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Para Naughty

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Alice Gaines

Misty Simon

Francesca Hawley

Draumr Publishing, LLC
Maryland

ParaNaughty

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Cover art by Skye Wolf.

There is no ISBN associated with the electronic version of this book.

PUBLISHED BY DRAUMR PUBLISHING, LLC

www.draumrpublishing.com

Columbia, Maryland

Printed in the United States of America

Foreword

by Eileen Wilson

In my mind, I picture the perfect heroine and she's unabashedly curvy. When on a date with the man of her dreams, she eats what she wants, including that deliciously decadent cheesecake. She wraps her voluptuous body in fun, stylish clothing that reflects her sassy personality and emphasizes her bodacious cleavage and scrumptious junk in the trunk. Her lingerie drawer is filled with soft, silky peignoirs that entice her dream man to touch her and whisk her off to the bedroom for a wild romp.

The perfect heroes for these plump beauties think the women have great personalities but, more importantly, can't keep their hands off the lush packaging. The men can be devilishly handsome or the clean cut boy-next-door type, but the one thing they have in common is their appreciation for the Rubenesque heroines.

I've waited years to see these kinds of heroines and heroes in romance, especially in erotic romance. Slowly but surely, authors are beginning to incorporate such characters into their stories. Zaftig women everywhere can stand up and cheer because more and more writers are heeding the call to create real-sized women in real-life situations, meeting and falling in love with men who celebrate their curves.

The stories in this anthology are another step in the right direction. Sit back, relax and curl up with some hot men romancing voluptuous women.

Eileen Wilson is the author of "An Unforgettable Kiss", available in the "Love at Large" anthology.

With Many Thanks

To Eileen Wilson for her assistance in editing this great work of
paranormal erotica.

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*The Devil, You
Say*

Alice Gaines

Dedication

For my Rebel Sisters. "Living well is the best revenge." - George
Herbert

Chapter One



The woman looked like an escapee from a fashion runway in hell. Draped in expensive clothes and with every hair coifed into submission, she was thin enough to bend in ways the human body wasn't meant to bend. Worse, she was going to be Cynthia Redmon's new boss, dammitall.

Cyn had worked her tuchus off for months to get this promotion. Fat chance. After he'd all but promised the job to Cyn, Stewart had hired someone from the outside. Now, he sat leering at his newest acquisition as if he'd already figured out a way to get into her pants. Maybe he had. Who knew? Maybe he'd hired her as payment for services rendered.

"Carole will be transitioning into her new management role on Monday," Stew said, in his usual pseudo-business gibberish.

"That's Carole with an 'e,'" the new boss added.

Cyn nodded. Both of them had told her that. Maybe the extra vowel got Carole a few thou more in salary.

"I'd like you to prioritize your calendar so that you can show Carole the scope of her new duties," Stew said.

"I have to train her?" Holy excrement. The bastard didn't re-

ally expect her to train the woman who'd gotten the job she'd hoped to win for herself, did he?

"You've been here a while, Cyn." Stew gave her an oily smile.

"Six years." Six long years of scrimping and saving in hopes of buying a piece of the American dream—her own house—only to watch the ridiculous real estate market snatch her dream away from her time after time. This promotion had offered her only real hope to make enough to get a mortgage. Damn Stewart and his obsession with leggy, skinny blondes.

"I look forward to working with you, Cynthia," the skinny blonde said. She didn't look as if she looked forward to it, though. The slight lift to her eyebrow and curl to her lip looked as if she didn't quite approve of Cyn. As if she planned to deliver mini-lectures on the "epidemic of obesity" and leave low-carb diet sheets around the office.

"I look forward to it, too, Carole," Cyn said sweetly. She hoped. "Say, I wonder if I might have a word with Stewart alone."

Carole's eyebrow went up even further, and she glanced over at Stew for guidance.

His beady eyes narrowed in disapproval. Then, he gave Carole a slick smile and gestured toward the door. "Would you excuse us?"

"Of course." Carole rose and walked to the office door. She paused with her hand on the knob. "Lunch later?"

"Sure, doll."

Doll? He called his new accounts manager "doll"? He'd put Cyn off her feed if he ever called her anything like that. It didn't seem to bother Carole, though, because she smiled and let herself out, closing the door behind her.

"That was pretty rude," Stew said, his pointy weasel nose all a-twitch. "You're going to have to interface with Carole on a daily basis, you know."

