

ELLORA'S CAVE *Moderne*

LYNN
LAFLEUR

*Lavender
Lace* A DATE
WITH
Mr. Wonderful

A Date With Mr. Wonderful

Lynn LaFleur

Second in the Lavender Lace series.

A shopping spree at Lavender Lace, a lingerie store owned by Celtic goddess Ashlyn, thrills Twyla Gardiner, who has trouble finding sexy lingerie to fit her tall, voluptuous body. But who will get to appreciate that lacy red bra and risqué thong?

Twyla's friends seem determined to set her up with new men every week. When her best friend arranges yet another blind date with a man she swears is Mr. Wonderful, Twyla decides she can't go through another disappointment. She escapes to a favorite hideaway spa.

Daniel LaFevers is new in the Seattle area and hasn't had the chance to meet many women. One look at the voluptuous raven-haired beauty sitting in the bar of the locals' favorite hideaway and Daniel knows he has to get to know her better.

When Twyla invites Daniel to her room for an evening of unforgettable passion, will this be another in a long line of disappointments, or a date with Mr. Wonderful?

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A Date With Mr. Wonderful

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A DATE WITH MR. WONDERFUL

Lynn LaFleur

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Chapter One

Twyla Gardiner had to catch herself before she rolled her eyes. She'd heard the same phrases over and over since her divorce four months ago.

You need to get out more.

Don't sit at home by yourself. That isn't any fun.

I know the perfect man for you!

I have a cousin who's coming to visit.

You'll just love him!

And on and on and on.

Twyla stared out the window at the softly falling mist and tried to tune out her friend Sherry Trahan. She'd have better luck getting a suntan in December.

Picking up her fork, she calmly ate a bite of her crab salad while she waited for Sherry to stop for a breath so she could jump into the conversation.

"Look, Sher, I appreciate your caring about me, but I'm fine. I don't want another blind date."

"But he's *perfect* for you! He started working at George's office last week. He's about six-two with dark brown hair that brushes his collar, piercing green eyes, shoulders like a linebacker, flat tummy and great ass." Sherry fanned her face. "He is soooo gorgeous!"

Sherry said that about every single man in her husband's office. George worked at an insurance company that employed hundreds of people. The turnover rate must be high, for Sherry was always discovering new single men who would be "perfect" for Twyla.

At least he was tall. At five-ten, Twyla usually towered over men instead of looking directly into their eyes, especially when she wore high heels.

"What's the date today, Sherry?"

A confused look crossed Sherry's face and she hesitated before answering. "October 21st."

"Do you know when my divorce was final?"

"Sometime in June, I think."

"June 10th. That's four months, Sherry. Why would I want to get involved with a guy so soon after getting rid of the louse I married?"

"I'm not saying you have to get serious about him or *marry* him, just go out with him. He really is wonderful, Twyla. I know you'll like him if you'll give him a chance." Eyes wide and shining with excitement, Sherry reached across the table and clasped Twyla's wrist. "I know! I'll have both of you over for dinner. Quiet, calm, no pressure. If you don't feel any sparks, you don't have to see him again."

"Sher –"

"Saturday night. Seven o'clock. I'll send the kids to my mom's, or they can spend the night with friends."

Apparently satisfied that everything was settled, Sherry picked up her fork and dug into her salmon. Twyla could continue to argue, or she could gracefully give in and let Sherry once again introduce her to this wonderful man.

If this guy was so damn wonderful, he shouldn't be single.

Twyla speared a piece of cucumber in her salad. She knew Sherry was only trying to help. So had all her other friends when they'd introduced her to their friend/brother/cousin/coworker.

She wasn't in any hurry to become involved with another man. Sure, it would be nice to date someone who could carry on an intelligent conversation. It would be nice to sit together on her couch and eat popcorn while they watched a movie. It would be

really nice to have sex again. She missed that closeness, that sweet slide of skin against skin.

It wouldn't be worth marrying an idiot just for sex. That's why vibrators were invented.

Vibrators couldn't hold her, stroke her skin, touch her hair. They couldn't wake her with a soft kiss, or cuddle her when she felt bad.

Sherry laid her fork over her empty plate. "The salmon was incredible. How was your salad?"

"Great." Or it had been until Sherry started talking about Mr. Wonderful. After that, the taste disappeared.

"Do you have time for some shopping or do you have to rush right back to work?"

Twyla should go back to work. She had a desk full of paperwork to wade through. She also had hours of personal leave due her and had worked a lot of overtime lately. Taking the afternoon off to shop sounded like an excellent idea. "My boss didn't have anything special on her calendar, but something may have come up after I left for lunch. I'll call her and see if she needs me."

"I want to check out the new lingerie store on 6th. George's sister Lydia told me about it. She said the selection is amazing."

Twyla's friends, Molly Ross and Marci Bayne, had told her about the lingerie store, but Twyla hadn't been there yet. Even though both gals had raved about the store, shopping for lingerie was a disappointing chore for Twyla. Her large breasts made finding pretty bras almost impossible. Even buying horribly expensive bras online didn't work, for they rarely fit her the way they should to be comfortable. She'd found one department store that carried bras in her size, yet they were plain and not the least bit sexy. Twyla would love to wear wisps of satin and lace like so many other women did.

Sherry picked up the ticket from the table. "I'll take care of the check while you call your boss."

* * * * *

Sherry pointed to a pale lavender bra and panties set in the store window. "Now *that* would definitely raise George's blood pressure." She looked at Twyla and grinned. "I just *love* raising his blood pressure."

A twinge of jealousy tightened Twyla's stomach. She wasn't ready to get involved with another man. That didn't mean she couldn't dream about meeting a guy as great as George. Sherry had lucked out when she'd found him. Kind, considerate, funny, good-looking and Sherry said he was incredible in bed.

Twyla gazed at the rest of the window display. Every hue in the purple palette had to be here. Neither Marci nor Molly had said the store carried only purple lingerie. Since she wasn't a big fan of that color, she didn't see where anything in Lavender Lace would interest her. "Is everything in the store purple?"

Sherry laughed. "No, silly. Lydia said there's every color you can think of." She wrapped her fingers around Twyla's wrist. "Come on, let's check it out."

Twyla followed Sherry into the store. The first thing Twyla noticed was the comfortable seating area on her left. It contained a loveseat and three chairs...a perfect place for tired husbands or bored boyfriends to sit while their wives or girlfriends shopped. Small tables sat between each chair. So many times while shopping, Twyla would've paid someone twenty dollars for a place to sit.

Light and airy, the store was larger than it appeared from outside. The displays were set up by color. Sherry had been right. There was so much more than purple here. Twyla immediately gravitated toward the red display. She'd always loved to wear red panties. She had one red bra in her size that she couldn't bear to throw away, even though it should've gone into the trash months ago since the support was almost nonexistent.

"I see you found your favorite color," Sherry said, grinning.

Twyla shrugged. "I'm so easy."

"With your fair skin and black hair, you look gorgeous in red. I look blotchy. I think I'll check out that lavender set in the window."

"Okay."

Twyla picked up a sheer bra with lacy cups. It felt as light as air, and couldn't be more than a B cup. She sighed. Way too small for her.

"May I help you?"

Turning to her left, Twyla saw a lovely thirty-something blonde with striking blue eyes. Her aqua T-shirt and cream pants showed off her curvy body perfectly. A plain silver name tag above her left breast said *Ashlyn*. "I love this bra, but it isn't my size."

Ashlyn openly gazed at Twyla's breasts. "Thirty-eight G, right?"

Twyla's mouth dropped open. "How did you know?"

The blonde smiled. "It's my job to know. Don't worry if you don't find your size on display. This is only a small portion of what I have in stock." She picked up the bra and checked the tag. "I'm sure I have this in your size. I'll be right back."

Two more women walked into the store as Ashlyn headed for the back. She turned around long enough to say she'd be right with them before continuing to the back of the store.

If Ashlyn had this beautiful bra in her size, Twyla would be a very happy camper.

Sherry walked up to her, carrying several pieces of lingerie. "I'm going to try these on. Did you find something?"

"Maybe." She held up the red bra so Sherry could see it. "The clerk is checking to see if she has this in my size."

"Ooh, very nice! I know someone who would love to take that off you."

Twyla frowned. Sherry never missed an opportunity to play matchmaker. "He isn't going to see it, much less take it off."

"Now, Twyla, never say never. I promise you, you'll take one look at him and melt."

"I do *not* melt."

"You will," Sherry said, her voice smug.

She wandered off toward the dressing rooms before Twyla had a chance to make another comment. It was just as well that she couldn't pop off to her friend since Ashlyn headed her way, a smile on her face.

"Sorry it took me so long. I'm alone today and it's been crazy."

"No help?"

"One clerk, who's off today. I hope to hire more clerks soon." Ashlyn held out the red bra to Twyla. "Size thirty-eight G. I brought matching bikini panties in your size too. Or I have a thong to match the bra, if you'd rather have that."

A thong? With that little piece of fabric that would ride up her butt? "Uh, no. I don't wear thongs."

"You should try one. Men love them."

"I wear what *I* like, not to impress a guy."

"That's good. A woman should always do what's right for her. But sometimes, we should make our guys happy. Don't you agree?"

Twyla almost said, "I don't have a guy," but stopped herself. She didn't know this woman, yet she'd almost confided in her. That didn't make sense. Twyla made friends easily, but she didn't pour out her life story to a complete stranger.

"Just the bra and panties. I'm not brave enough to try the thong."

Ashlyn smiled. "No problem. Would you like to try these on now or would you prefer to look around more?"

She might as well keep shopping since Sherry would be in the dressing room for a while. "I'll look around."

"Fine. I'll put these in a dressing room and help my other customers."

Once Ashlyn left, Twyla slowly strolled through the store, her fingertips grazing the different items as she passed them. She often wore sexy nightgowns for she loved the

way they felt against her skin. Maybe she should add one or two to her underwear purchase. She hadn't spoiled herself in a long time.

She turned a corner, and gasped. Directly in front of her, a mannequin wore the sexiest black nightgown she'd ever seen. Tiny spaghetti straps held up the low-cut lace and satin confection. A slit ran up the left side, almost to the waist. Lace made up the bodice and sides of the gown. A swirl of satin covered the pubic area and ran across the front. A woman couldn't help but feel sexy when she wore it.

Twyla had to have it.

She waited until Ashlyn's other customers headed to the dressing rooms before she approached the owner. "The black nightgown on the mannequin. Do you have it in my size?"

"Of course. Would you like to try it on?"

"Yes, please."

Ashlyn smiled. "I'll get it for you."

She had taken two steps away when Twyla had a sudden thought. "Ashlyn?"

The owner turned back to face her. "Yes?"

"You have other sexy bras in my size?"

"Several."

"I want one of each in black and white. And the panties to match."

Ashlyn smiled again. "I'll be right back."

Twyla could hear her Visa groaning in her wallet. It had been a long time since she'd splurged on herself and decided she deserved it. She wanted the lingerie for *her*, not to impress a guy.

She thought about her upcoming "date" at Sherry's house with Mr. Wonderful. He would be the fifth man Sherry had introduced her to in the last two months. All of them had been perfect for her, according to her friend. Of the first four she'd dated, one never looked in her eyes, but stared at her breasts all evening. One had been so conceited,

he'd talked the entire time about himself. One hadn't talked at all, leaving Twyla to come up with different topics to keep the conversation flowing. The last one decided since he'd bought her dinner, she owed him sex. It was the closest she'd ever come to punching a guy in the nose. Or kneeing him in the balls.

There might be some Prince Charmings left in the world, but she hadn't found any in Seattle.

Twyla wandered up to the counter to wait for Ashlyn. The owner appeared from the back with several pieces of lingerie in her hand.

"I have this bra in ice blue that will look gorgeous on you. It also comes in a deep forest green and cranberry."

Twyla fingered the wisp of silk and lace. "It doesn't look like it has any support."

"It does, I promise. See these panels on the sides? They pull your breasts in and push them up."

"My breasts are large enough without being pulled in and pushed up."

Ashlyn tilted her head. "You aren't ashamed of them, are you?"

"No, of course not."

"Then flaunt them. You have a lovely body. You should do everything you can to show it off."

Twyla's self-confidence had taken a nosedive when her husband walked out on her. He'd said it was her fault that he'd looked for other lovers since she was so cold in bed. She knew that wasn't true. She loved sex and had always responded to her ex-husband. He threw the blame for their failed marriage on her to justify his affairs. Still, she'd wondered if she could've done something different in the bedroom, something that would've kept Scott in her bed instead of visiting half the women in western Washington.

She continued to caress the silky bra. She bit her bottom lip as her Visa groaned louder.

What the hell. This is my special treat. I can make payments if I have to.

"You have panties to match the bras?"

"Of course."

"I'll try on all of them."

Twyla followed Ashlyn to the back of the store. The dressing room was large and softly lit, with a three-pane mirror in the corner. A woman couldn't ignore any of her body's flaws with all those images surrounding her.

Ashlyn added the new pieces of lingerie to the items already on the low shelf. She sorted them into two piles—one for bras and one for panties. Twyla noticed the nightgown hanging on a hook on the opposite wall.

Digging through the pile of panties, Ashlyn drew out a red thong. "I know you said you don't wear thongs, but try this one on. It matches the red bra perfectly. You will feel incredibly sexy and alluring wearing this lingerie beneath a clingy black dress."

A vision of Twyla's favorite dress popped into her head. A straight shift with cap sleeves and a low rounded neck, the silky material flowed over her curves to her knees. She always felt feminine in that dress, even if she happened to be taller than her date.

"Okay, I'll try it on."

"I'm going to see to my other customers. Let me know if you need anything else."

After Ashlyn left, Twyla removed all her clothes. She tried on the red bra first. It fit perfectly, pushing her breasts together to form a deep cleavage. She did a little shimmy and smiled when the bra didn't shift or dig into her skin. If all the bras fit as well and were as comfortable as this one, she would definitely be making payments on her Visa account for several months.

