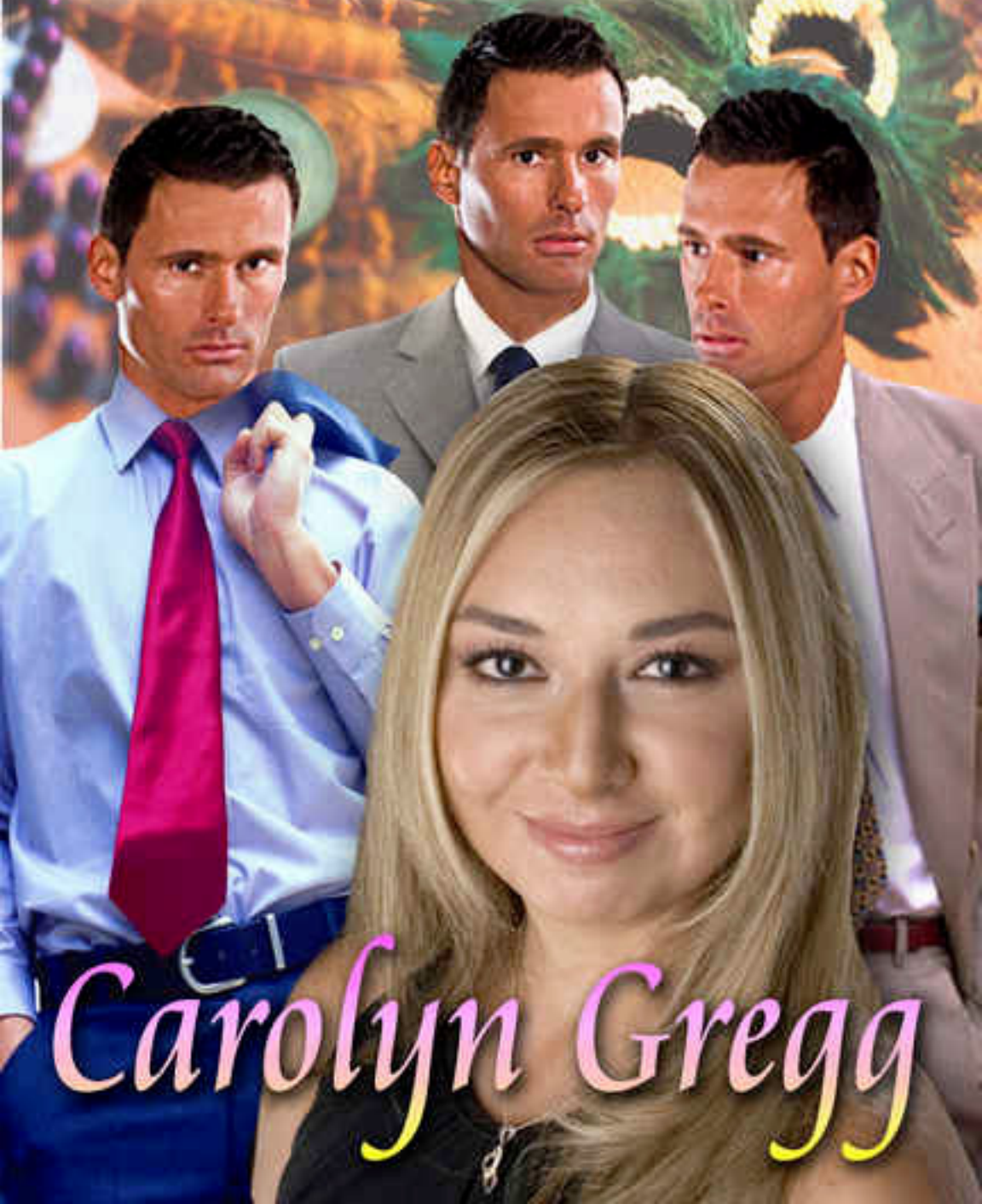


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La Petite Mort



Carolyn Gregg

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by Carolyn Gregg

Red Rose Publishing

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Chapter One

I want to die.

Bria held off on that thought and knocked again on the boss's door, but the lack of response from inside told her Angie had stepped out. A quick glance at her watch revealed it was almost half past two. Angie always took her lunch around eleven, which meant the woman had more going on this afternoon other than her usual BLT down at Cyril's Bar and Deli.

Sighing, she opened the door and entered. These new specs had to be delivered to Rassen Enterprises before five p.m. today. If Angie didn't make the deadline, she wouldn't be able to blame anyone but herself for the flub.

Bria snorted as she propped the disk against the woman's computer monitor. Oh, yeah. Let her say she couldn't find it this time!

Forget it, Bria, a little voice inside her head argued. If there's any way the woman can foist both her responsibilities and her subsequent fuck-ups on someone else, she will. And that someone is you, as you well know. She'll miss the deadline, like she has in the past, and will again in the future. And when she does, you'll become her whipping post all over again. Whipped, filleted, strung up, and left out to dry. Damn it.

I want to die.

That nagging little demon was back, riding inside her ear like an irritating fly that couldn't be shooed away. Every so

often it would open its mouth and whisper sweet, demented nothings in her ear. Just recently—just as her life was seriously heading for hell in a hand basket—it had started a new, more morose litany.

I want to die.

Giving herself a mental shake, Bria turned to walk out of the office and return to her stuffy little cubicle when her eyes caught sight of a piece of paper sticking out of the woman's trash can. Normally, Angie's trash didn't interest her. All of the important papers, especially the ones that could prove to be damaging to Angie's reputation if ever she was dragged into court, those papers always went into the shredder. The little aluminum receptacle was relegated to unimportant items like empty coffee cups, used tissues ... and this brown colored object that caught her eye. It was expensive-looking and covered with elaborate print, and definitely out of place in Angie's faux shabby chic office.

Pulling it out, Bria surreptitiously palmed the paper against her skirt and left the office. It wasn't until she was safely ensconced back in her private little domain that she lifted the heavy cardstock and read what she'd pilfered.

