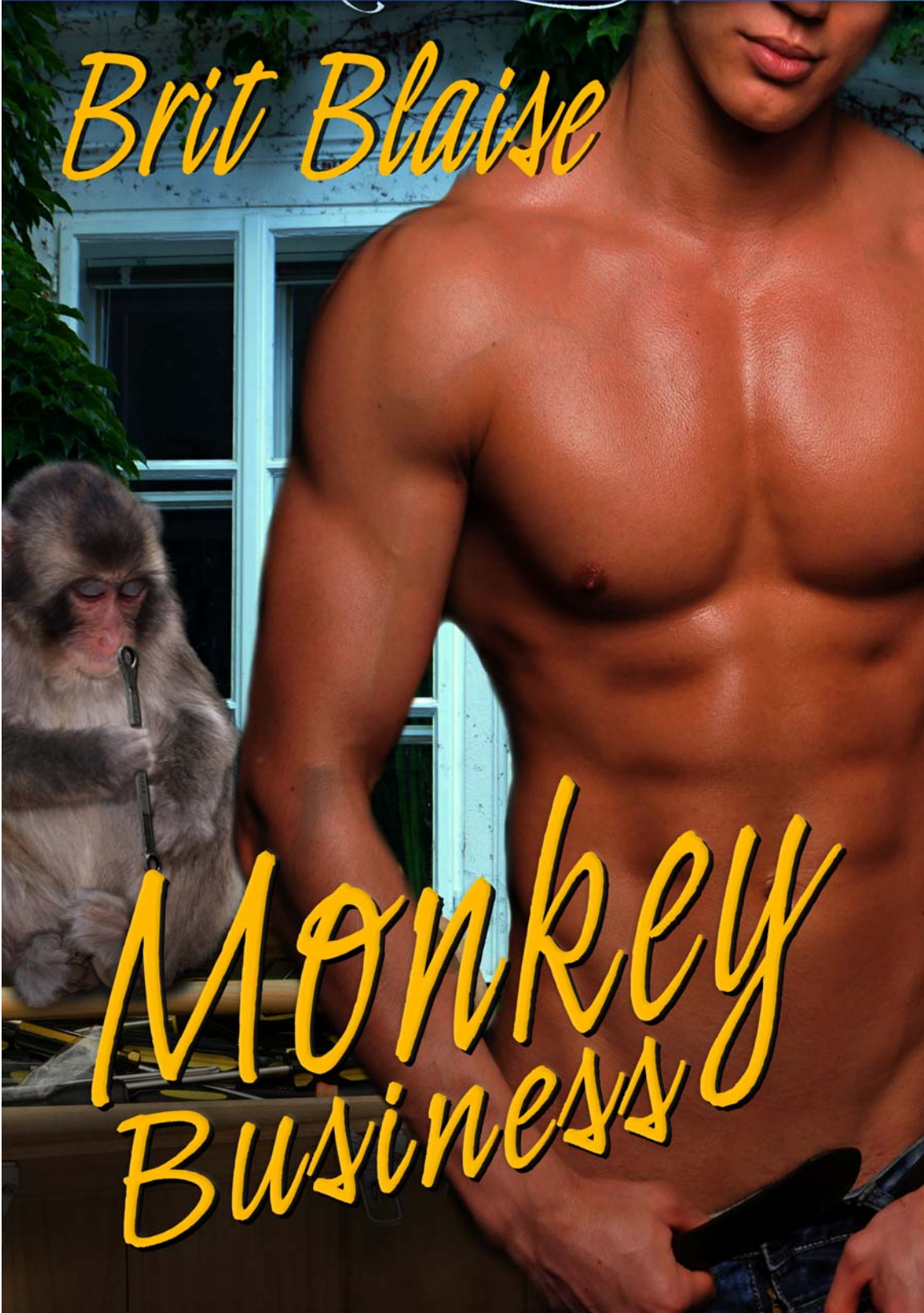


Sapphire Blue Publishing

Brit Blaise

*Monkey
Business*



SAPPHIRE BLUE BOOKS are published by:

Sapphire Blue Publishing, LLC
P.O. Box 42255
Phoenix, AZ 85080-2255

Copyright © 2010 Brit Blaise
Publisher's Edition Copyright © 2010 Sapphire Blue Publishing
Cover Art by Kendra Egert

All rights reserved. eBooks are *not* transferable and can not be given away, sold or shared. No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including photocopying, faxing, forwarded by email, recording or by any information retrieval and storage system without permission of the publisher, except where permitted by law, as this is an infringement on the copyright of this work. Brief quotations within reviews or articles are acceptable.

Sapphire Blue Fairy Logo © 2010 Sapphire Blue Publishing, LLC

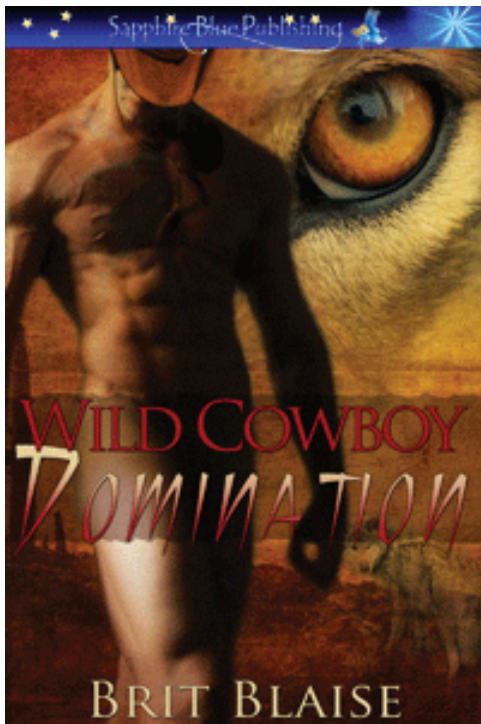
ISBN 978-1-934657-47-8

Publisher's Note. This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are a product of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to a person or persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is purely coincidental.

First Sapphire Blue Publishing, LLC electronic publication: May 2010

Visit Sapphire Blue Publishing on the World Wide Web at
<http://www.sapphirebluepublishing.com>

Other titles from Sapphire Blue Publishing:



Wild Cowboy Domination
Brit Blaise



Changeling
Stephanie Bedwell-Grime

Monkey Business

By Brit Blaise

SAPPHIRE BLUE PUBLISHING

<http://www.sapphirebluepublishing.com>

Dedications

For Tina...

Acknowledgement

Thanks to the Butterscotch Martini Girls, who helped me do this...way back in the day.

Chapter One

“Donald wants his engagement ring back. Right now. Give it to me.”

Nothing could have prepared Tina for the indignity of standing on her front porch and being told her fiancé of two years wanted his ring back.

Nothing.

Her breathing increased, as did the beating of her heart while the rest of her body went numb. A hot flush of mortification seared her cheeks.

Donald sent a stranger to tell her he was breaking off their engagement?

Tina anxiously twisted the diamond ring on her finger. There were problems in their relationship, but what kind of man had someone else do his dirty work? How could Donald send the “other woman” to break off their engagement?

Was he really such a slimy weakling?

“Did you hear me?” the woman demanded in a harsh voice.

At the sight of the woman’s smart designer suit, Tina inched back behind the door. Everything about this interloper, her suit, the stylish haircut, perfect nails and makeup contrasted with work-at-home-Tina’s indifferent attire. Embarrassment burned through her as she tried to formulate a plan to escape her unwelcome visitor.

Was Tina the weakling? Fight or flee? Without a doubt, she wanted to run and hide.

The woman’s cloying perfume filled Tina’s nose, stealing her breath as a memory of the scent struck her harder than any physical slap across the face

ever could. She'd smelled the same fragrance on Donald and had been suspicious at the time, but his explanation that he'd been gift shopping for her had lulled her into believing his lies. Thinking back, she never did receive the gift, giving credence to her initial suspicion.

"Who are you? Why would Donald want me to give my ring to *you*?" Both bewildered and betrayed, Tina didn't want to hear the answer spoken out loud even as she already knew the woman's identity. Where did she go wrong? The tiny hairs on her arms stood at attention while her stomach rolled.

"He paid over eight-thousand dollars for that diamond." The woman's thin, red smirking lips delivered private information with a nasty tone to match her haughty demeanor. What did Donald see in her? Tina pushed back the urge to flee to get an objective look at the woman her man preferred.

Too thin, the woman couldn't be called pretty with hallowed cheeks and a long pinched nose. Her small dark eyes, close together, were her best feature.

"Did you honestly expect to keep the ring? He's mine now. And so is that expensive ring." Ignoring the questions asked of her, the blonde bimbo boldly thrust out her open hand toward Tina, while she tapped her foot impatiently. "Give it to me!"

Tina's initial gut reaction to run and hide morphed into anger. Manners be damned.

Tina pointed at the bitch's flat chest. "You tell Donald if he wants this ring back he's going to have to come and get it himself."

Before it got ugly, a large utility van, with James Plumbing emblazoned on its side, pulled into the driveway. Tina's adversary lowered her hand and turned to stare at the truck.

Tina swiped a tear from her cheek. She wasn't going to allow herself to cry in front of this evil excuse for a human being. She may no longer have Donald, but she still had her pride.

"Donald isn't going to be happy about this," the strumpet snapped, before the repairman joined them on the front steps.

Monkey Business

“Right now, I’m not too worried about what makes Donald happy.” Tina tried to focus on the man waiting with his toolbox in hand. She had never been so happy to see a repairman in her life. He wasn’t her regular guy but, if he could end this humiliating situation, he could fix every pipe and appliance in her house, even if it meant a whopping bill. James Plumbing took plastic, which she’d gladly supply.

“I have a broken dishwasher.” Tina hoped her unwelcome visitor would take the hint. At least she had a believable excuse to force the woman to leave before she humiliated herself further with a flood of tears.

“I’ll be back,” the woman warned with an intimidating tone.

“I’ll only give the ring to Donald.” With as much dignity as she could muster, Tina motioned the repairman through the door and slammed the door in the woman’s face. The small victory made her feel good for half a second. She’d still have to deal with Donald. The uncharacteristic curse at the tip of her tongue remained unsaid. She had an audience.

Tina leaned against the closed door while she took a second for a better look at the repairman. “What happened to Fred? He was the one who came by last week when I had a problem with my disposal.”

The plumber shifted his toolbox to his left hand, extending his right in greeting. “Ms. Shelby, my name is Paul James. Fred is down with the flu and asked me to help him out. You can call the office for confirmation if my being here makes you nervous.”

While shaking his hand, a surprising spark of awareness sizzled between them as she examined his handsome face. Clear blue eyes fringed with dark lashes stared back into hers as realization dawned. She didn’t feel in any way threatened. Not even a little bit.

“It’s nice of you to help Fred out.”

“He’s my brother. Which way is your dishwasher?”

Walking ahead of him toward the kitchen, she was suddenly conscious she wasn’t exactly dressed for company. She wore little except a shabby dress and no underwear.

