

DRAWN

to You



SERENA GREY

Drawn to You

SWANSON COURT SERIES
Book *One*

SERENA GREY

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This book is a work of fiction. All names, characters, locations, and incidents are products of the author's imagination, and have been used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, locales, or events is entirely coincidental.

DRAWN TO YOU

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Raven§Press

Dedication

To readers.

Find Love.

Live Joyfully.

Be Happy.

Drawn to You

He thinks she's a hooker.

She thinks she's in love with someone else.

After one memorable night, Rachel Foster cannot stop thinking about sexy billionaire hotelier Landon Court, and the way his touch set her body on fire. But as far as she knows, she's never going to see him again, and that's okay, because she'd rather not risk falling for him anyway.

For Landon, one night is not enough. He wants Rachel, and he's not prepared to back down. He always gets what he wants, and she will not be an exception.

Unable to resist her attraction to Landon, Rachel decides to give him what he wants, but on her own terms.

One week. Just sex. No commitment.

What happens when love is not allowed, but everything else is?

One

“You should totally hook up with Chadwick tonight.”

“What!” I exclaim. “No way!” I look up, meeting my cousin’s gray eyes in the mirror. She’s standing behind me, fixing up my mass of blond-streaked, deep copper hair in preparation for Chadwick Black’s birthday party, which she’s practically forcing me to attend. Right now she’s looking at me with her own particular expression of exasperation.

“Seriously, Rachel,” she says, inserting another pin into my hair to hold up the style she’s creating,

“you need to have some fun. And from what you’ve told me, Chadwick is cute, sexy, and eager to give you just what you need.”

“Me and every other girl in New York,” I scoff. “Come on Laurie, It’s not that bad. I have fun. I have you, Brett, all those beautiful books on my ereader, and an amazing job,” I pause, “which is not so amazing, but whatever.”

Laurie laughs and pushes back her back-length curly black hair. She’d just returned from work when I told her about Chadwick’s party, which I wasn’t sure at the time, that I wanted to attend. Immediately, she’d dropped everything and started to help me get ready, insisting that I had to go. She must be tired, after a long day at the law firm where she works, but she still looks stunning. I like to think we look alike, at least features wise, our fathers are identical twins after all, but in coloring we take after our mothers. My skin is pale and a little rosy on a good day, while Laurie has an absurdly beautiful light caramel tone.

“I’m sure you know how pathetic it is when me, my boyfriend, books, and work are your only claim to a fun-filled life,” Laurie says, still smiling. “P.S when I said fun, I didn’t mean the PG version.” She meets my eyes in the mirror and lowers her voice to a theatrical whisper. “I meant sex.”

I chuckle. "I'm not going to have sex with Chadwick. It's enough that you're practically forcing me to go to his party."

"Yeah," she says unrepentantly, "Brett is spending the night, and I don't want to worry about being loud." She smiles mischievously. "Anyway, we both know that if I don't force you, you'll just sit in your room pining for you-know-who."

I shake my head. "I don't pine, and you can say his name."

"I know I can, I just wish you would forget it." She sticks another pin in my hair. "Forever."

"His name is Jack Weyland," I say stubbornly.

She rolls her eyes. "And he's an asshole."

"He's not."

"Is too."

We both laugh, reminded of when we were children. We practically grew up together, and have been inseparable our whole lives.

Her laughter ends in a small chuckle. "I don't know about you, but when a guy asks you out, leads you on, spends two months making you fall in love with him, and when you finally tell him how you feel, he tells you that he loves you too, but.." she stops, "what were the exact words again?"

I don't answer. I don't want to remember.

Sometimes, it's still too painful to think about.

Laurie is right. I spend too much time thinking about Jack Weyland. The most renowned features writer at Gilt Traveler, a world-famous adventure traveler, and the man I've been in love with, silently and unrequitedly for the last two years.

