

Selena Kitt

Baumgartner
Generations:

Janie

WARNING: This book is not transferable. It is for your own personal use. If it is sold, shared, or given away, it is an infringement of the copyright of this work and violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

This book is for sale to ADULT AUDIENCES ONLY. It contains substantial sexually explicit scenes and graphic language which may be considered offensive by some readers. Please store your files where they cannot be accessed by minors.

All sexually active characters in this work are 18 years of age or older.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are solely the product of the author's imagination and/or are used fictitiously, though reference may be made to actual historical events or existing locations. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

Cover Design: Selena Kitt

Baumgartner Generations: Janie © June 2010 Selena Kitt

eXcessica publishing

All rights reserved

Baumgartner Generations: Janie

By Selena Kitt

Prologue

I think I was two, maybe almost three years old when my brother Henry came along. I admit, I don't remember looking forward to having a sibling. I was pretty mad about the whole thing. My mother still tells people about the time I used an entire bottle of Elmer's glue to try and seal the baby's room door shut—and he hadn't even arrived yet. Besides, he was getting my old room, the one with the fun window you could crank open on hot days, and what good was that going to be for a baby, anyway?

It didn't matter that I had brand new wallpaper in my new room with ladybugs that were as soft as velvet to the touch—the room that used to be Daddy's office with the big oak desk—or that my mother had taken me shopping to find the perfect ladybug bedspread to match. It didn't matter that I had a new big-girl bed with a tall canopy and wispy white curtains that billowed in the breeze from the open window like sails.

It didn't matter, because I was sure, once that baby came, no one would love me anymore.

It was after the Elmer's glue incident, after my Daddy had threatened to paddle me within an inch of my life—he never did, he never touched either of us in anger that way, but he would say it sometimes and it was the one time I really believed he might actually do it—I finally crawled into my mother's lap and laid my soul bare.

She didn't rush to reassure me or change my already-made-up little mind. She just rocked me gently and let me cry about it for a while.

Finally, she asked, "You love me, don't you, Janie?"

I nodded against her breast, easily giving her the reassurance I was looking for myself.

“And you love your daddy, don’t you, precious?” She stroked my hair, long and blonde like hers, only a few shades lighter.

“Yes,” I agreed, squirming in her lap, already sensing somehow what was coming.

“But how can you love us both?”

Her question stopped me and I stared up at her, my mouth gaping, the realization slowly dawning. She whispered, “Our hearts are so big, Janie, that we can always love. No matter what. We always have room to love someone else.” Then she laughed and cuddled me close. “Besides, we’re Baumgartners. We can love the whole world if we want to.”

And it was true. They loved me and they loved my brother, and we both loved them. We were a family—we were the Baumgartners, and we Baumgartners could love the whole world.

At the time, my mother was just reassuring a jealous sibling, saying something to comfort me when my world was about to expand beyond my usual, comfortable boundaries

Years later, though, pressed between two warm bodies under the sheets, I would remember her words, and they would take on a whole new meaning.

I was resistant to the idea at first, sure that I wouldn’t get enough love, enough attention, that my world would come crashing down if I included anyone else, but I was proven wrong then, and I was proven wrong later. Experience proved me wrong again and again, opening my heart wider with every new encounter.

I was a Baumgartner. I was made to love—often and well. My mother was right.
She always is.

Sometimes I think I really could love the whole world, if the world gave me a
chance.

Chapter One

I usually didn't spend the night in their bed.

Mostly it was to keep up appearances—Beth was in second grade and smart as a whip, and none of us wanted her asking questions we couldn't answer. But it was something else, too. Ronnie and TJ's bed was...well, it was their bed. They loved me and I loved them, and sometimes I shared their bed, but it was still...theirs. It was an unsaid sort of thing, but they wanted it like that, and really, so did I. It was better that way.

We were always careful—the door was firmly shut and locked at night—but once in a while, usually on a weekend when no one had to set an alarm for the morning rush, I'd wake up pressed firmly between their flesh, TJ's thigh tucked between mine from behind, my cheek resting against Ronnie's breast, my breath making her nipple hard even in her sleep. I liked those mornings, in spite of myself. It was a delicious way to wake up, feeling TJ's hand moving over my hip, watching as he reached across me to tweak his wife's nipple, encouraging her awake.

Our nights were long and wild and crazy, but our mornings, when we had them, were invariably slow and sweet and lazy. Ronnie was a deep sleeper, the slowest to respond to TJ's early morning urges, but I was all too aware of him with the swollen length of his cock rubbing me from behind. I couldn't help wiggling back against him, spreading my legs to make room for him to slip between, not entering me, just using the flesh of my thighs to press him snugly as he rocked against me.

He liked it when I reached down to touch myself, spreading my smooth pussy lips, letting my wet slit become a slick crevasse for him to plow through, still not entering

me, teasing my clit with the head of his cock with every pass. Even our gentle rocking and my soft moans as TJ cupped the fullness of my breast in his hand, rolling my nipple between thumb and finger, didn't wake Ronnie. She slept, her hair spread out on the pillow, my own mixed with hers like flecks of gold in the darkness, while her husband probed between my legs with his fingers now instead of his cock, following my wetness to its sweltering source.

I couldn't help but turn, lifting my bottom in the air as he fingered me. "Faster!" I whispered. "Harder!"

"More?" he asked, not waiting for my response before slipping a third finger in, stretching me, making me moan against the mattress. When he moved behind me, his motion shifting the bed, Ronnie stirred, sighing softly in her sleep and curling her hand up under her chin. I watched her chest rise and fall, her pink nipples puckered and hard, and I wondered if she was dreaming about this very thing as TJ teased me from behind, his cock sliding up and down between my pussy lips.

"Please," I whispered, looking back at him, his eyes dark with lust in the early morning light. "Fuck me, TJ."

I used my muscles to squeeze the head of his cock as he pressed it against my hole and he gasped, grabbing my hips and shifting forward. I bit my lip, trying to be quiet, enjoying having him to myself for the moment, focused solely on me as he reached around to cup the sway of my breasts in his hands.

"God you're so fucking tight," he whispered, and I whimpered as he pulled back, only halfway in me, to thrust again. This time he made it all the way in and stayed there

for a moment, his cock throbbing so thickly I could feel his pulse. “I love your little cunt, Janie...”

I squirmed under his praise, pressing my cheek against the mattress, my eyes roaming over Ronnie’s curves as she slept beside us. She shifted in her sleep as TJ began to fuck me. He was in no hurry, using my juices to slowly wet his way, his fingers alternately tweaking my nipples and strumming my clit, keeping me guessing.

“Lick her,” TJ urged, his hand in my hair, guiding me. “I want to watch.”

I didn’t need to be asked twice. I leaned over to kiss the rise and fall of Ronnie’s belly, down to the hairless cleft of her pussy. I loved smelling her, tasting her, using my tongue to part her lips so I could focus on the sweet bud of her clit. She came awake a bit at a time, her hips beginning to move in rhythm with my tongue, her eyelids fluttering, her breath coming faster, faster. She was just half-awake, her nipples standing straight up, her pussy swelling under the attention of my mouth.

When she finally opened her eyes and moaned out loud, fisting her hands into my hair, I moved fully between her open thighs, eager to please her now. TJ groaned, his cock slowing as he watched his wife’s body twisting, arching, one hand on my head, the other palming her breast, fingering her nipple and I knew—he must be close to coming. He always did that when he wanted to wait, slowed to almost stopping, making that little growly noise in his throat.

I loved that sound.

“Janie, baby,” Ronnie whispered, stroking my hair, my cheek, her thighs trembling. “Oh sweetie, please... please don’t stop...”

Not a chance. I whimpered, pressing my tongue flat in the way she loved, wiggling it back and forth against the sensitive kernel of her clit, my fingers finding the wet give of her pussy and sliding in deep. She moaned, ushering her hips upward to meet me, and I saw her looking over my head, past me, watching her husband fuck me from behind.

“TJ,” she murmured, her eyes half-closed with pleasure. “She’s gonna make me come so hard...”

“Yes, baby,” he urged, grabbing my hips, squeezing, his cock pulsing deep inside of me. “Come all over her face. Do it. Come on!”

Ronnie reached a hand out and he grabbed it, their palms flat against one another, their fingers twining. I buried my face in her cunt, sucking and licking, greedy for her climax, and she gave it to me with sudden, shuddering thrusts, actually covering her mouth with her other hand to keep from crying out too loudly.

“Jesus, Ronnie,” TJ whispered, pulling slowly out of me, still rock hard, making me whimper at the loss. “I have to fuck you.”

I moved aside, stretching out beside his wife. She cradled me in her arms, kissing the sweet taste of her own pussy from my lips, holding me tight, belly to belly. We lost ourselves in softness, our breasts pressed together as TJ straddled Ronnie’s thigh, lifting her other leg so he could slide his cock into her wetness. She cried out against my mouth when he began to fuck her and I had to break away to watch.

TJ had a gorgeous cock and it was just accentuated by the sight of Ronnie’s fat pussy lips spreading for him with every thrust. I reached down to find her clit, rubbing it with my fingers, back and forth at first, then in circles, making her moan and squirm.

“You, too, precious,” she whispered, her hand cupping my tender, throbbing mound. I shivered, leaning in to kiss her again, our tongues touching as she slipped two fingers down around my clit, cradling it in the V made by her index and middle finger, rocking her hand up and down. God, I loved that sweet, indirect stimulation, that constant rubbing. It reminded me of when I was young and used to masturbate by riding against a pillow

Oh fuck,” TJ cried, thrusting harder, deep. “Ronnie! Oh!”

She broke our kiss to gasp, “Yes! Give me your come, baby! I want Janie to lick it all up!”

That did it. He threw his head back, his body jerking and twitching with his climax, his belly, hard and flat from his morning workouts, contracting rhythmically as he emptied himself into her. He groaned when I reached down to grab him, squeezing his softening length as he slid himself slowly out of Ronnie’s moist heat, and the sound that came from his throat was sibilate, almost a hiss, as I moved down to lick the head of his dick clean.

“Oh! God!” I cried out in surprise as Ronnie shoved my hips to the bed and buried her face between my thighs. I accepted her weight as TJ moved away, swinging her thigh over my head so she could position herself over my face. I could smell them together, TJ and Ronnie, his cum and hers, and I wrapped my arms around her hips so I could press my face fully between her legs.

“Jesus,” TJ murmured as he stretched out beside us, watching. “You’re both so beautiful.”

Neither of us acknowledged his compliment—we both had our mouths full. The feel of Ronnie’s tongue sweeping over my clit made me flushed with heat and I moaned against her pussy, working hard to concentrate on her clit, too, trying to focus as her mouth drove me to distraction.

“Taste good?” TJ asked and I gave him a muffled assent, sucking at Ronnie’s clit, feeling her body quaver. I couldn’t even begin to tell him how good she tasted—how good they tasted together. I could have spent all day worshipping the soft, pungent spread of her flesh against my tongue.

TJ rested on his elbow, but his face was up by his wife’s head as he studied her licking my cunt, spreading me open to give him a better view. But I could see the hardening length of his cock, still slick from the fucking and the sucking he’d received, and the sight of his hand shuttling up and down made me want to come right then and there.

“Oh god,” Ronnie gasped as my tongue dashed furiously back and forth over her clit, my hands cradling the full swell of her breasts, tweaking her nipples. “That’s so fucking good!”

“Are you close?” TJ’s hand moved faster between his legs. “You want to come, baby?”

She moaned, rubbing her whole face against my pussy now, her cheeks, her chin. I gasped, rising up to meet her.

“Janie!” she cried, her thighs trembling, her nipples like pebbles under my fingers. “Oh fuck! Janie! Janie!”

I would have said *yes* or *fuck yes* or *come for me* but I couldn't say a word as she cried out and came in my mouth, her whole pussy spasming, her clit throbbing against the full rush of my tongue. I continued to lick and lick and lick her, my tongue sliding between the soft folds of her flesh, lapping over the puffy outer lips of her cunt.

"Little Janie wants to come, too," TJ murmured and I moaned when Ronnie turned her full attention back between my thighs, using both her fingers and tongue this time.

My whole body sang with pleasure and still I wanted more. My attention shifted to TJ's cock, fat and firm again in his fist, and I reached over as far as I could, scratching his balls with my fingernails. He groaned, shifting further down on the bed to give me more access, letting me grasp him firmly in my hand, tugging.

"Greedy girl," TJ gasped. "You want that cock?"

I nodded, eager. "Let me suck you."

He nudged Ronnie and she moved off me, settling herself down fully between my thighs, her dark eyes bright as she looked up at me over my mound, her mouth once again anchored deliciously right there.

"Suck it, then," TJ agreed, kneeling and feeding me his cock. I moaned as he pushed the head between my lips, accepting the thrust of it, the way he reached around and cupped my neck, giving him leverage. "Oh baby, yeah. God your mouth..."

I just sucked him, trying not to come, trying so hard with Ronnie's fingers fucking me deep, her tongue rubbing, rubbing. I wanted it to go on and on. TJ growled and grabbed my breast, squeezing, twisting, and I gasped around the thick length of him buried deep in my throat, my hips thrusting upward.

“That’s my girl,” TJ growled, shoving his cock into my mouth, making me choke on it because he knew I loved it. “Take that fucking cock. I want you to swallow my cum, you hear me?”

I nodded, moaning, taking him again, again, working for it, wanting it.

“Oh fuck!” He squeezed my nipple, pulling, and I would have screamed with my own climax at that moment, but he was already coming, flooding my mouth with a fountain of hot white stuff. I strained upward, my whole body thundering on the bed with my own orgasm as I dutifully swallowed him, wanting more, it was never enough, never. I sucked him until he began to wilt and begged me to stop and even then, I licked the taste of him from my lips and chin.

“Our greedy girl.” TJ chuckled as he collapsed beside his wife, pulling me between them.

“Mmm, she is.” Ronnie kissed me, her lips impossibly soft. smoothing my hair away from my face. “I love it.”

“I love *you*.” I snuggled closer, my cheek against her breast.

“And *we* love *you*.” TJ kissed the top of my head, putting his arm across both of us.

“One big happy family.” I laughed, knowing how very strange and yet how very true it was.

I must have dozed off again—it was still very early, the sun just coming up, and it was Saturday, after all. Ronnie slept too, her cheek resting against the top of my head, but TJ had already showered and was standing in front of the full-length mirror on the back of their walk-in closet door, tying his tie, when I opened my eyes again.

“Did I sleep through the weekend?” I rubbed my eyes and yawned, stretching under the covers.

“Shhh.” TJ glanced at Ronnie, who was smiling in her sleep. “It’s just for a few hours.”

“I heard that.” Her eyes didn’t open and her words were barely intelligible but TJ sighed, understanding her perfectly.

“Sorry, babe,” he apologized, shrugging on his suit coat. “Honest, I won’t be long.”

“You always say that.” Ronnie opened her eyes to look at him and then at me. She frowned, her hand moving in my hair, petting absently. “I thought we were all going to make a day of it. We promised we’d take Beth to the Met. They’ve got Picasso on exhibit.”

“We are. We will.” TJ made a face, undoing his tie and starting again. “Besides, she’s six... she’s got plenty of time to see Picasso. She’d probably have more fun at the McDonald’s playland.”

“I would,” I mouthed, rolling my eyes, but I knew Ronnie couldn’t see me with my head tucked under her chin. TJ did though and he smirked.

“TJ, she has to know this stuff if we want to get her into Trinity—”

Oh god, not this again. Yes, Trinity was the most prestigious school in New York—and just happened to be where Beth was teaching, so it would make life much easier, I knew, in terms of scheduling—but was it really the end of the world if the kid didn’t get in? Did anyone need that much pressure in second grade?

“You know what, Ronnie?” I found way to change the subject as I cuddled up, my cheek more fully on her chest.

“Hm?” She glanced at me, momentarily distracted. That was good.

“If I didn’t know any better, I’d swear your breasts were bigger.” I cupped one of them in my hands, teasing her nipple.

“Stop,” she snapped, pushing my hand away and reaching for the covers. I sat up on my elbow, blinking at her in surprise as she pulled the coverlet practically up to her chin.

“What?” I looked between her and TJ, not understanding the sudden temperature change in the room. “I just—”

“You’re pregnant.” TJ’s face paled, the dimple in his chin growing more prominent as his pallor changed, his eyes widening as he stared at his wife. I gaped at him, looking back at Ronnie and seeing the truth in her eyes. TJ saw it, too, staggering to the bed and sitting on the edge. He looked back at her with a dazed expression. “I thought you had that thing, that IUI thing...”

“IUD,” she corrected, hugging the covers around herself. “I do. I did.”

“Did?” His eyebrows went up.

“I had them take it out,” she explained softly. “*After* I got pregnant. It happens sometimes, even though it’s ninety-nine-something-percent effective. And sometimes, when they take it out, you lose the baby...”

“But...” He took a deep, shaky breath. “They took it out, and you’re still pregnant?”

She nodded and I saw her lower lip trembling. I wanted to hug her but I couldn't move. I knew I shouldn't be there, but there I was, and I had no idea what to do now.

TJ sighed, putting his head in his hands. "After what we went through with Beth, we said... we *agreed*..."

The tears Ronnie had been holding back spilled down her cheeks. "I didn't do it on purpose."

TJ wasn't looking, didn't see. "How far along?"

"A little over three months."

I touched her bare arm, rubbing lightly, gently. She glanced at me and tried to smile but didn't quite make it.

"And you didn't tell me?" He turned toward her, his eyes blazing.

"I was going to," she managed, tears pooling at the hollow of her throat.

TJ saw them now and his face softened. Then he looked at me. "Janie, can you go check on Beth?"

I nodded, knowing it was just a excuse to get me out of the room, and I took it, grabbing my t-shirt off the floor and pulling it on before slipping out the door. I did check on Beth, but she was still sleeping, her thumb tucked firmly into her mouth, a habit Ronnie was trying in vain to break her of. She was definitely going to end up with braces at this rate.

Instead of going back to my room on the first floor, I went straight for the shower, still warm and steamy from TJ's time there. There was a shower downstairs, too, but it didn't have double showerhead jets and I want to stand under the pound of water hot and hard enough to turn my skin bright red.

A baby.

It was both exciting and scary. What did that mean for them? For us? For everything? I loved being Beth's nanny. She was a great kid, easy-going, very quick—and she had the goofiest sense of humor. But what would it mean, being a nanny to a baby? Diapers, bottles, strollers, crying in the middle of the night... And what about our nights? What would happen to the three of us? Would there even be room for me in their lives as their lover anymore?

Because we all knew I didn't want to be a nanny forever. What kept me, the reason I really stayed, was because I loved Ronnie and TJ and my life with them. Being "the nanny" was just convenient, for all of us. I could write while Beth was in school, then pick her up and make her a snack, supervise homework and get dinner started, all before Ronnie got home from teaching. TJ was always the last home, but he made it most nights for dinner.

And then, after Beth was asleep, we'd all huddle under a blanket on the couch and watch a movie, or sometimes we'd play games or read our books or do something on our laptops, and usually two or three nights a week, I'd end up in their bed, at least for a while.

It was a good routine, one we'd fallen easily into over the past couple years. Was that all going to change now?

"Knock-knock."

I startled at the sound of the little voice piping up behind the shower curtain and then heard the unmistakable sound of Beth peeing.

"Who's there?" I gave her the perfunctory response.

“Interrupting cow.”

Oh boy. This one again. The kid had a thing for knock-knock jokes lately.

“Inter—”

“MOO!” She poked her head around the curtain, grinning, her hair a dark, cloudy mess around her face.

“Moo right back atcha.” I flicked water at her. She made a face and quickly closed the curtain.

“I want waffles!”

“Did you flush and wash?” I reminded her, grabbing the shampoo.

“And bacon. And sausages. And Pop-Tarts. Strawberry ones. With pink sprinkles.”

“Are you sure it wasn’t interrupting *pig* at the door?” I lathered my hair, wincing as the water turned colder when she flushed and turned on the sink.

“OINK!” she agreed, peeking around the shower curtain again. “Can I have waffles?”

“Eggos?” I asked hopefully.

“Not homemade?”

I turned off the shower and opened the curtain. She had such a pretty pout—which was probably why she usually got just what she wanted.

“I don’t think we have time for homemade.” I grabbed the towel I’d left on the counter and wrapped it around myself.

“But it’s Saturday!” she protested.

Tell me about it, I thought. “I know. But your mom’s taking us to see paintings today.”

Beth slid up onto the counter and watched me wrap another towel around my hair. “Do they have cows in them?”

I laughed. “Some of them do.”

“Well then I guess we can go. If I can have waffles first.”

“Eggos.” I insisted on the compromise. “Go get dressed and get them out of the freezer, okay?”

“Okay.” She hopped down and opened the door, headed toward her room.

I hesitated, watching her go, and then looked the other way at the closed door of her parents’ room. There was no sound from inside. I stood there, wondering if I should knock?

My decision was made for me when the door flew open and Ronnie came out, pulling her robe around her.

“You scared me!”

“Sorry,” she apologized. Her eyes were red and I knew she’d been crying. “Is Beth up?”

I nodded. “Did TJ go to work?”

“For a little while.” She sighed. “I’m going to take a shower. Can you get her ready? We’re going to meet TJ at the Met at noon.”

“Sure.” I stood there, wanting to say something but not knowing what to say. Congratulations? Are you okay? What? Beth saved me from saying anything, bursting out of her room wearing jeans and an iCarly t-shirt.

“Time for Eggos!” she exclaimed. “Mommy! Knock-knock!”

Ronnie groaned, shaking her head. “Oh no, it is way too early for knock-knock jokes. Ask Janie.”

“Moo!” I said, sticking out my tongue and steering Beth toward the stairs. “Let’s go rustle up some syrup and butter.”

When I looked back, Ronnie had gone into the bathroom and shut the door behind her.

* * * *

R U COMING 2NITE?

I glanced at my cell, reading Lil’s message, and quickly texted her back.

Y.10?TTYL

“Your boyfriend?” TJ teased, sitting down next to me at the Met cafeteria table with his tray of food.

“Just Lily.” I rolled my eyes. He teased me all the time about not dating, and it was true, I didn’t—at least, I never brought anyone home. “Beth, sweetie, all those vegetables you’re pulling off your sandwich are the best part.”

“Nuh-uh.” She stuck out her overly-red tongue—she’d been drinking a cherry Icee—and opened her sandwich again to show me the myriad of lunchmeat on it. “The cow is the best part!”

“And the pig,” I reminded her, eating another baby carrot. “There’s pig in there.”

“Yum!” She took a big bite, her grin doughy and huge, and I could see her lunch through one missing front tooth.

“Just hurry up and eat it.” Ronnie snapped the brochure she was holding closed.

“The crowds are crazy today and the Picasso exhibit is going to be mobbed.”

“Good salads,” TJ remarked, shoveling in another huge bite of his Cobb salad.

“They should be, for the price.” Ronnie took a much more delicate bite of her Chinese chicken salad. “We should have eaten before we left.”

I swallowed a sigh and looked between the two of them, sitting across the table from one another, silently chewing lettuce. I knew it was going to be like this. I’d tried to talk to Ronnie before we left, but she kept changing the subject, and she brought her Kindle and read on the subway while Beth and I played I-Spy, so there was no opportunity there, either. I felt totally shut out. This wasn’t like her at all, and I hated to admit, even to myself, how much it hurt my feelings.

“Daddy, Janie said there are cow pictures.” Beth sucked hard at her straw to get the last of her Icee, making loud slurping sounds.

“You like cows?” TJ asked, looking amused.

“Knock-knock!” Beth grinned. Even her teeth were red!

“Who’s there?” He indulged her current love for knock-knock jokes much more than Ronnie or I did.

“Cows go.” Beth licked mustard off her upper lip.

TJ smirked. He knew this one. So did I. “Cows go who?”

“No, cows go MOO!” Her voice rose to a yell on the last word and several people around us looked over from their tables.

“Beth, shh!” Ronnie said, but she was laughing. She obviously hadn’t heard that one yet.

“God I love your laugh.” TJ’s expression softened when he looked at his wife and she smiled back at him. It happened just like that. Whatever had been stretched between them had snapped and recoiled and the distance between them was now much shorter.

My cell vibrated again in my pocket and I pulled it out, reading the text under the table.

WAN2 TRY 1OAK?

I contemplated the screen. 1 Oak was an exclusive club. We’d been turned away a couple of times, although if Lil and I dressed to the nines, we usually managed to finagle our way past the bouncers.

CAN WE GET IN?

Going out clubbing was the best part of New York. I’d met Lil when I was finishing my creative writing degree at NYU and she’d been the one who introduced me to the clubbing scene and I couldn’t get enough.

HOW SHORT IS YR SKIRT?

I snorted, texting her back.

INVISIBLE

“You and Lil going out?” TJ slurped the last of his Diet Coke and I glanced up, seeing him watching me.

“1 Oak.” I looked down to see Lil’s last message: *CW2CU!* I couldn’t wait, either. I suddenly had a lot of restless energy I needed to get rid of.

“Expensive, isn’t it?” Ronnie raised her eyebrows, finishing the last of her salad.

I smiled broadly. “We hardly ever pay for drinks.”

"I bet that's true." TJ gave me a knowing look and I blushed.

"Just be careful." Ronnie stood, gathering up garbage to toss out.

I stood, too, helping her. "Yes, Mother."

She stopped and looked at me and then smiled. "Have fun."

"I always do." I smiled back and felt it in that moment—things were okay again.

"Can we go see the cows?" Beth helped us carry our garbage to the trash bin and toss it in.

"Actually, they're bulls, I think." TJ tossed his empty soda container in.

"Yes, very twisted bulls." Ronnie snorted as TJ slipped his arms around her from behind. He nuzzled her ear and I saw more than heard him whisper, "I love you."

She turned in his arms, kissing him lightly. "I love you, too."

"Are you ready to go see some crazy cows?" I asked Beth, watching her watch her parents. Her eyes were as glued to them as mine were.

"Bullcows," she corrected me, taking my hand and swinging it as we walked.

"Let's go!"

Chapter Two

The secret to getting into a club was acting as if you couldn't care less, no matter what. You couldn't beg or plead or make up some story about knowing someone inside—the guys at the door had built-in bullshit radar. You just had to stand there and expect to get in.

“Sorry, we're closed for a private party.” The bouncer at the door was a big guy—they were always big guys who stood there with their arms crossed, making their pecs and biceps stand out even more. Of course, they weren't really closed for a private party. That was just what they said when they didn't want to let someone in. We'd heard it before.

“Who's this, Sailor Moon and her lesbian lover?”

I looked over at Lil and almost laughed—he was right on. She looked just like a dark-haired Sailor Moon with the short navy pleated skirt and white blouse and red bows. I told her with my eyes, *don't say anything*. She raised an eyebrow but she kept her mouth shut.

We both just stood there, not even looking at the bouncer. I took my phone out to glance at it. It wasn't ringing and I didn't have a text—I just wanted to look like I had something to do. Lil took a stick of gum out of her purse and put it into her mouth.

“Go on,” he said, waving us through. I saw him look at my legs first, though, and I was glad I was wearing heels that made me a good four inches taller. Lil snuck a triumphant squeeze to my hand as we walked past him.

“Damn, you weren't kidding when you said your skirt was invisible!” She had to yell to be heard, and this was the first chance we'd had to talk. She came from West

Chelsea, and TJ and Ronnie's house was all the way out in Douglaston, a place that always had Ronnie saying, "There's nothing wrong with living in Queens!" Of course, you couldn't tell that to the Upper West Siders.

"Like it?" I yelled back, flipping the hem. I couldn't flip it much—it was one of my shortest, cream-colored, a halter dress, if you could call so little material a dress, with a plunging neckline, completely backless. I wore a silver armband with it and my hair was up—it was too hot to dance with my hair down.

Lil gave me two thumbs up and then grabbed my hand. We checked our wraps before heading toward the dance floor. We'd dance until we got thirsty—and by that time, we could take advantage of some guy trying to pick one of us up and offering to buy us drinks. Even a gin and tonic was eighteen bucks!

The music was so loud I could barely think—it was fantastic. We waded to the center of the sea of writhing bodies, our hips already moving, driven by the beat. For me, dancing was almost as good as sex—hell, it was sex—hips grinding, bodies swaying, adrenaline pumping. It was like an all-night orgasm, a constant throb. I lost myself dancing, and in that, Lil and I were just alike.

Of course, it was all dependent on the music. The DJ was important, and when we got one that was into the rap and hip-hop thing, or someone who was just crazy bipolar, picking one good song followed by a dud, we usually called it a night early, because we were all about the dancing. Unless one of us—usually Lil—found someone to go home with. That was a given.

I'd only done it twice, myself. Once it was some male model—and oh my god he was beautiful, but the sex was boring as hell. He loved being worshipped but didn't want

to do any of the work. Another was a woman, Catherine. She said she had an “arrangement” with her husband, an open marriage. Well, I knew all about that, didn’t I? The sex that night had been incredible. I saw her here sometimes, still, and she made it pretty clear I could go home with her again anytime I wanted.

“Look!” Lil was pointing and I followed her finger toward the upper deck.

“Is that—?” I squinted, shading my eyes against the strobe, but I was sure. “Jim Carrey?”

Lil grinned, bobbing her head and bumping me with her hip. I didn’t get as star struck as I used to, when I first came to New York, but it still stunned me when I ran into one. I’d even seen Kate Hudson jogging in Central Park—of course, I only knew her because TMZ was following and snapping pictures. Otherwise, she just would have been another blond woman running in sweats and a baseball cap.

“I gotta pee!” I pointed to my bladder and then toward the bathrooms downstairs. Lil nodded, following me. We didn’t like to get split up.

“Hey! Lil!” The voice came from behind us and Lil turned. Inwardly, I groaned, knowing the night was pretty much over. He was gorgeous, I’d give her that—but aside from the perfect hair, perfect teeth and perfect body, I didn’t understand what she saw in him.

“Alek!” Her whole face lit up. I bit the inside of my cheek and tried not to roll my eyes. “What are you doing here?”

He nodded toward the bar. “Buy you a drink?”

She looked back at me and I waved her away. “Go on! I’ll meet you!”

“I’ll be right here!” she yelled, grabbing a stool. Alek was already ordering their drinks.

I nodded, weaving through the crowd and deciding to take a detour upstairs first. Jim Carrey was one of my little brother, Henry’s, absolute favorites. It was worth a shot, right? He was still standing there near the railing, talking to someone I didn’t recognize—a short, balding guy in a suit.

I dug a receipt out of my purse and climbed the stairs, hoping he wouldn’t disappear before I got to the top.

“Mr. Carrey?” God, this was embarrassing. Was I really doing this? *It’s for Henry*, I reminded myself, imagining his shock and awe when I gave it to him and told him the story—embellished, of course.

He glanced at me and then did a double-take, his eyes moving first to the plunge in my neckline and then to the hem of my skirt.

“I’m sorry to interrupt,” I said, holding out the receipt and a pen. It was one of TJ’s—it had his name, followed by his title, ‘financial consultant,’ along with his business phone number. That was when I noticed my hands were actually shaking! “But could you sign this?”

He blinked at me for a moment, as if he was considering, and then he smiled brightly, that same smile you see on screen, too big and wide and a little bit fake.

“What’s your name, sweetie?”

“It’s for my brother,” I explained as he took the pen and paper, looking around for a hard surface to write on. “His name is Henry.”

“Turn around,” he told his friend, and the balding guy hesitated for a moment, looking at me—he was staring, really. Then he sighed and turned, leaning over the railing slightly.

“Agents.” Jim grinned at me and it was real this time. “They’ll do anything.”

“Thanks a lot!” the guy mumbled, glancing over his shoulder as Carrey used his back to put the receipt on. “Just because I’ll bend over a railing for you...”

“Ha! It’s usually the other way around, pal.” Carrey scribbled his name with a flourish and then looked at me. “Let me tell you something—agents smell money like sharks smell blood.” Carrey winked as he handed me both the receipt and the pen.

“Nice dress. What’s your name?”

“Jane.” I felt more flushed now than I had on the dance floor.

“Oh no, not you!” He was just as smooth and dramatic in person as he was on screen. “You give plain Janes a bad name, sweetheart.”

“Thank you.” I tucked the autograph and pen away in my little purse. “And thank you again, for this.”

“My pleasure.” He grabbed my hand and actually bowed, leaning it to kiss it. People around us were watching and he waggled his eyebrows at me. “And a very nice view, I might add.”

Now I was sure I was bright red.

“Jim.” The agent saved me, clearing his throat.

“Right. Back to business.” Carrey straightened and tipped me a dismissing wave.

“Nice meeting you, Jane.”

"You, too." I didn't even hear my name being called until I got to the stairs. If I hadn't detoured on my way to the bathroom that night to get Jim Carrey's autograph for my little brother, things would have gone very differently later, but Catherine found me again because I had, grabbing my arm and pulling me into a hug.

"It's so good to see you!" she exclaimed. I returned her affection, still flushed from dancing and my encounter with a real celebrity. I hadn't had the guts to actually go up to any of the stars I'd seen in New York since I'd been there, and probably wouldn't have this time, if it weren't for Henry. He'd seen *Bruce Almighty* fifteen times!

"You look gorgeous," she gushed in my ear, still holding me close. Catherine was a leggy redhead with a temperament as fiery as her hair. Even in my heels I felt short and dumpy next to her. The night she'd taken me home from *1 Oak*, I felt like I was going home with a goddess.

"So do you." My returned compliment was genuine. She looked fantastic in a black mini-dress—her legs went on forever!

"You alone?" Her smile was suggestive as we parted, still standing close and practically blocking the stairway. People squeezed by us, both coming up and going down.

I shook my head. "I'm here with my friend Lil."