It would be worth it.

Twyla hesitated before picking up the red thong. She couldn't imagine wearing something like this would be comfortable, much less make her feel sexy. Taking a breath, she stepped into the thong and pulled it up her legs.

The tiny triangle covered her mound, the elastic band rode low on her hips. Twyla turned one way, then the other, examining her body in the mirror. Her buttocks were round and full and gravity hadn't affected them yet. The red band disappeared in the cleft, naturally drawing her gaze between her legs. She understood why a man would love to see a thong on a woman.

She felt sexy and alluring, and she liked the feeling.

"How are you doing?" Ashlyn asked through the louvered door.

"Great. In fact..." She turned again to look at the front of her body. "I think I'd like to try on some other thongs."

Chapter Two

A move and job change wasn't always a good thing. Daniel LaFevers figured that out during his second week at his new job. He appreciated the generous salary that he earned in his new position as Vice President of Finance at Ellison-Miller Insurance. He didn't appreciate the mess he'd inherited with the title.

The company was still showing a profit, but barely. His job was to cut expenses without cutting jobs or service to their customers.

Easier said than done.

Daniel had set up several spreadsheets to help him track expenses versus income. He'd spent the last three days entering figures from the piles of papers on his desk. The fax machine came on behind him, an indication that even more figures would soon be added to his pile.

Nothing like job security.

A rap of knuckles on his open door drew his attention away from the computer screen. George Trahan entered. Daniel had met him at the board members meeting his first day on the job. He'd barely caught his breath after arriving at Ellison-Miller before he was called into the meeting and introduced to the other officers of the company. With his brain still on overload from his move to Seattle, Daniel had trouble putting names to faces. He remembered George, the VP of Human Resources. George had been friendly and helpful right away as he helped Daniel wade through the ocean of paperwork a new employee had to complete.

George walked over and flopped down in one of the two chairs before Daniel's desk. "How's it going?"

"Shitty."

George laughed. "I like your honesty."

"Did the last VP of Finance ever do any work? The files are a mess, both in the filing cabinets and the computer." Blowing out a heavy breath, Daniel sat back in his chair. "It'll take me weeks to straighten out everything before I can actually do any work on a budget."

"Don't let it stress you out, man. It'll all fall into place."

"God, I hope so. Right now, I'm not sure."

"You need to relax. You got here and were thrown in with the sharks. It'll be better soon."

Daniel appreciated George's positive attitude, even though he wasn't as sure of everything falling into place so easily.

Leaning forward, George clasped his hands together between his knees. "My wife wants to invite you to dinner at our house Saturday."

Surprised at the sudden invitation, Daniel didn't respond at first. He liked George, and his wife had seemed very nice when he'd met her last week. An evening with them would be a welcome break from being alone.

George cleared his throat. "I think I should warn you that she's invited a friend of hers too. A female friend. A *single* female friend."

A matchmaker. Great. Daniel quickly changed his mind about having dinner with the Trahans. He'd suffered through matchmakers and blind dates in the past. He didn't want to go through that agony again. "Look, George, I appreciate the invitation, but I just got to Seattle. My life is insane now. I can't get involved with anyone."

"Just dinner, that's all."

Daniel could tell by the way George refused to look him straight in the eyes that it wasn't "just dinner".

George cleared his throat, obviously uncomfortable. "Sherry and I have a great marriage. She can't stand to see anyone single. Her heart is in the right place."

"I'm sure it is, but I'm not interested."

"You don't have to stay long. Come have dinner. You can leave as soon as we have dessert." He flashed a coaxing smile. "Sherry's a great cook. You won't be disappointed in the food."

A home-cooked meal would certainly beat whatever he might eat. Daniel hated his own cooking and eating out got old in a hurry. George was right. He could leave as soon as they finished dessert. "What time?"

The look of relief that flashed across George's face almost made Daniel laugh. "Seven. Give me a piece of paper and I'll write down our address. Do you need directions?"

"No." He dug through the mess on his desk until he found a notepad for George. "I have GPS in my car."

"Great. Perfect."

Daniel couldn't stop his laughter this time. "What's wrong? Did your wife threaten to kill you if I didn't say yes?"

"Close." George tore off the sheet and handed it to Daniel. "She mentioned vacationing with my in-laws. That's a penalty worse than death."

Still chuckling, Daniel folded the piece of paper and stuck it in his shirt pocket. "I won't let you suffer, George."

"Thanks, man."

Once George left, Daniel turned back to his computer. All the numbers ran together. He'd worked long hours since he'd been here, trying to get the files organized. Those long hours were catching up to him. If he didn't slow down, he'd make a mistake he couldn't afford to make.

George was right. Everything didn't have to be done immediately. William Miller, one of the owners of the company, had hired him permanently. This wasn't a job that he'd lose in a month or two if he didn't come up with a million dollars in savings in his first month.

Daniel swiveled his chair toward the window. He noticed George hadn't described this single female friend. He hadn't even used the old "she has a great personality" description, which usually meant she broke a mirror when she looked into it. That didn't matter to Daniel. As a man, he naturally admired a lovely woman, but he'd never let looks impress him. He'd dated pretty women who were vain and inconsiderate, and he'd dated women who were plain but projected an inner beauty. He'd take beautiful on the inside over the outside any day.

While the idea of another blind date didn't thrill him, it would be nice to meet an interesting woman. He hadn't been in Seattle long enough to find out the best places to meet people. Bars were out. He'd done the bar scene in his twenties. Now thirty-eight, he wanted more from a woman than just a fast fuck.

He'd dated a lot of women, even asked one to marry him. Luckily she'd figured out they'd never be able to live together about the same time he had. They'd continued as fuck buddies after she broke the engagement until she met another man. Daniel had wished her well and gone back to his solitary life.

Daniel hadn't been with a women in almost three months. His cock reminded him of that every day. He wasn't ready to commit to one woman, at least not until he was more settled into his new job and life in Seattle. In the meantime, he wanted to date and have a good time.

For now, that was enough.

* * * * *

Ashlyn rolled her neck to the right, then the left, to try to loosen the stiff muscles. A massage would be so good right now. She'd wanted her store to be a success, but the last six weeks had been insane.

She loved it.

So many women who loved to wear pretty lingerie had come into her store. The sales had been staggering, much better than she'd expected. Once she got a "feel" for

the customer, it was easy to pick out the perfect lingerie for a woman. Whether the woman wanted a new bra or designer hosiery or that special nightgown to wear for her lover, Ashlyn knew exactly what to recommend. She'd had over five hundred years of experience in helping women feel better about themselves.

Ashlyn did one more walk-through of the store to be sure everything was in place before she closed. Satisfied that all her displays were perfect, she made her way to the back of the store, where she turned off the bright overhead lights and turned on the muted lights in her front windows. The soothing effect never failed to make her smile.

The store officially closed at six, but it had taken her over two hours to restock her displays. She desperately needed to hire more sales clerks.

She wouldn't need to hire anyone else if Llyr were still here.

He'd left her ten days ago. She'd known from the moment he'd arrived that he wouldn't be able to stay long. He'd been with her five weeks—his longest visit ever—before he was called to return to his duties as a god of the sea.

She missed him so much.

She passed through the doorway into the back storage area. She turned the corner, heading for the back door. The sight in front of her made her stop in her tracks. Llyr lay on a pile of blankets, resting on one elbow. One knee was raised, his wrist draped over his knee. He wore only a tiny black bikini brief that did little to hide the bulge of his cock and balls.

Her heart soared at the sight of him.

He smiled. "Good evenin', lass."

"Good evening." Her gaze fell to the blankets, where he'd spread out a feast. A silver ice bucket held a bottle of white wine. Dishes held bite-sized pieces of chicken, beef and shrimp. A platter of raw vegetables sat next to a bowl of creamy dip. Cheese cubes and crusty buttered bread completed the meal. "When did you get here?"

"A short while ago. Do ye like me surprise?"

"It's wonderful." Candles outlined the blankets, creating a romantic area for two. "How did you do all this without my knowing?"

He gave her a look that said she should already know the answer to that question. Ashlyn spent most of her time around humans, so rarely used the powers she received at birth. She forgot that Llyr possessed even more powers than she. "Sorry. Dumb question."

"Not dumb, just unnecessary." He held out one hand to her. "Come here, lass."

In the few seconds it took Ashlyn to drop to her knees next to Llyr on the blankets, her clothes disappeared. She glanced down at her body to see she wore only her ivory bra and panties. She looked back at Llyr. He flashed her a devilish grin.

"'Tis only fair, darlin', since I'm wearin' nothin' but this skimpy thing."

"Do you ever undress the mortal way?"

He shook his head. "Takes too long, I told ye that." He ran the tip of one finger over the top of her breasts. "When I want somethin', I want it *now*."

Llyr had always been impatient, except when it came to lovemaking. The first time they'd made love when he arrived seven weeks ago had been fast because they were both so hungry for each other. For the following five weeks, he'd raised her desire slowly with his kisses and caresses, loving her every day that he'd been with her.

She glanced at the front of his briefs. His hard cock stretched the fabric until it was in danger of tearing. She caressed the full length of him. "Does this mean you want me now?"

"Aye. But I know ye've worked long and hard today. Ye need yer nourishment first." He propped up his body on one hand. "Food will build up yer strength."

"Will I need strength?"

"Oh aye. That ye will." He picked up a plump shrimp and held it to her mouth. "I plan to have me way with ye many times tonight."

Ashlyn closed her teeth around his fingers and pulled the shrimp into her mouth. She liked the way his eyes flared with heat. "How many is 'many'?" she asked after swallowing.

"As many as I can manage."

That meant she might not be able to walk in the morning. Luckily for her, a goddess recuperated quickly. "I'll drink to that if you'll open the wine."

"Be glad to, darlin'."

Ashlyn ate another piece of shrimp while Llyr poured the cold liquid into two glasses. He was so handsome, sometimes it hurt to breathe when she looked at him. Out of all the gods she knew, Llyr was definitely the most handsome.

Any woman—mortal or goddess—would be attracted to Llyr. Ashlyn appreciated his good looks, but she also knew what a wonderful man he was inside. He rarely showed his tender side to the gods and goddesses who were under his rule. He had to lead them, be strong at all times. Yet with her, he was kind and loving and considerate.

He handed her a glass, then held up his own. "To a night of love."

She clicked her glass against his. "To a night of love."

Llyr gazed into Ashlyn's blue eyes as they sipped their wine. Her skin looked golden in the candlelight. She was so lovely, and even more lovely in the soft lighting. His duties often kept him away from her for months at a time. He hated that. He never wanted to leave her side.

Or her bed.

He couldn't get enough of her. He'd had sex with many, many women. None of them made him feel the way Ashlyn did. Gods and goddesses naturally had high sex drives. Centuries ago, he'd moved from mortal to goddess and back again, searching for the perfect lover. His wandering had stopped the first time he took Ashlyn to bed. She satisfied him completely.

He and Ashlyn had made no promises to each other, no arrangement to sleep with no one else. He'd had other lovers since he became involved with Ashlyn and knew she had too. No more. They'd admitted their love before he left her ten days ago. To him, that meant an exclusive relationship for the rest of his life with the beautiful blonde who had stolen his heart.

"Mmm, very good." Ashlyn smiled. "You always pick the best wine."

"I've had a few years of practice." He selected a piece of tender chicken. "Open up."

She parted her lips. He slid the chicken into her mouth. Picking up a piece of beef, he savored it slowly while she chewed her own meat. As soon as he swallowed, he fed her a cube of sharp cheddar before taking one for himself.

"Do ye like the cheese? I picked it up in France."

"It's wonderful. Everything is wonderful." She touched his chest, sliding her fingers across his skin. "Thank you for doing this."

"Anythin' for ye, lass."

He dipped a tiny carrot in the creamy dip and lifted it to her mouth. Eyes narrowed, she closed her lips over the vegetable and slowly drew back. Llyr's breathing deepened. She looked like she was sucking a cock.

His shaft quickly grew even longer and thicker. Llyr had planned the romantic picnic to celebrate coming back to her after almost two weeks apart. He wanted to do something special for Ashlyn before they made love. He looked at her breasts. Her hard nipples clearly showed through the sheer fabric. She shifted on the blankets. A whiff of her arousal drifted to his nose.

His willpower was fading in a hurry.

A small drop of dip lay on her bottom lip. Llyr wiped it off with his thumb. "Have ye had enough?"

Her coquettish smile made his cock jerk. "Not nearly enough."

"I get the feelin' ye aren't talkin' about the picnic."

Ashlyn shook her head. "Not at all."

Llyr went willingly when she pushed him to his back. She grasped the waistband of his briefs and tugged them past his hips. She paused long enough to lick his rod from tip to base. Llyr barely had time to inhale sharply before she pulled his briefs off his legs and tossed them aside.

She attacked his cock as if she were starved for it. She licked all around the head, dragged her tongue down the length. His balls received her expert attention long enough to make his eyes cross.

"Ah, darlin', ye have a wicked tongue."

Llyr closed his eyes and absorbed the pleasure of her lips and tongue. She drew his shaft deep into her mouth, then slowly pulled back until only the head remained between her lips. Grasping the base, she repeated the action over and over, going a bit farther each time until she took all of him.

There wasn't a spot on his cock that she didn't lick or caress. She spent extra time at the sensitive area beneath the head...the area that shot his blood pressure through the roof when she licked it. Pre-cum oozed from the slit. She lapped up every drop.

Mere moments away from an orgasm, Llyr cradled her face and looked into her eyes. "'Tis time for ye to stop, darlin'."

She ignored his command and took his cock deep again. He could stop her, or let her do what she so obviously wanted. Tunneling his fingers into her hair, he pumped his hips and fucked her mouth.

"Take it all, lass. Aye, that's the way."

His balls drew up close to his body. Llyr arched his hips and squeezed his eyes shut when the pleasure galloped up and down his spine. His body jerked with each pulsation of his cock.

Llyr pried his eyes open to see Ashlyn leaning over him on her hands and knees. A satisfied smile touched her lips. "I love it when you come in my mouth."