"How could you do this?" Cyn demanded.

"Do what?"

"How could you hire someone from the outside when you promised the job to me?"

"I never bottom-lined it for you." More nose-twitching. Stew-

art always got that rodent look on his face when he lied, and that was a lot of the time.

“You told me all I had to do to prove I was manager material was to run the department for a while. I did that, and I did a damned good job of it.”

“I appreciate your task-orientedness,” he said. “But it’s time to sunset that work modality for you and look at what’s best for this company at the end of the day.”

“Speak English, Stewart.”

His eyes narrowed even further. “Carole has more experience than you.”

She also had pert boobs and non-existent hips. Swimsuit model material. Worse, she put up with being called “doll.” Stewart’s dream of a seductive yet compliant female employee.

“Besides,” he said. “She’s an asset, brand-wise.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“We have a company website, you know.”

“I ought to,” she grumbled. “That was my special project *last* year.”

“Carole’s picture there projects an image. It speaks.”

What did that mean? She stared at Stew for a minute. “What does a picture on a website say?”

“It says, ‘this is a company with a winning paradigm.’”

“Excuse me?”

Stewart took a deep breath. “It says we have our feet on the ground, our nose to the grindstone, and our eyes on the prize.”

And our head up our ass. If only she could find the courage to say that out loud.

“You wanted eye candy on the website,” she said.

“You’re being counterproductive, Cyn,” Stew said. “You need to stay on goal.”

“Oh, I’m *on goal.*” She rose, planted her fists on Stew’s desk and looked down at him. “And my goal required me getting a promotion. A good one.”

“The company has plenty of opportunities for advancement.” He glared up at her. “Don’t blame me if you haven’t utilized the right career paths.”

Dammit, she ought to shake the little weasel. Her fingers itched

to do exactly that. That wouldn't get her a promotion, though. In fact, it'd probably get her fired. She'd already skirted pretty close to insubordination. So far, Stew hadn't threatened her because he knew he needed her to train his new acquisition. Heck, she ought to quit on her own, but she'd looked at the job market. Good opportunities didn't pop up everywhere these days, and most folks were happy to earn a paycheck, even from a boss like Stew the Poo.

"Now, maybe you'd better get back to work," the Poo said. "I still need the project implementation projections."

Cyn did a not-so-slow burn. The creep had dangled the carrot of a promotion in front of her for months, then, he'd hired someone from the outside. Next, he'd ordered Cyn to train the new person. Now, he'd dismissed her. If she stuck around another minute, she'd say something she'd regret.

So, she stood and looked down at him. "Fine."

He gave her an oily smile. He'd won, and he knew it. "You're a team-player, Cyn. That's what I like about you."

"Right," she said from between clenched teeth. Before either of them could say another word, she turned and left the office.

Once in the hallway, she pulled the door closed carefully, rather than slam it, as she'd really like to do. Then, she pounded her head on the wall a few times.

Bam. There had to be another job somewhere that would pay her more money. But, she'd have to leave her pension and 401k if she left.

Bam. There had to be a way for a regular single person to qualify for a mortgage. But in Oakland, decent houses *started* at half a million dollars.

Bam. She'd move to the boondocks. But then, she'd have a multi-hour commute on freeways that looked like parking lots at rush hour.

Bam. There had to be some way. There *had* to be.

"Why are you doing that?"

"Huh?" Cyn looked up to find Midge, the receptionist, staring at her. Midge's eyes were wide with alarm, and she'd let her mug dangle until coffee threatened to spill over the side.

"Why are you pounding your head against the wall?" Midge

righted her cup.

“Because it feels so good when I stop.”

“That doesn’t make any sense.”

Damn it, she knew it didn’t. Still, what could she do?

“Calories,” Cyn mumbled. “I need calories.”

“Okay, who died?”

Cyn set down her menu and looked up at her best friend. “You don’t want to know.”

Jenny shrugged out of her coat and draped it over the seat opposite Cyn’s. “You never ask me to meet you at Romero’s unless something really bad has happened.”

“Sit down and help me decide,” Cyn said. “I plan to order half the menu.”

“Wow.” Jenny pulled out her chair and sat. “That bad, huh?”

“I’m going to start with aguacate and eat my way through zapato.”

“You’re going to eat a shoe?”

“Maybe, but I think I’ll have some guacamole first. How about you?”

Jenny reached over and put her hand on Cyn’s. “Tell me, honey.”