She looked disappointed and, for a minute, I was, too. I wondered if she was remembering the night we spent in her posh Manhattan apartment. I'd been pretty drunk—Lil's Alec had bought drinks for us all night long in hopes that she would go home with him and I had taken full advantage of his generosity. He'd taken advantage of Lil later, she said, so I guess it was a win-win for everyone that night. I couldn't help

remembering what it felt like to kiss Catherine, how full and sweet her lips were, and thinking about kissing her reminded me of the taste of her pussy, completely shaved below with a fine landing strip of red hair at the top to prove, she said, that she was a real redhead.

"Listen, I have to pee." I smiled apologetically, remembering Lil waiting for me at the bar.

"I'll go with you."

And that's how we ended up downstairs in the bathroom, which looked like the Starship Enterprise and made me feel like I was peeing in outer space. It was crowded, as usual, as we pushed our way to the sinks to wash our hands. Catherine touched up her make-up, blinking fast to dry her mascara. Her eyes were big and blue, gorgeous, probably contacts—they were too bright not to be. But she was stunning.

"If you keep looking at me like that, I'm going to be forced to take you home with me again." She didn't look away from the mirror as she said the words, but her smile was slow and mischievous.

"Don't throw me in the briar patch," I quipped, adjusting the top of my dress—it really was too low-cut for someone with my cup size. I felt like I was falling out of it constantly, but at least it had gotten us through the door.

"Don't tempt me." She did look at me then, her eyes darkening, her smile fading, and I gasped when she grabbed my shoulders, pressing me against the bathroom wall between two hand-dryers and kissing me. She tasted like sweet alcohol and cherries and I didn't even care that women were moving around us to dry their hands, probably

watching Catherine's long, silky tanned thigh sliding between mine, her hand reaching under the front of my dress to caress the bare flesh of my breast and thumb my nipple.

"Cat," I gasped when we parted, my thighs squeezing hers. I couldn't help myself. My pussy was pounding, sodden. "What are you doing?"

"Tempting myself." She stepped back, letting me go. I caught the eye of the woman next to me at the hand dryer. She was watching us, expressionless. Things like this happened in the 1 Oak bathroom a lot, though. I'd heard couples fucking in the stalls before, while a line of women waited to go.

"Let's dance." Catherine grabbed my hand, pulling me along. Saying 'no' to her was next to impossible.

I didn't even think of Lil until we got back upstairs and I looked for her at the bar. She'd promised to wait, but she wasn't there.

"Come on!" Catherine led me and I followed, letting her rub up against me as we danced. She turned me around, pulling my behind into the saddle of her hips as if she were a guy getting ready to fuck me. I felt the press of her breasts against my bare back, the silky material of her dress brushing against me.

"I love your tattoo." Her thumbs were there, at the small of my back. "I forgot how sexy it was."

When her fingers began tracing the Celtic design, I shivered, telling myself I had to find Lil, that I wasn't, under any circumstances, going to give in and go home with Catherine tonight. Both TJ and Ronnie had admonished me not to be too late, and I knew, just from the way they'd said it, they both wanted me in their bed. After Ronnie's morning confession, the mood between them had gone from tense to loving as the day

wore on, and by the time I was getting ready to go out, they were lazing together on the sofa, watching *The Marriage Ref* and laughing.

"I have to find my friend." I said the words into Catherine's ear as she turned me around. The music was like an aphrodisiac. My body moved all on its own, creating delicious friction between us.

"You'll never find her in this crowd." Catherine shook her head. "Text her!"

Brilliant. Why didn't I think of that? Probably because Catherine's hands were petting my behind.

I unzipped my purse and found my phone, quickly typing in a text message to Lil.

WHERE R U?

Catherine didn't let me alone, her long limbs twining with mine, moving me to the music. God, she was something else, so hungry. It was very hard to refuse her, which was probably why I never had. The other times I'd seen her here, I'd avoided her for just this reason. I admit, I felt guilty going home with her, knowing Ronnie and TJ were waiting for me. It didn't make any sense, I knew. Technically, I was a single girl, and they were fine with me dating, encouraged me, in fact—but something in me still felt as if it were a betrayal. I didn't understand it.

DOWNSTAIRS. WITH ALEK.

Well. I knew what that meant. I texted her back.

RU GOING HOME W HIM?

I gasped when Catherine began kissing the back of my neck, my bare shoulder, instantly hardening my nipples. I glanced around. Most people weren't paying any attention to us, but a few were watching. It was quite a display of dirty dancing, the tall

redhead and the little blond making out on the dance floor. And I couldn't pretend we weren't making out as she turned me around and kissed me fully on the mouth, her tongue softly touching mine, exploring. I moaned when she slipped a hand down to fondle my ass and clasp me tightly against her.

My phone, still in one of the hands wrapped around Cat's neck, vibrated, and I broke the kiss, checking the text message over her shoulder.

I WANT2

"I want you." Catherine's didn't have to say it. I knew—everyone on the dance floor knew. But she extended the invitation anyway. "Come home with me."

Lil was going home with Alek. Ronnie and TJ were home and had each other. As much as I liked to think of myself as part of them, as part of the family, they were really a separate unit, a family of their own—and a growing one. Who did I have, really?

"Do you have a car?" Last time, we'd gone to her place in a limo, a luxury that both shocked and thrilled me.

Her smile widened. "Driver's waiting outside."

Over her shoulder, I saw Jim Carrey, still standing at the railing talking to his agent, but I could swear he was looking at us. Then, when he turned to look fully at me, his eyes met mine and I knew he'd been watching. He grinned, winked and gave me a thumbs up. I almost laughed out loud.

"Okay." I acquiesced, and her eyes brightened as she took my hand, leading me through the throng of people.

I took the time to text Lil one-handed.

GO4IT!

And I told myself, as I swept through the club on Catherine's arm, that I was just taking my own advice.

* * * *

We stopped for a courage-drink at the bar before we left—two shots of tequila each. The bar in the limo was stocked, too, and she kept pouring, champagne this time, petting me the whole way. But I was nowhere near as drunk as I'd been the last time we showed up at her penthouse apartment, and I'd forgotten how intimidating her wealth was. I hadn't even seen the view from her balcony before.

That night, we'd made it first to the immaculate white leather sofa, and then to her four-poster bed, where I'd woken up early and tried to sneak out. When she woke, looking as hung over as I felt but still gorgeous, her hair hanging in red waves over the side of the bed, asking where I was going, I told her, "I'll take the subway home," and took off.

"This place is...breathtaking." I looked out across the terrace to the lights of the city, flickering like fireflies in the night. The whole place was alive and moving below us.

"Nowhere near as breathtaking as you are." Catherine pulled the tie behind my neck, moving her hands over my shoulders, sweeping the material away. It puddled in a creamy, silky heap at my feet and I stood there in my panties and heels, letting her massage my breasts, standing in front of the window for all of New York to see if they wanted to.

"So sexy." She slid a hand down my belly, under the elastic edge of my cream-colored panties, her fingers parting my flesh. "Oh god, so wet...!"

I was. I knew she must be too, between the music and the dancing and the drinking and the anticipation. I wanted to turn around and kiss her, to show her how much I wanted her, how good it felt to be there, but her finger found my clit, rubbing in circles, and I was lost.

"Oh, yes..." I leaned back against her, my nipples hardening. I saw our reflection in the glass, my blond head arched back against her shoulder, her red one bent to brush kisses over my neck.

I should have felt awkward or ashamed of myself, going home with a woman I hardly knew, practically a stranger. Okay, so I'd done it once already... but I'd never called her, she'd never called me. It was just a one-night stand, a little bit of very drunk fun for both of us. I hadn't planned to ever repeat it, with her or anyone else.

But here I was again.

"Let's go to bed." I didn't want to see myself doing this, even just in reflection.

"Mmmm...not yet..." She grabbed my hips, swinging me around and pressing me against the door wall. I gasped as the cold glass met my back, but the heat of her breath warmed me when she sank to her knees, pulling my panties aside to probe my slit with her tongue.

"Cat..." I moaned in spite of myself when she sucked at my clit. "Come on. Not here."

"Right here," she insisted, pulling my panties down to my knees, her eyes meeting mine. "Right now."

I was buzzed, but I wasn't drunk. I definitely wasn't too drunk to care that we were standing in front of a window, that anyone might see us. But the more her tongue

and fingers delved, the more exciting the thought became. What if someone was watching us? What if some voyeuristic guy across the way had a pair of binoculars and was standing there, cock in hand, watching Catherine lick my cunt?

"I wanted to do this to you right there in the bathroom." Her voice was husky, her fingers sliding in deep. Oh god, what if she had? The thought made me burn. "Right there on the dance floor."

Jesus. While the entire club watched?

"Oh god." I stroked the thick mass of her hair as she tongued my clit. "That's so good. I don't think... oh! I don't think I can stand up much longer..."

It was true—my knees were actually weak.

"Come here." She directed me, sitting me on the edge of the coffee table and spreading my thighs. "Don't move."

I watched as she stood, slipping out of her dress, too, and then kneeling in front of me, both of us now in panties and heels, black and white. She slipped her heels off, but mine were the strappy kind and I didn't want to take the time to struggle with the straps.

"I'm going to lick you until you come all over my face." She parted labia with her fingers, admiring my cunt. "Then I'm going to take you to my room and fuck you with a strap-on until you can't breathe or think or do anything but come and come and come for me..."

Oh my god. My whole body prickled with excitement, but she was right, I didn't have time to think. The world could have been watching and I wouldn't have cared. She worked at my pussy with her tongue, her fingers, moaning against my clit as she ate

me, all the while rubbing her own cunt. I leaned back on the coffee table, pulling my knees back and spreading wide for her. I wanted her to devour me, to make me forget everything, and for a while, she did.

"So close," I managed, grabbing her hair and driving my hips upward, my nipples hardening almost to the point of pain as I climaxed, using her tongue to get myself off. She didn't complain about my roughness. In fact, she took it in stride, burying her face between my thighs, planting her mouth over my mound and staying there, smearing my juices over her mouth and chin until I was begging her to stop.

"Ready for more?" She rained kisses over my still-quivering cunt.

I groaned, half-laughing as I sat, not sure if the dizziness was the effect of the alcohol or my orgasm. She gave me that same mischievous grin, her hair a red mass of silk over her shoulders, her breasts perfection, round and firm, her nipples pink and hard. I didn't know if they were real—I suspected not, especially in Manhattan—but didn't really care.

"I think we gave New York enough of a show." I nodded toward the balcony, the blinds still open wide. "Let's go have a little private time."

She led me to the bedroom I assumed she shared with her husband. I didn't ask where he was—she'd told me the last time we were here that they had an arrangement, that he knew she went out clubbing and picked up women and he was fine with it. Maybe she only did it when he was out of town, I thought, unbuckling my heels and tossing them aside. My panties and dress, I realized, were still in the living room, along with my purse and phone.

Her bed was huge and high. I literally had to climb up onto it. There was a balcony in there, too, but she pulled the blinds before coming to join me in bed, shutting the world out.

"You could have had your pick of any woman there tonight. Why me?" I wondered out loud as she captured my nipple in her mouth.

"I like you," she said simply, pressing my breasts together, trying to capture both my nipples at once. My breasts were large, but not quite that large, and she had to bridge the difference with the wet lash of her tongue. "You're so young and sweet, beautiful..."

"So are you." I looked back as she rolled me over, moving down to kiss and nibble my behind.

Catherine laughed, her fingernails grazing the globes of my cheeks, my ass clenching in response. "How old are you? Twenty-one?"

"Twenty-three." I sounded defensive. I probably was.

"Talk to me when you're thirty-three and you've been to a plastic surgeon twice, and you've had more Botox in your body than should be legal."

"You'd be beautiful anyway." I let her spread my thighs, her fingers searching for my clit, still so sensitive from my orgasm. "I'm sure your husband thinks you're the most beautiful woman in the world."

"I don't know." Her hand stopped moving between my legs, her lips still on my behind.

For some reason I thought of TJ and Ronnie then, the way he looked at her when she didn't know he was watching, the way his eyes followed her around a room. Every woman should have that, I thought—one man who couldn't keep his eyes off her.

Catherine moved to stretch out beside me and I looked over at her in the lamp light. She looked sad and I wanted to hug her.

"I didn't mean to pry," I apologized.

"No, it's okay." She shook her head. "He's a good guy. I love him and I know he loves me..."

"But?"

She slowly traced the lines of my tattoo. "This was my idea, you know."

"This?"

"Seeing other people." She rubbed my lower back. "He didn't want to have anything to do with it."

Again, I was thinking of TJ and Ronnie. Whose idea had it been, I wondered? His or hers?

"I guess I just wanted...something more."

Now I was curious. "Do you bring home men, too?"

"No." She kissed my shoulder, her lips soft.

"Does he see other women?"

"Well...he could." Her breasts pressed against my side as she moved closer. "If he wanted to."

"But has he?"

"No. Not that I know of."

I rolled to look at her, up on my elbow. "Do you think you'd be okay with it, if he did?"

"I...I think so." Her gaze fell.

"And he's okay with...this?" I reached over and touched my index finger to her nipple.

"I think so." She bit her lip as I cupped her breast, feeling the weight of it in my hand. "He says he is."

"You know what?" I leaned in to embrace her, my body warming hers.

"What?" she asked as I began to kiss the tops of her breasts, squeezing them both and thumbing her nipples until they grew hard.

"I think you need to not think for a while."

Her belly was soft but flat, her skin like cream. I let my tongue dip into her navel, a preview.

"I think that's a good idea..." she whispered, her hands in my hair, pressing my head down, down...

I followed her direction as she spread her pussy lips with her fingers, her French-manicured nails showing me the way. I could smell her musky scent, her mound radiating heat. I played in the novelty of her pubic hair, just a strip at the top of her cleft, pulling and tugging gently, taking my time. I was anticipating the taste of her, the feel of her flesh against my tongue, the same and yet so different. Ronnie and I were incredibly familiar with each other. She knew what I loved; I knew how to please her. Being with Catherine was an experiment, an exploration into entirely new territory. It was blackly exciting.

I explored her with my fingers, my tongue, letting my body remember her. I'd been really drunk last time and so had she, but tonight I was more aware and breathing her in. The mattress we were on could have been floating on a cloud, I was so lost in her.

"Mmmmm so wet." I slid two fingers easily inside of her, pumping gently, feeling her begin to fuck me back.

"Your tongue," she begged, arching toward my mouth. I indulged her, flicking the tip of it back and forth over her clit, teasing as I fingered her, wanting to keep her on the edge, panting. Her flesh gave in slowly as I thrust my fingers deeper, the wet sound filling the room. One thing I did remember was she liked to be fucked—and hard.

"Come on," she urged, lifting her hips completely off the bed. "Gimme more than that, baby!"

I already had three fingers pumping but I slipped another in, twisting so all four would fit, stretching her wide. She drew her breath in sharply tugged at her own nipples, grinding her hips against my hand.

"Deeper!" she panted, thrashing, rolling her pelvis. Her pussy was sloppy-wet, bathing me down to my wrist with her juices. "Ohhhh fuck! Yes! Janie, do it! Put your whole fucking hand in me!"

She got just what she wanted as her body surged, her hips lunging—my entire hand disappeared into her hole, swallowing me up in sweltering heat. It was like plunging into the center of volcano. I had small hands, but still—I stared, agape, as she began to fuck me all the way to the wrist, my hand curling into a fist inside of her.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" She moaned with every stroke, and I let her guide things, afraid I might hurt her, but she kept on, asking for more, more. "Give it to me! Yes! Fuck me deeper! Harder!"

"Oh my god." I panted, working hard, fucking her as deep as I dared, her cunt like a furnace, watching in awe as her lips spread for every thrust, feeling the soft give of her pussy against my fist. "This is so hot."

Her eyes were only partially open as she looked at me, her gaze full of lust. I knew she must be close. She grabbed my hair, pulling, and I gasped, following her direction as she shoved my face against her cunt.

"Make me come," she insisted, impaling herself on my fist. "Oh yes, yes, make me come!"

I covered her mound with my mouth, sucking her clit and pumping my fist deep into her cunt. Her whole body tensed, her toes curling, and she screamed with her orgasm. I felt every contraction around the slick fist I had buried in her pussy. I could barely breathe as I watched her climax, her muscles constricting again and again, scalding my wrist and arm with her juices.

"Ohhh wait, wait," she pleaded as I began to slide my hand slowly out. "Easy... ohhh god..." I tried to go slow, feeling the subtle spasms of her lingering orgasm against my knuckles as I straightened my fingers, easing them out of her cunt. My whole hand and arm was shiny with her and I smiled when she grabbed my hand, pulling me closer and lifting it to her mouth to lick my fingers.

"I never did that before." I was still breathless. My whole body was on fire for her. I'd never seen anything so sexy in my life as her fucking me like that—my whole damned hand buried inside her!

"It's really good." She reached down to cup my mound. I was dripping. "Want me to do it to you?"

"No way." My eyes widened but I moaned as she cradled my cunt and rocked her hand against me.

"You'd love it." She used the heel of her hand, riding me hard. "I won't hurt you."

I shook my head, straddling the velvet expanse of her thigh. "Let me show you what I like."

"All right." Her eyes brightened as I inched my way up the long length of her silky thigh, my pussy closing in on hers. When my mound reached hers I began to rock, the softness of our lips rubbing together, back and forth.

"When I was young, I used to do this," I admitted, arching when she rolled a little sideways, lifting her leg to give me a better angle.

"With girls?"

I flushed. "No. By myself. With anything I could find... pillows, stuffed animals...fence railings..."

She grabbed my hips, situating me closer. "That's fucking hot."

"Doesn't it feel good?"

"Yes." She reached down to spread her lips. Oh god, that was *really* good—our pussies rubbed together, spreading liquid honey. It made me ride her faster. "But I meant...it's hot thinking about you doing this by yourself."

I closed my eyes, rolling my hips in circles, focusing on my clit and swabbing it back and forth against hers. It was like they were kissing, the soft folds of our flesh fat and oily as we rocked together.

"Did you do it a lot?" Catherine squeezed my hips, her breath rapid.

I nodded, not opening my eyes—I was concentrating too hard. "I had one stuffed dog I liked best." I bit my lip when one of her hands massaged my breast, flicking my taut nipple with her thumb. "Oh god! Yes! I can feel that right in my clit!"

"Good." She tugged, twisting, and I burrowed in deep against her cunt. "Why did you like the stuffed dog best?"

"He had a hard nose." I felt my face turn scarlet with embarrassment at my confession, opening my eyes to look at her. "And I used to rub against that part like this." I let my clit linger over hers, worrying my hips around, fast, faster, holding onto her other thigh for leverage. Her skin was like silk. "My mom couldn't figure out how he got so dirty."

Catherine gave a low laugh. "Dirty girl."

I was ashamed by my admission, but too turned-on to stop. The feel of my pussy searing over hers was euphoric, and I knew I could ride over the edge into paradise at any minute.

"Do you like being called a dirty girl?" She hefted both breasts now, delightfully torturing my nipples. The sensation roiled through my belly and went straight to my clit in delicious, lightning-fast pulses. "A naughty little slut?" My breath rushed out in a gust when Catherine slapped my tits, opening my eyes wide. "Such a bad girl." *Slap. Slap.* My nipples stung and my skin reddened as she continued to smack my breasts. I

twisted and rolled, pushed and pulled, my breath rapid, my heart racing. "Rub yourself off, baby. That's it!" She fucked me back, catching a rhythm sure to send me over. "Rub that hot little clit all over my cunt. Get yourself off, Janie! Do it!"

"Oh! Now! Now!" I spread wide, leaning in and splaying my pussy against hers as I came. She grabbed my tits and mashed them together in her hands, quivering underneath me, and I knew she was coming, too, wrangling me like a bucking calf as I gave her every last bit of my orgasm.

"Oh my god!" I collapsed, my limbs going limp, letting her fold me into her arms. "Oh. My. God."

She brushed the hair away from my heated face, kissing my sweaty forehead. Our bodies were polished with sweat—we'd worked hard for that one. Exhaling, I hid my face against her breasts and she petted me—my hair, my back, my arms.

"Damn, I didn't even get my strap-on," she murmured against the top of my head.

"Well, we've got all night."

She laughed, kissing me down onto the mattress as we fell into oblivion, losing ourselves in each other once again.

Chapter Three

I woke up hung over and I had no idea where in the hell I was. My first clue was a pair of black panties I had wrapped around my wrist. I vaguely remembered having them stuffed into my mouth at one point, and then—had they been used to tie me to the bed post?

I rolled to my back from my belly with a groan. Oh my god, I was sore! My pussy was sore, my arms were sore, my thighs actually trembled when I tried to move...

What in the hell was I doing last night?

Then Catherine sighed and shifted in her sleep, pulling the covers up, and it all came back. Well, most of it anyway. I looked at the smooth curve of her spine, her hair spilling over her shoulders like a river of fire, and felt faint. I didn't even want to think about what I'd done or said the night before. I had to get my stuff and get the hell out of there. TJ and Ronnie were going to be worried sick. They'd probably called a million times already. Where was my phone?

I found my panties and shoes on the floor and remembered my dress was in the living room. I slipped my panties on and carried my shoes, easing open the bedroom door as quietly as I could. Behind me, Catherine sighed and rolled again, but then she was quiet. The door clicked shut behind me and I crept down the hall, past half a dozen closed doors—*how many rooms do they have in this apartment?*—past the private penthouse elevator, looking for the living room.

The blinds were still open wide and I blinked at the brightness of the morning, my head throbbing. I'd obviously had way more to drink the night before than I'd realized. Shading my eyes and groping my way around the couch, I returned to the scene of the

crime, hunting around the coffee table and in front of the door wall for my things.

Problem was, they were nowhere to be found.

I stood there for a moment, lost in foggy thought, trying to recall. Had I gotten up in the middle of the night to get my clothes? I didn't think so, but I was pretty hung over. I couldn't be sure. Maybe—

"Are you looking for these?"

I probably would have screamed if my throat and mouth hadn't already been so filled with cotton.

"Who are you?" I squeaked, my arms snapping quickly closed to cover my breasts, my shoes still in hand, but I knew it was too late. And I knew, in an instant, who he was. Of course. It was Catherine's husband. If nothing else, I would have recognized him by the vanity wedding photo over the fireplace—the dark, curly hair and smiling eyes were a giveaway, although he was a few years older in person. And there he was, standing there looking scruffy and disheveled like he'd just woken up, too, wearing a navy colored robe belted at the waist and holding my clothes out in one hand like a waiter.

"I'm Josh." He took two steps forward, putting my folded dress and my purse on the coffee table and taking a step back to turn around. "Go ahead. I won't look."

"Thanks," I croaked. It was a little late for the whole not-looking thing, but I grabbed my dress and pulled it quickly over my head, wishing now that it was made of more material.

"I think you have some messages." He turned slightly to say this over his shoulder, still keeping his eyes averted. "Your phone's been beeping."

I unzipped my purse and checked. Twelve messages—ten texts and two voice mails. Of course, the voice mails were Ronnie and TJ, respectively, the first asking where I was, the second asking if I was okay. The texts were all Lil. I flipped my phone closed—I'd read them later.

"Thanks," I said again, clearing my throat. "I'm dressed now. You can turn around."

He did, giving my outfit a once-over. "It looks much better on. So what's your name?"

I smoothed my hair. "I'm sorry. I'm Jane. Janie."

"Well, Jane-Janie... it's nice to meet you." He held out his hand. I took a few barefoot steps toward him to shake it. What else could I do?

Never mind that it happened to be the hand which had been buried up to the wrist in his wife's cunt the night before... Thinking about that made me want to pass out.

"It just Janie."

"Want some coffee, Just-Janie?" He nodded behind him toward the kitchen. So that's where he'd been when I thought I was sneaking by, I realized. "It's fresh."

I shook my head. "No, I should...I need to get home."

"I'll get you a car." He walked over to the wall, reaching for a button on the intercom.

"No!" I caught up with him just in time, covering his hand with mine. He looked at me in surprise, eyebrows raised. I moved my hand as if I'd been burned. "I mean...I can take the subway."

"In that?" He blinked at me. "I couldn't live myself knowing I let you out of here to ride the subway wearing that."

"I wore it last night," I protested.

Oh crap. I'd also worn a wrap I'd checked at the door and had forgotten to retrieve when Catherine and I left *1 Oak* in such a hurry the night before.

"Which is, I'm sure, one of the myriad of reasons Catherine decided to bring you home." He smiled as he began to unbelt his robe. I took a wary step back, my eyes widening, and he shook his head, shrugging the robe off his shoulders. He was wearing blue and gray striped pajama pants underneath. "Here. Put this on. Let's get you some coffee to help your head and I'll call you a car to take you home, okay?"

I reluctantly accepted the robe as he slipped it over my shoulders—it was still warm from his body—and hesitated a moment before following him and the tempting smell of coffee toward the kitchen. All the floors were hardwood, even in here, and my feet were cold. I sat on one of the bar stools, pulling the robe tight around me as I watched him take down two mugs—both matching blue, like the black and blue accents in the marble backsplash in the kitchen—and pour two cups of coffee.

"Sugar? Cream?"

I shook my head, taking the mug as he held it out and closing my eyes, sipping slowly. It was fantastically rich and good, probably fresh-ground. Even in my hung over state, I could tell that much. When I opened my eyes, I saw him watching me over his own mug.

"1 Oak?" he asked casually, leaning against the counter. It felt safer to talk to him from over here, on the other side of the bar that looked into the spacious, wide-open kitchen. The place had ceilings that went up forever.

"Yes," I confirmed, taking another gulp of coffee, my eyes watering at the heat. I studied the stainless steel refrigerator devoid of any personal affects—not even a magnet or a picture—like it was the most interesting thing in the world. "Um...can I get that ride?"

"Oh, right." There was an intercom in the kitchen, too, and he pushed a button on it. I assumed it was the doorman who responded and said he'd buzz when the car was ready. "So, Just-Janie...are you a student? An actress maybe?"

"You don't have to babysit me." I put the coffee cup down on the bar and looked at him. He really was good-looking with all that dark curly hair and olive skin, probably somewhere in his early-thirties, like Catherine. He worked out and took care of himself—his shoulders and arms were nicely defined, I'd noticed when he took off his robe—and clearly he made a good living. He also happened to have a wife who was bisexual and liked to pick up women. What more could a guy ask for in life?

"I mean... I don't know if this is weird for you..." I studied the sink this time. It was stainless, too, and immaculately clean—not even a drop of water in it.

"Well, I've met some of the women Cat's brought home." He put his coffee down on the counter. "But I admit, you're the first one I've seen naked."

I reddened. "Sorry about that."

"I'm not." He grinned. "You're a beautiful girl."

"Thanks." What else could I say? "So...and feel free to tell me to shut up, okay? But I'm curious...you never...together?" I jerked my thumb back toward the bedroom, where Catherine was still asleep. "I mean...you'd think, you know, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em?"

He shook his head. "It's her thing, not mine."

"But you're okay with it?" I took another gulp of coffee and waited for his response. My head was getting slightly clearer. Besides, the coffee was fantastic. Josh was looking past me, and he was quiet so long I almost turned around, thinking there was someone or something there, but then he shook his head as if to clear it and turned to me.

"I love Catherine." He smiled, looking apologetic. "And Catherine loves women."

Which wasn't, I thought, exactly the same thing as being okay with it. It made me sad. And it made me think of Ronnie and TJ, who had always made me feel like it was all okay, that they both wanted and loved me. It never felt strange or awkward or wrong with us.

"I'm a nanny," I said, picking up on his earlier question and trying hard to change the subject. His smile said he knew it, and I think he was even a little grateful. "I live-in. Beth is seven. She's in second grade. And I guess there's another one on the way now..."

My voice trailed off. I'd almost forgotten—Ronnie was going to have a baby. It still wasn't real to me.

"Do you like it?" He reached over and grabbed the pot of coffee to top off his cup.

"Sure." I held my mug out for more, too. "I mean, I don't want to do it forever, but..." I shrugged.

"So what do you want to do?" He poured more aromatic, deep, rich coffee goodness into my cup, and I licked my lips in anticipation.

"I'm a writer."

"Ah." He replaced the coffee pot, nodding. "Of course."

"What does that mean?" I eyed him over my mug, breathing in the scent. It was nirvana.

He shrugged. "Well you know, it's New York. Everyone's a writer or an actor..."

I took a sip, even though it was too hot and burned my tongue a little. "What do you do?"

"I'm an agent."

"Aha!" I wagged my finger at him. "So not everyone's a writer or an actor."

"Well, someone has to represent all the talent." He straightened and went to the fridge, opening it and pulling out a white box. "Are you hungry?"

I groaned when he put the box on the counter and opened it. Inside were the most delicate, delicious-looking pastries I'd ever seen, some of them decadently drizzled in chocolate, others with raspberry or strawberry or lemon.

"I don't want to puke." I reached across the bar anyway and snagged a puffy chocolate-covered thing.

"I don't blame you." He picked something with lemon on top and popped it into his mouth. "So, what do you write?"

"Little bit of everything." My mouth was full of pastry as I said it—oh my god, it so rich and buttery and scrumptious! I already wanted another one. "But lately...I mean, what I really *like* to write..."

I hesitated, taking a big gulp of coffee, overdosing on richness.

"Go on, you can tell me." He winked and offered the box once more. I indulged again, moaning softly as thick, sweet raspberry ooze flooded over my tongue. "I'm just some guy you'll never see again."

"Erotica." I licked the filling off my lips, catching a drip on my chin with my finger. His eyes never left me as I waited for his response. I'd never really told anyone before, except for Ronnie and TJ, who occasionally enjoyed private readings.

"I see." Josh plucked another pastry from the box, something that looked almost like a chocolate-dipped cannoli. "And were you doing research last night?"

I laughed, popping the last of the raspberry-yum into my mouth. "Mystery writers don't have to kill people to write crime books, do they?"

"True enough." He took half the chocolate thing in one bite as I watched, impressed.

"So who do you represent?" I snuck my hand across to snatch one of those chocolate things. He slid the box so I could reach.

"Are you looking?" His mouth was full and he sounded decidedly Scooby-Doo-like when he asked. It made me laugh.

"Jim Carrey informed me last night that all agents are evil." Oh my god, it was actually a chocolate dipped cannoli! I bit the chocolate coating off the end and sucked at the cream, making little happy noises until I noticed Josh staring at me.

"What?" I licked my lips.

He cleared his throat and took a sip of his coffee. "You met Jim Carrey at *1 Oak* last night?"

"I got his autograph for my brother." I patted my purse. "His biggest fan and all that."

"You know, if you're serious about being a writer, you're going to need an agent." He closed the box and I looked at it longingly as it disappeared back into the refrigerator. "We may be evil, but we are, I'm afraid, a necessary one."

I shrugged, licking cream off my fingers. "Lots of people have made it without agents."

"That's a myth." He leaned against the counter, watching me slip my fingers into the soft shell of the cannoli, looking for more cream.

"Of course you'd say that." I sucked my fingers enthusiastically. "You're an agent."

Josh shrugged, standing up and holding his coffee mug, sipping slowly, still watching me. I stared thoughtfully at my dessert-for-breakfast, contemplative.

"What can an agent do for me I can't do for myself?"

I'd tried pretty hard in the couple years, since moving in with Ronnie and TJ, to get published. I had a stack of rejection letters shamefully shoved under my desk blotter to prove it. I'd almost decided give up and start writing porn instead of erotica—there was always a paying market for that stuff in *Hustler* or *Forum*. Either that, or I was going to have to start writing about vampires—very handsome, sparkly ones with Victorian-era names and lots of teenage angst.

TJ knew people and had put me in touch with a few agents, but I thought Jim Carrey was right. Agents followed the money and I hadn't made any. None of the ones I'd talked to thought I really had the potential to make enough for them, was my guess. Erotica was a niche market, and I wasn't going to make any real money there. Everyone said so. None of the agents TJ put me in touch with would even look at my writing after I said the word "erotica."

"First of all, an agent keeps you out of the slush pile." Josh interrupted my thoughts and winced at the words. Every aspiring writer dreaded the slush pile—that huge slushy pile of unsolicited manuscripts sent in by unknown authors looking to be published. "And to tell you the truth, a lot of the big houses stopped doing slush after 9/11 and the anthrax scare. The playing field has narrowed. Considerably."

"But it still happens..." I put my chocolate cannoli down, suddenly feeling queasy.

"People still win the lottery, too." Josh laughed, but it wasn't funny. He reached over and put his hand on my arm, meeting my eyes. "Look, an agent will get you in the door. An agent will get you a fair and fast read, which is all an author can really ask for, and if your book is accepted, an agent will get you a better money deal, hands down. That's what an agent can do for you."

I frowned. "Are you a good agent?"

He smiled, raising an eyebrow. "Are you a good writer?"

"I'm very good." I looked down at his hand on my arm and back up at him.

He nodded. "So am I."

The intercom buzzed and we both jumped.

“Car’s ready,” Josh said, as if I hadn’t heard the doorman say so. “Do you have everything?”

I shrugged. I hadn’t come with much. I stood, opening his robe and taking it off. “Here. Thanks.”

“Don’t mention it.” He slung it over his arm, looking across the bar at me. “Tell you what, let me give you my card.”

“I don’t know if that’s a good idea.”

He was already opening a kitchen drawer, taking out a white card and a pen and sliding it across to me. “Go ahead and write down your phone number and email on the back.”

I hesitated, frowning, pen in hand. “I don’t know...”

“What have you got to lose?” He opened the drawer, taking out another card. “I mean, I’ve already seen you naked.”

I blushed and laughed, writing both my cell and email on the card and sliding it back to him.

“Here, take this one.” He scribbled something on the back. “That’s my personal email.”

“Thanks.” I zipped it up inside my purse. “I guess I better go.”