But Paul, she reminded herself, *doesn't know that*. Fred had told her he would call first, before he came by. Paul obviously hadn't been informed.

"What happened when it quit working?" He turned to face her in the middle of her small kitchen. And then he smiled.

The effect was instantaneous and produced a very physical reaction for her...a subtle sensual flow of energy to make her breathing hitch. Curious under the circumstances... He had the kind of smile that transformed his face from handsome to drop-dead gorgeous, displaying a dazzling, bright-white toothpaste commercial smile.

His thick hair was almost black, neatly styled and trimmed close to his head. Several inches taller than her five-foot-nine, his lean and lanky frame hinted of a man well acquainted with either hard work or diligent exercise. Why hadn't she noticed earlier how sensational-looking he was?

Tells me where my mind wasn't, she chided herself. But then again, she wasn't in the habit of checking out other men while engaged.

But I'm not engaged now, she reminded herself. Shouldn't she be devastated? Shouldn't she be collapsed in a puddle of tears? A ray of anticipation snaked through her mind.

"The dishwasher?" His deep voice jolted her out of her reverie.

"The floor flooded with water so I just shut it off and didn't turn it back on again. I did remove all the dishes though."

"Did it make any strange noises before you shut it off?"

"Not that I noticed." Tina glanced at the clock on the stove and saw it was almost four o'clock. "Isn't it about your quitting time?"

"I had my own work to finish up before I could help Fred out."

His timing couldn't have been better. She moved closer to where he leaned against the dishwasher. "You have an appliance repair business too?"

"I have experience with...a different kind of plumbing." His cryptic statement, accented with another smile playing about his sexy full lips, made Tina wonder. Before she could ask him to explain, he turned away.

"How about I take a look at the dishwasher before I have to admit what I

Monkey Business

normally do to make a living?” He delivered a low teasing laugh that was instantaneously infectious.

A reluctant smile tugged at the corners of her mouth and the natural urge shocked her.

Why wasn't she in tears? She'd just been sadistically informed a five-year-long relationship was over—two of which they'd been engaged. To make matters worse, she'd been told of the betrayal by her ex-fiancé's too skinny, bleached-blond lover.

When she should really let him work in peace, she didn't move. Tina didn't want to be alone to think about her future without Donald. She just didn't want to be *alone*. “Can I get you something cold to drink?”

“That would be great. I skipped lunch so I could clear my schedule and leave early. Maybe some cold water will stop my stomach from making weird embarrassing noises.”

At his comment, Tina couldn't stop herself from glancing at said stomach. He was in superb physical condition. His tight white T-shirt veered down from wide shoulders into his snug, unbelted faded jeans. When he cleared his throat, she realized exactly *where* she'd been staring.

Heat flamed into her face, and she swiveled on bare heels to open the door to the fridge and allow the chilled air from the refrigerator to cool the physical effects of her mortification. “I have iced tea.”

When she didn't get an answer, she turned, looking at him over her shoulder. He quickly glanced away as if she'd caught him staring and he didn't want her to know.

Just great. I made him uncomfortable when I ogled him. He probably thinks I'm a bored housewife desperate for a little action.

“Iced tea?” she repeated.

“I can't tolerate caffeine after midday. I end up bouncing off the walls—literally. It's not a pretty sight. Water will be fine.” The sound of his deep voice was honeyed gravel. “Let me take a look at this thing and see what's wrong.”

“One ice water coming right up.” Tina opened the freezer and pulled out an ice cube tray. She took her time breaking the small cubes free and organizing them in the glass before she stopped herself. Donald. No more worrying about how many ice cubes or any of the other obsessive-compulsive tasks she’d performed for her...her *ex*.

“I think I may have found the problem,” Paul announced, his voice sounding strained, almost strangled.

“That was fast.” She turned with the glass of ice water chilling her hand only to have the tightest butt she could remember greet her vision. With his head in the dishwasher, she could ogle away. The sight sent a flare of desire racing to her nether regions. Paul’s firm butt sure beat the hell out of Donald’s.

Her grip on the cold glass tightened as she stared. *It doesn’t hurt to look, does it? Besides, aren’t I entitled, under the circumstances? If a tight, shapely ass helps lessen my pain, why not?*

“Do dishwasher repairmen have a confidentiality clause? Because trust me—it’s going to be hard not sharing this story with the boys over a beer.” Paul pulled his head back out and looked up at her with a big grin plastered on his fabulous face. “And here I thought my brother had a boring job.”

Setting his glass of water on the nearby counter, Tina moved closer, curious about what he could have found. Confidentiality clause?

Paul grinned, winking conspiratorially before he stood up, his hand held playfully behind his back. “I’ve never heard of this before. You use your dishwasher to wash your sex toys?”

A horrifying thought occurred to her. Had one of the “toys” fallen through the rack? No way could her luck be that bad. “I...I’m not sure what...”

Paul held out a large, wobbling dildo toward her, his eyes twinkling with amusement. “I think this is the first time I’ve ever held one of these.”

Chapter Two

“Oh, good grief!” Tina gasped. She took one step back and then one step forward wanting to grab the dildo from him.

“Give that to me. No! Put it down! Oh, my God, this can’t be happening.” She buried her face in her hands wishing the floor would open up and swallow her whole.

“It’s none of my business, but your...” Paul paused before he glanced pointedly at her ring finger. “Fiancé? He must be an extremely confident man to compete with this. I’d guess it’s about nine inches.” He gave the big rubber dick a shake and chuckled.

“It’s not mine.” Tina didn’t want do this.

“You wash *other* people’s sex toys in your dishwasher?” He gave a loud groan before he turned a bright shade of red. “Does this belong to your fiancé?”

Tina’s face flushed at his inference Donald could be the one using a dildo. “As of about ten minutes ago, I don’t have a fiancé. And no. It doesn’t belong to him. When I said it’s not mine, I meant I’ve never... err...used it. I was writing an article about wash-n-wear sex toys and needed to see which ones held up to daily washing. I just didn’t realize one went missing.”

“You mislaid *this*?” His eyebrows raised and his blue eyes glistened bright with amusement.

His face suddenly turned thoughtful. “No fiancé, huh?”

Tina didn’t know which question to address first. Both were difficult to

answer. “Why should you care if I have a fiancé? You don’t even know me.” Did he want to know her? The idea excited her.

“I know what you look like almost naked,” he said with a husky growl. “And I can see you’re wearing a diamond on the appropriate finger.”

Tina gasped at his bold statement, but before she could gather her scattered thoughts and pump him for more detailed answers, he continued.

“I know you must have a very interesting job.” He chuckled, giving the dildo another playful shake and watching it wobble back and forth happily before handing it over to her.

“Naked?” She reached for the errant dildo. As her fingers wrapped around the lifelike, semi-soft rubber she tried to pretend this was just an everyday occurrence—a dildo in her dishwasher and a sexy man in her kitchen.

“When the light hits your dress it filters straight through it. I have been trying to keep my eyes to myself, but let me tell you, it hasn’t been easy, darling.”

Her first inclination, as always, was to run and hide. Where had that gotten her? Nowhere! The sting from Donald’s betrayal came to mind. Where the old Tina might have run, the new one emerged like the proverbial Phoenix from its ashes and wanted to see where this would lead. “Well, seeing me almost naked should entitle you to call me by first name at the very least. Tina.”

She stared down at the dick in her hand. “I guess this is one repair call you won’t soon forget. Maybe I should go and get dressed...” Her feet seemed to have a mind of their own and didn’t move an inch. Was it because she wanted to parade half-naked in front on him? Did she want a quickie with a stranger in her kitchen?

“Don’t change on my account, Tina. I’m enjoying this.” Paul’s sparkling blue eyes smoldered as he grinned at her, and her pulse began to race. The sound of her name coming from his lips gave her delicious butterflies. She’d never had a one-night-stand before, however, at the moment, the prospect appealed to her.

Monkey Business

Maybe too much so.

“I have to know how that managed to fall into the bottom of your dishwasher and why you didn’t miss it. And is this whole experience making you as horny as it’s making me?”

Tina gazed into his soft blue eyes, crinkled at the corners. Yes! She restrained herself from screaming it out loud. His sexy lips parted in a wicked grin as if he could read her mind. What a handsome face. “What can I do to keep you quiet about this?”

He gave a hearty laugh. Score! She’d done it. She’d given herself the freedom to go after what she wanted. Right now, she wanted *him*.

Donald had never let her tease like this. He didn’t like sexual innuendos. All the more reason to play now.

Donald could go straight to hell!

“*You* tell me. What *can* you do?”

Heat pooled low in her belly before spreading down between her legs. If she’d worn panties, they’d be damp. Donald always told her she needed to relax more to enjoy sex. *This* certainly didn’t feel relaxing.

Not even close.

She was unbelievably tense, but in a good sort of way. She wanted to get lost in this sensation and do very little thinking.

“I’ve never been very spontaneous,” she explained, “about anything in my life. Especially sex. I’m not sure I know how.”

Paul took her free hand in his. He gently tugged her closer before directing it to the substantial bulge tightening the front of his jeans.

“Oh.” She stared at her motionless hand’s new placement as the level of her arousal skyrocketed and her vaginal muscles clenched in response. “I guess this *has* made you horny.”

“Do you like to control or react?” His words played along her nerve endings and enhanced her anticipation. Control or be controlled? Her gut reaction was to give the hard length a squeeze. Sometimes she had difficulty expressing what she wanted.

She tore her gaze away from her hand and another wave of liquid heat washed over her body when she stared into his blazing blue eyes. "I'm not really sure," she admitted.

What does he want from me?

"Then let me take the lead," he offered, the huskiness in his voice seductively lyrical. A tug against the material covering his hard-on, told Tina he'd shoved a hand into his back pocket. She wanted to see him bared to her.

Did she dare ask?

"I only have one of these," he whispered, pulling a condom from his wallet.

"Is this really happening?" These things didn't happen to women like her. Did they?

This happened in the movies, or in dreams. Never in real life. Nothing remotely like this had ever happen to her before. But she was willing...and wet.

"I want it. How about you?" His eyes promised her she wasn't dreaming. A gorgeous man wanted to have sex with her, right now. Maybe right here in her kitchen.

She nodded. Her hand, stuck there like glue, hadn't moved one inch since it had been placed over his still growing erection. She released the rubber cock in her other hand and it hit the floor with a dull thud.

As he nudged her back against the island counter, she lost her grip on his hard-on. *Damn!* She didn't want to let go.

He didn't give her time to think about what came next before he nibbled at her lips, alternately pecking and nipping until her lips were moist and pliant against his. She'd longed for this, the weak-in-the-knees, heart pounding, mind-numbing sensations of a perfect kiss. When she opened her mouth a fraction, it was all the encouragement he needed to deepen his exploration.