No, not pilfered. The woman had thrown it away, so obviously it was garbage to her, Bria argued with herself. The trashcan sat against the wall behind the desk. Bria had placed it there to make sure nothing else "fell" off Angie's desk and got accidentally thrown away, as the woman insisted in the past had happened whenever her work failed to appear on time. If the paper was in file thirteen, then it was because Angela Bergman deliberately put it there. So even if Angie

caught her with it, there was no way Bria could be accused of theft ... again.

You can't steal what's already been tossed out, and everyone knows what's one man's trash could be another man's treasure.

The trash in question was an invitation to a masquerade ball. And not any masquerade ball. The annual Midnight Fantasies Masquerade Ball.

Sitting back in her chair, Bria tried to absorb the implications. Angie Bergman threw away an invitation to what many considered to be the most exclusive, most sought-after, most prized event of the year? What was that woman smoking?

Midnight Fantasies was said to be "THE club to end all clubs". The fact that it was located on a privately owned island only enhanced its mystery. But those who had attended in the past often spoke of fulfilled fantasies, most of them the sexual kind. The paparazzi was forced to observe from the shore as the rich, the famous, and the well-connected were shuttled by ferry to the castle-like mansion located almost two miles off-shore. And that was only the social aspect of it. Monetarily, the event raised ungodly sums of millions for charity.

Bria stared at the card. Like many people, she read all the juicy news after every ball, which took place the last weekend of October. The guest list was kept as secret as the combination to the safe at Fort Knox. Why in the hell would Angie pass up this kind of opportunity? There was no doubt

she'd thrown it away. There was a coffee stain streaking one corner, which Bria wiped away.

If the quality of the invite was any indication, no expense was spared for the event. Bria felt the texture of the paper, noting the barely perceptible watermark embossed on the back. More intriguing, though, was the simple phrase "explore your wildest fantasies" written in heavy black ink deeply embedded in the finely woven rag content.

Explore my wildest fantasies? How much simpler could it be?

I want to die.

Finding this invitation was almost as good as having her dreams come true. She was depressed enough and just desperate enough to take the chance.

Shit! There's not much time. The ball is Saturday night. That's the day after tomorrow. How am I going to find a costume in just two days?

She flipped the invitation over, searching for the RSVP. It wasn't on the card she held. Maybe it had been included in the original envelope. What if Angie hadn't answered it? Or if she had, would they let Bria in anyway? For that matter, should she even try to pass herself off as her boss?

The Ball was a noted charitable event. She had a little over thirty-eight thousand dollars in savings that she could immediately get to. Hopefully, it would be enough.

A noise outside her cubicle alerted her to the fact that Angie was back, and she wasn't in a good mood. Hastily, Bria stuffed the invitation into her purse before checking to see what the woman was complaining about now. But for the rest

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of the day, the paperback book size sheet of vellum was never far from Bria's mind.

By five that evening, she'd made up her mind to take the risk. To hell with the consequences. If they discovered she wasn't the person to whom the invitation had originally been sent, so what? After all, what could anyone do to her if she was already dead?

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Chapter Two

Torch lights illuminated the huge castle-like mansion where the ball was taking place. Bria stared at the multiple spires with their mullioned windows with a gnawing hunger that had nothing to do with the need for food. Tonight she would be granted her ultimate wish, her penultimate fantasy, and her nerves were so tightly strung, the synapses were singing in anticipation. Her skin was dry and damp at the same time. Her mouth felt like it was clogged with cotton balls.

It had taken her all day Friday and Saturday to figure out what to wear. After all, what did one wear to one's own death? And in the midst of a masquerade ball, at that?

Careful snooping and a few well-placed questions only revealed that just about anything would be acceptable in the form of a disguise. Which meant that a trip to a costume shop had been part of the agenda. Endless searching, and more than a dozen try-ons later, Bria had settled on a Grecian toga of sorts. The layers of material were diaphanous. Even after wrapping it around her, it was still almost completely see-through; but the store clerk assured Bria she had the figure to pull it off.

"Did you know Grecian women loved to drench themselves in water to highlight their attributes?" the woman grinned. "With your dark, naturally curly hair, you could be the spitting image of one of those models on their mosaics or urns. By the way," the clerk added in a conspiratorial tone of voice, "be

sure to go braless, but wear some little something down below so your thatch won't be so prominent."

Red-faced, Bria had nodded and hustled out of the shop. Yet, once she put the costume on again, secured her hair up on top of her head, and added a gold cuff as her only jewelry, the final results were superb. The Greek goddess Bria was ready to descend from Mount Olympus and honor the common mortals below with her presence.

As the moon rose above the horizon, she drove to the outskirts of town, and the secluded stretch of beach where the island's parking lot was located. A man dressed as a knight, complete with chain mail and tabard, merely glanced at her invitation before helping her onto the ferry that would take her over to the event. There were three other people with her on the brief ride. They were all dressed in different outfits—a cowboy, an Egyptian pharaoh, and a super heroine complete with cape. No one spoke, much less attempted to engage in conversation.

Once they docked at the island, another knight escorted them to one of three open carriages, each one driven by two pristine white horses that took them through a small forest, and finally up the main drive to the mansion. As she was helped from the conveyance, Bria handed over the invitation to the Musketeer standing in the doorway.

The place boiled with activity. Kings, satyrs, belly dancers, and princesses in medieval finery—the flowing wall of color and flesh was overwhelming. With every passing minute, Bria realized she didn't know these people. And, in truth, she

didn't belong here. The invitation hadn't been meant for her, so her being here could be legitimately argued as fraud.

She turned to see if she could escape back outside and make her way back to the ferry when a fresh wave of costumed revelers came through the door, blocking her exit. Almost panicking, Bria turned to see a huge set of double doors leading to another room. She headed toward them.

Buffet tables and drinks trays piled high with nearly everything edible imaginable filled this room adjacent to the entryway. Music filtered in from the ballroom next door—loud but not overwhelming. Not knowing much about music, Bria couldn't tell whether the live orchestra played a tarantella, or a minuet, or a waltz. Did people actually dance to it? It didn't seem to matter anyway. The costumed guests appeared to be unaware of the entertainment as they meandered from room to room and indulged.

All right. The hosts were taking care of the basic needs. So where was the person taking the fantasy orders?

"May I be of service?"

