

~ Unspoken ~
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Synopsis: Rachel Thompson spends most of her time in the library. Not really the setting most people envision as romantic. But a chance meeting with a fellow researcher leaves her wanting more than old books. Maybe it was time to lift her head out from under the dust jacket and face real life.

Disclaimers: Yep. A lady getting to grips with love ... and maybe a little more.

Sex: Erm. Cough. Erm. Blushing furiously. A little bit ... or maybe a lot ... you decide. And its between two ladies ... therefore, if you are underage or it is illegal where you are I'm sorry. But I bet you'll read it anyway <wink>.

Thanks: To my beta readers, who tell me to get a grip and get on with it. Thank you for treating me like family

Until that day.

The day.

The day I spotted her leaning over the largest tome I had ever seen.

It was the book, which grabbed my attention, like usual. Well. It was huge. Fucking huge, if you'll pardon the lapse into the lowest form of the vernacular. I could hear grunting and moaning, like the person on the other side was performing sexual favours between the sheets of paper, then a slam as it hit the table, shuddering the lights.

Dust flew upwards and clouded my first sight of the person behind the grunting. Then coughing. I was just about to tell them 'Do you mind?' as anally retentive bookworms tend to do, when I was stopped, mouth slightly open. Gobsmacked even.

The woman was leaning over the table trying to catch her breath ... and so was I. My heart had started to pump just that little bit faster and the blood was playing havoc with my nerve endings.

But it was when she looked up at me I felt my world had started to spin out of control.

Then she smiled. Coughed. Then smiled again.

My face stayed slack, the smile escaping the lips, which were waiting to reflect the gesture. Inside my brain was shouting 'Smile back you dipshit!' but the words thundered around in vacuous silence.

Her smile slipped slowly and was replaced by a pursing of the lips, a slight shake of the head and then 'Sorry about disturbing you.'

Before I had chance to answer, she was absorbed in her book and I was left stranded on the sidelines like a dick head.
Probably because I was.

It wasn't until I left for coffee about forty-five minutes later that I allowed myself to fully digest the woman from the manuscripts room. As I sat, nursing the over priced beverage, I documented her in my head, starting from her head right down to her feet.

This was a mean task, by any stretch of the imagination, as I hadn't actually seen all of her ... just bits and pieces. But what I had seen was more than enough to be going on with.

Let me explain.

Dark brown hair ... haphazardly tied back into a loose ponytail, stray locks fighting for freedom. Eyes. Two of them. Brown and full of something I couldn't quite place. Lips ... once again ...two ... ruby red and full. Glistening too, if my memory serves me right. Must have been all that coughing.

Then it all gets a little hazy. There were two other things that had caught my gaze, but I doubt you want to know about those do you. Let's just say they were perfect.

I sat in the canteen well over the allotted fifteen minutes I gave myself. And it was all down to the woman with the perfect testimonials.

When I got back she was gone, and I felt gutted for some reason or another. It would've been nice to share working space with someone other than a fat balding guy who was constantly trying to rub himself up you in the pretence of just trying to reach for something that was extremely close and couldn't be reached without a quick rub with a flaccid penis on your back. Long sentence, eh?

The book was still there, spread-eagled on the table and looking bashful as it exposed its inner depths to all and sundry. She could have at least put it back where it belonged, although it would have been a struggle, it was the unwritten rule in this section. And it was also one of my pet hates. Clean up after yourself. I mean. I know it was heavier than the average reading material, but she had found the strength to get it off the shelf in the first place.

I was half way out of my seat to sort it out, when she appeared again. Her eyes drifted over to meet mine and a flicker of a smile appeared followed by a sharp nod of her head.

I smiled in return, but she missed it as she was pulling her chair out at the time. I felt like I should inspect my fingernails, as people who have been ignored tend to do. Yes. I know. She

didn't ignore me. Didn't see me that's all.

Or had she seen me and thought she'd ignore me because of how I had treated her before? Bugger. But I hadn't ignored her. It was my slow acting brain's fault. I had been more than willing to flash them the Thompson smile, but Brain had put the clamps on that and refused to work.

And why am I talking about my brain as if it is a person? And, more importantly, was it so important that she saw my smile?