Immediately after college, I'd gotten a job at Gilt Traveler, one of the many publications owned by Gilt Magazines. I fell for Jack on my first day in the building post-interview, when he walked past me in the lobby. I'd been starting as an assistant to Mark Willis, the senior features editor, and was on my way to the elevators when a tall, dark-haired, confidently handsome guy, had sauntered towards me, making me stare. He'd winked at me, and I'd almost tripped in my three inch heels.

I didn't know who he was at the time, but I found out soon enough. By some divine providence, he also worked at Gilt Traveler. He was a gifted writer, handsome, charming, and nothing like the guys I'd known in college. He asked me to dinner, making me the envy of all the girls at Gilt, because he had never dated anyone from the office.

It was magical. Or so I'd thought. By the end of the week, I was sleeping with him. Before long, I knew I was falling in love with him. Stupidly, I told him how

I felt, and he responded by telling me that I was sweet, and he loved me too, but that he could never commit to any one woman, and would only hurt me in the long run if he tried.

“I mean it when I say I love you,” he’d said earnestly, with a passionate expression that had always made me feel as if I was the most special person in the world to him. “It would mean a lot to me if we could be friends after this.”

Laurie is still waiting for me to respond. I close my eyes, trying to block out the sad memory. “He said that he can’t commit to just one woman.”

“That,” Laurie says. “When a guy does that, he’s an asshole, and you don’t stay friends with him for any reason. You wouldn’t even be going to Chadwick’s party tonight if Jack was in town to say ‘Hey Rachel, why don’t we go and hang out at this-or-that café. I’ll be so charming and funny, while I take pleasure in the fact that in just two months with me, I made you incapable of falling for anyone else.’”

We’ve had this fight a couple of times, the one where she tells me how unhealthy my friendship with Jack is for me, and I try to defend Jack and the fact that two years after he broke my heart, I’m still in love with him.

When I don’t reply, Laurie, uncharacteristically,

lets the matter rest. She sticks one final pin in my hair and steps back, looking at her handiwork. Most of my hair is held up in an up-do that's intentionally messy, but stylish, with a few strands framing my face. It's lovely.

I meet Laurie's eyes in the mirror and smile my appreciation. "Thanks."

She smiles back. "No biggie. Now go to that party and have fun." She winks. "In case you change your mind and decide to rock Chadwick's world. I left a present in your purse."

Eyeing her suspiciously, I go to my bed and pick the black clutch, opening it and rolling my eyes at the 'present'.

"I definitely won't need these," I say with a laugh.

Laurie shrugs. "The night's not over yet. Allow me some hope."

LESS than an hour later, I'm in front of the Oyster room, an exclusive restaurant and bar on the second floor of the Swanson Court Hotel. From the exterior, it's impossible to guess that there's a party going on inside.

Pausing on the corridor outside the doors, I catch my reflection in the glass and thank my stars for

Laurie. She also helped pick out my clothes, a dark-green dress the same color as my eyes, with a suggestive décolletage, and a hemline that ends just above my knees, paired with black heels that add four inches to my modest five foot five.

Satisfied that nothing is out of place, I push open the doors and step into a quiet ante-room occupied by a smiling hostess, who directs me to another set of doors that open directly into the restaurant. Inside, the party is in full swing, seemingly containing all the stylish, artsy, or creative young people in New York City. That's not surprising. Chadwick Black, the celebrant, is an award-winning photographer who sometimes does work for Gilt Traveler.

From the entrance, I glimpse a few people from the office, and then Chadwick across the room, whispering something to an impossibly slender blonde, who's giggling at whatever he's saying. Typical Chadwick. He loves to flirt, and he's been trying, very good-naturedly, to get into my pants for ages. I take a glass of champagne from a passing waiter, my eyes still on Chadwick. He's good-looking, very good-looking, with long brown hair, caramel eyes, and a charming smile that gives him the appearance of being the harmless, friendly-yet-

incredibly-hot guy next door. I know better, his love for women is generous, nondiscriminatory, and definitely not monogamous.

