaving rehab." He shrugged. "You know how it goes."

"None better." Although she'd never gone under the knife before she didn't condemn people who made that choice. "But now it's my turn. I take it the confidential doctor-patient relationship between us is no more?"

"You take it right. It was there for about five minutes. I'd still like to know why you want it done but you're not talking to a doctor here. Just me, John, a man."

She loved that voice the way it purred over her skin like a caress. Suppressing her shudder she concentrated on what he was saying. It wasn't as if she were about to give him her deepest secrets after all. "I've written my autobiography and I have a promotional tour coming up. TV personal appearances. I got a new manager, Randy Norwood, and he put me in touch with a great ghostwriter who helped me turn my book into something else rather than just another exposé."

His eyes widened. Despite his sangfroid that name impressed him. "Doesn't Norwood manage Pure Wildfire?"

"The hottest rock band on the planet'. Yes. And Scott Evans, one of the most literate writers on the planet. Randy picks people he's interested in."

He watched her, his stare almost unnerving. "And does Norwood say you have to have cosmetic surgery?"

She hesitated not wanting to lie to this man. His tall leanness intrigued her and his cologne-free male scent reminded her of heat between the sheets. "Not exactly. He says I should do what I feel most comfortable doing."

"Wise man. So will you let me help you?"

She arched a brow. "You think I need help?"

He smiled. "You're nervous about the surgery. I don't have to be a doctor to spot that. So I want you to take a bet." He leaned forward, picked up his coffee and sipped.

Used to reading and using body language she sensed his tenseness, his need for something to do rather than look at her. This bet was important to him.

“What kind of bet?”

He stared into the midnight depths of his cup. “If I make you feel good about your body will you cancel the work?”

She shook her head not understanding. “What do you mean?”

“I’ll pay attention to any part of your body you want to have altered. I’ll prove to you that it’s perfect as it is.”

“How?”

He came around to her front and faced her again. “You need to take the bet first.” His voice had lowered to a purr.

“And what’s the bet?”

“If I can’t persuade you I’ll pay for all the surgery.”

“Is this an excuse to get into my panties?”

“Totally.” He looked up meeting her gaze and his intensity took her breath away. She felt that stare as if he was touching her and the hairs on the back of her neck rose. This was more than a quick fuck. For both of them.

“How old are you?” she said suddenly her senses jolted by his low words. She needed to think.

“Thirty-five.”

“Ten years younger than me. Are you kidding me, John Sung? Or is this some kind of sick wish fulfillment? When you were a kid, I was the star of the runways, rushing from show to show in July in Paris, in the pop videos, my picture on billboards all over the world in satin underwear. Is that it? Did you want me then?” She was used to that, men wanting her without knowing who she was. She wouldn’t take offence though she would be disappointed.

He put down his cup half drunk. "When I was a child I hardly ever looked up. I never noticed billboards, I didn't watch pop videos. I was a boring fat kid and I grew into a studious teenager. I didn't lose the weight until I started running every day in my late teens. So no. I want you now as you are not as you were ten or twenty years ago."

The air between them stirred, tightened. The women on the blog had encouraged each other to get out of their ruts find someone younger less hidebound. So was this her younger man? Could she crow on the blog tonight?

Oh yeah. What the fuck was she waiting for? John Sung would be her first younger male.

"Yes."

He stared at her as if she'd grown a spare head before he laughed. "I didn't think you would but, fuck, I hoped for it. Are you sure? You want to go on this trip with me?"

"Maybe you'll take me further than I've ever been before. Maybe you'll only take me to the end of the street. I have no idea but it's worth a try." And maybe he'd jolt her out of this uncharacteristic doubt and help her see where the next part of her life would lead her.

"Go upstairs take off your clothes and find a robe. I'm betting you have a full length mirror somewhere. I'll give you ten minutes. Five."

When she got to her feet, she was surprised to find how shaky she felt. As if this was her first time. Okay, first time in a while but she was far from a virgin. About twenty men away from one if she counted. Which considering her age and profession wasn't bad at all.

She crossed the room and climbed the stairs, feeling his avid stare all the way up the open-plan pale blue glass steps. She watched every one, careful with her steps. The almost untouched brushed steel handrail was a welcome aid now.

Her feet sank into the soft carpet on the mezzanine and she walked through to her bedroom.

He was as good as his word. Five minutes and she heard a soft knock on her bedroom door and called, "Come in!"

He entered. He'd discarded his jacket and now stood in dark immaculately tailored pants and a charcoal-gray shirt unbuttoned at the neck. He crossed the room. She'd changed into a white fluffy bathrobe and stood in front of her mirror, a full-length one with wings either side that she could tilt. "I'm not that vain but it's easier to check how I look that way. If I don't do it, paparazzi will." She glanced at her closets. Edie was cursed with a neatnik personality that abhorred mess. She kept her closets tightly closed, like her life.

He circled her. She didn't follow his movements but let him walk around her examining her like a designer studying his latest creation.

Despite her utilitarian robe he made her feel as if she were queen of Dior again, pampered, feted. Wanted.

Right now he was staring at her, his look as far from the professional as she could imagine.

The silence tensed her. She broke it. "So what now?"

He took off his glasses and tucked them in his pants pocket "This." He leaned forward.

She didn't press back but she held steady for their first kiss. His mouth touched hers briefly and he withdrew. "You want to alter your lips?"

"Botox is an option."

"Collagen actually. Or implants." He touched her top lip, traced his finger over the contour. "You'd lose some sensation. Let me show you what you'd lose." He removed his hand and instead traced the outline of her lips with his tongue touching only that part of her. She shivered deliciously in response but held steady under his examination. Then he flicked his tongue over the seam and she gasped.

He took her gasp and moved closer, licking his way into her mouth, exploring the planes and textures and she responded. He tasted wonderful, of a spice she couldn't identify, something she'd never come across before. She loved it. The taste was all him all John Sung.

She lifted her arms to hold him but immediately he withdrew. A smile curved his lips. "Not until you say it."

"One kiss and you want me to give up lip implants?" Although he'd tempted her to say yes the moment their lips met. The instantaneous connection between them stunned her, made her wonder why she hadn't felt this complete before with anyone else. Every man was different but this was out of her experience. She felt newborn. Maybe it was because she hadn't had sex in a couple of years. No, it couldn't be that. She hadn't missed it at all until now.

Excitement rocketed through her at the thought that she might be having sex with this man soon even if it was on a temporary basis. Temporary worked for her at this point in her life though she wanted enough time to explore and enjoy him. But at the expense of the surgery. She wouldn't cheat, she wouldn't go elsewhere but her unaccustomed uncertainty about her looks had haunted her since she'd turned forty. Since Peter had divorced her in favor of a younger clone of herself.

"Don't think," he said now his voice more husky than before. He glanced at her shoulders.

"Maybe I'd get rid of the bat wings," she said. But she was lying. Her constant regime of weight training had kept the sagging at bay and she hadn't had to wash any lines away when she'd showered.

He lifted his hand touched her arm. Even through the robe, the contact tingled, all her senses centered where he cupped her shoulder. "So I have these to play with too. But you haven't promised not to have lip implants yet." He drew closer and kissed her again.

The bare inch of space between their bodies heated and she scrabbled at her belt to strip the garment off her sensitized body. His hand covered hers, preventing her but he kept his lips on hers and explored her mouth at his leisure. He used his tongue to devastating effect rimming her lips before venturing inside to stroke her tongue and then the roof of her mouth. And all the time his lips played on hers urging her to go deeper faster harder.

But every time she tried, when she twisted her tongue around his, pushed it into his mouth, he pulled back and slowed what they were doing. It tantalized her and eventually infuriated her.

Because she wanted more. She wanted to fuck him, pin him down on her bed and ride. With his kisses he evoked sensations she'd never felt or had forgotten.

John kissed her as if nothing else mattered nothing in the world. He curled his hands around her upper arms his fingers spread to encompass her biceps. She reached for him and this time he let her put her hands on his waist but he kept the rest of his body separate from her. When she tugged, he resisted with a strength in his lean body that surprised her. But there was no mistaking the tightening of honed muscles when he stopped her drawing him closer or when he held her off. And still he kissed her, alternating deep probing kisses with tiny gentle ones.

When he eventually drew away, it was with such smoothness that she remained, her eyes closed, her lips slightly parted. "Can you feel that?" he murmured, his voice smooth as silk. "That awareness the knowledge that you've connected with someone else. Your body full of tingling nerves each one attuned—to me. All centering down there in that exquisite pussy."

His hands on her shoulders renewed the feelings. Every part of her body turned toward his hands, became aware of them, waited for his next move. Taking her time, she opened her eyes and gazed into his face.

This close she could see the difference between the dark iris and the darker pupil. A touch of warmth edged the iris a slightly lighter brown than the intense depths within. She could drown in those eyes and count herself lucky.

He was saying something. Still drugged with kisses she had to concentrate. "Turn around."

She found herself facing the mirror again. When his hands left her shoulders, she felt bereft but he went to the mirror and tilted the wings so she could see herself reflected three times. He came back and stood behind her touching her shoulders once more. "Look at your lips."

She looked. The kisses had plumped them, filled them.

"You don't need artificial aids."

"You tell that to your patients?"

A ghost of a smile drifted across his mouth and then was gone. "Only you. I could go bankrupt if they all thought they could look this good."

"You won't be here all the time. I can't pull you out of my purse like a lipstick whenever I want to look like this."

"Maybe remembering will do the trick." She appreciated that he didn't make any false promises. Thinking about it made her lips moist and her pussy flooded with liquid, eager for him and unashamed. But she refused to clench her thighs together or tighten her muscles. He'd see it through the fabric of the garment, feel her muscles tense and he'd know how much she wanted him right this minute.

As if he didn't. But he might not know just how much.

"Look at your eyes."

Light glared down on them. Edie was so used to bright lights she hardly noticed but it made her hair gleam and her eyes glisten. She knew the tricks. Closing the eyes tight for a minute to make them wider, tilting the chin down and looking up but this time her eyes glinted promise and desire honestly with no tricks.

She'd never seen them quite like that before. She had blue eyes, bright true blue, one of her trademarks and every tear and sadly, every flaw showed. Photographers airbrushed the flaws out. A single drugs binge early in her career scared her enough to make her stop and although she loved wine and cocktails, she rarely drank more than a couple at a time. So her eyes remained clear for the most part, although fatigue did awful things to them.

Like put shadows underneath and add light veins of blood. Just like today.

"You've not been sleeping well have you? But they're beautiful. Your eyes are famous. Change the shape one tiny bit and the public will notice. Surgery on the eye is particularly tricky. And of course if you have a facelift the eye area will be affected."

"I have lines."

He bent and kissed the fine lines at the corner of her left eye. "I love them. They give you character."

She snorted. "I've heard that before."

He kissed her temple. "In your case it's true. You're lovelier than you ever were." He smiled at her reflection, meeting her mirrored gaze. "Tell me which part of you needs surgery in your opinion and I'll persuade you that it's better as it is. Have I won anything yet?"

"The lips." She couldn't bear to give up that kind of sensation and in any case, she'd always had full lips. If they thinned a little with age that wouldn't be a problem. "But my eyes need some help."

He touched the corner of one eye then pulled up the skin so the eye slanted and the laughter lines disappeared. "You want that?"

She met his gaze with the one eye that could still see. "What do I say to that? Do I resort to cliché?"

"Contrary to popular opinion the oriental eye doesn't bear much relation to that."

She could see that for herself. His heavy-lidded oriental eyes gleamed back at her, gentle humor in them. But he wasn't wearing his glasses. "Can you see that far?"

He smiled. "I'm mildly shortsighted. Enough to use glasses when I drive and for a few other activities. I wear them all day for convenience—easier to put them on and forget it. So yes I can see that far." He released her eye. "If you have a facelift it will stretch and lift your skin. You'll have tiny scars at your hairline and behind your ears." He bent and kissed her earlobe, softly nibbling at the edge around the gold studs she wore then licked up and just inside the rim. The delicate caresses made her shudder. She didn't try to hide it. "The thought of it makes me shudder. You'll have a lift every five years or so and you'll look slightly different each time. It will erase your character."

"In that case why do you do cosmetic surgery?"

He smiled. She loved that smile it seemed to hold secrets hidden inside. "Because I'm good at it, because it pays well and it's a challenge. I'd rather see someone like me do it than someone who can't. I've seen some botched jobs that make me want to hit something, preferably the surgeon who committed the atrocity. We redo procedures when we can and I do a lot of corrective surgery for people who actually need it. Harelips, burn scars, birthmarks that kind of thing." He gave a short laugh. "I'm telling you all my secrets. You're too easy to talk to."

"Nobody told me that before."

"Not your previous husbands?" He seemed mildly curious not jealous or possessive. She liked that. Her previous husbands had wanted to own her. Perhaps finally she'd met a man strong enough to meet her on her own terms.

Who was she kidding? This sense of bone-deep rightness couldn't be anything but an illusion. He was ten years younger than she was, they hardly knew each other although she liked what she did know. *Idiot. Just enjoy this for what it is.*

Though she wasn't sure what it was yet.

He curved his hands around her waist to touch the knot on the belt. "I know you thought of a breast lift."

"You read my notes."

"No I didn't. Most women want a boob job it's one of the most common procedure around."

He touched the knot and his hands stilled. "Can I see?"

She jerked her head in a quick nod. "You think men haven't seen them before? Don't you remember the Quick Nails campaign?"

He shook his head.

