

TRUTH
IN
SENSUALITY



BY
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To loyal readers, friends and family- Your support is a wonderful motivator!



CHAPTER ONE

Surrey, England

Tortured, breathless feminine cries of delight filled the loft apartment. Only the soft comforting hum of the central heating system mingled with the sensual sounds in the air. Then, the distinct grunts of male pleasure were added to the combination.

In the middle of the tousled king-sized bed, Ryken Gabrielle added more savagery to his thrusts. His massive frame glistened with sweat beneath the late afternoon sunlight which turned his bronzed skin a deeper shade of copper.

Beneath him, Lucilla Fairchild threw both hands above her head and arched her hips to take more of him. Her lashes fluttered maddeningly until the chore of keeping them open grew too frustrating and she opted for keeping them shut. Several times, she bit her bottom lip when a few additional inches of his powerful stiff dick entered her trembling body.

Wanting no further obstacles in his way, Ryken spread Lucilla's legs far apart. In one smooth stroke, he sheathed the rest of his shaft inside her drenched pussy. Groaning a bit deeper then, he collapsed atop her and buried his darkly beautiful face in her neck. One hand cupped a bouncing tit, his thumb grazing the nipple already firm from the various forms of manipulation it'd been subjected to.

"Please," Lucilla gasped.

Ryken's cleft single-dimpled grin appeared. He knew she was seconds away from coming for the third time since they'd started to fuck. The loud, slurping noises of her creamy need joined the mixture of erotic sounds swirling in the bedroom. Moving his hand from her bosom, Ryken grasped her neck-holding her still for his kiss. His tongue drove deep into the sweet cavern of her mouth just as his cock coaxed her to climax. When she was spewing her fragrant juices over his length once more, he let himself surrender to the desire he'd been desperate to keep in check.

Impossibly, his dick hardened even further; and a millisecond later, the warmth of his come was flooding the walls of her sex. Heavy breathing signaled the mutual satisfaction they now relished in the aftermath.

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“And cut!”

The direction had no affect on the two stars of the scene. While every other member of the crew conversed and bustled about, Ryken and Lucilla lay exhausted and silent.

“Good job, love,” Director Charlie Perry told Lucilla and kissed her cheek while pulling an afghan across her nude dark body. To Ryken, he tousled the man’s head full of gorgeous blue black curls.

“Don’t forget the wrap party tonight at Cranston’s,” Charlie told his actors once the rest of the crew had already cleared out. Tapping his hand against the beautifully carved headboard, he left the couple to collect themselves.

“Shit,” Lu hissed after they’d rested in silence just a short while longer.

“What?” Ryken queried, his deep voice muffled where his face lay in one of the pillows littering the bed.

Lucilla sighed and massaged her fingers across her eyes. “I need to meet my date before this party.”

“Mmm, me too,” was Ryken’s muffled response.

Neither made a move to leave the bed for at least five minutes. Then, it was Lucilla who broke the period of relaxation.

“So what slut are you bringing to the wrap party?” she teased once she was sitting up.

Ryken’s grin was impossible to see as his face was still hidden in the pillows. “You know me. I’ll be bringing *two* sluts,” he replied after raising his head.

“Mmm, of course,” Lu sighed.

“And what about you?” Ry inquired, lowering his head once more. “What clown are you bringing?”

Lu’s smile caused her almond shaped cocoa brown eyes to appear more luminous. “I was sure he’d have earned that title by now, but he hasn’t. I really like this one.”

The softness in her voice, prompted Ryken to turn over and face her. “Who is he?” he asked.

“Don’t worry,” she whispered and sent him a saucy wink. “He’s a good guy-*not* in the business.”

Ryken’s green stare narrowed in suspicion.

“He’s one of the new physicians at my doctor’s practice. We met when I had my annual checkup a few months ago,” she explained.

“You’ve been seeing him that long?” Ryken blurted, his stunning gaze raking her face in disbelief. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

Lucilla massaged her neck. “Because I didn’t know how long it’d last and I didn’t want to have to deal with all the ‘I’m sorries’ when it didn’t work out.”

A tiny furrow marred Ryken’s brow. He didn’t know why, but he didn’t think ‘I’m sorry’ would’ve been a sentiment he’d have uttered.

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“Does he know who you are?” he asked in a slower, deeper tone than his usual brogue. “Does he know what you...do for a living?”

Lucilla turned a bit to face him. “Don’t you mean *who* I do for a living, Ry?” she teased, using the shortening of his first name that she’d taken to for the last five of the eight years she’d known him. Smiling then, she straddled his hulking frame and leaned close to nuzzle her nose against his.

Ryken squeezed her hips in warning. “Does he?” he asked more firmly.

Lucilla rolled her eyes. “Of course he does. We’ve got the number one show in Europe, mate.”

“Mmm and half our numbers won’t admit they watch us.”

“Well *he* does and *doesn’t* seem to have an issue with it, so there,” she retorted and thumped his forehead.

Ryken wasn’t impressed. “He sounds perfect,” he lied.

Lucilla was well aware of it and took a pillow with intentions of smothering him. “I’ll see you tonight,” she whispered when he pulled the pillow from her grasp. She pressed a quick kiss to the corner of his mouth before leaving the bed.

Ryken yawned and opted for another quick nap.

Several men at the Garrett Pub, received prompt slaps to the backs of their necks for staring in awe at the stunning molasses dark beauty who entered their midst that evening. Lucilla had arranged to meet her date there. The pub was owned by one of her uncle’s long time friends. The place was close to the posh flat she maintained in Montague Square in the enviable Marylebone High Street area of London. It was a place where she could kick back without being mobbed by one of the scores of “undercover” viewers of her show “*Sensuality*”

To Lucilla’s delight, the pub’s owner Cecil Garrett was out on the floor when she arrived. The jolly 60-something Haitian enveloped his best friend’s niece in a tight hug and savored the jealous eyes shooting daggers in his back.

“Good for my business and my eyes, what more could a man ask?” Cecil teased as Lucilla planted a sweet kiss to his grizzled cheek. “Come, your gentleman friend just arrived,” he announced, taking her by the arm and leading her deeper into the crowded pub.

Jeff Frakes stood to greet Lucilla when she and Cecil approached the table. His dark handsome face practically beamed when he embraced his stunning date.

“I’ll send your waiter,” Cecil announced, casting an approving smile upon the couple before he strolled off.

“Did you have trouble finding the place?” Lucilla asked as Jeff helped her out of the butter cr me Cashmere coat she wore.

“Not a bit,” Jeff assured, setting the coat to a vacant chair before resuming his place at the table.

Lucilla pursed her lips and a brief glint of unease flashed in her expressive gaze.

Jeff couldn’t help but notice and propped a fist beneath his square jaw as his own gaze narrowed. “What is it?” he asked.

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Smoothing both hands across the clinging ruffled cuff sleeves of her dress, Lucilla shrugged. "I guess I'm just not certain about this party tonight. You honestly don't have a problem with going?"

"Why would I?" Jeff asked, a knowing smile softening the concern in his dark eyes.

Lu toyed nervously with the clipped locks of her boyish cut. "I can't warn you enough about all the...displays of affection you're sure to see this evening. These aren't people known for being bashful-it's not uncommon to see a couple screwing on a balcony or the ballroom floor for that matter."

Jeff chuckled. "Mmm...not your usual group of minglers, hmm?"

"Hmph, for certain." Lu confirmed.

"Lucilla do you think I'm a monk?"

"No, no of course not," she denied quickly. Silently however, she had to admit that she had no way of being sure. After all, her relationship with the handsome doctor had been grounded in the platonic code since their first date three months prior. Sex hadn't been an issue. Moreover, until she'd mentioned him attending the party, it hadn't even been a passing thought.

Lucilla was certain it was why she held Jeff in such high esteem. Most of the *clowns* as Ryken so astutely labeled earlier barely lasted beyond the first week. All they were interested in was the true pay off of catching the eye of the most sought after and probably the most jerked off to woman in Europe. When they realized sex with the goddess of "*Sensuality*" wouldn't be forthcoming, they made the mistake of mentioning it to her. Of course, they were promptly shown the door with a wave of her hand or a kick from her boot.

Jeff Frakes had been a refreshing change. She hadn't even caught him so much as staring at her boobs when she talked. If it weren't for the passionate yet sweet kisses at the end of their dates, she'd think the man a eunuch or at most gay.

"Good evening, Sir, Miss, may I take your drink orders please?" the waiter inquired of them both, yet his awed brown gaze was fixed on Lucilla.

"We'll both have white wine," Jeff ordered when Lucilla remained silent as her uncertainty kept her preoccupied.

"Then there's the press..." she added once the waiter had left them. "They're going to have a field day with us when they get a whiff of my new beau," she groaned.

"Lucilla," Jeff sighed, massaging his hands for a moment or two before speaking again. "Are all these reasons...the *real* reasons you're questioning my desire to go to this party?"

"*Real* reasons?" She parroted, frowning a bit as she shook her head out of confusion.

Jeff reclined in his seat. "You know, I may not have a room full of "*Sensuality*" paraphernalia, but I'm as much a fan of the show as anyone."

"I'm confused," Lu admitted with a nervous laugh.

"Many people believe you and Ryken Gabrielle are for real," he clarified simply.

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Lucilla rolled her eyes and laughed as her confusion melted away. After eight years, she was certainly no stranger to hearing that surmise. “It’s a job-it’s not for real,” came her usual response.

“Some of it’s very *very* real Lucilla,” Jeff pointed out softly and smiled when she conceded with a nod.

Leaning close to the table, Lu stroked his wrist. “You know you may’ve missed the episode of Desiree Jacobs,” she said, referring to the hostess of the popular chat show, “but long ago Ry and I decided that it would be disastrous for the show if we ever acted on anything *real* outside of the show. I’m proud to say it’s a decision we’ve adhered to and we love the arrangement. I’ve never had a better friend,” she concluded, her voice softening as that friendship came to mind.

Jeff bowed his head, this time conceding *her* point. “I stand corrected,” he said with a smile.

Ryken didn’t know what in the world possessed him to agree to share a limo to the wrap party. His two dates, or as Lu so aptly labeled them-*sluts* were about to drive him mad. Correction: they had already driven him mad and now he was simply looking for the fastest way to put himself out of his misery. But this is what he did, he dryly noted with a grimace that was effectively masked in the dark cabin of the car.

“So quiet Rykey?” Helena Moss cooed, tugging at his earlobe with her teeth while her hand smoothed across his trouser-covered thigh. She gave an impatient sigh when she moved to stroke his cock only to find that the job was already being handled by the other plaything in the car.

Lois Wenton refused to relinquish her place there and stroked the impressive shaft with renewed vigor. “There’s time for a little if you want to have a go, love?” she invited, suckling her index finger and gazing at Ryken with innocently adoring eyes.

Yes, this is what I do, he noted once more. Subjected himself to socializing with an endless parade of mindless bimbos who only wanted to fuck or go clubbing. They didn’t seem to mind that he was only interested in one of the two and even the fucking aspect had put a bad taste in his mouth-no pun intended.

“How ‘bout it Rykey?” Helena urged, now brushing a bare tit against his arm.

The limo pulled to a stop then and Ryken was quietly elated to see the elaborate estate of the network owner in the distance.

“Later,” he said, exiting the car and leaving his *dates* to fix their clothing.

Brake Cranston’s home was located in the majestic Dorset area of England. The estate had been in the man’s family for centuries. Towering brass-framed portraits of the thirty year old billionaire’s ancestors lined practically every hall of the mansion set amidst rolling hills of lush green. Visitors to the estate often wondered what those ancestors thought about the shocking displays of...affection that was constantly in session in various rooms of the pristine family dwelling.

Ryken nodded and shook hands with the multitude of grinning members of the press as well as the executive staff at Cranston Comm. The flamboyant execs were the

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masterminds behind the top rated shows on the Cranston Crème Network or the CCN as it was more well known.

Those who knew of the family's sterling reputation found it appalling that the youngest Cranston made his name off the lurid sex and violence his shows were known for. Of course, little distaste was shown towards the wicked sums of cash the shows produced.

Ryken turned toward the area he heard his name called. His jade stare narrowed and he smiled when "*Sensuality's*" director rushed toward him.

"Good to see you, man," Charlie Perry greeted, shaking hands with his leading actor while drawing him to the far corner of the sitting room. There waiting, were the show's executive producer Jeremy Swinton and everyone's boss, Brake Cranston.

"Ryken," Jeremy greeted, reaching for the man's hand just as Charlie released it.

"Jere, Brake," Ryken said, then thanked Jeremy for the drink he'd summoned from a passing waitress.

"Another top notch season. You should be proud," Brake commended while Jeremy and Charlie nodded in agreement.

"Thanks Brake, we're all proud of it," Ryken said of himself and his co-stars.

"You should be. We may have to begin the *summer* season for "*Sensuality*" in the winter as the polls are showing the viewers want it now!" Jeremy shared.

Ryken's grin triggered his single dimpled smile. "Well that's good, isn't it?" he coyly inquired, tugging on the cuffs of his tux jacket.

Brake leaned close. "It's better than you think, my friend," he promised, his blue eyes twinkling devilishly.

Ryken's head tilted when further explanation didn't appear to be forthcoming. "You going to make me guess?" he asked.

Jeremy clapped his shoulder. "Patience man. We'd like to tell both you *and* Lucilla together."

"Just whetting your appetite a bit Ry," Brake added.

"Where the bloody hell is she, anyway?" Charlie wondered aloud.

Just then, voices rose near the front of the main room. Most of the media congregated at the arched doorway.

"Well, well I guess we know who'll be gracing the front of the entertainment section tomorrow!" Brake decided with a hearty chuckle.

Jeremy appeared entranced. "My God, she actually has him on her arm. This must be serious."

Ryken remained quiet, observing Lucilla who had just arrived with the 'good guy' she'd talked of earlier that afternoon. He paid little attention to the fact that his heart was racing and even less to his temper which was growing shorter by the second.



CHAPTER TWO

When just a tad of the hubbub died around the newly arrived couple, Lucilla broke free of her admirers and tugged Jeffrey Frakes along with her. Stunning, in a chic mushroom satin frock, she held the attention of every man and a generous number of the women as well. Making her way over to Charlie, Jeremy and Brake, her intention was to make introductions.

In actuality, however, it was Ryken she really wanted to see and introduce to Jeff. “Luci, we were wondering if we’d be graced by your presence this evening,” Jeremy teased while kissing her cheek.

Lucilla laughed. “You know how I like to make an entrance,” she teased in return. “Well you made it worth the media’s wild. They’ve been waiting all evening for their scoop,” Charlie noted, stepping up next to embrace his leading lady.

Lucilla cast a quick, skeptical glance across her shoulder. “I hope they felt it was worth the wait.”

“Oh believe me, they did love,” Brake assured, with a squeeze to her waist.

After the light hearted teasing at Lu’s expense, the three men moved in to shake hands with Jeff. Ryken was last to greet his co-star’s new beau and his greeting was far less *eager* than that of their other colleagues. Thankfully, no one noticed-not even Ryken.

“Jeffrey my friend, would you mind us stealing away your date for a while?” Brake asked after they’d all enjoyed a few more minutes of chatter. “Just a bit of business to discuss,” he added.

Jeff was already waving his hand. “Not at all. You’ve got a beautiful home here. I’ll just entertain myself with a look around,” he decided, his dark face alive with curiosity.

“I can accommodate that,” Brake invited and with a snap of his fingers, he produced someone to give the man a proper personal tour.

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Ryken lagged behind, waiting for Lucilla to kiss Jeff's cheek before he ventured off with his 'tour guide'. When she turned to him with a sunny smile, Ryken pulled her closer. He kept an unconsciously possessive arm about her waist and escorted her to where the execs wanted to meet.

"Hope he won't be too stunned by what he's liable to see on that tour," Ryken jibed.

Lucilla's full laughter rippled through the long corridor. Ryken's expression was probing as he studied her.

"Seem happy," he noted.

Lu nodded, her smile turning sheepish as she bowed her head and raked a few fingers through her short dark crop of hair. "I'm very optimistic Ry and well...there was a time when I could've cared less about whether things progressed or not. But I..." she paused to expel a refreshing sigh. "I have to admit that I'm really looking forward to this." Gracing him with another brilliant smile, she patted his hand at her waist and then eased on ahead to chat with Jeremy Swinton.

The muscle danced fiercely in Ryken's jaw as he followed.

Inside the dark interior of Brake Cranston's posh, sunken study, everyone took their places before the majestic desk that occupied almost the entire back wall of the room. Only one other arm chair was free and without thought, Lu opted to take her place on Ryken's lap.

Brake and Jeremy exchanged gleeful smiles at the sight. They loved the couple more than any other duo on the popular show.

"Well, it goes without saying that "*Sensuality*" is the equivalent of success," Brake announced, massaging his hands while leaning back in his massive black suede desk chair. "Over the last eight years, it's become the standard where all others are judged in our industry."

"And not only in *our* industry," Jeremy pointed out.

Brake nodded. "Right. The same fire and chemistry is also being sought after by the more mainstream and conservative shows as well," he confirmed before clapping his hands. "That said- it's up to us to make that leap-bring that spice to the big screen. The *main* screen, if you will. In six months, "*Sensuality*" will go into production for its first feature film."

Lucilla gasped. Even the closed expression on Ryken's bronzed face, brightened a bit and he sat a tad straighter in the chair.

"Don't be so surprised you two," Brake urged, stroking his dimpled chin. "The show is a hit in almost every market and age group. A film is inevitable."

"And not just *any* film," Jeremy chimed in once more. "This will not be any B movie. We'll be using A-list talent-nothing less."

"And of course *A-list* talent includes our director?" Ryken asked.

"And crew?" Lucilla added, exchanging a quick glance with Ryken. "We both-well, the entire cast actually...we've grown...accustomed to familiar faces in light of the things we do..."

Brake, Jeremy and Charlie all chuckled.

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“Yes,” Brake assured the dazzling couple. “We consider our director and crew to be top of the line-no changes needed there. We mean A-list as it refers to marketing-Jeremy?” he urged the executive producer to continue.

“We plan to make a splash in the adult market on all ends. This won’t be a kid’s movie but we damn well intend to draw the attention of as many parents and maybe grandparents as we can find,” Jeremy concluded.

“Well!” Brake clapped his hands and chuckled at the awed expressions Ryken and Lucilla still wore. “This *is* a party you two. We’ll go into more detail later.”

“Right,” Charlie spoke up. “We’ve scheduled a meeting at the studio tomorrow morning first thing. Don’t fret Ry, we’ll be done in time for you to make that flight to Cape Town,” he promised, referring to the trip the man made at the wrap of every season.

“So, until then,” Brake said as he, Jeremy and Charlie stood.

“Does everyone else know?” Lu called from her place on Ryken’s lap.

“You two were first. We’re off to tell the rest of the cast and crew,” Charlie shared.

“Then it’s off to the media,” Brake announced, fixing them both with a warning look. “If you plan to get out of here without having to answer every question in the book, you can leave using the back stairways-you’re familiar with the path. Congrats you two,” he said, before he and the others left the room.

“Do you believe this Ry? Did you have any idea?” Lu breathed, after they’d sat alone in silence almost a full minute. She turned to watch Ryken shake his head.

“Never in a million years.” He admitted.

Lucilla giggled then. “I’m off to tell Jeff,” she decided, and then cupped Ryken’s face to plant a kiss to his mouth.