He looks up from the blonde's ear and notices me. Grinning, he excuses himself and comes over. "Rachel honey," he exclaims above the loud pop music, then kisses me on both cheeks before leaning back to look at me. "You look stunning."

"So do you," I reply, dodging a second round of kisses, "Great party."

"I know, right?" He takes my hand, and there's a flash as someone takes a picture. I don't have as much social clout as some of the other girls at Gilt, so I'm not worried that my picture will appear in any of the fashion or gossip columns.

Chadwick is still talking. "I have great friends who realize that there's nothing more important than celebrating the fact that twenty-eight years ago, I came into this world for the benefit of women everywhere," he proclaims.

I chuckle. "You're so full of it."

"Yeah," he replies with a charming grin. "But you love me."

"I do."

"Then why won't you let me show you just how crazy I am about you?"

I swat him on the arm. “Because I love myself too much.”

He sighs exaggeratedly. “Come on then. Let’s introduce you to some of my friends.” Pulling me across the room, he leads me to a group of people talking and laughing over drinks and finger foods.

“Guys, this is Rachel,” Chadwick announces, “into whose panties I’m trying to get.” He winks at me, unrepentant, as his friends hoot.

Someone pulls at his sleeve and whispers something in his ear. “I’ll be right back,” he tells me before leaving to take care of whatever he’s needed for.

One of the friends, a guy with messy brown hair and an unshaven face, tells me his name in a crisp British accent. He also introduces the rest of the group. There’s a painter, a curvy brunette who works at a tabloid, a food critic, and the typical blend of writers, artists, and other creative types. “We mostly went to college with Chad,” British guy says. “How do you know him?”

“He does some work for us..., the magazine where I work.”

“Which magazine?” The question comes from the painter, a petite woman with a pixie cut.

“Gilt Traveler,” I reply.

“That’s a good one.” The tabloid writer, I think her name was Annabel, seems impressed. “What do you do?”

“I’m a features associate,” I tell them. It’s the official title for my real job, which is to write the tiny little articles the real features writers can’t be bothered with.”

“Sounds like a nice gig,” someone says.

“Yeah, it is,” I agree with a shrug.

“I can’t wait for the moment when a bikini-clad model pops out of a cake,” British guy declares, finishing his drink and immediately picking another from a passing tray.

“Is that going to happen?” I ask, interested. I’ve never seen anything like that outside of the movies.

“Not likely. It’s not a frat party.” He sounds wistful.

Chadwick returns. “So have you guys convinced Rachel that I’m worth at least a night of her time.”

“Are you?” One of the women says, tossing her hair. “Not from what I remember.”

The rest of the group bursts into laughter and I join them. Chadwick tries to look annoyed but fails.

“Chadwick, darling!” The soft voice comes from across the room, and we all look in that direction. The speaker is a vaguely familiar woman, tall and slender,

with a wild mass of dark-blond hair, and mile-long legs shown off in a tight jumpsuit.

“Here comes Claudia,” I hear someone say.

But I’m not listening. My heart is hammering, my eyes locked on the man standing beside the new arrival.

Jack Weyland.

What is he doing here? I think, panicked and elated at the same time. He’s supposed to be in England, skydiving with Reese Fletcher, the sixty-year-old electronics billionaire daredevil. We’d spoken on the phone only a few days ago, and he didn’t mention anything about returning to New York.

Yet here he was, with the most beautiful woman at the party, no less.

He hasn’t seen me yet, so I have time to look at him. He’s standing back, watching his date as she throws herself into Chadwick’s arms, his expression, that irresistible combination of boredom and mystery that only some guys can pull off. His dark hair is short at the sides and back, longer in front, with an appealing forelock falling onto his forehead. His body, perfect in a stylish shirt and dark pants, is fit and athletic. My heart catches in my throat, filling with the familiar, bittersweet ache I feel whenever I see him.

“Who’s her companion?” Annabel asks.

