

# ~ Finding Herself ~

by Alex Tryst  
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**Disclaimers:** These are original characters of mine, and this is the first lesbian story I ever finished. It is definitely not of the caliber of what I've been writing in the last year or so, but I thought it might be fun to post, so that my fans could see the evolution of my writing style. Needless to say this is about two women, who are finding themselves, and of course this wouldn't be one of my books without sex, so there are sexual situations between two women as well as some with men, but that doesn't last too long. Anyway, hope you enjoy it, and drop me a line if you'd like at alextryst@hotmail.com.

Dedication: To my wife, you are my fondest wish.

Now on with the show.....

## Part One

### Chapter One

Snow was coming down on Massachusetts Avenue late that afternoon making it difficult for Reagan to maneuver her Jeep Cherokee in rush hour traffic on her way home from a busy day in court. She was checking her voice mail from her car phone as she passed her old alma mater, American University. She was faintly aware of cars stopping ahead of her, so she applied her brakes gently. However, she then looked down to her lap before feeling something hit her car with great force from behind. She looked over her shoulder to see the front end of a black sports car crumpled up into her bumper.

“Shit.” she mumbled. That’s all she needed. Reagan emerged from the driver’s side door and just looked at the sports car. She could see the driver slouched over the steering wheel. Concerned, Reagan immediately called for an ambulance before approaching the car.

Moments later the driver, Melanie Cantrell, a twenty-two year old college student, began to slowly raise her head. She moaned painfully. Reagan rapped on Melanie’s window with her knuckles getting her attention. Melanie open her door and slowly got out.

“Are you all right? Why don’t you sit down?” Reagan suggested seeing the gash above Melanie’s brow. Melanie sat back down in the car. As they began to exchange information, Reagan handed Melanie a business card.

She took it and read it mumbling, “Honorable Dr. Reagan Elizabeth Charleston. Shit.”

“Listen, Miss Cantrell, I’ve called an ambulance for you, because that gash looks pretty bad, and you were unconscious. However, if you could contact me tomorrow about the accident.” Melanie just nodded without a word as the ambulance arrived.

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The following week Reagan had just gotten back to her office from court when her secretary knocked. “Your honor, you have an appointment in ten minutes. However, she’s early and asked if there was any way you’d see her now.”

“I don’t remember having an appointment. Who is it?”

“She called this morning, and I squeezed her in. Her name is Melanie Cantrell.”

“Oh, well, send her in please.” Reagan took some water out of her small refrigerator and went for two glasses as she turned toward her door. “Well, Miss Cantrell, how are you today? Feeling better?”

“Physically? Yes, thanks for asking.”

“Please sit. Would you like a drink?” Melanie shook her head as she took a seat. Reagan unzipped her robe before slipping it off of her shoulders. After hanging it, she sat behind her desk. “Well, to what do I owe this visit? We could’ve discussed things over the phone.”

“First of all, what shall I call you? Your honor?”

“That’s just courtroom formality. Judge Charleston or Dr. Charleston will be fine.”

“Okay, Judge Charleston.” she mumbled.

“Are you nervous, Miss Cantrell?”

“I’m afraid I am.”

“There’s really no need to be. I’m supposed to be intimidating for a reason. It’s to scare the juveniles that come into my courtroom, but as far as adults go, that’s not my department, so please, say what you feel you need to.”

“Okay. I say this fully understanding that you don’t have to agree to it. However, I truly am in a predicament.”

“Okay. Continue.”

“Well, that was my friend’s car, and I actually have no insurance.”

Reagan gave a displeased groan. “Did you get an estimate on your friend’s car?”

“Yes. It was \$500.”

“Well, mine was \$250, That makes \$750 total that you’re in the hole. Is this the part where you tell me that you don’t have it?”

“Yes, it is.”

“Do you have a solution?”

“I can pay you in installments.” hesitantly Melanie answered.

“Miss Cantrell, what’s your major?”

“Political science and dance.”

“Do you have an interest in the Juvenile Justice Department?”

“Why do you ask?”

“Well, you may have noticed that my secretary is very pregnant. In fact she’s expecting in a month. I need a secretary for about two months while she’s on leave. Do you have any secretarial experience?”

“No.”

“Well, are you even interested in it?”

“Maybe. What are you thinking?”

“Since the government actually supplies my secretary, I can’t hire you. However, we could call it an internship. Given that you have no experience but the cost of living is high, I’ll pay you, say \$7.00 an hour, but instead of paying you, I’ll just take it out of the \$750.”

“Does this mean you’re fixing my friend’s car too?”

“Yeah. I’ll pay for it. There’s no reason that she should have to pay for your mistake too. What do you say? You put in twelve to thirteen hours a week here at my office for those two months.”

“That’s a more than generous offer, Judge Charleston. Let me check my schedule and get back to you.”

“Is this a deal? I need to know as soon as possible.”

“Yes, it’s a deal.”

Reagan stood and extended a hand to Melanie. Melanie stood as well and took Reagan's hand, shaking it almost with relief. "Very well, Miss Cantrell. When your friend's car is fixed, have the bill faxed over to me, and I will pay it. As for you, you start on Monday. Just call and let me know when you'll be in."

"Thank you, Judge Charleston. I will see you Monday."

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On Monday afternoon Reagan came in from court around 2:00pm. When she opened the office door, Melanie was engaged in conversation with her secretary. "Hello, Miss Cantrell. I see you've met my temporary secretary. She will be taking care of everything but the phone. I want you to handle that. My appointment book is on her desk. If someone calls for an appointment, please schedule them in a blank space. My court dates are already in the book, and I'm here at the office the other times, so just schedule them accordingly. Now, if you will come with me, I want to stimulate your mind."

They walked into Reagan's office and sat as Reagan asked, "So, Miss Cantrell, what do you want out of life?"

"First of all, I want you to not call me Miss Cantrell anymore. I prefer to be called by my first name, Melanie."

"Okay. Melanie, what do you want out of life?"

"That's a loaded question, don't you think?"

"Well, why don't you tell me what your plans are after college then."

"I don't know. I guess I would like to pursue a dance career."

"A dance career? I thought you said you are a poly-sci major."

"Well, I am, but my other major is dance. I also have a minor in voice. My parents made me pick what they would call a real major. To them dancing and singing are not real career choices."

Reagan nodded. "But they are your passions?"

"Very much so. To me singing and dancing make life worth while."

"Well, sounds like you're in the wrong field then."

"Yeah, but since my parents pay for school, it's hard to go against the grain. It's hard to be myself when they expect so much."

"I understand that feeling. My parents did the same thing when I was your age. Fortunately for

me, they thought law school was a worth while venture. So, what kind of dancer are you? Modern? Ballet? What?”

“Oh, I’m trained in ballet, jazz, and tap, but I’m always looking to acquire more training. Dance provides me with an outlet for self-expression, so the more I know, the better I can express myself. Besides, it’s a great place to meet girls.” Melanie mentioned crossing her legs.

“Excuse me?” Reagan inquired sitting up straighter in her oversized, leather chair.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I thought you knew I was a lesbian.”

“How would I know that? I don’t even know you.” fumbled Reagan nervously.

“Because I could’ve sworn you were one too, but it’s obvious I was wrong. I’m sorry if that makes you uncomfortable.”

“No, no. I, uh, I’ve just never had anyone come out to me. You don’t look like one.”

“Oh? And what does one look like?”

“I don’t know, not feminine.” Reagan’s heart was pounding wildly, her nerves frazzled. In her thirty-five years of living she had never known anyone gay, and this first encounter left her not knowing what to say. How could such an attractive, bright, young woman be gay? It boggled her mind. She looked at her watch. “Oh, look at the time. I’ve got to get back to court soon.” nervously she stammered.

“Judge Charleston, I didn’t mean to shock you. That wasn’t my intention. I’m sorry.”

“Miss Cantrell, I’m fine. However, may I suggest that if you ever get a real job, you might want to reconsider telling your boss. Some people might not react well to such a bold statement.”

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That evening when Reagan went home she took J.R., her golden lab for a longer walk than usual as she thought about her conversation with Melanie. She wasn’t sure which made her more uncomfortable, that Melanie was gay or that Melanie thought she was. The question made Reagan uneasy, but she was determined not to let it bother her, so she tried to unwind with a book as she went to bed.

Melanie was up late that night as well socializing with her friends. When one of them asked how her first day went with the judge, Melanie moaned and rolled her eyes. She explained what happened before her friend Sarah, a long brunette like Melanie, inquired, “So did she ever deny it when you when you said you thought she was gay?”

“No. She just flipped out.”

“Do you still think that she’s gay?” Melanie nodded and grinned. “What’s the smile for? Are you interested?”

“No. She’s too old for me, but I was just thinking what a shame it would be if she wasn’t. After all, she is an attractive, intelligent, compassionate, older woman. She seems to be wealthy too. She’s my type, but she’s probably in her mid to late thirties.”

“So? Why’s that too old? Wouldn’t it be great to be married to someone wealthy and attractive? You’d never have to worry about a career.” Melanie laughed Sarah’s comments off, but the following morning when she saw Reagan step out of a 1968 Corvette looking suave in a dark pinstripe suit, she thought about Sarah’s words.

Reagan was tired that morning having tossed most of the night. Since yesterday she couldn’t get Melanie out of her mind, so when she looked up and saw Melanie standing by the building’s entrance, she was startled. “What are you doing here so early? I thought you weren’t coming in until after lunch.”

Smiling Melanie shifted her weight. “Well, I don’t have any classes today, so I thought I’d come down here and see you.” Reagan didn’t hear her words though, as she found herself caught up in Melanie’s smile. Suddenly she felt her heart jump. Nervously she fiddled with her keys as they walked toward the office. Sensing Reagan’s nervousness, Melanie said, “Judge Charleston, I’m sorry about yesterday. I didn’t mean to make you uncomfortable.”

“Honestly, Miss Cantrell, I’m fine. It did surprise me, but I’m fine. I’m not uncomfortable.”

“Then why won’t you call me by my first name? Are you afraid that’s too personal?” Melanie’s hand touched Reagan’s forearm as Reagan unlocked the office door.

Reagan looked at Melanie’s hand before pulling her arm away. “You should’ve been a psychology major, Melanie, if you want to try to analyze people. No, I don’t think it’s too personal. I actually hadn’t noticed I was doing it.” she lied.

“Do you let anyone call you Reagan or is it always Judge Charleston?”

Reagan stopped and looked at Melanie directly. Going against her intuition, she answered, “If you really would like to call me Reagan, you may. Judge Charleston is just more professional.”

Melanie nodded before Reagan disappeared into her office. She worked for a couple of hours preparing for cases she was hearing the following day, but around 11:00 she went to check on Melanie. When she opened the door, she saw Melanie diligently typing on the computer with headphones blaring music into her ears. She didn’t notice Reagan, so Reagan just watched her momentarily, intrigued by this young woman. Finally when Melanie did notice her, Melanie jumped, tearing her headphones off.

“You know, there is a stereo right there you could use. Saves your batteries. Plus you could then hear the phone.” Melanie nodded. “Uh, I was thinking about going to lunch. Do you have any

lunch plans?”

“No. I hadn’t even thought about it.”

“Well, since it’s kind of a slow day, I was wondering if you’d like to get some lunch and then maybe join me in court this afternoon. That is, unless you’d rather stay here in the office.” Reagan suggested shoving her hands into her trouser pockets as she leaned onto the door frame.

Melanie just looked at Reagan a moment, standing with such confidence and self-assurance, and suddenly she wondered what it would feel like to be held in the arms of such a powerful woman. Instead of indulging in the fantasy though, she replied, “Yeah, sure. Sounds good.”

“Great. There’s this little cafe by the Holocaust Museum that I really enjoy. It’s very kosher. Would you mind if we go there?”

“No, that’s fine. I’ve never been down by the Museum.”

“Never? It’s fascinating. For me, it truly was a life-altering experience. I actually did my dissertation on Hitler for my doctorate in European History.”

“Why Hitler?”

“Well, I have German ancestors and wanted to learn more about them. At the time I was an undergraduate with a history major, so I began researching. I went back to World War II, and things became very confusing. Some of my ancestors were part Jewish, others Aryan. Some perished in the Holocaust in concentration camps while others were part of the regime. I became fascinated with the Third Reich, so when it was time for my dissertation, I decided to write about Hitler.

“Of course, the Holocaust Museum wasn’t opened until a few years ago, so I didn’t have the luxury of having so many references in one place. Now I go about once every couple of months to research family genealogy. You should go with me sometime if you’ve never been.”

“I’d like that.” Melanie caught herself saying with almost too much enthusiasm.

Over lunch Melanie kept asking Reagan questions about German history, not necessarily because she wanted to know the information, but she could tell it ignited a passionate fire within Reagan, one that made her face come alive. As Melanie sat across the small, cafe table from Reagan, she began to wonder more about Reagan’s personal life. During a lull in conversation, Melanie leaned back in her chair asking, “Judge, may I ask you something personal?”

Reagan set her tea cup down cautiously mumbling, “Yes, you may.”

“Have you ever been married?”

“No, I haven’t, but I was close once.”

“What was he like?”

“Well, he was two years younger than me. We had known each other a long time, and even went to the same college. We were engaged for six months.”

“What happened?”

“I wasn’t happy. It was almost like we were best friends. There wasn’t passion like I thought there should be, so I broke it off. That was about twelve years ago. I’ve never really been interested in finding Mr. Right, and after that I pretty much gave up on that nonsense. I’m doing just fine with my house and dog.”

That afternoon they spent in court. The last case of the day took longer than expected, however. Reagan was still listening to testimony at ten after six when her eyes met Melanie’s. Reagan was surprised Melanie was still there. Finally at 6:45pm Reagan handed down her verdict, and court was adjourned for the day. Reagan stood stretching. “You didn’t have to stay so late.”

“That’s okay. I wanted to.” Melanie answered smiling.

Reagan was beginning to be fond of that smile. “Listen, I, uh, was going to stop by Uno’s Pizza in Georgetown on my way home, because I don’t feel much like cooking, and I’m starving now. Would you care to join me? It’s the least I could do for making you stay past five o’clock.”

“That sounds wonderful.”

“Great. Let me just drop off my robe in the office on the way out.”

When they were at dinner, snow began falling lightly outside. Usually Reagan would have been concerned about her Corvette in such weather, but tonight the thought never entered her mind as she enjoyed Melanie’s company. When they had both eaten to their heart’s content, Reagan had their waitress wrap the rest for Melanie to take back to the dorm.

When their bill arrived, Melanie reached for her backpack, but Reagan said, “This one’s on me.”

“You bought lunch, though.” Melanie pointed out.

“So? I know college kids are poor. Keep your money.” Reagan stated reaching into the inside breast pocket of her suit jacket and pulling out a long, thin, leather wallet.

As she opened it, Melanie caught a glimpse of a picture. “Who’s that?”

“Well, my younger brother Richard, his wife Janette, and their kids.”

“What are they like?”



“Well, they are incredible people. They married when he was twenty-five, and she was twenty-three. I thought they were too young, but seven years later they are still married, so I guess I was wrong. Rich, Jr. is five. He’s a doll. Then there is Alex, who is four. He’s the one you have to watch out for, because he’s always into everything he shouldn’t be. Then there’s Lizzie. She just turned one a few months ago. She looks just like Janette. She’ll be stealing hearts when she gets older. She’s already stolen mine.” fondly Reagan said smiling at the picture.

“Do you ever want kids of your own?” Melanie inquired.

Reagan shrugged. “I’m thirty-five, so I’m getting a little old to have children. I love kids but I don’t feel I have the time to devote to them, so I seriously doubt I’ll ever have any of my own. What about you?” Melanie shrugged. “Melanie, may I ask you something? It’s about being, well, not heterosexual.”

“Sure. What do you want to know?”

“How did you know?”

“Oh, I’ve always known ever since I was a little girl. I found myself having crushes on other girls, but it wasn’t until high school that I realized what it all meant. However, I know a lot of people that didn’t realize it until college or even later than that. Why do you ask?”

Shaking her head Reagan mumbled, “Just curious.” She looked at her watch. It read 9:30pm. “Goodness. It’s getting late. I didn’t realize we’d been here that long. I should get you home. You probably have better things to do than keep me company.”

Their eyes met momentarily as Melanie responded, “Actually, I like being with you very much.”

Reagan tried to ignore her pulse as it quickened. Instead she just smiled but did not respond, because she wasn’t sure what Melanie meant. The ride up to American University was quiet as they listened to the radio. Finally, Melanie couldn’t stand it anymore and asked, “What are we listening to? May I please change the station?”

Reagan nodded. When Melanie found the station that she liked, she turned up the volume and soon the Corvette was vibrating from the bass. “You think my music’s bad? What is this?” playfully Reagan teased. When Reagan stopped the car in front of Melanie’s dorm, she turned the music down. Turning to Melanie she asked, “Are you coming in tomorrow?”

“Of course. I’ll be there at about 2:00pm.”

“Okay. If it’s a slow day like today and you want to come into court, you can. Just be sure to do it between cases.”

Melanie nodded as their eyes stayed locked. Suddenly Reagan felt awkward, so she looked away from Melanie’s deep, dark eyes to the street saying, “I should be going. The Vette doesn’t do well in the snow, so I should get it home before it gets worse.”

Melanie could feel the uneasiness radiating off of Reagan, but it didn't stop her from wanting to feel Reagan's arms around her. In her mind Melanie cursed Sarah for planting the seed of interest for Judge Charleston. "Good night." Melanie whispered.

"Good night." mumbled Reagan keeping her eyes focused on the road. Reagan watched Melanie disappear into the building before driving away. She didn't understand her feelings toward Melanie. She wasn't sure what they were or where they were coming from.