When she would have pulled back, his hand locked around her neck and the intended quick peck became something all together different. The kiss deepened. Ryken thrust and rotated his tongue inside her mouth for a brief-yet heated time.

Lucilla’s expression was clearly inquisitive once he released her. Her vibrant brown stare searched his deep-set emerald one, but Ryken shielded it before she could even think of a question to utter.

“Do you think he’ll take this well?”

Lucilla blinked. “Who?”

Ryken smirked. “Jeff? With you being gone so long so soon after you’ve started seeing each other.”

Concern registered on Lucilla’s face but a moment, and then she smiled. “I’ve got no worries,” she shrugged. “It’s not like he can’t come visit while we’re on location, right?” Her giggles returning, she tousled Ryken’s blue black curls and left the room.

Charlie Perry’s round, cherub-like face held a look of obvious skepticism. He shook his head while tapping the gold pen he held to the pages of the producer’s notes. “Yeah, we should put this on the table first off,” he decided with a groan. “She’s not gonna like this.”

Brake shrugged and exchanged glances with Jeremy Swinton and the other five execs who sat in the room the next morning.

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“What’s not to like? She’s sucked a dick before hasn’t she?”

“Not on camera,” Charlie threw back, clearly disapproving of Brake’s outburst. “I’ve never been able to get her to do it on camera. Not even for Ryken,” he said.

“Maybe she’s had a change of heart,” Jeremy suggested. “They’ve been at this almost eight years. Rumor has it Ryken Gabrielle is the *only* man she’s giving it up to.”

“Besides,” Brake interjected, “if *he* has no problem putting his tongue in that perfect ass of her, then she should have no problem sucking that massive cock of his,” he surmised and then winked at a couple of the female execs in the room. The women were all smiles in reference to the super-stars’ sought after endowment.

“Well I’ll be honest about it,” Charlie said, tugging at the loose collar of his black sweater, “I don’t want to be the one to approach her with it. Any takers for the job?” he asked, finding none.

“How about this,” Brake was saying after the room had been dead silent for almost two minutes, “the script will be done in three weeks. Ryken’ll be returning from his trip around that time. Let him be there when she reads it for the first time. Let *him* try to coax her into doing it.”

“My God man, do you realize he’d be taking his life into his own hands?!” Charlie blurted.

Brake’s reddish blonde brows rose slowly. “Better him than us. Besides, he looks like he can handle her.”

“It’s settled then,” Jeremy decided with a clap of his hands. “During the meeting we’ll simply discuss locations and set up meetings for fittings, rehearsals, and etcetera and leave the rest for later.”

The buzzer sounded then and Jeremy’s assistant was telling them that the cast had arrived. Shortly after the announcement, the ladies were shown in followed by the gents. “*Sensuality*” boasted four superstar couples with Ryken and Lucilla leading the pack. While all were exotic and beautiful, they were each all intelligent and highly savvy in business matters. The execs were aware that while the group did the most shocking things on screen, they were no fools. They could handle everything from script changes to contract negotiations. They garnered a respect few actors could claim in the industry.

“Top of the line mate. Top of the line.”

“Mmm,” Ryken acknowledged when he arrived last along with Dane Cameron one of the other male leads. The man had been boasting about his latest motorcycle for the past fifteen minutes.

“It’s got everything. My dick went hard the minute I saw it.” Dane continued.

Ryken chuckled. “Sure it did, but the poor thing will meet the same end as your other bikes when the next line arrives.”

“Cest le vie,” Dane conceded, with a wicked grin.

Again, Ryken chuckled. His attention though was more focused on Lucilla and the conversation she was having with Betha Schaeffer one of the other female co-stars. Topic of conversation: Jeff Frakes.

“Breakfast bar across the room guys, help yourselves and then let’s get this meeting started.” Charlie announced.

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The cast did as they were told. Ryken decided only on juice and was seated at the long conference table before everyone else.

“When’s your flight Ry?” Tomlin O’Shea inquired.

“Two p.m. and I won’t pretend that I’m not looking forward to seeing the sun,” Ryken told the crew chief.

Tom grinned. “Aye, it *is* a beautiful place.”

Ryken’s participation in the conversation of his homeland was overshadowed by Lucilla’s presence at the table. His jade stare followed her every move while she chattered away about her new love interest. He couldn’t keep his eyes off her and found himself massaging them constantly in hopes of erasing her image from his mind. Silently, he berated himself for thinking whatever it was that he was thinking. He wasn’t seriously thinking *that*, was he? He queried, refusing to put a more clear definition on exactly what *that* was.

Besides, *that* was impossible, he acknowledged, loving the way Lucilla’s teal crew-neck sweater molded to her generous bosom. Yes, *that* was impossible especially when long ago they’d decided to never breach it. His hand flexed around the juice glass he held. The beaded vessel was a mere second or two away from being crushed into a million shards. Thankfully, Brake was announcing the beginning of the meeting.

“Alright, we all know of the upcoming movie,” he began, joining in when a round of applause ensued. “Your agents will soon be receiving contracts for the various deals and there will be extensive meets with the writers on the um scripts,” he paused to clear his throat. “But more details on that later. Today, we’d like to get some meeting dates noted to work with everyone’s schedules as we’ll all be scattered to the winds ‘til after the new year.”

“A discussion on location will be most important,” Jeremy added. “We hope to take into account the various viewer emails we’ve received. Many of them noted an interest in seeing more uh sex on the beach.”

Laughter rumbled and Jeremy turned beet red.

“Therefore, many of the shoots will be on location in tropical climates.”

Clapping followed the laughter.

“Speaking of tropical climates Ryken, we’ll be doing about three weeks worth of filming in your domain. Tuscany.” Jeremy announced, referring to the boyhood home of Ryken’s father. “Simon wants to meet with you and discuss some prime spots the scouts may overlook that a native would be well aware of,” he added, referring to the director of photography Simon Red.

Ryken tilted his glass and nodded in agreement.

From there, the conversation focused on the rest of the filming which would include two months of film related meetings and shoots there in London during the holidays. A round of groans followed that announcement. Spirits rose when the group learned that there would be three to four months of filming throughout Europe and Fiji.

Brake clapped his hands to douse the multitude of conversations filtering the room then. “This all begins in six weeks people, so rest up, keep everything tight. Meeting adjourned.”

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As everyone made their way out of the conference room, Lucilla caught the edge of Ryken's khaki shirt and pulled him aside.

"You have a safe trip alright?" she urged, smoothing her hands across the cream sweater over his crisp shirt. "Are you alright?" she inquired softly, her brown gaze searching.

A bit surprised by her perception, Ryken shrugged. "Why do you ask?"

"Well I..." she couldn't seem to finish, hoping she wasn't being overly inquisitive. "You've just seemed sort of quiet-distant," she confessed at last.

Ryken let his long lashes shield his gaze from hers. "Just on edge about the flight, I guess. You never know what to expect these days."

Lucilla blinked and nodded slowly, seeming to agree with the explanation. "Well be safe and you call me the moment you land."

"Will that be alright with Jeff?" Ryken blurted before he could stop himself.

Lucilla frowned playfully. "Where'd *that* come from?"

"Just teasing," he lied after muttering a sharp curse below his breath. "I just don't want the poor fellow to misunderstand."

"Well it may interest you to know that Jeff and I already had that talk."

"Oh?" Ryken inquired, his sleek brows rising.

"Mmm and I told him he had absolutely nothing to worry over. He believes me."

Ryken massaged his jaw and nodded. He didn't know if he'd be so quick to categorize fucking another man's brains out for six months out of every year for the last eight years as 'nothing to worry over', but he decided to make no comment.

"I'll call when I land and am safely out of the airport," he promised in his most obedient tone.

"Good boy," Lu teased, drawing him into a close hug. She read nothing into the extra tight squeeze he gave her.

Ryken on the other hand wished he never had to let her go.

Two weeks later...

"Shit," Lucilla hissed when her blind fumble for the ringing phone only succeeded in knocking it from the nightstand. "Mmm...hello?" she answered finally.

"What are you doing?" Ryken's deep, gravel voice grated through the line.

"Hmm...nine a.m. Let's see...sleeping?"

"Alone?"

"Is there another way?"

Ryken grinned, refusing to admit how pleased he was by her response. "Get up and come get me from the airport."

The request forced Lu to sit upright. "What the hell are you doing there?"

"Decided to cut my trip short."

"Why? Is everything alright with the aunties?" Lu asked, referring to Ruby and Raveen Dwele who had raised their nephew since their sister died shortly after giving birth to Ryken. His father, Vallone Gabrielle was an Italian officer who met Riana Dwele while on tour in Africa. The man was killed while rushing his fiancé and unborn son to the hospital.

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The sisters chose to raise their orphaned nephew between Cape Town and in the Tuscan village that was his father's childhood home.

Ryken laughed, thinking of the two boisterous women. "They're fine. Bawdy as ever and jumping on my back for not bringing you with me."

"Those two...well I do hope I'll get to see them while we're on location. So um, why'd you cut short your trip?" Lu asked.

"For the film."

Lucilla's mouth formed a perfect O. "You're joking."

"Not at all. Charlie called and said the scripts were ready earlier than expected. Ours are set to arrive together at your place sometime before lunch today. He thought I should be there so we could go through it together."

"Together?" Lu whispered, her full lips twisting into a pout. "Sounds fishy."

"Well I don't know and really don't care. I only want you to get your ass in motion and come get me."

"I'm on my way," Lucilla promised and clicked off the phone.

Ryken shook his head when the connection ended-how he'd missed her! Strange since he'd only been gone two weeks and there were trips when he'd been gone far longer. What the hell was going on?

That jackass Jeff Frakes was what was going on. True, he had no real basis for labeling the man a jackass. Still, there was something about the guy that simply rubbed Ryken the wrong way.

And why the hell should it? A silent angry voice grated inside his head. Why did he care now? Why was his head becoming so screwed up by this fool? He knew Lucilla changed men like she changed shoes and she never kept one around for long. *And because you used to be the only man she smiled for like that.* The silent angry voice was right, he acknowledged. His green stare was murderous as he rolled his eyes away from an entertainment rag with the 'happy couple' on the cover.

"Oooh, bad flight I assume?" Lucilla noted when Ryken met her later outside the gate. "Tired?" she queried, again receiving no response. "How about some breakfast?" she offered, folding her arms across the gold zip-front hoody she wore.

"Breakfast?" Ryken asked, slipping the strap of his duffle bag from one shoulder to the other. "Don't you mean lunch?"

"Look, damn you. *I'm* the one who had to get out of a nice warm bed to come collect you," Lu snapped finally. "Hell you could've easily taken a taxi or gotten one of the thousands of horny women here to take you anywhere in the world."

Ryken barely looked her way. "I wanted you," he said and strolled on past her.

Lucilla couldn't help but freeze momentarily in response to the suggestive octave his words possessed.

When they arrived at the building which housed her flat, Lu signed for the package that arrived while she was out.

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“Must be the scripts,” she muttered while she and Ryken headed for the elevator bay. “Yep,” she confirmed, finding the two bound items inside. “Wonder why Charlie would have you interrupt a well-deserved vacation to read a script together,” she pondered and found an additional envelope addressed to Ryken along with the scripts.

“Good day Lucilla,” an elderly gentleman greeted while stepping inside the elevator car.

“Mr. Morey,” Lu replied, absently passing the envelope to Ryken.

As the neighbors caught up on things, Ryken read over the note from Charlie. The words written in the director’s hasty scribble sent his mood into an even more sour state. He looked over at Lucilla who was still gabbing with the eighty-something Irishman.

Scanning the note once more, Ryken felt his dick swell at the mere thought of that luscious mouth gliding up and down his shaft and then glistening with the moisture she’d force from its head.

He grunted softly then and thought of the rage sure to erupt when she read the scene. Playing devil’s advocate wasn’t something he was looking forward to. He could only pray that *his* mouth wouldn’t be the one glistening-with blood that is, once she’d popped him a good one.



CHAPTER THREE

“It’s not the end of the world, love,” Ryken noted softly while watching the fixed expression on Lu’s lovely dark chocolate face. She sat on the opposite end of the sofa they shared. Her expression was a look of complete astonishment.

They’d enjoyed a light lunch and then Lucilla had gone out to run errands. Ryken decided to spend the night at her apartment as he often did the first night after returning from an extended trip. He showered and napped while she was gone and it was nearing four p.m. when they met in the den to give the script a read through.

“Sons of bitches,” Lucilla hissed. “They know how I feel about this and they wait to do this when it’s a feature film they use as the carrot to dangle before my eyes...’scuse me, my mouth.”

“Hey, hey,” Ryken urged her calm. He pulled her close to straddle his lap. Grating his teeth then, he ordered himself to focus beyond the feel of her tight clit grazing the semi hard erection beneath his sweats. “It’s not the end of the world,” he repeated, toying with the waistband of her faded denim shorts.

Lu kept her eyes downcast. “Thanks, but you wouldn’t understand,” she muttered.

“Well excuse me for saying this, but you’ve done far more graphic things than give me a blow job during our eight years on the show,” he pointed out quietly.

Lucilla only shrugged and expelled a heavy sigh.

“Hey?” he whispered, nudging her chin with his fist. “Tell me what’s *really* wrong.”

“It’s stupid.”

Ryken tilted his head and smiled. “So what else is new?” he teased, flinching playfully when she smacked his cheek.

“It really is though,” she insisted.

“Tell me.”

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Fiddling with the hem of her snug pink tee, Lu took a while to begin. "Like you said, I've done so much *on* screen. I felt like this would be the one thing I'd get to save for that special man. You know? Mr. Right?"

Rage rumbled through Ryken's massive frame. The innocent admission threatened to illicit a growl next. Jeff Frakes? Mr. Right? He'd be damned if that fool would ever have that title.

"Anyway," Lucilla sighed wearily while shrugging once more.

Ryken forced aside his anger. "It's alright, love. After all, it's not like it'll be your first time givin' a guy a blow job."

Lucilla appeared even more uneasy. "Actually um, actually it is."

Ryken blinked. "On camera, right?"

"Anywhere."

He blinked again. "You mean you've never given a man oral sex?" he asked, disbelief coloring every word. His deep set gaze narrowed in awe and he watched her mouth as if she'd just uttered the secrets of the universe.

"At first I was disgusted by it," she admitted with a soft laugh. "Then...well, I just decided to keep at least *one* thing sacred."

Ryken felt his temples throb once sharply at the vision of her giving head to Jeff Frakes. No way in hell would the son of a bitch have that. No way in hell would she give the bastard her first blow job. *Sorry Jeff man. No way in hell.*

Lucilla massaged her neck and fixed Ryken with a knowing smirk. "Looks like my days of wiggling out of it are over, eh? I'm certainly not going to walk away from the project because of it. Still..."

"What?" he probed, smoothing both hands across the lush line of her licorice toned thighs.

She appeared reluctant to look at him directly. "I don't want my 'first time' to be on camera. There's a...finesse involved, you know? If I'm going to do this, I damn well intend to do it right."

Ryken commanded his cock not to react. His heart was already racing and he was mere seconds away from panting.

"Let's rehearse."

"What?" Ryken practically croaked.

"It's the only way I'll master this," she decided and began to grind herself against his crotch.

Of course, Ryken needed no coaxing. His dick swelled to three times its current size within seconds. His shamefully long lashes fluttered and he squeezed her thighs.

"Luci you-you don't have to do this," was that *his* voice? He marveled.

Lucilla's smile was soft as she leaned close. "Thanks for being so sweet," she whispered against his ear while brushing her tits across his massive bare chest. "But I'm a big girl and this is what I've chosen to do for a living. Besides, who better to break my cherry with-so to speak-than you?"

Indeed, Ryken silently agreed while surges of warmth threaded throughout his body. Lucilla began to shower kisses along the strong chords in his neck. Her fingers splayed across the pects that flexed beneath her touch. Her lips glided down the

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devastating array of abs and lower...she slid off his lap and onto her knees before him on the sofa. Easing her hands behind his knees, she tugged him a bit closer to the edge of the cushions.

Her eyes widened to find his shaft already rock hard and forming a tent below the waistband of his sweats. It took a bit of maneuvering, but she eventually managed to get the material past the stunning erection.

Ryken closed his eyes and rested his head back against the sofa. He told himself it was so she wouldn't be on edge with his eyes upon her. In truth, his body was thoroughly drained of strength. Well...not his *entire* body. All strength and energy flowed right to his erect cock being worshipped by the dark lovely on her knees before him. He tried to stifle a grunt when her tongue flicked across his balls before gliding around the base of his dick. She eased the tip of her nose along the erect shaft and brought her luscious brown gaze to his face.

"Ryken I need to know if I'm doing what you like, so please don't be silent," she urged softly.

This time a purely helpless whimper escaped his throat. *What the hell?* He'd never whimpered in his life. Sadly, he had no time to harp on the uncharacteristic display of desire.

Lucilla was working her tongue along the wide long length of his sex. She massaged the powerful chords which were thoroughly emphasized in the wake of its stiffened state. The bronzed shaft that had pleased her for the better half of eight years...she realized she'd never really had the treat of viewing it so completely. The tip of her tongue worked around the base of the head. She was driving him mad-if the whimpers, groans and soft curses he uttered were any proof. Torturing him for a few moments longer, she moved to take only the head into her mouth.

Ryken's resulting moan encouraged her to continue. She worked her tongue all over the satiny area, forcing soft suckling sounds into the air. He began to make tiny, thrusting movements with his hips, aching to feel her take more of him into her mouth.

Lucilla refused to rush it and moved very slowly. Ryken's sighs of pleasure reaching her ears, instilled more confidence. Gingerly, she accepted more of him knowing if she went too quickly with so much of an endowment, she'd not get around to tasting much more than the head.

Ryken was fully thankful she'd given him permission to be vocal. He was. Countless curses and grunted slurs of satisfaction passed his lips. Eventually, his hands covered her head and he toyed in the beautifully cut crop of hair that waved and curled across her head.

By now, Lucilla had an ample portion of him in her mouth. She suckled enthusiastically and hungrily, emitting her own grunts of delight. His enjoyment fueled her confidence as well as her arousal.

Ryken knew the decision of when to stop would soon arrive. He was seconds away from coming.

"Luci...damn...I can't hold it," he admitted in a tortured voice. He was torn between pulling her head away and pushing it down.

"Okay..."

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Her soft gasp of the word was his undoing. Moments later, his come was releasing into her mouth. She increased the pressure, forcing every drop. His dick throbbed again, already refueling for another round when she withdrew. He watched her swallow and use her thumb to wipe remnants of tell-tale moisture from the sultry curve of her mouth.

Ryken's jade stare was hooded, but he couldn't completely look away from her. She eased his sweats over the semi-hard length and re-positioned herself straddling his lap once more.

"Good?" she asked, enjoying the sight of him reclining against the sofa and taking deep breaths.

His trademark, deep affecting chuckle rumbled. "Hell yes," he admitted when she laughed.

"So? How was it?" she inquired further, beginning her survey. "Was I sucking too fast? Too slow? Did I bite you? How'd my tongue feel?"

Ryken pressed the heels of his hands against his eyes. The last thing he wanted was to discuss the devastating job she'd done.

"You're on your way to becoming one of the greats," he assured her quickly.

Lucilla pursed her lips. "Thanks," she snapped.

"You know what I mean," Ryken soothed, nudging her chin with his fist. "I've never come that fast. Not from a blow job."

