

Chapter 4

Dez took Phil up on her invitation. On Saturday night she pulled her bike to a stop in front of a grinning valet and handed him her motorcycle keys and helmet. She walked past the well-lit entranceway with its faint scent of jasmine and old money. A steady stream of people, mostly women, flowed toward house. She slid her hands into her loose-fitting tuxedo pants and went to join them. The wide, marble-paved walkway led to a high, curving balcony overlooking a dimmed dance floor where human constellations mingled and shone together. It would be easy to distance herself from the party, to lean over the balcony and watch the action happen down below. But, as usual, the women and the lights called to her, promising more opportunities for fun than just brooding up here by herself.

The party was well underway with high-energy music and the sound of alcohol-laced laughter, when her feet touched the final step into the opulent ballroom. Dez heard someone call her name. She looked around, glancing past tantalizingly bared flesh, the swell of breasts, wet mouths, and curved backs, past the pleasant distractions, to find the source of that voice.

Phillida stood up from a couch at the far end of the room and waved. She looked gorgeous in a pale, body-skimming blue dress with dyed to match flowers sprinkled in her black hair.

“Dez! I’m glad you could make it.”

“Of course. You asked so nicely. How could I refuse?” She greeted the other woman with a light kiss on the cheek, eyeing the caramel skin and its artfully displayed cleavage. “Please. As if I had that much influence over you.” She looped her arm through Dez’s and pulled her toward the couch. “You remember everybody, right?”

How could she forget these women who she had ran with in high school and then later on in college? They looked much the same now as they did two years ago when Dez left, perhaps only a bit more polished, and a lot more jaded.

“Dez.” Rémi Bouchard extended a hand to Dez. When she moved to take it Rémi grabbed her in a crushing bear hug that drove the air from Dez’s lungs. “Bitch, where the fuck have you been?” she demanded with a growl.

The first time Dez saw Rémi, she had to look twice. Before that she’d never known anyone whose looks literally took her breath away. And she didn’t even want to fuck her. At least not at first. It was more than the dimpled chin or the devilishly curved lips. It wasn’t even the powerful body that she’d seen naked more times than she could count.

Feature by feature, Rémi Bouchard was simply the most gorgeous woman that Dez had ever seen. At first sight all you noticed were the lazy-lidded brown eyes and the mouth that seemed made for pleasure. Later after the shock of her looks wore off then you saw the deep olive skin with its hints of red, the low-cut wavy hair, and long, elegant hands.

At six feet, she was the same height as Dez, only twenty pounds heavier and all of it muscle.

They had been best friends once. In their teens, they'd formed a mutual admiration society, even flirted with each other, briefly, with the thought of getting involved. But they'd realized in time the value they both placed on a friendship, with being the only two out black dykes in middle school and then later on in high school.

After that they'd taken off and traveled for three years together around Africa and the West Indies, half learning and discarding languages, agonizing over straight women, laughing and crying on each other's shoulders. All that had stopped when Dez's Aunt died. Dez had to go back to Florida and Rémi didn't want to stay in Bonaire by herself, so their adventure was over.

"I've been here and there," she said, answering Rémi's question. "I told you in the letters. I just hit Miami last week though."

"What brought you back? I know it wasn't my fine self."

"Some family stuff."

Rémi nodded. Dez would tell her more. Later.

"If the beautiful butch reunion is over, can the rest of us get a turn?" Nuria Diaz leaned her cleavage toward Dez from her seat on the arm of the couch. She pouted prettily then smiled, looking every inch the Dominican princess with her cocoa dream skin and shoulder length dreadlocks twisted into fat curls. The platinum stud of her labret piercing winked in the light.

"You can always get a turn, baby," Dez said, moving toward her. She scooped the delectable Dior-dressed bundle into her arms and buried her nose in her throat. Nuria smelled like maraschino cherries and peach schnapps. She wiggled in Dez's embrace, setting off a chorus of appreciative laughter and catcalls. The crowd eddied around them, watching their raucous reunion with mildly curious eyes.

"She never hugs me like that," Rémi laughed.

"Because you never come out looking like this." Nuria's tongue peaked from between her lips as she gestured to Dez's handsome tuxedo jacket with the loose matching pants that hung off her prominent hip bones and left an inch of skin between it and the tight, lace blouse bare.

"You got that right," Rémi said touching the brim of her hat. Ever since her family took her to Montana to play with horses, an eleven-year-old Rémi had decided then and there that she was a cowboy. After that, she never left the house without a cowboy hat, spurs, boots, boot-cut jeans and chaps, or some other cowboy paraphernalia. Never mind that she was deathly afraid of horses and would rather go surfing than riding on the range. Nuria ignored Rémi's comment.

Her fingers traced the strip of skin between Dez's blouse and slacks, before settling on the fold of cotton that hid the zipper. Dez chuckled, helpless to the twitch of stomach muscles and the clenching a few more inches down.

"Careful, baby. I'm only human."

"Why do I have to be careful?" Nuria pouted again. "You just got back into town after, what, eight years of playing hard to get?"

"I never play those games. You know that by now. I always deliver."

"For damn's sake," Sage, the smallest of the group, said. "Here we go again. Cool it you two. It's been less than five minutes and you're already starting the same old shit."

"I'm just getting my lovin' in while I can. As soon as all the easy girls in Miami know that the Good Time Twins are back together again—" she gave Rémi and Dez a sly look, "—I'll have to fight the crowd just to be able to kiss her...ring."