When Reagan got home that night, she parked the Corvette in its spot in the garage before stepping into the laundry room. The house seemed unusually quiet as she walked into the kitchen. She threw her briefcase into one of the kitchen chairs and laid her overcoat over the back as well. Going to the refrigerator, she peered in for something to drink. The choices were slim, outdated milk, the bottom of a jug of orange juice, and flat cola. She shut the refrigerator door dissatisfied and went off to her bedroom where J.R. had settled down to sleep all ready. Casually she dressed for bed and then settled in with her book. However, she couldn't concentrate on reading though as she just stared at the pages, because her house seemed overwhelmingly lonely. Dismissing it, she decided to go to sleep.

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The following morning she went to work focused on everything she had to do that day. She didn't even have a moment to think about Melanie until 2:30pm. She was between cases at the time and busy looking over papers when she felt eyes drilling into her skull. Looking up, she saw Melanie standing there in the back of the room smiling at her. Reagan's eyes flashed as she unknowingly gave a sexy grin in return.

The rest of the afternoon flew by and at 5:00pm, Reagan finished court for the day. When Melanie came up to her, she said, "I was hoping you'd come into court today."

"Really? Why?" she asked head turned slightly downward shyly as her eyes looked up into Reagan's.

"Because I wanted to see you. So, you want a ride home?"

Melanie smiled her eyes flashing with excitement. "Sure. Thanks."

Traffic was horrible that evening, but neither of them seemed to notice as they sat in silence enjoying each other. Melanie turned on the radio and was surprised to find it set to her favorite station. She looked at Reagan, who just smiled.

Suddenly Melanie wanted a reason to spend more time with Reagan so she suggested, "You know, the traffic is really bad. Do you want to go get a drink or something?"

Instantly Reagan's heart screamed yes, which caught her off guard. Not one to let emotions guide her though, she answered, "Thanks, but I really have some things to do at home tonight."

She saw obvious disappointment on Melanie's face even though she played it off. "Would you mind if I smoked?" Melanie asked.

"Yeah, I would mind. You do know that smoking is bad for you, not to mention smells awful."

"Well, you don't have to be around me or kiss me, so what's it to you?" Melanie snapped.

Reagan was taken back by Melanie's comment. "You're right." Reagan mumbled. "It's not any of my business."

Melanie thought she heard hurt in Reagan's voice. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap. It's just that I'm trying to quit, but it's so hard. I've gone the whole day without a cigarette, and it's about to drive me crazy."

"Well, congratulations. Quitting is hard, but you can do it."

That night when Reagan got home, the emptiness was preponderant. She ate her dinner in front of the television that evening just to hear another human's voice, but her mind kept straying to Melanie. She realized she didn't have a life anymore. Everyday it was the same routine, but Melanie had thrown a wrench into the works. However it was only after spending time with her that she noticed the absence. Reagan's thoughts moved to Melanie's kissing comment in the car.

Suddenly when she realized she was actually thinking about how it would feel to be kissed, she became horrified. She'd given up on love and even sex such a long time ago that to have them practically thrown in her face by a woman thirteen years her junior was scary.

Not knowing exactly what to make of it, she decided to call her brother. However, Janette answered the phone, and when she said Richard wasn't in, they began to talk about the kids. After awhile though, Janette inquired, "Reagan, you seem upset. Is something going on?"

"Oh I don't know. I've met someone that's turned my life upside down."

"Oh really? What's he like?" she inquired with interest.

"First of all, it's nothing like that. It's a young woman, actually."

"Oh, okay. What's she like?" Janette asked obviously surprised.

"Well, her name is Melanie Cantrell. She's twenty-two and very interesting. I mean the first day she was in my office she told me she was a lesbian, but then she said she thought I was one. Janette, I flipped out. I didn't know what to think about that, still don't. Anyway, to get to the point, I enjoy her company, but after I've spent time with her, I feel lonely. She's made me realize I have no life and no friends really. It's depressing. She's the closest thing I have to a friend, and I've only known her about a week."

“Look, Reagan, it’s never too late. If you want to have meaningful relationships, friendship or romantic, it takes work but it’s never too late. Sounds like you enjoy spending time with Melanie. Why shut her out because she’s younger than you?”

Her age wasn’t the real problem, but Reagan didn’t want to admit that, so she just agreed with Janette half-heartedly. Then again maybe Janette was right in the fact that she was shutting Melanie out too quickly.

## Chapter Two

On Saturday Reagan went to the Holocaust Museum to do some research. The library was busy with people, but Reagan managed to find a table with two empty chairs. She threw her briefcase and coat in one and sat in the other. She had only been there about half an hour when she heard someone behind her say, “Excuse me, ma’am.” She turned and looked over the top of her reading glasses up at a tall, slender body to the man’s dark eyes. “I was wondering, being that there are no other vacant chairs, may I sit here?” he inquired gesturing to the chair with her briefcase and coat.

“Oh, sure. Sorry.” she mumbled moving her things before going back to her reading. She paid little attention to him until she kept feeling his eyes on her. Looking up their eyes met. “What? Do you not have enough table space?”

“Oh no. That’s fine. It’s just that, well, I can’t help but look at you. You are by far the most attractive woman in the library.” Playfully he smiled.

Reagan laughed softly. “Well, that’s a line I’ve never heard. Young man, what’s your name?”

“Rob.”

“Rob, how old are you?”

“Twenty-five.”

“How old do you think I am?”

He looked her over. “Twenty-seven.” he lied smiling causing Reagan to laugh again.

“Is that a line too?”

“Maybe. Is it working?”

“Well, I am still talking to you, aren’t I? What else do you want?”

He hesitated before asking, “How about lunch?”

Reagan admired his confidence. Trying to break her mold of conservativeness, she answered,

“You make it the cafe next door, and it’s a date.” Spontaneity was nothing she was used to, but being that she felt her life was in need of change, not to mention he was handsome and charming, she went against her grain. They both gathered their things, and when he extended a hand to her, she hesitated but then took it.

They had an enjoyable lunch together before walking down toward the Tidal Basin. As they walked for a bit, the wind began whipping off the water causing Reagan’s teeth to chatter. Rob encircled her shoulders with his arm. They stopped under a cherry tree, and Reagan leaned into it. Rob took a step toward her and his body pressed into hers lightly.

“Reagan, may I make an observation about you?” She nodded. “You seem unhappy. There’s no love in your life, is there?”

“What makes you say that?”

“Because if there was, you wouldn’t be here with me right now.” he whispered.

She was aware of his body leaning into hers. She knew she was about to be kissed, but instead of stopping him, something inside her was screaming for it. She closed her eyes feeling his lips on hers as her arms instinctively wrapped around his neck. It was a pleasant closed-mouth kiss, but as he pulled away, Reagan pulled him back moaning for more. His hand slid from her hip around her back as they kissed again.

Reagan’s body was smoldering. After thirteen years of celibacy, she had tired of it with only two of his kisses. His mouth moved from hers to her cheek and then neck.

“What am I doing?” she gasped raking her hands through his dark hair. “I don’t even know you.” He looked at her. Reagan smiled as she stroked his disheveled hair sweetly.

“Reagan, I want to know you better. Please let me.” He kissed her again. Reagan could feel herself being emotionally swept away by this man.

Finally after a few more minutes, she forced herself to whisper, “I can’t do this. You’re a complete stranger.” Rob pulled away slowly. His eyes tried to hide their disappointment. “Look, Rob. Everything I’ve done today has been out of character for me. You’re a nice young man, but I do have to draw the line somewhere. Please try to understand.”

“No, I do understand. It’s okay. What if we move slower? Maybe go out? What do you say to that?”

“I don’t know. I’m not sure if I want any sort of relationship right now.”

“Okay. I’ll tell you what. Why don’t I give you my number, and if you change your mind, you can call me.”

She nodded in agreement taking out a business card for him to write on. He read it before turning

it over and writing his number on the back. “Well, I guess this is good bye then.” he mentioned. Reagan nodded. “May I at least give you a kiss?”

With Reagan’s consent, he kissed her softly. “Good bye, Rob.” she whispered.

“Good bye, Reagan.”

On Monday morning Reagan went into the office distracted by what had happened. Fortunately for her, she had court all morning to take her mind off things. However, she had just come back from lunch and opened the office door to see Rob talking to Melanie. “Rob, what are you doing here? How did you find me?”

“Hello, Reagan. I must admit I memorized your address from your business card. I wanted to see you. You’ve been on my mind since Saturday, and I knew that you’d never call, so I decided to pursue you instead. Do you mind?”

Reagan laughed. “You certainly are a persistent young man.”

“Do you have a few minutes for us to be alone?”

“Yeah, sure. Come on in.”

He followed Reagan into her office, and then locked the door behind him as she took off her robe. Before she realized what was happening, he had encircled her waist with his hands. He kissed her softly. “Rob.” she whispered.

“I’ve ben thinking about this since Saturday, Reagan. I’ve wanted you since I’ve touched you. I know you feel that, and I know there’s something in you that feels the same. Why won’t you let it happen?”

“I don’t even know you, Rob.”

“Somehow, I don’t think that’s the real reason, Reagan. You strike me as a person who does whatever she wants, so I don’t think me being a stranger matters if you really want it.”

“Okay. You really want to know? I haven’t been to bed with anyone in thirteen years. Quite honestly, the only thing that I remember about it was that it was never satisfying, so I gave up on it.”

“Maybe you just haven’t found the right man. Why don’t you try me on for size?”

Reagan was silent a moment before answering, “Okay.”

“Okay? What do you mean okay?”

“Rob, I’m thirty-five. I’m not a kid. You’re right that I go after what I want. We are the same

kind of person, so you can read me just like I can read you. The sex is not an issue really. It's more of what else you want."

"I want whatever you want to give, whether it be friends or more."

"How about dinner tonight, just friends?" Reagan suggested.

"Okay, sounds good."

"All right then. I need to get to court, but you can call me later, and we can discuss it." Rob smiled before kissing her cheek.

Once he was gone, Melanie poked her head in the door, Reagan motioned her in. "Looks like you got yourself a man this past weekend."

"Oh Rob? Yeah, we met this past weekend, but we're just friends."

"Try telling that to him. It looks like he wants more than friendship."

"Maybe so Melanie, but I'm not looking for a relationship. I gave up on men a long time ago."

Reagan saw Melanie's mouth curve ever so slightly into a smirk as she stated, "Me too." Reagan laughed.

## **Part Two**

That night Rob decided to make dinner for Reagan. When she arrived at his apartment, she knocked expecting him to answer. However, another young man, a blonde with blue eyes and nice build answered the door. "Well, hello there. You must be Rob's woman."

"Reagan." she introduced herself. "Rob and I are just friends."

"Oh well, in that case, I'm Chris. Do you have any boyfriends, fiances, or husbands?"

"No." Reagan answered giving him a quizzical look at his odd question.

"So that means I can call you then?"

"Hey! I can hear that Chris. Knock it off." Rob stated peering around the corner out of the kitchen.

"I'm just kidding. Relax, Rob." Chris lead her into the living room where two other guys were watching ESPN.

They introduced themselves before Reagan asked, "Is the Wizard's game on yet?"

“It’s about to start. You like basketball?” asked Chris.

Reagan nodded sitting. They all began watching the game as Reagan impressed them with her knowledge. Finally, Rob came out of the kitchen and said, “Okay guys. Time to go.”

“No way, man. We’re watching the game with Reagan. This woman knows hoops. She’s cool.”

“You guys promised to leave when she got her, so get out.”

The three guys grumbled and said good bye to Reagan. Once she and Rob were alone, she mentioned, “I feel like I’m in a time wrap in a college dorm room.”

“Well, it feels like that sometimes, but now it’s just us.” he softly said embracing her and leaning in for a kiss.

Reagan accepted the gesture and soon Rob’s body had pressed her into a semi-reclining position on the couch. Reagan closed her eyes feeling his mouth ravaging her neck, his hands grappling with the buttons on her blouse. Soon it was open, and Rob had flicked open the front clasp of her bra. Their mouths met as Rob’s hand ventured up to one of her breasts causing her to moan.

“Reagan, I want you so much.” he growled stripping off his own shirt. “Please let me take you to bed.”

Later that night as Rob and Reagan were just lying in bed, she mentioned, “I should go. It’s late, and I’m really tired.”

“No, don’t. Stay here. Let me hold you.” he said propping up on his arm.

Reagan smiled and brushed his hair back. “Rob, I can’t. We’re supposed to be just friends.”

“Reagan, you still want to be just friends after tonight? Come on. Why won’t you let me in? I want to get to know you. Please. Stay with me, and let me hold you. Give it a try.”

“You really want me to?” she inquired.

“Yes, I do.”

“Okay. I’ll stay. I don’t have to be in court until the afternoon anyway.”

### Chapter Three

When Reagan arrived at her office the next morning, it was after 10:00am. She opened the door and saw Melanie sitting there reading a book. Suddenly Reagan’s heart dropped into her stomach. “Good morning.” she mumbled avoiding eye contact.



Melanie sensed something wrong immediately. “Good morning. How are you? You’re awfully late.” Melanie mentioned hesitantly.

Reagan nodded but said nothing. She didn’t know what to say, because she didn’t understand the way she was feeling, so she was silent. A few minutes after she went into her office, Melanie came in and just stared at her. Reagan tried desperately to ignore her at first and wandered over to the refrigerator.

“Are you all right?” Melanie asked softly.

Reagan didn’t answer the question but just looked at Melanie with confusion. Finally she said, “I just need to be alone.”

Melanie hesitated for a moment before walking out of the office. Once she was gone, Reagan felt like crying at her confusion. She felt wonderful when she was with Rob, but her feelings toward Melanie were changing. Instead of enjoying her company, Reagan was beginning to feel awkward. She didn’t know where her feelings of guilt about Rob were coming from. It just didn’t make sense to her why she felt ashamed.

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That night when Reagan got home from work she got a call from Rob inviting her skiing for the weekend. She accepted with great enthusiasm, but after hanging up realized she would need a house sitter for J.R. In the three years that she’d had him, she had never been away from him for more than a day. Everywhere she traveled he had gone also, but this time wouldn’t be possible.

Since it was already Tuesday night, she wondered who she could get on short notice. Suddenly Melanie came into mind, but she quickly discounted it, even though she didn’t know why. By bedtime she still hadn’t thought of anyone. Melanie was beginning to look like a better option. Snuggling further into her blanket, she looked at the clock which read 10:30pm. Figuring Melanie would still be awake, she dialed the number.

Melanie was sitting in her room with her roommate and friend Sarah. They all were lounging on Melanie’s bed as Melanie was tearfully trying to explain what had happened at the office when the phone rang. As her roommate got up to answer it, Melanie said to Sarah, “To make it worse, I think she slept with him.”

When Reagan heard a young woman answer, she hesitated for a second. “Uh, hello. This is Judge Reagan Charleston, and I am calling for Miss Cantrell. Is she in by chance?”

“Yes, she is. One moment.”

Melanie looked at her roommate who was cupping her hand over the receiver. “It’s her.”

“Her who?” asked Melanie.

“Reagan.”

Melanie wiped her eyes before taking the phone. “Hello.”

“Uh, Melanie, hi. This is Judge Charleston. I’m sorry to disturb you. I wasn’t sure what kind of hours you kept, but I figured college kids are usually up pretty late.”

“No. It’s okay. You didn’t disturb me.” she answered staring at her friends who were anxiously watching her.

“Well, the reason I called is because I have a business proposition for you. I’m going skiing this weekend, and I need a house sitter. It’s only Friday evening through Sunday morning, and all you would have to do is take care of my dog, J.R. and sleep over at the house. I’ll pay you whatever you think is fair.”

“Oh, I’d love to, but I have no way to get over there.”

Reagan was silent a moment but then before realizing what she was doing she said, “Well, I’m taking the Jeep with me, but if you promise not to get a scratch on it, I’ll let you borrow the Corvette. No joy riding though.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t dream of it. I would love to house sit for you.”

“Great. That’s a load off my mind.”

Melanie could tell in Reagan’s voice that she was uneasy. “May I ask you a question? What did I do to make you ignore me today?”

Reagan was silent for a second before answering, “You didn’t do anything. It had nothing to do with you.”

“You had a date with Rob last night, didn’t you?”

“No, it wasn’t a date. It was just dinner. We’re only friends.” unconvincingly she said, but Melanie knew just by the tone in her voice that it wasn’t the truth. She knew then that Reagan had been intimate with him.

Melanie wanted to hang up right then, but knowing she didn’t have the right to her feelings, she just asked, “So is Rob going skiing with you?”

“Yeah. He and a few of his friends that I met last night.”

“Well, that sounds like fun.”

“Yeah, it should be. Well, I guess I’ll see you tomorrow then.”

“Yeah, I’ll be in sometime after lunch.” When Melanie hung up the phone, she just laid her head on her pillow before mumbling, “She’s going skiing with him this weekend, and she wants me to house sit for her.” Sarah put a consoling arm on Melanie’s shoulder. “Oh well. I guess I was wrong about her.”

“Yeah, but it doesn’t change the way you feel. You like her.”

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On Friday evening Melanie went to Reagan’s house late. When she arrived J.R. was awaiting her anxiously. She patted him on the head before walking into the kitchen. Sitting on the counter was as note from Reagan giving basic instructions for J.R. Melanie then wandered around the house admiring Reagan’s taste. She wandered upstairs and stepped into the master bedroom. Melanie stood in the doorway just staring at the queen sized bed as she wondered which side Reagan slept on. She figured it was the left side being that there was a phone, alarm clock, and lamp on the night stand.