"Really?" she breathed, her eyes widening.

"Really," he confirmed, sounding as though he hated to admit it. "Are we done?" he asked her.

Lucilla nodded, easing off his lap as she did so.

"Going to take another shower," he grumbled and stood. *A cold one*, he added too softly for her to hear.

"And why the hell do you care about some fool she's only been seeing for a month?"

"Three months."

"And?"

"Seriously Ry man, I'm with 'Dre. Why the hell do you care about this bloke?"

Ryken rolled his eyes and took another sip of his tequila. Out for dinner with his friends that night, the conversation settled on Lucilla. Of course, the conversation always settled on Lucilla whenever he dined with Andre Steed, Marcus Hammond and Durante Bazen. This night however, they all wanted to know about Jeff Frakes. The man had become a celebrity in his own right while seeing the sexy superstar Lucilla Fairchild. Many speculated that the relationship could be serious.

The trio decided to grill their 'insider' friend for all the tidbits much of Europe wanted to know.

Ryken thought back to earlier that evening. Lucilla had suggested going out or she'd cook in for the night. All he could think of was that luscious mouth of hers riding his cock and decided she'd be safer-*he'd* be safer going out.

"Listen," he addressed his friends, forcing his attention back to the present conversation. "In the long run this could seriously affect the show. *That's* why I care so

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much about this new relationship of hers,” he shared, tugging on the cuff of the white linen shirt he wore beneath a gray boucle textured coat. “They could get married,” he continued, clearing his throat on the last word, “then the ass would make her leave the show. I’m just concerned for my future,” he added with a shrug.

Andre, Marcus and Durante exchanged knowing looks, but none dared tell Ryken what they were truly thinking.

“Look man, just don’t worry over it,” Marc urged, knocking his fist to the table.

‘Dre raised his glass in a mock toast. “Damn right and remember *you* are the one who gets to fuck her every day.”

Ryken rolled his eyes. “She’s got a man for that, remember?”

“And you *still* get to fuck her every day!” Durante reiterated, grinning devilishly while shaking hands with his laughing friends.

Soon, Ryken couldn’t help but join in if only to laugh at their one track minds.

Avery and Telia Fairchild lived in the London borough of Lewisham. Avery was the proprietor of his own paper mill—a venture he began with his wife when she was still his girlfriend. Over the years, the business grew and diversified. The success afforded Telia the luxury of living her true dream of focusing on home and family. The vivacious Jamaican born lady was a success at both, raising three lawyer sons and one superstar daughter—whose choice of profession had caused her parents more than one sleepless night.

Still, the family overcame those trials and grew stronger for it. The struggles also intensified Telia’s nurturing instincts. She was always quick to adopt a needy soul. Such was the case when Lucilla introduced Ryken to the family. Being so far away from his own people for so much of the year, prompted Telia to pull him into the fold as yet another son.

The Fairchild’s holiday parties were always quite the affairs. Not only family, but friends and neighbors were always welcomed. Since a few of the events took place right after Halloween, it was possible for several guests to attend without cutting into their own family plans.

Ryken didn’t realize how possessive he was being of Lu until they arrived at the event and had their first dance. Jeff had an emergency at the hospital and called to say how sorry he was that he wouldn’t make it to the party.

Of course, the Fairchilds were more than pleased to see Ryken escorting their daughter instead of one of the clueless adult film starlets he usually whisked around with.

Lucilla, who had been wearing a frown for the better part of the evening, finally decided to bite the bullet. “What the devil is wrong with you?” she asked, giving a firm tug on the lapels of his black suit coat.

Ryken simply raised his sleek brows and offered no verbal reply.

Lucilla rolled her eyes. “Why are you so quiet?”

He shrugged. “I’m always quiet,” he reminded her, fiddling with the side shirring on the top of the black matte jersey pantsuit she wore. “‘Brooding Masculinity’ is what they call it,” he jibed.

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Lucilla's frown darkened. "Well I don't like it," she snapped and thumped her fist against his brick chest. "Tell me what's wrong dammit."

"Hell Luci, what do you want me to say?" he snapped back, leaning close to fix her with a fierce look.

She only shook her head for a time. "You've been so distant-ever since you returned from your trip."

"Luci-"

"Other than rehearsing the script you've hardly had two words to say to me."

"Love-"

"Is it about the scene?" she interrupted him again. "My...rehearsing the oral sex?" she inquired, her fists weakening against his chest.

The quickly uttered question brought a look of surprise to Ryken's gorgeous face. "What?" he could only breathe.

Lucilla's gaze faltered and she focused on the strong chords of his neck visible beneath the shirt's open collar. "It's just...we've been rehearsing it a lot."

Ryken's grip flexed where he held her hips and he prayed she'd not feel his shaft swelling against her clit. A blow job done right wasn't something a man could always count on-not even a man with a slew of adult film beauties at his beck and call. Lucilla had not only mastered the art, but she was eager to maintain it. As the lucky recipient, he had no complaints. Just the thought of her head bobbing up and down on his lap, or the softly whimpered moans she uttered while her lips and tongue feasted on his pulsing cock, threatened to weaken his legs right then.

"You don't think any less of me, do you?"

He heard her voice the question and forced himself out of his daze. "What?" he hissed that time.

Lucilla wilted, looking as though she could've dropped through the floor for speaking her concerns. "It's just-"

"Hey," it was his turn to interrupt and he cupped her face in his big hands. "After everything we've done together-if you think giving me head-and damn good head at that-is gonna make me think less of you, forget it."

Lucilla's sunny expression returned. Standing on her toes, she kissed his cheek. "You have such a way with words," she said.

They swayed to a slow, jazzy holiday tune for several minutes more. It was some time before they tuned in to the soothing rubs across their shoulders.

Telia Fairchild's beautiful dark face was alive with happiness. "You have a phone call, love," she told her daughter.

"Thanks Mommy," Lu whispered, smiling up at Ryken as she slipped out of his embrace.

Turning to her daughter's leading man, Telia spread her arms wide. "Do you mind?"

"Are you kidding?" Ryken breathed, pulling the lovely fifty-something lady into a close embrace and kissing her neck.

"I'm the envy of all my neighbors tonight," she laughed, while casting sly looks around the room. "They're all so jealous that I know you."

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Ryken put his most wicked expression in place. “We could do even more to make ‘em jealous, you know?” he teased devilishly and pressed his forehead to hers. “If only I weren’t terrified of your husband,” he admitted, a look of playful unease creeping into his emerald stare.

Again, Telia laughed. “Well I already told them no other woman would stand a chance as long as you were in love with my daughter.”

Ryken stopped mid-sway on the dance floor. “What?” he uttered for the third time that night.

Telia gave his cheek a playful slap. “Don’t try it, handsome. You may have everyone else fooled-including my Luci-with all those little idiots you run around with, but all I have to do is look at you to know how far gone you are over my baby.”

Ryken sighed, desperate to uphold the façade. “I don’t know where you get this stuff, Miss T.”

“You just better come clean with her before that Frakes fellow makes his move,” Telia warned.

Ryken was intrigued. “You act as if you don’t like him.”

“I don’t.”

“You’ve never even met him!” Ryken laughed.

“That was him on the phone for Luci,” Telia shared with a disapproving gleam in her midnight gaze. “I didn’t like his voice.”

Ryken shook his head. “He’s a doctor, you know? Don’t all women want a doctor for a son in law?”

Telia offered a haughty sniff. “I’ve got three lawyers for sons. That beats one doctor any day.”

“Spoken like the mother of a lawyer!” Ryken chuckled growing serious at the look Telia flashed him.

“Don’t wait too long, love,” she instructed, curving a hand across his jaw. “Things like this can get messy,” she predicted before putting her smile back in place and continuing their dance.



CHAPTER FOUR

The set of “*Sensuality*” was always a beautiful thing to behold. Cast and crew alike had daydreamed of having their own homes capture just a bit of the allure of the various set locations. Even when it teemed with members of the cast and crew; in uproar over a last minute script or set change, it was still a lovely piece of construction. Lofty ceilings, sunken rooms and the elaborate décor gave the place a serene aura regardless of what was going on.

Such was the case that morning. The atmosphere was alive with conversation. Machinery and furniture were being moved about as the group made final preparations for the promo shoot announcing the new summer season and the upcoming movie.

Ryken and Lucilla joined their fellow cast members on the main set. The actors were garbed in robes or negligees while receiving direction on their shoots.

“Alright then, attention gang, attention,” Charlie called, waiting for the various conversations to silence. “So if there are no further questions?” he left the inquiry hanging for a few seconds before nodding. “Right, just remember these scenes are for the film’s teaser. So act like you mean it,” he instructed with a laugh that affected the cast. “None of us want to be here all day,” he continued, “I dunno about the rest of you, but I’ve still got loads of Christmas shopping left to do.”

As Ryken and Lucilla were next up, the remaining cast was allowed to venture off until their times were set.

“Alright then you two,” Charlie was saying once he had his leads alone. “Just get started. The scene will be filmed in Devin and Ariel’s kitchen,” he said, referring to the names of their characters. “I’ll yell cut when I have enough. You two are welcomed to continue until *you’ve* had enough,” he added in a naughty tone and they all laughed.

“So how’s Jeff?” Ryken asked, trying to sound as if he were really interested as they made their way to the set.

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Lucilla's smile was one of surprise and delight. "He's great. Thank you for asking."

Ryken nodded. "He meet your parents yet? I know he hated missing the party a few weeks ago."

Lucilla's sunny expression dimmed a little. "It's been so frustrating Ry, I haven't been able to get them together once. My parents are always crazy busy whenever I mention getting them together with Jeff."

Ryken smiled, thinking of Telia Fairchild just then.

"I'll work it out," Lucilla predicted with a lazy shrug. She sighed a bit and raked a few fingers through her short crop. "They should all have a chance to meet when I take him to the Christmas dinner."

They had just arrived in the kitchen area of their set home when Lucilla spoke. Ryken caught her elbow in a light grasp, stopping her just as they approached the spacious kitchen island.

"I thought I was taking you?" he asked.

Lucilla's brow furrowed with sympathy. "Oh love, you're so sweet to offer, but I don't have the heart to force you to attend another Fairchild Family Function."

Ryken bowed his head to hide the muscle dancing fiercely in his jaw. "You're not forcing me," he grumbled, stripping out of the navy robe he wore with sagging denims.

"Please," Lu groaned, "I practically bullied you into taking me to that party last month when Jeff had to cancel. I know you have better things-better *sluts* to do," she teased, standing on her toes to kiss his cheek.

Ryken's smile was not forthcoming. What Lucilla failed to realize was that he really enjoyed every event he'd let her think she was bullying him into.

"...No, I'm gonna get Jeff and my folks together if it kills me," Lucilla was still going on, "of course, the way things are going Papa won't meet him until he's giving me away at the wedding."

The simple tease removed the final tether Ryken had on his temper. Catching Lucilla's waist in an unbreakable grip, he set her atop the island while thrusting his tongue deep into her mouth.

She moaned in shock and instant arousal. In seconds, her tongue was thoroughly engaged in the lusty battle.

Ryken's only thought was getting her out of the silky mauve robe. Lucilla gasped when she heard more than a few rips and tears of the material.

"Ry-" she tried to complain, but his kiss simply deepened.

He kept a huge hand cupped behind her neck. The other cruised up her thigh and gave it a sharp tug. Moments later, Lucilla felt his fingers exploring her pussy-already drenched from the mastery of his kiss. Surrendering finally, she lost her fingers in his glorious hair...

Charlie's camera had begun to roll, but the on-screen lovers were oblivious to all else. Ryken pushed the robe to the floor and eased Lucilla down to lay upon the island. His tongue stroked her mouth with slow, heated lunge. His fingers abandoned her twat to manipulate her nipples into pouting buds of need. When they stood erect and eager, he left one tit with a possessive squeeze before venturing lower. Soon, his hands were

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spreading both her thighs. At last, his tongue was plundering her sex instead of her mouth.

Lucilla moaned shamelessly, her hips bucking. She twisted and arched fiercely to capture every thrusting inch of his tongue which rotated and sampled the fragrant cream that built steadily inside her.

Wanting more still, he cupped her ass and uttered a hungry groan while nibbling the hyper sensitive folds of her clit. Lu squeezed her eyes shut tight, her thumbnails flicking at her nipples as she drowned in a whirlwind of sensation. She didn't know whether she wanted Ryken to stop or go on. Clearly of course, he had no intentions of stopping. Just as an explosive orgasmic wave wracked her slender frame however, he stopped. Pulling her up, he made her drink the taste of her come from his tongue.

As she kissed him desperately, Ryken freed himself from the jeans he'd sported. Nude beneath, it took no time for him to fill her with the granite length of his dick.

Lucilla cried out in the midst of the kiss and impossibly took more of his tongue. Her hands fell away from the bronze expanse of his chest. She braced them behind her and moved wantonly against him; loving the way the length and width of his stiff cock invaded her.

Ryken continued to thrust, his mouth now filled with an ample portion of her tit. Somewhere in the depths of her mind, Lucilla knew that this was beyond acting-beyond the job. There was a base realness present and it caused her to tremble in a way that had nothing to do with the pleasure he brought her.

She tried to push him away with no success. He deserted the nipple he feasted on, preferring her mouth instead. Lu moaned helplessly and surrendered once more to the devastating effects of his kiss. Her gasps and all else were smothered. He continued to thrust, his steel erection carving its place inside her.

Ryken lost strength to hold her, his powerful frame weakened all over. A shuddering climax was seconds away. Bracing his hands on either side of her, he let his forehead fall to her shoulder.

Lucilla felt just as enraptured, arching closer while his perfect teeth bit softly into the satin flesh of her shoulder. She couldn't help but tune into his voice when he grunted in response to every long stroke of his cock inside her. She heard the soft whimper of her name on his lips. He didn't call her 'Ariel', but *Luci-hers* was the name on his mouth.

She hadn't much time to dwell on it. The sensation grew more intense, more...feverish. She felt his dick tense and throb in a tell-tale fashion seconds before his release oozed, warming her pussy walls in a way that aroused her all over again.

For long moments, they were locked in the embrace, catching their breath. Then, Ryken withdrew, collected Lucilla's robe from the floor and draped it across her. He kissed the corner of her mouth and left her atop the island.

Lu's expressive brown stare grew wider. Her lashes fluttered as she struggled to dismiss the thoughts racing through her mind.

"So they're getting married?"

"No."

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“So you’re upset because....”

“I’m not upset.”

“Mmm and I ‘spose that’s why both you fork and knife are bent in half.”

Ryken’s sleek brows drew close. “Shit,” he hissed, dropping the utensils onto his half-eaten T-bone.

Andre Steed chuckled. “Drop the act, man. Hell, at least be honest about what you feel for the woman. At least be honest with *yourself*.”

Ryken massaged his forearm beneath the worsted fabric of his black suit coat. “We’ve got the number one show in Europe. Number one over *every* other show in *every* genre and it’s number one because we’re able to separate real from fantasy,” he preached.

Andre nodded. “And how honest were you being just then, mate?” he inquired, his dark eyes twinkling when Ryken uttered another curse. “Bloody hell Ryken, your feelings for Lu didn’t just appear overnight *or* with the arrival of this new man in her life. They’ve been brewing since you met her.”

“Shit ‘Dre,” Ryken groaned, massaging his eyes as he smiled. “Of course *feelings* have been brewing. Need I remind you of how incredible she is to look at and to fuck?”

“Oh come off it,” Andre spat, his handsome dark face alive with disbelief. “Man we’ve all see the women at your beck and call. They’re all luscious beauties who are all most likely exquisite screws. There’s more to Lu and you know it. There’s the physical *and* the mental.”

“Do tell,” Ryken replied in a weary tone, now applying massaging pressure to the back of his neck.

Andre reclined in the deep armchair he occupied. “Once you meet that goddess and talk to her, you realize there’s a damned impressive brain inside that beautiful head of hers and you’re hooked far more than you ever were,” he confessed.

Ryken reached for his glass and finished what remained of his Courvoisier.

“...watching her on that show...” Andre continued, “I’m willin’ to bet every man who sees it, pictures himself in your place-fucking that captivating beauty and having her look at him the way she looks at you.”

“Well don’t you two look serious!”

Both men looked up to see the topic of conversation standing right next to their table.

“Hello love,” Lucilla whispered, leaning down to kiss Andre’s cheek. She laughed when he stood and pulled her into a more substantial hug.

“Damn we were just talking about you,” he confessed, toying with the row of buttons along the back of her silver gray frock.

Lucilla frowned playfully. “All good, I hope?”

“You know it,” Andre swore.

Lucilla was already looking at Ryken. “Hi,” she whispered, moving over to hug him as well.

Ryken had but a moment to savor the feel of her in the curve hugging dress. Seconds later, she’d left his side.

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“Dre, let me introduce you. Jeff Frakes, Andre Steed.” Lucilla was announcing then. “We’re out having dinner with my brother Amir and his wife,” she said as Jeff and Andre shook hands.

Ryken clenched his jaw and fist simultaneously. He barely managed a smile when Jeff leaned over to shake his hand.

“Well, we better head back.” Lu told them, hugging Andre once more. While Jeff and Andre spoke a few moments more, she took the time to talk with Ryken. She didn’t bother to ask if there was anything wrong-because clearly there was.

“I’ll see you at home,” she spoke against his cheek and noticed the muscle clench a tad tighter in his jaw. “Night ‘Dre,” she called, taking Jeff’s arm.

“Yes my friend, every man pictures having Lucilla Fairchild look at him the way she looks at you. Including, our man Frakes.” Andre reiterated, watching the couple heading across the dining room.

Ryken’s jade gaze glistened with suspicion. “What’s *that* mean?”

Andre laughed. “Hell man, trust me, whatever she feels for that man is *not* love. She’s saving that for you, I’m sure.” He spoke decidedly, before reclaiming his seat and preparing to finish his dinner.

Ryken simply watched Lucilla across the room.

That night, Lucilla stayed up waiting for Ryken once Jeff dropped her off at home following dinner. She’d dozed off atop her bedcovers, but awoke to the sound of Ryken in the guestroom.

Leaving her room quickly, she headed down the corridor and was stunned to find him packing.

“What are you doing?” she blurted.

“What’s it look like?” he replied.

Lucilla bristled beneath the snug white capped-sleeved tee she sported. The rigid set of Ryken’s broad frame and the force with which he shoved the clothes into his bag, told her not to press. Unfortunately, his behavior was damned confusing as hell and they were too close for her not to try getting to the root of his troubles.

Bolting across the room, she yanked a hooded sweatshirt from his hand. “*Why* are you leaving?” she demanded to know.

“Should’ve gone a long time ago,” he mumbled, reaching for something else to shove into the leather duffle. “I never stay in the city more than a few days. Besides, it’s the holidays, right? Time for family and...soon to be family and all that. I’m sure Jeff doesn’t appreciate us rooming together this way either.”

Lucilla rubbed the pulse point at her neck and decided not to comment on his last remark. “Well where are you going? Back to Cape Town?”

“No Tuscany, once all this publicity stuff is done.”

“Well are your aunts there?” she asked.

Ryken shrugged. “No.”

Chill bumps appeared along her bare arms. Lucilla knew it was confusion, not the room’s temperature that was affecting her. “What about my mom’s party?” she inquired softly.

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Again, his shoulders rose beneath the dark suit jacket. "I'll be there. I don't want to upset Miss T."