“I’ll walk you to the elevator.”

It was just around the corner and down the hall, and I didn’t bother with my shoes, carrying them in one hand.

“That really is a great dress,” Josh remarked as he pushed the button. The doors opened immediately and he held them for me. “I can see why Catherine brought you home.”

“Tell her I said...” Yikes. What should I say? I cringed, feeling awkward. “Tell her I said goodbye.”

He nodded. “Goodbye to you, too, Just-Janie. Nice meeting you.”

“Bye, Josh.” I gave him a little wave as the doors closed before leaning against the back wall of the elevator and letting out a huge pent-up breath.

I quickly dug out my phone, flipping it open to scroll through messages, seeing Lil’s last one first:

OMG THE NITE I HAD! W8 TIL U HEAR!

You’re not the only one, I thought, smiling and thinking of my unexpected night with Catherine—and my even more surprising morning encounter with her husband.

What were the odds of a writer meeting her future agent after spending the night having sex with his wife? I wondered. Those were long odds, I figured. Crazy-odds. The kind of odds Vegas wouldn’t even let you bet on.

Those were lottery-winning odds. And strangely, that’s just what it felt like, seeing Josh’s card tucked away in my purse—like I’d won the lottery. I just wasn’t quite sure yet exactly what my prize might be.

* * * *

I tried to sneak in as quietly as I could. It was still early and I was hoping, since it was a Sunday, everyone, including Beth, would still be sleeping.

I went in the front door because the side door that went through the kitchen had a squeaky screen. I leaned there for a moment as I gently closed the front door behind me. What a night! I still felt a little hungover, although I'd had worse mornings. I was mostly just exhausted. Catherine and I hadn't slept much last night. I warmed at the memory and wondered what to tell Ronnie and TJ, because I knew they were going to ask where I'd been, what I'd been doing, and more importantly, why I hadn't called.

Maybe I could go to bed for a few hours and pretend I'd been there most of the night? I started toward my room but stopped when I heard voices from the kitchen. Ronnie and TJ were awake, and I had to pass the kitchen door to get to my bedroom. *Damnit.* I inched forward, holding my breath, listening.

"It's not that." TJ sighed deeply. "But I told you before, I just don't know if I can go through that again."

Ronnie spoke up, sounding angry. "I went through it, too, you know."

"I know you did." He sighed again. "Come here."

"I just want you to be happy." Ronnie's voice sounded muffled, not angry now, and I knew he was probably holding her.

"I am happy!" TJ sounded sincere. "I'm just...scared. I almost lost you. We almost lost Beth. I don't want that to happen again."

"I know." Ronnie sighed and I stood there, wondering what had happened. Had Beth's birth been so difficult? I knew she'd had a c-section—she still had the scar, low and faded at her bikini line. But lots of women had those. I hadn't really given it much thought past kissing it as I made my way south or north on her body.

"I mean, look at me," he laughed ruefully. "I couldn't sleep all night, worried about our *other* girl."

I startled, knowing he was talking about me, feeling even more guilty.

"I wish she'd call or something. I just want to know she's safe," he said.

"I'm sure she's okay," Ronnie reassured him. "She probably went home with someone."

He snorted. "I don't like that idea either."

"Can't have your cake and eat it, too..." Ronnie laughed.

"I sure can..." he disagreed, and I knew that low tone in his voice, the one that told me he was turning wolfish, on the prowl.

Feeling guilty, I decided to make my presence known.

"Morning, guys..." I stepped into the kitchen, seeing them both standing by the sink, Ronnie wrapped in TJ's arms. She was in her robe and he was wearing pajama bottoms. "Sorry I didn't call..."

"Janie!" Ronnie smiled and held her hand out. "Where were you, you naughty girl?"

"Yeah, I...uh...slept over." I went to them at her invitation, and warmth enveloped me on both sides.

Ronnie grinned. "How was he?"

"*She*, actually..." I confessed, biting my lip.

"Really?" Ronnie looked up at TJ. "See, *I* should be the one who's jealous."

"Neither of you have any reason to be jealous." I tucked my head against TJ's shoulder and squeezed Ronnie's hand, which had found its way into mine. "I should have just come home."

"That bad?" TJ wrapped an arm around me and caressed my hip.

"Not bad, just..." I didn't know how to tell them what it felt like being outside of the circle of their arms, their love. "I don't know, meaningless sex feels good at the time, but it doesn't feel so good afterwards..."

TJ's hand moved over my dress, pulling it up in back and sliding under the elastic of my panties to massage my ass. "Well, how about some meaningful morning sex to make up for it?"

"But I'm so sore." I groaned, turning my face up to be kissed anyway. He tasted like coffee. I probably did, too.

"Just what were you doing?" Ronnie inquired, raising an eyebrow.

"Well..." I squirmed, feeling sheepish. "Let's just say...those toy cocks are way more dangerous than real ones."

"That is so not a good thing to tell a man." TJ laughed. "Good thing I'm so secure in my masculinity and all."

"Where's Beth?" I asked, suddenly realizing we were standing in the middle of the kitchen all mashed together.

"She slept over Isabelle's last night, remember?" Ronnie tucked a piece of stray hair behind my ear. "We were hoping you'd come home and join us last night..."

"Oh, right. Isabelle." I moved away, stretching and yawning and ignoring her comment. I noticed TJ looking at me hungrily in my dress but I just couldn't muster the energy. "Then maybe I'll go back to bed for a while."

"Sleep tight." Ronnie rested her head against TJ's chest as I turned toward the door, glad they weren't really mad.

"Don't let the bedbugs bite," TJ added, making me smile.

"Oh, one good thing..." I stopped at the door and looked back, seeing TJ's arms wrapped tightly around his wife again. "I might have an agent."

"You met an agent at *1 Oak*?" Ronnie sounded dubious.

"I actually met Jim Carrey at *1 Oak* last night." I patted my purse. "I got his autograph for Henry. But the agent, well...I met him at Catherine's."

"Catherine?" TJ inquired.

"The woman I went home with last night." I blushed. I couldn't help it.

"He went home with you?" TJ frowned.

"No...he was already there. I mean..." I took a deep breath. "He's her husband."

TJ blinked. "You spent the night with both of them?"

"No..." I was quick to dispel that. "Just Catherine. I met him in morning."

Ronnie and TJ exchanged looks.

"So what's this guy's name?" TJ asked.

"Josh..." I stopped, actually having to search my memory for Catherine's last name. "Josh Wickham."

TJ blinked longer this time, looking not just surprised, but actually shocked..

"Do you know him?"

"I know *of* him."

"Is that a good thing?" I asked.

"He represents some pretty big names."

"Oh?" Now I was really curious. "Like who?"

"Stieg Larsson. Maya Angelou. Oh, and JK. Rowling."

"You're kidding me." I knew my mouth was gaping and tried to close it. "Why would he give me his card?"

Ronnie snorted. "Because he wants to get into your pants?"

I waved that idea away. "He already saw me out of them... well, most of the way out of them."

"Oh really?" TJ perked up at that.

"Long story." I laughed, shaking my head. "Will you wake me up when Beth gets home?"

"I'll send her in to wake you up," Ronnie agreed, grinning.

I groaned. "Gee, thanks."

I went to my room, leaving them there to talk—and I was sure they were talking about me. At least I'd changed the subject from the baby, I thought, peeling off my dress and panties, contemplating a shower. Tired won, though, and I collapsed naked on my bed, pulling the covers up.

Then I remembered the text messages from Lil. I sighed, searching blindly on the floor for my purse and finding it. I located my phone, flipping it open and scrolling through. She had Alek had gone back to his place. Well, that was new. Usually it was her place. And he'd stayed all night, apparently. That was new, too. And they were

going out to breakfast. Wow. Alek was one of those "I have to sleep in my own bed" types who left at four in the morning.

I got to the end of the texts and realized I also had a voice message. TJ or Ronnie again, I figured, clicking 'dial' and waiting for the phone to connect to my voice mail.

"Hi Just-Janie, it's Josh."

I stared at my cell, blinking. He'd called? Already? When? I realized then that I'd turned my phone to 'silent' when I checked my messages at Catherine's.

"I was wondering if you wanted to go to dinner tonight. How's *Masa*? I can pick you up at seven."

Tonight? Dinner? *Masa*? Was he serious? It was the most expensive restaurant in New York—like, \$1000 for a romantic dinner for two expensive. And reservations were booked in advance for *months*. How in the world had he managed it?

"But I have to be honest...this is purely personal. Not business. I want to see you. Again. Probably wearing more clothes this time, if that's your preference. Although I really did like the dress..."

His voice trailed off and he cleared his throat. "Anyway, yeah, so I'd like to take you out on a date. And my wife's totally okay with the whole seeing other people thing, as you know, and since you were here after spending the night with her, well, I figured you must be okay with it, too... so I thought I'd give it a shot. What do you say, Just-Janie? Would you like to go out on a date with me?"

Did I want to go out on a date with Josh? No business, purely personal?

"You've got my numbers. Give me a call. Or text me. Or whatever."

I wasn't going to get an agent out of this, I realized. I was going to get another complicate triangulated relationship. And could I really afford that? I looked at the phone, frowning. Catherine was a goddess...but I wasn't in love with her and didn't think I ever could be. But Josh? I remembered talking with him, sharing coffee and cannolis, and my whole body felt like a pot just coming to boil.

"Bye for now, Just-Janie."

I can't, I told myself. *This is a really bad idea*. Getting involved with Josh after going to bed—twice—with Catherine? While I was already sandwiched firmly between TJ and Ronnie? No. It was a very, very bad idea.

2NITE. 7. I HAVE HOTTER DRESSES. -JJ

I texted him anyway, signing it "JJ" for "Just Janie." The name made me smile. I put my phone back into my purse, leaving the ringer on "silent."

Whatever the response, I'd find out when I woke up.

When I drifted off, I found I wasn't thinking about my incredible night with Catherine, even though every movement I made served to remind me. Instead, I was thinking about the way her husband looked at me over a cup of coffee, his dark eyes smiling but hungry, as if he could eat me up in a moment if he got the chance.

Had I just given him the chance?

I secretly hoped I had.

Chapter Four

"Janie? Is that you?" TJ's voice broke into my reverie as I stood under the hot, pounding water of their shower. I couldn't stop thinking about Josh, who had left another message while I slept, telling me he'd pick me up at seven and he couldn't wait to see what I'd be wearing. I'd been trying to decide since.

"It's me," I affirmed. There was a shower downstairs, but it didn't have the double showerhead—or the delicious shower massager—so I often snuck up here instead.

"Just taking a shower."

"Can I join you?" He peeked around the curtain, giving me a winning TJ grin, making the cleft in his chin even more prominent. I found it hard to resist him, even from the beginning. It was no different now.

"Where's Ronnie?" I wiped water out of my eyes.

"Shopping." He was already sliding his PJ bottoms off. "For baby clothes," he added, stepping into the shower fully nude. He was tall, tanned and gorgeous, filling up all the available space and blocking the water spray. Not that I really minded.

Sometimes I liked having him all to myself.

"Beth isn't home yet?" I'd woken up on my own—no Bethie jumping up and down on my bed—and slipped up here, feeling incredibly dirty, in so many ways, from last night's romp.

"She's going with Isabelle and her mom to the zoo." He grabbed the soap and began to wash.

I slipped past him to the front, back under the warmth of the water. "Well that's more fun than the Picasso exhibit."

He snorted laughter. "You didn't enjoy our day of art appreciation?"

"Oh, I didn't mind. But I think Beth will like sea lions and polar bears more."

"Probably true." He moved on to washing his hair and I admired him while his eyes were closed.

"Just think, next year we'll have two of them to take to the Met." I was still trying to get used to the idea. "Think a baby will appreciate Picasso?"

"The Picasso exhibit will be gone by then..." TJ rubbed water out of his eyes and looked at me. His expression had changed. I could tell he was really worried.

"I heard you talking this morning."

"What did you hear?" His frown deepened, and the look in his eyes—he wasn't just worried, he was downright frightened—made me put my arms around him. It was a look I didn't think I'd ever seen on his face before, unless you counted the time Beth accidentally inhaled an M&M and I was the one closest, the one who grabbed her and lifted and squeezed her little chest and made her spit it out. It was that same blind look of panic I saw in his eyes now.

"Why are you so scared?" I kissed his chest, beaded with water.

His arms went around me, tightening, holding me so close it was hard to breathe. "I nearly lost them both, Janie."

"How?"

He stroked my back. "Pregnancy just doesn't agree with Ronnie."

"What do you mean?"

"She had pre-term labor with Beth," he explained. "You know, when you have contractions way before the baby's ready to live on the outside?"

I nodded. I had a few girlfriends back home who had kids already, and had heard enough on *Facebook* about their pregnancies—from morning sickness to hemorrhoids—to last me a lifetime.

"Everything was restricted." His arms enveloped me, his hands sliding downward. "She had to stay in bed for half the pregnancy. We couldn't even have sex."

"Is that what this is about?" I exclaimed, my eyes widening as I slapped his hands away from my behind.

"No." He smiled sadly. "If it was just that, we'd have ten kids."

"What, then?"

"She developed preeclampsia," he told me. "Do you know what that is?"

I shook my head. Maybe I knew less about pregnancy than I thought I did, I realized.

"It's when the mother's blood pressure goes way too high. If it goes on, it can cause seizures and even death. For both mother and baby," he explained.

"Can't they fix it?"

He shrugged. "The solution is to get the baby out. But they don't want to do that until the baby is old enough to survive."

I tried to imagine how scared Ronnie had been, how scared TJ must have been. "So what happened?"

"They finally decided it was too bad and they had to induce labor," he went on.

"They tried that... but Ronnie had a seizure during labor."

"Oh no." Seizures I knew about. My uncle had been epileptic and I'd seen one once. It had scared the pants off me.

"I thought she was dying." TJ blinked fast and I thought there might be tears in his eyes, but it was hard to tell with all the water. "All these doctors and nurses were going crazy, pushing me out of the way, putting stuff in her mouth to keep her from biting down on her tongue. They wheeled her out of there and down to the operating room and I was just...left...standing there..."

"But they did the c-section," I urged, knowing the end of this story at least had a happy ending. "It turned out okay."

"Yes." He stared at the tiles as if they were the most interesting thing in the world. "That time, it did." He looked at me then and I'd never seen such a deep expression of sad and scared like that before. It made my heart clench. "But what about this time?"

"Can it happen again?"

"Yes."

"But it might not," I argued, swallowing hard.

"That's true."

"But you're still scared." My arms went around his neck.

"Yes," he whispered, his voice sounding choked and I knew there were tears in it.

"Now *I'm* scared." I shivered in spite of the heat of the water.

"Ah, Janie girl, I'm sorry..." He kissed the top of my head, stroking my wet skin. "I didn't mean to scare you, too."

"I don't want to lose her." Even saying the words felt like a dream. It couldn't happen. I wouldn't let it.

"I don't either." He kissed my cheek, my mouth. "I don't want to lose either of you."

"She'll be okay," I insisted, kissing him back. His tongue was warm, probing, his hands moving on my ass again. This time I didn't push them away.

"God, I love your body," he said against my ear, nibbling there, his thigh sliding between mine.

"Easy..." I groaned as his fingers probed between my legs.

"Are you really that sore?" He sounded genuinely surprised.

"Uh huh."

"Well I'll be gentle..." He grinned, sinking to his knees and pressing me back against the tiles. "How about I kiss it and make it all better?"

"Oooohh." I moaned softly as he carefully spread my lips. They were already swollen, and not just from the night before. I'd been thinking about Josh, lazily rubbing myself, when TJ interrupted me. Now his tongue pressed flat against my clit, moving back and forth, making me rock my hips in response.

"Oh yes," I murmured, my hands in his hair. It was cut short and there wasn't much to grab onto—not like Josh's dark curls. And I had to admit, I was imagining it right then, thinking about shoving Josh's face against my wet pussy. I couldn't help it.

"Oooo, god, no," I protested when his fingers probed between my lips, sliding up inside me. I was so sore from the fucking Catherine had given me from the strap-on I could barely stand it. "Not inside, please..."

"You poor baby." He slid his fingers out and used them to spread my lips wider. I put one foot up on the edge of the tub, giving his mouth better access. "How about I just fuck you with my tongue?"

"Oh!" I rolled my pelvis forward when he made his tongue hard, like a tiny cock snaking its way into my cunt, his nose rubbing against my clit. I looked down to see him, water dripping over my breasts and belly, his eyes turned upward to mine. "Oh god, baby, that's good! TJ, yes!"

"Mmmm!" was his only successful response.

I grabbed the back of his neck, grinding my hips, my clit throbbing, my pussy already wet from the shower, but slicker from my juices as he thrust his tongue in deep. I mauled my breast in my other hand, pinching my nipple, sending delicious shockwaves down through my belly. All the sensation was centered between my thighs as I tottered against him, rubbing my clit into the hard press of his nose.

"TJ!" I moaned when he slid a finger past my pussy, probing further back, pressing against the tight pucker of my ass. "Oh! God!"

"Did she fuck you here?" He broke away to ask me the question and I whimpered, not wanting him to stop.

"No," I panted, propelling him back toward my pussy.

"So I can do this?" His finger, wet and soapy from the dispenser on the wall, slid easily past my sphincter. I clenched, but it was no use.

"TJ," I begged, shaking my head but quivering anyway, my body responding even though my head told me not to. In the year or so we'd been together, I still hadn't

let him fuck my ass. Ronnie had encouraged me, and I'd watched him do her that way, but I just...couldn't.

"Just my fingers," he assured me, sliding another one in, making me cry out.

"Ohhhhh god," I whispered, feeling him begin to fuck me, slow, not deep, just easing his way in to the knuckles and then back out again.

"You like that?" He leaned in to kiss my clit like it was my mouth, exploring with his tongue.

"No," I lied, mewling, careening. "No, please... don't..."

Then TJ stood, not moving his fingers, and I tried to wiggle away, but he forced the fullness of weight against me, kissing me breathless against the wet tiles.

"Let's try this." He reached over his head and took one of the shower heads down. He flicked the side of it with his thumb, turning the shower massager on. "Nice and easy."

"Nooo," I whispered as he slid it down between my legs, focusing the pulsing spray on the already sweltering nub of my clit. He knew I couldn't resist the shower massager, and he was right. It felt too fucking good. It demanded my hips grind, looking for more, forcing his fingers deeper into my ass.

"That's a girl." He watched me, his cock like a hot steel poker against my thigh. "You like it in your ass. I know you do."

I gritted my teeth and shook my head, seeing him only through slits, but I thrust against his hand, the pounding wet heat of the shower massager driving me crazy. I held onto him, my knees weak, and nearly screamed as his fingers moved in deep, as deep as they could go, really fucking me now.

"Ohhhh TJ!" I moaned, struggling in his arms. His body was hard and lean, flattening me against the tiles. I bit his shoulder, raking my teeth there, licking an apology with my tongue afterward, lost in sensation.

"Oh yeah, that's it," he encouraged me. "Fuck me back. Do it. Faster, baby. Take it in your ass!"

I closed my eyes fully against his words, but I couldn't stop the feeling, his fingers spreading me wide while the water flooded my clit with pleasure, taking me right to the edge of ecstasy.

"Tell me!" TJ's fingers moved like lightning, and god, yes, I found myself transported into fantasy, imagining a cock inside me now, fucking that tight hole. "Tell me, Janie."

"Noooo," I wailed, biting my lip, still wanting to deny it even as I was envisioning it.

"Yes!" He pressed the shower head fully against my pussy, rubbing it there, grinding. Oh my fucking god. That was too much. "Yes, yes, tell me yes!"

"Ahhhhh!" My nails dug into his back as I gave into it, gave into him. "Yes! Oh fuck yes, TJ, yes! Yes! Fuck my ass! I love it! Oh god yes!"

I screamed the last, my climax catching up with me as TJ shoved the shower head against my cunt and drove his fingers deep into my ass. I let him have it all, my pussy throbbing with delicious spasms, even my tight little asshole clenching, rewarding his plunging fingers. He held me up as I came, my knees going out almost completely, my whole body vibrating with my final release. Then I crumpled in his arms, against the lean, wet, hard warmth of his body as the sensation overtook me.

"Jesus." He put the shower head back, the water flooding us both with pulsing heat, still holding me tight. "That was so fucking hot."

"Mmmm." I was floating, lost.

TJ took my limp weight in his arms, kissing me, my mouth, my chin, my neck, my breasts.

"Don't get any ideas," I said when I started to come around, glimpsing the light in his eyes. "I am still not letting you fuck my ass."

"No?" He pouted, but he was smiling, kidding me. "Then I'll just have to fuck a different hole...one that isn't sore... let me see..." I shied away when his hand reached for my pussy. "Hmmm, not here..." His slippery fingers probed my navel and I laughed. "Can't fit in here, I'm afraid."

Grabbing the fat, wet bulge of his cock and squeezing, I said, "Hardly," making him groan.

"How about here?" His fingers reached my lips, smearing over them. He kissed me, his tongue probing, making my limbs feel weak again. "Will you let me fuck your mouth?"

Nodding, I let my legs do what they wanted to anyway and sank to kneeling in the tub. His cock was rigid and I tugged on its wet length, using the water flowing down his body as natural lubrication. He turned so he was leaning back against the tiles now, letting me play.

"So hard." I rubbed the head of his dick against my lips. "You really liked fingering my asshole didn't you?"

His eyes brightened when he looked down at me. "You have no idea."

"What do you think it would feel like to put your cock in there?" I teased, licking his precum off with my tongue. I couldn't see it—everything was too wet—but I could taste it.

He groaned. "Fucking fantastic." Grabbing my hair, he slid his cock between my lips, not patient anymore. "A lot like this," he panted, ignoring my pleas as he began to fuck my mouth. He knew I loved it. "Only tighter." I gagged a little as he thrust deep and I grabbed the base of his cock to keep from taking too much. "And hotter."

Just the pace he set made me crazy and my pussy responded, aching for more. I wanted him in my mouth, in my cunt, in my ass, everything all at once. I couldn't get enough of him. He moaned when my fingernails grazed his balls, and then I cupped them gently, feeling their weight. I let him slip out of my mouth so I could tease his balls with my tongue.

"Oh god, Janie," he breathed, his hand in my hair. I guided his other hand to his cock as I sucked one of his balls into my mouth, rolling it around with my tongue. "You want me to stroke it for you?"

I nodded eagerly and he took it in his fist, pumping slowly as he watched me suck and lick his balls. The water dripped over his hard, flat belly and down into my mouth as I tongued him. I loved seeing him jerk off, the way his head went back, how the muscles in his stomach clenched and rolled.

I couldn't help myself—I reached down to touch my pussy, rubbing gently around my clit, avoiding the aching throb of my hole. Damn, Catherine had really gone to town on me last night. Still, I shivered with the memory, watching TJ stroke himself for me as he watched me touch myself, too. His eyes were full of lust when he looked at me, the

water slicking my hair back, beading on my breasts and belly, dripping down between my legs.

"You really want to fuck something that isn't sore?" I bit my lip as I met his gaze.

His eyes widened. "Are you serious?"

Instead of responding, I grinned, reaching up and squeezing soap out of the dispenser. His anticipation turned to amusement when I started spreading it over my tits, making them incredibly soapy.

"Tease," he admonished, but his hand moved faster in response to seeing the soapy water make its way over my breasts and down my belly. "Push them together."

I did as he asked, kneeling up so he could get a better angle. His eyes followed my movements as I rubbed my nipples, the soap slick on my hands, pressing my breasts up and together for him. He slapped his cock against my tits and I arched, watching him bend his knees so he could slide it up from the bottom, pressing between my flesh, the head of his cock appearing at the top of my cleavage.

"God, you've got incredible tits." His praise made me blush as he began to thrust, his hips working. I moaned softly, enjoying the exquisite sight of his cock appearing and disappearing again, the shower water from above flooding the crevice, making the soap turn into frothy suds as he fucked my tits, faster, faster. He growled and grabbed my breasts in his big hands, just using my flesh now to get off.

I had to get myself off, too. My pussy was sopping and I used the heel of my hand, rolling my hips and riding it out. It wasn't going to take long, the way TJ was thrusting and bucking and moaning all sorts of dirty things to me.

"Take that cock, you little slut," he groaned. "You like it between your tits? You're such a little cockwhore."

Oh, god. It was so true. I rubbed myself off faster, eager for my orgasm and for his. I wanted his cum all over me.

"Oh fuck! Janieeee!" He called my name as he came, mashing the softness of my breasts around his throbbing cock. I felt every fiery explosion of cum, the first blast hard enough to bathe my neck in alabaster devotion, the next coming in a bold gush from the head of his dick and then dripping like hot seed pearls over the rise of my breasts. I cried out, convulsing as I came too, just from watching the brilliant display of his climax, the heel of my hand riding hard against my cunt as I shuddered and threw my head back and howled.

"Oh god," he whispered, bending to scoop me into his arms and shower me with kisses. I put my arms around his neck, letting him hold me like a baby as he sank to the tub floor with me in his arms, resting my cheek against the rise and fall of his chest. "I love you so much, Janie girl. So very much."

I nodded, closing my eyes. I loved him, too, I did. I loved them both. I loved them so much I didn't know what I would do without them in my life.

The water had gone from hot to warm, and I knew it was going to run to cold soon and force us out, but for that moment, we were content, holding onto each other and rocking together.

* * * *

"Wow." Josh's eyes lit up and he gave a low wolf-whistle when I stepped out onto the porch. I couldn't help the rush of blood to my face—and to other parts of my body—when I saw his rapacious look. "Is red the new black?"

"Everything is the new black." I rolled my eyes, but I glanced down at my dress—it was a short, sexy red number with a sweetheart neckline and wide shoulder straps. The best part was the fully ruched torso that fit me like a second skin. I pulled my wrap up across my shoulders, now that he'd had the full effect. It was a warm night, almost summer-like, but my shoulders were bare and it would grow cool later in the evening.

"Who would have thought *more* material would be sexier?" he mused as I followed him to the car. No limo—this was a brand new Mustang GT, sleek and black, riding low to the ground. "So how you feeling, Just-Janie?"

I smiled as he opened the passenger door for me. "No longer hungover, thankfully."

"Well, let's see if we can fix that." He winked as he shut the my door, trotting around the front of the car to get into the driver's side.

"I am definitely not getting drunk tonight," I informed him as the car purred to life and I put on my seat belt. "Apparently, I do stupid things when I'm drunk."

He chuckled, buckling up too. "Well we can't have that."

I watched as he shifted—it was a stick—and the vehicle responded immediately. "Nice car."

"She's a sweet ride." He shifted again as he neared the stop sign at the end of our street.

"Why do men always talk about cars as if they're women?" I wondered aloud.

"Because they are." He turned left.

"How can you tell?" I snorted, opening my purse and finding a box of Altoids. "Did you turn it over and look?"

"Did you see this beauty?" Josh asked, incredulous, glancing over as I opened the tin and dug out a breath mint. "The lines, the curves...she's a looker, this one. Stunning."

"Really?" I sucked on the breath mint, wincing at the intensity. They were, indeed, 'curiously strong.' "Are we still talking about a car?"

He grinned. "She's fast and reliable, but she can be high maintenance." He shifted to slow down at a light, the engine going from low roar to easy rumble.

"Sometimes you have to sweet-talk her to get her to go where you want her to..."

"Well, jeez, does she put out too?"

He grinned. "That depends on your definition."

"Well if a car is a woman..." I offered him an Altoid. He shook his head, watching me plunk the tin back into my purse. "One good thing... no PMS."

He laughed. "True enough."

I turned to look at his profile as he drove, heading out onto the highway now. I couldn't decide if I liked him better cleaned up and dressed in a suit or in his pajamas with his hair all mussed. Both had their appeal.

"So Josh..." I hesitated, knowing what I wanted to ask, but not sure I should.

"So Janie..." he countered, weaving effortlessly through traffic.

"Does Catherine know you're seeing me tonight?" I asked the question quickly, like pulling off a Band-Aid.

He shifted and the car sped up, thundering in response. We were in the fast lane, now.

"No," he answered finally.

"Why not?"

He shrugged. "She doesn't tell me about her dates."

"Tit for tat?" I grinned when he gave me a sly look. "Just an expression. So... have you ever been on a date before, then?"

He gave me another look and I laughed. "I mean, while you've been married to her?"

"No."

I nodded. Just as Catherine had suspected. "So I'm the first?"

"You are," he agreed. Traffic was getting more congested the closer we got to the city. I glanced at the clock on the dash, but we had plenty of time to get to dinner.

"How come?" I asked finally. "I mean... a guy like you... I'm sure you've had plenty of other opportunities."

"You think?" A small smile played on his lips.

"Well, if I was a guy whose wife said go ahead, fuck anyone you want, I think I'd be like a kid in a candy store..."

"Would you?" He smiled fully then, glancing over at me, eyes dancing. "You're an adventurer, aren't you?"

"Yeah, that's me, an adventurer." I waggled my eyebrows. "Just call me Pirate-Janie. Argh."

"I think I like Just-Janie better." He winked. "But I wouldn't object to a pirate outfit. Maybe an eye patch, a ruffled shirt, a little skirt..."

"Of course." I shook my head, smiling. "But really...why haven't you?"

"I guess I'm not like that."

I snorted. "All guys are like that."

"I hope you don't convey that stereotype in your fiction," he remarked, raising an eyebrow in my direction.

"Oh come on, Mr. Cars-Are-Like-Women..." I rolled my eyes. "You can't tell me you haven't been tempted?"

"Tempted?" he asked. "Sure. But it's a long way between tempted and... well...this."

I nodded. "So what makes you take that huge leap between tempted and...this."

"I think my profession has made me...particular," he said finally.

"In what way?"

"In spite of what you or Jim Carrey may think about agents." He gave me a sideways glance. "We have to be very discerning. We know what we like when we see it."

"So what are you saying...?" I cocked my head, looking over at him as he pulled off onto the freeway exit ramp. "That in the entire city of New York, you haven't found a woman you wanted to go to bed with?"

"Yes." The car growled lowly as we idled in New York traffic. "Until now, anyway."

Our eyes met and I thought I might melt through the floor. The way he looked at me made my whole body fill with heat. It was like something had sparked at our first

meeting that had quickly kindled into wildfire. It was burning out of control. Someone honked behind us and Josh shifted his attention back to the road.

"Have you ever been to *Masa*?" he asked as we pulled up to the Time Warner building.

"No." I didn't know anyone who had ever been to *Masa*—at least, not to *Masa* proper. A few of TJ's friends talked about going to *Bar Masa*, which was like the upper-middle-class version. To go to *Masa*, you didn't just have to *have* money, you had to be practically *made* of it.

"Well, I hope you like sushi." Josh braked, shifted and opened his door. "Josh Wickham," he told the valet, handing over his keys as my door was opened by another valet, who extended his hand. I took it, letting him help me out.

The *Time-Warner* center was colossal, and it was both surreal and I suppose fitting to have to pass through what was essentially a high-end mall, mounting an escalator lined with advertising to get to the most exclusive, expensive restaurant in New York.

"Josh," I whispered as we stood side by side, riding up the moving stairway like we were ascending to heaven. "I've never had sushi."

"Now you tell me?" He smiled and took my hand. It was big and warm and practically swallowed mine. "Well, a pirate girl like you should take right to it. Adventure and fish— isn't that the life of a pirate?"

"Argh," I agreed, blinking as Josh gave his name again at the door and it was swung wide for us by a man with a shaved head wearing an oriental robe and clogs. "Maybe I should have worn a kimono. Or my peg leg and eye patch?"

"Nah." Josh squeezed my hand as he gave his name again and we were led through the restaurant. It was small but full, the Shinto-like decor sparse but lovely, including burbling water and bamboo shades. "Have I mentioned how much I like the dress?"

"Well, I had to find something impressive." I smiled. "Most men haven't already seen me out of one before our first date."

"Good to know." Josh grinned as he held out a chair for me. I sat, surprised we had passed up all of the tables to sit at the bar, which was lit from above and glowed, luminous, like a stage. There were men, all with shaved heads, working behind the bar, some pouring drinks but most preparing sushi and other entrees with knives so sharp they could have been samurai swords. I watched these sushi-monks, fascinated, as Josh ordered sake.

The bar itself was made of the softest wood I'd ever felt and just putting my hands on it was a sensual experience. I leaned over to whisper to Josh, "I've never had sake, either."

"Well, good," he said as it was put before us in a clear green bottle in a bowl on a bed of crushed ice. "Let's make this a night of firsts, shall we?"

After one sake, I was flying. "This is strong stuff," I gulped as Josh poured me more.

"Lightweight," he teased, downing another and nodding to one of the sushi-monks as he placed a small plate of food in front of each of us.

"What is it?" I asked, watching Josh bite into one of the delicately decorated squares.

"An adventure in my mouth." He swallowed. "Try it."

I picked it up, taking a tentative bite, my eyes widening in surprise. "That's good!"

He watched me finish it all, even dabbing my fingers on the plate to get the last little bits of snow crab touched with vinegar. "That was raw tuna," he informed me as one of the monks took away our empty plates. "Nobu-style with caviar."

"Mmm." I drank the rest of my second sake, feeling like I was floating. "Never had caviar either. That was spectacular."

"Do we have a sushi virgin over here?" I looked up to see a pleasant-looking, round-faced man leaning over the bar, watching us.

Josh held out his hand and the man shook it. "Masa! Good to see you."

He nodded in agreement. "And who is your friend?"

"Janie," I replied, holding my hand out, surprised Josh knew the owner, but now I knew how he must have managed to get a spot tonight at a restaurant that required reservations weeks in advance. "Nice to meet you."

"You never had sushi before, Janie?" Masa bowed over my hand, squeezing it between two of his.