“In a minute. I need to fortify myself with some refried beans.”

“We’ll go for ice cream afterwards.”

Bless Jenny. She never looked disapprovingly when Cyn dared to put something besides rabbit food into her mouth. The rest of the world acted as if she had no right to eat because she wore a size twenty-two. It got pretty tedious after a while.

The waiter showed up, pen poised. “Do las señoritas know what you’ll have?”

“We’ll want to split some guacamole,” Cyn said. “And I’ll have the number three.”

Jenny didn’t even look at her menu. “I’ll have the same.”

The man smiled, took their menus, and walked off. Cyn dipped a tortilla chip into the salsa and raised it in a toast. “Over the teeth and past the gums. Look out, buttocks, here it comes.”

Jenny crossed her arms over her chest. “Why do you do that?”

“What?” Cyn put the salsa-laden chip in her mouth and chewed.

“Why do you make fun of yourself like that?”

Cyn swallowed. “You think it’s *not* going to my buttocks?”

“I think your buttocks are gorgeous.”

Cyn stared at her. Jenny wasn’t skinny by any means, but she didn’t have to shop at the specialty stores. She ate what she wanted and stopped when she wanted and seemed perfectly comfortable inside her own skin. If only Cyn could do the same.

“You’re the best, Jenny,” Cyn said. “But you need to have your eyes checked.”

“You’re in fabulous shape, Cyn.”

Cyn ate another chip and thought about that for a moment. “I do exercise.”

“I’ll bet you were at the gym bright and early today.”

“Of course,” Cyn said.

“You’re strong. You have great muscle tone.”

“I guess.” In fact, that very morning some sweaty guy had had to lower the amount of weight on one of the machines after she’d used it.

“Your skin glows,” Jenny went on. “You radiate health.”

“Yeah, yeah. I glow and radiate. I’m a regular x-ray machine.”

The waiter reappeared with a bowl of guacamole and more chips. Cyn dug into it. “Here goes weeks of dieting.”

“No one can live on carrot sticks and low-fat salad dressing,” Jenny said.

“I can.” Rather, she could if the world would cooperate. The world didn’t seem to want to.

“You can exist on that,” Jenny said. “Not live.”

“Okay, then, I exist.”

“That low-fat dressing is vile. I don’t know how you swallow it.”

“Look, Jenny, you can eat what you want. I can’t.”

“You could, too, if you’d let up on yourself.” Jenny huffed. “It isn’t working, anyway. It isn’t making you thin. It’s making you

miserable.”

“I don’t need any help in that regard.”

“So, will you tell me what happened? Why did I have to meet you here on no notice?”

“I didn’t get the promotion.”

Jenny’s eyes got wide. “What? Has Stewart lost his ever-loving mind?”

“I’m not sure he has one.”

“Who could he have given it to? No one’s more qualified than you.”

“He hired someone from the outside. A size eight. Or six.” Or four. Who knew?

Their food arrived. A huge platter of beans and rice. An enchilada and a taco. A chile relleno. More guacamole. Sour cream. Cheese—gooey, melting, fattening cheese. A cloud of spices floated over the whole thing. All this and ice cream, too.

Jenny didn’t even pick up her fork. “I can’t believe he’d do that. Even Stew the Poo couldn’t be idiotic enough to hire someone who doesn’t know the company.”

“Don’t underestimate him. He gives idiots a bad name.” Cyn picked up her fork and dug into the beans. They oozed calories. Was it possible to smell lard?

“That’s so unfair, honey,” Jenny wailed.

Cyn ate the beans and followed them with a bite of enchilada. “Eat your lunch. It’s delicious.”

Jenny finally helped herself to some guacamole and watched Cyn eat for a while.

“Did he give you any reason he hired the woman from the outside?” Jenny said.

“He said he wanted someone who’d project the right image on the company website.” Cyn finished her chile relleno and moved back to her beans. “You know how Stewart is about weight.”

“You should have slapped him by now for some of his remarks.”

“I imagine he wants to pork this woman, too, if he isn’t doing it already.”

“Well, you don’t want any job where you have to pork Stewart,” Jenny said.

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“Ewww, Jenny, I’m trying to eat.”

“Good point.” The two of them ate in silence for a while.

Damn, she’d counted on this promotion. Without it, she’d have to spend years scraping together a down payment.

“So, what are you going to do?” Jenny asked.

“I don’t think there *is* anything I can do about Stewart, and I doubt I could find another, better job.”