"Billboards all over the country had it. It caused quite a stir. I was naked but on the poster, I didn't show anything. Except the fingernails that were the whole point of the ad. It sold millions of fake nails." She huffed a laugh. "Randy Norwood would have negotiated me a percentage but in those days I was happy to get the work and I took the flat fee. It made my name in the wider world, outside high fashion that is. But enough men saw everything I had to offer then and I did topless shoots, the see-through, the 'let's get them to look at the boobs instead of the dress' clothes. I didn't realize I could have the studio emptied and rather than that, it filled. The photographer insisted on a closed session after my first one and came on to me. I kicked him in the balls so it was just as well the photos turned out well or he wouldn't have used me again. Sometimes the full studio is the safer one."

"There's only me and you here." His hands tightened on the knot, the knuckles showing white. "I don't intend to lose this bet."

She felt the smile start deep inside her and she didn't stop its release. "That poor are you? Can't afford to lose?"

"It has nothing to do with money."

He loosened the knot and the belt eased. She let the robe open. It caught on her nipples. No hiding now that his attention had made them crinkle into tight peaks. He hadn't even touched them. But he did now. He cupped her breasts, lifted them and she sighed at the contact, her flesh aching for his touch. "You don't want augmentation or reduction?"

"What do you think? What would you do?"

His eyes burned into the reflection of hers. "I can't imagine them any more perfect. That's why I didn't know what you wanted."

"A lift and a reduction. I can't do the pencil test anymore."

He chuckled and nuzzled his mouth against her temple. "That doesn't mean a thing. If you have a lift, you'll lose sensation and have a few discreet scars under your breasts. A reduction would help you fight gravity but if you had it done I'd mourn the loss. You have beautiful breasts Adelaide."

"Edie."

He frowned.

"My first name's Edith. My friends and family call me Edie. I've always been Edie. Adelaide and Sunset came later."

"Edie." He tried it again. "Edie. It's good. It suits you."

She leaned her head against him. "I'm glad you think that."

His slender fingers spread. The darker skin of his hands against her pale skin looked stunning and again that unaccountable feeling of rightness swept over her. Her garment was open down the front but she still wore her delicate lace panties so she wasn't completely naked. Nerves had stopped her stripping completely.

He took the weight of her breasts in his hands, lifted them and touched her areolas with his long forefingers. Just touched them and watched the way she responded as her nipples tightened even more leaving little beads of flesh at the tips. "You might not respond as well as this afterward. Does it feel good?"

"Yes. Yes it does." She suppressed her shiver of reaction.

"Close your eyes." She obeyed. "Just feel. Concentrate on feeling."

He lifted his hands away before he put the tips of his fingers back onto her skin. He stroked her breasts from the base to the nipple, just stroked and didn't linger. When he reached the nipple, he lifted away and did it again. Base to tip over and over again. His

voice heated her ear when he murmured to her. "Feel that? If you have work done it will affect some of those nerve endings. Small numb patches, tiny areas you won't notice. Unless someone does this."

His fingers left her and he stood away from her making her feel bereft. Before she could check where he was, he said, "Keep your eyes closed." He was still close.

Then she felt a soft damp kiss on her nipple. She caught her breath, made a small sound of wanting. "Fuck!"

He kissed the other and touched it with the tip of his tongue. She couldn't tell if he was kneeling or bending to her until she felt his hands on her waist steadying her. Kneeling then. She so wanted to see that sleek dark head against her flesh but he'd told her to keep her eyes closed and she was too afraid he might stop if she opened them. He circled her nipple with tiny laps then increased his licks to long sweeping caresses until he was curling his tongue around it and then, *then* he sucked it in.

Wonderful so good.

If he hadn't been holding her she would have jerked right out of his hold. She'd never felt such intensity from having her breasts sucked before. Pleasure sure but not this. He made her feel as if all her senses centered at the tip of her nipple, now held in his mouth between his teeth as he delivered a nip that made her shudder. He suckled drew hard and before she had time to draw breath had moved to the other nipple. He didn't build up the sensation here but drew it right in and because he'd built up her expectations it drove her to more and harder sensation.

He released her nipple long enough to say, "Open your eyes," and he returned to her.

She glanced to the side and saw their profiles reflected in one wing of the triple mirror. His cheeks were hollowed where he sucked, his eyes closed. The sight of his lips curled around the tip of her breast was for a moment a separate entity until he curled his tongue around her nipple and she saw the movement reflected in the mirror.

She sobbed and her pussy pulsed, convulsed and she came.

Incredulous she gripped his shoulders for balance and rode it out. John released her nipple and leaned his forehead in the cleft between her breasts, breathing heavily. Heated air crested her stomach and pussy. She must have soaked her panties. She felt dampness seep over her thighs, too much for the tiny scrap of lace to contain.

He firmed his hold on her waist and stood, getting up in one smooth motion and then drew her close. His erection probed at her flesh insistently but when she moved her hand seeking him out he pulled back and gripped her wrist just enough to stop her. "Not now. I want you to think about what just happened and make your decision. I'll contact you tomorrow but don't contact me before then. Just think about it."

She couldn't believe it. "I know what just happened. I want more."

A slow smile curled his lips. "You want instant gratification. The American dream. Mine too once but no more. I've learned patience." His mouth tightened. "Barely. You're a wonder, Edie, a fucking wonder and I don't want you to do anything that might change it. But it's your decision. Always."

Chapter Four

Tempt the Cougar blog:

I met John Sung again last night and I took him home. He's the most amazing man. Girls he's ten years younger than me! Can you believe this is the first younger man I've ever dated? And by 'dated' I don't mean 'went out with' I mean got hot and heavy with. He's intense sexy—and he doesn't want me to have the surgery. Says it would be like whitewashing the Mona Lisa. Nuts. I never saw what Leonardo saw in her anyway. She could have done with a bit of lip-plumping at least.

This man is seriously hot. He made me come just by touching my nipples. Can you believe that? He asked me to call him tomorrow. I don't know. Should I? Or should I let this be just one of those ships-in-the-night things. Thing is, while I'm seeing him we're on a bet and the prize is that I don't have the surgery. I have a TV interview coming up and if I want surgery I need it soon so I can recover enough to appear. They can do wonderful things these days fast but not that fast. I'm running out of time.

An email alert flashed on her screen so Edie put up her blog post and clicked on the mail. The address meant nothing to her at first but she decided to open it and risk a virus.

Edie.

Dinner tonight? Say yes.

John.

She wrote her assent before she really thought about it. Oh yes she wanted to see him again.

She had an unfamiliar dilemma with her wardrobe before she went to meet John. She arranged to meet him at the restaurant at eight. Sure, there'd be photographers

outside but they frequented every decent eating house in LA so that wasn't a problem for her. At least she told herself not. But this was the first time she'd been out on a date with a younger man and the fluttering in her stomach reminded her she was nervous.

After deciding on a tight black number, she tore it off, deciding it was too short. A green corset top went the same way even before she found a skirt to put with it. Maybe the red— *Scarlet woman* went through her mind. Shit. She picked up the phone and hit speed dial. "Cam, what do you wear for a date with a man who's ten years younger than you?"

Her friend's warm husky tones came reassuringly down the line. "You wear something that says 'look who I'm with aren't you jealous?' You relax and you wear something appropriate. Nothing that gives the finger to the gossips but nothing that plays too safe either. Chances are they'll ignore you."

"Sure they will. John's not exactly unknown. Surgeon to the stars they call him. We were lucky the other night at the art gallery. No pictures today. But they noticed. If they see me with him again they'll do more than notice."

Cam's laugh sounded like warm honey. She'd always calmed Edie down before a big show and her presence albeit at a distance soothed her now. "And you're shitting big ones because he's younger than you. Girlfriend he's gorgeous and so are you. Just for a change don't dress for the paparazzi don't dress for yourself. Dress for him, fuck-me heels and all."

"Great thought. As long as you don't mean lingerie and stockings only."

They cut the call still laughing.

On the other hand, sexy lingerie always helped her feel confident. She found a sapphire blue set, one she'd always loved. The color set off her red-gold hair to perfection. Out of a bottle these days but still only to cover the gray, not change the color.

Stockings. Not black but sheer nude silk that made her legs feel pampered and she hooked them on to the matching blue garter belt.

After that, the rest was surprisingly easy. A vivid dark blue silk dress with a draped cowl neckline, classic lines, a couple of inches above the knee. Silver jewelry a sapphire pendant on a slender chain and matching stud earrings and since the dress was sleeveless a silver bracelet watch.

She parted her hair at the side and encouraged the waves to frame her face but tossed most of it over her shoulders to lie against her back to the level of her bra. At one time, she'd had hair down to her waist but it was a sonofabitch to look after so she'd gradually had the length reduced over the years.

She had a brief panic when she couldn't locate the matching shoes to the dress but she unearthed a pair of silver stilettos she hadn't worn yet that would do just as well. She surveyed her walk-in closet desperately trying to forget the last time she'd stood in front of this mirror. She had too many clothes she should really sort it all out. It was a symptom of her growing dissatisfaction about her looks or her condition or something. Restlessness since her last divorce and a growing belated sense of insecurity and lack of confidence. God knew where it came from. She'd never felt that way before.

She grabbed a silver purse and shoved her keys, change, a few bills and a credit card inside. When the concierge called up to say her taxi had arrived, she was ready. Except for the butterflies going batshit crazy in her stomach.

Edie had eaten at this place a time or two but it seemed particularly busy tonight. And the figure lounging outside, the only one she had eyes for seemed at home here. He stepped forward to help her out of her car, and cameras flashed. He leaned forward to kiss her cheek and took the opportunity to murmur, "Next time I pick you up, no arguments." She hadn't wanted him to do that tonight knowing they wouldn't have gotten as far as the restaurant. Despite his desire to take it slowly she would have hauled him inside thrown him to the floor and fucked him crazy. But part of the dare on the blog was to be seen with her guy. At least it was for her. She wanted to go all the way. Sex in private was good but she wanted more.

Though she wasn't sure what that was.

Seeing John again sent warmth through her, one she recognized. Taking a new lover was always like that. If she felt the same after a week, three weeks maybe then she'd consider herself caught. Or not. This time she knew she could walk away if she wanted to. This time. Did every woman think like that?

He led her through the doors opened for them by two men in uniform. "Why didn't you wait for me indoors?"

"I wanted to see your arrival and know it was for me." He laughed. "Stupid eh?"

"No." Some of her pleasure was the photos and the questions she'd heard shouted as they'd entered the sanctuary of the restaurant. *Je Suis* it was called. Aptly named because it gathered all the egos in LA into one place. "It seems a bit busy tonight. I don't kid myself. I don't get that kind of crowd anymore. Thank God," she added fervently and meant it.

"Clooney brought his new squeeze to dinner," John said. "They're waiting for them to come out."

She laughed. "In their dreams. If he wants to, he will, otherwise he'll go out the back way. He's a savvy guy, he'll have scoped that out long before he brought anyone here. But let's hope he does go out the front because he's a good distraction for us."

He glanced outside, the smoked glass windows adding a dreamlike quality to the crowds gathered on the street. "Nevertheless we've been seen and they've noted."

"Do you mind?"

He laughed. "Are you crazy? I'm proud of it. I know some much quieter places but you seemed okay with this and for a trendy restaurant they do some damn fine food."

She gave him the look, straight up straight down. "So the fat kid eats?"

"Hell yeah. As soon as I came out from behind the computer and started to live a little, the weight fell away. Together with some exercise." He winked at her and she laughed.

The maitre d' approached them and led them to a table near a window where they could see but not be seen as the glass was of the one-way variety. Cars hurtled by, chrome trim gleaming in the sunshine. LA didn't have much nighttime at this time of year but the June night dropped hard and fast when it finally came. It wouldn't for another couple of hours yet.

He leaned back in his chair and regarded her from half-closed eyelids. "You look fucking gorgeous but I bet you know that already. It must be second nature to you."

"No not anymore. I reared two kids and I spent most of my off-runway time in jeans."

He raised a brow. "Where are your kids now?"

"One's at college doing a doctorate, the other is working in Seattle." For once, it didn't make her feel old.

"I didn't notice any stretch marks." The professional speaking. "Not that it would have put me off." A glimmer of desire flashed from his eyes. She felt herself flushing. The curse of the redhead, that responsive skin.

"I was lucky." And it *was* luck. "I was working then. I would definitely have had surgery to correct stretch marks."

"It can't always be corrected although there are ways of disguising the marks." He glanced up as the waiter approached. "Do you know what you want or do you need the menu?"

She shook her head. "I've eaten here before."

They let the waiter outline the specials and they sounded interesting so she took a chance and ordered those. Mussels in white wine sauce followed by spring lamb with creamed potatoes. John ordered a salad and fish.

She grinned at him. "Anyone would think you were watching your weight." He laughed. Right then she decided she wanted to hear more laughter from John Sung.

Then the sommelier came to their table and Edie loved that he consulted her about the wine. They settled on a crisp dry white, a Moselle.

John didn't choose her meal for her or insist she try something because "I know you'll like it", he didn't decide on the wine without consulting her and she loved it. Her previous husbands had all done that, the first because she was young and needed to learn, the second because he was the possessive type and the third because he was an insecure controlling fuckwit.

Enough. All gone now two friends and a man she tried to ignore the existence of.

The meal came and they chatted their way through the first course getting to know each other a bit more but under all the pleasant conversation ran an undercurrent like the thrum of electricity, ready to snap to life when something connected with something else. Her pussy his cock, please God.

The main course arrived. John asked her if she preferred red wine but she said no and he topped up her wineglass with the white, which was perfect for a late spring evening. So were the conversation and the venue. For a fashionable restaurant *Je Suis* was a haven of quiet content, at least tonight. The food was served on fine white china the lighting was discreet but not too low and classical music played quietly in the background. She savored a mouthful of tender lamb before she spoke, taking her time.

"The in crowd, the busy people will move on soon. This place will be too boring for them."

