

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

*Soft Focus*  
LYNN LAFLEUR

ELLORA'S CAVE *Quickies*®

## **Soft Focus**

*Lynn LaFleur*

Daphne Kemp is trying to get her life and finances back in order after her ex-husband left her with a huge debt. When her friend suggests she answer an ad to model for famous photographer Gerard Lynch, the lure of paying off some of that debt is too strong to resist.

One look at Gerard lures Daphne into more than modeling. She breaks her rules about one-night stands and younger men and spends a sex-filled evening with the handsome photographer.

Gerard never gets involved with his models, yet he is immediately drawn to Daphne. He has to find a way to break down the walls she's erected around her heart to give them a chance at forever.

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



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Soft Focus

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# ***SOFT FOCUS***

**Lynn LaFleur**

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Dallas Cowboys: Dallas Cowboys Football Club, Ltd.

## Chapter One

Daphne Kemp gave her best friend a look that she hoped conveyed how ridiculous Faith was to suggest such a thing. "You can't be serious."

"Read it again." She pushed the piece of paper closer to Daphne. "I printed this off Lynch's website this morning. This is *perfect* for you."

Daphne pushed aside her empty plate and picked up the paper. She quickly perused it, only because her friend wanted her to, not because she would ever consider doing something so insane.

"What do you think?" Faith asked.

"I think you're crazy for even bringing this to show me."

Faith's eager expression faded. "Why? You've worked your butt off since Len left you. You can use the extra money."

"Faith—"

"You'll be modeling for Gerard Lynch." Her eyes sparkled with excitement. "*Gerard Lynch!* Ohmigod, he's only the best photographer in the *world*."

Daphne understood getting excited and silly about a musician or someone famous from television or the movies, but a *photographer*? "How do you know so much about him?"

Faith rolled her eyes, as if she couldn't believe Daphne would ask such a stupid question. "Don't you ever read anything but computer magazines? Gerard Lynch has photographs hanging in almost every gallery in Europe and a bunch in the U.S. He doesn't simply take pictures, Daph. He creates masterpieces."

Picking up the paper again, Daphne read the information more slowly. There wasn't a specific payment amount listed, only that the models would be generously

paid. Generous sounded really good. She had been working extra hours for almost a year to pay off the outrageous bills her lousy ex-husband had run up on her credit cards before he disappeared. Faith was right. Any extra money would be greatly appreciated.

"There's no guarantee he'll pick me. There will probably be hundreds of women applying for the job."

"And men. He's photographing both sexes for his new book."

"Why isn't he using professional models?"

"Gerard Lynch never uses professional models. He photographs real people."

Real people. With all their bumps and bulges and flaws. Daphne tried to take care of herself. She ate chocolate only twice a week. Okay, sometimes five times a week. Despite trying to work regular exercise into her routine, her thirty-eight-year-old body wasn't nearly as shapely as ten or fifteen years ago.

Gravity was *not* a woman's friend.

"Wouldn't he rather have young people pose?"

"Since when is thirty-eight old? Besides, he photographs all ages." Her gaze passed over Daphne's hair. "You're gorgeous, Daph. You have all that long, natural blonde hair and green eyes that make guys drool, plus a body that any woman would want. He'll take one look at you and whip out his checkbook." Faith reached across the table and squeezed Daphne's hand. "Go for the interview. Maybe he won't pick you, but you won't know unless you try."

Daphne swirled the melting ice cubes in her tea with her straw. "He's really good?"

"Excellent. I have a couple of his books I can show you. The latest one is all black and white photography." Leaning forward, Faith rested her folded arms on the table. "There's one of a guy taken from the back. Half his body is in shadow and half in light. He's standing on his tiptoes, his arms outstretched. All those delicious muscles are bulging." She shivered. "Yummy."

Part of what Faith said sent a zing of apprehension through Daphne's body. "How much of him did you see?"

"All of him. He was nude."

That cinched her decision right there. "I'm not taking off my clothes for someone I don't even know."

"He's a professional, Daph, just like a doctor. He's seen all different shapes and sizes of bodies. Besides, you won't be completely naked. Look at the description on that paper. You'll either wear lingerie or be tastefully covered."

"What does 'tastefully covered' mean?"

"You know. A bit of your butt will be exposed, or the side of a breast. Maybe a hint of pubic hair. Like that. He's an artist, not a guy who takes dirty pictures. His photographs are...sensual. Alluring. Hot without being obscene."

Sensual and alluring sounded really good. But Daphne didn't know if she could do it. She'd never modeled, never even fantasized about it. She doubted if there was a woman in the world who didn't have issues about some part of her body. Faith said Daphne had a nice body, but Faith was her friend and completely biased.

Len had made a fool out of her. She didn't want to do that to herself.

The words "generously paid" jumped out at her. It would be so nice to get some of the financial burden off her shoulders. She could pay off one of the credit cards with a few hundred dollars.

"All he can do is say no, right?"

Faith smiled. "Absolutely. But he won't. He'll snap you up in a second."

\* \* \* \* \*

Gerard Lynch blew out a deep breath. He'd lost track of how many prospective people had been interviewed to model for him. He left the interview process up to his assistant Dale, but he watched the proceedings on his computer from the sitting area in



his hotel suite bedroom where he'd set up his office. He'd found the men he wanted, but still needed one more woman.

He'd given himself two weeks, assuming that would be all the time he'd need to find the people he wanted to pose for him. Dozens had already filed through the doors of his hotel suite. Out of all the hundreds of thousands of people in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, he should be able to find twenty people who possessed the qualities he wanted for his new book.

It had nothing to do with looks or sex appeal or body shape. After ten years of experience he knew, simply by looking at someone, if they had the type of image he wanted to convey in his photographs. The woman talking to Dale now absolutely did not have the image.

He pressed a key on the keyboard. Dale would see the small red flash on his computer screen, the signal to wrap up the interview and thank the woman for her time.

Last one of the day. Thank God.

The brunette smiled, but Gerard could tell it was forced. She was obviously disappointed that Dale hadn't picked her to model. She was lovely, no doubt about it. Lovely wasn't enough.

If he'd met her under different circumstances, he'd ask her out, maybe invite her to spend the night with him. It had been a long time since he'd held a woman close to him, tasted her lips, caressed her skin. He'd been too wrapped up in his work to date, much less make love. And if he was honest with himself, he hadn't met a woman in a long time who interested him enough to want to see her more than a few minutes.

"One more, Gerard," Dale said over the computer's speaker.

"What? I thought the brunette was the last one."

"I had a gal call and ask if she could come in tonight instead of tomorrow. She'll be here about six."

Gerard looked at the clock on the computer. Fifteen minutes until six. He was tired and hungry and his eyes burned. He wanted to have a glass of wine, order a steak from room service, and fall into bed. Eight full hours of sleep would be nice for a change. Maybe even nine.

"Do you want me to call her back and cancel?" Dale asked.

"No. She's already on her way. We'll wrap it up after her interview."

He couldn't have the steak or his bed yet, but he could have a glass of wine. Gerard left his office and went into the kitchen. He opened a bottle of merlot and splashed a generous amount in a glass. The smooth liquid flowed over his tongue and down his throat.

Nirvana.

Gerard returned to his room. He opened the file on his computer of the men and women he'd already chosen for his project. Dale had snapped a digital picture of everyone who had passed the interview and uploaded it for Gerard to view. Gerard would feature each person in individual photos, yet would also group two or more together for specific poses.

After he finished in Dallas, he would travel to Houston and repeat the process before moving farther east. He planned to have at least five hundred photographs in the book. It would be his most ambitious book to date.

He took another sip of wine as he examined the pictures on his screen. The people ranged in age from nineteen to eighty-five. He hoped he'd find someone at least one hundred in the cities he visited. He wanted that to be the last photograph in the book.

"Hi," he heard a feminine voice say over the computer's speaker.

"Come in," Dale said. "You're right on time."

Gerard pressed a key to activate the camera focused on Dale's desk where he held the interviews. A woman with flowing blonde hair settled into the chair in front of Dale's desk.

Gerard's heart began a thick thumping in his chest.

A series of keystrokes and the camera zoomed in on her oval face. He couldn't tell the exact color of her eyes, but they were either green or hazel. Long eyelashes darkened with mascara. A light dusting of blush on her cheekbones. Shapely lips covered with glossy coral.

He moved the camera angle lower. Full breasts filled out the front of her green T-shirt. He could see a hint of cleavage in the round neckline.

"I'm Daphne Kemp."

*Daphne. A lovely name for a lovely woman.*

"Welcome, Ms. Kemp. I'm Dale Gibson, Mr. Lynch's assistant. I have a few questions to ask you."

"Of course."

Her voice wrapped around his cock and squeezed. A burgeoning erection made Gerard shift in his chair. He tried to move the camera lower to see more of her body. Dale's desk was in the way.

"Damn it," he muttered.