"I love it too, darlin'." He ran his hands up and down her arms and over her shoulders. "I was supposed to make ye come first."

"It isn't a contest, Llyr."

"Aye, but I like to feel ye tremble in me arms."

"The night is still young. I believe you said something about having your way with me many times tonight."

"That I did." He slid his fingers beneath her bra straps and pulled them down her arms. Her warm breasts fell out of the cups. Palming each full globe, he kneaded them until her nipples beaded. "Perhaps we should take this to your bed."

She kissed him. Llyr could taste his essence on her tongue. "I think we should definitely take this to my bed."

Chapter Three

Twyla saw Molly Ross at the usual corner table in Jennie's Java. An aspiring author, Molly said she preferred the atmosphere of Jennie's Java to the apartment she shared with her sister when she wanted to write.

She admired Molly's determination. Her friend had received numerous rejections from agents and editors, but she refused to give up.

It surprised Twyla not to see Marci Bayne here. Marci usually arrived before Twyla. Perhaps Marci's hunky boyfriend had kept her in bed this morning. If Twyla had a lover as gorgeous and sexy as Keefe Donegan, she certainly wouldn't waste her mornings having coffee with two women.

Taking her place in line, Twyla thought back to five weeks ago when she'd shared a table with Marci and Molly for the first time. The three women had bonded over their lattes and muffins. Discussions about jobs, body image, men and sex had quickly sealed their friendship. Twyla looked forward to their conversation every weekday morning.

Marci and Keefe came in the coffee shop as Twyla turned toward the table with her latte and chocolate chip muffin. They didn't see her since they only had eyes for each other. The same twinge of jealousy she'd felt with Sherry when they were shopping for lingerie hit her again. Twyla was happy for her new friend, but also longed for the same kind of happiness.

Marci looked in her direction and smiled. She spoke to Keefe again before he stepped up to the counter, then she headed toward Twyla. Her eyes sparkled with happiness. "Hi."

"Good morning. Is everything okay? You're later than usual."

"Oh yes, everything's fine. Keefe and I... We got a late start this morning."

"Couldn't get out of bed?"

A lovely blush filled her cheeks. Twyla grinned. "He must be really good."

"He is. He's *amazing*."

"I heard the word amazing," Keefe said, walking up to them. "You must be talking about me."

"He also has an ego," Marci said to Twyla.

"It's part of my charm." He handed a cup to Marci. "Good to see you, Twyla."

"You too."

Keefe kissed Marci's cheek. "I'll call you later."

"Okay."

Marci watched Keefe leave the coffee shop, love written all over her face. If Twyla hadn't already known how much Marci loved her man, she would know it now.

"Keefe isn't working today?" Twyla asked as they made their way to Molly's table.

"Not at the office. He's finishing up the painting at my house. We're putting it on the market next week."

"You got everything moved to his house?"

"Finally. I never realized I'd accumulated so much stuff until I started packing. I didn't think my little house could hold that much."

They stopped at Molly's table. The young redhead didn't lift her gaze from her laptop's screen. Her forehead was furrowed as her fingers flew over the keys.

Twyla looked at Marci. "I don't think she knows we're here."

"I think you're right." Marci leaned over and waved her hand in front of Molly's face. "Yoohoo!"

The young redhead jumped and jerked up her head. Her eyes appeared glazed for a moment before she smiled. "Hey." Her smile faded and her eyebrows drew together. "How long have you been here?"

"Long enough to see you totally absorbed in what you're writing." Twyla slipped into the chair opposite Molly. "Are you in the middle of another sex scene?"

Molly grinned. "A really hot one. I'm writing about a *ménage a trois*."

"You know about those?" Marci asked, sliding onto a chair between the other two women.

"Well, not personally. But I've done a lot of research."

"Sounds like fun research."

"*Reading*, Marci. That kind of research."

Twyla tore her muffin in half. "Would you like a more personal type of research?"

Molly wiggled her mouth back and forth. "I've thought about it. What woman wouldn't want two guys whose only desire is to make her come again and again?"

"I have that with *one* guy," Marci said with a wicked grin.

"Don't brag, Marci. It's tacky. Not all of us have a stud in our beds." Twyla popped a bite of muffin into her mouth and chewed. "Not that my friends and coworkers haven't tried to find one for me. My friend Sherry keeps setting me up with blind dates who are complete duds. I have another one tomorrow night with some guy who works with her husband George."

Marci removed the top from her coffee. "You don't know anything about him?"

"Only that he works with George and she calls him Mr. Wonderful. Sherry invited him and me to her house for dinner."

"Maybe he'll be different." Molly closed her laptop and entwined her hands on top of it. "He must be nice if your friend calls him Mr. Wonderful."

"You haven't had the pleasure of meeting the other four Mr. Wonderfals Sherry has introduced to me." Twyla uncovered her latte and took a cautious sip. "I know my friends are trying to help, but their idea of a great guy and mine are completely different."

"Maybe you should try meeting a guy outside Seattle." Marci snatched a bite of Twyla's muffin from her saucer. "Keefe and I went to a wonderful lodge in British Columbia last month. It was for business, but it turned personal the first night we were

there. You should go someplace where you can be pampered. Forget about your job and men and just think of you."

Twyla had to admit that sounded like a wonderful idea. It had been months since she'd taken any time for herself. She didn't have to go as far as B.C. for pampering. There was a wonderful B-and-B in the foothills above Seattle that she loved. She could get a facial, manicure, pedicure, massage, plus eat incredible food and enjoy the gorgeous scenery. "That's a good idea. I know the perfect place to go."

"But in case you *do* meet a sexy man there," Molly said, "you should check out all the goodies at Lavender Lace."

"I did. Sherry and I went there Wednesday. My Visa won't recover for months."

"Really?" Eyes wide, Molly leaned forward. "What did you buy?"

"Five beautiful, sexy bras, which I desperately needed. Panties to match all the bras, a gorgeous black nightgown, and...a red thong."

"Oooh, sexy."

"I don't know what possessed me to buy a thong. I've never worn one. I've never even tried one on until two days ago."

"Did Ashlyn wait on you?" Marci asked.

Twyla nodded.

"She seems to know exactly what a woman should buy. I'd never considered thongs either until she suggested I try one on. I thought they'd be uncomfortable."

"Same here," Twyla said.

"As soon as I saw the heat in Keefe's eyes the first time I wore one, I knew buying it had been the right decision. I went back and stocked up on thongs and demi-bras." She grinned. "He's a very happy man."

"And you're a very satisfied lady," Molly said, also grinning.

"Oh yes."

"You're also a lucky lady." Twyla wiped her hands on a napkin. "Keefe is a great guy."

The humor faded from Marci's eyes. "Maybe your friend's Mr. Wonderful will be great too."

"I doubt it, but I'm not going to worry about it. You're right, Marci. I need to think about me. I do deserve some pampering and I'm going to treat myself. Soon."

* * * * *

Daniel clasped his hands behind his neck and leaned back in his chair. He'd been looking at numbers all day and they were starting to run together. He knew he should quit, but he was so close to figuring out the best route to take with the budget that he didn't want to stop.

He had the building to himself. If he quit and came back Monday, he wouldn't have the privacy and quiet he had now. Constant interruptions would hinder his progress.

Also, if he continued to work, he wouldn't have to have dinner with the Trahans.

It would be rude to cancel on such short notice, but he'd be lousy company tonight for anyone. He wouldn't mind meeting Sherry's single female friend when he was more relaxed and not so wrapped up in his job.

His decision made, Daniel dug the piece of paper from his shirt pocket that listed George's address and cell phone number.

George answered after the second ring. "Hello?"

"Hey, George, it's Daniel. I need to cancel dinner tonight. I've been at the office all day and I'm wiped. I'm sorry to back out, but I'd probably fall asleep in my plate."

"Been there, done that. Luckily I caught myself before I actually fell in my plate."

Daniel chuckled. "My canceling won't get you in trouble with Sherry, will it? I don't want you to have to vacation with your in-laws."

"Nah, it's cool. And my in-laws aren't that bad. Well, my father-in-law isn't that bad. We won't talk about my mother-in-law."

"I appreciate your understanding."

"No problem. We'll do it another time."

"You bet."

Daniel hung up and turned back to his computer. His eyes burned. He hadn't lied to George when he said he was wiped. He was tired of staring at numbers, yet he didn't want to go home and spend the evening in front of the television. Maybe he should go to the Trahans' house for dinner after all.

He was too tired for that tonight. He wanted a quiet place to have a drink and a good meal. That would be perfect.

One of the employees in his section had told him about a place in the foothills. He said it was technically a bed-and-breakfast, but had great food and a laid-back bar. No loud music, no strobe lights...just a relaxing place.

Daniel closed his eyes while he tried to remember the name of it. It had something to do with flowers. Daisies? Lilies?

"Wild Rose Inn. That's it."

The rest of this mess could definitely wait until Monday. Daniel signed out on his computer, turned off the desk lamp and left his office.

* * * * *

Twyla jerked the dress over her head and tossed it on the bed. She wasn't having any luck deciding what to wear to the Trahans' tonight. She wore professional clothes every day to work. A T-shirt and jeans would be her normal attire when visiting Sherry and George since she usually ended up on the floor, playing a video game with their two kids. Not tonight. She thought she should look nice for dinner since Sherry had invited Mr. Wonderful.

She did *not* want to meet Mr. Wonderful.

She thought again about Marci's suggestion to take some time for herself. Spending a weekend at her favorite place sounded perfect. Maybe she'd even luck out and meet a guy for a wild night of sex.

Twyla snorted. She hadn't met a guy in the last four months she wanted to be with past the first hello. She had no reason to believe it would be any different if she went to the B-and-B.

The more she thought about it, the more she wanted to get away. No phones, no meddling friends. She'd already choked her Visa at Lavender Lace. She might as well make it gasp and splurge for the two-hour massage and all the goodies that went along with it.

It sounded perfect.

Twyla decided she'd call first thing Monday and try to book a reservation for next weekend.

Why wait? Why not go tonight?

The little voice in the back of her mind urged her to go now. Her boss would be out of the office Monday. One simple phone call and Twyla could take the day off too. She could go tonight after dinner and have two days of pampering.

Twyla frowned. It would be late by the time she left the Trahans' house. She'd rather go now and get a room, then check out the bar. She'd find her own date tonight, if for nothing more than a drink and pleasant conversation. If it worked out that they clicked and she invited him to her room, that would be even better.

First, she had to make sure she could get a room. Second, she had to call Sherry.

Her reservation made, Twyla punched in Sherry's cell phone number. She listened to four rings before she heard the recording in her friend's voice, telling her to leave a message. She didn't want to lie or hurt Sherry's feelings, so decided on a generic excuse.

"Hey, Sher. I can't make it to dinner tonight. I'll call you next week."

Guilt rolled through her stomach as she disconnected the call. Twyla took a deep breath and pushed away the uneasy feeling. She'd told Sherry over and over that she didn't want any more blind dates. Her friend had refused to listen.

Since she didn't have to try to impress the new guy, it would be easier to pick out what to wear. Twyla took her favorite dress out of her closet, the one she'd immediately thought of when Ashlyn at Lavender Lace had mentioned a black dress. It didn't shout "fuck me", but came very close.

She laid the dress on her bed next to the pile of lingerie she'd bought. The red thong lay on top of the pile. She picked it up and ran her fingertips over the silky fabric. It was so light, she could barely feel it in her hand.

Twyla had bought the red thong on an impulse because she'd felt sexy when she'd tried it on. She hadn't bought any of the other colors and doubted she'd ever wear this one. Thongs simply weren't "her".

She tossed the thong back on the pile and returned to her closet for a small suitcase. Her cell phone rang as she turned toward the bathroom. She cringed when she saw Sherry's number in the display.

"Damn," she hissed.

Unwilling to ignore her friend, Twyla flipped open her phone. "Hey, Sher."

"Don't 'hey, Sher' me. What do you mean, you can't come to dinner?"

She almost made up a phony excuse, but decided the truth would be better. "I don't want another blind date, Sherry. I tried to tell you that at lunch the other day, but you wouldn't listen."

"Well, you don't have to worry about that. He called George a few minutes ago and canceled. Said he's working. He's working alone in that big building on a Saturday night."

Twyla rolled her eyes. Sherry was such a manipulator. "If you're trying to make me feel sorry for him—"

"George really likes him, Twyla. You know he has to be a great guy if George likes him."

"I don't care! I don't want another blind date!"

"Okay, okay. Sheesh, don't bite my head off."

Finally, she listens to me. That has to be a first.

"Look, you can still come to dinner. I made that chicken casserole you like so much. And chocolate cake for dessert."

Twyla's taste buds did a happy dance in her mouth. Sherry's meals were always delicious. Twyla rarely cooked for herself, so always loved eating at the Trahans'. "I appreciate it, Sher, but I wouldn't be good company tonight. I just want to be by myself."

Sherry sighed heavily. It sounded so dramatic, Twyla had to bite her tongue to keep from laughing.

"Wanna do a movie tomorrow?" Sherry asked.

"Not tomorrow. Maybe next weekend."

"You're being very mysterious."

She didn't want to tell Sherry about going away for the weekend. Her friend would insist on tagging along or try to talk her out of going. "I just want the weekend by myself. We'll get together next week, okay?"

"Okay. But if you change your mind, come on over. I have lots of wine in the fridge."

Twyla released a relieved sigh as she disconnected the call. She doubted if Sherry would have been so understanding if George's coworker hadn't already canceled.

No matter. Now she could concentrate on herself and get ready for a weekend of bliss.

She threw a few clothes, toiletries and her e-book reader into the small suitcase before donning her new red bra and bikini panties. Twyla smiled. She loved the way

the lingerie fit her body. Despite no visible support in the bra, it definitely pushed up her breasts and showed them off to their best advantage.