"No, never." I nodded toward where his sushi-monks were working. "But I like it! And they're all so talented!"

Masa chuckled, turning to Josh. "You brought her to impress, hm?" Josh just smiled, pouring more sake. Masa nodded and winked at me. "I bring you something special."

"So, are you impressed?" Josh asked when Masa turned and went to talk to one of his chefs.

"Who wouldn't be?" I took another drink of sake, shivering at the taste and the effect. "I guess being J.K. Rowling's agent is lucrative?"

"Ah." Josh raised his eyebrows. "Did you Google me?"

I shook my head. "My employer knew who you were."

"To tell you the truth, what I make is a drop in the bucket next to Catherine's money."

"Really?" I looked at him, surprised. "She told me she was a model?"

"She is." Josh nodded at one of the monks as he put two plates in front of us.

"But just for the hell of it. Catherine is old money."

"What's this?" I inquired, already digging in.

"Aji mackerel sashimi tossed in shiso blossoms," Masa informed us, watching me devour it.

"Yummy." I looked up at him, smiling my approval. "And this?"

"Uni risotto," Masa told me. "With sea urchin and truffles."

"Ooo truffles." The stuff was like sex on a plate. "Never had those, either."

"Try the truffle butter." Josh fed me something from his plate and I moaned softly as the stuff melted on my tongue.

"Ah, and this is our Kobe-beef sukiyaki." Masa stood aside as the chefs took our empty plates and served us again. "And shabu-shabu."

"Is this lobster?" I dipped a spoon into the beautiful little pot and tasted the delicate stuff.

Masa smiled, nodding. "And foie gras."

I swallowed, making a happy noise and looking at Josh. "That's heaven."

"Just when you thought it couldn't get any better?" He took a bit of the meat from my pot and dipped it in a sauce. As he fed it to me, I groaned.

Eagerly, I began to dip and eat more, Josh's gaze on me the whole while. When the meat and vegetables were gone, Josh took the rest of my dipping sauce and poured it into the gorgeous bowl of broth, adding the leftover risotto.

Masa nodded, smiling. "*Now try.*"

I dipped a spoon into the mixture. It was like a tangy, delicious soup. "You make transformer meals!"

"Ha! Yes!" Masa laughed, slapping the bar. "Transformer meals!"

He went away, still chuckling, leaving us with another course.

"Now, this is really sushi," Josh explained as each plate was presented to us like works of art. The sushi-monks moved like silent, fluid jellyfish behind the illuminated bar, so many plates coming and going I could have sworn they had tentacles.

I couldn't keep track of the names—things like o-toro, tai, saba and kohada. Masa said one of them was flown in that day from Spain. The ika, which Josh told me was squid, was particularly good, and there were these delectable shrimp—aba ebi—I couldn't get enough of.

By the time the meal was over, I was stuffed, and the sweet, icy melon they served us at the end was perfection. I was also incredibly high on sake and couldn't believe we'd spent three hours in the restaurant.

"You come back again any time, Janie." Masa smiled as he shook my hand.

"Bring Josh if you want to."

I laughed as Josh put my wrap around my shoulders and we left. The descent back into the real world was more surreal than the whole dinner experience itself.

"I don't want to go home," I confessed, swinging Josh's hand as we got off the escalator.

"We could look around." Josh waved at the stores, but he looked doubtful.

I shook my head. "Let's do something...adventurous."

"Argh." He grinned. "All right, Just-Janie. Can you walk in those shoes?"

I looked down at the red strappy heels I was wearing. "Sure."

That was how we ended up walking through Central Park at ten at night, Josh's arm around my waist, the night air cool but inviting. It was the last refuge of nature in the middle of a city of steel and glass. I loved smelling the trees and the freshly cut grass as we walked and yet looking up to see the paradox of buildings lit up and towering over us.

"Did you like *Masa*?"

"If I wasn't so stuffed, I'd make you take me back for more," I teased.

He chuckled. "You're so greedy."

"It's true." I stopped and he turned to look at me, sliding his other arm around my waist. "I can't help it. I want what I want..." I wondered if he was thinking what I was—that I had been with his wife just a day or so ago, and here I was, now in his arms.

"Would it be wrong to tell you how much I want to kiss you?" His eyes were silver in the moonlight, his breath full of sake.

"No," I whispered, putting my arms around his neck. "It would be really wrong not to do it, though."

"You think?" His lips met mine before I could think of a response, before I could think at all. He tasted like sake, too, but so did I. I wasn't sure it was the sake, though, that was sending the fire flowing through my veins as we kissed. I slipped a hand through his hair, all those dark curls, as his mouth slanted across mine and our tongues began to explore. I forgot where we were, I forgot everything but the feel of his body against mine, my breasts pressed against his chest as he pulled me in closer.

"Janie, I want you," he whispered, kissing my neck, enveloping me in his arms. I could feel that—his cock hard through his trousers, pressed against my belly. "Would it be wrong to take you home with me tonight?"

I shivered as he lavished kisses over my neck and shoulders, his breath hot, coming almost as fast as mine. I wanted to answer him, to tell him yes, but I was too afraid. What would happen then, I wondered? What would it be like, waking up with Josh but having to face Catherine in the morning? How was this going to work?

"Josh," I murmured as his hands moved down my back, cupping my ass, squeezing gently as his tongue made little circles over my collarbone. God, if he kept that up, I was going to be inviting him back to *my* place, and I didn't even want to think about the consequences of that, what Ronnie and TJ would say.

"You feel so good," he groaned, and before I knew it, we were kissing on a park bench, Josh pulling me into his lap.

My dress was too tight to allow me to straddle him properly, so he pushed it up and grabbed my hips, crushing the red silk of my panties directly against the heat of his erection. I could feel it through his trousers, riding up and down as we rocked together.

"Oh god," I moaned softly when he broke off to stroke my breasts through my dress, kissing the swell of my cleavage. I could see the hunger in his eyes when he looked up at me in the glow of a street light. "Please, Josh..."

He slipped a hand behind my neck, pulling my mouth down to his, kissing me breathless. When I slid my hand between us to feel the length of his cock through the thin material, he groaned against my mouth, arching up. I couldn't stand it. If we kept on like this, we'd end up fucking right there on the park bench.

"Josh, wait," I begged, burying my face against his neck, breathing hard. "Not here. Not like this."

"You're right," he agreed, attempting to catch his breath, too. "My place?"

I shook my head sadly, sliding off his lap and pulling my dress back down. "I don't think that's a good idea."

"Your place?" he asked hopefully.

"I live with my employers, remember?" I took his hand and sighed. I didn't want to have to explain Ronnie and TJ. Not now. "They probably wouldn't care, but..." I shrugged.

"I understand." He gave my hand a squeeze and we sat there, listening to the crickets and watching dark clouds play tag with the moon.

"Come on," he said finally, standing and tugging on my hand. "Let's get you home before you turn into a pumpkin."

"I'm sorry," I apologized as we walked.

"Don't." He stopped, pulling me into his arms and kissing me softly. "Don't tempt me. I am two seconds away from getting us a room at the Plaza."

“Why not?” I breathed, just the press of his body against mine making me light-headed.

“Let’s save something for the second date.” He smiled and took my hand again as we began to walk.

Second date. Oh god, what was I getting myself into?

When he dropped me off at home, he gave me the softest, sweetest kiss ever and told me he’d call. And I believed him.

That was the problem.

Chapter Five

I woke up and thought I was dreaming. I was sure I'd been in Josh's bed, feeling him pressing against me from behind, lean and hard and wanting me. But when I turned in his arms, it was TJ in my little double bed, snuggled up under the covers next to me.

"What are you doing here?" I whispered, not sure I wasn't still dreaming. It had to be early—the sun was just coming up outside—although I couldn't see around TJ to the alarm clock on my night stand.

"Ronnie couldn't sleep," he murmured, sliding a thigh between mine and dipping his head to take one of my nipples in his mouth. "Kicked me out of bed."

"Oh," I breathed as he lashed at my hardening nipple with his tongue.

"She does that a lot when she's pregnant." He sighed, nuzzling me.

"But what about Beth?"

"I locked your door when I came in last night." His breath was warm as he made his way across to my other breast.

"Last night?" I murmured, putting my arms around him and wondering how long he'd been in bed with me as he paid attention to my other nipple.

"I wanted to wake you up and fuck you right then." He grinned up at me. "But you were sleeping so sweet..."

Sleeping the sleep of sake, I thought, glancing at the clock. It was six in the morning and everyone was still asleep. Everyone but us. TJ had never come to my bed before, and it felt strange to do this here, in my room.

"TJ," I whispered as his tongue dipped into my navel, his fingers taking over where his mouth had left off, rolling my nipples as he kissed his way south. "Is this a good idea?"

"Hmm, dunno." His mouth had found its way between my legs, thwarted only by the red silk panties I'd been wearing since last night—and they were still wet from my frustrating night with Josh. "Does it feel like a good idea?"

"Oh god." I moaned as he nosed the crotch of my panties aside, delving into my wetness with his tongue. I closed my eyes and remembered the feel of Josh's cock rubbing against me in the heated dark.

This isn't wrong, I thought as I arched and spread for TJ's mouth. I'm supposed to be doing this, I told myself as TJ rolled and moved me, pulling off my panties and situating us so I was sitting on his face, leaning over the solid heat of his cock.

So Josh didn't know about TJ and Ronnie. So they didn't know how I was falling for him. So what could I do? I did my best to swallow my delusions as I took TJ into my mouth, bathing him with my tongue in the early light of morning and trying to forget all the things that weren't being said.

"God, you're so wet!" TJ exclaimed, using both fingers and tongue to explore my puffy mound. I was already so turned on from holding back with Josh the night before, and my dreams hadn't helped.

"Lick it," I urged, making circles with my hips, pestering his mouth with my pussy. I had to swallow Josh's name as I took TJ's cock between my lips, sucking him deep, making myself gag on his length. He was swollen, too, the head of his dick a dark shade

of red that was almost purple. He must have been hard for a while before I woke, I realized. He'd probably been looking at me sleeping, jerking himself, trying to wait.

I moaned when he slid his fingers in, his mouth cemented over my clit, alternately sucking and licking. I started fucking him back, rocking on top of him, driving his fingers in deep. I couldn't stop thinking about Josh, about how hard he'd been when I sat and rocked in his lap on the Central Park bench. I could tell, even through his trousers, that his cock was a nice, good size. I found myself wishing I'd gone down on my knees on the cement to suck him right there. I wished I'd made him fill my mouth with his cum.

"I want your cock," I said, turning and straddling TJ's hips, telling myself it was mostly true. I wanted a cock anyway, even if it was Josh who I was thinking about. And TJ's cock was hard and ready and so very *here*. I grabbed him in my hand, his hands on my hips to steady me as I slid him up and down against my wet slit.

"Put it in," he begged, biting his lip as I continued to tease my clit with the head of his dick, my eyes closed, and yes, yes, I was thinking of Josh, remembering the rigid heat of his cock against my crotch. "Fuck, Janie, please!"

I opened my eyes to see TJ's gaze on me, his face a twisted mask, caught between pleasure and pain. I relented, slipping the head of his cock between my pussy lips and easing myself down. He rolled his pelvis to meet me, his hands moving down to capture my ass as I began to fuck him, slow and steady, my pussy drenched, taking him in with very little resistance.

"Come here." He hastened me down to lean over him, his hands maneuvering my motion, our bodies slapping together as we fucked. His mouth found mine and he sucked at my tongue, compelling me to work faster, take him deeper.

"Shhh," he implored, glancing toward the door, and I knew he didn't want Ronnie to know he'd snuck into my bed in the middle of the night instead of going down to sleep on the sofa. He didn't want her to know he'd crept into the nanny's room to fuck her on the sly.

"Oh god, that's good," I whimpered as his hips made circles, straining up, his hand slipping between us to caress my clit. "You know I love that..."

I kneaded my pussy against his hand, keeping his cock buried deep, my mouth mashed against his as our breath mingled. I was going to come so hard, there was no stopping it. Instead, I closed my eyes and worked for it, undulating my hips, his cock planted deep inside.

"MmmmmMMMMm!" I couldn't get out much more because his hand was behind my neck as he kissed me fiercely, and thank god, because I swear I moaned Josh's name as I climaxed, my pussy clenching so hard I thought it would snap TJ's cock like a twig. I whimpered and mewed as I came, shuddering uncontrollably, my thighs gripping him like a vise.

"Oh baby." TJ kissed my cheeks and chin, as I quaked in his arms. "That was so good."

"Mmmm hmmm." He was still stiff inside of me. "Your turn."

He groaned as I wriggled him out of my still-spasming cunt and started stroking him against my belly. He was slick and swollen but I spit in my hand anyway and fisted my saliva over the head of his dick, giving me even more lubrication. His eyes lit up as he watched me jerk him off, his hands moving to my breasts, yanking on my nipples.

They were so sensitive I squirmed in his lap and that just drove him on, grunting and ramming up into my hand.

"Ohhh fuck!" he bellowed, eyes closing, head going back.

"Shhhh." I glanced at the door. "Come on," I whispered. "Come for me."

His breath was hurried, his hips lunging, and I kneeled up, still pulling on his cock but now aiming it at the crest of my bald, dewy cleft. He bit his lip as he spread my fat pussy lips with his fingers, his eyes all on my cunt as I pumped him in my fist.

"Do it!" I begged, laboring hard, panting. "Come all over my hot little pussy!"

That did it. He exploded in my hand, his cock bulging, his cum shooting hot and fast against my clit with laser-like heat and precision. I gasped at the sensation, feeling him flood my fist as I continued to jerk him off. He trembled and thrust, but he didn't make any sound above a whimper as I milked him dry.

"Jesus," he whispered, using my red silk panties to clean my hand as he pulled me close. "I came so hard I can't even see straight."

"Mmmm." I rested my head against his chest, glancing at the clock and wondering if we could go back to sleep. I had half an hour before the alarm went off.

He kissed the top of my head, giving me my answer. "I'm going to go down to the sofa."

"Okay," I conceded as he slipped out of bed, finding his boxers and putting them on before unlocking my door.

"Beth has a concert tonight." He stopped with his hand on the doorknob.

"Remember, Ronnie wants to go to dinner afterward."

I nodded, snuggling under the covers as he opened the door. I remembered—Beth had a solo in one of her school's little productions. The girl had a beautiful voice. I'd told Josh about it the night before—it was the main reason we weren't getting together for our "second date" that very night.

"Hey, how was your date with Josh?" TJ turned to look at me like he'd read my mind.

"Good." I hid a smile I couldn't help under my covers. "*Masa* was amazing."

"I bet." He cocked his head. "Well, I'm afraid *Tamarind* will pale in comparison tonight, but it will have to do."

"It's fine," I replied, wondering if we were still talking about restaurants. "Beth will love it." The girl was a nut for Indian food.

He gave a little nod, frowning. "Are you okay?"

"Fine." I shrugged. "Maybe just a little too much sake last night."

"I love you, Janie." His eyes were soft, and it made me soften. Damn it. I loved him, too. But he was out the door before I could respond, shutting it softly behind him.

I couldn't fall back asleep. My alarm rang and I reached over to turn it off, still thinking about TJ and Ronnie...and Josh...and wondering what in the hell I was going to do.

That's when I noticed a message on my phone. Grabbing it off my night table, sure it was Josh, I called my voice mail.

"Hi Janie, it's Mom." I looked at the phone in surprise. She usually called me once a week on Fridays. A Sunday night call—or had it been early Monday morning?—was unusual. I listened to the message, not wanting to admit to myself that I was

disappointed it wasn't Josh. "I have some great news. Your father has a friend who has a cabin he can't use, and well, we're thinking it would be fun to have everyone get together for a little vacation. Give me a call back!" She made kissing noises at the end of her call and said, "Love you, sweetie!" before hanging up. She always did that.

I didn't know if we could all get away, if TJ could get the time off work, and with Ronnie's pregnancy, who knew? But when I sprang out of bed and headed down the hall toward the shower, I was already wondering how I could invite Josh.

* * * *

"Beth, you were so wonderful!" Ronnie snatched her daughter up and kissed her face all over.

Beth laughed and wiggled in her arms. "Ewww! Mom!"

"Amazing." TJ took Beth from Ronnie, swinging her around. "You have the prettiest voice I've ever heard."

"It's true," I piped up, giving Beth a smile. She beamed. Granted, her parents were biased, and maybe I was a little, too, but I thought even Simon Cowell would approve of our Beth's budding talent. The little musical show had gone off without a hitch and our star shone brightest of all. I leaned in to whisper to her, "And guess where we get to go eat to celebrate?"

"Tandoori chicken, here we come!" Beth exclaimed, making us all laugh. "I'm starving!"

TJ drove—and he still hadn't overcome his hatred of driving in New York, so he pretty much swore the whole way, while Ronnie admonished him from the passenger's seat and Beth and I giggled in the back.

Once we got seated and we'd ordered—I always got chicken tikka masala with a side of naan and samosa—Ronnie turned to me and asked, “Did you get a call from your mom?”

I nodded, sipping my water and retrieving Beth's napkin from the floor, tucking it back into her lap. “Something about a cabin?”

“In the Blue Ridge Mountains.” Her eyes were bright, her voice excited. “It's perfect timing—it will be this summer, when I'm off work. TJ's already put in for the time off.”

I glanced over at him, seeing if he was as excited as she was about the prospect of spending a week with my family, but his face was unreadable.

“Should be fun.” I'd talked to my mother only briefly—she'd mentioned that my younger brother, Henry, would be on break from the University of Michigan and would be coming and probably bringing a girl. Of course, when I asked if I could bring someone, she got all “Oh-my-god-who-is-he?” on me and I had to make an excuse to get off the phone.

I couldn't believe I was sitting there with Ronnie and TJ and contemplating inviting Josh... but I was. *Crazy, that's what you are*, I thought, sighing as I retrieved Beth's napkin again.

“Try not wiggling around so much, and it will stay in your lap,” I said to her and she rolled her eyes. I swear she got that from me.

“Guess who else is going to be there?” Ronnie's eyes were practically sparkling.

“I don't know,” I smiled. “But from the look on your face, it's gotta be someone good. Johnny Depp? Matthew McConaughey?”

“Better.” Ronnie grinned, finally giving it up. “Gretchen’s coming.”

I gaped at her. Gretchen had been our nanny—mine and Henry’s—after Ronnie had gone off to college and gotten married. The last I’d heard, she’d gone to school in California to be a photographer.

“She’s coming to New York,” Ronnie went on, still unable to suppress her smile. “She’s out of school and found a job here.”

“So she lives here now?” TJ mused, looking between us. I knew what he was thinking, and so did Ronnie. Gretchen and Ronnie had been lovers, and from what I could gather, it was Gretchen who had sort of pushed them into polyamory in the first place.

“Bad.” Ronnie slapped him playfully, but she was still smiling as the waiter poured her more wine. “So, how was your date, Janie? Do you have an agent now?” She slid her gaze over to TJ. “Or maybe a new boyfriend?”

I glanced at Beth, who was listening to the conversation with interest.

“It was good.” *Ha, that’s an understatement*, I thought, finding myself tempted to look at my phone again. I’d been checking it compulsively since Josh had dropped me off the night before, telling myself he was a busy man, he had work to do...

But why hadn’t he called?

“Just good?” Ronnie inquired, raising her eyebrows. “No spark? No fireworks?”

“Um...” I looked back and forth between them, feeling my face redden. “A little.”

TJ leaned back in his chair, his gaze steady, but he was frowning. “Did you talk about your writing?”

"Actually, no," I admitted. I honestly hadn't even thought about Josh in relation to my work all night long. I wondered if he had?

"Well, what did you talk about?" Ronnie asked.

"I have to go to the bathroom!" Beth piped up, plopping her napkin in the middle of her plate and hopping off her chair.

Thank god! I grabbed Beth's hand. "I'll take her."

The bathroom was all the way at the back of the restaurant and I swear I felt their eyes on me the whole way. This was going to be trickier than I'd imagined, this thing with Josh. And I couldn't kid myself anymore, after the night before—I did, indeed, have a thing for him.

"Take your time," I said to Beth as she swung the stall door closed and locked it. The more time I spent in here, the less time I would spend at the table trying to dodge questions. Maybe the food would be there by the time I got back and they would be too busy to ask any more.

I stood at the sink waiting for Beth, fixing my hair in the mirror. It was getting too long and cumbersome—almost to the middle of my back now. I'd been lazy these past few years, letting everything go, spending my time focusing on my writing. And on my relationship with TJ and Ronnie. They'd done so much for me. I felt guilty about what I was doing—or about to do—with Josh. Even though, if I told them, they'd probably be fine with it. Well, at least, I knew Ronnie would. I wasn't so sure about TJ.

I couldn't resist anymore and flipped my phone open, checking for a call. Nothing. Damnit.

I heard Beth flush and turned as she came out of the stall, announcing, "Ready!"

"Gotta wash your hands," I reminded her, turning on the sink and helping her reach the soap dispenser. She played with the hand dryer for a while, turning it so it blew into her face and laughing, and I let her.

"Can I have some lipstick?" she asked eagerly, watching me touch up my make-up.

I indulged her, taking out some clear lip gloss and glazing her pink little lips.

We stood in front of the mirror, admiring each other, and I took her hand, squeezing it and telling her, "Now you're the most beautiful girl in the whole restaurant."

"I want to be just like you when I grow up." She turned her shining eyes up to me.

"You'll be just like *you* when you grow up," I told her, smiling. "And that's just how it's supposed to be."

She skipped out of the bathroom, singing under her breath, and I followed. We weaved our way through tables toward the front of the restaurant, and I would have just passed by without seeing him if Josh hadn't called out, "Janie!" I turned, startled to see him sitting alone at a table, holding a menu.

"Josh? What are you doing here?" But I knew. I'd told him we were coming to *Tamarind* after the concert—and here he was. Coincidence? I didn't think so. My whole body felt galvanized when I saw him, as if I'd been hit by lightning.

Beth turned and frowned back at me. "Come on!"

"Probably the same thing you are." He leaned back in his chair with an easy smile. His eyes swept over me—definitely not as dressed up as the night before, but it could have been worse. "I was in the mood for Indian food."

I didn't believe it for a minute. "Where's Catherine?"

He shrugged. "She hates Indian food. I usually order take-out, but I just felt like getting out of the house."

Uh-huh.

"Come on." Beth was at my side now, pulling at my hand. She looked at Josh, frowning. "Who's he?"

"Don't be rude, Beth." I looked down at her, shaking my head. "Josh, this is Beth. Beth, this is Josh."

"Nice to meet you." Josh gave her a wink.

She looked up at me and whispered loudly, "Is he your boyfriend?"

Oh great. "Um..."

"I'm a friend of Janie's." Josh stepped in and saved me. "I'm also an agent. Do you know what an agent is?" Way to change the subject!

"Like..." Beth's eyes widened. "Like an agent of the devil?"

I said, "Yes" and Josh said, "No" at the same time and we both laughed.

"Where did you hear that phrase?" I asked her.

"Colin at school says our teacher, Mrs. Newman, is an agent of the devil."

"Out of the mouths of babes." Josh laughed again, shaking his head. "Contrary to popular belief, I'm not an agent of the devil."

"Well, what kind of agent are you?" Beth asked, curious now. "A secret one?"

"I'm a literary agent," Josh explained. "I help writers get their books published."

"Janie's a writer!" Beth exclaimed. "She wrote me an excellent story about a princess named Beth who gives away frogs."

"I thought princesses were supposed to kiss frogs." Josh grinned up at me.

"Yuk." Beth made a face. "Why would a princess want to kiss a frog?"

He asked the obvious. "To get a prince?"

"You don't have to kiss a frog to get a prince," Beth explained patiently.

Josh leaned forward, elbows on the table. "Well, what do you have to do to get a prince?"

"Be yourself."

He nodded, smiling. "You're a very smart girl, Beth."

"There you are!" TJ's voice behind me made my heart sink and I turned, already apologizing.

"Oh...I'm sorry..." I looked between them, Josh sitting, relaxed, confident, and TJ standing, arms akimbo, surveying the scene.

"Our food's here," TJ prompted. I just nodded, swallowing.

"Josh Wickham." Josh stood, holding out his hand, and TJ took it.

"TJ Mayer." They shook like only businessmen can, firm and a little cocky, looking each other in the eye as if they could play a non-verbal game of chicken in an instant.

"I guess we should get back..." I said, not wanting there to be much conversation between these two.

We started to go, but Beth refused to move, tugging on TJ's suit coat, whining, "Dadd-eeee, you can't let Mr. Josh sit here all by himself! He's lone-leeeeeee!"

TJ smiled at her. "Oh, I'm sure Mr. Wickham wants to enjoy his meal in peace and quiet, sweetie."

"Nuh-uh!" Beth insisted, grabbing Josh's hand. "Come on! I want to tell you the story of the princess who gives away frogs."

"Well, I think that's an offer I just can't refuse." Josh stood, putting his napkin on the table and looking at TJ. "Unless...?"

"By all means." TJ smiled, but it didn't reach his eyes. "Please join us."

And that's how we all ended up squeezed in, five of us at a four-person table, Josh situated firmly at a corner between me and Beth, who insisted she sit next to him.

"So how do you like our Janie?" Ronnie didn't waste any time.

Josh smiled, nodding to the waiter as he set another place and poured a new glass of water. "I like her a great deal."

I blushed, trying to hide it behind my now over-full water glass.

"She's an amazing writer," TJ piped up, just when I thought I couldn't get any redder.

"I actually haven't had the privilege yet." Josh glanced sideways at me.

"You haven't asked," I retorted, resisting the urge to stick out my tongue at him. I was also resisting the urge to touch him. Our knees were already kissing under the table.

Josh laughed. "Most writers would have sent me reams by now."

"I'm not most writers," I replied, playing it cool.

"That's true," TJ agreed. "She's much better than most."

"TJ, stop." I begged him with my eyes. "There are better writers out there than me."

"Not as far as I'm concerned." He met my gaze, steady, his eyes dark with tension.

Josh took a sip of his water. "I'm sure she's just as amazing a writer as she is everything else."

"That she is," TJ assured him, also taking a drink of his water, and the two men locked eyes like rams lock horns. I thought I would fall through the floor.

"Hey look, our food's here," I exclaimed as the waiter came over carrying a plate-loaded tray.

That saved me for a while as TJ grilled Josh about his vocation and vice-versa. They circled each other like two grizzlies, looking for weaknesses. It would have been funny if they weren't so serious about it.

"You have chicken tandoori all over your face, Beth," I said. "Use your napkin."

"I love chicken tandoori!" she replied, following my instruction anyway.

"You're just as adventurous as your nanny, aren't you?" Josh took a bite of his bhel poori.

"More," Beth bragged. "Janie's afraid of spiders. I'm not."

Inwardly I groaned and mumbled, "Only the really big ones."

Josh grinned. "What else is Janie afraid of?"

"Roller coasters," Beth said immediately. Okay, that was really true. "She hates being up high."

"Is that so?" Josh looked over at me, smirking.

"And I think she's afraid of the dark, like me," Beth went on, her mouth full of chicken.

"Why do you say that?" I asked, looking at her quizzically.

"Because I go sleep in Mommy and Daddy's room when I get scared, and I saw you—"

Oh. My. God.

My widening eyes met Ronnie's, her own mouth gaping.

I don't think I've ever moved so fast.

My entire glass of water went over onto the table as I pretended to reach for it, soaking my samosa, making it soggily inedible, but I didn't care. No one got wet, the waiter gave us copious amounts of napkins to soak up the mess, and when it was cleaned up, Beth had forgotten her comment, and I hoped Josh had, too. By the time we were eating our shahi anjir—ice cream flavored with figs and honey—Beth had told Josh about her musical performance and tried to convince him to represent her instead of me.

"It was lovely meeting you, Mr. Wickham," Ronnie said as she helped Beth with her coat.

"Please, call me Josh," he said. "It was nice meeting all of you. Especially you, Miss Beth. You are utterly delightful."

"I know." She grinned toothlessly up at him and he laughed.

"Would you mind if I drove your nanny home?" He leaned down to ask Beth, all serious.

Her eyes lit up. "Can I go, too?"

"Not this time, Beth." Ronnie intervened, putting her hands on her daughter's shoulders and pulling her back toward her. "I think Jane and Josh want to be alone for a while."

TJ frowned, looking between us, but I avoided his eyes.

Josh patted Beth on the head. "Next time, I promise. Okay?"

"Okay." She pouted but got over it pretty quickly after Josh pretended to pull a quarter out of her ear and then gave it to her to keep.

"I'll see you at home!" I called back to them as we parted ways at the front of the restaurant. Josh was parked in a garage around the corner and we ran for it because it was starting to rain. By the time we got to the car, the skies had opened up and I was soaked through to the skin.

"I think you might have the best job in the world," Josh said as he opened my door for me.

"She's a great kid," I agreed. It was hard to think with him standing so close.

"Are you cold?" He looked down at the front of me. My white sundress had become suddenly see-through, my nipples standing straight up in the cold. "Do you want my coat?"

"I can think of better things to keep me warm." I turned my eyes up to him, aching to be kissed. His eyes lingered on my mouth, but instead he smiled and stepped away, going over to the driver's side.

I sighed, getting in beside him as he started the car and turned on the heater.

"So did you have a busy day today?" I asked as he backed out and shifted the car into gear.

"No more busy than usual," he replied, turning into traffic.

"Oh." I wrapped my arms around myself, shivering in spite of the heater. I slipped off my heels and tucked my feet under me.

"Why?" He glanced over at me, frowning.

I shrugged, not looking at him. "I just wondered why you hadn't called..."

He was quiet for a moment, weaving through traffic. "Do you want to know the truth?"

I nodded, turning to look at him. His hair was wet, drops of water beading there. I resisted the urge to touch him.

"I didn't trust myself," he said as the Mustang snarled to life when he headed onto the freeway.

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"I want you too much, Janie." He sighed. "Every time I look at you, every time I hear your voice, I just want to..."

I smiled, turning fully toward him now. "To what...?"

"To do very, very naughty things." He glanced at me as I moved toward him.

"I do, too." I leaned over the console to press fully against him, my breasts crushed against his arm.

"Do you?" His mouth was almost touching mine when he turned his head toward me, and I closed the gap, kissing him quickly.

"You have no idea," I breathed.

He took a deep breath, turning his eyes back to the road. "So, right now, you're thinking about it?"

"I've been thinking about it since dinner last night." I slid my hand up the leg of his trousers, finding just what I was looking for, distended and rising fat and stiff under the material.

"Well, I can beat that." He drew his breath in sharply when I massaged him, making delicious friction with my palm through his pants. "I've been thinking about it since I found you in my living room."

"So what, exactly, have you been thinking?" I couldn't help myself. His cock throbbed stubbornly against my hand, demanding attention. I couldn't resist, slowly beginning to unzip him. I felt his whole body stiffen when I slipped my hand down to grasp him. Oh god, yes. He was solid in my hand.

"I'd rather show you." His voice grew low as I began to stroke him, lazy, up and down.

"I know." I leaned over the gearshift to take him into my mouth.

"Ahhhh Janie." One hand moved in my hair as I swallowed his length, the other stayed on the wheel. The console dug into my hip as I turned and stretched across to suck him, but I didn't care.

"Oh god." He groaned as I licked the head, teasing, enjoying the taste and feel of him. "Baby, ohhh... I'm not sure this is the time...or place..."

"I want you," I insisted as his hand moved over the front of my dress, manipulating my breast through the material, pawing at the hard pebble of my nipple. I grabbed his hand, guiding it down between my legs where I wanted it most, quickly pulling my dress up and my panties aside. His intake of breath was audible when he felt my cunt under his fingers, pure wet heat, as humid as a greenhouse, and I shifted

against him. "You just concentrate on driving and don't kill us," I instructed before taking him into my mouth again.

"Okay," he breathed, his fingers exploring my fleshy crease, my tongue making flat circles around the head of his cock. "Oh god, Janie, your mouth is so good..."

I made an eager noise in my throat as I sucked him, using both my mouth and hand now, washing him with my saliva. The sound of his breathing, harsh and heavy, filled the car.

"Put your fingers in me," I begged, spreading my thighs wider for him. "Finger my pussy. Fuck me."

He groaned and slid two fingers in, pumping his hand against my cunt. "Like that?"

"Mmmmm!" I responded around his cock, feeling the length of him swell as I fucked him back, thrusting his fingers in deep. "Hard! Harder!"

He got even more rough, his hand driving, relentless, making me go crazy on his cock. God I wanted to climb him like a tree and ride him, but what we were doing was dangerous enough. The car was barreling along the highway, thundering underneath me as I sucked him, ardent and resolute, tasting his pre-cum and slaving for more.

"Oh fuck, Janie, baby, if you don't stop, I'm gonna come!"

Why in the world would I stop? There was no way—the meaty onslaught of his cock in my mouth made my pussy beg for release. His fingers curled inside me, his hips vaulting upward, and I sucked him, tight-fisted, gulping, faster, more. "Ahhhhhh!"

The sound he made when he came, like a snarl caught in his throat, was a sweet, staccato symphony to my ears as he flooded my mouth with cum. I swallowed all

of it hungrily, wiggling over the console, trying to get even more of him. His cock grew fat with every fresh throb and I worked him with my fist, too, draining him dry.

"Oh damn," he whispered as I sat up, wiping my mouth with the back of my hand and looking over at him with half-closed eyes. "That was..."

His eyes widened when he looked over at me, leaning back against the passenger door and putting one bare foot up on the console. My dress was pulled up to my hips, my panties tugged aside, my pussy exposed.

"Josh, the road," I reminded him, noticing we were swerving into the next lane.

"Right." His gaze shifted and he adjusted the vehicle, sighing as he glanced at me again. His fingers found his way to his mouth, sucking my juices as he watched me reach down and spread my red and swollen lips. "Now I just want to return the favor. You taste so fucking good."