It didn't matter that he couldn't see more of her. He wanted to photograph Daphne Kemp for his book.

He pressed the key that would flash a green light on Dale's computer screen. Dale stopped in mid sentence and glanced at the camera, a shocked look on his face. Gerard had never approved someone so quickly, so wasn't surprised at his assistant's disbelief.

Dale stumbled over his words a moment before he spoke again. "Mr. Lynch is working on a new book and wishes to employ twenty people in this area to pose for him."

Gerard didn't wait to hear any more of Dale's memorized spiel. He rose and walked out of his bedroom.

He stepped into the corner of the living room that Dale used as a reception area. "No, I never have," Daphne said, "but I'm willing to work hard and learn."

"That's all I ask," Gerard said.

Daphne's body jerked and she whipped her head toward him, her eyes wide.

Green. Her beautiful eyes were a sparkling green, almost the same color as the first grass of spring.

"I apologize. I didn't mean to frighten you."

"No, that's fine."

Gerard switched his attention to Dale. "I know you have a dinner date tonight. I'll take care of the lady."

Dale blinked. Gerard narrowed his eyes slightly, indicating Dale should go along with whatever Gerard said. His assistant came through for him, as usual. "Oh right. Dinner date. I almost forgot." He smiled at Daphne. "A pleasure, Ms. Kemp. See you tomorrow, Gerard."

Daphne nodded her head at Dale before looking back at Gerard. He slipped into the chair his assistant just vacated. "I'm Gerard Lynch."

"Daphne Kemp."

"Do you have any modeling experience, Daphne?"

"None. I was telling Dale that when you came in."

"I don't want people with modeling experience. I want real people in my photographs."

"Aren't you afraid they'll...mess up?"

Gerard chuckled. He liked Daphne Kemp's honesty. "No. I'm a patient man, Daphne. I'm willing to work with someone until I get the exact picture I want."

Her lips curved up in a small smile. "I guess the French accent helps with the women, huh?"

This time Gerard laughed out loud. "I've lived in the United States for fifteen years. My accent isn't as pronounced as it used to be."

"It's very charming."

Silence fell between them, but it wasn't uncomfortable for Gerard. He wouldn't mind simply sitting with Daphne, as long as he could continue to look at her.

"Will you pose for me, Daphne?"

She bit her bottom lip. Gerard almost groaned. He imagined her teeth nipping at his skin as she moved down his chest, his stomach...

"I'm a bit apprehensive about it."

"I understand that. It's normal to be nervous about something you've never done. We won't be alone, if that concerns you. Dale will be here, and Krissy Bell. She's in charge of hair and makeup."

He could tell by her guarded expression that the idea of modeling still concerned her. "Is there something in particular that worries you?"

"I'm worried I won't be...right for you."

She had no idea exactly how right she was for him. "I promise you, you'll be fine." He shifted in his chair, resting his ankle on the opposite knee. "I'll tell you now that I may have you pose with another person. I often take photos of two or more people together. In your case, I would have you pose with another man. There could be a little bit of...intimate touching. All very tasteful, of course. Would that bother you?"

"I suppose not."

"If you would be uncomfortable, tell me now and I'll take your photos by yourself."

"No, it's fine. I'll... I'm sure it will be fine." She lowered her gaze a moment before looking back at him. "I don't want to sound greedy, but the article on your website used the phrase generously paid. How generous is that?"

"It isn't greedy to wonder how much you'll earn. I pay two-fifty per hour."

Her eyes widened in obvious amazement. "Two hundred and fifty dollars per hour?"

Gerard nodded. "Sometimes an hour is all that's needed, depending on the photo I want. Sometimes I need more time than that. There have been occasions when I got the shot I wanted in only twenty minutes. I always pay for a full hour. A person gives up his or her time to pose for me. They should be fairly compensated for that. Plus I make sure all the models get a copy of the book when it's published."

"Mr. Lynch, I—"

"Gerard, please."

She gave him that small smile again. "Okay, Gerard. If you're willing to take a chance on me, I'm willing to try."

"Excellent." He pushed a clipboard and pen across the desk to her. "If you'll fill this out, Dale will contact you about the shooting schedule. I assume the weekends would work better for you?"

"Actually, I'm flexible. I'm a software designer and work out of my home."

He watched her fill in her name, address, telephone number, and sign the release form. Her hair fell over one shoulder and covered her breast. He imagined pushing her hair aside, cradling her breast in his hand while he sucked on her nipple. He'd move his other hand over her body, savoring her silky skin before dipping between her thighs to touch creamy flesh.

Gerard never got involved with the women who posed for him. One-night stands had never been his style, and that's all he could offer a woman now. His profession took him from city to city, leaving little time for dating, much less a relationship. He had a lovely house in the Florida Keys, but barely lived in it. It had been at least six months since he'd been home.

Daphne laid the clipboard back on the desk. "Okay. I guess I'm ready when you are."

*I'm ready now*, Gerard thought as blood surged through his veins to pool in his cock. Being close to Daphne would definitely pay havoc with his vow never to get involved with a model.

He was thirty years old, not a teenager. Just because she affected him more strongly than a woman had in a long time didn't mean he had to act on it.

"Do you have any questions?"

"Probably dozens, but I can't think of them now."

"You can ask them as we work."

"Okay."

"Dale will contact you in the next few days." He stood and rounded the desk as she stood. "I'm looking forward to working with you, Daphne."

She graced him with a full smile. "I'm looking forward to working with you too."

## Chapter Two

Daphne stepped into the suite as quietly as possible. She leaned against the wall so she'd be out of the way and could still watch Gerard at work. Using portable walls, he'd divided the large living room into three areas with different furnishings.

Over the weekend, Faith had shown her the two books of Gerard's photographs she owned. Daphne had been amazed at his talent. His photographs were exactly what Faith said. Sensual and beautiful, he captured the soul of the people he photographed. Although several of his pictures were of nudes, there was nothing dirty or perverted in any of them.

They were, as Faith described them, masterpieces.

She'd relived the interview with him again and again as she'd looked at the books. Faith hadn't told her Gerard Lynch was so handsome. Black hair that flowed past his collar, brown eyes the color of dark chocolate, olive skin that indicated his Mediterranean heritage, plus a tall, broad-shouldered body that would make any woman want to tear off his clothes and run her hands all over him. Add all that to the amazing French accent and Gerard must have women falling at his feet every day.

The short bio in his books stated he was born in a small town close to Marseille to an American father and a French mother. It didn't state his father's occupation, only that it involved moving the family to America when Gerard was fifteen. He'd told her he'd lived in the United States for fifteen years. That must mean he was thirty...much too young for her. Len had been six years her junior. That relationship taught her that younger men were way too immature, meaning they were off-limits to her.

*You're getting way ahead of yourself, Daph. You're here to pose for pictures, nothing else.*

Still, it didn't hurt anyone if she fantasized a little. She watched Gerard move around the area, admiring his shoulders in the black T-shirt, his butt in the faded jeans.



His black hair was pulled back in a ponytail today. She imagined pulling the band from his hair, letting it fall into her hands while he leaned closer to her. Her lips would part before his touched them. His kiss would be tender, gentle, but would quickly turn hungry. He'd take her in his arms, crush her breasts against his wide chest...

"Lift your chin just a little," Gerard said.

Hearing Gerard's voice broke into Daphne's fantasy and brought her back to the present. A lovely African-American woman—probably mid forties—reclined on a maroon leather couch, a bright white piece of cloth draped over her torso. The side of one small breast peeked from beneath the cloth.

"That's the way. Let me see those beautiful eyes." *Click*. "Turn your face toward me. A little more. That's it." *Click*. He lowered his camera and glanced at the woman standing beside him. "Krissy, touch up her makeup. Her nose is shiny. Dale, adjust the light a little lower."

He was a total professional. Daphne could tell that right away. That helped her focus on the reason she was here. Len had left her with a mountain of debt. She hoped Gerard needed her for more than just one hour. She could use every dollar she could earn.

"Rosie, move the cloth on your right leg a little higher. I want to see a bit more of your thigh. Perfect." *Click*.

Gerard lowered his camera and smiled at the woman. "You were wonderful, Rosie. Krissy will take you to the back so you can get dressed. Dale will have your payment ready when you come out."

Rosie rose from the couch with the grace of a ballet dancer. Clutching the white cloth over her breasts, she walked up close to Gerard and smiled. "You will call if you need me again, yes?"

Daphne wasn't sure which country Rosie called home, but her accent sounded lyrical and charming. Her eyes were hooded, her lips parted. The woman obviously had more in mind with Gerard than simply posing for pictures.

He returned her smile, but it was friendly, not inviting. "I will. Thank you again."

She followed Krissy, looking at Gerard over her shoulder until she stepped out of the area. Dale chuckled. "Not exactly subtle, was she?"

"No," Gerard said, looking at the viewfinder on his camera. "But it doesn't matter. You know I never get involved with any of the models."