"Damn you! What about upsetting me?!" Lu couldn't help but snap. "Why are you being so cold?"

"Didn't realize I was," he mumbled, not bothering to face her.

Finally, Lucilla pushed the bags from the bed and sat in their places.

"Don't do this Lu," Ryken warned his voice grim as his green stare flared down upon her.

"Did I do something wrong?" she asked, her heart thudding when his warning glare turned scathing in its intensity.

"What?" she breathed, her wide stare searching the unsettling realm of his deep-set ones.

Instead of a response, Ryken turned his attention back to packing. He was reaching for one of the leather duffels, when Lucilla grabbed his wrist in another attempt to make him talk. Surprising her, he turned the tables. Taking both her wrists in one of his, he jerked her close.

"Let me go," his voice grated. He felt his heart lurch painfully when she blinked and appeared as if she didn't recognize him.

Lucilla left the bed when he released her. She walked out of the room without looking back.

Publicity days were full of fun on the set of "*Sensuality*". There were no lines to recite-only the bare basics were required and the couples literally threw themselves into their work.

Such was the case when the group met for the second time that week for the photo shoot. The shots would appear in various periodicals and billboards to hype the upcoming season. The sessions were similar to the teaser trailers except an outside Photographer was hired. Things were pretty standard. What *wasn't* standard though was for the show's top stars to appear so serious when they usually teased each other and everyone else without mercy.

Lucilla arrived on the set checking her watch and praying she could make it through the forty five minute session she and Ryken were scheduled for. So help him if he shot her one funny look or comment-else he'd be sporting a black eye or toothless grin for these damned photos, she vowed. His mood was no longer confusing, it was frightening. She'd wracked her brain trying to figure what it could be. Clearly it was a mood directed completely at *her*; for he was his devilishly charming self for everyone else.

Ryken walked out her door with his packed bags three nights earlier without a word-not even goodbye. Today would be the first she'd seen or heard from him since. *This is gonna be cheery*, she groaned silently.

Ryken arrived on set looking as foul as his partner. Attempts at being good hearted were now weighing heavily on his nerves and his temper. He knew Lucilla was confused, but what could he do about it? Tell her that a murderous rage swelled inside

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him at just the thought of Jeff Frakes holding her hand? Then what? Have them both second guessing the decisions they'd made to keep their sex life on screen and scripted and not off screen and true? It was a risk that could ruin the show-or worse-their friendship.

But isn't that happening anyway, man? A voice queried inside his mind. Thankfully, Charlie was calling everyone to order for instruction from Jacob Wayman, the photographer.

Just ride him Lucilla, that's what Jacob said-his only instruction to her for the shoot. Just ride him. Like it was so easy when all she wanted to do was slap the shit out of him.

Lucilla cast the enticing notion from her mind in order to focus on the er-task at hand. Jacob had allowed them a few moments to 'get going'. She intentionally averted her gaze when Ryken began to fondle her. They were nude and cuddled upon a beautiful burgundy settee draped with silken mauve and emerald materials.

Ryken's kisses to her neck and the intensity with which he sucked her tits held none of the coldness that had surrounded him that night in her apartment. But, of course, now he was acting, she thought. That night had been all too real.

Her lashes fluttered on impulse when his dick erected against her inner thigh. Instead of pulling away so she could begin her part in the shoot, he continued to suckle the nipple-interchanging between one and the other. He cupped and fondled the breast left bereft of his lips for a time. Lucilla couldn't pretend not to be affected-her pussy was soaking with need. She shuddered, tugging her lip between her teeth when his big hands curved about her thighs and spread them to accommodate his frame. Then, he was plunging down, thrusting his cock inside her with the same intensity that he thrust his tongue inside her mouth.

Lucilla lost herself in the delicious act, grinding her hips against his to enjoy as much of his steel length as he'd allow her to. She moaned heatedly beneath his kiss and felt him grow impossibly stiffer inside her.

"I'm on top, I'm on top," she gasped, realizing that they were perhaps moments away from him coming all over them both.

Ryken didn't appear to hear her. He simply buried his handsome bronzed face into her neck and slowed the delicious stokes he offered.

"Jacob wants me to ride," she continued to voice the warnings. Of course, her voice was barely there as her cries of delight overpowered everything.

Only two more thrusts and then Ryken was cursing fiercely as he withdrew to pull her astride him.

The click of Jacob's camera mingled with their moans of delight. Ryken directed the movement of Lucilla's hips. He barely allowed her to do anything except sit captive, straddling his massive body while he manipulated her moves.

Lucilla cupped one of her boobs, flicking her thumbnail against a rigid nipple while her other hand smoothed past her bellybutton. She toyed with the folds of her clit and shuddered at the passionate wave that flooded her.

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Ryken's deep set stare narrowed and he lost all control at the sight of her touching herself. He squeezed his eyes shut when one last clench of her pussy sent a wealth of his release rushing from the head of his throbbing cock.

Lucilla melted against him, her eyelids felt too heavy to remain open. In the distance there were shouts of 'good work guys!' as well as a few complimentary whistles. She was still trying to catch her breath when Ryken pulled her off him and left the bed. Lucilla held her forehead and willed her pulse to slow.

Telia Fairchild's Christmas dinner party was one of the premier highlights of the holiday season for all who were lucky enough to receive an invite. Held in late November, the event got the season underway. In spite of it all, Ryken was happy to be in the midst. With the aunts celebrating with friends in the States, the season would be even more grating than it usually was. Thankfully, he could count on the Fairchilds to keep him in the spirit.

If only he could steer clear of their daughter. He didn't know how much longer he could stand seeing the confusion in Lu's expressive chocolate gaze. But hell, how was he suppose to tell her that he'd gone and done the one thing they both swore never to do? How could he tell her he was in love-in lust-but yes in *love* with her?

A tug on his jacket lapel brought him back to jaw-clenching reality.

"Ry, don't you like what I'm wearing?" Jilly Paulson asked. Her collagen-enhanced lips turned down into a pout.

Ryken tried to hide his frustration. "You know I do," he replied, his tone making him sound as though he could have cared less.

"Well, you barely looked at me twice since we left my place," Jilly whined, rubbing her full chest against him.

"It's fine," he reiterated with a shrug and groaned silently when Jilly looked even more crestfallen. Leaning close, he cupped her chin and brushed his lips across her cheek. "It'll look even better on the floor," he whispered, against her ear and then stood back to rake his green gaze across the skimpy crimson frock.

His words had the desired affect and Jilly began to beam.

"Speaking of the floor, let's dance," he decided, knowing he'd made her night.

In another area of the house, Lucilla was finally introducing her parents to Jeff. She stressed the fact that he was a doctor when they didn't appear too impressed by the initial introduction.

"Well Jeff, I hope you've brought an appetite with you," Telia was saying as she stepped out of the cozy circle they stood in. "We've got quite a feast," she promised and then walked away.

Lucilla frowned, propping a hand to her hip as she watched her mother stroll off. Silently, she wondered what the devil was going on with everyone. It was then that she locked in on Ryken dancing with his date for the evening. One thing on her mind then, she left her dad talking with Jeff and headed for the dance area.

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A faint grimace twisted Lucilla's mouth as she approached the couple and overheard Jilly laughing over something Ryken had said. Stepping close, she smoothed a hand across the girl's shoulder and smiled when she turned.

"Lu!" Jilly cried, pulling her into a tight hug. "Great party! Your mother really knows how to throw them!"

"Thanks Jill, do you mind if I cut in?" Lu asked. Her eyes focused on Ryken's stony expression.

Jilly took no heed of the emotions swirling about her. "Sure!" she said, before turning to toy with the stylishly wide collar of Ryken's black shirt. "I'll be waiting," she promised and kissed his jaw as she spoke.

Lucilla raised her arms, hissing a curse when Ryken drew her into a crushing embrace that wasn't meant to be sweet. "So help you if you rip this," she warned, glancing down at the chic cutaway jacket of her plum suit.

"How much longer will you be all over me about this?" he snapped, paying no mind to her words.

"I didn't come to ask you to talk to me," she swore, her voice going soft. "I only wanted to apologize for whatever it was that I've done to upset you." She sighed when his hold loosened. "Just want you to know that I'm here to listen when or *if* you're ever ready to talk."

Ryken stilled himself from groaning. Feeling like a true heel when she was being her usual, sweet self, he felt his wall beginning to weaken. Confessing all was next on his list, when he noticed Lucilla wave and smile at someone across the room.

Seeing Jeff Frakes set his temper and his mood back to the ugly place it'd been dwelling for the last few weeks. Ryken couldn't drag his jade stare away from the man as he laughed and talked with Lucilla's father like he was already a member of the family.

Lucilla stood on her toes and kissed his mouth. "Remember what I said," she whispered against his lips.

Finding the will someplace deep, Ryken managed to release her when she moved back. He watched her join her dad and Jeff across the room. A minute later, he left the party without a word to anyone.



CHAPTER FIVE

Lucilla knew she'd regret imbibing so heavily on her mothers' special eggnog. She didn't realize how soon she'd regret it until her ringing phone woke her from a deep slumber around 4:30a.m.the following morning. Fumbling across the nightstand, she managed to lift the receiver by the third ring.

"Yeah?" she grunted.

"Yes am I speaking with Lucilla Fairchild?"

"This is Lucilla."

"Forgive the hour of my call Ms. Fairchild I'm Dr. Kai Dumali at Majesty Hospital."

"What's the problem?" Lu asked the words 'doctor' and 'hospital' quickly pulled her into a sitting position.

"I do apologize for disturbing you Ms. Fairchild. Ryken Gabrielle was admitted last night following an accident on his bike."

By now, Lucilla's eyes were wide open. "His bike? But...I just saw him earlier. I was sure he'd driven," she argued, recalling the date he'd brought to her mother's party.

The doctor was very sympathetic. "If you'll excuse me for saying Miss, but he must have exchanged the car for his bike."

Lucilla covered her mouth. Tears pooled her eyes as the doctor told her Ryken had crashed on a street near the hotel where he'd been staying since leaving her apartment.

"How? How is he doctor?" she shuddered.

"It appears he's suffered a broken bone in his foot, two cracked ribs and several bruises but this is remarkably good news," he added hearing the volume of her sobs rise. "Considering the severity of the crash, it's very good news indeed."

"Can I see him?" Lu asked, scrambling out of her bed when the doctor said yes.

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When Lucilla arrived at the hospital much of the crew and the entire cast were on hand. Hospital staff was having a difficult time focusing on their work in the midst of all the ‘beautiful people’ filling the corridors.

“There, there love. Shh...it’s alright,” Charlie soothed Lucilla when she ran right into his arms. “He’s alright, he’s fine...thank you for calling me,” he whispered against her hair.

“Where is he Charlie? Have you seen him? Is he *really* alright?” Lucilla fired the questions at her director, barely able to hear the words for her heartbeat pounding her ears.

“Shh...” Charlie urged, drawing her close once more. “He’s *really* alright but we haven’t seen him. The doctor is only allowing family.”

“Right, right,” Lu breathed, nodding her understanding. “When did the aunts get here?” she asked, smoothing her hands along the sleeves of her leather jacket.

Charlie smiled. “His aunts aren’t here, love. Dr. Dumali is only letting *you* in. You are, after all, the closest thing he has to a wife.”

Lucilla blinked, totally taken aback by the comparison. A second later, conversation silenced in the corridor as the doctor approached.

“Ms. Fairchild?” Dr. Dumali inquired, already reaching out to shake her hand. “Would you come with me please?” he asked before she could attack him with questions.

“He’s still pretty groggy from all the pain meds,” Dr. Dumali shared.

Lu felt her heart would explode as she followed the doctor through a series of bright hallways. “His family...his family is visiting in the States,” she felt she should inform him.

Dr. Dumali’s dark eyes twinkled. “Well it’ll do him a world of good to know *you’re* here.”

“I’ll contact them right away,” Lu added.

The doctor nodded then. “That’s fine, but you should know that *you* were the only one he asked for when they brought him in. Here we are,” he announced in the same breath.

At last, Lucilla put one foot before the other and followed the doctor into the dim room. She watched him stroll over to the bed where Ryken lay. After checking a few of the monitors, Dr. Dumali turned to grace her with another smile.

“Just push this button if you need anything, alright?” he instructed, then squeezed her shoulder and left the room.

On uncertain steps, Lucilla approached the bed to study Ryken more closely. Aside from all the bandaging around his foot and torso, he seemed the same. There was minor bruising on his jaw and cheek, but nothing huge. Removing her jacket, she eased into the chair closest to the bed and gingerly took his hand in both of hers. She feathered kisses across his bruised knuckles and bandaged wrists. Bowing her head, she spoke a silent prayer.

Moments later, Lucilla felt him fidgeting in the bed. She looked up, her eyes wide as she searched his expression for any sign of pain.

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“Babe?” She whispered, moving to stand over him. “Ry? It’s okay...” she soothed, toying with his thick blue black curls. “Shh...” she urged, kissing his forehead, temple and cheek. “Honey you’re in the hospital. You had an accident on your bike.”

“Mmm,” Ryken gestured, his eyes remained closed though he turned his head towards the sound of her voice. “Luci,” he grunted, and then grimaced in discomfort.

Lucilla leaned closer. “Yes, it’s me love. Don’t try to talk. Shh...” she kissed the corner of his mouth. “Don’t talk, you need to rest. Shh...”

“Luci, Luci...” he continued, his hand flexing around hers in a surprising show of strength. “Luci, I love you. I love you,” he confessed before drifting off into unconsciousness.

Lucilla blinked, her hand going limp in his. Then, she shook her head against the heavy thud of her heart. Well of course he loved her. She loved him too.

Smoothing both hands across the sleeves of her zip front hooded jacket, she ignored the warning voice which said she knew what he meant. She knew very well what he meant and it had nothing to do with the platonic love they’d accepted from each other for the past eight years.

Lucilla was coming from the bathroom when she saw that Ryken was wide awake. “Are you in pain?” she asked, tugging nervously at the long hem of the snug-fitting heather green sweater she wore beneath her jacket.

“Shit,” he hissed, just after shaking his head ‘no’. The sight of his bandaged foot and torso elicited the outburst. “Son of a bitch,” he went on.

“Sweetie, you had an accident-”

“I remember,” he interjected.

Lucilla nodded, raking fingers through her clipped waves. “Should I get the nurse?” she asked, drawing close to straighten the bed linens.

Ryken’s eyes narrowed. “No.”

“I was going to call the aunts when-”

“No and please stop that,” he said, referring to her fussing with the covers.

Knowing he was agitated over the accident, Lu decided to give him some time alone. She pressed a kiss to his temple. “I’ll go to the cafeteria for some coffee.”

Ryken caught her hand before she could move far. “I’m sorry,” his voice grated.

Lu smiled. “It’s okay you’ve been through a lot.”

“I’m sorry anyway especially for the way I acted at the party.”

“Ry-”

“And for the way I’ve been acting for a while,” he added.

“Shh...” Lu soothed. She perched on the edge of the bed to trail her fingers through his glossy curls. “It’s alright, really. I’m used to you acting like a jackass.”

Ryken chuckled, but the action triggered pain in his ribs.

“Alright, it’s time to get someone in here to see you,” Lu decided, moving to stand. “I’ll be right back,” she promised and leaned close to kiss his mouth.

What was intended to be a quick peck became something delicious and sultry. Ryken’s tongue delved lazily past her lips and Lucilla instinctively reciprocated. A tiny moan escaped her just as a knock sounded on the room door.

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“Dr. Dumali,” Lucilla gasped, grateful and relieved for the interruption. “I think he might be in a bit of pain,” she explained, tugging on the cuff of her sweater and looking everywhere but Ryken’s face. She hurried from the room without another word.

The next weeks showed great improvement on Ryken’s part. Dr. Dumali was stunned over how quickly he healed. Still, Ryken would need several more weeks of ease before he was fully recuperated. Lucilla showed up each day to bring magazines or other items he’d requested. She manned the phones-screening the incessant visits and calls from media who wanted info on the accident and Ryken’s condition. They never mentioned the kiss and things seemed pretty much back to normal-so Lucilla thought...and prayed.

“Any word yet?” Lucilla asked, smiling brightly when she walked into Ryken’s room that day. She knew he was on pins and needles waiting for word on when he would be released.

“Hasn’t gotten here yet.” Ryken said clearly sour over the fact.

“Are you comfortable?” Lu asked pulling off the black cashmere jacket she wore with a matching button down sweater. “Do you need anything?” she asked when he offered no response.

For a split second, Ryken envisioned himself between her legs and fucking her senseless. Quickly, he tossed out the image; knowing her and probably the good doctor would surely spot the erection that would form a lofty tent beneath the covers. “I’m good,” he managed to tell her just as Dr. Dumali entered the room.

“And how are we today?!” The forty-something doctor greeted the couple.

Lucilla’s bright smile returned. “Great!” she replied in a tone that was just as sunny.

“It’s cold out there,” The doctor replied, shivering as he flipped the pages of the chart he carried.

Lucilla took a seat on the bed and stroked Ryken’s hair. “I agree and I’ve still got to get out there and do more Christmas shopping.”

Meanwhile, the patient in question rolled his eyes in agitation. The sound of the syrupy conversation was about as frustrating as laying in bed for the last two weeks. “Could we skip all the greetings doc and have you tell me when I can get the hell out of here?” he snapped when the conversation turned to the year’s hottest gift ideas.

Dr. Dumali cast a knowing smile toward his patient. “To the dismay of the entire female staff, you’ll be released at the end of the week.”

“Oh that’s wonderful!” Lucilla cried, clasping her sweater.

“Why not today?” Ryken asked, his long brows drawn close.

“You still need to take it easy Ryken,” the doctor warned. “Your ribs are in fine shape, but that foot still needs more time to fully heal. It’s for that reason that I’ll only release you to the care of someone who can look after you. Otherwise, here at the hospital is where you’ll remain.”

“I’ll be damned,” Ryken growled, hating the phrase ‘look after’ with a passion.

Dr. Dumali’s expression was like stone. “Take it or leave it,” he said.

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“It’s alright doctor. I’ll take care of him,” Lucilla volunteered.

“Wonderful!” The doctor bellowed, at once his jovial self again. He spoke briefly with Lu about the release date and a few other particular before he left to continue his rounds.

“This is not a good idea Luci,” Ryken was saying once they were alone. “You can’t drop everything to *look after* me.”

Lucilla wouldn’t budge. “I can and I will,” she said and propped both hands on her hips. “Besides, you’d run over anyone else who had the job,” she predicted, a teasing smile on her dark face.

Ryken folded his arms across his chest. “I could find someone to take the job.”

“No doubt. But you need to be *cared* for, not fucked every second of the day which is exactly what would happen.”

The fact that being fucked every second *wouldn’t* happen with Lucilla put an even grittier edge to Ryken’s mood.

“And what about your boyfriend? What’s he gonna think of it?”

“Listen Ryken, you were in my life long before I ever knew Jeff Frakes existed. If you think I’m just going to leave you with no one to properly care for you, then you’re sadly mistaken friend.” Lucilla explained in a tone not to be argued with. “Now if you’ll excuse me I’m going to make my guest room more presentable.”

Ryken remained silent, watching as she gathered her things and left. Alone in the room, he groaned and pushed all ten fingers through his hair. How in hell was he going to survive seeing her day in and day out for the foreseeable future? He wondered. He wanted her in his bed and to be fucking her senseless every second she was there. Then, he shook his head and told himself to remember the sort of relationship they’d shared for the better part of eight years. It was good and strong because they’d kept who they were on “*Sensuality*” on “*Sensuality*”.

