



# Claimed By Blackstone

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**Description:** Kayla Swanson doesn't believe in ghosts so when she sinks her entire savings into an old Victorian house in the hopes of restoring it for business, she's more focused on the here and now than the salacious and brutal history of the original owner, Archibald Blackstone. Kayla and her younger sister, Lola, are two of the hottest new interior decorators in the Bay Area and they're determined to turn their fledgling business into a household name. But first, Kayla has her work cut out for her restoring the Victorian to its former glory. When odd occurrences start stacking up -- ones she can't explain away -- Kayla starts to question her sanity. When the dreams start -- dreams that leave her panting and moaning -- she doesn't know what to think anymore. Kayla doesn't buy into the hocus-pocus, woo-woo stuff but there's something about her house...even if she's not ready to admit it.

Archibald Blackstone has waited decades for the right woman to come along, someone worth parting the veil for during the witching hour on Halloween and the minute he sees Kayla step over the threshold, he knows the time has come. For a man with a voracious appetite, the celibacy of the afterlife is an interminable torture but Kayla was a woman worth waiting for -- and he's done waiting. Archibald, openly wicked in life, is unabashedly wicked in death and Kayla is about to discover the pleasure -- and delicious pain - of being claimed by the infamous Blackstone.

After one night...Kayla will never be the same again.

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# Page 1

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Kayla Swanson gazed around her newly purchased home, the key clutched in her hand and she felt nothing but elation. Her first home — and she'd gotten it for a steal! An older home, it needed some TLC but as a beginner interior designer in need of a project, this house was damn perfect — it even came furnished!. She didn't see the cracking paint and worn window sills, she saw potential. Her sister, and business

partner, Lola, wasn't as enthusiastic.

"You paid how much for this dump?" she asked, her lip curling as she gazed around the living room, taking in the surroundings. "If you paid anything at all, you got ripped off."

"For a supposed creative person, you have no vision," Kayla said, smiling, not the least bit deterred by her sister's dour opinion. "The bones on this place are fabulous. We can do so much with this space and then when it's all finished, we can use it for our base of operations to save a little money on office space. We're losing money on our current spot and I can't wait to tell our landlord to kiss off."

"I like that space. It has the best view of the bay."

"Well, it's costing us a fortune and Mr. Blowhard has used up his last chance in my book. I'm outta there as soon as possible."

Lola sighed and then shrugged. "Fine. I wouldn't mind saving a few bucks so we can start allocating some cash toward some things we really need such as—"

"We do not need a Keurig machine," Kayla overrode Lola for the tenth time about the damn coffee machine. "You're a broken record. Get over it. I hate the smell of coffee and you know it. I certainly don't want it in my house."

"If it's our office as well as your house, don't you think it would be a good idea to think of our clients, too? What self-respecting business doesn't have a coffee service?" Lola insisted, clearly not ready to let it go. Kayla rolled her eyes and walked away but Lola was intent on following, no doubt to press her belief that a coffee machine was necessary to success when a large thump upstairs caught both their attention. "What the hell was that? It sounded like something fell upstairs."

Kayla didn't know but the house had been vacant for quite awhile. The chances were a wild animal, possibly a raccoon was skittering around up there. She went to the broom closet and pulled out the lone mop inside. "It's probably a cat or something that got stuck inside," she told Lola. "The house has been empty for a few years."

"Try ten," Lola mumbled. "It's a miracle the plumbing still works."

"You're such a wet blanket. It's going to be great."

Lola shook her head and gestured for Kayla to go shoo away whatever was banging around upstairs and Kayla said, "You're such a baby. I'll be right back. Stay here, fraidy-cat."

"Yeah, I'll do that. You know in scary movies where the person goes and investigate the scary noise and then dies? That ain't gonna be me."

Kayla rolled her eyes. "This is real life, not a movie, there's no such thing as ghosts. I'll be right back." She motioned for the front door. "Open the door so whatever I flush out, can go back outside."

Lola opened the front door with a dubious expression. "If you say so."

Kayla laughed and headed up the hardwood stairs, silently appreciating the craftsmanship in the details. Someone had put a lot of pride into the creation of this house and she couldn't wait to bring out the natural beauty once again. She could see in her mind's eye just how everything was going to look and in spite of what Lola thought, it was going to be spectacular. Kayla checked each room and finding nothing, returned downstairs to find Lola sneezing after pulling the cloth from one of the high-back chairs. "Did you find anything?" Lola asked, waving away the dust cloud. "I think I found where ebola originated. This place is filthy."

“It’s just dust,” Kayla said, laughing as she pulled another cloth from the antique sofa. She gazed in admiration. “Would you look at this? Gorgeous. I can’t decide if we should keep it or sell it. I think I’ll keep it,” she decided on the spot. There was something so sensual about the deep, rich burgundy of the sofa, even if it need fresh stuffing and a good cleaning. “It goes well with this room. There’s just something about it.” For a brief moment, Monica’s vision blurred and she saw what couldn’t be there, a man dressed in a fine double breasted suit, circa 1940s if her guess were correct, sitting on that sofa, with a dark glint in his eye to match the slight curve of his lips, and she stumbled into her sister with a yelp. “Did you see that?” she exclaimed as Lola caught her. Kayla rubbed at her eyes and the man was gone. Holy crap. She needed more sleep. She uttered a shaky laugh as Lola stared at her in concern. “I’m sorry. I’m exhausted. I knew I should’ve waited to come see the house but I was so excited.”

“What just happened?” Lola asked. “Jesus, you scared me.”

“I scared myself. I thought I saw a dark-haired man sitting on the sofa. It was weird.”

“A man? Seriously? Who?”

“I haven’t a clue. He was wearing an old suit, like from the ‘40s or something.” Lola swallowed and opened her mouth but Kayla knew where she was going and cut her off. “Don’t go buying into those stories you heard about this place. There’s no such thing as ghosts and I’m not about to get freaked out over a mild hallucination from lack of sleep. Seriously, Lola. It was nothing.”

“Well, even if you’re not interested in the history of this place, I was and I did a little checking. Every sin

gle occupant of this house since the original owner died a brutal death has reported some kind of spooky goings-on. That can’t be a coincidence.”

“People with weak minds are susceptible to suggestion,” Kayla said, shaking her head at her sister. “There’s no such thing as ghosts.”

“How do you know?”

“Because if there were, don’t you think science would’ve found a way to prove it? There’s always logical explanation to the things that go bump in the night. And a rampant imagination is one of the first prerequisites.”

“You know, you don’t have everything figured out, Kayla. It’s possible that you’re wrong. And then what? Then you’re living with a ghost. How does that sound? How would you deal with that?”

“I’d probably charge him or her rent because we could use the money,” she quipped, refusing to take her sister’s irrational fear seriously. “Did you see that bannister? Exquisite. The craftsmanship is so incredibly detailed. It’s a wonder it’s survived all these years.”

“You know what didn’t survive? The original owner. He died in this house. Doesn’t that creep you out?”

Kayla shrugged, eyeing the drapes and wondering which color scheme to go with for the sitting room. “People die everyday. If you tried to avoid every place where someone, somewhere hadn’t died, you’d go crazy. I was thinking of a rich burgundy with gold thread to bring back the rich opulence of the original furnishings,” she mused, narrowing her gaze as she envisioned the changes. “What do you think?”

“I think you’re crazy for sinking all your money into this place when we could’ve just resigned the lease at our old office space.”

Kayla scowled. “That pig tried to feel me up and then blamed me for being offended.

No,” she shook her head resolutely “I wouldn’t sign another lease with that asshole if my life depended on it.”

“Famous last words,” Lola muttered, rubbing the shiver from her arms. “So, I guess you’re stuck with it now.”

“Yep. So let’s make the best of it,” Kayla said cheerfully. “C’mon, help me take the rest of these drop cloths off the furniture. I want to see what else is hiding under all these dusty sheets.”

“Hopefully not a dead guy,” Lola muttered under her breath, which Kayla ignored because even though she was fairly certain her imagination had run wild, there was the tiniest sliver of doubt that it wasn’t her mind playing tricks but something else far less ordinary —and frankly, she didn’t have time for that kind of paranoia.

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Three months later

Music drifted in from somewhere in the house, something Kayla didn’t recognize but realized it definitely wasn’t from her own collection of Top 40. She followed the sound to the antique record player in the drawing room and saw with a start, a record playing. She lifted the thick needle from the old vinyl and clicked off the machine. The revolution slowed and she read the label, Bing Crosby, Only Forever, and she knew with a certainty, she hadn’t played the record, nor did she know where it came from. She chewed her lip with mild apprehension. Where’d this come from? She knew it wasn’t Lola’s style either. Lola was a die-hard grunge pop fan and all of her music she kept stored on her phone so she could rock out while she did her runs around the park. She closed the top of the record player with care because it was antique and worth a pretty penny but she was half-tempted to drive it to the local consignment store and leave it there. Don’t be silly. It was weird, true, but there was

likely a logical explanation, she thought uneasily. As if a real ghostie had suddenly felt the urge to dance. Right. She ignored the little flutters of anxiety bouncing around in her stomach as well as the thoughts that immediately recalled some other equally weird happenings since moving in.

The scent of cigar smoke and whiskey — brief yet pungent.

A single red rose lying on the counter — dew still clinging to the petals.

Doors opening and closing — on their own.

And the feeling — as the hairs rose on the back of her neck — that someone was watching her.

Okay, so stop freaking yourself out, she chastised herself sternly. She had projects to finish and a business to run. The house was beautiful and just as she'd envisioned, the renovations and repairs had returned the grandeur to the old Victorian. It was a powerful calling card, particularly in the circles she hoped to attract for her design business and she was just starting to get a few solid clients that she could build upon. There was no way she was going to let a few odd instances get in her way. Speaking of, she checked her watch, one of her new clients was bound to show up any minute. Rushing to the hallway mirror, she double-checked her face to ensure she looked impeccable. She was passably pretty, or so she'd been told. Everyone always considered Lola the exquisite one, the sister that always got the swivel stare when they went out, but she wasn't ugly by any means. She had the girl-next-door look cornered with her light brown, shoulder-length hair and bright blue eyes. A little on the petite side with almost obscenely large breasts for her height, she always tried to downplay her breast size so as not to give the wrong impression to clients. Kayla buttoned her blazer and straightened her skirt as the front doorbell dinged softly. You got this. You are smart, you are capable. She repeated the mantra a few more times before opening the door with a bright, approachable smile. "Estella, so happy you



could make it,” she said to the blue-haired lady with the limitless pocketbook and well-placed friends in Bay Area society. “Would you please come in? I have fresh scones and tea, if you like.”