Once she finished touring the house, she changed for bed in Reagan’s bathroom. She noticed then that the whole house, including the bedroom and bathroom weren’t really feminine at all. Then again she never saw Reagan wear any feminine clothes either, but mostly neutral styles and colors.

Melanie was tired so she decided to curl up in bed and watch television before going to sleep. Going to Reagan’s bed, she climbed in centering herself in it. As she arranged the pillows around her, she noticed that some smelled more like Reagan than others, so she clutched one to her.

As Reagan and Rob went to bed that night, Reagan found herself wondering about Melanie. She found herself wanting to call to check on her, so while Rob was changing, she reached for the phone.

“Who are you calling?” he asked out of curiosity.

“I’ve just got to check on Melanie and make sure everything is all right.”

“I’m sure it is.”

“Well, I want to know for myself. This is the first time I’ve left J.R. with someone, so I want to make sure everything is fine.”

Rob gave a small laugh. “Oh, you and your baby.” he said as she dialed.

When Melanie answered, Reagan said, “Hey, Melanie. It’s Reagan.”

“Oh, hi.”

“I was just checking to make sure everything was okay.”

“Everything’s fine. J.R. and I were on our way to bed.”

While they were talking, Rob climbed onto the bed practically laying on top of Reagan. He began kissing her neck as he whispered, “Get off the phone.”

Reagan tried to ignore him at first, but finally she moaned accidentally. Melanie was shocked as she said, “Sounds like you need to get off the phone.”

“Yeah. I better go. I’ll see you on Sunday.”

When Melanie hung up the phone, she began to cry as she held Reagan’s pillow a little closer. On Saturday she awoke late and leisurely showered in Reagan’s bathroom. She stayed in the shower especially long as she inspected all of Reagan’s toiletries, once again finding nothing feminine.

On Sunday night when Rob and Reagan arrived back at her place, she noticed the Corvette was gone. They quickly unpacked the Jeep, throwing his things in his car, which had been sitting in the driveway all weekend, and then they stacked her stuff in the laundry room before going into the den.

They were sitting there watching television and holding each other when they began to kiss softly. Suddenly Reagan heard the garage door, and knowing it was Melanie, she jumped off the couch, which surprised Rob. “What’s wrong?” he asked just as the back door opened. When Melanie came in, Rob saw the look on Reagan’s face.

“Hey there! How was your trip?” Melanie asked almost as if she was excited to see Reagan until she noticed Rob.

“It was great. How were things here?”

“They were fine.” she mumbled.

“Hi, Melanie.” Rob said trying to be polite, but she only mumbled a greeting in return making Reagan even more uncomfortable. She excused herself saying she was going to get her checkbook from her study. As she walked back to the den after writing Melanie a check, she heard them engaged in a conversation that caused her to stop in the hallway out of eye sight.

“Look, Melanie,” Rob said. “I respect Reagan’s friendship with you, even though, between you and me, I know you want her for yourself. I’ve seen the way you look at her. Do you think I like that? I don’t think Reagan has a clue, and I want it to stay that way, so I hope you’re not thinking of saying anything to her.”

“Don’t patronize me, Rob! Do you think I like you being around? It sucks! I want her to be happy.”

“Well, she is with me.” Rob said defensively.

“She only thinks she is. Given one chance, I know she’d be truly happy with a woman. I see it in her eyes.”

“Yeah, wishful thinking! You just want her for yourself!”

Reagan was feeling weak as she stumbled into the powder room. She looked in the mirror and saw her face turning pale. Melanie was attracted to her. The realization made Reagan’s stomach do a somersault. Was she attracted to Melanie as well, Reagan contemplated momentarily. Knowing she had to go back out there, she took several calming breaths before walking into the den.

She saw Rob and Melanie sitting in strained silence. Going to Melanie Reagan looked her directly in the eyes and handed her the check. Melanie took it slowly feeling as if Reagan’s eyes were staring right through her to her soul. Then Reagan turned toward Rob and said, “I’ve got to take Melanie home, and then I’m going to come back here and crash, because I’m not feeling very well.”

“I’ll stay here and keep you company if you want.” he stated.

“No. That’s okay. I’ll call you tomorrow, though.”

Rob nodded standing, and Reagan escorted him to the door. He kissed her cheek before leaving. Reagan went back to the den to the wet bar where she began to fix herself a bourbon. “Would you like a drink?” she asked not even looking at Melanie.

“Sure.” Melanie answered hesitantly.

“What do you want?”

“Whatever you’re having, I guess.”

Melanie watched Reagan fill one glass with cola before adding a giger of bourbon. Then in the other glass she put a shot of cola and two parts bourbon. Reagan guzzled the stronger drink and poured herself a second just as strong. Then she turned toward Melanie who was looking concerned. Reagan handed her the drink before sitting next to her on the couch.

“Are you okay?” softly Melanie inquired.

“I’d just like to drink this and go to sleep!” she snapped.

“Bad weekend?”

“No. It was fine until I got back here.” It was obvious that Melanie was hurt by that statement as her lip quivered. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean it like that. Don’t take it personally. It has nothing to

do with you.”

“Then what?” inquired Melanie her hand moving to Reagan’s leg.

Reagan closed her eyes trying to hold back tears, but the feeling of Melanie’s hand made her heart ache. She had the urge to pull away but at the same time stay.

“I’m sorry. I’m usually not an emotional person, but these past few weeks have been crazy for me.” she whispered as her dam of tears broke.

Without thinking Melanie reached for her, and Reagan fell into her embrace. Reagan’s head nestled into Melanie’s neck as she cried a trail of tears starting on Melanie’s neck and rolling down into her shirt. She could feel Melanie gently stroking her brown, graying hair. They sat for about ten minutes in silence before Reagan felt the alcohol coming over her. “I think I need to lie down.” she mumbled.

“You want me to help you upstairs?” Melanie asked.

Reagan nodded, so they both went upstairs to Reagan’s room. Melanie sat Reagan down on the bed and then sat next to her before wrapping her arms around Reagan again. Reagan began to lay back, and since Melanie didn’t let go, she lied down as well. As they laid there, Reagan became aware of Melanie’s whole body, the shape and feel of it pressed against her own. After awhile, Reagan’s tears stopped, but they continued to lay in their embrace. Reagan was so amazed at how consoling, soft, and warm Melanie’s touch was that she didn’t want to pull away. Finally Reagan drifted off to sleep.

In the morning she awoke to find herself alone in bed. However, she heard running water in the bathroom, so she just laid there. A few minutes later the water went off, and then Melanie emerged from the bathroom wearing only a towel. Her hair was wet and pulled over her shoulder. Reagan desperately pretended to be asleep as she watched Melanie walk to her closet and pull out one of her dress shirts. As Melanie proceeded to slip it on, her towel fell to the floor. Reagan knew she should’ve looked away, but she couldn’t, her curiosity being too strong. She watched Melanie button it leisurely before leaning over to pick up her towel and taking it back into the bathroom.

Reagan’s eyes opened fully as she tried to breath, but it felt as if she’d been hit in the chest. When Melanie came out of the bathroom again, she saw that Reagan was awake. “Good morning. I hope you don’t mind, but I borrowed one of your shirts.”

Reagan unknowingly smiled as she stretched. “No, I don’t mind. How about some pants for that outfit?”

“How are you feeling? Any better?”

Reagan shrugged. “It was nice having company, though. Sorry I wasn’t a better hostess.”

“Don’t worry about it. I’m just glad I could be there for you. Isn’t that what friends are for?”

“I wouldn’t know. I don’t really have that many. Is that what we are?” Reagan asked. Melanie plopped down on the bed stretching out next to Reagan as she nodded. Reagan noticed the way the shirt just barely covered Melanie as she had one leg bent. Reagan found herself staring at it wondering if it was as soft as it looked. Melanie felt Reagan’s eyes on her leg. Rolling on her side so they were face to face, Melanie stretched her leg over touching her foot to Reagan’s. She smiled as they looked at each other. Reagan wasn’t sure what might happen if she stayed in that position, so she slowly got out of bed saying, “I need to get ready for work.”

When Reagan dropped Melanie off at school, she parked the car but left it running. She turned to Melanie, who had ended up wearing one of Reagan’s dress shirts with a pair of sweat pants. “Well, will you be in today?” she asked smiling. Melanie nodded. “Great. I’ll see you later then.”

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Over the next few days things were fine until Reagan saw Rob for the first time since the ski trip. They were hanging out at his apartment with his roommates when he suddenly left the room. Reagan thought nothing of it at first but when ten minutes had gone by and he hadn’t returned, she went back to his bedroom. She found him in a candle lit room lying on the bed in only his shorts.

“What are you doing back here by yourself?” she asked.

“Waiting for you. It’s about time you got here. Why don’t you join me?” he suggested softly patting the bed next to him. Smiling Reagan climbed onto the bed, and he began to unbutton her shirt before cupping one of her breasts. “I’ve missed you over the last few days. I’m sorry you’ve been sick. I would’ve taken care of you though, if you would’ve let me.”

“I know, but you entertained me all weekend. I didn’t want to impose on you or seem needy. Besides, Melanie stayed over that night, so I wasn’t alone.”

“She did?” Rob asked raising an eyebrow.

“Yeah. I got to feeling worse after you left, so she stayed the night. What? Why are you looking at me like that?” she inquired when he gave her a skeptical glare.

“Nothing. I just don’t know if I trust her.”

“Why? Because she’s a lesbian?”

“No, not exactly. If she were only gay, that wouldn’t bother me, but I think there’s more to it than that.”

“Like what?” Reagan’s voice was becoming agitated.

Rob withdrew his hand. “Do we really have to talk about this now?”

“What would you rather do? Have sex?” she yelled sitting up.

Rob sat silently watching Reagan fumble with her shoes trying to get them on. She stood starting for the door. “You can’t go out there like that!” he said seeing that she hadn’t bothered to close her shirt.

“Watch me!” she screamed marching out with Rob following closely behind her.

“Reagan! Reagan, wait!” He caught up with her in the den where his roommates were cat calling at Reagan’s outfit. She gave them a cynical glare, stopping their comments immediately. “Reagan, I’m sorry. Please don’t leave angry.” he softly stated.

“Trouble in paradise?” one of his roommates joked, but Rob shot them an angry stare while Reagan proceeded to finally button her shirt.

“Look, Reagan. I’m sorry I inferred things about Melanie. I know she’s your friend, but if you haven’t noticed, the woman is head over heels for you. I just don’t see how you can have a friendship. I’ve seen the way she looks at you and how uneasy it makes you.”

When he said that Reagan’s heart began pounding. She didn’t know she’d been that obvious. She wondered if Melanie had noticed too. Her eyes began to swell making Rob soften. He put his arms around her. Reagan knew he was trying to be consoling, but his arms just didn’t have the same healing power as Melanie’s, so she just felt foolish. She pulled away and gathered her composure quickly.

“Look, Rob. The way Melanie feels towards me or vice versa shouldn’t matter. She and I are friends. I’d like to continue to be friends with you as well, but I can’t if you and Melanie can’t get along.”

Rob looked at his feet a moment before saying, “I’ve tried really hard to win your affections, Reagan, but you still only want friendship from me. Why can’t we be more? Do I not satisfy you? What do I have to do?”

“Rob, there’s more to a relationship than sex, but I can’t give those things. I’m content being single. The sex is great, and I like the attention, but I can’t get involved right now. I have other things that demand my time and energy. A friendship is all I can do. Please try to understand.”

Rob lowered his head again. “Reagan, I don’t know if I can do that. I am genuinely interested in you as more than a friend. However, I don’t want to be without you completely. I like being with you.”

“And I like being with you, so let’s not make this good bye, just a see you later.” He nodded. Reagan then kissed his cheek before leaving.



As Reagan was driving home, she passed American University and found herself turning in wondering what Melanie was up to. Picking up her car phone, she dialed Melanie's number. Melanie was in her room doing her usual thing, gossiping with Sarah, when the phone rang. "Hello." she said listening to Sarah talk.

"Hi. Melanie? This is Reagan."

"Hey Judge! How are you?" she inquired smiling at Sarah who immediately became quiet.

"Well, you'll never believe where I am. I was driving home and before I knew it my car was sitting out in front of your dorm where I dropped you off the other morning. I've had kind of a rough night, so I was wondering if you were busy, because being with you always seems to make me feel a bit better. I know it's kind of short notice, and if I'm imposing, I understand, but I thought it was worth a shot."

"No, you're not imposing at all. I'd love to spend time with you. I should get dressed though. Why don't you come up to my room? It's better than waiting in the car."

"Oh, I don't know about that."

"No, it's fine. I'll let you in."

"Okay, sure."

When they hung up, Melanie screamed in excitement. "What's up?" Sarah inquired.

"She's here! She came to see me! I've got go let her in."

When Melanie went to let Reagan in, she saw how ragged Reagan looked. They hugged in a long silence before Melanie pulled Reagan toward the stairwell up to her room. Melanie walked in but when Reagan hesitated, Melanie grabbed her by the hand, pulling her into the room. Melanie's roommate and Sarah were sitting there staring at her with interest. Still holding her hand, Melanie gave introductions before walking to her closet. Reagan stood nervously by the door shifting back and forth on her work boots.

Sensing Reagan's uneasiness, Melanie gestured to her bed asking, "Do you want to sit down?"

"No, that's okay. I'm fine." she answered digging her hands deeper into her jean pockets.

Once Melanie had changed, Sarah mentioned, "It's cold out there. You might want a jacket."

"Oh I'm sure I'll be fine." she mumbled.

"Well, if you do get cold, you could always borrow mine." mentioned Reagan.

They ended up just strolling around campus as Melanie listened to Reagan reminisce about her

days there. Snow flurries began to fall lightly, so Melanie looped her arm through Reagan's and pulled her closer, leaning to rub her cheek against Reagan's thick, flannel shirt. Instantly Reagan felt her skin heating where Melanie was touching her, making her shiver at the unexpected feeling.

"It's getting cold." Melanie whispered.

Reagan was just holding her black leather jacket, so she put it around Melanie's shoulders. "Here. This should help." Reagan replied.

"Thanks," Melanie mumbled, "but I like your arm better."

Reagan stopped walking and faced Melanie. Her heart was beating erratically as she reached out on impulse and encircled Melanie's waist, bringing her in closer. "Better?" she asked almost breathlessly as she felt Melanie's cold nose nuzzle in to her neck. Melanie reached back and touched Reagan's hands. They were cold yet sweating.

"Your hands are freezing. Here. Put them under the jacket." she said guiding Reagan's tentative hands under the hem of jacket and back around her waist. She could feel Reagan swallow hard. They just stood for along time in absolute silence as the snow fell upon them.

When Melanie got back to her room that night, Sarah was still there. "Nice jacket." she mentioned.

Melanie giggled as she pulled it tighter around her body. "She's so sweet."

"And cute. You certainly were right about that."

Melanie moaned thinking about Reagan's outfit. "That's the first time I've ever seen her in jeans. Did you see that ass?"

"And those legs?" Sarah added. "For an older woman, she is really in incredible shape."

"She's got the strongest arms. I was cold, so she wrapped her arms around me and pulled me to her. Oh, what a firm body! I tell you, that's one body I wouldn't mind being underneath in bed!"

"Easy there, Melanie. You haven't known her that long."

"I don't care! I want her! She touches me and my whole body aches for more."

"And you think she feels the same?"

"I think she's beginning to. I could feel her heart racing as she held me."

As Reagan slowly made her way home through the snow, her mind raced with questions about the evening. She had gotten so angry with Rob when he had tried to infer that Melanie had

feelings for her other than friendship, but as they strolled through campus, Reagan realized for the first time that it was true. She could feel it in Melanie's body as she held her in the snow. Reagan wondered why she had the urge to embrace her in the first place, but didn't come up with a definitive answer. She was drawn in for an unexplainable reason. Sighing deeply she wondered what road she was headed down if she couldn't fight the urges to be close to the younger woman.

### **Part Three**

A few days later Melanie and Reagan had gone out for lunch together. During their conversation Reagan mentioned, "You know, I never received a bill for your friend's car. What's going on with that?"

"Oh, well her parents were going to get her a new car for graduation anyway, so they decided not to bother fixing it."

"Oh? Well, you've worked all the hours to pay off my car. You don't have to keep coming into the office then."

"I know, but I enjoy it. I like being there. I like being with you."

"Well, I like having you around too, but I do have to work. Since you're no longer under any obligations, can we cut back your hours at least? How about twice a week?"

"I don't want to cut back on hours. I won't get to see you as much."

"Well, not at work, but we'll still see each other. I want to still see you. I mean in the past month I've met you and Rob, and after last week when I told him that we could only be friends, I don't know if he'll stick around. I want you to stay around, though."

Melanie smiled at Reagan's comment about Rob. "Okay," she consented. A few minutes later Melanie asked, "I was wondering if I could ask something of you. My Spring Break is in about a month, and I really can't afford to go anywhere, but the dorms close. Do you think it would be possible for me to crash at your place? I promise I'll be the perfect house guest, cook, clean, whatever."

"Sure. That's no problem at all. I've got plenty of space."

### **Chapter Four**

When the time came for Melanie's Spring Break, things had become more tense between them, even though they hadn't progressed any farther than the evening in the snow. Reagan sensed something would happen while Melanie was staying with her, but she wasn't sure what or how she would feel about it. On the second night she was there, Reagan fixed them fettuccini alfredo with grilled chicken and Caesar salad for dinner. Melanie insisted they have the lights dimmer than usual, so what began as an ordinary meal turned into an intimate dinner as they sipped their

white wine. They hardly spoke during the meal, but their eyes expressed more than words ever could. When they had finished eating, Reagan washed the dishes. She was just wiping her hands afterwards on a towel when she felt Melanie's arms encircle her waist.

"Dinner was so wonderful. Thank you."