His lips, firm on her mouth, ignited her insides in an explosion of tingling bubbles bouncing throughout her body. His kiss deepened, both unfamiliar and a kiss she knew well from her dreams. Paul's arms surrounded her,

Monkey Business

cradled her. She lost herself in his powerful embrace.

His tongue delved inside her mouth with expert ease. Intimate and suggestive of more to come, Tina wanted this like nothing she'd wanted in a very long time. Eager hands roamed along her sides, bunching her loose fitting dress before his hands cupped her bare bottom, pulling her hard against his arousal.

He broke their passionate kiss and groaned. "You aren't making this easy on me."

Tina didn't know why. How much easier could this be for him?

Maybe he wanted her help. She pulled at the T-shirt tucked tightly into his pants. He took over, jerking it over his head. The sight of his naked skin stretched over chiseled muscles made her fingers itch to touch. His tanned and well-built physique gave the impression he worked out daily. Splaying her open hands across his hard chest, his nipples peared under her questing fingertips.

"Arms up," he commanded softly.

Tina obediently lifted her arms as he drew her dress over her head, tossing it to the floor. The cool air teased her wet pussy. He paused momentarily to look at her before grabbing her around the waist and lifting her up onto the island counter next to the sink. She didn't have time to think about the cold counter against her bare ass or worry about being naked in front of a man in broad daylight before he began to undress, too.

Crossing one leg over the other, he removed his boot and sock, before doing the same to the other leg. The sight of his bare feet planted firmly on her kitchen floor held her attention in incredible erotic fascination—until he unfastened his jeans and began to pull down his bulging zipper.

Tina held her breath and resisted the urge to clap her hands in delight. Anticipation built as she clutched the edge of the counter until her knuckles hurt. The thrill of seriously hot sex made her crazy. Her pussy clenched with desire. Throbbing nipples demanded to be touched. If he didn't hurry, she'd do it herself. Damn!

He'd slowed down. Much too slow for her taste.

He moved the zipper south so unhurriedly, she groaned and released the counter to run her hands over her erect nipples.

His delighted chuckle answered her impatient response. She'd hoped to see his cock spring free, but was disappointed to see a tent of white instead. After he stepped out of his jeans, he picked up the condom he'd laid on the counter and ripped the foil open with his teeth. When he stopped to stare, heat incinerated her. Hot spirals of desire pinged along her nerve endings making her shimmer inside.

Tina's breath now came in short gasps.

This can't be happening to me. Hurry. Please let it happen before he changes his mind.

She watched him inch the waistband of his boxers lower until free of all constraints. The deep muscles inside Tina's aching pussy tightened and released, before throbbing deep inside at the sight of him.

His cock stood proudly erect, boldly thrusting toward her. Thick and long, at least as large as the nine-inch dildo she'd held earlier. He was magnificent.

Paul rolled the condom expertly over the slightly darker head before stretching it down his length. "There." He gave his sheathed cock a satisfied pat. "Safe."

Tina did feel safe, or at least she didn't feel threatened. But was *safe* the right word for this internal chaos?

As he moved closer to her, still not touching, he leaned over to kiss her. She immediately welcomed him into her mouth, eagerly enjoying the movement of his tongue while it mimicked the inevitable—the promise of what he'd do with his cock. "Please?" she whispered with his tongue inside her mouth and it came out garbled. Imagine that...

Paul touched her sensitive juncture with his fingers. She responded with a scintillating flash. Intense. Wonderful. Perfect. Gently, almost too softly, he moved his fingers along her folds. Breaking free from their kiss, he pushed her

Monkey Business

back until she was leaning on her elbows, which allowed her to watch everything he did to her body.

“Beautiful.” He dipped a long finger deep inside her cunt. “So tight. Wet.”

Her hips involuntarily rose off the counter as a near orgasmic burst of sensations radiated from the nape of her neck and down her back at rapid speed. He gently nudged her back down. “Easy, try not to fall.” His spectacular smile calmed her enough to lie still and enjoy the glittery sensations while he moved his finger deep inside her, exploring her.

Tina widened her legs. It didn’t take long before she wanted his big fat cock instead of his finger. And she wanted him now!

“Yes,” she rasped as he pulled her toward his impressive length.

He chuckled again. “Just a little bit at a time, greedy one,” he teased before thrusting forward and positioning himself at the entrance of her aching opening without moving any further.

The sensation of his thick cockhead tapping against her slick heat made her moan long and low. He penetrated, stretching her until it seemed impossible. Her sight fixed on their coupling made her want him to take her fast and hard. The primal aroma of sex filled her nostrils.

“That feels soooo good.” The sound of her own voice gave her pause. She *never* talked during sex. The appreciative nod he gave her encouraged her. “Don’t stop. I want all of you.”

“And I want you to come for me first.” He moved his skilled hand to separate her folds. Her hard clit peeked out in anticipation of his touch.

As if! It took more than this to get her off.

He pulled back out of her and slid his cockhead up to nudge her clit before rescinding back to her opening. Again and again, he repeated the motion, each time entering her pussy a fraction more. His patience took her to a mindless chant of yes, yes, yes! While she craved his touch against her clitoris, she wanted him buried deep inside her even more.

Both actions made her delirious with want.

“There it is,” he said.

“What?”

As he moved just inside her passage, an unexpected sensation surprised Tina. It was as if that most private part of her was growing, almost as if it was widening and hardening at the same time.

“Your G-spot.”

He moved against that special place slowly. “You have a great vagina.” Paul touched her nub with his thumb and applied soft pressure. “Textbook perfect.”

Tina gasped as glittery tension coiled tight inside her. She was going to come!

Just like that!

She’d never been able to achieve an orgasm so easily. Never.

She exploded into far-reaching vaginal clenching his thick shaft

He thrust powerfully into her as she pushed against him with each mind-numbing contraction, drawing him deeper inside as if to never let him go. With each slow, measured plunge, her contractions grew stronger.

She could no longer think—only feel. Glittery... Glorious... Luminous.

He lengthened his stroke and took her to a higher level in her continuous orgasm. She felt like she was free-floating on a rising bubble of glimmering golden pleasure. Caught up in her own gratification, she breathed harder, inhaling and exhaling while her body took her to a place she’d never been...and she didn’t want to leave.

“Tina!”

Totally lost in blissful sensations, she couldn’t respond. It was *Paul* who called out to her, wasn’t it?

She opened her eyes, her hard-to-focus gaze meeting his as his brilliant blues opened seconds later. His body continued moving in its smooth rhythm. One final stroke pushed him so far inside her she thought he’d entered her womb. The movement sent her spiraling again as he shuddered into her.

“Tina!” The harsh and all too familiar voice entered her consciousness,

Monkey Business

bringing her crashing back into reality.

She glanced toward the doorway of the kitchen where Donald stood. The damned skinny slut who had demanded Tina's ring earlier leered over his shoulder.

Donald's face was ashen. The woman's, just the opposite—it was almost brilliant with color as though the sight of she and Paul fucking excited her.

Paul cupped his hand gently under Tina's chin, turning her face back to his. "I guess we really should have locked the door, huh?"

"Is that Dr. James?" the blonde screeched. "That slut is screwing my gynecologist!"

Chapter Three

Paul was a doctor? A gynecologist?

Tina tried to make sense of the woman's tirade, but at least now, she understood his cryptic plumbing remark.

Paul repeatedly asked Donald and his companion to leave while he attempted to cover her with her discarded dress and then grabbed for his pants.

Tina was grateful her backside was to them. An ass-shot seemed almost appropriate. Paul for the most part was hidden by the counter—and *her*.

Paul's requests were ignored as the two intruders supplied a constant rant, raving in tandem.

"Isn't this some kind of breach of ethics?" the blonde demanded stridently and moved closer, probably to get a better view.

Tina slipped the garment over her head and slid off the counter, before turning to face them.

"How could you do this?" Donald demanded as if he had *rights* at this point. *Jerk!*

"Get out," she growled through clenched teeth. "Both of you better leave right now or I'll call the police."

"It doesn't surprise me to finding her fucking someone." The woman moved closer. Was she trying to see Paul's equipment? "Although I didn't think she would be into kinky. The doctor coming here disguised as a repairman is certainly outré."

Monkey Business

Tina rolled her eyes at the woman's ridiculous attempt at sophistication.

"You heard Tina. Get out of here or we'll have you arrested for trespassing." The serious frown on Paul's handsome face indicated he meant what he'd said.

"I want my diamond ring," Donald postulated in a show of bravado. He looked Paul up and down before puffing his chest out.

As if...Tina stifled a giggle.

After Tina pulled the diamond solitaire from her finger with every intention of throwing it at his face, she hesitated. The sink was so temptingly close. A delicious thrill of evil intent shimmered through her.

Tossing the damned ring into the basin, she flipped the switch on the garbage disposal.

The sound was satisfyingly horrendous. And cathartic.

"No!" Donald's blonde screamed as Donald dove toward the switch. Before he could reach it, the disposal motor seized to a grinding halt.

Tina flipped the switch with a flick of her *middle* finger. Once she got it up, it didn't want to go back down. So she pointed it at both of them. Getting even with Donald and his slut was a near orgasmic experience. "Good luck retrieving your goddamned ring."

She'd had enough. Tina headed out of the kitchen. The dildo, still lying on the floor, caught her attention. Tina picked it up and tossed it to Donald's screeching woman.

"Here. If you're with him, you're going to need this." The blonde caught it and then screamed. She tossed it back to the floor as if it were a thousand degrees and would burn off her fingers.

"You have 'till the count of three and then I'll throw you out myself," Paul ground out lethally. "And I won't be held responsible for any broken bones."

That promise got Donald's attention. "You'll be hearing from my lawyer. Come on, Tiffany."

So, his new playmate's name is Tiffany. How appropriate.

Tiffany ignored Donald's dictate, dipping her manicured hand into the

disposal. She shook her head while busily fishing to retrieve the mangled ring.

“One,” Paul began to count.

“Tiffany,” Donald whined like a petulant child. *Poor* Donald, evidently he couldn’t control Tiffany like he had Tina.

“Two.” Paul took a purposeful step toward Donald.

“Tiffany!” Donald didn’t wait for her to follow as he fled in a cowardly rush. Tiffany, stopping to glare malignantly at the two disheveled lovers, followed behind at a careless pace.

Tina saw no evidence of the ring in her grimy hands. *Yes!*

Once she and Paul were alone, Tina wasn’t sure what to say. “That was certainly intense,” she said, finally.

“It certainly was,” Paul grinned. “Want to do it again?”

Tina thought for a second and began to chuckle. “Maybe.”

Paul’s stomach chose that moment to growl. “I told you I was hungry. How about we continue this conversation over a burger?”

Tina didn’t hesitate. After wasting five long years on a man who didn’t appreciate her, she wasn’t about to squander another second. A burger with one who obviously enjoyed her company was perfect. “That sounds great.” She may not have been a risk-taker before today, but she’d never been shy and retiring either.