"Do I?" I dipped my fingers into my honey and brought them to my mouth.

He groaned. "Don't make me pull this car over, young lady."

"Promises, promises," I teased.

He turned the wheel, heading for the shoulder of the road, and I laughed. "No! Don't you dare!"

Sighing, he righted things, working the gearshift to send us rocketing even faster down the highway. "If you knew how much I wanted you..."

"Show me." I reached for his hand, guiding it between my legs, sliding down to give him easier access.

I saw him swallow, but his eyes were on the road as his fingers began to explore, making me moan when he nudged my clit.

"Rub it for me," I purred, working the buttons on my sundress from the top down. He did as I asked, stealing glances as he made circles with his thumb against my clit.

"Jesus, Janie," he whispered as I pulled my bra down, exposing my breasts and playing with my nipples.

"The road," I murmured, moaning as his fingers slipped inside, his thumb still working my clit.

"I can't concentrate," he groaned, turning his gaze half-back to the highway. "You're so fucking beautiful."

"Don't stop," I begged, rocking against his hand, biting my lip. "Oh Josh, please, please, make me come."

He sank his fingers into me, faster, harder, the wet sound of my pussy being fucked filling the car. I asked for more, more, and he fingered me, hammering my cunt until I wailed and careened against the seat, finally throwing my head back and howling as I came, knowing I was getting the leather upholstery soaked, saturating his hand with the sticky copious sap of my cunt. My pussy clamped down again and again as I keened and twisted, completely at the mercy of my climax, lost in the pure pleasure of my orgasm.

"Oh. My. God." I opened my eyes, first seeing the sky, the color of gun metal, still raining down silver, and then catching the sight of the guy in the semi-truck driving next to us, staring down at me with wide eyes and a huge grin on his face. "Oh! God!"

I sat up, straightening and buttoning, feeling my cheeks go scarlet. The trucker honked and I flushed an even deeper shade of red, looking over at Josh, who was also grinning from ear to ear.

We both cracked up then, and I took the wheel for a second at Josh's request while he zipped himself back up, too.

"That was fucking incredible." Josh shook his head, glancing over at me. "My little pirate."

"Argh." I laughed, putting my hands to my cheeks to cool them. "That has to be even more dangerous than texting and driving."

"Probably," he agreed. "Think Oprah should start a campaign?"

I smiled but he was turning down my street. We were almost home.

"Oh Josh." I shivered, hugging myself. "What now?"

"Now?" He shifted the car into low, slowing in front of my house. "Now I kiss you goodnight."

I turned toward him, letting him cup my face in his hands, our lips touching softly. It didn't stay all sweet and nice, though, in spite of our incredible release only moments before. The spark between us heated to a blaze in an instant and I found myself practically in his lap, both of us breathing hard and groping each other.

"Either that," Josh panted into my ear. "Or we go get a room. Right now. God, Janie, I can't stop myself. I told myself not to call, and then I ended up going to the restaurant, knowing you would be there. I feel like I'm going crazy."

"I know," I whimpered. When I was in his arms, everything else went away.

"Want to?" His hand stroked the wet length of my hair, scattering kisses over my neck.

I groaned, glancing over my shoulder at the house. TJ and Ronnie were waiting. I felt a stab of guilt, tried to fight it, and lost.

"Not tonight." I touched his lips with my finger, shaking my head.

He nodded, taking a deep breath as he opened his door, and I waited for him to come around and open mine. The rain had stopped, but everything was wet and beaded with water.

On the porch, he kissed me again, properly, with no groping this time.

"Soon," he whispered into my ear.

I smiled. "Yes, soon. I promise."

He wasn't the only one who felt the urgency. I intended to keep that promise, I realized, opening the door and finding TJ and Ronnie ensconced on the couch.

I would keep it, no matter what the consequences.

Chapter Six

"Hey there, sexy." TJ smiled at me when I closed the door behind me, hearing the distinctive growl of the Mustang taking off outside with Josh at the wheel.

"Hi." I smiled back. "Is the princess all tucked in?"

Ronnie nodded, lifting her head from TJ's chest. "I told her you'd peek in on her though and say goodnight."

"Okay." They looked so cozy together, and part of me wanted to settle myself between them—but another part of me suddenly felt like it didn't belong there. I couldn't help but think of Josh. What was I getting myself into? "Let me get changed and I'll join you. What are you watching?"

"*Crazy Heart*. It just started." Ronnie grabbed the remote to pause it. "It's supposed to be good."

I stopped by Beth's room first. She was curled up under the covers, her thumb stuck firmly in her mouth, but her head popped up when I opened the door.

"Did Mr. Josh drive you home?" she asked sleepily.

"He did." I came to sit on the bed next to her.

"I like him." Her voice sounded dreamy and far away. *I know how you feel, kid*, I thought. "Hey guess what?"

"What?"

"Mommy's going to have a baby!" she whispered loudly.

I gasped. "Did they tell you that?"

"No." She was still whispering, as if they might hear her. "They talked about it in the car. They thought I was listening to my iPod but the sound was off."

"Sneaky Pete." I laughed. "Did you tell them you know?"

"Nuh-uh." Obviously—no wonder she was speaking in hushed tones. "Will it be a brother or a sister, do you think?"

"I don't know." I brushed her hair away from her face. "How do you feel about having a little brother or sister?"

"Okay I guess." She didn't sound thrilled. "Colin from school has a baby sister and he says she smells."

"Babies can be smelly." I tried not to laugh. "But they can be lots of fun, too."

"I hope ours is fun."

"It will be," I assured her, tucking the covers all around her body, making a little Bethie-burrito the way she liked.

"I'm sleepy," she murmured. "G'nite, Janie."

"Good night, precious."

I quickly changed into a baby-doll nightgown and towel-dried my hair, knowing they were waiting for me to start the movie. TJ whistled when I came out, his eyes lighting up. I just smiled, slipping onto the couch next to them. Ronnie was next to TJ, her cheek resting on his bare chest, and I slipped between her thighs, my head on her belly. She was wearing boy shorts and a t-shirt, but it pulled up a little, giving me a sweet view of her navel.

Crazy Heart was fantastically good—Jeff Bridges clearly earned the Oscar—but kind of sad. I think it brought us all a two-hour dose of reality we wanted to find a way to escape from for a while.

I debated telling them that Beth knew about the baby, but I didn't want to spoil any surprise they had planned. Ronnie had really started to show—or maybe I had just really started to notice. Her breasts were full, her belly becoming rounded and kind of hard instead of soft. I knew, because I was resting my head there as we watched.

"Anyone ready for bed?" Ronnie murmured, stroking my hair. It was still damp, even though I'd towel-dried it in the bathroom. The rain was coming down outside again.

"It's early still." TJ glanced at his watch.

"We don't have to sleep." Ronnie slipped a hand down under my nightgown to grope my breast. I sighed softly, shifting to give her better access.

He chuckled. "Pregnant women are so horny."

Ronnie's fingers brushed my nipple, making me moan. "Yep, that's my excuse and I'm sticking to it."

"Right, because it has nothing to do with having Janie down there tucked between your legs all night," TJ joked, but I could hear the growing excitement in his voice as he watched his wife fondle me, both of her hands in the bodice of my nightgown now.

"Mmmm, no, it couldn't be that," she teased. I cupped my whole pussy with my hand over the cotton stretch of my panties—god, I was still so wet from my finger-fuck in the car, and that made me think of Josh. Thinking about him made me feel both guilty and excited. "Looks like Janie's just as horny as I am..."

I turned over on the couch, my breasts spilling out of the top of my nightgown as I kissed Ronnie's rounded belly, my hands moving up her thighs.

"Oh yeah," TJ encouraged me as I slid her shorts down, finding she wasn't wearing any panties at all. Her pussy lips were plump and thick and I licked them, using my tongue to tease her clit before sliding it down to really taste her. She tasted different lately, more thick and musky, and I buried my face between her legs, making her moan and reach down to caress my breasts.

"Wait." Ronnie looked down at me, already breathing hard as I locked my mouth over her clit, sucking hard. She shuddered and I could see her nipples getting hard under her t-shirt. "Oh Janie, ohhh..."

"That's my girl." TJ slid his pajama bottoms down to let his cock free. "That's my good girls."

Ronnie twisted slightly, positioning her head in his lap as he stroked his cock against her cheek. I grabbed her thigh and lifted her leg, rubbing my own pussy as I licked hers. God, she tasted so good! I swallowed her juices, using my fingers to slide inside her, searching for more.

"Ohhh baby," Ronnie whispered, looking up at TJ. "She licks my pussy soooo good!"

"Not as good as you suck cock." TJ smiled, his eyes dark with lust as he put a hand in her hair, guiding her mouth to his dick. It was a stunning sight, seeing his fat, fleshy pole disappearing into her mouth again and again. His head went back, his breath coming faster, and I kept my mouth right there on her clit as I rubbed my own, watching them.

"Oh god," Ronnie gasped, coming up for air. "What about Beth? We need to go to the bedroom."

TJ groaned softly, his hand bruising his wife's breast underneath her t-shirt, giving me a sweet glimpse of her rounded flesh. "I'm sure she's sleeping."

"Just in case." Ronnie grabbed her shorts and pulled down her t-shirt. "Especially after what she almost said at dinner!" She looked over at me to see if I remembered, and of course, I did.

"I know." My eyes widened at the memory. "And I...I haven't even told Josh about...us...yet."

Ronnie took my hand and pulled. "Well, from what you said, he and his wife have an open marriage. He'd be kind of a hypocrite not to accept this." She wrapped her hand around TJ's dick—he was still sitting on the sofa—and tugged. He groaned, his hips rising up, and we both followed her.

"You'd think that was true..." I answered with a sigh, but there was no more room for words once we got behind a safely locked door, the three of us stripping and finding our way to the bed.

TJ stood beside us for a while as Ronnie and I kissed and fondled each other, mewling like kittens as we rubbed and nuzzled and licked. I loved kissing her, feeling her breath on my face as it came in little pants, her hand cupping my pussy, mine thrust between her legs, both of us working for it. The lamp on the night table was on, burning low—we rarely had sex in the complete dark, I think because all of us liked to watch—and I could see TJ stroking and squeezing his cock as he stood next to the bed.

"Oh baby," Ronnie murmured against my lips. I felt her quivering, her thighs trembling. "You're gonna make me come."

"Like this?" I whispered back, my thumb strumming her clit, my fingers buried deep.

"Yes!" she urged, hooking her foot over my thigh and thrusting against my hand. I focused all my energy on her, watching as her head went back, her dark hair spilling over her shoulders, her nipples hard and almost red instead of their usual pink. "Oh Janie! Now! Now!"

TJ groaned softly and I met his eyes as his wife came all over my hand, her pussy clenching my fingers, her nails digging into the soft skin of my shoulders. I would have little half-crescents there later, but at the time I didn't even really notice, because Ronnie was heaving and straining in my arms, her whole body quailing with her orgasm.

"That was fucking beautiful." TJ pressed against Ronnie from behind, sandwiching her between our flesh. He leaned over to kiss her and she turned her face up to him, arching and letting him maul her breast. I pressed my hand over his, squeezing, rubbing. I hadn't been imagining things—her breasts really were much rounder and fuller than they'd ever been. And more sensitive too. She squealed and yelped now when I licked and sucked them instead of just moaning. I leaned in to suck the one TJ wasn't fondling, just to prove my point, and she responded immediately, her hands burying themselves in my hair.

"I'm so wet," I murmured as my tongue played with her nipple, back and forth, teasing. She rolled to capture my mouth, straddling me, pressing my hands above my head.

Glancing over at her husband, she smiled. "I think Janie needs to be fucked."

"Well, I'm sure I'm the man for the job." He grinned as he moved toward us on the bed, situating himself between my open thighs. She leaned forward over me as he teased my pussy with his cock, making me moan and arch against Ronnie. She kissed me softly, murmuring sweetness as he slid himself in deep.

"That's a girl." She looked into my eyes as they widened in surprise at his sudden entry. "Take that dick. You like it inside you like that?"

"Yes." I wrapped my arms around her. I loved feeling her body against mine while he was fucking me, the soft press of her breasts, the now-rounded swell of her belly. It was almost as if she was fucking me with his cock as we rocked together on the bed, our tongues and arms twining.

"Do you want me to lick your little clit?" she whispered in my ear as TJ lunged. He was fucking me, but his hands were on his wife's hips and they moved together, we all did, the bed hitting the wall with every thrust.

I sighed softly, indecisive. I loved the feel of her body against mine, but the thought of her tonguing me to climax as TJ fucked me was too hard to resist.

"Yes," I urged. "Please. Lick it."

"Only if you return the favor." She grinned and then turned around, straddling my face. I groaned and wrapped my arms around her hips, pulling her pussy to my mouth. "Don't stop fucking her, baby," Ronnie insisted and I gasped when TJ's hands gripped my hips, rocking my legs back, making my body into a rounded "C" shape and conveniently bringing my pussy up more so she could lick it. He was pounding into me now, making my whole body pitch and quaver.

"Oh god!" I cried when her mouth found my cunt, but the sound of my voice was completely muffled. I was drowning in her juices and drinking that down as fast as I could. Her mouth was magic, her fingers spreading my lips for both her husband's pounding cock and the relentless lash of her tongue.

"I don't want you to come," she panted up at TJ, and I felt his fingers seizing my flesh as he groaned his response. "I want you to fuck my ass."

Oh god. I was surprised he didn't come right there, but he managed to hold out, still fucking me anyway as she re-focused her energy on my pussy, bringing me right to the brink of madness. I thought I was screaming but no one could tell because Ronnie was grinding her cunt down against my face, her thighs spread and trembling, and I knew she was close.

Ohhhhh fuck...

They both took me there in an instant, between the belly-deep assault of TJ's cock and the merciless press of Ronnie's tongue, I was gone, lost, catapulted, my whole body welling with my climax and then releasing it in a quivering flood. Ronnie was coming, too, pushed over by my orgasm, her pussy a hot, fleshy, pulsing throb against my face.

"Jesus fucking Christ!" TJ muttered, pulling slowly out of me. Ronnie rolled off me to the side to cuddle me against her, crooning and stroking my hair. I could taste myself when she kissed me and my tongue found hers, looking for more.

"Baby, I don't think I can last long," he gasped as he watched us tangling our limbs together on the bed.

"But I want you to fuck my ass," she pouted, and then grinned as she got up on her hands and knees. "I'm sure Janie will help..."

I smiled, reaching over and opening the night table drawer. The KYJelly was always there. I flipped open the lid as TJ sighed and positioned himself behind his wife to spread her ass cheeks.

"Here," he directed, nodding, and I drizzled some of the stuff down the crack. Ronnie shivered, glancing back at us as I worked the slippery lube into the tight space TJ wanted to invade, the opening winking at us like a dark starfish.

"Here, too," I murmured, using my slick hand to make him even wetter, jerking from base to tip, using quick, easy strokes. He captured my hip and pulled me close to kiss me. I kissed him back, my hand still tugging at his dick.

"You do it," he whispered against my mouth. "Put it in."

Swallowing, I pressed the spongy head of his cock against the wet pucker of her ass, watching as he grasped her hips for leverage. I was always sure it wouldn't go in, every time I watched him do this. Ronnie moaned, her toes curling, the covers bunched in her fists as he shifted forward, letting me guide him, my fingers pressing his flesh deeper.

"Ooooo!" Ronnie shivered and then cried out as the head of his cock slipped into her. TJ hissed air between his teeth, his fingers digging into her hips.

"Are you okay?" I whispered, dipping my head down to look at Ronnie. Her eyes were half-closed, her cheek against the mattress.

"That's the hard part," she murmured, closing her eyes all the way and slipping her hand between her legs. She liked rubbing herself off when he fucked her ass. "Now he can fuck me. Make him fuck my ass good."

"Wait." I reached over to the night stand and opened the drawer again. There were two little Lelo vibrators inside in silk drawstring bags—her bag was red and mine was blue. They matched the color of the vibrators. TJ always said next to the creamy complexion of the two of us together, it was like the fourth of July. It sure felt like fireworks when we played with them.

"Here." I slid Ronnie's red vibrator out of the bag and turned it on, handing it to her. She took it, moaning as she slipped it between her pussy lips.

"Christ, baby," TJ moaned. "I can feel that against my dick."

I knelt up next to him as Ronnie fucked her pussy with the vibrator and TJ began to fuck her ass. I was always both excited and fascinated to see how much the tight hole of her ass stretched to accommodate him. I pressed against his side, sliding my vibrator out of its sheath and turning it on. Just watching him fuck her was enough to make me want more.

"You like it in your ass, baby?" he panted, sliding in deep. She squealed, biting her lip, and I heard the hum of her vibrator grow louder. That made him groan, his head going back. "God you're so fucking tight!"

"I wonder what it feels like?" I whispered out loud, slipping my buzzing vibrator between my swollen pussy lips as my fingers explored the place where his cock met her flesh. He slowed, sliding an arm around my waist and kissing me. His tongue slipped into my mouth, teasing, and I ran the tip of the vibrator against my throbbing clit.

"Does it feel good?" I murmured as TJ broke our kiss, wrapping my thumb and finger around his cock and letting it slide over him as he fucked her ass.

"God, yes!" Ronnie moaned and bucked, fucking herself with the vibrator, fucking back against his cock. "I'm gonna come! TJ! Oh!"

He gasped and grabbed her with one hand, the other hand gripping my hip, as she shuddered against him. I watched, shivering, my pussy juice so copious it was actually coating my thighs.

"Does it feel good in your ass?" I whispered.

TJ gritted his teeth, his eyes meeting mine. "You keep asking and I'm gonna show you how good it feels in your tight little asshole."

"Would you like that?" I teased, feeling his hold on me tighten, his cock still buried in his wife's tight hole, my thumb and finger still making a ring around it. I could feel his dick get fatter when I said it. "Would you like to fuck my little virgin ass?"

"Fuck," he said, kissing me hard and thrusting deep, making Ronnie yelp and hang onto the sheet to keep from hitting her head on the headboard. "Oh god!" he growled, really giving it to her, taking it, using her ass. "Oh god, I'm coming!"

"Mine!" I insisted, pulling him quickly out and stroking, aiming the head of his cock against her asshole as I put my cheek against the rounded swell of her behind. He jerked and thrust, the tip of his cock finding its way back into her hole for a moment as he came, thick white liquid flooding back out over the head as I tugged on him and leaned in to lick it off.

"Oh Janie," he groaned, watching as my tongue played over his dick, catching each new blast as well as I could, still rubbing the head of the vibrator between my legs.

"Oh fuck, Janie, suck me off! Yeah, yeah!"

He grabbed my hair, burying his cock in my mouth as the last geyser of his cum bathed my tongue. I swallowed him dutifully, moaning softly. He gasped when Ronnie turned around and joined me, kissing me over the head of his cock, our tongues touching.

"I think I must be the luckiest man alive," he panted, one hand in Ronnie's hair, the other buried in mine.

Ronnie smiled, kneeling up to kiss him, and I did, too, the three of us together, arms entwined.

"I think Janie needs some more attention," Ronnie whispered, cupping my breast. I flushed, realizing I was still riding the little vibrator in my hand.

"Well we can't have that." TJ grinned, pushing me back on the bed.

I spread for both of them, their mouths and tongues, letting Ronnie take my vibrator. She turned it up on a high pulse, sliding it in and letting it hit that spot deep inside that made me crazy as they took turns licking me.

"I know what you want," TJ murmured, reaching up to pinch my nipple as his wife took her turn tonguing my clit. I moaned and reached down to spread my pussy wider for her mouth. "I can make you come... just... like... that." He snapped his fingers and I watched, wide-eyed, as he took the other vibrator, still wet from Ronnie's pussy and humming on the bed, sliding it down between my legs.

"Noooo!" I howled, but Ronnie rocked my hips, pushing my legs back, opening me wider, thrusting the blue vibrator in my cunt even deeper. I begged TJ with my eyes but he did it anyway, pressing the red tip of the vibrator against my ass. "Oh fuck! No! Please! Don't!"

Ronnie licked me faster, distracting me, and I moaned, thrashing on the bed. TJ grabbed my thigh, keeping me spread, and pressed the little humming head against my asshole. I cried out, my whole body tense, but I was so fucking close to coming, I couldn't stop it.

"Oooooo!" I howled as I felt the little red vibrator open me up, sliding in next to the blue one, Ronnie's tongue and mouth relentless, her face full of my juices. It was so good, too good, and I couldn't hold back. "Oh fuck! Yes! Do it! Fuck my ass and my cunt!"

I was stretched, oh god, so full, my pussy spasming, even my little asshole clenching around the slick, hard invasion there. It was love and rockets and fireworks and the Fourth of July between my legs and they both kept on, licking and fucking, until I was begging, pleading for them to stop.

"I can't!" I groaned, pedaling backwards on the bed. "No more! Oh! God!"

They came up to join me, Ronnie on one side, TJ on the other, both of them kissing me softly, petting me. My skin was on fire, my whole body alive, my nerve endings raw, turned inside out. TJ pulled the covers up over us and instead of dozing happily between them as usual, I found myself thinking of Josh. Again.

What is wrong with me? I thought, looking between the two people I loved most in the world. But every time I closed my eyes, it was Josh, smiling, kissing me, calling

me “Just-Janie” and whispering into my ear how much he wanted me. I sighed, knowing how selfish it was to want him, especially now, here. But I did. I wanted him more than anything.

"Where are you going?" TJ murmured as I began to untangle my limbs.

"My room," I whispered.

"Makes sense. Just in case," Ronnie mumbled, snuggling up to her husband as I pulled my nightgown over my head and found my panties on the floor. "'Cuz of Beth..."

"Good night," TJ called softly as I opened the door.

I smiled and said goodnight as I closed it behind me, but I was already wondering if Josh had called. When I went downstairs and got back to my room, the first thing I did was check my phone.

No message. But his number was there—he'd called. I glanced at the clock. Probably too late. I hit "dial" anyway.

"Hello?" He didn't sound sleepy.

"Did I wake you?" I whispered.

"No." I could hear the smile in his voice. "I was just thinking about you."

"Me, too."

"You were thinking about you, too? What a coincidence."

I muffled a laugh, not wanting to wake Beth down the hall. "No, I was thinking about this incredible guy who drove me home today..."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah. He's the sexiest thing I've ever met on wheels."

I could swear I heard him blush. "The feeling is mutual, sweetheart."

"I got an idea," I whispered, closing my eyes and cupping my still sopping mound. The minute I heard Josh's voice it was throbbing again. "A really naughty one."

"Do tell..."

So I did.

And we didn't hang up the phone until my alarm insisted it was time to get up.

* * * *

"Janie!" Ronnie nudged me awake and my head snapped up.

"Sorry," I apologized, flushing and looking over at Gretchen across the table. We were sitting in Katz's Deli, an infamous tourist trap—the place where they filmed the "orgasm scene" in *When Harry Met Sally*—and I'd obviously just fallen asleep over my pastrami reuben. "I'm just so tired..."

"You and TJ are keeping the poor girl up too late, Ronnie," Gretchen teased, I flushed even more deeply, letting them both think that was the reason, that it was most certainly *not* the fact that I'd been up talking to Josh until the wee hours in the morning for the past two weeks. Definitely not that.

"More the other way around." Ronnie winked, taking a drink of her water. She'd sworn off both coffee and Diet Coke. "So are you really here to stay, Gretch?"

"I don't see why not." The blonde woman leaned back in her chair with a shrug, flipping her hair over her shoulder. It was almost as long as mine, but finer and straighter and almost white-blonde instead of honey-colored. "New York is the best place to be if you want to do fashion photography."

"California didn't work out?" Ronnie took a loud bite of her pickle.

Gretchen rolled her eyes. “Flakes and bimbo. So not my scene. Oh my god, are you the quintessential pregnant woman or what? Do you want some ice cream to go with that?”

“I can’t help it.” Ronnie laughed, crunching happily. “They have the best pickles in the world.”

“So when does this kid make its appearance?” Gretchen asked. She was eating a chopped liver sandwich, in spite of the gagging sound Ronnie made when she ordered, and looked like she was enjoying it. “And do you know what it is yet?”

“Hopefully not until my due date.” Ronnie leaned back, putting a hand protectively over her belly. It was even more rounded now—it was like she’d popped out over night. They’d even told Beth, because it had become so obvious. “I’m due on Halloween.”

Gretchen frowned. “That’s... ominous.”

“I hope not.” Ronnie sighed. “Oh, and we’re not finding out the gender.”

“Why not?” I complained.

“Really!” Gretchen agreed. “How are we supposed to shop?”

“You’ll just have to buy yellow and green.”

“They’ve got some cute gender-neutral stuff nowadays,” I said, picking pastrami off my sandwich. The stuff was like velvet pork, so yummy. “Purples and oranges.” They both looked at me, surprised. “What? I’ve had pregnant friends. I’ve been in *Babies R Us*.”

Gretchen leaned her elbows on the table, looking across at Ronnie fondly. “You must be glad to get the summer off.”

"I am," she agreed. "And now we've got a real vacation to look forward to. TJ's taking time off work, and it's perfect timing—Beth will be at music camp all that week!"

"Ahhhh, a Baumgartner vacation." Gretchen grinned. "I, myself, can't wait. It's bound to be a wild time."

I snorted. "If my parents invite anyone else, someone's going to have to sleep outside." Of course, I'd been dreaming about inviting Josh. I just had no idea how to broach the subject. And how awkward would that be? I knew it was impossible. But still... I wanted what I wanted.

"Oh, it will be fine." Gretchen winked at me. "We can sleep three or four to a bed." That cracked both of them up.

"You guys are so bad." I sighed, glancing down at my phone. I had it in my hand, in my lap, waiting for a call or text from Josh. It was Saturday afternoon, and I was sure we'd see each other tonight, especially since Gretchen was now staying at TJ and Ronnie's in the guest bedroom until she could find an apartment. I flipped through, noticing two texts from Lil. *WHERE ARE U?* and *WTF??* Ugh. I'd been so involved the past few weeks, I hadn't even called her back.

The phone rang in my hand and I jumped. "I have to take this."

Ronnie looked at me, eyebrows raised. "Go ahead."

"I'll be right back." I stood, rushing toward the back of the deli, not wanting them to hear my conversation with Josh. Too obvious, I realized, but oh well, it was too late.

"Hello?" I said breathlessly, slipping into the women's bathroom. Empty. Thank god.

"I told Catherine."

My breath caught in my throat. Of course I knew what he'd told her—that he was seeing me. Granted, we hadn't been together face-to-face since the night he drove me home from *Tamarind*, but we'd been talking practically non-stop. We'd even talked about Catherine and their relationship and how he'd had the feeling, ever since he'd agreed to the seeing-other-people-thing, that it was more a one-way street in Catherine's eyes. Her street. Not his.

I swallowed hard. "...And?"

"She wants a divorce."

"Josh..." I breathed, leaning back against the wall. I felt like if I didn't have something to lean on, I was going to fall over. "Don't kid around."

"I'm not." So matter-of-fact, but I could hear it in his voice. His heart was broken.

I sank to the floor, unmindful of where I was, whispering, "I can't believe it."

"I can."

"But—" I protested. "But she was the one who wanted an open marriage!"

"I know," he agreed with a sigh. "But apparently she was only fine with that if I wasn't seeing someone else."

I stared at the phone. "Is that what she said?"

"She said a lot of things." His voice grew clipped and short.

"I'm sorry," I apologized. "I didn't mean to pry."

He took a deep breath. "She said mostly that she loves women."

"Well...so do I," I replied, thinking of Ronnie. And Ronnie and Gretchen. They'd been lovers once, too.

"No...I mean... *really* loves women," he said. "Like, exclusively."

"Then...why did she marry you?" I pondered, shaking my head.

"Yeah, that was my question."

"Did you get an answer?" I glanced up as someone walked in. It was clearly a New York tourist—the I “heart” New York t-shirt was a dead giveaway—and she did a double take at me sitting on the floor, but I didn’t care.

"She said she married me because she loved me." He sighed. "Still loves me, I guess."

"And you love her."

"I did," he admitted sadly. "I do."

"How long have you been married again?"

"Four years."

Not chump change. "And how long have you had an open marriage?"

"Two."

I blinked at the phone. I knew I’d heard the numbers before, but they still stunned me. "She's been sleeping with other women for two years..."

"Yep."

"And you never once..."

"Nope."

"Are you a masochist?"

Josh laughed. "I think I'm just...very stubborn. Like someone I know often says, 'I want what I want.'"

"Yeah. I know what you mean." I smiled, wishing I could reach through the phone and hug him. "So now what?"

"I don't know, Janie."

I closed my eyes, leaning my head back against the tiles. "Josh, I...I really...like you."

"I like you too." He gave a low laugh. "Yeah, that's an understatement."

I glanced over as the tourist came out of the stall and started to wash her hands.

"But I'll be honest...I don't want to be the cause of your marriage falling apart."

"No." I heard the protest in his voice. "Janie, don't even think that."

"But if it weren't for me—"

"Janie, stop." There was steel in his voice now. "Catherine made her decision, and she used you as an excuse to make it. That's all. It doesn't have anything to do with you personally. Not really."

"I just..." I sighed as the tourist woman walked past me to the door. "I'm so sorry."

"It'll be okay," Josh assured me softly. "Trust me. I know it will."

I shook my head, swallowing past a lump in my throat. "I don't know what to say."

"How about saying yes."

"Yes?" I asked quizzically. "To what?"

"To me." This time his voice was near a whisper.

And so was mine. "Oh Josh..."

He cleared his throat. "I made reservations at the Plaza."

"Yikes!" I rested my forehead on my hand. "I think it's a little soon. Don't you? I mean...it feels like... like having sex at a funeral."

"That's morbidly hot." He laughed.

"Josh!"

"Well, I did it for two reasons," he explained. "I admit, it gives us a place to go besides the car...but it also gives me a place to stay."

"She's kicking you out?" I exclaimed.

"No..." he corrected me. "I told her I was leaving."

I blinked, feeling tears stinging my eyes. "Is this really what you want?"

"*You* are what I want."

My heart stopped. "Oh Josh..."

"All you have to do is say yes."

"I don't know..." I breathed. This was all so very complicated—and getting worse by the minute. "I mean..."

"Say yes, Janie." If it wasn't Josh, I'd swear he was almost pleading with me.

"Don't think. Don't weigh the pros and cons. Just feel. Do what you feel."

"That always gets me into trouble..." I reminded him.

"I don't believe it."

"I want to..." I whispered. "I do..."

"So do it," he urged. "Just say yes, Janie."

I closed my eyes and whispered, "Yes, Janie."

"Yes?" He wasn't just smiling now, I could tell. He was grinning.

"Yes." What else could I say?

Chapter Seven

"You going out with Josh tonight?" Ronnie sat on the edge of the tub, drawing a bath. I was just out of the shower, getting ready.

"Not tonight."

Josh had called to tell me we'd have to postpone because he had to take the red-eye to Boston. *I'll be back Monday*, he'd promised. But today was Saturday and Monday felt like a million years away. I didn't want to admit how much I missed him, how much I wanted to see him. Not just now, but all the time.

"Trouble in paradise?" Ronnie raised her eyebrows. I glanced over at her as she shed her robe and stepped into the tub. It was one of those corner ones with jets and everything. She had candles lit all around it—she liked to soak and read or just relax. She could stay in there for hours.

I studied her as she leaned against the sloped back of the tub, her breasts and belly peeking out of the water. Her tummy was really rounded now, her belly-button nearly flattened. Her areola was a darker shade of pink, almost red—her nipples, too. She was beautiful, and I admired her, smiling to myself. She'd been like a cross between a mother and a lover to me, a strangely exciting combination.

"Ronnie, how did you know TJ was the one?" I asked.

She looked up at me, her eyes widening slightly, and then she smiled. "Wow. Are things that serious?"

I swallowed and shrugged, wrapping my towel more tightly around me.

"Come here." She held out a hand and I went to sit on the edge of the tub. She slipped a wet hand over my knee, rubbing tenderly. "When I met TJ, I was dating

someone else. I was dating him, but I wasn't in love with him. There was just no...I don't know... no real connection."

I nodded. I'd had a few of those sorts of boyfriends in my life.

"But when I met TJ, I felt..." She closed her eyes, taking a deep breath, and I knew she must have been remembering. She looked at me and then laughed. "I felt like I got hit with a Mack truck. Honestly, it was almost painful, the attraction I felt toward him. I thought I was going crazy. I'd never fallen so hard for anyone before."

I blinked back tears, feeling stupid for being so emotional, but it was just how I felt about Josh. It had all gone so fast, but it was like a ride I'd been strapped into and couldn't get out of. Not that I wanted to. Even if it was a little scary.

"You're in love with him, aren't you?" She smiled sympathetically.

I shook my head, but then I burst into tears. "I didn't mean for it to happen."

"Oh sweetie, Janie, it's okay," she crooned to me, reaching her arms out, and I went to her, tossing my towel on the floor and letting her cuddle me in the warm water as we rocked, making little waves.

"I'm sorry," I gulped, resting my cheek against her breast.

She kissed my forehead, stroking my wet hair. "You don't need to apologize, sweetheart. Did you really think we didn't expect you to fall in love some day?"

I gave a shuddering sigh, clinging to her more tightly. "I just love you guys so much."

"We love you, too." She tilted my chin up so she could look into my eyes. "But we don't own you. You need a man of your own. It's the way it should be."

"It's all so complicated," I complained.

“It doesn’t have to be,” Ronnie insisted. “Your mom taught me that.”

I startled. We didn’t talk much about that time in Key West. I knew what had happened. I knew my parents lived an open lifestyle, like TJ and Ronnie and I did, and that it all started back then, when Ronnie was our babysitter. My parents had sort of adopted Ronnie the way she and TJ had adopted me.