After slipping on her black dress and pumps, she grabbed her suitcase and purse. Halfway through the living room, she stopped. She stood still a moment, then turned and retraced her steps to her bedroom. Reaching beneath her dress, she pulled down the bikini panties and replaced them with the red thong.

“Wild Rose Inn, here I come.”

Chapter Four

Twyla closed the door to her room, leaned against it and smiled. She'd lucked out in getting a room at the Wild Rose Inn on such short notice due to a last-minute cancellation. The rooms were usually booked several weeks in advance.

A fire burned in the fireplace. It, along with a single lamp next to the bed, cast a warm glow around the room. She couldn't see anything outside the window now, but knew she'd find a magnificent view of the snow-dusted Cascades tomorrow morning.

Twyla removed her coat and laid it plus her suitcase on the king-size bed. She crossed to the fireplace and held her hands out to absorb the warmth. The stress began to melt from her body. A glass of brandy, a hot bath, and she'd sleep for twelve hours.

But first, she wanted something to eat. Her stomach had been growling for the last twenty minutes.

A quick fluff of her hair, a dash of fresh lipstick, and she was ready for whatever the evening brought.

* * * * *

Daniel saw the raven-haired woman walk into the bar. He froze with his glass raised halfway to his lips. She stood in the doorway, her gaze traveling over the room. Her eyes met his for a moment before she continued checking out the room. She crossed the floor and sat at a table for two in the corner.

Glided would be a better description for the way she moved. She walked with her head high, her shoulders back, her breasts thrust forward.

Gorgeous large breasts thrust forward.

Those long legs meant she had to be close to six feet tall. With his height at six-two, that would make them fit together perfectly while making love.

His cock responded to that idea.

Daniel had come into the bar to have a drink while he waited for an available table in the restaurant. Women had come and gone for the last forty-five minutes. He'd seen women of various sizes and shapes, blondes and brunettes and redheads. None of them had earned more than a glimpse from him. But *her*, the one with the short, curly black hair...he could look at her for hours.

Daniel sipped his scotch and watched the waitress step up to her table. The woman smiled and spoke to the server, probably ordering a drink. Once she was alone again, she looked in his direction. Daniel lifted his glass toward her in greeting. She hesitated a moment before she smiled at him.

Picking up a woman hadn't been on his agenda when he decided to come to the Wild Rose Inn. He came here to relax, forget about work and have a good meal. Seeing her changed his mind. He wondered if she was dining alone or waiting for someone.

There was an easy way to find out.

"Ready for another?" the bartender asked Daniel.

"Yes. And I want to pay for her drink." He nodded toward the woman's table.

The bartender looked in her direction and grinned. "I can't blame you for that. She's hot."

"Yes, she is. Do you know her?"

He glanced at her while adding more scotch to Daniel's glass. "I don't know her, but she does look familiar. I think she was in here a few months ago. I see a lot of people, so it's hard to keep track of who comes in when."

The bartender poured a glass of red wine and gave it to the waitress. Daniel observed the exchange between the server and the woman. She appeared surprised when the waitress pointed his direction after she set the wineglass on the table. She looked at him, lifted her glass and smiled.

Grabbing his jacket from the back of the stool, he carried his drink to her table. She watched his approach, her gaze traveling slowly down his body. She paused at his crotch on the way back up to his face.

"Good evening," Daniel said. He wouldn't sit unless she asked him. Just because she smiled at him didn't mean she wanted him to join her.

"Good evening. Thank you for the wine."

"You're welcome."

She gestured toward the chair opposite her. "Sit, please."

"Am I intruding?"

"No, not at all. I'm alone."

He draped his jacket over the back of the chair and sat down. "I'm Daniel."

"Twyla."

Leaning forward, Daniel rested his crossed arms on the table. "What brings you to the Wild Rose Inn, Twyla?"

She smiled. Her lips were full and looked soft. Kissable. "I'm treating myself to a weekend of pampering."

"And what does a weekend of pampering include?"

"Manicure, pedicure, facial, massage. All the goodies."

Her blue eyes sparkled in the dim bar lighting. High cheekbones, an oval face, creamy skin. Add all those features to that killer body and Daniel thought her one of the most attractive women he'd ever seen.

"How often do you treat yourself to all the goodies?" Daniel asked.

"Not as often as I'd like. It's been several months."

"So you live close by?"

She nodded. "In Seattle."

"So do I. I moved there three weeks ago. I'm still learning my way around."

She leaned forward, giving him an enticing view of her cleavage. He couldn't help looking, but quickly lifted his gaze back to her face. Men probably gawked at her large breasts all the time. He didn't want her to lump him in the same category with men who were too busy staring that they didn't hear anything she said.

"Where did you live before you moved to Seattle?" Twyla asked.

"Albuquerque."

"How are you surviving the clouds instead of the constant sunshine?"

"Actually, I like it. I didn't think I would since I lived in Albuquerque all my life, but I'm enjoying the different climate. And the scenery is breathtaking."

"I can't imagine living anywhere else. The view of Mount Rainier on a clear day is worth the days of cloudy weather."

"I've seen the base of it, but the top has always been covered by clouds."

"You'll see all of it before the weekend is over. It's going to be gorgeous tomorrow."

"Twyla, party of one," a female voice announced over the speaker. "Your table is ready. Daniel, party of one. Your table is ready."

"That's me," Twyla said.

"And me. Shall we leave one of those tables for someone else and dine together?"

She smiled. "I'd like that."

* * * * *

Twyla couldn't believe her good luck to meet Daniel. Her stomach had jumped when she'd first seen him. His dark brown hair and good looks had naturally drawn her attention. Any woman would be attracted to such a handsome man. She'd learned that good looks didn't mean a good man. Her last blind date had been with one of the handsomest men she'd ever seen. He'd turned out to be the biggest jerk she'd dated in the last four months.

Daniel buying her drink gave her the chance to meet him and discover if her initial reaction was wishful thinking or if he might truly be a nice man. She'd watched him approach her table. He'd walked with the confidence of a man comfortable in his body.

And what a body. Tall, broad shoulders, flat stomach, long legs. He wore loose-fitting black pants, but that didn't stop her from seeing the impressive bulge behind his zipper.

She'd only talked to him for a few minutes in the bar, but had quickly realized he was intelligent and charming. He'd looked into her eyes while speaking to her, instead of staring at her breasts as so many of her dates had done.

He rested his hand on the small of her back as the hostess led them to their table. The simple touch sent a jolt directly to her clit. Finally, *finally*, she had met a man who made her want to take the evening past dinner and to her bed.

She hoped he felt the same way about her.

She'd never picked up a man in her life. She'd dated a lot since the breakup with her ex, but had never made the first move. The fact that she invited Daniel to join her in the bar still surprised her.

She'd gone from high school sweetheart to husband without the normal flirting and dating that most women experienced. Her ex-husband had destroyed her self-confidence and belief that she was a sexy, alluring woman. No more. From the moment she'd slipped on the red bra and thong at Lavender Lace, she'd become the new, confident, sexy Twyla Gardiner...a woman who knew how to seduce a man and drive him up the wall with desire.

A man like the one sitting across from her.

Daniel opened his menu. "Do you have any recommendations?"

"The steaks are wonderful and so is the salmon. If you like prime rib, theirs is the best I've ever eaten."

"Prime rib sounds great. I haven't had it in a long time." He closed his menu and laid it on the edge of the table. "That was easy."

He sipped his drink, watching her over the rim of his glass. He had the most incredible green eyes with thick eyelashes. His hair was combed back from his face and held the slightest bit of curl. Twyla imagined tunneling her fingers into the brown strands, holding his head still while she kissed him over and over...

She laid her menu on top of his to give her a moment to drag her thoughts back to reality. "Why did you move to Seattle?"

"Work. I was offered a position I couldn't refuse."

She couldn't resist teasing him. "Does that mean you work for the mafia?"

Daniel chuckled. "Nothing that dramatic. I crunch numbers. It would be boring for most people, but I like it."

"I work for an attorney. Most people would probably find that boring too."

"It isn't boring if you enjoy it."

"I do. I have a great boss, flexible hours, wonderful benefits. I even have a window with a view. It's perfect."

"You're lucky. Very few people have what they consider the perfect job."

The waitress arrived with glasses of water and a basket of hot bread. Daniel waited until Twyla placed her order, then gave his to the server. Twyla watched his mouth the entire time he spoke. His lips were nicely shaped, a light rose in color. Once again, she imagined them pressed against hers while he ran his hands over her body...

She quickly lowered her gaze before he could see the desire in her eyes. They needed to get to know each other better before she suggested going to her room after dinner. He wasn't wearing a wedding band. That didn't mean he was single. No matter how hot Daniel was, Twyla would never become involved with a married man.

Twyla circled the rim of her water glass with one finger. "I assume, since you're here alone, there's no Mrs. Daniel."

"You assume correctly. I was engaged once, but it didn't take."

"Why not?"

"Lots of reasons. We didn't love each other the way two people should who get married. Luckily we realized that before we set a wedding date."

"No bitter breakup?"

Daniel shook his head. "We stayed good friends, even after we broke up. She got married three months ago. I attended the wedding. I'd never seen her so happy."

The waitress returned with their bottle of merlot. Daniel smiled at the server as she splashed a bit of the red liquid into his glass. After his approval, she added more to his glass and poured some into Twyla's.

When they were alone again, Daniel lifted his glass toward Twyla. "To new friends."

She clicked her glass against his. "To new friends."

She sipped the excellent wine and felt its warmth flow down her throat. She usually limited herself to one glass of wine because she refused to drink and drive. Since she already had a room on the second floor, she could enjoy herself without worrying about getting behind the wheel of a car.

If she had her way, Daniel wouldn't be driving away tonight either.

Daniel set down his wineglass. "What about you? No Mr. Twyla at home?"

"Not anymore. We divorced four months ago."

His eyes softened in sympathy. "I'm sorry."

"I was too, at first. We'd been married since right out of high school. But he decided he'd be happier with other women."

"Women? As in plural?"

Twyla nodded. "He changed from a loving husband to a wandering rat in a few months." She held up a hand before Daniel could say anything. "I'm sorry. It's rude to talk about my ex-husband with you."

"I don't mind. Sometimes it helps to talk."

"I've talked enough about him."

"Okay." He lifted his wineglass again for another sip. "But he's an idiot. You are an extraordinarily beautiful woman, Twyla."

No man had ever said she was extraordinarily beautiful. Heat crept into her cheeks at the sweet compliment. "I'm glad you think so."

"I thought that the second I saw you walk into the bar." He reached across the table and laid his hand over hers. "Is it all right to touch you?"

It was more than all right. Twyla craved his touch the way someone thirsty craved water. She nodded.

"There are all kinds of things I'd like to say to you, but they'll all sound like pickup lines."

Twyla chuckled. She liked his honesty. "I haven't heard a pickup line in a long time."

"How about if I just say what I'm thinking?"

"Okay," she said softly.

"I want to spend the night with you."

The heat of his gaze warmed her body all the way to her toes. He caressed the back of her hand with his thumb. Each movement made her pussy clench.

She wanted him with a passion she hadn't felt in a long time.

"Am I moving too fast?" he asked.

"No. I like honesty from a man."

"If you aren't ready for that and simply wish to have dinner with me, I'm all right with that. I would never expect you to do anything that would make you uncomfortable. I'm happy to get to know you before we take anything further."

"I appreciate that." She drew her hand from beneath his and picked up her wineglass. "Let's enjoy our dinner and see where the evening leads."

Daniel touched her wineglass with his. "To wherever the evening may lead."

* * * * *

Daniel poured the last of the merlot into Twyla's glass. "Shall I order another bottle of wine?"

Her eyes widened in surprise. "We drank the whole bottle?"

"It took us three hours. That isn't bad."

"Three hours?" She glanced at her watch. "It doesn't seem like we've been here that long."

"I hope that's because you're enjoying my company."

She smiled. "Very much. But we should think about leaving. It's almost ten-thirty and I think they close the restaurant at eleven."

Disappointment curled in Daniel's stomach. He hadn't been with a woman in months whose company he enjoyed as much as Twyla's. Her charm, intelligence and sense of humor made talking with her a delight.

Her beauty captivated him.

Admiring a lovely woman was normal for a red-blooded man. Yet there was something else about Twyla, something that called to a deeper part of him. He hadn't felt such an instant attraction to a woman in... He couldn't remember how long it had been. Or if he'd *ever* experienced it as strongly as now.

They'd finished dinner and shared a decadent chocolate dessert. They'd drunk an excellent bottle of wine. He had no reason to drag out their time together any longer, except for the fact that he didn't want the evening to end.

"Would you like coffee?" he asked. "I'd better have some before I head back to Seattle."

"Coffee sounds good." She touched his hand, drawing circles on the back with one fingertip. "Why don't we have it in my room?"

His cock quickly grew longer and thicker at the sexy tone of her voice and the fire in her eyes. She hadn't given him any indication that she wanted to be with him. He'd assumed it was too soon for her and he'd be driving back to Seattle, alone. "Are you sure?"

She nodded.

"What's your room number?"

"208."

"I'll take care of the check and meet you there."

"Okay."

He stood when she did. Once by his chair, she lifted her lips and kissed him softly.

"I'll be waiting," she whispered.

Chapter Five

Somewhere between the restaurant and her room, Twyla lost her newfound confidence. She wanted Daniel. She had no doubt about that. Her heart thudded heavily in her chest, her breathing came deep and uneven. She cradled her breasts and felt the hard nipples in the middle of her palms. Moisture leaked from her pussy and dampened her thong. She had all the signs of a very aroused woman.

Yet that little niggling voice in the back of her head whispered that she hadn't been with any man other than her ex-husband. She'd known how to turn on Scott. She wasn't sure about Daniel.

She didn't know what she should do first. Turning down the bed seemed too pushy. Maybe she should change into her new nightgown. No, that didn't seem right either.

This is pathetic. I'm thirty-four years old and have no idea how to seduce a man.

