



SEX IN SESSION

Kiss Me
IF YOU DARE

AURORA ROSE LYNN

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Kiss Me...If You Dare

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Warning: This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

Sex in Session

KISS ME...IF YOU DARE

Aurora Rose Lynn

Dedication

To my favourite bloggers.

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Chapter One

Friday night and not a date in sight.

Celeste Heplewich cast aside the dismal thought, stepped out of her fluffy pink slippers and climbed under the bed covers. Friday nights were always good nights to read if she could ignore the sounds of partying and laughter coming from next door. The walls between her apartment and the neighbour's were thin, and she heard everything, not only on Fridays, but every other night, too. She tried to focus on her text, a study on why criminals became criminals, although, she believed sceptically, there couldn't be any consensus.

"Oh drat," she muttered, remembering she'd left her hot cocoa on the kitchen counter. She threw off the covers, slipped back into her slippers and padded out of the bedroom and into the darkened kitchen. The sounds of partying next door were louder here and the incessant pound of heavy metal music made her roll her eyes. It was past ten-thirty, she noted, glancing at the clock on the microwave.

The phone in its cradle rang. Without thinking, Celeste picked up the receiver.

"Is there a party next door?" her best friend asked with a hint of excitement. Jasmine Arquette didn't consider herself beautiful, although Celeste thought so. Plus her friend of two years was vivacious and funny and every guy in Pine Woods wanted to date her.

"I know what you're going to say," Celeste replied. "Why don't I go and join them?"

"It'd be fun. You'd get out and meet new people. Our jobs don't exactly allow us to meet upstanding young gentlemen." As a court reporter, Celeste didn't see more than cocky criminals.

"Next door isn't much better."

Jasmine worked in the criminal division of the huge courthouse that served both Pine Woods and the outlying area – predominantly farm country – surrounding it. Several glasses shattered on the other side of the wall, and there was the sound of raucous laughter.

"I wouldn't exactly say they're upstanding young men, either," Celeste continued. They were probably more the free spirit types who rode loud motorcycles and cursed heavily.

"Well, you could always move," Jasmine suggested. "In with me."

Celeste was too polite to say that they both had men problems, and moving in with her friend would probably increase them. "I'll think about it, but what's the saying? Two's company and three's a crowd."

Jasmine burst out laughing. "Who are you bringing with you?" She gasped audibly. "Don't tell me you lost those fuzzy pink slippers and that housecoat?"

"The third is my libido, and no, I haven't tossed out my slippers or my housecoat," Celeste replied resignedly. Everyone, from her mother to Marly, her sister, teased her that she had rejuvenated her clothes from the late 1950s. What would they say about the curler at the top of her bangs?

"That's a shame. You should try out some lingerie from *The House of Sexy You*. They're fabulous works of sheer imagination."

"I was in there one day." On Wednesday, after she'd met Taylor Burnes at the coffee shop. He'd made her so hot and bothered as she watched him eat his ham and cheese on rye, that afterward, she'd challenged herself to at least have a peek at *Sexy You*. She hadn't bought lingerie but instead picked up a tiny vibrator she could set at the end of her middle finger to give herself one orgasm after another. After seeing Taylor, she figured she'd need them.

"You were?" Jasmine asked in surprise. "You're just jiving me, aren't you?"

"I'm not. They had some very pretty things." Along with hot books and both instructional and arousing DVDs. None of that was for her, and she'd felt out of place. Men didn't date her often.

Jasmine harrumphed. "I'm wearing their latest. A fabulous teddy made out of sheer silk in an ice blue."

Which would match her blonde hair with the brown streaks and her pretty heart-shaped face. Celeste sighed.

"How are your studies coming?" Jasmine asked.

Glad to change the subject, Celeste replied happily, "I'm doing well. I'm just about finished reading this text, and after I finish the next one, I'll be able to ace the Challenge exam." Many universities offered an examination where a student could pass a lengthy and extensive test pertaining to their area of interest, which was criminal forensics for Celeste. If the student passed with a high grade, then she didn't have to complete the coursework.

"You're very determined, aren't you?" Jasmine sighed heavily into the phone. "I wish I were as motivated as you."

Celeste grimaced but kept her mouth shut.

"When's the last time you had sex anyway?"

The question, out of nowhere, startled Celeste. "I don't need men in my life right now."

"Why not? They're good for boinking, if nothing else." The hurt came through in Jasmine's voice although Celeste was certain she was making a brave effort to hide it.

"I don't boink men," she retorted. "I date them."

"And then you boink them." Jasmine laughed aloud, her uneasiness abruptly forgotten.

Celeste smiled. She had to hand it to her friend. Jasmine always found humour in every occasion, no matter how serious it was.

"Talking about boinking, how are the judge and your mom getting along?"

Celeste's face flamed. She'd never live down that her mother and Judge Hanks had indulged in chocolate and whipped cream during sex. She suppressed a sigh. Her mom had called her after the episode, and although she hadn't come right out and said with whom, she sure delighted in the chocolate and whipped cream part. The older her mom got, the more weird she seemed to get too. "They're doing great," she replied through gritted teeth.

"Wow. That's terrific. That must be a first, a judge and a bailiff." She paused. "Maybe that's why we don't get laid more often."

Holding her breath, Celeste waited.

Jasmine used up her two-second pause as she headed for the punch line. "Because we're like old shoes. Much too reliable and predictable."

"But I like it that way," Celeste protested. She got up in the morning, went to work as a court reporter, came home, read her texts and went to bed. There was nothing wrong with that even on Friday night without a date in sight. Most of the time, she liked it that way. Tonight was an exception. Since she'd met a complete stranger, who'd revealed his name to be Taylor Burnes at the *Duck N Diner* last Tuesday, she hadn't been able to forget him. He was a hunky blond-haired, blue eyed, power plant on legs, she hadn't been able to get him, and the sexy things she fantasised he could do to her, out of her mind.

"Sure you do."

Celeste heard a doorbell ring over the phone. "You've got company."

Obviously, Jasmine had no trouble luring men to her door.

"Gotta go, love. See you Monday." The line went dead, leaving Celeste alone in her apartment with her dismal thoughts. Usually her friend's calls cheered her, but this evening, they'd left her hungry for a man.

Friday night and not a date in sight, she thought again.

Celeste strolled over to her computer, logged on and drew up her blog. What was the use of a diary when she could blog to her heart's content? No one would know who she was since she hid her true identity, and it served to get some of her feelings aired. The blog statistics were going through the roof. Today alone, fifteen hundred people had viewed her blog 'Kiss Me...If You Dare' and she hadn't posted since Wednesday night.

She read over that portion of her blog.

I met a guy in the coffee shop three days ago. The seats were all taken at the other tables, so he asked if he could sit down at mine. What the heck? I just about creamed my panties. He was one good-looking hunk. I normally wouldn't sit with a guy like that. He's a babe magnet for sure with tousled blond hair, blue eyes every female wants to sink into, and a package that is well, um, very big. Can you imagine his long, luscious cock sliding into you and giving you the time of your life...before he hightails it away from commitment?

I have to tell you, though, he wouldn't even consider a girl like me. I'm too vanilla for his tastes. He probably enjoys women who are higher class, who model or have been prom queen. You know, the women who are pretty with flawless skin, not an inch of fat on their slender bodies and are graceful swans. I'm not one of those. I have brown hair that won't hold a style no matter what I do, big boobs like my mother and I'm not slender. I'd probably be described as the 'girl next door' but I'm not a man's wet dream come true.

That's enough of me. This guy I met in the coffee shop is a real hunk, but he's not my type, and frankly, as I said, I'm not his type. But maybe he wants something a little different from the usual pretty girl hanging on his arm, perhaps a one-night stand with some wild, hot sex. I could slip out of my panties, you know the crotchless kind, then swing them on my index finger as an invitation, but would he accept it?

Celeste could swing her panties all she wanted. Taylor Burnes would just laugh and walk away, but wasn't it nice to indulge the imagination a little?

Still, he'd written his full name and his phone number on a napkin and when he'd handed it to her, said in a deep, deep voice that had made her body tingle everywhere, "If you ever want a night out on the town, just call."

Then he'd given her an unmistakable wink, gotten up from the table and walked away. Had it been pity or interest? She had no idea.

What a nice, nice ass and lean thighs. Can you imagine him naked and showing off just for you? His back is turned to you. He lifts his muscled arms above his head as if he is a bodybuilder – isn't he though with all those sculpted muscles? When he turns around, his cock bobs towards you. He walks forward with a purposeful, hungry stride. You see it in his blue eyes. You're the prey. Wait until he gets his teeth onto your aroused body. You'll swoon, your hand over your heart, then he will simply vanish. You know why? Because he never existed, and if he did, then it was only as long as you could hold him in your vivid imagination.

But there's something I forgot to tell you. Mr. Blue Eyes is too arrogant for my taste. I know that no matter how much I want him, in the end, he'll irritate me with his blasé self-assurance. He has a bad boy mentality that will get you into trouble, so watch out girl!

Celeste sighed. She was getting herself wound up, as she always did, and the only outlet for relief was masturbation with the little toy she'd bought. When she hungered for a man, she'd strap the tiny vibrator onto her middle finger and do herself, not once but several times, before she found some relief.

Friday night and not a date in sight.

Disheartened that several of her friends, and even her mother who had given up on men and sex, had somewhere to go on Friday nights, Celeste got to her feet and headed towards her cold cocoa, planning to reheat it in the microwave. Someone rapped on the outer door to her apartment, and she stumbled on the kitchen mat in front of the sink, catching herself just in time.