Whatever happened next, she was certain of one thing. After the out-of-this-world orgasm he’d just given her, she wanted more.

“I have to change first,” she told him. “I’ll only be a couple of minutes.”

~ ~ ~

Paul stared under the sink at the pipes leading to the garbage disposal. Tina was taking more than the allotted time to get ready, but that was only to be expected under the circumstances. He just hoped she wasn’t talking herself out of going with him.

But it would be no more than he deserved. What had he been thinking? The minute he’d laid eyes on her, he’d wanted her. He’d never initiated sexual

Monkey Business

contact so quickly. And as he shifted his hard package, he acknowledged he could easily do it again.

She was on the tall side, only a few inches shorter than his six-two. With long legs and voluptuous figure, he could easily imagine her carrying his child. Did she want children? Would they have her fiery red hair and striking green eyes? Would they have her button nose and bee-stung lips?

His brother was to blame.

Paul had been set up. At his first glimpse of that red hair and those green-golden eyes, he knew he'd been manipulated into taking this job. Not that he was complaining. He couldn't remember the last time someone excited him like this woman did.

The disposal was hot to the touch. *She sure did a number on it. James' Plumbing can take care of it.*

Paul glanced nervously at his watch. *Please don't let her change her mind.*

"I'm ready."

Startled, Paul jerked and bumped his head on the wooden frame under the sink where he'd done little more than daydream. Moving his toolbox out of his way, he stood to watch her come through the doorway.

Her scarlet cap of curls had been tamed into temporary submission, and he wanted to run his fingers through them, watching them spring back into that sexy disarray they'd been in earlier. She wore a buttery, yellow silk shirt and a short, faded jean skirt.

Had she thought about how easy it would be for me to get my hands up there when she put it on? He went from hard to painfully so.

"Is this okay?" she asked, her voice shaking with what he guessed to be uncertainty.

She looked gorgeous. Delectable. *This can't be easy for her. She definitely isn't the kind of woman who's accustomed to the chaos she's experienced today.* After all, she'd been caught by her ex, naked and impaled on his cock in the midst of an intense orgasm. It took a pretty extraordinary

woman to be able to handle something like that. Impressed by everything about her, Paul pushed to his feet to join her.

“Perfect,” he said, meaning it with every fiber of his being. “You look great.” And she *was* perfection. His brother had been right to trick him into this.

Her long golden legs made him want—want more of what she’d so freely given into earlier.

“I wasn’t sure.” She ran her hand over her hip. “Getting a burger sounded casual.”

“Relax, Tina. What else could possibly happen? It’s got to be a breeze from this point.” Paul grabbed an errant curl and tucked it behind her delicate ear. Like magic the lines of tension on her face disappeared at his touch.

Even her bare feet, encased in beaded sandals, were perfection. Oh, what he could do with those toes!

He watched as a grateful smile washed over her face, a smile so fragile it stole his breath.

So this is what it feels like to fall in love? At long last!

He’d started to believe the magic of love would never happen to him. And in his crazy family—*magic* was the key word.

He’d lied when he claimed this growing attraction between them would be a breeze. She was on the rebound. Had to be.

He was crazy to think it would be easy.

“Exactly what did you mean when you asked me earlier if I liked to control or react?” She gave him a shy grin. “It’s been driving me nuts. I need to know.” She broke eye contact, probably uncomfortable to seem so naive.

“I was asking if you liked to control your own orgasm, be proactive in achieving it, or if you wanted me to control it while you focused on the sensations.” He traced his thumb along her jaw. “I wanted this to be memorable.”

“I did the second one?” she asked tentatively.

A smile tugged at his mouth. Her naiveté charmed him, but he felt the

Monkey Business

need to be cautious to keep her inexperience from scaring her off.

“It seemed that way to me,” he said. “When I penetrated you, your vagina tented, pulling back before pushing against me. It surprised me when you had those long, drawn-out climbing contractions. It was as if I’d done something special. Unique.”

Her face turned red. “You did do something special.” She turned away from him in an ineffective attempt to hide her discomfort with talking about sex with him. “I’ve never felt anything like that before. Ever.”

He waited for what he’d heard since he’d become a doctor—the inevitable assertion that, just because he was a gynecologist, he had some sort of magical abilities. Most of the woman he’d dated expected it of him, and he’d grown to dread not living up to supernatural expectations.

“Will I be able to do that again or is it because of you...something *you* did?”

Paul thought about telling her the truth and decided that lying might be a better choice. “I think it was totally me.” He winked conspiratorially at her. “Shall we try it again just to be sure?”

She bit her fingernail and stared at him, her eyes wide and curious. “Maybe.”

His stomach sounded another loud groan.

“You need to eat something.” She stated the obvious.

“Yes, I do. Can you follow me to my brother’s house so I can get his truck back to him?”

As she said “yes,” Paul chortled to himself. He couldn’t wait to see the look on his brother’s face when *she* pulled into the driveway behind him.

~ ~ ~

No sooner had Tina parked in the driveway behind Paul’s work van than she saw Fred James walk out of the front door of his one-story ranch house and head toward Paul. At the same time, a station wagon pulled in behind her, effectively blocking her in. *Now* what?

Tina counted seven people piling out of the station wagon.

Three kids ran to Paul and Fred, shouting out greetings, while four adults followed behind them at a more leisurely pace. An elderly couple approached Tina's car, smiling their hellos as they passed by the driver's side window.

Couldn't these people see they've blocked me in?

She looked over at Paul who was waving for her to leave the car and come join him.

Please, no. He can't want me to socialize. Not with everything that's happened today. How could he do this to me?

She shook her head, silently indicating her "no."

He frowned at her response and paused for a second, as if debating what he should do, before he walked toward her car.

"I'll never hear the end of it if I can't at least get you to say hello to them. My brother invited most of the family over here to meet you."

"What? But why? And how did they even know I'd be coming with you?" Shouldn't she be pleased he wanted her to meet his family? If everything weren't moving so fast...

"While you were dressing, I called Fred and told him to order a new disposal for you."

"You didn't!" Tina gasped in shock that Paul would tell his family about the events of her day. She looked to where they'd gathered at the front of the house. The young ones were staring, while the others talked amongst themselves. "You told them about the ring? About my broken engagement? How can I face them after that?"

A frown creased Paul's handsome face. "I didn't reveal *how* the disposal got broken. Just that it was beyond repair."

"Oh." She sighed as relief slid through her. One of women smiled at her...a warm welcoming display of friendliness. What would it hurt to meet them?

"We won't be staying long," he said softly. "I promise."

Monkey Business

His tone and closed expression made her relent, and she opened her car door. But there were so many of them. The faces staring at her from the yard were far too numerous to count. “How many are there?”

“Let’s see.” Paul draped his arm around her waist as they walked. “There’s my mother and father, my pregnant sister, her two children and husband, my brother, his wife and their three children. Plus, I have two other brothers who are probably on their way.”

Tina had to wonder why he wanted her to meet them. She’d only just met *him*. “Why? Don’t you date much?”

She thought about what he’d done to her earlier and knew she *had* to be wrong about that. This guy was an expert. He’d evidently had lots of practice...with many women.

“Actually, my mother saw you in her tea leaves. She’s a gypsy,” Paul explained nonchalantly while pulling her closer to the congregated family before she could change her mind.

The nearer they got to the milling crowd, the more Paul’s family started chattering excitedly amongst themselves.

But it was his beautiful mother who drew Tina’s complete attention.

Tina had to admit she did look like a gypsy with her long, dark wavy hair and laughing eyes. Those midnight eyes sparkled like black diamonds as she eagerly watched Tina’s reluctant approach.

“Everybody, this is Tina Shelby.” Paul moved his arm from her waist to her shoulder. “And she’s not engaged.” The collective shouts, as well as the sighs of relief, startled Tina.

Who are these people? Why do they care about my engagement? Or lack thereof?

“I knew it.” His mother gestured into the air, like a preacher blessing his congregation. “My leaves are never wrong.”

“Now Mama.” Paul’s blue-eyed father captured one of her gesturing hands. “You’ll scare the poor girl off. Remember what you did to poor Fredrico’s wife? And that fright you gave Angelica’s beau?”

Something grabbed Tina's ankle. If not for Paul's strong arm curled tightly about her shoulders, she might have bolted in hysterics when she looked down to see a small monkey holding onto her possessively. And just when she thought the day couldn't get crazier...

The small brown creature stared back at her and screeched as if talking to her. Tina was afraid to move for fear of what it might do. As fascinating as she had always found animal behavior, she knew absolutely *nothing* about monkeys.

Everyone's words seemed to be quickly hushed by the tiny creature's chitterling, and Tina wasn't sure what to make of the sudden silence.

"Well?" one of the children whispered.

"Shhh." Paul's pregnant sister hushed the child. "You children go play. Right now."

As the kids walked off, the monkey started climbing Tina's bare leg, its little hands moving quickly before she could react. Tina froze as it shoved its head under her skirt while it tightly twined its long tail firmly around her leg. She smacked at the creature, trying not to hurt it. Paul tried to help, but only made it worse when he hiked her skirt still higher. If this monkey goosed her...all bets were off. She drew a mental line in the sand.

"Yes, you see!" Paul's mother cried out as the monkey tried insinuate itself further under her short skirt.

See what? See that Paul's family was a bunch of perverts?

In spite of everything that had happened to her today, a monkey climbing under her skirt marked the limit of her endurance.

Paul found a way to untwine the imp from around her limbs and had the struggling monkey caught in his large hands.

"Mom, take your monkey. And don't let go of it." He thrust the offensive beast into his mother's arms. Once there, it turned to glare at Tina while it hurled loud monkey insults.

The family grew louder, laughing and talking all at once as they hugged Tina, welcoming her into the fold. Paul's mother smiled widely as she hugged

Monkey Business

the irrepressible monkey to her generous chest.

Tina had the odd feeling that she'd been abducted by aliens while she wasn't looking.

One of the women, with hair far redder than Tina's, pulled her toward the house. "I'm Fred's wife, Connie. *This* is nothing. Wait until I tell you what happened to *me* when I met Fred. Although I have to admit, I was surprised to hear the monkey say you've already had sex with Paul. I guess this means we need to start planning the wedding."

The wedding?

Chapter Four

And to think I believed being confronted by Donald's new woman was embarrassing. Oh, God! What do I do now? She looked around the crowded kitchen and all the people in Paul's life.

Everyone believed the monkey going up her skirt meant she and Paul had sex? What could she say? She couldn't deny having sex. Why did they jump to the mistaken conclusion that the next step was marriage? She did the math. Man-plus-woman-plus-sex-plus-monkey equals marriage? Huh.

And Paul didn't seem the least bit phased by what his family thought about her. In fact, he seemed downright pleased with himself. What did that reveal about his character? It wasn't as if she was a good judge...Donald.