“That’s Jack Weyland,” British guy supplies, “Now there’s a guy who suffers from wanderlust. He’s been all over the world. There was a three episode special of his experience at the Spanish bullfights early this year. Never gave a damn before, but now I want to go to Spain.” He stops his narrative to look at me. “He writes for Gilt too, so you should know him.”

“Yes,” I say quietly, still looking at Jack. Sometimes, like now, I still question why I’d agreed to stay friends. At the time, I’d thought that was what it meant to be sophisticated, to be able to act as if I didn’t care, even when my heart was shattered. I’d paid a high price for that sophistication in the last two years. Smiling on the outside, but dying inside while he went from assignment to assignment, writing magnificent articles, appearing on TV, and having affairs with women from all over the world.

He still hasn’t seen me. His eyes are on his date, and I don’t blame him. By now, I’ve placed her face. She’s a famous British model, and she’s beautiful. Exactly his type.

“Chadwick photographed Claudia for some rodeo campaign back when they were both beginners,” British guy is saying. “Made her famous as the ‘risk-taking’ model to watch back then. I think

she's the only woman he never tries to sleep with. No offense to you of course."

"None taken," I reply distractedly. I've already forgotten about Chadwick. I look from Jack to Claudia. She's only the latest in a long line of women he's dated over the years. Though with each one, it becomes more and more unlikely that one day he'll realize that maybe, just maybe, his feelings for me are more than those of just friendship.

"If Chadwick was trying to sleep with her, then he's in for a huge disappointment," Annabel says. "I heard she got engaged to some writer. Maybe this hunk she came in with."

I take a sharp breath, my ears burning at the word 'engaged.' At that moment, Jack sees me. There's a brief flash of surprise in his eyes. Then he smiles, and my whole body fills with longing.

"Yup, he's the one." One of the women holds up her phone, which has a popular gossip site open on the browser. I force myself not to look at the headline or the pictures.

Claudia is busy introducing Jack and Chadwick, and as I watch, Chadwick starts to lead them both towards us.

"I'm going to go to the bathroom," I say to no one in particular. Finding a nearby table to place my

champagne flute, I turn my back on all of them and find an exit. Outside the restaurant, I lean on the railing, breathing in cool, filtered air as I try to regain my composure. I let my eyes travel from the crystal chandelier hanging from about a floor above, down to the magnificent entrance lobby on the ground floor. It's a beautiful hotel, with old classic architecture and evidence of careful, unstinting maintenance. Too bad that my first visit has been spoiled by having to watch the man I love with yet another woman.

I take a deep breath and start for the elevator, knowing that I don't want to go back inside and see Jack with his beautiful date again. I'll have to apologize to Chadwick later, but I doubt he'll mind too much. There're probably one or two women already waiting to go home with him.

"Rachel."

Jack's voice stops me in my tracks. I turn around, trying to control the intense longing that fills me as my eyes land on him. "Hi Jack." I force a smile. "Didn't know you were back."

He shrugs. "It was kind of sudden." His gray eyes, travel over my dress, then come back to settle on my face. "You look incredible."

"Thanks."

There's an awkward silence. Usually, we have so

much to talk about. By now I'd have been quizzing him about his trip, about skydiving with Reese Fletcher, and he would have been giving me his typical funny answers. But not today. Does he have any idea how I'm feeling? Is he aware of how much being his friend has cost me these two years? How painful it is for me whenever I see him with other women?

I doubt it. After he rejected me, I became much better at hiding my feelings.

"It's nice to see you," he says, moving closer. His lips curve in a small, familiar smile. "I wasn't expecting you to be here, but I'm glad you are. Don't tell me you're leaving?"

"I...Yes I am, actually."

"That's a shame." He looks disappointed, and for a moment, I imagine that maybe he was looking forward to spending time with me. That hope goes out of the window with his next words. "You didn't meet Claudia."

