



HER

Sinful
SECRET

SYLVIE KAYE



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Her Sinful Secret

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HER SINFUL SECRET

Sylvie Kaye

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Chapter One

Being a widow sucked.

Head in hand, Wendy Reed doodled a sketch of a huge, aroused dick on one of the lunchroom paper napkins. Admiring her handiwork, she licked her lips and sighed.

Not that she'd seen much of Fred's dick the past years before he'd keeled over on the seventeenth hole with a heart attack.

She crumpled the napkin, tossed the pencil and sipped her coffee, glancing around the empty lunchroom at Reed's, the upscale car dealership in northeast Pennsylvania she now owned alone.

Scraping back her chair, she went to rinse her coffee mug at the lunchroom sink. Face it—after two long years, she was lonely and horny. She yearned for human contact. A hug, a cuddle, someone to scratch her back.

And because she was wishing, she yearned for long-forgotten passion. After having companionship with very little sex for years, if she had to choose right now, she'd jump at the sex. Hard, torrid, slam-your-butt-against-the-wall sex.

As she turned to leave, Marsha from the parts department and Grace, one of the car salespersons, strode through the doorway.

"I'm telling you, online dating's the easiest way to meet and screen men." Grace was pert and in her twenties, as was Marsha.

"Maybe you should try it out, too, Wendy." Marsha tended to say whatever popped into her head, even to the boss. Although a little too nosy at times, for the most part she was harmless and a hard worker.

Wendy looked to Grace for help with her coworker.

Grace raised her hand, palm outward. "I swear by SafeFixUp dot com. Seriously."

As Grace explained the ins and outs of computer dating to Marsha, Wendy eventually skipped out on them and headed home.

In no time, she'd changed and reclined on the couch in her rumpled cotton pyjamas, eating a chocolate bar, feeling her thighs spread with each bite. Doodled note papers littered the coffee table with sketches of dishes of ice cream and pans of pizza from the TV commercials. And penises, drawn from fading memory or recent dreams that seemed to get

wetter and hornier each night.

Fighting off a case of hypochondria while the spokesman for some medication reiterated a list of symptoms, she tuned in the news.

Another awful carjacking of an expensive, luxury car. She shivered at the thought and clicked the remote again. Another commercial. *SafeFixUp.com*.

The online dating site Grace swore by. Wendy sat up.

"Find the perfect companion at any age. Forty is the new thirty," the announcer claimed. "All our clients are thoroughly screened."

A guarantee of no axe murderers was a plus. Licking the chocolate from her fingers, she glanced over at her laptop.

Should she? Dare she?

It couldn't hurt to browse. See what the hoopla was about. Grace at the dealership couldn't say enough about it. Not that Wendy would tell her or anyone. Certainly not her son. This would be her sinful secret. And far less fattening than the dark chocolate she craved.

After logging on and signing up at a nominal fee, she entered her information. Location: Pykes City, northeast Pennsylvania. Height, five-foot-seven. Weight, she lied. Hair colour, blonde, when her roots were done and her stray greys covered. Eyes, blue. Age...

She paused. Oh, what the hell, why lie? Forty-two.

She typed in the kind of man she was seeking. Strong, tall, assured. A gentleman. Passionate. Great smile and a tight booty. She shrugged. Why not? It was her wish list. She admired men who sported what she referred to as a bubble butt. Round, firm, squeezable.

Just thinking about it made her flesh prickle. She hit *Send* and stripped off her PJs on the way upstairs, hoping she'd recharged her vibrator.

It took two days before she received an email back. She soothed her ego with the assurance that SafeFixUp had been security checking prospective date-mates for 'priors' during the time lapse. Her tummy fluttered with anticipation as she opened the email.

Max Kanton. Outgoing, responsible and self-employed in finance. Picture attached.

She opened the attachment. He looked hot. Thick dark hair, smoky dark eyes, square jaw, ruggedly handsome. Her throat went dry and her heart thumped. He looked young. As her pulse baselined, she read further. He was thirty-two, and too young for her.

But who knew how recent his photo was? In the lunchroom Grace had cautioned

Marsha. "Don't think guys don't lie about their ages. The ones that do will send younger, slimmer, more muscled photos than the actual man who shows up to meet you."

Wendy stared at the picture, crossing her fingers and toes that it was outdated by about ten years.

What to do? Before she could chicken out, she scanned a flattering picture of herself from her cousin's wedding. The snapshot wasn't too close up and was perfectly angled to show off her best feature, her legs. She attached it to the email and hit *Send*.

Within the hour, she had her reply. He wanted to meet.

Chapter Two

Curiosity brought Wendy to the cosy Italian restaurant and a table reserved for Max Kanton. She was twenty minutes early and he hadn't arrived yet.

Even though they'd emailed back and forth the past week, and he'd seemed witty and intelligent, her stomach jittered. Suppose he really was only thirty-two. To calm herself, she doodled a sketch on the wine list of the flickering candle in its angled holder. Her palms dampened, so she wiped them on her linen napkin, tossed the pen back into her purse and sipped ice water to keep her vocal chords from drying up with sudden panic as the hour ticked closer.

"Wendy." A male voice, deep and low, vibrated through her.

She looked up. Wow. He was hotter and more gorgeous than his picture. Doubt flooded her with little hope that he was older than he claimed. She didn't know if she could handle a ten-year age difference, although her pulse, fluttering with immediate interest, thought it was no problem.

She inhaled him as his masculine presence surrounded her. He smelt faintly of a woodsy, musky cologne. Sexy, desirable, thrilling. He was dressed in dark slacks and a dark shirt, well-tailored. His belt and shoes were expensive leather.

When he touched her shoulder, a shiver skittered across her flesh. His fingers were long and warm and lingering. Hunger seeped through to her core. It had been a long time since she'd desired a man who was real and within touching distance. Carnal memories flooded her veins with throbbing heat.

"You're beautiful." His delicious voice thrummed through her again.

She hadn't heard those words in ages. When pressed, Fred might've said she looked nice.

'So are you' didn't seem an appropriate response so she murmured, "Thank you." He removed his hand and she ached to have him touch her again. In many places. Dark, wet ones which hadn't been touched by a man in so long memory failed her.

He sat across from her and signalled the waiter. "Should we order wine to settle our nerves?"

Young, handsome, athletic build. What did he have to be nervous about?

"It might take a whole bottle to settle mine," she said in all honesty. "I'm rusty at dating."

"I'll be gentle if you will." He winked.

And her heart flipped at the insinuation. Her body screamed to do him, while her mind warned she was robbing the cradle. But a few glasses of wine should numb her mind.

"Red or white, sweet or dry?" he asked as the server arrived.

"You choose." Living alone had made her indifferent to what she drank or ate. "I'm easily pleased."

"I hope not." His eyes raked over her face, settling on her mouth.

She felt her lips pulse, ready to be kissed. No, ravaged. With lots of sucking and licking and nibbling. She swallowed a sigh.

He ordered Soave. Once the waiter returned, decanted the wine and left, Max lifted his glass. "To an exciting evening." He smiled, his teeth white and even, his mouth firm and full and enticing.

While their glasses clinked, her crotch moistened and her clit swelled, eager to get to the exciting part of the evening. Lust was apparently ageless. She met his sleepy-lidded, sexy gaze and her pussy clenched with want.

As she sipped the white wine, he studied her over the rim of her glass. "Tell me, Wendy, what kind of man are you attracted to?"

"Fred, my husband, was a man's man. He played golf with his buddies several times a week." Soon as the words were out, she realised Max meant now, not then.

"I don't play golf." His lips curled upward at the corners, good-naturedly.

She smiled back, wanting to kiss those corners. "It's not a deal breaker."

"Is there something that is?"

"Nothing comes to mind." She shrugged, unsure what to say next. She really was out of practice when it came to flirting.

"Tell me about you?"

"I...we purchased a car dealership ten years ago, and Fred became a salesman while the economics of the business and our personal finances fell on to me. Now, I'm alone and still running things." She fingered the stem of her glass, recognising how dull it sounded and how tiresome it was to be the one always in charge.

"Ever wish you could let go? Let your guard down and let someone else take care of you, even if just for one evening?" His tone was soft and seductive, wrapping around her insides like a silken thread and drawing her to him.

"Mmm." She closed her eyes briefly, savouring the notion. "I'd love to relinquish control."

When she opened her eyes and they connected with his dark, alluring ones, she understood what he meant. Sexual control. Her stomach clutched, but not with fear, with titillation.

* * * *

Max couldn't take his eyes off Wendy's.

In the candlelight, hers had darkened to an enticing shade of blue. She licked her lips, her pink tongue contrasting with the deep rose of her lipstick, which had stained the rim of her wineglass. He was sorely tempted to touch his tongue to the brim, just to sample a taste of her.

He restrained himself. *Later*. Then, if he got lucky, he'd taste more than her mouth. Her lush breasts, outlined by the black silk of her dress, teased him from across the table. Their graceful sway whenever she lifted her glass or heaved a breathy sigh sent shockwaves to his dick.

"Tell me about you," she murmured, her voice midnight low and husky. He prepared to tell her some personal sexual preferences when she said, "I read in your profile you're divorced. What went wrong?"

He chuckled. "You really are rusty at this."

"I'm sorry." Her cheeks blushed pink.

He hadn't meant to embarrass her. If it put her at ease to know about his ex, he'd tell her.

"My ex-wife changed. At first, we both had a lust for sex and travel."

"Uh-huh." Her eyes glinted with curiosity, which he suspected wasn't merely travel oriented.

"After three years, she wanted to stay at home and make a baby. I didn't." He couldn't, but that was too much information for a first date. He handed her a menu. "Shocked?"

"Not yet." Her smoky eyes sent him a sexy signal before she opened her menu.

With one look she had his dick dancing. He shifted on his chair and concentrated on pasta dishes. His fingers tightened on the menu until he gained control of his spiking testosterone.

He cleared his throat. "I recommend the cannelloni. It's the speciality of the house."

"You must come here often." She nodded to his unopened menu.

"Mostly alone. I like the slow pace at the end of the day." But tonight, he wouldn't mind faster service.

She put down her menu. "Why don't you order for both of us?"

He grinned. He liked that a lot. He admired a woman who wasn't afraid to concede to a man's opinion on occasion. He relished even more one who capitulated in bed.

After he placed their orders, he turned to her. "I was surprised you were as pretty as your picture. I hear most women email ten-year-old snapshots."

"Going on the premise that men do the same, I counted on you being ten years older." She straightened the cloth napkin. "How old are you, Max?"

"Old enough." When she rolled her eyes, he said, "I really am thirty-two and, before you ask, I prefer mature women. They know what they like, say what they mean, and ask for what they want instead of tossing around ambiguous hints."

She laughed. "I hope I can live up to the hype."

"I'd bet on it." His entire stock portfolio. She was smart, witty, had life experience and, if he read her right, a sexual curiosity simmering beneath her sophisticated demeanour he'd kill to explore.

Their dinner arrived and she dug in. He admired a woman with an appetite. It foretold of other appetites to be fed and indulged. His sac tightened at the promise of the night ahead of them.

"I know you like to swim and walk on the beach. You know I like sports and travelling. Is there anything else you'd like to know up front?" He was eager to get the everyday stuff out of the way and open her up to intimate questions, ones involving body parts and positions.

"What kind of car do you drive?" She flicked at her fork tine with her tongue in a most erotic way.

He sucked in a breath, wanting her tongue on him. On the head of his prick, swiping

and swirling while he dug his fingers into her hair. The auburn strands looked so damn silky and soft from across the candlelit table.

"I drive a Jag, but I'm open to a trade-in."

"I'm not looking to sell you a car. I was merely curious." She shrugged her shoulders in a delicate, feminine shift of skin and bone.

"I'm curious, too." He lowered his voice and hoped he wasn't moving too fast for her. But the night was getting later and he was getting hornier with each rise and fall of her chest, each wispy word she uttered, every glance from her captivating blue eyes. "Do you like your sex slow and easy or hard and fast?"

She blinked, tossed her napkin and grabbed her purse.

Fearing he'd gone too far too soon, he reached for her wrist.

She smiled at him. "I thought you'd never ask."

He smiled back. "My place or yours?" Taking her elbow, he escorted her from the restaurant.

"Yours. I couldn't offer you a nightcap at mine. I stopped entertaining once Fred died."

Outside on the pavement, he asked, "My car or yours?"

"Yours. I took a taxi after hearing about another carjacking on the news this evening."

Moments later, with Wendy tucked in the passenger seat of his Jag, Max sped uptown.