“Fresh scones? Sounds lovely, dear,” Estella said, approving. “It’s nice to see some people were raised properly.”

“Yes, of course,” Kayla murmured, hurrying to the kitchen to bring out the tray she’d prepared. She’d found the prettiest tea set in a small antique store in Berkeley and she just knew Estella would appreciate the delicate touch because Estella was notoriously old-world having originated from London, some say from royalty, distantly. “Sugar and cream?” she offered, as she took her seat opposite the older woman.

“Yes, please. Oh, where on earth did you find this exquisite tea set? I haven’t seen its like in ages.”

“It caught my eye while shopping for a credenza for another client. I think the owner didn’t realize what a steal it was. I managed to procure it for far less than it was worth. Much like this house. I seem to have a knack for finding the diamond in the rough.”

“Yes, that’s quite a talent,” Estella agreed, her gaze wandering the sitting room, openly appreciating the room. “You kept the original furnishings?” she asked after sipping her tea.

“Yes, as much as possible. I restored some of the furniture but some were too far gone and had to be thrown away. Not too much, though. I’d say eighty-five percent of the furnishings are original.”

Estella nodded, her gaze far-away. “Yes, I recognize quite a few pieces.”

That startled Kayla. “You knew this house? Did you know the owner?”

A small chuckle followed as she admitted, “Oh yes. He was a devil of a man. Handsome but very wicked.”

Kayla held her interested smile but her stomach did a small tumble. “Oh? Do tell. I love learning about the history of places.”

Estella held her dainty cup in her hand as a moment of reflection passed between them. “His name was Archibald Blackstone. He was the toast of the town when he arrived. It was the early 1940s, we were right in the thick of the war, you know, and Archibald was very active in the artillery supply — some say for both sides,” she added, behind her hand in a conspiratorial whisper. “He was a man without principle and yet, so dashing. And ridiculously wealthy. Why, one time he had Beluga caviar brought in by the pound expressly for an exclusive dinner party when the rest of the nation was suffering food rations. He was daringly eccentric and didn’t give a fig about what others thought of him. That was part of his charm, of course.”

The way Estella’s eyes twinkled briefly, caused Kayla to wonder just how well Estella had known the man.

“It sounds as if you...knew Archibald well?” she ventured, not wanting to overstep or make assumptions and inadvertently offend the woman. “I mean, how do you know so much about him?”

Estella sighed with a wistful smile as she answered, shocking Kayla as she said, “We used to be lovers. He was the most virile, most adventurous lover I’d ever had the good fortune to entertain in my bed.”

“Goodness gracious, Estella, you shock me,” Kayla exclaimed with a chuckle but the surprise was real. Estella de Clare was among the wealthiest of the Bay Area high

society and frankly, Kayla had a hard time picturing Estella as anything but the sharply dressed, classy older woman that she knew her to be. But she supposed, everyone had been young at one time, right? “And here I thought we were going to talk about the ideas for your new house. This is far juicier, you sassy thing.”

Estella tittered like a young girl and Kayla laughed with her, feeling good about the connection they were making. If Estella felt comfortable enough to share her younger exploits, perhaps she’d feel more inclined to share her deep pockets, too. Not that Kayla was all about the money but let’s face it, she was young and just starting out and her business could use the shot in the arm. “So tell me all about this wicked, yet dashing gentleman,” she prompted as she lifted her own tea cup. “I have to know.”

“Well, as I said, he was a man who was accustomed to getting what he wanted. By all accounts, he was ruthless in business and equally ruthless in the bedroom, I can attest to that.” Estella’s hand fluttered to her chest and for a brief moment Kayla froze with anxiety but she could soon see that Estella was just enjoying the memory of a torrid love affair and relaxed. “He came to San Francisco in 1941 and began building this house straight away. Heavens, the money he threw around. He liked people knowing that he had excess when everyone else was struggling. Perhaps that wasn’t very charitable of him but he knew how to make an impression for sure. He wanted something grand, something that would cause people to stand up and take notice. He was the kind of man who, when he walked into a room, he seemed to take all the oxygen with him. Women were always all a flutter around him. It was quite scandalous, really. And there was no one who was immune. Married or otherwise. Even young girls,” she added in a hushed whisper as if the scandal still held power after all these years.

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“Sounds like it,” Kayla murmured. “How did you snag his eye when so many were after him?”

“Oh darling, because I was the one woman who didn’t want him. He was always such a sucker for the challenge. He couldn’t stand that I wasn’t interested in the least. He pursued me with the single-minded focus of a bloodhound on the scent of a rabbit.” Her expression turned sly. “And when I was sure he’d worked hard enough, I let him catch me.”

This story was getting good. Kayla settled more comfortably, ready for more details. Although there was something distinctly wrong with the fact that her love life was so sterile that she’d settle for past juicy tidbits from a client who was nearly a fossil. “He wasn’t married or attached? Usually men of that nature were already snatched up back then.”

“Oh, honey, no one could put a ring on that finger. Not that some didn’t try, mind you. He was a wily one. And singularly attached to his womanizing ways. Would you believe...no, I shouldn’t,” Estella’s mouth pursed shut as if she were suddenly reminded that she, of all people with her stellar reputation, shouldn’t be sharing such salacious stories and Kayla hoped she reconsidered because she was quickly getting sucked into the story. “These stories are not fit for polite society. Honestly, I haven’t talked about that time in my life for so long. I think I got caught up in the nostalgia.”

“Oh, I don’t mind! I love hearing about old stories from the past. When we were restoring this house, we poured through lots of old photos. I have a few of them in my study. Perhaps you’re in some of them?”

“Perhaps,” Estella mused, eagerly asking, “May I take a look?”

“Absolutely.” Kayla hopped up to get the box of photos. When she returned, she handed the small box to Estella with a hopeful expression. “Please let me know if there’s anyone you recognize. I would love to label them and perhaps return them to family members. Most of these photos I received from the Historical Society but a handful I found tucked away in a drawer in the master bedroom.”

“May I see the ones that were in the bedroom?” Estella asked and Kayla quickly plucked them from the box. Thankfully, she’d already separated the two piles and clipped them together. Estelle slowly perused the small stack and finally stopped on one, a smile wreathing her lips. “Ahh, I remember that night. The party. If Archibald knew anything, it was how to throw a bash.” She showed Kayla the picture, pointing out herself as the one closest to Archibald. A group of people, dressed to the nines, mugged for the camera and at the center of a bevy of women, Archibald, a snifter in one hand and a cigar in another, wearing the devil’s own grin and looking every bit the part of a modern day lothario and Kayla startled when she realized her hallucination on the first day of moving in, had indeed, been of Archibald Blackstone. A flush stole over her body as she forced a delighted smile for Estella’s sake. Those eyes — dark as sin and just as piercing — seemed to caress her exposed skin (and she knew that wasn’t possible but she had goosebumps that said otherwise) and while she wanted to snatch up the photos and return them to the box, she waited for what seemed an interminably long time before Estelle reluctantly relinquished the pictures. “Ahh, thank you, dear. That brings back memories I haven’t thought of in a very long time.”

“No problem. It was fun,” she said, ignoring the flutters that remained in her belly. Against her better judgment, she dared to ask, “I have an odd question...do you remember any of Archibald’s favorite music from the day?”

“Actually, I do,” Estella answered with a nod. “He was an ardent fan of Bing Crosby

— and who could blame him? — the man had a beautiful voice. So sensual. My apologies, dear, but the music of today has no soul. Bing’s voice was like melting butter on a hot stove. Smooth and melodic. Why do you ask?”

She shook her head, not even sure why she asked the question. It was ridiculous to even entertain the thought. “Nothing, just curious,” she lied with a bright smile, wishing she hadn’t asked. “Now, shall we get down to business? I have some lovely fabrics to show you and when I first saw them I knew they were made for you.”

“Of course,” Estella agreed, the wistfulness clearing from her gaze. “You’re a busy woman and I’m a silly old fool for spending so much time on a long-dead past. Yes, yes, please show me your samples. I’ve heard marvelous things about your talents and I’m ready to be amazed.”

Kayla spent the next hour detailing her vision for Estella’s newest home and by the end of their meeting, Kayla felt fairly confident she’d just landed Estella de Clare. Her elation was enough to make her forget that tiny little tremble of anxiety that refused to settle and enough to cause her to laugh off her fears and pop open a bottle of champagne to celebrate.

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That music...Kayla scissored her legs against the smooth silk of the sheets, her nude body delighting in the carnal depravity of such a decadent night as her head swam with the dizzying affects of too much alcohol. She laughed and the sound seemed off, as if echoing through a tunnel, and she struggled to sit up but she gave up with a giggle as she simply didn’t have the strength to master the simple move. Bing Crosby’s voice mingled with the scratch of the vinyl and she sought out the sound but her vision was blurry and she couldn’t quite tell where it was coming from. Memories that didn’t seem quite hers clashed with memories that were and she struggled to make sense of something that was nonsensical. She closed her eyes and suddenly, the

warm touch of hands parting her legs caused her to gasp.

“Shhh, my darling, let me taste you,” a voice crooned as she sank against the pillows, sliding as he pulled her close. She was dreaming, she realized muzzily, but never had a dream seemed so real. She opened her eyes and saw a dark head, the strands gleaming in the dim bedroom light, and then the invasion of deft fingers revealing her clitoris, parting the flesh so that his tongue could curl around the sensitive nub. Ohhhh my Godddd...this was some dream. The sensation of warm, wet flesh toying with her clit was more real than anything she'd ever experienced. Any minute a unicorn would go trotting by so she'd know for sure, this wasn't actually happening, right? But if it wasn't actually happening, where was the harm in enjoying every blessed, toe-curling minute? She squeezed her eyes shut as his firm hands gripped her hips and jerked her to his mouth, his touch insistent and she thrilled at the possessive growl he uttered against her dewy flesh.