“But I’ll be honest with you, Janie.” Ronnie’s arms tightened around me. “As much as I love Carrie and Doc, I knew I couldn’t stay in that type of relationship, not as the ‘third.’”

“I feel that way sometimes. I see the way TJ looks at you and my heart just aches...”

She gave me a quizzical look. “How does he look at me?”

“Like you’re the only woman in the world.”

She flushed with pleasure at my words, and I didn’t blame her. “And you want someone to look at you like that?” She went on before I could respond. “Well why not? You deserve that. You should have it.”

“But what if...” I sighed. “What if Josh won’t accept you and TJ and...us?”

She was quiet for a moment. “Then you’ll have to choose.”

“I can’t do that.” I buried my face against her breast, my heart breaking at the thought. How could I give this up—this woman who loved me, her husband who had taken me into his life, his arms, his bed? And I didn’t even want to contemplate not seeing little Bethie every day. That was too much.

“Listen to me.” Ronnie tilted my chin up, forcing me to look at her with tearful eyes. “I love you. And I love you enough to let you go, if I have to. If it’s what will make you happy, I’m okay with that. Whatever you decide.”

“He isn’t going to want me to be with you,” I wailed, sniffing.

She rocked me gently, kissing my cheek. “But doesn’t he have an open marriage with his wife?”

I gave a short, little laugh. “She wants a divorce.”

“What?” Ronnie exclaimed.

I sighed. “When she found out he was seeing me, she said she wanted a divorce.”

“But...why?”

I shrugged. “Mostly because I think she realized she was a lesbian.”

“Oh...” Ronnie blinked. “Well I suppose that’s a pretty good reason.”

“But I have a feeling Josh isn’t going to want to do it again,” I said. “You know, the whole open relationship thing.”

“You’re probably right.” Her look, so sad, broke my heart. I couldn’t do this. I just couldn’t. “When are you going to tell him?”

“I don’t know.” I looked at my wrist, pretending to glance at a fake watch.

“Quarter after never?”

“You have to tell him, sweetie,” she reasoned.

My lip quivered and I shook my head. “I’m so afraid of losing him. Or losing you.”

“You’re more likely to lose him by keeping it from him than you are by being honest.” It was great advice. But...

“That’s easy to say...” I shrugged. “Not so easy to do.”

“If he loves you as much as TJ loves me, then he’ll understand,” she assured me.

“You may have to make some sort of compromise...but you won’t lose him.”

“I hope you’re right.” I turned my face up to hers and she kissed me, her lips soft and warm and wet from the bath. “Because I don’t know what I’d do without you.”

“You’re so sweet.” She kissed me again, deeper this time, her tongue fluttering against mine, making my senses come alive. I wrapped my arms around her neck, our bodies wet and slippery as we rocked together in the water.

“Would you lick me before you go?” Ronnie whispered, glancing toward the door. I knew it was locked. Looking down, I saw her hand moving under the water between her thighs. “I can’t seem to get enough lately.”

I smiled, sliding down between her legs, the water making it easy to lift her hips in my hands. She grabbed onto the sides of the tub, her belly rising out of the water as she floated, buoyed by me, and I leaned in to lick her. Her pussy was clean-tasting, sweet, as I began to suck on her clit.

“Oh sweetie,” she murmured, arching her hips up. “That’s so good.”

God, she was so smooth, so soft, my tongue slipping easily between the slick folds of her flesh, my hands gripping her rocking hips. Her clit felt hard under my flickering tongue, and every sigh and moan she gave made my own pussy ache.

“Oh Janie!” she gasped, her whole body quivering, one hand going to my hair to press my mouth against her cunt. “Make me come! Yes! Yes!”

It was that quick. Her hips rolled in my hands, her body shifting in the water, and I focused right at the center of her pleasure, my mouth closed over her mound, making

her thighs tremble. I could see the muscles there flexing as she began to climax, drawing her knees up and back and giving her pussy to me entirely.

“Oh god, oh god,” she whimpered, sinking into the bath as she gave into her orgasm, and I had no choice but to follow her, closing my eyes and holding my breath, still sucking at her clit until she stopped shivering.

I came up with a gasp and she laughed, grabbing me and kissing me hard. “You are such a good girl,” she whispered, sliding her hand down to cup my aching mound. “Want me to return the favor?”

“Let’s turn on the jets,” I suggested, grinning, and she reached over and hit the button, her eyes bright. She’d taught me this trick, and it was hard to resist availing myself of the pleasures of the hard, pulsing water against my pussy any time I was in this tub.

“Wanna go for a ride with me?” She swung her legs over the side and positioned her pussy against one of the jets. I couldn’t believe she was ready to go again so quickly, but I shouldn’t have been surprised—pregnancy hadn’t just expanded her body, it had swollen her libido as well.

“Let’s race,” I teased, swinging both my legs over, too, moaning softly as the hard, pulsing spray opened my pussy lips under the water. I rolled my hips, focusing the throbbing heat on my clit.

“On your mark,” Ronnie murmured, her head going back, her dark hair floating in the water. “Get set...”

“Ohhhh!” I gasped when she reached over and hit the button again, making the jets pulse even faster, harder.

“Go!” she cried, rolling her hips and riding the spray. The water in the tub, already high, splashed over the edge, but neither of us cared.

I spread my thighs wide, gripping the edge of the tub and rocking fast, faster, the water pounding against my pussy, making my belly and ass clench in sweet anticipation. It was going to be a very short race—the finish line wasn’t far away at all.

Ronnie glanced over at me, her eyes only half-open, as she moaned, “So close, baby...”

Just seeing her, face flushed with heat, legs spread, belly rising up from the water, her breasts trembling with her impending orgasm, pushed me over the edge.

“Closer!” I gasped, slapping my whole pussy against the side of the tub, again and again, the hot thrill of the water making me shudder as I came, feeling Ronnie’s hand clasped over mine, hearing her cries as she surged over the finish line just after me.

I collapsed into the tub and she did, too, as we clung to each other, still trembling.

“I won,” I said with a grin. “Losers get to clean up.”

“Brat!” She groaned, looking over at the mess of water we’d sloshed out of the tub. “Wanna go best two out of three?”

“Can’t.” I laughed, standing up and getting out. “I’ve got a date with a dance floor tonight.”

“Too bad it isn’t with Josh, hmm?” she teased, and I glanced over as got a new towel—the other was a wet mess on the floor now—and wrapped it around myself,

seeing her hand moving lazily between her thighs, again—insatiable! “He’s quite a hottie.”

“Don’t remind me,” I pouted.

“Well hurry back, we can have some more fun tonight when TJ gets home,” she purred.

“Gotta go get ready.” I shut the door behind me, hearing the unmistakable sounds of her touching herself. I smiled when the jets went on again and headed downstairs to my room.

* * * *

“Going out with your new man?” Gretchen asked as I came into the kitchen. Ronnie was sitting at the table eating a bagel spread with red pepper paste and peanut butter. She’d had the weirdest food cravings since she got pregnant.

“Heading over to *1 Oak* with Lil.” I opened the fridge to get a bottled water.

Gretchen put her container of yogurt in the garbage and her spoon in the sink, returning to the table. “And what are you and TJ doing tonight?”

Ronnie licked red peanut butter off her finger. “We just got *Avatar* from Netflix.”

“Wow. Domestic bliss.” Gretchen made a face, turning to look at me. “Mind if I come with you?”

“Hey, we’re not that boring!” Ronnie protested, washing her peanut butter concoction down with milk.

Gretchen grinned and winked. “Don’t hate me because I walk on the wild side.”

“Go then!” Ronnie laughed, waving her away. “I’ll have a quiet night at home with my husband for a change.”

“You can come if you want.” I didn’t really care. I was only going because I knew I’d been horribly neglectful of my friendship with Lil. What I really wanted to be doing was anything—and everything—with Josh.

“Gimme five minutes.” Gretchen hopped up and headed upstairs to the guest bedroom, the one across from Ronnie and TJ’s. She was wearing shorts and a t-shirt—the weather had become summer-warm lately, and both Ronnie and Beth were out of school now. Granted, Gretchen’s long, tanned legs looked good in Daisy Duke shorts, but it definitely wasn’t *1 Oak* attire.

I took the chair she had vacated across from Ronnie. “How’s the apartment hunt coming?”

She glanced over at me, speculative. “You don’t like having Gretchen here?”

“It’s not that.” I shrugged, although a part of me really didn’t like knowing she was sleeping upstairs, right across the hall from them. “I just wondered.”

“She’s still looking. I went to see a few places with her yesterday.” Ronnie took a gulp of milk. “Don’t be too late, okay? Beth’s sleeping at Isabella’s tonight, but I’d like to go to the park tomorrow.”

“Okay.” I could easily make that promise, knowing I wouldn’t be going home with anyone else tonight. My phone vibrated and I took it out of my purse. Lil texting me. Of course.

ALEK’S COMING!

Great. Now I was going to have to entertain Gretchen all night and be the third wheel to Lil and Alek. They were, according to Lil, officially a “thing” now. This night couldn’t get any better.

FAB! I texted her back, glad my phone couldn't convey sarcasm.

"Okay, let's get this show on the road." I looked up and blinked as Gretchen appeared in the doorway, all long tawny limbs and white-blond hair. The silver skirt she was wearing rode high on her thighs, making her legs look even longer. Of course, the four inch black heels on her feet didn't hurt either. She was wearing a black halter-like top that tied at the neck, putting her cleavage on display.

"Ready?" I asked.

"I was born ready, sweetie." She winked at Ronnie as we headed out the door.

* * * *

Once we were in *1 Oak*—which proved to be even easier when Gretchen was with us—it wasn't as bad as I'd anticipated. Lil hugged me hard, and I was genuinely glad to see her, even if Alek was tagging along behind. He was an okay dancer, but he mostly liked to watch from the bar, so Gretchen joined Lil and me on the floor and we rocked the night away. The DJ was good, every song better than the last, and it was at least an hour before I even thought about leaving the floor.

"Alek will buy us drinks," Lil panted as she grabbed my hand, finally dragging me off. Gretchen followed, piling her hair up on her head with one hand to cool her neck. Mine was already up—I knew how hot it got out there. I dug into my purse and pulled out a ponytail holder.

"Here," I said, offering it to her. She smiled a thanks—it was really too loud to do much more—and proceeded to whip her hair up into a complicated knot on her head, securing it with the band.

"Sex on the beach," Lil announced, handing me one, Gretchen another.

Gretchen took that, too, sipping gratefully, and then grinned. She leaned in to yell, “I wish!”

I smiled, sipping my own. They were so light on the alcohol here, which sucked for twenty dollar drinks, but it really helped quench my thirst. It also helped take the edge off just a little, because now that I wasn’t dancing, and Alek and Lil were kissing at the bar, I was thinking about and missing Josh.

“Bathroom!” Gretchen announced, putting her empty glass on the bar. “And we’re doing shots when I get back!”

Inwardly, I groaned. Waking up with a hangover when we had a playdate the next day wasn’t on my agenda.

“You shouldn’t go alone!” I yelled over the music.

“I’ll go.” Lil slipped off the bar stool, giving Alek another kiss before taking Gretchen’s hand and going with her downstairs.

I sipped my drink, watching the people dancing. Alek turned back to the bar, putting in another order and slapping a hundred-dollar bill down. We had an understanding when Lil wasn’t around—we ignored each other.

I stiffened as arms slipped around my waist, and a soft feminine voice whispered the words into my ear. “Oh sweetie, you look good enough to eat tonight.”

Catherine. I swallowed, feeling her move against me to the beat of the music, her mouth next to my ear. “So, I hear you’re dating my husband.”

I shrugged, not wanting to yell to be heard, my face filling with heat and I was glad I was flushed from dancing already.

“I just want to know one thing,” she murmured, her mouth close to my ear. “Why Josh and not me?”

“Oh, Cat,” I whispered, knowing she couldn’t hear me. I sighed, turning around in the circle of her arms—she had long limbs and an incredible reach. Her eyes were sad, hurt, but she was trying to hide it, smiling anyway as she looked down at me. I put my arms around her neck, my mouth to her ear. “I can’t help it.”

Her arms tightened around me for a moment and she murmured, “I know,” before she let me go.

“I’m sorry.” I said it loud so she’d hear me. This was so not the place to talk about this.

“He’s an amazing man.” She gave me a genuine smile now that reached her eyes. “And as the lesbian who married him, I’m more than qualified to say that!”

We looked at each other and burst out laughing.

“What’s so funny?” Lil asked, joining Alek back at the bar, Gretchen following.

I waved her question away, still smiling. “Lil, you know Catherine?” They nodded at each other. I didn’t even bother to introduce Alek, but Catherine leaned in to ask me, “Who’s your other friend?”

“Gretchen,” I called. Her back was to us as she downed a clear shot of something that Alek had set on the bar for her before she turned fully to face us. “This is my friend, Catherine.”

They looked at each other for a minute, and even I felt it, like a wave of heat, passing between them.

“Hi Cat.” Gretchen grinned. “Nice to see you again.”

I startled. “You know each other?”

“Gretchen!” Catherine squealed, sliding over and slipping an arm around Gretchen’s waist to give her a long, open-mouthed kiss. I stood there, gaping at the two women, and I wasn’t the only one. They were quite a sight, the leggy redhead and the tall blonde French-kissing at the bar.

Gretchen saw me staring when they broke their kiss and winked, answering the question I’d almost forgotten I’d asked. “I’m a fashion photographer. She’s a model. ’Nuff said.”

“Let’s dance,” Catherine purred, leading Gretchen onto the dance floor

“Come on, Alek,” Lil begged, tugging on his hand. “Dance with me!”

He relented, following her, and there I was, left sitting at the bar with two shots—Gretchen was the only one who’d taken hers—watching Gretchen and Cat grind on the dance floor while Lil did some *Dirty Dancing* routine with Alek.

And I’d thought the night couldn’t get any worse.

“Fuck it,” I muttered. I downed both shots and ordered two more, even though Alek wasn’t around to pay for it.

I’d already done both of those when my phone buzzed in my purse. I dug it out and looked at the number.

Josh.

“Hello?” I yelled, already heading for the door. There was no way we could have a conversation in here.

“Janie?” Yep, it was Josh. My stomach clenched in excitement, just hearing his voice. “I can hardly hear you!”

I pushed past the bouncer at the door onto the street, the heat and pounding music of the club behind me now, the warm summer night air filling my lungs.

"Better?" I walked a little ways away, leaning against the wall.

"Much." I could hear his smile. "Where are you?"

"1 Oak with Lil," I said, feeling guilty, knowing he was in some hotel in Boston. "I've been neglecting her."

"I trust you won't be going home with anyone tonight?" he teased.

I blushed, thinking of Catherine. I couldn't tell him what I'd just seen his soon-to-be ex-wife doing.

"I miss you," I confessed.

"I miss you, too." He sighed. "Here you are, out having a good time, and I'm all alone in my hotel room wondering what you're wearing."

"You're bad." I laughed. "Remember that red dress?"

"How could I forget it?" He groaned. "Panties?"

"Red. Silk."

He groaned again. "Don't tease me."

"Well then stop asking..."

His voice sounded strained. "I can't stop thinking about you."

"Josh..." I looked around at the people coming and going, in cars and on foot, getting in line for judgment at 1 Oak, most turned away in shame. "You know, I'm standing right outside of the club..."

"And I'm in bed stroking my cock, thinking about you in the damned dress..."

My whole body felt electrified. "Oh god... Josh..."

“You have the sweetest little mouth, you know that?” I could imagine him, his hand shuttling up and down the length of his dick, and the thought made my knees shaky. Of course, the four shots of JD with no chaser hadn’t helped. I was pretty drunk.

“My pussy’s even sweeter...” I turned toward the wall, hoping no one passing was paying attention or could hear me.

“Jeez, girl, you’re gonna kill me...” He took a long, shuddering breath. “I should let you get back to Lil.”

“And leave you all alone?” I teased.

“I am all alone, I’m afraid.”

“What if I was there?”

“I’d be the happiest man in the world.”

I lowered my voice, holding the phone close. “Would you fuck me?”

“Every possible way I could think of,” he assured me. “And then I’d do it again.”

I gasped and whispered, “You’re making me wet.”

“I’m so hard, baby, I could pole vault on this thing,” he confessed.

I waited for a couple to pass me before asking, “Will you stroke it for me?”

“I am,” he growled, and I could imagine him. Oh god. I leaned my forehead against the wall, feeling faint.

“Will you come for me?” I closed my eyes, the picture of him in my head so clear I could almost climb into bed with him.

“It’s always for you, Janie,” he whispered, and I could tell by his breath he was doing it for me, tugging on his dick, wishing it was my hand, or my mouth, or my pussy...

“Tell me...” I urged, hearing people pass by but keeping my eyes closed, turned toward the wall. “Tell me what you’re imagining.”

“You in that red dress. Sitting in my lap. Jesus I wanted to fuck you right there.” His breath caught and I heard him moan softly.

“What else?” I urged.

“Your mouth on my cock,” he said, panting now.

“Mmmm. Did you like it?”

“Fucking loved it,” he grunted. “I thought I was gonna come right there when you grabbed my hand and put it between your legs.”

I sighed softly at the memory, squeezing my thighs together. My panties were sopping. “That was sooo good.”

“I can’t stop thinking about your wet little pussy,” he admitted, his voice even lower. He was getting lost in his fantasy and I was going along for the ride. “God, I want to lick you.”

“Oh yes...” I swallowed, my pussy clenching at the thought.

“So fucking sweet...” he breathed. “I want to bury my face in your cunt...”

I smiled, opening my eyes to see a group of people walking by. They had no idea what I was doing, standing there listening to Josh jerk off on the phone. “That’s not all you want to bury there, I hope.”

“Not by a long shot...ahhhh god, Janie, I’m so hard for you...” He gasped and I closed my eyes again, biting my lip. “You want this cock, baby?”

“You have no idea,” I whispered.

“Are you wet?”

"Oh my god yes."

"Can you touch yourself?"

"Not here..." I glanced around. Far too many people. "Are you doing it...for me?"

"Yes," he whispered. "I wish you were right here in my lap."

I smiled and purred, "I wanna go for a ride."

He groaned, his breath coming so fast.

"A long...hard...fast ride."

"Janie..." he begged. "Oh god, Janie..."

"Yes, Josh," I urged. "Do it for me."

"It's all for you, baby," he cried. "Oh! Ohhhh!"

"Oh god, Josh, yes!" I cradled the phone, keeping my voice low. "Please.
Please."

"Ahhh fuck!" He growled and snarled and I knew this was it. I closed my eyes and waited for it, imagining him, cock in hand, stroking fast and furious for me. "I'm gonna come for you!"

He groaned loudly and I pressed the phone hard against my ear, hoping no one could hear the sound of his pleasure. It vibrated all through me.

"Oh," I breathed. "Wow."

"Christ, Janie," he panted. "You make me crazy."

"Ditto." I swallowed hard, my head swimming. "I'm the nutty one standing outside of 1 Oak."

He chuckled. "Did you give anyone a show?"

"There you are!" I recognized the voice behind me and cringed.

“Hang on,” I said to Josh as I covered the mouth piece with my hand.

“I couldn’t find you inside!” Gretchen glanced at my cell as she came over to me. I saw Catherine standing at the curb, waiting for her driver to open the limo door. “I’m going home with Catherine,” Gretchen explained. “Will you tell TJ and Ronnie I won’t be home tonight?”

“Sure.” Catherine blew me a kiss before getting into the car. “Have fun,” I said, watching Gretchen as she walked back to the limo and got inside.

“Okay, I’m back.” I put the phone to my ear.

“What was that?” he asked, sounding curious.

“A long story.” I sighed. “Josh, can I call you in half an hour?”

“Sure.”

“Stay right where you are...” I purred. “And definitely keep doing what you’re doing...”

“Mmmm.” I heard him smiling. “Yes ma’am! Half an hour?”

“Be ready.”

“I will be,” he promised as I hung up the phone.

I texted Lil that I was going home—I knew she wouldn’t care if Alek was out there dancing with her—and when I got there, I told Ronnie and TJ that Gretchen probably wouldn’t be home all night.

I also declined their offer to go to bed with them, probably for the first time ever. Instead, I went to my room to call Josh back.

“Are you ready?” I was already stripped naked and in bed.

“And waiting,” he agreed, his voice barely above a whisper.

We were off to the races.

Chapter Eight

“Oh my god, Josh!” I exclaimed as I stuck my head out of yet another room in the Plaza’s Presidential Suite. “There are so many! How many bedrooms does it have?”

“Come here, you!” he called, holding out his hand. He was standing at the bar, pouring himself a drink. I went to him, smiling, hips swinging, knowing he was watching me, the black silk of my dress clinging to my body.

He pulled me close—he’d already kissed me breathless in the car, both when he picked me up and when we pulled up to the hotel—burying his hands in my hair as he looked down at me.

“Are you staying here indefinitely?” I asked, my eyes bright.

“It’s fifteen-thousand a night.” He laughed. “Even Catherine would think that’s too extravagant.”

My eyes widened, my jaw dropping. “Are you crazy?”

“Probably,” he murmured against my ear, his hand trailing down to the small of my back. “But it’s just for tonight. I’ve got a condo section of the Plaza reserved for a much more reasonable price. Not as good of a view though.”

We were on the top floor—the entire top floor, Josh claimed—which was already making me nervous, even though I’d avoided the windows on my impromptu tour of the place.

“There are five bedrooms,” he breathed, his thigh pressed between mine. I moaned softly as he kissed my neck, making delicious patterns with his tongue. “And I’m going to have sex with you in all five of them...”

“Tonight?” I gulped.

He smiled. "In the next hour."

Our kiss was hungry, eager, and I let my hands run all over him, down his back, over the hard edges of his chest and stomach, finally reaching for the part of him my body wanted most, finding him delightfully hard.

"Easy, girl." He kissed me, soft and slow, his tongue exploring.

"I can't help it," I whimpered, rubbing up against him. I loved him in a suit, his belt buckle biting into me. "We've waited so long..."

He smiled, grabbing my ass and lifting me. I squealed as he carried me, my legs wrapped around his waist, toward the sofa.

"What are you doing?" I cried as he sat me down, pushing my dress up over my thighs.

"Taking the edge off."

"Ohhhh," I whispered as he yanked at my panties, pulling them down and off. He knelt down between my legs, his eyes caressing me first, his hands moving slowly up and down the smooth, taut flesh of my inner thighs. He still wanted to take it slow, but I was eager."Please," I pleaded, swallowing hard as I looked down at him. "I want it so bad."

"This?" He parted my pussy lips gently, finding my clit with his index finger. I moaned, spreading wider and kicking off my heels, putting my feet up on the edge of the sofa.

"Circles," I instructed softly, and he obliged, his finger moving around and around against my clit.

"Like this?"

“Mmmm-hmmm,” I agreed as he rubbed me, his cheek resting against my thigh. His breath on my pussy was hot and I wanted his mouth. “Now do that with your tongue.”

“Yes ma’am.” He grinned, leaning in to oblige me. I moaned softly as he explored me first, his tongue slipping into my crease. I’d shaved, so I was soft and smooth, and I was already incredibly wet. “Oh god, Janie, you taste so good!”

“Lick it,” I urged, grabbing his hair and pulling his mouth to my cunt. “Josh, lick it! Please!”

He groaned as he sealed his mouth over my mound, his tongue making circles, just like I wanted. My head went back as he licked and licked me, and I couldn’t control the low sounds coming from my throat. It was too fucking good to stop.

I gasped when he grabbed my hips in his hands, repositioning me on the sofa so I was lying back against the arm and he was stretched out on the other half, his tongue still circumnavigating my clit, again and again. Then he got really busy, pulling down the bodice of my dress, molesting my breasts, seizing my nipples. I thrashed under him, whimpering under the relentless lash of his tongue.

When I looked down and saw his hand pressed against the crotch of his trousers, his erection obvious even through the material, I lost it, my hips rising, my toes curling, coming so hard in his mouth I could barely breathe. The pleasure didn’t just come in waves—it was like one long, continuous tidal wave, a fucking tsunami, drowning me in ecstasy from head to toe.

I reached for him, still panting for breath, and he came to me, kissing me softly again, this time with the taste of my sweet juices on his tongue. I slowly sucked them

off, kissing and nibbling at his lips, all the while my hips undulating, grinding my crotch against the bulge of his cock pressed between my thighs.

“God, girl,” he murmured as I wrapped my arms around his neck. “You’re so fucking hot. I might just have to get one out of the way first, too.”

“I’m happy to oblige.” I reached down and caressed his cock through the material.

He groaned, letting me for a moment, rocking against the heat and press of my palm, before taking a deep breath and moving back.

“Diabolical,” he breathed, shaking his head and looking at me, still all mussed and practically unclothed, dress pulled both up and down.

“Wanna take me to bed, Mr. Wickham?” I slid my foot along the length of his thigh.

“More than I’ve ever wanted anything.” He swallowed as my toes reached his crotch.

“Then what are you waiting for?”

Something that sounded like a doorbell startled me and I looked at him, wide-eyed.

“That, actually.” He stood, walking toward the door, while I pulled my dress back up—and down—but I didn’t have time to put on my panties before he swung the door open, so I just kicked them under the sofa as someone pushing a trolley cart entered the room.

“Thanks,” Josh said.

“Would you like me to open the champagne?” The man with the cart wasn’t dressed like a waiter, whoever he was. He was wearing a dress shirt and tie, not a monkey suit. He smiled over at me as I hung back, watching.

Josh gave him a nod, gesturing me over, but I went slowly, unsure. The waiter popped the cork on the champagne, letting the bubbles spill into the ice bucket, before pouring two glasses.

“Thanks, Eric.” Josh watched him hand me a champagne flute. “What have you got for us tonight?”

I looked between the two of them—they were clearly on a first-name basis. Did they know each other? I wondered how often Catherine and Josh had stayed at the Plaza—just for the hell of it.

“Eric is the head chef at the *Oak Room*,” Josh explained to me. “The Presidential Suite comes with its own personal chef, and he likes to oversee things himself.”

I looked at Eric—he was a good-looking guy, a little older than Josh, I’d have guessed, with kind eyes and a big smile.

“You get the best up here.” Eric winked as he began to lift the silver coverings on things. “Assorted crudités, fruits, cheeses, including brie, and there’s also caviar and pate. I do highly recommend the chicken-liver crostini. Also the lobster rolls with lemon vinaigrette and garlic butter.” He pulled another silver dome off and set it aside. “I’ve made you a special shaved fennel, radish and grapefruit salad. There are, of course, various petite fours.” Another silver lid set got aside. “Including the always romantic chocolate-dipped strawberries and cherries.” He winked again and leaned toward me, smiling, to say, “But if you like cookies, try the blackberry-walnuts. They’re amazing.”

“Thanks.” Josh gave him another nod.

Eric stepped back. “Just call me if you need me.”

With that, he was gone as quickly as he came, and I sat there, staring at Josh, my mouth gaping. “This is too rich for my blood.”

“I thought you’d like a little snack after dinner.”

We’d barely made it through our meal at the Oak Room downstairs before coming up here.

“No, seriously Josh.” I leaned back in my chair, rubbing my upper arms with my palms. “This is... like... really rich. Like, Donald Trump rich.”

“If you knew how much money Catherine had you’d keel over right here.” He laughed, popping a fat, red grape into his mouth and chewing. “Might as well enjoy it now. The pre-nup I signed will keep me happy, but not *this* happy.”

“But you make money as an agent,” I said, unable to resist Eric’s recommendation and nibbling at a blackberry-walnut cookie. “Oh my god, these are fantastic!”

“I make enough to support you in the manner in which you will become accustomed,” he agreed, drinking his champagne and watching me eat my delectable dessert.

I looked over at him, shaking my head. “You make my head spin.”

“In a good way, I hope.”

“In *every* way.” I took a drink of champagne—if my head was going to spin, I should at least have a reason, I decided. He poured me another glass, and I drank that,

too, getting more adventurous and trying the fennel, radish and grapefruit salad, which was also just to-die-for.

“I love watching you eat,” Josh said. “From that very first morning, watching you eat cannolis...it’s the sexiest thing I’ve ever seen.”

I blushed, remembering. It hadn’t been that long ago, I realized, looking over at him. I’d been completely swept away. Like Ronnie said, I felt like I’d been hit by a truck—or a freight train—only in a really, really good way. There was no stopping it now.

“What are you doing?” Josh raised his eyebrows as I pushed my chair back from the table and slid slowly under it.

“Having my dessert.”

He gave me a half-smile as I appeared between his thighs, nuzzling his crotch. He was only half-hard when I unzipped him as he pushed the chair away from the table, leaning back to give me room. I experimented with my tongue, looking for his most sensitive spots and finding two, parallel to each other on the left and right side of his cock, just under the ridge. Every time I flicked my tongue there, he gave me a louder moan or bucked his hips up.

I could tell he liked it when I used my hand and mouth together—his head went back and his eyes closed when I did that, and I tasted a bit of pre-cum on my tongue. I was wishing I’d put panties on, because I was embarrassing myself with the amount of wetness on my thighs. Sucking him made me crazy with lust.

“Janie, I don’t—” he panted, grabbing my hair, but there was no way I was letting him go. I could feel his cock swelling and turned my head so my lips rubbed those two

spots just right, working just the head of his dick with my mouth while I jerked him fast and hard with my hand. “Ohhhhh fuck! Wait! Ohhhh!”

I happily swallowed the first thick flood of his cum, looking up into his eyes—he was watching his cock disappear into my throat—and then took another, hotter blast of the white stuff, his hips rolling up helplessly, his head lolling back. I was a good girl and drank it all, even licking the tip of his cock clean.

“I couldn’t wait,” he whispered, looking down as I licked the last bit of him off my fingers. He reached out and smeared his fingers over my lips, reddened and swollen from sucking him. “That sweet little mouth...”

“That was better than strawberries.” I leaned in to kiss the softening head of his dick.

“You’re bad.” He groaned, tucking himself back in and zipping up. “I think you need to be punished.”

“Oooo!” My eyes lit up. “Are you going to spank me?”

He laughed, pulling me up to kiss me, and I couldn’t help myself—I crawled into his lap, straddling him, my sopping pussy making a wet spot on his trousers as I ground my hips.

I gasped when he pulled my dress up, but I wasn’t expecting his hand to come down against the swell of my behind—although I probably should have—making me jump and yelp.

“Hey!” I quickly climbed off. “No fair.”

He stood quickly, grabbing me by the arm and whispering in my ear, “Hold still.”

I did as he asked, watching him yank at the knot in his tie.

“What—” I asked quizzically, but my question was answered soon enough when he put it over my eyes, using it as a blindfold. “Josh...?” I asked hesitantly as he stepped behind me, holding my arms behind my back. I smiled, though, when I felt his erection, already returned, straining against my ass.

“Walk,” he instructed, and I took hesitant steps forward, letting him lead me. “There are stairs here.”

There were, curved ones—I remembered seeing the staircase and wondering what was up there. I let the rail in my hand guide me upward. When we reached the top, Josh pushed me gently forward, and I felt him reach in front of me and knew from the sound he was opening a door.

I gasped when I felt the cool outdoor air on my face, and again when he took my blindfold off.

“Josh!” My cry was strangled and I turned, clinging to him, hiding my face. “It’s too high!”

“Ah, that’s right.” He crooned, stroking my back. “You’re afraid of heights.” I could feel him laughing and pulled back to look at him.

“You knew that!” I pummeled him with my fists, but he just grabbed my wrists, still smiling.

“Look, Janie.” He turned me around, holding me tight. “I won’t let anything happen to you, I promise.”

I was shaking—being anywhere up high made me tremble—but we were on the eighteenth floor of the Plaza, and the view was spectacular and meant to be enjoyed. After a few deep breaths, I really started to calm down enough to appreciate it. With

Josh's arms around me I felt safe, and I slowly relaxed against him, looking at the lights of city below. It was a fabulous sea of jewels, just like the stars in the sky above. The moon was full and bright, a pearl in a web of diamonds.

"It's really beautiful." I slipped my hands over his at my waist. I squealed, though, when he propelled me even further forward, closer to the patio edge. "Nooo! Please!"

"I promise," he whispered again in my ear. "You're safe."

I whimpered, but we stood there at the very edge of the building, and from here it felt like flying. My stomach lurched and I turned in Josh's arms. He held me close, stroking my hair, kissing my forehead.

"Hey, Janie," he said softly.

"Hm?"

"I think I can see your house from here."

I laughed. "But can you see Russia?"

"No." He smiled, tilting my chin up and looking into my eyes. "But I can see heaven."

"If I used that line in a story, my editor would redline it in a heartbeat." I grinned. "Too cliché."

"What isn't?" Josh kissed my eyes closed, both of them. "It's all been done before. We're just doing it all again for the first time, together."

"I like that," I murmured as he proffered kisses over my neck. "I'm going to steal it."

"I'm going to steal *you*." His breath was hot against my breasts as he nuzzled them. "I'm going to lock you up and keep you forever and ever."

“How very caveman of you.”

“Grog like girl,” he grunted, sinking to his knees and hugging me close, kissing my belly. “Grog want girl.”

I laughed as he squeezed the swell of my ass in his hands.

“What are you doing down there?” I smiled, running my hand through his dark curls.

“Proposing?” He grinned up at me and I think my heart stopped completely. He saw the look on my face and stood, taking me in his arms. “Let’s go to bed.”

I gulped, looking up at him.

“Come on.” He smiled softly, pulling me toward the French doors that opened onto the patio. “Don’t make me drag you by your hair.”

