



All Fired Up



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He's ready to lead the way

Parker Wilson never thought he'd go from battle-hardened soldier to romance expert, but after his stint in the Rangers, that's exactly what happened. As the owner of DreamMakers Inc., he helps other men win in the love department, using every resource available to plan the perfect date. When a routine recon turns into an unexpected night of passion, Parker's mission becomes more personal—and he won't give up until Lynn Davidson is all his.

She's more than willing to follow

Lynn is a goner from the moment she lays eyes on the delectable Parker. She's just ditched her boring almost-boyfriend and is tired of sticking to the straight and narrow. It's time to walk on the wild side, and what better way than in the arms of the most irresistible man she's ever met? But when their red-hot affair is threatened, it'll take a team effort to make their dreams come true.

Chapter One

“This needs to be big. No, it needs to be huge. I’m talking flowers and candles and sunset helicopter rides and – whatever the hell it is you people do. If she says no, I’ll... I don’t know what I’ll do. She has to say yes. She *has* to. Got it?”

The grade-A douchebag on the black leather couch crossed his arms over the front of his tailored suit jacket, his cobalt-blue eyes daring the two men across from him to challenge his final remark.

From their respective armchairs, Parker Wilson and Dean Colter exchanged a brief glance. In the three years DreamMakers Inc. had been in business, Parker and his colleagues had met with a lot of asshole boyfriends, but Parker could honestly say Phil Shotelle was one of the worst. From the moment the sharply dressed executive had sauntered into their office, Parker had been attempting to hide his disdain for the dark-haired man. Something about Shotelle rubbed him the wrong way. Probably the air of self-entitled importance the dude exuded in spades.

Dean, whose poker face was most definitely lacking, addressed their client with an unmistakable smirk. “You seem mighty worried your lady is gonna turn down the proposal. Any trouble in paradise we need to be aware of?”

Phil’s expression clouded over. “No,” he said in a tight voice. “Our relationship is rock-solid – and, frankly, none of your concern. I’m hiring you to plan a fantasy date, not to play therapist.”

Parker leaned back in his chair and tried not to grin. Clearly Dean had hit the nail right on the head – there was trouble in paradise, and the panicky glint that kept flashing in Phil’s eyes confirmed it.

But the douchebag was correct. DreamMakers didn't provide counseling services, or matchmaking. The business had been designed to help clueless men plan the most romantic dates that said clueless men weren't able to conceive of on their own—a job a battle-hardened soldier like Parker would never have imagined himself doing, not in a million years.

After his stint in the Rangers, he'd figured he'd wind up working security or taking an instructor gig on one of the army's training bases. Instead, he'd founded DreamMakers with two of his fellow Special Ops soldiers, and somehow their little operation had transformed into a booming business, offering a service that was in surprisingly high demand in the San Francisco area.

Unfortunately, the influx of clientele meant jerks like Phil Shotelle were bound to cross their path.

"All right, why don't you tell us a bit about your girlfriend?" Parker said in his most diplomatic voice, all the while fighting the urge to kick their new client right out of the office.

Phil shifted awkwardly on the sofa. "What do you want to know?"

"Her name would be a good start." Dean's tone was laced with humor.

"Ah, right. It's Lynn. Her name is Lynn Davidson."

"Okay. And what does Lynn do?"

"She works at the Bay City Press. We both do. I'm the junior vice president of advertising. She does the layouts for the paper." Phil's lips curled in a sneer. "She's declined three opportunities for promotion in the last two years."

Parker didn't miss the note of scorn. In fact, he didn't sense an ounce of love or warmth coming from the guy in relation to the woman he was going to propose to.

"How long have you been together?" he asked briskly.

"Almost five months."

Dean's dark eyebrows shot up. "And you're already planning on popping the question? You must really believe she's the one, huh?"

Phil offered a blank stare. "What?"

“The one,” Dean echoed. “The woman of your dreams, the fabled Mrs. Shotelle, your one and only, etcetera, etcetera.”

The other man blinked. “Ah. Right. Yeah, sure, she’s the one.”

It took all of Parker’s willpower not to gape at the moron sitting in front of them. “Yeah, sure, she’s the one” was about the most half-assed response he’d ever heard in his life. He didn’t normally root against his clients, but damn, he found himself hoping Phil’s main squeeze rejected the proposal. He didn’t know this Lynn, but he already felt pretty fucking sorry for her.

“So, what does she enjoy?” Parker asked. “What are her hobbies?”

Cue another blank look.

He smothered a sigh. “What about favorites? Favorite color, movie, music?”

Phil shrugged.

Oh, for fuck’s sake. The man was about to propose to the woman and he couldn’t even name her favorite color?

“You know what,” Dean spoke up, “why don’t you take a few minutes to think about it? We’ll need you to fill out some forms anyway, including a questionnaire about your woman. And there’s also a couple of waivers you’ll need to sign.”

“What kind of waivers?” Phil asked suspiciously.

“Standard 374-9. Release of liability for performance of services. Then we have the 17-4 regarding transportation.”

Phil’s eyes glazed over as Dean rambled on, spewing a list of numbers and techno jargon that sounded damn impressive. When Dean stopped and flashed his grin, Parker covered his mouth with a hand to hide his amusement behind a cough.

“I beg your pardon?” Phil blinked a few times. “Release of liability?”

Dean cleared his throat. “Means you acknowledge and understand that while we’re planning the date, it’s *your* job to woo your woman. If it’s a proposal, we can’t guarantee she’ll say yes, and we won’t be held liable if the answer is no.”

A nod. "Fair enough."

"Just head to the lobby and ask Didi for the paperwork, and you can take as long as you need with it. We'll talk fees and ideas when you're done," Dean added.

Looking relieved, Phil rose from the couch and nodded. "Sounds good."

A moment later, the heavy oak door closed behind him, leaving Parker and Dean alone in the office.

"That poor woman," Parker declared.

"Tell me about it. If she marries that idiot, she's dooming herself to a life of douchebaggery. And did you see his nails? The dude totally has a manicurist on standby."

Parker snorted. "Says the guy who got a mani-pedi last weekend."

"Only because I was trying to bone the esthetician," Dean protested. "I have a weakness for redheads."

Parker rolled his eyes, because they both knew it was a load of bull. Dean Colter had a weakness for *women*, period. Redhead, blonde, brunette, short, tall, curvy, skinny. Didn't matter. If she was cute and willing, Dean was gonna get with her, end of story.

Not that Parker was one to talk. He damn well realized he was as big a playboy as his colleague. So was Jack Hunter, their other partner and Parker's longtime friend. He and Jack, in fact, had been best friends long before they'd met Dean, who'd been assigned to their Rangers unit.

The three of them had witnessed some seriously grisly things during their time in Special Ops—and they'd scored some seriously hot women when they were off-duty. Going into business together had been a natural step. Dean and Jack were the only people Parker trusted implicitly and the only ones, aside from his family, he'd lay down his life for without hesitation.