He smiled and twirled his glass to make the wine surge and eddy inside. "But the management here is very clever because some of us will remember and return. I certainly will. And I can't wait for the others to move on. *Je Suis* will have enough regular customers to survive. Those of us who don't crave the limelight." He looked up. "You don't. Did you ever?"

She shook her head. "It was part of the job that's all. I took my God-given looks and did something with them. I was someone else—Sunset, Adelaide, but not Edie. She stayed inside watching and noting. That was why I found it so easy to write everything

down when it came to write my autobiography. The ghostwriter said I was articulate but I don't kid myself. She made my dry memories into readable exciting prose." She laughed. "I gave her a chunk of royalties. Her agent never even negotiated them for her."

"So you're generous too."

"I give credit where it's due. I always have. It makes for good karma."

He watched her for several seconds before he turned his attention back to his plate. That fraught few moments said nothing about their conversation everything about his intentions after they'd eaten. But she knew she'd have to agree. He wouldn't take unless she gave first. "Karma or not you have relatively few enemies for someone who is spectacularly beautiful and worked for years in one of the most cut-throat industries in the world." He glanced up. "Another being medicine."

That broke the tension but only temporarily. When he looked at her again she was waiting. How could anyone become addicted to a gaze? But she feared she was.

He leaned back in his chair and picked up his glass. She followed suit and lifted hers, toasting him before she drank. "Usually when I make my mind up I follow through no matter what. I did research on cosmetic surgery, decided what I wanted done and I had my timetable worked out. How can you be so sure I won't have it done? I have my first TV interview at the end of next month. They want names and dates and as far as I'm concerned, I'm giving them. But I wanted myself invulnerable. I wanted perfection. It's my first line of defense and you're asking me to give it up."

He regarded her steadily his eyes grave. She knew he was listening, really listening to what she said. "So the crap will hit the fan at that interview? Why would you do that?"

"Because my third and last husband was a shit of the stinkiest most repulsive kind. He's gorgeous, good in bed, wealthy and influential. Nothing can touch him."

"So what is he? A child molester, a murderer?"

She shook her head. "Nothing like that. Nothing illegal, just immoral. He's a user, a charmer, a seducer. He does it in his job and he does it in his private life too. I've seen him take young enthusiastic trainees and wring them dry. He'll work them until he has no more use for them then he'll discard them. While we were married, he took mistresses serially. After the first three I threatened to throw him out but he didn't believe me. I refused to have sex with him but he seduced me." She gave a wry grin. "He's very good. But I learned to resist him in time."

He finished his wine. "So he used you too?"

"We used each other." Her lips thinned. "Yes he did. He tried to push my children away too, so I had nobody else but him. But my first husband, my kids' father, didn't allow it. That started the first rift when Zach used to visit to see the kids but after we divorced we'd agreed to make sure the children came first. We stayed friends."

He nodded and the tense lines around his mouth relaxed. "So you get on with your other husbands."

She knew what he was thinking. That she was the user not Peter. "You know who they were, you said you'd looked me up."

"I know *who* they are but not *what* they are. Tell me."

Why did it seem natural to talk about her previous husbands with a man who might become her next lover? It didn't seem right but it worked for her. "My first husband was Zach Atoya, the head of his own fashion house. He was twice my age when we married but since I was eighteen that wasn't as bad as it sounded. He was my mentor and my friend. I had the twins at twenty and it could have been a disaster for my career but he supported me even designed a maternity line." She bit her lip forcing back her smile. "We divorced because we grew out of each other, wanted different things but we parted friends. My second husband was Bobby Demaris the lawyer. He's still my lawyer, which should tell you something. He was a controlling man, alpha to the max and he wanted all of me. I couldn't give it so he found someone who could. But

I understood why he wanted what he did. He found himself a wife who suited him better in the bedroom. And yes I'm friends with her as well as him."

"So you don't want all women to forge their own careers and make their own lives?"

She laughed. "No why should I?"

He smiled back and his face lost the sternness she realized meant he was concentrating. Not that he couldn't concentrate when he was smiling. "I prefer a woman who knows her own mind, who has an opinion. My male ego isn't insulted when a woman disagrees with me, just when she tries to fuck with me by playing idiot games or railroad me into something I don't want to do. And I've been with women who have done both." He met her eyes. "Shall I tell you what I want to do with you? To you? Do you want to know what I want you to do to me?"

She caught her breath. She hadn't expected that, not here. "People will hear you."

"No they won't. The people at the next table are too busy trying to get other people to look at them to bother about eavesdropping and nobody else is close enough." He leaned forward pushing his plate aside. "I promise."

The waiter arrived and took away their plates, leaving them with a dessert menu. He didn't look at it. "Maybe you'd like dessert at my place. Or yours. Wherever you're most comfortable. I have some interesting playthings." He crooked a dark brow and gave her a quizzical smile.

"Toys?" She liked toys.

"Oh yes. One or two."

"You're into..." A pang of disappointment went through her. She didn't want him to be into BDSM because she wasn't. She'd tried it from both sides and it only made her laugh at herself.

"No I'm not. I'm into mutual play and exploration. I'm into breaking boundaries whether you know they're there or not. I'm into letting go and doing what feels right whatever anyone else thinks about it. Only we matter in this, Edie. Nobody else."

Intriguing and fascinating. But he wasn't done.

"I want to fuck you, sure I do. But I want to do it in different ways. Then I want to watch while you fuck me and while you masturbate. That's one of the most beautiful sights in the world, watching a woman giving herself pleasure. I want to watch you explore yourself. I want to watch you explore me. And I'll do whatever you want me to as long as it feels good."

She couldn't breathe. He'd said it with such intensity she knew she'd met her match, the man she wanted. How this could have happened and how it happened now she was still struggling with.

He watched her and she knew he could see everything she was thinking. She just knew it. It didn't make her feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. It made her feel good. Just as he'd said.

"I want to remind you why your lips and your breasts shouldn't be subjected to the knife and I want to know what other work you wanted doing so I can persuade you against it. All I ask is honesty. So one question remains. Your place or mine?"

Outside the day was still bright but a slight freshness invaded the air, one that hadn't been there before. Cameras flashed and popped, more of them than before. Instinctively she moved closer to John and he curved his arm around her waist also, it seemed, instinctively. But she didn't shrink close to him. She knew better than that. She drew up to her full height five foot ten plus the three-inch heels she had on and pasted on the Sunset smile. She'd worn her hair loose tonight for him but now she could shake it back and remind them why she'd gotten that nickname within six months of her first picture appearing in the teen magazine that had given her the first break of her career.

More cameras flashed and she moved toward the car drawn up by the curb. She had no idea if it was theirs or not. It wouldn't be the first time she'd gotten into the

wrong limo and got out a block later. Premieres and society events were packed with such eventualities. All for the sake of appearances.

But it seemed that this was his car because he took the keys from the boy holding them out to him and opened the door on the passenger side.

“Are you a couple, Sunset? How long have you and Dr. Sung been seeing each other?”

John saw her into the car and closed the door but she opened the window and listened to his reply. At first, she thought he wouldn't say anything but then he paused and tossed the car keys in his hand as if weighing his answer. He walked around to the driver's side and paused. “Yes we're a couple. For now.”

He got into the car, started it up and drove away.

Chapter Five

“What made you say that?”

He glanced at her and grinned. He drove like he conducted his life, competently and without fuss. “Either because I want us to be or because we are. They’ll say it anyway. Clooney must have gone out the back way because the paparazzi out there are slaving for a story so we’ve given them one. It’ll be all over the blogs by now, the gossip mags in the morning but what do we fucking care?”

She grimaced. “I know a few people who might.”

“My place then,” he said, correctly interpreting her distaste.

She loved Bobby dearly but she wouldn’t bet against there being a phone call or an email from him when she got home. Still protective, especially since he’d handled her divorce from Peter and knew how hard that had hit her. Reminded of him, she dug inside her purse and found her phone. It had begun to vibrate when she switched it off. “Definitely your place.”

He lived in the Hills, but not the flashier part. He drove into a gated community and slowed down outside a two-story villa. She liked the understated design the clean shapes of the plastered walls and the way the large windows gleamed in the light of the setting sun. Edie found herself hoping this was his place.

It was. A garage door slid up and he parked the Mercedes inside before exiting the car and coming around to her side to open the door for her. She had her hand on the door handle but she liked that little touch. It made her feel cherished. Little courtesies that meant so much and John did them when nobody was around as well as when people were looking. Unusual for this town.

However when she got out of the car he didn’t step back. Instead, he placed his hands on her waist and drew her close. She lifted her head for his kiss and when their

lips met she was reminded of the sensation she'd felt when he'd kissed her before. Togetherness.

Their mouths moved in harmony and anticipation built low in her stomach fizzing up to tighten her throat and send tingles through her limbs. Her nipples tightened against his chest and although he probably couldn't feel them underneath his suit jacket and shirt, he hummed into her mouth and gave a low growl of approval.

He withdrew slowly with a series of nips and licks before he leaned back and gazed at her. "I've been torturing myself all day wondering if you really tasted that good. It's better than I remember."

She smiled up at him pleasantly hazy. "You have a gift for kissing."

"It's the first time anyone's told me that. Come inside and let's see if there's anything else I'm good at."

He led her into a spacious living room and past the comfortable dark-hued sofa set to a staircase at the far end. She looked up the steps. "Clear glass. Just as well I'm not afraid of heights."

"I knew that. I saw the picture of you in *Vogue* where you posed at the top of the Empire State Building. You lay on the rails."

"There wasn't much danger. They tethered me down and then airbrushed the straps out. But it really was the top of the Empire State and I was really, really cold. They brushed out the goose bumps too." She shivered and curled her arms around her body, clasping them hard as if she were still up there. "That was a looong shoot. At the time I was so cold I thought I was going to die. I spent the next four hours in a hot bath."

He frowned. "I don't like to think about you in that position. I know modeling isn't glamorous a lot of the time but that verges on fucking torture." He reached out and drew her close just holding her.

"We earn too much for people to feel sorry for us. And there are glamorous times along with the hard work and the discomfort. I'm still here aren't I?" Unfolding her

arms, she enjoyed his warmth. Although he didn't keep his air conditioning on freeze like a lot of LA residents, she felt the long-ago chill when she'd been seriously worried she'd developed hypothermia. The hours on top of the Empire State in March had left her cold right through her model-skinny body, literally chilled to the bone. It had been a long time since she'd thought about that shoot and she usually laughed the discomfort off since it had resulted in one of the iconic photographs of her career. John had seen straight through to the truth.

"I'm sorry," he said after a moment. "I didn't realize I'd be bringing such traumatic memories back to you. Do you want a drink?"

"No I'm fine." She lifted her chin. "I'm here with you and we're fine."

"So we are." He dropped a kiss on her nose and drew back but reached for her hand. "Am I rushing you? Do you want to sit and talk?"

"No. I want to get naked."

He pulled her toward the stairs laughing, the sadness dispelled. In the process of climbing the stairs, he paused and looked back at her. "But you remember our bet right? You'll give me a chance to persuade you not to have the surgery."

She owed him the truth. "I don't know if I can promise that. Dr. Roubiere suggested an extensive program but I won't have it all done at once."

He bared his teeth. "Fucking bastard," he said but without heat. "The trouble is he's good at what he does. What he does he'll do well. You can still say no." He played with the fingers of her hand.

"When you're paying?" She gave him a roguish smile. "Now why would I do that?"

His laughter sounded around the quiet room. "I'm sure we can think of something else to do with the money. Barbados maybe?"

Her brow arched. "Hey aren't we getting a bit ahead of ourselves here?"

He turned to climb the stairs. "I don't think so."

She followed him, taking her time to enjoy the way the hidden lights gleamed through the glass steps, hitting highlights that drew rainbows. The stair rail next to the wall was cool to the touch and on the other side the stairs were open hanging over the floor below as if by magic. Hers were railed in. She liked the open format.

He waited for her at the top of the stairs. He took her hand and kissed it old-style but the gesture wasn't cheesy, it was heartfelt. She loved it.

His bedroom contained a huge platform bed and a row of closets, all of them mirror fronted. She walked across the deeply carpeted floor to strike a pose, arm above her head, hip thrust forward, an exaggerated sultriness making the gesture comic rather than sexy. At least she thought so until she saw his face as he walked up behind her. She saw intensity behind the black-framed spectacles, burning heat that could keep her warm for a long time. His lips were slightly parted, giving her a glimpse of gleaming teeth. A predator heading for the kill.

She shivered when he put his hands on her shoulders. He didn't comment on it though he must have felt it. "What other work are you considering?"

"The works, everything, the full Monty," she said wildly. Really, she didn't give a flying fuck. He cared more than she did right now. If he'd known he only had to ask, he'd have the advantage. She'd make him work for it.

She'd been born with the genes that made her body. Apart from taking care of it, she had just been lucky. She'd learned how to make the best of what she had, how to stand, how to pose. It came naturally to her even now, years after she'd joyfully tossed her modeling career in the crapper. "This is my raw material." She passed her hands down her body smoothing it over her hips and thighs, enjoying the feel of expensive silk. "It was my job, my living and if it doesn't sound too pretentious, my way of expressing myself."

"Not pretentious at all." He moved his hand so he could kiss the skin left bare by her dress. "Well maybe a little bit."

She couldn't believe she hadn't had sex with this man many times, because she felt so natural with him but at the same time a frisson of anticipation ran up and down her spine making her want to squirm under his hands and beg him to touch every inch of her.

His hands left her shoulders and he walked past her to touch a closet door. It popped open and her eyes widened when she saw what was inside.

Jesus fucking Christ. When he'd talked about toys she'd imagined floggers, handcuffs, leather but she saw nothing like that.

Instead a row of glass dildos faced her, each slightly different as if modeled from life. The insides were far from realistic made stunningly beautiful with twists of colored glass and air bubble spirals. He'd ranged them according to the colors of the rainbow.