Inside, the view was almost as spectacular as outside. The poster bed was high and wide and white, and Josh, apparently the quintessential romantic, had ordered rose petals, red of course, strewn all over the white coverlet. But there was something else—lilacs, bunches of them in vases all over the room, probably a whole bush’s worth. It was that time of year, they were in full bloom all over the place, but how—?

“How did you know they were my favorite flower?” I bent over to breathe in the scent from the vase sitting on the night table.

“Lucky guess?” He hopped onto the bed, leaning back, his hands behind his head. He was grinning.

“Feh!” I rolled my eyes. “Who did you ask? Ronnie?”

“I’m not telling.”

“You better tell.” I frowned. “I can make you tell.”

“How?”

“I have my ways.”

I stood above him on the bed, my feet straddling his chest, and slowly inched my dress up my thighs. He watched, eyes bright, as the hem of my skirt cleared the top of my cleft. I knew I was swollen and wet, my clit peeking out of my slit, looking for attention, and I gave it to her as he watched, rubbing myself with one finger, back and forth at first, then in fast little circles.

“That’s fucking hot.” His eyes were dark and glued between my legs.

I ignored him, pulling my dress up further, wiggling out of it and tossing it onto the floor next to the bed. Then I unhooked my bra, leaning over him, balancing with one hand against the headboard, to dangle it in his face. He snatched it from me and pressed it to his nose, breathing in my scent. I let him fondle my breasts like that, moaning when he wet his fingers in his mouth and slathered them over my nipples.

“Come here.” He caught my hips and pulled me to my knees. I stayed that way, still rubbing myself, feeling his hands moving over my body, everywhere at once. He was still fully clothed, except for his tie, and I reached for him with sticky fingers, unbuttoning his shirt from the top down. He let me, smiling as I spread it wide and ran my palms over his chest and belly. The hair on his chest was dark and I let it curl around my fingers, tracing down the center of his belly, following the line of hair from his navel to his belt buckle.

“Didn’t I undo this once already?” I complained, unbuckling him again. When I unzipped him and tugged down both his trousers and his boxers, his cock sprang free and I admired it, tracing the ridge around the head lovingly with my fingernail, seeing

him shiver. I leaned in to kiss and lick the tip of his cock, hearing him sigh and feeling him shift his hips to press himself deeper into my mouth. I sucked him in as far as I could, gagging a little, and his eyes widened as my nose touched his pubic hair.

“Damn, girl,” he groaned, his hands in my hair, pulling me back up. “Come here.”

I slid up to kiss him, trapping his cock between us and it pulsed against my belly as he ran his hands down over my back, my ass, clasp me hard against him. He tasted like alcohol and caviar and I sucked at his tongue as his hands rocked my hips, kneading his cock between us.

“Josh,” I gasped, begging with my eyes. “Please.”

“In the drawer.” He nodded at the night table. “Condoms.”

“It’s okay.” I shook my head, reaching down to grasp him, making his breath catch. “I’m on the pill.”

“If I had a dollar for every time a woman said that...”

“Trust me.” I stroked him slowly in my hand as I sat up, straddling him. “I need you. Inside me. Please.”

He hugged my hips in both hands, his thumbs on either side of my navel, watching as I rubbed him against the top of my cleft, teasing my clit. It was already swollen, so very sensitive, but I needed more of him—all of him.

“Slow,” he murmured as I positioned him against my hole. “Ahhh god... Janie...”

I eased myself down, watching his face, seeing his eyes close, hearing his breath coming in slow shudders. When I had him all the way inside me, he pulled me down to kiss me, his mouth slanting across mine with a fierce longing. I whimpered when he thrust up, holding my hips still in his hands, working his cock up into my cunt.

“Oh yes,” I whispered, burying my face against his neck and letting him do the work, my breasts pressed against his chest. He wrapped his arms around my waist and we moved together, our bodies riding an invisible wave.

“You feel so good,” he panted, reaching down and gripping my ass, pulling me in tight, completely immersed in me. I wiggled on him, wanting, needing more.

“Let me ride you.” I kissed his shoulder, raking my teeth there. “I need to, please. Please.”

He let me go as I sat up on him, my thighs spread, rolling my hips. I moaned and closed my eyes as he squeezed my breasts in his hands. Then I really rode him, faster, deeper, harder, going down the length of his cock like a fireman sliding down a greased pole. He bit his lip, watching as I fucked him, taunting, teasing, rolling my hips against his.

“Janie,” he gasped, but I grabbed his hands in mine, palm to palm, linking our fingers and squeezing as I ground my pussy against him, feeling his cock moving deep, deeper inside. “Oh god, Janie...”

“Nn! Nn! Nn!” I mewed and quivered as I came, my pussy contracting around his cock, hugging it, the feeling of him inside me making my orgasm even more intense. He growled and rolled me, dazed, underneath him on the bed.

“Josh,” I gasped before his cock began pounding into me, his mouth pressed hard against mine. I took his weight, welcoming it, letting him fuck me, gripping him with my thighs, my legs going around his waist.

“Oh yes,” he whispered when I squeezed my muscles around him. He looked at me, his eyes searching mine. “Can you come again?”

I smiled dreamily, slipping a hand behind his head. "I can come all night."

He groaned happily, but I whimpered when he slid out of me. I didn't want to ever let him go.

"This way," he directed, rolling me to my side as he spooned me, his cock nudging between my thighs, searching for the sodden heat of my pussy. I reached down to guide him in and he hefted my leg as he entered me. He held me tight to him, and I felt the muscles in his stomach and chest working as he fucked me, his breath hot in my ear.

"Touch yourself," he urged, but my hand was already there, rubbing the aching bud of my clit in time with his thrusts. Our bodies slapped together, growing slippery with sweat. "Come on, Janie," he implored me, his breath panting fire against my cheek. "I want to feel you come."

I whimpered, closing my eyes and biting my lip, his cock driving, relentless, sending shockwaves through me.

"Please," I whispered, rubbing faster, faster. "So close."

"Oh Janie, you're so beautiful," he groaned, spreading my legs wider as he plunged in deep, grunting with every thrust.

"Now!" I cried, arching against him as I came, hot, delicious spasms clamping my pussy down around the swell of his cock inside of me. I turned my face into the pillow, trying not to scream with my release as Josh whispered my name over and over, wrapping both arms around me, holding me, rolling again so I was on top of him, back to front this time.

“So sweet,” he murmured, kissing my flushed cheek. He was still inside me, his thighs spreading mine, thrusting up lazily. I shivered, my pussy clenching again involuntarily, making him moan. “Janie, I...” He grabbed my hips, holding me still—I was rocking with him. I couldn’t help it. “Oh god... Janie, I want to come inside you so bad.”

“Oh yes!” I turned my face to his, my mouth against his ear. “Please, Josh. Yes, I want it. Please.”

He slid both hands down the front of my body, stopping to play with my nipples before settling into the groove of my thighs as he fucked me, my hips rocked forward to take him in as deep as I could. His breath sucked in sharply when I reached down to touch myself, feeling him going into me, slick with my juices.

“One more time for me, Janie?” He moaned as I rolled my hips against his thrust, my fingers slicking between my swollen lips.

“Maybe,” I murmured, squeezing his cock. “Can you hold out until I come one more time?”

He groaned softly. “I’ll try.”

“You do it for me,” I urged, grabbing his hand and pressing it between my legs. “Rub it. Hard. Get me off.” He followed my motion, pressing his palm against my mound as I guided him, making flat circles. “Fuck me, Josh,” I begged, my hips rocking. “Please. Don’t stop.”

“Oh god, Janie,” he panted, his breath coming fast in my ear. “I don’t know if I can...”

“Please!” I begged, writhing on top of him, my whole body quivering, even my voice wavered. “Pleeeeeeease!”

“Ohhhh fuck!” He thrust up with a deep growl and I actually felt his cock expand with the first eruption of his cum. “Janie-eee!”

“Yes!” I clutched his hand, making it into a fist and grinding my clit against it. “Ohhhh god, yes, fill me, baby, fill me with all that hot fucking cum!”

My orgasm rocked us both, and Josh held me tight with one arm wrapped around me, the other clenched between my trembling thighs. I felt his cum dripping out of me, each spasm of my climax sending more of it in a flood mixed with my own juices down my ass.

He wrapped both arms around me as I turned to kiss him, our lips salty with sweat. I smiled as I rolled to my side, so we were pressed belly to belly, still catching our breath, and picked a rose petal out of his hair, flicking it. It stuck to his chest and I laughed.

“Romantic idea,” I said. “But highly impractical. I’m covered in rose petals.”

We both were—they were stuck all over us, arms, legs, hair—and I didn’t even want to think about the other places they might be hiding.

“You’re beautiful.” He kissed the tip of my nose. “There’s a tub fit for a princess in this bathroom. We can get clean before we start round two.”

“Does it have jets?” I perked up.

“I think so.” He picked petals out of my hair. “Why?”

“Because I want to show you something.”

He leaned over and captured my mouth again—god I loved kissing him—and murmured, “Oh goodie, I can’t wait.”

“Wait... *this* bathroom? How many bathrooms are there?” I asked, maneuvering toward the edge of the bed.

“Five.”

My eyes widened. “*Five?*”

“That’s right.” He rolled onto his belly, grabbing a pillow and hugging it as he looked at me. “And I intend to fuck you in every single one of them.”

“Five bedrooms.” I counted on my fingers. “Five bathrooms...” I held up all ten fingers, smirking. “Are you up to that?”

“Let’s find out.”

I squealed as he came after me, quick as a snake, and I didn’t even make it to the bathroom before I was in his arms again.

* * * *

“I don’t want you to go.” Josh pulled me into his arms across the Mustang’s console, kissing me for the umpteenth time. I’d lost count of kisses and times we’d made love and times we’d chased each other around completely naked and laughing hysterically, Josh threatening to spank me, and me threatening to tie him up and tickle him to death. I’d discovered his one weakness, his Achilles, well, not heel, but armpit—and had taken full advantage.

“I don’t either.” It had been a dream—three days in the Presidential Suite at the Plaza, with Eric cooking our meals and nothing to do but play all day. Josh had simply taken the days off work, and I’d called Ronnie to tell her I wouldn’t be home until Wednesday. Thank goodness it was summer break, because I didn’t think I could have said “No,” to Josh, even if it meant getting fired.

But I knew, of course, they wouldn't fire me.

"Stay with me." His eyes searched mine in the morning light. "Move in with me."

I blinked at him, swallowing hard. Not that it wasn't tempting, but...

I glanced at the house, knowing Ronnie was home, probably making Beth breakfast while TJ got ready for work. They were my family. How was I supposed to just...give all that up?

"Josh, I can't..." I winced at the pained look on his face. "I mean, where I live...it's also my job."

"But you don't have to work..." He sighed when he saw the look on my face. "Okay. But will you think about it? Maybe in a month or two..."

I nodded and he kissed me again, quickly this time, before coming to open my door. He was getting my suitcase from out of the trunk and I was standing next to him, teasing his ribcage with my fingernails, threatening to tickle him, when I heard the front door open. I turned, my hand caught in mid-wave as the screen door banged wide and TJ burst out, carrying Ronnie in his arms.

"Call 911!" Josh sprinted past me and I stood there, aghast, not moving. I couldn't move. Ronnie was covered in blood, the whole front of her nightgown soaked in red, and TJ stopped for a moment as Josh said something to him. He shook his head, starting down the porch steps, but Josh stopped him again, still talking.

"Janie!" Josh yelled again, and I startled, looking at him, my eyes wide. "Call 911! *Now!*"

I dug my phone out of my purse, dialing and walking toward them in a daze as I watched TJ collapse, sitting on the front porch steps with Ronnie in his arms, sobbing.

She was awake, aware, talking to him, her arms wrapped around his neck. Josh sat beside them, putting an arm around TJ's shoulders, still talking.

"Please, I need an ambulance," I croaked when the 911 operator asked what my emergency was. Josh looked up at me and saw the look on my face. "There's so much blood, please, you have to come."

He took the phone, pulling me down to sit next to him on the porch too, telling the operator the address.

"I think it's a miscarriage," he said into the phone, glancing over his shoulder as Gretchen appeared at the door, her mouth agape. I saw Beth coming up behind her and looked at Josh, my eyes wide.

"Take Beth inside!" he snapped at Gretchen, covering the mouthpiece of the phone with his hand. "And shut the door! Do it! Now!"

She blinked at him, but turned and ushered Beth into the house, shutting the door behind them.

"Ronnie, are you okay?" I reached my hand across TJ's lap to grasp hers. It felt cold and small in mine. Her head was resting against TJ's chest and she opened her eyes, looking at me.

"It hurts," she whispered, wincing and closing her eyes again.

And we sat there, Josh holding me, TJ holding Ronnie, waiting for the ambulance, or the end of the world, whichever came first.

Chapter Nine

“Absolutely not.” TJ stood over Ronnie’s hospital bed, obdurate. “You are not still going.”

“Yes I am,” she replied calmly, peeling off another layer of orange Jell-O with her spoon. “The doctor says I can fly during the second trimester.”

TJ swore, turning and yanking the curtain out of the way, storming out the door.

“He’ll be back,” Ronnie said, glancing over to where I sat, Josh beside me, holding tight to my hand.

“Do you really think it’s a good idea?” I asked. “I mean, Ronnie, you practically bled to death!”

“Oh don’t exaggerate. You sound like TJ.” She rolled her eyes, putting the Jell-O on her tray. “I lost a few cups of blood. Having placenta previa isn’t the end of the world—it just means I’ll have to have another c-section. It’s not that big of a deal.”

I blinked at her and then looked at Josh. He shrugged.

“So this placenta premium thing...what is it again?” I asked with a sigh.

“It just means the placenta implanted over my cervix,” she replied.

The doctor had explained, after they’d done all their tests—what an amazing relief it had been to see the baby, tiny but moving, a little heartbeat flickering on the ultrasound machine—but I didn’t understand how someone could lose that much blood and still be fine.

“It happens sometimes,” she went on, eating Jell-O. “And it’s early yet—the placenta can move.”

“It can...move?” I looked at her, doubtful.

“Think of the uterus like a balloon,” she explained. “The placenta—that’s the part that feeds the baby, where the umbilical cord is connected, you know that, right?”

I nodded.

“If the placenta is here, at the bottom of the balloon, it covers the opening, and there’s no way for the baby to get out.”

Josh interjected, “Without massive blood loss and fetal and maternal death, anyway.”

“Right.” Ronnie made a face at him and he smiled. “But, if a balloon is blown-up only part way, and there’s something here at the bottom of it, and then you blow it up as big as it can go.” She used her hands to demonstrate, making her ‘air balloon’ bigger. “Whatever was down here may have moved up out of the way of the opening.”

I was still doubtful, and like TJ, would have rather erred on the side of caution. “I still don’t know if flying to Georgia next month is a good idea.”

“I don’t see why not. I’ll still be in my second trimester. Honestly, aside from this bleeding thing, I’ve been feeling great.” She gave me a big, bright fake smile to prove it and I couldn’t help laughing.

“Well, the doctor did give you some restrictions,” Josh reminded her.

“I can be on partial bed rest here or there.” She waved that one away, using her spoon to get the last bit of orange stuff out of the container. “And the sex thing...well, that sucks... but it’s only for a few more months...”

She frowned, looking at the door, as if she expected TJ to walk back through it. She was confident he was coming back, but I wasn’t so sure. I’d seen his face in the shower when he talked about her pregnancy with Beth, how frightened he’d been.

Josh stood and walked over to her bed side. “I think your husband is just really scared. He’s afraid of losing you.”

“I am, too.” I came to stand next to Josh, taking his hand.

“I’m not dying—I’m just pregnant!” she exclaimed, exasperated.

“But can you see it from his perspective?” Josh cocked his head at her, raising an eyebrow. “Imagine for a minute that you’d come in to find him on the kitchen floor covered in blood.”

She was quiet, looking at the door where TJ had disappeared. “I guess, when you put it that way...”

And just like that, TJ appeared in the doorway, still frowning. He grumbled, “The nurse is coming in with your discharge papers,” not moving from where he leaned against the door frame.

“TJ, come here.” Ronnie held her hand out to him. He scowled at her, grudgingly moving toward the bed. “Come *here*,” she insisted, grabbing his hand as he came closer, so he was right next to her.

She put her arms around his neck, making him bend down to hear her, but she said it loud enough for me to hear, too. “Baby, I’m so sorry you were scared.”

TJ wrapped his arms around her, and as I watched, he sank down, putting his head in her lap, his shoulders shaking with sobs.

Josh’s eyes met mine and we slipped out of the room, shutting the door behind us. He held my hand as we walked a little ways down the hallway and then he stopped, pulling me into his arms, and just like TJ, I burst into tears.

Josh murmured into my ear, the words unimportant, stroking my hair and back as I cried in his arms. Nurses and doctors and even patients passed us, not even looking twice. There were few places left in the world where they were used to the gamut of human emotion, but this was one of them.

“I was so scared.” I clung to him, seeing I’d stained his shirt with tears.

“I know.” He kissed the top of my head. “So was I.”

“You sure didn’t show it.” I looked up, surprised.

He shrugged. “I’m good under pressure.”

“I can’t believe she still wants to go.” I wiped my eyes.

“I really don’t think it will hurt anything. It might actually do her some good, let her relax. And it’s a short flight.” He snapped his fingers, his eyes brightening. “I’ve got an idea.”

“What?”

He winked. “Let me make a few calls and then I’ll tell you.”

“My man of mystery.” I kissed him softly.

“Are you really okay?” His eyes searched mine. “I thought you might faint there for a minute when you were on the phone...”

“It felt like it.” I shivered. “She’s...” How could I possibly describe what Ronnie meant to me? Now wasn’t the time or place, I decided. “She’s like family to me.”

He hugged me, long and hard. “Well, I guess it will be up to you and TJ now to make sure she rests easy.”

“I guess so.” I sighed. “Josh, I was thinking...”

“Uh oh.” He wagged his eyebrows. “That can only mean trouble.”

I slapped his arm playfully. “I was wondering if you might want to come with us to Georgia? I talked to my mother and she said there’s plenty of room.”

He looked at me in surprise. “Whoa—taking me home to meet the parents?”

“Well, secondarily, I guess.” I smiled. “Mostly I just don’t want to be away from you for a week.”

He grinned, sliding his hands down to my lower back. “I know. I’m irresistible.”

“You are,” I agreed, playing with the hair at the nape of his neck.

“When is it?”

“Second week in July.”

He nodded, kissing my cheek. “I’ll clear my schedule.”

“Really?” My eyes brightened and I kissed him

I didn’t even think about the fact that I hadn’t told anyone else, aside from my mother, until TJ came out of the hospital room, pushing Ronnie in a wheelchair. What were they going to think, I wondered, when I told them I’d invited Josh? And how was I going to tell Josh about my relationship with them?

“Can’t you walk?” I asked as they came closer and we started heading toward the elevator.

“Hospital policy.” Ronnie rolled her eyes. She glanced up at TJ. “Did you call a cab?”

“I’ll drive you.” Josh pushed the down arrow button for the elevator.

“Hey.” Ronnie grabbed his hand and squeezed it. He looked down at her, smiling quizzically, and she said, “Thanks. For everything.”

He nodded, his eyes softening. “It was the least I could do.”

"Can you do one more little thing?" Ronnie asked as TJ pushed her into the elevator.

"Sure," Josh replied, seeing we were all in before pressing the button to close the doors.

"Can you stop on the way at *Emack and Bolio's*?" She grinned up at him. "I'm sooo craving some of that Purple Cow ice cream. "

I laughed. "You're gonna get as big as a house."

"So I'll be fat and happy." She stuck her tongue out at me.

Josh laughed, squeezing my hand. "It's not a bad way to go."

* * * *

I came in from dropping Beth at day camp, kicking off my shoes in the kitchen, already thinking about sleep. I was so tired. I talked to Josh way too late every night, and now that Ronnie pretty much had to stay prone as much as possible, I had to get up with Beth to make her breakfast and get her off to camp.

Sometimes I wished they would just let her stay home, but Ronnie said she wanted to keep her stimulated. Between six weeks of day camp, two weeks of sleep-away music camp, and two more weeks of swimming lessons, I figured the kid was probably over-stimulated, but she didn't complain.

I was spending my time entertaining Ronnie during the day now. Since we couldn't go anywhere, we watched chick flicks and cried a lot. Not that Ronnie wouldn't cry anyway—she was so emotional lately she burst into tears at commercials. We also played Yahtzee and lots of card games like Cribbage, Gin and Five-Hundred. But that meant I wasn't getting any writing done, and when I wasn't writing, I got cranky.

And if I'd thought having Gretchen around was going to help, I was wrong. She was gone most of the time, either working or hanging out with Catherine. But when I heard her voice coming from the living room, I perked up. Maybe I could actually go sleep for a few hours!

"I don't know." Ronnie was sitting up on her elbow on the sofa, talking to Gretchen, who sat in the plush chair next to the TV. "I honestly don't think TJ isn't going to survive four months without sex."

"Sure he will." Gretchen scoffed. "His hands work, don't they?"

I couldn't help but laugh at that and Ronnie looked over at me, smiling. "Hey, there's Janie. Well, at least he has you, right?"

I gave her a half-smile, sitting in the other plush chair, but my stomach lurched at her words. Of course, I loved her and I loved TJ, too. And I'd moved in with them, knowing I was going to be their lover. But this was different somehow.

"But what about you?" Gretchen asked Ronnie, grabbing a handful of the baby carrots Ronnie had been snacking on.

"I know lots of aphrodisiacs." Ronnie sighed. "But what do you do to suppress your libido?"

"Become a nun?" Gretchen suggested, grinning. "Honestly, I'd help him out, but I think I'm officially seeing someone."

"Who?" Ronnie asked, perking up. I looked between them, realizing Gretchen hadn't told her about Catherine yet.

"I met her at 1 Oak when I went with Janie," Gretchen said. "Well, actually, we originally met out in California a few months ago when she did a shoot with me, but since she lived in New York, and I lived there..."

"Catherine," I breathed. Ronnie looked between both of us, frowning, and I knew she hadn't quite made the connection.

"I called Carrie to see if they could squeeze someone else into the cabin," Gretchen said, smiling. "She's coming with us."

Oh my god. I couldn't breathe. What now? I'd already invited Josh.

"Oh, hey, I may be out of your hair soon, too." Gretchen grinned. "She told me I could stay with her until I find a place."

"Isn't this kind of fast?" Ronnie looked at me and I shrugged.

"Well, we had a thing, back in California..." Gretchen said. "She spent a few weeks out there."

I wondered if Gretchen knew that Catherine was still married—to the man I happened to be dating. And had already invited to come with us. There was only one way to find out. I had to take the plunge some time, right?

"I invited Josh." I blurted it out and waited for a response.

"Yeah, I know," Gretchen replied, crunching carrots. "Cat said he called her, something about chartering a plane?"

I gaped at her. So that was his big idea!

Ronnie smiled at me. "Looks like we'll be one big happy family," she said, and I think she really believed it.

* * * *

“Janie.” TJ whispered my name in the dark. My bedroom door snicked shut quietly and I rolled over, barely awake, to see the shadow of him standing over my bed.

“What?” I whispered, sitting up. “Is Ronnie okay?”

“Shhhh.” He climbed into bed beside me wearing just his boxers. “She’s fine. I just...I couldn’t sleep.”

“Oh.” I sighed. “So she doesn’t know you’re here.”

His hand slid across my bare belly—I had taken to sleeping nude lately, what with all the late night phone calls with Josh. I glanced over at the clock—it was four in the morning. I’d just hung up the phone with him an hour ago.

“Let’s make it our little secret.” His hand moved to cup my breast.

I remembered what Ronnie had said—*at least he has you*. But I didn’t want this, not like this.

“No, TJ,” I whispered, moving his hand away. “You should go back to bed.”

“I want you so much, Janie.” He leaned in to capture my nipple, his aim incredibly accurate. I gasped as he began to suck and lick it. “I can’t stop thinking about you.”

I felt my body giving in when his hand moved down under the covers, caressing my mound, rocking there.

Still, I tried. “We have to get up early.”

“Let’s make it quick then.” He kissed me, his tongue playing with mine. “I just need you tonight. Please.” His breath was warm against my face, his fingers sliding into me, his palm working against my clit. “Let me.” His mouth trailed down my neck, making me squirm. “Let me have you.”

I moaned softly when he guided my hand between his legs, finding him hard and beyond ready. He made a little noise in his throat when I petted him through his boxers, feeling his heated length. When I slid my hand inside, gripping him, he moaned, his fingers making wet, squishy sounds as he fingered me under the covers.

“Oh Janie.” He thrust against the tug of my hand. “That’s so good.”

He pulled his fingers out of my pussy and I whimpered, but he smeared that wetness over my nipple, making it harden, and then licked it off. I wanted him now and he knew it. I couldn’t help myself. It wasn’t that I didn’t think of Josh—I did. But my body betrayed me, arching under TJ as he climbed on top of me, and I even helped him pull off his boxers and gripped his ass as he traced his cock up and down my slit.

“I have to fuck you.” He was rocking, already thrusting, though he wasn’t even in me yet. The head of his cock tickled deliciously against my clit. “Please, baby. Put it in.”

“TJ,” I murmured, but there was no going back now. I couldn’t refuse him. Instead, I reached down to find him, aim him, guide him. He gave a low moan and shuddered when I shifted, telling him with my hips that I was ready. His cock slid into me easily, sending a sweet wave of pleasure through me. I clung to him.

“Oh baby, you feel so good,” he whispered against my mouth, kissing me, licking and nibbling at my lips. “Oh god, your sweet little cunt!”

“You’re so hard,” I cried as he thrust, deep and long at first, matching his breath, and then shallow and fast, making me bite my lip and wrap myself around him, arms and legs both.

“Come for me, Janie,” he begged, his full weight on me now, his hips grinding. “Oh god, I can’t wait. Your pussy is so fucking hot!”

"It's okay." I squeezed him with the muscles of my cunt, making him groan and buck. He buried his face in my hair, his breath hot, panting in my ear, his cock driving me into the bed.

"Arrrrggggh!" He gave a strangled cry, trying to stay quiet, as he shuddered against me, his fingers digging into my shoulders. He came inside me, I felt it, his cock pulsing. Then his thrusts began to slow as he kissed my neck and the tops of my breasts while I cradled his head against my chest.

"You didn't come," he murmured.

I shrugged, "Don't worry about it."

Some crazy part of me was justifying this because I hadn't—as if that made it somehow okay or better.

"Oh Janie," he whispered, rubbing his cheek over the soft swell of my cleavage. "I don't want to lose you."

I stiffened. "What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean." He sounded sad and I stroked his hair, short, baby fine and soft at the nape of his neck, so different from Josh's curls. "You're so obviously in love with him."

"I can't help it." I told him the same thing I'd told Catherine.

"I know." He sighed. "He's a good guy."

"He is," I agreed, kissing the top of his head. "And so are you."

"Are you going to tell him?" TJ asked. "Or are you just going to end things with us?"

I startled, blinking up at the ceiling. "I...don't know."

“He may understand.” TJ was beside me now, tracing circles around my navel.
“But he’s going to want you to himself. After Catherine, I don’t blame him.”

I felt tears prick my eyes. “I don’t either.”

“We’ve been so lucky to have you.” He kissed my belly now, his breath warm.
“To love you. So very lucky.”

“I’m lucky, too.”

His cheek rested against my tummy, his hand moving, soft and easy, just
stroking my skin lightly, over my thighs.

“You know, when we started this thing, I thought it would be great, something to
add to our sex life—I knew Ronnie liked being with women and missed it. But then you
came along, and just...you stole my heart, Janie.”

His words made me want to cry and I fought my tears, swallowing hard. “How
can you give your heart to more than one person?”

He hugged my hips. “You can love a million people at once. I love Ronnie, but I
love you, too. Just like I love Beth, and I’ll love this little baby that’s on the way just as
much.”

“So I can love you and Josh, too?” I whispered, feeling tears slip, hot and wet,
down my temples, falling onto my pillow.

“Of course you can.”

“Because I do,” I admitted, closing my eyes against it even as I said the words. “I
love you, TJ.”

His lips were soft on my belly, a tender acknowledging kiss. “I know.”

“But...” I struggled with this next bit as tears slipped past my temples in rivers now. “But I don’t know if I can have you both...even if I love you both.”

He squeezed me, hard. “I know.”

Chapter Ten

I crept back to bed barefoot from the bathroom, avoiding the loose boards—after four days in the cabin, I knew where they were now. My mother wasn't kidding when she said they had plenty of room! There were four bedrooms downstairs and five upstairs. TJ and I had an upstairs corner one and the view from the window was incredible.

I stopped to peer out in the early morning light, seeing the sun just coming up over the lake, spreading over the horizon like honey drizzled from heaven. The water was clear and cold—I knew, because I'd been in it a few times already, but it was nothing like swimming in the warm waters of Key West, where we'd vacationed for years. The lake was now still and calm, like a sheet of glass, and as I watched, a deer and her fawn appeared out of the woods to drink at the rim.

Breathless, I made a noise in my throat, something to wake Josh, so I could share this moment with him, but then I heard him snort and start to snore. That made me smile and drop the curtain, moving away from the stunning beauty at the window to climb back into bed with him. I snuggled up close to him, nudging him a little, making him roll to his side so he'd drool on the pillow instead of snore in my ear.

"Janie?" he mumbled as I lifted my shirt, so we were pressed skin-to-skin, belly-to-belly.

"I saw a deer," I whispered, the wonder of it still in my voice. "It was magical."

"Really?" he murmured, not opening his eyes. "Where's my gun?"

"Ooo you're mean." I hissed, nudging him playfully on the arm. "I'm telling you, it was magical."

He smirked. "Why? Did it fly?"

I giggled, sliding my hand over the bare expanse of his chest. "That would be a *reindeer*."

"Good eatin'," he said, grinning and opening his eyes, his reflexes quick enough to stop the knee coming for his crotch.

"I'll give you good eatin'." I rolled him onto his back, pulling my t-shirt off and tossing it aside as I straddled his face.

"Mmmmm!" He spread me wide with his fingers, digging in, his mouth already busy.

"How do you like that?" I teased, rocking my hips back, making him stretch his tongue out for it.

"I love it." He clasped my ass and pulled me toward him. "Like butter. Sweet as honey. All I need now are some pancakes." He made me moan softly as he explored me with his tongue and fingers, parting my lips and paying special attention to my little clit. He almost had me distracted enough not to care when he stopped to add, "And maybe a venison steak or two."

"You're so bad." I laughed.

"And you taste sooo good," he said, delving back in.

I groaned, rocking, spreading my thighs wider. "Keep eating."

"Oh I intend to."

"That means you need to stop talking." I grabbed the back of his head, shoving his face against my crotch, and he groaned, burying it there, sucking and licking and

growling like a hungry dog. It wasn't long before I was flooding his face with my cum, riding my clit against the ridge of his chin as I quivered above him.

He was gasping for breath when I eased my way down to straddle his hips. He grabbed me and kissed me, hard. "Now that I made it all wet, you have to let me fuck it," he panted.

"You want to feel what you did?" I grabbed his cock—oh god, so hard—and putting it quickly inside of me.

"Oh that's nice," he breathed as I began to rock.

"Just nice?"

His eyes were closed. "Shh, I'm concentrating."

"On what?"

"On not coming inside you right now like a teenage boy."

"Oh that would just be awful," I teased, rolling my hips. "Especially since I could come at least three or four more times just doing this."

"Diabolical, I tell you." He opened his eyes, his expression pained.

I grabbed his wrists, pinning them over his head as I fucked him, catching an easy rhythm. "I've got you now."

"Oh what shall I do?" He grinned.

"Lay there and take it."

He nodded, closing his eyes. "That's a brilliant idea."

I leaned in to whisper in his ear, "And don't come."

"Right," he panted.

“Whatever you do...” I murmured, my pussy clenching him. I made it as tight as I could and then released, doing that again and again, punctuating each of my words with a hot, wet squeeze. “Don’t shoot a hot...wet...sticky load of cum...deep into my cunt...”

“Fuck,” he cried, his eyes flying open wide.

“I said no.” I pressed his wrists to the bed, still riding him for all I was worth.

“Don’t do it, Josh.”

“I heard you,” he gasped. “But my cock doesn’t have ears.”

I sat up then, reaching behind me to cup his balls in my hand. “Oooo there’s so much cum in there.” I rolled them around, making him clench his teeth. “Just waiting.”

He started making that noise, the one at the back of his throat, that I knew meant he was close. Really close.

“Nooo, Josh, don’t you fucking do it,” I demanded, slowing, but just a little. I squeezed his ball sack gently, making his hips buck. “Ooooo, baby, all that hot come in there for me.” He nodded, watching me through dazed eyes. “Tell me, it’s all for me.”

“It’s all for you,” he croaked, crying out when I reached out and squeezed both of his nipples—hard.

“Give it to me,” I panted, slamming my hips against his, our bodies slapping together furiously.

“Now?” He wrapped his arms around my shoulders, pulling me close and driving his hips up, burying his cock deep.

“Now!” I insisted, biting his earlobe, and he did just as I asked, giving me every bit of his cum in long, shuddering waves, his hips rising so far up off the bed I felt like I was riding a bucking bronco.

I snuggled beside him and let him pull the covers back up over us. "The deer really was amazing..." I whispered. "Just beautiful."

"You're beautiful. And amazing." His eyes were closed, but he was smiling. "And really, really good eats."

"She had a baby," I told him. "A sweet little fawn."

"You know." He cleared his throat. "They say veal is a delicacy, but baby deer—"

I slapped my hand over his mouth, feeling his chest shaking with laughter. "Go to sleep, you evil man."

"I-muff-uu."

I took my hand away from his mouth, sitting up on my elbow to look at him. "What did you say?"

"I love you," he repeated, his eyes soft.

