

Sibling Rivalry

By Robbie Cox

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One

She should be asleep by now, lost in some dream world with some bare-chested hunk from one of her romance novels. She should be, but she wasn't, not with her sister in the next room. Aimee Harper lay in her bed, again regretting sharing an apartment with her twin sister, a regret she had almost every weekend. It was three in the morning and instead of the deep silence of night lulling her to sleep, she was being kept wide awake by her sister's cries of pleasure. Living with Karla really wasn't the problem; at least, not usually. When Karla first asked to share Aimee's condo, Aimee thought it a great idea. She could save money for one, which would assist her in her quest to actually do something with her photography hobby, and also have someone to split the household chores. When she didn't have to remind Karla to do her portion, that is. And, for the most part, they got along as well as most siblings. They bickered here and there, squabbled over who drank the last Diet Coke, and whose turn it was to clean their only bathroom, but they made it work. No, it wasn't the fault of Karla and her wild nights. The blame lay with their apartment's thin walls, compounded by the fact that their beds rested along the same wall. That was a fact she needed to remedy first thing in the morning and while she was kept awake by her sister's one night stand, Aimee mentally rearranged her room three times.

That wasn't enough to distract her from the fact that she was privy to Karla's moans as well as the bumps of the bed against the wall. She didn't need to experience someone else's sexual exploit this Saturday night. She needed an exploit of her own.

With her eyes closed, Aimee took a deep breath, trying to calm the emotions gurgling up inside of her. She should have known how the night would end when Karla brought home... Aimee opened her eyes and stared up at the ceiling. What was his name? After a minute or two of trying to conjure up the name of Karla's new toy, she surrendered. It simply escaped her, like so many of the other names of the men her sister brought home. She never kept them for very long, so Aimee saw no need investing in the normal civilities. Besides, knowing her sister, Karla had probably never even introduced him as she scurried the man through their apartment and straight to her bedroom for the predictable conclusion to her night's activities. As Aimee recalled, Karla had barely even waved on her way through the condo and the man was too intent on Karla's heart-shaped ass to even notice Aimee was sitting on the couch in her flannel pajamas, eating popcorn, sorting through her sunrise prints, and watching an old Bob Hope movie. Aimee sighed into her pillow at the image of her Saturday night. *Boy, do I live a pathetic life.* She really needed to get her car fixed.

The action on the other side of the wall began a steady rhythm that sent tremors through Aimee's bed, her head bouncing slightly on her pillow. Her sister always brought home men. It was one of the main reasons she wanted out of her mom's house. She used to sneak boys into her room when they were in high school, which wasn't all that long ago, though it seemed like forever. Of course, when you're in your twenties, a year feels like a decade. *That's why we think we have plenty of time to accomplish our dreams. We're young. There's always a tomorrow.* Still,

Aimee preferred Karla's conquests being sneaked in as opposed to having them pranced in front of her like a prize Karla won at the state fair. Sometimes, it came across like "look what I have that you don't." Aimee knew what she didn't have. She didn't need reminding.

There were times, like tonight, that Aimee wished her sister still lived with their mother and was not invading her private domicile. Aimee moved to Gainesville to gain some independence as well as some separation. When she returned to help with their sick father, she quickly found her own place to keep that independence. Well, that, plus she was tired of seeing her sister manipulate their mother. How Karla even managed to convince Aimee to allow her to move in was beyond her. Yet, that was Karla, always getting whatever she wanted.

Aimee heard something fall off Karla's night stand on the other side of the wall as her sexual cry penetrated the night. As much as she fought it, the sounds were making Aimee's own juices begin to soak into her panties, as she recognized the scene in the other room moving from foreplay to the main show. She finally succumbed to the growing excitement within her and slid her fingers under the waistband of her pajama pants down to the growing heat between her legs. Karla's whimpers seeped through the wall, as Aimee rubbed her swollen clit in cadence with the thumps of headboard on drywall. She knew she shouldn't be doing it, using her sister's sexual activity to get herself off. It felt wrong—dirty, even—but it was all she had. It had been way too long since her last date and even longer since she had sex. Besides, it wouldn't be the first time one of the twins used the other's exploits to get themselves off.

She closed her eyes and pictured her own body sprawled on the bed, her legs spread as she envisioned Clint Asher from three doors down plunging his cock deep inside of her pussy, opening her up with his massive organ. She had been using him in her fantasies for a while and

his powerful face popped easily into her frenzied mind. It was her cries now echoing against the walls, as her hips thrust upward to meet his in a sweaty pounding of heated flesh. Her swollen nipples were pinched and flicked, sending orgasmic shocks throughout her body. Clint's body grazed against her clit, not her fingers drawing wet circles around the hood of her swollen pearl.

A scream split the night, shouting out her orgasm, as her body twitched underneath her fingers. Her heart pounded, as her eyes flew open at the realization that it was her scream, not her sister's, that ripped the silence. She covered her mouth with the hand that was pinching her nipple just a second ago, as her chest heaved with the lust that coursed through her. She squeezed her eyes shut, praying no one heard her, but knowing there was no way they missed it. Even with her sister's own cries of sexual pleasure, Aimee's pierced the apartment. *Oh, great. Please don't let that man spend the night.*

That man was Brad Pennington and he did spend the night. He was standing over the stove when Aimee trudged her way out of the hallway, and he spotted her before she could duck back into the bathroom and freshen up. He stood about three inches past six feet and came equipped with a thick chest and flat shoulders that Aimee could probably rest her morning coffee on without fear of the mug falling. He was bald and clean-shaven with a smile that she was glad he decided not to hide behind facial hair. He was obviously a morning person, because even after being up until four in the morning doing the nasty to her sister, he cheerfully made breakfast and had already swallowed half a pot of coffee. At least he left her some. He wore blue jeans with his smile and nothing else. Aimee glanced over the counter and wasn't disappointed that even the man's feet were sexy. *How in the world is Karla so damn lucky?*

Aimee realized she still wore her baggy flannels and tried to hide behind the island

counter, as she raked her fingers through her long, blonde hair. She really wished Karla would give her some sort of warning before allowing her to wake up to someone in their kitchen, especially a sculpture like Brad. Yet, Karla was never that proactive and Aimee highly doubted the other Harper sibling was likely to start anytime soon.

“Wow,” he said, as he turned and filled a mug with coffee, setting it in front of her when he finished. “Karla didn’t tell me you two were twins. I bet people confuse the two of you all the time.”

“Even with her hair dyed brown. It gets annoying.”

“Well, I’ll do my best not to add to that annoyance.”