Who would it be at this late hour? If her mother or Marly wanted to talk to her, they'd call. They never made a late night appearance. They talked but they weren't close since Celeste's parents had divorced. And her friends knew she was off limits unless it was an emergency.

At the door, whoever it was knocked loudly, more impatiently this time, startling her. She jumped up then unlocked the door and threw it open. Her mouth gaped open in astonishment.

Taylor Burnes brushed past her, seized her wrist, pulled her from the entrance and slammed the door shut with such force the wall shook.

"You smell nice," he growled, "but you need to do something about your frumpy clothes."

His hand around her wrist bone hurt, and she sensed the raw power emanating from him. Sparks flew between them, and his eyes seared through her before he dropped her arm so swiftly it was as if the contact had burned him. He turned his back on her, and for a fleeting second, she imagined him on top of her, his weight firmly on her body. However, his comment about her 'frumpy' clothes swept aside thoughts about lust for the uber-attractive man.

She bristled. "You can't just walk in here!" *In the late evening and throw out disparaging statements about a woman's clothing*, she silently added.

He spun around nonchalantly as if he strode into other people's dwellings every day. "I just did, didn't I?" His gaze pierced through her already slim defences.

In the coffee shop, he'd been casually dressed, but any clothes he wore were only window dressing. Tonight, he wore polished black boots, a felt cowboy hat, and a denim jacket with worn jeans that moulded his legs and thighs. He would have looked just as good if he'd worn a three-piece suit. Or nothing at all.

Celeste gulped. Temptation was only an arm's reach away. How did one fight a panther in a battle that's already been won? By the panther?

His presence simply threw her off balance. Not only was she tongue-tied, but she'd lost her nerve. She could only gape at him and pray he didn't see the computer monitor behind the couch and read how much he aroused her.

"Just go back to whatever you were doing," he said, taking two huge strides to the couch and seating himself on the sagging cushion. He gazed about him as if he owned the place.

Anger began to roil in the pit of Celeste's stomach. Over the years, as she'd realised her parents weren't getting back together and they were as good as divorced, she'd tried to make the best of life, often choosing to swallow her anger rather than let out her emotions.

"What would that be?" she asked, crossing her arms over her chest in what she hoped was a threatening gesture.

His lips curved in a quirky grin. "What do women who aren't out on Friday nights do?" Taylor shrugged as if he wasn't too interested in her reply.

She was steaming mad now. "My clothes and my life on Friday nights are none of your business. Now get out." If only she'd known how rude and arrogant he was, she wouldn't have fantasised about him!

"I need a place to crash for a couple of days." His gaze was unblinking and unnerving.

Celeste fumed. She wondered if she could get to the phone and call the cops before he stopped her. Chances were she wouldn't. She was on her own.

"I don't even know you!" she flashed back. Apparently, he had no regard for other people's privacy.

"You do now," he drawled, eyeing her from head to toe and back again.

She immediately felt as if she were lacking, whether it was brains or beauty, she didn't have a clue. "For goodness sake," she blurted, "I'm a court reporter. I hear about your type day in and day out. Get out or I'll call the police." Maybe if he knew she had ties to the judicial system, he'd hightail it out of here.

His brow arched up, and heat curled into the pit of her stomach. His blue eyes seemed to pierce right through her slim defences. "Don't bother."

Celeste made her way to the phone, but Taylor's words stopped her in her tracks. The room suddenly smelled of heady aftershave and virile man.

"The cops won't listen. They never do. You want to know why?"

I can hardly wait. She didn't turn around. Chances were what he would say next would put an end to her fighting him.

He laughed grimly. "Because I'm the police chief's son."

Taylor didn't like asking for anyone's help, but in this case, he'd had no choice for two reasons. First and foremost, he had to find out what Celeste's attraction for him was. In the

Duck N Diner, he'd responded to her over every other female during the crowded lunch hour at the coffee shop. Luckily for him, after he'd gotten his sandwich, the seat facing her had been unoccupied. If it hadn't been, he'd have shunted aside the patron. There was no way he'd eat alone without pretty company. After that, he hadn't been able to return to his painting thinking about her luscious eyes and the curvaceous body she hid under her prudish, black clothes.

Countless times, he'd asked himself the same bothersome questions. What did this woman have that others didn't and why was he so attracted to her when he didn't even know her? Maybe that was half the challenge. He didn't know her, she didn't know him, and the experience of getting to know each other would be fresh and invigorating. Watercolours, cold beers and disagreeable thoughts were often his sole companionship. He couldn't get away from himself or his feelings no matter how he tamped them down. Celeste would offer some excitement in an otherwise dreary life, and hopefully, she wasn't the type interested in attachments like 'happily ever after'.

Secondly, he had a rare coin in his pocket, worth half a million dollars, and he needed to keep it hidden, which meant squirreling himself away from his cousin and his friend. Neither of whom had many scruples when it came to committing crimes. His studio apartment on Whittier Avenue had been ransacked, quite probably in search of the coin, which looked like any other penny, unless one had some knowledge about rare coins. Not that he knew much, but he'd sensed the coin was valuable after he'd wiped off the grime. A 1943 wheat penny, the coin shop's owner had told him, was extremely rare. There were only twelve in the world that he knew of. So after his apartment had been turned upside down, Taylor had decided that Celeste's apartment would do while he explored his alternatives in more ways than one.

He marvelled that she had so occupied his thoughts that she had been the first one he'd considered after he'd found himself in a whole heap of trouble.

If he told his dad, who really did happen to be the police chief in Pine Woods, the old man wouldn't believe him, as usual. Since Taylor had been eight, the chief had accused his only son of making up his own rules and living by them without regard to others. He'd pretty much disassociated himself from Taylor, who was happier without his father's bitching and strong-arming. Taylor had never known his mother, so she hadn't been part of

the picture while he'd grown up, constantly fighting the world around him, creating rules he understood to combat society. His old man had never been real supportive, and so Taylor didn't expect him to be that now. Taylor grew up distrusting everyone, from his schoolteachers, to his cousins, to his few friends. Most people stayed away from him since he was too much trouble to handle.

Over the years, if there was some hope of connecting with his dad on an emotional level, they'd almost instantly began arguing and ended up shouting and cursing at each other, which only resulted in driving them even further apart. Being the police chief's son was hell. Being the police chief's son and hiding a deadly secret would land him in purgatory, unable to save his own roasting skin.

He watched as Celeste bit into her lip then her posture straightened, and with a twinkle in her eye that told him she was about to come out and play, she said, "Well, now that all the formalities are out of the way, why don't we settle down and learn our manners?" She took a seat in an armchair across from the couch.

Taylor liked spunky woman. Celeste had rallied fast and come out with her punching gloves on. "So you're going to make this difficult, are you?" he asked.

It wasn't bad enough that everything in his apartment had been damaged beyond repair, including watercolour paintings he'd laboured over for days, but he'd have to deal with the inflexible Celeste Heplewich. His favourite lunch time haunt was the *Duck N Diner*, and he'd had ample opportunity to watch her. She always ate a Caesar Salad with a glass of water and always wore a similar blouse and skirt. He knew who she was from asking questions of other patrons, who were mostly courthouse staff.

"You bet. I usually do when strange men barge into my apartment at midnight."

Taylor glanced at his wristwatch. How time flew when looking through the remnants of what had been your life.

"Is it a regular occurrence?" He judged on first impressions, and they rarely failed to pan out. From what he'd seen at the *Duck N Diner*, he'd instantly liked Celeste from across the room, even though she dressed primly. For the oddest reason, he felt he could trust her. He hungered to find out what she hid under her quilted pink robe. If she lost the fuzzy slippers, she'd be real nice. That and the curler at the top of her bangs. She looked like an android out of a science fiction movie. At the coffee shop, he'd seen how slender her legs

were, although he hadn't had much of a chance to see anything above her knees. She'd worn a bulky, pink sweater, which he didn't understand since the temperature had been in the mid-seventies. Apparently, she preferred to dress like a delectable mouse—a pink one.

She harrumphed, and her cheeks flushed scarlet. "No, it is not."

He'd stepped on her toes. With the way she dressed, she didn't entice men. He couldn't wrap his brain around it, but he wanted her and badly. She wasn't wearing makeup or a mini-skirt or high heels, but there was something about her that had sparked his interest big time, and it wasn't about to let go.

"You invited me in quickly," he hedged on the truth. He'd pushed past her in his eagerness to get away from the would-be penny thieves.

"I did not. You barged in here," she retorted, her eyes going wide. "You're lying."

"We might as well be nice to each other since we have to make it through the weekend," he drawled. It was going to be a short one with her in his arms. Man, but did he have a hard-on just thinking of the possibilities.

"You're only staying the next few minutes," she ground out.

Which, he saw in her expression, was a few minutes too long. Yet he saw the interest and arousal in her eyes under her thin, black-rimmed glasses. He shrugged. Sparks were flying every which way. "The next few days," he corrected nonchalantly. He cleared his throat. "When I first saw you," he continued, sharing with someone for one of the few times in his life, "at the *Duck N Diner*, I thought you were the most attractive woman in the room." *That I was safe from your womanly wiles, that I was as good as dead below the waist. I was so wrong.*

Her eyes rounded noticeably before they narrowed.

That's it, Tay, just let her know what you think of her. Celeste, you didn't stand at risk of being seduced by me. I wouldn't be tempted in the least. That is until I saw your ankles under that long, black skirt. "Believe me, you've caused me a couple of sleepless nights." Oh the nights he'd tossed and turned after the vision of her slim ankles. He'd dreamed of his mouth grazing the skin on her calves, and as he travelled upward, he'd smell the scent of her arousal, fragranced with musk. And he would look up her body to her breasts and know he was just beginning his exhilarating exploration.