"You know what?" Dean's gaze lingered on the doorway before focusing on Parker. "I think we should pass on the gig. All jokes aside, I've got a bad feeling about this guy."

“Ditto. But let’s wait and see what he writes on the questionnaire. It might end up being an easy job.”

“Well, we’re charging him double regardless. He deserves to pay the asshole fee.”

“Duh. I told Didi to prepare the asshole forms the second I spotted the Armani suit.”

Dean snickered. “Who wears Armani for a job at the Bay City Press? Doesn’t he know print is dying? He’ll be out of a job in a year, two tops.”

As Parker chuckled, Dean drifted over to the mini-fridge on the other side of the office. “Beer?”

“Can’t you at least wait until the client leaves the building, bro? To give off even a modicum of professionalism?”

Yet for all his protests, Parker accepted the Bud Light that Dean handed him. Truth was, DreamMakers was no uptight Fortune-500-type company, and that was probably why their clients loved them. They were three former soldiers who liked cold beers and warm female bodies. They’d made their company easy to find on Google, and they catered to the average man—the guy who forgot to buy his lady flowers on her birthday and wanted to make up for it with a whirlwind date, the poor sucker who didn’t know the difference between roses and peonies, the football-loving husband who mistakenly scheduled his fantasy draft on the same day as his twentieth anniversary.

And, apparently, the junior VP of advertising who knew diddly-squat about his prospective fiancée, as the two men confirmed twenty minutes after Phil the Douche finally finished the paperwork and left the building.

They stood by their receptionist’s desk, studying the questionnaire Shotelle had hurriedly filled out, unable to believe the results.

“Sweet baby Jesus,” Dean grumbled, his head bent over the paper. “He wrote ‘not applicable’ on the line asking for her birthday!”

Parker peered closer, a groan of disbelief escaping him. “For favorite flower he wrote ‘red ones, or maybe yellow’.” He paused. “Huh. At least he knows her middle name—Elizabeth.”

A long red fingernail tapped the bottom of the page. "Check out what he wrote for favorite animal," Didi Lorge said, an unrestrained grin stretching her lips.

Parker read the answer aloud. "'One time she said something about whales'. Oh, for the love of..."

Their receptionist laughed in delight and spun her computer chair, far more amused by the situation than Parker. Didi had been working for them since they'd first opened DreamMakers, and she was the bubbliest, most flamboyant fifty-year-old he'd ever met in his life. Her husband Teddy was a veteran who was friends with Parker's father, and when he'd heard his best bud's son was starting a business, he'd all but pleaded with Parker to hire his wife to "give her something to do so she quits dragging my ass to the mall".

Parker's doubts about the sassy, big-haired blonde had long since faded, and he couldn't deny Didi was fun to have around. Besides, not only did she work hard, but all their clients adored her.

"We can't work with any of this," Dean declared. "This guy wouldn't be able to pick his girlfriend out of a fucking lineup."

"Language, Mr. Colter," Didi said sternly.

Dean was instantly shame-faced. "Sorry, D."

"Good boy."

Parker, who wholeheartedly agreed with Dean's assessment, reached for the sheet of paper beneath the questionnaire and gave it a quick read. "Shit, he's willing to pay the asshole fee. And he said he'll pay extra if we can arrange the date for this weekend."

"That's four days away, man. We can't do it."

Parker rubbed the perpetual stubble coating his jaw. "We might be able to swing it."

"How?" Dean countered. "Gee, I know, let's set up a romantic dinner and serve—wait, what's her favorite food?—" he glanced at Phil's answers, "—and serve *bread*, load the table with red or maybe yellow flowers then top it off with a visit to an aquarium so she can see a whale. She'll be putty in his fucking hands."

“Language!” Didi snapped.

“You didn’t reprimand Parker when he said *shit*,” Dean grumbled. “See? I *knew* you played favorites, and don’t bother denying it, D.”

She batted her lashes. “I love you all equally, only Parker signs my checks.”

Parker chewed on the inside of his cheek as he considered. “We can make this date happen. It means we have to do a little sleuthing.”

Dean’s eyes twinkled. “Are you thinking what I’m thinking?”

“Recon,” they said in unison.

Didi laughed again. “You boys are too easily amused.”

“We’ll go tonight,” Parker decided. “Didi, call our guy at the precinct and tell him to get us an address for the girlfriend. And we’ll need some gear.”

Dean started to walk off, but Didi’s stern warning stopped him. “Oh no, you don’t. No running off until we go over the rules.”

Both men sighed. “Must we do this every time?” Parker grumbled.

“If we want to avoid a lawsuit, then yesiree.”

Dean dropped into the chair opposite her, threw his feet up on the desk and began reciting in a singsong tone like a student repeating the times table. “One. No recording devices. Two, all interactions must take place in public. Three, there—”

“Parker’s turn,” Didi cut in.

God. It was like they were back in preschool. “Aren’t you going to give Dean his gold star first?” Parker taunted.

His receptionist’s gaze turned icy cold.

Okay, then. “Three. There will be no discussion of personal details of clients except as it pertains to arranging the date.”

“Which is total bullshit,” Dean interrupted. “Not that we’re about to go blabbing information, but face it—if we find out shit, it’s because someone said it in public. You know the kind of crap people talk about these days? Hell, this asshole in the restaurant waiting line yesterday—he gave his girlfriend’s address, phone number and measurements out loud while talking on the phone.”

Didi swatted Dean's feet off the desk. "Yes, people are stupid, but that doesn't mean you boys have to be. DreamMakers will rise above the stupid and stay on the straight and narrow. Set a good example for the world."

"You're a dreamer, Didi."

While Didi and Dean went off on a tangent, Parker read over the questionnaire again, but the details provided were so vague it was impossible to get a sense of Shotelle's girlfriend. Ah well. Hopefully after tonight, they'd have all the details required to knock the lady's socks off with a date for the ages.

As much as it pained him to bring even an ounce of joy to a douchebag's life, the money was too good for Parker to ignore. Which meant by the end of the job, he was going to know Lynn Elizabeth Davidson inside and out.



Her computer monitor flickered for the fifth time in the last hour, and Lynn swore softly, palms pressed to the desk on either side of her ergonomically correct keyboard as she mentally urged the disruption to vanish like it had every time before. She glanced at the overhead lights, but they were still on full. A quick peek over the pale purple cubicle dividers at her coworkers proved they were still hard at it.

Nothing wrong with *their* screens or power sources.

Lynn pushed her computer chair aside and leaned under her desk to follow the cables. If she lost the past four hours' work because her power failed, someone's head was going to roll.