Claudia Sever. The model he came with. The void in my stomach widens. "Is it true?" I ask. "Are you engaged?"

He smiles. "It's crazy, isn't it? Who would have thought I'd ever settle down?"

"Yes," I agree, my heart breaking. "Who would

have thought?”

The silence stretches again. I’m supposed to wish him happiness, like a good friend would do, but I can’t bring myself to say the words. Not when I was still holding on to the hope that when he finally took that step, it would be with me.

I force a small laugh, and even to me it sounds fake, and sad. “So what happened? You told me you could never settle down with any one woman.”

He frowns. “That was a long time ago.”

My eyes cloud. It’s hard to understand how your feelings for someone can be everything to you, and yet nothing to them. “Sometimes it still hurts like yesterday,” I say softly.

“Rachel...” he closes the distance between us and places comforting hands on my shoulders, “You know I do love you.”

The words come out of his mouth so easily. Words that in other circumstances would mean the world to me.

“Then why...” I stop before I make a total fool of myself. Why can’t we be together? Why do you keep breaking my heart?

“Rachel,” he says firmly, “We’re friends. You should be happy for me.”

I push away from him, letting his hands fall

from my shoulders. “We were more than friends, and it was good. It was wonderful. It was the best thing that ever happened to me.” I stop talking, seeing the situation for what it really is. Me, throwing myself yet again at a man who has made it clear that he doesn’t want me.

His silence adds to my shame. I close my eyes. “I wish you all the best,” I murmur, before turning away and hurrying towards the elevators. I can feel tears stinging at my eyes, and I blink furiously to keep them from falling.

God! I should have thrown his friendship in his face when I had the chance.

Laurie tried to tell me, so many times. “He knows you’re in love with him, and he wants to keep you that way, so you’ll always be there. It’s an ego thing. As long as you let him, you’re going to be stuck in the same place while he chases the women who present a real challenge.”

I hadn’t listened. I’d been too eager, too willing to take the little Jack offered. I’d thought if we spent time together as friends, he would surely see that we were meant to be more than that.

How pathetic!

The elevator doors slide open, and luckily, the car is empty. I step inside and press the button for the

ground floor, unable to control the tears gathering as the doors swish closed again.

The ride is short. After only a few seconds, the elevator stops on the ground floor. By then my face is wet with tears, and a glance at my reflection in the mirrored walls tell me that I'm not fit to walk into the lobby. I dab at the mascara smudges on my bottom lid, and without looking, I press a button to send the elevator back up. Hopefully, the ride up and back down again will give me some time alone to repair the damage that Jack has done, both to my face and my heart.

BY the time the elevator stops at the top floor and beeps. My face is under control again. Now I just want to go home and forget everything about tonight. Not that it will be easy. I'll still have to face Jack at work, and I have no idea how I'm going to do that. I sigh. No matter what happens, I'm so done being his go-to companion.

I hear another beep and realize that a small box on the elevator panel is prompting me for a code. I frown. At the top of the panel, the button marked 'PH' is glowing. I'm on the penthouse floor, and the elevator probably needs a code to open the doors. I don't have a code, obviously, so I pause, wondering

what to do.

I didn't even realize that I'd pressed the button for the penthouse. I'd just wanted time to fix my face. I press the button for the ground floor, hoping that will work. The prompt for the code beeps again.

Okay, so what am I supposed to do now? There must be an emergency button somewhere. I'm searching along the panel when suddenly, the doors to the elevator slide open.

And my breath stops.

Something happens. Either the earth drops, or it suddenly stops spinning. I feel unbalanced, as if I'm going to lose my footing. My hand finds the aluminum railing inside the elevator, and I lean on it for support while I stare at the Greek god standing on the other side of the open doors.

There's no other way to describe him. He's tall, at least a head taller than me, with long legs, lean hips and broad shoulders shown off in a perfectly tailored dark-gray suit, paired with a snowy white shirt. There's no tie, and the top button of his shirt is open, exposing his throat and a little hint of hard well-muscled chest.