He sighed.

If a blush could redden, she now accomplished the impossible. She was falling for his avowal, which was what he wanted. So why did he feel like a rotten heel?

"You whirled out the door at the Duck N Diner, and I wanted to know more about you." Liar, you feel safe with a woman for the first time in your twenty-five years. She's not threatening your masculinity. She won't scream 'Take me to the altar!' You're safe from her. You can trust her. She's not wily, although she is aroused and wants you.

Celeste glanced over his shoulder and pulled her housecoat tighter around her waist, not that there was any danger of catching a peek at what lay underneath. She was bundled up tighter than an unfurled rosebud. She swallowed hard, and he sensed she was struggling to find the right words to lambaste him. Her eyes flashed fire.

"There are other ways to get to know women," she began, hugging herself tighter.

Taylor wished she were holding him like that.

"Like over coffee or taking them dancing or to a movie." She looked him up and down, as if appraising him. Her eyes lingered too long on his hard-on before they travelled down then back up again. Her gaze darted behind him again.

Were Roscoe and Terry already here? Impossible. They didn't know about Celeste. Hell, he hadn't known he'd be hanging out with her until he'd left his wrecked apartment.

Just to make sure, he glanced over his shoulder. Nothing but a computer there. Taylor laughed disparagingly at himself. How could he have thought Roscoe and Terry could be hiding out here? He returned his focus to Celeste.

She gnawed on her lip, and the blush travelled higher. "I'm just a diversion for you, aren't I?" She didn't seem to be bothered by the revelation. "What are you hiding from? A raging girlfriend? An angry husband?" she demanded, waving her hands in the air. "Or let me guess...you want to make your current girlfriend jealous by hanging out with a girl you think is safe from your charms? Or are you just creating a diversion for yourself because that's what you enjoy doing with hapless women?"

Man, had she pegged him right. She was a smart lady. Now, he felt even more like a heel, a muddy, dirt-encrusted heel. He frowned. "I can't even remember when I last heard the word 'hapless', but none of those are true." Except for perhaps the diversion part. If Roscoe and Terry were to find him, then what a hell of a way to go, in the sack with some hot chick.

“Men!” she threw at him angrily. “All you know how to do is use women!”

He knew what was coming before it happened. Awkwardly, she jumped up, caught her slipper in the large rug and started to fall towards the wooden coffee table. He leapt to his feet and caught her in his arms. She smelled of flowers and heaven, he decided hastily.

Celeste quivered against him, her hands clinging to his arms as if they were made of steel. “Oh.” She sighed and gazed into his face with glistening, dark-brown eyes. Her lips were plump and parted and so darned kissable.

It was then Taylor knew he was lost, that he’d probably never stood a chance.

Chapter Two

Celeste tilted back her head. Taylor's arms were muscled and big, and even through her housecoat, she felt his erection pressing against her stomach.

"Oh," she managed dryly before she regained her footing and pushed away from him. He was far too tempting and dangerous. Her mind detailed all the reasons she should shove him into the hallway and slam the door while her traitorous body urged her to take him in her arms. She needed to put some distance, at least a couple hundred miles, between them.

"Do you know older people die early Monday mornings?" she asked inanely then wondered where in the heck the question had come from. Countless times, Marly told her she was a walking encyclopaedia, crammed with facts.

Smoothly, Taylor said, "But it's Friday night, and both of us are young." He grinned wickedly. "Unless you're hiding something under that housecoat."

"I certainly am not!" she replied, outraged. How dare he think of what was under her clothes? It was a thin, ragged nightie, but that was none of his business.

His face became unreadable. She had to keep him from seeing the computer screen and her *Kiss Me* blog. If he laid eyes on it, she'd die. Her heart pounded against her chest. He'd already turned in that direction once. What had he seen? Just a computer screen, she hoped. Lord, that's all she needed was for him to read even a portion of *Kiss Me* then he'd get the wrong idea.

She straightened her shoulders and urged herself not to panic. He wouldn't know it was her blog, would he? She relaxed, but he was still far too close, and his powerfully built body seemed to take up so much of the room.

He chuckled a thumb under her chin and lifted her face. Her gaze met his intensely curious eyes. "You can't stay here," she told him bravely, although she had no way of backing up her words if he decided to argue. She knew from experience and listening to stories, that the cops defended their own, and Taylor was the police chief's son, and according to Jasmine, he had a bad boy reputation.

"I swear to keep my hands off you, Celeste. If you want," she heard him say through the thick fog that surrounded her brain. "I just need a place to stay until this all blows over."

He was lying.

She wanted him to touch her, to make love to her. After all, it was Friday night. Her nipples puckered under the thick material and the sensitive flesh rubbed against the cotton. "What kind of trouble are you in?" she rasped out, leaning forward.

He shook his head. "You wouldn't believe me if I told you, and just in case, you're probably safer if you don't know." His mouth was so close to her lips. His breathing warmed her cheeks. How incongruous was it that he wanted a place to stay, had barged in and all she wanted was sex?

"I'd rather know," she murmured, as his mouth neared hers. He hadn't shaved for a few hours, judging from the stubble on his cheeks. The fine hairs gave him a devilish appearance, which she found sexy and attractive.

"No, you don't." His moist lips claimed hers, nibbling her lower lip, savouring her upper with a deliciousness that left her spellbound. Her whole body reacted like a harp played by a master. Every muscle quivered, and her knees shook so violently, she barely kept on her feet. She couldn't allow him to make love to her, but she wanted him despite her inner protests to the contrary.

He stepped back, breaking the contact between their lips and their bodies. "This is one bad idea."

No, it's not. It's a good idea as long as you leave after making love to me, so we don't do this wild thing again. I'm not the kind of woman who hops into bed and has sex with whatever guy is available.

Celeste squinted and gave him a questioning gaze. "Are you pretending to be in trouble?" She should have saved her breath.

Taylor frowned. "I'm really in trouble now," he muttered, and once again he kissed her, deeply this time, and her world rocked with the passion behind it. If he was in trouble, she wanted to know about it, but she suspected she knew exactly what it was. He wanted sex and nothing would stop him, and she realised with a twinge of guilt, she wouldn't stop him, either. Right at her fingertips, she had a real, live man instead of a tiny vibrator.

Her hands wound around his neck, holding onto him for dear life and to keep her violently shaking knees from collapsing under her. She grazed the stubble on his cheek as he groaned, and his erection pressed harder and more insistently against her stomach. At his

ear, she whispered a naughty invitation. "If you want to see what's under the robe, why don't you take it off yourself?"

His mouth trembled, and his eyes glazed over. Now who was holding the power over whom?

Taylor's first impression of Celeste had been that she was shy and withdrawn when it came to men, but after her quiet invitation, he amended the impression. She was one hot chick!

"You really want this?" he asked. He might be an asshole when it came to agreeing with his dad, but he respected women.

Her arms came down to his hands, and she smiled at him languorously. "I don't know what the part about you needing a place to stay for a couple of days was about, but go ahead, undress me and satisfy your curiosity."

"Do you really need those glasses?" he muttered, thrilled that slowly he was uncovering the real Celeste Heplewich.

"No, only for reading."

Carefully, he reached out and slid her glasses off her face. "That's better," he remarked with relief. "You reminded me of my fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Bowman." Mrs. Bowman had been the one person in his growing up years who had believed in him, who had told him he could make something of himself and had encouraged his childish painting.

Celeste gave him a seductive smile. "Can't have that, can we?"

"No," he grunted, folding the glasses and setting them on the coffee table. "How long is your hair?"

"I think you're an expert at undressing women, so why don't you unfasten the pins and see for yourself?" She lifted her index finger and sucked lightly on it.

Distracted, he watched the frosty pink nail slide into her mouth ever so delicately, ever so erotically. His cock got immeasurably harder. This woman did for him what none other had ever done, luring, teasing and, he sensed, seducing him expertly.

The temperature in the small room skyrocketed to a zillion degrees. He shrugged out from his jacket and allowed it to carelessly fall to the floor in a heap around his boots. He was lost for sure.

The pins had been woven in so expertly, they were hard to find in the silky tendrils. He pulled out one after the other and her hair fell in riveting cascades down her shoulders.

"It's so long," he commented, noting the luxurious thick strands fall. He ran his fingers through her hair to straighten the curly tendrils. Just the touch of his hands in her hair was supercharged with emotion and erotic beyond his wildest fantasies. "I had no idea," he whispered softly.

Celeste blinked. "No idea about what?"

"That a woman's hair could feel so luxurious and erotic," he responded. Holding his breath, he stepped back and surveyed her.

Her lips curved in a sultry smile. "You have your own attraction," she murmured, her eyes downcast before her gaze returned to his face.

Overjoyed that this interlude was a mutual discovery, he groaned. "If your eyes, hair and ankles are so beautiful, then what does the rest of you look like?" he wondered aloud.

She burst out laughing. "I've never heard that particular combination before. Eyes, hair, and ankles. I'll have to remember that."

Taylor was suddenly and uncharacteristically shy. "Why would you want to remember that?" he queried, licking his lips. What was under her frumpy housecoat?

She lifted her shoulders in a half shrug. "Oh, I don't know. Maybe for the next novel I write."

His breath caught in his throat. "You're writing a novel?" Was it about the dreary life of a court reporter, or did she write about the guys she lured into her bed?

"No, but I might." Again, the wickedly teasing smile.

His heart skipped a beat. Yeah, about the guys she slept with.