'Because your anal.' Answered Brain.

'Fuck you.'

'Excuse me?' Her voice was sweet, light and rich all at the same time. And directed at me. The numbskull who had just told her brain to fuck off. Loudly, by all accounts.

I felt my face glow as the blood made its way to it, trying to be privy to my embarrassment. My throat decided it was time to eliminate all the liquid from both itself and my mouth making it nearly impossible to answer.

'Just clearing my throat. Sorry.' I could tell by her face she had heard what I had said before; the look of incredulity was obvious. But, I gave her a winning smile, which this time she definitely saw. 'All this dust ... sticks ...' and I pointed dramatically to my neck, 'right here.'

'I know what you mean. You need to get a drink. Would ... '

'Just had one.' And I wish I hadn't said that so bloody quickly, as I'd butted in half way through her just about to say about grabbing a coffee. I think, anyway. I hoped she was, as the look she gave showed disappointment, and I hoped it was because of me.

That doesn't sound right does it? I didn't mean I purposefully got my rocks off making women disappointed. And that doesn't sound right either.

Bollocks. I was verbally racing down a one-way street the wrong way. No brakes either. Just glad it was internal monologue.

Back to silence. Me hovering over the near intelligible script of Emily Bronte, on loan from the Bronte Society, and her nearly climbing into her book, whose title escaped me from this distance. The only sound to be heard were pages turning, crinkling with age, and the buzzing of the desk lamps and overhead lights. It's amazing how time escapes you when you are fully emerged in a book, and before you know it someone is next to your table telling you the library would be closing shortly.

My eyes shot over to the table opposite. Empty. Books cleared away, chair pushed under the table.

Now it was my time to feel disappointed. And for once it wasn't because the library would be closing soon.

She hadn't even said goodbye. Neither had I, for that matter. But it was definitely disappointment just the same.

I still couldn't shake off the image of her eyes when I returned to my flat. Just kept on replaying the moment she looked straight at me, and the feeling I had inside. It had been too long since anyone had stirred an emotion within me ... too long. I didn't really know how to respond to it, as I had two major emotions battling for dominance.

Excitement and fear. Both can accentuate the other if left unattended, but I just couldn't understand why I was feeling either. I mean, me and the Lady with the Book had exchanged a mere half a dozen words or so, so why was I acting like a bloody teenager. Erm ... not so much acting, as feeling. Must be a chemical imbalance or something. Lack of food? Sleep? Stress? Yes. All of them, methinks.

It's amazing how we try and rationalise our innermost longings to diet, sleep deprivation and even the ambience of our surroundings, isn't it. But there's always an outlet, whatever the rhyme or reason. And mine was through my sleeping thoughts.

And the dream I had that night released more than pent up emotions, that I can guarantee.

Location.

The library. Not the most romantic or sensuous of settings, granted. But bear with me on this one.

In my dreamscape, the library took on an ethereal quality ... the overhead lighting was turned off and the place was lit by the small table lamps.

It was late. The library was closed and I was sitting at my usual desk, pen in hand ... book outstretched. A voice drifted into my consciousness, soft... soothing ... sensual, and unmistakably the woman from the daytime. Her hair was down and cupping her face with gentle caresses. Brown eyes seemed moist, pleading and searching for a sign from me.

My hand lifted from the tabletop to brush against her cheek, a soft moan escaping those beautiful lips. She turned her head and kissed my fingers, so soft ... delicate and promising, and then down the back of my hand and along my forearm, her face progressively nearing my own.

Face to face. She was leaning down towards me; mere inches separated her mouth from mine ... inches that evaporated in a second as I pressed my lips against hers. The suppleness of those lips

was absorbing and I literally fell into her.

Her hand snaked behind my head and pulled me in closer ... closer ... closer and into her. My nostrils filled with her scent, my mouth full of her taste, my body cleaving contact. Wetness gathered and spilled from within me, a primitive urge to pull her down and slam her on the table was overriding all my sensibilities. God. I wanted to fuck her. Fuck her. And fuck her again.

Fingers tangled in my hair, and my fingers tangled in the material of her blouse, wanting to yank the buttons from their confines, rip them apart and push my face into the warmth of her breasts.