The sudden, deep voice coming from behind Bria startled her. She hoped the white cotton half mask over her eyes helped to hide a lot of her confusion, and disguised most of her embarrassment when she turned around to see who was talking to her.

The man towered over her. With glossy black hair and the deepest blue eyes she had ever seen on a man, his face alone was enough to stop traffic. He wore no mask, which surprised her. But what concerned her was not his alarming good looks. Nor was it those impossibly wide shoulders, complete with

Superman muscles. No. It was the tiny white skirt he wore below the wide, gold belt about his narrow waist. A skirt that was barely long enough to cover his buttocks in the back.

Dear Lord! I hope he's wearing something underneath it, was her first thought, until the little devil sitting on her shoulder firmly rebuked her. Five will get you twenty he's not. Betcha if he gets a hard-on, it would peek right past the hem. What a bitch to discover a man who looked better in a short skirt than most women did.

"We seem to make a couple," the man continued, either oblivious to her staring, or not caring about the way she was ogling him. In fact, by the time Bria managed to drag her eyes back up to his, he was smiling.

"Uhh ... a couple?"

Laughing softly, the man indicated her toga and his similar attire. "I'm Hercules. And you are ... who? Athena? Or perhaps Hera, the queen of the gods."

She had to have a personification? Bria opened the rusty gates on her mental files regarding Greek and Roman gods. Vague memories of an old college class came back to her, until a name clicked into place.

"I'm Persephone, spending what time I have here on this earth to attend this masked ball," she managed to reply without stammering.

"Ah. Persephone. Queen of the underworld. I am honored to make your acquaintance." The man bowed over her hand before pressing his lips to the back of her wrist. The feel of his mouth on her skin sent a warm flood of desire surging through her, soaking the tiny thong she was wearing and

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leaving her moist between the thighs. Unconsciously, her eyes darted to the tiny skirt, but nothing stirred.

"My real name..."

"Ah!" Hercules wagged a forefinger at her as his eyes sparkled with amusement. "No real anything. Not tonight. Tonight we are whoever we wish to be, doing whatever we so desire. And what is your desire, my queen?"

Well, hell, Bria. Now's your chance. Go for it!

"I want to die."

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Chapter Three

The words were out before she was aware she'd said them. Her eyes remained glued to the tall hunk standing so intimately close, toga and skirt nearly merged. She waited for the look of condemnation or shock to cross his face. Strangely, Hercules gave her a small, sad smile.

"May I ask why you wish to die?"

"Because I'm ready. Because there's nothing left for me." Reaching under her toga, she pulled out the white envelope containing her savings. "This is all I have," she started to offer him. The man stayed her hand.

"Take back your money, My Queen. We can deal with that later."

Someone passed by. Hercules gave a nod to acknowledge the man's greeting. He also gave a signal to someone behind Bria. She assumed the man was well-known.

"Are you one of the hosts of this ball?" she asked, hoping it would lessen the growing discomfort she was feeling. Although she was on the verge of thinking she had made a mistake in coming here, she was closer to believing she should have kept her mouth shut and just soaked in the ambience of the place. Have some fun, do a little flirting, and maybe have a harmless tryst afterwards.

Oh, yeah, and wake up the next morning to prepare yourself for the coming week. Another opportunity to tackle the world and your asshole boss on Monday.

Hercules slid a tall glass of something cold into her hand. "No," he said, answering her question. "That honor goes to Madame Diana. I am simply one of her humble servants here to mingle among the guests. And to ... see to their every need." The insinuation slid under her skin, setting fire to her blood vessels like they were tinder. Her eyes dropped to see his long fingers still curled around the glass. As she watched, he released the glass and slid over her hand, lightly caressing the skin between her thumb and forefinger before delicately brushing across her wrist.

Without realizing it, her eyes went from his hand to the slight movement of the white skirt. She stared as the material moved again, this time lifting upward. There was no doubt in her mind what was causing the skirt to move.

Bria fought against the heat washing over her. The room suddenly grew stuffy and too closed in. The door leading out to the foyer was right behind Hercules, but before she could make a move, the man seemed to read her mind.

"You need to drink," he told her, helping to lift the glass to her lips. "Nectar of the gods. It will help to clear your head."

Indeed, the liquid was cold, sweet, and packed a punch in its aftermath. Gasping, Bria breathed past the alcohol sliding down her throat. "Whoa. Potent."

Hercules chuckled. "Feeling better?"

"Yes. Yes, I am. Thank you."

"Just being a good host. So, tell me, My Queen, regarding your wish to die, did you have any particular way or method in mind to accomplish this feat?"

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Chapter Four

The second swallow cleared her head. By the third sip, all sense of trepidation had sunk into the floor. Bria cleared her throat and gave him her best smile before she answered. "I want to be fucked to death."

"Oh?"

Bammo! That one had his thick eyebrows crawling up into his hairline. She desperately wanted to look down to see if what she felt nudging her hip was what she hoped it was.

"It's my fantasy," Bria reminded him.

"I understand that. And by all rights, that's what tonight is about. Very well, My Queen. How would you like to be fucked to death?"

"With a sex machine. Specifically, a fucking machine," she told him, damning his poker face. Either the man had heard it all and had managed to grow a very thick outer skin, or he was a master at shielding his emotions. Even his eyes remained caring and interested. "Do you know what a fucking machine is?" she asked, needing to fill the void in their conversation. She also took another swallow of cold mojo.

"As a matter of fact, I do know what a fucking machine is," he answered softly. "What I don't understand is why you prefer an unfeeling automaton over a real human being."

"For that exact reason. A machine doesn't feel. It doesn't try to sweet talk you, or feed you lies and useless promises while it tries to get between your legs." Okay, that sounded

bitter, but she had no reason to hold back. Not now. Not this evening. She wasn't surprised to see Hercules nodding.

"So you wish to end your life by extending your sexual pleasure to the point that your heart gives out. Or you give yourself a stroke. Or an aneurysm."

She managed a weak smile. "At least it won't be painful." Poor joke, but she wasn't about to apologize. "Well?"

Instead of answering, Hercules took her by the elbow and began to lead her toward another open doorway. People continued to greet him, waving or calling out to him. One female dressed as a sexy vamp referred to him as Zel as she sashayed past. Bria glanced up, but Hercules didn't appear bothered by the woman's familiarity. She resisted the urge to call him by that name, but she satisfied herself by silently mouthing it to herself.