“I've waited a long time for someone like you,” he said, flicking her swollen nub without mercy. Then, he slipped a firm finger inside her, probing, pressing her G-spot and thrumming the secret ridged spot until she was writhing, unable to breathe.

“I know this isn't real,” she gasped, perhaps needing to say the words so she could hear them herself. “I know this isn't real! It's an amazing, incredible, s-s-ex dream that probably means...ohhhh God, probably means, that...that...I have some kind of repressed emotional need that I...I...holy shit...I...” And then she couldn't speak any longer because a monster of an orgasm screamed through her body, ripping her words to shreds in her mouth as she sucked in deep lungfuls of air and everything clenched and released, singing a chorus of pleasure that zinged through her veins and collapsed her will like a soda can beneath a booted foot. Every muscle went rigid as the contractions of wild sensation caused her to babble like someone who'd suddenly gone mad but she couldn't bring herself to care because it was the single most exhilarating pleasure she'd ever experienced in her entire life and she didn't want it to end.

Sweat beading her body, she slowly became aware and she realized she was gripping the sheets, her 1600-thread count, not silk, sheets and she uttered a shaky laugh. She clapped a hand over her forehead, wiping away the moisture as she struggled to sit up. That was some dream. Freud would've had a heyday with that one. Logically, she'd dreamt about Archibald — yes, she had no doubt it was him — because of her visit with Estella. Plainly that was the reason. She chuckled at her reasoning, though her body was still tingling from that amazing orgasm (not even with a vibrator had she

achieved such an epic O) and after getting a drink of water, climbed back in bed. A delicious lethargy caused by total relaxation stole over her body and she began to drift back to sleep but just as she about to slip away from consciousness...a voice, deep and amused, tickled her ear.

“Now you are mine, pretty girl. All mine.”

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“Jesus, what's wrong with you?” Lola exclaimed, jumping away just before getting splashed with tea. Kayla gasped and apologized, rushing to grab some paper towels to sop up the mess before it ruined the hardwood floors. “You've been jumpy all morning. Are you okay? Did the meeting with Estella de Clare go okay? I thought you were confident that you could land that account.”

Her jumpiness had nothing to do with Estella. Or did it? She couldn't think straight. “It went fine,” she answered, throwing the sodden paper towels in the waste bin. “I'm just tired.”

“It's this big house. I told you shouldn't live here. Frankly, I find it creepy.”

“It's not creepy, it's beautiful,” Kayla shot back, rubbing at her eyes. “I just need a



little more caffeine.”

“No, that’s the last thing you need. You’re already as wiggy as a long-tailed cat in a roomful of rockers and don’t try lying to me because you’ve always been a terrible liar. Out with it, business partner before I hold you down and breathe on you with my coffee breath and force a confession out of you.”

“Anything but that,” Kayla said, finding a chair and sitting in it heavily, not quite sure how to tell her sister what was really on her mind. She searched for the right words and when Lola made an impatient gesture for her to get on with it, she just decided to throw it out there. “I had a sex dream last night.”

Lola blinked. “Excuse me?”

“A sex dream. I mean, as in, I actually...well, um, hit the, you know...”

“You came?” Lola finished for her and Kayla nodded, her cheeks flaming. “And?”

“And what?”

“And why is that freaking you out? People do that all the time. This is what happens when you swear off dating. You get all bound up inside and those sexual urges need an outlet. You’re lucky you didn’t wake up humping the bedpost in my opinion.”

“Lola!”

“What? I’m just sayin’.”

“Ugh. Why do I even try with you? You never take anything seriously.”

“Au contraire, I always take sex seriously.”

“Ha ha, smart ass. That’s the last time I confide in you.”

“Oh, calm down you drama queen. So who were you sexin’ up in dreamland?”

“Like I would tell you,” Kayla retorted, still miffed, but she had to tell someone and her sister was the safest, if not the most sensitive choice. She relented grudgingly. “Okay, I dreamed that the original owner of this house, Archibald Blackstone, was the one who was...doing the honors.”

“Archibald Blackstone...so that’s his name? When I was asking around no one could rightly remember the name. Although, that name is pretty sexy. Sounds like a British Lord or something,” Lola did a fake shiver of delight. “And obviously, he had some talent in the boudoir?”

“Oh yes, you could say that,” Kayla answered, her cheeks blooming. “Is it sad that it might’ve been the best I’ve ever had? Wait, don’t answer that. I already know.”

Lola laughed. “Well, consider yourself lucky. My sex dreams aren’t as fulfilling. I always wake up before the big moment and instead of some hunky guy, I’m usually getting it from someone totally gross, like the homeless person who’s always begging at the corner of Birmingham and Eleventh Street. Makes for some awkward moments.”

Kayla made a face. “That’s gross. I think you might need professional help.”

“Says the woman banging a dead guy,” Lola quipped before heading for the door. “I have that appointment at the fabric store. I’ll catch you later.”

“I didn’t actually bang him,” she muttered as Lola exited. “I just had the best oral of my life. A figment of my over-active imagination gave me the best orgasm of my life. Perfect. Maybe I’m the one who needs professional help.” Or maybe she ought to

start dating again. Scooping up her textile samples, she headed for the study that served as her office and made a mental note to forget that it'd ever happened.

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After a long, satisfying day, Kayla curled up with a good book and, with a fire crackling in the gas fireplace, settled in for a relaxing night. She didn't care what Lola said, this house was amazing. And just as she'd predicted, the house made a great first impression on clients. She was just getting into her book when an odd sound pricked her ears. She glanced up and tracked the room, but finding nothing, returned to her book. Maybe she ought to get a cat, she mused as she flipped the page. All those little noises she heard now and then were probably a mouse running around. A cat would take care of that little problem. She reached for her wine glass and heard the noise again. Kayla ignored the chill that washed over her and purposefully took a sip. She was not going to allow paranoia to get the better of her. Ghosts didn't exist and her over-active imagination was not going to run away with her tonight. Nope. Not going to happen. She was going to read her book, enjoy the quiet and then go to bed. End of story. That might've worked...if the faint breath at the shell of her ear hadn't made her shriek and throw her book at thin air as she leaped from her spot on the sofa. Her wine glass, toppled and fell in slow motion to the floor and she made a mad, useless dive to catch it, only to watch it shatter when it hit the hardwood, sending glass and red wine everywhere.

Shit! So much for a relaxing evening at home. Irritated and annoyed at her overreaction, she went to get something to clean up the wine and glass, only when she returned, she found the glass whole again and the wine in her glass. "I know that the glass fell and the wine spilled," she whispered, gripping the broom and the dishcloth in sweaty palms. "What the hell is going on?" Her heart rate quickened with an erratic beat and she licked her lips as they suddenly seemed parched. There's a logical explanation for this, she tried rationalizing but her mind was shrieking and babbling, so much so that she couldn't hardly see straight. "I don't believe in ghosts,

okay? There's something scientifically plausible going on and I refuse to let my ignorance scare me into thinking my house is haunted. Just not going to happen. I paid cash for this house. My life savings and a large portion of my inheritance, so I'm not walking away from this investment. This is all I have." She didn't know if she was saying all this for her own benefit or for the supposed ghost that didn't exist but she felt marginally better for uttering the words. At the very least her heart rate had slowed to an acceptable level and she didn't fear an impending cardiac event. She gulped down the wine and returned the glass to the sink and then grabbing her book, found her place and sank back into her favorite guilty pleasure — a romance novel.

The thing about romance novels that she adored was that the men were always, at their core, good men. And Kayla had experienced a shortage of good men in her life as of late. Her last boyfriend was a shining example of her wretched judgment when it came to the opposite sex. Hayden had been gorgeous — a surfer type — whose smile had snagged her eye right away. But as it'd turned out, hers wasn't the only attention he'd caught and she'd actually found him screwing another girl when he'd claimed to have a cold. She, like the schmuck, had gone to his apartment armed with chicken noodle soup with visions of nursing him back to help, but had been doused with the cold reality that not only was her hot surfer a liar, but a cheater, too.

And then there'd been Roger, the banker — total opposite of Hayden in every way, except one — he'd been a serial cheater, too. She'd discovered dirty text messages on his cell and then, to add insult to injury, pictures, too.

So, yeah, dating had been a sore subject for her and she was a bit gun-shy. Maybe, if she were being honest, a dream lover was preferable to the real thing because at least a dream lover would be faithful.

A yawn cracked her jaw and her book drifted from her fingers to land on the floor beside her. The sofa was soft and inviting and her eyelids were refusing to remain open. She'd just catch a few winks and then drag herself up to bed.

No sooner had she started to fall asleep, she felt a presence near her. The hair on her body began to quiver and stand at attention and she actually squeezed her eyes shut harder. “No,” she pleaded, almost for her sanity, even as her body tingled with awareness. “I don’t believe in ghosts. I don’t believe in the supernatural. This is a dream and I refuse to believe that it’s anything more than my over-active imagination playing with my tired brain.”

So open your eyes and prove it. But she couldn’t. A part of her was so afraid that she’d open them and, indeed, see Archibald Blackstone staring down at her with that damnable grin and those wicked dark eyes and she would straight lose her mind. Open your eyes. Prove that you’re not going insane. Slowly, almost reluctantly, Kayla allowed her eyes to open and when she didn’t see Archibald, she actually barked a short laugh as she sat up. Good one, Kayla. Either you need a better sleep schedule or you need meds. Hopefully, it was sleep. She turned off the lights and headed for her bed, rubbing the goosebumps from her skin as she climbed the stairs to her bedroom. Tomorrow she would laugh about this. Yep. That was the plan. In the light of day, she was going to laugh her fool head off.

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“Halloween is just around the corner. Are you going to Izzie’s party?” Lola asked the following week as they were enjoying a quick lunch before client meetings. Her sister’s expression turned concerned as she added, “In case you were considering it, I just thought I’d let you know, Roger might be there.”