"Too bad. Rosie is really hot. I wouldn't mind dipping my wick in her."

Daphne decided it would be a good time to interrupt before the men's conversation became more explicit. She stepped forward. "Hello."

Gerard whipped up his head. His eyes narrowed slightly while his gaze traveled over her body. Daphne thought she saw his nostrils flare, as if he was inhaling her scent.

A delicious thrill flowed through her body while her fantasy of their first kiss flashed through her mind.

"Hello," he said, his voice low, husky.

"I hope I'm not interrupting."

"No, not at all. I am finished with Rosie. I can start on your photos as soon as Krissy helps you change."

Krissy appeared from the back. "Perfect timing," Gerard said with a smile. "Krissy, please help Daphne get ready. I want her in the green negligee first."

*First?* Daphne wondered if that meant he planned for her to wear more than one item. If so, that probably meant she would be here for longer than one hour. More time modeling meant the quicker she could pay off her debt.

Krissy smiled at her. "This way, Daphne."

She followed the young woman out of the living room. They passed Rosie in the hallway. Daphne smiled at the lovely woman, but Rosie didn't return it. Her gaze passed over Daphne as if she were a piece of roadkill.

She waited until she and Krissy had stepped inside a large bedroom before she spoke. "What's up with Rosie? She wasn't very friendly."

"She probably considers you competition."

"Competition? For what?"

"Gerard. She flirted shamelessly with him the entire time she was here. He ignored her flirting, just like he does with all the models. That didn't go over well with her."

Krissy stepped up to a long clothing bar in front of the closet and began looking through the lingerie hanging on it. "Gerard doesn't get involved with the models. He considers that unprofessional. Rosie let him know the moment she arrived that she'd be willing to take this further than modeling."

"I would imagine a man as handsome as Gerard gets that a lot."

"Yeah, but he's adamant that work and pleasure don't mix." She glanced at Daphne. "Go ahead and undress. You can step into the bathroom if you'll be more comfortable."

Daphne saw no reason for that. Krissy would no doubt see all of her before she finished her session. "I don't have anything you don't have."

"No, but you have more than I have of some things." She looked at Daphne's breasts and grinned. "Lucky you."

Daphne laughed. She already liked the twenty-something woman very much. She slipped off her slacks, blouse and shoes. Standing in her bra and panties, she waited for Krissy to give her whatever she was supposed to wear for the photos.

Krissy selected a green silk negligee from the bar. Lace completely made up the bodice. A slit ran from the hem almost to the waist on the right side. It had to be the sexiest gown Daphne had ever seen.

"Undies off too," Krissy said.

Once nude, Daphne slithered into the negligee. It hugged her curves as if made especially for her. The bodice covered her breasts, yet they were clearly visible through the lace.

"Your hair looks great down like that," Krissy said, "but Gerard wants your makeup to be more dramatic."

Ten minutes later, Daphne blinked at herself in the mirror. Krissy had added more eye shadow and liner to her eyes, whisked a darker blush across her cheeks, used a bolder lipstick on her lips. She looked more...alluring, sensual.

Sexy.

Krissy smiled. "Perfect. Let's go."

Daphne followed Krissy back into the living room. Her heart pounded, her palms were sweaty from nerves. Gerard seemed to have faith she could model for him when he interviewed her, but she had no experience with this. She was afraid he'd regret asking her to pose for him.

She stopped when she saw a handsome young man speaking with Gerard. He stood at least six feet tall. Long brown hair brushed his shoulders, a muscular chest and broad shoulders filled out his navy T-shirt. Daphne doubted if he was over twenty-five years old.

He must have sensed her presence for he swung his head toward her. His gaze immediately dropped to her lace-covered breasts. Daphne had to fight the urge to cross her arms over them. Modeling was one thing. She hadn't expected to be ogled.

Gerard also shifted his attention her direction. His gaze dropped to her breasts too, but only for a moment before he smiled. "Daphne, you're ready. This is Rodney. He'll be doing the first set of pictures with you."

"The first set... Excuse me?"

"During our interview, I told you I might have you pose with another model. Do you remember that?"

"Yes, of course, but I didn't expect..." She trailed off, unsure what to say. She didn't want to sound like a prude by saying she didn't expect someone so *young* to pose with her.

Rodney flashed her a brilliant smile. His teeth were white enough to light up Dallas at night. "I'm looking forward to posing with you, Daphne."

Gerard turned to his assistant. "Krissy, I want Rodney to wear the green boxers that match Daphne's gown."

"Will do, boss."

Daphne looked back at Gerard after Rodney left the area. His gaze passed over her face, her hair. She could see the male interest in his eyes.

*"Tu es éblouissante,"* he said softly.

She didn't know what he said, but hearing the words in his accent made her nipples pucker. Again, she fought the urge to cross her arms over her chest. "I don't speak French."

"I said you are stunning."

Heat climbed into her cheeks at the unexpected compliment. "Thank you."

"Do you have a problem posing with Rodney?"

"No. I mean, I knew I might pose with someone else. You told me that. I just hadn't expected him to be so...young."

His eyes twinkled with humor. "Do you have something against younger men?"

She would not get into a discussion about her ex-husband with Gerard. That would be completely inappropriate when she barely knew the photographer. "Only when they're young enough to be my son."

Gerard laughed out loud. "Rodney is twenty-eight. I doubt if you could've had him at age ten."

"He looks younger than that."

"You look younger than your age too."

He continued to stare into her eyes. A gentle throbbing began in her clit. Her pussy dampened, getting ready for his possession.

Daphne cleared her throat. "Shall I sit on the couch?"

Her question seemed to snap him out of his trance. "No. I'm going to take your photos on a different set. Dale should have everything ready by now. This way."

She followed Gerard through a doorway into a dimly lit area. A huge four-poster bed sat in the middle of the set, dressed with ivory sheets. Six pillows were propped against the headboard, covered in the same ivory cotton as the mattress.

"Please climb up on the bed, Daphne," Gerard said. "I'll take a few shots of you before Rodney gets here."

She did as he instructed, sitting in the middle of the bed with her legs folded. In the background, she saw Dale adjust one of the lights so it didn't shine so brightly on her face.

"Good." *Click*. "Lift your chin for me. Look right into the camera lens. That's the way." *Click*. "Turn your legs the other way. I want to see them in the slit."

Daphne shifted to her other side and arranged the gown so the slit exposed her entire right leg and hip. Gerard smiled. "Wonderful. That's exactly what I want." *Click*. "Tilt your head to the left. A little more. Good." *Click*. "Straighten your shoulders. More. That's the way. Perfect." *Click*.

He spoke his instructions clearly and gently, never raising his voice even when he had to tell her twice how to position her body. He took several more pictures before Rodney came into the area. Daphne couldn't stop the catch in her throat when she saw the handsome man in nothing but a pair of green silk boxers. He must have heard her for he flashed a grin.

"Rodney, climb on the bed behind Daphne. I want you to pretend you can't wait to make love to her."

"No problem there," Rodney said, pressing his chest against Daphne's back. Slipping his right arm around her waist, he splayed his hand on her stomach. "I can easily imagine making love to you," he whispered in her ear.

His warm breath should've sent goose bumps scattering over her skin, but it didn't. She didn't feel the least bit attracted to Rodney.

When Gerard came to the bed to adjust the sheet and his hand brushed her bare leg, heat shot through her body. She kept her head lowered so he couldn't see the desire in her eyes.

*I have to snap out of this. No matter how attracted I am to Gerard, this is a job. Period. Once he finishes my photos, I'll never see him again.*

He moved back to the end of the bed and lifted the camera to his eye. "Rodney, entwine your fingers with Daphne's. That's good. Hold it." *Click*. "Pull her hair back from her shoulder. Daphne, tilt your head to the right and close your eyes. Oh yeah, that's perfect." *Click*. "Rodney, kiss her shoulder. Daphne, tilt your head back a little farther. Good." *Click*.

Gerard moved to the side of the bed. "Daphne, I told you in your interview that there might be some intimate contact. You said you were fine with that. There won't be much, I promise. Are you still okay with it?"

*I wish it could be with you instead of this child. "Yes, I'm okay with it."*

Gerard smiled. "Good. Rodney, pull down her strap."

He did as Gerard said, leaving the top half of her left breast exposed. Daphne glanced down and saw her nipple poking through the lace. She lifted her hand, intending to adjust the bodice, but stopped when Gerard spoke again.

"No, don't move anything. You look amazing."

His camera clicked several times as he walked around the bed to the other side. "Rodney, slip your hand inside the bodice and cup her breast. Good." *Click*. "Tug the bodice all the way off her breast and cup it again. Move your mouth closer to hers as if you're going to kiss. That's it." *Click*.

Daphne knew it was Rodney touching her, yet she wished it were Gerard cradling her breast, leaning to kiss her. She closed her eyes and parted her lips as she imagined him moving even closer until their lips touched...