"I paint," he confessed.

Her eyebrows shot up in question, and her genuinely curious eyes begged him for more of an explanation. She was so endearing, and no one had ever taken a real interest in him before.

"Watercolour painting. *The Pine Woods Art Gallery* takes many of them almost as fast as I can paint them." Which was a huge source of pride for him. His father had wanted him to join the police force, but Taylor couldn't see the point in chasing after criminals day after day,

and unfortunately, his dad didn't understand. Painting landscapes wasn't 'real' work for a man, his dad had said countless times.

"You'll have to show me," Celeste intruded on his thoughts. "You know you're a work of art in your own right, don't you?"

Taylor practically chortled. No one had ever called him that. "I'd never considered myself such."

"Why don't we start exploring your work of art?" she said lightly, her gaze drifting from his chest to his eyes.

Taylor could hardly wait. He had a few reservations about being in her next book, which she might simply call *Studs*. The Taylor Burnes chapter would be titled 'A Work of Art' which he didn't think was a bad title, even if he'd thought of it himself.

Celeste imagined writing in her blog that Taylor Burnes knew how to make a woman feel powerfully seductive and helpless in his virile presence. She'd leave out his name, of course, but she wouldn't leave out any of the juicy details. Details such as his stubble rasping against her cheek, his broad shoulders leaning towards her, his cock pressing against his jeans. Oh wow, but she was ready to drool just thinking about being naked with Taylor.

His gaze had become dreamy and somewhat unfocused as he bent his head and once again kissed her. Her panties were wet now, and oh, how she wanted him, his muscled frame over her body, taking her, possessing her. She was fascinated by him, she admitted, and all this malarkey that he needed a place to hide was just that. Interestingly, he wanted her. Without the dating or the dinner thrown in first. How many girls were lucky enough to strike out with a sexy hunk the first time around? On a Friday night?

Deftly, she unbuttoned his shirt and pulled aside the western-cut shirt. Wow, he had some hard muscles on his chest. "Do you work out?" she asked, awestruck by all that tautness.

"I've been known to from time to time."

Yeah, she'd bet. In bed with other women, but for this one night, he was hers, and hers alone.

He began to unbuckle his belt, but she stopped him, placing her hands on his and giving him a pleading glance. He shrugged, giving her the impression he was willing to

submit to her loving ministrations. Celeste had never had a man quite like Taylor before. Sure, she'd gone through the motions, but it had only been two bodies pretty much groping around in the dark and fumbling with the concept that two people could bond. Taylor, she knew, would be different. He'd burst into her apartment, made up some excuse to stay and offered her all he had. How much better could it get on a Friday night?

She closed the distance between their bodies and, holding her breath, placed her hands in between his bare stomach and the waistband of his jeans. She revelled in the sensation of her finger pads against the rigid muscles and slid her hands lower into his briefs.

Sighing heavily, she rested her head against his chest. Her head barely came to his chin. He toyed with her hair, raking his fingers through the strands.

"You're hard everywhere," she mused aloud. Trembling, she slid her hands lower and shivered as she made contact with his bulging cock.

Taylor chuckled. "I am, and I'm willing to bet, you're soft all over. And wet," he added in a murmur.

"Oh definitely." Her housecoat was stifflingly warm, and her slippers were like clunkers on her feet, hindering her poetic movements. She wanted to pirouette in a lively dance on the tips of her toes, like a ballerina in majestic flight.

She was getting wetter as she inched her hands lower in his waistband and cupped his hot cock. She moaned, and somewhere, far away, she heard Taylor groan. Firecrackers exploded in her head. This was what she needed, raw sex with a feeling of feminine power.

"I'm going to come without much more provocation," he said earnestly, nibbling at her ear and trailing burning kisses across her cheek.

"You can't come yet," she protested, fiery hunger consuming her. "I want all of you." She'd never before said that to a man, although she enjoyed teasing herself and the countless unseen others on her *Kiss Me* blog.

He chuckled good-humouredly although she heard something else behind it. Was it criticism or was it his self-assurance coming through? She didn't care. She only wanted more of him.

Carefully, she unzipped his jeans. The metal teeth rasped against each other in the room's silence. She tugged the pants lower, and they fell around his feet in a whoosh of stiff

fabric. His rod bulged out of his briefs and waved towards her temptingly. The tip glistened with a single drop of moisture.

Giving a breathy sigh, she pushed him on the couch. He fell backward in a graceful play of hard muscles and tormenting male angles. "I haven't quite undressed you," he murmured, glancing at her face.

"You don't need to, since you're only staying a few more minutes."

"Long enough to get loved and thrown out," he mumbled, his gaze flashing over her.

Pretending she was an Amazon warrior, Celeste toed off her slippers. Taylor was plain yummy, one booted foot stretched out along the length of the couch, the other dangling on the floor. His shirt was wide open to reveal his chest and abs, and yummier still, was his stiff rod.

"Oh thank goodness," he whispered, eyeing her slippers. "I thought the battery bunny was about to make love to me." He laughed at his own humour.

Her brows arched. "The battery bunny?" She wished he could have thought of something else to say. Something sexy and provocative and tantalising. Her slippers kept her feet warm on cool spring nights.

"The pink one that beats the drum," he added, his lips curving in a small smile.

"Right," she grunted. A blush heated her cheeks.

He bent at the waist to sit up, but she pushed him back down again with the heels of her palm. "You're in my house, you play by my rules," she told him. This new angle would go over well on *Kiss Me*. She was the boss during sex. She called the shots while her lover acceded to her demands.

His lips curved in a thin smile, and for a moment, she felt she'd stepped over the line. Some men didn't like Amazon warriors making love to them. They wanted demure women who did as they were told. Celeste had vowed never to be like them. She was twenty-two, she had a mind of her own and wanted sex her way.

She frowned at her realisation. Sex was simply an intellectual pursuit on her part. There was no emotion attached to the act—no love, no commitment, nothing but cold, hard intellect driving her. But how could that be? Fifty percent of marriages ended in divorce, as her parents' had, although her mother had gone on with her life, become a bailiff at the courthouse and now indulged her lover, the judge, in chocolate and whipped cream.

"Your way or the highway," Taylor intruded on her thoughts with a twinkle of humour in his baby blues.

She'd continue to play the sexy vixen although, she sensed, Taylor wasn't buying her act. What was she doing wrong? And if this was an intellectual pursuit, then why did it matter so much?

Lifting her housecoat up to her thighs, she straddled him and let the robe fall over his cock.

"Hey," he protested. "No fair. You shouldn't be wearing much either. I want to see you." He lifted his hands to the belt on her housecoat.

She slapped his hands. "I'm the boss, remember?"

A trace of annoyance flitted across his eyes, but he quickly quelled it. "Yeah or else you'll throw me out on my ear, won't you?"

You're going to go out on your ear anyway. Taking a deep breath, she rubbed his cock against her wet clit. When she heard him groan, she impaled herself on his shaft and threw back her head.

Through the housecoat, Taylor pressed his palms against her budding nipples. Without saying a word, she batted his hands away again.

"Where am I supposed to put my hands?" he pretended to whine.

She gave a half-hearted shrug and began riding him in earnest. His question was forgotten amidst the drumming of her heart and the roaring of sensuous pleasure in her veins. Yeah, she'd needed a man in a bad way. Lucky for her, Taylor Burnes had dropped in.

Celeste was not only one hot chick but a crazy one, Taylor told himself. He'd never known a woman who didn't want to get naked with him and make out. After all, men were visual creatures, they needed to keep their eyes on breasts, nipples and cunts. Apparently, Celeste was having none of that or else she wanted to drive him out of his mind with wanting to look at her.

His thoughts faded as tension ratcheted up in his body. Who cared if Celeste was crazy as long as she did him good?

She moaned deep in the back of her throat, and he watched as she swallowed hard. Her bow-shaped lips parted and her breasts jiggled under her robe. If only he knew what she

looked like underneath. Sweat dotted his forehead, and he saw a few drops of moisture on her upper lip. He desperately wanted to lick it off and taste it. Instead, he settled for planting his palms on the curve of her waist.

Celeste rode him harder. Her channel muscles clenched around his shaft, and that was all he needed to spend himself. His body shook with a cataclysmic force then he lay utterly still, his eyes closed, his ears attuned to Celeste. She breathed in short, raspy gasps of air then slowly, she stilled, bent at the waist and fell over him. Her head rested on his upper chest, and her hair spilled over onto his face. Yeah, he must have died and gone to heaven, but just as soon as Celeste regained her bearings, she'd throw him out.

* * * *

"Is this how you teach manners?"

Celeste lifted her head and gazed into Taylor's eyes. "Emily Post wouldn't have dared teach manners during sex. It seems that must have been a taboo subject."

He gave her a wicked grin. "Sex is no longer taboo." Abruptly, he lost his smile. "We forgot something," he said as if the world were falling down.

"Geez, I can't imagine what that would be."

He sighed and slapped his forehead with the heel of his palm. "A condom."

"Oh, you don't need that with me." She would never have children. Not after an accident when she was twelve, that had left her scarred and unable to conceive, so she didn't have to worry about birth control. Celeste had become serious about a guy, Mark, only once, but when he'd seen her naked, his eyes had bulged in shocked astonishment, and he fled as fast as his legs could carry him. Since then, Celeste had always made love with her clothes on. The accident and its damage were also reasons behind the *Kiss Me* blog. On the blog, she could have a real and daring sex life even if it was only a fantasy.

His brows furrowed. "You're on birth control?"