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 10, 2025, 8:13 am*

Inwardly, Kayla recoiled but she held her composure. She couldn't crumple every time Roger's name cropped up. Besides, the best revenge was indifference. "Really? I don't care. I'm not going to let him ruin my good time."

"Oh good," Lola exclaimed, relieved. "Because at first I was worried that when you heard he was dating Holly, you might freak out."

He was dating Holly Richards? She forced a shrug even as her heart spasmed a little. "Maybe I ought to send her a condolence card. She has no idea what she's getting into."

"Yeah, once a cheater, always a cheater, right?"

"So they say."

"Good for you, taking this so well. I really was worried about telling you."

She smiled for her sister's sake. "I'm not made of China. I won't shatter. Besides, I'm happy to be single right now so I can focus on our business."

"Good plan. Good short-term plan, anyway. If you don't find time to mingle eventually, you might end up that eccentric old lady with the houseful of cats."

"I mentioned getting one cat, not a houseful," she said, exasperated. "I think I have a mouse."

"Eww. Mice are gross. They carry diseases," Lola said, wrinkling her nose. "Well, I

suppose one cat would be okay.”

“So glad I have your approval,” Kayla retorted, causing Lola to chuckle. A moment passed between them before Kayla asked her sister something she probably didn’t want to know the answer to. “Do you believe in ghosts?”

“Ghosts?” Lola repeated, blinking as if she’d never really thought about it before. “Hmm, well, I don’t know. Maybe. I think it would be cool if they existed but only the nice ghosts, not like the kind that tear your face off and wear your skin like a meat suit.”

“Oh dear lord,” Kayla murmured, horrified. “Yes, that wouldn’t be good. I mean, nice ghosts, I guess.” The kind that leave roses and play Bing Crosby at odd hours. “Why do you think that ghosts, if they’re real, hang around? Why don’t they move on?”

“Well, the prevailing wisdom is that they have unfinished business,” Lola answered with a shrug. “Why?” Suddenly, she straightened, her eyes wide. “Oh my God. Does this house have a ghost? I knew it! It’s just too creepy and old not to.”

“For the last time, it’s not creepy. You have no appreciation for the classics,” she told her sister, instantly defensive. “And, no, I didn’t say there was a ghost here. For the record, I don’t believe in ghosts. I was just curious to see how you felt about them.”

“No, I don’t buy that,” Lola said, shaking her head. “Something’s happened, hasn’t it? Tell me. I want to know. Did something go bump in the night? Did mysterious orbs float in thin air? What exactly is an orb, anyway? I’ve always been confused by the weird lights and balls that ghost hunters post on their websites. Seems like a camera malfunction to me.”

Kayla waved away Lola’s tangent. “There’s no ghost. I was just making

conversation.”

“Sure you were,” Lola said wryly. “But, okay, if you don’t want to share, I understand. Nobody likes to have their entire belief structure challenged. I get it.”

Kayla gave her sister a sidewise glance. Was that it? If she admitted that there was something hinky going on, would she have to reexamine everything she knew to be true? Perhaps. She released a short breath and decided to come clean. “Okay, maybe there have been a few odd occurrences...but I’m not really ready to admit that there might be a ghost rambling around in the halls. Honestly, there’s probably a scientific explanation for the things I’ve experienced.”

“Well, the only way to know is to share. So what happened?”

“Um, well, one morning a single red rose was on the kitchen counter, still wet from the morning dew. Did you bring it in?” she asked, almost hopefully.

“Why would I bring you flowers?” Lola asked. “No, I didn’t bring you a red rose. I’d chalk that up to officially weird. Either you have a stalker or...a ghost with a romantic streak.”

“Yeah, not sure which option I prefer,” she admitted. “Okay, the other thing is that the old record player was playing a record I’ve never seen, from an era that I wasn’t a part of. The 1940s to be exact. Bing Crosby, which I learned from Estella was Archibald Blackstone’s favorite singer.”

“Creepy. Definitely creepy. And you’re still staying here, why?”

“Because I’m not about to walk away from my life savings over something that likely is totally explainable.”



“Maybe someone is messing with you.”

“The only person I can imagine would do that, is you.”

Lola looked affronted. “Well, it isn’t me!”

“Okay, then. I don’t know what to think anymore.”

Lola gathered up her trash and threw it away. “Look, maybe there is something logical to the things that have happened but what does your intuition say? Are you creeped out?”

She thought about it for a moment and then realized she wasn’t. “No,” she answered slowly. “I mean, I would’ve thought that I would be, but, I’m not going anywhere. I love this house and besides, I can’t abandon it anyway. Everything I own is tied up in this house. It’s a part of me. If I walk away...I’m screwed.”

“Then, I guess you’d better make peace with whatever is going on. I mean, if it is a ghost and it’s leaving you roses and playing romantic music...that’s far better than a ghost that’s throwing pots and pans and screaming at you to ‘Get out!’”

True. Her wacky sister made a fair point. “It’s not a ghost, though,” she said, deciding to drop it. “And we have clients to meet. Make sure you take those burnt sienna swatches over to the execs over at Washu Bank. I think it’ll really pop against the white wainscoting.”

“Sure thing, boss. Oh, and if by some chance it is Archibald Blackstone and he’s moonlighting as a dream lover, send him my way. I’m down with sampling a little of what he’s giving you.”

Kayla gasped and tossed a leftover grape at her sister, suffering an odd twinge of

jealousy. “Get your own dream lover.”

“Hey! I can’t help it, I’m in a dry spell. I’m not like you. Celibacy does terrible things to my brain!”

Kayla laughed and Lola scooped up the swatches before letting herself out. Kayla cleaned up their lunch fixings and then returned to her study for an afternoon filled with work but in the back of her mind, a question lingered...what if everything she’d been experiencing was the real deal? What if Archibald Blackstone was actually haunting her? And if so, why?

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## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 10, 2025, 8:13 am*

Halloween was Monica's least favorite holiday but she put a good face on it and went through the motions for the sake of appearances. She decorated the house, put out candy, and even gave out holiday discount cards to her customers for specific services but privately, she found the holiday creepy and disingenuous. Like so many pagan holidays bastardized by Christianity, Halloween made no sense and was so far afield of what it originally was, that it'd become a parody, in her opinion. Dressing up and asking for candy? She found more integrity in the Mexican festival, Day of the Dead, because at least she could make sense of it.

It was nearing nine o'clock and she would've figured all the little kids finished with their rounds by now but a knock at the door made her sigh and grab the nearly empty candy bowl. Well, at least she wouldn't have a bunch of chocolate around after tonight to tempt herself with. She opened the door and nearly jumped out of her skin when Lola and a bunch of her friends scared the life out of her by lunging at her dressed in horrid witch costumes. "Good God, what the hell are you doing?" she asked, once she'd recovered. "Aren't you a little too old to be trick or treating?"

"Of course, we just made the stop to see if you were down with coming with us to Izzy's party," Lola answered with a laugh. "Go put on something cute and you can come with us. Costume optional."

Go to a party where she knew Roger was going to be? No thank you. "I'm going to sit this one out. I?

I'm pretty tired, actually. I haven't been sleeping very well. I could use a little extra shut-eye."

“It’s all those sexy times with your dream lovah,” Lola teased and Kayla wanted to strangle her sister with the stringy strands of her wig. But Lola was oblivious to anything but her own fun at the moment and thought her quip was hilarious. “Okay, okay. Get some sleep. But just remember, you were invited and you chose to stay home like a fuddy-duddy.”

“Duly noted,” Kayla said, getting ready to close the door but Lola surprised her when she double-backed as everyone began climbing into the car.

Lola was semi-serious as she said, “Listen, I don’t know if you should be left in this house tonight of all nights, you know?”

“What are you talking about?”

“Let’s just say for a minute that maybe you do have a ghost in your house and maybe, if the legends are even a sliver true, that Halloween, or All Hallows Eve, is when the veil is the thinnest between the barrier separating the living from the dead...then maybe being in your house tonight isn’t such a bright idea. You get what I’m saying?”

She did. And admittedly, there was a certain crazy logic to Lola’s point but Kayla wasn’t about to give into an irrational fear and couple it with superstition or a belief that she didn’t even believe in. “I’ll be fine. Go have fun and don’t do anything that will reflect badly on our business.”

Lola paused then blew her a kiss and bounded to the car where her friends were waiting. Moments later they were heading to Izzy’s party, where, no doubt, there would be plenty of bad judgment going on into the wee hours of the morning.

Kayla distracted herself with some work and then some mindless television before shutting down the house and heading upstairs. She glanced at the nightstand clock

and suppressed a shiver at the realization that it was the so-called ‘witching hour’ and she forced herself to chuckle at the absurdity of her thoughts. She washed her face and brushed out her hair before heading back to the bedroom only to stop short at what she saw. A black negligee lay strewn across her bed, the fine silk fabric gleaming in the faint light and she knew without a doubt, it hadn’t been there when she’d left the room to wash her face. She slowly walked to the bed and picked up the lingerie, the ultra-fine fabric slithering between her fingertips, whispering tales of sensual debauchery she could only imagine in her most filthy of fantasies and she let it drop to the floor, still in shock. What was happening?

“Put it on my lovely and I will show you how a man ought to take a woman.”

Kayla gasped and whirled, fear nearly stopping her heart as she stared at the man from her dreams, lounging against the bedroom doorway, that smile, those eyes...Archibald Blackstone as she lived and breathed, watching her with a hunger that was unmistakably carnal. “I’m hallucinating,” she whispered, perhaps to herself but the painful hammer of her heart rate felt incredibly real. “What’s happening? Am I having a stroke? M-my brain is throwing out incomprehensible signals and I’m h-hallucinating, right?”

Archibald chuckled with dark amusement and pushed off from the doorway and she nearly stopped breathing. “I assure you, beautiful lady, you are not dreaming or hallucinating...I am very real, as real as you in this moment, and I’ve waited so long to feel the vibrant spirit of one such as you, pressed up against my flesh.”

“You’re dead,” she felt prudent to point out, even though her voice came out as a horrified whisper. “This isn’t happening. I don’t believe in ghosts.”

“Yes, you are very fond of saying that. However, I am here and I am not alive so what does that make me? Regrettably, a ghost, though the label lacks a certain flair wouldn’t you say?”