"Daphne, hold that expression. Perfect!" *Click.*

Gerard lowered his camera and smiled. "Okay, take a break. There are drinks and snacks in the kitchen if you want something. We'll start up again in fifteen or twenty minutes."

Rodney climbed off the bed and held out a hand to help Daphne. "Would you like something to drink?"

Daphne raised the strap back to her shoulder and accepted Rodney's hand. "A bottle of water would be nice."

"Sure. Be right back."

Gerard waited to speak until Rodney had left. "Are you all right?"

"Yes, I'm fine. It's nice to stand up. My legs were getting a little cramped."

"I try to move my models often so they don't get too tired. You and Rodney were so perfect together, I wanted to get as many shots as I could." His gaze passed over her face and hair. "Your blonde looks against his olive skin and dark hair is incredible."

Daphne couldn't help but wonder how she would look against Gerard. She imagined standing in front of a mirror with him behind her, holding her tight against him. His dark arms would be crossed over her stomach, showing her the contrast of their skin...

Gerard's eyes narrowed. "What are you thinking?"

She never had been able to hide her feelings. Her eyes gave away too much. Daphne crossed her arms over her breasts to cover her hard nipples. "Just wondering how the pictures will look."

"This is the last set of the day. Would you like to stick around after Rodney leaves and look at the proofs?"



"Could I?"

Gerard smiled. "Sure. I'll be happy to show them to you."

Daphne returned his smile. "I'd like that."

## **Chapter Three**

It didn't take Gerard long to decide he was an idiot.

It wasn't enough that he'd had to witness Rodney's hands and lips on Daphne's skin. No, he had to invite her to stay after the session and look at the proofs. That meant she'd be close to him, close enough so he'd get little whiffs of the flowery perfume she wore. Or maybe the scent came from that glorious hair. Either way, every time he inhaled he drew that fragrance into his lungs.

He'd never let anyone other than Krissy and Dale look at his proofs. The agreement the models signed clearly stated it was completely up to Gerard which photos he used in his books. There was no reason for him to let anyone see the proofs. And yet, he'd invited Daphne to do that.

Gerard didn't get involved with the models. It became harder for him to remember that the more time he spent around Daphne.

Dragging his attention back to the set, he moved to the end of the bed. "I want these last pictures with only the sheet as covering." He looked over his shoulder to see Krissy approaching with a large piece of black cloth to hold up so Daphne could stand behind it. "Daphne, Krissy will help you remove your gown. Rodney, slip beneath the sheet and take off your boxers."

"No need for that. I'm not shy."

Everyone received a show as he pushed his boxers down his legs and stepped out of them. Gerard couldn't help glancing at the young man's impressive cock before he slid beneath the sheet, as did Daphne and Krissy. That's probably what Rodney wanted.

Rodney possessed that special something that came across in photos, but that didn't mean that Gerard had to like the conceited fool. He decided he didn't want Rodney to

touch Daphne's nude body. "On second thought, Rodney, I want you on your stomach on top of the sheet."

While Krissy kept the black cloth close to Daphne until she could slide beneath the sheet, Rodney threw the covering off him and rolled to his stomach. Brush in hand, his assistant spread Daphne's long hair out on the pillow and touched up Rodney's hair. A different brush fluffed powder over their noses to cut the shine. She gave a quick nod to Gerard, indicating she was finished.

Picking up his second camera with the fresh memory card, Gerard carried a small stepladder to the side of the bed. He climbed to the top step so he could look down on the couple.

"Daphne, tuck the sheet beneath your arms. Good." *Click*. "Rodney, slide down a little more. More. Lay your head on her stomach. That's it." *Click*. "Wrap your arm around her waist. A little lower." *Click*. "Daphne, uncover your right leg and bend your knee toward Rodney. That's the way." *Click*. "Rodney, curl your fingers over her hip. Oh yeah, that's perfect." *Click*.

He continued to give instructions, which Daphne and Rodney followed with no complaints or hesitation. Daphne may not have done any modeling in her life, but she was a natural at it. He could hardly wait to look at the proofs.

Satisfied with this set, Gerard lowered his camera and smiled. "You two were amazing. Dale will figure out your payment while you get dressed."

He climbed down from the ladder and moved it aside so Rodney wouldn't trip over it. The young man scooped up the boxers from the floor and, without bothering to put them on, swaggered from the area.

Daphne grinned at Krissy. "Nice ass."

"Conceited ass," Krissy said, returning Daphne's grin.

"I guess he believes in the saying, 'if you've got it, flaunt it'."

Gerard chuckled at the two women teasing each other. Krissy was always friendly with the models, but she seemed to click with Daphne. That didn't surprise him. He'd sensed warmth and caring from Daphne the first time he'd spoken with her.

Today, he'd witnessed her passionate side. There had been times during the photo shoot when she'd looked at him with heat in her eyes. He'd wondered if perhaps she'd imagined him in Rodney's place. He'd pictured himself with Daphne many times, kissing her shoulder, cradling her breast, running his hand over her bare thigh.

The mental images had kept his cock half hard all through their sessions.

She wrapped the black cloth around her body and followed Krissy from the set. At the entrance, she stopped for a moment and glanced at him over her shoulder. A small smile touched her lips. That smile traveled all the way through his body and settled in his cock. She turned and continued through the doorway before he could develop a full-fledged hard-on.

He didn't understand why Daphne attracted him so. Yes, she was beautiful and charming, but he met beautiful, charming women almost every day of his life. He rarely gave them more than a look, or perhaps a smile. With Daphne, he wanted to talk to her, learn about her likes and dislikes. He wanted to take her to bed and lick every inch of her.

His cock liked that idea a lot.

Picking up his cameras, he left the set and returned to his office. Dale sat at the desk, sealing an envelope with Rodney's name on it. "Got everything figured out?"

"Yep. Two hours, five hundred each."

"Have you done Daphne's check yet?"

"No, I did Rodney's first."

Gerard leaned against the desk and crossed his ankles. "Hold off on Daphne's. I'll take care of it after she looks at the proofs."

The expression on Dale's face would've made Gerard laugh out loud if he hadn't caught himself in time. He'd never seen such a look of shock on his assistant's face. "Excuse me?"

Gerard shrugged. "She told me she wondered how the pictures would look and I offered to show some of them to her."

"You've never done that."

"Hey, there's a first time for everything."

Now the expression on Dale's face could only be called a smirk. "I think it's more than a first time for everything deal. You're attracted to Daphne."

"I don't get involved with the models."

"You don't show them proofs either."

Warmth crept up his neck. Gerard looked at his watch, hoping Dale wouldn't notice any change of color in his face. "Don't you have a date in less than an hour?"

Dale chuckled. "I know when someone wants me out of the way." He stood and picked up the envelope on the desk. "I'll take care of paying Rodney before I leave."

"Thanks."

He sensed Daphne's presence when she walked into the room a moment later. He turned to look at her. She stood five feet away from him, wearing the peach blouse and jeans she'd worn when she arrived. Her hair flowed over one shoulder to tease the tip of her breast.

He wanted his tongue to tease that tip instead of her hair.

"May I look at the proofs now?"

"I have to download the photos from my cameras."

"Of course you do. I wasn't thinking. I'll go so you can do your work."

He quickly took two steps toward her. "Please don't go. It won't take long to download them. Unless you have plans and need to go."

"No, I have no plans, other than watching the football game tonight."

Gerard chuckled. "You'll be home in plenty of time."

"The Cowboys aren't playing, no big deal if I miss the game."

"So you're a diehard Dallas Cowboys fan?"

"Absolutely. Don't tell me you aren't or I'll have to hurt you."

He liked the teasing gleam in her eyes, and the way she pressed her lips together as if trying hard not to laugh.

There was very little about Daphne that he *didn't* like.

Krissy stepped into the room. "Everything's put away, Gerard."

"Thanks, Krissy. I'll see you tomorrow."

She glanced at Daphne, then looked back at Gerard with an obvious question in her eyes. "Do you need me to stay longer?"

"No. Daphne and I are just talking."

"Okay. Well, I guess I'll see you tomorrow."

At which time Gerard expected to be bombarded with questions from both Krissy and Dale. The negative aspect of working with two people for five years and doing something completely out of character meant they would expect him to answer all those questions.

"It was nice to meet you, Krissy," Daphne said with a smile.

"You too. Oh wait. I forgot to give you this." She withdrew a piece of paper from her jeans pocket and handed it to Daphne.

Daphne unfolded the paper. Gerard craned his neck, but couldn't see what was written on it. "Anything important?" he asked, trying not to sound too nosy.

"No. Just Rodney's phone number and a note that I can call him anytime." She waded up the paper and tossed it in the trashcan by the desk. "As if I would ever want anything to do with six feet of ego."

Krissy snickered. "I like the way you think, Daphne." She headed for the door, throwing a "'Bye, boss" over her shoulder.