Never before had sex encroached upon their real lives and they had a successful relationship because of it. That all sounded marvelous. Unfortunately, it wasn’t nearly enough for him now. He wanted Lucilla—he wanted access to every part of her. He decided then that he damn well intended to have her.

That Friday, Ryken was hobbling into the posh guestroom at Lucilla’s which would belong to him for at least the next two months. He resisted help from anyone. He left the car and made it inside only assisted by the crutches.

The room was every man’s dream—all his favorite books, magazines and movies (rated G through triple X) He had every sports channel imaginable. His laptop, IPOD, MP3, Blackberry and any other electronic device were in an arm’s reach. There was a private fridge with all his favorite drinks and Lucilla was there to get anything else he might need.

Ryken was subdued, closely watching her as she fussed around. When she decided it was time for him to get into bed, he didn’t argue.

“Is there anything else you want?” Lucilla asked for what had to be the twentieth time.

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Ryken pressed his lips together and thought it best that he keep his *wants* silent. His hand ached with desire to reach out and take what he wanted as her ample bosom practically grazed his cheeks while she fluffed pillows behind his head.

“Your pain medicine is right on the nightstand Ryken-pay attention to the time. I don’t want you forgetting to take it,” she lectured. “And stay off that foot. I mean it Ry,” she added in a firm tone knowing he’d not hesitate to break that rule.

“Jerk chicken and vegetables for lunch,” she announced and passed him the remote. Leaning close, she tousled his hair. “I’ll be in to check on you as soon as I change clothes,” she promised and kissed his forehead.

She left the room already tugging the sweater over her head and Ryken kept his eyes focused-hoping for more of a glimpse. He groaned when she was out of view and quickly found something on the TV that was sports related. Sadly, the thought of her right across the hall and taking off her clothes, did nothing but stiffen his dick. Leaning back against the pillowed headboard, he massaged the aching muscle between his legs and willed it to soften.

Lucilla had barely slipped into a silk cranberry blouse when the doorbell rang. “I’ll get it!” she called on her way down the hall. She stopped by Ryken’s door and looked inside.

“Are you alright?” she asked, buttoning the blouse over her generous bosom. “Ryken?”

He nodded eventually.

“Are you okay for visitors? That’s probably for you.” She asked over the doorbell’s persistent ringing.

“I’m good,” he replied in a hushed tone and shook his head when she walked off.

Five minutes later, Ryken was regretting his decision to accept visitors. Lucilla was ushering three of his ‘friends’ into the room. The women were full of gasps and syrupy sweet words of sympathy as they all fawned over him.

For a while, Lucilla leaned against the doorjamb and watched the sickening yet amusing display of affection.

“Can I get any of you a drink? Lunch maybe? I was about to go make something for Ryken.”

“Oh thank you Lu, but don’t trouble yourself!” Amber Howence urged.

“That’s right, Lu. We’ll take care of Rykey and you can rest yourself,” Milli Silver said, smoothing her hand across his chest.

Regina Stone clasped her hands together and squealed. “We’ll handle lunch even!”

Lucilla’s brown eyes rose in surprise. She didn’t know whether to laugh or feel sorry at the sight of Ryken’s woeful expression. Still, she left the group to their devices and prayed he would survive. She hesitated only a few seconds when something unmentionable tugged at her heart as she watched the girls kissing Ryken and stroking the cast on his foot.

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Lucilla woke later to the sound of Ryken's deep voice bellowing her name. She had no idea she'd even dozed off in her room and leapt from the bed to see to him.

"Everything okay?" she asked, finding the ladies gone when she leaned against the doorjamb of his room. "How was lunch?" she inquired, issuing a silent prayer of thanks that the dizzy beauties hadn't burned down her house.

Ryken rolled his eyes. "Did you really believe they knew a kitchen from a bathroom?"

Lucilla chuckled, pulling her hands from the back pockets of her jeans when she stepped into the room. "So you're hungry, I take it?"

"Very."

"Hmph, I hope they weren't the ones you were going to call on to look after you?" she teased while dropping the script into his lap. "Make yourself useful. We rehearse after lunch."

Following a delicious spread of jerk chicken, steamed broccoli and buttery rolls, Lucilla and Ryken camped out in his bedroom and went through their lines. The chemistry between them was just as obvious within their dialogue and was another element that made the duo such a popular on screen couple.

"Well, this went well. Now, I'm going to relax downstairs with a book and some music," Lu sighed, standing from the armchair she'd occupied. "Need anything?"

"Only for you to stop asking me that."

Lucilla's sweet smile faded into a scowl. "Well what the hell have I done now?" she snapped, believing the fierce moods were behind them.

Ryken ran a hand across his face and refused to answer.

Lucilla decided he must be in pain and went to check his medication. "Let's see if it's time for you to take anything," she muttered, while studying the various pill bottles. "Preferably something to put you to sleep," she added.

Having her within reaching distance, Ryken caught her wrist and pulled her down.

"Ry-" She only had time to gasp before his tongue thrust deep into her mouth. The kiss was the personification of lust and possession. Lucilla leaned into it eagerly, moaning as she kissed him back. Seconds later, he had her straddling his lap. She tried to pull away, but he only allowed her a bit of space.

"We shouldn't," she cautioned, straining for more separation. "Didn't you have enough of this from your friends?" she tried to tease.

"I made them leave about thirty minutes after you walked out of the room. They won't be back," he assured, tugging her into another kiss. This time, his massive hands cupped and fondled her tits just moments before he began to unbutton her blouse.

"Ryken, you're hurt," she argued, using all her strength to break their contact. "I don't want you in any more pain."

His deep set gaze clouded with a frustration that was as firm as his hold on her hip. "Luci right now, a hard dick is the only thing causing me pain and the only thing I can take for it is you."

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She had little strength left to fight and could only watch in helpless wonder as he removed her shirt. She wore nothing else beneath the material and her lashes fluttered when his perfect teeth grazed a nipple before suckling it intently.

“What are we doing?” she breathed, gently grinding her crotch against his rigid cock.

Ryken chuckled, his mouth now feasting hungrily. “What we do so well. Now please shut up.”

Lucilla obeyed and found herself completely nude moments later. His hands were everywhere then-plundering her pussy until she was drenched and oozing come all over the throbbing stiffness that appeared to be bursting from the confines of the partially unbuttoned fly of his sleep pants.

He released one of her tits and freed himself before easing her sex over his devastating erection.

Lucilla was in a state of bliss, her hips bucking wildly when he filled her to overflowing. She threaded her fingers throughout his glorious hair while he nibbled on the tips of her breasts. She rode him steadily, feeling stretched anew with every lunge from his dick. A tiny moan of disappointment rippled from her throat when he pulled her off his shaft. He made her turn and took her from behind.

Ryken squeezed his eyes shut, knowing he was seconds from coming. Somehow, he restrained himself and pulled her off again. He set her wet twat upon his mouth and feasted voraciously upon her. At the same time, Lucilla returned the favor. In a desperate, famished manner, she licked her juices from his iron length.

The sounds of deep groans and breathless cries of pleasure filled the room. Much later, they simultaneously exploded in a rush of release and satisfaction.

After three sessions of mind blowing sex, Ryken fell asleep. Lucilla waited until he was in a deep state of it before she quietly left the bed. In her room, she headed for the shower, praying the soothing spray of steamy water would clear her head.

Her thoughts raced however, teeming with questions about what they’d just done. *What they do so well*, Ryken said. But what would he want with her when he’d had three lovelies at his bedside that day that would’ve done anything he told them to?

Idiot! A voice suddenly hissed over all the questions littering her brain. Yes, she was an idiot, she told herself. She knew very well why. *Why* hadn’t she seen this coming? But hadn’t she? Hadn’t she known all along that what she and Ryken did on screen was far more than acting?

Lathering her hair, Lu tried to scrub the admission from her scalp. It didn’t help. She’d foolishly prayed they could maintain the ‘act’ at least until the show was on its way off the air. They could end on a high. But wasn’t that why “*Sensuality*” was so successful? The steam between them was real because their feelings were deeper than the physical.

“Nooo,” Lucilla groaned, scrubbing her hair with greater voracity. She knew that with the delight would come the drama. How successful would they be once the audience realized how much truth lay beneath the act?

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She would have to get him to see that this would be a mistake. To continue this, no matter how enjoyable it was, would only lead to aggravation and possibly the end of their friendship.

Idiot, the voice hissed again. How in hell would she get Ryken to accept that when she wasn't sure she wanted to accept it herself?



CHAPTER SIX

After her shower, Lucilla fell into the crisp charcoal gray coverings of her bed. She dozed off instantly. In the wee hours of the morning, she woke-or rather she was *awakened* by an oh so delicious treat. Her hips were already rotating and bucking in response to what felt like a thrusting tongue invading her pussy.

“Ryken-” she barely managed the gasp, keeping her eyes closed while blindly searching for his curly head of hair.

Hearing her awaken, he gripped her hips more firmly and deepened the intimate kiss.

“Mmm...” Lucilla let herself surrender to the delicious swirls of pleasure he stoked. Tugging her bottom lip between her teeth, she ground herself softly against his mouth and cried out when he rotated his tongue in the moist well of her sex.

“Ryken? Ry-” she began, deciding she should at least *try* to resist. “Ryken we should-we shouldn’t,” she warned.

In response, he began to stroke her clit with his thumb and feasted upon her in a more ravenous fashion.

“Ryken listen-”

He began to nibble on her clit then. His thumb and forefinger were now manipulating her nipples.

“Ryken wait-”

He covered her with his massive frame and kissed her thoroughly.

She participated eagerly, mimicking the slow erotic delving of his tongue. Soon though, she was trying again to state her case. “Ryken please, please listen to me,” she was still kissing him hungrily.

He grinned. “I’m listening,” he assured her and settled himself between her legs.

Ryken took her in one smooth lengthy stroke and Lucilla forgot all her words of precaution. Throwing her arms above her head, she savored being fucked by such an incredible cock. She draped one leg across his shoulder to take him as deeply as he

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wanted to go. Ryken continued the pulsing love session they'd embarked upon earlier that day.

Lucilla enjoyed every second only crying out her disappointment briefly when he pushed her leg from his shoulder and withdrew. Her delight returned a split second when he invaded her from behind. His big hands cupped her bosom and kept her firm against his massive chest. Lucilla felt powerless to do anything other than rush the throbbing plunges into her pussy. She could feel a rush of come ooze from her body after each thrust and felt faint when he withdrew yet again.

"Ryken please," she shuddered, but for a completely different reason.

Ryken carried her from the bed and hoisted her high against the wall it sat next to. For a time Lu marveled at his strength and wondered if his foot had ever been injured at all. She almost laughed when another orgasm built and crested-thrilled that he didn't pull away that time. She felt his come warming her deeply and flexed her canal around his spewing erection. Ryken let his head rest on her shoulder. He could barely stand yet unsheathing his dick from its delicious dwelling was his last intention. When all passion was spent, they remained against the wall still locked in the embrace.

"We shouldn't be doing this," Lucilla tried once again, she settled her face against the crook of his neck and sighed.

"Why?" Ryken snapped, his jade stare narrowing dangerously. "Because you don't want to screw around on Jeff?"

Lucilla blinked. She hadn't even thought of Jeff. It was no surprise of course. After all, wasn't Ryken Gabrielle the reason sex wasn't an issue for her with Jeff-with any other man for that matter? Ryken was the only man she wanted in her bed. In-her.

"This will ruin us," she foretold, shaking her head then. "Sooner or later, the drama that follows *all* relationships will be our downfall."

Ryken gave into his anger then. He withdrew from her body, but kept her sealed against the wall. "Do you think I give a damn about that show?"

"I'm not talking about the show, you idiot! I'm talking about us-about our friendship! What would happen to our friendship if I let this become real?"

"It's already real love," Ryken informed her, wearing a smile that was danger incarnate.

Lu rolled her eyes. "I won't do this," she hissed and pulled away. "No matter how much I enjoy what we do. I won't let it ruin us," she vowed, turning her back on him.

Ryken came up behind her and encircled her waist in the steel bands of his arms. "Do you really think you can resist me for the next two months that I'm living under your roof?"

Lucilla shrugged, lashes fluttering at the feel of her skin next to his. "If I had to," she said.

"Mmm..." Ryken gestured, bowing his head for a moment. "And what about the script? Remember the movie we're rehearsing for?"

"Forget it," she sang, "we can still rehearse our lines. Clearly we've got no problem with the love scenes so..."

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“Uh-uh,” Ryken argued, shaking his head as he lowered his mouth to nibble on her neck. “That won’t work for me. I have to keep my skills in shape, you know?” He nudged her bottom with the head of his dick.

Again, Lucilla’s lashes fluttered. “I suggest you practice those scenes with your many willing friends, then.”

“Won’t be the same,” he growled, inhaling the scent of mango and mocha clinging to her skin.

“Why?” Lucilla blurted, she was desperate to keep her sanity. God, the man was everything she wanted. Why hadn’t she seen it long before?

“Because they’re not you.”

“Ryken stop. Please stop now,” she sobbed, her head sloping forward in defeat. “We lasted almost eight years without this being an issue. Why now?”

The teasing expression on Ryken’s bronzed face sobered. “I believe it was *always* an issue. It just wasn’t something I felt I needed to act on until you got serious with that idiot Frakes.”

Lucilla frowned and turned in his arms. “Is all this because you’re jealous?”

Ryken towered over her, his expression even darker. “This is *because* thinking about you with Frakes in bed or out makes me angry enough to hit something.”

Lucilla patted his cheek. “That’s jealousy, love. You’ll get over it.” She promised and maneuvered out of his hold.

God, I want to tell her I love her, he lamented slowly. Of course he knew she wasn’t ready to hear it. Was *he* ready to say it? Oh yes, he’d been ready to say it for years he realized.

Lucilla was pulling open her bedroom door then. “Out,” she ordered, waving her hand toward the hallway.

Ryken did so without argument, only pressing a kiss to her mouth before he left.

Lucilla honestly believed *she’d* be the one in need of recuperation by the time Ryken left. Over the next two weeks, she tried to see that he was made comfortable and then get the hell out of her place before the days grew steamier than the nights.

He took her often and vigorously and she hadn’t the strength (or will) to resist. She tried to go out with Jeff every evening, but her thoughts were riveted on the bronze god laid up in her guest bedroom. Ryken was determined to break her iron will. Lucilla was determined to not let him know he already had.

Lucilla hissed a curse when she turned from the oven and almost dropped the pan of croissants she’d heated for breakfast. Finding Ryken leaning against the archway of the kitchen entrance sent her heart to her throat.

“Everything’s almost ready,” she announced in a breathy tone while setting the pan to a cooling rack. Silently, she cursed that she hadn’t managed to finish cooking and leave before he stirred.

Ryken pushed his big frame from the doorway. His stride, as he approached her, was practically stalking in its deftness.

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Lu was reaching into an overhead cabinet for a platter, when she felt his hand cupping her hips. "Please," she moaned the word that had become her usual greeting as each day began with his hands somewhere on her body.

"Stop," she gasped, biting her bottom lip when his fingers skirted the frilled edge of her burgundy boy shorts. Smoothly, his middle finger nudged inside the dampening crotch.

Lucilla braced herself and tried to move away, but the other hand was firm on her hip. Her body became less rigid as a modicum of defeat swept through her. Her own hands curved loosely across the edge of the sink when both his middle fingers were plundering her pussy.

"Ryken I'm asking you to stop," she moaned while grinding herself onto the delicious thrusting of his fingers.

Ryken's deep chuckle radiated through his chest. He kissed her nape. "Asking, but not telling?" he inquired.

"Do I have to *tell* you?"

"Yes, if you expect me to stop. Asking gives me the right to say no."

No, she wasn't going to survive this, she decided. Defeat claiming her fully then, she let him have his way and he took full advantage. For the next several minutes, he fingered her into frenzy. When she was grinding against him and crying out her delight, he tugged at the shorts until they pooled at her ankles.

Lucilla closed her eyes at the feel of him unzipping his jeans-all he wore. Her filmy olive green nightshirt was bunched around her hips now and in one thrilling move, he replaced his fingers with his cock.

"Ryken!" she cried out unashamed and satisfied. Tossing back her head, he savored the invasion that stretched her anew every time. No one had or would ever fill her the way he did. There was simply no equal and she'd tried to find one. Honestly she had. Perhaps it was time she stopped fooling herself.

The deep strokes continued, impaling her more securely upon his throbbing length. Ryken's perfect teeth nipped the soft ebony flesh of her shoulder, his hands weighing her boobs while flicking the tips of his thumbs across her nipples.

Lu rested her head back against him, her mouth forming a perfect O as he took her feverishly against her kitchen sink. She winced, feeling come ooze warm along her thigh. Amidst her breathless cries and Ryken's grunts of pleasure, the doorbell chimed.

"No," she virtually sobbed.

"Forget it," Ryken ordered with a chuckle as his strokes continued.

Lucilla was willing to do just that. The chiming bell however only served to remind her that what they were doing had to stop.

Surprising herself by summoning the will to resist, Lu pulled away, situated her under things and left the kitchen. Ryken chuckled, but still winced in a bit of discomfort as he eased his unsated dick back inside his jeans.

Lucilla took a deep breath, before flinging open the door. "Jeff!" she gasped, finding 'her man' outside the door. Stunned, she could barely breathe even as he leaned inside the door to kiss her cheek in greeting.

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“What are you doing here?” she asked finally, willing the come still resting on her thigh to remain there and not ease further down.

“Thought we might have breakfast together,” he invited, rubbing his hands together and stepping inside when she waved him in. “That is, if you don’t have a better offer?” he noted then, his eyes briefly raking her scant attire.

Lucilla waved her hand. “No, no nothing better,” she said quickly and decided it was safer to be *out* with Jeff than *in* with Ryken and being screwed senseless. Biting her lip, she watched Jeff head toward the kitchen and prayed her houseguest would behave himself. Thankfully, he was gone by the time they got there.

“Where’s Gabrielle?” Jeff asked while removing his leather jacket.

“Must’ve headed upstairs,” she said with a shrug and glanced at the clock above the hutch. “I should head up too and get showered. I was fixing breakfast for Ryken and got behind,” she explained, already backing toward the doorway. “Help yourself to a bite if your hunger gets the better of you while you’re waiting,” she urged, and rushed out.

Safely behind the closed door of her bedroom, Lucilla leaned against it and shut her eyes. “Get it together Lu,” she ordered. Figuring it best to not waste time on more heavy thinking, she stripped and headed for the walk in closet.

“Son of a bitch!” she hissed, finding Ryken there waiting in the chic pearl gray armchair she used for dressing.

“Out!” she ordered, storming over to clutch his wrist and pull him to his feet.

Turning the tables, Ryken caught her waist and tugged her closer. A moment later, he had her neatly straddling his lap.

“No Ryken, this time I’m *telling* you-no.”

His bronzed face was more beautiful in the wake of phony innocence. “Why?” he asked.

She rolled her eyes. “Dammit, because Jeff is right downstairs!”

“Oh. But not because you don’t want me to?” he challenged, his striking gaze lowering as he leaned close to feast on her pert, licorice-toned tits.

Lucilla arched her back. “Rogue,” she accused.