The back of the desk had a protective metal panel on it, but she figured out if she lifted and pushed it to one side, she could get on her hands and knees and poke around. A quick examination was enough to discover the cord didn't end at a power strip. Instead, the thick black cable joined a half-dozen others and disappeared under the cubical edge toward the hallway.

Great. More investigating needed. She was in the middle of backing out of her awkward position when a familiar voice interrupted her.

"Is this the new office exercise routine Marti was raving about in the lunchroom today?"

She jerked upward in surprise, smacking her head on the underside of the desk hard enough to see stars. "Jeez, Suz, warn a girl next time." Lynn crawled into the clear, hand going to rub the rising knot as she scrambled to her feet. "A call, a wave..."

"It's hard to wave hello when all that's aimed outward is a butt." Lynn's BFF since high school, Susanna Jones, leaned her curvy hip on the desk edge as she settled neon-yellow-clad arms across her chest. "And you have so little butt, damn you, that makes it even tougher. Did you lose an earring?"

Lynn shook her head even as she blinked to stop her eyes from watering. "Where did you get your sweater?"

Suz popped up and pirouetted like a tipsy music-box dancer, with her arms flung to the sides. The position only emphasized the black lines running through the gaudy fabric in horizontal streaks, rising and falling over Suz's ample breasts as if someone had painted racing stripes on her chest. "You like?"

It had to be a trick question. Nothing was this simple with her friend, not even clothing choices. Lynn stuck to her usual *modus operandi* and told the truth. "You look like a molting bumblebee."

Sheer delight streaked across Suz's face, making her green eyes sparkle with mischief. "Really?"

"On your last wings. Liable to crash and burn into the next flower patch in a pollen-induced stupor. Where did you even get it? No—" Lynn held out a hand, "—more important, *why* did you get it, and why are you making my eyeballs bleed?"

Suz cracked the gum bubble she'd blown. "It's not for you, silly." She checked around before leaning in closer and lowering her voice. "I was informed I have the fashion sense of a turnip. I thought I should prove her wrong. I'm much worse than a turnip."

"Because you don't give a hoot about high-fashion clothes, and with your figure, you don't need to." Lynn didn't mind being trim and in shape, but every

now and then she'd kill to own Suz's curves. Ever since high school, their girls'-night-out pictures had showcased them like human salt-and-pepper shakers—Suz the fair-skinned blonde with knockout curves, Lynn with her dark hair and dark complexion showcasing slim but feminine lines. Her best feature was her shockingly light eyes—“moonlit crystals on a Mediterranean beach”, a silver-tongued date had once informed her.

No, Lynn was happy with her body but still pissed on Suz's behalf. “Who was the smartass who insulted you, or do I need to ask?”

“It was Dana Hastings, of course.” Suz adjusted the raggedy cuffs on the ancient monstrosity as if she were on a Paris fashion runway. “I'm on my way back from her desk. You should have seen her recoil in disgust.”

Lynn couldn't help but snicker in response even as she double-checked her work was still in place and her computer screen hadn't done another vanishing trick. “Please don't wear it to yoga tonight, or we'll be banned for life for disturbing the delicate balance of the universe.”

“Hey, what do you think caused the big bang in the first place?” Suz paused. “Speaking of big dicks, I mean *small* dicks...”

Damn. “That was a very cheesy segue. I'm going to ignore you.” For some reason, Lynn's on-again, off-again dating situation with Phil Shotelle, one of the upper management at Bay City Press, was a source of constant annoyance to Suz.

“Tell me you've seen the light and dumped the stiff, and I'll float my bright little wings toward my desk.”

Lynn sighed as she pulled her fingers through her long hair, attempting to straighten not only the tangles caused by the excursion under her desk, but the tangles in her brain. It was a good thing she had work she loved and Suz to distract her, because her current dating relationship wasn't lighting the night on fire.

And that was fine.

She supposed.

A sense of guilt struck. Poor Phil. He hadn't done anything to deserve getting dumped on, and she found herself defending him yet again. "He's not a bad guy, Suz. Really, he's not."

Suz took a step forward, finger extended in accusation. "But you'll admit he's not a good guy either, right? Or not the right guy for you. He's boring and old and never *ever* makes your heart pound." She clutched her hands together. "Come on, pretty please admit that much."

"Thirty-nine is not old," Lynn insisted, dragging her hair into a ponytail and securing it in position with an elastic. Suz had a point, though. Her relationship with Phil wasn't one of passion. It was more one of...

Convenience. Or reliability. Familiarity?

Shit. Those definitions were too close to *boring*. Lynn shook off the strange sadness the topic always wrapped her in. "Face it. You've never liked Phil."

"Because I have good taste in men."

Lynn couldn't speak for a moment, the constant chain of guys Suz had enjoyed over the years flashing through her brain and making her blink. Her friend was careful not to hook up with axe murderers, but she didn't resist temptation as far as enjoying herself. Lynn would have been jealous if she didn't love Suz so hard, and besides, she wasn't looking for a different lover every night.

Although one who knew where her clit was would be a nice change of pace. Or one who even seemed remotely interested in at least searching. Phil's chivalrous behavior was positively puritan.

Meanwhile, she lived vicariously through Suz's escapades. "So you're insisting you've only dated absolute princes among men," she teased. "All of them. Every. Single. One."

"Yip," Suz gloated. "If you let me help pick a guy for you, you too would wear a smile like mine in the mornings instead of needing four cups of coffee before you're halfway human."

"Come on, you've had a few duds." Lynn scrambled for an example. "Say...your boxer?"

Suz blinked then shivered hard. "You mean the one who tied me up and made me orgasm so often and so hard I passed out? Yeah, he was such a loser."

Jeez. "How about the pilot?"

That suggestion brought a heavy sigh from her friend, but the reason for the reaction wasn't what Lynn expected. Suz lifted a hand and fanned her face. "You talking about Kakeru? The San Fran to Japan-based pilot who brought his copilot along for the ride—*nom nom*, I might add—or the KLM pilot who taught me all the dirty words in Dutch, or the—"

Lynn's computer monitor flickered again. "Shit. Sorry to cut this scintillating conversation to a close, but I'm ten minutes away from completing my revisions on the layout, and I need to get them done."

Suz shook her head sadly. "He's no good for you."

"We'll talk about it after yoga."

Her friend made a low clucking noise. Lynn whipped her head up, then realized Suz wasn't commenting on her lack of willpower to call it off with Phil.

Dana Hastings was marching past, four-inch stilettos flashing as she strode forward in her expensive suit. Her nose visibly twitched as if she smelled something funny in their vicinity.

She'd only gone a half-dozen steps past Lynn's cubicle before Suz turned. "Gotta run," she muttered. "We *will* talk about this more tonight."

She took off after Dana, the long, uneven ends of her sweater flapping behind her like tail feathers, and Lynn giggled. God, she loved that woman.

Turning back to her computer screen wiped the smile off her face. "You, I don't love. Come on, computer, behave."