“Isn’t it great waking up to a bare-chested man cooking breakfast?” Karla appeared out of the hallway in her silk robe, which barely covered the bottom of her ass. Even though she tried to appear as if she just woke up, Aimee knew Karla had brushed her shoulder-length chocolate hair, fixed her makeup and roughed herself up in just the perfect way. Karla was never a mess without it being on purpose, and she never allowed the men she brought home to see the natural side of her in the morning. “Always make them think you wake up gorgeous,” she told Aimee when they first moved in together. She would wake up before her date did and make sure her “morning face” was exactly as she wanted it. “Did you two introduce yourselves while I was sleeping in?”

Aimee fought not to roll her lake-blue eyes. “Actually, I just woke up myself. I thought it was you frying the bacon until I remembered you don’t cook.”

Karla ignored her. Instead, she walked over to Brad, the top of her head just barely reaching his shoulders, and ran a finger down his flat chest, “What can I say? My talents aren’t

in the kitchen.”

Brad grinned at her, revealing his perfect white teeth, as he leaned down and kissed her forehead. “I’m sure the talents I experienced last night could be used anywhere.”

This time Aimee did roll her eyes. She coughed a couple of times, as well, to get them to pry their eyes off each other. She stretched her hand out across the counter at the mountain of a one night stand her sister attempted to climb. “Hi, I’m Aimee, her sister.”

After prying himself from Karla’s embrace, Brad wiped his hands on a towel he had tucked into his waistband before shaking her hand. “Brad, Brad Pennington. I hope my being here doesn’t bother you. I promise, I’m a good cook.”

Aimee shrugged her shoulders. “Not at all. Karla’s men always cook me breakfast the morning after screwing my sister. I haven’t cooked a weekend morning in ages. What are we having?” She tried to smile syrupy sweet.

Her sister turned and glared at her before giving Brad’s chest a kiss. “Yes, what is for breakfast?”

He glanced back and forth between the two sisters, not sure what was really going on. He must have decided to just ignore it as sibling barbs, because he said nothing about Aimee’s comment and simply announced the morning fare. “And it’s almost ready. Will your boyfriend be joining us?”

“Boyfriend?” Aimee felt her eyebrows pinch together with her confusion. *What in the world has Karla told him?* “I don’t have a boyfriend.”

“Oh.” Now Brad looked confused. “Sorry. I just... Well, the walls are extremely thin. I know you heard us because, well, we heard the two of you. I just assumed he spent the night, as

well.”

Aimee felt the redness of her embarrassment warm her cheeks as she ignored Karla’s smirk. “No, it was just a quick booty call. He left right afterward.”

“Oh, well, I made too much food then. Sorry. Where are your glasses?” He pulled three glasses from a cupboard Aimee pointed out to him and then poured everyone some orange juice.

“Oh good.” Karla patted his flat stomach as she passed him. “I’ll just go freshen up a bit and join you at the table. I’m not sure how you can stand looking at me fresh out of bed like this.”

“Because I saw you freshly tucked into that bed,” he said, and Aimee could have sworn his eyes sparkled. Why were men so corny after getting their rocks off?

Soon they were sitting around the table, dipping bacon in syrup and eating pancakes. The breakfast conversation turned to other things and Aimee was able to eat without feeling nauseous watching her sister drool over her latest catch. Brad worked in real estate and seemed pretty successful at it. Aimee wasn’t surprised. He seemed a natural salesman just from what she witnessed that morning as he maneuvered her sister. Of course, Karla was better at the manipulation game and, while Brad probably thought he was playing Karla, Aimee knew he was the one being played. Her sister always worked an. Always.

Karla held a piece of bacon between her fingers as she said, “I told Brad about your car problems. He has a friend he’s going to call and hook us up. He might be able to help us get it running smooth again.” She smiled at Aimee just before taking a bite of her bacon.

Unbelievable was all Aimee thought as she stared at her sister. She was right about who was being played, but she hadn’t considered that it was for her benefit and not Karla’s. She

glanced over at Brad. “That’s really nice of you, but I’m sure we can manage. I have some money set aside I was going to use for the Decades of Rock concerts in a couple of weeks. I’d rather it go towards getting the car fixed.” She glanced back at her sister, hoping Karla felt the daggers she was sending. “I would hate to take advantage of a friend.”

Brad finished swallowing his eggs as he waved off her words. Men just loved to be the white knight and when you combined that with giving them a piece of ass, a girl could usually get anything she wanted. Karla was a pro at the game, even though it turned Aimee’s stomach. “It’s not a problem. His name is Mitch Greenway and he runs his own shop over on Hillshire. I’m sure if I call him, he’ll give you girls a good deal and he’s damn good at what he does.”

So is Karla. Aimee kept her eyes on her sister who just sat there smiling sweetly.

After breakfast, Brad left and Aimee went to her room leaving Karla the dishes. Of course, Karla wasn’t happy about being stuck with cleanup duty. She would rationalize that Aimee owed her since Karla arranged to have someone take a peek at the car. However, Aimee didn’t care and, even though she still planned on talking to Mitch Greenway about the car, she was going to insist on paying full price. She wanted no special treatment based on how well her sister fucked one of his friends. Aimee would not be the reason Karla whored herself out.

It had always been that way, it seemed. Karla could always worm something out of any man she met. It started in middle school when the seconds-younger Harper sibling realized that, with a shake of her ass and a low cut blouse, she never had to write her own papers ever again. Of course, as she moved into high school, it cost her more to get what she wanted. A hand job. Oral sex. However, the gifts were more expensive and her men older. High school boys didn’t have as much as college men. Her body was her asset and she used it to manipulate people any

way she wanted. While Karla fucked her way to graduation, Aimee busted her ass to earn everything she received. Karla quit college, not even finishing her Associates Degree, and bounced from job to job. Aimee, determined to make something of herself, escaped to Gainesville, attending the University of Florida. It turned out to be the change she needed in her life.

Grabbing a stack of her prints to sort through, she flipped on her stereo and stepped out onto her balcony. The morning was bright and cheerful with a warm breeze carrying the scent of the ocean to where she sat. She loved living on the beach. It was the main reason she chose Sea Breeze Condominiums. The fact that the condo was equipped with a balcony that stretched along the living room as well as her bedroom was an added bonus. Karla offered to pay more on her rent if she could have the back room, but Aimee wasn't having it. It was her condo. Karla could have the room closest to the bathroom. It would help with her morning ritual when her boyfriends spent the night. The beach view was Aimee's. She had to admit, the beach had a soothing effect on her. It calmed her just to sit and watch the waves roll in, redecorating the shell-covered shore. She loved the beach. It was the ocean she didn't care for, too many unknowns slinking around her ankles that she couldn't see. She saw Jaws. Teeth, sharp teeth, lingered under those whitecaps. She'd stay on shore where it was safe. Safe was good. Very good.