Once Gerard heard the suite door shut, he pulled up a chair close to his behind the desk. "Sit, please. It won't take me long to download these photos."

She did, scooting the chair a bit closer to his. Now less than two feet away from him, her flowery scent drifted to his nose. His balls tightened with the first whiff. He longed to bend her over his desk, pull down her jeans and panties, and find out if that same scent wafted from her pussy.

Trying to ignore his hardening cock, Gerard connected the cord between his camera and computer. His photo program opened and images popped up on the screen...row after row of the hundreds of photos he'd taken today.

Daphne watched the screen as the images appeared. "How many people posed for you?"

"Today, or total?"

"Today."

"You and Rodney were numbers four and five. My first model this morning was an elderly gentleman, maybe seventy-five. His session took only forty minutes." Gerard swiveled his chair toward her. "He was magnificent. Debonair, charming, handsome. I'll bet he was quite the ladies' man in his youth."

The late afternoon sun broke through the clouds and shined in the window behind them. The rays touched Daphne's hair, turning it into a golden flame. Gerard had to capture that look on his camera.

"Stay right there."

"What—"

"Don't move." He picked up his second camera from the desk and lifted it to his eye. "The sun is shining on your hair. It's amazing." *Click*. "Raise your chin a little. Yeah, that's good." *Click*. "Turn your head a bit to your right. Perfect." *Click*.

Gerard slid to his knees on the floor and pointed the camera up at Daphne's face. "Your hair looks as if it's thirty different colors." *Click*. "So beautiful. Everything about you is beautiful."

A delicate blush filled her cheeks. He captured the blush on his camera.

Pushing his chair out of the way, Gerard backed up a foot so he could see more of Daphne. "Turn your upper body this way. Not quite so much. Good." *Click*.

He lowered the camera to his chest. "Unbutton the top button of your blouse."

She hesitated a moment before she did as he said.

"Lift your collar in the back and pull your blouse open."

She did. He could see the beginning of her cleavage. The clouds covered the sun again, casting her in shadow. If possible, she was even more beautiful now.

Gerard stood and raised his camera again. "Sit still. I'm going to move around you."

Slowly, he circled her chair, taking shots of her from different angles. He took one standing behind her shoulder so he could see the tops of her breasts. He took another before she looked up at him.

"That's it. That's the shot." *Click*. He zoomed in closer on her eyes. Tiny flecks of gold were sprinkled in the green. "Oh yeah. Perfect." *Click*.

The clouds shifted again, letting the sunshine once again bathe Daphne in its light. Gerard clicked off two more shots. "Unfasten another button for me."

Now he could see her cleavage and inner curves of her breasts. Gerard circled her again, taking shots from every angle.

"Prop your elbow on the back of the chair and hold your collar away from your face." *Click*. "Bite the end of your thumb. Yeah, like that. Perfect." *Click*.

Humor flashed through her eyes and her lips twitched. Gerard lowered his camera. "What's funny?"

"Do you know you say 'perfect' a lot?"



"Do I?"

Daphne nodded.

"That's because every photo I've taken of you is perfect." He knew he shouldn't touch her, but he couldn't resist the lure of her skin. He cradled her jaw in his palm, whisked his thumb over her lower lip. "Just as you are."

That lovely blush filled her cheeks again. "I'm hardly perfect, Gerard."

He caressed her lip again. "You are to me."

Warning bells clanged in his head about getting too close to a model. It wasn't professional, he'd never see her again, he hated one-night stands...all those things he'd told himself over the years. He'd always avoided becoming close to a woman and having to walk away from her. None of those things seemed to matter when he looked into Daphne's green eyes.

He leaned closer to her. If she moved or asked him to stop, he would.

She lifted her chin and parted her lips.

A whisper of flesh against flesh. Warm breaths mingled together. The taste of mint. Gerard absorbed all the flavors and sensations of kissing Daphne. He immediately knew that one kiss would never be enough.

He slid his fingers around her neck and tilted his face to deepen the kiss. The soft sound of pleasure in her throat traveled straight to his cock. It had been half hard ever since he first saw her today. Touching her, kissing her, sent blood rushing south, giving him a full-blown erection in seconds.

With his lips still pressed to hers, Gerard tugged Daphne from the chair and into his arms. She reached behind his head and pulled the elastic band from his ponytail, then tunneled her fingers into his hair. Her breasts pressed to his chest, her abdomen cushioned his shaft. Gerard tightened his arms around her and tickled her lips with his tongue, asking for entrance.

She gave it, touching her tongue to his.

Like a match to gasoline, he went up in flames. Holding her head with one hand while he devoured her mouth, he ran his other hand all over her body...caressing a full breast, rounded hip, firm ass cheek. He squeezed that cheek, made the return journey back to her breast. He brushed his thumb across her nipple. Her little sounds of pleasure rewarded him for his action.

Gerard kissed her passionately once again before cradling her face in his hands. He rested his forehead against hers while he tried to get his breath back. "God, you're even more delicious than I thought you would be."

She said nothing, just clutched his T-shirt at his waist. Her warm breath coasted across his lips every time she exhaled. He thought about feeling that breath moving down his body in advance of her mouth, her tongue...

"Gerard?"

Her voice came out soft, barely a whisper. He loved the way she said his name. "Yes?"

"Kiss me again."

He didn't hesitate to obey her. This kiss was different...a gentle persuasion instead of ravishment. He coaxed her lips to part, swiped his tongue across hers. Needing to touch her skin, he pulled her blouse from the waistband of her jeans and laid his palm on her low back. Her skin was warm and a little damp from perspiration.

"I want you." He kissed her cheek, her jaw, her neck. "Let me make love to you."

She pulled back and looked into his eyes. Touching his lips with her fingertips, she whispered, "Yes."

## Chapter Four

Daphne had had a grand total of two lovers before she married Len when she was twenty-seven. Her first, in high school, had no idea what to do with a girl other than get off as quickly as he could. Her second, in college, hadn't been much better. Len had made all the right moves, yet sex with him had been...predictable and boring. She'd rarely had a climax with him and had to take care of herself after he'd rolled over and fallen asleep.

She had no doubt sex with Gerard would be *anything* but boring.

He kissed her again, slowly, thoroughly, his lips sliding over hers one way, then another. His tongue touched each corner of her mouth, glided along her bottom lip, touched the tip of hers.

By the time he ended the kiss, Daphne was panting for breath. She clutched his shoulders to hold herself up because her legs felt like overcooked noodles.

Daphne's eyes crossed when he nipped the side of her neck. "I love the way you kiss," he said in a raspy voice. He gripped her ass and pulled her against his groin. "I want to taste every part of you."

She wanted that too. The eight-year age difference didn't seem to matter. He made her feel attractive and sexy, something she hadn't felt in much too long.

She knew Gerard would be leaving Dallas in a few days. She doubted she'd ever see him again. While she'd never had a one-night stand, she'd make an exception for this man. If she could only have one night with him, she'd take it.

After one more toe-curling kiss, he took her hand and led her from the office through an open doorway. A single lamp cast a soft glow over the king-size bed. She noticed a white terry cloth robe lying on the end of the bed. She assumed it was one the

hotel provided for their guests. She didn't see anything personal, anything that would prove Gerard lived here for the short time he'd be in Dallas.

How sad that he didn't have a home. Or perhaps he had one, but his traveling took him away from it for months at a time.

He took both her hands in his, raised them to his mouth and kissed her palms. "Have you changed your mind about being with me?"

Her thoughts must have shown on her face. Heat rushed to her cheeks. She didn't want him to think she no longer desired him. "No, not at all. I was just...thinking."

"Ah." One corner of his mouth quirked in a grin. "It usually means trouble for a man when a woman thinks."

She chuckled at his joke and squeezed his hands. "No trouble, I promise. I saw the robe on the bed and wondered if you live in hotels."

"Most of the time. But that's something to talk about later." He released one of her hands and fingered a button on her blouse. "There are much more pleasurable things we can do, aren't there?"

The brush of his fingers against her breast sent tingles straight to her clit. Oh yes, there were definitely much more pleasurable things they could do. She waited until he'd loosened the last button before she tugged his T-shirt from his waistband. "Lift your arms." She pulled the shirt over his head and dropped it on the floor.

A moan escaped before she could stop it. His chest was broad with well-defined muscles. A light sprinkling of dark hair ran across it and arched down his stomach. It swirled around his navel. She followed the downy arrow with her fingertip from the top of his stomach until it disappeared into his jeans.

"Don't stop now," Gerard said, his voice husky.

Looking into his eyes, Daphne unfastened his belt. She had to move her hands away from him for a moment while he slipped her blouse from her shoulders. She longed to be wearing one of the sexy bras she'd seen in the dressing area instead of the

plain flesh-colored one she wore. Gerard didn't seem to mind. He cradled both breasts in his hands, pushed them together, dipped his tongue into the cleavage.