Dark gold hair frames his face. It's wavy, and just long enough to tease his collar, with a few bright strands highlighting the dark waves. And his face! It

makes me unable to remember what exactly I'm doing in the elevator. Dark winged brows, eyes a deep cerulean blue, and a Greek nose, slim and pointed like an arrowhead. His lips are full and sensual, and for some reason, they make me start to think of whispers, kisses, and those same lips tracing a path on my heated skin.

I stare, lost in the glittering depths of his eyes, and unable to tear mine away. Strangely, it seems as if everything that's happened before this moment has somehow lost all importance. As if he can feel it too, his brow knits, a puzzled expression entering the eyes that seem to be stripping me and looking into the very depths of my soul. At that moment, it feels as if I know him. As if I've known him all my life.

I step back, my fingers curving around the railing and holding on. Finally regaining the use of my lungs, I take a long breath, unsuccessfully trying to dispel the effect his undeniable masculine sensuality is having on me. It doesn't help that he's still looking at me, his eyes traveling up and down my body as if he knows exactly what he's going to do with it.

I close my eyes, trying to arrange my thoughts and ignore all the carnal images that have taken over my brain. Okay, so he's probably the owner of the apartment. The man with the passcode. He looks as if

he was on his way out. He must have opened the elevator from inside and is probably surprised to find me right outside his apartment, staring at him as if I've never seen a man before.

"Good evening," I start haltingly, trying to find the words to explain why I'm there.

There's only a small flicker of his eyes to show that he heard me. He considers me for a few more moments, while I wonder if he's going to acknowledge my words at all, and then one of his perfect eyebrows arches up.

"Well," he says finally, in a voice that's almost whispery soft, yet deep, raspy, and so incredibly sensual, it sends shivers down my spine. "You're not what I'd have chosen, but you'll do."

Two

I don't understand a word he just said, but that might be due to the fact that my brain is still discombobulated by his blatant sexiness. I watch as he steps back and inclines his head in a gesture that tells me that he wants me to come inside the apartment.

“Come in.”

I'm already stepping into the entrance foyer before I wake up from the effects of his voice. I stop and frown at him. What does he mean 'I'll do?'

“Um...” I start, looking for words. What will I

*say? I don't know who you think I am, but I was just hiding in the elevator while trying to repair the damage to my makeup from crying over a guy who doesn't give a rat's ass about me, and I ended up in front of your apartment. Now if you don't mind, I'd like to...*I hesitate. What exactly do I want to do?

I don't want to leave. That's for sure. There's something dreamy about being ushered into a million-dollar, luxury apartment by a man who looks as if he just stepped out of a 'sexiest man alive' photo-shoot. He thinks I'll do? For what exactly? I want to know, and somewhere in a shameless part of me, I desperately hope I don't disappoint him.

He sees my hesitation. "Come in," he repeats in that mesmerizing voice, "I won't bite." There's a short pause. "Unless you want me to."

There's suddenly a weird, achy feeling low in my stomach. I pull in a gulp of air, my legs propelling me into the dimly lit foyer. He clearly thinks I'm someone else, but whoever it is, I'm more than ready to play the part, at least for now.

He leads the way through the foyer into a large living room with floor-to-ceiling windows that look out onto the city. As he walks, he shrugs off his jacket, dropping it carelessly on a sofa to join a discarded tie. "Have a seat," he says, turning back to look at me.

Without the jacket, his broad shoulders, narrow waist, slim hips, and the hard muscles beneath his shirt are obvious, too obvious.

“Would you like a drink?” he asks.

It takes a moment for me to tear my mind from thoughts of his body. “Um...”

“Brandy, Water, Wine...?”

“Brandy,” I tell him.

He gives me a small nod, then walks across the living room to a bar by the side, where he pours two glasses, then adds ice cubes. I manage to tear my eyes from his body so I can look around my surroundings. The room is tastefully furnished, the classic architecture complemented by a décor that’s luxurious without ostentation. It feels like a home. A place you expect a family to live.