As a pelican nose-dived into a cresting wave, Aimee began to thumb through her photographs of the sunrise. The manager at Duffy's Steak House was expecting her to drop off two of her prints for his walls that week. She wasn't sure if she wanted to use two sunsets or toss in one of her osprey photographs. It might be good to mix it up a little. Give the people a

selection. Of course, the sunsets weren't the same, so there were choices there, as well. *What are you going to do, Aimee?*

She started taking photographs in high school, even joined the photography club and all that. One of her teachers made her enter some contests and, to her surprise, she even won a few. In college, while she studied for her Computer Criminology Degree, she sold a few photos to magazines and even participated in a couple of art fairs. Those she really enjoyed, because it put her in front of real people. *Maybe I should do a few more of those.*

Aimee's cell phone trilled and a quick glance at the caller ID showed it was their mother. Aimee gave a quiet groan before answering. "Hello, Mom."

"Good morning, baby doll. I'm surprised you're up so early."

"You called hoping to wake me up?"

"Well, no, but it's Sunday, and I assumed you would be out hitting the town with your sister last night. I know how you both enjoy your Saturday night dancing."

"Karla enjoys dancing, Mother. I enjoy sleeping at a regular hour." Her mother didn't need to know that her daughter just didn't have a date. "Why do you keep forgetting that I'm not like my sister? Besides, I'm trying to select some prints to hang in that steak house that opens next week. They've agreed to display some of my pieces to sell." Aimee doubted her mother ever forgot the twins were only alike in appearance. It was more like her mother hoped Aimee would somehow get a life. What Karla had, however, was not a life. It was a STD waiting to happen. "Why are you calling, Mom?"

"I wanted to invite the two of you to dinner tomorrow night. I was thinking of buying a roast and it's just too much for me to eat alone. I don't want it to go to waste."

Aimee closed her eyes. She loved her mother, but she dreaded family meals. Mainly because Karla manipulated her mother as much as she did everyone else, and Betty Harper refused to see what was being done to her. When their father was alive, he was able to keep Karla from taking advantage. He was the firm one with a strong work ethic. People needed to earn what they received and not be given free handouts. He believed a person appreciated what they earned more than what they were given. Of course, Karla would argue that she did earn what she received, but she couldn't exactly tell their father how she earned it. Not and remain alive, that is. Now, however, it was almost as if Karla made up for lost opportunities. It was nauseating to watch.

“Have you already asked Karla?” The deciding factor.

“Yes, and she said it sounded like a great idea. Now, how about you?”

Trapped. If she was going to protect her mother from some pitiful ploy of Karla's, she would have to go. She shouldn't have to babysit her sister or protect her mother. She forced a smile into her voice. “I'll be there. What time?”

The weekend was turning out to be a real waste of time, and she was tired of being cooped up in her condo. She needed a break. With hopes of salvaging some peace and quiet, Aimee slipped into her bathing suit, a two-piece that didn't really compliment what she saw as flaws to her body, pulled her hair back in a tight ponytail, and headed for the condo's pool. Perhaps frying her flesh under the sun's ultraviolet rays would melt some of the negativity out of her. If that didn't work, there was always that bottle of tequila above the fridge.

Two

As Aimee stepped out into the hall, she saw Miss Fowler standing in front of her own door about to enter, her little Dachshund panting hard in her arms as she held it with its belly up as if it was a little baby. Aimee gave a silent groan and would have ducked back inside, but it was too late. That seemed to be the theme of her day. Miss Fowler already saw her. Miss Fowler saw everything.

“Well, good morning, Aimee. Heading to the pool? I can’t say I blame you. It’s a beautiful day for it. Duchess and I just got back from our morning stroll.” At the sound of her name, Duchess rolled her head toward Aimee, stretching her neck out wanting some attention. “Stop squirming, Duchess.” Miss Fowler tried to shake a loose strand of her gray hair out of her eyes as she glanced down at the dog.

Aimee reached out and scratched behind the dog’s chocolate ears. “Good morning, Duchess.” She glanced up at the older lady. “And how have you been?”

“Good, good. Of course, I’m not having to try and sleep with strange men in the house. I saw your sister’s friend leave this morning. How can you sleep with someone you don’t know in your home?”

“How do you know he wasn’t my friend?”

Miss Fowler just gave her a “get serious” look and continued talking. “That’s the third man this week. Is she going for a record? It doesn’t help a girl’s reputation, you know.”

Aimee felt the heat flush her face at the older woman’s rebuke, even though it wasn’t directed at her, but at her sister. “Why do you assume she’s doing something wrong? She just has a lot of friends. Besides, I can’t do anything about what Karla does. She’s her own woman.”

“Well, she needs to take lessons from you. You’re a respectable young woman. You’ll go far, mark my words.”

“Thank you. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I need to get to the pool before the chairs are all gone.” Aimee felt like she was just insulted. While she didn’t want to behave like her sister, she didn’t want the possibility so easily dismissed as ridiculous. The fact that Miss Fowler, who saw the worst in everyone, didn’t think Aimee could have a man spend the night said too much about her prudish lifestyle.

Arriving at the pool, she noticed Clint Asher and his little three-year-old, Abigail, playing at the shallow end on the steps. Abigail had floaties around her upper arms and wore a fairy princess one-piece. Long, brown hair clung to the middle of her back, as she bounced up and down on the steps, splashing water in all directions. Aimee felt the blush warm her cheeks as she remembered her fantasies last night, and she felt her sex stir. She would go into a coma if he ever found out she masturbated with his face on her mind for the past few months. Well, since she met him, actually. She wondered if he would be as good in bed as he was in her mind.

Clint was twenty-eight, just three years older than her, but his being a father made him seem so much more mature in her eyes, the whole being a parent thing adding years where there

weren't any. Responsibility will do that to a person. It makes you grow up. He was slender with just the right amount of muscle tone in his arms and chest, giving him a fit physique that she dreamed would be on top of her one day. His short, brown hair was cut in a no-nonsense business cut that brought out his hazel eyes, which always seemed to sparkle even on the worst of days. His life was his daughter and he was all little Abigail had, the mother preferring money to marriage and running off with some guy in a fancy convertible. How a mother could just walk out on someone so precious, Aimee would never understand. Abigail was adorable and Clint did a great job raising her by himself.

That was actually how Aimee impressed herself upon him when he moved into the Sea Breeze Condominiums seven months back. Aimee helped keep an eye on Abigail when Clint's company, a local construction firm that focused on flipping old properties, kept him working later than his nanny could stay or when his parents were unavailable. Aimee didn't mind, as Abigail had inherited her father's easy going manner. Besides, it allowed Aimee to get closer to Clint, except he saw her as nothing more than the friend who babysat for him once in a while. Their relationship was all in Aimee's head, just as her sex life was all in her fingers.