"Here, eat this." Connie handed Paul a plate of assorted raw vegetables. Turning to Tina she explained, "He never eats right. If he's not careful, he'll cause himself some serious health problems. His stomach is already a mess. As his wife, you'll need to watch that."

"I think you're a bit premature." A *bit*? These people were loony. "We just met."

"Tina's right. Enough of the marriage talk. And there's nothing wrong with my stomach," Paul grumbled as he started shoving a stalk of broccoli into his mouth. "See," he muttered.

"My brother needs someone to take care of him," his sister said when she joined them carrying a huge bowl of noodles. "We have been worrying about him because it's taken him so long to find a wife."

Monkey Business

Tina didn't know what to say. How could they possibly think Paul wanted to marry *her*? The man she'd been with for five years didn't want to marry her, so why did they believe Paul would?

Didn't they realize Paul could have any woman he wanted?

"Would you like some noodles?" Paul's sister offered the bowl to Tina.

Tina waved the offer away. "No, thank you. I'll wait for the burger Paul promised me... I mean...are we still going for a burger?"

Everyone stopped talking to stare at her. The kitchen seemed to shrink in size. Paul's mother stopped stirring a pot on her daughter-in-law's stove. Tina inched down in her chair.

Paul laughed. "We made plans to go out. Alone. Together. Without any of you."

"Ahhh," Paul's mother agreed with a sage nod, and everyone started talking again.

Relief washed over Tina.

"No!" Paul yelled, startling her. "I just got paged."

Tina watched him pull a small blinking phone from his pocket. It hadn't occurred to her that he could be called away by a medical emergency. Dear, God! He wouldn't dare leave her with the family of aliens!

"It's the hospital. I'll bet it's Emily Kerry's time to deliver." Paul turned to her. "Come with me?"

Tina had no clue what she would do in the hospital while Paul delivered a baby. But, as she looked around the room, she carefully considered the alternative...alone time with his family.

"I'm going." She jumped from her chair and rushed to the door before anyone could stop her. "It was so nice to meet all of you."

Paul followed her to the car, and she handed him the keys while Paul's brother moved the station wagon. "Should I drive?"

"We'll take my Jeep," Paul called to his brother and pulled her toward a small green Jeep parked off to the side.

After he helped her into her seat, he leaned close. "Does my family make

you jumpy? This was pretty good behavior for them. Trust me. It could have been a lot worse.”

Then he kissed her.

The kiss was short, but sweet. “Baby time!” he whispered with excitement sparkling in his eyes.

She sat back and enjoyed the ride.

What *should* have been the worst day of her life remarkably hadn’t been. So far, it had in fact been...unusual...to say the least. But she still had to wonder what this gorgeous guy was doing with *her*.

Paul wheeled into a space bearing a name plaque with his department title and prestigious medical initials. “Sit still,” he ordered while he opened his door.

Tina thought maybe he wanted her to wait in the Jeep while he took care of business. When he walked around to open her car door, she smiled at her erroneous assumption. What else would she discover about this handsome doctor?

“Right this way,” he said. “If we’re lucky this shouldn’t take long.”

“Don’t you mean if the *mother* is lucky, it shouldn’t take long?”

Paul stopped in the middle of the walkway and pulled her into his arms for a gloriously long and passionate kiss. Her body responded. Her breath hitched. Her heart rate escalated. “That’s my girl, Tina. Don’t let me get away with that male chauvinist crap.”

He could say whatever he liked as long as he kissed her like this to make up for it. She could kiss him forever.

Forever...?

Where had that thought come from? How could she entertain a *forever* with someone she’d just met today?

Tina paced the waiting room while Paul delivered the baby. Fully expecting to be waiting a long time, she was surprised when he showed up forty minutes later dressed in blue hospital scrubs, a wide grin covering his face.

Monkey Business

“It was a girl. How about a tour while we’re here?”

“You don’t look like you broke a sweat.” Tina searched for any sign he’d just delivered a new life.

In fact, he looked darned sexy in his scrubs.

“We have a brand new operating theatre. State of the art. Would you like to see it?” He held out his hand, enticing her to follow him.

Tina slipped her hand into his. It felt good, like it belonged there.

As they walked by the nurse’s station, the curious looks on the faces of the people there made her wary. When he slipped his arm around her shoulders in a proprietary gesture, it made her proud to be with him.

They stopped by an unmarked door. “Right in here.” He flipped a light switch inside. “It’s not finished yet, but you’ll get the idea.

The gleaming metallic surfaces glowed in the diffused light. Tina didn’t have clue. She’d never been operated on, nor had any reason to be in a room like this.

“I’m kind of jealous that I probably won’t be the first to use this since most of my patients use birthing rooms now. But isn’t it a beaut’?”

She ran her hand over the surface of the table. “I’ve never thought of operating rooms as being beautiful.”

“Of course not.” He shrugged and gave a light-hearted chuckle. “I’m warped. My family is warped and you should run for your life because I intend to have you.”

Tina swallowed hard when her throat constricted. Have her? Did he mean sex? Here?

“Now?” The idea excited her. “Wouldn’t that metal be even colder than my kitchen counter?”

“I was thinking long term. But now that you mention it, want to play doctor?”

“I was deprived as a child,” she said with a fake pout. “No one ever played doctor with me.”

“My poor little girl. Jump right up here and tell the doctor where it

hurts.” He lifted her onto operating table.

And just like she’d thought...it was cold...frigid even.

He ran his fingers along the edge of her hem. “You almost gave me a heart attack when you came out wearing this short skirt. You have great legs.” He ran his hands up both sides of her legs, stopping at the juncture of her thighs.

His touch sent a flood of moisture to her panties. “You’re *that* kind of doctor?”

“What other kind is there?” He quirked a single brow.

“The kind that saves lives.”

“Done that.”

“The kind that cures diseases,” she teased.

“Boring.” He rolled his big-blues with feigned tedium.

“The kind that uses a monkey?”

Paul started to laugh so hard Tina almost didn’t notice the stirrups.

Almost.

“Put your feet in here,” he said. “And scoot way down to the edge of the table. And relax. This won’t hurt a bit. I promise.”

Tina thought about what he’d done to her earlier and wouldn’t have hesitated if not for the worry someone could interrupt their play. She weighed whether it added to the excitement or dulled the pleasure. “Aren’t you worried someone will see you with me like this?”

Paul huffed. “No one ever comes in here. It’s not scheduled to open for another month.”

If it didn’t worry *him*... “You want me to show you where I need help?”

“No, I think I have this covered. Now lay back and let me take a look. How attached to these panties are you?”

Tina lay back on the cold table. “Emotionally attached? I can live without them.”

“Good. Now, put your feet in the stirrups.” No sooner did he say the words, when he lifted first one stirrup in place and next the other. Kinky.

Monkey Business

He positioned her legs before urging her to move her rear down to edge of the table. “Just a little more. There—perfect.”

“Are you sure this procedure is safe, doctor?”

“You’re in good hands.” To demonstrate he ran his hands along her legs, massaging and caressing as he went.

Tina’s breath rasped in the quiet space. She gripped the edges of the table as he drew closer to the juncture of her legs.

“Now hold very still.” He pulled strange scissors from his pocket and gently slipped the blade under the cloth of her cotton panties. With quick motions, he cut the panties off. He tossed both the scissors and her destroyed panties onto a nearby table. She sucked in a breath as arousal curled through her.

“Do you have any more sharp instruments down there?” Tina loved teasing him. “Anything else I should worry about.”

“I have a very hard instrument, but I think it’s just what the doctor ordered. I’ll take a closer look to make sure.” With both hands, he spread the lips of her pussy.

Tina was about to make a snappy comment when his tongue touched her nether lips.

She stiffened.

Donald had complained about getting hair stuck in his teeth the entire time he’d tried to please her this way. She had hated the solitary experience. He’d even gagged. After that, she’d sworn she’d never suffer the humiliation of oral sex again.

He bobbed to smile. “Relax. I know what I’m doing. I have a degree.” He lowered his head again.

Tina’s worry eased. It was time she stopped comparing Paul with Donald. They were nothing alike. “A degree in oral sex?”

Paul winked. “The technical term is cunnilingus and I got an ‘A-plus.’ Allow me to demonstrate.” He laved her from clit to core with the flat of his tongue and then reversed direction with tiny kisses. He stopped at her clit,

pulling it into the heat of his mouth. He alternated between gentle sucking and flicking with the tip of his tongue.

The heat of his mouth sent her soaring. Every cell in her body joined the party. Her body became one huge ball of glittery desire...long pent up passion for an act she'd never experienced.

He released her clit to deliver tiny kisses. Unpredictable. Unparalleled. Un-fucking-believable! His technique soon had Tina moaning, and she gripped the sides of the table with her hands, her head tossing with the rush delicious mini explosions traveling throughout her body. "That's so...oh—oh!"

"Aahh-choo."

"What the hell was that?" Paul raised his head just before he sent her spiraling into an orgasm.

Before Tina could react to the sound, Paul rushed to the wall behind the table to flip a switch. An observatory room in the balcony level of the operating room flooded with light and three people covered their eyes as the luminosity hit them.

"No!" Tina screamed and bolted upright. She struggled to get her feet out of the stirrups. No way could she have an audience! "Not again. Not twice in the same day."

With her feet out of the stirrups, she tugged her skirt down and jumped off the table.

"You're dead." Paul pointed a finger at the two women and one man. "All of you! This is my future wife you've just spied on."

Chapter Five

Paul wasn't quite sure how he'd managed to screw...err...mess things up so badly. He hazarded a guess that telling Tina the guy peeping at them from the observation room was his best friend *might* help.

And two of the women wouldn't say anything bad about Paul if their lives depended upon it. One of them hadn't dare say anything about sexual harassment, simply because *she'd* been harassing *him* for months. The other woman was his best friend's live-in.

Maybe he could use this mishap to his advantage.

Just maybe.

"It's still early," he offered. "Do you think we could stop for a bite to eat?"

"You already ate." Tina's peevish tone warned him not to smile at her words. Yes, he had. And he would again if she'd let him.

"I guess we could just go back to my brother's for your car. But, let me warn you, I'd take bets everyone is still there waiting for our return."

"And your mom's monkey will goose me again?"

"Probably. Or worse." His mother's monkey...was he ready to have that conversation? Not yet.

Tina squeaked. "Worse? What could be worse than having a monkey nose up my skirt?"

Paul hid a smile and tried to nod in sympathetic understanding.

"I know. Having three strangers watch a doctor put his head up my skirt is worse, right?" Tina sarcastically supplied.

“Technically, they were only strangers to *you*. They know *me*. I wish they *were* strangers because maybe then I wouldn’t be in danger of possibly losing my position at the hospital.” Tina frowned at his words. He didn’t really think he’d lose his job, because none of those involved would talk. “Guess I can get all my patients to use the other two hospitals I’m affiliated with. But it’s not going to be easy without some type of explanation.”

Tina reached over to touch his hand. “I’m so sorry, I hadn’t thought about the repercussions. Is that why you told them I was your future wife?”