She saw the immediate relief in his gaze. "Yeah," she said blithely, wishing that were true. Reluctantly, she raised her torso and slipped off him then padded to the bathroom. She'd give him a grace period – about as long as it took to relieve herself and wash her face – then she'd make sure he left the apartment.

As she washed her hands and gazed at her kiss-swollen lips in the vanity mirror, she realised she'd left on her computer monitor, and Taylor would be able to see what she'd written. Her heart sank, and her mind whirled. What did she do now? She'd been in the bathroom for three or four minutes. That was plenty of opportunity for him to read the *Kiss Me* page that was on the screen. Wouldn't she die of shame if he'd read it?

She stormed into the living room, hoping to catch him in the act. He wasn't there. With a sinking feeling, she checked the kitchen, but in her heart, she knew Taylor was gone.

Dejected, Celeste sank on the couch, tears welling in her eyes. She'd wanted to be the one to end this interlude, and the hard realisation hit her full force. Taylor *had* been using her. She'd known that as soon as he marched past her and shut the door. He hadn't been in any more trouble than she was, and his excuse about hiding out had been just that—an excuse to sleep with her. If only she'd been able to make love to him without her clothes, like the other women in his life no doubt had. But her housecoat was the only protection she had against pitying looks. The few times she had sex, she kept her upper clothes on. She didn't need to scare away the few men she slept with. Celeste wanted good memories. That's all she'd have in this lifetime. Some good memories...

She set her elbows on her knees, cupped her face in her hands and sobbed.

Chapter Three

In the apartment parking lot, Taylor mentally slapped himself countless times. He needed a place to stay for the weekend, and now that he'd had sex with Celeste, he wanted more. But she was one crazy chick, coming on to him as strongly as she had. What bothered him the most was she hadn't taken off her clothes.

A light drizzle began. The drops fell onto the hood and roof of his two-door car with a metallic tinkle. He leaned one hip against the front fender and watched Celeste's apartment building. Most of the lights were out, but he counted carefully to the third floor and over six. They were still on in hers.

Once again, he was ashamed of himself. He'd run out on her. Dismayed, he breathed in the scent of rain, early grass and the coming spring—a time for making a fresh start. He'd been so hot for Celeste and getting her to make love to him, he'd hardly considered her needs. What had she been hiding under the pink robe? Taylor couldn't begin to guess. A hard lump rose in his throat. He actually liked Celeste Heplewich, if he ignored the man-hungry reputation her mother had received. He'd heard the stories about her divorced mother, Judge Hanks, chocolate and whipped cream during sex, but they were just stories, weren't they? Perhaps gossip for people who didn't have anything better to do. Somehow he couldn't imagine Celeste indulging in those items.

Taylor wanted a cigarette so badly, but when he patted his breast pocket, he found it empty. He didn't smoke that often, only when things got out of hand. Like now. He heaved a deep sigh. Gossip could hurt families and kids. When he'd been fifteen, he'd run away from home to find his elusive mother, not for his own sake but his sisters'. Tanya and Nellie had been torn apart when they'd seen others at school with their mothers. When he'd seen their melancholy faces, it had ripped his heart in two. No child deserved to be without a mother.

He shifted from one foot to the other, comforted in the darkness and the light rain. The full moon and the twinkling stars amidst a bank of clouds provided comfort too. When he'd run away, he lived in LA for several months, but there had been no sign of his mother. Was she dead or had she remarried? Taylor had no idea. He hadn't received a prodigal son's welcome from his father when he'd returned, nor had he expected one. Instead, his father

had soundly beaten him and told him if he wanted to disappear then he should do it permanently. The scars, both from the beating and those days in hot, humid hell, still remained on his body and his soul.

Running his hands through his short hair, he smiled grimly. Because of the coin, he was half a million dollars richer and he could begin to vanquish the sad memories. All he had to do was protect his penny. He fished in his pocket where he'd kept it by itself. Alarm began to ring in his head. The penny wasn't there. Where could it have gone?

He remembered his jeans had fallen around his ankles in the heat of the moment when wealth had been the farthest from his mind. Had the wheat penny fallen out then? His heart was in his throat. If he didn't find the penny, then he'd be broke again with no way of claiming his money.

* * * *

"Friday night and a man all gone," Celeste mumbled to herself. After her crying jag and several moments of self-pity that hadn't done anything to cheer her, she'd bucked herself up, showered and sat at her computer. Then she'd remembered the cup of cocoa on the kitchen counter. It was cold, but she'd throw it out in a minute and make herself a fresh, hot one.

Men sucked, although she now had a new entry for *Kiss Me*. Should she write the truth or should she embellish it? If Taylor ever read it, would he be able to see himself pictured there as the man who'd made up an excuse about hiding then made out with her? She started typing:

Truth is stranger than fiction. Incredibly, Friday nights can be fun, with lots of sex. Unexpectedly, Mr. Hunk came to the door and pushed past me, claiming he needed a place to hide out. It was an excuse really. I fell in love with the looks of him, and we were mesmerised by each other. I felt like the typical girl in a romance novel – head over heels infatuated with a good-looking guy.

He said, "If your eyes, hair and ankles are so beautiful, then what does the rest of you look like?" I've never heard that line before, and I have to give him credit for its originality.

Want to hear some juicy details about my Friday night sexual encounter? His stubble rasped against my soft cheek, which turned me on even more. His broad shoulders seemed to be made from solid rock, and oh my, but his cock pressed hard against me through the fabric of his jeans. He really

does have a big penis, all inviting, and when he thrust inside me, I just about screamed from sheer delight. I felt like a dominatrix playing her part, ordering him to play by my rules since he's in my house. Feminine power thrilled through me. It's a new angle for me, playing the boss during sex. I think I like it.

But he left in a hurry, without a goodbye. I went to the bathroom, and by the time I came out, he was gone, disappeared into proverbial thin air. Men use you then they dump you. Men suck. So much for Friday night.

Celeste strolled over to the kitchen, poured the cold cocoa down the drain, and nuked more water. *Truth is stranger than fiction*, she told herself as she stirred the boiling water into the freshly washed mug.

Someone rapped on the door. In the overwhelming silence, the sound rattled her so badly, she dropped the spoon on the floor.

"Oh fudge," she muttered, although she wanted to use a stronger expletive, but that kind of language wasn't tolerated by folks who worked in the court. "Who is it?" she shouted, reluctant to open the door to yet another stranger. It was two a.m.

"Taylor," came the quiet reply.

"I'm not letting you in again," she managed from a dry throat. What did he want and why? Wasn't it bad enough he'd left her without so much as a goodbye?

"I'd slip these under the door, but they won't fit," he said in his deep, very masculine voice.

"Are they diamonds?" she called out, half teasing. No one had ever bought her those before.

"No. Try again."

"A new housecoat?" Pink would be nice.

"Nope. You want to try again?"

Three's the lucky charm. She scrunched up her face, trying to guess even though she wasn't much interested.

"A condom?" she threw out then chortled. A condom indeed!

"Nope. Your guesses are all used up," came from the other side.

Wiping the sudden tears of laughter from her eyes, Celeste asked, "Why can't this wait until morning?" Not that it was that far away.

"Look, I'm sorry. I want to tell you that. Without this piece of damned wood between us."

She rested her head against the door. Could she hear his breathing? She thought she detected his musky scent, but she couldn't be sure.

"Besides, I forgot, but I still need a place to stay for the weekend."

His deep drawl was so enticing, luring her into doing what she didn't want to. He could be quite endearing when he had a mind to, she realised. "I thought you just wanted sex."

"That too. You're gorgeous."

If he only knew the truth.

"Celeste? Are you still there?" he asked, his voice more subdued.

She stepped back and considered walking away, climbing into bed and reading her textbook. "Yeah."

"Let me in, and we can talk about this in private. Your neighbours on either side of you are opening up to hear the juicy details."

That would be Mrs. Myers, an older lady with a cocker spaniel she carried everywhere, and Mr. Beamer, whose eyeglasses were thicker than window panes. "Okay, but we'll only talk for a few minutes." *Although I want to make love to you again. That would be nice.*

Stepping back, she opened the door. Taylor did exactly the same thing he'd done a few hours earlier. He stomped in, hauled her out of the way and slammed the door. The walls shuddered yet again. The only difference from last time was he carried a bouquet of early spring flowers. Like a child, he thrust them towards her.

She pressed her lips together in a grimace then squared her fists on her hips. "Whose garden did you get those from?"

He blinked and a sheepish look appeared on his face. "You could accept them gratefully then chew me out for ripping them out of someone's garden."

Celeste simply shook her head. "What difference would that make?"

He shrugged and set the small bouquet of purple streaked irises, yellow crocuses and pale purple hyacinths on the kitchen counter. His hair and jean jacket were wet with small

drops of rain. Clasp ing his hands in front of him as if he were in detention, he muttered, "I'm sorry."

Celeste began to enjoy herself but frowned just in case Taylor thought she was too. "For what?"

"Leaving like a thief in the night." He took one step forward.

He *did* look repentant, she decided, but she'd wanted him to go, hadn't she? "Why did you leave if you're in need of a place to stay?" She couldn't say with any certainty, but maybe he was telling the truth, but until she knew more, she'd stick with her story, that he was using her.

He cast his gaze to the floor then back up to her face before he responded in a low voice. "I want to make love to you again—without any obstructions this time."

"I don't believe—"

She found herself wrapped in his arms, against his broad chest and his beating heart. Celeste gasped.

"Don't believe me?" He kissed her again, not slowly and carefully as he had last time but with an ardour that would have embarrassed a chivalrous medieval knight.