"Well, I'm glad you liked it." Reagan said turning around, so they were facing each other. "That's one of my favorite meals." Melanie began to play with Reagan's shoulder length hair. "Would you like some dessert?" Reagan inquired as Melanie looked into her eyes. She nodded seductively. Reagan could feel the wine coming over her, urging her to lower her guard. Feeling flirtatious Reagan slipped her arms around Melanie's back as she whispered, "What would you like?" Melanie gave a small grin as she leaned up and at the same time pulled Reagan's head down slightly until their lips met softly. When Melanie pulled away, Reagan breathlessly asked, "What was that for?"

"Because I think I'm in love with you, Reagan, and I can't keep it to myself any longer."

Taken by surprise Reagan smiled nervously. Her head was spinning out of control as her heart pounded harder. "That's the first time you've ever called me Reagan."

"Reagan, I love you." Melanie whispered causing Reagan to smile again. It had been such a long time since anyone had said that to her. "Do you feel the same? Do you love me?"

Reagan looked away from Melanie's brown eyes. She wasn't prepared to talk about her feelings. When Reagan didn't answer, Melanie pulled away from her and excused herself from the room. Reagan heard her bound up the staircase.

Melanie went into the guest bedroom where her things were and collapsed onto the bed. About ten minutes later, there was a knock on the door, and then Reagan entered. She stood at the foot of the bed. "Melanie, I'm sorry. I just have never felt like this in my life, and I don't understand why I'm feeling this way. I find myself thinking about you at all hours of the day, and at night I inevitably fall asleep thinking of your beautiful face. No man has ever made me feel this way. I've never been so stuck on one person in my life. I thought I knew what love was, but since being with you, I don't know anymore. I do know that I like having you around, and when you're not, I wish you were." Melanie stood and came to Reagan, embracing her. "I love the way your body feels against mine." Reagan confessed as her lips lightly grazed the top of Melanie's ear. "It's so small and warm. I feel like my whole body could envelope you."

"I like it too. I love it when you hold me like that night in the snow, just like you're doing now." Melanie whispered.

Reagan felt Melanie's mouth on her neck. It brought tears to her eyes. Reagan whimpered softly before their eyes met. "You have no idea how that makes me feel." Reagan moaned.

"Oh, but I do. I love feeling your heart starting to race. It turns me on." Melanie growled wantonly.

Reagan moaned again. “Your voice is so sexy.”

“Reagan, I think you’re sexy.” Melanie whispered. Their mouths began to hover over each other but not touching until Melanie softly begged, “Please.” Their mouths met again, and Melanie parted Reagan’s lips with her tongue, gently thrusting into her mouth. Reagan tightened her embrace around Melanie’s waist feeling Melanie pull her head in deeper. When they broke away Melanie mumbled, “Damn, you can kiss too. Is there anything you can’t do?”

Reagan gave a sexy grin. “I guess you’ll just have to find out for yourself. I have an idea. Why don’t we go curl up downstairs and watch a movie?”

“How about we stay here and go to bed?” suggested Melanie seductively.

Reagan gave a small nervous laugh. “Oh, honey. I’m not sure I’d know how to please you. Besides, I don’t think I’m ready. How about we compromise by watching a movie in bed?”

“Can I pick the movie?”

“Sure. I’ll go get us snacks. What do you want?” Reagan asked pulling away.

“Just you.” answer Melanie with a grin. Reagan flushed as she returned the smile.

When she got back from the kitchen, Melanie had settled into Reagan’s bed already and was anxiously waiting. Reagan noted that Melanie had changed into her night clothes, so after putting down their drinks, she changed in her bathroom. Coming back to the bed, she was met with a smile.

Melanie extended a hand to her. “Come sit here.” she said patting the spot between her legs. Reagan did and then Melanie pulled her into a reclining position, so Reagan’s back was resting against Melanie’s chest.

As they began the movie, Reagan realized that it was about a woman discovering her identity. During the intimate scenes, Reagan became aware of Melanie’s hands on her back, shoulders, and hair. Melanie’s body seemed to be growing warmer, and Reagan found herself wondering if Melanie was thinking about her. When the movie was over, Melanie asked, “Are you ready for another movie?”

“Sure, I guess.”

“Great. However, I will say this next one is a bit more intense.”

“More intense? How?”

“The suspense, well, and the sex is a bit more explicit.” answered Melanie getting off the bed.

Reagan watched her walk to the VCR and put in another tape. Tilting her head to one side, she could barely make out the fact that Melanie was naked underneath her extremely short yet loose shorts. Melanie turned to see Reagan's head tilted.

"What are you doing?" she asked pretending not to know.

"Nothing." Reagan answered innocently.

Melanie gave a sly grin as she came back to the bed. For the second movie, they switched positions, so Melanie was sitting between Reagan's legs. Reagan wrapped her arms around Melanie's waist, but Melanie gently slid Reagan's hands under her tank top so they were on her bare stomach.

Melanie was indeed right about the second movie. Reagan found herself watching a scene of two women in bed that left nothing to the imagination. She felt Melanie's body stir restlessly, which Reagan was surprised to find aroused her. She found herself wanting to touch Melanie's body in places she'd never dared think about until now. Pushing Melanie's hair to one side, Reagan softly began to kiss the back of her neck as one hand ventured up to the edge of one breast.

"Reagan," Melanie moaned softly as her eyes closed. She had waited for such a long time for this that her body was aching to be adored. Reagan's hand glided along the curvature of Melanie's breasts before cupping one. It was so soft and firm it made Reagan groan as she found herself wanting to kiss them.

Not able to stand it any longer, Melanie repositioned her body so she was sitting sideways between Reagan's legs. Her mouth anxiously met Reagan's as her hands worked open the buttons on Reagan's flannel night shirt. When Reagan felt Melanie's hand caressing her chest and shoulders, she tore her mouth from Melanie's as she gave a whimper. Melanie attacked her neck as she managed to push Reagan into a lying position.

Reagan couldn't believe this was happening to her. "Melanie, wait." she whispered causing Melanie to look up. "Look, sweetie. I really need to slow down. This is overwhelming for me."

Melanie lowered her head as she tried to apologize. "I'm sorry. Sometimes I forget that it can be overwhelming."

Reagan pulled Melanie's body down on top of hers, and Melanie put her head next to Reagan's on the pillow. "Melanie, I would like to be everything you ever wanted me to be, but I need time. I've never felt like this. I've never wanted or desired to please someone else as much as I want to please you. I want to fulfill your dreams. There's no doubt in my mind about that."

They were silent a few minutes before Melanie mentioned, "You know, I've always had this fantasy of being with an older, sexy, intelligent, wealthy woman. She'd take care of me financially, but in return, I'd take care of her in every other way and make her feel like a queen."

“That sounds wonderful.” Reagan answered.

“Does it?” Melanie inquired lifting her head.

Reagan tucked some of Melanie’s hair behind her ear as she softly asked, “Who wouldn’t want to come home to your beautiful face everyday?” Melanie blushed.

That night Melanie slept with Reagan at Reagan’s invitation. When Reagan awoke to go to work the following morning, she found Melanie curled up with her head on Reagan’s chest. Reagan gently slid out of bed, so she wouldn’t disturb Melanie and went downstairs. Leisurely she fed J.R. and then read the paper with a cup of coffee. When she went back upstairs to shower, she found herself gazing at Melanie sound asleep, and Reagan felt at peace.

Melanie finally awoke around 11:00am that morning. She was just watching television when the phone rang. After debating on whether to answer it, she picked it up saying, “Charleston residence.”

“Uh, hi, this is Janette. Is Reagan at home?”

“No, she’s not. May I take a message?”

“Would this happen to be Melanie?”

Surprised Melanie answered, “Yes, it is.”

“Well, I’m Janette, Reagan’s sister-in-law. I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“Really?” she asked once again surprised.

“Oh, yeah. Reagan talks about you all the time. The woman adores you.”

“She does? Well, that’s nice.”

“Listen, could you give her a message for me? Could you tell her that we’ll be there on Friday afternoon?”

“Uh, sure. Okay.”

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On Friday Reagan came home from work at lunch time to prepare for her family’s visit. When she walked in, she heard the stereo on louder than usual and singing coming from the kitchen. Reagan walked toward it and peeked around the corner to see Melanie cleaning the counter tops. Reagan watched and listened to her for several minutes. Finally making her presence known, she said, “Hey. What are you doing?”

“Oh, hi. I figured I’d straighten up for you, because you work so hard. The last thing you should have to do is come home and clean.”

Reagan dropped her briefcase and coat to embrace Melanie. “You’re too good to me. You know, I was standing there listening to you for awhile. You have an incredible voice.”

“Thank you.” Melanie blushed as they kissed lightly. When Reagan pulled away and started for the refrigerator, Melanie asked, “Aren’t you forgetting something?” Reagan turned to see Melanie holding her briefcase and coat. “I just cleaned this floor. Why don’t you put these where they belong?” she teased.

Reagan smiled. “A tough girl, huh? Trying to run my house for me?” She took the briefcase out of Melanie’s hand and tossed it on the floor again before throwing the coat. She then pulled Melanie by the waist to her. “Maybe I should show you who’s the boss.” Reagan stated leaning down and kissing her passionately. Then she kicked off her shoes and pulled off her socks dropping them into a pile. Reagan began to unbutton her dress shirt as she said, “I’ll put anything on this floor that I want.”

Melanie’s eyes flashed with excitement as Reagan ripped her shirt off her shoulders letting it fall to the floor, leaving her in only a t-shirt and slacks. Reagan reached for Melanie’s top and pulled it off as well. Then Reagan sat Melanie up on the counter and forced her body between Melanie’s legs as she dove into Melanie’s neck. “What’s gotten into you?” Melanie gasped feeling Reagan kissing the slopes of her breasts. Melanie ran her hands through Reagan’s hair pulling Reagan’s head deeper into her chest as she wrapped her legs around Reagan’s waist. Picking her up once again, Reagan moved Melanie to the floor. The cold tile bit Melanie’s bare back sending shivers up her spine.

“You all right?” Reagan whispered.

“I’m just cold.”

Reagan’s leg nestled between Melanie’s. “Seem warm to me.” Reagan growled.

Melanie tore at Reagan’s t-shirt until it came off and then pulled off Reagan’s bra. She then got her own off before pulling Reagan’s body down onto hers. The feeling of their bare skin touching made both of them groan. Suddenly Reagan’s cell phone in her back pocket began to ring. Reagan reached for it, but Melanie stopped her.

“I have to answer it. It might be the office.” Reagan sat up on her knees still straddling Melanie. Melanie proceeded to unbuckle Reagan’s belt as Reagan pulled the phone from her pocket. “Hello.” she said feeling Melanie undoing her pants.

“Hey, it’s me.” Rob said.

“Hey, Rob.”



As soon as Melanie heard who it was, her hands jumped away from Reagan's zipper like she had touched a hot stove. She sat up and began caressing Reagan's breasts with her hands as she whispered, "Say good bye to Rob. Hang up."

Reagan ignored her however, so Melanie took the phone from her and hung up on him.

"Melanie, I was talking to someone." Reagan growled in annoyance. The phone rang again as Melanie held it. Reagan took it out of Melanie's hand and after a moment of deliberation answered it. Immediately Melanie slid out from Reagan's legs and walked away. Reagan heard her rush upstairs. "Look, Rob. This isn't a good time for me to talk. Can I get back to you, say on Monday?"

Once Reagan hung up the phone, she went upstairs not even bothering to pick up their clothes off the kitchen floor. She went into the bedroom where she heard the shower running. Going into the bathroom, Reagan said, "Melanie, I'm sorry."

"Leave me alone! I don't want to talk to you!"

"Well, I want to talk to you." Melanie didn't answer, so Reagan took off her pants and opened the shower door. Stepping in she said, "I figured this was the only way you'd talk to me." Melanie didn't say anything at first as her eyes roamed over Reagan's body. They had never been completely naked together. Melanie took in a short breath. "Come here." Reagan demanded sliding an arm around Melanie's waist. Kissing Melanie's neck, Reagan whispered, "Forgive me?"

"Uh huh." Melanie barely responded.

They showered slowly every once in a while stopping to kiss or caress each other. Following their shower they fell asleep holding each other. Reagan awoke later to Melanie nudging her. "Reagan, wake up. Someone's at the door."

Reagan looked at the clock. "Oh, shit! That's probably them!" Reagan threw on her robe and bound down to the door. "Hey! Sorry, I was in the shower, and I guess Melanie is asleep. Come on in."

"Melanie's here?" Janette asked seeing the two boys attacking either of Reagan's legs. After everyone hugged Reagan went back upstairs to get dressed. A few minutes later she and Melanie both came downstairs. Once introductions were over, Reagan began to play with the kids on the floor as Janette and Richard talked to Melanie.

That night the children went to bed early and then Richard and Janette thought it best if they went to sleep too being so tired from their trip. Reagan consulted her watch once she and Melanie were alone. "Well, it's 10:00. We should probably go to sleep, because the kids get up really early. I should get my pillows and blanket."

"I wish you'd sleep upstairs with me." Melanie said.

“Honey, I can’t this time. By the way, what did you do with the clothes on the kitchen floor?”

“I didn’t do anything. I thought you moved them.”

“No, I didn’t. Well, let’s go to bed.”

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Reagan slept on the couch in the den, but she was restless. She really wanted to be upstairs in bed with Melanie. Not being able to sleep, she went into the kitchen and made herself a sandwich. She was eating when she heard movement on the front staircase, and then Melanie appeared wearing only Reagan’s robe. “What are you doing up?” Reagan asked.

“Missing you. I couldn’t sleep.” Melanie straddled Reagan’s legs so they were sitting face to face. They both ate some of Reagan’s sandwich as they talked. Finally Melanie said, “Please come up to bed with me. I want you.”

“Oh, you know I can’t, Melanie.”

Melanie then untied the robe and pulled it off her shoulders asking, “Not even these could change your mind?”

Reagan brought a hand to Melanie’s bare breasts and gently stroked them as they began kissing. A few minutes passed before Melanie begged, “Reagan, please take me to bed.” Reagan opened her eyes to respond but jumped when she saw Janette standing there with Lizzie in her arms.

## Chapter Five

When Reagan jumped it caused Melanie to turn around and notice Janette. Quickly pulling the robe over her shoulders, she stood saying, “Well, I guess I’m going to go back to bed now. Good night, Reagan.”

Once Melanie was gone, Janette fumbled, “I’m so sorry. I didn’t know-I was just trying to get Lizzie back to sleep. Had I known you two would be-”

“Janette, I’m sorry you had to walk in on that. I thought everyone was asleep.” Reagan mumbled in embarrassment.

“No. It’s your house. I just didn’t know. I suspected it today when we arrived, but I didn’t know for sure.”

“What made you suspicious?”

“I found the clothes on the kitchen floor. I picked them up before Richard saw them. Then when you and Melanie came downstairs, you both had wet hair and looked like we had awakened you.

Reagan, I just want what makes you happy. If this is what it is, then so be it. I don't think you should have to pretend to be something you're not. You don't have to hide it from us."

"I'm not hiding. I just don't know what's going on, and I am concerned about the kids. They wouldn't understand if they saw Melanie and me together."

"Richard and I strongly believe in not sheltering the children from things that are different. Bad yes, but different, no. If this is the way it is, if this is who you are, then the kids will still love you. True, they might not be capable of understanding right now, but by the time they can, they'll be used to it. The only thing I want to know is, which one of us is going to tell Richard? Do you want me to tell him or are you going to let him figure it out on his own?"

"I'm not ready to tell him. Things just started with Melanie. I don't even know if this will last."

Janette nodded. "Well," she said cracking a smile, "you looked pretty content to me when I came down here, and it's obvious Melanie is in love with you. She makes you happy. That has to count for something." Reagan nodded.

The next morning Reagan was awakened by Alex jumping on her. "Aunt Rea, good morning."

Reagan slowly opened her eyes and smiled at him. "Hey, sport." she mumbled ruffling his hair.

"I wanna watch cartoons." he said.

"Okay. Hand me the remote." As soon as they got the television on, Rich, Jr. came downstairs and joined them. Reagan was exhausted but did her best to stay awake until she saw Richard.

"Rea, you look really tired. Why don't you go back to sleep while I fix these guys some pancakes?"

Reagan went upstairs sleepily and opened her bedroom door. There she saw Melanie asleep holding one of her pillows tightly. Reagan went to the bed and caressed Melanie's face. Melanie smiled in her sleep. Instead of going back to bed, Reagan decided to just get dressed for the day, so she could spend more time with the kids.

By the time she had gotten back downstairs, Janette and Lizzie were up as well. Reagan and Janette's eyes locked in a long silence. "Good morning." Janette finally said. "Melanie still asleep?"

Reagan nodded without a word. "Rea, what's wrong? Is something going on that I need to know about?" Richard asked seeing his wife and sister's eyes locked in silent discussion.

Reagan knew it would be best if she told him, so she said, "Yeah. We need to talk, little brother. Why don't we go take J.R. for his morning walk?"

Richard looked at his wife before slowly saying, "Okay, just let me go get my shoes."

When they got outside, Reagan was quiet for a few minutes. “Look, Richard, there’s something I’ve got to tell you, but I’m not sure how.”

Richard smiled inquiring, “Does this have to do with Melanie?”

The surprised look on Reagan’s face gave her away. “How’d you know? Did Janette say something to you?”

“No. Do you and my wife think that I’m that dense, though? Come on, Reagan. Give me some credit here. How long has it been going on?”

“A few weeks. Richard, I’ve just never felt this way before. I don’t really understand what’s happening or how I’m feeling. The only thing I know is that she makes me happy.”