Drawers were set underneath, each with a crystal handle, but she couldn't work up the curiosity to wonder what they held right now. She'd never seen such beautiful sex toys before.

He pulled out a drawer. "I have pearls. If you were thinking of an ass lift, we might explore that area. Let's see." He turned his back on his toy cupboard and studied her instead. Her breasts rose and fell as she took a couple of quick breaths. "Only what you want, my lovely. I want to seduce you with pleasure, fuck you to joy."

She caught her breath. "I'm not exactly inexperienced."

"If anything I do doesn't thrill you, you have to tell me. You hear?"

"Oh yes. I hear. So no blindfolds or handcuffs?"

His mouth twisted. "It's not really my thing. But I'm willing to experiment. With you."

She shook her head. Her second husband Bobby was into BDSM. He was a part-time lifestyler but she hadn't enjoyed it, although she'd tried to for his sake. She could only assume his current wife found it more to her taste. Bobby had never scared her, always went slowly and she played along for him but her heart had never been in it.

Now for the first time she wondered if a new partner would make a difference to her. John Sung to be precise.

She reached out to touch one of the dildos, the green one. It felt cool and smooth. "Pick it up," he said.

It had a heft to it that could make it a lethal weapon.

When he spoke next, his voice sounded choked. "How did you know that was mine?"

"I didn't. I just liked the look of it." She spun it in her hand and watched the green spiral twist curling in her hand. It felt so different to the real thing but seductive in its own way. "What do you mean 'mine'?"

He reached past her to take up the one with tiny red droplets scattered through it, more like rubies than blood. "In the sixties and seventies some groupies were known as the Plaster Casters. They used to make casts of famous stars' dicks. The trick was to keep them erect during the time it took the plaster to harden. Either they didn't have the fast-curing stuff we use today or they chose not to use it." He grinned. "It was fun. They had a shitload of volunteers."

"I bet."

"These were taken from the original casts but being glass they're idealized. This one is Jimi Hendrix's dick. The one you're holding is mine." He held his hand under hers but she didn't drop it only held it tighter and stared in fascination. "I didn't have the pleasure of the services of the Plaster Casters but as I said we have faster setting plaster and I used it. Do you know how hard it is to masturbate for twenty minutes without coming?" She snorted with laughter. "I was a med student living at home. It scandalized my mom who opened the parcel when it arrived. She never opened another one of my letters or parcels."

She stroked the tip of the dildo. It was realistic enough for her and if this was a cast of his cock, she could hardly wait. "So you had a glass replica made? Do you use it much?"

He put the red one precisely back into place. "No. But I want to use it now. With you." He touched his lips to the side of her neck, a place that made her shiver. "So tell me where you were thinking of having more procedures. Then I'll try to persuade you against it."

"Will you give me your honest opinion?" She put the green dildo down next to the red one, not as precisely as he had done.

He smiled against her neck the slight movement sending another shudder through her. "As a man yes. As a doctor no." With a last kiss, he lifted his head and turned her to him his hands on her shoulders. "The color of your dress makes you look untouchable but I was always one to go against the rules." He bent and took her lips in a deep kiss.

He kissed like an angel—or a devil, his marauding tongue taking her, invading her. Making her feel—owned. She'd felt like that before but not now when she knew who she was and what she wanted. She wasn't even sure he knew what he was doing. And when his tongue swept over hers and stroked it, inviting her to share, she stopped caring.

He smoothed his hands over her dress and after a moment, she realized what he was looking for. The zipper. She broke away and after he'd pursued her and stolen a couple more gentle kisses as if he couldn't bear to leave her, he grinned. "Okay I give in. How do you get out of this thing?"

She took a step back. "Now that is more sensible. I wouldn't have liked you to rip it. Have you ever heard of bias cutting?"

He spread his hands and shrugged in an intensely masculine gesture.

Chuckling she reached for the hem of the dress and lifted it over her head. She dropped the silk to the carpet where it fell with a gentle susurrant of surrender.

"Fuck, oh fuck, you're beautiful." The gleam in his eyes was unmistakable. His gaze roved over her form and she helped him, sliding her hands over her body from her breasts down over the curve of her waist to her hip and down to her thighs. Then she

glided them up her body at the front ending just under her breasts. She cupped the silk-encased mounds and spread her fingers. When she grazed a nipple, a shiver passed through her. From his hot gaze she knew she'd turned him on but he wasn't the only one. She'd sensitized her skin, made herself ready for him.

Without taking his gaze away from her, he dragged off his jacket and as she had done with her dress dropped it to the floor. He unfastened his shirt, flicking the buttons undone one by one and took a second to undo his gold cufflinks and drop them on his coat. But he didn't take the shirt off. No smile softened the harsh, chiseled features or crinkled the dark eyes at the corners. His concentration was absolute. On her. She reached behind her to the bra clasp but he took the step that brought him right up against her and his hand covered hers. They undid the clasp together and then he held the bra closed when her hand fell away.

She touched him held his waist and gazed up at him. "Don't you want me to take it off?"

"I want to know. Have I won? What have I won?"

"You mean what have I agreed not to have done?" He nodded a sharp jerk of his head that revealed his tension. She'd thought it a game, after all why should he care what she did to her body? He liked her body enough to become her date instead of her doctor but that was all. This could only ever be a transient enjoyable affair.

It didn't feel like it now with his gaze boring into her as if he could see everything she was. Right into her innermost secrets. She had to give him something. "My lips. I won't have my lips done."

"Even temporary treatment?"

"Even that." She hadn't been sure about that procedure anyway she told herself but deep down she knew he'd won the right fair and square, and made her lips feel wonderful.

Just as he did now. His kiss wasn't a taking, it was a celebration. He touched her lips, licked them before he settled his mouth over hers and drew her flush against his

body. He released her bra strap and the elastic sprang back, releasing the tension that held her breasts up and tight. She didn't want reminding about how they'd drooped with age.

He pressed tender kisses against her lips and brought his hand up to cup and caress her right breast. He tugged at the nipple, drew it into a stiff peak and stroked before he moved to the other to give it the same treatment. "I want these to stay just as they are," he said kissing her between each word. "They are so lovely and so responsive. Remember how I made you come just touching them and sucking them? You could lose sensitivity if you have implants. I don't want you to let anyone interfere with them. Except maybe me."

"I'm almost tempted." She gasped as he tweaked her nipple, loving the way it sent shards of sensation to her spine and along it to the rest of her body.

"I'll enjoy persuading you."

"You're so sure?"

"No. But I know what I want. I won't railroad you, Edie, only persuade." In a sudden movement, he bent and swept her into his arms. She giggled. When had she last giggled? She had no idea but it felt like a lifetime since she'd felt so lighthearted and downright happy with a man. He glanced back at the shelf. "Would you like to take Jimi with us?"

She smiled up at him. "I'd rather have you."

He laughed and swept up the green glass dildo, carrying her and it over to the wide bed. He bent and laid her carefully on it and placed the dildo on the night table with his glasses. "I don't think that color's quite you."

It wasn't—the cover was yellow silk, which clashed badly with her auburn-sunset hair. She lifted a brow. "Does it bother you?"

"I'd like to see you laid out on green or blue. And I will. I'll order a new cover tomorrow. Velvet soft and rich. Like you."

She laid a hand on her stomach and grimaced. "Don't remind me."

"It's good. I love it." His hands went to his pants and he flipped open the button. She watched avidly and he groaned. "Don't do that. It makes me close to coming."

"We have all night. Have a free one on me."

He threw back his head and laughed.

Now that he'd mentioned the cover it did bother her. She had enough vanity left to want him to see her at her best. She stripped it off to reveal a white duvet and bed linen. Much better.

By that time, he'd undone the buttons on his fly and now it gaped open, revealing a pair of tight white boxers that barely held the bulge of his erection. A damp patch marked where he'd leaked drops of his precious fluid. It empowered her, made her feel wanted and she hadn't felt that way for a while.

People wanted her, sure. Her children wanted her, her friends enjoyed her company, at least they came back for more, and her business associates wanted her for obvious reasons. She made money for them. But she hadn't felt wild hunger course through her body for years and it felt fucking wonderful.

He stared down at her. "I'm stripping for action tonight. I don't want anything in the way of us. So tell me now. Where do you think you need work?"

She swallowed her throat dry. "A tummy tuck?"

He gave a derisory laugh low in his throat. "More."

"Maybe liposuction on my thighs? They don't seem as thin as they used to be. And my ass—I've never been entirely happy with that. My agent used to say that if she had to pick anything, that was the worst flaw I had."

His lip curled. "Your stomach is beautifully rounded. Made as a pillow for my head I'd say so I can watch while I touch and tweak that gorgeous pussy." He pushed his pants past his hips and they fell to the floor with a soft thump. No hiding his cock now.

His underwear stood clear of his taut stomach where the plump head pushed up, demanding its freedom.

He gave it by hooking his thumbs in the top of his boxers and sliding them down. She watched as he spoke, licked her lips. "I want to examine your ass in greater detail. I have to be sure don't I?"

Edie didn't want to take her avid gaze off his beautiful cock but she turned over. His soft groan came sweetly to her ears. "Perfect. It's perfect."

And then he touched her, leaned forward and cupped the curves of her backside in his hands. He weighed them stroked them through her barely there panties and all she knew was she wanted them both naked. He eased his hands over her thighs enough to pull the silk down and free her to his gaze. She didn't know where her panties landed. She didn't care. Turning her head, she watched him.

That sight of John Sung naked, proud and beautiful fed her addiction. She wanted him so badly moisture trickled between her thighs when she turned.

He wasn't touching her but she felt his presence as if he were, as if his eyes had the power to caress her. What did he find wanting? She couldn't bear it, that fraught silence. "Are my arms okay from the back?"

"Every way I look at you I see perfection." He sounded husky. He cleared his throat. "Your ass is an invitation a boy's wet dream. And I'm no boy."

"I noticed that."

"My cock isn't the only part of my body desperate for a taste of you. My mouth, my hands—God I thought those photos of you were touched up but they weren't."

"They were." Once her third husband had shoved her and left a bruise. He didn't go in for crude physical abuse usually but that night he'd had too much to drink and she'd been particularly accurate in her description of him. They'd had to airbrush that bruise out after the shoot the next day. Nobody asked about the mark. Strange that Bobby, the husband who was into BDSM rarely left a mark on her and never without her permission.

She wouldn't tell that to John. It was none of his business. He wanted her body although they had enjoyed themselves earlier at dinner, found a few things they had in common. And she liked his house. The spaciousness and airiness appealed to her.

All that raced through her mind while she was trying not to come just from him looking at her. She knew he'd be watching her with the deep intensity of a man who concentrated on the things that mattered to him. Right now she did.

So enjoy right now. They could fuck like bunnies and she'd leave smiling in the morning.

Chapter Six

She sighed into the soft pillow under her head and at that moment, he touched her. Curved his hand over her ass then his other hand over the other cheek. The contact felt like she'd been waiting her whole life for him to do that. Then he pulled the cheeks apart not hard but firmly and he groaned. "Everything about you is gorgeous. Turn back again, Edie, before I forget myself and do it all to you. But you said you wanted an ass lift. I'm going to find out if all you need is an ass job."

Nervousness tightened her throat and she swallowed. None of her husbands had been into that, not even Bobby. She was panicking again, trying to think herself out of the wild intensity that suffused every pore of her body.

She turned around not knowing how to arrange her body, how to appear before him. The raw honest hunger in John's face almost destroyed her. It stripped away any attempt she might have had at subterfuge or trying to keep this light. They'd laughed during dinner but no laughter remained on his face now.

Stark want delineated every feature from the sharply defined cheekbones straining against his skin to the taut mouth. And those dark eyes so intense, clear of everything except lust. Honest lust.

She took her cue from him and lay back, legs slightly apart, arms by her sides, trying not to think of posing. Here she was, Edie, that was all, the girl who had come from England to LA with such hopes and become one of America's sweethearts. Or America's sex symbol anyway.

"Why the smile?"

"I didn't know I was smiling. But I can see plenty to smile about."

He gave her a wry grin. "Thanks for that."

At last he moved, coming down and resting one knee on the bed by her feet. He ran his hand up her leg. "So smooth." He turned his head sharply when he heard her intake of breath. "No don't tell me the effort it takes to get there, don't tell me how it's done. Right now, I don't care. Let me admire you."

That was something she was used to. Maybe not as intimately, but this she enjoyed. She'd had lovers before who when she got them into bed turned out to want Sunset or even Adelaide, not Edie, so that was what she'd given them. Posed, preened, acted as egotistically as they'd expected, given nothing away and then she'd gotten them out of her front door as fast as she could.

But John wanted to *appreciate* her. She could do that, admire her body as if it were a separate entity to herself, to the Edie stuck inside the fabulous exterior. She'd been gifted her body, the long limbs, the slender figure and all she'd done was take care of it. Now it was time for payback. All those hours of smoothing, massages, exercise, toning, now she wanted something for herself.

Much, much too soon for her to call it love but it was coming perilously close. Sex yes. John was moving his hand slowly up her leg, massaging the calf with careful fingers, moving on to her thigh. No cellulite yet.

Stop it, Edie. He'd asked her to drop the criticism of herself. She'd try to for him if not for herself. Years of objective assessment had forced her to divorce the body that had made her fortune from the person inside but it was time surely it was time for that to change. For her to get back in touch with who she was, what she wanted and solder the two into a complete if imperfect whole.

Perhaps that was why she needed this so badly. Perhaps John had realized what she needed. Who knew?

Those soft caresses and the sight of the lithe tanned body before her moved her libido level up slowly but inevitably. John glanced up as he shaped her thigh with his hands. "I know what you're thinking. Your mind works twenty-four/seven doesn't it?"