“That and the fact that my mom’s monkey says you’re going to be. Have you ever known a monkey to be wrong? So what do you say?” he asked in the silence that followed his comment. Did she believe in love at first sight? He did.

“About getting married? Or about cognitive primates?”

“Do you think it can happen this fast? My father married my mother the same day he met her.”

Tina rolled her eyes. Paul decided to change the topic. “Are you willing to risk going back to my brother’s?”

Paul really wanted her to say she’d marry him. But, if he shared that little jewel of information, she’d think he was loony for certain. What girl wants to hear she’d been chosen using tea leaves and a monkey?

And what woman would believe he really had fallen in love at first sight?

Tina sighed. “Not just yet. I think we should wait until your brother is sound asleep and your family has left.”

Paul smiled inside. “How about the beach?”

“We live in Phoenix,” she reminded him.

“You could let me take you home with me.” He wanted her to see where—he hoped—they’d live once they were married, the home he’d chosen with a big family in mind. Paul kept his eyes on the road ahead but could feel her looking at him.

She didn’t say anything, but appeared to be considering his request.

“Or not,” he said finally.

Monkey Business

She gazed at him with those beautiful green eyes. “I’d like to see where you live.”

“Good, we’re almost there.”

“I thought we were heading back to your brother’s house. Isn’t this the same street?”

“I live a few doors down. My parents live on the next street to the right.” To say they were a close family wouldn’t begin to scratch the surface of their bond. When blood ties didn’t keep them close, their mother’s gypsy magic did. Outsiders didn’t get it. Would Tina?

“And the rest of your family?”

“My sister, Angelica lives on the same street as my parents.” Paul wanted to see her reaction, but it was too dark in the car. “I know it’s weird, but it’s hard to find property with any kind of land in Phoenix. This subdivision has two acre lots.”

“And that’s why you all live near to each other?”

Her voice didn’t reveal what she thought of the arrangement. “We’re a close family. We all get along pretty well. Well, with the exception of some of mom’s gypsy practices, I’d say we’re just about perfect.”

Paul pulled into his driveway and hit the garage door opener. “We’re home.”

The overhead light in the garage illuminated her face as she stared at him. She didn’t say anything, and Paul couldn’t read her expression. “How about a tour of the house?”

“Will it be anything like our hospital tour?”

This time he could hear the anxiety in her tone. “No way. We have the whole place to ourselves.” Paul reached across her to open her door and, in the process, accidentally brushed his arm across her breast. When he heard her telling sharp intake of air, he started to relax.

She wasn’t impervious to him after all.

“And there are no spare keys floating around? No one who could possibly show up at an inappropriate time?”

“Ms. Shelby, are you thinking of seducing me?”

Tina smiled shyly, but nodded. Paul’s heart started to race.

Somehow he had to win her, make her his



Tina followed him through the three-car garage, weaving around an enormous SUV that screamed family man. His second vehicle, the one they’d driven to the hospital, a shiny green jeep, seemed a little more characteristic of a swinging single man, but not much.

The house was nothing like she’d expected. A family should live in a house this big. She wanted to take her time, but he rushed through each room. Not surprisingly, their tour ended in the master bedroom. She had expected a swinging bachelor’s bedroom, when in fact, as far as she could tell, nothing in his home suggested he lived the lifestyle of a man on the prowl.

The queen-sized bed, made up with a comforter in masculine hues of rich browns and brilliant blues, beckoned Tina to make herself at home.

She stretched across the bed and patted an invitation to Paul.

He nodded, winked, and then playfully peeked under the bed, checked behind the curtains, and opened the closet doors.

“Alone at last.” He gave an exaggerated sigh of relief. “No ex’s around, no relatives hiding in closets, and no chance of any more of my workmates popping out to surprise us.”

“And it’s all a breeze from here, right?” Tina wished saying it would make it so.

Maybe he was right.

What could go wrong now that they were *truly* alone?

“Tell me all about this article you’re writing on sex toys. Is that what you do? You’re a writer?”

She could support herself with her writing, but she wanted more. She wanted to sell one of the five manuscripts under her bed. “I make a living as a freelance writer of mostly magazine articles with dreams of one day writing a

Monkey Business

best-selling novel.”

“Do you get to keep the toys?”

Tina started to answer him when it suddenly occurred to her that, despite all the rotten events of this day, she’d just spent what could probably be considered the most memorable day in her life with *this* man.

An extraordinarily handsome man who had teased her about marrying him.

“Paul, I want to thank you for making this an unforgettable experience, but I think it’s time we called it a day.” The fleeting look of pain that shot over his face before he hid it nearly made Tina relent.

This could end up being a matter of simple survival for her. She could face a life without Donald in it without a qualm but, if she allowed herself to fall in love with *this* man, would she be able get over the pain of their parting as easily? She really didn’t believe she could.

“When you said you could lose your position at the hospital?” Tina asked. “Did you mean it? Could it happen?”

Paul looked away as if hesitant to answer and she *knew*. She needed to go. She needed to leave this instant.

Any new relationships she formed from this point forward would have to be based on total honesty and ultimate trust. She couldn’t deal with anything less.

“Wait,” Paul called after her as she quickly walked toward the door.

Tina shook her head and stopped. “I don’t know what’s happening between us, but I don’t think you are being completely honest with me. And I have to have that right now.”

“I want to. Believe me, I do. I’m afraid if I do, I’ll scare you away. To say my family is unusual is an understatement.”

“I’ll make you a deal.” Tina decided to compromise. “Let’s try having a normal date. You know, one where you come to my house. I make you dinner. Then maybe we can go see a movie. Let’s just see if we have anything to talk about, anything in common. Let’s try to spend one entire evening without any

drama.”

Paul glanced down at his bed and then back to her face.

His expression clearly showed his disappointment at her dictates, but Tina wasn't about to make the same mistakes twice. From now on, she would have transparency in her relationships or else.

This guy was a lothario of major proportions, and she just wanted a shot at leveling the playing field. She needed to feel like an equal to him or this was never going to work.

Right now, he has all the power and I don't have any.

He was a successful doctor while she earned a meager living at best. If she couldn't keep stodgy Donald from straying, how would she keep a dynamite man like Paul? What was there about her that could ever hold his interest?

Sex was only a temporary stopgap and men like *him* probably got bored easily. So she had to know for sure this had a chance to work before she got herself in any deeper emotionally.

“We can talk, but you might not like what I'm likely to say,” he warned her after a few moments of tense silence. “I was hoping to have a little more time to keep all my skeletons hidden from you.”

“Dr. James, I'm willing to meet you halfway. If *you* are willing to agree to one *normal* date, I'll think about continuing our game of *doctor*.”

His face brightened at the prospect of her not leaving as quickly as she had threatened.

“After,” Tina admonished. “After a single normal date.” She looked at her watch.

“Tomorrow night? Say around six?”

~ ~ ~

Their date was anything but normal.

It was better than normal, in fact, it should go down in the Guinness Book of Records as the best date ever...until they stopped for coffee.

Monkey Business

Stopping in at a nearby Starbuck's after their movie, she would have sworn she spotted one of the women Paul worked with. And she was pretty sure it had been one of the women from their operating room incident.

Now Paul wanted to go and spoil everything with a visit to his parents' house. His mother had called his cell after they had gotten out of the movie, insisting they stop by on their way home because she had a gift she wanted Tina to have tonight.

When Paul had asked if she minded, she didn't want their time to end with craziness. But at least his family cared. Not the poster-child for good family relationships, she was lucky to get a call on her birthday.

"I know what you're thinking," Paul said. "I am *not* hogtied by my family. They're just excited at the prospect of me having someone special in my life. It's hard to deny them when they get so much joy from seeing me happy."

"Are you saying they think we are in a committed relationship?" *Careful how you phrase that....*

Paul gave her a delighted grin. "Are we finally on the same page? I want to be. I thought I've been making that perfectly clear."

He had. But she didn't trust that he knew his own mind. Donald hadn't after five years. And she needed to stop comparing him to her ex. "I thought you were only joking. I mean, we've only known each other a little over twenty-four hours. And I *just* broke up with the man I've been dating for a very long time. I didn't think you, or your family, were serious about all of this. Sheesh, you told me your mom's *monkey* wants me to marry you. How crazy is *that*? Do you mean to say that you believe in all of that hocus-pocus? You're a doctor!"

"I think maybe I need to start this from the very beginning, if you really want to know what a bunch of nut cases we are. Oh, hell, why not?" Paul sounding resigned. "It's going to come out sometime down the road. Better now than later."

Flipping open his phone he hit a single number.

"Fred? I'm on my way to the folk's house. I want to tell Tina everything.

You started this, so now you can be the one to end it.”

Tina worried about what he meant when he'd said something about ending it. It was true she'd just wasted five perfectly good years on a man who didn't appreciate her and was a slimy screw-up, but she didn't want to waste any more of her precious time looking for Mr. Right.

And this Mr. Right had seemed a sure bet until...

If it weren't for all the weird stuff that went with his family, I'd be the happiest woman in the world.

As they pulled into a curved drive, Tina saw they weren't the first ones to arrive. “You guys give new meaning to the phrase ‘being there’ for each other. Have you always been like this?”

Paul's pregnant sister approached the car wearing ‘Hello Kitty’ pajamas and a questioning frown. “Are you *really* sure about this?”

“What do you think, Matt?” Paul asked his brother-in-law, who trailed close behind his waddling wife. “What if we'd told *you* the truth right away?” Matt didn't answer at first, occupied with carefully balancing a sleeping child under each arm.

When he did respond, it was a simple quiet chuckle. Tina wasn't sure if that was a good sign or a bad one. However, she couldn't help admire the closeness between them. She'd often heard nothing was more important than family and had been resentful. According to what little she'd learned about her birth, Tina was the offspring of an unwed mother. And she'd always been the outsider when her adoptive family had two more children of their own.

Once they were all seated inside the spacious living room, Paul insisted that Fred be the one to explain to Tina why their family was so different compared to everyone else.

Fred squirmed as if uncomfortable. “I'm just not sure where to begin. We've never told the whole truth to an outsider before.”

Tina winced at the possibilities of what she was about to hear.

Outsider? Never been truthful before? Oh...my...God... What could be so bad?

Monkey Business

“Well, you’re not exactly an outsider, just a non-believer,” Fred continued. “See, mom had a vision of the woman I was going to marry. And, when I met my wife, it was love at first sight.” Fred smiled at his wife.

Paul’s mother stood and walked behind her husband, sitting in an overstuffed chair. “And my mother had a vision of my husband. We were married the same evening we met. It’s always been this way in our family.”

Paul’s sister, Angelica, stepped around the chairs to loop an arm around her mother’s waist. “Mom told me about the vision she had of the man I was going to marry, and it took less than a week to get Matt and I hitched. I would have married him that first night, just like Mom and Dad, but Matt needed some convincing.”