So I did.

The satisfying pinging of the plastic discs filled me with a need bordering on desperation. Shimmering lights danced on her exposed flesh and my mouth filled with water. I wanted to eat her. Sample her. Revere and relish the offering before me. The decision was taken from me as she pushed her breasts towards me whilst pulling my head forward.

Either side of my face was surrounded by the luxurious feel of her skin, the roundness, the curve and swell of her ... almost suffocating ... almost delirium.

I pushed her bra over pert nipples with my thumbs, and blew gently, listening to her gasp. My lips parted and I hovered over one of them, my eyes catching her hooded gaze before I closed my mouth around it.

Moans drifted and fell. Mine or hers, who cared. I sucked and flicked and sucked and ... flicked, increasing the pressure as she bore into me, begging me to swallow her whole. And I wished I could. Wanted to eat her ... devour her inch-by-inch ... delight in the skin that covered her, have her within me as I wanted to be within her.

That's when I stood up, my mouth leaving her breast and searching out her mouth. Hot kisses accompanied wild hands. I pushed her top down over her shoulders, down her arms and over her hands. Then I turned her towards the table and lowered her down, my lips never leaving hers. I could feel her fingers slipping underneath my top, up my stomach and toying with the underside of my breasts. I pushed into her, needing to increase the contact ... needing to quench the thirst raging through every pore of me.

As I grappled with the button on her trousers, one of her hands left the sanctuary of my breast and ventured to my jeans button, scrambling with the metal stud in an attempt to free the ache. The release of cloth was synchronised and air reached my exposed flesh as she pushed the material down and away, just as I pulled her trousers along her thighs.

She was truly beautiful. Lying there, naked. Waiting for me to take her. Open and ready, waiting for a touch ... a taste ... a fulfilment I yearned to give her.

My hands stroked her thighs, but my eyes stayed on hers, needing to see what she wanted me to do. As I ran my fingers across her, errant thumbs brushed the outside of her innocence, the

pressure slowly increasing. One thumb slipped inside her folds and she bucked underneath me ... her clit pert and honest.

I replaced it with a finger ... slow and sure ... slow and sure. She was as wet as I was ... glistening and ripe.

I needed to taste her. Needed to know her secret.

It would have been so easy just to lift my finger and place it in my mouth, but I wanted more. I dipped deeper inside, coating that lone digit with her juices and smeared it over her breast, as she watched ... mesmerised. Pushing her legs apart, I climbed in between and lowered myself onto her, my mouth capturing both her breast and her essence.

At that moment I knew what heaven tasted like ... knew what perfection was.

My hips were moving steadily and my nub was rubbing along her clit. She was rising to meet me and I could feel the tension building. It was so easy to go with the flow ... just bang into her ... bang into her ... bang ... into her. But she was worth more than that.

So I pulled away. And the air between us caused a void that seemed impenetrable.

Until I bent down between her legs.

Hands gripped thighs and lifted and separated, exposing the Holy Grail ... my search complete. I lowered my head, tongue protruding ... expectant.

Flick.

Sharp and deliberate.

Flick.

Quick and hungry.

She lifted her hips to try to attain more contact, but I pulled away.

'Please.' Her voice was pleading, and my mouth was watering. I couldn't resist just opening my lips and capturing her wholly in my mouth. Soft, wet lips captured ... the nub ready for me to eat and suckle. I kissed and kissed and kissed, becoming frantic in my want of her.

My fingers tightened on her thighs, my mouth deliriously content with consuming her all. I was so fucking wet ... I could feel droplets escaping and racing down my legs. But I knew I wanted to make her cum ... cum ... all over me, feed me ... quench this raging need to make her cum.

Her moans were rapid, breathing too. She was close ... close ... and I had the key, turning about inside her internal lock. I concentrated on her bud ... totally focused. Brought it into my mouth

to graze my teeth over it ... slap the tip of my tongue over it ... suck it ... and suck it.

'Fuuuuck ... yes ... Fuccck!' And over she went. Crashing and slamming her arse on the wooden tabletop, dragging out the pockets of pleasure I was sure were cascading through her.