A married woman didn't have to seduce. Scott had understood her moods, her desires. He'd stayed away from her during her horrible bouts of PMS. He'd brought her soup when she was sick. He gave her long, deep kisses to arouse her before lovemaking, and cuddled with her afterward. All those years of marriage had meant he'd known her almost as well as she'd known herself.

Enough. That part of my life is over. It's time to concentrate on a new man.

Coffee! She'd invited Daniel to her room for coffee. It would help if she ordered it.

She'd hung up the phone after placing the order when she heard a gentle knock on the door. Nerves danced in her stomach again. She pressed her hand against it for a moment to try to settle it, then walked to the door.

Daniel stood on the other side, his jacket over his arm. He smiled. "Hello again."

"Hello." She opened the door wider and stepped aside to allow him to enter. "Come in."

She leaned against the door while he glanced around the room. "Nice." His gaze landed on the bed and stayed there for several seconds before he looked back into her eyes. "Very nice."

Twyla pushed away from the door and reached for his jacket. "I'll hang this up for you."

He released the jacket before she had a good grip on it and she dropped it. A small bag fell out of the pocket. Twyla knelt and reached for it at the same time as Daniel. The bag upended, spilling a box of condoms on the floor.

Twyla gulped. Seeing the box of condoms, knowing she and Daniel could be making love soon, sent a shiver of apprehension mixed with desire through her body. She clutched his jacket to her breasts, unsure what to do next.

"Nothing will happen that you don't want to happen, Twyla," Daniel said, his voice soothing and gentle. He picked up the box and slipped it into his pants pocket. "You invited me here for coffee. I bought the condoms in case things go beyond that. But if coffee is all we share tonight, that's fine."

She held his gaze as they both stood. "You wouldn't be angry with me?"

"Only a jerk would be angry with a woman if she didn't want to have sex with him."

"I've dated some of those jerks."

He chuckled. "I'll bet you have." He ran his hands over her shoulders, down her arms and took his jacket from her. "Did you order the coffee?"

Twyla nodded. "It'll be here soon."

"Then why don't we sit down and enjoy the fire while we wait?"

His easy manner and understanding helped Twyla to relax. He wanted her. She had no doubt of that. Her confidence returned, stronger than when she'd invited Daniel to join her in the bar.

She waited until he hung up his jacket, then led the way to the small couch in front of the fireplace. Slipping off her shoes, she sat with her legs curled on the seat, her bent arm resting on the back of the couch. Daniel laid his hand on top of hers. His thumb slowly brushed back and forth across her skin.

"You're a toucher," she said with a smile.

"Guilty. Does it bother you?"

"No. I like it. Touching is nice."

"How do you feel about kissing?"

"Kissing is even nicer."

Daniel leaned closer and covered her mouth with his. Soft lips, carrying a hint of the wine she'd drunk with dinner. His head spun...not from the wine, but from the taste of Twyla.

He kept the kiss light, gentle, not wanting to rush Twyla until she was ready to go further. Her fingertips brushed his cheek. Daniel touched the seam of her lips with the tip of his tongue. She parted them ever so slightly, giving him a more generous taste of her. Still he kept the kiss gentle, even though everything inside him screamed to take her.

A hard knock on the door followed by a muffled "room service" announced the arrival of their coffee. Daniel reluctantly ended their kiss. Twyla's lids slowly opened. Her blue eyes reflected the firelight, clearly showing her desire. He wanted to draw her back into his arms, kiss her with all the passion that he longed to show her.

"I'd better get the door," she whispered.

He nodded since he wasn't sure if his voice would work right now. All the blood in his head had drained down to his cock. He couldn't even think, much less speak.

Daniel tugged on the crotch of his pants, trying to get his shaft into a more comfortable position, while Twyla let the waiter into the room. He set the tray holding the coffee service on the table by the window. With a nod to Daniel, the waiter accepted the tip Twyla handed him and left the room.

"How do you take your coffee?" she asked, her back to him.

He didn't give a damn about any coffee. He only wanted her back in his arms.

"Twyla."

She set down the pot before pouring any of the hot liquid and faced Daniel.

"I don't care about the coffee."

"Neither do I."

He held up one hand to her. "Come here."

She walked to the couch and took his hand. With a gentle tug, he pulled her down to his lap and kissed her the way he'd longed to since the moment he saw her.

The soft moan from her throat wrapped around his cock, making it as hard as it had been before the waiter interrupted them. He tightened his arms around her and deepened the kiss. She parted her lips and touched his tongue with hers. Daniel nipped her lower lip, drew it between his teeth, licked the gentle bite to soothe it. Twyla responded by snuggling closer to him.

He groaned when he felt those full breasts pressed to his chest. It would be easy to lose control if he didn't slow things down.

Daniel ended the kiss. He rested his forehead against Twyla's and fought to breathe. The quick puffs of air from her mouth proved she was as affected as he by their kisses.

"Wow," he breathed. "You're one hell of a kisser."

"I was just thinking the same thing about you. Why did you stop?"

He lifted his head so he could look into her incredible blue eyes. "Because I was three seconds away from tearing off your dress."

"Considering this is my favorite dress, I'd rather you didn't tear it. However..." A siren's smile touched her lips. She released the top button of his shirt. "There's another way to take off my dress."

Daniel swallowed. "Twyla, I..." He looked at her hand when she released the second button.

"You what?"

He forgot what he was going to say when she loosened the third button. Gazing into his eyes, she slid her hand inside his open shirt and caressed his chest. "Mmm, nice body. You must work out."

The feel of her palm on his skin sent his blood pressure skyrocketing. Cradling her nape in one hand, he pulled her closer and kissed her again. He darted his tongue into her mouth, savored the answering touch of her tongue against his. She released the rest of his buttons while they kissed and tugged his shirt from his pants. Spreading it wide, she continued to touch his chest and stomach.

Daniel slid his free hand up her smooth leg and beneath her dress. He paused at the top of her thigh, then continued to her ass cheek. No panties. God, how sexy was that?

Continuing his exploration, he found the thin elastic that divided her cheeks. Not bare, but wearing a thong. With one fingertip, he traced the elastic until he reached the beginning of the silky fabric covering her pussy. He pressed ever so lightly on her anus and was rewarded with her moan.

"I think we're wearing too many clothes." He kissed her again, and again. "What do you think?"

Instead of answering with words, she moved away from him and rose to her feet. Grasping the hem of her dress, she pulled it over her head and dropped it on the floor.

Daniel started at her face and slowly moved his gaze down her body. Tall, voluptuous, creamy skin. Her red bra and thong trimmed with black lace was the sexiest underwear he'd ever seen. Her lush breasts spilled over the top of her bra. Her nipples clearly showed through the red fabric. His mouth watered with the desire to draw them into his mouth, suck them until they were even harder.

"Your turn," she said with that siren's smile.

He stood and shrugged out of his shirt as he toed off his shoes. When he reached for his belt, Twyla covered his hands with hers.

"Let me do that."

She dropped to her knees before him, giving him an excellent view of her breasts. He ran his fingers over the top of the full mounds while she unbuckled his belt. Her skin was so soft, so smooth. He wanted to start kissing her neck and work his way down her body to her toes.

Daniel sucked in a sharp breath when Twyla's hand brushed across his hard flesh. The rasp of his zipper sounded loud in the quiet room. She tugged his pants past his hips. They fell to his feet.

She sat back on her heels as he stepped out of his pants and removed his socks. He stood before her in nothing but a pair of dark brown briefs.

"Those too," she whispered.

The briefs landed on top of his slacks.

She inhaled and slowly blew out her breath. "You're magnificent, Daniel."

Keeping in shape had always been important to him. Right now, with Twyla looking at him with such lust in her eyes, he knew all those hours of sweat had been worth it.

She leaned forward and dragged her tongue up the length of his cock. He could easily stand here and accept the pleasure she offered. Before he concentrated on

himself, he wanted to please Twyla. He took her hands and helped her stand. "I want to touch every inch of you."

He scooped her up in his arms and carried her to the bed. He laid her on the soft comforter and lay beside her. Their lips met as he slipped one leg between hers.

Twyla would swear she was melting right into the bed. Daniel made her feel feminine, desired, something she hadn't felt in so long. He kissed her as if he worshipped her, as if nothing mattered to him except her pleasure.

He swept his hand down her side, over her hip, her thigh. He made the return journey up her body, pausing to caress her mound through her thong before snaking up her stomach to her breast. Twyla gasped when he plucked her nipple. The sensation shot through her body, directly to her clit.

"You like that?" he asked against her lips.

"Yesssss."

"So do I." He plucked her nipple again, then rolled it between his thumb and forefinger. "What else do you like?"

Everything, she wanted to shout. Her body was on fire, desperate for Daniel's touch, his possession. His caress through her bra sent wave after wave to her clit, but it wasn't enough. She wanted his mouth on her.

"Suck my nipples."

He rose to his knees between her legs. Twyla swallowed at the sight of his hard cock standing straight up. She reached for it, longing to feel the satiny skin, the bead of moisture at the slit. He took her hand before she could touch him. Holding her wrists, he positioned them next to her head. "Leave your hands there."

The trace of dominance in his command sent another zing to her clit. Twyla nodded. Daniel slipped his hands behind her back and unhooked her bra. He tunneled his hands beneath the silk and lace and cradled both breasts.

“Beautiful,” he whispered. “Absolutely beautiful.”

Twyla closed her eyes to better enjoy the pleasure of his hands. He kneaded her flesh, caressed the tips. Her pussy clenched with each swipe across her sensitive nipples. She shifted on the bed and lifted her hips. She loved his hands on her breasts, but she needed more.

She got it when Daniel pushed up her bra and opened his mouth over one stiff peak. Twyla arched her back, trying to push more of her breast into his mouth. He suckled, bit, licked one nipple thoroughly, then switched to the other one. Back and forth, treating each tip to even more attention when he returned to it.

“I could suck your nipples all night.”

She didn’t get the chance to respond to his comment before he started suckling again. Heat built inside her body, threatening to consume her. Twyla grabbed handfuls of his hair. He immediately pushed her hands back to the bed and held her wrists in place.

“Leave them there.”

“I want to touch you.”

“Later.”

“Daniel—”

His lips silenced her protest. He drove his tongue deep, withdrew and tickled the corners of her mouth with the tip. Twyla had never come just from kissing with Scott, but wondered if it was possible. Daniel kissed her over and over, holding her wrists so she couldn’t move. She breathed in the light scent of his aftershave, savored the hint of wine on his breath. She felt surrounded by him, yet wasn’t afraid at all. She knew Daniel would never hurt her.

He latched onto her nipple again and suckled hard. Everything seemed intensified as her climax drew closer—the warm wetness of his mouth on the hard peak, the silkiness of his hair brushing across her breast, the glide of his skin against hers. She

curled her hands into fists to keep from grabbing Daniel. She wanted to touch him so much, it was almost a physical ache deep inside her chest.

The orgasm happened so quickly, she barely had the chance to gasp before the pleasure flooded her body. She trembled and bucked beneath him. His balls brushed her clit with every arch of her hips, drawing out her climax even longer.

Tiny aftershocks flowed through her body for several moments. Twyla slowly opened her eyes to see Daniel leaning over her, his breathing fast and ragged.

"You're gorgeous when you come." He kissed her mouth, her throat, her collarbone. "Are you wet for me?"

"Definitely."

"I think I'd better make sure."

Twyla lifted her hips when he grasped the elastic of her thong. He tugged the damp piece of lingerie down her legs and tossed it aside. Her bra soon followed. She lay before him, as naked as he.

She opened her legs wide and watched his eyes flare. First he looked, then he touched. One thumb and forefinger parted the feminine lips. He spread her cream over her smooth labia with his other thumb.

"Oh yeah. Nice and wet." He began a slow massage on her clit. "I think you need to come again."

More moisture formed at the tip of his rod. Twyla licked her lips, wishing she could lick the head of his cock instead. "What about you?"

He chuckled. "Trust me. Coming won't be a problem for me."

A single finger slid inside her channel. Another followed. He moved them in and out slowly while he continued the gentle massage on her clit. She groaned when he pressed upward against her G-spot.

"That's the way," he rasped. "Let it happen. Let me feel you come again."

With each brush of his fingertips over her G-spot and clit, a burst of sensation passed through her body from head to toes. He obviously knew his way around a woman's body. Every touch, every kiss, every swipe of his tongue made her want him more.

She didn't think another orgasm could happen again so soon, but it did. Biting her lower lip, Twyla arched her back, threw back her head and squeezed her eyes closed. Her head spun, her chest heaved from her heavy breaths. Her pussy started to pulse and milk Daniel's fingers as the climax rolled through her body.

Long moments passed while her body relaxed and her breathing slowed. She opened her eyes when Daniel withdrew his fingers from her body. He licked her juices from them.

"You're delicious." He leaned over and kissed her deeply. "And so sexy, you take my breath."

He'd given her two incredible orgasms, yet that wasn't enough. She had to feel his shaft drive inside her. Unable to resist touching him any longer, Twyla wrapped one hand tightly around his cock.

"Inside me. Now."

Chapter Six

Those soft hands could bring him to a climax in only moments. Daniel gritted his teeth while Twyla caressed his hard flesh. She ran both hands up and down his shaft. Her thumb swirled through the moisture at the slit, spreading it all over the head. She cradled his sac, gently squeezing the tight balls as she continued to caress the crown.

He loved her touch, but wouldn't last long if he didn't stop her. He lifted her hands and kissed both palms. "I'll be right back."

Daniel found his pants next to the couch and dug out the box of condoms. He opened it and removed one of the foil packets as he approached the bed again. Seeing Twyla lying crosswise, resting on one elbow, stopped him in his tracks. Her creamy skin looked golden from the firelight. She lay with her legs parted. A small tuft of black hair covered her mound, but her feminine lips were bare.

He'd sampled her juices from his fingers, but that wasn't nearly enough of a taste.

Tossing the box and packet on the nightstand, he grasped Twyla's ankles and tugged her closer to the edge of the bed. He dropped to his knees, spread her legs wide and feasted.