“Oh Jesus, I can’t believe this is happening,” she moaned, startling when he snapped his fingers with an impatient gesture.

“Enough. Gather your wits, woman. I have but three hours to enjoy this thinning of the veil and I intend to spend that time fucking that lovely body of yours. Now, put the lingerie on, my sweet and be quick about it. Celibacy does not agree with me.”

That shocked her out of her stupor. Did a ghost just order her to avail herself for his convenience? Oh, hell no. “Excuse me, but I’m not interested in your advances, ghostly or otherwise. From what I know of you, Mr. Blackstone, you were a terrible, wicked man and I’ve had enough of those in my life.”

He surprised her with a hearty laugh as he advanced. “In life, I was quite wicked. It’s nice to know that I have not been entirely forgotten but I must confess, some of the rumors were, in fact, exaggerated.”

“Exaggerated? Which ones?”

He stopped to think, then answered, “I am positively certain I never...oh wait, yes I did do that. Age of consent in my day was much different than it is today and sixteen-year-old flesh is the sweetest carnal delicacy. But I drew the line at certain proclivities. Animals, children, bodily fluids...never.”

Kayla shuddered, not quite sure what to think of the surreal situation. If it were true — and she wasn’t, in fact, suffering a brain aneurysm — then she was conversing with a horny ghost who had every intention of having his wicked way with her. Could she get pregnant from a ghostly encounter? Oh, as if that were the major concern! Try focusing! “Why me?” she dared to ask, moving away from him, putting more distance between them as he continued to advance undeterred.

“I suppose an answer is easily enough given. You burn with a fire I am consumed

with experiencing. Being dead affords me certain privileges, one of which is the ease of seeing a living aura. You blaze with life. I'm drawn to that fire for its heat and its promise of exquisite pain and pleasure. I've invaded your dreams enough to know that you yearn to let go and experience something beyond your control. You're so contained in your need to conquer all obstacles in your life, that you forget that the beauty of living is the knowledge that nothing is inherently in your control, my lovely. A lesson, I didn't quite learn until I was dead. And now, my sweet, I have answered your question and I've been patient. It is your turn to indulge me." Within a blink — a heartbeat, even — she was, in fact, wearing the silky scrap of lingerie, her breasts straining the confines of the cloth that clung to her curves and accentuated the flare of her hips. She sucked in a tight breath as her skin tingled wherever the cloth touched and she knew with certainty that Archibald would take what he wanted from her whether she consented or not. The knowledge, though frightening, was also liberating. Her insides burned just as Archibald had said and she knew he spoke truth even if she wasn't sure how to reconcile the knowledge. Archibald smiled, slow and sensual, as his gaze drank in every detail of her undress, and she felt herself warming to the idea that Archibald might pleasure her in real life as he had in her dreams. "You are a vision, my dove. Your breasts have kept me wanting since the day you stepped over my threshold. I have tasted their sweetness in my dreams and the agony that I had to wait was a torture I cultivated with pleasure knowing this day was coming."

Kayla couldn't help herself. His words had a drugging effect on her senses. His voice, deep and melodic, yet colored with wickedness, drew her in and teased with the prospect of what he planned to do to her. "I sympathize with your situation," she heard herself say breathlessly as his finger trailed her bare shoulder, igniting the skin and sparking a distressing tremble in her stomach. "But I'm not about to be your one-night stand, no matter how talented you are with that tongue of yours."

"Ahhh, so you remember the dreams and what I did to you," he said, chuckling with approval. "Good. Because that was a mere preview of the pleasure I will wrought on

your body tonight.”

A preview? Holy hell, was he serious? She’d nearly gone into a coma from coming so hard. She risked a glance and caught the sharp scent of his cologne, manly with a hint of citrus, and fought to stay focused. It would be so damn easy to just succumb because none of this felt real anyway but a part of her resisted, insisting quite vehemently that she hold strong. “Tempting but...I don’t think you’re my type. Well, I kn

ow you’re not my type. I prefer flesh and blood men...men who haven’t crossed over, if you know what I mean.”

“Do I feel ephemeral to you?” he asked silkily, allowing the thin strap to fall, replacing it with the firm press of his warm lips. She shivered. No, he felt decidedly real. Very much alive, down to the mildly damp spot his lips left behind on her skin. “I assure you, I am very real in this moment. Let me tell you what I plan to do this night with your sweet body as it yields to me...I will plunge my cock into your warm and willing feminine heat until the head of my cock touches your womb. I will make you scream my name and beg for release but I will not give it until you’ve ceded to me. Do you understand, my sweet dove? Modern women, so rigid, so self-righteous in their feminine power and yet they realize nothing of their true power, their gift to the men in their lives.”

“And what would that be?” she managed to ask, her lips dry. “Women’s rights weren’t exactly a thing back in your day. How would you know how to treat a woman without being insulting?”

“Ahhh, there’s that fiery spirit again and sassy mouth. A woman was made for a man’s touch...to yield.”

She barked a shaky laugh. “Sorry but women today don’t yield. They do all sorts of



things they never did in your day and age, like vote, drive cars, have the right to voice their opinion.”

He waved away her statement as if it were immaterial. “You miss the point. No worries, I will show you, my defiant little rose.” She started to protest but suddenly, her muscles were held in a vise and she was forced to remain still as he divested her of the slip of material with a wicked grin. “You see, there are some advantages over the living flesh that I find delightful. This little trick would’ve come in handy when I was living.”

She gasped as he released her and she tumbled to the bed, horrified and oddly aroused that she was completely naked. “This is rape,” she cried desperately, needing to say something — anything — that might make him stop, even if she was embarrassingly turned on by the memory of what he could do to her. But how could she possibly explain to a police officer that she’d been sexually assaulted by a...ghost? Oh good grief, they’d laugh her out of the precinct.

## Page 5

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“I do not rape women,” Archibald said stiffly, his gaze narrowing. “And I will not need to force you. You will come to me of your own accord.”

“And how do you see that happening?” she dared to ask.

“Like this,” he flicked his hand and it was as if a bell had been rung inside her body, reverberating with pleasure throughout her nerve endings, awakening everything to the possibility of the kind of pleasure he promised. She gasped and squeezed her legs together as he tickled her clitoris with unseen fingers, a million tiny tongues licking at her pleasure center, pressing every button and causing her to lose herself immediately and without warning. She writhed, sweat beading her body, as she moaned and cried out, wanting more, yet afraid of just how far he could push her to the edge with little effort on his part. It hardly seemed fair, honestly. “I could do this all night,” he told her easily, manipulating her body to deeper sensations until she felt as if she were about to fall apart.

Over and over, she came close to coming but then the sensation would recede like the waters of a lake, gently lapping the shore and she’d start all over. Building, building, to a frustrating end, only to begin again. Soon enough, she was crying out, begging for release, even as it shamed her and destroyed her dignity. “Please, let me come,” she begged, her cheeks flaming. “God, please, I need to come!”

“Tell me you will yield,” he said without mercy. “Grant me access to your body and I will ease your suffering.”

“You’re a bastard,” she cried, groaning as he ramped up the pleasurable torture to near insane levels.

“Yes,” he agreed without argument. “I am a bastard. Wicked and without a care to another’s feelings — that’s indeed what my enemies would say. But if you would ask my lovers...a different story entirely. If you would let me, I would worship your body, take you to heights you’ve never known and will never know in another lovers arms.”

She would say or do anything to stop the madness growing in her body. She’d grant him anything if only he would let her come. “Yes, God, yes,” she whispered, half-sobbing as her body screamed for release. “Anything, just make it stop.”

“Then let our night begin...” he said with dark victory. “Let it begin.”

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“When I was alive, I was brash, hot-headed, often reckless. I fucked at will and gave little care for the consequence. I discovered, to my dismay, that all things come at a price. Even pleasure.” Archibald began slowly, methodically undressing, his gaze never leaving hers. He jerked his pristine white dress shirt open to reveal a dark spot above his flat nipple. “This,” he gestured to the unnatural spot “is where the bullet pierced my heart. A lover’s affronted husband, incensed at being a cuckold, shot me dead right here in this room. I died here. One shot. Clean and efficient. Ironically, I’d gone hunting with the man and he’d never been as good a shot when hunting fox as when he was shooting a human being.” He shrugged out of his shirt and let it drop to the floor. “Lesson learned, I suppose.”

“That you can’t always get what you want?” she supplied with a brave tilt of her mouth once she could breathe again.

He countered with a cool smile of his own. “No, that I should pay closer attention to my intuition and not the dictates of my cock. I knew Gia was trouble from the moment I laid eyes on her. A loose slut with eyes for every cock in town and an

appetite that would never be satisfied no matter how many times she'd been fucked. But my ego got the best of me. However, I believe I got the last laugh. Isaac died of a horrendous sexually transmitted disease many years later from a whore. His hypocrisy was mildly amusing as was his karmic retribution but I digress. Within time, I learned that on this eve, the veil separating the dead from the living was as diaphanous as a sheer curtain and I took full advantage. Ahh, the adventures I had but then this house emptied and there were no more beautiful ladies to court."

"This is not courting," she disagreed hotly. "This is ghostly assault and unnatural."

"And what of the red rose? The music?"

She shook her head. "That's not enough and even if it were possible to accept the affections of a ghost...the fact remains, that you are dead. There's no future there, which is fairly typical of the men in my life," she grumbled.