At the moment, solving the power-source problem was more important than mentally debating, again, her love life. Lynn found the electrical cables where they popped up on the far side of the cubicle wall. She followed the black bundle as it slithered along the edge of the moveable wall, finally crossing a structural dip in the hall and vanishing around a corner.

It was like running an obstacle course. Only when Lynn rounded the corner she had the joy of one more obstacle. The left side of Dana Hastings's desk stood

directly in front of the bundle, and no amount of searching on either side exposed a new escape route.

Somewhere under the desk was the issue.

Lynn glanced around, but the manager Dana clerked for was out of her office. After making sure no one else was looking, Lynn fell to her knees and once again crawled into the close confines of under-desk dwellers.

She wasn't going to even think about spiders.

Fortunately, she'd already figured out the back-of-the-desk trick, and she had the cables in sight in less than thirty seconds. The source of her troubles became perfectly clear—a main power breaker was set along the wall, and one of the plugs had worked partially free. She shoved the head in tightly, a satisfying click sounding as the prongs locked into position. Good. Now she could finish her job.

She gasped in pain as her hair caught on something, the ponytail she'd put it in snagging on a loose screw. Her head throbbed for the second time that day as she stilled, reaching upward in an attempt to loosen the knot without ripping out part of her scalp.

At least no one was around to see her humiliation—

Click.

Click.

Click. Click. Click. Click. Click.

High heels. Rapidly approaching. Lynn resigned herself to being caught. She worked carefully on her hair while waiting for the perfect moment to announce her presence.

"Of *course*, Mr. Shotelle," Dana purred.

Lynn froze. Phil was here on the production level? He never came down from—

"It's never a problem for *you* to call me," Dana said in a teasing voice. "That's why I gave you my cell number."

A flirty little laugh followed, but all Lynn could focus on at first was that Phil was on the phone, not on the floor. Her heart thumped once, hard, then stopped completely as Dana's shiny gold shoes paused two paces from where the desk chair had rolled after being shoved aside.

Stuck with her head twisted to one side, Lynn's only line of sight was through a narrow crack. Dana's legs from feet to mid-thigh was about it for a view, but it wasn't so much being stuck under the desk as the overheard conversation that turned Lynn's blood to ice.

Dana's shoes rotated toward the wall, her voice dropping to an intimate whisper. "Do I get to see you for another...*emergency*...tonight, sugar bear?"

Emergency? Seeing Phil?

Comprehension hit in a rush. Lynn dropped her head in exasperation, and the lock of hair still caught on the screw yanked a bunch of strands free. Only sheer frustration stopped a scream from escaping as her scalp throbbed in protest.

Phil's emergency, the one he'd sorrowfully told her about as he cancelled their Sunday date, had involved Dana Hastings calling him *sugar bear*?

Only the *click, click, click* of Dana walking away saved Lynn from being tossed in prison for murder. She wouldn't have minded scaring the bejeezus out of Dana before marching upstairs to Phil's office to bludgeon him to death with whatever advertising plans lay strategically placed on his desk. The ones she swore he propped up every morning to prove how important he was.

Fucking bastard. So much for being reliable and...and *puritan*. All his sweet talk about respecting her and being old-fashioned regarding sex was one hundred percent horse hockey – he was dipping his doughnut in someone else's coffee.

Ass.

Jerk. *Butthead*.

Making up insults passed the time as she undid her ponytail, carefully escaping the trap she now welcomed having crawled into. By the time she'd

regained her freedom, Lynn was over her rush of anger. She'd needed a good solid reason to move on, and this was it, baby. This was it in *spades*.

Forget killing him. Phil Shotelle wasn't worth the energy to even bother tossing him a kiss-off. Maybe she'd take Suz up on her offer of helping Lynn find a date.

In a month.

Or a year.

When she was no longer sick of the entire population of Y-chromosome carriers.

Chapter Two

Everything that could go tits-up, would. Parker wanted to kick his own ass for thinking the rule wasn't in effect in civilian territory.

"Dean. Change of plans. She's not headed home." He let a single car slip between him and the sporty hatchback Lynn and the blonde woman with her had driven from the parking garage of the Bay City Press.

His partner's voice echoed through the radio, slightly tinny. "I'm leaving the office now. Where should I meet you?"

Parker adjusted the radio setting to lower Dean's volume. "Not sure yet. Depends where the studio is."

"Studio?"

"Yoga, apparently. I scored big at the news office. Went in through the mailroom and spotted a package on the counter. Took it all the way to Lynn's floor in time to catch her and a friend discussing their after-work yoga plans."

Dean's wicked chuckle echoed over the line. "Dibs on checking out that action. Did I ever tell you about the yoga instructor I dated? The woman could bend in ways that were illegal. Talk about flexible—"

God. "You've told me a hundred times, usually when there was no way I could shut you up."

"Just saying. I love our job, bro."

Parker laughed. "It doesn't suck, does it? Anyway, I figure since I'm already tailing her, I'll hit the gym with them."

"Are you sure? You've never done yoga, have you?" Dean's amusement was clear.

“How hard could it be? I’ve got board shorts and a T-shirt in my kit. I bet they’ll love to help a newbie.” A low beeping sound went off in the background, and Parker clicked open the line to connect their third partner. “Hey, Jack, what’s up?”

The faintest hint of aggravation carried with Jack’s words. “Hate to bail, but can you stay on the Shotelle job without me? Didi got a last-minute call for help from some guy who realized he promised his wife he’d organize an anniversary dinner for them and her parents. For tonight.”

“Oh, that’s classic. Way to get in shit not only with the missus but the in-laws.” Parker changed lanes to keep on Lynn’s tail, noting they were headed into the Mission. Lynn’s apartment was in the same neck of the woods. The yoga studio had to be somewhere close by. “Don’t worry about it—we’ll manage without you.”

Dean spoke up. “If you need any help, Jack, give us a buzz.”

“Naah,” Jack drawled. “Piece of cake. We’ve got that permanent booking at the pier. Unless someone in their group has a seafood allergy, Didi and I have it under control.”

“Thanks for putting out the fire.” Ahead of him the blue hatchback had pulled into an open parking slot. “I’m at destination. Jack, have fun. Dean, I’ll relay the address when I have it.”

“Roger that. What’s the plan?”

“I’ll try to strike up a conversation during the class and see if I get anything useful. You can wait outside.”

“Gee, thanks.”

Parker slid into the last available parking space on the street, popped open his trunk, and grabbed gear as quickly as he could. Fortunately, his target was taking her sweet time, talking animatedly with her friend as the two women opened car doors and slipped gym bags over their shoulders.

Laughter rang out as well, sheer delight and happiness in the sound. Parker caught himself smiling and hoping for another chance to hear them laugh. A

grumble of discontent followed hard on the thought as he trotted down the sidewalk toward the door Lynn had vanished behind.