“Why not?” Jenny said. “You’re so well qualified.”

“The whole world’s the same as Stewart about weight. They all want stick women to adorn their offices.”

“That isn’t true, hon. You just have to find the right company.”

Cyn set aside her fork and wiped her mouth with her napkin. “I have another idea.”

“What?”

Cyn reached into the pocket of her jacket and found the brochure from the clinic. She slid it across the table to Jenny.

Jenny took one look at it, and her eyes got wide again. “No, honey. I mean it.”

“The surgery is very successful at helping people lose weight.”

“Not surgery, Cynthia. You can’t.”

“I called them this morning. I can have it done in a couple of weeks.”

Her friend crumpled the brochure into a wad and set it on the table. “Don’t you dare even think of such a thing.”

“Why not?”

“Surgery’s dangerous. Just an anesthetic mistake can kill you.”

“Lots of people have had it done.”

“People who need it,” Jenny said. “You don’t.”

“I’m desperate here,” Cyn said.

“If you’re in good health, it’s completely unnecessary,” Jenny said. “I won’t let you do it.”

“Nothing else is working.” Cyn rested her palms on the table and leaned toward her friend. “At this point, I’d sell my soul to be thin.”

“Oh, honey, I know you’re hurting, but…”

“I mean it, Jenny. I’d sell my soul.”

The room got funny all of a sudden. The walls leaned inward, and the floor shook. Jenny didn’t seem to notice but sat, staring at Cyn.

“Whoa,” Cyn said.

“Are you all right?” her friend’s voice came out distorted as though it was being played in slow motion.

Everything started to spin around Cyn, and she pressed her hands to her eyes. When she removed them again, everything had gone black.

When Cyn’s vision returned, she found herself in some kind of anteroom. Rows of straight-backed chairs lined the walls. Bare vinyl floors. An empty metal desk stood in front of an unadorned door. The walls held no pictures and no windows. The décor went way past minimalist to bleak. If she’d sold her soul to the devil, the Prince of Darkness ought to be able to do better than this place.

She *was* in hell, right? She wasn’t in Kansas anymore, for sure. Nor Romero’s Cocina Mexicana. She’d just vowed to sell her soul in exchange for a svelte figure, so the devil must have taken her. She looked down at herself. Beelzebub hadn’t kept his part of the bargain—every extra pound on her body had followed her here.

“Well, Satan, or whoever brought me here, I don’t have to endure any lakes of fire if you haven’t made me thin.”

“Come in, Cynthia.” It was a male voice that seemed to come right out of the walls.

She looked around. “Huh?”

“The door, Cynthia. There is only one.”

She did a complete three-sixty. The voice was right. Only one door—the one behind the desk. She must have materialized inside the anteroom. Either that, or she’d had a wicked reaction to MSG, if they used that at Romero’s.

“I’m waiting,” the voice called again.

Oh, what the hell? Oops, now that she was in hell, maybe she’d better stop using it as a curse word. The landlord might take exception. Whatever. She walked to the door and tried the knob.

It opened easily.

The room she entered was as sparse as the anteroom, maybe even more so. The same vinyl floor, the same metal desk. A man sat behind this desk, though, on the only chair in the place. He hunched over a keyboard, his face obscured behind a huge computer terminal. Although he must have called to her to enter, he acted as if he didn't know she'd come in. He typed and stared at the screen while she fidgeted.

Finally, she cleared her throat.

"Cynthia Redmon?" he asked.

"You were expecting, maybe, Britney Spears?"

"What would I want with her?"

"What do you want with me?"

"Have a seat," he said. "I'm almost finished here."

She looked around. "The floor looks comfortable."

"Sorry." A hand appeared from behind the terminal. Masculine with long fingers, it pointed at a spot beside her, and a chair appeared. Oh-kaaay. Definitely not Kansas. Cyn sat in it and put her hands in her lap.

After a minute, he pushed his swivel chair from behind the screen and looked at her. Cyn's breath caught on an audible gasp before she got control of herself. He was easily the most unusual looking man she'd ever seen. And the most handsome. His skin had a dark glow to it, in contrast to the ice blue of his eyes. High cheekbones and bushy eyebrows made his face look harsh, almost animalistic. Yet the whole package worked in an otherworldly sort of way. Could this be the face of Satan himself?

One of his bushy eyebrows went up. "Looking for something?"