Richard smiled again as he asked, “That’s all that matters, isn’t it?”

Reagan gave a sigh of relief. “I’m glad you think so. I just wanted you to hear it from me instead of Janette or figuring it out on your own.”

“Look, sis, I don’t really care who you date as long as you’re happy. I must admit, though, that she seems awfully young. How old is she?”

“Twenty-two.”

“Oh, a cradle robber.” he joked. “Well, whatever makes you happy. I’m just glad to see you smiling again. You always had worked too much. Maybe this will help you realize there’s more to life than work. She seems to have had a great influence on you already.”

“Well, like I said I’m not sure about it, but I am happy.”

Richard reached out and gave Reagan a one arm hug before suggesting, “Why don’t we go get some pancakes before the boys devour them?”

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On Sunday evening Reagan took Melanie back to school. They were sitting in her dorm room alone just talking about the weekend when Melanie noticed Reagan gazing at her breasts. Melanie didn’t say anything at first until Reagan’s hand fell upon the buttons of the shirt Melanie had borrowed from Reagan’s closet. Slowly Reagan unbuttoned it as she pulled Melanie into her lap. “What are you doing?” Melanie asked playfully.

“Something I’ve wanted to do since Friday night.” mumbled Reagan pulling Melanie’s sports bra off. Reagan cupped one of Melanie’s small breasts as their eyes met, and then Reagan leaned down taking Melanie’s breast into her mouth for the first time. Melanie groaned feeling Reagan’s tongue teasing her until she was tingling.

“Reagan.” breathlessly she mumbled.

Reagan laid Melanie down on to the bed as she continued to enjoy Melanie’s body. After awhile Reagan’s hand trailed down between Melanie’s thighs. Instantly they spread a bit wider as Melanie’s hips gave a small thrust. Even on the outside of Melanie’s pants, Reagan could feel how hot she was. Their mouths met eagerly as Melanie hoped this would finally be it. She’s waited so long for Reagan’s touch. Guiding Reagan’s hand between the folds of her zipper, Melanie whimpered, “Please.”

Neither of them heard the key in the door or noticed Melanie’s roommate until the overhead light came on. “Oh, sorry.” she said seeing them on the bed.

Reagan jumped away from Melanie but then cracked a smile. “We just can’t get any privacy, can we, Melanie?” Melanie slipped on her shirt quickly. “Well, I need to go.” Reagan stated standing.

Once she was gone, Melanie collapsed on her bed. “I’m sorry. I didn’t know you two were here.” her roommate apologized.

Melanie just moaned. “God, I want her so much.”

“Well, it looks like you won her over finally. When did this happen?”

“Last Sunday. It’s been such a great week.”

**Continued in Part Four**

**The Athenaeum's Scroll Archive**

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**~ Finding Herself ~**

by Alex Tryst  
Copyright May 1998

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**Part Four**

On Monday Melanie came into the office to do some work, but the secretary said Reagan hadn’t come in yet. About an hour later, Reagan appeared with Rob. Melanie noticed Reagan’s damp

hair as well as Rob's but said nothing until he was gone.

"Where have you been?" Melanie asked trying not to sound jealous.

"Oh, Rob and I went to the gym to play racquetball." Reagan answered as they went into her office.

Once the door was closed, Melanie slipped an arm around Reagan's neck. "I missed you last night. Did you miss me?" she whispered.

"Actually, I did. My bed felt rather large and lonely without you in it."

Melanie smile in satisfaction. "I'm sorry my roommate interrupted us. I wish you had stayed. She left again about an hour after you did and was gone most of the night."

"Oh, I'm sure you managed. You had Sarah to hang out with."

"Yes, but I would have rather been with you. I dreamed about you last night."

"Really? What about me?"

Leaning to Reagan's ear, Melanie kissed it as she whispered in her sexiest voice, "I dreamed about you being inside of me." Reagan groaned as her own dream from the previous night flooded her mind. "Would you like that, Reagan?" she whispered.

"Oh, Melanie, you have no idea how much I would love that."

"Then come here." Melanie replied pulling her toward the couch.

"Baby, I've got court in twenty minutes."

"Then we'll have to make it fast."

"Melanie, please. As tempting as this is, let's wait. I don't want to have this time constraint. I'd like to take my time and enjoy the moment."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Melanie, I want to fulfill all your desires, and I don't think I can do that in twenty minutes. Please, give me some time."

"Will I see you tonight?"

"Sure. You want to go out to dinner?"

"No. Let's stay in, and I'll cook you dinner."

“Okay. Well, I have to go to court now.”

“All right. While you’re in court, think about the fact that I’m going to give you a night you’ll never forget.” Reagan smiled at the prospect.

That night when they got to Reagan’s house, Melanie sat Reagan down in the den. “You can sit here and relax while I make us some dinner. Here, prop your feet up.” she said taking Reagan’s shoes off. Reagan followed her instructions, and about forty-five minutes later Melanie came back in to get her. Taking Melanie’s hand, Reagan followed her back into the kitchen where a candle light dinner was waiting.

“Ah, you’re so sweet.”

Dinner was quiet as Reagan was feeling tired from a long day. Following dinner Melanie escorted Reagan upstairs to the master bathroom. Melanie began a bubble bath before taking her clothes off. Then once she was naked, she came to Reagan. They kissed a bit as Melanie worked Reagan’s clothes off her body as well before both of them slipped into the warm water and relaxed. Resting her head back on Melanie’s chest, Reagan mumbled, “I could definitely get used to this.”

“So could I. I like taking care of you.” Melanie replied gently beginning to bathe Reagan’s body. Reagan moaned with pleasure closing her eyes. They stayed in the tub long after the bubbles had disappeared, but finally Melanie stepped out. Reagan watched her dry off before Melanie motioned for Reagan to come to her. Reagan slowly rose and stepped to her. Melanie dried Reagan off before pulling her into the bedroom and laying her on the bed. Melanie began to gently massage Reagan’s back. Reagan was in ecstasy.

Sleepily she closed her eyes before mumbling, “I love you, Melanie.”

Melanie smiled widely knowing she had finally gotten what she wanted. “I love you too, Reagan.” Melanie responded kissing Reagan’s bare shoulder sweetly. A few minutes later Melanie heard Reagan breathing deeply. Realizing Reagan had fallen asleep, Melanie just smiled. Although she wanted to make love instead, she felt content knowing she’d given Reagan a wonderful, relaxing evening. Pulling the covers over them, Melanie just watched Reagan sleep for awhile until she finally drifted off too.

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Over the next few days they didn’t see each other, but Melanie convinced Reagan to take her down to the Holocaust Museum that Saturday afternoon even though Reagan had plans with Rob that night. After touring the museum, they walk around downtown for a bit. Reagan found herself taking the same walk with Melanie that she had taken with Rob last winter.

When they came to the cherry trees by the Tidal Basin, Reagan’s stride slowed eventually coming to a stop at the tree where she and Rob had kissed. Melanie could tell Reagan was deep

in thought. Melanie picked a blossom off the tree and lovingly placed it on the lapel of Reagan's jacket. "What are you thinking about?"

"Oh, nothing. Nothing important anyway." Reagan mumbled turning toward Melanie who gently held the lapels of Reagan's jacket in either hand. Reagan looked at Melanie fondly. It amazed her how much Melanie adored her.

"I love you." Melanie stated, gently tugging on Reagan's jacket. Reagan returned Melanie's smile but didn't respond at first making Melanie uneasy. "Reagan, why do you have difficulty expressing your feelings?"

"I don't have difficulty with it." Reagan lied.

"Yes, you do. Why won't you just tell me you love me like you did the other night?"

"The other night?" Reagan inquired, not remembering.

"You don't remember?" Melanie's voice was lined with disappointment as her face plainly showed her hurt.

"Oh, I remember." Reagan fumbled.

"Don't lie to me. You don't do it well. You don't remember it, do you?"

Reagan lowered her head. "No. I don't remember saying it, but that doesn't mean I don't feel that way."

"Then say it." desperately Melanie pleaded, but when Reagan fell silent again, she pulled away with tears and began to walk away.

"Melanie, where are you going?" asked Reagan following. She took hold of Melanie's arm, but Melanie yanked away.

"I'm going home, Reagan!"

"Melanie, please. Don't walk away."

Melanie continued to walk though, so Reagan grabbed her arm again, turning her around. Melanie was crying as she pleaded, "Please, let me go, Reagan. Just let me go."

"At least let me give you a ride home. It's such a long ride on the Metro." Melanie nodded in response.

It was a painfully long, silent ride back to American University. Reagan knew she could make things right by saying three words, but she just couldn't bring herself to do it. She still wasn't sure what she was feeling, so she opted to stay quiet.



That evening when Reagan went out with Rob, she was quiet and pensive. “Are you upset about something, Reagan?”

“Oh, just thinking about Melanie. We’re not getting along so well right now. There’s a lot of tension between us.”

“Cause she’s in love with you. Well, how about I help you forget about her for awhile?” he suggested bringing her into a hug.

He kissed her cheek lightly and then their lips met. Feeling his mouth on hers, Reagan realized that his kiss didn’t do anything emotional for her as Melanie’s did. Reagan broke away whispering, “I can’t do this, Rob.”

“Why not? What’s wrong?”

Reagan was holding back tears. “It’s all so confusing to me.”

“What is?”

“Rob, I think I’m in love with Melanie.” Reagan blurted out, not being able to keep it to herself any longer.

Rob’s eyes shot open in surprise. “No way. You’re just confusing your business relationship with her.”

“No. I really think I am.”

“How do you know?” he inquired.

“Her touch sets my body into a frenzy. My heart starts pounding, and I can hardly breath. And when I kiss her...”

“You’ve kissed her?” Rob inquired with interest.

Nodding Reagan continued, “Her kiss touches me in a way I’ve never known.”

“Well, sounds like you’re at least in lust, if not love, to me. So, have you, you know?”

“No. We haven’t had sex. I can’t. It’s not fair to either of us. She says she’s in love with me, so I don’t want to go to bed with her if I’m unsure of how I feel. That’s not fair to her. I can’t seem to get that point across to her, though.”

“Man, I wish I had a woman begging me for sex.” Rob stated in disbelief. After a moment he recovered enough to give her a one-armed squeeze. “Don’t worry too much about it, Reagan. If Melanie will make you happy, then that’s what matters. You need someone, someone that I

could never be even as hard as I tried. I only wish her the best, because you are a handful.” he teased making her laugh for the first time that day.

The following day Reagan decided to go see Melanie at school and try to make amends. When Melanie answered her door, she looked extremely tired. Reagan smiled leaning against the door jam keeping her hands behind her back. “Hello. Sorry to come over without calling first, but I had to see you. I hardly slept last night, because I was thinking about yesterday.”

“Do you have something behind your back?” Melanie asked.

“Yeah. If you let me in, I’ll show you what it is.”

Melanie let her in before Reagan pulled a red rose from behind her back. “What’s this for?” Melanie asked.

“It’s my way of apologizing for yesterday. Melanie, I am sorry for hurting you. That wasn’t my intention. I’ve just never felt this way in my life, and I have a hard time with new things.” Melanie took the flower out of Reagan’s hand and smelled it. “Melanie,” Reagan began embracing her. “I love you. After last night I know it’s true, and it scares me to death. I’ve never been in love before, but I do love you.” Melanie smiled as her eyes glistened. “Why are you crying now?” Reagan whispered wiping some of Melanie’s tears off her cheek with her thumb.

“Oh, Reagan, I love you too.”

Reagan held her for several minutes. “Well, what do you want to do now?” she asked.

Melanie shrugged her shoulders answering, “Enjoy each other’s company like we’ve been doing, or…”

“Or?” Reagan prompted in interest.

Giving Reagan a shy smile that made her seem younger than she truly was, she suggested softly, “Consummate our relationship.” Melanie’s hands ran up the front of Reagan’s body to massage her upper chest as she felt Reagan’s breathing quicken. Melanie leaned in and began to kiss up Reagan’s neck to her ear before seductively whispering, “Do you want me, Reagan?”

Reagan moaned. “I do, but I can’t do it, not here anyway. If we’re going to do this, I want to do it right, not in a dorm room. Let me take you somewhere.”

“Okay. Where?”

“I don’t know, but I’ll think of something.” Reagan pulled away thinking that she had successfully delayed Melanie again. “Well, I should go. I don’t want to take up your whole day.”

“Are you crazy? Do you think I’m just going to let you walk out of here after you tell me that you love me? You’re stuck with me now, at least for the rest of the day.”

“Well come on then. Let’s go home. I’ve got work to do. I’ve got to mow the grass.”

## Chapter Six

A few days Reagan and Rob were playing racquetball again when he asked, “So, what’s going on with Melanie? You been to bed with her yet?”

“No! That’s none of your business anyway!”

“Hey, sorry. I didn’t realize it was a sensitive subject. I just figured that with the way she wanted you, you would’ve given in by now.”

“Look, she keeps trying to seduce me, but I’m just not ready for it. I’ve never been to bed with someone I was in love with. Plus the fact that she is after all, a woman, I wouldn’t know what to do. How would I please her?”

“Well, I’ll tell you how.” Rob offered with a smirk.

“Do I really want your advice?” hesitantly Reagan asked.

“Look, Reagan. I could stand here and tell you that going down on her will solve everything, but that’s the smart ass answer.” Reagan stood straighter when he said that. “There are several ways actually to handle this. First of all, being a woman you should know what you like done to you. For the most part, it will be a variation of what you like, but the points of stimulation are the same. Of course, if you’re brave enough, you could always ask her, but more than likely you should just follow her lead if you’re unsure. She’ll let you know what she likes. You just have to be able to read the signs.”

Reagan sighed in discontent. “That’s too complicated. Why are women so complex?”

Rob laughed as he said, “I’ve been asking myself the same question for years.”

Reagan laughed before settling into nervousness as she said, “I want to ask you something. I never thought I’d ask this question, but I guess I need to know. What’s it like to engage in oral sex with a woman?”

“You know the answer to that. You are a woman. I never met a woman that didn’t love it. Chances are Melanie will too.”

“I mean what’s it like to perform it, not receive it.”

“Oh, well, it depends on the woman. It’s never been one of my favorite things, but if it helps my chances, I’ll do it.”

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Reagan sat on the edge of her bed and looked up into Melanie's dark eyes. Slowly Melanie pulled the short, silk, maroon negligee over her head leaving her naked and looking down at Reagan for approval. Reagan's eyes trailed down Melanie's body to her bare abdomen. Reagan leaned to it kissing it lightly. Melanie's skin was so soft. Reagan moaned feeling Melanie's hands in her hair cradling her head. Reagan softly kissed down toward Melanie's heat causing Melanie to cry softly.

Suddenly Reagan felt a wet nose against her face causing her eyes to open. "Oh, J.R." she mumbled sleepily. Turning over she looked at the clock which read 4:30am, so she groaned closing her eyes, desperately wanting more.

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A week had gone by without them seeing each other due to conflicting schedules, but they had planned for a Sunday afternoon together. When Reagan came to Melanie's dorm room, Melanie was anxiously waiting. Melanie pulled Reagan into her room embracing her closely. "I've missed you so much." she whispered kissing Reagan's neck.

"I've missed you as well, sweetheart." Reagan answered.

Melanie smiled. "Really?"

"So much that I've been dreaming about you."

"What about me? Tell me." Melanie asked.

Reagan smiled slightly before seductively saying, "I'd rather show you."

Melanie gave an excited grin as she nodded in consent. Reagan pushed Melanie up against the wall as their mouths met. Reagan's hands worked open the buttons of Melanie's shirt, one she'd borrowed and never returned. Melanie allowed Reagan's hands and mouth to explore her as she stood enjoying the sensations. As they continued to kiss, Melanie was becoming aroused. She began thrusting her hips brushing Reagan between the thighs. Reagan unbuttoned and unzipped Melanie's ragged, tattered, jean shorts. Slipping her hand into them, Reagan was greeted by flooding anticipation. Melanie groaned gripping Reagan's shoulder. Reagan could feel how wet Melanie was and was fascinated at the effect she had on this woman. Reagan explored the wetness for a few more minutes before withdrawing. Reagan was amazed that she herself was becoming hot as she inhaled slowly to calm her labored breathing. "The rest I'll save for later." she mumbled kissing Melanie's ear. Melanie groaned wanting more, but Reagan pulled away saying, "Come on. J.R. is in the car."

Reagan took Melanie's hand as they walked down to the Jeep. It was a beautiful spring afternoon, so they wanted to spend it outside walking around Old Town Alexandria. People seemed to be out in mass, but they found the waterfront trail a bit more quiet. They walked closely together in silence for awhile before Melanie suggested they rest on the next bench they

passed. The next bench they approached was empty and shaded, so they sat.

Reagan watched J.R. wander over to the water's edge. Her demeanor was reserved and somber as she just observed J.R. cautiously step into the water and lower his head to drink.

“What are you thinking about?” Melanie inquired touching Reagan's shoulder.

“Oh, I was just pondering what was going to happen when you graduate. It's almost April, so it's only about a month and a half away. Have you thought about what you want to do with your life?”

Melanie looked out over the water, her mood now matching Reagan's. “I'm not really sure. Sarah and I have talked about getting a place together in DuPont Circle, but as far as a job, I'm not sure. I'd really like to dance.”

“So you are going to stick around this area?” inquired Reagan with hopefulness.

Melanie nodded. “I'm not ready to settle down into a career or anything. I want a job that pays the bills but leaves time to enjoy life as well.”

Reagan nodded in understanding. “Do your parents know about you?” asked Reagan hesitantly shifting the subject.

Melanie nodded again saying, “They know, but I really don't think they've dealt with it. You'll get to meet them at graduation. That'll be the first time they've seen me with someone.”