Satiny skin. Musky scent. Honeyed cream. Daniel savored every part of her pussy...from her clit that was peeking out from its hood again, to the tight rosette of her ass.

"Daniel," she whispered.

He looked up from between her legs to see her propped on both elbows. A light coating of perspiration made her skin shine. Her nipples stood up firm in the center of pale pink areolas. Her eyes... God, her eyes were filled with so much lust.

He nipped the tender skin at the crease of her thigh. "You're delicious."

"Daniel, *please*. I need you inside me."

He couldn't resist giving her labia one more long lick before he stood. She pushed herself back to the middle of the bed while he tore open the condom packet and climbed on the bed next to her. With one long, slow slide, he buried himself inside her.

Tight. Hot. Wet. All those sensations hit Daniel at once. He lay still, clutching Twyla's ass, and fought for control. He felt like a teenager with his first girl, ready to come in seconds.

He began to move, short thrusts that drove the head of his cock in and out of her channel. She clutched his shoulders, her fingernails digging into his skin.

"Yes. Oh yes. That feels so good, Daniel."

He held her ass tighter, drove deeper until his balls touched her slick flesh. Burying his face against her shoulder, he increased the speed of his thrusts. Twyla's arms tightened around his neck, her legs wrapped around his waist.

"Harder." She tugged on his earlobe with her teeth. "*Harder*, please."

Daniel did as she ordered, moving faster, thrusting deeper. He kissed Twyla as he moved inside her, gently biting her full lower lip, sucking it between his lips, swiping his tongue across it. She returned kiss for kiss, thrust for thrust.

Sweat pooled at the base of his spine. His heart pounded so hard, he felt it in his temples. He slipped one arm beneath Twyla's thigh and lifted it so he could drive even faster into her.

She closed her eyes and threw back her head. "Right there. Oh Daniel, right *there*. Yes!"

The walls of her pussy pulsed around his cock. Daniel's balls drew up tighter to his body and he moaned loudly. The orgasm raced through his body and poured out the end of his rod.

Totally spent, he collapsed on top of Twyla. He managed to hold himself up on his elbows so she could breathe, but that's all he could do. All his muscles turned to mush with his climax.

The soft touch of Twyla's hands on his back gave him the strength to raise his head. Her eyelids were half closed, her lips tilted up in a satisfied smile. He couldn't resist the lure of those rosy lips and kissed her. "You realize it's completely unfair."

Her smile faded, to be replaced by a slight frown. "What's unfair?"

"That a woman can come over and over and a man wilts after one orgasm."

She laughed, which was exactly what he wanted. "'Wilt' being the operative word?"

"Yep."

"Does that mean you take a long time to...recuperate?"

"I didn't say that. In fact..." He kissed the sensitive area beneath her ear. "I don't think it'll take me very long at all." He kissed her mouth again, longer this time. The stirring of his cock proved he'd soon be ready to make love to her again. "So I'd better borrow your bathroom before anything...develops."

He was halfway to the bathroom when Twyla spoke again. "Do you want coffee now?"

"I'd rather have something cold."

"Chardonnay?"

Daniel smiled. "Perfect."

Twyla waited until Daniel had disappeared into the bathroom before she called room service and ordered the wine. After she hung up, she stretched out on the bed, her arms over her head. She couldn't believe how lucky she was to have met Daniel. He was an incredible lover, but it was more than sex. He was funny and charming and she enjoyed talking with him.

She wondered if this could be the first night of many more to come.

As quickly as that thought entered her head, she pushed it aside. She was going way too fast. She and Daniel had clicked sexually, but they barely knew each other. She couldn't assume he'd want to see her again after tonight, just because she wanted to see him again. Maybe this was nothing but a one-night stand to him.

That thought caused a hollow feeling in the pit of her stomach. Daniel didn't seem like the one-night-stand kind of guy.

A knock on the door followed by "room service" had Twyla scrambling off the bed and grabbing her robe. The waiter set the tray on the table next to the coffee service. He offered her a pleasant "good evening" and left in only moments.

She heard the bathroom door open. Daniel peeked through the small opening. "Is the coast clear?"

"Yes."

Daniel came out of the bathroom, still gloriously naked. His cock hung between his thighs, tempting even in its relaxed state. He walked up to her, amusement lighting his eyes. "You're staring."

Twyla grinned. "Absolutely."

He laughed before kissing her. Slipping his hand behind the belt of her robe, he tugged her closer to him. "I wouldn't mind staring at you. If I'm naked, you should be too."

"That could be arranged."

"Why don't you arrange it and I'll pour the wine?"

"Okay."

A thin blanket lay on the end of the bed. Twyla climbed back on the bed and pulled the blanket up to her waist. She watched Daniel open the bottle of wine, admiring the way the firelight illuminated his smooth back and bottom. A light sprinkling of dark

hair covered his well-shaped legs. She loved the way the dusting of hair on his chest brushed across her breasts.

"I can feel you staring at me," Daniel said, not looking at her.

Fluffing the pillows behind her back, she snuggled into their softness. "I like the view."

He picked up the two wineglasses and carried them to the bed. His gaze dropped to her breasts as he held out one glass to her. "So do I."

She held up one corner of the blanket so he could slip beneath it. Once sitting beside her, he took a long sip of the cold liquid. "Mmm, good."

"Very," Twyla said after taking a drink of her wine.

He wrapped one arm around her shoulders. Twyla thought snuggling with Daniel was much better than the pillows. She turned so her back rested against his chest. He cradled one breast in his palm, his thumb slowly moving back and forth over her nipple. Twyla had experienced three intense orgasms tonight, yet her body responded to Daniel's caressing. Each pass of his thumb sent a direct current to her clit. Her pussy clenched with the need to be filled again.

"Your breasts are amazing."

His warm breath close to her ear sent a chill down her spine. Goose bumps erupted across her skin.

"Are you cold?"

She shook her head. "Your breath in my ear makes me shiver."

"Hmm." He nipped her earlobe as he squeezed her breast. "What else makes you shiver?"

"Your kisses."

He kissed his way across her shoulder to her neck. "What else?"

"When you touch my breasts."

He set his glass on the nightstand and cradled both mounds in his hands. Twyla moaned when he whisked his thumbs across the peaks.

“What else?” he asked.

His caressing of her nipples made it difficult for Twyla to think, much less talk. “Touching my clit.”

One hand slid between her thighs. He circled her clit with his forefinger. “What else?”

Twyla leaned over to set her glass on the nightstand. Turning back to Daniel, she rose on her knees and wrapped her arms around his neck. “That’s enough talking, don’t you think?”

He clasped her ass and pulled her closer to him. “Definitely.”

She kissed him. A hint of wine clung to his lips, mixed with a trace of her juices. She tunneled her fingers into his hair while she kissed him again and again. She couldn’t get enough of his taste.

“You are so hot.” Daniel kissed his way down her chest. “And sexy.” He latched on to one firm nipple. He sucked hard, stealing Twyla’s breath and all the strength in her legs. She fell to the bed, her hands still buried in Daniel’s hair to hold him at her breast. He followed her down, stretching out on top of her between her spread legs.

The feel of his hard cock pressed into her belly made Twyla arch her hips to get closer to it. He wasn’t kidding about recuperating quickly.

“Are you ready for me again?” he asked against the curve of her breast.

“Yes. Now please.”

He wasted no time in donning a condom and sliding inside her. Twyla had wanted it rough the first time. She’d wanted Daniel to pound into her as fast as he could. This time, she wanted their lovemaking to be tender.

As if he'd read her mind, his movements were unhurried and easy, driving up her desire slowly. She stared into his eyes as he thrust inside her. She saw heat, but she also saw tenderness.

"I want you to come again." He kissed her lips once, twice. "What do you need from me?"

His obvious concern for her pleasure was all she needed. The climax built steadily, flowing through her body instead of grabbing her by the throat like her earlier orgasms. It rippled from her womb to her toes, to the top of her head. Her pussy contracted around Daniel's cock.

"God, yes," he muttered. He dropped his head to her shoulder as his body began to quiver. "*Christ!*"

She held him tightly until his body stilled. His heart didn't pound as hard, his breathing quieted. She pushed his damp hair back from his face and kissed his cheek.

He lifted his head. He looked into her eyes a moment, then kissed her tenderly. "I'll be right back."

Twyla watched him rise and walk to the bathroom again. She didn't think she'd ever tire of looking at that incredible ass.

A chill raced through her without Daniel's body to keep her warm. She pulled back the covers and burrowed between the soft sheets. Satisfied and relaxed, she could fall asleep in seconds. Her eyes drifted closed.

She opened them again when she heard Daniel come out of the bathroom. He placed the bottle of wine inside the small refrigerator before returning to bed. He climbed in beside her and tugged her into his arms. Wrapping one arm around his waist, she laid her head on his shoulder and sighed.

He kissed her temple. "Sleepy?"

"Mmm-hmm. You wore me out."

"I'm happy to serve."

She tilted her head so she could see his face. "You served very well."

"Does that mean you might want a repeat tomorrow?"

"I wouldn't mind."

His chuckle vibrated in her ear. "I'll have to make another trip to the gift shop for some clean clothes."

"I promise I'll make whatever you spend worth it."

"You already have."

He lifted her chin and kissed her softly. He kissed her again, this time with more passion. Twyla wrapped her hand around his cock and felt it grow longer and thicker. He pumped his hips as they kissed, sliding his shaft across her palm. In only moments, he was fully hard and ready to fuck her again.

"Once more before we go to sleep?" he asked.

Twyla squeezed his firm flesh. "Oh yes."

Chapter Seven

Daniel awoke the next morning with Twyla's warm lips wrapped around his cock.

"Fuck," he muttered.

Before he stopped to think, he arched his hips and drove his shaft deeper into her mouth. When he realized what he'd done, he pulled back so he wouldn't gag her. Instead of letting him go, she took him all the way to his balls.

He grabbed the covers and threw them aside. Twyla looked at him, her mouth still sliding up and down his flesh. "What are you doing?"

She licked up one side and all around the head. "If you have to ask, I must be doing something wrong."

He groaned when she darted the tip of her tongue into the slit. "Trust me, you aren't doing anything wrong."

"Then just lie still and enjoy it."

An excellent suggestion, and one he'd love to follow, but he wouldn't do that to Twyla. He wouldn't let her bring him to a climax without giving her the same pleasure.

"Hey." He slipped his hand beneath her chin and lifted her mouth away from him. "Swing around here so I can lick your pussy."

Her eyes flared, proving she liked his idea too. She gave his cock one more long lick from base to tip, then turned and straddled his face. He gripped her ass as she lowered her pussy to his mouth. He inhaled, savoring her musk. The scent was intoxicating.

He licked her clit at the same time that she took his rod in her mouth again. Her cream slid across his tongue and down his throat. He'd never tasted anything as good as Twyla's juices. He licked the full length of her labia, then concentrated on her clit. It grew larger and firmer with his stroking.

She moaned when he nipped it with his teeth. Daniel felt the vibration all the way through his cock. He scraped his teeth over her clit again, licked her labia to her anus. She moaned even louder when he touched her anus with his tongue.

It appeared the lady liked anal play. To test his theory, he licked all around the rosette before driving his tongue inside her.

She moved her mouth faster up and down his cock. Daniel jerked when he felt her wet finger slide into his ass. The pleasure was so intense, he groaned long and loud.

His cock slipped out of her mouth. "Do that again."

It took him a moment to realize what she wanted. Daniel placed his lips directly on her anus and groaned again. Twyla arched her hips and pushed her ass closer to his mouth. "That feels so good."

"The vibration or my tongue?"

"Both."

He hummed as he licked her again, giving her as much stimulation as he could. She took his shaft in her mouth once more, flashing her tongue all around his hard length as she moved her lips up and down. Daniel's eyes crossed. He was so close to coming. Somehow he had to hold off, to bring Twyla to a climax first.

Grasping her buttocks tighter, he began fucking her ass with his tongue. She pumped her hips in time to his thrusts. Her breathing became choppy, heavier. He licked faster, darted his tongue quicker into the sensitive opening.

A loud moan came from her throat before she trembled. Daniel pulled back and watched her pussy and anus pulse with her orgasm.

God, that was sexy.

Once her breathing evened out, she began to move her mouth on him again. Daniel's desire had faded while he concentrated on Twyla's pleasure. It erupted back to life with the feel of her lips and tongue on his flesh.

She pushed a second finger inside his ass, and he lost it.

"Twyla. *Fuck!*"

Daniel closed his eyes tightly and threw back his head. His cock jerked and throbbed, his cum filled her mouth. He saw stars. He'd experienced strong orgasms in the past, but he'd never seen stars.

He didn't know how long he lay there, struggling to breathe, until he opened his eyes again. Twyla remained on top of him, her face resting on his thigh. Her warm breath brushed his balls every time she exhaled.

He ran his hands over her ass. "Hey."

"What?" she said, her voice still breathless.

"Come here."

"What makes you think I can move?"

He knew what she meant. His legs felt like overcooked spaghetti. Lifting her leg, he slid out from beneath her, turned and lay on his side so he could see her face. Her eyes were closed, her lips parted. He pushed her hair from her damp temple.

"What a way to start the day," she said. Those beautiful blue eyes opened and she smiled.

"A very hot way to start the day."

She rose to her elbows. Frowning slightly, she reached beneath her breasts and rearranged them to a different position. Daniel grinned. "The girls giving you trouble?"

"Just getting them comfortable." She glanced at his cock. "Don't you ever have to...adjust things?"

"Oh yeah. All the time." He reached over and gave one mound a gentle squeeze. "Is having large breasts a problem for you?"

"Finding bras in my size has been a problem. But there's a new lingerie store in Seattle that carries gorgeous bras in every color and size imaginable."

"Is that where you got your red underwear?"

She nodded.

"I approve. You're gorgeous in red. Black too."

"Thank you."

He squeezed her breast again. "Of course, I prefer you like this."

"Of course."

Daniel grinned. "Hey, I'm a guy. Guys like naked."