Chapter Three

Max flipped on one dim lamp. His apartment was furnished with clean lines and sleek furniture in monochromatic shades of brown. As they stood face to face in the marble foyer, soughing quiet breaths, sexual tension mounted. Wendy's nerves were strung taut with anticipation. Their eye contact felt magnetic, his body heat electric.

"It's been a while and I'm not sure what to do," she whispered inches from his mouth.

"Don't do a thing. I'll do it all." Each word caressed her lips. His hands rested on her shoulders, reassuring and inviting at the same time. "Relax and let me make you come. Again and again."

Again and again. "Can you do that?" She'd been lucky with Fred if she'd got off once.

"Or die trying."

She stopped herself from melting right there at his feet. She wanted to act as if she was worldly and travelled, with experience to bring to the table, er, the bed...

She had every intention of exploring his bed before the night ended. Who knew when she'd get her hands on such a young, virile man again? Who knew if she'd ever be brave enough again? At the moment age didn't seem to matter to her. In the light of day, it might be a different story.

She held her arms out away from her sides. "I'm all yours, Max."

"I'm one lucky stiff."

She wondered how stiff his cock was as he feathered his fingers along her outstretched bare arms.

Gentle stirrings awakened every fibre of flesh and muscle and nerve. Tingles ended where his palms rested flat against hers, their fingertips touching.

Her breathing halted as his mouth edged closer. When at last their lips met, she devoured him with a kiss so aggressive and hungry she ought to have felt ashamed. But she didn't. Max made her feel carnal and desirable.

She let her inner wanton woman emerge. Or maybe Max brought her X-rated spirit to life. Whatever, she gave herself over to the kiss. His mouth was firm and warm and talented, moving over hers, suckling and teasing. His teeth nibbled her lips and nipped at her tongue.

When his tongue tangled with hers, her breath quickened. Her nipples peaked. Her lower lips quivered.

All from a kiss. The man was good. Sex with him was going to be hot and satisfying. She felt it in her very wet, achy crotch.

"May I undress you?" he whispered into her mouth.

"Yes," she hissed, deciding to let him have his way with her. Even though she didn't have the muscle tone of a younger woman, she'd rely on the muted lighting in the hall to hide her flaws.

He settled her arms at her sides before he let go of her hands. Reaching behind her, he unzipped her dress and peeled it down her shoulders to her waist. He skimmed his tongue along the swell of her breasts, dipping his moist, hot tip into her cleavage.

Her breath caught in her throat. Heated sensations slithered through her, leaving her aware only of her body and his adept tongue.

When he stopped, she felt abandoned until he shimmied her dress down and she stepped out of it. With great care, he folded the silk garment and draped it over the top of the steel-framed console table, where his mail and a spare set of keys took up most of the small space.

"Your body was made to worship," he murmured, his eyes glazed and sexy.

If the remark wasn't evocative enough to turn her into Jello, his smouldering gaze was. Her high heels and knees both wobbled as his dark eyes stroked her body. When his stare lingered on her breasts, her nipples pebbled beneath the lacy material of her corset, aching for him to suckle and grate the nubs between his teeth until she begged him to stop.

Her lustful, shameless thoughts amazed her but only for a moment. Soon her sole concentration was centred on his tantalising touch.

With slow, deliberate motions, Max edged the lacy straps of her body-hugging lingerie from her shoulders. Her skin tingled and flushed hot beneath his hands.

"As much as I love the sight of a woman, of you in a corset, I can't wait to see and feel you nude."

She made a mental note not to skip her gym workout next week. If there was a next week in their future.

She let him look his fill. The corset held her tummy in and the dim light cast her thighs in shadow. He lowered his hand and cupped her mound. Their body heat melded and her

clit swelled when his palm moved back and forth with a gratifying amount of friction.

He groaned. "I can't wait to feel your naked pussy."

She hadn't been felt up in years and was more than willing to accommodate his request. She spread her legs for him, and he pulled on the corset's crotch, opening the snaps with one sharp burst. Slipping his fingers into her fleshy folds, he plunged in and out until she dripped with want.

"Max," she murmured, coaxing.

"Shh. Just stand here and enjoy." He shoved another finger inside her, stretching her wider and hitting her G-spot with every lunge of his crooked fingers.

With a moan, she bucked her hips, but instead of taking her to orgasm, he halted, leaving her on the sizzling hot edge of satisfaction.

"I need more of you." His voice sounded husky with want. He slid a finger along the bra portion of the corset, encouraging her. "Can I take this off?"

"What about your clothes?" She tugged at his belt.

He stayed her hand. "Right now it's all about you."

His mesmerising words left her breathless and motionless. When he hooked his fingers on either side of the lacy décolleté, she encouraged him with her eyes. With a few tugs, he obliged her and stripped the garment from her body.

Naked and exposed, she closed her eyes.

"Look at me." When she did, he smiled. "Your body is to die for, and I've been dying to do this all through dinner." He grabbed her bottom, one cheek in each hand and kneaded the bare flesh.

His movements were rhythmic, hypnotising. Any inhibitions she had about her body image melted away. She sighed and swayed into him. Her hot crotch cradled his cock. Through his pants, he felt rigid and long, every inch of his penis throbbing muscle. And he had quite a few inches.

He ground his hips into her harder and she hugged his neck. His shoulders were muscled. So were his thighs. And his washboard abs. She didn't remember ever being with a man with such a toned body.

Fred hadn't been into exercise. Of course, twenty-some years ago when they'd met standards had been different. A slight paunch was the norm.

She forgot about stomachs when Max spread her ass cheeks wide, exposing her anus to

his finger. He circled the puckered opening, making her squirm with delight.

"Do you like that?" His breath tickled her ear, sending shivers down her spine to coil in the very spot he was titillating. "I don't want to do anything you're uncomfortable with."

"I didn't think I'd like it, but I do." Actually she'd never thought about having her back door entered, but with him firing awareness into that area the idea grew in allure.

He tapped the pad of his finger against the opening, causing a heated, pulsating response. She clung to his neck, content to give herself over to his expertise.

Once he had her writhing with lust, he said, "We'll get back to that later." He abandoned pleasuring her ass to grasp her at the waist.

Her disappointment was short-lived when he kissed her lips. He Frenched her thoroughly before moving down her neck, nipping and sucking her tender flesh as he moved ever lower. When he drew her nipple into his mouth, her breath halted. Fire flickered at her nerve endings, contracting her pussy with every pull of his mouth.

With a moan, she clasped his head and forced his face even closer. Taking her cue, he pulled harder on the distended bud and rolled it between his teeth, slowly increasing the pressure. Tottering somewhere between pain and pleasure, she held him even tighter.

He moved to her other nipple and repeated his ministrations. Only now he reached down between her thighs and massaged his thumb over her clit while he manipulated her nipple. The dual actions drove her to the edge, fast. He pinched the nub between his thumb and forefinger, while biting her nipple with the same amount of intensity. White hot desire shot through her.

She didn't want the delicious sensations tormenting her to end. Max had taken her to this height twice. She trusted him to bring her to this point again and again until she demanded to come. His persistence in prolonging the lusty ride was something she enjoyed and intended to savour.

"Care to kick it up a notch?" he asked, breathing heavily, tweaking her clit harder.

"It can't get any better than this." Her head lolled on his shoulder. His shirt smelt like clean laundry while dirty notions roiled in her imagination.

"It can if you want it to." Withdrawing his hand, leaving her trembling from head to toe, he reached for the console table. The drawer slid open and she lifted her head to see what was inside. He pulled out a golden chain. "Ever been clamped?"

She stepped back to have a better look. "I've never seen such a gadget before." She

sucked in her bottom lip as he dangled the chain with its three vinyl-clad attachments in front of her chest and vagina. Oddly, it aroused her in some erotic way.

"It's a toy, not a gadget, which means it's fun." His tone and smile were enticing.

"I'm all for more fun." Her body shuddered with anticipation. "How does it work?"

"It's easier if I explain as we go. The pressure shoots pleasure signals to your brain." When she nodded, he clamped each nipple. He adjusted the tension on each clamp, slowly, and fire ignited her nerve endings. "It constricts the blood supply and increases your nipples' sensitivity to touch and pull. How does it feel?"

"Oh-my-gosh." She spread her thighs so he could clamp her engorged clit.

"I gather that's a good oh-my-gosh."

"Yes, yes." She spread wider, to hurry him up. It felt so good.

He clamped her and adjusted the tension. "How's that?"

"It makes me want to come."

He straightened, standing tall and handsome in front of her. She kissed him lustily. He swept her mouth with his wet tongue and she quivered. Sucking and tugging, he reached between their bodies and jerked the golden chain. Mind-numbing stabs of heat raced to her nipples and clit.

"That's incredible. Do it again."

He grinned against her lips and ground against her body. The effect was intense, a combination of sting and thrill.

"Again."

"You're insatiable." He removed his hand and pulled her snug against him.

With his fingers teasing her anal opening, he plundered her mouth and rubbed his torso against hers, rasping the golden chain so it tugged and pulled and excited her beyond belief. Her sensory receptors signalled a possible overload, but she refused to back off one heavenly inch. She clutched his shoulders and held on.

With a shift of his hunky body, he loosened himself and winked. "A few minutes are enough for a first-timer." With his thumb and forefinger, he clasped the clamps attached to her nipples, one in each hand. "Prepare yourself for a rush."

"I'm ready," she said and held her breath.

He eased the tension from the clamps gradually. A slow painful flood of blood left her nipples flushed and protruding. He licked them, ever so lightly, and the cooling air soothed

her flesh.

When he finished, she asked, "What about down there?" Her eyes signalled between her thighs.

"With a minimal amount of stimulation you're going to explode with an incredible orgasm."

Her throat went dry. Speechless, she nodded. He removed the clamp and, after a surge of blood flow, her clit stood erect and throbbing.

"Time we moved into my bedroom."

Chapter Four

"Not much in here." Max gestured to his king-size bed and the flat-screen TV on the wall. "That door's the closet and that one's the master bath, if you need to."

"I'm fine," Wendy said.

And ready, if the glint in her blue eyes was an indication.

After a letdown or two from the dating service, Max had given up and gone through a six-month dry spell. With his membership ready to lapse, he'd figured he'd give the email account one last look-see. That's when fate had stepped in and Wendy's bio popped up.

She moved from his side towards the bed, lithe and graceful, stroking her hand along the mattress. Her suggestive gesture made his cock rigid enough to break cement.

She just might be the woman of his dreams. Mature and adventurous enough to suit his prurient tastes.

He strode over to her, kissed the back of her neck and whispered near her ear, "Babe, kneel on the end of the bed on all fours."

She did as he asked, kneeling and peering back at him over her shoulder with a come-hither look to her glassy eyes. Her auburn hair was tossed wildly about her beautiful face. Her lips were pouty and lipstick-free after his kisses. His dick throbbed as he admired the picture she made. She was so sexy and earthy and womanly.

When he unbuckled his belt, she sucked her bottom lip between her teeth. Her gaze zeroed in on his fly. She was keen to see his cock and he toyed with her by slowly withdrawing a cellophane-wrapped condom from his pocket and even more slowly unzipping his fly, one torturous notch at a time. Her breath rasped when the zipper opened wide and he finally dropped his pants and briefs.

His erection stood out, tall and long and hard. She licked her lips and her response pleased him, making him even stiffer if that were possible. Before sheathing himself, he grasped his cock in his hand and stroked it from base to head as she watched.

She groaned, all throaty and sexy.

"Ready?" he asked and she faced forward, bracing herself on her forearms.

He caressed her ass cheeks, massaging and spreading them to his view. The opening

puckered and contracted and he circled it with his thumb. Moving on, he teased the moist outer and inner folds of her vagina with his middle finger before leaning forward.

He let the hair falling over his forehead tickle her soft fleshy orbs and build her anticipation. When her flesh quivered and her breath halted with her expectation, he planted kisses to her pussy. His first taste of her juices was musky and sweet...addictive. He felt her muscles tense and flex beneath his lips, heard her breathe in and out, sensed her effort to widen her kneeling stance.

He lapped his tongue between her folds, from her front to her back, over and over again. Finally, he touched her hot, wet clit with the tip. She moaned, loudly.

She was dripping. He rubbed the head of his dick in her juices, smearing her wetness everywhere, between the folds of her pussy and around her anus, taunting her into wondering what opening he'd penetrate.

"What do you want, babe?" He needed her to tell him.

"I want to come." She hurried the words.

"How?" He continued to rouse her tender flesh with the plump head of his cock.

"Anyway you want, Max."