This was the only part of the job he didn't like. Even the brief glimpses he'd caught of his target made him leery of doing anything to help slimy Shotelle achieve his goals.

"She's wearing a blue shirt and drives a blue car," he reported. "Could be her favorite color."

"Try to start a convo about music," Dean advised. "Otherwise we might have another Gellar fiasco on our hands."

Parker stifled a groan, remembering the romantic date they'd planned last year, during which the fiancée-to-be had a total meltdown when the string quartet they'd hired came out to play. Turned out she was a descendant of one of the Titanic musicians who'd gone down with the ship—what were the odds of *that*? Luckily, she'd still accepted Joe Gellar's proposal, but the disaster had taught DreamMakers an important lesson: never assume a damn thing.

"I'm about to head in," he informed Dean, rapidly mentioning the address and name of the studio. "I'll keep you posted."

"Suggest you wear only the mini-receiver. There's no way you can get into a class with a mic, and you can't use it anyway. I'll do a Google search while I'm waiting and update you with any pertinent information."

Another reason why Parker loved working with Dean and Jack. Smart, quick on their feet. They worked together so well, their strengths meshing to make the system click. "Affirmative. Turning off mic and switching ear sets."

He pulled the tiny speaker from where he'd clipped it to his collar and dropped it into his pocket. One more move and the barely visible receiver was in his ear.

Now he'd focus on his part of the job and trust Dean to do his.

The door to the studio swung open smoothly, soothing music and the gentle sound of gurgling water mixing in the background. The muted lighting showcased a welcoming entrance with benches along one wall and a front desk area covered with flickering candles.

Lynn and her friend were both seated, leaning over to remove their shoes as they continued to chatter in lower tones. Parker moved forward slowly, taking in the entire room, but his gaze hesitated on the smooth fall of Lynn's long brown hair as it hung over her shoulder.

"Can I help you?" Behind the desk a bright pair of eyes blinked as a short woman in workout gear hopped to her feet. "Are you here for the next class?"

Parker nodded. "In the community visiting, and I need a break." Thank God the prices for classes were listed in clear sight on the wall behind her. He slipped a couple bills onto the counter, avoiding hitting any of the candles.

The small woman tucked the money away before bowing slightly. "We're happy to accommodate drop-in guests. Sign the waiver form here—" she tapped the countertop, "—then make yourself at home. Class begins in ten minutes."

He moved to the bench, settling beside Lynn. He was still examining her on the sly when she turned and he caught the first glimpse of her face close-up. Smooth olive-toned skin. Full lips that were both perfectly bitable and a lickable licorice-red that seemed to be her natural coloring. Cheekbones he wanted to stroke with his fingers, but her eyes were what trapped him. Long lashes fluttered open to reveal pupils of an icy pale blue, like the inner core of a glacier. Unique and glorious.

She straightened, and those delectable lips twitched into a full smile. "Hi."

Parker couldn't look away. "Hi."

My God, he had seen his share of beautiful women, in and out of their clothes, but he'd never before had a gut-punch reaction like falling into Lynn Elizabeth Davidson's eyes. They were mesmerizing. He was damn near holding his breath, hoping she would blink so he could see her lashes sweep up and down again.

Her smile faded slightly. She cleared her throat. "Are you okay?"

A rapidly rising obsession shouted in his brain, commanding he wrap his fingers around her neck and pull her firmly against him so he could prove he was far better than *okay*, especially for someone like her.

Dean's softly spoken words slapped him. "I'm in the café across the street. Meet me there when you're done."

Parker snapped back to reality. Jeez, what the hell was wrong with him? He was going to fuck up a mission for the first time in his career, all because of a pretty pair of eyes.

Instead, he took off his shoes and looked around as if wondering what to do next. "I've never been here before, and I'm feeling a little lost."

"Don't worry, sugar, we'll be happy to let you tag along with us," a new voice reassured him. Lynn's friend stepped in front of him and eyed him appreciatively. She stuck out her hand. "Susanna. Or Suz. I'm easy."

He shook her hand and didn't bother to fight the enormous smile that burst free as she waggled her brows suggestively. "Parker." He turned to Lynn. "And you are?"

"Not as easy as her."

Suz smacked her friend on the shoulder, her good-natured grin staying firmly in place. "Don't knock it 'til you try it, baby."

Lynn rose off the bench, settling the straps of her gym bag over her shoulder. "I'm Lynn. Sorry about my friend. Her medication wore off about half an hour ago."

He accepted her handshake as well. "Thanks for offering to show me the ropes."

"No problem. Drop your shoes over there, and we'll point you to the men's changing room." She looked him over, her gaze lingering on his shoulders and biceps before she jerked her head away.

Parker followed the women down a narrow hall, a tight fit for three people walking side by side. When his arm gently brushed Lynn's, he could've sworn she sucked in a gasp of air.

Huh. Maybe he wasn't the only one feeling something here, which only made the fact that he was on a job more awkward.

A flash of white caught his peripheral vision, and inspiration struck. He stopped in front of the little ledge at the end of the corridor, admiring a bright yellow vase overflowing with white roses.

"Something wrong?" Lynn asked.

"No, nothing. I just like these." He traced one of the delicate petals with his finger. "White roses are my favorite."

The two women exchanged a look, and then Lynn said, "Oh."

He cocked a brow. "What, you don't like them?"

She shrugged. "I'm not a fan of roses in general. I'm more of a cornflower girl."

Jackpot.

Looking like she was fighting a grin, Suz pointed to the left. "Change there, and the hot room is at the end of the hall on the right."

"Hot room?" Parker paused with his hand on the locker room door.

Lynn's eyes narrowed. "Did you not know it's a hot yoga class?"

He'd never heard of such a thing. Still, it couldn't be any worse than a typical session of calisthenics during Hell Week.

"No," he confessed. "But I'm game to try new things."

"Oh, sugar. You are in for a treat," Suz promised.

His target looked concerned. "Are you sure you want to do this? It's a little more intense than a typical class."

Parker resisted the urge to smooth the frown from her forehead. "I'll be fine."

"You are fine." Suz gave him a wink. "Just so you're prepared, dress like you're heading into a sauna. And take a water bottle."

By the time they were fully into the class, however, Parker was ready to reevaluate his definition of torture.

He'd slipped on his shorts, but following the lead of the couple of guys he'd met while changing, left his shirt off. Towel in hand, he stepped into the studio to find a dozen other participants already standing over mats.

“Over here.” Lynn and Suz waved him to the space they’d saved.

“Has yoga started yet?” Dean’s voice slid into his ear. “I know you can’t answer, but try to do it telepathically so I can feel like we’re having a conversation. The café is empty and I’m frickin’ bored. Seriously. Not a single cute girl in sight.” A pause. “When you’re in there you should flex the guns a few times, bro. Maybe you can score a date with the hot yoga instructor. She *is* hot, right? I just assume all yoga instructors are.”