"Aimeeeee!" Abigail waved her arm as she screamed. Clint glanced up from where he was sitting on the steps. He smiled at her and offered a smaller wave than his daughter had, his smile slightly bashful, but pleasant.

Aimee nodded and smiled back, her hands too full to wave. "Beautiful day for the pool. I hope you don't mind me crashing your quietness."

"Quietness? With a three-year-old?" Clint laughed, as he shot her a playful, imploring look. "Please. Save me with some adult conversation."

“Aimee to the rescue.” She pulled a lounge chair close to where they sat, but not too close. She witness Abigail in the pool before and knew what the splash zone of a toddler was. Aimee wanted sun, not a bath. “How has your week been?”

“Busy and boring, just the way I like it,” he said, as he watched her get situated, his hands palm flat on the edge of the pool, holding himself up.

Aimee sprawled out on her towel-covered chair and picked up her book. She didn’t need stripes up and down the flesh she desired to darken. Zebra stripes were not a fashion statement on anything other than zebras. “No fun adventures, huh?” She already knew what his answer would be, but it was one of those questions she always asked. Clint was a homebody much like herself, which is part of the reason they always seemed to get along so well.

“You know us single dads. The most excitement we get is wrestling a tot into pajamas before bed time. It’d be fun to hit a club once in a while, but I don’t feel she should be with a babysitter at night after she’s been with one all day. How about yours?”

“You know me, I spend most of my time trying to keep Karla in her pajamas.” They both laughed. Aimee regaled him quite often with her sister’s antics. Clint was one of the few men who had so far escaped Karla’s clutches. To the best of Aimee’s knowledge, the two hadn’t even met, which was odd as Karla had a way of sniffing out single men. Of course, the fact he had a child would have scared her away. She didn’t like responsibility. It wouldn’t have mattered, however. Clint wasn’t looking for a hook up. He only had eyes for Abigail and, when he wasn’t working, the little girl devoured his time. It was one of the qualities Aimee admired about the man. His parents helped out now and then, but Aimee knew he didn’t want to depend on them too often.

She settled back in her chair and allowed the rays of the sun to beat down upon her body. She held her book in her lap, unopened. Her mind was too full of distractions to concentrate on the pages. For one thing, she was still pissed at her sister. First, for bringing Brad home, and then for expecting Aimee to be grateful she screwed a bargain out of him for her. She was also annoyed at her mother for always being too soft on Karla and forcing Aimee to take over for their father, being the enforcer.

“If I don’t give in to her, Aimee, I’ll lose her.” It was the excuse her mother gave her the last time they argued about her sister.

Aimee just shook her head. “She’s using you, Mom.”

“She needs me. I’m not turning my back on her.”

“What she needs is a swift kick in the ass. You’re allowing her to manipulate you. She’s a grown woman, for crying out loud! She can take care of herself. Trust me. I’ve had the unfortunate pleasure of listening to her do just that, thanks to our thin walls.”

Her mother didn’t catch the insinuation or, if she did, she chose to ignore it. “You don’t understand. If I don’t help her, she’ll stop loving me. I’ll lose her.”

“If you have to buy her love with money or favors, then it’s not love. You need to make her stand on her own two feet. Stop letting her use you.”

As always, her mom never listened to her and Aimee found herself attending lunches and dinners she would have rather missed just to keep Karla from ripping their mother off. Karla was trouble all through school, driving their father crazy. Their mother always made excuses for her, bailing her out of trouble. Of course, with all that pent up frustration, she had to let it out somewhere, and Aimee was the puppy that was constantly kicked. Obviously, her mother didn’t

think she needed to buy Aimee's love, which was fine. Aimee didn't want her to feel she had to buy it. Yet, it would be nice to be on equal footing.

"Long day?" Aimee opened her eyes, as Clint slid into the lounge chair beside her, "Stay on the steps!" He called to Abigail, as he settled back to rest.

Aimee smiled. "Just a typical day."

"That bad, huh?"

"Karla brought home some guy last night and they kept me up late. My mom wants us to go over tomorrow night for dinner. My car needs major surgery. I think that's about it for now. Fingers crossed."

He gave a low whistle. "Wow. When it rains, it pours. Anything I can do to help?"

"Do you want my sister to live with you?"

"How about I help with the car, instead?"

"Chicken." Abigail let out a scream, as she threw water up into the air and let it hit her in the face. The little girl giggled hysterically as it pelted her, and Aimee laughed watching her. "But you seem to have such a way with kids," she said to Clint through her laughter.

"One kid. I don't need two, right now."

"I don't even want one, at least not right now, especially one that's twenty-five."

"What you need is a break and I have the perfect idea for you. My parents are picking Abigail up after lunch. I have to work early tomorrow morning, so they are having her spend the night, as opposed to me dropping her off before the sun comes up. Anyway, I have to do a walk through on this old house we're being contracted to remodel. You've mentioned how you want to take some pictures of old buildings. Why not come out and snap some shots, while I do my

walk-through? You'll get your pictures, and I'll get some company."

Aimee thought about it a moment. She loved old buildings, especially abandoned houses. Usually there were things left inside that would make for some great photos. She toured one back in Gainesville and was able to sell the pictures almost immediately. They would probably go well at one of the art shows in the future. "Sounds like fun. When do you want to leave?"

"My parents are picking Abigail up at one, so how about right after that? It'll give you some daylight for your pictures, since there's no power in the building."

"Sounds great. Still leaves me time to lay out."

He just smiled at her as he laid back in his chair. "Great. Should be fun."

Aimee closed her eyes, her mind full of images of being alone in an abandoned building with Clint Asher. She already felt the tingling between her legs. If only he saw her the way her fantasies had him seeing her, she wouldn't be taking pictures at that building. Or they wouldn't be taking pictures of just the building. Maybe she could get a few shots with his shirt off to aid in her masturbation rituals at night. She'd never stop touching herself if that happened.

Aimee stared up at the pale blue sky and forced her legs not to touch each other. She could feel her breathing becoming heavier as the images passed through her mind only to settle in the slick passage of her sex. It was going to be a long afternoon of her thoughts torturing her.

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"Oh boy, my sister, alone, in an abandoned building with a man. And you're just planning on taking pictures? I bet that's not what he has in mind."

"Not the things you have in mind, I assure you," Aimee said, as she slipped a T-shirt over her head. "I told you. He has his hands full raising his daughter. He doesn't see me that

way. I don't think he sees anyone that way."

Karla just shook her head at Aimee's comment. "You have so much to learn."

Aimee slipped on a pair of old jeans and slid her feet into a pair of dark sandals. "You're not wearing that, are you?" Karla gave her a tsk-tsk tone, as she looked her sister up and down. "That's not very enticing."