The bed gave way to his weight as he lay beside her, as comfortable as if they were an old couple sharing intimacies. She should've been scared out of her mind but oddly, she wasn't. If anything, she was intrigued by the mystery, the science, even, and the mystique of what was happening. And even, if she were being honest, the attraction she felt toward the man. He was a force to be reckoned with in death, she could only imagine how he'd been in life. "You have beautiful breasts," he shared, reaching over to squeeze her breast with a firm hand. Before she could protest, his mouth descended, closing tightly over the budded nipple and she moaned deep in the back of her throat as her nerve endings leaped with awareness and she arched as if to feed him more of her own flesh. "And you taste like honeyed wine," he murmured against her nipple, grazing the sensitive bud with the gentle scrape of teeth. "In life, I would ask a woman what she desired...in death, I already know." Monica's arms were suddenly bound above her head and her legs splayed. She gaped at the realization she was helpless and the telling wetness between her legs gave away her immediate arousal. Her cheeks flared and she tried to hide her face behind her arm

but it was hopeless, he knew her dirty heart and it wasn't fair. He leaned into her space, crowding her. "I can smell your honeyed core, your pussy juices practically drip down your thigh, giving away your secret. Do you know why your previous lovers were dissatisfying? It wasn't their lack of fidelity — although that's what you believe — it was their lack of ownership. My sweet dove, a man who can satisfy his woman's craving, has no need to look elsewhere because he's too busy fucking her into submission. They weren't worthy of your sacrifice, your loyalty."

Something rang true in his assessment even though her rational mind wanted to balk. Roger had been a considerate lover but a little too timid if she were honest and Hayden had been full of adventure but ultimately selfish in his lovemaking style. She dared to meet Archibald's knowing gaze, his lips inches from hers. "And you think you are worthy?" she asked.

"My sweet dove, you and I were made for one another and I've waited decades to claim you as my own. All encounters to this point have been mere practice for the main event."

"So you played with other women...after you became a ghost?"

"There was a learning curve, my sweet," he chuckled. "But I am a master now. Let me show you all my tricks and treats on this special night."

This was it. The defining moment. Either she was all in or she fought what she knew in her heart to be true because her mind hadn't quite accepted it yet. The memory of untold pleasure tingled in the back of her brain but it was the knowing in Archibald's gaze that told her the complete story. Her soul seemed to yearn for his touch, even as crazy as it seemed and she was truly helpless to ignore the siren call. So here it goes. She would yield and come what may. She lifted up to meet his lips, sealing her mouth to his in a deep searching kiss that took him by surprise but ignited the beast within him. "So take me then," she dared him, breaking the kiss. "Make me yours."

With a triumphant growl, Archibald rolled her to her knees, her hands still bound by invisible rope and slipped his finger deep inside her, testing, probing, and she groaned, pushing her hips back to bury his finger deeper, wishing it were his cock, groaning as he pushed another finger in, stretching her, teasing. He pinched her swollen clit, causing her to yelp and grind on his fingers, wanting more, needing more, until he obliged and rubbed the nub with a light touch. And then his fingers were gone and his hands gripped her ass, squeezing the plump flesh hard enough to leave a bruise but she welcomed the mark because maybe, just maybe, it would be necessary to save her sanity later when she questioned if any of this had happened at all. “Your ass is s

o sweet, so squeezable. So fuckable.”

Did he mean to...? She stiffened, frightened at the thought but he didn't give her a chance to give into fear, distracting her with more pleasure. Pleasure that was impossible to imagine and brutally encompassing. A pleasure cloud enveloped her body as she rang with sensations that were otherworldly and decadent and she forgot her fear entirely. Suddenly, his fist was tangled in her hair as he wrenched her head back, bowing her to his will and causing her pussy to flood with juices. He was clearly in control and she was helpless to stop him and she loved it. That was her dirty secret and he knew it. Knew it as easily as he knew his left from his right palm and she shuddered at the power he exuded. “The things you want but are too afraid to ask for, afraid of the censure, the judgment, I assure you, I will give you,” he promised darkly and she knew he would. “You yearn for domination, so that you may submit to a man without feeling as if you've given up your feminine power and I will show you that your fears are groundless. Submission is your gift, my sweet dove, and I intend to accept it with a willing and humble heart.”

Any other man saying these words to her would've been a huge turn off but she could barely contain her joy as she gave herself over to Archibald. There was liberation in relinquishing control, relinquishing expectations. There was no social dance to adhere

to — he was fucking dead and of a different era — he could give two shits about convention and politically correct niceties. And, oh God, he was a fucking beast in bed!

He was behind her, his cock poised at her slippery entrance and she braced herself, giddy with anticipation of being split in two by his cock. She rocked against him, presenting her pussy to him with willing abandon, loving that she needn't be concerned with anything but pleasure and she cried out, "Take me, Archibald! Fucking take me now!" And then he did exactly that, plunging inside her, pushing his massive cock into her tight sheath, stretching her as he went, demanding everything she had and taking it without restraint. A groan escaped her as he thrust against her, punching her womb with the unerring accuracy of a hunter intent on its prey. He went balls deep, the soft tissue of his testicles slapping her bare ass as he continued to ride her, hips thrusting without mercy, pushing her to that final edge. But before she could tumble over that blessed cliff, he withdrew and slapped her hard on her ass, causing her to yelp and groan, "What are you doing? I was so close!"

"You did not ask for your release and thus you must be punished my little dove," he told her harshly and she trembled with anticipation at what he would do to her. "When you wish to come, you will beg for your release. If you please me, I will grant it. If you disappoint me, I will deny you the sweetness of release and drag out your punishment until you scream."

She bit her lip, smiling as she wiggled her ass, teasing him. "And just how will you punish me, Archibald? Will you fuck me harder? Because if you do, I will only come harder."

"Oh, you little vixen, let me show you."

And then his cock was pushing at her ass, breaching her tightly budded entrance, and she gasped at the intrusion. But even as she opened to him, thinking smugly that she

could handle whatever he thought to dish out, she cried out in shock as the sensation of Archibald filling her pussy once again made her shudder and moan. “What are you doing? How? Ohhh my God!”

He was filling her in both places. How was it possible? But the questions would not have answers at the moment because head-splitting pleasure began to take over as he began to pump against her, two cocks, one real, one phantom, as he bent her to his will with the sheer force of his sexual domination. Soon enough she was babbling incoherently as pleasure built and receded, built and receded, until she was mindless.

“Beg for your release, my sass-mouthed vixen,” he demanded and she could only cry as her body shuddered and jerked against the need to let go. Her breath was stolen from her lungs and she couldn’t take much more. “Beg, my darling and I will grant it.”

“P-please,” she managed, but the words were stuck in her mouth. She forced the words out with a sob. “Please! Let me come. Please!”

“Who does this pussy belong?” he roared, slapping her hard on the ass, stinging the flesh and causing her to scream and grind harder against him. “Say it, sweet girl! Who do you belong?”

“You! Archibald, oh my hell, you Archibald, p-please!”

Satisfied, he pumped her without mercy, pushing her to the final edge until she shattered into oblivion, her soul flying into the sun, as two cocks pummeled her without end. She couldn’t take anymore and yet she wanted it so desperately. “Yes, yes!” Archibald roared his release and warmth filled her body, both in her pussy and her ass, which should’ve been impossible and yet, she felt bathed in his fluids, dripping with his seed so that the sounds of their fucking filled the room with soppy squishes. He collapsed against her and they both tumbled to the bed, the invisible



ropes binding her disappearing as if he'd momentarily lost the ability to manifest the effect and she rocked against the sensations crashing over her in big, cresting waves that were so powerful, they bordered on pain. When she could speak, her voice was hoarse as she stared in wonder at the ceiling, knowing there was no going back after an experience like that. "I am well and truly yours now, aren't I?"

"Yes."

"I'll never be able to settle for anything less than this," she said almost bitterly. "Why me?"

Archibald laughed. "Why not?"

Even as the pleasure continued to ring inside her body, she struggled with the knowledge that her life was forever changed and she wasn't sure how she felt about that. "This isn't natural."

His expression hardened as he gripped her jaw. "Screw the natural law. I will have you and I've waited a lifetime to claim you for my own. Can you not feel in your soul that this is meant to be?"

She did. Good God, she did. It was ludicrous and yet, so right. "But I can never truly be yours. What kind of future is this? You're the quintessential unavailable bachelor — the exact kind of man I've been trying to avoid. Just because you're dead doesn't change a thing. I don't want to date guys like you."

"You will date no one like me. Ever," he returned smugly and she wanted to bop him over the head with a pillow...or an anvil. "Come, we have precious little time before I lose this corporal body. We shouldn't waste it bickering like an old married couple."

Well, she couldn't argue with that logic. "How much time do you have left?"

He glanced at her bedside clock. “An hour.” A wicked smile curved his lips. “Shall I show you something truly sinful?”

She held her breath and relented. “Yes, we might as well go for it. What else you got?”

A dark laugh rumbled out of his hard, chiseled chest as he pressed her into the bed. “I’ve got tricks that will make you forget your own name, but never,” he said, his voice lowering to a sensual octave “who owns this luscious body.” He went down her belly, sliding his tongue into her navel before slipping his tongue into her pussy, delving into that hot flesh, until she was gasping for air and gripping his hair in her hand. “I will always come to you...in your dreams...on this night. Promise you will be mine forever more,” he murmured, wrenching the promise from her lips with the seal of utter pleasure. She groaned, giving him her soul, searing the unnatural bond between them in bodily fluids and helpless but wondrous sweetness as he milked her clit of every sensation, demanding she submit to his touch and yielding to his whim.

“Yes, I yield,” she cried, losing herself again and again. “Holy fuck, I yield!”

His low rumble of laughter echoed in her dreams long after the hour had passed and she was left naked, wet, and completely worn out from head to toe. There was no mistaking that it’d happened. She’d been fucked — completely and absolutely — by an unnatural being and her soul was likely in jeopardy but as her body continued to tremble with the aftershocks of the insane pleasure he wrought in her body, she couldn’t bring herself to care

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Colors seemed brighter, sound more vibrant and her body sang with a power that wasn’t natural in the least. If anything, she could practically feel her living aura, blazing, fed by the fire created by Archibald’s unnatural touch and she knew nothing

would be the same. Ordinary men would never satisfy her again. And, as a smile found her, she was okay with that. Ordinary men were so...ordinary.

A smile found her lips as she stretched, lazy as a cat and just as sated, dizzy with the realization that everything she'd ever known about life — and death — had been seriously obliterated and you know what? She was good with it. Soooo good with it.

In fact, she was counting down the days until the veil was thin enough to be claimed by Blackstone...again and again and again again...because she belonged to him.

In this life — and the next.

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Looking for more by Alexx Andria?