They exited the buffet room to a smaller foyer containing a staircase. Hercules took her glass and placed it on a corner table.

"Where are we going?" Bria asked as his hand slipped from her elbow to entwine his fingers with hers.

He flashed her a warm smile. "To fulfill your fantasy."

"Now?" Boy, they sure didn't waste any time, did they?

He paused, one sandaled foot on the first stair step. "Is there any reason to delay the inevitable?"

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Chapter Five

The blunt question stung. "No, I guess not." Making a motion at the upper landing, Bria nervously giggled. "Don't tell me you have a fucking machine upstairs."

"Your wish is death by sex," Hercules answered indirectly. "My job is to fulfill that wish to the best of my ability." He gave her hand a tug, and Bria continued to follow him upstairs.

They passed the second story and started to continue upward toward the third story when Bria hesitated. At Hercules' questioning glance, she looked back the way they had come. "How do I know I can trust you? How do I know this is all legitimate? I mean, how can I...?"

He shoved her against the wall and descended over her, claiming her mouth with his lips, her breasts with his hands, and her barely covered mound with a rock solid cock. Bria tried to scream against the man's invasion, but the sound was shoved back into her throat by a tongue that possessed her as thickly as she wanted him inside her.

His hips bucked, shoving the thick, rounded tip of his erection between her thighs. The sheer cotton toga prevented absolute penetration, but it wasn't enough to keep her from feeling the heat radiating from every inch of his immense hard-on.

His hands massaged her breasts. Long thumbs pinched, rolled, and teased her nipples against his index fingers.

Squeezing them as his palms plumped her; pleasure sizzled into her core.

The scream drowned inside her, softening to a moan as Bria reached up to wrap her arms around his neck. Hercules released her breasts to grab her under the knees. With a breathy grunt, he lifted her thighs, spreading them as he still kept her against the wall, and shoved himself between her pussy lips.

For a moment they remained there, both of them panting lightly. Bria knew she encapsulated his engorged penis like a hot dog bun around a summer sausage. He wasn't inside her, but if he somehow managed to pull away the thin material and bury himself into her dripping quim, she wasn't about to complain or stop him. Her whole body was on fire; every inch of skin was frying from the inside out.

Vaguely she was aware of the man lowering his head next to hers. Warm lips touched her shoulder, softly kissing and licking, sending tremors all through her. "You'll get your wish tonight, My Queen," his voice rumbled in her ear. "Far be it from me to try to convince you to allow yourself to be taken out of this world by a flesh and blood executioner, instead of one made of aluminum and silicon."

Carefully, he extricated himself from her before lowering her feet back to the floor. Bria sagged against him, suddenly unwilling to let him go, much less continue up the stairs.

"Persephone?"

She nodded in answer. Letting him take her hand, she allowed him to lead her up to the next floor.

At the landing he turned and stopped at the first door. A man dressed as a jungle god, complete with leopard print loincloth, answered three knocks. Only a loincloth. Bria stared in amazement at the wild man's thick, dark hair and blue eyes, then looked back at Hercules. The bared chest and thick neck, even the height was the same.

"Is he related to you?" she asked, already knowing the answer.

"He's my brother. One of them. Let's go in."

As she expected, it was a bedroom—a large and airy one complete with a huge four-poster bed. Bria felt her feet glue to the floor when she caught sight of the contraption already sitting at the foot of the bed. Although she had never personally seen a fucking machine, she recognized it as being the real thing. It was no more than a small generator on tall, aluminum stilts, with an enormous fake dildo extending over the bed.

"It's called the Orgasmitron," the jungle brother said.

"No kidding?" Where did one even buy one of these things? Do companies have them in catalogs? Or does it come in a kit, and have to be put together?

"Is everything ready?" Hercules asked.

"As much as we can be," a third voice replied. From behind them stepped forward another man, an almost identical match to Hercules and the wild man, except his costume consisted of a brief leather skirt with matching cuffs around his wrists and a headband circling his forehead. If they weren't triplets...

"How many brothers do you have?"

"Hi. I'm Cray," the jungle man introduced himself, holding out his hand. "In case you're counting, there's just the three of us."

The gladiator-garbed brother also offered to shake her hand. "Call me BJ."

"This is Persephone," Hercules announced. "And, as you already know, her ultimate desire is to be fucked to death by the Orgasmitron."

"Shame," BJ sighed loudly. "The queen of the underworld deserves better."

Bria was past the point of asking how the other two men knew her wish when she had only told the first brother, not to mention the fact that there was already a fucking machine on the premises, waiting for her. There were too many questions she wanted to ask, but she was afraid that if she started pressing for answers, she would chicken out of doing what she came here to do in the first place.

"My Queen?"

She glanced up to see BJ standing beside a large Japanese screen. He folded it back to reveal a tub filled with water that was still sending steam trails curling above the surface. As she stared at the tub, Hercules moved behind her and started to lift her gown away from her body.

"First, a soothing bath to prepare you," he whispered, letting his hands glide down her arms. Slowly dropping the fabric draping over her arm, he placed tiny kisses on her skin, evoking a series of goose bumps from neck to shoulder. Bria closed her eyes to savor the gentleness as she felt her gown drift to the floor.

"My queen, you're truly an exquisite masterpiece of womanly flesh," BJ sighed.

Her?

Bria opened her eyes to see the man gazing at her pubic area. A couple of leather flaps on his skirt were lifting at his reaction, and she had to stifle a giggle. These men were actually being turned on? By her? Inconsequential little Bria, the Grande Dame to three incredibly gorgeous men?

At the same time, Cray helped to remove her cuff and sandals and the tiny bit of thong that was now soaked with her juices. To her surprise, he lifted the triangle of white cotton to his nose and sniffed, giving her a sexy grin as she watched.

Hercules pressed himself against her buttocks to the point where she could feel his cock trying to burrow between her butt cheeks. Smiling, she gave his arm a playful slap. In reply, he lovingly pinched her nipples before helping her into the tub. The water was warm but not too hot, and it smelled wonderful.