“Oh boy.” Reagan mumbled already feeling tense.

“It'll be fine.” Melanie assured her taking her hand. “What about your parents? I guess they don't know about you.”

Reagan stood and walked to the water mumbling, “Let's not talk about my parents.”

“Why not?” Melanie asked following her.

“Look, Melanie, they'll never know about me, because they were killed in a car accident about a year ago.” Reagan's eyes began to glisten, but she held her tears by taking a deep breath.

Melanie slid her arms around Reagan's waist whispering, “I'm sorry.”

Reagan took several slow breaths before answering, “It's okay. I'm fine.” Their eyes met, and Melanie smiled sweetly before leaning up to give Reagan a kiss.

## Part Five

Over the next month Reagan and Melanie only saw each other twice a week due to Reagan's busy case load and Melanie's job search. One particular weekend Reagan did help Melanie and Sarah find a place to live in DuPont and even put down the security deposit for them, since neither had found jobs yet. However, it looked highly likely that Melanie would be working with the Washington Ballet Company.

As graduation came around, Reagan got extremely busy, but on the day of graduation, she showed as promised just in time for the ceremony. Afterward Reagan waded through the crowd trying to find Melanie and her family, but there were so many people making it difficult. She felt a hand on her side causing her to jump. "Sarah, hi."

"Hey, Reagan. You look awfully dashing in that suit. Melanie's lucky. I wish I had run into your car instead of her. Funny that she totaled my car but still gets the girl." she mentioned grinning coyly.

Reagan gave a slightly uncomfortable smile not knowing exactly what Sarah was trying to say. "Have you seen Melanie? I'm looking for her."

"Oh yeah. She went that way."

"Okay. Thanks. I'll see you later. Congratulations, by the way." Reagan said extending her hand to Sarah.

Sarah threw her arms around Reagan's neck though, brining her into a full body hug. Pecking Reagan's cheek she whispered mischievously, "See you later."

Reagan pulled away slowly as their eyes met. Sarah quickly raised an eyebrow as her lips blew Reagan another kiss. Suddenly Reagan heard her name in the crowd. Turning she saw Melanie approaching, and Sarah relinquished her grip on Reagan's waist. After a brief introduction to her parents, they all decided to go for lunch and then to see Melanie's new apartment.

The following day Melanie and Sarah borrowed Reagan's Jeep to move in to their new place while Reagan was at work. However, Reagan promised that when she got off, she'd come by to paint the kitchen and bathroom. When she arrived at the apartment, she found Sarah there alone.

## Chapter Seven

"Hey, cutie. Melanie's not here right now. Come on in. You look tired." Sarah stated pulling Reagan in by the arm. "How about a drink?" she asked.

"Okay. Thanks. I'm just going to change into my paint clothes. Tonight I'm going to finish the kitchen for you."

Reagan went and changed into a tank top and old shorts before going into the kitchen. She began to paint the trim while Sarah started her dinner. A few minutes went by in silence before Reagan felt a body pressed into her back. A hand looped around her waist. "Your drink." Sarah

whispered. Reagan could feel Sarah's breath on her neck as her temperature began to rise. Reagan took her drink, thanking her. Sarah's body lingered against Reagan's as her hand rested on Reagan's stomach momentarily before retreating to the stove. Reagan desperately wished Melanie would return quickly.

A few more minutes went by before she felt Sarah's hand on her hip. "Scoot over a bit. I need to get in this cabinet."

Reagan did as requested, and Sarah opened the cabinet, kneeling down next to Reagan's leg. Instead of just reaching directly in, Sarah reached through Reagan's legs to get what she needed. When Reagan felt Sarah's hand low on her inner thigh, she unknowingly gave a whimper. Suddenly the front door opened causing Reagan to jump. Sarah stood giving Reagan a sensual, knowing smile before going back to her dinner. When Melanie came in, she hugged Reagan.

"Baby, it's so good to see you." Reagan said giving her a powerful kiss while Sarah looked on.

"Well, I missed you too." Melanie teased as Reagan dove into her neck. As Reagan kissed Melanie's ear, her eyes caught Sarah's. Finally after a few minutes of playful affection, Reagan pulled away and continued with her painting.

It only took about an hour to finish the trim, and then Reagan began to wash her brush in the kitchen sink. As she was standing there, she lowered her head and closed her eyes from a long day. A moment passed before she felt arms encircle her waist causing her to jump, thinking it was Sarah again.

"Sorry, honey. I didn't mean to scare you." Melanie whispered. "You got paint in your hair. Why don't we take a shower, and I'll get that out for you." Reagan nodded beginning to feel Melanie rub her bare shoulders.

Leaving her brush in the sink to drain, Reagan followed Melanie into the master bedroom. They both undressed before getting in the shower. Reagan closed her eyes as the warm water fell upon her neck. Melanie bathed herself quickly before concentrating on Reagan. She washed every inch of Reagan's body, massaging her back and shoulders, as Reagan nuzzled into her wet hair.

"I love you so much." Reagan whispered beginning to gently graze Melanie's neck with her lips.

"Oh, I love you too."

Reagan backed Melanie into the tile wall as her hands began to massage Melanie's outer thighs. They parted slightly and Reagan's leg nestled between them as their mouths met. Reagan wanted to be inside of her at that moment more than ever before. Pulling away slightly their eyes met before Reagan slowly knelt on one knee. Melanie's hand touched the top of Reagan's head, giving Reagan a gentle pull between her thighs. Reagan's eyes closed as she leaned into it, smelling Melanie's scent for the first time.

However a knock on the bathroom door stopped her from going further as she anxiously jumped

up from her knee. The door opened slightly before Sarah said, "One of our neighbors is here. She wants to meet you. She's so cute."

Knowing sex would be postponed again, they got out of the shower and dressed quickly. When they walked into the living room, Sarah was standing there with an average height, black-haired, dark-eyed woman. She was muscular in the legs and arms. She was wearing a black tank top, jean shorts, and black combat boots. As soon as her eyes saw Melanie, she gave a wide, interested smile.

"Hi, I'm Shawn. I live next door." she stated extending her hand.

Melanie shook it answering, "I'm Melanie, and this is my girlfriend, Reagan." Shawn's smile faltered slightly but quickly recovered as she shook Reagan's hand as well. Shawn only stayed for a few minutes but as she left, she invited them to a party that weekend. Once she was gone, Reagan decided she better go as well. Melanie begged her to stay, but Reagan declined saying she had to tend to J.R. She really only wanted to get away from Sarah's eyes, though. Reagan had become very aware of their every movement over her body during the course of the evening.

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On Saturday night Melanie and Sarah went to Shawn's party. As soon as they walked in Shawn greeted them. "Hey! Glad you could make it." she said to both of them. Turning to Melanie she asked, "Where's your girlfriend?"

"Oh, she went to a Baltimore Orioles game with some friends." Melanie mumbled.

Seeing her disappointment Shawn said, "Sorry. I didn't mean to bring up a sensitive subject. I'm glad you're here. I was hoping you'd come."

Over the course of the evening Melanie and Sarah got to know many of Shawn's friends, but Melanie's found herself missing Reagan. Reagan had not been to the apartment since the night Shawn had come by to introduce herself, and Melanie didn't understand Reagan's reluctance. She was pondering this when Shawn plopped down next to her on the couch.

"It's not right for a beautiful woman like you to be upset at one of my parties. What's wrong?"

Melanie cracked a smile as Shawn touched Melanie's hair gently. "Sorry. I was just thinking about Reagan."

"Aw, screw her. She left you alone on a Saturday night for a baseball game. Who needs her?"

Shawn was leaning closer now. Melanie could smell the alcohol pouring off Shawn's's breath. "I need her, Shawn."

"Why? She's an old broad. You need someone younger. Why do you need her? Is she that good?"



“I wouldn’t know.” Melanie replied solemnly.

“Really? How long you been dating?”

“Two months.”

“And you haven’t had sex? Damn! Sounds like she’s a fucking repressed, old dyke who can’t get any! She shouldn’t treat you that way, and you shouldn’t let her! You need someone who will take care of your needs!”

“You don’t know her, Shawn! Don’t talk about her like that! I love her!”

“Well, she doesn’t treat you right. Sounds like she takes you for granted. I would never treat a woman like you that way.”

Melanie’s eyes began to glisten as she stated, “We’re going to change the subject now, or I’m leaving.”

Shawn just rolled her eyes. “It’s just infuriating to me that a beautiful woman like you is tied down to a woman like that! I bet the only reason she has you around is because you’re young and energetic! She’s over the hill and needs you to help her feel young! The woman is probably going through a midlife crisis and wants you to help her through it. Then when it’s over, she’s going to get her act together, find someone her own age, and leave you to wonder where it all went wrong.”

Melanie stood yelling, “I’ve heard enough, Shawn! I’m leaving!” Melanie stormed out of the apartment.

Everyone glanced at Shawn as one of her friends teased, “What? Did a woman actually turn you down?”

Melanie ran to her apartment in tears. Falling onto the couch, she just wept wondering if there was any truth to Shawn’s statements. She didn’t know what was going on with Reagan, so Shawn’s statement about their being someone else scared her. Melanie didn’t see how it could be possible, but then again, Reagan had never acted this way. Could it be true? Could there be someone else? Could Reagan have had enough of her? Melanie quickly tried to put those thoughts out of her mind. Her Reagan wouldn’t do that. She just knew Reagan wouldn’t, would she? Melanie cried harder until finally falling asleep due to exhaustion.

The next morning Melanie was just moping on the couch when there was a knock on the door. She went to answer it and saw Shawn standing there holding a blanket, book, and headphones.

“Hey.” Melanie mumbled.

“Hi. I just wanted to come by and apologize for last night. I didn’t mean to hurt your feelings. I

just thought it wasn't cool of your girlfriend to leave you on a Saturday night, but it really wasn't any of my business anyway. It's just that when I get drunk, I find myself becoming brutally honest sometimes. It wasn't my place to say the things I did, so I just wanted you to know that I'm sorry."

"It's okay. You weren't completely out of line."

"Why? What happened?" Shawn asked matching Melanie's tone.

"Oh, I talked to Reagan earlier. I asked her to come over, but she said she couldn't, because she was going to play racquetball. I haven't seen her in a week, and every time we talk she's got an excuse of why she can't come see me. I don't know what's going on anymore. I used to be able to read her, but it's impossible now, except to say that something is really wrong. I just wish she'd talk to me."

"Well, I'll tell you what. Instead of sulking around here, why don't you come with me down to the Circle? I've got a blanket, book, and music. Come on. It'll get your mind off of Reagan."

"Okay. That sounds like fun. Just let me get my shoes."

Later that afternoon Reagan decided she should go see Melanie regardless of Sarah, so she drove over to their apartment. However, being a Sunday afternoon traffic was horrible. She had to park several blocks from their place. As she walked toward Melanie and Sarah's she looked at all the people in the Circle. She saw Shawn lying on a blanket propped up on her elbow looking down on a brunette, one that looked similar to Melanie from a distance Reagan thought. Reagan dismissed the thought, though, seeing how animated and alive Shawn looked and the way Shawn held the woman around the waist. Reagan figured she had just gotten a new girlfriend. Reagan was about to stop but decided tending to Melanie was more important at the moment.

When Reagan got to the apartment, she unlocked the door. "Hello? Anyone home?" she called walking into the living room. No one answered. "Melanie? Sarah?"

Since no one answered she crashed onto the couch being so tired and fell asleep soon after. Sarah came in a bit later and saw Reagan asleep. Going to her Sarah knelt by the couch. She brushed some of Reagan's sweaty hair off her face before leaning to kiss her cheek.

Reagan stirred. "Melanie." she mumbled turning her head towards Sarah's face. Their lips met, and Sarah wasted no time but slipped her tongue into Reagan's mouth. Reagan became fully aware at that moment even though her eyes were still closed. Upon a quick inspection with Reagan's exploratory tongue, she realized that it wasn't Melanie and opened her eyes. Seeing Sarah Reagan jerked away and scrambled into a sitting position. "Sarah! What are you doing?"

"Giving you what you deserve. I don't think it's fair that Melanie is off running around with Shawn while you sit here waiting for her. You deserve better, a woman who will satisfy your every desire, a woman who will be faithful."

Sarah moved next to Reagan on the couch causing Reagan to retreat into the couch's corner. "You and Melanie are supposed to be friends! Why did you do that?"

"I just told you why. You didn't seem to mind too much."

"I thought you were Melanie at first."

"Don't lie. You knew it wasn't her. How could you not know?"

Reagan thought about seeing Shawn and Melanie in the Circle. Reagan was off in her thoughts so much that she didn't notice Sarah's arms sliding around her waist.

"I'm sorry, Reagan. I wish I wasn't the one to tell you."

"They're just friends. Melanie wouldn't do that." Reagan said, but it was really more in an effort to convince herself.

Sarah brought Reagan's body closer to hers. Reagan closed her eyes trying to hold back confused tears. Nuzzling into Reagan's neck, Sarah whispered "It'll be okay."

Reagan felt so drained suddenly, so much so that she began to close her eyes. She became faintly aware of Sarah's lips on her neck, but Reagan made no effort to move away and just sat there in confusion. Sarah tilted Reagan's head up by the chin and kissed her softly on the mouth. Reagan allowed her to do so, not really caring to fight until the door opened.

Melanie and Shawn entered the living room to see Sarah and Reagan embraced, and Sarah caressing Reagan's jaw. Reagan jumped up awkwardly seeing Melanie. "Reagan, I thought you weren't coming over. How long have you been here?" Melanie asked with some suspicion.

"About half an hour." she answered, her eyes meeting Shawn's. Reagan knew Shawn sensed what had taken place. "I need to go." Reagan stated making a move toward the door.

"No. You just got here. Don't leave." Melanie said reaching out for her.

"No. I don't want to be in the way. You and Shawn obviously have plans."

"Reagan, what's wrong with you?" Melanie asked seeing Reagan's bizarre behavior. However Reagan didn't answer as she walked out. Melanie looked at Sarah and inquired with a firm voice, "What happened?"

Shawn excused herself saying she was going to her place, but once she was out of the apartment, she ran after Reagan. She grabbed her by the arm yelling, "I could kill you, Reagan!" Reagan shoved Shawn's hand away and kept walking, so Shawn grabbed her again. Reagan pushed her off a second time and turned to face her.

"Don't speak to me, Shawn! I have nothing to say to you!"

“Well, I’ve got something to say to you! How could you treat Melanie that way? You treat her like shit and then make moves on her best friend! You’re a bitch! Melanie deserves so much better!”

“Like you I suppose! I see you’ve wasted little time moving in when you had the chance! Well, if you want her so much, just say so! I wish she wouldn’t have gone behind my back!”

“What are you talking about? Melanie and I are just friends.”

“Well, according to Sarah you’re more! I saw you two today in the Circle.”

“Reagan, I swear I would never make moves on someone else’s girlfriend. She loves you. She made that very clear. She’s been upset that you haven’t been around, and I was just trying to make her feel better.”

“I haven’t been around because of Sarah. It had nothing to do with Melanie. I wish she’d understand that.”

“She doesn’t know, Reagan. What’s up with you and Sarah?”

“She’s been making moves on me, so I just decided not to be around her.”

“Sounds like she’s trying to steal you from Melanie by saying I’ve taken Melanie from you. She’s scamming you.”

Reagan gave a disgusted groan. “Damn! How could I be so blind? How could I fall for that?”

“I bet you she’s upstairs right now telling Melanie that you made a move on her.” Reagan brought her hands to her face. “Why don’t you just go back up there and explain things to her?” Shawn suggested. “If it’s really the truth, that is.”

“It is the truth! It wouldn’t do any good, though. Regardless of who made moves on who, I never stopped her. I allowed Sarah to come on to me. I never said no to her advances. Allowing it to happen makes me just as guilty.”

“That’s not necessarily true. She had you at your weakest moment, when you thought Melanie was cheating on you.”

“No, it’s no use. I’ve lost her. She’d never believe me over Sarah, anyway. For goodness sakes, Sarah is her best friend. Of course, she’d believe her.” Reagan mumbled starting to walk away again, but this time Shawn just let her leave conceding Reagan’s position.

Reagan went to bed that night frustrated and confused. Her bed seemed too large, and she longed for Melanie to be lying next to her. Finally not being able to handle it, she broke down and called her. However, Sarah answered the phone. “Sarah, it’s Reagan. I want to talk to Melanie.”

“Oh, well, she’s over at Shawn’s right now.”

“Well, go get her. I’ll wait.”

“I don’t think she really wants to talk to you after the way you acted today.”

“I don’t care! You put her on the phone now!” Reagan was losing her patience.

“Okay. I’ll go get her.”

When Melanie got on the phone, she sounded upset. “What do you want, Reagan?”

“Honey, I’m sorry about today, and for the past week as well. I have been avoiding your place lately because of Sarah. She’s been coming on to me, so I thought it was best to just stay away, but in doing so, it’s caused us problems. I just wanted to tell you I was sorry.”

“Reagan, I wish I could believe that, but she told me a different story. She said you were the one making the moves. She said you kissed her today.”

Reagan was silent before saying, “Let me explain what happened.”

“So it’s true.” mumbled Melanie.

“Melanie, let me explain. It wasn’t like that at all. Melanie, I love you. I would never cheat on you.”

“Then why did you kiss my best friend?” Melanie asked choking on tears.

“I didn’t kiss her. I was taking a nap on the couch and woke up to her on top of me with her tongue in my mouth. She kissed me while I was sleeping, and when I awoke, I pulled away immediately. That’s what happened.”

“You expect me to believe that? Reagan, Sarah and I have been friends for four years. She wouldn’t do that to me, and she wouldn’t lie to me either.”