“You love it,” he confirmed, his mouth filled with her as he freed himself and eased his still rock hard cock into her still wet sex.

Lucilla pressed her lips together in hopes of keeping silent which was practically impossible. She began to grind on him instantly, shuddering as need and desire swirled throughout her quivering frame.

Ryken rested his head back on the chair and directed the moves of her hips. After a while, he stood with them still connected and began to fuck her on the plush carpeting. Lucilla gripped his taut ass and struggled to capture more of him than she already had. When he withdrew and turned to take her from behind, she stopped him.

Pushing him to his back, she decided to finish him off with an enthusiastic blow job.

“A little rehearsal, eh?” he teased.

“Shut up,” she commanded her mouth full of him.

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Ryken happily followed orders, thrusting into the warmth and moisture of her mouth. He looked down to watch as she feasted-loving the tiny furrow between her brows as she focused on pleasuring him. Her full, generous lips with their slight pout...the sight of them sliding up and down the length of his cock sent him coming seconds later.

Lucilla held him in her mouth, feeling his flesh tense and throb. When he was fully sated, she released him and stood.

"Get out," she ordered softly, leaving him with a smirk before heading on to her shower.

"Shit," he grunted, feeling his sex swell yet again he decided he could use a shower as well.

Telia Fairchild's oval face was a study in uncertainty. At last, she decided she'd debated long enough.

"Should I make a fire, love?" Telia asked. She decided to intrude on the peace of the sitting room; which was growing dim due in part to the lateness of the day and the gray skies which promised snow at any minute.

"If you like," Lucilla's voice sounded hollow across the room.

"I know we'd decided on lunch, are we having dinner together as well?" Telia asked, taking a spot behind her daughter along the window seat.

Lucilla leaned back against her mother. "No, I'm going out with Jeff. Just figured on leaving from here," she sighed, still gazing out over her parent's backyard.

Telia raked her fingers through Lucilla's short, silky waves. "Mmm, I'd thought there might be another reason why you were avoiding going to your place."

"Why do you say that?" Lu bolted up while asking the question.

"Well...love," Telia shrugged, fidgeting with the hem of her camel haired sweater. "Aren't you looking after Ryken?"

Lucilla blinked. "Oh...right."

Telia knew and understood her daughter's unease all too well. Still, she decided to let Lu come to her. Of course, that didn't stop her from jibing. "I know he's doing much better, but bloody hell what woman wouldn't want to spend as much time as possible *looking after* that?"

"Mommy!"

"What?" Telia gasped, pretending to be stunned and confused. "Oh *please* hon, you of all women know exactly what I mean."

"Mommy really," Lu huffed, recrossing her jean-clad legs. "Ryken and I work together. I don't have time to notice...anything else."

Clearly, she was struggling to make herself believe it, the poor thing. Telia tamped down her laughter. "Baby, why don't you just tell Ryken how you feel?"

"Because there's nothing to tell," Lu snapped, then closed her eyes and stretched on the window seat. "I'm seeing Jeff, remember?"

"Oh...yes-yes of course."

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“He’s a great guy, Mommy.” Lu championed, her index finger raised toward the ceiling. “Respectful, *respectable*-he’s a doctor in case you’d forgotten. We’ve had a wonderful time together.”

Telia nodded. “Well it sounds like you’ve convinced yourself that he’s the one you really want. Too bad the truth is already written over yours and Ryken’s faces.”

Lu made a hasty glance at her watch and stood. “I’ve got to meet Jeff,” she called on her way out of the room.

Christmas Eve...

Lucilla was in a state of bliss. She’d finally finished her shopping earlier in the day. Jeff met her outside the market where she was picking up a few last minute items for the dish she’d be preparing for the family Christmas dinner. From there, he whisked her away for an afternoon of frivolity. They went for hot ale at a local pub, more shopping-all for her, of course. There was even a carriage ride through the streets that were dusted with a light brush of snow with more falling from the skies above.

The day was sheer wonder and culminated with a delicious feast back at Jeff’s apartment. He put his culinary skills to the test and prepared a fabulous meal which Lu so thoroughly enjoyed, she helped herself to seconds and thirds.

“Mmm, thank you. Thank you so much for the best day I’ve had in such a long time.” Lucilla purred when they were cuddled on the sofa before the fire.

“You deserve it. Running around, shopping for family and friends, preparing to film a movie and caring for an ailing friend on top of all that.”

Mention of Ryken made her bristle. Lu prayed Jeff couldn’t feel her tense as he massaged the dip between her shoulder blades. “Well it looks like we’ll be bringing in Christmas morning together,” she said, glancing at the clock which read 1:15a.m.

“Christmas morning and Christmas day,” Jeff noted, brushing his lips across her temple. “And Christmas night,” he added, smoothing his hands along her arms.

Lucilla giggled, basking in the feeling of utter contentment surrounding her. Her ease diminished just a fraction however, when she felt his thumbs outline the curve of her breast beneath her eggshell sweater. Coolly, she pulled his hand away and set it to her hip. It rose again and this time he gave her boob a firm squeeze.

“Jeff,” she whispered and moved his hand again.

Again, it rose. This time, he leaned close to brush his mouth across her jaw and the line of her neck.

“What are you doing?” Lu asked still cool and smiling.

Jeff chuckled. “You of all people should know.”

A second later, his tongue was invading her mouth.

“Wait,” she whispered, pulling away as much as he would allow.

“I *have* waited,” he reminded her, keeping her hand nestled against the front of his tan sweater vest. “I’ve waited patiently for several months and clearly you’re waiting on *me* to initiate.”

“Initiate?” she was stunned.

“I feel I’ve done an admirable job of being a gentleman.”

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“Job?” Lu repeated again. She was now gazing upon the man with a renewed intensity.

“Come off it, love,” he urged, his dark face shadowed by something less than honorable. “You know what I mean. This has been brewing between us from the beginning.”

Lucilla found that she could produce nothing but single word questions. “Brewing?” she stammered.

Jeff apparently didn’t notice or was ignoring her unease. “I’ve shown you that I can be the doting, honorable boyfriend, keeping his hands to himself and showing respect. But now the time has come for *you* to show *me* the kind of girlfriend you can be.”

Lucilla’s brown eyes narrowed in realization. “Was this a game to you Jeff?” He shrugged in a flip manner. “Not a game, but I know you get sick of all the fools who talk of nothing except how much they want to do you. I decided to show you I could be more than that.”

“Sick bastard!” She spat, shoving her hands against his chest. “I believed you and you-you were acting all along?”

“And you haven’t been?” he answered, his hold tightening on her hand. “Pretending that us holding hands and pecking each other on the cheek was just swell with you?”

“I enjoyed that,” Lu confessed, her lovely features softening at the memory of it. “It was wonderful to find a man who wasn’t all about sex with the star of “*Sensuality*”.

“I can be that man,” Jeff swore, pressing a feverish kiss to the back of her hand. “But beauty, you can’t expect me to play the impotent beau forever, can you?” he asked, leaning in for another kiss.

Lucilla wrenched away her hands and shoved his chest again. It didn’t take longer to realize he didn’t intend to back off. He forced her down flat on the sofa. She could barely breathe with his tongue down her throat and his hands groping her breasts and bottom. Lu fought for all she was worth when he hiked up her flaring suede skirt and gripped her thighs.

Jeff was lying between his legs, tugging up her sweater as he continued to kiss her. He groaned when the full mounds were practically exposed. Finally, he broke the kiss to gaze down at her chest. Lucilla was struggling to catch her breath and took no heed to how much he adored the sight of her heaving bosom.

Moments later, he was grabbing frantically at her bra in hopes of exposing one of the dark globes. Successful at last, he hungrily suckled one while trying to free the other. He’d just managed to do so, when Lucilla landed a cracking slap to her face.

“Shit!” he hissed, yet grinned dangerously before taking both her hands and pressing them to the arm of the sofa. Then, he resumed his feasting.

Lucilla felt tears pressure her eyes and cursed herself for not seeing past the innocent demeanor. When she heard Jeff groan and begin to thrust a semi hard dick against her as he outlined her nipples with his tongue, her anger reheated and replaced the regret.

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His hold upon her had loosened a bit, enabling her to snatch her hand free and crash a ringed fist against his eye.

“Cunt!” he raged, howling as he clutched his eye as a cut opened above it. Forgetting the pain, he tried to catch her wrists in one hand while undoing his pants with the other.

“You only like it rough, I see,” he accused softly a menacing smile cast his dark face deeper in shadow. “I can manage that or...can you only do it when there’s a camera rolling?”

Lucilla gasped, her gaze wavering in a telling fashion.

Jeff blinked as the idea settled in his mind. “It’s him you want, isn’t it? Gabrielle? He’s the reason why you won’t screw anyone else. You-you *can’t* unless it’s with him,” he breathed in awed disbelief.

“Son of a bitch!” Lu hissed, ramming her knee into his groin. Grabbing her purse and coat, she ran from the apartment, slamming the door shut on Jeff’s howls of pain.



CHAPTER SEVEN

It was well after 3a.m. when Lucilla got home. She'd driven around for well over an hour trying to clear her mind. Finding the lower level dark, she prayed Ryken was either out or *knocked* out from the effects of his pain medication.

Upstairs, she found his room door open. The lights were out though and biting her lip, she planned to tip past. She'd almost cleared the doorway, when the deep, bellowing voice reached her ear.

"Where have you been?"

Sighing, Lucilla sauntered to the doorway. "It's Christmas Eve Ry," she sang, "you know? Parties, shopping..."

"Frakes?" Ryken guessed, his temper sizzling at thoughts of what they'd been doing together all evening.

"Go to sleep, will you?" she simply told him.

Ryken; who could see her from his position against the headboard of the bed, noticed the way she winced when she pushed off from the doorjamb. Recrossing his arms over his bare chest, he saw the rip at the neckline of her sweater as her coat gaped open.

In her room, Lucilla removed her coat gingerly and let it drop to the floor. She studied the tear in the sweater and grimaced as she tried to lift the garment over her head.

"What happened?"

Ryken's voice vibrating in the still and quiet of the night roused a yelp of surprise from Lu.

"Silly actually," she blurted and tried to make a play at laughing. "I um, I got one of my rings caught in the fabric and managed to rip the damn thing until I was able to disentangle the stone."

Ryken stroked his jaw and closed his eyes in response to the poor lie. He'd have to force the truth from her then and blocked her way when she made a move for the closet. His hands closed over her upper arms.

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T. ONYX

“Son of a bitch!” he cursed when she cried out and jerked in response to his hold. “What happened?” he asked again. Now his emerald stare was as unyielding as his tone.

“What I told you,” Lu answered in a tiny voice.

Groaning, Ryken brushed his hand across the small of her back and led her to the window seat. He leaned down, bracing a fist on either side of her. “The truth, or shall I go call our man Frakes?”

“Ryken please, I-”

Smiling as though he were glad she hadn’t answered, Ryken bolted up and was on his way out of the room.

“Wait! Ry please!”

He faced her then, his brows raised in expectation.

Tears began to well in Lucilla’s eyes and Ryken appeared as a blur when he knelt before her again.

“Did he hurt you?” he whispered the question.

Lucilla swallowed her tears and shook her head. “No, no he tried...but I got out before...things just got a little rough, but I fought-” the tears returned full steam, choking off the rest of her words.

“That’s it, shh...” Ryken soothed, pulling her close.

“We had the best day,” she shared, her voice slightly muffled against his shoulder. “We went shopping-I felt like a kid...he bought me so much stuff. We had dinner at his flat-he cooked. I-I guess he thought he was entitled...” Lucilla trailed off, recalling the events of the day, all the days before and cursed herself again for not seeing through Jeff sooner. It wasn’t long though before she felt the tension consuming the embrace. “Ryken?” she whispered.

“He’s a dead man.”

“Ry!” she called, clutching his wrist before he could move away. “Ryken no! Please you can’t! You can’t.” she repeated, shaking her head slowly. “He’s not worth it. He’s not and-and it’s Christmas and I don’t want to be alone. You can’t leave me here alone! You can’t.” Tears reclaimed her.

Ryken rolled his eyes and felt like a heel for upsetting her again. “It’s alright, alright now...” he urged, rocking her slow. “Come on now, let’s get you out of this,” he said, gently pulling back to help her out of the torn clothing. Soon, she was warm in a pair of comfy PJs.

“Come,” Ryken called, beckoning her toward the bed he’d just turned down. He tucked the covers in tight around her once she was settled.

“Where are you going?” she called when he appeared to be leaving the room.

Gracing her with his the trademark lazy smile, he leaned down to kiss her cheek. “Only to the kitchen for tea with a little rum. It’ll help you sleep. I’ll be right back,” he promised when she squeezed his hand.

Regret took its place on Lu’s dark, lovely face. “I was supposed to be taking care of *you*.”

He nudged her chin with his fist. “I’m fine as you can see. Time for me to repay the favor, eh? I’ll sit with you, ’til you doze off.”

Lucilla couldn’t hold out against yawning. “Kay,” she said in the midst of it.

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Ryken kissed the top of her head and then got her settled down again. At the bedroom door, he looked back at her, watching as she turned onto her side. *He's a dead man* he vowed silently and left the room.

Tuscany, Italy- 6 weeks later...

The flight to Italy was surprisingly wonderful. Everyone was eager to begin the film shoot. Of course, they were more eager to begin what many considered a holiday to the beautiful Italian countryside. The scouting crew had already chosen several lush spots. Once the plane landed, they decided to take a bus into Tuscany in order to show the cast their chosen locales.

The group was thrilled and spoke of how envious they were of Ryken for having grown up there. In the middle of the trip to the hotel, they stopped for an outdoor luncheon.

Lucilla's serenity was etched all over her face as she stared out over the lush green of the hills where they dined. She was happy to be away. Out of London where thoughts of Christmas and the fiasco with Jeff Frakes ran rampant.

"How are you, love?" Lauri Kensit asked, handing Lu a glass of iced tea. Aside from Ryken and the rest of the cast, no one knew what happened on Christmas Eve.

Lucilla didn't dare tell her parents, knowing her father and brothers would've wasted no time in killing Jeff.

"Thanks Laur, but I'm okay. I think the trip'll do me good."

"Have you heard from the slime?" Lauri asked, scrunching her button nose as she spoke.

Lucilla scrunched her nose as well. "No and I don't expect to."

"So you think you've heard the last of it?"

"I hope so. I was so very blessed that situation didn't get more out of hand," she bowed her head. "I just want to forget it."

Lauri pulled her close. "Oh hon, any woman would."

"I was so stupid," Lu moaned, pounding a fist to the grass.

"Hey don't do that," Lauri ordered, pulling back to look at her. "You thought Jeff was a nice guy because he wanted you to-he gave you no reason to think otherwise."

"And he was just another phony son of a bitch," Lu hissed, pulling a few tufts of grass from the ground. "And I had no idea. I thought he was interested in *me* not Ariel from "*Sensuality*" but Lucilla. Can you believe I thought we'd be walking down the aisle," she mused, letting the grass sprinkle across her jeans.

Lauri laughed. "I'd have enjoyed seeing that happen once Ryken tore off his legs especially."

Lu's expression cleared. "What?"

"Well love, do you really believe Ryken would've let you marry that idiot?"

Lucilla shrugged. "Well I know he's protective but-"

"Oh come off it Luci, Ryken Gabrielle is more than protective. He is in love, and it seems everyone except you can see it."

Lucilla raked at her hair. "Is it that obvious, you think?"

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Lauri laughed. "You already know it, you coy bitch! Sweetie why in the world would you jerk around with a fool like Jeff Frakes when you've got Ryken Gabrielle at your beck and call?" she marveled, her sea blue eyes alive with disbelief.

"Have you just completely forgotten the show?" Lu scolded. "You know how important it is that we not let anything interfere with it."

"Well 'hon unfortunately the heart doesn't care too much about what it's *interfering* with. Why do you think the two of you are so successful hmm? Everyone can see it. You're just as around the bend for him as he is for you."

Lu flopped back on the red and black fleece blanket she and Lori shared.

"I'm still surprised Ry didn't rip the bastard in two when he found out what he tried to do."

"Yeah," Lu sighed, crossing her tan Wellington boots one on top of the other. "Surprised me too. That night he was absolutely livid and I just barely got him to stay with me on Christmas. I think it helped. He hasn't mentioned Jeff once," she said, though her expression appeared troubled.

A little ways off, Ryken was in conversation with two of his male co-stars Jordan Fell and Owen Gray. They were the only two who knew that Ryken hadn't just *forgotten* about anything.

"Do you still think it was wise? Goin' after the fool?" Owen worried, glancing across his shoulder at Lucilla and Lauri.

"Yeah, you know how they just love to jump on us celebs when we go after a *regular person*," Jordan added.

Ryken fixed them with stony glares. "You're tellin' me neither of you would've done it?"

"Hell no!" Both men cried in unison.

"But do you think you've heard the end of it?" Jordan asked.

Ryken sighed. "Hell no."

Lucilla decided to turn in early that night. She was about to settle in to the luxurious bed with its promise of a heavenly night's sleep, when the doorbell rang. A little groan rumbled in her throat, yet she padded through the suite. Another groan was in order when she checked to see who it was.

"It's late Ry," she sighed just loud enough for him to hear.

"Open the fuckin' door Luci," he replied in the same sighing manner.

Obliging, Lucilla whipped open the door and fixed him with her weariest expression. "It's late," she repeated.

"Why are you ignoring me?" was his reply as he walked in forcing her to back up and make room.

Lu grimaced while fiddling with the ruffled square bodice of her rose print cami. She refused to answer, though her brown eyes widened when Ryken stepped close enough to block everything from view.

"Dammit Ryken we've been together all day."

"Don't play with me Luci. You know what I mean."

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“You’re paranoid,” she hissed, rolling her eyes as she thought to turn away.

Ryken had other plans, stopping her easily and tugging her close to search her gaze with his. “What’s wrong with you?” he asked.

“What’s wrong with me is it’s late and I’m ready for bed,” she spat, wrenching out of his loose grip.

The devilish green stare narrowed and he seemed to be considering her argument. Perfect teeth tugged on his full lower lip and Lucilla felt weak as she willed herself to look away.

“That’s a good idea,” he said as if the thought were a novel one and he was eager to try. In the next instant, he was pulling the black BOSS sweatshirt above his head.

“What-” Lu took an instinctive step backward. “What are you doing?” she demanded to know, her eyes shifting from his face to his broad chest.

“Getting ready for bed, love.”

“Here?!”

“What does it look like?”

Lu curved her hands around her hips. “I seem to recall you having your own perfectly good room a ways down the hall and a perfectly fine number of women to fill it. There were at least fifteen outside your door when I passed by. Damn you Ryken listen to me!” she cried, hating the panic in her voice as she watched him doff his sweats.

When he was fantastically nude and stalking her, she cast several nervous glances across her shoulder and continued her retreat.

“Don’t,” she whispered, shaking her head as she spoke.

Instead, Ryken closed the distance between them more quickly. In one deft move, he had her in his arms and was easing his hands into her snug, white boy shorts and filling his palms with her ass. Lucilla moaned, feeling herself being lifted snug against his chiseled frame. She couldn’t resist, kneading the rock slabs of muscle in his back and shoulders. Then, summoning strength from someplace deep, she forced herself to resist.

“Stop!” she hissed, pounding instead of caressing his chest.

Ryken’s bronzed face darkened further in his agitation. “Tell me why you’re ignoring me!” he demanded.