Daphne had trouble concentrating on moving her fingers when every part of her body focused on Gerard's mouth. She worked to unfasten the buttons on his jeans while he nipped and licked the sides of her breasts. Finally, she released the last button and dipped her hand inside the fly.

She wrapped her hand around velvety steel.

"Oh God, you aren't wearing briefs."

"I don't like them."

"Boxers?"

"Don't like them either." He tugged down one bra cup and swiped his tongue across her nipple. "Mmm, *this* I like."

She liked what she held in her hand too. His cock was thick and long and so hard, she wondered if it hurt.

Gerard sucked in a sharp breath between his teeth. "Ah, Daphne, you have magic hands."

She felt her bra strap tighten and loosen. Gerard slid the straps down her arms and let her bra fall to the floor. He cradled her breasts again, lifting them as he brushed his thumbs over the hard peaks.

"*Ravissante*."

The word sounded lovely in his accent, even though she didn't understand it. Grasping the waistband of his jeans, she pulled them down enough so his cock sprang free. A trimmed thatch of black hair surrounded the base.

No shorts and trimmed pubic hair. If he were any sexier, she wouldn't be able to draw a breath.

"Gerard."

He kissed one nipple, then the other. "Yes?"

"My legs are going to collapse if I don't sit down."

She loved how the corner of his mouth quirked when he grinned. "I don't want your legs to collapse, *chérie*." He grabbed the bedspread and threw it to the end of the bed, then scooped her up in his arms. Laying her in the middle, he kissed her as he unfastened her jeans. She lifted her hips to make it easier for him to remove her jeans and panties. He glided them slowly down her legs, dropping kisses and gentle nips all the way to her feet.

By the time he dropped them on the floor, Daphne's clit throbbed and moisture leaked from her pussy. She didn't think she'd ever wanted a man as desperately as she wanted Gerard.

His gaze made a leisurely tour of her body. "I want to do so many things to you, I don't know where to start."

His hard cock still jutted out of the opening of his fly. "Take off your clothes and I'll help you figure out a spot."

He leaned over, bracketing her body with his arms. "I want to savor you, but I don't know how long I can last the first time."

The *first* time? "You're planning on more than once?"

His teeth flashed in a wicked grin. "Once won't be nearly enough." He straightened again before she had the chance to touch him. "I'll be right back."

"Where are you going?" she asked while he walked toward the bathroom.

"To get a condom."

She hadn't thought about that. But she hadn't dated anyone since her divorce, and she'd been married for ten years without need of one.

Gerard walked back into the room, completely naked. Now it was her turn to gaze at his body. One word came to mind – magnificent.

He tossed five condom packets on the nightstand. Either he was being overly optimistic, or she was in for the best sex of her life.

Gerard fought back the grin when he saw Daphne's eyes widen at the number of condom packets he'd brought with him. He had no idea how many they'd need and saw no reason to go back to the bathroom for more and interrupt their intimacy.

It'd been so long since he'd made love, he had to check the expiration date. Luckily they were still good.

He stretched out beside her and laid his hand on her stomach. He could see the desire in her eyes, yet had to know if she truly wanted him. "Are you sure?"

She didn't answer him with words, but parted her thighs and dragged his hand between them. "Does that answer your question?"

He moaned at the amount of cream her pussy produced. His cock screamed at him to take her now...to drive into her body hard and fast until he came. He pushed a finger inside her, then two. Her back arched and she released a sound that was part pleasure, part pain. Gerard immediately withdrew his fingers. "I didn't mean to hurt you."

"You didn't. I haven't been with a man in a while and I'm...tight."

Tight and creamy. Perfect.

"Touch me. Please." She closed her eyes and spread her legs another few inches. Gerard used only one finger this time, moving it in and out of her pussy to get her ready for him. His thumb passed over her clit. It was almost as firm as his cock and peaking out from the hood. He pushed the second finger inside her. This time she lifted her hips, as if she needed more.

He gave it, fucking her with his fingers while he caressed her clit with his thumb. She opened her eyes and stared into his. Her lips parted, her breath sounded choppy. Perspiration dotted her forehead and upper lip.

"That's the way, *chérie*. Come for me."

"What about...you?"

"I want you to come first."

Her eyes slid closed again. "God, it feels so good."

Gerard rose to his knees next to her hip. He continued to finger-fuck her pussy with one hand, caressed her breasts with the other. Every time he pushed his fingers into her, his thumb brushed her clit. Daphne pumped her hips in time with his movements.

He tugged hard on one nipple and pressed his fingers into her G-spot. The walls of her pussy clamped onto his fingers when she shattered.

He'd never seen anything as beautiful as Daphne in the throes of her orgasm. She lay still, breathing hard through her mouth. He could see the pulse pounding in her neck. Unable to resist the tempting sight, he placed his mouth there and sucked gently.

"Are you giving me a hickey?"

He wasn't, but now that she mentioned it... He sucked harder on her skin while he tapped her G-spot with two fingertips. More moisture oozed from her channel. Her breathing grew heavy again.

"Gerard." Her voice sounded hoarse, raspy. She tunneled her hands into his hair and softly pulled on it. He lifted his head. "I need you inside me."

"I want you to come again."

"I want to come with you inside me."

He'd be a fool to deny her. Reluctantly withdrawing his fingers from her pussy, he reached for one of the condom packets and tore it open. Once protected, he moved between her legs. Holding tight to her ass, he entered her with one gentle thrust.

Her body tightened a moment, then she released a breath and relaxed. "Okay?" he asked, dropping kisses on her shoulder and collarbone.

"Yes. It's wonderful." She skimmed her fingernails down his back. "You feel so good."

"So do you. Perfect."



He grinned at his deliberate choice of word while she smiled. Then his grin faded and he began to move...slow, easy strokes to ignite her desire again. He still craved to pump hard and fast, but he cared more about Daphne's satisfaction than his own.

His thrusts remained easy until she dug her fingernails into his back. "Faster. Gerard, faster please."

He lifted her hips so he could thrust deeper. Daphne's breath hitched. She clasped her knees and pulled her legs farther apart. Gerard could go even deeper, sliding his cock into her channel all the way to his balls.

Her damp skin clung to his, releasing her flowery fragrance. He buried his face in her neck. His rod grew even harder, his balls tighter. He knew his orgasm was only moments away from taking over his body.

Not yet.

Gerard withdrew from Daphne. She huffed out a sound of protest. "Don't stop!"

"I'm too close to coming, *chérie*. Let me take care of you first."

The next moment, he had her ass in both hands and his mouth on her pussy. Daphne arched her back and released a keening sound of pleasure. Her juices seeped from her channel to glide over his tongue, wet his lips, his chin. He'd never tasted anything so delicious.

She grabbed handfuls of his hair. Her thighs tightened against his face. Gerard flicked her clit with his tongue, drew it between his lips to suck it.

"Gerard! Ohgodohgodohgod!"

Her body shivered, her hips bucked. Gerard drew back and watched her pussy contract with her climax.

The erotic sight pushed him over the edge. Unable to wait another moment, he quickly flipped Daphne to her stomach. Drawing her up to her knees, he rammed his cock into her.

She was even wetter now than the first time he'd entered her. Gerard drew in a shaky breath and began to pump. Gripping her hips, he drove into her tight sheath over and over. This time, when his orgasm tightened his balls, he didn't try to fight it. The pleasure flowed through his entire body and out the end of his cock.

Daphne lay with her head almost buried in the pillow, unable to move. All her bones had dissolved with her second orgasm. Not even when she heard Gerard's loud moan, felt his shaft jerking inside her, could she make any part of her body move.

She didn't know if months of abstinence had made her so hungry, or if Gerard was an exceptional lover.

She suspected it was the latter.

He helped her straighten her legs and stretched out on top of her. "Ah, *chérie*, that was amazing."

Not trusting that she could make her tongue work yet, Daphne nodded.

Gerard brushed aside her hair and kissed her nape, the sensitive area behind her ear. "Are you all right?"

"I think I'm dead."

His warm breath flowed over her ear when he chuckled. "Believe me, *chérie*, you are not dead."

She winced slightly when he pulled out of her, her body unused to such vigorous fucking. Then she sighed as he dropped kisses all the way down her spine. He kissed each buttock before helping her roll to her back. His eyes looked drowsy, his lips curved in a satisfied smile. He kissed her lips softly once, twice, while cradling one breast in his palm.

"Would you like something to drink?" His thumb rasped over her nipple in a gentle caress. "Perhaps a glass of wine?"

"That would be nice."

"Are you hungry? It's after six. I can order room service."

In answer to his question, her stomach growled. Daphne covered her tummy with her hands while Gerard laughed.

"I'll get the wine while you look at the room service menu. It's on my desk. Or would you rather go out?"

"No, I'd rather stay in."

"So would I." Desire flared in his eyes again. "We can eat to build our strength back up for more lovemaking."