Aimee gave herself a once-over. "It's an old building. Besides, I'm not trying to be enticing. I'm going to be taking photographs."

"What a waste of an abandoned building."

The doorbell rang and Aimee grabbed her camera case and headed for the door. "Not everyone sees things as you do, sister dear. Sorry."

"You're the only one that doesn't see the opportunities that I do," her sister called after her.

Aimee was shaking her head when she opened the door. Clint just stared at her, his sparkling smile pushing his cheeks up. "Everything okay?"

"Karla is just being Karla."

"Ah." He gestured down the hall toward the elevator. "You ready?"

"Lead on."

As they started walking toward the elevator, Miss Fowler opened her door and stepped out into the hall. She started to say something, but Clint ushered Aimee quickly past the elderly woman. "The way she likes to talk, we'll be trapped there for hours," he whispered once they were out of earshot.

Aimee just giggled. She couldn't argue with him.

The ride over was filled with chitchat as Clint weaved through the Sunday after-church traffic. He drove a small, dark blue Toyota pickup, the bed of which was filled with his tools under a topper that he could keep locked. Abigail's car seat was strapped in the back behind Aimee, so that he could glance over and see his daughter if necessary and reach her with his right arm. "Hard to do if she's behind me."

The house was nestled into a wooded area on River Road, surrounded by massive oaks and towering pines. As he drove down the winding driveway, Aimee felt as if she actually stepped back into another time. The giant branches offered shade over the drive and hid the house from the road and passersby. It would be easy to get lost in the scenery. The grass needed cutting, but the overgrowth added to the atmosphere of the house. Her gaze remained glued outside the truck, taking in everything they passed as he drove down the drive to the main house. She would have to walk back down the driveway, she told herself. It was like a nature trail all unto itself and the photo opportunities were terrific.

Clint parked his truck in front of the house, thanks to the circular drive, and they both stepped out into the humid afternoon. Clint held a clipboard in one hand and a pencil in the other. Aimee's Nikon D3100 hung from the strap around her neck. She stared at the ancient Old West house, absorbing the nuances in the architecture and the faded, chipped paint.

"It should be safe, but I'd still be careful. You never know when a floorboard or step could be loose or rotted out. Just step gingerly until you're sure. I need to wander around and take some notes. Holler out if you need anything."

She glanced over at him, and his smile warmed her heart. "Thank you. I appreciate this."

"My pleasure."

She watched as he walked off toward the back of the house, his jeans snug around his ass, his shirt sliding across the muscles in his back. She would rather be exploring the old house with him, but she would take what she could get. After he rounded the corner and disappeared, she turned her attention back to the house in front of her. It seemed to be a completely wooden structure, with three steps leading up to a wraparound porch. The railing had some sagging boards and a section of the front steps had surrendered to the dank ground below, but it still looked pretty sound. Still, she heeded his advice and took soft steps, testing the wood beneath her feet. A creak gave her warning, but the wood held. She finished climbing the steps and entered the house.

An old, musty smell filled the air, a mixture of mildew and age. The first room was a giant living room with faded lemon paint, some of it peeled away. A dark molding trimmed the floor and ceiling, accenting the walls and drawing out the wooden floor. A broken rocking chair lay on its side in the corner, a leftover remnant proving someone once dwelt there, that the house knew life at one time. Newspapers, dating back a dozen years, littered the dining room floor. Dust covered everything, free of footprints and handprints, a testament to the abandonment of the house. Tattered drapes hung in front of a missing window.

Aimee took several photographs from all different angles of the paraphernalia that littered the home. She changed lenses, filters, zoomed in and zoomed out. She heard Clint moving about, but as soon as she started clicking away, she only had attention for what she saw through her lens. She abandoned herself to what spoke to her. Others saw a broken chair or trash. Aimee saw beauty that reached out to her from the past. Art was about what you could make others see and feel. If the piece spoke to her, she could make it speak to others, and that is

what she wanted, to speak to people.

“How’s it going?”

She jumped, almost tumbling backwards at the sound of Clint’s voice. She clutched her chest with one hand and protected her camera with the other. She tried to ignore his laughter, but she couldn’t blame him and soon was laughing as well. “Other than a racing heart right now, I’m doing pretty well. I think I have some great shots. This has been fantastic. I can’t thank you enough.”

“I’m glad you were able to get some photos.” He stood with his clipboard dangling by his side. She could see his cursive writing all over it along with measurements and symbols. “I’m about finished up, so whenever you’re ready, we can go. No hurry, though. Take your time.”

“Thanks. Maybe just a few more shots. I really owe you for this.”

“Do you now? Well then, how about paying me back by not making me eat alone tonight?”

Aimee stopped, her finger still on the button of the camera, and looked up at him. “Are you asking me out?”

He shrugged. “Nothing wrong with friends catching a meal together. Besides, I owe you for all the times you’ve babysat Abigail. I figure a meal is cheaper than an extra babysitter. See, I’m really cheap and just using the meal to get out of another payment.” He grinned at her, and Aimee just shook her head.

She looked down at herself. She was covered in dirt, and her outfit was not chosen for dinner out, but rather to get down in the dust and grime of an old house. “I can’t go out like

this.”

“Really? Why not?” His grin was bigger as he stared at her. “I’m just joking. We can go back, both clean up and change, and then head out. It would save me from having to heat up a frozen dinner and downing a bottle of wine alone.”

“Well, I guess we can’t have you suffering in isolation, now can we?” She finished taking her photograph, and then stood up. “Dinner sounds good to me, but you don’t owe me for babysitting Abigail. I love that little girl. She’s one of the sweetest kids I know. Plus, she’s easier to babysit than Karla.”

“Well then, I’m rescuing you.”

“How about we rescue each other?”

His eyes sparkled as he watched her. “I like that.”

She felt the warmth between her legs burst into a flaming heat, as her heart pounded a rapid beat. She wished she could say it was a date, but she would settle for a dinner out with a friend. She had an active fantasy life. She could always pretend.

And she would. A lot.

Besides, as Clint said, it was better than eating alone.

After a few more shots, she told him she was ready to go. Stepping back out into the humid night, the sky already started to be swallowed up by dusk. Crickets were heard singing their song from the shrubs that bordered the property, as squirrels leaped from branch to branch in a fast game of tag. She tried to catch a few in mid-leap before she slid into the passenger seat of his truck.

“All set?” He turned the ignition and his truck roared to life.

“Yes. A shower sounds good right about now. Thank you again. These should go over well at the art show.”

“Anytime I can help. Besides, it was nice having company who didn’t squeal and beg for piggyback rides.”