"Let me tell you something."

"What?"

She moved closer until her lips were a breath away from his. "Gals like naked too."

He liked this teasing side of her. "They do?"

"Yes. Very much."

"Does that mean we're going to stay naked all day?"

"A tempting idea, but don't you think we should leave the room sometime?"

Daniel pretended to think about what she'd said. Then he grinned again. "Nope."

Twyla dropped her head to his chest and laughed. Wrapping his arms around her, Daniel tugged her closer until her body touched his. "As long as room service is available, what do we need outside this room?"

She ran her hand over his chest and stomach. "Fresh air?"

"Highly overrated."

"Exercise?"

"Sex burns up lots of calories and is fun at the same time."

"You have an answer for everything." She lifted her head and looked down at him, amusement in her eyes. "Are you sure you aren't a lawyer?"

"Just an overworked accountant who's very horny."

She laughed again, then crossed her hands on top of his chest and rested her chin on them. "How long has it been since you slept with a woman?"

"Three months."

"Was it a serious relationship or just...fun?"

"I thought it might turn into something serious, but we were too different. We broke up after a month." He slid one arm behind his head. "When I was offered a job here, I decided it would be a good time to start over. New job, new scenery, new people. I knew my job would require a lot of hours, but had no idea it would consume me. I can't ask a woman to become seriously involved with me, at least not until my life settles down. It wouldn't be fair to her."

"I'm not looking for anything serious either. It's only been four months since my divorce. I'm not ready to jump back into a relationship yet."

"But dating is okay?"

"Dating is okay. Sex is okay."

"Sex is *very* okay."

She leaned forward and kissed him. "You're the first man I've made love with since my divorce. Thank you for making it so special."

It pleased Daniel that she felt comfortable enough with him to be honest. "My pleasure."

She kissed him again. "I have an idea."

"What's your idea?"

"Let's take a shower and go down for breakfast. Then we can visit the gift shop and get whatever clothes you need."

"I have a better idea. Let's order room service, then take a shower while we wait for breakfast. We can worry about clothes for me later."

"You just want to keep me naked."

"As long as possible."

She gave him that sexy siren's smile he liked so much. "In that case, I think your idea *is* better."

* * * * *

Twyla opened her mouth when Daniel held a plump grape to her lips. She sat in the middle of the bed, knees bent, ankles crossed. Daniel sat opposite her in the same position. Neither of them had bothered to put on any clothes after their shower.

There was something incredibly sexy about eating breakfast naked. Twyla had eaten many meals naked with Scott during their marriage and never thought a thing of it. After all, he had been her husband and knew every inch of her body. She'd met Daniel a little over twelve hours ago. Yet she felt no embarrassment, no shyness, to be this intimate with him.

It surprised her to feel so comfortable with a man she barely knew.

He held another grape to her lips before he popped one into his mouth. "I didn't realize I was hungry until I started eating."

"We worked up an appetite."

Daniel bobbled his eyebrows. "Yes, we did."

Twyla laughed. She liked a man with a sense of humor. Daniel made her laugh as well as thoroughly charmed her.

He reached over and whisked his thumb across her lower lip. "You have a beautiful laugh."

She sobered at his touch. He slid his thumb across her lip again, then ventured inside. He rubbed it on the inside of her lip, across her lower teeth. Twyla gently clamped her teeth over it and licked the tip.

In the shower, he'd run his soapy hands all over her body. Only the lack of a condom had kept them from making love beneath the warm water. They'd barely swiped towels over their bodies so they could hurry back to bed when their breakfast had arrived. Daniel had kissed her deeply and promised her they'd pick up where they left off after breakfast.

Apparently he was about to fulfill his promise.

She laid her palm against his stubbly cheek. She hadn't brought a razor with her, so he hadn't shaved. The day's growth of whiskers made him look rakish. Combined with his disheveled dark hair, he reminded her of a pirate.

A sexy, dangerous pirate.

He pulled his thumb from her mouth. "I can tell what you're thinking by looking in your eyes."

"What am I thinking?"

"That you want me to kiss you."

"Actually, that isn't what I'm thinking."

"It isn't?"

Twyla almost laughed at the disappointed look on his face. She shook her head. "I was thinking you remind me of a pirate."

A wicked grin curved his lips. "I like that. Does that mean I get to ravish you?"

"I think you've already done that today."

His eyes narrowed and turned smoky. "Did you like it?"

"Very much."

"Well, then..." He slid off the bed long enough to set the breakfast tray on the floor. When he returned to her, he gently pushed her back against the pillows. "It must be time to ravish you again."

Twyla sighed in pleasure when Daniel's lips covered hers. He was such an incredible kisser, much better than Scott.

She stopped that train of thought before it went any further. She couldn't compare Daniel to her ex-husband. It wasn't right or fair to even let her former lover cross her mind while she was in Daniel's arms.

Firmly pushing memories of Scott out of her mind, she wrapped her arms around Daniel's neck and returned his kisses. Heat spread through her body. Her breasts grew

heavy and swollen. A delicious throbbing started in her clit. She spread her thighs when he slipped one leg between them. His hard cock nestled against her belly.

"I can't get enough of you." He kissed his way down to one nipple. It peaked beneath his tongue. "You're delicious." He kissed her belly, beneath her navel, her mound. "Everywhere." He swiped his tongue across her clit. "Especially here. God, I love the taste of your pussy."

He proceeded to prove his words by settling between her legs and devouring her wet flesh. Twyla cradled her breasts and rubbed her nipples with her thumbs. She flicked them with her thumbnails, twisted them between two fingers. Every caress added to the pleasure Daniel gave her with his tongue.

Her body was already primed from their time in the shower. Stopping long enough to eat breakfast hadn't diminished her desire, only delayed it. It quickly flared even hotter than when she stood beneath the warm water with Daniel's soapy hands caressing her breasts.

He pushed two fingers into her channel. His tongue continued to torment her clit while he caressed her G-spot. Twyla released her breasts and grabbed his head as she lifted her hips. "There. Yes. Oh *yessssssss*."

He licked her clit with the flat of his tongue and continued to move his fingers inside her. The orgasm built deep in her womb. Only a few more seconds...

It fizzled when Daniel stopped licking her and pulled his fingers from her body. She was about to protest when he flipped her to her stomach. Grasping her hips, he lifted her to her knees. She looked over her shoulder to see him grab a condom and tear open the package. His gaze met hers as he slid the latex over his stiff cock.

She lowered her head to the pillow and waited. A moment later, she felt Daniel's shaft slide into her pussy.

"Tight and wet," he said, caressing her ass. "Perfect."

He began to move, slow and steady. Twyla clenched her hands in the pillow. Daniel thrust all the way until his balls touched her, then pulled back until only the head remained inside her.

She jerked in surprise when he touched her anus with his wet thumb. It only took a few seconds to arch her back, wanting more of his delicious touch.

He circled his thumb around the rosette as he continued to thrust into her channel. "You like it when I touch you here, don't you?"

"Yes."

He pushed the digit half an inch inside her. Twyla pushed back, driving his thumb and cock farther inside her.

"That's the way. Show me what you want."

The low growl of his voice made her shiver. She spread her legs another inch. "I want you deeper."

He slid his hand beneath her stomach and held her in place while he drove his cock and thumb into her body. The sound of his flesh slapping against hers filled the room. The scent of sex surrounded her. Twyla squeezed her eyes shut and hugged the pillow tighter as her orgasm loomed closer. She could feel the heat building in her body and knew that her skin must be flushed.

His hand glided up her stomach to cradle her breast. He leaned over her body and spoke in her ear. "Is that deep enough?"

Goose bumps erupted on her skin from his warm breath. He tugged on her lobe, darted his tongue into her ear. That final bit of stimulation pushed her over the edge into bliss.

"Ohgodohgodohgod!"

Her body trembled with the force of the climax flowing through her. She released the pillow and held her head, certain the top would blow off. Behind her, Daniel squeezed her hips tightly and thrust several more times before he released a long moan.

He fell next to her with a loud “oomph!” Twyla’s legs gave out and she collapsed on the bed next to Daniel. Somehow she managed to find the strength to turn her head so she could look at him. He lay on his back, one arm over his eyes. His chest rose and fell rapidly with his heavy breathing. A thin layer of perspiration covered his skin.

He was gorgeous.

She reached over and touched his chest. Daniel moved his arm and gazed at her. He smiled. “Hey.”

“Hey yourself.”

“Did that count as a second ravishment?”

“It did in my book.”

“In my book too.” Wrapping his hand around her neck, he tugged her closer for a kiss. “Don’t move.”

“No problem.”

She watched him rise from the bed and head for the bathroom before rolling to her back. She winced at the soreness between her legs. It had been a long time since she’d been so sexually active.

She had no intention of complaining.

Daniel came out of the bathroom. Her gaze swept down his body to his soft cock. She heard him chuckle.

“A third round of ravishment is going to have to wait a while.”

Twyla braced herself on one elbow as he sat on the bed. “A third round sounds wonderful, but I think it’s time to leave the room and make sure the world is still out there. A walk would be nice. And housekeeping will be by soon to make up the room.”

“Okay. I’ll go down to the gift shop and buy some things while you get ready. Is there anything you need?”

She shook her head. “I’m good.”

He grinned. “You certainly are.”

Before she had the chance to laugh, he kissed her soundly. She laid back against the pillows again while he dressed in his wrinkled clothes and shoes. He didn't bother with his briefs or socks. The thought of him walking around commando in the gift shop made her wonder how quickly they could get to that third round.

Chapter Eight

Thick clouds were beginning to cover the sun by four that afternoon. Rain would start to fall from those clouds within the next hour. Daniel reluctantly turned his car toward the bed-and-breakfast. He and Twyla had been driving and enjoying the scenery for hours. The sunny day had given them a perfect view of Mount Rainier and the Cascades. Twyla had played tour guide. She knew the area well, so pointed out places to visit, restaurants to try, areas to avoid.

She was bright, charming, funny and beautiful. A perfect companion.

He tuned the radio to a classical station and turned the volume low. Twyla leaned back against the headrest with a smile. "That's nice."

"You like classical music?"

"Some. I like all kinds of music. It depends on the song."

The longer he talked with Twyla, the more he discovered how much they had in common. He already knew they burned up the sheets in bed. She was a perfect lady in public. In private, she let her inner siren loose.

He liked both sides of her. More than he should.

Daniel glanced at her. Her eyes were closed, a small smile touched her lips. He wanted to hold her, kiss her. He couldn't remember ever experiencing such a strong reaction to a woman, not even with his ex-fiancée. Their relationship had started easy and built slowly. The sex was always good, but it had never been intense the way it was the first time with Twyla.

He hadn't exaggerated when he'd told Twyla his job consumed his life now. He worked twelve to sixteen hours a day, six to seven days a week, with no end in sight to his crazy schedule. When he became involved with a woman, he wanted to devote his

full attention to her. He didn't want to fall asleep from exhaustion during the middle of a conversation.

He'd go without sleep if it meant he could be with Twyla.

The exit sign for the Wild Rose Inn came into view. Daniel reached over and laid his hand over hers. "Are you asleep?"

"No." She opened her eyes and smiled at him. "Just resting my eyes."

"You can't possibly be tired, just because you only got about five hours of sleep last night."

"Was it that much?"

"Okay, maybe it was four."

"That sounds about right."

He squeezed her hand. "Are you sorry?"

"No. Last night was incredible. So was this morning."

"Yes, it was." Lifting her hand to his mouth, he kissed the back of it. "You're a very sexy woman, Twyla."

"Thank you. I appreciate your saying that."

"Why wouldn't I? It's the truth."

She remained silent for several moments. "My self-confidence took a beating when my husband divorced me." She looked at him. "I told you you're the first man I've been with since Scott left. I was worried that I might do something...wrong."

"Everything you did was two hundred percent right. Surely your divorce had nothing to do with your performance in bed."

He waited for her to say of course that had nothing to do with her divorce. Her lack of denial stunned him. "Twyla, your ex-husband is an idiot if he told you you're a lousy lover. Nothing could be further from the truth."

Daniel was about to heap more praises on her when she spoke again. "Enough about my ex. I shouldn't have brought him up at all."

"I don't mind."

"I do. He's out of my life and I don't want to talk about him. I had a wonderful time with you. *That's* what I want to remember. And I will, for a long time."

That last sentence sounded a lot like a goodbye. She'd told him dating and sex were okay. She'd also said she wasn't ready to get involved with anyone. No matter how much he wanted to see her again, she needed time to heal from her divorce.

He had to give her that time.

He pulled into a parking space close to the entrance, but left the motor running. "I'm heading back to Seattle, Twyla."

Surprise flashed in her eyes. "Now? You don't want to have dinner first?"

Daniel shook his head. "We had a late lunch. I won't be hungry for a long time. I have to be at the office early tomorrow and didn't get much sleep last night. I'd better turn in early tonight."

"But..." She glanced down at her lap for a moment, then looked at him again. "I understand."

"But what? What were you going to say?"

"It isn't important."

Maybe she was going to say she wanted to see him again. Maybe she was going to say her feelings for him were as strong as his feelings for her.

He could drive himself crazy with "maybes". It was time to leave her while he still had some willpower. "I enjoyed being with you, Twyla. I hope you believe that."

"I enjoyed being with you too."

He leaned across the console. She met him halfway and their lips touched in a tender kiss. He clenched his fists to keep from pulling her closer. "Goodbye."

She ran her fingertips across his cheek. "Goodbye."

Drops of rain began to fall as Daniel watched her leave his car and hurry toward the entrance. He felt as gloomy inside as the weather had become outside. For the first time

in months, he'd found a woman he'd like to get to know better, but their timing was all wrong. If he'd met Twyla two months from now, perhaps she'd be ready to start a new relationship. Then he wouldn't be going home alone.

* * * * *

Twyla hesitated before she pulled open the door to Jennie's Java. Although she hadn't known Marci and Molly that long, the three of them had become good friends right away. The two women were excellent at picking up on feelings and emotions. No matter how hard she tried to hide the hollowness deep inside, her friends would sense her unhappiness.