Then her hands were on my face and pulling my head up to meet her face. Eyes darkened with the after effects of her cumming, lips parted in anticipation as she pulled me into her.

The kiss was hungry and still unsatisfied. But before I could disentangle myself from her she had me over, splayed on my back, and between my legs.

'I'm going to fuck you.'

Splash. Juices poured. Expectation of what she was going to do nearly made me cum right there and then. She was standing over me, the look on her face demanding and primal. God. She was so sexy ... so hot.

'Fingers or mouth?'

I just pleaded with my eyes ...

'Fingers or mouth?'

I could barely talk, my throat was dry, and my mouth was still in silent prayer for the gift of her cumming.

'Fingers it is, then.'

I felt her hand cup my core and stop. Take stock. Then gradually she moved the palm over me in slow circular motions, eliciting a guttural moan from deep within. When she pulled her hand away, I grabbed her wrist and tried to lower it back to where I needed it. Brown eyes twinkled, the smile crooked.

'Patience.'

I let go and she lifted her hand to her mouth trailing her tongue over the wet palm. She was tasting me, and God ... that made me want her even more if that was possible.

Fingers back and separating my folds. The sensation of her fingers on my clit was tantamount to torture ... glorious agony. I could feel one stray digit hovering outside my entrance, circling, waiting for admittance.

I pushed down and felt it slip inside. Her eyes had never left my face, and she knew I wanted her ... wanted her inside.

Slowly it slipped in. Deep. And stayed there. I watched as her eyes flickered closed and then

opened with desire seeping from them. The finger slipped out to be pushed inside again ... then out ... then in ... then a second finger joined. And that's when I grunted.

She started a rhythm in and out ... in and out ... two fingers ... in and out. My hips joined the dance and my nerve endings were on red alert. When she stepped back and came forward with my leg between hers, I knew I wouldn't be long. I could feel her wetness coating my thigh, and it was like an aphrodisiac.

Pumping hips and concentrated strokes. Strokes which were becoming faster and deeper ... deeper and faster. Breathing was sporadic and excited. She was banging into me, the rate electric and oh so fucking delectable. I gripped her arse and pulled and pushed. It was building. I was building. She was building. And God ... I needed to cum with her.

Sweat glistened and rained from her, pooling on the sweat gathering between my breasts. She leaned down and swiped her tongue over the flesh, her eyes impossibly close, her breath like fire.

The lights of climax progressively intensified and I knew I was going to tip over.

And I did. And so did she. The feeling of the wetness shooting from her and onto me made my climax so much better. She was flat on top of me by this stage, my thigh clamped between her legs, her fingers buried deep.

Funny thing was, I had woken up by this stage, but I swear to you, as God's my witness, I felt her kiss my mouth. Softly. A ghost of a kiss, but a kiss just the same.

I had my pillow clamped between my legs and my hand down my sleep trousers, my fingers hidden deep inside the wetness of my nocturnal meanderings. I felt contented for the first time in so long.

Sleep came quickly again, and I hoped I would dream the same dream.

Wouldn't you?

The next day in the library, she was there again. I felt the rush of a blush as she looked up from her book and smiled.

'Morning.' The smile stayed intact, full and all consuming. It appeared the lights above had surged radiance, but it was just her smile.

I nodded and spluttered out a greeting, can't even remember what I said. I felt totally exposed and so bloody embarrassed. I mean, it's not as if she could read my mind. But that's rational thought, isn't it? If you've ever experienced an erotic dream about someone and then come face to face with them shortly after, you'll understand what I'm saying.

All morning we sat in silence ... it was a library after all. But unlike all the other times I had visited, this time the silence was agony. I wanted to stroll over and begin meaningless conversation with her, but that was a definite no no.

Lunchtime came and went and she didn't move. Neither did I, for that matter. I was bursting for a pee and a drink (in that order), but I didn't want to miss out on her asking me if I wanted to grab a coffee again. I could've just asked her, but that was too simple.

I felt my concentration drifting from my work and casually turn up at her table, looking innocent in a nervy 'I shouldn't be here' kind of way. Funnily enough, most of the time I glanced over, it appeared she had been looking over at me, but turned away quickly. Maybe it was just wishful thinking.