Hooking her arms around his neck, she leaned into him. It wouldn't hurt to have sex with him again, would it? Her pulse pounded erratically, and she stood on tiptoe to return the kiss. She melted against him, turning into mush for the second time that evening.

When he broke away, he left her dazzled and unsteady. How could she want a man she'd only met a few days ago with such intensity? When he was in her apartment, the rooms became small and inconsequential. Taylor swept aside every care, and all she could focus on was her body responding to his. She pushed her pelvis to his in a wanton mood, refusing to relinquish the contact between them.

He stroked the back of her head. "Those damn pins again." One by one, he pulled them out from her hair until it tumbled to her shoulders. "You're beautiful with your hair down. Why don't you wear it like that to work?" He saw her often enough at the *Duck N Diner* to know she always wore her hair up. His voice was soft.

Celeste shook her head. "It wouldn't be very businesslike. Long, flowing hair is only for models and prom queens."

He grazed a burning trail across her cheek. "You're all of those, Celeste. You're the most gorgeous woman I've met."

Incredulous, she pushed at his chest with the flat of her palms. "Don't play cruel games with me, Taylor," she whispered hoarsely. "You know that's not true." It never had been in her experience.

Disbelief flickered in his eyes. "I'm telling you the truth. You need to believe me."

"No," she moaned. If he knew what lay under her clothes, he'd run away as quickly as Mark had.

"I want to sleep with you again." Taylor's voice was hardly loud enough to hear. "I want to feel your naked body against mine, your heart against my chest."

"You're a sappy fool," she muttered longingly. His words and his presence aroused her to a fevered pitch.

"Maybe, but it's better than the alternative."

At her raised eyebrow look, he added, "Being angry all the time with everything and everyone." He scooped her closer. "Since I met you, I can't think of anything else. My paintings of the woods and summer landscapes have gone by the wayside. I paint you, over and over."

Celeste grimaced. She'd be perfect in his paintings. Her body would be whole, without the rigid, long white scars. She couldn't make love to him again. He'd discover her secret, then the hurt would spiral through her when he ran away from her.

"Celeste?" he asked quietly, tenderly, giving her an earnest appeal. "What's wrong?"

"You have to leave," she told him. The words grated and were like pulling wisdom teeth. *I don't want you to go, but I don't want to share my secret with you either. If I do, I'll die of shame.*

He didn't move a muscle. "Leave? Why?"

Unwilling to explain, she shook her head. It would cost her too much to strip out of her robe, to show him the scars.

"I'll tell you what. I'll take off all my clothes first then you can explore me."

I'll never find on you what will drive you away from me.

"No," she said firmly, pushing at him again. If only he would leave, her secret would be safe. "I can't."

She wouldn't meet his eyes. He would see she was lying to him and to herself since she wanted to make love to him again without the barrier of clothes.

He smiled warmly. "I'll start, so you know there's nothing to be afraid of."

Taylor was misinterpreting her. She wasn't afraid of him, only of herself her past that reared up to hurt her again and again.

Celeste had been twelve when she and her dad had gone into the wilds for a picnic. They had shared the same liking for the outdoors. Back then, she'd gone out to the lake with him as often as she could, and they'd fished and taken along meals for picnics. Her father had been warned that there was a bear and her cub in the area, but he hadn't relayed the message to her.

In retrospect, he wasn't a bad man, but he could have said something. A little girl Celeste had pegged as about five or six had come careening out from the thick forest, screaming in terror. A bear had been running after her. Without thinking twice of the consequences, Celeste had jumped to her feet to help the girl, and the next moment, the cub's mother had been on top of her. Her father had finally scared it away, but not before it had mauled her.

Celeste had been airlifted to the nearest hospital, and although the emergency doctors had saved her life, they hadn't been able to fully repair her shoulder, her right breast, and abdomen. She had healed, but her legacy from the bear were several ugly and long scars.

"Celeste?" Taylor whispered urgently, as if trying to wake her up. "Where did you go?"

She shook her head, unwilling and unable to talk about the past, which should have been dead and buried but kept flaring up now that she was older and wanted a little sex. Yet that's all it would be—sex with a good-looking hunk but no prospect of marriage or children.

"You're tired," he said gently. "It must be close to three o'clock. Why don't you go to bed?"

She heard a hint of regret in his tone but ignored it and nodded. "Now will you leave?" She gave him some points with her for being a gentleman. Most men never thought of anyone but themselves, *Numero Uno*. She could respect him for that.

"No." His eyes narrowed. "If you have a nightmare then I'll be right here." He made eye contact with her. "On the couch."

She raked her fingers through her hair. "How do you know I have nightmares?" Of bears and being attacked.

He shrugged. "You looked as if you were reliving something from the past, and it definitely wasn't pleasant." He traced his knuckles down her cheek to her mouth where they lingered, sensuous but non-threatening.

"Oh," was all she replied.

Tenderly, he said, "I get them, too, but most of the time, I'm by myself so no one else gets to hear the torment and see the terrified sweating and heart pounding."

In a daze, she sat on the couch and patted the sagging cushion beside her. "Taylor? Sit down with me."

She didn't think he'd refuse, and he didn't. After shrugging from his jacket then carefully folding and setting it across the back of the armchair, he sat next to her. His short hair stuck up in endearing, little spikes all over his head.

"What do you relive?" she asked in a muted whisper, dreading the answer. If she wanted to scare herself to death, all she had to do was turn on the TV and watch a late night horror movie.

Taylor rubbed his palms along his thighs but didn't sit all the way back against the cushions. It was as if he were alert for something, although she had no idea what.

"When I was eighteen, I enlisted in the army." At her querying expression, he added, "That was seven years ago." He hesitated, giving her the impression he didn't want to relate this particular life experience.

Celeste patted his knee encouragingly.

"It was to get away from my dad, to prove to him that I could do anything I wanted."

"You don't get along?"

The room was hushed with nightly quiet. Outside, the rain pounded heavier on the pavement and the wind picked up.

"No. I think he was responsible for my mom leaving when my sisters and I were very young." He licked his lips. "He's always been one of these macho men who thinks stern discipline will remake people. That or a stint in prison."

"Right," Celeste murmured, thinking of asking if his dad had written the textbook she was reading which advocated discipline from an early age.

Taylor drew a breath. "I should have known better. The army wasn't any better. I was only a few days from going home when I was wounded in Afghanistan. My dad didn't even send me a get well card."

Celeste made sympathetic sounds. It appeared they'd both been wounded although she'd never have considered enlisting in the army.

He grimaced. "Most nights I relive the bomb that damaged my arm. When I came home and realised that I could have died and my dad didn't give a flying shit, I told myself I didn't have to care about him anymore."

"You said you paint?" she asked softly.

He nodded vigorously. "Yeah, mostly landscapes, but once in a while, I do a still life or portraits."

She couldn't help herself. She leaned closer and rested her cheek on his shoulder. "Does it still hurt? Your arm, I mean?" They both needed comfort, and even though her mother had always been there for her when she'd needed it, Celeste felt a deep void within her that didn't go away no matter what she did.

"Yeah. That's when I take out my case of beer and drown myself in the stuff." He chuckled quietly. "Doesn't do much to kill the pain, but it helps me sleep through the night."

Gingerly, he lifted his hand and patted her cheek. "I'm lucky though. My buddies didn't walk away."

"I don't understand war," she murmured against his shoulder. Oddly, she felt as if they shared a bond that transcended space and time.

"Me either. I was angry and couldn't understand why I was fighting for a cause I didn't believe in. Even after all the indoctrination, I very much had a mind of my own."

"Good for you." She threw her arms around his neck and held him close. Had she only known him a few hours, instead of years and years?

"Is that why you don't want to get undressed for me? You're hiding your own demons?" he whispered, his voice tender and concerned.

She lifted her head and gave him a piercing look. "How did you know?"

He patted her shoulder. "We're two war torn bodies, you know, each in our own way." Taylor sighed. "You're tired, Celeste."

In one quick movement, he scooped her up in his arms and headed towards the bedroom. She clung to him. He smelled nice, he posed no threat to her and he'd be in the next room if she had a nightmare.

Taylor laid her on the bed, squirreled off her slippers and covered her up to her chin. "Sleep well, princess."

Her eyes were so heavy, she didn't need much to close them. And she didn't mind being tucked into bed like a kid.

"I'll be right here," she heard him say soothingly.

Taylor watched as Celeste conked out right away. She must have been tired, and he'd kept her awake talking about his short stint in the army. Quietly, doubting he would wake her, he pulled off his boots and slid over beside her on top of the sheets. Her features were peaceful, her long hair pushed to one side of the white pillow. He wondered what kind of emotional scars she had and if he'd be able to handle them.

Grunting, he nestled his head on the pillow next to Celeste's and told himself he could handle anything she threw at him. He left on the lamp on the nightstand just in case either one of them had a nightmare.

Chapter Four

Taylor smelled nice, Celeste decided as she reached for him, for his muscled shoulders and his sturdy arms. She needed more sex, too. She chuckled at her brazen behaviour. He was in the living room sleeping on the couch, but she could entice him into her bed. Or had she already?

The whole bedroom was hazy, as if it were filled with misty fog, but that wouldn't deter her from searching for Taylor. She'd discovered she liked him a great deal. He'd shared one of his secrets with her, one she felt certain he hadn't easily shared with others. That fact alone raised him in her book of respect. But sex wasn't about respect, was it?

Sighing, the mist enveloping her heavily, she put her hands out as if to get off the bed and stumbled on him. He had a hard-on, and she wondered if she should make apologies for hurting him with her palms.

He said nothing, simply drew her into his arms.