Her pussy clenched at his words. Despite the two powerful orgasms she'd experienced, she wanted more of him. For tonight, she'd take whatever pleasure Gerard could give her and return it to him. Once he finished his assignment here in Dallas, he would be off to another city, another state, perhaps another country. She'd already decided that she'd take the one-night stand with him and be satisfied with it.

Even if she wanted more.

He came out of the bathroom, winked at her, and continued out of the bedroom. He hadn't bothered to slip on anything to wear, so she was blessed with a wonderful view of his back and ass.

She sighed. What a gorgeous man.

Her stomach growled again, reminding her it'd been hours since she'd eaten a meal. Daphne rose and walked over to Gerard's desk for the menu. Strolling back to bed, she propped up in the middle of the mattress and perused the selection.

"I'm glad you didn't get dressed."

She looked up to see Gerard walking toward her, holding two glasses of white wine. Her gaze zeroed in on his flaccid cock. Although no longer hard, the sight still sent desire flooding through her body.

"I saw no reason to get dressed only to get undressed again after we eat."

"You're a wise woman." He handed one glass to her and joined her on the bed. "Did you decide what you want? Everything I've tried so far is wonderful."

"Do you eat in a lot?"

Gerard shrugged. "It's easier. Sometimes I'll take Krissy and Dale to dinner, but I usually work on my photos in the evenings."

It sounded like a lonely life, just like hers. Daphne had many friends, but spent most of her time alone with her software programs. "They travel with you?"

He nodded. "They've worked for me for five years. They're wonderful employees and great friends. At the end of the workday, they do whatever they want with their personal time."

Daphne sipped her wine while glancing at the menu's selection again. "I'll have the chicken Caesar salad with hot bread, if it's available."

"It is, and it's wonderful." He gave her a gentle kiss. "Good selection. I'll order two for us."

He set his wineglass on the nightstand and picked up the telephone receiver. After tossing the menu to the floor, Daphne rolled to her stomach and rested her chin on Gerard's thigh. His cock was only inches from her mouth.

Quite a temptation.

Leaning forward, she swiped her tongue across the head. He tasted and smelled like sex. She heard Gerard's voice pause a moment while placing their order. She looked into his eyes as she licked the crown again.

"Thank you," he said into the phone but with his gaze on her. "Forty-five minutes will be fine." Still looking at her, he replaced the receiver. "What are you doing?" he asked, his voice a bit husky.

"Starting round two."

## Chapter Five

Daphne shifted to between Gerard's legs. She nuzzled her nose against his balls, searching for more of their combined scent. He laid his hand on the top of her head, his fingers sifting through her hair.

"Daphne," he rasped.

"You smell good. Like you and me and sex." His shaft began to harden as she ran her tongue over his balls. "You taste good too. How do you say 'you're so delicious' in French?"

"A woman to a man would say *tu es délicieux*."

"*Tu es délicieux*," she whispered.

She took his cock in her mouth and felt it getting thicker and longer. His breath rushed out on a long sigh.

"Ah, *chérie*, that is so good."

Daphne thought the same thing. She loved taking a soft cock in her mouth and feeling it harden. She sucked him in as far as she could, slid her lips back to the head. Her tongue circled the rim, darted into the slit, glided down the large vein to the base. She repeated her movements, noting which actions made Gerard breathe heavier or shift his hips. He clenched his fists on the bed, as if he wanted to grab her head to guide her but refused to do so.

She liked that he would let her do whatever she wanted with him, to him.

Wrapping her hand around the base, she moved it up and down his length while she continued to lick and suck the head. Gerard's breathing increased. He clasped the side of her head, holding it while he fucked her mouth.

His movements became choppy, more frenzied, so it surprised Daphne when he suddenly pulled her mouth away from him.

“Why did you stop me?”

“It isn’t fair for me to come without you.”

“It’s fair if it’s what I want.”

“Daphne—”

“We have forty-five minutes before our dinner arrives. Don’t spoil my fun, okay?”

His fingers grazed her cheek. Desire still filled his eyes, but she also saw tenderness. “You are an unselfish woman, Daphne.”

Such a sweet compliment deserved a reward. Daphne rose to her knees, cradled his face in her palms and kissed him.

His hands skated over her back, her buttocks, her thighs. The sweet kiss turned more passionate, more demanding, when Gerard wrapped his arms tightly around her and parted his lips. They teased hers open for the thrust of his tongue. Daphne greedily accepted what he offered, sucking his tongue into her mouth the way she’d sucked his cock a few moments ago.

With one arm around her shoulders, one hand gripping her ass, Gerard flipped their position. Daphne wound up on her back again with Gerard looming over her. His mouth opened on her neck, teeth gently scraping her flesh. Goose bumps erupted over her skin. Her nipples pebbled. He settled between her legs, his hard cock bumping her clit with every movement.

That busy mouth moved down her neck, tasting, teasing. He brushed over her collarbone, her chest, and latched onto a nipple. Each tug of his lips, each flash of his tongue, sent little zings of sensation between her legs.

She slid her hands over his upper back, savoring his heat, his damp skin. His hair tickled her breast as he sucked her nipple. She gasped when he pushed two fingers into her pussy again.

He'd turned things around, giving her pleasure instead of accepting it from her. She almost reprimanded him, but then he pressed against her G-spot. All thoughts flew out of her head.

"Your pussy is so creamy." He dropped kisses on her skin as he returned to her neck. He nipped her earlobe. "I love how wet you are for me."

His mouth covered hers in a kiss so passionate, it left Daphne shaking. She clutched at Gerard's shoulders, wrapped her legs around his to try to get closer. They touched from lips to thighs, yet it wasn't enough.

"Fuck me, Gerard. *Now!*"

He pulled away only long enough to sheathe his rod with a condom. Rising to her knees, Daphne pushed Gerard to his back. She straddled his hips, grabbed the base of his cock and impaled herself.

She froze, the pleasure of having him inside her again almost too much. Her eyelids slid closed. "So good." She propped her hands on his chest and began to move, taking him as deep as she could. "You feel so good."

"As do you, *chérie*."

He gripped her hips and helped guide her movements. Daphne opened her eyes, needing to look into his while they moved together. Her pleasure built slowly this time, unlike her last two orgasms. This one flowed through her limbs like a lazy river instead of rushing through her body like a wildfire. She cradled her breasts in her palms, thumbing her nipples until Gerard released a grunting moan and jerked beneath her.

She melted on his chest, heart pounding, breathing labored. She couldn't have moved at that moment if a tornado barreled through the room.

Gerard kissed the top of her head. "I enjoyed round two very much."

Daphne caressed his chest, over his heart. "So did I."

"Round three will have to wait a while."

She lifted her head and looked at him. "Will there be a round three?"

"I hope so." He took her hand and kissed the palm. "Stay with me tonight."

She wanted to. She wanted to fall asleep in his arms and wake with him beside her tomorrow morning. She hadn't felt so drawn to a man in... There hadn't been a time in her life when she'd felt so drawn to a man. Len had been her husband, but their relationship had built steadily until marriage seemed as if it were the right thing to do.

Now that the marriage had ended, she knew she'd loved Len, but she'd never been *in love* with him. There was a huge difference between the two.

The doorbell rang. "That must be our dinner," Gerard said.

"Good. I'm starving."

Despite her shaky legs, Daphne managed to roll to her back so Gerard could rise. He made a dash to the bathroom, returning in another white terry cloth robe.

He leaned over and gave her a quick kiss. "Bring the wine to the dining room. I'll meet you there."

She donned the robe that had ended up on the floor when he threw back the bedspread. Picking up their wineglasses, she padded through the living room and into the dining room. Gerard was transferring their meal from the tray to the large table. He smiled when he looked up and saw her.

"The bread is fresh from the oven, if you want to butter it."

"Definitely."

She sat at the table and pulled back the green napkin in the straw basket. The scent of hot bread drifted to her nose. "That smells wonderful. Do you want a buttered piece too?"

"Please." Gerard sat across from her, shook out his napkin and laid it over his lap. He splashed more cold Chardonnay into their glasses before he picked up his fork. "I'm not used to having a beautiful woman wait on me."

Not that it mattered or was any of her business, but Daphne had wondered if Gerard was a woman-in-every-port kind of guy. "You don't date very often?"



"No." He accepted the buttered bread from her with a smile. "My work keeps me busy. You're the first woman I've been intimate with in months."

"I haven't been intimate with a man since my divorce almost a year ago."

"That's hard for me to believe."

She paused with her fork raised halfway to her mouth. "Why?"

"Because you're so lovely and sensual. Men should be tripping over their feet to be with you."

His compliment warmed her. "Thank you."

"I'm only being honest."

She took a bite of her salad. The taste of the Caesar dressing and grilled chicken made her moan. "Oh that's wonderful."

Gerard's eyes narrowed. "When you moan like that, I think of the sounds you make when you come."

"I make sounds?"

"Very sexy sounds."