“Because I have something to ask you and I’m just as afraid you’ll lie to me as I am to hear the truth!”

“Ask me,” he growled close to her face.

She shivered. “No.”

He nodded, fixing her with a look of pure wickedness. “So let me have what I came for.”

“Ryken-”

Any further words were stifled when his tongue filled her mouth. His big hands cradled her bottom and kept her trapped against him. Lucilla kissed him back, her tongue thrusting hungrily and without shame.

“Son of a bitch,” she cursed him when he finally pulled back and gave her a moment to breathe.

Of course he paid no attention, delighting himself in the intoxicating fragrance outlined her ear and intermitted suckling of her earlobe. His soft grunts of pleasure in her

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ear aroused her just as powerfully as the feel of him kneading the firm roundness of her ass.

Lucilla buried her hands in his glorious hair. Her nipples ached to be sheltered in his mouth and bathed by his tongue. Bereft of that, she rubbed her tits across his flexing pectorals.

Her heart took a swan dive to her stomach as she was unexpectedly lowered to the bed. Answering the silent plea of her nipples, he began to suckle them through the soft cotton of the cami stretched across her chest. Lucilla moved to tug the top over her head, but he wouldn't allow it. He did, however, allow her to wiggle out of the shorts.

Seconds later, his fingers were massaging the fleshy folds of her pussy lips. Lucilla bucked against the torturous caresses, trying desperately to persuade him to do more. Ryken indulged in looking down at her dark, lovely face-made more lovely in the wake of her desire. Slowly, he granted her request using his middle finger to gently plunder and rotate. His own arousal transformed from a simmer to a boil when he thrust the finger deep and encountered a well of come that had already formed inside her tightness.

Two fingers, three... Lucilla gasped and thrashed about amidst the coverings. Her walls contracted around his fingers in an attempt to keep them there. Soon though, it wasn't enough and she tried tugging away his hand in the pursuit of something more.

"Please," she murmured, groping for his dick when the head brushed her inner thigh. "Ryken please," she begged, nibbling at his jaw in gentle persuasion.

Clutching her thighs, Ryken drew them wide apart and drove inside. The squelching sounds of come being stirred by a throbbing cock filled the room. He pleased them both with the lengthy strokes. So overwrought by sensation, his head fell to rest on her shoulder.

Lucilla peeled off her top and began to flick her thumbnails across her nipples. She met his insatiable thrusts with a fire of her own. She was torn between crying and laughing when he pleased the pouting tips of her breasts with his lips, teeth and tongue.

"No, Ryken, no don't," she cried when he did the unthinkable and withdrew what she craved most. He left her thrusting on the memory of his sex filling her to overflow. "No," she cried once again, when he abandoned her tits and trailed his tongue along the valley between, around their lush curves, across her abs and then exploring her bellybutton. He trapped her thighs once more, parting them wide and feasting ravenously. He was almost insane for the taste of his body mingling with hers.

Lucilla grew orgasmic as much from the unbelievable things his tongue did inside her body as she did from the savage grunts he uttered while doing them. Her whimpers of 'no please' when he pulled away only drove him to torture her more with the pleasure he wanted to bring.

Grabbing her wrists, he pulled her in for another kiss. Lucilla's extreme eagerness came through as she suckled his tongue, famished for it. Her hungry participation aroused Ryken so, that he too lost himself in the kiss. Lucilla took advantage of his weakness and forced him down on the bed.

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“Wait,” Ryken began to resist when he felt her pussy grazing the length of his dick. “Lu...” he groaned, knowing if he spent more than two minutes inside her that night he’d be coming far more quickly than he’d wanted or intended.

“Wait...a minute,” he asked again when she ground softly onto the head of his cock and then began to sheathe him inch by inch.

“Luci wait please,” he urged, grunting and squeezing her hips. As he was further devoured by her hungry twat, a stream of heavy cream oozed from her body.

“Damn Luci, listen to me.”

“No,” she refused and took the rest of him.

Ryken tried to focus on more than the deliciousness worshipping his manhood. Unfortunately, fondling her tits did nothing to help—moreover it enhanced the fact. Groaning once more, he pressed the heels of his hands to his eyes.

“Luci, I don’t want to come yet.”

“Too bad,” she moaned and changed the speed and direction of her ride atop his powerful shaft. Her hands rose to toy with her boobs again and she delighted herself into frenzy.

The sight of it threw Ryken over the edge. He caught her hips and controlled her movements from then on. A tortured cry rippled from Lucilla’s throat when she felt the heat of his release inside her.

“You should go,” Lucilla was saying later as they lay sprawled across one another in a tangle of arms, legs and bed linens. She smiled, feeling the familiar growl of agitation radiate in Ryken’s chest. “There’ll be too many questions if anyone sees you leaving my room in the wee hours.”

“They’ll just assume we’re rehearsing.”

Lucilla couldn’t help but laugh then. “I suppose that would fly,” she agreed and laughed again.

“That sounds good. It’s been a long time since I heard it—your laugh,” Ryken shared, smoothing his lips across the curve of her hip.

“Things have just been so crazy,” she admitted, briefly hiding her face in a pillow. “This was just the thing I’d been trying to avoid happening. If I...if I knew this was as crazy as it’d get I suppose I’d be willing to give in to what I want.”

Ryken stilled, and then raised his head to stare at her for a time. His attention was fixed as he eased up and made her lay flat. “Say that again...you want this?”

Lucilla searched the unsettling depths of his emerald stare. “I do. I do want this...I just...have that feeling that things *are* going to get crazier and crazier still if we give into this thing between us.”

“Can’t you forget about that? Forget about that and let me have you?” he pleaded, the ocean deep quality of his voice harboring an adorable manner.

“Ryken—”

“I swear you have every part of me,” he went on. He watched the uncertainty well in her eyes and knew that she wouldn’t speak the words he wanted to hear. “I’ll leave,” he whispered, the playfulness creeping into his eyes then. “But after we give in once more to this *thing* between us.”

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Lucilla felt him nudging her thigh and smiled as she welcomed him inside her.



CHAPTER EIGHT

The next few weeks found the crew taping everything from still shots and various scenes. The flow was productive, the cast sizzled. Tuscany was phenomenal and so were Ryken and Lucilla. Though silent decisions were made to not ‘give into the thing between them’; each scene crackled with the real love and desire they couldn’t stifle no matter how hard they tried.

Well...Lucilla tried. Ryken made no secret of how much he wanted her. She endured everything from his escorting her with his hand somewhere on her body to his making sure she had everything she needed during their dinners out with the cast and crew.

Still, it was all so subtle...Lucilla enjoyed the easiness of it all. She also foolishly appeased herself with the false notion that Ryken was coming round to her way of thinking. She disillusioned herself so well, that nothing could prevent the look of dumbfounded amazement that held her face captive when she returned to the hotel one afternoon and found herself the target of questions from a swarm of reporters.

Seeing as how much the media onslaught had cooled somewhat during the last few weeks of filming, the amazement on Lu’s part almost tripled. She found herself as agitated as she was curious to know what had them in such an uproar.

In the midst of the media swarm, Lucilla was only able to pick up on the words ‘attack’ and ‘secret romance’. Moments later, a hand took her arm and she was pulled through the gang of journalists.

“Charlie?!” she cried, swallowing to diminish the feel of her heart pounding in her throat. “Charlie what the hell is going on? What are they in a frenzy over?!” In response, Charlie thrust a paper into her hands. The tabloid’s cover story would have stopped her mid-stride had Charlie not been dragging her along.

The headline: “*Truth In Sensuality? Exposed! Adult TV Icons Ryken Gabrielle and Lucilla Fairchild’s Triple X Affair!*”

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“Come on love,” Charlie coaxed in his soft brogue. The sympathy in his gaze proved that he knew she was stunned.

They left the melee in the lobby for a quieter atmosphere along the hotel’s administrative wing. Charlie escorted Lucilla through the doorway of a conference room where the crew and rest of the cast were gathered. Lu noticed Ryken looking completely at ease from his relaxed position in the corner of the room. When his gaze locked with hers, she lowered her eyes.

“Alright everyone, this incident has the press in a tizzy and it’s gonna have the same affect on our work!” Charlie called out over the mix of voices in the room. “It’s going to make shooting the film far more difficult especially the uh outdoor sex scenes- not just for Lu and Ry, but for the entire cast.”

Lu felt even more clueless as she wracked her brain wondering what *the incident* was. She glanced with heightened disinterest at the paper and was prepared to shove it across-preferably off-the table when she saw Jeff Frakes’ name. Written in white block letters, it was positioned in a sidebar near the headline: “*Starlet’s jilted beau reveals inside story of hidden sex romps between the supposed just friends of the popular show!*”

So that was it. Jeff had his revenge after all. Lu couldn’t help but laugh at the irony of it. Having a boyfriend should have quelled the rumors that there was anything *real* going on between her and Ryken. It’d done just the opposite.

“Say Charlie, is this Frakes bum pressing charges against Ry?!” A camera man asked in the midst of the conversation that was still going full steam.

Lucilla’s head snapped up but no one seemed to notice her reaction.

“Thankfully no,” Charlie was replying. “The guy seems happy enough with all the increased VIP treatment he’s now getting. The clown says he could understand Ryken’s attack to protect the honor of the woman he loves.” Charlie shrugged. “Using that stand, the press loves him even more.”

“And hates us?!” Someone guessed.

Charlie was shaking his head. “No, actually DVDs from our previous seasons are flying off the shelves faster than ever. The studio even wants us to bump the movie up from November to August.”

The room volume grew louder then with cheers and thanks directed Ryken’s way.

“Son of a bitch!” Lu hissed, slapping the paper to the table as she stood.

Virtual silence resumed within seconds.

“Uh guys, let’s give Ry and Lu a few minutes, eh?” Charlie suggested, nodding when everyone seemed keen on the idea.

“How could you do this?” Lucilla whispered once the door closed behind the last member of the crew.

Ryken stood as well and chose a spot before the windows overlooking the south parking lot.

“I can’t believe you looked right at me and lied!”

“*I’ve* lied?!” Ryken bellowed, losing the last hold on his temper.

His roar far outweighed hers, but Lucilla maintained her stance. “So you forgot already?” she accused, folding her arms over the silk mocha blouse. “Your promise on Christmas not to go after Jeff?”

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“Correction love, I promised not to leave you on Christmas and I didn’t.”

“Son of a bitch, you knew what I meant!”

“Did you really think I wouldn’t pay him a visit after that?” Ryken challenged, stepping closer to study her intently.

Lucilla raked her fingers through her clipped crop and shuddered. “I warned you this would happen. I warned you of this very thing. But did you listen? You just had to have what you *had* to have.”

A wicked smirk in place, Ryken rounded the table and brought his stare level with hers. “I’m so sorry Luci, I had a hard time hearing any words of resistance on your lips through all the moaning you did while I fucked you.”

She slapped him hard and didn’t wait around to judge his reaction. When she’d gone, Ryken grabbed the paper and hurtled it across the room.

“Alright gang, we’ve got work to do and we can’t let this thing get the best of us!” Charlie lectured from the sandy mound he stood atop looking out over his people.

“Remember, we’re working on a shorter schedule now, so let’s get to it!”

The group met at 5a.m. on the beach a few mornings later. Lucilla cheered the hour, hoping the swarms of reporters were still fast asleep. She also cursed the romantic setting. For the first time, sex with Ryken Gabrielle was something she wasn’t looking forward to.

“How is she?” Charlie asked, having called over his leading man for a private chat before the shoot began.

Ryken massaged the back of his neck while slanting a gaze toward Lucilla. “No idea. Only time she speaks to me is during a scene so...”

“We need this to work, you know?”

“You don’t say?” Ryken’s sarcasm was evident.

Charlie slapped his arm. “Why don’t I leave direction to you, eh? Coax her well,” he added.

Ryken only nodded. He’d have no trouble following that order, but regretted having to resort to physical tactics when Lu was so on edge. Taking a long breath, he headed over to where she stood gazing over the ocean. He thought twice on touching her once he stood only a few inches behind. Then, shrugging off the uncertainty, settled his hands to her shoulders. He could at least determine how much coldness she carried toward him. He supposed it was a positive sign when she didn’t flinch or pull away. She merely turned her head to listen as he asked if she was ready.

“Don’t do that,” Ryken soothed when she started to pull the gauzy crimson robe from her otherwise nude body.

The obvious curiosity in her expression led to no questions. She only sighed and let him lead her to the shore.

The crew was in place. Ryken wore only a pair of black silk sleep pants, slung low on his waist. Lucilla’s attention was fixed upon the water once more and Ryken took advantage of her stance. Easing the steel bands of his arms about her waist, his hands rose with thumb and forefinger beginning a dual assault on her nipples.

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Her affect was instant, lashes fluttering when he weighed her breasts in his palms. Her head rested back on his chest and the tiniest sound of helplessness slipped past her lips. She was biting her lip when he started to suckle her earlobe. Ryken uttered a groan of his own when she ground her ass slightly against his erecting cock. His usually steady hand shook faintly when it ventured inside the loose robe to graze her pussy lips.

Lucilla's entire body responded with a jerk but Ryken didn't stop. Strong, persuasive fingers stroked the satin cocoa colored flesh guarding the core of her. Sweetly, they eased inside to stroke her until she was drenched with desire for him. Lucilla bit her lip, feeling his name on her tongue then. They'd have to re-shoot the entire scene if she let herself go and cried out Ryken Gabrielle's name to the clean sea air. She knew she hadn't the strength to take what he was giving more than once.

While his fingers made love to her, Ryken removed the filmy robe which lilted into the heavy morning breeze. In the distance, Charlie clenched a triumphant fist in celebration of filming the beautiful vision of the red garment liting toward the sky.

Ryken tilted back Lucilla's head and kissed her deeply from that angle. She moaned, squeezing his forearm in an attempt to beg that he let her turn and face him. He allowed it finally, following several more torturous moments of him fondling her nipples. A lusty kiss began then. Ryken took her waist and held her high against his chest. She allowed all her unease and stress to merge into the kiss. Her heart swan dived when Ryken dropped to the sand, taking her with him.

"No," she murmured, blindly searching for his mouth when he broke the kiss. His lips blazed a hungry journey across her body, down the silky darkness of her neck, filling his mouth with her tits and suckling ravenously as she writhed atop him. The swelling erection beneath his pants, throbbed painfully the longer she brushed herself against it.

The waves were upon them, adding to their heating rocking against one another. Ryken pushed Lucilla to stand as his kisses rained down her chest and abdomen. Soon, he was stroking her clit, which caused Lu to gasp and thrust her sex against his sensuous lips.

Ryken lay back in the sand, keeping her draped across his mouth. His tongue thrust high and deep inside her. Lucilla pressed her fist to the fine sand and cried out each time her inner walls contracted around his wicked tongue.

Ryken was in no hurry. He lay there pleasuring her and massaging the full curve of her ass as he did so. Eventually, some attention to his own needs was required and he freed himself from the loose confines of his sleep pants. Tugging them just past his hard dick, he shamelessly stroked himself while continuing to delight the beauty grinding upon his famished tongue.

"Please...mmm...please-" she urged softly, biting her lip when she once again felt his name waiting there to slip out.

Ryken was at the hilt of his restraint as well. Deftly, he began to tug her down the length of his massive bronzed frame. He stopped for a moment to tongue her bellybutton until she shrieked and giggled. Further down he tugged her, trailing his nose beneath her boobs and then helping himself to a few seconds of rapacious feasting on her nipples.

Lucilla was already nudging her twat against the head of his dick in a show of obvious impatience. Ryken locked her thighs in his wide palms and spread her before

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thrusting. Lucilla pushed herself up and rode him with thrilling eagerness. Ryken slapped away her hands when her nails grazed the bare silky triangle of flesh above her womanhood. Her intentions of massaging her clit were foiled when Ryken took control and used the pad of his thumb to manipulate the super sensitive bud.

Lucilla wanted to melt; she was so weak with desire and focused on his cock. The feel of the long organ stretching, stroking, plundering seemed to carve a deeper place inside her. Ryken wouldn't allow her to control the scene for long and pulled her off before settling behind her. Without ceremony, he spread the full cheeks of her butt and sheathed himself inside her. Lucilla uttered a shuddery cry and flattened her palms to the sand. Ryken kept her hips trapped in a tight grasp and grunted each time his dick delved into her perfect derriere.

The camera crew filmed them at every angle, but the couple was oblivious to all except the sultry sensations swaying them towards the crest of fulfillment. Ryken exchanged one tight entrance for another. Lucilla felt like a puddle of nothing as she fell deeper into the erotic abyss he'd created for them both.

The waves slapped at their bodies and the moisture rivaled that which dripped from her sex as his granite length took her with a merciless intensity. Ryken hunched over her, trailing his tongue along her spine. One hand curved across her thigh, sealing her to his chiseled form. His other hand cupped her neck and kept her head close to his. Lucilla kept her fingers curled into his glossy curls and couldn't tell which one of them groaned the loudest. When Ryken came, she felt his seed deep inside her, with more trailing her inner thigh. She trembled, savoring the pulsing of his cock as her pussy milked him. For countless seconds, they remained in the embrace, catching their breath.

“Cut!”

Lucilla snapped to, hearing Charlie's direction. She withdrew and headed toward one of the assistants who held a robe. Ryken barely comprehended Charlie's compliments on a killer performance. His emerald stare was focused on Lu as she practically ran from the set.

Following the beach scene, Lucilla decided to treat herself to a massage at the hotel spa. She still felt as pent up following the shoot as she had been before they began.

All she wanted was Ryken-it was true. Why it had never dawned on her before; that he was the only man she craved, she'd never know. Then again, maybe she *had* known. Maybe she'd known all along. She'd been intimate with no other man since she and Ryken entered one another's lives eight years ago. She told herself it was because she wanted to get to know the others first. She had to be sure they wanted Lucilla Fairchild of Sussex instead of Ariel Woods from “*Sensuality*”.

That was a crock, she hissed silently. A moan slipped past her lips when the masseur soothed an achy spot with the heel of his hand.

Ryken had always been there. He was the friend she could confide in and the lover she could lose herself with. Moreover, she was the same for him. Squeezing her eyes shut tight, she ordered herself back to reality. If “*Sensuality*” weren't part of the *reality*, they could have a shot. But such wasn't the case-they were well-known, often photographed and highly intriguing to the press and public as a whole.

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In short, they'd never make it. The pressure of such a public life would put a stranglehold on any attempt they made at a relationship. So what now? Continue to shun Ryken's advances? How was that going to work when they had sex almost every day? Several times a day...

"Discomfort madam?" The masseur asked when Lucilla moaned again.

"No, no it's fine," she assured him and returned to her thoughts. How was that going to work? Tension already surrounded them. They were barely on speaking terms. Arguments ensued if they were in each other's company for longer than thirty minutes. Then, there was the sex. How many times had his name almost tripped from her tongue during the beach scene? She even recalled a mild feeling of intrusion while the camera filmed them. Heavens, not only was this affecting their true friendship, but their on-screen relationship as well. Instead of protecting things by resisting an involvement, everything was approaching ruin.

Burying her head more deeply into the table's facial insert, she decided this debating was doing little to relax *or* enlighten her. She tried to clear her head of everything except the masseur's touch. It helped and she felt her eyelids grow heavy as relaxation claimed her. A giggle even settled in her throat when the man's touch brushed the rise of her bottom at the top edge where the towel covered the lower portion of her body. She wiggled and his touch ceased only to resume at the nape of her neck, the curve of her ear, her cheek...