Yes it did.

"Concentrate on the way my hands feel on you. Look at your legs. Long, luscious gorgeous. That light tan is just enough to enhance them not enough to damage your skin. And it's a real tan isn't it?" He didn't wait for her to answer. "No cellulite but I wouldn't care if there were. And this..." He slid his hand under her and cupped her ass. "So inviting. So good."

He looked and it was so not the gaze of a professional medical man, his eyes so hot she thought he might melt her on the spot. And it was cool in this room. She let her legs remain slightly open, felt her lust oil her pussy, liquid bathing the tops of her thighs.

"You can have all kinds of things done to your cunt you know."

She gave a sharp laugh. "Is that a medical term? Cunt?"

He looked up at her face, smiling. "Who cares?" He returned her attention to her cleft. "You can have the hood of the clit removed or even extended. You can have collagen injected in the labia to plump them up. You won't feel them for a while, but who cares, they look good."

Her blood ran cold until she saw the smile and realized what he meant. She licked her lips to moisten them. Her mouth was running dry while her pussy was dampening. "I could have that done couldn't I?" It was the best she could manage. Because if she didn't say she wanted to change that part of her body, he might not touch it. And she'd die if he didn't.

"But if I show you the sensation you might lose, you could give it to me couldn't you? Give me another part of your body you won't allow the knife to touch." He laid one finger on her just above the line of her pubic hair. "You could shave if you wanted to."

"Would you like that?"

He gave another smile. "Maybe I would. So we'll exempt that part shall we? You might even allow me to do it for you."

"I used to shave there, I had to. I still trim."

He ran his finger between her legs along the bikini line. "So you do."

Without warning, he bent and licked her slit front to back. Her legs were only slightly open so he couldn't reach all the way but as she shuddered in reaction, he gripped her thigh and urged her legs apart. His low groan vibrated along her cleft, peaked at her opening. She panted sharp and fast and he purred against her skin, a low rumble that flowed through her body and amplified her arousal. Her body tingled with awareness, with wanting. His low words, his reassurances all served to lull her to stop her thinking.

So she just felt. His tongue curled along her cleft and then tickled her clit. She gripped the sheet under her, felt the smooth fine cotton scrunch in her hands, added it to the sensations she was feeling. She felt every movement of his talented tongue as he curled it around her clit like a guardian, a protector and then he sucked it in like a marauder, owning it.

The combination sent her up into a cycle she dimly recognized as pre-orgasm when every sense tingled in response to his touch.

He traced patterns on her thigh with his fingers, intricately weaving sensation into a rich tapestry of delight. Every time he touched her, she soared higher. He sucked, pulled her into his mouth and made a sound that he might make for the richest chocolate or the finest wine.

He changed his angle, lifted up on one hand, his other still tracing patterns and he devoured her. Ate her. And she couldn't hold back any longer. She arched her back and screamed as the climax hit her with the intensity of a tropical storm, rocking every inch of her. "Oh fuck me, don't stop, keep going — oh God!"

Her pussy pulsed and she realized he'd pushed his finger — fingers — inside her. He didn't stop licking and sucking although she squirmed to get away, the sensitivity too much but he kept a hand on her thigh, holding her in place for his invading tongue.

She cried out, begged for him to fuck her now but he ignored her until he'd lapped up every drop of her essence. No man had ever done that to her before, not eaten her out as if he couldn't get enough of her.

Finally he pulled away and rested his forehead on her mound. He breathed deeply as if he'd sprinted a hundred yards at Olympic speed.

"I could do this all night." His voice sounded muffled. "You taste glorious." He lifted his head. His mouth glistened, his chin was damp. "So good, honey, so good."

She stared at him enthralled. Gorgeous, hot and for tonight all hers. "I could let you. But we have other places to go don't we?"

"Oh yes. Plenty of other places." With a sudden movement, he pushed himself up on all fours. His cock thrust up aggressively close to her pussy. Not close enough. He eased himself up the bed until he crouched over her but he wasn't touching her although she could feel his heat and the way he wanted her. She swallowed. She could smell herself on him. The scent turned her on with a power that was new to her. At least this way. He vibrated enjoyment. He stared down at her, his gaze molten lava. "I need a moment or I'll come all over you right now. And I want in."

"How do you do it?"

"Do what?" His voice purred over her like velvet against her skin.

"Be this — this intense."

"I live in the moment. It's hard to do." He smiled down at her, bent for a gentle kiss. She licked her lips, savoring her taste on his lips and he watched avidly. "But it's a skill you can learn. Ten years ago, I was going nuts, literally. My nerves were shot to hell. I was a clever kid and my parents pushed me. My dad especially, the Chinese ethic to achieve kicking in. So I graduated early, set up the business and nearly had a breakdown. I went to classes and I learned not to agonize so much. Want me to teach you?"

She shook her head. "I'm doing okay. You stop the world for me."

He kissed her a lingering closed-mouth caress. "Now that is the best thing anyone's said to me."

She laughed. "Ever?"

"Ever." He bent again and he breathed in deep through his nose, a sexy sound that added to her enjoyment of him.

John took her mouth, explored it, tasted it and then lowered his body so it lay over hers, his cock between her legs caressing her pussy. Right now she didn't care about protection. He could do what he wanted.

But he finished the kiss and drew away, his attention going to the nightstand. He reached inside the drawer and found a condom before he leaned back, sitting on his heels while he slid the protection over his cock with a deliberation that she now knew meant he was appreciating every stroke, every easy glide. She should have put it on for him. She wanted to but after that wonderful orgasm she was still floating in a warm tide of aftermath.

He stretched over her again, smiling into her eyes. "Ready?"

"Oh yes." She smiled back. He'd made her more aware of her body, she realized. Ready for him, her pussy so wet her juices trickled in the cleft between her buttocks but assured by the promise in his eyes, she reached for him and opened her hands wide over the skin of his back. "Fuck me, John. Fuck me good."

His muscles flexed and she felt them stretch as he lowered his body to hers and inexorably entered her.

Despite her openness, he was still a tight fit. The head worked through her opening into the welcome he'd helped her prepare for him. He pushed, and more slid in. All the time they kept their eyes open and watched each other, neither of them speaking or breaking the moment as if this was something sacred.

In a way it was. It felt so different so new. Not virginal new but a new kind of sex a new kind of awareness. Was he a magician or some kind of hypnotist?

No. He'd talked to her and he'd listened. Listened to her body as it sang for him. When he'd gone down on her, he'd felt the way she responded, listened to the sounds she made and reacted accordingly. Did what she wanted although she hadn't realized she'd wanted until he did it to her.

And now he was doing it again. Easing into her, letting her feel every inch of him as he slid his cock inside her pussy. She sighed, her breath catching in the back of her throat. "How big are you? Do you know?"

"How big does it feel?"

"Fucking huge."

He laughed. "Very flattering, sweetheart. Thank you. I never measured it. It always seemed adequate. So how do I compare?"

"You're bigger than average but you're not scary."

"Scary?"

"Big isn't always better."

He laughed. "I'm not even going there. This is us, me and you, and if we fit that's good enough."

She arched up to him. "Oh yes, we fit all right." She let her eyes half close and felt the hardness sliding so easily now deep inside her. Every touch, every moment, every inch. Until his balls nestled softly against her ass. He came to rest. "Me and you. Me in you. Never so good, Edie. Never."

She believed him because it was the same for her. But before she could tell him, he pulled out and pushed back in. Slowly. His control awed her. He must have amazing physical strength to fuck her with such controlled slowness.

He kept up a rhythm like the constant but deliberate motions of Tai Chi, easing in and out, the liquid sounds providing an accompaniment she knew she'd never forget or ever want to.

With blinding recognition, she realized what he meant. This time was all that mattered. Whatever came next, whatever had happened before, they had this and if they appreciated it, if they lived and enjoyed it now they'd never regret it.

"We'll never lose this will we?"

His slow smile warmed her. "No we never will." He bent his head for another kiss and she reached up eagerly to share it with him. He never stopped moving in and out of her and with every glide he touched her sweet spot, caressed it and withdrew only to caress it again. Her arousal rose almost without her being aware of it. It just was.

They reached the high points, passed through them and went higher. Everything outside their bodies ceased to matter until they could have been the only people in the world.

And then she exploded but not like the fourth of July. More like underwater fireworks if there was any such thing, the shimmering, magnificent climax drenching them in a mist of fire.

Edie didn't know if she cried out, didn't care, but she heard his voice crying out to her, calling her name. She didn't realize how closely she held him until she breathed deep and found it more difficult than it should be.

John rolled to one side, taking her with him, his eyes closed, his mouth slightly open breathing deeply. She rested her head on his sweat-sheened chest and licked his skin, the salty taste a tribute to their efforts.

"You," he said slowly, his voice deeper than usual, "are a miracle, Edie Howard."

He called her Edie. She'd lived as Sunset for the last thirty years. Now it was Edie's turn.

Chapter Seven

John wondered if love at first sight existed. This sublime sensation unlike anything he'd felt before could be because he'd tried harder with Edie. She needed it, he'd thought, sensing the lost soul under the sophisticated beauty but it had turned out that he needed it too. Maybe he was as lost as she was. And maybe she was bringing him back to life.

He opened his eyes, saw her watching him and lifted his hand to caress her cheek and cup it before he kissed her. She invited touch, that soft skin begging him to worship. It had been a long time since he'd thought about the mess he'd been ten years ago but something in her had brought it out, reminded him of what he'd been. On the surface a raging success, underneath a pathetic fuck-up, his nerves shot, his ambition and self-confidence out of control.

Now she needed help too but he was afraid that in bringing it to her he'd reopen old wounds. With horror he recalled that helpless feeling of being dragged along by a tide he couldn't stop. He wouldn't let that happen to Edie.

Slowly he withdrew from her, his body protesting at the separation as if they already belonged together. He pulled away to discard the used condom. Already he wanted her again, his cock swelling once more, so he found the task more difficult than it should have been.

One taste and he feared he was addicted to Sunset. No, to Edie. The woman behind the sophisticated ex-model fascinated him much more, the real woman behind the elegant polished façade. And never for a moment did he forget how lucky he was that she'd allowed him in. Edie was adept at keeping people at a distance, he'd seen her do it on TV interviews. That had been the first time she'd intrigued him rather than elicited his imagination as a symbol of perfection when he'd had a glimpse of how she worked.

Now here she was in his bed, the focus of his loving.

He rose up over her and took her lips once more, explored her mouth with leisurely thoroughness. She opened for him, accepted him and gave back. He drew away slowly.

“Are you still thinking about surgery?”

“What’s that?” She smiled up at him.

“How about an ass lift?” His voice suddenly became hoarse as he remembered the sight of that elegant curve. His cock completed its expansion.

The witch snuggled close and purred. “Possibly. Is it the thought of the surgery that makes you so – interested?”

He laughed. Her honesty in bed enchanted him. He curved his arm around her and cupped those delectable curves, deliberately allowing his longest finger to slip between her buttocks down to her labia and just inside. Damp still, and when he touched fresh juice flowed from her onto him. He wanted to taste it again, but to do that he’d have to take his hand away and he didn’t want to. So he curled his finger in a little, increased the pressure on her ass. “You can’t want to do anything to this. It’s beautiful, tempting. You could end up with a small scar here.” He traced a line in the lower crease with his forefinger but he didn’t remove his middle finger from her cleft. He doubted that he could right now. Her heat scorched him and all he wanted was to burn. “It would be a sin to mar such lovely flesh. And where you have a scar the nerve endings are damaged or destroyed and you’ll lose feeling there.”

He kissed her forehead, let his lips linger on her fabulous skin and felt her answering kiss on his chest.

She lifted her head. “You’re pretty delicious yourself you know.”

“Not like you.”

“Exactly like me.” She stroked her cheek against his skin, sending sensation skittering down his body. “You made yourself. You told me you were overweight as a child.”

"Derided for it." He recalled how he'd felt but it was a distant memory now as if it had happened to someone else. "I was a clever fat kid. A clever, fat Chinese kid. That gave them plenty of ammunition. I pretended not to care."

"But you did."

"Fuck, yes I cared. I cared enough to lose weight and work so hard at my studies that I graduated early. I met Henry Roubiere. He was like me, a misfit but for different reasons. We set up the partnership, his money, my expertise until it was our money and our expertise." He stopped abruptly.

"Then you had a breakdown."

He smoothed his hand over her hair and forked his fingers through the waves, wild now. "Pretty much."

She wriggled against him, working his cock with her body. He groaned. "And you became the sex symbol you are today."

He laughed and enjoyed the freedom of the moment as he'd been taught, as came naturally to him these days. "That's you."

"Don't be modest. You've appeared on enough screens and been at enough premieres for the media to know your face. 'Sexydoc', I've seen you described as. More than once."

"Oho, so you noticed me before did you?"

She primmed her mouth. "I googled you when I was thinking about the surgery. I had an interesting afternoon investigating you."

"Hmm surgery. That reminds me." He wriggled his finger, still nestled in the cleft of her ass. "I have more persuading to do don't I?"

She hummed, more in appreciation of what he was doing than agreement or cogent argument. At least he hoped so.

He rolled up on his knees, taking her with him so she was on all fours. Only then did he take his hand away and admire the beautiful sight. She kept her legs spread and

her glorious hair, the hair that had gained her the nickname she'd had for most of her life spread over the upper part of her back, gleaming autumn gold in the subdued light of his bedroom.

John would never forget that moment. This woman embodied all his dreams, was the epitome of the perfection that he'd sought for in his early years, the perfection he now knew was better flawed.

He saw tiny marks airbrushed or unseen by the camera. A scar from, he guessed from its age, a childhood incident and a slightly darker patch on one side. It marked this back as belonging to Edie and no other. The blemishes made the sight dearer to him, not less.