Damn. He’d forgotten a one-way receiver meant he couldn’t tell Dean to fuck off and die. He’d have to save the beating for when he next saw the man.

The instructor at the front of the room began, removing her wrap to display an outfit that was barely legal but made sense considering the heat. And yup, she was definitely attractive, which supported Dean’s inane theory. Her arms lifted skyward, legs spread. Parker moved his mat back slightly so he could observe Lynn easier, as well as the others, ready to copy their motions the best he could.

The room temperature had to be over a hundred, the humidity high as well. Most of the guys were in shorts, the women in small exercise bras and skimpy shorts. He planned on appreciating the view without getting too distracted.

Only when the second thing they did was bend over to touch their toes, Parker nearly swallowed his tongue. Lynn’s very fine ass filled his peripheral vision. He should look away, he really should...

They moved into a “downward dog”, and the pressure in his groin only increased. He glanced to the side, and she caught his gaze, smiling encouragingly as she mouthed the words “watch me”. She stretched extra hard, pushing her head in line with her shoulders, but the position only emphasized her ass and breasts and, *holy shit*, he was going to self-combust before the hour was over. One motion flowed into another as the heat in the room increased and sweat broke out on his skin.

Fuck it. The room could have been icy cold, and he would still be sweating. Why the hell hadn’t anyone warned him yoga was dirtier than porn?

By the time they moved to the floor, Parker's skin was slick with sweat, beads running down his temples and back. The couple of simple moves in a seated position allowed him to breathe, and a little of his full-on hard-on to fade.

Until they rolled to their hands and knees. To his side, Lynn was following the instructor's directions carefully, her back arching and bowing in slow-motion timing. Parker's cock was ready to explode as he used every last ounce of mental strength to keep from being obvious about his fixation on the thin layer of material covering her pussy and ass.

Tilt forward, tilt back.

Tilt forward, tilt back.

Jesus *Christ*, this was killing him. If he'd been three feet to his right, both of them naked, this move would slide his cock in and out of her in the perfect rhythm to blow both their minds.

He closed his eyes and thought of the rottenest, coldest op he'd ever been assigned, desperate to kill his erection dead before he came without a single touch.

And it was all about Lynn, which was the most frustrating part. Suz was bending and twisting through the yoga moves as well, putting as much on display. But for some reason Suz's exuberant, sexual come-hither reminded Parker of Dean. No way he wanted to hit anything that reminded him of his buddy, no matter how sexy the woman's curves were.

The other women in the class were attractive, but it seemed his libido had locked on to Lynn, which was fucked-up and stupid and all kinds of wrong.

"Okay, so we might be looking at a vegetarian here." Dean's soft remark dragged Parker back to the here and now. He finally focused on something other than the sexual hum in his veins, listening to his buddy's update. "Just found a scathing editorial about animal cruelty on the *New York Times* site. Unless a different Lynn Davidson wrote it. Hold on... 'kay, wait, I clicked on her bio. It's some vegan chick from Chicago. Meat-eater's back on the table."

Parker tried not to roll his eyes, though he did appreciate the distraction. Getting turned on by a client was wrong. He had to nip this attraction to Lynn in the bud, now, before he made any more mistakes.

She had a boyfriend who was about to propose, for fuck's sake, slimy as Phil seemed to be. The pressure in Parker's dick eased when he pictured Lynn with the jerk, frustration and anger slipping in to replace the lust. She was wasted on that ass. Phil didn't even know her favorite color, and he was planning on marrying her? Screw him sideways.

Parker took a deep breath and let it out slowly, choosing to focus on the yoga instructor as he obstinately ignored the sexy woman at his side.

He'd deal with any remaining hard-on when he got home. Right now, he'd stick to the mission. All he was hired to do was organize a fucking dream date, nothing more, nothing less. It was up to the people involved to make the rest of the decisions. Their life, their choices.

But hell if he didn't want to make some choices that involved putting a smile on Lynn's face and seeing those gorgeous eyes light up with passion.



"Sweet mother of pearl, that was the *best* yoga sesh on the planet," Suz raved as the two women strode toward Lynn's car. "Did you *see* those biceps? And the totally lickable tattoo on his shoulder? And those washboard abs? Holy moly, if I were a pioneer woman I would have washed my clothes on those abs, and I might not even have taken them off first."

Suz gave an exaggerated shiver, which brought a grin to Lynn's lips. Truth was, she couldn't argue with a single thing her friend had said. And...well, maybe her body was experiencing a few shivers of its own.

Because *damn*. Today's hot yoga class gave new meaning to the words *hot yoga*. It was a miracle she'd managed to execute each move without falling on her butt, what with her peripheral vision being glued to the sexy newcomer for the entire hour-long workout.

Lynn had seen plenty of attractive men walk through the doors of the Serenity Studio, but she could honestly say she'd never ogled a single one of them – until today.

Lord, the man had been *delicious*. Long, hard body rippling with muscles that looked to be carved out of stone. His scruffy dark-blond hair made her fingers tingle with the urge to stroke it, and those eyes...the most vivid shade of green she'd ever seen, like dark moss growing in a lush rainforest. His position had given her tons of time to admire the tattoo on his rock-solid right biceps. The banner at the top was so real every time he flexed it looked as if he were waving *Rangers* in the wind. Below was a lion head with bared teeth, ready to take a bite out of her.

She shivered at the decadent thought of exactly *where* she'd like to be bitten.

"And a soldier, to boot." Suz was still gushing. "You know what a big supporter of the military I am."

"You should have gotten his number." Lynn clicked the car remote to unlock the trunk. "Actually, I'm kind of surprised you didn't."

She leaned in to stow her workout duffel and waited for her friend to follow suit, but Suz stayed rooted in place, still gripping the strap of her bag.

It took a second to realize the blonde was staring. Gaping, as if Lynn had shaved her head and grown a mustache in the past ten seconds.

"What?"

Suz burst out laughing. "Oh, man. You're so clueless it's almost kinda cute."

Lynn narrowed her eyes. "What are you talking about?"

"Hon, the reason I didn't get his number is because he wasn't interested in me. He was interested in *you*."

Lynn froze. Forced a hasty laugh of her own. "No, he wasn't. He was being friendly."

"Uh-huh, sure, if your definition of friendly involves undressing someone with their eyes while trying to hide a very impressive boner. At the beginning I worried he might be gay – I mean, what straight guy *literally* stops in his tracks to smell the roses? – but once I saw that hard-on, I knew exactly what team he

played for. And who he wanted to play *with*." Grinning, Suz tossed her yoga bag in the trunk and headed for the passenger side.

After a beat, Lynn shut the trunk and hopped into the driver's seat, doing her best to ignore her friend's evident amusement.