Then I saw her rummage around inside her bag and pull out her purse. She was going to get a drink, and by the Gods I was going to ask if I could go with her. Fuck it. I was a grown woman after all. How difficult could it be to just casually say 'Oh ... Good idea. Care if I join you?' Simple. Sorted.

Not.

'Rachel! Hi!'

Fuck. Bloody Dr Lawson had to show up didn't he. When had he ever towed his lardy arse to the library? Never. He NEVER came to the library. And trust him to become the epitome of bad timing.

I saw him waddle his doughnut-eating carcass towards me, leaves of paper fluttering out of his podgy doughnut eating fingers, and then cram his doughnut shaped arse into the seat next to mine.

Quickly, I looked over at her, and she was half out of her seat, purse ensconced in her hand, the unspoken question on her lips and in her eyes. She was going to offer coffee again and this twat ruined it.

'What do you want, Phil? More blood, sweat and tears?' I was totally pissed off with him, for more reasons than one, especially how he had stiffed me on my research fees for his last book. But, that was in the past, now he had stiffed me by fucking up an opportunity of having a coffee with the gorgeous brunette.

'See your tastes have improved.' His beady grey eyes followed the departure of her, his fat doughnut gobbling tongue licking his plump lips. 'Nice arse.'

'What do you want, Phil?' I tried to keep the question emotionless, but he could read me like a book.

'Nothing. Thought I'd say hi.' Twat. 'And, Rachel my dear, don't go wasting your time on floozies

like that. You're here to work.'

'What's it got to do with you what I get up to. I don't work for you anymore.' I felt myself sagging. Not that I took any notice of what he thought, just the standard realisation that the woman most probably didn't even consider me in that way. I mean. We hadn't even spoken. I was still living off the dream I had the night before.

'Just a friendly bit of advice.' He tried to elevate himself out of the chair and found his arse was wedged between the handles. I didn't even laugh. Still can't believe I didn't laugh, especially when he was trying to give advice on how I should live my life and he couldn't get his backside out of the chair. Should have taken it as a living metaphor. But you know ... I'm a little backwards sometimes.

I gripped both hands onto the armrest, and with a huge pull he was free.

'Must be going. Meeting with my publicist.' He gathered the dropped papers from the floor exposing the crack of his arse in the process. When he turned to go, he stopped, had a think, and then turned back. 'Good work on the research you did, by the way.'

And then he was gone. And I was left gob smacked. That was a first.

By the time I had reached the coffee shop she was just placing her empty cup and saucer onto the trolley. Bollocks. Missed her.

As she walked past me she smiled and nodded again, and I was left there, breathless. From the run or the smile, God only knows.

Weeks went by with pretty much the same thing going on. Some days she would be there before me, and others I would pip her at the post. We had not progressed from the occasional hello, nodding and smiling stage. And I was becoming more frustrated. I was dreaming of her at least twice a week, and my body was yelling at me to get a move on. Either ask her out or go and get laid. But, as you can gather, I did neither.

Christmas came and went, the library closing for the duration. January trickled in bringing with it students who knew their time for pissing about was over. Therefore the section we used to have to ourselves was overrun by delinquents of all shapes and sizes. Bless. Those were the days. Not washing, eating or sleeping. Alcohol as liquid nourishment. Sharing accommodation with complete strangers you normally wouldn't piss on if they were on fire. Cramming for finals with the zeal of a man on death row.

Wouldn't swap it for all the tea in China.

However, I was put out that my peace and tranquillity was marred by the offshoots of the

flowerpot men. And I couldn't get a good look at her because some grungy youth would insist on sitting in front of me with his (or her) matted dreadlocks that had last seen soap and water the last time his parents had pinned him down under the hose pipe.

So ... January went. Flew by, actually. It was the second week in February by the time the library became ours once again. And it was bliss. Quiet and reflective ... time to study ... to research undisturbed.

And, more importantly, I had her all to myself.

It took forever to pluck up the courage to say 'Quieter now, thank God.' And then go beetroot. She smiled, nodded and repeated 'Thank God.'