He sank his teeth into his bread, holding her gaze while he chewed. The look in his eyes left no doubt in Daphne's mind that there would be a round three...and possibly more than that.

Gerard took a long sip of his wine. "You didn't give me an answer about spending the night with me."

"I'd like that."

"I only have three more condoms."

Daphne almost choked on her wine at his statement. "Do you think we'll need *more* than three?"

"It's been a long time for me, *chérie*. And for you." His gaze dipped to her breasts. "I have many ideas about what to do to you."

"Do you think you might be...overestimating your ability?"

He seemed to consider her question. "Perhaps. But it'll be fun to try."

\* \* \* \* \*

Gerard rested on one elbow and watched Daphne sleeping. Early morning light filtered through the parted drapes, casting a soft glow over the bed. He longed to touch her cheek, run his fingers through her hair, yet didn't want to wake her when she slept so peacefully.

Last night had been incredible. The sex had been amazing, but being with Daphne was so much more than sex. They'd talked between rounds of lovemaking. She'd described some of the software programs she'd designed. He'd been shocked to discover he used one of her calendar programs on a regular basis.

She'd told him about growing up in a small town south of Dallas, one almost the same size as his hometown in France. She said she'd been a shy teenager, which was why she'd turned to computers. Playing with bytes of information meant she didn't have to be around a lot of people. Gerard understood that. He'd turned to photography for the same reason. A skinny teenager with lots of acne, he hadn't made friends easily. He was almost eighteen before he finally grew into his arms and legs. At twenty, he'd realized he loved taking photos and wanted to do it for a living.

She'd asked him about growing up in France. Her eyes lit up when he described his home country and talked about his family who still lived there. It had been years since he'd gone back to visit the many aunts, uncles and cousins who still lived in and around Marseille. He'd never thought about taking anyone with him.

He wanted to take Daphne.

A tiny frown wrinkled her brow. She rolled from her back to her side, facing him. She inhaled sharply, exhaled slowly and opened her eyes. They were unfocused at first, but then she smiled.

"Good morning."

Her voice sounded rusty from sleep. "Good morning. How did you sleep?"

"Fine, once I fell asleep. *Someone* kept wanting to make love."

"I didn't hear any complaints from you last night."

"You won't hear any from me this morning either."

He pushed the covers to her waist so he could see her breasts. "I do have one more condom."

She wrapped her hand around his neck and tugged him closer. "Well, we wouldn't want it to go to waste, would we?"

Her mouth was warm and giving beneath his. Gerard cradled one bare breast, kneading it and rubbing his thumb across the nipple. A purr of pleasure came from Daphne's throat.

"Hey, Gerard," Dale called out. "You sleeping in today?"

Gerard had just enough time to jerk the covers over Daphne's breasts before his assistant strode into the room.

"I brought—" Dale came to a halt, his eyes wide. "Oh shit." Quickly, he turned his back on the couple in bed. "Sorry, man."

"Dale, why don't you go down to the corner bakery and pick up some breakfast pastries?" Gerard suggested, tucking the covers securely around Daphne.

"Good idea. I'll do that. I'll be back in... I'll be back later."

He scurried from the room as fast as he'd entered. Gerard looked at Daphne and chuckled. "Well, that was a mood breaker."

"I need to go anyway."

The thought of her leaving tightened his stomach. He didn't want to say goodbye. "No, not yet. Stay for breakfast."

"I think it's better if I go."

He had no choice but to accept her decision. He reluctantly climbed from the bed as she did and donned his robe while she slipped into her clothes.

Once standing at the door to his suite, Gerard raised both her hands to his mouth and kissed them. "I enjoyed our time together."

Daphne smiled. "So did I."

"I'll be sure you get a copy of the book when it's released."

"Thank you."

Still holding her hands, he kissed her softly. "Goodbye."

She stepped through the doorway. At the elevator, she looked at him and smiled again. The next moment, she entered the elevator and was gone.

Gerard closed the door and leaned against it. A heaviness settled low in his belly...a feeling that he'd made the biggest mistake of his life in letting Daphne go.

\* \* \* \* \*

Daphne tilted her head back and blew out a long breath. She'd worked on the software program for the last five hours and it still didn't do what she wanted. Perhaps getting away from the computer would help clear her head.

Wandering into the kitchen, she opened the refrigerator and peered inside. She hadn't eaten in hours, but food held no appeal. Her appetite had been almost nonexistent for the last four days. So had her creativity. She could blame her listlessness on the unusual blast of cold air that had barreled into North Texas yesterday, dropping the temperature fifteen degrees. Or she could blame it on the fact that she hadn't left her house in three days while she worked on the software program and was sick of looking at her own walls.

No matter where she tried to place the blame, it came down to one thing—Gerard.

She wondered if he'd left Texas yet. He'd told her his next stop after Dallas was Houston, then... Alabama? Mississippi? Daphne couldn't remember for sure, only that it was a Southern state. After he finished there, he said he would return home to decide which photos to use in the book. She'd found out "home" was a house in the Florida Keys, one that he rarely frequented.

She'd tried not to think of him. What they'd had was a one-time thing, an evening of really great sex. But it hadn't been just sex for her. She'd connected with Gerard in a way she hadn't ever connected with another man. Feelings she'd never experienced had made her heart swell, her tummy flutter. If they'd had the chance to be together longer, maybe those feelings would've turned to love.

The fact that she'd never know depressed her.

*Okay, enough of this. It wouldn't have worked out anyway. You're eight years older than he is. You know from experience that a relationship with a younger man is doomed from the start.*

Still, she couldn't help wishing things could have been different, that she and Gerard had had more time together.

Reprimanding herself for her sour mood, Daphne took the pitcher of tea from the refrigerator and set it on the counter. She reached for a glass as her doorbell rang.

A quick glance at the clock on the stove showed her it was almost three-thirty, which was usually when she received deliveries. It must be the box of books she'd ordered online from her favorite bookstore. She hurried into the living room. Not bothering to look through the peep hole, Daphne opened the door.

It wasn't a man dressed in brown on her porch, but Gerard.

He wore all black, from his boots to his jeans to his T-shirt to his jacket. His hair was loose around his shoulders and ruffled from the wind.

Her heart began a tap dance in her chest.

"Hello, Daphne," he said with a smile.

"Hi."

"May I come in?"

"Yes, of course. Please."

She drank in the sight of him as he stepped into her living room. She watched his gaze sweep the room before he looked back at her. "You have a nice home."

"Thank you."

He reached in a pocket in his jacket and withdrew an envelope. "I neglected to pay you for your modeling. Dale discovered my error this morning while he was packing up the office."

She accepted the envelope and slipped it into her pocket without opening it. "Packing up? So you're on your way out of town?"

Gerard nodded. "We'll be in Houston next week, then we head to Biloxi. After that, Dale and I are going to my home and start the job of deciding which photos to use in the book. That will take several weeks." His lips turned up in a grin. "I'm very particular."

Her tummy quivered at the sight of that quirky grin. How she wanted to wrap her arms around him and never let go. Instead, she turned into a polite hostess. "I was about to fix a glass of tea. Would you like one? Or I can make coffee."

"No, thank you. I don't have time. I have to leave for the airport."

"Oh."

Tears tightened her throat. She swallowed hard, refusing to give in to her grief about what might have been until he left.

He stared into her eyes for several moments before clearing his throat. "I'd better go. I'm sorry for the delay in paying you."

"It's fine. No problem."

She opened the door for him. Gerard slammed it closed again and faced her. He stepped closer and took her hands in his. "Come with me."

Daphne blinked, certain she hadn't heard him correctly. "What?"

"I've thought of you every moment since you left my suite Tuesday. I want to spend more time with you. I want to show you my home in Florida and take you to my hometown in France. I've never made that offer to another woman."

He squeezed her hands. "I know this is sudden," he said quickly, as if to keep her from refusing him before he'd made his case. "I know you may not feel for me what I feel for you. Just give me a chance, Daphne. Give *us* a chance."

His eyes were full of tenderness, caring...love. She touched his cheek, his lips. She didn't see a man eight years her junior, or a man anything like her ex-husband. She saw a man who wanted to be with her as much as she wanted to be with him. She couldn't possibly say no to him when her heart yearned to say yes. "I'd like that," she whispered.

He drew her into his arms and kissed her, softly, sweetly. "How much time do you need to take care of details before you come to my home?"

"A few days. I work for myself, so I make my own schedule."

"I'll come back for you next week. We'll fly to Florida together."

"Okay."

He kissed her again, then glanced at his watch. "I wish I could stay longer, but my plane leaves in an hour."

"Go. We'll have plenty of time when you come back."

He tipped up her chin and kissed her once more. "Keep this for me until I get back."

He pressed something into her hand before he walked out the door. Daphne looked down at her palm to see the last condom packet.

And laughed.

*The End*

## About the Author

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

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

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

Lynn welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

### *Tell Us What You Think*

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