She wanted to undress for him. In her mind, the scars from the bear mauling were long gone, healed so magically and adeptly, she hadn't noticed. Laughing softly, she caught him in her arms, and he hugged her affectionately. It was far too soon to wonder if they were soul mates, like the judge and her mother, Charlotte. They had found each other after many years of living on this earth, but Charlotte didn't hesitate to say they were soul mates. The judge and the bailiff. Who would have guessed? Not Celeste. Now she had Taylor, and he was hers.

She didn't need to tell him that she wanted him to make love to her. Her robe and her worn nightie whispered as they each fell around her waist. She'd bared her breasts to him, and he was suckling each nipple in turn. His hands roamed her body expertly and deliciously. She groaned and plucked her robe and nightie from around her torso and carelessly tossed them on the floor.

Taylor was naked now, too, and she enjoyed every part of him, especially his cock and his strong thighs. My, oh my, but he was hard. She said nothing but, with a pleading glance, asked him to lodge his cock in her pussy. The hushed silence was a little unnerving, and the mist hung on, but she didn't care.

Celeste heard him mutter that he shouldn't, and she stopped to question him. Then her heated, aroused body met his. Oh, the bliss, she thought, her breath catching in her throat. The bliss of being completely naked with him in a way she'd never been with a man before. Now that the scars were healed in her mind, she no longer had to worry about being naked. Not ever again.

Lying on her back, she took the full length of his rigid erection inside her wet sheath and caressed the rigid knots along his spine and his back with sure fingers. This was the way life was supposed to be. No secrets lurked in the darkness waiting to spring out and bring her to her knees in shame and terror.

She heard him murmuring. Were they words of endearment? They had to be, from one war torn body to another. Her world shook as he moved deep inside her heat. He licked and laved her nipples and continued to murmur. Her orgasm blew her apart, and soon, Taylor followed, his body rocking hers. She thought she heard him cry out her name but she was sated...at least momentarily.

* * * *

Taylor blinked open his eyes. This had to be the best wet dream of his life, making out with Celeste. She'd been soft and responsive, and the only thing that had bothered him initially was the deep scars on her shoulder. Yet he'd easily bypassed them. He had his own to contend with. So what if she had a few?

He turned his head and swallowed hard. None of that had been a dream. He'd actually made love to this beautiful woman. Except for the sheet thrown across her middle, she was nude. Oh man, but he'd learned a long time ago that he was responsible for his actions at all times, and yet this once, he thought he honestly had problems if he could take a woman while they both slept.

Feeling like a heel again, he lurched off the bed as quietly as he could, scooped up his clothes and ran like hell. He'd meant to stay he told himself as he dressed as quickly and noiselessly as possible in the living room. Then he remembered the penny, and in the dim light of dawn, fell to his knees and to search for it.

"What are you doing?"

The question and Celeste's presence in the living room doorway caught him by surprise. From his position on hands and knees, he looked up. She'd wrapped herself in the bed sheet and wore it like a toga.

"I was going out for a smoke," he said defensively. She sounded so much like his father, and he hated the way he reacted—as if he owed her anything. Yet, he loved the way she looked, like a tastefully captured centrefold.

"On your hands and knees? I don't think so, and besides, you don't smoke. I was about to make us some Saturday morning breakfast."

A home cooked breakfast? He hadn't had one of those since he was a kid. Now, he mostly ate TV dinners and things from boxes—anything that didn't need much cooking. Celeste wasn't being coy, and he wondered at her lack of prudishness when last night she'd been in a near panic as soon as he'd suggested she get naked with him. He forgot about the coin.

In supplication, he spread his palms out in front of him. "Breakfast sounds really great, but I have to go," he said lamely.

Celeste headed towards him, and he forgot all his excuses for leaving. Her dark hair flowed over her shoulders and down to her waist, and she approached him like a sexy goddess, sure of her movements and with a seductive smile on her lips. Her eyes were heavy lidded, and he only had the presence of mind to beg for mercy, but he waited.

"You told me last night you needed a place to crash. I need a man to make love to, before or after breakfast is your choice."

He inhaled, and he was certain he forgot to exhale. Words didn't normally elude him but now, they were all gone. Taylor sank to his knees and buried his face in the sheet. What had he done to deserve such a good woman?

Gazing up at her, he said with gratitude in his voice, "I don't deserve you, Celeste, not one bit. I've done drugs, I've gone on drunken binges and I did a stint in the army, all because of my pigheaded stubbornness, but I don't deserve you."

Would she remember she'd slept with him while he was in her bed? Should he run before it was too late?

Inexplicably, she tugged on the bed sheet and let it swirl to the floor around her feet. He backed away hastily but remained on his knees, taking in her scent and, he was ashamed to confess, ogling her.

"You're a goddess," he muttered, wondering again what had brought about the sudden change in her attitude towards being dressed. Her shoulder had several ridges across the flesh. What had done so much damage to her? If it was another man, he'd kill him with his own hands.

"Is this what you wanted to see?" she asked, her voice languorous and tempting. "Why aren't you running away?"

Frowning, he watched as her expression hardened. "Celeste, I don't care about that. I only care about you," he told her soothingly.

"Most men would have leapt to safety," she breathed, clearly astonished he hadn't.

He rose and cupped her face against his palms. "Celeste, those don't matter. You do. The intelligent, caring, spunky woman behind those scars."

She laughed self-deprecatingly. "Soon as I turn my back, you'll be gone, won't you?"

He shook his head in denial. "I've made mistakes, but leaving you behind won't be one of them." He was his own man, and he suspected, he'd have a lady to care for, starting about now.

"Leaving me behind?" she queried him, with evident disbelief.

"Leaving you behind." He'd left most everything behind. Except his nightmares. He couldn't run from those no matter how he tried.

They ended up on the couch. Taylor had shimmied from his clothes so quickly, and his speed had astounded Celeste. He made eye contact as he settled on his elbows to either side of her head. "Do you want me to touch your scars?"

She swallowed hard, but she wouldn't let the marks get in the way anymore. The time for hiding behind them and not being willing to face herself was over. "Yes."

The corners of his eyes wrinkled, and he chuckled. "And you thought I'd run away."

She might as well tell him at the outset, before they got much more involved, but she hesitated.

Taylor must have seen her vacillate. His warm breath fanned her face. "What is it, Celeste?"

Tears welled in her eyes. "I don't know how important it is to you, but I can't have children." She couldn't face him and looked to the couch.

He slipped his fingers in under her cheek and forced her to meet his eyes. "I'm not sure I'd make good daddy material, not with how I was raised, but if and when the time comes, we can adopt."

"Okay." Her assent was wholehearted. She'd completely bared herself to him in the hope he'd accept her for who she was, scars and all. His expression was affectionate. She thought with a lurch of happiness, that she hadn't made a mistake in doing so. "Make love to me, Taylor Burnes, who isn't afraid of anything."

His soft sigh told her he wanted the same thing. Gently, he eased into her, kissing her cheek and lowering his face to her scars and kissing them tenderly too.

She laughed and pushed his head away. "Easy there. In my dream, they were all healed, my skin was smooth, but you might make them into angry welts," she teased.

"Angry welts?" Taylor moved onto her right breast, where another visible scar stood out. "I couldn't understand why on such a warm day at the *Duck N Diner*, you were wearing a sweater. Do you know you can cover that up with makeup?"

Hope flared strong. When she was a teenager, she'd considered it, but it was much easier to cover up like a nun. "Do you think I could go out in a bathing suit then?"

"Yup. I have army buddies who do it all the time." His cock moved back and forth in her sheath. His eyes twinkled.

"Are you concealing an old injury?"

"No, I have enough trouble with my arm."

She kissed a hungry, gentle trail up the length of his arm from his wrist to his shoulder.

After the words stopped flowing, their lovemaking was tender and passionate. He rocked her with his sweet fierceness, and when an orgasm claimed her, she felt him come with her. This time she heard him call out her name and revelled in the knowledge that Friday night with a sexy hunk had turned into Saturday morning without regrets.

Later, as she cooked breakfast in the nude for the first time in her life, she asked Taylor, "When I woke up this morning, what were you looking for under the couch?"

She saw him tense. What could there possibly be there that could interest him?

He was naked too, and as she flipped a buttermilk pancake, he came up behind her and embraced her. "You told me your secrets so it's only fair I tell you mine."

She glanced backward at him and laughed quietly. "You have more?"

"Lots more." He tweaked her already pert nipples. "You're making me hungry with all these delicious smells. Hickory smoked bacon, fresh squeezed orange juice and pancakes."

Celeste rolled her eyes, knowing he couldn't see her face. "Are you going to tell me, or do I have to guess?"

"You would never guess in a million years."

"Good then you can tell me." She would have taken a shot at surmising, but she was more of a facts person.

"I have a penny worth half a million dollars," he murmured, lifting her hair and kissing the back of her neck.

"You're kidding me, aren't you?"

"No, I'm not." He left and took long strides to his jeans in the living room. She watched as he sank to his knees and ran his fingers along the carpet. A soft sigh exuded from his lips and when he faced her, the penny was in his upturned palm.

She stared at it incredulously. "It's only a penny," she huffed. "What makes it so special?" If it was. Taylor could be pulling her leg. She flipped another pancake on the searing, hot griddle.

"Probably because there were only twelve ever made." He shrugged as if he didn't care.

"Oh. What kind of penny is it?"

"A 1943 wheat."

"It can't be worth half a million." The bacon sizzled in the frying pan beside the griddle.

Taylor took her in his arms. "If it is worth that much, I can start my own gallery, and if you want, we can take you to a plastic surgeon to get those scars all fixed up."