"Jasmine?"

"Honeysuckle," BJ answered.

Cray came around the front of the tub, until all three men surrounded her. It was BJ who dipped a sponge in the scented water and slowly began to rub it over her breasts, which protruded just above the surface. With BJ on her left, Cray in front, and Hercules to her right, she felt both on exhibit and worshiped. It was an odd combination that aroused her even further.

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As if reading her mind, Cray grinned. It was becoming easier to tell them apart. They weren't identical, but the resemblance between the three was close enough.

"If there is anything our queen wishes, she needs only to ask."

BJ dipped the sponge further in the water until he reached between her legs.

Before she could grasp what he was doing, he'd slipped between her pussy lips and was nudging her clit with his finger while he stroked her with the sponge. Bria felt her breath hitch in her chest at the bloom of eroticism searing her inside.

Her reaction also affected them, and at that moment Bria decided she was no longer the doormat assistant she'd been for the past seven years. Tonight she was Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld, blessed with the undivided attention of three perfect male specimens, to use as she wished.

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Chapter Six

"Take off your clothes. I want to see you." She glanced up at the gladiator kneeling over her. "You, too, buster. Drop the leather."

Apparently it was what they had been waiting to hear. Quicker than she could fathom, all three men dropped their costumes and the little strips of cloth that had served as jock straps. At the sight of three fully extended cocks straining at the bit, it took everything she had not to reach out and grab one.

Again, damn him, Cray appeared to read her mind. "Touching is allowed, My Queen. In fact ... anything you desire is yours to command."

Bria didn't hesitate any further. Since BJ was the closest, she closed her fingers around the peach-velvet skin that covered his rigid, unbending member. Slowly she slid her hand up and down its length, staring unabashedly at how the skin seemed to flow over the surface, and how the pulsing veins stood out. Overhead, she heard him hiss at her touch.

"My Queen, you have my permission to suck it if you so desire."

Oh, geeze! As if she needed his permission!

The tiny drop of moisture beading at the tip was too tempting to ignore. Bria licked it, tasting its salty sweetness. She lapped the enormous head as though it was an all-day sucker. Warm, totally intoxicating, and addicting, she tongued around the helmet until a movement at the corner of her eye

caught her attention. The other two men were still standing where she'd left them, but both were now slowly stroking themselves in rhythm with her licks. No longer self-conscious, Bria pouted.

"Ohh, poor babies. Feeling left out?"

She gave them no chance to answer. Instead, she released BJ and moved to the other side of the tub. Clutching a quivering cock in each hand, she took turns gently licking and sucking on the tips, moving back and forth to give both men equal attention. Carefully nipping, then running her teeth lightly over their silky, hard warmth. They filled her mouth, all the way to the back of her throat. And beneath her fingers she could sense them trying not to buck in response. Their velvety sacs rolled incredibly soft in her palms. It almost had to be torture for them, she realized. It was Hercules who finally touched her cheek to stop her.

"My Queen. Your machine still awaits." His voice was hoarse and his breathing ragged. Bria gave him an impish smile.

She got to her feet to allow BJ to dry her off, noting he took special care to rub the soft towel across her genitals. The action was enough to keep her fire banked and the embers inside her pussy ready to burst into flame.

Cray led her to the bed where he helped her lay on top of the satin coverlet, lifting her hair away from her face and head so it wouldn't be pulled as he placed a pillow underneath her neck. Hercules positioned her feet flat on the bed and lifted her knees, spreading her legs far enough apart to allow

ample room for the dildo on the fucking machine to manipulate. BJ aimed the pistoning machine at her crotch.

"My Queen."

Cray's soft voice drew her attention away from the black object with its flesh-colored extension now poised a few inches away from her cunt. He had one knee on the covers. One hand held her wrist, and a length of pale green fabric was in his other hand.

"For you to experience the machine's full pleasure, you must be restrained. You have the choice of us holding you down, or being tied to the posts. What is your decision?"

Hercules hurried to reassure her. "Persephone, if at any time you wish to recant your wish to die by orgasm, you need only say the word and we will remove it immediately. Do you understand?"

She nodded, perplexed by the sadness reflected on his face. Hey, it was her death, not his. Besides, these men hardly knew her. Why should they look so downhearted?

"If I want to be tied up, will you still be nearby?"

"Most definitely," BJ answered.

"And anything I ask you to do, you'll do it?"

Hercules nodded. A lock of dark hair fell across his forehead, and she had to resist the urge to reach up and smooth it back.

Taking a deep breath, Bria let it out in one quick, loud sigh. "Okay. Tie me up."

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Chapter Seven

The material they used was soft and non-abrasive. Her wrists were looped firmly to the posts, but not actually tied. Bria noted that the material would keep her from jerking her arms down to touch the machine and inadvertently injuring herself. But if she took the time to unravel the restraints, she could slip out of them without much difficulty.

However they didn't tie down her ankles. Instead, Hercules held on to her right leg with one warm hand; Cray held her left.

"Ready, My Queen?" BJ inquired.

She nodded, closing her eyes so she couldn't see the whirring dildo as it descended toward her pussy. As it barely touched her outer lips with its mad, buzzing sound, she could tell someone had gone to the trouble to warm its surface. The head pushed forward like a battering ram while simultaneously rolling. In the back of her mind, the little devil wryly observed that rollercoasters didn't have as many moves.

The sound made by the fucking machine was loud and irritating. If she was alone with it, she would have worried about someone hearing it. Maybe they would think it was a hair blower? Or a really loud shaver?

This isn't working, her inner voice told her. When she should be relaxing and enjoying the ride, all she could think about were the three studs standing over her with their fire hydrants ready to gush. She peeked between her lashes. Yep.

Their eyes were on the machine as it began to bury its faux head into her. Their own breathing grew more agitated; their cocks slowly wobbled up and down, but remained steadfastly horizontal. All three men were becoming increasingly aroused, yet their hold on her ankles was gentle.

What the hell was she thinking?

"Stop!"

BJ immediately switched off the machine and pulled it back. Bria looked up to see Cray giving her a questioning stare.

"You said I could ask for anything, right? Anything at all?"