Put on a happy face and pretend everything is wonderful. You can do it.

Head high, Twyla entered the coffee shop. She spotted the two women at their usual table. Marci gave her a quick wave and Twyla returned it, then headed for the counter to place her order. The usual twenty-something barista waited on her, the one who always stared at her breasts. Twyla swore someday she would grab the front of his shirt and yell at him to look into her eyes.

She ordered a white mocha and a pumpkin spice muffin. She was in the mood for lots of fat and calories today.

Marci and Molly stopped their conversation when Twyla walked up to the table. They both smiled at her as she slipped into the chair opposite Molly.

"How was your weekend at Wild Rose?" Molly asked.

Twyla knew her friends would worry about her when she didn't show up yesterday. She'd called both ladies late Sunday evening to let them know she was out of town. "Great. I love it there. The food is incredible, the room wonderful, the view gorgeous."

"Lots of adjectives," Molly said with a grin. "You sound like a writer."

"I'll leave the writing to you."

"What did you do?" Marci asked.

"Read a lot and just relaxed. I had a two-hour massage yesterday. It was heavenly."

Marci's eyes narrowed. She leaned closer to Twyla and peered into her face. "If it was so heavenly, why do you have circles under your eyes?"

"I wondered about that too." Molly wrapped both hands around her ceramic mug. "What's up?"

Twyla knew she couldn't fool her two friends. She slowly pried the lid off her cup while trying to figure out a way to tell them about Daniel. The best way would be to simply say it.

"I met someone Saturday night, a man I wanted to be with for more than a few minutes. We had dinner together and he spent the night with me."

Molly tilted her head. "You don't look happy. Wasn't he any good in bed?"

"He was amazing in bed."

"Then what's wrong?"

"I was nothing more than a one-night stand to him."

"How do you know that?" Marci asked.

"Because he blew me off Sunday. He didn't ask to see me again. He didn't even ask for my phone number to make me think he might call me. Nothing."

"Maybe you should call him."

"How? I don't have his phone number. I don't even know his last name. All I know is he lives in Seattle. That doesn't exactly narrow down the search options." She tore her muffin in half and dropped both halves on the paper saucer without taking a bite. "We clicked so well. I felt a...connection between us. Or I thought I did. I would never have believed he was just after sex. I've dated enough of that kind of man to spot one easily."

"Sometimes they fool us."

"Daniel certainly fooled me. I feel like an idiot."

Marci covered Twyla's hand with hers. "Don't. You aren't an idiot. *He's* the idiot for not realizing what a special woman you are."

Twyla knew Marci would say exactly the right thing. She always did. "Thanks, but it taught me a lesson. Obviously I'm not ready to date yet. I made a total mess of it."

Sympathy filled Marci's eyes. "Twyla —"

"No, it's a good thing. I can tell my friends — especially Sherry — to stop setting me up with men."

"You can't give up," Molly said. "Look at how happy Marci is with Keefe."

"I know, and I think that's wonderful. I hope to meet a man as wonderful as Keefe someday. I thought I had, but he turned out to be a very handsome, sexy jerk. I'm glad I'll never see him again."

Molly wiggled her mouth back and forth. "You know what you need? You need to go shopping."

"I'm not in a shopping mood, Molly."

"A woman is always in a shopping mood. Come by Nordstrom later. I'll give you a sneak peek at some of the new holiday items we got in yesterday."

"Can I get in on this too?" Marci asked.

"Absolutely. We'll drool over the expensive party dresses and have a long lunch. How about it?"

Twyla didn't have a man in her life, but she had wonderful friends. She smiled. "Deal."

* * * * *

"Hi!" Sherry grabbed Twyla's arm and pulled her into a hug. "I'm so glad you came over."

"You didn't exactly give me the chance to say no."

Sherry grinned. "I do have a talent, don't I?" She moved back so Twyla could walk into the kitchen. "I know you rarely cook and a home-cooked meal will be good for you."

We'll stuff ourselves with lasagna and garlic bread and drink lots of wine and talk until midnight."

"Sounds good."

"Sit down and I'll get us a glass of wine. I sent George to the store for the bread. We have about fifteen minutes to ourselves before he gets back."

"Where are the kids?"

"At my mom's. She lives in the middle of that huge housing development. They'll have a better shot at getting lots of Halloween candy at her house."

Twyla wandered into the living room. She'd called Sherry Tuesday evening and told her everything that had happened with Daniel. Her friend had been ready to skin him alive. While she'd listened to Sherry rant about men without morals, Twyla realized she couldn't blame Daniel for what had happened between them. She'd invited him to her room. She'd willingly gone to bed with him and enjoyed every moment. So she'd been a one-night stand to him. That wasn't a crime. He was out of her life and she'd never see him again.

"Here you go." Sherry held out a glass of red wine to Twyla.

"Thanks." She took a long sip while her friend sat on the opposite end of the couch. "Mmm, good."

"I splurged and bought the good stuff."

"I'm flattered."

Sherry sipped her wine. "So, do we start bashing the asshole now or after dinner?"

"I'm tired of bashing him. I enjoyed my time with him, Sher. He made me feel things I haven't felt in a long time. The sex was incredible. That's what I'll remember."

"But you wanted more than just sex."

"Yes I did, but it wasn't meant to be. It hurts, I'll admit that. I survived Scott leaving me and I'll survive this too."

The sound of the kitchen door opening signaled George's return from the grocery store. "Sherry?" he called out.

"In here," Sherry said. She looked back at Twyla. "We'll talk more after dinner."

"You'll never believe who I ran into at the store," George said. "I convinced him to come over for dinner."

"Who?"

George stepped into the living room. "Daniel."

Twyla froze with the wineglass halfway to her mouth. No, it couldn't be. George's friend couldn't be the same man who had shattered her heart six days ago. That would be a cruel coincidence. She looked past George to see the man who stepped into the living room behind Sherry's husband.

Daniel stood there, looking even more handsome than he had a week ago. Desire tightened her stomach for a moment before she firmly pushed it aside. He'd probably love knowing he could still make her melt at his feet with a look from those sexy green eyes.

Sherry must not have sensed the tension between Twyla and Daniel for she stood with a smile. "How nice. I've been wanting you two to meet. You'd already have met if you hadn't canceled dinner last week." Her smile faded when she looked at Twyla again. "What's wrong?" Her gaze passed from Twyla to Daniel and back again. Comprehension apparently dawned for her eyes widened. "You mean he... George's coworker is the Daniel you met?"

Twyla nodded. Setting down her wineglass, she stood on shaky legs. "I'm sorry, Sher, but you must understand why I can't stay for dinner." She gave her friend a quick hug. "I'll talk to you later."

"Twyla, wait."

She ignored Daniel's plea and hurried toward the kitchen and escape. Grabbing her jacket and purse from the coat tree by the back door, she ran outside and toward her

car. She heard the door slam behind her and picked up the pace. She couldn't face him. If she did, she'd fall apart.

"Wait, please."

He grabbed her upper arm, pulling her to a stop. Twyla tried to jerk her arm away from him, but he held her tightly. "Let go of me."

"We need to talk, Twyla."

She lashed out at him to cover her pain. "I have nothing to say to you and I don't give a shit about anything you might say to me."

Taking her other arm, he turned her to face him. "Twyla, I ran into George at the grocery store. He told me he and Sherry were having Sherry's best friend over for dinner, that she'd been hurt by a man she met last weekend. He invited me to join everyone for dinner. My first instinct was to say no to his invitation. I didn't want to spend the evening trying to be polite to a woman I didn't know, one who probably hated every man on the planet right now. Then he said the friend's name was Twyla. There couldn't be that many Twylas in the Seattle area, or even in Washington, so I knew the friend must be you. I had no idea you were the woman I was supposed to meet here last week."

"It doesn't matter. We met at Wild Rose Inn and fucked each other's brains out. End of story."

The mercury light over the garage offered enough illumination to let Twyla see anger flash through Daniel's eyes. "It wasn't like that and you know it."

"Do I? Then what am I supposed to call it?" She pushed against his chest, but his hold was too strong to break. A lump formed in her throat. She was afraid she'd cry any moment, and she certainly didn't want to do that in front of Daniel. "You dropped me off after our day together without even asking me for my phone number or last name. You had no intention of ever seeing me again."

"You're right. I didn't. But it wasn't because I didn't want to. I was trying to be considerate."

"Considerate? Well, that's a new word for brush-off."

His eyebrows drew together and he scowled. "Damn it, Twyla, it wasn't like that. I loved our time together. You have to know that."

"I know you got your rocks off and went on your merry way to your next conquest."

Daniel glanced up at the sky. "Talk about a stubborn woman," he muttered. Looking back at her, he tugged her a step closer to him. "You said in my car you'd remember our time together for a long time. That sounded like a goodbye to me, like you didn't want to see me again."

She couldn't believe he was trying to dump this back on her. "So it's *my* fault you misunderstood what I said?"

"No. I'm not blaming you for anything. But you told me you weren't ready to get involved with another man. I didn't misunderstand that, did I? Isn't that what you told me?"

He had her there. She'd said exactly that to him. "Yes," she mumbled, hating to admit he was right.

"You've only been divorced four months. No matter how much I wanted to see you again, I let you go so you could heal."

Twyla stopped struggling to get free when his words finally sank into her brain. "What?"

"You have no idea how hard it was to say goodbye to you. I wanted to beg you to give me the chance to prove I was nothing like your ex, that I would never hurt you the way he had."

She lifted one hand to his face and touched his cheek. "You really wanted to see me again?"

He nodded. "More than anything. I've never fallen so quickly for a woman in my life. I can't call it love yet, but it's well on its way to that. If you'll give me another chance."

Tears flooded her eyes and filled her throat, making speech difficult. Instead of telling him how she felt, she showed him with her kiss.

Daniel wrapped his arms around her and pulled her against his body. Twyla ran her fingers into his hair and kissed him deeper. Lips slid across lips, tongues touched, warm breaths mingled in the cool air. She felt Daniel's hands glide down to her bottom. He held her in place and rubbed his growing erection against her mound.

"Hey, you two," Sherry called out from the back door. "You gonna stand out there in the rain or come in and eat?"

"Is it raining?" Daniel mumbled against her lips.

"Don't care," Twyla said before kissing him again.

"I know we live in a secluded area," Sherry said, laughter in her voice, "but I do have neighbors."

Reluctantly Twyla pulled back from Daniel. He smiled at her. "We don't want the neighbors calling the police."

"No. Plus I'm starving."

"Me too. George said Sherry's an awesome cook."

"She is." She slipped her hand into Daniel's. "I'm definitely ready for her lasagna."

Twyla led him back into the kitchen. She almost rolled her eyes at Sherry's smug smile.

"See?" Sherry whispered while Daniel slipped off his jacket. "I told you I'd get you a date with the right man."

Twyla looked at him as he pushed his damp hair back from his face. He winked at her. "Yes," she said, smiling at Daniel. "You definitely got me a date with Mr. Wonderful."

Epilogue

Llyr leaned against the wall, crossed his arms over his chest and watched Ashlyn straighten a pile of blue panties. She had divided Lavender Lace into sections by color to make it easier for her customers to find the exact lingerie they wanted. Everything she did for her customers was to help them find the perfect item to wear for the special man in their lives, or simply to feel better about themselves.

Llyr still thought bare was better.

"You're staring at me," Ashlyn said, her attention focused on the bits of silk and lace she folded.

"Aye, that I am. 'Tis very enjoyable to stare at ye."

She looked at him. "You could help me."

Her expression was stern, but he could see the laughter in her eyes. "Ye know I donna do things the human way. I could straighten everythin' with one snap of me fingers. So could ye."

"I enjoy taking care of my store the human way, Llyr."

"Aye, I know that. And I enjoy watchin' ye do it."

She released a dramatic sigh. "Sometimes I wonder why I've put up with you for five hundred years."

Llyr pushed away from the wall. He liked the way her gaze devoured his body as he slowly walked to her. He tipped up her chin with one finger. "Because I make yer body sing when I make love to ye."

Her eyes turned all liquid and soft, exactly the way he liked them. "Yes, you do."

"And because I love ye," he whispered before his lips touched hers.

So soft, so silky. Her beautiful lips parted as soon as he kissed her. Ashlyn always responded to his kisses and caresses with a passion that hadn't dulled in five centuries.

She slid her arms around his neck and pressed her breasts against his chest, her mound against his hardening cock. He could easily take her right here, right now. A simple flick of his wrist would keep anyone outside from seeing through the large windows into the store. They'd made love several times in the back, but never out here among her frilly things.

"Llyr."

"Hmm?" He pulled the collar of her shirt aside and kissed the spot where her neck met her shoulder. Her shiver made him smile.

"You do realize people can see us."

Tugging up the back of her shirt, he laid his palm against the warm, smooth skin of her lower back. "Aye."

"I don't think it would be good for business for me to be arrested for indecent exposure."

He kissed his way up her neck to her ear. "Then maybe we should go somewhere private. I promise ye, I'm about four seconds from gettin' rid of yer clothes."

She lifted one hand and snapped her fingers. All her displays were now straightened and ready for when she opened the store Tuesday morning.

Llyr smiled. "That's me lass."

Ashlyn returned his smile. "Take me home, Llyr."

The End

About the Author

Lynn LaFleur was born and raised in a small town in Texas close to the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Writing has been in her blood since she was eight years old and wrote her first “story” for an English assignment.

As well as writing at every possible moment, Lynn enjoys reading, scrapbooking, photography and learning new things on the computer. She’s a software junky and loves to try out new programs, especially anything to do with graphics.

After living on the West Coast for 21 years, Lynn now lives 17 miles from her hometown in Texas. She’s a romantic at heart and can’t imagine ever writing anything but romances. A full-time writer, she spends her days creating stories of people who find their happily ever after, sometimes with the help of an alien or psychic or vampire.

Lynn 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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