"By the way? He was totally waiting for you to ask him out," Suz said as Lynn started the car. "I think he would have made the first move if you hadn't been sending out *taken* vibes."

"I wasn't sending out any vibes," Lynn protested.

And certainly not *taken* ones, she decided not to add. No, because she didn't feel taken at the moment. She felt betrayed.

But she wasn't ready to tell Suz what she'd overheard in Dana's office earlier. Her best friend had made her opinion of Phil more than clear. Suz wouldn't stop at launching into another *Phil Sucks* speech if she knew what Lynn suspected – she'd go to physical violence.

Girls who grew up in the midst of lots of brothers leaned heavily toward bursts of rage, or so Suz had professed.

Nope. Lynn had enough doubts about Phil that she was ready to call things off. But Dana Hastings had a reputation for spreading lies around the office. For all Lynn knew, Dana hadn't even been on the phone with Phil. Maybe she'd been aware all along that Lynn was under the table and had simply been trying to mess with her the way she messed with everybody.

So until there was proof of actual wrongdoing, Lynn wasn't about to give Suz any more ammo against Phil, especially since Suz had the tendency to make impulsive decisions based on very few facts. Lynn didn't operate that way. She needed to think things through before deciding how to handle this Phil situation.

"Even if he was interested in me," she said, "I'm not in a position to get involved with anyone. Especially not a hot stranger I randomly met at yoga."

Her friend instantly pounced. "Aha! So you *do* think he's hot."

"Well, duh. The guy was totally, what did you call it? Lickable." She reversed out of the parking space, glancing over her shoulder to check her blind spot.

Okay, fine. Glancing over her shoulder to see if Parker was still in the lot.

But he wasn't, and she felt like an idiot for even checking.

With a sigh, she shoved all thoughts of the delectable Parker from her head and concentrated on driving, while Suz chattered her ear off for the five minutes it took to reach her friend's building. By the time she came to a stop at the curb out front, she was eager to say goodbye to Suz so she could go home and clear her head.

"Later, hon." Suz slid closer and smacked a kiss on Lynn's cheek. "Yoga again tomorrow after work? In case the hottie makes another appearance?"

She rolled her eyes. "How about we stick to our usual Tuesday-and-Thursday routine and not let our exercise schedule revolve around hotties?"

"Fine, be that way. What about drinks? We haven't done Tequila Wednesdays in a while..."

"Maybe. I might have to stop in at my folks'."

"Let me know." With a little wave, Suz hopped out of the car and skipped toward the main entrance of her low-rise building.

As Lynn watched her friend's lively gait, she marveled over the woman's energy. How Suz wasn't exhausted after a long day of work followed by sweltering yoga was a complete mystery. She, on the other hand, couldn't wait to get home, draw a scented bath, and spend the rest of the evening lazing around. But first she had to make a quick stop for groceries. Her stomach had been rumbling since the class had ended, and her fridge was pitifully empty. She desperately needed to do some restocking, otherwise she'd be stuck eating ramen noodles for the third night in a row.

She was just pulling into a parking space in front of the Fresh Mart when her cell phone vibrated in her purse. She warily fished it out, checking the screen as she put the car in park. With her aging parents' health concerns, she couldn't risk missing a call from them, but nope, it was an incoming call from Phil.

For the life of her, she couldn't muster enough enthusiasm to answer. Instead, she shoved the phone back in her purse and hopped out of the car.

Her purse buzzed for a second time as she strode through the automatic doors of the grocery store. She ignored it again.

It occurred to her that she wasn't as angry as she should be. Weren't women supposed to flip out when they discovered their partners were cheating? Wasn't she supposed to throw things and curse the heavens and plot her boyfriend's death?

And if her relationship had actually meant something, why had she spent her evening lusting over another man?

The image of Parker floated to mind, and now that she was alone without Suz to witness it, her body reacted to the drool-worthy hottie who'd captured her attention. She pictured his broad, rippled chest, remembering how his muscles had flexed enticingly with his every move, the beads of sweat clinging to his defined pecs.

Had he really been sporting a hard-on? She hadn't noticed, but now she couldn't stop thinking about how sexy that was. Her mind conjured up the memory of the board shorts hugging his trim hips, and when she pictured a hard ridge of arousal straining beneath them, her core instantly clenched.

"Welcome to Fresh Mart! I hope you enjoy your shopping experience!"

The bubbly voice jerked her from her dirty thoughts and brought the heat of embarrassment to her cheeks. "Uh, thanks," she muttered to the teenage employee who'd popped in front of her face like a jack-in-the-box.

Her phone vibrated for a third time, but she gritted her teeth and pretended not to hear it. Phil could wait.

And so could his lies and excuses.



"She went to Adams High in Marin County," Dean said, his gaze focused on his cell phone screen. "And she designed the school yearbook in her senior year. Means she's good at art, right? And maybe computers, too."

Parker nodded absently. Normally he enjoyed piecing together details to create a usable profile, but tonight he was having a bitch of a time concentrating. His thoughts kept straying to the beautiful woman in the car ahead of them. Christ, he was dying to catch another glimpse of those mesmerizing silver-blue eyes.

“Holy shit, man,” Dean blurted out. “I’m looking at the faculty bios for Adams High, and I *totally* slept with the girls’ volleyball coach. Small fucking world, huh?”

There was a smacking sound, and Parker glanced over at the passenger seat to see his buddy sucking on a piece of licorice.

The same shade of red as Lynn’s pouty lips.

God help him.

“Anyway,” Dean went on, “we’ve made some headway, at least. She likes cornflowers, which bodes well for blue being her favorite color. She’s into art. She obviously cares about her health, since she does yoga. I’m starting to get a sense of her. You?”

Parker gulped. Oh, he had a sense of her, all right. The kind of sense that hummed in his cock and made him want to pull her over, yank her out of her car, and fuck her until they both couldn’t see straight.

“She seems pretty level-headed,” he answered, considering the brief words they’d exchanged at yoga. “I don’t think she’d go for anything overly extravagant. No mariachi bands singing to her at dinner, or big displays that make her the center of attention.”

Up ahead, Lynn changed lanes. A second later, she parked in front of a Fresh Mart. Parker quickly followed suit, steering the SUV through the lot and choosing a space not too far from hers.

Both men watched as Lynn slid out of her car.

Parker hit his door release. “I’ll follow —”

“Bullshit.” Dean shoved his hand in front of Parker’s face, a receiver and speaker dangling from his fingers. “You’re not thinking that one through, bro.

Are you *nuts*? She just saw you at yoga. You show up in the same grocery store as her five minutes after class, and she'll call the cops."

Shit. "You're right." Parker sat back with far more reluctance than he should have while simply deciding who would follow a target.

Of course, Dean, the observant asshole that he was, picked up on the hesitation immediately. "Don't worry, I'll give you a full report of everything she's buying."

"Great."

"Every stick of celery."