A smile creased his full lips and he dipped his head in acknowledgment. "Whatever our queen requires."

She glanced over at Hercules who released her ankle. BJ shoved the machine against the opposite wall and came back to the foot of the bed. Bria let her eyes slide down to his manhood, then licked her lips. The cock seemed to spring to life.

"I want you," she whispered, lifting her face to stare up into his eyes. Swiveling her head to look at the other two men, she added, "All three of you. Pleasure me. Let me die the way I wish, but in the arms of someone warm and alive and caring. I want the three of you to fuck me to death."

"Whatever our queen desires," Hercules murmured as he descended over her. His mouth took hers, reaching deep into her soul with his kiss. In it she could swear she felt his relief and gratitude, as though she had finally voiced their own deepest desire.

Unable to do anything, Bria melted under his lips as someone released her wrists from their bindings, allowing her to slip her arms around his neck. Powerful arms encircled her back and waist where his hands tenderly cradled her. His tongue gently swiped her teeth, then played a tangle tango with her own. At some point she realized he was lifting her, raising and moving her across the bed as he lowered himself onto the mattress with his head at the foot.

Once her center of gravity shifted and she knew she was on top instead of on the bottom, Bria pulled back slightly to stare down at him. His hands continued to hold her, balancing her above him as if she weighed nothing. Seeing her look of surprise, Hercules grinned. She grinned back. "Now what?" she asked.

"Now ... we get to pleasure you as we've been wanting to do from the moment we first saw you," he whispered, and slowly began to lower her over him. Before she could ask him how he planned to do that, the head of his rigid cock was nestled within her pussy folds. Bria gasped, and the pole slid in a little further.

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Chapter Eight

She groaned, and the pole shoved itself deeper. Gradually, he pushed himself into her until she was finally sitting on top of him. He was all the way, deep inside. So deep, she could swear his cock was poking the interior of her womb. Wriggling her hips, she could feel his balls like two small pillows cuddled beneath her. Hercules sucked in a breath between his teeth.

"Careful, My Queen."

At the sound of his nervousness, she laughed with utter joy. Oh, God, she felt wonderful! How could she have been so stupid as to believe a mere machine could be this fantastic?

Someone moved behind her, climbing onto the bed and making the mattress jiggle slightly. Bria clenched her pussy muscles, and delighted in the twin fires she saw erupt in Hercules's eyes.

Hands came around to cup her breasts the same time a hot mouth lowered to her neck. Bria caught sight of BJ still standing at the foot of the bed, but now he was stroking his own engorged appendage as he watched their love play.

Hercules took her hips and began to pump her slowly, steadily, up and down his cock. Cray continued to mold her breasts with his palms, using them like a potter manipulates delicate clay. When he gently pinched her swollen nipples, Bria cried out for joy. "More!"

"Our queen requests more?" Hercules gasped. He was holding back, determined to give her more satisfaction, despite his rising needs.

She could no longer think as his hard thickness stretched her, delighted her, and rubbed her to the point of soreness. The mattress tilted slightly, and Cray released her breasts. Immediately, Hercules let go of her thighs and reached up to take her shoulders. Slowly he drew her down until the hard tips of her nipples scratched across his chest. His fingers dragged through her loosened hair, his palms cupped the sides of her face, and he sucked her tongue into his mouth when he kissed her.

Warm hands touched her buttocks. Unaware of what was going to happen next, Bria sighed as fingers lightly dipped across her anus, leaving a cooling sensation in their wake. His touch sent erotic impulses coursing through her, heating her blood even higher.

And then came the strange invasion.

"Oh, God!"

"Shhh!" Cray's voice shushed her. "Relax, My Queen. Relax. Let the pleasure we're wanting to give you sing through your body."

His cock glided into her, past her anus. Taking her ferally. As she gasped again, Hercules took command of her mouth. A hard body leaned over her back, acting almost like a shield as hands pinched her nipples. At the same moment, the steel rod of his cock slipped past the tight ring of her ass and slowly, inexorably, slid into her.

Hercules paused, allowing his brother time to enter her. Bria couldn't stop the trembling overtaking her as this new and utterly devastating sensation started to flood her system with raging lust. She moved her hips slightly, a minute jerk,

and instantly a pair of hands were on her backside holding her still.

Groaning, she tried to make sense of it all, tried to separate who was who and where. Hercules continued to devour her mouth. His hands kept her face where he could reach her. His cock quivered inside her pussy, ready to continue.

Cray's hands fondled her breasts. His heavy breath warmed the back of her neck. His enormous cock was nearly shoved all the way to the hilt of her ass, to the point where she was almost afraid to move.

Then whose hands were holding her buttocks?

Lifting her mouth from Hercules, Bria raised her eyes to see BJ's weeping penis at eye level as the man bent over them. As she stared at the erection nearly an inch away, she could see the soft, delectable texture of the flushed helmet. A pearly droplet hung off the tip, and without thinking she licked it off. In the next second, his cock was pressed against her lips. The invitation was clear, but unspoken.

She sensed Hercules giving the signal as she opened her mouth to take BJ into her mouth. At the same time, Cray began to pull out, then press back in. Hercules used his hips to move up and down within her weeping pussy.

The three sensations going on all at once were both overwhelming and devastating. She couldn't scream with her mouth full of turgid cock. Somehow she managed to flex her fingers and found they were on top of Hercules's chest. Gripping his shoulders, she hung on for dear life.

Sanity left her. Every ounce of strength and awareness was focused on the slow, methodical screwing she was being given from every angle—mouth, pussy, and ass. The three men were being careful not to hurt her, and as a result she grew closer and closer to the absolute perfection she had sought all her life.

She couldn't think, but there was no need to. Nor did she need to fear. These men knew what they were doing, and with every thrust, with every deep penetration, they always stopped just short of pain. Bria moaned, and all three men echoed her.

Their actions grew stronger. Faster. More demanding. Bria matched them as best she could, taking their triple dominance over her as her nerve endings flared and fired.

She had no time to notice when the giant started uncoiling inside her. Three immense cocks fucking her brains out were all she was aware of until the orgasm rammed into her with unmerciful force. As she shrieked, BJ pulled out and continued jacking himself off those last few seconds before he erupted. Hercules cried out, and the next moment so did Cray. They both rammed into her ass and pussy and held themselves there as their cream pumped with vicious explosiveness.