Lucilla jerked away then, whirling around on the table to find herself looking into Ryken's jade stare.

When no words were forthcoming, Lu could only sit there watching him for a time. Then, taking stock of her nudity, she tugged the towel before her chest. Ryken's grin held no humor. Slowly, he approached her and leaned close to cup her cheek.

"No need for that love. I'm not here to ravish you."

"What?" was all Lucilla could manage.

"I'm sorry," he murmured, kissing the corner of her mouth. "What I said to you when we fought over the story and what I did to Frakes."

Lucilla shook her head then, recalling the ugly words they'd spewed back and forth. "It's over," she whispered.

Ryken shoved a hand into the pocket of his olive green trousers and grimaced. "I've never spoken to you that way and I don't intend to start now no matter *how* frustrated I am."

"Ryken-

"No Lu-this, this is killing me," he smiled, seeing the surprise in her eyes. "I want you in my life in my bed...I want to know you're mine. That you belong to me-to Ryken Gabrielle and not Devin Black of Sensuality," he said. "But I can't have that and...instead of accepting it, I've done everything in my power to persuade you to change your mind and in doing so I'm losing my best friend." His sleek dark brows drew closer as he trailed the back of his hand down her cheek. "Knowing that is more frustrating than all the rest."

"You haven't *lost me* Ry," she soothed, resting her hand against the front of his shirt.

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“But I will,” he argued. “You were right Luci. Us...together-truly together is a mistake.”

“Ry...” Lucilla whispered again. He appeared as though the words were causing him physical pain.

“I can accept this,” he went on. “I want my friend back,” he said, resting his forehead to her shoulder. Then, brushing his fingers across her collarbone, he kissed her temple and left the room.



CHAPTER NINE

That evening, cast and crew dined at the Allure, a most exclusive restaurant. So exclusive, in fact, that it was built in the middle of a bay and accessible only by ferry. That night, the “*Sensuality*” family was the only guests. Wrapping was nearing completion and if they were to maintain a strict schedule all deadlines would be reached.

“Provided we aren’t interfered with which will be virtually impossible with the press hounding us at every turn,” Charlie was saying as the meeting portion of their dinner began. “Because of that, our location arrangements have been altered a bit,” he announced and then began waving his hands as the volume of conversation rose. “Our man Ryken has been gracious enough to open his home to us for the remainder of filming in Europe. “We’ll be traveling to Livorno, Tuscany. Equipment is already en route and we’ll be leaving on the morrow.”

Conversation rose to a thundering pitch then as everyone vied for a chance to kiss Ryken’s cheek or shake hands to thank him. Not bothering to join the melee, Lucilla took a moment to watch him accept the gratitude. Then she left the hubbub for the quieter atmosphere on the veranda outside the airy dining room. She felt Ryken’s arms easing about her waist moments later.

“You okay?” he asked, nudging his handsome face into her chic dark crop.

“Mmm...” she confirmed in a light enough manner when in truth every part of her sizzled in the midst of his presence. “Why’d you do this?”

“Being at the hotel is making you uncomfortable. I don’t like it.” Was his simple reply.

Lucilla tugged at the end of his charcoal coat sleeve. “It’s not fair that you should have your home turned upside down for us.”

“Hmph, it’s not as much of a chore as you might think,” he said and allowed her to turn in his embrace. “My aunt’s have been on me to entertain more.”

Lucilla giggled. “If they only knew, right?” she teased.

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Ryken didn't seem amused by the comment. "There's something you should know Luci," he began, squeezing her arms to urge her quiet. "My socializing, my um *entertaining* has been mainly to keep up appearances."

"Appearances?" Lucilla parroted, tilting her head.

His stony, serious expression softened a bit. "For the last two years, you've been the *only* woman I've wanted and trust me, I've tried to *want* others but it hasn't been possible."

"Ryken..." was all she could muster.

His deep set gaze was clouded and clearly he wanted to say more but decided against it. "We can never be more than what we are, love. I understand that now," he said.

"Ry!"

A voice from inside the dining room beckoned and Ryken turned to wave, before looking back at Lucilla. He brushed her cheek once before leaving her alone again on the veranda.

By morning, the cast and what remained of the crew were prepared to set off for Livorno, a coastal town located in the northern portion of Tuscany Italy. A caravan of Mercedes SUVs had been chartered to make the drive, but Ryken acquired his own transportation and told Charlie that he and Lucilla would drive up together.

Lu was noticeably shaken when she arrived down in the lobby and found only Ryken there. He stood at the front desk, talking with the two male clerks there.

Get over it! Lu ordered herself. If they were going to have a go at putting this...attraction behind them, she was going to have to get back to the easy going relationship they used to share. If only she could be sure that letting down her guard around Ryken wouldn't have her so relaxed, she'd eagerly give into her desire for him.

"Where is everyone?" she asked, when he'd ended his conversation with the clerks and stood before her.

"We're going to drive up together," he said, his focus on rolling the sleeves of his midnight blue shirt above muscular forearms.

Lovely, she remarked quietly. The news didn't surprise her. What good would it do to make an issue of it now?

Ryken appreciated that, since he'd planned a day that wouldn't have them arriving at the villa until late evening. The excursion was more for his benefit than anything. He realized that he actually had to retrain himself to think of her simply as his friend Lu and not the woman he'd come to love. *That* was an emotion he never expected to link with any woman other than the two who raised him. So he'd planned a day of sightseeing and stops along the coast. All the while he'd pray the image of her nude and panting with desire for him wouldn't ravage his thoughts for the better part of the day.

"You must be joking?" Lucilla breathed her brown eyes wide and unwavering. The car had carried her and Ryken the short distance from the hotel to the pier.

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There waiting, was a gorgeous fifty foot Bow rider. It came complete with every vice including a sterling silver bucket of chilling champagne and platters of assorted fruits, cheeses and chocolates on deck.

“There a problem?” he asked, chuckling softly.

Lu couldn’t help but laugh. She took his hand and let him help her aboard.

“This is incredible,” she raved, strolling across the gleaming deck to look out over the gorgeous sea view.

Ryken went to speak with the captain and within fifteen minutes they’d set sail.

“This is the life,” Lucilla marveled as they finished off a second bottle of champagne and what remained of the fruit. “Thank you Ry, I do believe I’ll be truly relaxed for the remainder of filming.”

“Glad you approve,” he said, finishing the champagne in his glass.

Lucilla laughed suddenly. “You know, a yacht like this would be perfect for a scene. Have we ever done it on a boat?” she asked him.

Ryken leaned back his head, a playful frown marring his brow. “I don’t believe we have. Maybe Owen and Lori,” he said, mentioning two of their co-stars.

“Mmm...” Lu gestured, while snuggling back on the large settee they shared. “I think we should request one.”

“You think?” Ryken queried. All the playfulness left his emerald stare as he watched her reclining. Her eyes were closed as she sipped from her glass.

“Mmm,” Lu agreed, teasing outrageously and having no clue that the conversation was venturing far beyond anything *playful*. “We could begin with you giving me oral on the deck,” she said, now envisioning the perfect scene.

Ryken’s smirk sparked his dimples. His gaze ventured to her thighs barely covered thanks to the wind whipping the hem of her coral halter frock. “Would you reciprocate?” he softly inquired.

“Of course. Right here on one of these settees,” she purred amidst her laughter. “Now that I’m such an *expert* at it, that is.”

Ryken closed his eyes and felt his dick swell. Memories of her giving him her first blow job resurfaced in his mind.

“We could fuck right against the wheel,” Lucilla was going on, the affects of relaxation and champagne wreaking havoc on her inhibitions. “You’ll have to be careful though. I’ll bet that hard wood could be a real bother.”

“I’m sure it could,” was Ryken’s only response.

The silence following his words prompted Lu to open her eyes. One look at him told her how seriously he’d taken her teasing. Clearing her throat, she returned her conversation to compliments on the boat. She noticed Ryken roll his eyes and smirk giving her a fine idea that he knew what she was doing.

Lucilla’s heart was in her throat and she stifled a relieved sigh when the cook requested Ryken a few moments later. When he’d gone, she collapsed on the settee and buried her face in her hands.

An hour later, Ryken was searching for Lucilla to tell her brunch was ready. He found her on the top deck and immediately regretted his decision to look for her. She’d

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taken advantage of the warm morning and eased out of her dress under which she wore a striking sea blue bikini.

“Luci?” he called, massaging the bridge of his nose in an attempt to keep from staring. “Lu!” he bellowed, grimacing when she scarcely stirred. “Lucilla,” he called once more, watching then as she opened her eyes and stretched. “Brunch,” he announced, then left before she could respond.

They were dining a short while later. Lucilla was in heaven, but Ry was cursing his decision to embark on the excursion. He’d never realized how tempting and unintentionally sexy Lucilla’s habit of eating with her fingers was. They dined on peeled shrimp in a rich butter sauce, fruit and croissants.

Ryken intended to wolf down the rest of his food and leave. Instead, he found himself reclining in his seat and watching her nibble food and suck juices from her fingertips. He was entranced.

Lucilla noticed him staring and tapped the corner of a napkin to her mouth. “Thank you for um, the trip. And the food...it’s great,” she rambled and continued to eat. She’d hoped to spark a bit of chatter from his end, but had no luck. Risking another glance at his face, she was disturbed by the glare he sent her way.

“Ryken? Are you-are you alright?”

The question sent him bolting to his feet. “Think about it Lu,” he snapped, leaving her to stare at him in confusion as he left the table.

Ryken and Lucilla enjoyed the remainder of the trip apart from one another. Lucilla thought they’d been getting along fine, but clearly they hadn’t been. She supposed it’d take more than a day-long jaunt to bring them back to their ‘just friends’ status. Part of her though, was afraid they’d never find it again.

Livorno, Tuscany

“Well, it’s about time!” Charlie wore a big grin when he greeted them later that evening. “Incredible place you got here Ry!” he called, strolling the long pier where the yacht docked. “You two have a shoot late afternoon around 4p.m. tomorrow.” He said, pulling Lucilla into a hug.

Ryken barely registered having heard Charlie. His long strides carried him quickly up the deck, leaving Charlie and Lu to approach the house together.

Dinner that evening was a huge affair hosted by Ryken’s aunts Ruby and Raveen Dwele. The two were dark, beautiful and as fragile looking as two China dolls. No one could believe the two beauties had raised Ryken to which they simultaneously replied: “Why do you think there are *two* of us?!”

The sisters had prepared a meal of curried chicken, broiled salmon with a zesty seasoned rice, wheat rolls and greens. For dessert, a recipe for sweet potato pie that Raveen borrowed from a friend in the southern portion of the United States.

It was a lively affair and the sister’s thoroughly enjoyed the cast and crew. Everyone was surprised to learn that both ladies were fans of the show. Ruby made sure

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the seating arrangements had the male stars-with the exception of her nephew-seated closest to her and her sister.

When dinner was over and the dishes were being cleared by the house staff, Ruby and Raveen abandoned the rest of their adoring guests to request a private visit with Lucilla.

“So love when may we expect some sort of announcement from you and our nephew?” Raveen interrupted when Lucilla’s ravings over the house and thanks for welcoming she and her colleagues showed no end.

Lucilla began to fidget with the ruffled bodice of her grape jam blouse. “Um...sorry? An-an announcement?”

Raveen rolled her eyes toward her sister.

“Lucilla dear please tell us you’re not one of those mindless strumpets our nephew parades around with for the public?”

“He loves you, dear,” Raveen leaned close to whisper.

A nervous laugh rumbled forth from Lucilla. “I love him too,” she breathed.

“He’s *in* love with you,” Ruby clarified.

Lu seemed to wilt, her pretense at making light of the situation seeping out of her body. “I’m so afraid,” she admitted, sitting on the railing that ran past the spectacular garden on the west side of the property. “Things are so strained between us...”

“Oh honey,” Raveen soothed as she and her sister took their places on either side of Lucilla.

“I just know any *real* involvement would mean death to our friendship not to mention the show. I’ve seen it happen too many times. A lot of people depend on us and that show for their livelihood you know?”

Ruby toyed with the dangling star earrings on Lucilla’s lobes. “Your problem is a simple one love. All you need to do is ask yourself if you and Ryken in love and enjoying all that entails is worth the risk and means more to you than some show-which by the way, will be over as soon as someone younger and more devastating pops on the scene.”

Lucilla blinked. The sisters exchanged smiles as if knowing they’d given her something more to consider. They pressed kisses to her cheek and left her alone.

“Stay,” she pleaded.

“I’ll be back,” he promised.

“I’m afraid you won’t be.”

“Hey?” he commanded, nudging her chin with his fist. “You’ve got me. You’ve got *all* of me. I’m not goin’ anywhere unless you tell me and even then you’re gonna have a devil of a time convincing me before I do.”

A wickedly erotic kiss followed. She felt as warmed by it as she did from the rays of late afternoon sunlight. It streamed through the windows and into the hay-filled loft where they made love. Her groan was accompanied by a gasp when his dick stiffened again inside her.

“Cut!” Charlie yelled. “Fabulous! Fantastic work guys!” he raved along with everyone else.

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Ryken rested his forehead on Lucilla's shoulder. He took several deep breaths as if trying to silently order his cock to deflate. It did exactly the opposite.

"Lunch in ten, guys!" Charlie called on his way out the door.

"Sorry," Ryken apologized once they were alone.

He began to withdraw and Lucilla locked her legs around his back. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"Shower." Was his firm, subtly angry response.

She flexed her calves around his back. "You don't have to."

"Don't do this to me Luci," he ordered, his baritone voice sounding heavier with desire.

"But I can't just let you go like this," she clenched her inner walls around his erection. "I can take care of this," she invited.

Ryken's eyes glinted with fury. "That's right. You can take care of my dick, but not my heart."

"Ry--"

"Shut up," he warned, deciding to take what she offered. His hands imprisoned her thighs, spreading them to more easily accommodate his powerful frame. He took her savagely, stroking her long and deep until he was thoroughly satisfied. Without a hint of remorse, he withdrew and left her there on the hay strewn pallet. Lucilla had no strength to follow as she lay there wilted and breathless from his ravishing.

The cast and crew were given the following day off to enjoy the sights of Livorno. The Tuscan coast was utter beauty and everyone relished the time from the set. Including Ryken, who set out before dawn to take refuge at his favorite remote hillside.

The day was overcast and surprisingly cool-perfect for an impromptu camping trip. Ryken prayed the outing would cool his temper, his mind and his hormones. He was at a complete loss as to how to proceed with Lu. It was an obstacle he'd have never believed would exist between them. Deciding not to agitate himself further with the thoughts, he dropped one last log to the fire and cracked open his second Heineken.

The snap of a branch in the distance, caught his ear and he looked up to see Lucilla climbing the hill. Obvious surprise covered his face, yet he remained silent until she stood just on the other side of the fire.

"What the hell are you doing out here?" he snapped.

Lucilla blinked, clearing her throat to summon courage. "Your aunts told me you come here sometimes."

"Right. To be alone."

Lucilla stomped splotches of mud and leaves from her black Wellington boots and ventured closer. "We should talk."

"Ah Lu," Ryken groaned, trailing five fingers through his thick hair. "I've had enough *talk* to last me a decade. I don't think this is something *talk* can settle. It can't even be settled with sex."

Lu managed a smile and smoothed both hands across the clinging sleeves of her rose knit sweater. "I guess we're in a big trouble then."

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“You think?” he murmured, taking another swig of his brew.

“Something that can’t be solved with sex,” she sighed, coming to sit next to him by the fire. “It’s really funny especially since we’ve been using sex to solve almost everything. At least, *I* have.”

Ryken slanted her a look, but said nothing and continued to enjoy his drink.

“I’ve been so unfair to all those fools I’ve been seeing over the years.” She admitted, bracing her elbows atop her knees. “It’s true though and while some of them were complete jackasses, I have to own up to my part in it. You see...they came into the relationship wanting a relationship *of sorts* and I knew I had *no* intentions on following through with any of it. Those guys were just pawns to hide the truth from the public—maybe even from myself...” she raked her fingers through her hair. “Ryken you’re the only man I’ve had sex with since we first had sex together almost eight years ago. You’re the only man I’ve *wanted* to have sex with. I made myself believe all I felt for you was friendship and the sex was just part of the job. That was a lie.” She quieted for a moment, tossing a few frail sticks to the fire. “Ryken I’m terrified of what the media—the public would do to us if they got whiff of anything serious between us. I could live with the way things were, but I never stopped to think of how *you’d* handle it. Then Jeff came along—*acting* as if he didn’t want sex. It was so easy and everyone bought that it was a love match—hmph, including me. I never counted on his betrayal or your feelings being anything other than what I thought they were.” She groaned into her hands. “I’m so sorry for making you feel as though you were wrong for wanting this when I wanted the same.”

Ryken twisted the near empty beer bottle in his fingers. He could barely hear above his heartbeat filling his ears. Still, he managed to quell the excitement her words flooded into his chest.

“Why are you telling me this Luci?”

She tugged on the hem of the black and gray hoody he wore. “Isn’t it obvious?”

“The public’s still out there Lu.”

“I know.”

“And?”

“And I love you.”

Ryken’s expression grew darker. “Don’t play with me Luci,” he cautioned.

“I swear I’m not.”

His eyes raked her several times, taking in the clenched hands at her chest as she perched on her knees. He smirked, tossing back more beer.

Grimacing, Lucilla moved closer to straddle his lap. The hem of her short, linen shirt rose a tad higher and she wrenched the bottle from his grasp. “I *swear* I’m not playing with you Ryken. I love you. I always have—as a friend, lover...as the man I truly want in my life.”

“And the show?” he challenged.

She rolled her eyes. “To hell with the show. It’ll always be there. Why soon, there’ll even be someone younger and prettier on the scene to take our places.”

Ryken smiled then and gave her a playful jerk. “Speak for yourself.”

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Elated by his teasing, Lucilla's laughter fluttered free. It was smothered moments later when his tongue lunged deep into her mouth. Shivers crackled to life inside her and she quickly became a hungry participant in the kiss.

Ryken's hands journeyed up along the black tights she wore. He winced, exploring her mouth more intensely when he discovered the silken flesh above the lacy tops of the garments. His fingers plunged beneath the crotch of her panties. His dick lengthened another two inches at the feel of warm cream covering his skin. Ryken closed his eyes, praying for the will to resist rushing the moment. This time he was taking Lucilla and she was truly his for the taking. He damn well intended to savor it. Lowering her to the pallet spread out before the fire, he kissed her out of her clothes. Keeping her wrists pinned to the luxurious navy fleece blanket, he gave her sex a thorough tonguing. Only when she shivered uncontrollably, did he doff his clothing. He took her slowly, ignoring her when she begged him to be forceful. She came hard and steady, every inch of her quivering with a fiery need.

"I love you Lucilla," he spoke against her mouth.

"I love you back," she whispered. "I love you Ryken."

He repeated the phrase, smiling when she did the same. The words mingled soft and sweet between them amidst the crisp air.

Dear Reader,

Greetings and thank you for embarking upon this debut slice of erotic fiction. I hope Ryken and Lucilla thrilled and satisfied while they humored and overwhelmed.

I'd love to know your thoughts on the story-be they positive or constructively critical.

Drop me a line anytime: t.onyx@hotmail.com

Keep reading,

T. Onyx