“Wait, I could have had a piggyback ride? Why didn’t you tell me? I would have squealed.” As soon as she said it, she blushed at the thought of him making her squeal. He probably could make her do much more than that. The truck hit a bump in the drive, jouncing her a bit, and it sent electric shivers through her body, causing her to focus on her passion. She took a deep breath, as he pulled back out onto the road. Glancing over, she saw the smirk on his face. Her comment obviously sent the same thoughts into his head, as well. It was going to be a long night.

## *Three*

“Now you’re going on a date with him? He’s a single dad, Aimee. Why go on a date with someone who has a kid? Tell me he’s at least rich or something?”

Karla sat on the edge of Aimee’s bed, as her sister tried to decide which outfit looked good, but not boring, on her. Or trampish. She didn’t want to come off like her sister, and this *was* just a dinner to thank her for babysitting Abigail. It’s not like it was an official date or anything. Aimee didn’t know what one of those even looked like, it had been so long since she went on one. “Why do you sound so surprised? I go on dates.” *Liar*. “And no, he’s not rich. I don’t go out with people for what they have. Besides, this is just a thank you dinner. Nothing fancy.”

“A thank you dinner? What is he thanking you for? What exactly did you do in that old building?” She had a look on her face like she was proud of Aimee.

“I took pictures, perv. It’s for babysitting his daughter. Why are you making such a big deal out of this?”

Karla shrugged. “Seems like slipping you a twenty would be a better thank you. Taking you out to dinner is an excuse to slip a date in on you.”

Aimee sighed, as she slid her shorts off and replaced them with jeans. The outfit was decided. Jeans and a soft blouse, the beige one her mother gave her last Christmas. “Not everyone lives life on ulterior motives. Some people actually mean what they say.”

“Ha! No one means what they say and everyone has an ulterior motive. Once you realize that, you will get further in this life.”

“If that is what it takes to get ahead, then I’ll gladly stay behind. I’d rather be naïve than cynical.” She slipped the blouse over her head and grabbed her purse, just as the doorbell to their apartment rang. *Saved by the bell.* “I’ll see you later. Don’t wait up.”

“And miss all the fun details?” Karla called after her, her tone revealing her meaning behind her words.

Aimee just shook her head, as she reached the door. Karla would never change. Everything had to contain a hidden meaning, and every night needed to end in sex. Her sister simply could not just enjoy what was offered on the surface. Of course, being that cynical came from the way she lived her life. She thought everyone was just like her and Karla Harper was one of the most manipulative people Aimee knew.

She opened the door and Clint stood there, dark jeans and a long-sleeve button-down white shirt, his biceps and powerful chest pulling the material snug against his body. Aimee’s breath caught in her throat a moment, and she forced herself to breathe. She caught herself soaking in the rest of him, the way his jeans cupped his manhood and promised strength in his legs. She jerked her eyes back up, realizing she was staring too long at parts of his body she should not have even looked at. Ever since he asked her out, it was like her fantasies took over her perceptions. *Would it be so bad if the night did end in sex? That wouldn’t make me like my*

*sister, would it?*

“You all set to go?” His smile pulled one out of her, and she swallowed before speaking to make sure she had a voice.

“Please. I need a break from the mess that is Karla Harper.” She pulled the door shut behind her, and the two of them walked down the corridor to the elevators at the end of the hall, hoping to get past Miss Fowler’s condo before the old woman poked her head out. They passed his apartment on the way out, and Aimee blushed at the thought of ending her night there.

He laughed as he pressed the down button. “Another fun day with the Harper sisters, huh? If you two don’t get along, why do you live together?”

The elevator dinged and the doors whooshed open. As she stepped into the small box, she said, “Because it keeps her out of my mother’s house.” It sounded cold and callous, but it was the truth. If Karla wasn’t living with her, she would be taking over their mother’s home and milking their mom for all she could get. It was standard Karla Harper fare. As much as her sister drove her crazy, it was better than the alternative, even if she was tricked into it at first.

Charlie’s Place was a small, rustic café located on the beach with tables set out back to allow diners to enjoy the ocean view as well as its breeze. Clint stood beside her chair as she slid in, and only then did he take his seat. The waitress took their drink orders—sweet tea for her, water with lemon for him—and disappeared to bring out the garlic knots the place was known for. The evening sky drifted from dusk to the darkness of night, with stars forcing their way onto the evening. Seagulls flew overhead while others perched on the wooden rail that marked off the dining area, hoping for some delight to be tossed their way. The evening was cool thanks to the breeze blowing off the ocean, and just the scent of the Atlantic helped soothe her mind and calm

her spirit. The beach was always a relaxing place for Aimee and helped her center herself whenever she became stressed out. Clint chose a perfect spot.

“Thanks for allowing me to pick the place,” Clint said as he opened the rolled up cloth napkin holding his utensils. “It’s nice to eat out where the meal doesn’t necessarily come with a toy or need dipping sauce.”

She faked a shocked look. “I’m not getting a toy with my dinner? First no piggyback ride and now no toy. What kind of an evil man are you?”

Clint laughed, and it made her smile just to hear it. “But if you behave, I’ll buy you ice cream for dessert.”

“Deal, but it better have sprinkles,” she said, and they both laughed.

The waitress brought their drinks and they placed their orders. Clint made a suggestion as to what he thought were a couple of the best dishes, and she ordered based off his recommendations. He filled her in on his work, as they waited for their food. He was in construction, but he also owned a small warehouse where he made furniture and wooden sculptures. He liked to create with his hands, and he spent what little free time he had making pieces for family and friends. One day he wanted to enter a craft show and see how people took to his creations. It was a dream of his to live off his woodwork earnings one day, as it was for her to do with her photographs, but for now, being a single dad kept his hands full. “I do appreciate you being able to watch Abigail when I have to work late. My parents would do it, but I prefer her to be home around her toys and stuff. It makes it easier to settle her down when I do get home to finally feed her and get her ready for bed.”

“I can understand that. Abigail is a sweet child. She’s so funny in her mannerisms and is

always cracking me up. It's amazing what you do with her all by yourself."

He bowed his head slightly, a sad expression darkening his brows. At first, she thought she made a wrong comment, but then he smiled and thanked her. "I do what I can. I wish it could be more. She deserves both parents, but that wasn't my choice."

Aimee wrapped her hands around her glass of tea, just to have a place to put them in order not to tear up her napkin in her nervousness. She couldn't believe someone turning their back on a child. "May I ask what happened?"