I wonder if he’s married.

Well, it’s not as if I’m planning to sleep with him, I tell myself, continuing my admiration of the room. Some of the furniture are classic antique pieces, and the walls are covered in some sort of textured finish, with paintings hanging here and there. There’s a family portrait featuring a couple that’s obviously his parents, based on his resemblance to the man in the picture, and two children, boys.

He’s clearly the older one of the boys. It’s the

same perfect face, only younger. Next to the portrait, there's a large black and white original of a beautiful ballerina, her posture graceful as she leaps through the air. It's the same woman in the family portrait, his mother apparently. At the bottom of the frame, I recognize the Andrew Marvell quote, "*A thousand years should go to praise thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze.*"

"Here." I turn away from the picture as that soft raspy voice pours over me again, making me shiver. He sounds like temptation, and I cannot imagine any woman who wouldn't agree to any suggestion made in that voice.

He hands me the drink, his eyes on my face, and I do my best to hold my hand steady when I take the glass from him. I almost fail when his warm fingers brush mine. It's just a tiny touch, but I feel it everywhere from my fingers to my thighs.

Still watching me, he drops gracefully beside me on the sofa. I can't tear my eyes away from him. I feel almost as if I can look at him forever.

"You like ballet?"

"Hmm." I'm so lost in staring at him that it takes a while for his words to register.

He gestures at the print of the ballerina. "You seemed interested in the picture."

“Well, I like ballet, as much as any little girl who ever wanted to wear a tutu.” I laugh nervously. Both Laurie and I had attended classes, but I’d stopped only after a few months. I preferred to read, even then. “But I was looking at the quote in the picture,” I continue, “It’s from one of my favorite poems.”

An eyebrow goes up, only a little, but it draws my attention to his eyes again. They look like sapphires, I decide, dark and rich, with an irresistible glitter in their depths. “*Had we but world enough and time,*” he quotes, “*this coyness, lady, were no crime.*” The corners of his sculpted lips lift in a small smile. “But you’re not coy, are you? That would be inconsistent with your profession.”

I frown, not sure what he means. He’s doing a slow perusal of my body again, almost as if he’s undressing me with his eyes. I should be annoyed that this stranger is ogling me so openly, but I’m not. Instead, I can feel my body responding. Heat unfurls in my belly, spreading until I can feel the insistent need all over my body.

What am I doing? A few minutes ago I was devastated because I found out that I’d been waiting in vain for Jack to decide I was the girl for him. Now here I am, letting another man turn me on, which, to his credit, he was doing just by looking at me.

I should explain that I'm not whoever he thinks I am and leave. But not yet. I want...

I want him to keep looking at me with that sensual, smoldering gaze. I want to keep hearing that sinful voice. I want to feel his hands on me.

I take a quick sip of the drink he gave me, breaking the contact with his eyes. I can't be considering casual sex with a total stranger.

An insanely hot, sexy stranger, who has me aching for him without even touching me at all.

I drag my eyes back to the print on the wall, and the line of poetry, even though I'd much rather be looking at him. "The woman in the poem," I say, "Was she being coy, or careful? Many people have tossed caution to the wind and surrendered to passion, and yet come to regret it later." I'm rambling, but I can't stop. It's the only way to escape the spellbinding effect of being so close to him.

He doesn't reply, so I turn back to look at him. His eyes are on my face, a curious, speculative gleam in their blue depths. How can his lashes be so long? I wonder, half in admiration and half in jealousy.

"You're absolutely right," he says finally, with a small chuckle. "Though only my brother would find a hooker who talks about poetry on the job."

A what! I swallow a mouthful of brandy, and

the hot fiery liquid goes down all the wrong places. I sputter, almost dropping the glass as I try to get my throat under control.