Horns, maybe. His hair was long enough to hide stubs of horns. It came to a prominent widow's peak in the front, which also made him look devilish. Oh, those eyes...

He glanced back at his screen. "Cynthia Abigail Redmon. Born 25 years ago. Single. Assistant accounts manager for a mid-sized publishing company. Height, five-seven. Weight..."

"Hey, wait a minute, pal." Cyn raised a hand to stop him. "I don't discuss my weight with anyone."

"Really? I thought you were doing exactly that right before

you called to me.”

“I called to you?”

He looked back at the screen. “Your exact words were ‘I’d sell my soul to be thin.’ You said it twice.”

“I didn’t sign anything, so you don’t have a contract.” She looked at her watch. Rather, tried to, but her wrist was bare. “Okay, I don’t know what you’ve done, but it must be time for me to get back to work.”

“Your last physical was excellent. Blood pressure 110 over 80.” He smiled at her. “Very nice.”

“I didn’t know men cared about women’s vital signs.” The only vitals men cared about, in her experience, were 36-26-36. Or 40-18-22 these days.

“You live alone in a nice apartment and make a good salary.”

“Not enough to buy a house in California,” she said. The way her life had gone so far, she wouldn’t get a husband’s help with the down payment any time soon.

“That’s why you were so upset to lose that promotion,” he said.

“How much do you know about me?”

The fire in his eyes flared briefly, making him look truly dangerous. “As much as I need to know.”

All right, enough. She got up from the chair, walked to his desk, and rested her fists on the top. From this close, his eyes and the glow of his skin could hypnotize a woman of lesser determination. In fact, a more susceptible female might lean toward him, hoping for a kiss from... Damn, his lips were as luscious as the rest of him. Full and curved. She shook herself.

“Look, I said something in haste,” she said over the hammering of her heart. “But I didn’t make any promises, and I didn’t sign anything.”

He smiled. Smugly, the s-o-b. He knew what effect he had on women, obviously. In another time and place, she might entertain fantasies of a man like that giving her a tumble. But he was Satan, and this was Hades, and she had to get the hell out.

“You called out for help,” he said.

“Help?” Was the man nuts? “An offer to sell my soul is a cry for help?”

He gave her a cat-and-canary grin. "So, I'm right. You did offer your soul."

"Don't break your arm patting yourself on the back," she said. "I offered my soul in exchange for something. You didn't hold up your part of the bargain, so you get nothing from me."

"What if I want to give you something, instead?"

Call for help? Give her something? This made no sense. When had Satan gone into the psychotherapy business? Maybe this was a con. She'd offered her soul, and he'd blown the deal. So, now he thought he could seduce her into turning over the goods, anyway. He looked seductive enough, but if she wanted to surrender, she wouldn't.

"If you want to give me something, give me my freedom," she said. "Send me back to Romero's."

"To that orgy of self-loathing? I think not."

"What business of is it of yours?"

"A soul is a very precious thing, Cynthia, not to be bargained away for something as trivial as body size."

Easy for him to say. He didn't have an extra ounce of fat on him. He could probably eat three Romero's number three specials without putting on a pound. Come to think of it, she'd always suspected that mortals who could do that might be the devil's spawn. Maybe she'd been onto something.

"I lost my dream job because of my body size," she said. "With that, I lost my hope of owning a house."

"There are other jobs. Better ones."

"Like I'd get one of those in my size twenty-two muumuu's." She threw her hands into the air. "For pity's sake, I don't even have a sex life."

"Ahhhh..."

He gave her that smug smile again. Did she dare try smacking Beelzebub?

"That, at least, is something worth sacrificing for," he said. "But, I can help you with that."

She crossed her arms over her chest. "Exactly how do you think you're going to do that?"

"Really, Cynthia, that should be obvious."

She stood and stared at him for a while.

“I’m a man,” he said finally. “If you want sex, I’ll give it to you.”

“Whoa, now *there’s* a smooth line if I ever heard one. Very romantic. I may swoon.”

“Forgive me. You were so frank about sex, I thought you’d appreciate frankness from me. Is this more agreeable?”

He waved his hand around the room, and everything changed. The plain walls disappeared to be replaced by drapes of red velvet. A fireplace stood on one wall, and several logs blazed in the hearth. This looked more like hell. Except, maybe, for all the plush furniture around the room. A recliner and ottoman in one corner, a conversation pit against the wall, a chaise in the same red velvet—all of it designed for maximum comfort. Next to the chaise stood a low table with a bowl of fruit and two crystal wine flutes on it. Next to that, a tripod held a wine bucket with what looked like a bottle of champagne sticking out of it.