His heart hammered at the reply. She was too good to be true. Unable to hold back his enthusiasm, he thrust into her pussy with one stabbing push, all the way to the hilt.

She gasped, but bucked her hips into his lunge. "I've never felt so filled."

To make it even better for her, he reached around and strummed her sensitised clit with his middle finger while he gripped her hip with his other hand and withdrew his dick.

"Please," she pleaded, eager and greedy, before he had a chance to plunge again.

She gyrated her hips with wild abandon as he flicked at her distended nub and drove his cock into her from behind. Hard and fast, she set the rhythm. Her fleshy cheeks felt soft and giving and hot. They glowed a rosy colour from his pounding drives.

Then she whimpered. He felt her cum drip over his fingers, felt her contractions tighten around his shaft, felt his own spasm flood the condom.

Her leg muscles tensed and crumpled, while the stiff muscle of his dick went limp with satisfaction.

Standing behind her as she collapsed belly down on the bed with her legs dangling off the mattress, he smacked a kiss to her bottom before flicking the rubber off. He tossed it into the wastepaper basket next to the bed to deal with later.

He lay down beside her on his stomach, mirroring her position. He met her eyes, kissed her lips and smiled. "You were amazing." He hugged her to him, his arm around her back.

"The multiple orgasms you promised," she whispered, "I'll need to take a rain check on them."

He chuckled, glad, but he didn't tell her that.

* * * *

Later, after he showered her fabulous body and massaged her tired muscles, delighting in the feel of her satiny skin, he escorted her home.

He tapped his fingers on the steering wheel, realising that more than the satisfying sex lifted his spirits. Wendy had been more than he'd bargained for. She was different, like a rush of fresh air. He had to see her again.

"I really enjoyed our dinner together. Would you like to go out again soon, maybe take in a movie?" He veered down the street to her address. His heart stuttered as he waited for her answer. He wanted to know her better, a lot better. Suppose she didn't feel the same? Sure, she acted like she'd had a good time, but you could never tell with women.

"I'd love to. It's been years since I've seen a movie in an honest to goodness theatre instead of on DVD." She smiled over at him.

Dinner, sex and now even a movie seemed new and interesting because of her enthusiasm.

"Great. I'll call you to set up a day and time." He handed her his cell phone. "Could you punch your number in?"

When she finished with his phone, she returned it to his pant pocket, slithering her hand inside, nudging his cock playfully before dragging her hand away.

"Still frisky." He glanced from the road to her. He was curious to see how far her enthusiasm stretched. Steering one-handed, he reached into the glove box. "I have a present for you to wear on our next date if you'd like."

"I can't accept—"

"Before you go all mushy on me, you'd better look in the box." He passed her the small blue and gold square package.

She opened the lid and, unblinking, stared at its contents. "What is it?" She held up the

gold-coloured, oval-shaped, gel-coated device by its thin, short retrieval wire.

He pulled into the driveway in front of her house. "It's a hi-tech, remote control stimulator."

He studied her face. *Please, don't reject it.* He braced his arm along the back of her seat and caught a whiff of her spicy, sexy scent. A mind-bending combination of female.

"I'm supposing I wear, er, insert it?" She sized up the three-inch by one-and-a-half inch sex toy as it dangled from its pull cord. She arched a brow at him, a reddish, well-shaped, pretty one. "And you control the remote?"

"It works from up to twenty-five feet away. It's super-quiet and hypersonic with six degrees of vibration, pulsation and escalation." She nodded with each '-ation' he mentioned. "It's called a Golden Egg."

She laughed, dropping the apparatus back into its gilded box. "I hope that doesn't make me the goose."

After stashing the small, square remote into his pocket, he wrapped her slender, warm fingers around the container. "Take the box, and I'll keep the control. Think on it until we meet again."

"I have to say the evening certainly was exciting. The wine was aromatic, the dinner scrumptious, the company charming, and the entertainment original."

"Thanks to you."

She kissed him goodnight, taking the tiny gift box with her when she left.

Halleluiah.

Chapter Five

Max called Wendy at the dealership the next day.

"You're not having any morning-after doubts, are you?" His voice thrummed through her like it had upon their first meeting. His sexy allure was unlike any she'd ever known before. Yet, she forced herself to resist him.

"No doubts," Wendy lied. "I had an exceptional night." That much was the truth. She'd relived every word, action and nuance over and over again. She'd hardly slept.

But in the light of day, she knew she'd acted out of character. She wasn't the kind of woman to have sex on a first date. She wasn't the kind to submit herself to a man's desires for her own gratification, and one so young at that. Anyway, she hadn't been until last night.

"Are we on for the movie tomorrow night?" he asked.

"I'll have to get back to you on that. I have to check my schedule." After a hurried goodbye, she hung up.

As if there was anything in her appointment book. She'd spend the evening and the next and the next, like all the others, in her pyjamas by seven p.m. watching TV.

Read a book, for cripes' sake, she scolded herself.

Max persisted and called every day, and every day she put him off. She needed time to think. To put him and her life into proper perspective. Although, there wasn't anything proper about Max, outward appearances aside. He looked successful, responsible and easy-going, until he was aroused. Then he was dominant, demanding and, God help her, fantastic in the sack. She craved him like chocolate but denied herself both indulgences.

He was too young for her. He was too kinky for her. He was all wrong for her. She'd had her one wild night. Now back to reality, boring as that was.

By the end of the week, her life was back to normal and dull as ever. Bringing up an order on the computer screen, she said into the phone, "I'm sorry, John, but the new hybrid is still on back order."

"When will it be in?" He paused. "Remember Fred and I were old friends."

"Honestly, I don't have a delivery date for any of the hybrids. I promise to call you as soon as I hear."

She hung up and shook her head. The hybrid was so hard to get in Pykes City and the surrounding areas that several customers on the waiting list had offered her bribes to get their hands on the first one to hit the showroom. Any colour.

The day dragged on with paperwork, phone calls, problems with customers, parts, detailing, plates, insurance. You name it. But no calls from Max. He'd given up, and although she knew it was for the best, a part of her felt let down.

At four o'clock, the gang at the dealership surprised her.

"Happy birthday," they shouted while carrying a pink and white frosted cake.

She'd forgotten. Or, most likely, she'd wanted to forget.

While they sang the verse, she counted more dripping candles than pink-iced roses.

How dreadful.

When they finished the cheerful song, she blew out all the flickering flames, even though it took more than two breaths. All the same, she smiled and pretended it was the start of another great year. Another year of loneliness.

When she got home, she didn't hop right into her pyjamas. She waited for the phone to ring and pounced when it did.

"Happy birthday, Mom."

"Tyler, I knew you'd call." She grinned at the sound of her only son's familiar voice. Birthdays were for spending with family, not employees or acquaintances. The day had taken a turn for the better.

"I know we've done dinner on your birthday for the past two years since Dad's been gone, but I'm sorry, I can't make it this year. I didn't realise the Mariah Carey concert tickets were for tonight until Rachel called."

"I understand. I hear tickets for Mariah Carey are hard to get." Her heart ached, but she refused to be a clingy mother. "Besides, young people should be with young people."

After agreeing it was merely a postponement of the dinner and not a cancellation, they hung up.

Young people should be with young people. Warning bells went off. Max. She'd been right to avoid him all week. Even so, she flopped onto the nearest chair, miserable. She kicked off her heels. The only thing worse than getting older was getting older alone.

The phone jangled again. She jumped up. Tyler had changed his plans. Selfish, but she felt elated.

"Hello, Wendy. Thought I'd touch base with you." Max's voice reverberated through the phone, affecting her like it always did.

Her flesh tingled and her stomach did a flip-flop. At her age, how silly.

"What's new?"

"It's my birthday and our age gap just widened."

"Birthdays are only numbers." He brushed off her worry. "Why don't we go out and celebrate? Unless you have other plans."

Her plans included the TV Guide and a TV dinner.

"I did, but my son had to postpone at the last moment. Don't you have plans on a Saturday night?" she asked, curious and surprised.

"My mind was set on you, and my invitation to the movie is still open. I'll even buy you a present."

"Your presents are strange." She laughed, feeling better, less lonely. The heck with their age difference. Max was just what she needed tonight.

"I'll let you pick it out at the adult superstore." He chuckled. "Price is no object."

"I'll just wear the gift you already bought me." She sounded throaty. He brought out the naughty side of her so easily, a side she hadn't known existed until they'd met.

"Don't forget to load the batteries."

"Bring extras," she said, her voice enticing.

"I'll be there within the hour."

* * * *

Sad, but Max was happy that Wendy's son had stood her up. For whatever reason, she was willing at last and no longer merely a voice on the phone putting him off with an echo of regret. That's what had driven him to persist. Her hauntingly lonely but sensual voice had touched the empty parts of him.

He had patience, in bed and out, and it had paid off tonight. The expectation of being with Wendy had only stoked his need. He ached to have her again, to be with her and in her.

He squeezed her hand as she sat next to him in the theatre.

"I never knew an IMAX screen was so huge." Wendy craned her neck to see the bottom of the screen from their upper tier seating.

"The screen's seven storeys tall with a multi-speaker sound system. This one's equipped with 3-D technology."

"Good grief." She dug into the tub of popcorn and munched a handful.

He handed her the 3-D eyewear. "The show's an underwater adventure."

Perching the plastic glasses with the coloured lenses on her nose, she faced him. "Do they make me look intelligent?"

"Beautiful, sexy and scholarly." He met her eyes through the coloured plastic. She was all three of those things, even wearing the goofy-looking glasses.

"Wendy." At the sound of her name, they both turned their heads towards the aisle. A bubbly twenty-something woman shot them a quick wave while balancing her jumbo soda. "I thought you were going out on the town with your son tonight."

"Something came up at the last minute. This is —"

"Well, I'm glad one of Tyler's friends was able to fill in for him."

"Over here." A voice called and the woman disappeared into the darkness above them.

Clearly stunned, Wendy sat there as if she'd been slapped. Max reached over and hugged her stiffened shoulder.

"I didn't have a chance to introduce you to Marsha," she said blankly. "She works in the parts department at the dealership."

"I wouldn't worry about it. Manners don't seem to be a priority of hers."

"She's still young and dumb."

"My point exactly." He pecked a kiss to her forehead and continued to hold her.

Seemed the age difference was still a problem for her, and possibly the reason she'd put off going out this second time. He intended to do everything in his power to make her forget about the insensitive coworker. Luckily, he had just the device to aid him.

* * * *

Forcing Marsha and her none-too-flattering assumption to the back of her mind, Wendy concentrated on the crunchy buttered popcorn and the hunky man sitting next to her.

By the time the lights went out and the movie experience began—with sea creatures swimming right at her in the third dimension, the relaxing sounds of the ocean ebbing and flowing around her, and Max's warm, strong hand holding hers—she felt carefree for the

first time in years. The feeling could become addictive, she warned herself.

As soon as they finished the popcorn and she was once again entranced by the 3-D effects, a tingle rippled inside her. The sexually exciting tickle built in intensity ever so slowly.

Ah. The stimulator she'd inserted on his dare. And Max was playing.

She jerked her head to catch him in the act. Sure enough his hand was in his pocket and his face looked too passive to be innocent.

She bumped his elbow and he whispered, "What?"

"More." She sent him a steamy glance.

The next shot from his remote sent an undulating wave of prickles radiating at a much quicker, steadier pace. She crossed her legs, squeezing her thighs together to contain the delicious feeling of lust firing her flesh.

Max sent jolts pulsating through her core at intermittent intervals. Anticipation excited her as much as the actual resonations. She gripped the armrests as the thrills escalated with each tap of his thumb on the button of the remote.

When she was so wet the crotch of her panties felt damp with craving, she rubbed her leg along his calf to get his attention. He leaned his head down closer to hers and she whispered near his ear. "I'm ready to leave."

Without giving anything away, he engaged the remote and a sluggish, pulsing beat thrummed inside her, arousing her to a frenzied state of urgency. She tugged on his sleeve and reached for her purse.

"Don't you want to see how it ends?"

"I'm counting on a happy ending. For the movie and me." She stood and angled down the narrow aisle. He followed close behind. Too close. His body heat and scent only stimulated her further.

Once outside, the chill, early spring night air did nothing to cool her desire. As they walked down the block, arm in arm, towards the parking lot, a man approached them.

"Hey, Max." He stopped and held his hand out to her. "Are you a client of Max's? I don't think we've met. I'm Jim, an associate with the firm. Nice to meet you, Ms..."

"Wendy Reed." She took his hand.

"Excuse my appearance." He gestured to his sweats and sneakers. "I've just come from the gym."