Tina couldn’t believe what she was hearing. Her mind raced as she considered what these people were saying. Was it possible? Or were they all delusional? Whatever...she didn’t deny their happiness, it radiated from each and every one of them. She wanted some.

She turned to Paul. “And now *you* think I’m the woman you’re supposed to marry?”

“Fred found you. But we were all worried about the possibility mom might be wrong when he told us you were wearing an engagement ring.”

“I never drank so much tea,” Paul’s mother muttered. “I just couldn’t understand how I could have been so wrong about you.”

“And I was stuck in the middle, while my brother and Mom argued about it.” Paul laughed wryly. “I had Mom telling me she’d found my perfect match, and Fred telling me you weren’t available. So, when I showed up at your house in place of Fred, you can imagine how excited I was to discover you’d broken off your engagement.”

He’d known what was happening from the time he arrived? And took pleasure in it? For a moment, anger rose inside her. Except...Paul couldn’t have known about Donald’s deceitful nature. Paul had made what could’ve been one of the worst days in her life—better.

“Especially after I had a chance to meet the idiot who was stupid enough

to let you go. I knew they'd been right about you the very first moment I laid eyes on you. Now do you understand?"

Tina might not be all the way to understanding, but, if this persuasive family had their way, she would. "And you are all positive about this? And you're never wrong?" Tina thoroughly examined each serious face.

Everyone nodded.

None of them appeared to be the least bit unsure. "That's nice, but I'm still a little skeptical."

"Okay, Mom," Paul said. "Tell her what you told me."

Paul's mother smiled at Paul, before she turned a solemn face toward Tina. "We knew his wife would be called Tina and that she would have red hair and green eyes."

With every word, Tina became more of a believer.

"But remember that, at first, we thought it might not be you," Fred interrupted. "Because you were already spoken for."

"We knew you would be an orphan," Paul's mother continued.

These people were downright spooky. Tina had always believed she was intuitive, but this was whole other level of paranormal, a little frightening, but exciting too. "I never talk about my adoption. How did your mother know?"

Paul gave a negative shake of his head. "We didn't know for sure, Tina. Not until just now when you confirmed our suspicions."

"Tell her the best part." Paul's youngest sister, Angelica, practically bounced off the sofa. "Tell her why you wanted to be a gynecologist."

"That's not why!" Paul playfully threw a pillow in his sister, Angelica's direction.

Angelica snatched it out of the air and lobed it back, landing a solid hit to the side of his face. "Are you saying you didn't look?"

Tina didn't have clue.

"That's *not* why!" Paul protested.

"What?" Tina reached for the pillow, which rebounded near her feet. She lifted it in a threatening manner toward Paul. "Would somebody please

Monkey Business

explain what you all are talking about?”

“You have a birthmark near your privates. A little red heart on the left side of your...” Angelica shot a sly smile in her brother’s direction.

“Sis! Please?” Paul pleaded, clearly embarrassed. “Give Tina some privacy here. Don’t you think this is hard enough for her to accept?”

“I have a heart on my...?”

Paul smiled and nodded just as the monkey decided it was time to find out for sure.

Chapter Six

For the first time in her life, Tina decided to take a chance on the unknown. On the way home, she decided to trust that Paul knew what he wanted. His entire family couldn't be wrong, could they? Look where playing it safe had gotten her—everything she'd believed about Donald had proved to be wrong. She had thought she'd known Donald after five long years, but hadn't really known him at all. Now, in a whisper of time, an entire family wanted her. It was a gigantic leap of faith, but why the hell not?

Why not take a chance on a gorgeous doctor who is willing to commit to a relationship after knowing me for only a single day?

His family assured her that truth and faithfulness were family traits she could count on forever. And they claimed there had never been a single divorce or unhappy marriage from the mate choices made by the tea leaves and monkey.

Coming out of the bathroom, wearing a sexy negligee, she found Paul sitting bare-chested on the bed, rummaging through her bag of sex toys she had left in a box next to her bed.

"You couldn't wash *these* in the dish washer. They're lined with mink." Paul playfully dangled a pair of furry handcuffs from his index finger.

Her reaction came like a whirlwind. The tightening inside her abdomen, the erection of her nipples, the rapid beat of her heart, all a preview of more to come. "They were a gift from a female friend and I've never used them," she admitted, leaning over to feather his muscular chest with ardent kisses before

Monkey Business

taking the handcuffs from him. “Control or react?”

“Control?” he volunteered.

“Wrong.” Tina’s confident chuckle sounded so right and, at age twenty-nine, way past due. The five years she’d wasted with Donald were fading away faster than she would’ve believed possible. “This time I have the control. You get to react.” Tina’s words brought a grin to his face. “Lie flat on the bed and put your arms above your head.”

Pushing him onto his back, she straddled his chest, linking the cuffs around the iron rail of her antique bed. The sight of his well-defined chest distracted her. Before fastening the cuffs around his wrists, she took a moment to lave one of his nipples with her tongue. The hiss of his quick intake of breath made her give the other one attention too.

After she fastened the cuffs, she trailed both hands down his muscular arms so slowly he reacted with little jerks and sighed. “You’re lucky you took your shirt off or I would have had to cut it off.” She continued her exploration until she reached the waistband of his jeans. “As it is I guess I’ll just have to deal with these pants on my own.”

Crawling off his reclined body, she removed his loafers from his sock-less feet before she went to work on the zipper of his pants. Fine linen tented over his manhood. Tina took a moment to trace the shape and breadth of his fully erect cock beneath the material.

“So powerful.”

“Careful, I might get a big head.”

Tina stuck her tongue out at him. Who knew sex could be such fun? “Promises, promises.”

”Don’t take my word for it. See for yourself.”

Pulling down the waist of his pants, she took his boxers with them in one swift yank. At the sight of his freed erection, her pelvic muscles clenched tightly. Her insides went crazy, sending pings of glittery bliss to every cell. This thrilled her. Tina showed him by leaning close to kiss him there. She’d never done this before but she’d read articles about how it was done.

Paul's breathing changed, coming in harsh pants. It exhilarated her to have this affect on him. She suddenly couldn't wait to find out what happened when she did more.

Moving her tongue over the thick head of his cock, she licked the bulb in a circle, around and around as if it was the most luscious of ice cream cones. The velvety softness and faint mushroomy fragrance made her wet.

Paul groaned.

The taste of him pleased her, sweet and musky. A moment later, a drop of pre-cum beaded on his slit. Without hesitation, she caught it with the tip of tongue. The consistency of warm yogurt it tasted both sweet and a little salty. Her response was to take him deeper into her mouth.

One inch at a time, she consumed him, allowing the constrictions in her throat to stimulate him. With each swallow, he moaned a little louder. Sliding his member slowly out of her throat, she licked down the length of his shaft while she fondled his tight sacs.

The manly taste of him thrilled her. The unique textures bundled in eight inches or so of space made her wet. She ran her tongue around the ridge of his cockhead, and stopped at the underside where the tag of skin caught her attention. She teased and wiggled it unmercifully, sucking it between her teeth.

"Any more of that and I won't last long enough to satisfy you," he warned.

"This isn't about *me*." Tina raised her face to gaze at his beautiful blues. The man could make her insides turn to mush with just a look. "Be quiet. I'm in command now."

"Just saying," he chuckled before gasping. "Oh Tina...not again...slow down...oh...God—"

Tina took him back into her mouth, and this time she intended to— someone—something touched her ankle.

"What was that?"

"What?" Paul jumped, ramming his erection into her eye.

Monkey Business

Pain shot through her. "Ouch! Hey, be careful with that thing!"

"What happened?"

"You poked me in the eye."

"No, before."

Tina shuddered, looking around the room as she rubbed her eye. She didn't have clue. "Something...somebody touched my ankle."

"You probably imagined it," Paul said. "Unlock these cuffs and I'll help you look."

Tina reached for the key and found it wasn't where she'd laid it. Hadn't she put it on the nightstand, right next to the clock? She picked the clock up in case it had slid underneath.

Nothing. Had she lost her mind?

She looked under the lamp.

Nothing.

"Didn't I put the key here?" Paul shrugged at her question as a worried expression replaced his smile. "Maybe I left it in the drawer where I'd once put the cuffs." The highboy dresser was across the room.

Opening the drawer, she rifled through it. No key.

Looking back at Paul, she tried not to show her worry. "Maybe I can pry them off of you?"

"No," he moaned.

"I don't know what could've happened to it."

"Don't you have more than one key?"

"No. Only one."

Out of the corner of her eye she saw the bed-skirt move, and she laid her finger to her lips to quiet Paul while, with her other hand, she pointed under the bed. Paul rolled his eyes at her and she gestured more insistently.

Grabbing firmly onto the iron framework, Paul bounced hard on the bed. A shrill screech echoed through the room.

Tina climbed onto the lower dresser sitting next to the highboy, knocking everything to the floor in the process.

“No. Wait. It’s okay. It’s only my mom’s monkey. I’d recognize that sound anywhere.”

Relief shot through Tina, but not enough to get off the dresser. “What would your mom’s monkey be doing under *my* bed?”

“She stows away in my Jeep and ends up riding to work with me at least twice a month. I’ve never been able to catch her at it. She must have done the same thing when we stopped at my parents’ house earlier.”

“We have an audience *again*? I can’t believe this.”

“Someone’s at the door,” Paul said.

Tina listened and, sure enough, someone was knocking on the door. “Maybe your mom has come to get her monkey.”

Tina grabbed her robe, tying it closed while she left Paul trying to charm the monkey out from under the bed.

“Coming,” she called to the person knocking loudly and insistently on her door. She opened the door and found the woman from the coffee shop. Why? How? It was so reminiscent of Donald’s bimbo earlier, that it gave Tina a chill.

“Can I help you?”

The woman scowled. “I saw Paul’s jeep out front when I was visiting someone I know up the street. Tell him I left my watch in his bathroom this morning after our shower and I need it. I’m working the night shift in the OB. I would have gotten it myself, but I can’t find my house key. I asked him to get me a new one, but you know Paul.”

If she’d been stabbed, it wouldn’t have hurt more. She’d just had her mouth around a dick that had been in this woman on the same day? Her stomach pitched. “Are you saying you were with Paul *this* morning?”

“Sure. I stop by after work to have sex with him a couple of mornings every week. Did you think you had exclusive rights to him?”

“Tina! It’s not true!” Paul yelled from the bedroom.

Another cheating man.

Another woman at her door.

It was too much for Tina. *Why me?* She needed a stiff drink. She

Monkey Business

needed a couple dozen stiff ones. Where could she go wearing a robe? Any place was better than here...

“Tell Paul about your watch yourself. You’ll find him naked, handcuffed to my bed.” Tina grabbed her purse, pushing past the woman while listening to Paul yelling Tina’s name.

“Tell it to the monkey!” she paused to scream back before getting in her car and speeding off.