I blinked. "That's what I thought you said."

"But can you name that tune in three notes?" He grinned.

"The Wedding March?" I quipped.

"Yikes!" He slapped his forehead. "Let the old marriage burn out before we start talking about phoenixes rising from the ashes, shall we?"

"Scared ya," I teased, tucking my head under his chin.

"No." He traced his fingers over my lower back, as if he could see my tattoo in the dimness. "I don't think there's anything you could say now that would run me off."

I didn't say anything, but part of me wasn't so sure about that. "Do you really love me?"

"Beyond words."

"I love you, too."

He held me close, breathing me in. "It's about time."

* * * *

"Josh, quit eating all the chocolate," I complained, snatching another Hershey's from his hand. My favorite part of the whole vacation so far had been making s'mores around the fire. That, and the sex with Josh. They practically tied.

"It's the best part." He snuck another one from the pile.

I sighed, handing a marshmallow fork to my brother. "Henry, will you tell him how you're supposed to do it?"

"Watch carefully, Josh." He demonstrated. "Graham cracker, chocolate, marshmallow, graham cracker. Then, and only then, do you eat."

Josh scowled. "I think you took too many steps between *chocolate* and *eat*."

"Let the man eat what he wants, Janie," a voice called from across the campfire.

"Yes, Mother."

I glanced around the fire, feeling content and really relaxed for the first time in a month or more. Since Ronnie went to the hospital, I realized, I'd been living from one breath to the next, waiting for the world to collapse again. But there she was, sitting in a chair next to TJ, happily roasting marshmallows and passing them to Gretchen, who had Catherine breaking up chocolate so my dad could put them on graham crackers before passing them to my mother to put on paper plates. It was a whole assembly line of s'more-making that made me ridiculously happy to watch.

Josh was doing nothing—except sneaking chocolate—and Henry was roasting. Me, I was just supervising. I realized, looking over at my brother, that he was the only

one there who wasn't paired up. My mother said his girlfriend couldn't make it, but I wondered. He'd been awfully quiet.

"I have something for you," I said to Henry. We'd been here five days already and I kept forgetting to give it to him. "Remind me."

"You got a Porsche in your pocket?" He smirked. "Did you bring it on the private plane you flew in on?"

I flushed. Josh had insisted—the three of us, TJ, Ronnie and Gretchen, had all cashed in our American Airlines tickets and had flown in on Catherine's private plane. Ronnie could actually lay down for the whole flight, and she did. She always slept on flights and she'd slept the whole way. Gretchen hadn't even bought a ticket yet, and Catherine invited her to fly on the plane, of course.

So far, it hadn't been strange or awkward. Josh said it was going to end amicably between them, and I believed him. Catherine didn't seem angry or vengeful. In fact, watching her feeding Gretchen little pieces of chocolate, she looked deliriously happy. She laughed more. That hard edge to her had softened.

"It's better than a Porsche," I told Henry, ignoring him sneaking Josh another Hersey bar.

He scoffed. "Not possible."

"What would you say if I told you..." I dragged it out, knowing they were all listening. "I got Jim Carrey's autograph."

Henry jumped up, Hershey bars flying. "You what?"

"Hey!" Josh protested, snatching candy bars from the fire. "Don't waste the chocolate!"

I grinned up at my brother. "It even has your name on it."

"I am so sorry for anything bad I have ever said or done to you," Henry exclaimed, reaching down and pulling me into a hug. I laughed as he swung me around. "I'm sorry I stole your Bratz dolls for target practice." He kissed my cheek. "And I didn't mean to ruin your cashmere sweater, even though I was sure it would be perfect for cleaning my bike chain." He kissed my other cheek. "Oh, and I should have told Mom it was me who was riding off the roof on my BMX into the pool and not let you take the blame for it."

"I told you it was him!" I exclaimed, pointing at my mother.

"Oh, Doc, I'm gonna pee my pants!" My mother cried, clinging to my father, laughing so hysterically she couldn't stand up. He was laughing, too, supporting her.

"Wouldn't it be funny if Janie said, 'Psych!' right about now?" Josh asked casually, leaning back in his chair and opening yet another Hershey's bar.

Henry's face fell. "You..." He looked between the two of us, his eyes wide. "Wouldn't..."

"Psych." Josh grinned, waggling his eyebrows.

"It's upstairs." I smiled, nudging Josh with my sneaker. "You are so bad!"

"Wow." Henry sat down, looking over at Josh admiringly. "You're good."

I ran upstairs to get the autograph, still tucked away in my wallet, and when I got back, Josh and Henry had joined the assembly-line, both of them roasting marshmallows side by side and contemplating their shapes like some people look at clouds.

"Mine looks like Buddha," Henry said, turning his stick sideways.

“I’ve got Lindsey Lohan.” Josh held his up, the marshmallow goo running down the poker. “Before rehab.”

That cracked everyone up, and I knew, then, that Josh was really part of the family.

* * * *

I wish I’d never looked out the window to see them, standing in the same place I saw the deer and her baby drinking at the water’s edge. Josh was holding Catherine’s hands, both of them, in his. They were talking. Closely.

They’re still friends, I told myself. Hell, they’re still married. Of course they still care about each other. But the rationalization didn’t take. When he leaned over and kissed her—not on the cheek, but on the mouth—I’d had enough.

I was curled up on the bed when he came into the room. He smelled like pine trees and sap as he sat next to me.

“Taking a nap?”

I made a noise, but didn’t really answer him.

“Want me to join you?” His hand moved in my hair, down my back, and I winced away from his touch.

“Why don’t you go take a nap with Catherine?” I snapped.

I felt him stiffen and grow quiet. “It wasn’t what you’re thinking.”

“What?” I rolled over, my arms crossed over my chest. “She’s your wife, after all. Go ahead. Go sleep in her room.”

“Janie.” His eyes flashed a warning, but I ignored it. “We were just talking.”

“Oh, I didn’t know talking involved putting your tongues together like that,” I spat.
“Is that like the new math?”

He half-laughed. “It was just a friendly kiss.”

“Go ahead.” I waved my hand toward the door. “Go sleep with your wife, if that’s what you want....oh wait, that’s right—she’s a lesbian. She doesn’t like men. Or maybe it’s just *you* she doesn’t like.” The words were out before I could even think about them. My mouth was always, always the thing that got me into trouble. I put my nail in my own coffin when I half-sat, my eyes blazing, and asked, “Did you ever wonder if you were the one who turned her?”

Josh looked like I’d hit him. He stood, taking a deep breath, and moving toward the door. I wanted to call out, tell him I was sorry, but something caught in my throat.

“I don’t want to fight with you.” He didn’t turn around, his hand on the doorknob.
“And I definitely don’t want to fight dirty. I’m going to—”

“Why not?” I interrupted him, snarling. “Too good, too *rich*, to get your hands dirty with the rest of us?”

“Well, Janie, I think you’ve taken full advantage of that fact.” When he looked at me, his eyes were narrowed and dark and full of anger. “You’ve had no problem availing yourself of Catherine’s hospitality—or mine. I’m actually surprised you didn’t choose her instead. She’s the one with all the money.”

I wanted to go after him, but I didn’t. Instead I curled up on the bed, dry-eyed, trying to find a way out of the circles my head was running in until my dad called me down for dinner.

* * * *

"How's my baby girl?"

"Mom," I admonished, rinsing the last dinner dish and putting it in the dishwasher.

"I'm not a baby anymore."

"I know." She slipped her arms around my waist, kissing my cheek. "But you'll always be my baby."

"Does every parent say that?" I rolled my eyes, drying my hands on a dish towel.

"Probably." She laughed, giving me a squeeze and letting me go. I turned to face her and she searched my eyes with hers, her brow knitting. "Are you okay, Janie? You don't seem...happy."

"I'm okay." I shrugged, leaning back against the counter. "Things are just...complicated."

"Josh?" she inquired.

"Mom..." I sighed. "I don't want to talk about it right now."

"Will you let me know when you do?"

I shrugged, agreeing just to make her stop. "Okay."

"I'm here," she insisted.

"I know." I cocked my head, listening. The house was quiet—no laughter, no television or music. "Hey, where is everybody?"

"Ronnie and TJ went upstairs to take a nap," she said, turning to tend to the coffee pot. "Oh my god, I can't believe I'm going to be a grandmother again. I can't stop touching that sweet belly of hers! Did you see it?"

I wasn't going to tell her just how many times I'd seen in, and the various positions from which I'd seen it, either. "Mom, you're not a grandmother. She's not your daughter."

"She might as well be." She turned to stick her tongue out at me. Must be where I got it from.

"Where's Henry?" I peeked out into the family room—the cabin was huge, with high ceilings, and the living area had a vast fireplace, not that we needed it this time of year—but there was no one in there. "I promised him I'd give him a chance to save face at Scrabble."

"Out on the lake." She waved her hand in that direction.

"He seems quiet," I mused. I knew my little brother well enough to know when something was up. "What's going on?"

"He's having trouble at U of M."

That surprised me. "He is?"

"We got him a tutor—Toni Franklin. Do you remember her?" My mother took a coffee mug out of the cupboard. "We were on the PTA together when you were little."

"Wow, how is Mrs. Franklin?" I blinked. I remembered her clearly—she and her husband had played bridge together on weekends with my parents. "I haven't seen her in years."

"Divorced." The coffee was done and she poured it. "She's got a belly ring and two tattoos."

"Mrs. Franklin?!" I exclaimed. "Really?" Poor Mr. Franklin. I just remembered him as a tall, balding man with glasses and a goofy laugh.

“Do you want coffee?” she asked, putting sugar in hers.

I shook my head. I didn’t need any caffeine. With Josh next to me at night, I’d slept like a baby.

“So what’s going on with Catherine and Josh?” My mother lifted her cup, looking at me over the rim as she blew on the liquid’s surface.

I glanced at her sharply. “What do you mean?”

“I overheard them talking.” She shrugged. “Something about a pre-nup?”

I swallowed. Had she overheard them at the lake, I wondered? Had she seen them? I contemplated lying, but decided I’d been doing enough of that. It was just getting me into more trouble.

“Josh and Catherine are married,” I said flatly.

Her eyes widened. “Oh Janie...”

“This is a very long story, Mother, and I really don’t feel like telling it right now.” I walked away from the sympathy and concern in her eyes. “I’m going to find Josh.”

“They all went out on the lake,” she called.

I stopped. “Who?”

“Everyone but TJ and Ronnie.”

So Josh was out on the boat with Catherine. I was sure he went to punish me. We hadn’t even sat next to each other at dinner or said, ‘Pass the salt.’

I’d intended to go apologize after I finished doing the dishes—I always did housework when I was mad, it expended my energy and made me feel better—but now he was gone. Out on the boat. With Catherine.

And it didn't escape me, the irony that I was jealous of a woman that I, myself, had been with. That I had no room to be jealous in the first place, considering that I was still involved with Ronnie and TJ. What in the hell was wrong with me?

"I'm gonna go take a nap," I said, heading up the stairs.

"Janie." My mom called from the bottom and I looked back over my shoulder with a sigh. I knew she was trying to help, but there were just things you couldn't tell your mother. "I love you," she said finally.

"Ditto."

I closed our bedroom door and stretched out on the bed, hugging Josh's pillow because it smelled like him. "Oh Josh, I'm sorry," I whispered, letting the tears I'd been holding back finally burst out. I cried into his pillow, I didn't know how long—until that horrible, stuffed-up, sleepy, after-crying feeling came over me and I fell asleep.

I didn't hear TJ come into our room. I didn't know he was there until I felt him behind me in bed, spooning me, his hand moving over my hip.

"You okay?" he murmured, kissing my cheek. "I thought I heard you crying."

"M'okay." I sniffed, snuggling back against him, so warm and solid, taking comfort in his arms.

"You can tell me."

I shook my head. That felt like even more of a betrayal to Josh than anything.

"Janie, we've been talking."

I turned to face him, frowning.

“Maybe this isn’t such a good idea.” He swallowed, tracing my jaw line with his finger. “Maybe it’s time we stopped being Janie-and-Ronnie-and-TJ... so you two can be just-Janie-and-Josh...and we can be just-Ronnie-and-TJ.”

I didn’t know if it was hearing the phrase “just-Janie” or the realization that he was actually talking about ending things, but it brought my tears, already close to the surface, welling up again.

“Is that what you guys want?” I choked, images of the times we’d spent together flashing through my head—Ronnie and I trying on dresses together in *Neiman Marcus*, knowing we weren’t going to buy anything, but admiring each other just the same; the time TJ stole me a whole bunch of lilacs from the tree down the block just because I said they were my favorite flower; the three of us rolling around in bed, tickling each other, trying not to laugh so loud we woke Beth.

“Maybe it’s not what we want.” He sighed, leaning over to kiss my cheek. “It might not even be the best thing...but maybe...maybe it’s the right thing.”

I knew what they were doing. They were setting me free. Loving me enough to let me go. Isn’t that what Ronnie had said? Still, it hurt. It hurt so bad I couldn’t breathe.

“TJ.” I gasped out his name, cupping his face in my hands and kissing him. It was a thank-you kiss, a goodbye kiss, an I will never forget you kiss. It was our last kiss, and it would have been, I think, even if Josh hadn’t opened the door to our room and walked in to find us.

He didn’t say a word. The look on his face said more than enough.

I sat up, calling after him—he was already halfway down the hall. “Josh! Wait!”

But he was already down the stairs, out the front door. By the time I'd crawled over TJ and made it to the hallway, Ronnie was there, doubled over and clutching her belly.

"Teej!" she cried, reaching for him blindly. "The baby!"

"Fuck!" He was over to her, supporting her, before I could take my next breath.

"Janie, get Josh."

Get Josh? That's what I'd been going to do. Josh would fix everything. But Josh had left me. He didn't just storm away, like he had before when we were fighting. He'd walked away, disappeared, like he'd never been there at all. And why not? I'd lied to him. I'd betrayed him.

"Hurry!" TJ yelled as Ronnie clutched him, gasping for air. "We need to get to the nearest hospital! Now!"

"Okay." I felt like I was moving in slow-motion, reaching in my back pocket for my phone. "I'll call 911."

"Oh god," Ronnie whimpered. "It's pre-term labor. Just like with Beth." Her eyes were wild when she looked up at her husband. "Not again. Please. Not again!"

"Goddamnit!" TJ swore, pulling her close, cradling her. "I told you we shouldn't have come!" he snapped, proving to me once again that even people who love each other, maybe especially people who love each other, said awful, horrible things.

"No signal," I whispered, punching at my phone, staring, incredulous, at the one bar showing in the corner.

That's when Ronnie screamed. It was a primal thing, something that came wrenching up from deep inside of her, and then the hallway was crowded with people.

Henry grabbed the house phone and called 911 while TJ carried Ronnie down the stairs—my mom got her a blanket and even thought to put shoes on her feet. And it wasn't Josh's arms I found myself in this time, but my father's.

I stood on the porch and watched as the ambulance came and took Ronnie and TJ away. And then I collapsed, sobbing in my father's arms instead of Josh's.

Because Josh was already gone.

* * * *

"Janie, you need to rest."

I looked at Ronnie as I tucked a tray with my red-roasted pepper and tomato soup and gourmet grilled cheese on it around her legs. There were four kinds of cheese on the sandwich. I'd made one for Beth, too. She was sitting in the kitchen scarfing it down.

"I'm fine," I told her. "Do you need anything else?"

"You look like you haven't slept in a week."

I nodded. "Sounds about right." It had been that long since we'd been back.

"He'll call." She touched my hand as I tucked the blanket around her.

I just shook my head. "I wouldn't blame him if he never did."

"He loves you."

"Yeah, well..." I went to the door, pausing with my hand on the knob. "Love doesn't solve everything."

"I'm sorry, Janie," she whispered, and I looked back to see tears brimming in her eyes.

"It's not your fault." I wanted to crawl into bed with her, to cry in her arms, but I couldn't. "I love you."

"I love you, too, sweetie."

I noticed the mail stuck through the slot in the door and grabbed it, taking it with me to the kitchen. Beth was sitting with her feet tucked under her, picking the crusts off her sandwich and singing, "Rockabye Baby" under her breath.

"Interesting song choice," I said, tossing the mail on the table and pouring myself a cup of soup. I'd been all about comfort food this week—macaroni and cheese, lasagna, chocolate chip cookies and, of course, tomato soup. Beth thought she'd died and gone to heaven.

"I'm practicing." She took a long drink of milk. "To sing to the baby when he's here."

I smiled, swallowing past the lump in my throat. It had been a close call. That's what TJ'd said. They'd given her I.V. medication that made her horribly sick but might work to stop the contractions, had even tilted her bed so her head was pointed toward the floor to take the pressure off, doing everything they could think of to stop her labor. And, miraculously, after two hours, it had.

Beth's little brother or sister was just fine. For the moment. Of course, Ronnie couldn't get out of bed except to pee, and she was still on meds that made her feel awful, headachy and nauseous.

"Think it's gonna be a boy?" I asked, sipping my soup.

"It's a boy," she said definitely, making her crusts into letters—an M and then an O. "But I don't want it."

“No?” I didn’t believe it for a minute. She practiced singing and rocking and diapering and carrying babies constantly.

“When the baby comes...” She made another M out of her crust and I realized she’d spelled MOM. “No one is going to have time for me.”

“Do you think so?”

“No one will have time for me, or room for me, or...” Her eyes were filled with tears when she looked up at me. “No one will love me anymore. Not as much as they love him.”

“Come here.” I held my arms out. She came to sit in my lap, letting me cradle and rock her, and I had a memory of sitting on my own mother’s lap just like this, saying the words I was about to say.

“You love me, don’t you, Beth?”

She nodded against my shirt, her thumb in her mouth, preventing a verbal assent.

“And you love your mommy, don’t you?” I heard her breath hitch, and she nodded again. “And your daddy, too?”

I felt her growing still on my lap. She was older than I’d been, hearing these words, and she was making connections faster. I could feel it.

“But how can you love so many people at once?” I pulled out the punch line, letting it sink in.

She took her thumb out of her mouth and looked up at me in wonder. “It’s easy.”

"I know." I smiled, squeezing her tight, remembering my mother's words and repeating them to her. "Our hearts are so big that we can always love someone else, no matter what."

"I love you, Janie." Her words made my heart ache.

I kissed her dark head. "I love you, too, kiddo."

"I'm going to give mommy my crusts," she said, hopping off my lap and sliding her grilled cheese onto the table to make room for the crusts that spelled MOM on her plate.

"She'll like that."

I flipped through the mail when Beth had gone upstairs, separating out theirs from mine. I didn't get much—mostly credit card applications and rejection letters from publishers. I almost tossed the letter aside because I figured it was another rejection. And then I saw the return address. *Wickham Agency*.

Josh.

My hands trembled as I tore the envelope open, reading the first few lines in confusion and wonder:

*We are pleased to inform you that we would like to
accept your manuscript, The Princess Who Threw
Away Frogs, for publication...*

But how? Josh had never once read any of my work. I never wanted him to think I just wanted an agent out of everything after all, so I'd actually refused to let him.

There was a note stuck inside, handwritten in Josh's bold, brash scrawl:

If I can't be your boyfriend, that means I can be your agent. I've negotiated you an unprecedented advance for this book. Call me. Josh

There was a number on the stationary—his work phone. I'd never called him at work before.

I pulled my cell out of my pocket, my fingers shaking so badly I had to dial slowly to make sure I was pushing the right numbers.

"Josh Wickham."

Oh my god. Didn't he even have a secretary? I wasn't ready yet. I tried to say his name, but it only came out as a hiss of breath.

"Hello?"

"Josh." My voice was strangled and I closed my eyes, the sound of his voice filling me with a familiar warmth.

"Janie." He sounded surprised, even happy, and my heart soared. There was a moment of silence, and then he was all business. "You got my letter?"

"Yes."

"Good." He cleared his throat. "We need to sign some paperwork, but if you're interested—"

"How did you get your hands on that book?" I blurted.

He was quiet for a moment. "TJ gave it to me."

Ah. That explained it all. Ronnie had probably snuck my laptop into her room and printed it out for him. I couldn't imagine it wasn't a joint venture.

I was grinning from ear-to-ear. "Isn't it illegal for you to represent me if I haven't even signed a contract with you?"

"Probably," he agreed casually. "Want to sue me?"

"No. I want to kiss you," I confessed, holding my breath.

"We can arrange that."

"Can we?" I closed my eyes.

"I'm still at the Plaza," he told me. "It's not the Presidential Suite, but..."

"It could be a tent for all I care," I breathed. "It was so never about that."

"I know." He paused, sounding sad. "I'm sorry."

"No, *I'm* sorry," I insisted, the tears I'd been holding back now spilling over. "I'm sorry I lied, and I'm sorry I didn't tell you about Ronnie and TJ, and I'm sorry I—"

"Janie, you're mine." His voice stopped me. "You've been mine since the first day I met you. I won't share you with anyone else."

"I know," I whispered, hot tears falling. "But I don't want anyone else, Josh. I just want you. I'm so sorry I didn't tell you. I'm sorry you had to find out that way. I'm so sorry—"

He interrupted me. "Doesn't love mean never having to say you're sorry, or some sappy thing like that?"

"No." I sniffed, remembering what TJ had said to Ronnie when he was holding her in the hallway—*I told you we shouldn't have come*—and all the hurtful things I'd heard my parents say, the horrible things I'd said to Josh at the cabin. "No, love inevitably means saying 'I'm sorry' a whole lot—and meaning it."

“Then I’m sorry a whole lot,” he said. “I’m sorry times a million. I’m sorry up to the moon and back. I’m sorry times *infinity*. I’m sorry—”

“Okay, love doesn’t mean being pathetic.” I laughed through my tears.

“Yes it does.” His voice sounded as choked as mine. “I’ve been dragging my heart and my pride around behind me since I met you, girl. Don’t you know that? God, I love you so much. I’d do anything for you.”

I swallowed the lump in my throat. “You’ve done everything for me.”

“Sweetheart, I haven’t even started yet.” He gave a short laugh. “Now, put on something sexy and come down to my office. I want you to sign some paperwork and fuck you on my desk.”

“I’m coming,” I said breathlessly, already out of my chair.

“Not yet you’re not.” I could hear him—not smiling, but grinning, from ear-to-ear. “But you will be.”

Epilogue

"He's gorgeous!" My mother cooed over the bassinette, reaching in to pick the baby up as Ronnie hovered behind her. "Oh my goodness, what a precious boy."

"So do we have to call him Jackson?" Josh asked, his mouth half-full of bruschetta. He was enjoying the after-christening spread on the table for this shin-dig and why not? He'd had it catered. "Or can we shorten it to something cool, like Jack?"

"He looks just like you, Ronnie," my mother exclaimed, turning to my father and holding the baby up for him to see. "Doesn't he, Doc?"

"He's got her eyes," my dad agreed.

"My chin, though," TJ said, touching the cleft in his as he pulled Ronnie back down to the sofa.

"He's got my dress on!" Beth piped up, peeking her head from under the table where she'd taken the handheld game Josh had given her this morning. "That was mine when I was a baby." The christening outfit was, indeed, one Beth had worn.

"So Janie, when's your next bestseller hit the shelves?" TJ asked, his arm around his wife's shoulders.

I flushed. "Actually, I just got the advance for the sequel to *The Princess Who Threw Away Frogs*."

"A mighty handsome one," Josh interjected. "Thanks to me."

I kissed him on the cheek, laughing. "Yes, darling, you are the best agent a writer could ever have... and the best husband a woman could ever ask for."

"What's this one called?" Ronnie asked. "*The Princess Who Ate Tokyo*?"

"Close," I said. "*The Princess Who Ate The Pea*."

Beth poked her head up. "I want to read it!"

"You will," I promised. "You'll get the very first autographed copy, and I'll even come to Trinity to read it for your whole class."

"The whole school!" Beth exclaimed.

"You're famous." Josh winked at me. "Who woulda thunk?"

"Well, if you count being famous with first-graders." I laughed.

"He's so perfect." My mother rocked and jiggled the baby as he waved his fists and started to fuss. She made ridiculous faces, talking to him in a high, sing-song voice.

"Jeez, Mom," I said, reaching for Josh's hand and squeezing it. He came up behind me, slipping his arms around my waist. "I sure hope you swoon like that over your biological grandchildren."

"Oh, sweetie, I'm sure I—" She stopped, looking up at me, her eyes growing wide and wider still as she saw Josh grinning and caressing my belly. "Oh my god! Oh my god! You're pregnant? You're pregnant!"

"Just a little bit," I confessed, laughing as they all exclaimed congratulations at once.

My mother put the baby in my dad's surprised arms to come over and hug me and Ronnie jumped up, too, squeezing me hard. Her eyes were bright with tears when she looked at me and then murmured into my ear, "It couldn't have turned out any better."

"Oh this isn't the end." Josh overheard, leaning over to kiss my cheek. "Trust me, as an agent, I know these things. There's *a/ways* another sequel."

The End

ABOUT SELENA KITT



Like any feline, Selena Kitt loves the things that make her purr-and wants nothing more than to make others purr right along with her! Pleasure is her middle name, whether it's a short cat nap stretched out in the sun or a long kitty bath. She makes it a priority to explore all the delightful distractions she can find, and follow her vivid and often racy imagination wherever it wants to lead her.

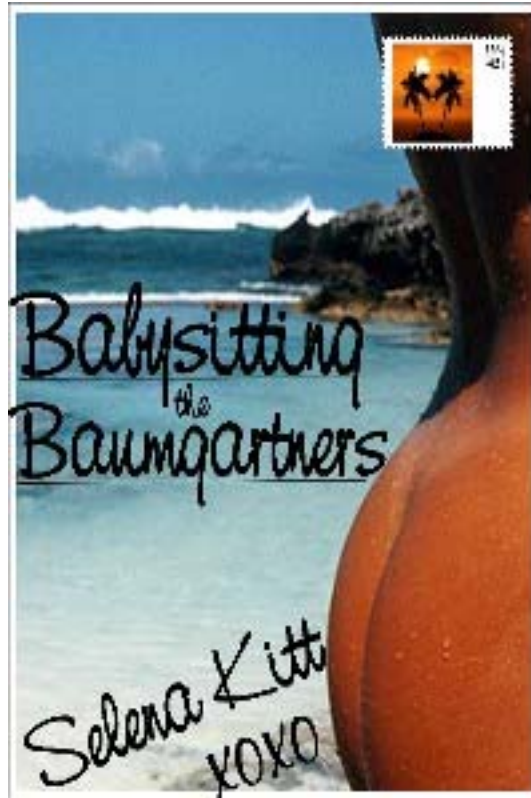
Her writing embodies everything from the spicy to the scandalous, but watch out- this kitty also has sharp claws and her stories often include intriguing edges and twists that take readers to new, thought-provoking depths.

When she's not pawing away at her keyboard, Selena runs an innovative publishing company (www.excessica.com) and in her spare time, she worships her devoted husband, corrals four kids and a dozen chickens, all while growing an organic garden. She also loves bellydancing and photography.

Her book *EcoErotica*, was a 2009 Eppie Finalist, her book, *The Real Mother Goose*, was a 2010 Eppie Finalist, and her story, *Connections*, was one of the runners-up for the 2006 Rauxa Prize, given annually to an erotic short story of "exceptional literary quality," out of over 1,000 nominees, where awards are judged by a select jury and all entries are read "blind" (without author's name available.)

She can be reached on her website at www.selenakitt.com.

**If you enjoyed BAUMGARTNER GENERATIONS: JANIE,
you might also enjoy:**



BABYSITTING THE BAUMGARTNERS

By Selena Kitt

Ronnie—or as Mrs. Baumgartner insists on calling her, Veronica—has been babysitting for the Baumgartners since she was fifteen years old and has practically become another member of the family. Now a college freshman, Ronnie jumps at the chance to work on her tan in the Florida Keys with “Doc” and “Mrs. B” under the pretense of babysitting the kids. Ronnie isn’t the only one with ulterior motives, though, and she discovers that the Baumgartners have wayward plans for their young babysitter. This wicked hot sun and sand coming of age story will seduce you as quickly as the Baumgartners seduce innocent Ronnie and leave everyone yearning for more!

Warning: This title contains MFF threesome, lesbian, and anal sex.

Excerpt From BABYSITTING THE BAUMGARTNERS:

I got out of the shower and dried off, wrapping myself in one of the big white bath sheets. My room was across the hall from the bathroom, and the Baumgartner's was the next room over. The kids' rooms were at the other end of the hallway.

As I made my way across the hall, I heard Mrs. B's voice from behind their door: "You want that tight little nineteen-year-old pussy, Doc?"

I stopped, my heart leaping, my breath caught. Oh my god. Were they talking about me? He said something, but it was low, and I couldn't quite make it out. Then she said: "Just wait until I wax it for you. It'll be soft and smooth as a baby."

Shocked, I reached down between my legs, cupping my pussy as if to protect it, standing there transfixed, listening. I stepped closer to their door, seeing that it wasn't completely closed, trying to hear what they were saying. There wasn't any noise, now.

"Oh god," I heard him groan. "Suck it harder."

My eyes wide, I could feel the pulse returning between my thighs, a slow, steady heat. Was she sucking his cock? I remembered what it looked like in his hand—even from a distance, I could tell that it was big, much bigger than any of the boys I'd ever been with.

"Ahhhh fuck, Carrie!" he moaned. I bit my lip, hearing Mrs. B's first name felt so wrong, somehow. "Take it all, baby!"

All?! My jaw dropped as I tried to imagine it, pressing my hand over my throbbing mound. Mrs. B said something, but I couldn't hear it, and as I leaned toward the door, I bumped it with the towel wrapped around my hair. My hand went to my mouth and I

took an involuntary step back as the door edged open just a crack. I turned to go to my room, but I knew that they would hear my door.

“You want to fuck me, baby?” she purred. “God, I’m so wet... did you see her sweet little tits?”

“Fuck, yeah,” he murmured. “I wanted to come all over them.”

Hearing his voice, I stepped back toward the door, peering through the crack. The bed was behind the door, at the opposite angle, but there was a large vanity table and mirror against the other wall, and I could see them reflected in it. Mrs. B was completely naked, kneeling over him. I could see her face, her breasts swinging as she took him into her mouth. His cock was standing straight up in the air.

“She’s got beautiful tits, doesn’t she?” Mrs. B ran her tongue up and down the shaft.

“Yeah.” His hand moved in her hair, pressing her down onto his cock. “I want to see her little pussy. God, she’s so beautiful.”

“Do you want to see me eat it?” She moved up onto him, still stroking his cock. “Watch me lick that sweet, shaved cunt?”

I pressed a cool hand to my flushed cheek, but my other hand was rubbing the towel between my legs as I watched them. I had never heard anyone say that word out loud and it shocked and excited me.

“Oh god, yeah!” He grabbed her tits as they swayed over him. I could see her riding him, and knew he must be inside of her. “I want inside that tight little cunt.”

I moved the towel aside and slipped my fingers between my lips. He was talking about me! The thought made my whole body tingle, and my pussy was on fire. Already slick and wet from my orgasm in the shower, my fingers slid easily through my slit.

“I want to fuck her while she eats your pussy.” He thrust up into her. His hands were gripping her hips and her breasts swayed as they rocked together.

My eyes widened at the image he conjured, but Mrs. B moaned, moving faster on top of him.

“Yeah, baby.” She leaned over him, her breasts dangling in his face. His hands went to them, his mouth sucking at her nipples, making her squeal and slam down against him even harder. “You want her on her hands and knees, her tight little ass in the air?”

He groaned, and I rubbed my clit even faster as he grabbed her and practically threw her off of him onto the bed. She seemed to know what he wanted, because she got onto her hands and knees, and he was fucking her like that, from behind. The sound of them, flesh slapping against flesh, filled the room.

They were facing the mirror, but Mrs. B had her face buried in her arms, her ass lifted high in the air. Doc’s eyes were looking down between their legs, like he was watching himself slide in and out of her.

“Fuck!” Mrs. B’s voice was muffled. “Oh fuck, Doc, make me come!”

He grunted and drove into her harder, and I watched her shudder and grab the covers with her fists. He didn’t stop, though—his hands grabbed her hips and he worked himself into her over and over. I felt weak-kneed and full of heat, my fingers rubbing my

aching clit in fast little circles. Mrs. B's orgasm had almost sent me right over the edge. I was very, very close.

"That tight nineteen-year-old cunt!" She shoved into her. "I want to taste her." He slammed into her again. "Fuck her." And again. "Make her come." And again. "Make her scream until she can't take anymore."

I leaned my forehead against the doorjamb for support, trying to control how fast my breath was coming, how fast my climax was coming, but I couldn't. I whimpered, watching him fuck her and knowing he was imagining me... me!

"Come here." He pulled out and Mrs. B was turning around like she knew what he wanted.

"Swallow."

He was kneeling up on the bed as she pumped and sucked at his cock. I saw the first spurt land against her cheek, a thick white rope of cum, and then she covered the head with her mouth and swallowed, making soft mewling noises in her throat. I came then, too, shuddering and shivering against the doorframe, biting my lip to keep from crying out.

When I opened my eyes and came to my senses, Mrs. B was still on her hands and knees, focused between his legs—but Doc was looking right at me, his dark eyes on mine.

My hand flew to my mouth and I stumbled back, fumbling for the doorknob behind me that I knew was there. I finally found it, slipping into my room and shutting the door behind me. I leaned against it, my heart pounding, my pussy dripping, and wondered what I was going to do now...

BUY THIS AND MORE TITLES AT
www.eXcessica.com



eXcessica's [BLOG](#)

www.excessica.com/blog

eXcessica's [YAHOO GROUP](#)

groups.yahoo.com/group/eXcessica/

**Check out both for updates about eXcessica books, as well
as chances to win free E-Books!**