“Wendy and I were at the cineplex.” Max pulled her closer, making it clear their togetherness wasn’t business related.

“Have a good night.” With a wink and a wave, he jogged off.

She looked at Max and sighed. “Another person who assumes you’re too young to be my date. Between Jim and Marsha, there’s going to be speculations flying over Monday morning lattes.”

Jingling the keys in his pocket, he searched her face. “What they think doesn’t concern me. I hope it doesn’t bother you?”

“It doesn’t when it’s just you and me.” Her shoulders sagged. “But when other people assume we couldn’t possibly be out together, I have to admit I have second and third thoughts about our age difference.”

“Screw them.” He smacked a kiss to her lips that raced her blood. “You’re gorgeous and they’re jealous idiots.”

No sooner did the words leave his mouth than a vibration hummed in her panties, and her impatience to get Max alone overshadowed her anxieties.

Chapter Six

Max drove Wendy home, saw her to the door, and let her drag him inside. Lucky man that he was.

He kicked the door shut with the heel of his shoe while her crotch pressed against his growing hard-on. Her mouth devoured his and an ecstatic rush of blood shot to his head. Both heads. This woman made him laugh and come, he managed to make her laugh and come, and all without having to turn himself inside out to do it. A welcome change in his life.

"We seem to spend a lot of time in foyers," she mumbled between demanding kisses. "Let's move into my bedroom."

He pulled his mouth from hers. "No tour of the house?"

"After." She took his hand and led him up the staircase and into the master suite. The bedroom smelt like her, spicy and feminine. The bed had a frilly canopy.

"Yours and Fred's?" He sat on the edge of the mattress.

She stood in front of him. "New."

"Nice." He reached out, pulled her closer by her hips and nuzzled his face into her crotch, inhaling her musky, sexy scent. She cradled his head and fisted her fingers into his hair.

Hooking his fingers into the waistband of her jeans, he tugged. "How about I give you your birthday present?"

Before he could make a move to assist, she unzipped and undressed with more ease and grace than a stripper. "I'm ready for my present now." She stood before him naked with only the retrieval cord of the Golden Egg dangling.

His heart pounded. "You're so damn sexy."

"So are you when you're not wearing so many clothes." She ran her finger down his shirt placket in a suggestive gesture that wasn't wasted.

He traded places with her, sitting her on the edge of the bed while he stripped for her, not bothering with much finesse.

Her eyes gleamed with lust all the same. "You're quite fit and handsome. You'd make beautiful babies." She eyed his 'baby-making organ'. "I know you said you didn't want a

child now, but someday down the road you may want to leave your worldly possessions and gorgeous genes to one."

He shook his head.

"You never know."

But he knew. A high school football injury had left him infertile and he'd learned to accept it. "There are enough children in the world." He didn't want to discuss his sterility and kill the mood.

"One's enough for me," she said.

"If I ever have the desire to play daddy, you can lend me your son." He leant down and smothered her mouth to kiss away any further discussion. Her anxiety over age and his over his immobile swimmies, as his ex lovingly called them, were both non-issues in their relationship as far as he was concerned.

Once he had her panting, he released her and fished through his jeans pocket for a rubber.

"Did I mention how much I admire your tight booty?" She leant back on her elbows while twirling her finger for him to turn around.

"Booty." He chuckled, obliging her by turning his backside to her. "Can't say the subject was mentioned."

"Your buns are so round and squeezable and kissable. May I?"

"How can I refuse? No one's ever complimented my ass in such glowing terms before." The remark was flip, but he was pleased by her praise.

Her fingers caressed his behind, one hand on each cheek and she squeezed. His dick sprang up rock-hard. When her soft, moist mouth touched his flesh where her hands had been, his cock quivered and spurted pre-cum. He strained to keep from ravaging her until she finished kissing him.

Then he pounced.

He tucked her curvaceous body beneath his, revelling in her softness and wetness. With his cock nestled between her thighs and her ample breasts crushed beneath his chest, he clutched her hair in his fingers.

"Not much foreplay tonight." She taunted with her eyes lighting up, her mouth temptingly open.

"I plan to eat your pussy."

She stopped laughing.

"I take it you're agreeable."

"Oh, yes." Her voice sounded silky and breathy.

Reaching down between her legs, he plucked the stimulator from her pussy and placed it on the night stand.

"I kind of miss it," she said.

"I'm going to replace it with something even better."

She shuddered, expectation glimmering in her eyes.

He dragged his body from hers, positioning her thighs over his shoulders so he had access to her sweet, tender inner lips.

As he touched the tip of his tongue to her slit, she bucked her hips to get closer to his mouth. But he gripped her bottom and stilled her movements. Teasing her, he flicked his tongue back and forth inside her folds with feathery but quick motions. She moaned and tried to grind her hips.

Her squirming urged him on. He delved deeper, harder, faster, licking and sucking. He slid his hands upward along her ribs, over her stomach. Her skin felt soft and supple, her body lush and taut. He felt her purr deep in her belly.

Sliding one hand down over her belly button and towards her pussy, he thumbed her clit while his mouth continued to devour her. She pumped her hips, pushed against his mouth and begged, "Please, Max."

Her clit was a knotted nub. She was oh, so wet. He lapped at her musky juices. She tasted luscious. His cock felt ready to explode. But he'd promised to bring her to orgasm with his mouth and he planned to keep his word.

He penetrated her opening, plunging his tongue in and out fast until she shuddered and cried out. When her muscles tightened and then went lax, he released her legs and slithered atop her body.

Kissing her mouth while capturing her panting breaths, he murmured, "Happy birthday, Wendy."

Chapter Seven

When Max finally entered Wendy, his hard, throbbing cock halted her breath in her throat. At her reaction, he heaved what sounded like a satisfied sigh.

As good as her climax had been just moments before, it didn't compare to the sensation his erection, rigid and thick, was causing. With his every plunge, the ridge at the plump head clashed with her sensitive G-spot. As she ground her hips higher and quicker, a moan rose from somewhere low within her.

Desire soaked her pores and her nerve endings shivered. She clung to his sleek, toned body for all she was worth, digging her heels into his butt and her fingernails into his back. Heated blood beaded her throbbing nipples and clit, and she rubbed them against his chest and pubic bone as he plunged into her. She gave herself over to the sheer pleasure his body wrenched from hers.

He increased his tempo, and her muscles tensed. Small spasms racked her. With his next two strokes, she came with a gush of vaginal juices and a loud scream.

Shock widened her eyes. She'd never screamed during sex before. He grinned, his male ego obviously elated by her response.

Slithering her hand down between their bodies, she squeezed his sac, gently. His grin swiftly faded and his cock jerked with his thundering release.

He groaned and collapsed, keeping the bulk of his weight from her with his elbows. Touching his forehead to hers, he gasped for breath before speaking in a husky tone. "You're just as terrific in missionary position as from behind."

"You should see me stand on my head," she kidded, pleased by the offhand compliment.

"I know this is going to sound out of the ordinary, but come away with me to Peru." He raised himself up further and peered into her eyes, his heavy-lidded and dark with carnality.

"Peru?" She blinked. The notion of going away with him was touching, even if farfetched. And Peru was another continent, surely more than a weekend junket.

"I have plans in the works to visit Peru soon, and I'd love if you'd vacation with me."

As their slick skin melded and the scent of sex and man clouded her thinking, she

fought to find her voice. "I can't. I have a family business to run. Employees depend on me. I don't take vacations."

"Let your son handle the family business for a couple of weeks."

"Tyler doesn't work with me. He's studying marine mammalogy, and his share of the dealership profits help fund his research."

Max lifted himself up onto his hands and looked down at her, surprise rounding his eyes. "You really don't take vacations?"

She glanced down and trickled her fingers through the hair on his chest, downward towards the spot where their bodies were still joined. "I haven't in years."

Decades would be more accurate.

"Surely you can take a weekend off. We can fly to Cancún instead." He kissed her nose and rolled from her body, as if the issue were settled.

"I work Saturdays."

"We'll have to see what we can do about changing that." He helped her up from the bed and into the bathroom with its massive tile shower.

* * * *

Max had been convincing. It hadn't been the slippery lather or the way he'd angled the showerheads. Although both had been persuasive, his logic had won her over. His credentials had been thoroughly screened and vouched for by the dating company. So who better to figure out a way to afford her time off than a financial adviser?

"New?" Max asked later in Wendy's living room.

She nodded as they sat on her plush sofa with her financial records spread out on the cocktail table. "The sofa's made from natural fibres," she said proudly.

"Are you an environmentalist?"

"I only recently started to do little things when I began redecorating. As a car dealer, I try to steer customers towards the more eco-friendly models."

"Still trying to get me to trade in my Jag?" He plonked his coffee mug onto the table and concentrated on her accounts with the same intensity as he made love.

His feet were bare and his hair damp from the shower. He wore only his trousers. He looked sexy and capable as she curled up next to him in her short, terry robe, sipping from

her mug of tea, feeling irresponsible. And loving it.

Every now and then, he reached over and absent-mindedly stroked her naked thigh. His hand was strong and large and tender. She all but purred.

What a delicious man. What a delicious time in her life.

Picking up an empty tablet from alongside the pad where he scribbled numbers, she began to doodle. In a short time, a pencilled sketch of Max took shape. As she shaded and smudged, a click from the front door lock startled her.

As the door creaked, she jumped.

Her son had a house key.

Before she could tell Max to hide, the door opened and Tyler entered. "I felt bad about leaving you alone on your birthday. Rachel understood when I cut our date short."

She stood frozen, yanking the collar of her robe tight at the throat. She didn't know whether to hug him or hide. She couldn't leave Max alone with him. Who knew what would happen?

Max rose.

"We left before the encore. After dropping Rachel at her apartment, I hurried over..." Tyler's voice trailed off. He eyeballed her short robe, her bed-mussed hair and lipstickless mouth. He scowled like he did whenever she made changes around the place.

"What's going on?" He slung his hands on to his slender hips. "Who's he?" He stepped towards the living room but she blocked his path.

"My date, Max." Who was shirtless and shoeless. Thank goodness he had pants on. She gestured for Max to stay where he was. She didn't want him any closer to Tyler with her son in such a disapproving mood. Suppose they ended up mixing it up? Suppose someone got hurt?

With a polite nod in their direction, Max stayed put, but remained standing. She shivered from the tension swirling the room.

Tyler cocked his head. "Are those your books from the dealership? What are you, his sugar mama?" His tone rose and his eyes bugged.

"I am not." She shook her head and stroked his arm to calm him. "Max is a financial consultant."

"And he makes house calls." Tyler pulled his arm free and her fingers slipped from their gentle hold. "I've seen his type on TV. A younger man taking advantage of an older

woman's trust for his own gain. How stupid can you be?"

Suddenly, she felt old and hollow. All the light seemed to drain from her life. She reached out to touch Tyler, make contact so she could explain, but he shrugged further away.

"Please don't call your mother names in my presence." Max's tone was polite but stern.

Oh, great.

"Don't tell me what to do in my own house." Tyler raised on the balls of his feet as if ready to strike.

"Please." She grabbed his arm. "It's my home. You share a place with Rachel. Maybe you should go there and cool off before you do or say something we'll both regret."

"I'll come back, and soon. Get him out of here before I do." He turned heel and strode out the door and down the sidewalk, calling out, "I'm having him checked out." She heard the word 'cops' and 'charges' before he hopped into his SUV and slammed the door.

Once he drove off, she closed the front door and trudged back into the living room a lot less enthusiastic about the future. Max took her in his arms and kissed the top of her head.

"Do you still want to borrow my son when you feel the need to play daddy?" She stared up into his dark, magnetic eyes.

"With some space and time, he'll get past it. Do you want me to go after him and try to force him to listen to reason?"

"No." Feeling defeated, she said, "I'm sorry, but you had better go before he returns."

"Whatever you think is best. He's your son and I won't interfere unless you want me to." He met her stare. "Promise you'll call me if things get out of hand."

"I won't need to."

He grabbed his shirt and shoes, but halted and pointed towards her records. "If you'd like a little good news, your dealership's in great shape. If you decide to break from the family business—which isn't really family-run as you're the sole working member—I could set you up with an investor."

She shook her head. "I couldn't ask you to do that."

"It's what I do." He slipped his shoes on and stuffed his arms into his shirt sleeves.

"I couldn't take advantage of you."

"I could charge you." He raised an amused brow. "Seriously, if you choose to restructure, you could afford a manager to take over your duties."

She walked him to the front door. "What would I do if I quit? I don't play golf or tennis.

My female friends still have husbands, which makes me the odd woman out for dining or dancing or shows.”