And then it was back to work.

It was the second Tuesday in February that it happened.

Another ordinary day ... me stealing sly looks at her over the towering books, and trying to convince myself she was doing the same thing. Why hadn't either of us taken the plunge and started a conversation in the last few months? The only thing I could put it down to was because we were in a library ... you know ... the 'shush' rule and all that.

The ants in my pants were driving me crazy, but not as much as the need just to get to know her - even find out what she was researching would have been a start. There had been no invites for coffee, no debates on outdated philosophies. Nothing.

It was four forty five, my usual time for departure, when a young student asked for my assistance in finding a book. I wasn't impressed. I mean ... I should have been packing away by now ... heading for the door ... leaving for another day of being a mute. But what can you do? Someone asks you to help them find a book, which by the looks of things was imperative, and I couldn't resist.

Fifteen minutes later saw me rushing back to my table, gathering my notebooks, pencils, jacket and handbag. She had already left. Table, as usual, packed away to its usual standard of pristine condition. I couldn't help but release a sigh. How much longer was it going to be before I got a spine? Or her, for that matter.

Once again, I was jumping ahead of myself. Why on earth did she have to speak to me at all? It wasn't in the rules of study. She was free to come and go as she pleased.

So why did I feel so empty?

Working had lost its appeal. The research I had been doing seemed to pale in comparison to wanting to get to know someone else rather than wanting to know what had happened over a hundred and fifty years ago. Life should be lived in the present, learning from the past granted ...

looking towards the future ... but it should definitely be at home just living here ... in 2006.

Outside the library, the February air was chilled and crisp. Refreshing after a day stuck in false heat and musty rooms. I gulped down a lung full of air ... blew out slowly, slightly entranced with the air from inside my body misting with the coolness of the early evening.

My car was parked in the far corner of the car park, and I strolled over to it. No need to hurry. All I would be doing that evening would be processing the information I had gleaned that day. No one there to chat things over with ... analyse findings ... argue authenticity.

I had never bothered about that before, and I couldn't grasp why it seemed to bother me now. I mean, I had been alone for nearly a year and been happy about having time and space to do as I wished. But now ... the thought of going back to another empty flat, for another evening of the once coveted solitude did nothing for me - well, apart from make me feel depressed.

The silver Seat was before me before I knew it, and I groped one handed inside my jacket pocket to find the key. Not a good idea. Especially if you are carrying loads of crap with the other hand. A certain guarantee that all will be lost and you will end up looking like someone practicing moves for a break dance finale.

My stuff was everywhere. Papers fluttered along the ground in search of a resting place, whilst I danced and raved a rain dance, slamming my foot down and scooping up the little escapees. The notebook lay forlorn as most of its insides were now curled up tightly in my fist. When I bent down I could see something red peeping for between its leaves.

An envelope. Not my envelope, that I was sure of.

'Rachel'

My name, but it wasn't my envelope. I looked round wildly, thinking someone was going to step out of the shadows film noiresque and demand 'Give me the code, comrade'.

No one. Just me and a red envelope with my name on.

What the hell.

I slipped my finger under the seal and along the gummed edge, my focus totally on the contents. Inside was a card ... quite tasteful ... Victorian design. The words on the top read 'Will you be ...'

I opened it quickly, thinking the message would self-destruct if I didn't.

' ... my Valentine?'

Huh? Who on earth sent this?

Images of the nervous looking student filtered into my head. Bollocks. That's all I needed. Some love struck teenager wanting to get horizontal with me. Then I saw the message.

'Fancy a coffee? Tonight? CB2 - 7pm. Maybe we could chat for once. XXX ?'

CB2 was a popular bookstore-come-internet café that was popular with the students. It must be the student. Who else would ...

Her. She sent me this. Didn't she? She must have ... the 'Maybe we could chat for once' was a fucking huge clue. Wasn't it?

Ah shit. What if I turned up there and it was the pimply student sporting a tent pole in his under crackers? What would I say? Too young? Wrong sex? You smell?

But it can't have been him. He was nowhere near my table ... nowhere near any of my books since I last used them. They had only been left once and he was with me then. The only other person was her ... crap ... I really wished I knew her name. And there wasn't even a signature to go with the kisses.