He spread his hand over her back, savored the contrast between her pale skin and his olive tones, loved the sensation. He breathed deep, scenting their previous lovemaking, knowing that it would soon be renewed. He watched her pussy dampen for him, the tops of her thighs glistening with her arousal and he just managed not to bend and taste it, lick it off. He had a use for it. Her rosebud tempted him, the tight furl of her anus beautiful, far too tempting for him to refuse to accept.

Then he reached for the dildo and lube.

Edie gasped. He put them on the sheet beside him where she could see them and curved his hands over her waist. "I'm trying to give you pleasure, Edie, only good feelings. A pinch of pain can add to the pleasure. You know that don't you?" If she said no now he'd die. But he had to make sure.

"Sometimes." Cautious but she was still with him.

"Trust me?"

"Okay."

He massaged her skin, keeping his motions smooth and gentle. No sudden movements. He saw her muscles tighten slightly with the increased tension. "You say stop, I stop. All I ask is that you give it a chance. Has anyone taken you in the ass before?"

"Someone tried."

She sounded subdued. He hated that. He wouldn't destroy the trust building between them. "I really want to. I want to show you how good it can be. But those other times, you didn't like them did you?"

She shook her head, her hair moving against the pillow, falling over her face. He leaned forward to smooth it back and tuck it behind her ears so he could see her. "Did he force you?"

"A bit. Not rape, never think that but..." She bit her lip. He wanted to bite it too just a nip.

"But you didn't like it. If you don't like what I'm doing, say so. Just give it a chance to feel good."

He picked up the dildo and rolled it over her buttocks. The coolness raised goose bumps. "Even a subtle sensation like this might not feel right after the procedures. You'll have dead spots in your body where a continuous feeling would be halted. Most times it won't matter, you'll hardly notice." He rolled the phallus down over the crest of her buttock to the top of her thigh, the flanged head pointing to her pussy and ass. "But you'd notice if I did that. Like a blind spot in your eye, you'd have a break." He stopped, lifted the dildo to the other side and repeated the action with his other hand. "Does that feel good?" He retrieved the lube and popped the tube open with one hand without her seeing. She was looking at the dildo. It showed his cock right down to his balls, the smooth glass skimming over any wrinkles or creases in the original. He moved so his cock bobbed up to lie over the crease between her buttocks and he placed the dildo next to it. "They did a good job. But I have more fun with the real thing." He twisted the glass, twirled it against her skin.

Leaning forward he pressed his cock into her buttock crease so the head nudged over the top. She felt so good he could come from working it there. He took a moment to kiss her shoulder blades, waiting for the peak to die down.

He squeezed the lube, letting the clear gel flow over his fingers before he dropped the tube on the sheet. He leaned back and slid his glistening fingers into the crease where his cock had just discovered intimations of glory.

Working the liquid over and over, he slid past her rosebud opening, not attempting to enter. She liked that, liked him to massage her there. Allowed it. So he slipped the tip of his forefinger inside. Just the tip, although it killed him not to take her, fuck her deep inside and feel the beauty of that hot velvet sheath.

He thought he'd learned patience in the last ten years. He'd been wrong.

Moving the dildo to the front of her body, he slid the smooth glass head over her clit and felt her shiver. A drop of her honey slid down her thigh and he watched its glistening progress, knowing he'd driven it out of her.

The sight enthralled him. He caught his breath until the drop was lost in the sheet under her knee.

And still he worked her, rubbed the phallus over her clit down to her cunt until it slid in almost of its own volition because by then she was so wet she could have accepted the dildo and his cock together. Except that the dildo *was* him in a way. Strange how she'd picked that one even before she'd seen him naked.

He took a couple of deep breaths. Her soft moans drove him higher still and he knew he wouldn't last much longer without fucking her. He wanted to be inside her body so badly he could taste it. Moaning, he dragged his mind away from the prospect.

He pushed one finger inside her anus and waited. Just to the first joint to let her feel it. She didn't object; if anything her moans increased. She clutched the sheet under her hands, fisting and releasing the crumpled fabric. He wanted it to be his cock but he couldn't be everywhere. He added another finger.

Working his fingers inside her softly he managed to get them further inside, then began to introduce a third finger. With the dildo pushed inside her cunt, working her slowly, she melted over him, soft as butter while he was hard as iron.

He leaned against her ass until she got the message and lowered her body so the dildo could remain lodged inside her while he leaned over to get the condom he'd left on the nightstand. He dropped a kiss on her shoulder, stopped to suckle and taste her skin.

Almost as far gone as she was, John managed to get the condom on one-handed before he replaced his hand on the dildo and urged her back up. He needed her completely open so he wouldn't hurt her. And he wouldn't force it much, though the demon that resided deep inside him told him to. *Just push, fuck, shove inside her as far as you can go. The real ecstasy is the deepest heart of her. Tear her apart.*

Edie could hardly believe it. A few instances excepted, and they'd been a long time ago, the last time she'd allowed herself to be so vulnerable with a man was Bobby. Her sex was usually done with her on her back or on top, both enjoying themselves with the intensity of a tennis game on a summer afternoon, or rather, the lack of intensity. Not this.

His fingers inside her where she'd only allowed tentative attempts before, his cock sliding inside her cunt. Another word she rarely used, but here, emotions and needs stripped raw, it was right.

And she wanted him now. Now. Urgency sent need ripping through her. When he removed his fingers from her ass, she felt bereft but only for a moment because smooth hard heat touched her. He slid the very tip inside, barely opening her. "Here we go, sweetheart. Breathe out for me." His hand on her waist was shaking. He wanted her as much as she wanted — needed — him.

She took a deep breath and released it slowly as he pushed in. He got the head in and a little of the shaft she thought from the way it felt. *So good.* He moaned a long drawn-out sound of appreciation. The hand holding the dildo inside her trembled.

He gripped her upper thigh, drawing it back. "God I wish you could see this! My cock as it slowly, so slowly, slides inside your body. Fuck."

"John!" She lifted her head and saw them reflected in the mirrored closets opposite. His golden olive-toned body behind hers, her leaning forward on her elbows, her breasts nearly grazing the rumpled sheet below them. The expression of ecstasy on his face surpassed anything she'd seen before on a lover and nearly made her come on the spot.

The blue outer rims of her eyes had almost disappeared, swallowed by the dark pupils that displayed her arousal. John's sexy dark eyes showed raw blatant need. He watched his lips drawn back over his teeth as he pushed home.

Perspiration was breaking out all over his body. And he drew back and drove in again. At the same time, he pulled out the dildo and pushed it home. "Can you come up here, sweetheart, to me?"

She'd never felt so full. She moved gingerly, wondering if it would hurt but it didn't. Instead, she felt full. Full of him, cunt and ass both, his cock in both holes. And she wanted to see that area between her thighs, her view blocked by her breasts and deep shadow. But he wanted a part of this. He didn't just want to do it to her, he wanted her close to him, moving with him. He kept still as she straightened her arms and pushed up on all fours.

He looped his free hand around her waist and pulled her up the rest of the way. "I've got you."

She cried out as she moved against him and her back made contact with his chest. He cupped a breast and she reveled in the feel of her hardened nipple against his palm, sensitivity cubed.

Inside her like this, double fucking her with the dildo and his cock, she felt complete. Coming home never felt so good before and here with him buried in her body she *was* home.

She tilted her head so her cheek rubbed his shoulder and murmured his name against his neck. He tasted so fucking sexy. Then she lifted her head so he could hear her next words. "They're both you." He was driving her insane.

The dildo and his cock. “Yes, yes they are. Yessss.” He thrust again, withdrew and thrust and gritted his teeth. The phallus glistened with her juices, her thighs wet with them, mingled with lube and sheer desire.

Then she tensed as everything went into overdrive, sending her higher than she’d ever been before. She finally knew what the phrase “screaming orgasm” meant. Her muscles clutched him, held him tight, released, clenched. Her ass fisted around his cock. She cried out, her body stiff against his and that was enough. No more holding back.

She came in agonizingly ecstatic waves, feeling his explosion, hearing him crying her name.

Chapter Eight

Tempt the Cougar blog:

Do I get my toaster now? We did it. But I'm in deeper than I meant to be. He's great in bed and out and his invention in bed is amazing. I thought I was experienced. I am, but while I might have done the things we do before, I haven't done them with him, felt the perfection of being with him. What is happening to me?

Cam—You sound like a teenager with her first crush. Be careful because at our age we're vulnerable. Think about what you want, what you really want. Younger men are good for a fling but keep your head straight.

Rachel—I know you well enough now to know you have sense, that you'll hold back. Just go for it but never forget to keep at least one toe on the ground. Younger men are fun but most of them don't have staying power. So don't expect it to last forever.

Edie grimaced as she read the responses to her blog. She still felt good. The euphoria after their first night had taken her completely by surprise. But three days after that first night she still felt it. She could fall in love with this man and that would be a big mistake. Nothing more pathetic than an older woman falling for a younger man and failing to know when it was over.

So she wouldn't tell him. From the way John called her, connected with her, she knew he wanted to be a couple but she hadn't gone that far.

She clicked the tab on her web browser and brought up the gossip columnist Patrick Sheraton. Bitchy and gay, Patrick was an essential guest at every party and he lived in LA, where else?

She and John had made it onto Sheraton's fucking column for two nights out of the last three. Their first meal out together the comments had been snarky but suggestive, and Patrick seemed more interested in the possibility that she was seducing him for free cosmetic surgery although he ameliorated it by saying, "Mind you, peeps, if all plastic surgeons looked like John Sung there'd be a lot more paying in kind. I know I would. Look at this man and say you wouldn't!"

Their second appearance had been last night when she'd picked up John after work and they'd gone back to her apartment. Someone had done a candid snap of them getting out of her car and even caught the way John grabbed her hand and dragged her inside, too intent on getting her to bed to exercise any caution. At least he hadn't picked her up and carried her, although once indoors he'd done that too.

The comments there were definitely more snarky. Some made her wince although she could have sworn she was immune to the little shit behind the column. She'd weathered gossip columns for years without feeling too concerned and now she felt concerned for John. Would their affair mean that she shouldn't go to Roubiere? She rather thought so. In any case, the date of her first TV interview for the book was coming uncomfortably close and she wouldn't recover in time from any major procedure.

Not that she wanted it anymore. She'd see the doctor and explain.

Except it didn't turn out quite like that.

* * * * *

John found himself on the second floor where the operating rooms were situated, looking for a missing piece of equipment. His stethoscope. He hardly ever used it these days but he'd had it since his student years and he wanted to know it was safe.

So it was that he saw an unconscious figure wheeled out of Operating Room One.

Edie, her hair bound back, no makeup but unmistakably the woman who'd promised not to have any cosmetic surgery. Only last night she'd told him, gazed up at him and said "I won't have anything done. I swear. You've persuaded me."

Disappointment reverberated through him. He stared as the nurses wheeled her past, hardly able to believe that she could lie so well.

John found his stethoscope and returned to his office. He sat at his desk, numb to his surroundings until his assistant called to let him know his next appointment had arrived. The woman he saw probably thought he'd earned his reputation as cold and clinical but he agreed to the breast implants she wanted and sent her on her way. She glanced back when she reached the door. "I thought you'd say no. My friend who recommended me said you put her through hours of counseling before you agreed to do her op. Has someone changed your mind?"

He stared at her, not seeing her but the high-cheekboned, porcelain-skinned face of Edie Howard. "I haven't changed my mind. You still have to go through the counseling."

The woman sighed. "I'll wait for your letter then. But I want it done in the next two months. I'm getting married again in October and I want to be fully healed by then."

He didn't give her any outward response. "If you're a suitable candidate we can handle that." A new husband, a new pair of boobs. Somehow, John doubted he'd be doing this one. Once when he'd started out and they needed the reputation and the money but these days he could pick and choose. Be more ethical.

She left after one short smile, tentatively, as if she expected him to pounce on her. Maybe he did, but probably not in the way she intended.

Finally he was free to go upstairs and visit the wards. One in particular.

When he entered, Edie was sitting up in bed, her hair brushed out, her eyes still bearing the blankness and confusion he saw in most patients after an operation. She wore a pretty but modest nightdress. He stared at the bandage over her nose. She

looked at him as if she was looking at a stranger, her stunning blue eyes fixed on his face.

He closed the door quietly and stood with his back to it. "You did this without talking to me?"

She opened her mouth, closed it again. Nodded.

Sorrow tasted bitter he discovered. Disappointment added a sour note. "Edie, it wasn't that you had an operation, it was that you did it without talking to me. You promised me and then you had it done anyway. I can't trust you can I?"

She still stared.

"You're not the woman I thought I was falling in love with." He should never have trusted his instincts over his clinical judgment. He should have known. This woman had supreme confidence, had run her own life for so long she didn't recognize when to give way. It was no fucking good. He'd only ever be an adjunct, an extra to her, never able to compete with the wealthy, powerful men she'd married.

His lack of self-worth warred with his anger and both won out over the lurking suspicion that she was holding something out on him. But despite his fury, he was relieved to see her recovered after the procedure. Even now he cared for her well-being. He told himself it was because she was an important patient here, not because of what he'd thought they'd had.

He forced a smile. "Edie, it was fun wasn't it? You were the best fuck I ever had. I wish you all the best in the future."

He left while he still could but he went straight to Roubiere's office where he vented some of his wrath on his partner. "You could have told me, you bastard."

Roubiere lounged back in his chair. "And violate the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship?" A smile twisted the corner of his mouth. "If Ms Howard wants you to know she'll tell you for herself or she'll give me permission to tell you. Otherwise you'll be breaking the oath you took."

John snarled. "You fucking bastard. She told you?" His sense of betrayal increased, sent fury rocketing through him. He'd been let down before too many times to count but he'd never thought Edie would do this to him. He trusted her.