“You could travel with me.” His voice was low and luring.

“When we’re not travelling, and you’re back at work,” she said, “I’ll become restless at home.”

“You like to draw. I saw your sketch. You could take lessons if you like. Although I don’t think you need them.”

A smile lurked behind her lips. In spite of the dire situation with her son and the confrontation surely ahead of her, the idea of art lessons appealed to her.

“Think about it.” He took her chin in his fingers and kissed her solidly. “And about going away with me.”

In all truth, she couldn’t concentrate on anything except her son and his anger.

Chapter Eight

Max slammed the phone down. Two weeks and Wendy still avoided him. She wasn't even taking his calls. No voice urging him to keep trying, and no voice touching his emptiness. After the headway they'd made over the age and baby issues, her son's anger had caused a major setback. Though he'd known her only a short time, he missed her and his usual patience was running out.

"You're awfully grouchy." Selma, a neighbour he hadn't seen in a year, sat on a stool at his home bar with her legs crossed, wearing a skirt short enough to show off everything including her panties...if she wore any. He didn't look. She'd barged into his condo only moments ago with the clichéd excuse of borrowing a cup of sugar.

He blew out a breath. "Sorry I'm gruff. It has nothing to do with you."

"Business." She nodded at her own reply. He let it go. "What you need is something to eat."

If she headed for his kitchen, he was going to choke. Selma didn't cook, she ate out. She slipped from the stool and rounded the bar to slither her shapely, fake-baked body next to his. "Let's go out."

"Fine." He grabbed his car keys from the bar. "But I have to make a stop first."

On the way to the dealership, he discovered why Selma had dropped by so unexpectedly. "I heard at the gym you're planning another trip. To Peru this time."

He'd taken her on vacation once a long time ago. Once had been too much. And his personal trainer had a big mouth.

"It's not cemented yet." He'd asked Wendy to go away with him. Wanted to experience exotic places with her, delight in her reactions. Hell, he wanted to explore life with her. That part both scared and excited him.

"I'd love to tag along," Selma said. "I heard the surfing in Peru is the best."

Surf boards. He shook his head. Selma was so predictable. Forget the rainforest or the Inca trail.

Once he parked and strode into the dealership's building, Max ran into Marsha, the woman from the movie. "Is Wendy around?"

"She usually is but she left early today. She has a dinner date."

Whoosh. That took the wind out of his sails.

"I can see if one of the other salespeople can help you," she said.

He rocked back on his heels, took a deep breath and tried to keep his voice calm. "Her son and the make-up birthday dinner?" he asked. He hoped.

"Oh, you know her son. I thought you looked familiar."

He nodded, at a loss for words. It wasn't his place to tell Wendy's employees about them. Besides, if she wasn't dining with her son, Wendy might've moved on already.

Marsha shook her head and his heart dipped. "It's not the make-up dinner with her son," she said, "although her son did fix her up. I heard them talking on the phone. A blind date."

Selma strutted over to them and clung to his arm. He'd told her to wait in the car, but she became impatient easily. "Are you ready?" She ignored Marsha. "I'm hungry."

He smiled at Marsha and let loose a jealous demon. "Selma and I are looking for a place to eat. Where's Wendy dining?"

Minutes later, they were zooming down the road following the directions Marsha had given him. He was hell-bent on eyeballing the competition for himself. At least with Selma along he didn't look like a stalker.

* * * *

Having made tentative peace with Tyler, her only child and only living relative, Wendy avoided Max's phone calls for the sake of harmony. Worse, she'd agreed to go out on a date arranged by Tyler and Rachel with a retired uncle of hers.

At age sixty-seven, Sonny was past being called son by anyone. When he rang her doorbell, he was wearing rumpled khakis and a Members Only jacket. Wendy guessed his sneakers, sparkling white with Velcro closings, were his date-night footwear.

Ouch.

She wore a conservative black pants suit and pearls. For her own inner sanity, she'd put a lacy, silk camisole underneath the buttoned-up jacket.

Sonny drove her to a local, down-home restaurant in his economy car, which needed a new exhaust system from the sound of the pipes.

Inside the restaurant, the atmosphere was pleasant—candlelit with linen, checkered tablecloths and napkins. Taking his lead, she ordered roasted chicken, not wanting to price him out of his much-needed car repairs.

Once the server had retreated to the kitchen, he asked Wendy, “Do you play checkers or bingo?”

Checkers or bingo? The man sounded like he was eighty-seven instead of sixty-seven.

“Sorry. Neither.” She smiled politely.

“We play at the senior centre after lunch. You should stop by sometime.”

“I’m not retired yet.” *Or a senior.*

She still had things to do and people to see. Max shot to mind, and her hormones took an upward surge. Places to go. Peru flashed on the globe spinning inside her imagination. Plans to fulfil. The sketch of Max and the many more depictions she’d love to draw. She hoped to stave off a sedentary lifestyle for at least the next two decades or more.

“I could’ve retired at fifty-five but stuck it out to increase my retirement benefits.” Sonny shook out his napkin and tucked it into the neck of his shirt. “In the end, the extra money went for meds that leave me tired and bloated. My dreams of biking cross-country are gone forever.”

“I’m sorry,” she said. “That’s sad.”

“Yep. The folks at the centre have similar tales. Lola has retinopathy and Marty neuropathy. Diabetes got them both.” He shook his head. “Health issues and disabilities stop plenty of seniors from doing the one thing they waited all their lives to pursue. Don’t wait for retirement. Follow your dreams whenever you have the opportunity.”

“I’ll keep your advice in mind,” she said, thinking of Max.

Their dinners arrived and the conversation took a more pleasant turn towards the rosemary chicken, which tasted home-cooked and delicious. During coffee and a dessert of apple pie, Sonny amused her with a few stale jokes. Right before the next punch line, she heard, “Hello.”

A familiar voice thrummed through her. When she looked up, there was Max. With a woman. A young, shapely, stunning blonde.

Wendy introduced the men to each other and waited. Max’s lips turned up as if thrilled to meet Sonny, who was far less a rival than Max’s comely escort.

“This is Selma, a one-time travelling companion.” Max gestured to the young woman.

Selma opened her slick, pink-glossed lips and purred, "I'm trying to convince Max to take me to Peru with him."

Envy tightened Wendy's throat. She couldn't swallow or speak. As much as she'd dallied about travelling with Max, now that the decision had been taken from her she realised how much she wanted to go.

Fortunately, Sonny filled in the lull. "Passed through Peru, Wyoming on a hunting trip back in ninety-four. Mountains and rivers alone are worth the trip."

"I meant Peru, the country." Selma crinkled her pert nose.

"Wyoming's pretty." Max stepped in closer and blotted out his companion and her snide attitude. "Thanks to winter snow runoff in the mountains the lakes, rivers and streams are a great place for anyone who loves water sports."

Wendy had never been out West, and listened intently as the men went on about the Grand Tetons, each adding remembered details. Her fingers itched to sketch the ethereal mountain peaks and valley floors they described.

Selma tugged Max's sleeve. "Let's eat."

"The food is quite good. Have you eaten here before?" Wendy looked to Max, tall, handsome, sexy. Her heart tugged.

Selma replied. "I prefer gourmet, but some car saleswoman told Max about this restaurant. So here we are."

Max shrugged. "She wasn't a salesperson but she did work for an upscale dealership."

"Was she talkative and named Marsha?" Wendy asked.

With a nod, he grinned.

His grin made her smile. He was so hot.

He'd tracked her down. Flattering.

Marsha's loose lips were another story. So was Max's companion. Selma leaned on his arm while everyone exchanged polite goodbyes. The younger woman in the stiletto, fuck-me heels, wiggled her tight bottom as she edged away between the dining tables. Jealousy stabbed at Wendy's belly.

When the bill came, Wendy and Sonny split it Dutch treat and called it a night. After eight o'clock, it was time for meds and bed.

She had her own worries. Max. Her jealousy. Tyler. His anger. And Marsha from the parts department, who'd felt free to blab away. Something had to be done about that girl. But

Wendy was damned if she knew what to do about any of them.

Chapter Nine

Wendy's cousin Margo phoned. Wendy smiled, remembering how a snapshot from Margo's wedding had helped launch Wendy's affair with Max.

"I heard you're dating much younger men." Before Wendy could reply to Margo's nasal-toned comment, she added, "And much older ones. What's with that?"

"I, uh, who told you?"

"Rachel." Her cousin's nasally twang gave the name of Tyler's girlfriend just the right note of unpleasantness to suit the situation.

"Why would she mention my dating preferences to you?" Indignation spiked Wendy's voice.

"Possibly because you ditched her uncle for a much younger man." She sounded amused.

"I didn't dump him. We had one date. An arranged one."

"You're going out on blind dates with old men. How desperate."

"It was apparently my punishment, meted out by Tyler and Rachel, for dating Max."

"Max, is that the young man's name? Sounds hunky." She giggled like a schoolgirl. "Is he over twenty-one?"

"Max is thirty-two."

"Caught you. You didn't deny the hunky part." Margo laughed.

Wendy lightened up and laughed, too. Tyler's objections to Max had her stomach tied into a knot. It was a relief to unwind for a change.

"Give it up. What does he look like?" Margo asked.

"He wears khakis and logo jackets and sneakers with Velcro."

"Not the uncle, you jerk. Max."

Wendy smiled. "Got you back."

"Ha ha. Now tell me before I come over to the house to twist your arm. I'm dying of curiosity."

"And obviously of post-honeymoon blues."

"So let me live vicariously through you."

"Max is tall and handsome and buff. His buns are round and tight...and a handful." Wendy chuckled at her cousin's gasp.

"You are so naughty. And I'm so envious."

"A newlywed like you?"

"I know. You'd think I'd be getting a lot of action. But Stanley turned into a couch potato almost overnight. Between the TV and video games the only moves he makes are with his thumbs."

Wendy shook her head. Stanley was younger than Max. She was so lucky. Max was such an extraordinary man. But how was she going to keep him and her son, too?

* * * *

The next day, Max showed up at the dealership, looking like every wet dream Wendy had ever imagined. He wore fitted jeans and a corduroy jacket that she wanted to strip away to ogle the hard body she knew lay beneath. She tucked her hands behind her back as she strolled towards him in the showroom, needing to keep them far from the temptation to touch and stroke what her eyes admired.

The employees' hushed voices followed her. "That's him. That's the guy from the cineplex who stopped by yesterday."

"I can hear you," she chanted to no one in particular.

From the corner of her eyes, she saw Marsha duck her head back into the parts department. The clerk hadn't wasted any time pointing Max out to the staff. And sooner or later, word would reach Tyler. Wendy didn't fancy another scene with her son.

But right now the only man she could concentrate on was the one winking at her in a most flirtatious manner.

"You needn't have asked for me," she said as she got closer. "I assure you all of our salespeople are knowledgeable."

He reached out, stroked her arm from her shoulder downward, tugging her hand free from behind her back. Holding it in his large, firm grasp, he met her eyes with searing contact. Her heart thumped and her pussy wept with want. Everything faded into the background—the cars, the employees, the whispers.

"I needed the owner's personal attention."

"Oh." That's all she could think to say with his dark eyes sending lusty messages to her erogenous zones.

Her nipples peaked and her panties combusted. She wanted to give him her personal attention, starting with the zipper on his tight jeans. The desire to unzip him right here in the showroom, drop to her knees and service his memorable cock was difficult to suppress. She salivated with her craving to taste him, suck him, make him moan and come.

She blinked away her shocking thoughts, ones she'd never had about any man. He crooked a wicked smile, as if he'd read her mind. His tempting mouth, his entrancing eyes and the sexy scent of his masculine cologne drew her in. Suddenly, her carnal notions weren't so shocking. With Max, she'd like to try everything sexual. No bounds. She let out a breathy sigh.

"I thought it was time I take a ride in a hybrid." He stroked his thumb along the pulse throbbing in her wrist, which only made it difficult to think about anything but doing him.

"Why?" she said, absently.

"For investment purposes."

The reason behind the restructuring of the dealership tore her from Max's sensuous spell. "From what I saw last night, you no longer need a travelling companion so I no longer need an investor."

He'd wasted little time in replacing her, which was a sore spot that had kept her panties in a twist at the restaurant and her sheets rumpled most of the night.

He led her over to a luxury coupé and peeked through the window at the interior.

"Selma vacationed with me once, but never again. She's more interested in the spa facilities at the hotel than in a country's culture or scenery." He shook his head. A lock of hair fell onto his forehead.

She looked away before she reached up to touch the silky strands.