Enjoy the first chapter from her bestselling novel, **LEVERAGE**

-1-

Boston Kincaid was used to getting what he wanted — not because things came easily to him but because he didn't accept obstacles.

And he wanted her.

There were a million different reasons why he shouldn't, but none mattered. She invaded his fantasies, his dreams, interrupted his thoughts with frightening regularity and he figured that the only way he could ease his frustration was to have her in his possession.

But first he had to find his leverage. He suffered no illusions that what he was doing

was ethical, moral, or even legal but, again none of that mattered. Perhaps he was obsessed, yes... That was a good word for it. Obsessed. But if the advantage of being filthy wealthy was the ability to remove all obstacles, Boston didn't hesitate to use every resource available to him.

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And that included finding a way to bend Julianna to his will.

“She's here.” Although Richard, his right-hand man, knew better than to allow a hint of judgment to color his voice, Boston could see the questioning look in the older man's eyes. “Shall I show her in?”

Boston stood and straightened his jacket, tugging on his sleeve until they were impeccably straight, a predatory grin stretching his mouth. "Yes, please do. And close the door behind you."

Richard opened the door and a curvy blonde, big brown eyes wide and unsure, walked in, obviously confused as to why Boston Kincaid, a billionaire several times over, had requested an audience. He enjoyed her confusion, but even more so, he couldn't help but feast his eyes on every curve on her lush figure and he couldn't wait to taste every inch. Was it presumptuous of him to assume that she would agree to his terms? Perhaps...but fortune favored the bold. What he was about to propose was likely the boldest move he'd ever made in his life. And he couldn't wait. Richard closed the door quietly, enclosing them both in the privacy of his expansive office.

“Please take a seat, Miss Holly,” he said, his eyes dancing. She was even prettier than she was the first time he'd seen her, trying to balance a tray full of dirty glasses, glasses barely clinging to the tip of her nose. At first glance, she wouldn't have drawn a single glance from any of the people he usually associated with — short, awkward, and plainly not the most coordinated — but Boston hadn't been able to take his eyes off her. Not even for a second. Her breasts, barely contained in that ugly ill-fitting uniform, nearly begged for his mouth, and those hips were made for his hands as he drove into her. Everything about her was rounded and feminine and he had to have

her.

“I don't understand why I'm here,” she started, looking nervously around the room.

“Have I done something wrong?”

“Do you know who I am?”

She shook her head. "No. Should I?" she asked, pushing her glasses further up on the bridge of her nose. “I don't have a television and I don't pay attention much to the news. I mostly read. When I have free time that is.”

“My name is Boston Kincaid. I could spend the next hour talking about all the things I own, businesses, houses, etc. but that's not really why I have brought you here. I have a business proposition for you of a unique persuasion.”

A subtle frown gathered on her forehead. “A business proposition? Are you sure you have the right girl? I dropped out of college and I've been working at the Tasty Perk for the last six months. I'm not sure I have anything to offer someone like you.”

He couldn't help the smile. “I think you're exactly the person I've been looking for.”

“What kind of person would that be?”

Instead of answering, he said, “I always make a habit of doing a thorough background check on the people I plan to have in my life. I know quite a lot about you Julianna Holly.”

“You do?” She asked, plainly confused. “Why?”

“I know that you have a brother you care a lot about. And I know you're doing your best to care for him. But it must be terribly difficult to bear the financial burden of his

medical needs all by yourself.”

“How do you know that?” she asked, shifting with discomfort at the personal nature of his background check. “And why would you need to know such personal stuff about me and my family?”

“As you can imagine, a person of my position must take every precaution so I hope you can forgive my intrusion.” She nodded but remained wary, much like the gazelle watching for the lion. He suppressed the predatory smile and pushed forward, impatient to end this forced social nicety so that he could make his offer. “You have nothing to fear. I found nothing that gave me pause. You have been a good girl to this point in your life. Good grades, civic volunteerism and only one parking ticket, courtesy of the university campus police. They’re such a nuisance, aren’t they?” he tsked in commiseration, which prompted a small smile.

“I was late for an exam and decided to risk the fine to park in an area that was designated for parking passes only.”

“Was it worth it?”

“Not sure. I got a B on the exam and the ticket cost me \$150. That’s a lot for a college student on a budget,” she added for his benefit assuming he wouldn’t know how it felt to be stuck with limited funds. “Paying off that ticket meant I was eating ramen noodles for two weeks. Have you ever tried to exist on high sodium and carbs alone?”

“I can’t say that I have.”

“It’s rough.”

“I can imagine.”

Julianna pushed her hair behind her ear and glanced around his office. “Nice place. Smells like old wood and lemon polish. Like an old library.”

“Is that a compliment?”

“Yeah, I like books. I can’t usually afford to buy them so I spend a lot of my free time in libraries. Some people visit museums, I visit libraries.”

“And my office reminds you of one you visited?”

She smiled. “Yeah. It was a small town, not even big enough for a stoplight and the museum actually shared space with the library. One side of the building housed the antiques and the other end, books. But there was a huge fireplace in the middle of the room with a sitting area for reading, like one you’d see in a castle or something. It was amazing. I always thought if I had a lot of money, I’d build a library in my house something like that. It was cozy and warm and invited curling up with a good book.” She glanced at him shyly to ask. “Do you have a huge library like that?”

“I do...not that I get to spend much time there. I haven’t read for pleasure for a very long time. However, the last time I was in there...my pleasure wasn’t found between the pages of a book.”

She blushed at the casual mention of his sexual exploits and his groin tightened at the inadvertently sexy action. “So...not to be rude or anything but...why did you bring me here? I’m still a bit confused and I need to get back to work.”

Boston rubbed his mouth to keep his excitement at bay. Yes, to the point. “As I mentioned before, I know a bit about you. The fact that you dropped out of college to care for your brother says a lot about your character.” Ironical, that he would admire her for such a selfless gesture and yet he was about to ask her to compromise her dignity and integrity. If he weren't such a bastard, he might've felt a twinge of



conscience. But just standing in her presence, was enough to fire his blood. “Let me get straight to the point. I want to help you with your brother. But before you get the wrong idea about my intentions, know this...nothing comes for free. What I'm about to offer you might be shocking, it might even offend you. But I'm a man accustomed to getting what he wants and right now I want you.”

Julianna's mouth dropped open at his frank statement. Her voice rang with indignation as she asked, “What the hell are you talking about? What do you mean you want me? Do you mean...?” She couldn't even say the words, which he found quite endearing. Hell, everything about her he found delicious. She swallowed and stared. “I think you have the wrong impression of me. I'm not a whore so if you're about to make me an indecent proposal, save your breath.” She rose on unsteady feet, wobbling on her cheap heels. “Good day Mr. Kincaid.”

She turned to leave but Boston wasn't about to let her go. “It's a pity your brother can't get the help he needs. I would imagine that if you had more resources at your disposal, Tom might actually walk again. I've done a little research and I found a facility in New Zealand with some cutting edge technology and therapy designed to help repair spinal injuries, much like your brother's. I imagine, a man like him, who was once very active, dreams of someday getting out of that wheelchair.”

“What are you saying?” she asked.

“Don't play coy. Simply that with more resources, your brother might get the help he needs. If you were agreeable to my business proposition, I would happily provide those resources to your brother. Actually, it's a very simple arrangement with mutual benefit so there's no need to take offense. Honestly, women ha

ve been bartering their bodies since the beginning of time so it's hardly a new concept.”

“How dare you dangle something like that in front of me. Who are you? What kind of man are you?”

“I'm a man who gets what he wants. By any means possible.”

Her stricken expression told him volumes about her opinion of him but he didn't care nor did it cut when she said, “You are very cruel.”

He shrugged. It wasn't the first time he'd been accused of cruelty and it wouldn't be the last. “Would you like to know more?”

“No.”

Boston reached into his desk and tossed a plane ticket toward her. "Right there is a first-class plane ticket to New Zealand purchased in your brother's name. He already has a suite reserved at the facility. There is a waiting list two years long for people to get into this program. With one phone call, Tom could be there at the top of the list. It seems a small thing I'm asking of you for such a life-changing possibility for your brother."

“And what exactly are you asking of me?” she asked, her eyes watering. For such a small thing, she radiated energy. Everything about her seemed to vibrate with youth and energy. Boston was 10 years older than she was and he couldn't wait to peel the clothes from her body. "I suppose you know enough about me to know that what you're asking of me goes against everything I believe in.”

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At that he chuckled. “Ahh yes...I've always been fascinated by people who take a vow of chastity before marriage. Take heart, most women lose their virginity for far less noble purposes.”

Her cheeks colored. “You're taking something precious from me by suggesting such a thing.”

"Nonsense. It's a thin sheath of skin that you could've lost horseback riding. Don't place undue value on something so easily lost.”

“It's not about a sheath of skin. It's about something I was saving for someone who loved me, not a callous businessman with more money than morals.”

“So be it. I'm happy to play the part of the bastard as long as I get what I want.”

"How can you be so cruel? I don't understand. What did I do to deserve this?"

"Perhaps the question should be how did you get so lucky? Do you realize how many women would love to be in your position? I'm willing to give you something no one else would ever be able to."

“Yes, but the price is my soul.”

"Please. Don't be so dramatic. I'm asking for the use of your body for a predetermined space of time. And for that right, I will pay you handsomely as well as provide your brother with the care he so desperately needs to resume his life. Imagine, if you weren't caring for an injured brother, perhaps you could go back to

school or stop working two jobs. If you realign your thinking, what I'm offering you is truly a blessing.”

Her stare narrowed. “Only someone who has never valued anything more than what money could buy would say something like that.”

“Perhaps. Would you like to know more about your new place in life?”

“I haven't said yes.”

“A formality. You and I both know you're going to say yes. You would be a fool to say no and I know you're not fool.”

The defiance died in her eyes and he knew he had her. The victory hardened his cock and lust pounded through his veins. “Take a seat. We shall discuss terms.” He waited for her to slowly sink into the chair before continuing. “For the sum of \$1 million you will move into my home and into my bed. You will tend to all of my needs. Your body belongs to me. I will provide you with a new wardrobe, a new car, and spending money. In addition I will see to it that your brother receives the best care for his rehabilitation.”