Her mouth dropped open. She forgot about breakfast. "You'd do that for me?" She'd never had anyone hand her anything on a silver platter before, although this one was copper.

"Even if it takes up the whole amount. I want you to feel good about yourself. The gallery can always wait."

She couldn't get over his generosity, but with the huge amount of money, there was also the unspoken hint that she wasn't good enough, that her body wasn't perfect. She scowled and demanded, "Do they turn you off?" She meant her scars.

Adamantly, he shook his head. "Not in the least, but the surgery might help you to turn yourself on."

"I don't understand."

"You feel like the ugly duckling, don't you?"

He'd pegged her right. It was as if he could see into her soul. "Sometimes."

"Well, after the surgery, you don't have to feel that way. You can wear a bikini or an evening dress and no one will see those marks because they'll be gone. You'll have been transformed into a Cinderella."

The bacon started to burn around the edges, but she paid no heed.

"I'm lacking in some way, aren't I?" she whispered incredulously. Why was she so hurt by his statement? She didn't want to be Cinderella, whether in a bikini or a ball gown. Celeste just wanted to be herself.

Her world crumpled around her. "I don't think this is a good idea." She stalked to the living room with Taylor behind her. She threw his clothes at him. "Please. Just leave."

Her heart broke in pieces as she watched him dress. He didn't protest or ask questions. He simply left, and the walls didn't shudder.

Chapter Five

Celeste sank into her chair in front of the computer keyboard and screen, sniffing. Why did Taylor think she needed help or that she wanted to be Cinderella? She attacked the keyboard with a vengeance.

Initially, Friday night turned into Saturday morning without regrets, but secrets from the past are a sure fire way to kill a love life. Why does a potential relationship go south when one of the partners wants to change the other? Why does the Ugly Duckling have to become Cinderella in all her finery? Maybe I'm being snippy, but the Hunk has found me lacking in some way. I just want to be myself, just the way I am, scars and all.

Yeah, so I let the cat out of the bag. I've got scars across my upper body and my love life is just taken a huge downward spiral. Heck, I thought Hunk would race as fast as he could from me, but no, he wants me to go for surgery, to become Cinderella. I just want to be me. That's it.

* * * *

Taylor hurried out, not knowing what he'd done or said wrong although he desperately wanted to. It didn't help that he was feeling like a heel again as well as lost and hopeless. Not caring who saw him, he leaned against his car and breathed in the early morning air. Bright sunshine glowed over the apartment buildings and the trees in the nearby park. The whole area was utterly still with no pedestrians or even the hum of a car driving by.

A tight knot formed in his chest. He had nowhere to go except to his ransacked apartment. He couldn't confide in his dad that he had a valuable coin his cousin and his friend wouldn't mind getting their hands on it. He had to tell someone. Sighing, and reaching into his breast pocket without thinking, he searched for his cigarettes, but of course they weren't there.

"Damn." He didn't smoke often, but man did he want a cigarette now. He glanced up at Celeste's apartment. The drapes were closed. Was she furtively watching him? He had to

make amends with her, tell her he was sorry again, that he hadn't meant to hurt her feelings, because damn it, that's what he'd probably done by mistake.

Resolutely, he marched back to her apartment and banged on the door. "Celeste, let me in! I want to talk to you!" His heart pounded loudly in his ears. Even in the field, he'd never been so scared out of his pants as he was now with a woman. His woman. He knew that after only a night with her. Man, he was in bad shape if he could let sex with her dictate his reasoning abilities.

"Go away!" he heard from the other side of her door. So she was still pissed at him. Not anymore pissed than he was.

"Look, Celeste. Give me a break, okay? I only want what's best for you. If you don't want what I offered," he said, keeping the details out since the neighbours on either side of Celeste had cracked their doors open to eavesdrop, "then that's fine."

An old gentleman strolled out with an unlit cigar between his lips, his robe flying behind him as if he were a bird of prey. "Tell me, young man, what did you offer her? Diamonds, a vacation in Bermuda, money to live with you?"

The old guy probably didn't get any more excitement than this. Taylor kept pounding on the door. Now that the neighbours were awake, what the heck? One way or the other he'd get to talk to Celeste, even if he had to go outside and climb onto her balcony.

"I'm in the middle of crisis here," Taylor replied. "Maybe Celeste can tell you when she's no longer mad at me."

The elderly man lifted the cigar from his mouth and pointed it at Taylor. "You should try flowers. That works every time."

"I tried that last night," Taylor remarked and clenched his teeth together. He hadn't wanted a public spectacle, but if Celeste did, then she'd have it.

Mr. Cigar was next to him. He stuck the cigar in his mouth. "It obviously didn't work, 'cause you're still here."

Then to Taylor's astonishment, he too, started banging on Celeste's door. "Look, young lady, he only wants the best for you, so you can hear him out, can't you?"

Celeste's female neighbour entered the debacle. "What's going on here?" she croaked. Her hair was done up in curlers, and she wore a flowing robe with huge flowers imprinted on it.

"Celeste won't open up for this young man, and his heart is wrapped up on his sleeve," Mr. Cigar replied stoically then continued to bang.

"His heart is on his sleeve," Mrs. Curlers corrected. Then she too rapped her balled fist on Celeste's door.

His heart wasn't on his sleeve or anywhere else, Taylor vowed, wondering just what in the hell he'd gotten himself into. Soon all the apartment building's occupants would be at Celeste's place, making a great noise. Of course, he could count on the fact that there was always strength in numbers.

Finally, Celeste cracked open the door. It was hard not to cave into three people's pounding, and she didn't want the building's super to think she was rowdy like the folks next door. He'd already given them warning several times.

"I'm only letting *one* of you in," she grumbled with a straight face. It had taken her several minutes to stop laughing at Mrs. Myers and Mr. Beamer's joining in with Taylor.

"That'd be me," he said, his hand over his heart and rolling his eyes heavenward.

"What connection do you have with him?" she asked the two old people. She didn't know them well, but they stuck their noses in everyone's business, including her own.

"Since you moved in, you've always been alone," Mrs. Myers said. The curlers bobbed with her head movement.

Mr. Beamer grinned with the cigar between his lips. Celeste had never seen him smoke it, and guessed it was like a comforting blanket. "What do you do when you get a young man with his heart hanging out?"

"On his sleeve," Mrs. Myers corrected somewhat automatically.

"Since I'm the odd man out here, why don't I just step in and tell you what I have to say?" Taylor stepped across the threshold. "Are they coming to the wedding?" he asked, with a wicked glimmer in his eyes.

"What wedding?" Celeste asked in amazement.

"Our wedding." He closed the door and confronted her amicably.

"I just kicked you out," she said with half amusement and half protestation.

Taylor embraced her. "I like you just the way you are, and if you don't want anything from me, that's fine."

He was offering her an olive branch in an attempt to make peace.

"Oh," she said, reaching up on tiptoe and kissing his cheek. "We've just met."

"I'll tell you what. I'll go sell this penny and return with that half million dollars then we can decide what we want to do. How does that sound?" His hands were all over her, touching her breasts, her shoulders, skimming the flat of her stomach and the curve of her hips.

"That would make me sound as if I want part of the half million," she whispered in his ear. "I'm not a gold digger." Which she wasn't. All she'd ever wanted was to be happy, to be loved and cherished, and to return her soul mate's affection. She wound her arms around his neck and pressed her stomach against his hardening cock. "By the way, I was online, and I read that the cops caught a couple of guys breaking into a local coin collector's shop. That wouldn't have been you, would it?" she teased. She'd have to change the name of her blog, maybe to *Kiss Me...Now That You Dare*, although her love life was no longer a fantasy but the real thing. Maybe she'd delete it since what went on in the bedroom was no one's business but their own.

Taylor's eyes widened. "Nope, but I might know who they were."

"I remember one of their names — Roscoe — but not the other," she supplied.

"By any chance, was it Terry?" His expression hardened.

"Yeah, that's it. What's going on, Taylor?" Her heart thumped against her chest wall, and she began to wonder how he was mixed up in all of this.

"They're my cousin and his friend. They broke into my place last night and ransacked it, looking for the penny. They destroyed several paintings I've been working on. It's nice to know they'll be put away for a long, long time."

"That's why you needed a place to stay." She sighed. "I'm sorry about your place and your paintings. You'll be able to replace things, won't you?"

"Everything except for the paintings, which I'll have to do over again." He smoothed his hand over the back of her head.

"You know, I can think of someone I want to be put away with for a long while," Celeste murmured.

"By any chance, would it be me?"

She gave him a wide grin. "Come on. We've haven't made love in —"

Taking her hand, he finished for her. "In a couple of hours."

They laughed together and headed for the bedroom, their scars, nightmares and fantasising blogs slipping into the past behind them as they closed the door, and the walls shuddered.

Epilogue

This is my last entry to this blog, Kiss Me...If You Dare. My fantasy life, for that's all it was, is over, joyfully replaced by the real thing. With sizzling hot sex and mind-blowing companionship. I have a terrific man in my life. And for all those who read how men suck in a previous entry, well, they do. On breasts, nipples and on sugar and spice.

Hey, one last thing, I think elderly Mr. Beamer and Mrs. Myers are romantically involved. Imagine love over the age of seventy. Just goes to show that love can come at any age.

About the Author

Aurora Rose Lynn, a bestselling erotica author, lives in the Pacific Northwest with her husband and conure. She enjoys writing romance with a sensual twist but first and foremost, her stories must be about love. When she isn't writing romance, she writes young adult and fantasy stories under a pen name.

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