He opened the car door. "Is leather an option?"

"Is Peru?" She looked up at him.

"Not for Selma." He squeezed her hand. "How about you?"

She smiled, pleased with his reply. "Me and leather are both options." She didn't know how she'd swing it with her son, but she'd deal with that later.

He let out a low whistle and eyed her from head to foot. "You in leather. Black and shiny with buckles and zippers." He leaned in closer, his voice a warm whisper in her ear.

"The image is giving me a hard-on."

Her eyes flitted to his bulging fly in his tight jeans and quickly back to his face. He chuckled at her less than discreet response. Her cheeks flushed with a combination of embarrassment and excitement.

"Want to touch?" His breath on her ear became warmer and moister, shooting pangs of want to her crotch, causing her clit to throb and her pussy to ache for his rock-hard, familiar cock.

"Very much." She taunted him in return, grazing her fingertips over his thigh in a fleeting caress as she stepped to the side to hide her actions from the offices behind her.

"Take me for a ride." His hand rested on the open car door while his eyes alluded to another, more lurid ride on his lap.

"I'll get the keys. Don't go away," she purred, feeling seductive and wanton.

He spoke through gritted his teeth. "If I moved right now, I'd injure myself."

"I'll hurry."

"I won't watch. Your skirt and heels are a turn-on I can't handle at the moment."

Feeling his eyes on her despite his protest, she couldn't help but sway her hips when she strode towards the office for the car keys.

* * * *

Max inhaled a deep breath to get control of his rising testosterone and his faster-rising cock. Wendy was an earthy, exciting woman with intelligent interests, and just what he needed in his life. No shallow ego like the women who pursued him for appearances and money. No baby-nesting instincts like his ex-wife had suddenly acquired three years into the marriage, knowing upfront he couldn't give her kids.

Wendy had been there and done that. She was a great match for him.

Watching her walk towards him was mesmerising. Her hips and breasts swayed with seductive suggestion. Her eyes and mouth crinkled when she smiled and laughed, readily, lighting up her face.

"I missed you," he said as she approached him.

Her pleasure at his words brightened her blue eyes to an indescribable shade, somewhere between a clear sky and the ocean on a remote beach he'd visited once in the Pacific Islands.

She dangled the keys between her graceful fingers, her nails impeccably manicured and short. No fake, claw-like nails or black polish. He cringed at the memory of the woman who'd come on to him at a nightclub months ago, raking her dark, pointed acrylics along his neck in what was supposed to have been an irresistible gesture.

"The keys are to the hybrid. We just got it in." Even in salesperson mode, Wendy's voice sounded sultry as she rattled off its benefits. "The hybrid has increased horsepower, lower emissions, reduced noise, longer battery life, plus fuel economy. Right now, this model is in demand, and this pearl colour is especially hard to come by. It takes eight months to a year to get one. Want to drive?"

"I'd drive you anywhere." He took the keys and held the passenger door of the car open for her to slide onto the supple leather seat.

Her legs as she swung them inside were a vision of naked thighs and curvaceous calves. He was hard pressed not to climb in after her, wrap them around his neck and have a go at her sweet pussy.

He slammed the door on the image and slid behind the wheel instead. Once the engine purred to life and he steered on to the freeway, the car rode true to form as promised, smooth, quiet and comfortable.

He glanced at her and she sideswiped him with a look hot enough to tighten his ball sac. She would look amazing in leather. Too bad she was most likely flirting when she'd agreed to leather and Peru. Too bad.

He jerked his attention back to the road when a car horn blared. He wiped thoughts of leather from his mind and focused on the traffic and Peru. Should he ask her if she'd been serious about going with him? Or should he start off smaller? Maybe ask when she was going to start taking his phone calls again.

If his suspicions were correct, and she was trying to avoid her son's disapproval, he didn't want to put her on the spot to choose between them. It wouldn't be fair. Until he could figure out a way to win over her son, he'd have to make do with whatever time she allotted him. Like this afternoon.

After weaving in and out of lanes, dodging cars on the expressway, listening to horns blasting instead of the sultry sound of Wendy's voice, he pulled into the nearest mall. He couldn't concentrate on both the road and her, and he'd rather put all his attention on Wendy.

He parked beneath a shade tree far from the mall entrances and turned the ignition off. "Quiet at last." Unbuckling his seatbelt, he smiled over at her and she agreed with a nod and a snap of her own belt.

He stretched his arm along the back of her seat and eased her into conversation. "At first, I was jealous over your blind date last night."

"At first?" She cocked her head in a flirtatious manner.

"Although Sonny's a nice man, he's too old for you."

"Apparently my son and his girlfriend think Sonny's just my speed." She grinned good-naturedly.

"A woman as vibrant and sexy as you needs a man that can keep up with her." He stroked his finger along her arm. Her flesh shivered, pleasing him.

"Are you that man?" Her voice had lost its teasing tone, sounding throaty instead.

"I want to be."

"I want you to be," she murmured.

His heart did a flip, but what she'd said wasn't enough. It was important for her to know how much he needed her. "It's more than sexual. I like being with you. I feel more alive with you than with anyone I've known."

"Oh, Max. I feel the same way." She hugged him around the neck and planted a jubilant kiss to his lips, as if they'd just discovered gold.

And damn, but he had. He lost himself in her mouth. She tasted like café au lait, sweet and creamy. He nibbled her lips and suckled her tongue. Her soft moans egged him on when he should've ended the torrid kiss. His cock hardened. Before his dick became an unstoppable force, he pulled away.

"Whoa, we better take a break." He raked his fingers through his hair, seeking composure. "Let's take a walk around the parking lot, check out the architecture, the landscaping, cool down."

She didn't move but didn't protest. He took that as a yes.

When he hopped out of the car, rounded the front grille and opened the door for her, Wendy swivelled towards him, placing her feet on the ground while remaining seated. She reached over and tugged on the zipper of his jeans.

"I've wanted to do this since you walked into the showroom." She undid his zipper and stroked a fingernail through the wiry curls surrounding his dick.

Public sex. What a turn-on. Heat shot up his spine and his cock hardened even more and twitched, eager for the touch of her palm or her mouth. Whatever she planned to use was fine with him. He sucked in his stomach as her nimble fingers freed him from the tight confines of his jeans.

Sun glinted on the row of windshields in the lot ahead of them. Still no one in sight. Excitement spiked through him. When she lowered her head, he felt her tongue, hot and wet, lick the slit at the head of his penis. Grabbing hold of the roof of the car with one hand, he gripped the door with the other, white-knuckled and determined not to let go until she finished gratifying him.

Please don't let anyone come.

But him.

She swirled her tongue along the ridge of the swollen, pulsing tip of his cock and he closed his eyes, threw back his head and gave himself over to the heated pleasure of her mouth.

She teased him, sucking hard and then easing up. Moving her head in a fast rhythm and then slower. Gripping his shaft in her fist, tight, then loosening her hold. He couldn't anticipate what stroking or licking or sucking action she'd perform next, but each one brought him closer and closer to climaxing.

A jerk, hard and unexpected, yanked him from behind. The neck of his shirt tightened around his Adam's apple, choking his airwaves as he was propelled backward. Landing flat on his back, he gasped for breath. With his now limp dick sticking out of his fly, he stared up at a masked man pressing a gun to his forehead with a leather-gloved hand.

Chapter Ten

"Lady, get out of the car or your john gets it," The gunman shouted without taking his eyes or gun from Max.

"Joh..." Wendy stammered, sitting on the edge of the car seat, her feet planted on the macadam, her face stunned, her voice a shaky whisper.

The man in the woollen, black ski mask grabbed her wrist with his gun-free hand and wrenched her out of the car and onto her knees. Fear rounded her eyes. Max would've grabbed the man by his ankle to upend him, but with the handgun boring into his head, he'd have little chance of surviving long enough to be of any help to Wendy.

"I'd let you blow me too, but I don't have time to fool around." He waved the gun. "On your hands and knees."

Max flinched but could do little else. When she complied, she attempted to reach for Max when the assailant stepped on her hand. She cried out in pain. He laughed again, but this time the pitch of his glee was high and wild. He sounded deranged.

Max bided his time when every fibre of his being urged him to pounce and beat the crap out of the gunman, bullet or no bullet. But where would that leave Wendy?

"Any moves and you die." The gun barrel stabbed against Max's forehead with enough force to break the skin while their attacker ground his shoe heel into Wendy's hand. She whimpered.

"Any heroics and she'll pray to die before I'm done with her." The gunman lifted his work-booted foot.

Max cringed, fearing he'd stomp on her hand, perhaps breaking bones. He lunged to meet the gun butt smashing against the bridge of his nose and a boot heel against his groin, the brunt of which he dodged. Once he was down again bleeding and in pain, the car thief pushed Wendy flat on her stomach.

Asshole. Max fisted his hands at his sides to keep his cool. He might be able to get a punch in...before they both got shot.

"I don't have much cash on me, but I have a credit card." Max figured he could pay off the crook for now and deal with him another day. He'd track him down if it took him and a dozen PIs a lifetime.

With a smirk visible through the mouth hole of the ski mask, the attacker nodded towards Max's open fly. "Take your wallet outta your pants pocket." He snickered. "Slow. One quick move and I pull the trigger and blow your cock off."

Glad not to have the jerk rustling in his jeans while he was exposed, Max slipped the wallet from his back pocket and held it away from himself. The man snatched it.

"Both of you stay down until I drive off." He lifted the mask away from his lower face, his chin and mouth red and wet from sweat, and sneered at the car. "What a waste of a sweet ride. Beats me why anyone would want a damn hybrid and in pearl blue no less. But my customers want fancy."

Wendy's blue eyes glittered with pain and fear. They pleaded with Max to stay down.

He swallowed his male pride and let the gunman go without trying to tackle him. His dignity was a small price to pay in exchange for Wendy's safety.

He watched helplessly as the gunman jumped in the driver's seat, tore off his knitted ski mask and tossed it on the seat next to him. With a squeal of wheels, the carjacker sped out of the lot, quickly blending into the heavy expressway traffic.

"Are you okay?" Max shook off his pain and rolled to his feet to help Wendy up. Her legs were rubbery as she stood. She inhaled large gulps of air as if to ward off a crying jag.

He steadied her with his arm around her shoulder. "How bad is your hand? Can you flex your fingers?"

She nodded and wriggled them to show him she could.

His heart pounded. Now that it was over, reality sank in. He hugged her to him. If he'd lost her...no, he couldn't even think about it.

Gripping his arm for support, she brushed dirt from her scraped knees. "My purse and cell are in the car."

"My cell's in my pocket. Lucky my open zipper kept the creep from frisking me." He hoped his levity would wipe the fear from her face.

She forced a laugh.

Ah, it worked.

Zippering his fly, he chuckled, relieved she wasn't hurt or still scared.

"We can skip over that particular detail when we report the carjacking." She tore off a piece of her blouse to blot the blood dripping down his face.

"Thanks." He took the cloth and held it to the bridge of his nose. With his other hand,

he dug his phone from his jeans pocket and flipped it open. After pressing 9-1-1 and giving the operator the details, he and Wendy sat on the ground and waited.

She glanced at him. "If they found out all the details, the police and the news media would brand us for life. BJ and the bandit." A small burst of laughter slipped from her lips.

"You're enjoying this way too much."

"How about BJ and —"

"How about just a BJ?" He silenced her with a kiss so hot he forgot about his facial pain.

She groped for his fly but was interrupted by the sirens and flashing lights of the ambulance and the police car. *Damn.*

Nine-one-one sent paramedics. Although Max's main injury was to his dignity, he rode in the ambulance to ensure Wendy had her hand examined.

He'd wanted to help her go after her dream, not keep her from it. He hoped her chance to draw hadn't been ruined before she'd begun. He should've been more diligent when they were in such a compromising position, instead of losing himself in pursuit of his sexual satisfaction.

* * * *

At the hospital, Max and Wendy filled out insurance and health information.

"Operations? Accidents?"

"I had an injury and surgery to my testes from playing football when I was eighteen." Max glanced her way and her heart swelled with sympathy.

Later, in the waiting room, she pursued it further. "Is your injury the reason you don't foresee children in your future?"

He nodded. "I'm sterile. Over the years, I've come to realise I don't need to be a father to feel fulfilled. I would've told you eventually when we became more serious."

"I imagine your infertility put the hitch in making a baby with your ex-wife." She took his hand to comfort him. "Did you two consider a sperm bank?"

"No, my ex didn't plan to use a turkey baster. She had designs on my best friend's genes and his injector."

"His cock," she whispered, shocked.