“And you think I would cheat and lie? Fine. I can’t make you believe me. Why don’t you just go back to Shawn then? I’ll leave you alone, so you can get on with that relationship. It’s obvious that she is more than happy to fulfill your needs. Good bye, Melanie.” Reagan stated hopelessly before hanging up the phone.

Melanie gently hung up her phone before going back to Shawn’s in tears. “What’s wrong?” Shawn asked.

“I think Reagan just broke up with me.” Melanie answered falling onto the couch.

Shawn embraced her. “Why? Did she give you a reason?”

“What am I going to do, Shawn? I love her. I just don’t know who to believe. Sarah’s my best friend. Why would she lie to me? Of course, why would Reagan cheat?”

Shawn stroked Melanie’s hair as she contemplated her options. If she ever wanted a chance with Melanie, it would be the perfect time, but Shawn decided not to manipulate the situation more than it already had been by Sarah. She would feel guilty for the rest of her life to take advantage of Melanie’s confused state, so she just sat in silence. “Look, Melanie.” she finally said. “It wouldn’t be right to sit here and withhold information from you. Reagan told me what happened, and she feels terrible.”

“What did she say?”

“She said that Sarah had been coming on to her, so she was avoiding your place. She feels bad that she never gave Sarah a firm no. She said because she allowed Sarah to continue, she was just as guilty. Reagan was in hopeless tears, and I couldn’t convince her to talk to you, because she said you’d never believe her over Sarah anyway.”

“When did you talk to her?”

“Today as she left. I must admit, I followed her out of the building, because I was angry that she had treated you that way. I was being a bit immature I guess, but I was mad. I started yelling at her, but when I saw her face I knew Sarah had misled her. Sarah manipulated her into thinking that you and I had something going on, and then when Reagan was at her weakest, Sarah took advantage of that.”

“So that’s what Reagan was referring to. She referred to the fact that she thought you and I had something. I just can’t believe this. Why would Sarah do this to me? She’s ruined my relationship with Reagan. I can’t go back to that apartment. I can’t face her right now.”

“Well, you can always crash here if you want.”

Melanie smiled up at Shawn replying, “Thanks. You’re sweet.”

## Chapter Eight

Reagan went to work the next day feeling as if all was lost. It felt like that dark, snowy night when she and her parent were on their way home from dinner. Reagan was in the back seat listening to her parents as she began to think if she would ever be in such a loving relationship. Her father took his eyes from the road to gaze fondly upon her mother, and neither of them saw the car skidding out of control into them. In an instant their lives were lost, taken before she could even say a proper farewell. It had been an all-consuming emptiness, and the void had returned.

Reagan just sat in her chair trying to repress her emotions, but when she ran across a note in

Melanie's handwriting as she straightened her desk, she lost control breaking down into tears. Things just seemed to be too overwhelming as she was forced to face the loss of her parent's passing and Melanie's absence.

Rob called that morning to see if she could go to lunch, but when he heard her voice, he knew something was wrong with Melanie. He asked what happened, and Reagan did her best to explain, but Rob sensed she was playing her emotions down. "So are you two still together or did you break up?" Rob inquired trying to clarify.

"I can't be with her if she doesn't believe me. She took Sarah's word over mine, so it's over. She chose that."

"Well, what can I do to make you feel better? I know this woman at work. I could set you up with her if you want. Her name is Victoria. She's really cute, and well, more your age than Melanie. No offense of course."

"Rob, thanks, but I don't think that's a good idea. I'm not interested in getting involved again."

"Okay, be that way. How about some lunch then?"

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When Reagan met him for lunch he was already seated, but there was a woman with him. Reagan knew who it was instantly, and she cursed Rob out in her mind as she walked to the table. However she did notice that Rob's description didn't do this woman justice. She was beautiful with long, flowing red hair and green eyes. Reagan shot Rob a glare before introducing herself to Victoria. Even though she did feel set up, Reagan found lunch enjoyable with both of them.

That evening as she drove home from work, Rob called her again. "You're not going to kill me, are you?" he inquired.

"I should. I told you I didn't want to be set up."

"I know, but I thought if you just saw her, you might change your mind. I thought lunch would be a casual way to meet with no pressure. So what did you think? Are you interested?"

"Rob, she was great, but I'm not interested in dating right now."

"Well, what if she hung out with us, so you could get to know her better? Would you mind that?"

"No, I wouldn't mind, but I'm telling you I'm not interested. You understand that, don't you?"

"Yeah, I got it, Reagan. It's just too bad, because I think she's interested in you. We talked about you all the way back to the office."

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Over the next few days Melanie stayed with Shawn. She didn't want to face Sarah and only went to their apartment to get clothes or food when she knew Sarah was gone. She had no idea that Reagan had called several times, because Sarah never left her any messages until one afternoon. Melanie was in the apartment and noticed there were messages on the machine. She pressed play out of curiosity since technically she still lived there.

"Sarah, this is Reagan. I'm assuming that since Melanie is never there when I call, she's not living there anymore, or she really doesn't want to talk to me. Either way would you please tell her that I'll be by in the next few days to collect my things and drop off my key."

Going back to Shawn's, Melanie told her that Sarah was now keeping messages from her. "I can't live with her anymore! She's ruined everything with Reagan! I can't trust her, because she's lying to me! I don't know what to do! I can't afford to live alone, but I can't stay with her!"

"Hey. It'll be okay. You know you can always stay here for awhile until you figure things out."

"Thanks, Shawn. You're too good to me."

Shawn shrugged. "You need someone to look out for you until Reagan returns. It might as well be me."

"Reagan's not coming back. I should've believed her."

"Oh, I think she'll come back."

"You don't know her like I do. She's hard-headed and doesn't deal with confrontation if emotions are involved."

"You've got to get her back then. If you want her, go after her."

"I think I might when she comes over to get her stuff. It might be my last chance."

"Good. I think you should. You've got to try to work things out."

"You're right." Melanie stated deciding that she would indeed give it one more shot.

That Saturday afternoon Rob invited Reagan over for a barbeque at his place, but Reagan knew it was his excuse to get her together with Victoria again. Nevertheless she accepted his invitation. When she arrived Rob's friends were all trying to converse with Victoria, staring at her like she was a new toy.

"Hey guys." Reagan greeted them, but they only mumbled in return without turning to her. Victoria however, looked directly at Reagan and stood. Reagan's eyes perused Victoria's body, seeing why the guys were drooling. She had on a form-fitting, low-cut tank top, the perfect shade



of green to match her eyes. Her khaki shorts just covered her, accentuating her alluring legs. Her red hair was pulled over her shoulder.

“Hey, Reagan.” She smiled brightly feeling Reagan’s eyes appreciating her figure. Realizing her mouth had fallen open slightly, Reagan quickly said, “Hi, Victoria.”

For the most part everyone just watched the baseball game, but Reagan’s mind drifted to Melanie. She had to get her things. However she dreaded going alone, so she asked Rob if he would go with her.

“Oh Reagan, you know I would if I could, but I really can’t. The guys and I are going to a club to scam on girls. You want to come?”

Reagan shook her head. “No, I really have to go to Melanie’s. I just don’t want to have to go alone. I’m afraid to be alone with Sarah. She makes me uncomfortable.”

A moment went by before Victoria mentioned, “I’ll go if you’d like.” Reagan gave a surprised look but since she was the only volunteer, Reagan agreed.

When Reagan and Victoria arrived at Melanie and Sarah’s apartment, Reagan took a deep breath before knocking. Sarah answered the door. “Well, hello stranger. Who’s your friend?” Reagan didn’t give any reply but asked, “Where’s Melanie?” Sarah gestured them in and they walked into the living room Reagan heard commotion in Melanie’s bedroom and then Shawn appeared carrying a box. Seeing Shawn walk out the door, Reagan turned to Sarah asking, “What’s going on?”

“Melanie’s moving in with Shawn.”

Suddenly feeling her heart drop into the abysmal pit of her stomach, Reagan leaned into Victoria, who wrapped an arm around her for support. Before Reagan could respond, Melanie came out of her bedroom. Everyone became awkwardly silent as Reagan and Melanie exchanged glances. Melanie noticed the way Victoria was holding on to Reagan like a life preserver, a gesture Melanie mistook for insecurity on Victoria’s part. Melanie was fighting back her tears.

“I came for my things.” Reagan finally stated.

Melanie nodded disappearing into her room, momentarily reappearing with a box, which she was holding as if her most valued possession was inside. She extended it to Reagan. Reagan took it, peering in to see all the clothes had been pressed and folded into neat squares.

By this time Shawn had come back from her place demanding an introduction to Victoria, which Reagan quickly gave before returning her attentions to Melanie. Their eyes just stayed locked in their hurt stares. Reagan could feel her throat tighten realizing that this was the end. All she wanted to do was to grab Melanie and pull her close once more time, but thinking that she had forced Melanie into Shawn’s arms, she just gazed at Melanie with hopelessness. As Melanie gazed at her love, her Reagan, she sensed that Reagan was finished with her, just as Shawn had

predicted and had moved on to a woman more her own age. Realizing this made Melanie painfully speechless.

“Well, I guess I’ll be on my way then.” feebly Reagan said clutching her box tighter.

When Reagan and Victoria got out to the car, Reagan was silent. “Are you okay?” Victoria inquired sympathetically seeing Reagan struggle to get the key in the car door.

“I’m fine.” lied Reagan. “I should take you home now. I’m sure you’ve got better things to do than to hang around me right now. I’m afraid I’m not in a sociable mood.”

“That’s okay. I understand. I’ll tell you what. Why don’t we got back to my house and I’ll fix dinner for us.”

“Oh, I don’t know. I don’t want to put you out.”

“Reagan, it’s not a problem. I’d love to cook you dinner. You have to eat, so you might as well agree.” With that Reagan backed down and nodded.

Back at Victoria house, Reagan found herself explaining her relationship with Melanie from the car accident until the incident with Sarah. Victoria seemed to lend a sympathetic ear as she made dinner, but as they sat, Reagan found herself at a cozy, candle light table, which made Reagan retreat into uncomfortable silence. Things had shifted into a more intimate atmosphere, one Reagan wasn’t sure she wanted to be in at the moment, so they ate quietly.

Refilling Reagan’s wine glass Victoria inquired, “Would you mind if I made an observation about Melanie?” Reagan shrugged, so Victoria continued. “She still seems to love you, and I can tell you love her.”

“She doesn’t trust me, though. I can’t have a relationship with someone who doesn’t trust me.”

“So, you’ve decided to move on. Does that mean you’re going to be open to dating again soon?”

“I don’t think so. I’m not interested in that kind of stuff anymore. I did fine before my relationship with her, and I’ll be fine now.”

“Well, that’s too bad. An amazing yet unavailable woman like you is a great loss to the dating pool. So tell me. Is your friend Shawn single? She’s really cute.”

“I’m under the assumption that she and Melanie are together now.”

“You think so? I didn’t get those vibes at all. I didn’t see any chemistry there, not the way I saw it between you and Melanie. They aren’t together.”

Over the course of the evening, Victoria and Reagan enjoyed each other’s company while finishing off two bottles of wine. They had moved to the couch to watch a movie, and as the

night progressed they became more physical with each other. The mild physical attraction they felt toward each other became more obvious as they held each other closely on the couch. Reagan was feeling a bit intoxicated and adventurous as she gazed at Victoria's inviting neck. Leaning to it Reagan took in the scent of her hair. Victoria didn't say anything at first, allowing Reagan to continue until Reagan kissed it softly. Victoria smiled pleasantly as she shrugged Reagan's head away from her neck.

"What's wrong?" Reagan asked looking up at Victoria with heavy eyes.

"Nothing. You look tired. Why don't we go to bed? It's been a long day for you." Victoria suggested standing. She extended her hand, which Reagan took, and they went back to her bedroom.

Upon entering the room, Reagan saw the queen size bed and it struck her that they would be sharing it. Suddenly her daring mood shifted into reservation again. Victoria offered her something to sleep in, but she declined saying she'd sleep in her clothes. Reagan then became a bit more uneasy when she saw Victoria come out of her bathroom in a silk black chemise.

When they got into bed, Reagan immediately turned on her side away from Victoria. A few minutes passed before she felt Victoria's body brush up against hers as Victoria's hand came to rest on Reagan's shoulder. "Reagan, are you asleep?"

"No."

"Then what are you thinking about?"

"You."

"Me? What about me?" Victoria asked in surprise.

"I was wondering if you were going to make a move on me or not."

"Oh. I didn't think you did by the way you turned over. Did you want me to?"

"No. I just haven't been in bed with a woman other than Melanie. It seems strange."

"Well, that's what I figured. I don't cross boundaries like that. I just wanted to cuddle with you." Reagan turned over on her back to allow Victoria to nuzzle into her chest, and they fell asleep.

## **Part Six**

That next Monday Reagan received a call from Shawn at her office. "Um, Reagan, I was wondering if you and Victoria were dating? Melanie thinks you are, but I didn't think so. I just wanted to call and find out."

“Why? Does Melanie want to know but is too scared to call herself?”

“No. Actually, I wanted to know for myself.”

“No. We aren’t dating. In fact, neither one of us are seeing anyone. Why?”

“Well, do you think it’s possible to maybe set me up with her then?”

“Yeah, I think I could do that. I think she’d like that too. How about we get together this weekend sometime?”

“Oh. That would be great. Thanks, Reagan. I owe you one.”

“It’s no problem. May I ask you a question, though? How’s Melanie doing?”

“Well, she’s not good, Reagan. She’s still upset over losing her girlfriend and best friend at the same time.”

“Yeah, I guess that is hard.”

“Especially since she still loves you.” Shawn interjected.

“She doesn’t act like it.” Reagan mentioned beginning to feel defensive.

“But she does love you. She’ll admit it.”

“Yeah, well, I guess I’ll see you this weekend, Shawn. I’ve got to go to court.” Reagan said trying to change the subject.

“Reagan, do you love her?” Shawn asked.

Reagan sighed before admitting, “Yes, I do. I’ll see you later. I’ve got to get going.”

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On Saturday Reagan and Victoria had agreed to meet Shawn at one of the many coffee shops in DuPont Circle. They were sitting inside leisurely sipping their ice coffees when the door swung open. “Well, look who’s here.” Victoria mumbled.

Melanie was standing in the doorway scanning the crowd. Her eyes fell upon them, and she hesitated but then slowly walked toward them.

“Hello. I’m looking for Shawn. Have you seen her by chance?”

“Actually, we’re supposed to be meeting her here.”

“Oh, well, I was meeting her as well.”

“Would you like to join us then?” Reagan inquired.

“Oh, no. That’s okay. I don’t want to intrude. I’ll just get my soda and wait outside.”

“No. I insist. Sit down. I’ll go get it for you.”

Melanie didn’t really want to sit with Victoria, but she felt obligated as Reagan went to buy her a drink. “So, how are you enjoying your new living situation? You and Shawn getting along all right?” inquired Victoria trying to break the awkward silence.

“It’s fine.” Melanie answered shortly.

Trying a different angle, Victoria stated, “Shawn is so cute. I hope we get along as well as Reagan thinks we will. She thinks that we’d make a cute couple.”

“What are you talking about?” Melanie asked in confusion

“You didn’t know? Reagan has set Shawn and me up on a date for this afternoon. I hope it goes well.”

Before Melanie could comment, Reagan came back with Melanie’s Italian soda. Melanie thanked her, but then they sat in silence just listening to the busy cafe around them. Reagan consulted her watch saying, “Shawn should be here by now.”

As if on cue, the door opened and Shawn appeared. She was wearing a grin as she walked toward them. “Hello everyone.” Turning to Melanie she said, “Melanie, I forgot I had a date with Victoria. I’m sorry I didn’t cancel, but you’d left the apartment, and I couldn’t get a hold of you.”

Shawn pulled up a chair between Victoria and Melanie, forcing Melanie to reposition her chair closer to Reagan’s. Melanie sat quietly as they three chatted for a few minutes before Shawn extended a hand to Victoria asking if she was ready to go. She nodded as they stood. After they both said farewell, Reagan and Melanie found themselves alone together.

“So, how are you?” Reagan asked trying to be polite.

“I’m fine, and you?”

Reagan shrugged. “How’s the dancing coming along?”

“It’s good. I really like my job.”

“Well, that’s good. You should let me know when you’re performing. I’d love to come see you.”

“Yeah. Sure.” Melanie mumbled. She finished the rest of her drink quickly before saying, “I need to be going.”

“Oh, okay.” Reagan responded somewhat disappointed.

Melanie stood whispering, “Good bye, Reagan.”

Reagan watched her walk out the door, but then Reagan found herself bounding out after her. “Melanie.” she called. Melanie turned and took a step back toward Reagan. “Um, I was wondering if I could, maybe, walk you home?”

“Reagan, I don’t...”

“Please, Melanie. Let me walk you home.”

Melanie folded quickly and nodded. Reagan held out a hand to her hoping Melanie would accept the gesture. Melanie hesitated but then slowly took Reagan’s hand as their fingers interlocked. Neither said a word as they walked back to Melanie and Shawn’s apartment until they got to the door.

Melanie turned to Reagan and said, “Thanks for walking me back.”

“My pleasure.” whispered Reagan. “Listen. Would you like to go out to dinner with me tonight? We’ll go wherever you want.”

“Reagan, I don’t know if that’s a good idea.”

“Why not?” Melanie shrugged. “Melanie, I want us to be together. I miss you. Please. What do I have to do? Get on my knees and beg? Because if that’s what it’ll take, I’ll do it.” Reagan persisted.

“Dinner, huh? Okay, I’ll go with you to dinner tonight. What time will you pick me up?”