The last thing Bria knew before she blacked out was that three grown men were embracing her as tenderly and as affectionately as if she really was their beloved queen.

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Chapter Nine

When she awoke, she was still in the third-floor bedroom, but she was alone in the bed. Someone had placed her under the satin coverlet to prevent her from getting chilled.

A sound from the other side of the room caught her attention. She turned her head to see Hercules sitting on a small love seat. He wore his little white skirt and a big grin.

Slowly, Bria glanced around the rest of the room. The fucking machine was gone. So were Cray and BJ. The only evidence to show what had gone on earlier in the room was the box of condoms and the small jar of Vaseline sitting on the table near the bed.

Opening her mouth to question the whereabouts of his brothers, Hercules softly told her, "They had to attend to other guests."

"Oh?"

Her disappointment to find them gone drew a smile from him. "Not in that manner, My Queen. You are unique. A rare jewel. Would you believe me if I told you that you are the only woman the three of us ever agreed upon? The only one we ever wanted or were willing to share?"

Could she believe him? Why the hell not? There was something extremely morale-boosting in his comment.

"But you failed," she whispered, looking back at him. When he gave her a puzzled expression, she told him, "I didn't die. I didn't get my wish fulfilled."

La Petite Mort
by Carolyn Gregg

"On the contrary. Yes, you did. And it was a beautiful death."

A beautiful death? She gave a bark of laughter. "Oh, puh-leeze."

"Believe me," Hercules insisted. "The French call it la petite mort. The little death. It's when your orgasm is so strong, so overwhelming that you black out. That's what happened to you, My Queen." He held out his hands, palms up. "We fulfilled your desires."

She couldn't argue with him. She didn't want to. Hercules and his brothers had given her a memory that would last her for the rest of her life.

"Is it still Saturday night?"

"A little past two in the morning. You've been asleep for a little more than three hours."

She'd been out for three hours? "And you've been here the whole time?"

Again that enigmatic smile. "It was my desire."

His desire? Or his job? She wanted to believe the former, although the truth was probably closer to the latter.

And speaking of truth, there remained one final confession she had to get off her chest. Otherwise, her conscience would never allow her to guiltlessly savor this experience for as long as she lived.

"Hercules? ... Zel?"

His smile sparkled at her use of his real name. "What?"

"I have to be totally honest with you. I ... it wasn't my invitation that brought me here."

"What do you mean?" Odd, but he didn't seem surprised as he patiently waited for her to continue.

"The invitation to the ball. It wasn't mine. I filched it out of my boss's wastebasket." Bria shrugged. "I figured since she wasn't using it ... and I was ... feeling..."

"Your name is Bria Bingham, isn't it?"

At his softly spoken question, Bria's head jerked up in surprise. Her face must have said it all. Zel chuckled. Deep, provocative. She could feel her body coming alive again.

"The invitation was sent to you." At her daft expression, Zel insisted, "Your boss must have intercepted it. Or it may have gone to her by mistake in the first place."

"But ... how? I mean, why send it to where I work? Why didn't it go to my apartment?"

"My Queen, if you had gotten the invitation at your home, would you have answered it by coming here tonight?" His eyebrows lifted, and he snorted in amusement. "Of course not."

"But..."

"Let's just say we anticipated your boss would intercept your mail, just as she's done for the past few years. Sooner or later we knew you would receive the invitation, and when you did, you would come here. Out of spite or anger, it didn't matter. You would come, and we would finally be able to fulfill your ultimate desire." Zel chuckled again. "It doesn't matter if you believe me or not, Bria. What matters is that by fulfilling your wish, we fulfilled ours as well."

"Yours? You mean you yours, or you and your brothers'?"

"The three of us. We have been wanting a four-way with you ever since we first saw you at The Monte Leon two months ago."

The Monte Leon? It had been a business trip Angie had ordered her to accompany her on. The four days in New Orleans had been sheer torture and an exercise in prolonged patience. But apparently some good had come out of it.

"I'm flattered," she admitted. "I truly am." Taking a deep breath, she sat up in bed. The satin sheet fell to her waist but she ignored it. She was still naked and deliciously sore, but she had no complaints. "Well, what happens now? You got what you wanted. I got what I came for. We're even."

"Perhaps. Perhaps not. Sometimes, the thing we least expect to happen can occur, and our hearts are suddenly ... never mind."

Slowly, Zel got to his feet. For the first time he appeared lost for an answer. "Your gown is on the chair," he said, motioning to an area behind her. Bria turned to see her costume lying on the vanity. Next to it was the envelope containing what appeared to be every penny of her savings. "When you're ready, someone will escort you to the front where you'll be taken to the ferry. Bria..."

Strange. If she didn't know any better, she would swear he looked ... sad.

"Thank you," he told her. A moment later he closed the door behind him, leaving her completely alone.

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Chapter Ten

"Bria! Where's the Maguire folder?"

Angie's screech of anger could be heard clear across the large room and into the offices on the other side of the building. Wincing, Bria walked into the woman's office and began to dig under the pile of folders on the woman's desk. When she found what she was looking for, she dragged it out and dumped it on top of the heap.

"There you go."

Rather than thank her, Angie snatched it up and opened it. Bria started to leave when the woman said, "Oh, by the way, I can't make the Victory meeting this afternoon. You'll need to cover it for me."

Bria turned to face her and hoped she could keep her temper under wraps. "I asked for this afternoon off yesterday and you approved it," she reminded the woman.

"Well, I'm going to have to un-approve it. I got a phone call today from their main office, and the meeting's been moved to the Candelaria Restaurant at one." Angie closed the folder and gave her one of those evasive looks Bria hated.

"I thought you were excited about snagging this new account," Bria commented. "I distinctly remember you telling me this thing was worth a double-figured million mark."

Angie waved a French-tipped finger to dismiss the reminder. "Doug Pelosi called with an emergency," she finally admitted. "I need to take care of him, or else we'll be losing a double-figured million mark account! Besides..."

Bria tried not to roll her eyes. Here it came, the big schmooze. The I-can't-do-this-without-you hook that would make it impossible for her to turn away.