He grinned despite the seriousness of the conversation. "You never cease to surprise me. I mean that in a nice way." He clasped her uninjured hand tighter.

* * * *

They spent the next two hours at the hospital waiting to be examined. Afterward, they gave their statements to a cop at the police station who used the two-finger method of keyboarding on his computer.

Unfortunately, Wendy and Max still had to return to the dealership to claim his car. She could've taken a taxi home and dealt with the residual unpleasantness in the morning, but she refused to let him face the curious looks and questions alone. Bruised and bandaged and dirty, she looked more battered than she felt.

Max didn't look much better with his swollen nose, despite the ice pack applied at the hospital. His mouth formed a grim line. He was apparently still angry at himself for letting their attacker escape. As if he'd had a choice.

Men.

But she didn't have much time to dwell on men with Marsha bearing down on them as soon as they entered the office.

"The police were here. They said you were all right, but how did it happen?" Marsha asked, nosy as always. "The cops said it was mall carjacking. Didn't either of you see him coming?" Her eyes narrowed.

She eyeballed them suspiciously, as if their clothes weren't buttoned and their wounds mercurochromed. Almost as if she could see them enjoying oral sex before the thief took them down.

Wendy blushed. Forty-something and she blushed. Gawd, but Max was good for her ego.

"I was checking the tire pressure," Max said.

Oh, yeah, that was believable. Wendy stared at him and attempted to keep her jaw from hanging open.

"Why didn't you wait until you returned to the dealership?" Marsha didn't try to hide her disbelief.

Adding to the fray, along came her son, tall and lanky, his phone plastered to his ear. "Tyler." Wendy ran over to her only child, happy to see him, even if Max's presence would likely piss him off.

He clicked the phone shut and kissed her cheek, his concern for her safety clearly

overshadowing his peeve where Max was concerned. "The police told me you'd left. I was frantic to find you. You weren't at home so I raced over here on the off-chance. Are you all right? Do you need anything?"

"I'm fine. The doctor swears my hand will heal with no problems." She flexed her fingers as proof. "I don't need anything now that you're here."

He put his arm around her shoulder. "I'm sorry for acting like such a jackass. I should trust your judgement. You have every right to find happiness wherever."

Max was obviously the wherever because Tyler held his hand out to him. "I want to thank you for looking out for my mother."

Max took Tyler's hand but frowned at Wendy's bandage. "I should've protected her better."

"You did everything you could," she said.

Max didn't look convinced.

Tyler waved his cell phone. "That call was the police. They found the car, dusted it for fingerprints and released it."

"That was fast." Max shoved his hands into his jeans, drawing her attention to how snugly they fit. All thoughts of cars fled. The man had a devastatingly sexual effect on her. She smiled, liking it and him more every minute.

"The thief ran out of gas," Tyler told them.

"We'll go and pick it up," she said.

Her son shook his head. "You two look beat. I'll go. One of the salespeople will drop me off. Go on home. Both of you." He squeezed her shoulder.

She kissed and hugged her son, happy and relieved to have peace restored between them. Max then walked with her to his Jag.

"Looks like we have my son's blessing." She smiled, amazed at how well the day had turned out after all.

"I felt like a jerk accepting his thanks after endangering your life." He held the car door open and helped her in.

"You didn't. The gun-toting thief did. Please, let it go, Max." Joy seeped from her tired body.

Once he climbed behind the wheel and studied her face, he forced a grin. "I don't want to put a damper on your reconciliation with Tyler."

The ride home was quiet except for a CD of soft rock music, and she felt re-energised by the time he pulled into her driveway.

“Why don’t you come in?” She stroked his arm. “Stay the night. I’ll put another ice pack on your nose, and we can lick each other’s wounds.”

“I got kicked in the nuts, if you recall.” He arched an eyebrow, showing his interest in her offer.

With a wink, she dangled her house keys and he took them.

Chapter Eleven

Max carried Wendy's nude, wet body from the shower into her bedroom. Clean and invigorated by the soap and water as well as from seeing her slick and wet, he planned to make it up to her for all she'd been through today. After the fright of their carjacking, she was badly in need of some pampering. He was just the man to give it to her. He prided himself on giving as much as he took in the bedroom.

He placed her on the bed, lay down next to her and kissed her injured hand.

"That feels better already." She unravelled her soggy bandage and dropped it into the nearby wastebasket.

"Tell me where else you hurt." He nuzzled her neck, moist with droplets from the shower, and licked her flesh which was water-warmed, pliant and sweet-smelling.

"When you do that, I ache mostly down below." She cradled the back of his head with her uninjured palm and gently scratched his scalp.

"Show me where." He clasped her hand and trailed it down her thigh.

"Here." She moved their joined hands between her thighs.

"You're pubic hair hurts?" He slid their fingers into her damp curls.

"No, silly, Lower." With a throaty giggle, she moved their hands between the folds of her pussy.

Her flesh was hot and sticky. He curved his large finger over her smaller one and inserted them. They slid easily into her slick opening. He teased her G-spot with their crooked fingertips before penetrating her completely. She gasped.

He plunged their fingers in and out, slowly, then sped up. Their joint masturbation of her was erotic and enticing.

"Do you want to come?" He stopped, awaiting her answer.

"No." She shook her head on the pillow, rolling it from side to side. "I want us to come together."

He withdrew their fingers and held them up in front of their faces. He licked at them, urging her to do the same.

She tasted her juices for the first time. The experience was risqué and somehow natural,

both at the same time.

"I promised to lick your wounds. She reached down. Gripping his penis in her fist, she pumped, squeezing while he got hard and even harder.

Before she lowered her head, he stilled her hand. "Babe, let's not get ahead of ourselves."

He sheathed himself and entered her. Locking his dark eyes with hers, he connected with her in a way that somehow seemed more intimate than sexual. His gaze penetrated her as deeply as his thrusts. She felt consumed by Max, body and soul. When she lifted her hips to meet his plunging movements, it was so she could get closer yet.

Wrapping her legs around his waist, she arched her back higher and murmured, "I need you deeper."

He unlocked her legs and placed them over his shoulders. He re-entered her, sinking in all the way. His eyes pierced hers, reflecting the emotions swirling through her. Caring ones. Withdrawing, he plunged again and again. Friction was electric. Skin slapped skin, muscle met muscle. She felt needed, wanted, fulfilled. Sensations escalated as he drove her closer to the brink of her orgasm. She clawed at the sheets, wanting the delicious torture to end, wanting it to last forever. Wanting to stay this close to Max forever.

Then he took her more rapidly and she gave herself over to desire. His hips hammered into her. Her bottom and the back of her thighs were pounded by his weight.

Harder, deeper, faster. He forced her closer to her orgasm with each lunge. He gasped and panted with his efforts. Her breathing quickened as her climax overtook her. In a rush to climax, she came. He continued to pump until he groaned loudly and erupted. Stilling, he smiled into her eyes before lowering her legs. With her legs draped at his sides, he dotted panting kisses on her stomach.

Slowly, his breathing evened and he rolled onto his back next to her on the bed. Without looking, he peeled off the condom.

She took it from him and tossed it into the wastebasket. His cock wasn't limp or soft. She touched the shiny cum glistening on his shaft.

"Now you can lick my wound."

Shock jerked her eyes open wider while erotic excitement tickled her insides. His challenge took hold of her. She bent her head and ran her tongue along his shaft. His cum tasted salty and musky, slightly tart. She lapped along his length until she'd licked him clean.

His cock became erect again. She took the entire engorged head into her mouth. Moving her head up and down while she fisted his shaft tight in her hand, she pumped. He became even more rigid and the slit opened. When he began to spurt, she wasn't sure what to do.

He laughed, pulled her away and mopped it up with the corner of the sheet.

"I was getting prepared to swallow," she said.

"Knowing you were willing is good enough." He kissed her, his mouth tender and lingering.

When he broke away, he said, "Now let's talk business."

* * * *

An hour after Max left in the morning, the doorbell rang.

Wendy peeked through the front door safety viewer. It was Tyler.

She flung the door open. "Did you lose your key?"

"I was being discreet in case you had company."

"Thank you for your consideration." She kissed his cheek and tucked her arm in his, ushering him into the kitchen where fresh brewed coffee warmed on the burner and scented the room.

He hopped onto one of the wooden bistro stools while she poured coffee into two colourful ceramic mugs. Handing him one, she took hers and sat across from him.

"I talked to the police this morning. They caught the carjacker. He had a client, who remains nameless for now, willing to pay a high price for that particular model and colour." He shrugged. "Status thing, I guess. People always want what's the hardest to obtain."

"Thank goodness he's behind bars." A shiver ran through her, recalling his brutal treatment and evil laugh.

"Yes, especially with me flying out to join the professor and the mammalogy team in the Indian Ocean. Otherwise, I'd feel like I was abandoning you."

"When?" She was more concerned with not seeing him for months than with the thief who was safely locked away.

"Tonight. The research project came together quickly."

Fingering the rim of her mug, she decided to go for broke. With Tyler's recent acceptance of Max, he might as well know everything.

"Max wants to buy into the dealership as a partner. As a financial consultant, he has knowledgeable ideas for expansion and development."

Tyler's cup stopped midway to his mouth. After a brief hesitation, he placed it back on to the table. "Why is he investing in the company? It's always been solely family owned."

"I haven't had a vacation in years. With the partnership and restructuring, I'd have time off to pursue my own interests. Like you, with your research."

"What interests?" He crooked his eyebrows.

"I love to sketch and want to take lessons and visit exotic places."

"With him?"

"Yes, starting with a mini-trip to Cancún this month and finishing with an extended vacation in Peru at the end of the year."

"Are you sure you're not moving too fast?"

"It's what I want. He's what I want." She paused to let it sink in. Her years of responsibility were ending. She was looking forward to this new time in her life. She reached across the table and patted his hand. "Any objections?"

Slowly, he shook his head. "Can't think of any."

"You'll still get funding for your research. Your share of the profits won't change." She smiled.

"I had him checked out, financially, personally, criminally. I got the report yesterday. Planned on telling you the details last night."

Her mouth gaped open.

"Don't you want to know how he did?"

"No." She trusted Max.

"Time for me to go." He slipped from the stool and gave her a hug before heading for the door. After opening it, he turned and winked. "He passed with flying colours. I'm glad you'll be in good hands when I'm out of the States."

* * * *

A few days later, Max took her to dinner. Sitting across a candlelit table, he held both of Wendy's hands in his. "I have some bad news. I called the police detective to see if there was anything new with the car theft case. The carjacker posted bail."

She snapped upright in her seat, jerking his hold loose. "Are we safe?"

He took her hands in his again, his grip firmer. "I'm not sure. Apparently, he's not a flight risk or the judge wouldn't have allowed bail."

"Did they lift any prints from the car?" He could almost see her mind clicking, piecing together what she knew and needed to know.

He shook his head, met her eyes. Hers appeared frightened. He forced calmness into his voice he didn't feel. "The hybrid came up clean. The bastard must've kept his gloves on even after he drove off."

"What about the other cars or witnesses in the string of hijackings?" Her hands felt cold in his.

"They haven't recovered any other vehicles. The only evidence against him is our eyewitness testimony." He thumbed her wrist where her pulse fluttered.

"So we're the only two people who can testify against him." She tugged free and snatched her purse from the table, nearly knocking over the burning candles. Pulling out her phone, she hit speed dial. Then she clicked *End* and tossed the phone back inside. "Tyler's in the middle of the Indian Ocean. There's no sense worrying him."

"That's up to you." Lacking parenting experience, Max deferred to her in regard to Tyler.

"What about us?" She took a deep breath to calm herself.

"It's the perfect time for a getaway to Cancún."

* * * *

An impromptu getaway took some arranging. Before Wendy and Max could escape to Cancún, Max had to juggle some meetings and clients. She had to interview and hire a general manager for the dealership, then walk her replacement through things. She left her phone number with him in case he encountered any unforeseen problems.

Upon arriving at the Cancún International Airport ten days later, she and Max jeeped along the coastal highway of Riviera Maya. Eighty miles later, he pulled up to a remote area on the beach alongside a rustic, thatch-roofed cabana he'd rented, which had no electric and no telephone.

For the next two weeks, the squawk of exotic birds woke them in the morning and the

lapping waves eased them into a sound slumber at night.

Wendy's eager fingers sketched the spectacular, turquoise ocean from a front porch canopied with palm fronds, and tried to capture the density of the verdant jungle from her bedroom window. She drew a picture of the curious crabs scrambling along the powdery, white sand and another of the sea turtles mating in the bubbling surf.