"What does it matter? You told me it was an affair, something to amuse you both. It couldn't be that you thought it was something more, could it?"

Breathing deeply helped. Not thinking about how she'd fooled him didn't. So he blocked the thought and shoved it to the back of his mind. "You're right. She promised to tell me, that's all. It's not important."

He straightened up and left the office.

Roubiere watched the closed door thoughtfully before he hit the intercom that connected him to his secretary. "Jude, don't tell Dr. Sung anything about what happened here today. He'll try to find out, so encrypt the records and don't tell him a thing."

The fucker deserved to stew if he had such little confidence in his own judgment and in Edie's trust.

Edie sat in front of her laptop again. Her stay in hospital hadn't been long. She pulled up the blog page and read the entries. Not much had changed but then although her life had taken another turn she was too old to imagine that the world revolved around her.

She typed her entry with a heavy heart. Back to reality.

I promised John I wouldn't have any cosmetic surgery but I had to break that promise. However he didn't wait to find out why.

I went to tell Dr. Roubiere I'd changed my mind and tripped and fell in his office. Maybe it's time to give up four-inch stilettos but I refuse to go into flats forever.

Broke my nose. Apparently the bone shattered or something and if I hadn't had work done it could have affected my breathing. Hell, I don't know but I couldn't bear the thought of going

around with a flat nose and everybody laughing at me. Okay I'm vain but I've spent my life taking care of the way I look, so I let him do some plastic work as well as the necessary surgery.

I went straight into surgery. They knocked me out for it. I'd skipped breakfast so I could take the general anesthetic. Straightened my nose and you couldn't tell. I must have been down as a rhinoplasty, or maybe John just jumped to conclusions but he decided that the immediate postoperative period when I was feeling vulnerable was a good time to yell at me. My mouth and lips were dry and I felt disconnected from everything and he thought it was the best time to vent his anger on me. He said I'd violated his trust, refused to think about anything else and stormed off in a righteous rage. Ripped me a new one.

I did think about replying but honestly, do I really want a man who can do that? So if we made our affair more permanent would I be letting myself in for more heartache?

I have to be grateful to John for bringing me back to life. I'm in my mid-forties with my kids all grown up so I don't see them every day, and with my exes getting on with their lives I was at the lowest ebb I can remember. Hence the visit to the plastic surgeon. But the book I talked about is my autobiography and my manager thinks I'm going to do well with it.

I made a couple of other decisions. I'm not going to do an exposé on my last husband any more than is already in the book. I'd wanted to use the exposure as revenge to spite him for dropping me as soon as he found a younger clone but what the hell, he doesn't deserve it. I have to say my manager, Randy Norwood, is delighted. He said the book will do much better and, hey, why didn't I think about writing more stuff. An exposé on the fashion world, or maybe a more investigative piece. It's an interesting thought.

And the second decision? I love you girls. You have been better friends to me than I've ever had in my life. You've supported me and let me help you. I don't feel useless anymore and I don't feel alone, and that is down to you. So I'm taking another chance. My name is really Edie, like I told you. It's the name my friends use and Cam has been a friend for a long time, so I haven't been deceiving you girls. But I use my middle name in my professional career. Adelaide Howard. And I've used the moniker Sunset for most of my life too. My first husband, the designer Zach Atoya gave me that name because of the color of my hair and it stuck.

I'd hate it if it made any difference to this relationship. And if any of you are in the LA area give me a shout because I'd love to meet you for real. If you're going to Romanticcon again will you let me know? This time I'll be there.

Cam: Give him time, sweetie. Even hunkilicious surgeons have their insecurities and trust is obviously one of his buttons. I'm sure he'll calm down and then feel like a real jerk (as well he should) when he finds out the truth.

Hey at least you had the balls to give the cougar thing a try. And who knows if it's really over, honey. If it is then, hey, remember the good time and move on. Don't let it weigh you down. Life's too damn short. But still...don't close the door on the possibility that it's not a done deal. Remember men really are from Mars—which makes them an alien species—and we all know how unpredictable aliens are. :)

Oh I could hug you for coming clean!! You have no idea how many times I've almost slipped up and called you Sunset. And honey you know that if there's anyone in the world who can be trusted it all us gals here. Hell, the things we know about each other could fill a book...a really naughty one at that!

Romanticon? Yeah baby! I think it's time for a reunion. Friends, drinks, books, models? Bring it on!!

Rachel: Vanity had nothing to do with your decision! What you're supposed to go through life with a broken nose and breathing problems so people won't think you had a nose job? I've seen people come in for emergency problems stemming from this sort of thing. The time to do it is when you did it, not when there's so much scar tissue that you won't look normal no matter what you try to do to fix it.

Do you think part of John's reaction stemmed from worry about not doing the work himself? Don't get me wrong he shouldn't have jumped to conclusions and attacked you at your most vulnerable. (Bet you'd like to be a fly on the wall when he finds out the truth.) I'm just wondering if he completely lost it because he was worried too, not only because he thought you'd broken your promise to him.

Oh. My. God! I just about fell off my chair when I found out who you were! My first thought was: I've been giving sexual encouragement to Sunset?? Me? But you know what? It doesn't make a damn bit of difference. We all started out in the same boat didn't we and we've done a great job of providing each other with oars. Or were those dildos too? <g>

Being in this group had just about saved her life.

Edie closed the laptop when her phone rang and checked the caller. Not John. She knew a clean break was best but it didn't stop her looking and even hoping even after his shitty behavior to her after her operation. She still didn't know why he was so furious, why he didn't wait for explanations even if she'd felt like giving them after his outburst. But she wouldn't have done that. It would have put her in the wrong. Never ever again would she allow anyone to do that.

She thumbed the green button. "Hi Randy."

"Hey. How you doin'?"

Randy Norwood had helped her too, just by accepting her. "Not bad. And you?"

"This ain't idle chitchat much though I enjoy that too. Listen they want to bring your interview on the Victor Schuman show forward a couple of weeks. Are you good to go or do you want me to turn it down?"

"What date are we talking about?"

"The first Thursday in July. Five days. If you don't want to do it, no problem. We'll stick to the original date. But there are rumors about you and John Sung, and rumors that you had surgery done. If Sung did it, he's in violation, isn't he? So that's topical now. In the news and good for the book. In a couple of weeks it won't be so hot."

Indignation rose within her and her temper rose. John could survive a rumor like that because they'd been completely ethical, but it could damage the clinic, as it survived on reputation and goodwill. She couldn't allow it.

She glanced in the mirror, turned her head one way and then the other. "I'm fine. Take the offer."

"You sure?"

"Perfectly. But I won't say if I had surgery or not. Only that John Sung never operated on me or advised me." She stopped, her senses assaulted by memories. John making love to her, sucking her nipples, asking her to promise. Intensely erotic scenes

when he'd tempted her into making all those promises about no surgery. Either he cared, or he was a controlling fuck who made Peter look like a pussycat.

Either way it didn't matter anymore. John Sung was a memory, nothing else.

Chapter Nine

Victor Schuman was a smarmy, snarky middle-aged ex-standup comedian who'd made such a success of his chat show that it was now generally known as *The Victor Schuman Show* instead of its official title of *Hollywood Tonight*. His frequently unfair but often funny comments reminded Edie of Patrick Sheraton. But these were only two of the fuckwits who benefited from celebrities' avid desire for publicity and the public's delight in hearing about the affairs of other people, the sleazier the better.

Not that Edie was above all that. She enjoyed Schuman's monologue at the top of the show even though it held at least one untruth and a stack of insinuations, none of them actionable, none of them about her although she knew she'd been the butt of his jokes a week or so before. She'd been too wise to watch that edition of the program. She might have been tempted to respond.

Now she sat in the small area still referred to as the "green room" dressed in one of her most elegant dark blue pants and silk shell outfits, wearing discreet diamonds, her hair brushed to a gleaming mass to lie around her shoulders, waiting for her first interview.

Schuman finished his monologue and introduced the first guest. Edie was to replace the final guest, so she had the spot at the end. She had to wait.

She'd forgotten how boring these times could be, the wait until your spot, the interminable hours waiting for the right light or for the crew to set up the shot then another wait for more of the same. Every model had her own way of coping and it varied over time. The ones into sewing had completed whole quilts over time. She wouldn't have to do this much longer. A few TV shows, some author signing sessions and the book would be launched.

But she'd enjoyed working with the ghostwriter and had, after the initial interviews, written most of the book herself and given it to the writer to polish and perfect. She wondered if she could do it again, this time working on her own. It would be a new adventure. Thanks to John, she was ready to face new challenges. But she feared she'd have a hole in her life now.

She glanced into the monitor that showed her the shots the cameras were taking. Almost automatically she'd done that when she'd arrived, deciding how she'd sit, how she'd move, even to the tilt of her head. All those lessons so carefully taught, so well absorbed. She'd never stop being a model, not really. It was like learning to drive where learned techniques became automatic. But she didn't despise herself for it. This was her chosen profession and she'd had to decide early on to take it seriously. That meant learning her best features as well as her worst, how to pose properly so as not to waste the photographer's time, how to show off the designer creations she paraded on the runway despite the unwearability of some of them.

She didn't miss it, not one bit. Nor the press attention nor the photos in the glossies. In fact she was relieved not to have to do it anymore.

Her eyes narrowed when she saw someone she thought she knew. More monitors showed the angles other cameras were taking and she found one fixed on the audience. Anticipation fizzed inside when she realized she was looking at Cam. Her friend had come and next to her — fuck!

But yes. She recognized Rachel from a photo on the blog and then she saw others. They'd come to see her. Live, here. They cared enough about her to take the journey to support her!

Euphoria filled Edie. No other woman had ever cared enough to do that for her. With their support she'd come this far, recovered from her obsession with John and the first nights when, weakened by the surgical procedure and the accident that preceded it, she'd woken calling his name.

Fuck him. Fuck all men. She was whole and her own woman. She could do this. Her women friends had helped to set her free.

Schuman began his buildup. She began to listen properly when he started with the “beautiful” spiel and she knew what was coming. “We know that some of the world’s most famous models, desperate to remain in the limelight, have gone through cosmetic surgery. My next guest hasn’t just done this, she’s written a book that opens the lid on her world. Married to three of the world’s most desirable men, she divorced them all and recently she’s been seen with one half of Hollywood’s most successful plastic surgeon partnership. Did she get pro bono treatment?” A picture flashed up of her leaving the clinic, her nose still bandaged after her operation. She’d seen that picture before—it had been all over the internet the day she’d left to go home. On her own. “Has the man known as Sexydoc finally gone too far and broken his ethical code for the love of Sunset? Let’s find out shall we?”

And she was on her feet, walking toward the stage, guided by a stagehand. She glanced at the man who was doing his best to leer down her cleavage, but with her height plus the four-inch heels, the little shit probably didn’t have much of a view. Mindful that the camera would attempt the same thing she’d kept exposure to a minimum, sexy without being obvious.

She strode on to the set and shook hands with Schuman, drawing away when he threatened to kiss her. Too vulnerable from John’s possession, she didn’t want any man to get even that intimate. Not yet anyway.

Schuman asked the questions about her past, the easy ones about her relatively comfortable childhood and how she started her modeling career. So of course she had to talk about her first husband.

He had few secrets left and she’d usually chosen to use his example as one to follow. The fewer secrets she had the less the bastards who preyed on her could expose. But she was careful to skim over her second husband Bobby’s sexual preferences, nobody’s business but theirs and Bobby’s current wife.

Schuman wasn't very interested in the first two. It was the third, Peter Henderson, he wanted to know about. The one who'd dumped her so publicly. But it didn't hurt her anymore and she told Schuman why. "Peter doesn't know any other way. He took me because I was available at the height of my career and I knew everyone. I took him because he was damn sexy." She had the audience laughing with that one. "But by the time we split five years later, if he hadn't dumped me I would have dumped him. He found someone else first."

"You know his wife is pregnant?"

She shrugged. If he'd hoped to get a rise from her, he would be disappointed. She really didn't give a fuck anymore. "I have two wonderful children by Zach. They're fine adults and I'm proud of them. I hope Peter has as much joy from his children as I have out of mine." The honest truth, and it earned her a round of applause. What she didn't say was that Peter had wanted children from her but she'd kept on taking the pills. He'd wanted possessions and trophies, not flesh and blood children. Just as he'd wanted her to become a living Barbie.

Strange that it didn't hurt anymore the way Peter had deceived her, used her and then dumped her. Fate had a way of balancing things out. She didn't have to do a thing about it. He'd get what was coming to him sooner or later. Karma.

She gave Victor Schuman her best smile, the one that told him she was the sultriest, most desirable thing on two legs. He melted, the expression in his eyes softening. She had him. "I wish Peter all that he deserves. I'm sure he'll get it."

Another round of applause with some laughter. Here lay a danger point, when things were going well and she thought she had Schuman. She'd done enough of these things to know he'd strike soon, hoping her relief and maybe a touch of adrenaline might get her to say too much.

"I understood that your new book would lift the lid off a number of things. We got the inside story on your marriages so how about the modeling world?"

"There's too much for one book. I might do that in the second."

"You're planning another book?"

"I'm thinking about it."

"And more cosmetic procedures?"

He slipped that in almost seamlessly. No wonder he had the reputation for getting secrets out of the people who appeared on his show. The camera would be zooming in for a closeup, a nice reveal of her face. But she hadn't been in front of cameras for this long without learning a few things. She froze her expression and turned it puzzled, lifting her chin so she could frown at him. "More?"

"You aren't going to deny that you're seeing cosmetic surgeon Dr. John Sung, are you?"

She shrugged. "We spent some time together."

She was close enough to see the coldness in Schuman's eyes as he settled in for the kill. "And you were seen leaving his clinic recently with your nose bandaged." No doubt the screen had flashed that picture up again.