The man now stood next to the fireplace, lounging with one elbow on the mantle. He wore formal attire—a cutaway jacket and tails—which made him look even more devilish. And more delicious.

“More romantic?” he asked.

“In an early bordello sort of way.”

“One more thing.” He made another gesture, and the light in the room dimmed until only the fire filled the room with warm illumination. It cast his form into shadow and made him look even taller and more imposing than he had before.

Just a moment ago, he’d offered to fix her sex life. Her knees wobbled.

“You look absolutely ravishing, by the way,” he said. His eyes widened as he looked her over, from the top of her head to her feet and back to her—ohmigod—breasts. They responded as if he were stroking them with his fingers. They felt achy and heavy, and the nipples hardened against the flimsy material.

Hey, wait a minute. Flimsy material?

She looked down at herself. Somehow he’d replaced her business suit with a long, flowing negligee of perfectly sheer, black gauze. It revealed—no, showed off—every bit of flab and cellulite on her body.

“What in hell did you do?” She ran behind the chaise and crouched low to hide herself. Hell, indeed. This hell business was finally starting to make sense. She’d come here to a den of iniquity with a man who looked good enough to eat, but she had to expose herself to his ridicule. She’d spend the rest of eternity horny beyond human endurance, and he’d keep telling her she turned him off.

“Why are you hiding, Cynthia?” he said.

“If you have any mercy in your soul, don’t do this.” She really ought to laugh at that one. Mercy from the devil.

He approached the chaise. “Do what?”

She crouched lower. “Make fun of me.”

He stopped where he was and stared down at her, a look of honest puzzlement on his face. “Telling you how ravishing you look is making fun of you?”

“It is if you don’t mean it.”

“You think I’m not attracted to you,” he said.

“Bingo.” The man had a keen grasp of the obvious. She didn’t move but glared at him from her safe spot behind the chaise.

He held out his hand toward her. “Come out from behind the furniture.”

“It doesn’t matter whether I think you’re attracted to me or not, I don’t get naked on the first date. I’m old-fashioned that way.”

“False modesty,” he said. “I’m going to give you one more chance. Come out from behind that chaise.”

Her heart started pounding again. After all, this man was the devil, and he’d delivered a direct order. Twice. What would happen to her if she continued to refuse? The tortures of the damned? Pillars of fire? Locusts? But honestly, he hadn’t kept up his part of the bargain. How could he say he owned her soul?

That fire came back to his eyes. “Three. Two. One.”

The chaise disappeared. Just plain disappeared. One second it was there, and the second second...pfffft. Without the support, she collapsed onto the floor.

“I was thinking more of the couch,” he said. “But if you prefer the carpet...”

She scrambled to her feet and raced to the side of the room. She could hide behind a drape. Of course, running away from the

most beautiful male she'd ever seen—a man who claimed she looked ravishing—didn't make a whole lot of sense. But she'd started on that path, and by gum, she'd stick to it. What part of "no" didn't he understand? The stupid drape didn't budge, though, no matter how hard she tugged on it. So, there she stood in a black gauze negligee, yanking on velvet.

That was, until she turned around and saw him walking toward her. Slowly. With a determined gleam in his eye. She flattened herself against the wall and watched him approach.

"I'm not going to hurt you, Cynthia," he said softly as he walked ever closer. Carefully, as if he were coaxing a frightened animal to trust him.

"Isn't that your job, tormenting people?"

"Why would you think a thing like that?" He stopped right in front of her. So close, the fabric of his suit almost rubbed against her breasts. They started aching again. Traitors.

He placed his hands on either side of her face and leaned toward her. Heat radiated off him. Maybe that really came from the fire in the hearth, but the man himself felt like a furnace. In the dim light, his eyes glowed. He was sin incarnate, but then, he was the devil, after all. He was built for sin, and oh, was he built.

"Don't be afraid of me, Cynthia." His voice sounded like warm chocolate. His breath was as sweet as honey. The man was a walking, talking, breathing dessert. Yum.

"I'm not," she said. Or croaked, rather. She cleared her throat to try again. "It's just..."

He stroked the side of her face. His fingers were hot, too, but pleasantly. "Just what?"