"Fine."

"Every bag of chips."

"Good."

"Every dirty magazine off the rack –"

"Fuck off."

Dean tucked his earpiece into place and attached a tiny mic to his collar. "Just think—she could have chosen to stop at an adult shop like The Pleasure Chest or something. How'd you like to hear a live-action report on that?"

The idea was far too tempting. "How about you focus on the things she buys that might help us plan the damn date."

Dean was out, both feet on the pavement. He paused to lean on the doorframe, teasing grin firmly in position as he looked at Parker. "Wonder if she's the type who goes for a rubber ducky?" he cracked.

Parker rolled his eyes. "A grown woman in her late twenties? I highly doubt that."

"No, bro, I was talking about a *rubber ducky*. You know, that new brand of vibrator that chicks can bring into the tub?"

Parker's cock twitched. Christ. Dean just *had* to plant that image in his head, didn't he? "Go follow her, you ass, and shut up about sex. She's getting groceries."

“Shut up about sex?” Dean muttered softly the entire way to the front door of the market. “Shut *up*? Everything is about sex, and you know it. Dating is about sex. Clothes are about sex. Hell, even this magnificent display of tomatoes I find before me as I enter the store—even this is about sex.”

Tomatoes. “Right. Explain that one as you find our mark, please.”

“Grabbing a cart.” There was a rattling noise, and then a steady *squeak, squeak, squeak* began in the background. “Heading down the cheese and bakery section. No sign of her. And the tomatoes—obvious, bro. Breast fixation. Stock boy set up the display in pairs.”

Parker gave in and let his head collapse forward, hard enough he set off the horn. He jerked upright, glancing around to make sure no one had witnessed his mistake. “Dean...”

“Looking. Looking.” *Squeak.*

Squeak.

Squeak.

“Oops, okay, found her.” Dean’s voice dropped to a faint whisper. “A couple instant noodle dishes—looks like Thai, some spaghetti sauce in a jar. Whole wheat noodles.”

“Healthy stuff. Got it.”

“Pecans...oh, shit.” The squeak in the background stopped mid-screch. “Umm...”

“What?” Parker demanded.

“Contraceptive section.”

Damn it. There went his final hope that the blue-eyed goddess wasn’t really *involved* with Phil the slime. “Don’t let her spot you,” Parker warned.

“Fuck you, too. I know my job. And I can multitask. For example, I can stand here, completely out of her line of sight, and observe that she’s pulling *lube* off the wall. At the same time I’m being Mr. Observant, I can think what a shame it is that such a fine woman isn’t on the market. Imagine all the dirty, dirty things we could do with her...”

Parker had indulged in enough threesomes with Dean to know the other man *excelled* at dirty.

"She's smoking hot," Dean added.

"Tell me about it." He made a frustrated noise. The woman was pulling *lube* from the shelf? His cock was far too interested in that bit of information. "You weren't the one who had to watch her during yoga."

"Damn shame," Dean said again. "She's wasted on Shotelle. You and me could rock her world in ways that idiot never could."

Parker nodded glumly. "Yup. But we're not. And we can't, because she's the girlfriend of a client. So—" A crash sounded in the background. "What was that?" he demanded.

"She's on the run. Top shelf was a little too high for her and she knocked a section down reaching for a box. She's vanished around the corner, cart and all, like there's someone on her ass."

That didn't sound like Lynn, not even from a short time of observation. "She's not sticking around and picking stuff up?"

Dean's amused chuckle carried over the line. "I think she's too shy to deal with helping anyone pick this up. Guess what's on the top shelf—you'll like this one, bro."

He bet he wouldn't. "What?"

"Boxes of lube *with* accompanying finger vibrators. Looks as if someone's planning a little private entertainment."

Great. Parker was going to spend the rest of the night with an erection trying to tunnel its way out of his pants, just from the mental image of Lynn slipping her fingers between her legs.

"Recon is done. Get out, now," he barked.

"Need me to pick up anything?" Dean asked. "There's lots of lube right here—might help with that frustration I hear in your voice."

"Now, Colter. Haul ass." Parker briefly closed his eyes and sighed. The sooner he got rid of Dean, the sooner he could go home and deal with his *frustrations*.

Alone.

And that sucked hugely.

Dean

He wasn't surprised Parker called off the recon so early, especially after a quick glance revealed his buddy was sitting as uncomfortably in the car as Dean.

Lynn Davidson's brand of shy innocence was damn attractive, and taunting Parker had backfired—Dean was riled up as well. As much as he loved his partner, and as pretty as Parker was, the other man couldn't help him with his current dick-related predicament.

Fortunately, he knew someone who could.

Dean pulled out his phone the second Parker sped away from the Fresh Mart. He scrolled through his substantial list of contacts before he found the one he wanted. "Katie baby," he drawled a second later. "Feel like playing tonight?"

A snort sounded from the driver's seat.

The call lasted all of three seconds. He hung up and turned to Parker. "Change of plans. Drop me off at the next block."

"What about your car? You left it at the studio."

"I'm sure I can convince Katie to drive me back there tomorrow."

"Dude. Do you have a fuck buddy on every street in the city?"

He grinned. "Pretty much."

"Tell me, when you were a baby, was your first word *sex* or *fucking*?"

"Not sure. It might have been *pussy*."

That earned him a loud snicker from Parker, who shifted his attention to the road as Dean put away his phone. He wondered what his buddy would say if Dean told him he hadn't lost his virginity until he was nineteen. But *naah*, Parker wouldn't believe him, and besides, he had a reputation to uphold.

He hadn't always been a ladies' man, but he sure as hell was one *now*.

"Turn left up there," he instructed. "It's the second house on the right."

Parker smoothly steered toward the intended destination and parked in front of the skinny Victorian home. He let out a sigh. "We'll look through all our information tomorrow. Hopefully we've got enough intel to plan something good."

"A part of me wants to tell Shotelle to fuck off," Dean admitted. "I still have a bad feeling about the guy."

"Yeah, me too. But this is our business. We have to finish the job whether we like the client or not." There was no mistaking the agitation in Parker's green eyes. It was rare to see his friend so torn about a gig, or so taken with a target.

"You're right. Let's see how it goes tomorrow," Dean finally said.

"Sounds good." With a nod, Parker reached for the gearshift. "All right. Get the fuck out of here." He cocked a brow. "Unless I'm invited for your date with Katie baby?"

"Sadly, no. She's only into one-on-one." Dean wiggled his eyebrows. "But I'm working on it, so ask me again tomorrow and the answer might be different."

He hopped out of the SUV, closing the door and tapping the frame in goodbye. A moment later, Parker sped off, and Dean headed toward the house, still thinking about the Shotelle job. But he forced the misgivings aside. That was tomorrow's problem.

Tonight he had a boner to take care of, and a lady to make happy. Fortunately, the two things went together oh so well.

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