Kisses. Three of them. Big ones too.

I could go to CB2 and peep through the windows to see if she was there. A plan! A bloody good one too, which with my track record was unbelievable.

Time. Five thirty. Time to meet with unknown suspect. Seven. That left me with an hour and a half to get ready and develop my plan. And, people think literary people can't do maths ...

What we can't do is park. I'm continually reminded of this fact every time I want to park my bloody car in Cambridge. I hated to park in the Grafton Centre, as multi story car parks tend to leave scuffmarks on my front bumper ... the walls jump out, you see.

So, I opted for Sturton Street and decided to walk up to CB2. That way I could walk past a few times and get a good look inside. Pimply teenager = run. Gorgeous nameless woman = sit down and have coffee.

Nope. CB2 decided that downstairs was to be used for people who wanted to sit and dine, so the place was full of people stuffing their faces. No sign of solitary youth or woman. The only option was to go upstairs.

I must have passed the window going on ten times before I had the balls to venture inside. Why was I nervous? I'm a grown woman and could handle situations like this. Couldn't I? Erm ... could you please explain that to my bowels.

Fuck it. I could do this. This was a piece of piss. Two ways I can respond depending on who was waiting.

'Bugger off, limp dick.'

Or.

'Hey ...' soft and alluring, followed by catlike manoeuvres into chair ... totally in control. And ... in my head ... sexy as hell.

I was clumping up the stairs with grace and dexterity of a baby elephant, my heart was filling in the missing thuds, and I wanted to be sick. I just wanted it to be ten minutes from that moment ... either it would be me pounding concrete or me sipping latte.

The top of the stairs gave way to the rest of the café, and there she was ... sat next to the window ... watching me, her hands underneath her chin.

'Calm down, girl.' Yeah right. Talking to internal organs really works. Mmm ... actually, I think it excites them more.

Time to ooze the charm and engage catlike manoeuvres.

'It's about time you came in. You were making me dizzy watching you walking up and down the road.'

'Fuck!' Why I said that then is beyond all rational thought, and definitely not on the top ten of chat up lines. Or maybe it is.

'Better than "Fuck you" like before.' Honestly. They could toast bread on my face. I mean, I how do you respond to that?

'I ... I ...'

'Calm down, Rachel. I was pulling your leg.' And then she started laughing. Talk about an icebreaker. She had such an infectious laugh, that it wasn't long before I was joining her. 'Come. Sit.' She half stood, her hand outstretched. 'Helen Simons. Pleased to finally speak to you at last.'

Warm fingers took my hand and squeezed my digits softly ... not limply, just the right amount of pressure. Her other hand gestured towards the chair in invitation, and I kept hold of her hand as I sat down.

'Sorry it's so packed in here tonight. Valentine's Special ... Two eat for the price of one.'

Crap. No wonder it was busy and they had converted the downstairs. I'd wondered what all the red balloons and love hearts were all about.

'And you still haven't answered me?'

I looked at her, my idiot side completely exposed.

'The question I asked you.' Her eyes were searching around my face looking for a spark of activity ... life even.

'And the question was ...' I drifted off for effect, but came out as simple.

The smile came to her face instantaneously. 'For a researcher, you don't really take much notice of what you read do you?'

Huh?

'The card I sent you had a question on it.'

'I know "Fancy a coffee and a chat". Question answered.' I felt smug. But not for long.

'There was another question on it.' There were three kisses ... that I remember. I stole a covetous gaze at her mouth, completely distracted by the licking of her lips.

'And?' She leaned forward in expectation, and so did I. I was still thinking about those kisses.

'And what?'

'Your answer.'

She was impossibly close now ... and rational thought had long since fled. I just wanted to lean over and kiss her. Her breath was tickling my face by this stage and inciting parts of me best left unsaid. People were eating after all.

Then it hit me, like a bolt out of the blue. So simple. So bloody obvious. The question on the card.

'Yes.'

She smiled so beautifully ... had mastered the art of capturing my heart. So I did the only thing I could think of.

I kissed her. No words were needed.

The End ...

Let me know what you thought ...

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