"This has all been a little hard to understand," she said. "A few minutes ago I was in a Mexican restaurant having lunch with a friend. And now, I'm here, wherever here is."

He sighed, a deep, reluctant sigh. "I see. You have been through quite a bit today."

"So, if you could send me back," she said. But did she want that, really? "Give me my regular clothes first, of course."

"I'm sorry, but I can't do that." He didn't look sorry, though, not the least bit. "You have to stay here a while."

"How long?"

“Until...” His voice trailed off, and he continued to look into her eyes. His lips were so close that the tiniest movement toward them would get her a kiss. For pity’s sake, why didn’t she just do it?

He backed away, finally. Not far. He still had her pinned up against the wall, but she had some breathing room now. Some.

“I tell you what,” he said. “Let me give you a little sample of what I’ve offered you. I think after that, you’ll want to stick around for a while.”

“Okay.” She took a few deep breaths. “I guess.”

He smiled, a very sweet smile, considering he was the devil himself. Then, he took her hand and led her to the couch. When they sat on it, it expanded under them until it was the size of a bed.

“How do you do that?” she asked.

“Do you really want to know?”

She patted the mattress beneath her. It seemed normal enough, but what if it was cursed or something? “I don’t think so.”

“Good,” he said. “Lie down like a good girl.”

She did, and he stretched out beside her. He still wore his very formal evening attire, and the negligee still covered her body. He made no move to undress either her or himself, so she lay, looking up at him as the firelight played in his black hair.

Lord, but he was gorgeous. Tempting. She couldn’t have taken her eyes off him if her life depended on it. He was the stuff that the hottest of erotic dreams were made of. The kind of dreams that aroused her so completely, she’d have to fish for the vibrator behind her bed before she could go back to sleep.

Now, a man that handsome lay in a bed with her and promised her a sample of what he could do for her. If only she had her vibrator right now.

“You are so beautiful,” he whispered.

“Um...”

“Shhhh.” He put his finger against her lips. “Don’t talk.”

Talk? Words? How could she even think of something to say with him next to her, looking down into her face with those eyes? His lips only inches from her own. She could hardly breathe. She wasn’t likely to produce speech any time soon.

He removed his finger and smiled. After a minute of that heart-stopping beauty, he closed his eyes and his mouth moved toward hers. Slowly, so slowly. She could have died from the anticipation. The minute he kissed her, the room began to spin.

Damn, but it was good. Damndamndamn. He caressed her gently, the pressure of lips on hers as light as a feather and as deep as an ocean. Her heart pounded, and her blood thrummed in her veins. This beat anything from her dreams, never mind reality. After a few heartbeats of heaven, she whimpered into his mouth and answered his kiss, begging for more.

He pulled her against him and claimed her lips with more authority. All along the length of her body, his heat burned into her flesh while he claimed her breath, her sanity, with his caresses. She ran her arms around his neck and surrendered.

Images exploded in the back of her mind as she grew more and more aroused. The two of them lying in a field of warm grass, with the sun beating down on them. Naked. Him parting her thighs and positioning himself between them.

The two of them splashing in water so clear it was transparent. He'd take her hand and place it around his cock. His huge, engorged cock. His eyes would get unfocused with pleasure.

The two of them on a king-sized bed like this one, hung all around with lace curtains. The tip of his sex entering her slowly, followed by the bulk of his shaft. One glorious inch at a time.

All that lay inside his kiss. How could he do that? He did own her soul, after all. At least for this brief moment, he owned every bit of her—flesh and spirit. Dear lord, what was happening here?

She sank back into the cushions and pulled her mouth away from his. "You really are the devil, aren't you?"

He grinned wickedly at her. "Thanks. I like to think so sometimes."

"No, I mean it. Really."

He laughed. "I've been called a lot of things."

"Seriously, who are you?"

"Why is that important?"

"I just let you kiss me within an inch of my life," she said. The kiss had only been half of it. Oh, those images. If she'd let him, he could have brought her to orgasm merely by kissing her.

Impossible.

“And you’ll let me do a lot more before we’re through.” Grinning again. The smug devil was back. He knew the effect he had on her. He’d probably thought up those images to tempt her to stay. He’d won.

“Won’t you?” he prompted.

Damn, she shouldn’t surrender. He hadn’t kept his part of the bargain, and she could demand that he release her. But, if she did, she’d miss out on sex so good it was unworldly. She might not be the most beautiful woman on Earth, but she wasn’t stupid.

“Anything you want,” she said.