"Miss Victory said she was sending her CEOs to the meeting because she couldn't make it either. But she's so insistent to make this deal work, she guaranteed she would have her representatives there. I promised her we wouldn't let her down. You have such wonderful people skills, Bria! Please? Pretty please?"

"Angie, I have a doctor's appointment scheduled for two o'clock!"

"Take the lunch meeting and go late to your appointment. You probably wouldn't get in to see the doctor for another hour, anyway. Come on, Bria, I'm relying on you! Have you ever been to the Candelaria Restaurant?"

No, she hadn't. It was an exclusive, high-priced establishment, well out of range for her pocketbook. But word on the street said it was well worth the cost. Bria shook her head. The admittance was as good as a nod to her boss.

"Great! Take the company credit card and splurge. Bring me back a signature, or at least the promise of a signature that will legally hold up in court, and you can take tomorrow afternoon off!"

Sighing in defeat, Bria relented. "All right," she said and left the office. After all, what else could she say? At least she would get a free meal at one of the city's best restaurants out of the deal. Things could be worse.

"Yeah, like what?" Bria muttered to herself as she tried to hail a cab. Ever since Saturday, she'd been in a slump, both

mentally and emotionally. Dammit to hell, was it possible to fall in love with three men all at once? How in the world would she ever be able to go to bed with a single, ordinary-looking man, and expect to feel the same kind of perfection she had experienced that magical night?

She wouldn't. Not again. Not ever again. And she knew it. And now, if such a thing was possible, she was in worse shape than when she had dressed up as a Grecian semi-goddess and gone to the masquerade.

The weather had turned as downcast as her mood, and drizzly. By the time the cab stopped in front of the restaurant, it was pouring. Bria dashed through the door and tried to shake off the stray drops from her suit.

"Can I help you?" the maitre d' inquired politely.

"Yes, thank you. Party for Summers Professionals?"

"Yes, Miss! Your party is already waiting. Follow me, please."

Bria tagged along behind the smartly dressed young thing that outgunned her by fewer years and several less pounds. Get over it, girl! Concentrate on the job, and one of these days if you're very good, Santa just might—

"Oh. My. God."

The booth was located at the furthest end of the restaurant where it was practically secluded from the rest of the room. At first, she didn't recognize the young man rising from his seat to greet her until he smiled ... and a curl of licorice black hair fell over his forehead.

"Uhh ... Zel?"

She was unable to take her eyes away from his dark blue gaze or the magical smile spreading across his face. At least, not until she was aware of movement rising up from behind him.

"Hello, Persephone," his deep voice rolled over her, dark with memories.

"We're delighted you could join us," a second voice responded.

Somehow, Bria managed to jerk her eyes away from Zel to see Cray and BJ standing beside their table. It was nearly impossible to believe these devastatingly good-looking men dressed in business suits were the same three who had dominated her dreams these past three days. "Y-you're with Victory Enterprises?" she managed to ask.

BJ chuckled with the same resonance as his brother. "Bria, we are Victory Enterprises. We three and our sister, who fronts as President when she feels like it."

"How are you doing, Bria?" Cray inquired as Zel led her over to the booth.

How was she doing? Besides feeling totally numb? "I'm ... okay."

"We've missed you, Bria," Zel told her. "In more ways than you can imagine."

"Oh?" she almost squeaked. And then it hit her. "You arranged this! Just like you sent me the invitation, you fixed this meeting so that I would show up instead of my boss!"

"She's quick," Cray noted with a grin.

"She's learning," BJ corrected him.

"Doesn't matter," Zel said as he reached for the flagon of champagne sitting in the bucket at the end of their table and poured Bria a glass. "We brought you here for a very selfish reason, Miss Bingham. Are you open to a proposition?"

She clenched her hands in her lap and tried to nod. She no longer trusted her voice. Just being with them again was turning her insides into fiery magma. Not to mention the nasty little pictures in her mind's eye that were starting to make her inner thighs slick.

Zel gave her another melting smile. "We want you to come and work for us. For Victory Enterprises."

"Don't tease," Bria snapped, although she felt they were telling her the truth. They had always told her the truth. Why would they start lying to her now, especially after Saturday night?

"I'm sorry," she hurried to apologize.

"Don't be," Cray told her, holding out the glass for her to take. "We've known for quite some time who was the brains are behind a lot of Miss Bergman's decisions."

"You do?" The glass felt cold to the touch, and immediately she wondered if the champagne would taste as sweet as the liquid she'd imbibed that night at the island.

Zel snorted. "It didn't take us long to figure it out, Bria. Ten minutes with your boss, and we could easily see she didn't have the smarts, much less the imagination, to come up with some of those ideas she claimed to author. So we decided we no longer wanted to work with a company. We thought it would be better to hire a consultant who knew the ropes to work in-house."

Cray winked. "We'd pretty much made up our minds about you. But it was the night of the masquerade that sealed it for us."

"Of course, you realize, Bria, that there is a very personal offer attached to the job," BJ added. "Not to mention the fact that each of us would like to get to know you better ... individually, of course."

"Oh?" As if she didn't already guess. She may be slow, but she wasn't stupid. What was it Zel had told her that night before he left?

Sometimes, the thing we least expect to happen can occur, and our hearts are suddenly...

They were in love with her. All three of them.

Holy fucking hallelujah.

Suddenly hope bloomed warm and promising, and filled the low-lit room with sunlight. Giving them a wide smile, Bria raised her glass of bubbly. "Fulfilling your greatest desires again, Gentlemen?"

BJ snorted softly. "Deny it all you want, Bria, but getting away from Summers and being in charge of your own company has always been one of yours, yes?"

Never let it be said that Bria Bingham passed up the perfect opportunity when it presented itself. "In that case, shall we toast our, uhh, this exciting new merger?"

Three grown men let out the breaths they had been holding, much to her delight. As four glasses clinked together to seal the bargain, Bria knew this was one partnership she would never regret forming.

Not for as long as she lived.

La Petite Mort
by Carolyn Gregg

The End

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Carolyn and her family come from the Texas hill country outside Austin. Writing is her hobby, and hubby approves because it keeps her out of the malls.

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