He shrugged, his eyebrows lifting slightly as he did. "Bonnie never wanted to be a mother. She told me that from the get-go. I was young when we started dating, twenty-two. After about two years, she finds out she's pregnant. At first, she wanted to abort the baby, but I convinced her we could make a go of being a family, and so she decided to keep her. I suppose I was hoping that once she held Abigail in her arms, she would change her mind." He sat forward in his chair, his fingers laced together as he rested his elbows on the table. "She didn't last a month. From day one, she made it obvious that I was the one responsible for Abigail. I'm the one who wanted her, so I would be the one who took care of her. All Bonnie wanted was to party and do as she pleased. It was the reason she never wanted kids to begin with. She didn't want the responsibility. She wanted to come and go and do as she pleased when she pleased. She didn't comprehend that children need someone to be there for them. Bonnie never intended to be that type of parent.

"So, she would go out with friends and pretend she was single and not a mother with a child crying for her at home. Two years, I lived like that until I had the guts to finally call her out on her behavior. I was fed up with her coming home drunk and never knowing who she was

out with or what she was doing. Oh, there were great moments when we seemed like the perfect, normal family. It wasn't all bad. Yet, when Bonnie wanted to do something, she wasn't going to allow anything such as having a daughter at home stop her from doing it and it didn't matter if we could find a babysitter or not. She went out and I stayed home. One night she came home drunk and I noticed that it was some guy I didn't know who dropped her off. When I questioned her about it, she refused to discuss it. She said it was none of my damn business. Of course, I told her I wasn't having my wife brought home by strange men and that's when she said she was tired of playing family, packed her bags, and left. We haven't heard from her since. It's been almost a year."

Aimee shook her head, her heart aching for both him and Abigail. "I just can't imagine ever abandoning my child. I mean, it sucks she left you, but couples split up all the time. But to leave your own child? Who could do that?"

He shrugged. "I hate it for Abigail, but, really, I'd rather she left then than wait around and be a bad influence on my daughter. Abigail is better off without that particular woman for a role model."

Aimee's heart still ached. It was a shitty thing to do to someone, and from what she knew of Clint, she found it even harder to believe someone would do that to him. He was a great father; a great man. Who wouldn't want to hold onto that?

The waitress brought their food and the conversation lulled while their meals were placed on the table. A couple walked hand-in-hand along the beach, and Aimee felt envious of their bond. She wished she had someone in her life to do things with like that. She glanced across the table as Clint told the waitress, "Thank you." She thought back to Karla's words

about people with ulterior motives. Did Clint think of this as a real date? She wished she could just ask him, but she would feel like an idiot if he said no. She wanted to do like they did back in school and send him a note that read, “Do you like me? Check yes or no.” Then she wouldn’t have to see his face when she found out his answer.

He glanced up at her. “What?”

“Huh?” She panicked. What had her face looked like while those thoughts ran through her mind?

“You seemed lost in some deep contemplation,” he said with a slight laugh.

“Oh, sorry. I was just thinking of something Karla said about ulterior motives before I left.”

“Oh? Do you have one?” *Was that hope in his voice or just wishful thinking in her head?*

“What?” Her eyes widened in shock, and her heart raced as if she was caught with her hand in the cookie jar. “No. No, definitely not.” She took a deep breath. “Actually, she thought you had one tonight. I told her this was just a thank you dinner, but she said you were trying to get a date without actually asking for one.”

He smiled at her, as he lifted his glass and took a sip. He acted like he was thinking over her words and then nodded as he set the glass back on the table. “Well, I was just asking you out to say thank you for watching Abigail, but to be honest, a real date wouldn’t be such a bad thing in my mind. It would be nice to have someone to do things with once in a while. Perhaps, we can do this again? If you want to, that is. No pressure.”

Aimee stared at him. *Did he just ask me out?*

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Aimee left on her date that wasn't really a date, leaving Karla alone. Karla hated being alone. After pacing around the apartment for a while trying to find something to do with herself, she decided the night called for alcohol and dancing, even if it was Sunday. She began to rummage around in her closet, looking for the outfit that would keep her from having to pay for her own drinks. Men were always so eager to help a slutty-looking girl. In the end, she chose a pair of white jeans, with holes in very strategic places, which hugged her ass almost as tight as her skin. She wore a blue blouse that tied in the front and fell open over the top of her breasts, revealing quite a bit of the softness of her round globes, and left her tummy exposed.

As she was running a brush through her hair, her cell phone went off. The number wasn't in her contacts, which she thought odd. "Hello?"

"Karla Harper? This is Mitch Greenway. Brad asked me to reach out to you about your sister's car."

"Oh, yes, hey, thanks for calling." She almost forgot Brad would be giving her phone number out instead of Aimee's. Hell, she almost forgot why she hooked up with Brad in the first place. Not that he hadn't been worth it. She was still sore from their after-hours activities. With a deep breath, Karla switched from rushing to get out of there to the sexy damsel in distress. "Will you be able to take a peek at it for us? Brad seemed to think very highly of your work."

Mitch laughed into the phone. "Brad's a great guy, but he wouldn't know an alternator from a battery if his life depended on it. Can you swing the car by my shop tomorrow? I'm located out on Hillshire."

"Sure. What time?"

"As early as you can. The sooner I get my hands on it, the sooner I can peek under your

hood.” His tone was playful, and Karla was sure Brad had filled him in on their evening last night. Mitch Greenway was flirting without being too obvious, just in case Karla wasn’t interested or was actually serious about Brad. Sneaky. She liked sneaky.

“I’ll be sure to have it there when you open your doors. It’s always nice to have a man under the hood who knows what he’s doing.”

“I’m sure it is.”

“I’ll make sure it’s there,” Karla repeated, and then thought it was time to flirt back. “I’m rushing out the door right now for some dancing and music. The night calls for adventure.”

“And what night doesn’t? Where do you usually club at?”

“The old Sand Dune right off A1A. You can’t beat a bar on the beach. The inside has the music and booze, and the outside has the romantic setting. A fun combination with the right person.”

“Sounds like a good time. Brad tagging along?”

“Playing it solo tonight. Sometimes, it’s fun to see what fish are still lurking in the deeper waters.”

He laughed, his voice deep, masculine. “Well, have fun and I’ll see you tomorrow morning. If I don’t bump into you tonight, that is. You make Sand Dune sound very enticing.”

I bet I did, Mr. Greenway. You’ll be there. Of that, I have no doubt. “I’ll see you in the morning if not sooner, then. Thanks again.”

He said his goodbye and hung up. Karla tossed her phone in her purse and snatched up her keys. If she didn’t see Mitch Greenway at the club, she would be completely surprised. If men were anything, they were predictable.