She swallowed and there was a subtle shake to her voice as she asked, “And when will this relationship start?”

He leaned forward, pinning her with his gaze. “Immediately,” he answered silkily and she shuddered. “Do you agree to my terms?”

“I need time to think about it.”

“No. Decide now.”

She gasped in distress but he knew the key to successful negotiations was to hit hard and fast and this was one deal he didn't plan to lose. She looked as if she'd rather run away but she jerked a short nod. His smile widened. "Excellent. You're making the right choice."

"Then why do I feel like throwing up?"

"Because you're letting go of the old you to embrace a new one." She didn't look convinced and he found her reluctance adorable. "Release your hair," he instructed, wanting to see those golden waves tumble down her back. Her hair, tousled and wild, was just the right length for gripping a solid handful. He had to restrain himself before he lost control right there in his office. "I have something for you, something to seal the deal between us."

She eyed him with suspicion. "And what would that be?"

He reached into his desk and removed a Tiffany box. He cracked it open and removed the tiny, delicate bracelet. He'd had it custom made just for her. His initials were woven into the tiny gold thread. It was impossibly beautiful and ridiculously expensive but more importantly, it was a symbol of his ownership of her that only they would know. He walked to her. "Hold out your wrist," he instructed as he clasped the bracelet on. "You are never to take this off. If I see this off of you there will be consequences. Do not test me for you will not like the man I become. You belong to me and as such you will wear this as a symbol of who has claimed you. Am I clear?"

"Do you see me as nothing more than a pet?"

"A very valuable pet," he corrected her. "A very lucky pet."

She shook her head. "A pet just the same."

Had he not just given her the world in exchange for something relatively small? “Some pets are cherished above people,” he pointed out gruffly and she shrugged as if only someone like him would say something like that and it made him feel small, which didn’t sit well at all. “It doesn’t matter how you look at our relationship. What matters is that you obey the rules set between us.”

“Fine. I will wear your bracelet,” she agreed but he felt no satisfaction. He wanted her to want to wear the bracelet. Julianna plucked at the gold. “So delicate. What if it breaks? I’m very clumsy.”

His smile became indulgent. “Than I shall make you another.”

Julianna accepted his answer and then pierced him with her gaze to ask, “Why me? I’m sure there are a million different women out there who would jump at the chance to be your pampered pet. I’m clearly not one of them and yet you’ve coerced me into accepting. Surely, you could’ve persuaded someone far less difficult for your little game.”

His breath became shallow as he stared into her deep brown eyes. The knowledge that no one had ever touched her was enough to send him into orbit before even taking her. But he couldn’t explain why she intrigued him like no other because he didn’t know. Instead of answering truthfully, he answered, “Why not?” before pressing his lips to hers in a sweet, almost innocent kiss. Her breath caught and she made a small sound in her throat that he wanted to suck into his mouth. He would wait before he took her for the first time – he wanted everything to be perfect — but he was almost shaking with the need to explore every inch of her body. His cock pulsed, hard and ready. “Tell me of your sexual experiences,” he said roughly. “I want to know every detail before we begin.”

Her cheeks bloomed with heat and her tongue darted out to lick her lips and he couldn’t stop himself from lowering his mouth to taste her again. She was as sweet as

he imagined she would be but now he had to know her intimately. His hand reached down to caress her quim through the soft cotton of her dress and she jumped at the contact. “What are you doing?” she asked, her tone strangled by mortification. “Here? Now? Oh my God...what if someone walks in?”

“No one will disturb us,” he assured her, loving the warmth beneath his palm, knowing that if he were to dip his finger deep into her core, it would come out wet with her sweetness. “I want to know your dirty secrets,” he said.

“You didn’t pay for my secre

ts, dirty or otherwise,” she answered, her chest rising rapidly. “My secrets are my own.”

He growled at being denied. “You belong to me now.”

She countered with, “Only my body. Never my heart.”

His mouth stretched in a cruel smile. “I have no interest in your heart, silly girl. Your body and your consent are all I require.” To drive home the point, he removed her glasses and gave her shoulders a gentle push, commanding, “On your knees, Julianna. Your service to me starts now. Have you ever sucked a cock?”

She covered her face with her hands as she lowered to her knees but nodded.

“Good. I suppose a college girl would’ve found herself in a situation where a cock ended up in her face at some point,” he said but he hated the idea of her pleasuring anyone but himself in that way. A growl of possession surprised him. “Let’s see how good you are,” he said, unzipping his trousers with mildly shaking fingers. He released his cock and smiled with satisfaction when her gaze widened at his size. He’d always been blessed with a well-endowed penis, something he’d realized in

high school and quickly put to good use with every pretty girl who'd allowed him into her panties. "Nice, huh?" he said, palming the length and squeezing the moisture from the head. "Look what you do to me?" he teased with a wide grin but she wasn't smiling. Julianna lifted her gaze to him and shook her head.

"I can't get my mouth around that thing," she said, although her pupils had darkened and her tongue had snaked out to dart across her lips. "It's impossible."

But Boston was willing to bet she wasn't worried about her mouth. He smiled indulgently, and nudged her soft lips with the head of his cock. "Let's give it a try and see what happens," he suggested playfully before guiding his cock to her soft mouth. She made a mewling noise at the back of her throat but she opened for him, squeezing her eyes shut as the head passed beyond her teeth and slid into her wet mouth. "Caress my ball sac tenderly," he instructed, closing his eyes to the pleasure as her tongue danced across the sensitive head. "Ahhh, that's it...very good..." Better than good, he wanted to groan, barely containing the voracious appetite building behind every soft hip thrust against her mouth. Hot, wet, tantalizingly erotic, Boston had never been so consumed by the pleasure of a woman's mouth. His knees weakened as her tongue drilled into the opening at the head, surprising him with move. She may be a virgin but she was pretty adept at sucking cock, he realized, suddenly needing the support of his desk to remain standing. She tugged at his cock and gripped his balls and his thighs quivered at the rough touch. For a tiny thing, she was stronger than she looked.



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His eyes popped open and he was thrown by how quickly his need to come skyrocketed at the sight of her lovely, wide mouth devouring him inch by inch. Ahhh...shit...he wasn't going to last, not like this. Slow the fuck down, he told himself, trying slow his hip thrusts so as not to hurt her. His chest tightened and his stomach muscles clenched as his orgasm barreled down the pipe like a locomotive that'd just jumped the track. He couldn't stop it; he was going to come. A split second decision stilled his warning as he exploded into her mouth, shuddering with pleasure and nearly losing the ability to remain standing as white-hot jets of fluid went down her throat. Julianna stumbled back, choking and wiping at her mouth, glaring as sudden tears glittered in her eyes.

"Don't do that again," she warned when she could speak again as he straightened on unsteady limbs. She'd sucked the strength right out of him. Holy hell, that was one bang up blowjob, even if she looked ready to brain him with his marble penholder. He hadn't meant to come in her mouth but honestly, he couldn't exactly spurt onto the floor. What would the cleaning lady think of that mess? But seeing Julianna with angry tears coursing down her cheeks, made him immediately defensive.

"Sorry, can't make that promise. I liked coming in your mouth." Boston tucked his spent cock back into his trousers and zipped up with a quick motion. He knuckled her cheek and caught a tear with a small smile even though she was sending daggers his way as she replaced her glasses on her nose. "You're pretty good at that. Are you sure you're a virgin? You didn't just hustle me, did you? Pretending to be the virgin without much experience, when in truth, you're as experienced as a two-dollar whore?"

Julianna narrowed her gaze at his crude humor, to retort coolly. "I hardly think you

are the kind of man who would allow himself to be hustled by anyone.”

“True enough,” he agreed, still riding the high of his conquest. He couldn’t remember the last time he’d felt so euphoric after a sexual encounter. Damn, this was better than any street drug he’d ever dabbled with. “But usually women with little sexual experience don’t know what to do with a cock of my size. Let’s just say I was pleasantly surprised by your skill.”

“Just because I haven’t had sex doesn’t mean I haven’t had sexual experiences,” she said, deflating his previous good humor. Why did he hate the idea of her with anyone else? She seemed to realize her comment had struck a nerve and it was her turn to smile. “And you know what they say...practice makes perfect.”

Ouch. He glared at her nerve. “Good,” he managed to return with an equally frosty smile. “I look forward to sampling more of your honed talents.”

A moment passed between them and Julianna exhaled with a fatalistic shake of her head. “This isn’t going to work. I don’t like you.”

“And why should that matter?”

Julianna blinked in surprise at his blunt question. “Well, because it does,” she answered with a tiny stamp of her foot. “The act of sex is very intimate and I would imagine you should at least like the person you are doing it with.”

“Your feelings toward me are inconsequential as long as you don’t bite.”

At the implication of his statement, she blushed two shades of pink. Yes, that’s right...I’m talking about when my cock is stuffed in your mouth. He watched her struggle with the urge to tell him to go to hell but when she remained silent, he shrugged. Missed opportunities, love. Back to business. He returned to his chair and leaned back with a self-satisfied smile. And why shouldn’t he be satisfied? Thus far

the day had been very productive. And relaxing. Perhaps he should request a blowjob every day as part of their new arrangement. The happy thought remained with him as he said, “Richard will finalize the documents and the financial arrangements as well as have your belongings delivered to my home. Is there anything else you require before we conclude our first meeting?”

She wiped at her tears, a single expression of desolation marring her lovely beauty, before she cleared her voice and lifted her chin, to say in a hard tone, “My brother better have the best of everything for the price I’m paying.”

Boston smiled at her spirit, impressed. “Don’t worry. I don’t renege on my word,” he assured her, adding with a primal grin. “I look forward to being the first man between your thighs. Do whatever you need to prepare yourself for this evening,” he said, then added, “Richard will take you to the spa for your waxing, but I prefer a little hair on the pussy so please, a landing strip would be perfect.”

She skewed her gaze away but nodded nonetheless.

As soon as she was gone, Boston let out the breath he hadn’t known he was holding. Julianna was no easy conquest and the war he saw in her eyes was bound to leave scars. Tonight couldn’t come soon enough. Thank God, he had work to distract himself from what he wanted so desperately at the moment.

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