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That evening Reagan arrived at Melanie’s door at seven o’clock. She was dressed in khaki pants and green knit shirt with sandals, not really common for her style. However the shirt accentuated Reagan’s arms, which Reagan knew Melanie liked, and the pants hung in a flattering way on her hips, giving Melanie access to enjoy her lower body as well. She knocked on the door with one hand as the other nervously twirled a pale yellow rose.

Shawn and Victoria were sitting on the couch when they heard the knock. “Will one of you get that?” Melanie yelled from the bathroom. She was trying to dress in a hurry yet look as good as possible. This could be the chance to win Reagan back, and she wanted things to be perfect.

Shawn answered the door and let Reagan in. “Wow, sexy woman.” Victoria stated. “Looking

kind of butch tonight.”

Reagan smiled the uncomfortable statement off even though it was true. Reagan stood there waiting for Melanie anxiously, but Shawn and Victoria kept her engaged in conversation. A few minutes later, though, Reagan’s eyes averted to the hallway sensing movement as Melanie stepped into the room. It was a rare occasion, but Melanie was actually wearing a dress. It was navy knit that fell just above her knees.

“You look beautiful, Melanie.” Reagan stated stepping toward her. Reagan extended the flower. Melanie took it, brushing her hand against Reagan’s slowly.

“Thank you. You look great too. I love that shirt on you.”

“I know.” Reagan mumbled. “Shall we go?”

They walked to the car silently. There was an awkwardness like being on a first date, but both of them knew that this could be their only chance at reconciliation. As they got in the car, Reagan said, “I was thinking that I’d like to fix you dinner at my place. That is unless you’d rather go out.”

Melanie, who really didn’t care what they did, mumbled, “Sure. It’s better than fighting the crowds.”

When they got to Reagan’s house, they were greeted by J.R. He seemed ecstatic to see Melanie as his tail wagged wildly. She leaned down and hugged his neck as she stroked him.

“Well, he seems really glad to see you again. He’s missed you.”

“I’ve missed him too.” answered Melanie standing.

The two of them made dinner together, and then Reagan set the table on her back deck. The sun was just beginning to set as they sat down to their meal. J.R. ran around the back yard for a bit chasing birds and sniffing the shrubbery, giving them some entertainment as they ate. It was a relatively quiet dinner, though, and what little conversation they had focused around their respective careers.

Once the meal was over and everything put away they took J.R. on a walk. As they strolled down the street things began to feel a bit more comfortable between them. It seemed as if things were beginning to fall back into place in their relationship. Upon reaching home again, Melanie suggested they watch a movie. Reagan agreed, so they settled onto the couch.

A few minutes into the movie, Reagan decided to turn the lights off to try and make things more intimate. She then sat closer to Melanie propping an arm up along the back of the couch behind Melanie’s head. Reagan watched the movie awhile longer as she contemplated making a move. She gently placed her hand on Melanie’s and stroked it lightly. Melanie’s could feel her own heartbeat quicken. Reagan’s hand felt so tender. As the movie continued, Reagan progressed to

her waist. Then slowly Melanie felt Reagan's mouth. Reagan kissed Melanie's cheek lightly before nibbling on her earlobe. Melanie swallowed hard, but allowed Reagan to continue down to her neck as Reagan's hand ventured up to her breasts. Melanie moaned softly as her head leaned further from Reagan, instinctively exposing more of her neck. Melanie closed her eyes to enjoy the feeling of Reagan's eager mouth until she heard the credits of the movie end. Reagan was still kissing her neck as one of Reagan's hands had found her bare inner thigh under her dress. Melanie desperately found herself wanting to urge Reagan on, but when Reagan's hand nestled in further without invitation, Melanie found herself jumping from the couch. Going to the VCR, she pressed the rewind button mumbling, "It's getting late. I should probably be getting home."

Suddenly she felt Reagan's body pressed firmly into her back as Reagan encircled her waist. Reagan nuzzled into the nape of her neck kissing it lightly. "No." Reagan whispered seductively. "Stay. Stay with me."

Melanie's knees gave way as Reagan turned her around. Melanie's breathing was growing rapid feeling Reagan's hands hiking up her dress to caress her bare leg. "Why?" Melanie desperately mumbled cradling Reagan's head into her neck.

"Because I love you, Melanie. Please, stay with me tonight." Reagan growled her hand becoming more possessive as it traced her inner thighs.

Tears began collecting in Melanie's eyes hearing Reagan's confession. "I love you too, Reagan." she answered.

Reagan gazed into Melanie's dark eyes and saw them glistening. "So, will you stay?" Melanie tucked Reagan's hair behind her ear before giving a tearful nod. They both leaned into each other as their mouths reunited. Both of them groaned insatiably, for it was what they both had been wanting all evening. Reagan pulled away slightly and brushed some of Melanie's hair off her face before suggesting, "Come on. Let's go to bed." Melanie nodded in agreement and allowed Reagan to escort her upstairs to the bedroom.

As soon as they got inside, Reagan went back to Melanie's neck as she began to pull Melanie's dress over her shoulders and threw it to the floor. Sensing what was to come, Melanie began to undress Reagan, and soon they were both standing naked as they continued to kiss deeply. Reagan guided Melanie to the bed, laying her down gently. Melanie closed her eyes feeling Reagan's body press firmly on top of hers.

Reagan's hands caressed Melanie's breasts as her mouth kissed her upper chest. Then Reagan slowly made her way down to worship Melanie's breasts with her mouth while her hands stroked Melanie's thighs, which had begun to part to hold Reagan's hips. Reagan could feel Melanie's body rocking into hers as she moaned, wanting more.

Reagan's mouth lingered over Melanie's stomach before coming to rest between her thighs. Reagan didn't give herself time to change her mind as she plunged into Melanie's heat. Melanie cried out wantonly as she pulled Reagan's head deeper. Reagan closed her eyes as she explored



Melanie with her mouth, fascinated by the taste and feel of Melanie's body. Reagan could feel Melanie's thighs start to twitch as Melanie hips rocked faster.

Suddenly she screamed, "Inside! Inside! Oh, god, don't stop!"

Reagan took the direction and thrust into her, only realizing she had broken through the thin barrier of womanhood when Melanie cried out again. "Melanie!" Reagan cried in surprise.

"Please, Reagan, don't stop! You feel so good!" Melanie was gasping for air as she screamed again. Reagan could feel Melanie's body contracting around her. Melanie tugged on Reagan's shoulders bringing Reagan's body on top of her own while Reagan continued to thrust with her whole body. Melanie's body clung tighter to Reagan's back until she descended from her climax, falling limply into the mattress.

Withdrawing finally, Reagan whispered, "Melanie, I love you."

Melanie's body shuddered. "I love you too, Reagan." Melanie replied gently stroking the back of Reagan's neck.

"I never knew you were a virgin." Reagan mentioned. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't know if you'd still want me if you knew. I've wanted you to be my first for a long time. I just thought it was better if you found out this way."

"Oh, sweetheart, I'm honored. I love you so much." A moment passed in silence, but Reagan was insatiable. Reagan looked deeply into Melanie's eyes as her body hovered over Melanie's. A drop of sweat trickled off of Reagan's brow, splashing Melanie's chest. Melanie saw the fire raging in Reagan's eyes. She knew Reagan was far from sated, so she pulled Reagan's head down into a lustful kiss.

Melanie turned over forcing Reagan onto her back. Melanie straddled Reagan's waist before sitting up and brushing her wet hair off her face. Reagan admired Melanie's body with her eyes. It was glowing with perspiration. Reagan sat up sliding her arms around slim hips and then up Melanie's back as her mouth greeted Melanie's breasts. Melanie's head fell backward as her hands dove into Reagan's hair. Reagan slipped her hand between Melanie's thighs. Melanie moaned feeling Reagan's hand teasing her on the outside.

"Reagan, please." she begged.

Reagan slipped in but then quickly withdrew causing Melanie to groan in frustration. Reagan then thrust as deep as she could causing Melanie to writhe. Melanie's body fell into Reagan's, but Reagan kept her sitting to take advantage of Melanie's widespread position. When Melanie exploded again, her heat covered Reagan's hands, dripping down onto Reagan's legs. Reagan longed for the taste of Melanie again, so she pulled Melanie on top of her to turn her over, but one of Melanie's hands dropped between Reagan's thighs giving her a pleasurable surprise. Feeling Melanie's fingers mingling in her heat, she found herself longing to feel Melanie inside

of her, and her legs instinctively spread.

Melanie took advantage of it immediately and slid into her. Reagan groaned deeply as Melanie began her rhythm of penetration. She was shallow and light at first matching her kisses, but the deeper she forged, the more possessive her mouth became until Reagan felt herself be taken over by a fulfilling climax. They rested again momentarily before Melanie moved down Reagan's body.

"Melanie," Reagan mumbled nervously.

"It's okay." Melanie assured her. "Allow me to please you."

Reagan's thighs relaxed parting again. Reagan closed her eyes feeling Melanie's mouth tease her so painfully slow. Reagan moaned urging Melanie to continue. She had never experienced anything like making love to Melanie. When they both were satisfied, they lay facing each other. Reagan played with Melanie's hair smoothing it back before smiling.

"I love you." she whispered wrapping a leg around Melanie's.

"I love you too, Reagan. You're so good to me." A moment passed as they peacefully held each other. "So, what do we do now?" Melanie inquired looking into Reagan's eyes.

They flashed mischievously as she gave a sexy grin. "Well, are you tired?" Reagan inquired. Melanie nodded, so Reagan suggested, "Then how about I hold you while you fall asleep?"

"I'd like that."

"So would I." Reagan answered. Melanie turned away from Reagan pressing her back into Reagan's bare body and pulling Reagan's arm around her waist before they drifted to sleep.

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In the morning Melanie's awoke to a furry face nuzzling into hers and then a scratchy tongue swipe up her cheek. She laughed softly tussling J.R.'s hair and opening her eyes. She saw Reagan standing next to the bed in her robe holding a tray of food.

"Good morning, my love. How about some breakfast?" Reagan suggested placing the tray on the bed.

"Wow! Look at all that food. It looks wonderful." Reagan slid into bed next to Melanie, and they leisurely fed each other. "You know, you keep doing things like this, and I'll never want to leave."

"Good, because if I have you forever, that still wouldn't be long enough." Reagan answered.

"Oh, you are so sweet."

After breakfast in bed, Reagan went to shower. She was just relaxing with her eyes closed as the water cascaded over her, when she heard the shower door open and Melanie's hands on her back. "Do you have room for me in here?" she asked when Reagan turned around.

"Always." answered Reagan kissing her sweetly and bringing their bodies together. Reagan was feeling aroused again with just one kiss. Reagan smiled stroking Melanie's cheek with the back of her hand. Melanie could tell what Reagan was thinking, so she slowly leaned her body into the shower wall, spreading her legs slightly as she pulled Reagan in for another kiss. Reagan's hand dropped to Melanie's hip, caressing it softly before moving between Melanie's legs. Melanie was not just thinking about Reagan being inside her again. Reagan gently slid into her and gave a few smooth thrusts as they kissed. Things were more methodical than the night before as they just enjoyed having their bodies interlocked.

Reagan began to kiss down Melanie's body until she was kneeling in front of her. Melanie's looked down into Reagan's eyes and smiled as her hand fell into Reagan's hair. Reagan leaned into Melanie nuzzling her head between Melanie's thighs, yearning for the taste of her. She moaned as her tongue tasted Melanie's arousal. Reagan spent what seemed like an eternity to Melanie on her knees giving Melanie the ultimate pleasure until they both were satisfied.

That afternoon Reagan took Melanie's back to Shawn's apartment. Shawn wasn't home, so Melanie gave her a tour. "This place is really small. How are you two getting along in here?"

Melanie's shrugged. "It's not the best, but it works for now. I should try to find my own place, though. Shawn's nice about it, but I know she wants there place to herself again soon. Things are just so expensive around here, and I really don't want to live alone."

Reagan nodded. "Well, maybe we can look at some places next weekend. I'm sure we could think of something." Reagan mentioned her mind already mulling over options. They'd known each other for seven months and dated for almost five of them, so the idea of moving in together crossed Reagan's mind. She had a strong feeling Melanie would agree to it, but even know she loved having Melanie around all the time, Reagan wasn't sure if it would be rushing things.

Over the next few weeks Melanie and Reagan saw each other every couple of days. On one Friday evening Reagan got to the apartment before Melanie. She and Shawn were just lounging on the couch, and Shawn appeared agitated. "What's wrong, Shawn? You and Victoria having problems?" Shawn shook her head. "Then what?"

"Reagan, I love Melanie to death, but I'm not used to sharing my place and my stuff with someone who's not my girlfriend. I know it's temporary, but it's still driving me crazy."

"I can understand that. We're trying to find her a place as soon as possible."

"Well, you know, if she had her way, she'd move in with you. That's what she really wants." Shawn stated. Reagan could tell it was meant to be strong suggestion. Reagan just gave a nod of acknowledgment but said nothing as they heard the key in the door. Reagan was beginning to

like the idea the more she thought about it, though.

The next weekend Reagan and Melanie looked at apartments for her. Everything in her price range seemed less than perfect to Reagan. Reagan always found fault with something, but the places Reagan liked were way too expensive for Melanie, leaving both of them frustrated. Over dinner that evening Reagan sat frazzled at the situation. It was becoming apparent to her that nothing would be acceptable to her for Melanie. Melanie sensed Reagan's tension.

"Honey, maybe I should do the apartment hunting alone. I can tell it's frustrating you." Melanie said taking Reagan's hand.

"No, I can do it. I just have something in mind, and I know it's out there. It's just a matter of finding it."

"I know what you want me to have, but I can't afford it. I have to be realistic about what I can spend. I'd love to live in a penthouse too, but I just can't."

"Well, what about further out? The city is expensive."

"Yeah, but the problem there is transportation. I'll end up paying just as much, because I don't have a car."

Reagan nodded knowing that was true. "What if I got you a car? Would that help?" inquired Reagan thinking she'd rather put money into that than rent.

"Reagan, I don't want you to do that."

"Why not? Come on. If you could have any car in the world, what would it be?"

"I don't know. I don't like SUVs."

"What about Volvos? Have you seen their new series? They're incredible." Reagan stated with excitement.

"Volvos are nice, I guess. I've never been in one."

"You haven't? Well, how about after dinner we go look at one?" Reagan's face was beaming with the prospect.

"Why?" asked Melanie.

"Just humor me, honey. Go with me. It'll make me happy."

Going to the dealership, Reagan's mood instantly changed into happiness. With childlike exploration, she looked at every inch of the cars in several rows before turning to the salesman.

“I want to see the top of the line car you have on the lot.” The salesperson directed them toward the row and pointed to four. Reagan turned to Melanie asking, “Which color do you like best?”

Melanie looked at them, navy, silver, dark green, and black. “The black.” she answered.

Reagan turned to the salesman and gestured to it. “We’d like to test drive that one.” Reagan’s voice was dominating and direct taking, the salesperson by surprise. Reagan drove the car for about fifteen minutes as she talked with the salesman about different features. After awhile she turned to Melanie. “You want to drive?”

“Yeah, sure.” Melanie answered her voice matching Reagan’s excitement.

When they got back to the dealership, Reagan and the salesman talked numbers for awhile before Reagan thanked him for his time. As Reagan drove Melanie’s home she asked, “So, what did you think?”

“You’re right. It is incredible.”

“You think you could drive it everyday?”

“I don’t know. You’d have to twist my arm on that one.” Melanie teased.

That night Melanie begged Reagan to stay with her or take her back to the house, but Reagan declined saying she had things to do early the next morning but would be by to get her after lunch. The following morning Reagan called Rob early. It was obvious she had gotten him up, but she asked nevertheless, “Hey, what are you doing this morning?”

“Sleeping.” he growled.

“Well, I need you to do me a favor. It’ll take all morning. Can I come pick you up?” she inquired anxiously.

“Yeah, I guess so, but you owe me, Reagan. What do I have to do?”

## Chapter Ten

Reagan showed up at Melanie’s door shortly after lunch. Melanie’s noticed Reagan was nervous but excited for some reason. Melanie’s spirits were not as high, though. “I don’t feel much like going apartment hunting today.” she mumbled.

“Oh, come on. I think I found the perfect place for you. I know you’ll love it, and it’s in your price range.”

“Where is it?”

“It’s outside the city, but there’s decent transportation nearby. Just let me show it to you?”

Reagan asked convincing Melanie.

Melanie paid little attention to where they were going as they talked about other things, and she gave it little thought when they came to a stop in Reagan's driveway. They both got out of the car, and Reagan extended her hand to Melanie. Together they walked up to the front door, which Melanie's did find unusual considering Reagan always used the garage door. Reagan unlocked it and they walked into the foyer. Taking Melanie's hand again, Reagan smiled, slightly nervous.

"Here we have a spacious three bedroom, with two and a half baths." she began. Melanie began to smile knowing where Reagan was going with her monologue. "There's a wonderful, large kitchen and laundry facility. Furthermore, it comes fully furnished. Plus as a signing bonus, you get a dog and transportation."

"Transportation? What kind of transportation?" Melanie inquired playing Reagan's game. Reagan pulled a set of keys from her pocket and extended them to Melanie. Melanie saw the word Volvo stamped across one of them as she took them out of Reagan's hand.

"There is one drawback, though." Reagan stated seriously.

"Which is?"

"The owner is a real grouch sometimes. She thinks she's this invincible, independent person, but I personally think she's needs a woman to look after her. She's a wreck without someone to take care of her."

Melanie wrapped one of her arms around Reagan's waist and caressed Reagan's jaw lightly. Melanie was smiling brightly as she whispered, "I'll take it."

Reagan grinned in return as they embraced in a deep kiss.

The End