The night was cool as Karla weaved her way through traffic down A1A. She didn't exaggerate when she said Sand Dune possessed it all. She remembered a few nights that started in the bar only to end with her bare ass in the sand and some man who bought her drinks pounding into her. Sex on the beach was not just a cocktail. It was, however, amazing as the waves crashed nearby and the wind caressed your skin like a third lover joining in the romp. The sand was a scratchy mess afterward, but during the sex you didn't care. All you cared about was getting laid. She laughed to herself as she pulled into the parking lot. *Karla, girl, you sound like a typical male.*

Sand Dune wasn't as busy as she would have liked, but then again, it was a Sunday night. She waved to Paul behind the bar and he nodded at her. Her usual would be at her side in a moment. Hopefully, it would be the only drink she would pay for all night. Of course, a little sweetness and cleavage tossed Paul's way would guarantee she wouldn't even need to pay for that drink, but she'd wait and see how the night panned out before using her tits on him. He was her Old Faithful. He wasn't bad in the sack, either.

She leaned back on the bar, facing the dance floor. Men were not the only ones who prowled the clubs. They were, however, at a disadvantage. Women possessed more tools in their tool bag for pick-ups. She found herself smiling. The one with the vagina always controls the night, and Karla Harper was always in control.

"Here you go, gorgeous," Paul said, as he slid a rum and Coke beside her. "Any lucky man tonight or are you just trolling to see what pops up."

She took a sip of her drink, as she batted her eyes at him. "What? You don't think I came here to see you?"

He laughed as he wiped down a small section of the bar with a white towel. “I know you better than that. However, I’ll be here at closing if you strike out. The pickings are pretty slim tonight.” That was an understatement. “Hey, you still looking for a gig? One of our bartenders is moving to Miami.”

She glanced back over her shoulder at him. “Sure. When do I start?”

He laughed as he leaned on the bar. “Slow down, princess. You need to be interviewed first. I know you can down the drinks, but can you pour them? Pop by sometime during the week and we’ll talk about it.”

“You’ve got it,” she said, knowing she’d have no problem with the interview. Paul just wanted her alone. She gave him points for creativity.

Karla scanned the place, trying to see if anyone tickled her fancy, but so far Sand Dune seemed all paired up. That was okay. The night was still young and held promise. At least, the band was decent, a reggae beat to go with the beach theme of the bar. She held her drink and watched an older couple twirling out on the dance floor, not a care in the world from what she could see. That was the way she would be when she was older. She didn’t want to have to worry about anything, like her parents did when she was younger. They hardly ever ventured out that she could remember, the struggle to keep the bills paid always prevalent in their household. They weren’t necessarily dirt poor, but they struggled enough that Karla felt she never possessed what she wanted out of life. She vowed she would never feel like that again and used whatever means necessary to get what she wanted out of life. So far, everything worked in her favor.

She tried to do the same for Aimee, but her sister was too hung up on her definition of morals to allow her assets to work for her. She always preferred doing things the hard way. Even

in school, Aimee was the studious one, always busting her ass to get good grades and trying to be Miss Popular. Karla was popular, but it was more behind the curtains than in front of them. Furthermore, she learned a long time ago that low cut blouses and bending over usually helped your grades go up, and if that didn't work, there was always some nerd ready to do her papers for her in exchange for a quick hand job. She graduated with the same grades as Aimee, only she didn't need to spend so much time at a desk. Well, not in the chair, anyway. Sometimes, she needed to step in and help her sister out, even when Aimee didn't want that help.

“Quaint little place. I can see why you like it,” a deep voice said from beside her. She recognized him from the phone call earlier. She knew she could count on him to be predictable. Men rarely disappointed her in that area. Of course, there were always other ways to be disappointed.

Turning, she soaked in the broad shoulders and thick biceps of Mitch Greenway. He did not look like he would be a disappointment. She smiled as she raked him with her gaze, not even bothering to hide it, relishing his powerful stance as well as his short, dark hair and hazel eyes. The outline of his jeans held promise for later and Karla had no doubt his ass was going to be squeezable. He seemed to be over thirty, but to Karla that was perfect. Older men possessed the experience she preferred in the sack. Sometimes helping her sister out held its own rewards.

Glancing back up into his eyes, she ran a tongue over her dry lips as she raised her eyebrows in appreciation. “Quaint can be good at times.” She turned around, her ass now an invitation for his eyes, an invitation he gladly accepted. “Glad to see you decided to venture out.”

He shrugged, his smile an accessory that drew her eyes. “What else is there to do on a

Sunday night except see what a sweet sounding lady does with her time?”

She gave him a seductive grin. “Someone has to keep an eye on us. And I hope your lines get better as the night continues.”

He laughed as he leaned against the bar, his arm touching hers. She felt her chest flutter at the contact and her breath catch in her throat. He wasn’t playing hard to get, at all. Of course, if he was, he wouldn’t have even made it out that night. He glanced behind her, obviously soaking in her ass and legs with his gaze. “Definitely well worth keeping an eye on. And I’ll try to do better with the lines.”

She blushed as she leaned into him a little. She took a deep breath, inhaling his fresh-out-of-the-shower scent. “Sure don’t smell like a mechanic.”

He laughed. “You would prefer oil and grease?”

She shook her head slightly. “Not at all. It’s just nice to meet a guy who doesn’t bathe in cologne.”

“Not into perfume for men. Sorry.”

“Don’t be. I prefer men who smell and act like men.” She glanced behind her at the crowd. “This place can fill up with boys pretty fast.”

Mitch turned and followed her gaze with a shrug. “Everyone takes time to mature. They’ll learn.”

“I just don’t have the patience for them to get it together. I much prefer finding someone already seasoned.”

He laughed as he leaned back and stared at her. “Did you just call me old?”

Paul came over and Mitch ordered a Jack and Coke. Paul gave Karla a pouty look as if

his hopes for a sexy ending to his Sunday night were just dashed. She just winked at him. Paul was always good as a last resort. Besides, there was always the interview.

“Age is just a mindset. I plan on remaining twenty-five the rest of my life. I like how I feel right now.”

“Oh? And how is that?”

She turned back around, her chest pushed out as she felt confident in herself. “Alive.”



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About the Author

Robbie started writing as a way to escape - escape his teachers, escape his fears, even to escape his insecurities and doubts. However, his stories of seduction and adventure, not only allowed him to hide in the lives of his characters, but also captivated those who wanted to escape with him. Now, he enjoys a full-time career as a storyteller and novelist, and invites readers to runaway with him - to escape, getting lost in the seduction of adventure.

When he is not writing, Robbie can be found on his back porch enjoying a cigar, a scotch, and a good story. He derives pleasure from his large family and his crazy group of friends who provide the inspiration for his blog [The Mess that Is Me](#).

He is the author of the Urban Fantasy series, [The Warrior of the Way](#), along with the paranormal series, [The Witches of Savannah](#). His Contemporary Romance series includes [The Rutherford Series](#), [The Harper Twins](#), and [the Fangirls series](#).



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