She allowed a smile to touch her lips. "Ah, I see where you made your mistake. No, I was Dr. Roubiere's patient not Dr. Sung's. And the procedure was the result of an accident. I fell and broke my nose."

Schuman's mouth turned up in a sneer and he leaned close, so close she could see the powder congealing in the lines on his face. He was sweating, probably with excitement. She wondered if he came when he got his victims this close. Well she wouldn't be the cause of one of his orgasms. "You expect us to believe that?"

She didn't give an inch, but shrugged. "Believe what you like, it makes no difference to me. Except that Dr. Sung was never my physician in any capacity. Dr. Roubiere looked after me."

"Don't they share patients?" That got him a snigger from a few people in the audience. The double entendre was too obvious for her to find it remotely amusing.

"They share the business, not each other's lists."

She'd silenced the audience. They needed something, something to win them over to her. Oh fuck, yes, she knew just what would do it. "I saw *many* people while I spent time with Dr. Sung. Going in and out of the clinic, obviously having surgery done. As many men as women." She paused, met Schuman's eyes, smiled right into them. "I could tell you who if you like. I'm not bound by any confidentiality clause."

The audience got it. She heard the collective gasp of breath. Schuman had always declared himself totally against cosmetic surgery, some of his most vicious diatribes had been aimed their way. But this close she saw a fine line under the sweep of hair across his forehead. Victor Schuman had had a facelift.

A voice was easily heard in the sudden hush. "Go for it, Edie!"

Cam. Wonderful Cam, the woman who had helped her through ups and downs and introduced her to some of the best friends she'd ever had.

"But of course," she said, turning the conversation from sour to sweet. "Since neither of us has had a cosmetic procedure we wouldn't know about that would we?"

He leaned back. At least he had the smarts to know when he was beaten. "Of course not."

The media would crucify him. Well he shouldn't have gone for her. Bastard.

Chapter Ten

Edie didn't get home until the small hours, after a raucous celebration with the women from the blog. The friendships she'd cemented tonight would last the rest of her life, she felt it to her core.

Exhausted, she stepped out of the studio car and fumbled for the key to her apartment. Ahead of her, the concierge held open the door of her building, a broad smile wreathing his features. "You really stuck it to that know-it-all Victor Schuman. About time somebody gave him some of his own back." He chattered until she was in the elevator and the doors were sliding closed, then a change crossed his face. "Ma'am, someone —"

The rest of his words were cut off as the elevator finished closing and began to rise. Edie slumped against the wall; the evening had taken more out of her than she cared to admit. She wanted a hot bath and then bed.

How much better it would have been had she had someone to pamper her and care for her. Maybe she'd find someone in time, but all that she saw when she closed her eyes was a lean tanned face with eyes that burned into her soul. Despair touched her.

She straightened up and spoke aloud to reinforce the statement. "It's only been two weeks. I'll heal." Determination filled her. She had a life, a good one and she'd do her best to live what was left of it. Without him. The hollow inside her would fill because she'd make sure it did.

The elevator doors slid open and she walked the two steps that took her to her apartment. Perhaps she'd get out of this place, buy a house, take up gardening.

She typed her combination into the keypad and glanced at the fingerprint recognizer but it didn't glow in a silent request for her print. Funny, she thought she'd turned it on when she left. Maybe not. She'd been a little absentminded recently.

She closed her eyes as she entered and took a deep breath of the potpourri she left in a large china dish on the side table. A calming mixture made especially for her. She'd thought she was finally getting over her misery. Her triumph tonight and the meeting with the ladies of the blog afterward had dispelled it but now that she was on her own again, it flooded back, the dam breached once more.

A tear trickled from beneath her closed lids and she took a moment to will the others away. Tears did no good. She'd learned that.

"Don't cry, Edie."

At first she thought the soft voice came from her imagination. She'd heard it often enough and he'd never been there.

When she was ready, she opened her eyes.

He stood there. Dressed in iconic black, his collarless shirt open at the neck, his dark eyes gleaming behind the lenses of his black-framed spectacles.

Their eyes met and tears sprang to her eyes once more. She blinked them away. "How the fuck did you get in here?"

"Your concierge let me in. Didn't he tell you?"

Slowly she shook her head and realized what the guy downstairs had tried to say. "You can leave now."

He shoved his hands in his pockets. She could see the fists as he bunched them. "I will but I wanted to say something first. Please hear me out." The slight quiver at the end of his words told her he wasn't as in control as he was trying to project. That made her feel better, because she was sure as fuck not in control of her own emotions, which were rioting out of control. She felt hot, she felt sick, she felt exhilarated to be in his presence again.

"You can talk but then go."

He dropped his gaze then lifted it again, his eyes blazing. And this time he didn't hide the yearning in them or the desire that nearly set her on fire. It took all she had to hide her own need for him.

"Edie, I was wrong. So fucking wrong about so many things. When you left the clinic, I knew I'd made the biggest mistake of my life. Roubiere wouldn't tell me anything, you know, not what you had done or didn't, but I did look at the operating lists. You were down for a rhinoplasty." A bitter smile twisted his lips. "I didn't even make you promise not to have one did I?" He shrugged. "Not that it matters. I shouldn't have made you promise anything. At first it seemed like a game and a way to have you, but later I really started feeling it. You're so perfect, Edie, so very beautiful. Your experience enhances what you are and if you'd had surgery, that would have been eliminated like an eraser on a pencil drawing. It hurt me to think of you doing that." He shook his head. "But that was me. I should never have asked. Just explained how I felt and left it up to you."

"Yes, you should. It's my body, my life." And the reason she'd enforced her absence. She belonged to nobody, not anymore and she never would again. Not even this overwhelmingly sexy man.

"I know." His eyes held misery now but still that desire he seemed unable to contain. "You have to do what you want otherwise you won't be happy. And that's what matters. You have to be happy, Edie. Anyway, I came to apologize and tell you I know why you walked away. And why I stayed away. If it weren't for that, nothing would have kept me from coming to you." He rocked on his heels and then started to walk.

It took her a moment to realize he was intent on leaving. She stepped aside so he could pass her but at the last minute, when his hand was on the doorknob, she put her hand on his arm. The muscle flexed as he turned to face her. His face had paled. "I'm sorry, Edie."

"So you said. Aren't you going to kiss me?"

He swallowed but she saw the spark of hope in his eyes, the way his mouth lifted at the corners. "Do you want me to?"

"I wouldn't have said if I didn't."

The next minute he'd swept his arms around her, holding her tight, and his mouth was on hers, drinking her in like a man dying of thirst. His groan reverberated through her body, echoing hers. She opened her mouth when his tongue pressed against her lips took him inside. He swept his tongue around her mouth, reacquainting himself with her shape, her taste and she took too, her body remembering how exciting, how wonderful he felt.

He drew away slowly, ending with gentle butterfly kisses to her lips so she was tempted to follow him. His eyes opened slowly. Softer now. "God I missed you!"

"So much." They stared at each other and she slid her hands under his jacket so that only his shirt lay between her skin and his. "What are we going to do?"

"Where's your bedroom? If I don't make love to you soon I'll die."

She loved his honesty. She felt the same way. And for the first time he'd said "make love".

Her bedroom was at the end of the hall to the right. She took his hand and led him there, hitting the button by the door that dropped the drapes. They fell softly over the window the green silk falling in supple folds. She tugged him to the bed and swept back the embroidered coverlet. That wouldn't be comfortable against bare skin. Then she turned to face him. "John, I—"

He cupped her face with his free hand. "I know. You don't want commitment. I got that."

Her eyes widened. "How did you get that?"

"I can't give you everything you want."

"Don't give up." That wasn't what she was going to say at all.

A smile curved his lips. "I don't intend to. And who knows, you might want more from me one day."

She was sure of it but she didn't tell him so. It wouldn't do to give him too many ideas. They'd slept together, fucked every night for a week then spent two weeks apart miserable. Normally she'd say that wasn't enough but this time she wasn't sure. Not at all sure.

But she was sure of one thing. Her fingers went to her side zipper only to meet his already there. She smiled and moved her hand away, working on his shirt buttons instead.

The sight of his bare chest made her salivate and she went to taste and kiss. His hand cupped the back of her head. "Edie, Edie!"

She nuzzled the base of his throat and then lifted her hands to push his jacket and shirt off his shoulders. They fell to the floor and she had access to his top half.

But he had his demands too. He tugged at her shell and she lifted her arms so he could pull it off. He had her bra unclipped and off. No longer ashamed to show her flaws, she smiled up at him as he touched her nipples. His fingers were shaking. He lifted his eyes to her face and kept stroking her breasts. "I thought I'd lost this. I really did only come to say I was sorry."

A suspicion crossed her mind. "Did you see the TV show?"

He shook his head. "I knew you'd do well, but I saw your name and I needed you. Needed to be with you. I thought of coming to the studio but I didn't want to put you off so I stayed away." He gave a shaky laugh.

"So you don't know what I said?"

His gaze sharpened. "No. Does it matter?"

She lifted her hands to remove his glasses and put them on the night table. He wouldn't need them for a while. "I said you were never my doctor, that's all."

He touched her cheek, smoothed his finger down, trailed it over her chin and down her throat to draw an imaginary line on the slope of her breast. "That doesn't matter. We could have proved it if we'd had to." He huffed. "Roubiere took more care than he needed to. Probably for the best although I nearly punched him out when he refused to discuss you at all." He paused. "I just wanted to talk about you. If I couldn't see you, couldn't touch you, I needed something. But he wouldn't."

"It could have ruined your business if people started to gossip. You know what damage rumors can do."

"I would have left, started again somewhere else. I thought about it, just so I wouldn't have to share the same city as you." He released her breasts and drew her close. "I'm not always a nice person. I didn't want to think of you with anyone else. Couldn't bear it. There's a caveman lurking in all of us."

She pressed her lips to his chest and enjoyed his taste and his nearness. "Just keep him under wraps for me. Don't get rid of him completely, especially in the bedroom."

"Does that mean...?" He cupped her head and stroked her hair. She heard him catch his breath.

"It means we take it one day at a time. I'm still ten years older than you are. That has certain implications."

"You're still the most beautiful woman I've ever seen, still the only one I want in my life. And I'm sorry, Edie, but I want that badly."

She tilted her head up and he kissed her.

By the time the kiss ended they were lying on the bed stark naked. His rigid cock pressed against the soft flesh of her stomach and he rolled her so he was on top. He kissed her cheek, her throat and lingered at the sensitive hollow at the base. She shuddered and pushed against him.

"Sweetheart, I need you now." He leaned over, threatening to leave her but knowing what he wanted to find, she put a restraining hand on his shoulder.

"No, you don't have to use protection. I'm not fertile, it's the wrong time of the month. And I'm clean."

He leaned up on his elbows. "You're sure?"

She nodded.

He watched her as he lifted up and settled between her legs when she spread them for him. His cock nestled in the folds of her pussy. "I love how you left that little bit of hair there."

"It's called a Brazilian."

He smiled. "I know. But on you it's called heaven." He pushed his cock, sliding through her wet folds until it touched her vagina. "Edie!" He thrust inside her.

Her name on his lips was sweeter than any endearment, the name she'd hidden inside herself for so long, the name only a few other people used. On his lips it sounded perfect. "John!"

He stilled, buried deep inside her. "Will you call me Kwoklyn sometimes?"

He sounded younger, more vulnerable. She opened her eyes and smiled up at him. "Is that your Chinese name?"

He nodded. "Nobody uses it anymore. Not since my father died. To my mother I'm always John."

"I like it. Kwoklyn. Now shut up and fuck me."

Groaning he drove inside her, pushing deep until he touched her sweet spot. She cried out and pushed her pelvis up, trying to get him deeper. He plunged and stroked it again. She shuddered and held still while he massaged it, caressed her into a pure orgasm that reached her very heart.

Her body convulsed and she lost control, crying his name, both names, over and over until he called her name in response and she felt him gush hot and wet, so far inside her he became a part of her.

She had no idea how much time passed but when she opened her eyes, they were lying on their sides, his body still embedded in hers. Still hard. Or maybe he'd hardened again. He gazed at her and she knew what he was about to say.

"I love you, Edie Howard."

She didn't need to hesitate. "I love you too." She kissed him with such perfection she couldn't believe she'd ever kissed anyone else before. "I always did love you right from the minute I saw you. But that doesn't mean I'll always do what you want."

"I don't want you to. I'd hate that." He smiled and touched his lips to her cheek. "I'll love you even if you decide to turn into a human Barbie."

"How do you feel really about me having surgery?" She tried to keep the emotion out of her voice, not giving him clues to the answers she wanted.

He gazed at her, touched her face, trailed his fingers down to her throat in the caress she adored. "The real person Edie Howard is more beautiful than any of the other incarnations. Adelaide Howard and Sunset were, are, dreams, icons of perfection. But Edie is so much more. She's lived, she's loved and she is so strong that I catch my breath when I see her. Hey." He caught her tear on his fingers. "Just ignore me. I didn't mean to make you cry."

She watched the crystal droplet shimmer on his fingertip. "Good tears, my love. Good tears."

About the Author

Lynne Connolly has been published for five years and in that time has won two Eppies and a number of other awards, Recommended Reads and other acknowledgements for her paranormal romances and historicals.

While these are very gratifying, that isn't why she writes. She wants to bring the stories in her head to life and share them with others, in the hope she might then get some peace.

Writing is what she was doing while she was working, bearing children and doing the other boring things that constitute living. Her favorite writer's motto is "I can use that." She lives in the UK with her husband, children and cats, and her doll houses. Creating worlds, miniature or otherwise, seems to be Lynne's specialty!

Lynne welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at www.ellorascave.com.

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