"I feel like a voyeur." But she couldn't tear her eyes from their sexual act.

"We could give them competition." He reached over and took the sketching pencil from her hand.

Kissing her open palm and running his wet tongue along her love line, he put an end to her fascination with the turtles. Shivers ran up her spine. She lay alongside him on the terry beach blanket and spread her tanned, nude body open to him. Knowing her erogenous spots well by now, he coaxed her flesh into eager submission.

He plucked her turgid nipples and slipped his finger over her slick clit. He pinched and aroused the throbbing nub until stabs of want clenched her vaginal walls, and she ached to have him inside her body. Anywhere.

"I love having anal sex with you," he murmured in her ear.

"I love making you happy. But it doesn't appear as if the sea turtles are doing it anally." She flicked her tongue along his ear and tugged his lobe with her teeth.

"They don't know what they're missing."

Enthralled, she rolled over and, with a moan of anticipation, opened her body and mind to him.

He slapped her bottom playfully, then twice more with a little more pressure. Her cheeks heated and warmth quickly spread between her thighs and into her pussy. He cupped her buttocks and massaged the hot spots he'd swatted. Desire flooded her. She became damp and horny. Her nether lips quivered and her bottom puckered and pulsed. Max never failed to take her to new heights of arousal.

He positioned her on her knees, lifting her hips and arranging her bottom at the best angle for his penetration. She rested her head on her arms and felt his body heat from behind. Slipping his fingers between her thighs, he toyed with her clit, setting a rhythm her hips were fervid to imitate.

His pubic hairs tickled her cheeks before his shaft nuzzled her tight bottom. His hips joined in the tempo she'd set, and she became more frantic to have him satisfy the sizzling

desire escalating with each jerk of their bodies.

The plump head of his penis rubbed against her pussy, smearing her juices backward to moisten the tight bud of her anus. Taking a cheek in each hand, he spread her open and slowly pushed his cock inside. She shuddered as her tight hole burned to accept his size.

He slipped one hand around to tease her clit as he began to thrust in and out of her tight opening, stretching her with each pump of his hips. Intense sexual pressure exploded through her nerve endings. Her whole body throbbed with her lust. She bucked her bottom backward against his thrusts, her frenzy contagious.

Soon they both moved with wild fury. Her muscles trembled as the ultimate orgasm rocked her. His body contracted and in a few more strokes he groaned and spasmed, his semen trickling down between her cheeks.

Her knees buckled. Her lungs gasped for air. Still behind her, he planted a kiss to her spine.

* * * *

Later, they ate fish with mango and papaya salsa and drank bottled water, which a local woman from a nearby town delivered daily. They made love again by candlelight beneath mosquito netting that lent a gossamer mood to the experience.

She and Max explored the Mayan ruins, the pyramids, the haciendas and the cool, crystal-watered *cenotes*, the natural swimming holes where coral and fish collided in bursts of colour.

They jeeped for miles, passing eco-resorts that strove to avoid impacting the environment, their ecological walking paths protecting the flora and fauna indigenous to the area. They toured the northern shores, discovering stretches of undeveloped beaches, freshwater springs and coconut groves.

On the final day of their vacation, she and Max sunbathed nude on the white, sandy beaches for the last time. Lush tropical flowers scented the sea breeze caressing Wendy's sun-warmed, naked skin.

"Are you going to sketch today?" He reached out and touched his hand to hers.

"I'm hoping I can do justice to your magnificent body when I put my pencil to paper."

He smiled at the compliment. "I'm hoping to do justice to your magnificent body when I put my penis—"

She swatted his arm. "You are so single-minded."

"You like me for my mind."

"I do. You're imaginative, provocative, considerate, caring..." She waved her hand and looked away. Her cheeks flushed as if embarrassed by her feelings.

"I love your mind." He squeezed her hand, ducking his head to meet her eyes. His grip on her hand tightened. "And I've fallen in love with the rest of you too."

"I've fallen, too." She tugged on his hand and they fell into each other's arms. When they were face to face, she said, "You've given me a second chance at life and love."

"You make me feel whole. Me just being me seems to be enough for you."

"More than enough." She rubbed herself against his cock.

Chapter Twelve

Back in the United States, life wasn't so carnal or simplistic.

Max's time was consumed with a financial merger, bigger and more complicated than theirs concerning the car dealership. Wendy saw little of him the first week. Her workload at the dealership, on the other hand, disappeared when she turned over the reins to the new general manager. His first act was to arrange sensitivity training for the staff, with emphasis on determining how much information people needed. She suspected it was aimed at Marsha.

The following week, Wendy pursued her art with a vengeance. She bought sketch pads, graphite, coloured and water-colour pencils. She signed up to take classes two afternoons a week and bought a book on composition.

Missing Max, she drove out to a picturesque old cemetery on the outskirts of town to sketch and occupy her mind with ideas that didn't involve him and bed.

She felt alone and yet not alone. She'd felt someone watching her since she'd returned home. But whenever she checked, no one was there. Silly. She shook off the creeps. Probably the aftermath from the carjacking. She tried not to dwell on the frightening incident or let it affect her comings and goings. She'd only recently recaptured her gusto for life, thanks to Max, and she didn't plan on letting the sleazy car thief rob her of that. He was in court at this very moment for his preliminary hearing. She and Max weren't supposed to testify until tomorrow.

Out of habit, she checked her rearview mirror. One other car, well behind hers. She supposed roads to graveyards weren't travelled much, except on Memorial Day and All Hallow's Eve.

Once parked, she trotted up a pathway, lugging her bag and stool, stopping every few feet to adjust her bulky load until she found the ideal spot to set up her folding stool. Not yet comfortable with the idea of an easel, she pulled out the sketchpad and sat to put pencil to paper.

A tall tree, with its budding branches poking up at weird angles. A crumbling stone wall. Potted flowers, vibrant and alive, contrasted with the dead earth of a new grave. She

couldn't decide what to draw.

Ling-a-ling. Ling-a-ling.

Her pencil point broke as the unexpected, noisy phone pierced the serenity of her surroundings. Gripping the pencil between her teeth for a moment, she freed her hands to rummage through her new bag, which she'd purchased to hold all her art supplies.

"Where are you?" Max said. "I'm over at your place."

"I was about to sketch. What are you doing at my house?" A door slammed in the distance, the sound carrying.

"I cleared my schedule to take you to dinner. I've missed you." His voice was bedroom low.

Her stomach knotted with instant, sexual excitement. It had been a long time since they'd indulged in each other's bodies. "I just got here, but I'll be right home." She couldn't wait to see him, be with him again. She missed the smell of him, the touch of him, the taste of him. Everything about him.

"How long? Where are you?" He sounded eager.

"About fifteen minutes. I'm in the cemetery on the outskirts of town. It's peaceful and pictorial here."

"It's remote out there." His voice lowered with concern. "I was going to wait until I saw you, but the carjacker jumped bail and didn't show up for court."

"I'm leaving as we speak." She stuffed her pad and pencil into the bag.

"Be careful," were the last words she heard as she flipped her phone shut.

As she stuffed her phone into her satchel, she heard the crack of a tree branch in the woods surrounding the cemetery wall.

Her ears perked, alert. Squirrels or chipmunks weren't that noisy. She stared off into the woods. A late spring breeze blew strands of her hair across her cheek. It tickled her lips, but she didn't swipe it away. She stood frozen, listening.

Another crackle rent the quiet, and she jumped.

A shadow flickered briefly on the far side of the stone wall. Or maybe it hadn't. She was spooking herself, understandable given she was in the cemetery alone amongst the tombstones and the worn, final words etched on the granite slabs. She rubbed her arms where gooseflesh prickled.

From the corner of her eye, she saw a dark figure standing near the old tree, still as a

statue, as if waiting. Spooky, yes. Odd, no. It was probably a loved one visiting a relative or a friend. She turned away, giving the mourner privacy.

She slung her satchel over her shoulder and snatched up the folding stool, tucking it under her arm. She scampered towards the iron gate and her car on the other side.

A loud squeak, like rusty metal, and a sudden slam stopped her in her tracks. "Who's there?" she called.

No answer, just the rustle of footsteps in the brush. The sound became louder, closer and faster. Her heart pounded. Panic tightened her chest. She called out again. "Hello, anyone?"

Again, nothing. Even the footsteps had stopped.

What did that mean?

She scanned the cemetery, seeing no one. The shadowy mourner was no longer in sight. She hurried along the path, shifting the stool and bag every few steps. Adjusting the strap of her tote securely on to her shoulder, she glanced at her watch. Nearly ten minutes had gone by. She'd be late. Max would worry.

She loped along as best she could, the satchel slapping her thigh until she skidded to a stop at the end of the macadam walkway. The iron gate was closed.

She dropped her gear and rattled the gate, but it didn't budge. Not even a sliver so that she could squeeze through.

With no choice other than to climb over, she stuck her foot into the latticed scrollwork to heave herself upward. Lifting her other foot off the macadam, she grappled for a foothold. No such luck.

She heard heavy breathing behind her. Smelt a sour odour. Garlic. It was no animal. It was human and it wasn't talking.

Taking this as a bad sign, she kicked her foot backward and it sank into flesh with an ugly thud.

"Oomph." The sound was definitely human.

As she scrambled to vault over the fence, large hands gripped her by the back of her blouse and flung her down. She landed on her back, gasping for air. Her head hurt. And her elbow. She rolled her eyes backward to glimpse the figure standing at her head. She recognised the work boots as the ones that had trampled her hand.

"I cut you a break last time, and you repaid me by fingering me."

"I, uh, if you mean the case, I changed my mind. I'm not testifying. After all, the car was returned. No harm done."

He gestured towards the car she drove today. "You wouldn't object to lending me your car then?"

"Sure. Borrow it. Or we could trade for whatever you drove here."

Probably stolen, too. She tried to get up from her disadvantageous position. But her elbow and head ached too much.

He laughed, the pitch eerie and wild. She decided to stay put, hoping he'd take the vehicle and split.

"The keys are in there." She pointed at her satchel.

He bent, his large form shadowing her, ominous. With one hand he grabbed her bag and with the other he seized her hair and yanked her to her feet.

She squeezed her eyes shut to block out the stabbing pain. It intensified as he wrapped the strands around his fist. Her scalp tightened as if it would split open. She bit her lip to stave back the tears. She sensed crying would give him reason to harm her even more.

"It's been a chore following you, trying to get you alone. It ends now. You're taking a little ride with me." He dragged her along by her hair.

He forced the gate open with his shoulder. It let out a loud, pained creak. He'd tailed her here to end it. What was *it*? Her life? She gulped for air as fear replaced misery.

He pushed her towards her car and braced her back against the rear fender. "You're riding in the trunk. Hold still and this will be over in a flash." He pulled his fist back to cold-cock her.

Max jumped out of nowhere and blocked the man's fist with his forearm. A loud crack, an earsplitting yelp, and the carjacker doubled over, gripping his wrist. She was pretty sure Max had broken the bones.

A siren, a flashing light bar, a cruiser.

Thank goodness Max hadn't waited at home for her, but instead had called for help.

* * * *

This time the carjacker didn't get bail. He got a speedy and just trial.

Afterwards, with Tyler back in town on a short break from the research project, they

celebrated at Wendy's favourite café, the cosy Italian restaurant where she'd first met Max.

"I want to thank you for keeping my mother safe. I regret not being here." Tyler shook his head.

"No thanks necessary," Max said, gazing into her eyes. "I don't want to think about life without her in it."

He took her breath away, and she'd thank him properly later. Right now, she had to reassure her son. "You should've been exactly where you were, pursuing your life and interests." She patted his hand from across the table.

"I could've lost you. Been orphaned."

"He planned to kill both of us. Lure Max in with a ransom demand. Let's talk about something pleasant." She'd been fretted over by Max since the attack. Enough was enough.

With a nod, Tyler made the effort. "How's the new manager working out at the dealership?"

"No complaints. The reorganisation is working better than expected." She smiled over at Max.

"I predict an increase in profits next quarter." Max's tone sounded upbeat.

"I've been meaning to take back the remark I made about you and your sugar mama." Tyler chuckled, referring to the ridiculous accusation he'd aimed at Max upon their first meeting.

Wendy laughed. Max laughed. They all laughed.

With Max, she was carefree. She had love and freedom and time to explore the depths of both. What a heady combination. What a wonderful time in her life.

About the Author

Born and raised in northeastern Pennsylvania in the shadows of the Pocono Mountains and its honeymoon havens, Sylvia Kaye breathes the air of romance daily. Road trips to exciting locations in her beautiful country inspire the settings for her stories.

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