Chapter Seven

Tina drove around for two hours, when she could finally actually *drive*. Most of the time she spent sitting parked, along the side of the road, bawling. Feeling sorry for herself... And cursing men in general.

Why was she so damned stupid? Why did she allow her trusting nature to bring her to the depths of humiliation?

Driving back to her house, she fully expected to find herself alone. Again. Maybe alone forever if the last twenty-four hours was any indication.

As she pushed her front door closed, it stopped short. A yelp stopped her from pushing any harder.

Tina opened the door to find Fred hopping around, holding his foot.

“I thought you saw me,” Fred said in explanation. “Have you seen Paul? I keep getting these weird vibes that something’s wrong, and I can’t reach him on his phone. The hospital couldn’t even get hold of him.”

Tina thought about where she’d left Paul earlier. Surely, his girlfriend had rescued him.

“I left him handcuffed to my bed a couple of hours ago with his *girlfriend*.” She spit the distasteful word.

“Girlfriend?” Fred huffed. “What are you talking about? The *only* woman Paul is interested in is *you*.”

Tina didn’t believe him. “His girlfriend showed up here looking for her watch. So I left.”

“When you left he was handcuffed to your bed? You’re certain he’s not

Monkey Business

still there?” The anger in Fred’s voice gave her pause. Could he still be where she’d left him?

Tina turned and walked to her bedroom door. *Please don’t let him still be here. I can’t bear to face him.*

“If he’s still here, wouldn’t he have called out to us?”

“How could you do this?” Fred growled, pushing past her to enter the bedroom. “You just left him here like this?”

The sight of Paul sprawled naked and snoring on her bed was probably even worse for Fred. Lord knows she didn’t want to see him naked and vulnerable. Staying near the door, she stayed out of Fred’s way.

Why hadn’t Paul just told his girlfriend to get the key away from the monkey? Or why hadn’t he told the bimbo to call his brother?

Grabbing the sheet, Fred covered the slumbering Paul before giving him a gentle nudge. “Paul? Wake up.”

Paul’s eyelids fluttered open, and, for a moment, he seemed disoriented. “I guess I fell asleep. What are *you* doing here?”

Fred sat on the edge of the bed. “Are you okay?”

Fred’s concern for his brother touched Tina when she didn’t want to feel sympathy for Paul. Why should she? He’d deceived her.

“Could you get Kisses to give you the key to these things? I didn’t want to break Tina’s bed. She’s mad enough at me already. She wouldn’t give me a chance to explain—I need to talk to her.”

He hadn’t seen her yet, and she wasn’t ready to confront him. She only needed to walk away... Why didn’t she?

“Why would Kisses have the key to the handcuffs?” Fred demanded. “If you were doing something weird with mom’s monkey you know she’s not going to be too happy with you.”

“She stowed away in the jeep and then made off with the key while Tina and I were otherwise occupied.” Paul looked away from his brother and saw Tina for the first time.

The sadness in his eyes tugged at her heart. Why? She didn’t owe him

any compassion. And she was done being a doormat for *any* man. Tina turned away to leave the two brothers alone.

“Tina, wait. Let me explain. That woman is a stalker.”

Yeah, right. At least Donald hadn’t tried to hide his character. “Tell someone who cares.” Her words were brave, but she didn’t keep moving. Instead she turned back to face him.

“The little blonde from OB?” Fred asked.

She had been blonde, just like Donald’s woman. And Tina had first seen her in OB. Paul nodded to his brother.

Fred gave a growl. “I told you to have that woman arrested. You’re too kindhearted for your own good. What’s she done *now*?”

Tina’s insides went into chaos. Her stomach pitched and her already raw nerves joined the party.

“She has Tina believing I slept with her this morning. She showed up at the door asking for her watch.”

Paul’s gaze locked on Tina. “You have to believe me. The woman is a menace. I’ve never even dated her, let alone *slept* with her.”

Fred stared at Tina, a look of utter disbelief on his face. “*You* thought he slept with *her*?”

The lump in Tina’s throat made it impossible to speak. She didn’t know what to say anyway. Of course, she’d thought that. What else under the circumstances? Should she have trusted Paul? Her stomach pitched again.

“Fredrico, don’t blame Tina. You weren’t here. You don’t understand.”

Fred pushed up from where he sat and glared at Tina. “Don’t you dare hurt my brother.”

Tina didn’t reply as he passed near her on the way out. She didn’t know what to say.

“He forgot to get Kisses and the key to the handcuffs.” Paul sighed.

Glad for reason not to be alone with Paul, Tina raced to catch Fred, who was already out the door and speeding down the walkway.

“Fred, wait.”

Monkey Business

“You left him alone again?”

Fred’s words were like a slap in the face. Why did he assume she’d do something to hurt his brother? “We need your to help get Kisses. The key?”

“I hope we can laugh about this one day,” he muttered and shook his head. “I know I overreact where Paul’s concerned, but we’re close. And Paul seems to attract trouble. Maybe I take my roll as big brother too seriously. Paul says I do.”

Tina burst into tears. Is this how families who cared looked after one another? She never felt so alone in her life, and being an orphan who’d never connected with her adoptive family gave her plenty of experience. “I’m so sorry,” she sobbed. “I don’t blame you for hating me, but I didn’t know about Paul’s stalker.”

Fred put his arms around her. “I’m sorry too. Let’s go take care of Paul and forget this ever happened.”

~ ~ ~

Later, lying in Paul’s comforting arms, Tina surrendered to the fact that she’d fallen hopelessly in love. She didn’t need five years to tell her. She didn’t even need five days!

“I’m sorry I didn’t trust you.”

Paul tucked a curl behind her ear and lingered to tickle her lobe with his thumb. “I’ll never hurt you, Tina. I promise.”

Nothing about this romance made sense, but that didn’t stop Tina from believing...in him and in the love he promised. The emotional connection she shared with him defied explanation. She reached up to catch the back of his neck and drew him close enough to kiss.

The touch of his mouth gave her comfort where mere words fell short. The tender way his lips played upon hers made a promise too.

Tina pulled back to look into his sincere blue eyes. “I’m not sure I believe that the *monkey* says I should marry you. But I do believe in *you*.”

“What about the tea leaves?” Paul smiled widely. Just like the first time

he'd smiled, it stole her breath away.

“You've gotta love 'em.”

“Like you love me?” he asked softly

“Like I'll love you forever.”

About The Author

Brit Blaise

Long time Arizonan Brit Blaise grew up with a deep and abiding love for books. She believes in dark and dangerous heroes; strong women who are not afraid to think for themselves; head over heels love; fairy tale endings and that it's more fun to laugh than to cry, but doing both at the same time is the best of all. She writes fun, sizzling stories with a twist of the unexpected.

When not busy crafting a story you can find her caring for her extended family in her mountainside home on the outskirts of Phoenix where rattlesnakes are frequent guests, or in the ramshackle Victorian home she's restoring in small town Ohio.

Enjoy A Sneak Peak Of Wild Cowboy Domination from Sapphire Blue Publishing:

Chapter One

Ray picked up the leather manacle dangling from a heavy chain. “And you’re interested in becoming my love-slave for the night.”

Rachel could tell by the sarcasm in his voice, he didn’t believe her. Did she have the courage to agree? She reached an arm toward the manacle. Hell, yes!

He sucked in air as if she’d punched him. “Before you go too far, take a closer look around. These walls are steel reinforced, too. What if I chained you and didn’t let you go?”

He flipped a switch on the ceiling. The small rectangular light receptacle didn’t offer much illumination, but enough. Not only were the walls made of steel, there were a second set of manacles on the floor for her ankles. He’d told the truth.

Once he put them on her, she’d never get out of them on her own. She dropped her arm.

The tack room was small, probably no more than four or five feet separated the walls. The smell of hay, leather and horses comforted her. Horses she understood. Men weren’t nearly as easy...especially this one. Did she dare allow him to truss her in his bizarre contraption?

She examined his handsome face. Nearly black hair fell across his forehead and curled onto his collar. Ray’s pale hazel eyes narrowed and riveted

her to the spot. A muscle in his strong, square jaw twitched and a slight upward curve of his full, firm lips hinted she'd amused him.

While Rachel didn't care to own up to it...this encounter both made her nervous and gave her a sense something life-changing was about to happen. Was it?

When Ray chuckled, he gave her backbone a mental nudge. Her heartbeat throbbing in her ears, Rachel raised her hand toward him a second time.

Even in the dim light she could see surprise written in his wary gaze. He threaded his fingers through the loose hair on his forehead, sweeping it back, almost a nervous gesture. "I may've had too much to drink. I think I'm hallucinating. I didn't figure you for the kind of woman who'd submit so easily."

"Trust me, I'm not." The way he'd said the word submit in a deep baritone rumble caused internal havoc low in her abdomen, inching down to settle into a needy itch demanding to be scratched. Preferably with this cowboy's cock!

"All the better," he said, and his heated gaze raked over her, appraising her. The flame she read in his eyes showed his approval. "All the better," he repeated. What memory did his words and the inflection in his voice trigger?

Something intense flared in his stare, a fierce look unfamiliar to her. Ray hooded his eyes before reaching above his head to the ceiling to flip the light back off again. A swift tug of anticipation made her jump inside. Only the glow from the door leading into the tiny bathroom next to the tack room, kept them from complete darkness. The living-quarters at the front of Ray's horse-trailer would be far more comfortable than the tack room, but she'd already seen this... If Ray was into bondage and domination, Rachel needed to know how far he'd take the game. Could that have been what happened to her sister?

No. Ray Wilde didn't scare her. Why? Rachel couldn't explain her bold and unsubstantiated assessment of him if she tried, he didn't frighten her.

Monkey Business

She didn't doubt he had secrets, but a tendency toward violence? Could she be wrong? "What if I scream? Could someone hear me?"

He paused to narrow his eyes and gave her another mysterious look she didn't understand. If only she could see him better.

"If they were close enough to the trailer, they might hear you, Ray said. "Are you afraid I'll hurt you? Trust me, I don't get hot hearing a woman scream in fear or pain...not even close."

There was more behind that statement than the actual words he said? The regret in voice was thick enough to cut with a knife. It was as if he'd really heard women's screams, and it didn't sit well with him. His words gave her pause when her pussy demanded action.

"I thought doms got off making their submissives apprehensive of them?"

"So you're saying you want me to scare you? Lady, be careful what you wish for. This time, you just might get it, in spades."

His words caused a sinister tingle to run up her spine, and, for the first time, her head was about to overrule the bad girl in her, ready to come out and play. As if he sensed the hesitation his words produced, he took her hand in his and caressed it. The rough sensation of thick calluses on his palms as they moved over her sent a wave of goosebumps simmering along her sensitive skin. He had strong hands, the kind she liked on a man...the kind she liked touching her naked body. He brought her hand to his mouth and kissed it, his lips so soft, tender.

"No, I don't want to be scared," she answered. "I want a man in control, who knows how to deliver."