He's at the bar and back in what seems like milliseconds. "Here," he takes my brandy and hands me a glass of water. "Drink this."

I take the water from him and take a huge gulp.
He thinks I'm a whore!

No wonder! He'd been expecting a hooker. I give the water back to him, unable to meet his eyes. I should tell him now that he's wrong, but his fingers close over mine. They're firm and warm and hard, and even from that slight touch I can feel the heated pulsing intensify between my thighs.

He thinks I'm a whore!

"Are you alright?" he asks softly.

His fingers are still on mine, distracting me, making me think of all the other places where I want him to touch me. It's only sex, I tell myself, and heaven knows that after two years of being stuck in the friend zone with Jack, I could do with some of that. If only to get my mind to move on to other things.

I lick my lips, nervous at the thought of what I'm about to do. *He thinks you're a prostitute!* An inner voice of reason screams at me, but I don't listen.

I can only feel the growing excitement in the pit of my stomach, and the aching need in my body.

“I’m fine,” I tell him, venturing a small smile. “I just drank it too fast, but I’m fine.”

“Good.” His fingers are still around mine, and I wonder if he can tell that my heart is beating like a freaking drum. I’m going to sleep with this stranger, I think almost incredulously. I’m going to let him fuck me any way he wants because he thinks he’s paid for that right, and I’m going to enjoy every minute of it.

He takes the water from me and sets it on the coffee table, his eyes never leaving mine. Suddenly, it’s hard to breathe. Why am I doing this? I could tell him he made a mistake and walk out of here. I could tell him that the hooker his brother sent is probably still on her way. I could go home to my empty bed, and spend the rest of the night crying over Jack...

...or I can just let him fulfill the promise of toe-curling sex I can see clearly in his eyes.

“What’s your name?” he asks.

“Rachel.” My voice is barely more than a whisper.

“I’m Landon.”

I’m doing this, I decide resolutely, smiling at him. What happens now? I wonder. How do we go from exchanging names to entwined bodies and

clawing sheets?

“Did Aidan tell you it was my birthday?”

Who...? “Yes,” I lie, guessing that Aidan is probably the brother.

He nods. “What are your rates?”

For a moment, I have no idea what to say. “It’s already been taken care of...” I murmur.

“Of course, but tell me anyway.”

I pick a number off the top of my head that I think is exorbitant enough for a high-class hooker.

He looks impressed. “My brother is being very generous,” he says with a small chuckle. He studies me for a moment. “So...what do I get for that?”

I pause. “The whole night.”

“Anything I want?”

I take a lungful of air, pushing the small sliver of panic out of my mind. “Anything you want,” I whisper.

His lips quirk. “Follow me,” he says, getting up from the sofa.

He leads me out of the living room into a wide hallway, then up a flight of stairs to the upper floor. He walks gracefully, his obvious strength held firmly under control. He moves quickly too, so I don’t have time to admire the apartment, or do more than be awed by the sheer size.

Upstairs, he opens the door to a large bedroom with soft grayish walls, large windows half hidden by long, heavy-looking curtains, and a perfectly made bed. A light from the bedside lamp on one of the nightstands casts a soft glow around the room, giving it an intimate ambiance. There's a lounge chair close to the windows, a writing desk and chair, and closer to the bed, there's a soft looking armchair. I step inside the room, and Landon closes the door behind us.

"You have condoms?" he asks.

It's really not a question. What self-respecting hooker wouldn't have condoms? I start to panic, then I remember Laurie's present. Thank the stars for Laurie, I think silently, opening my purse to retrieve the roll of condoms, before handing them to him.

He takes them, tossing them on the edge of the bed before going to sit on the armchair. I'm still standing by the door, and he motions for me to come farther into the room.

I walk towards him, suddenly very nervous. There's something incredibly sexy about the way he's leaning back on the chair with his body relaxed, and his long legs splayed out.

He raises a hand to stop me before I get to him. "Take off your clothes," he says.

My fingers are trembling. Why are my fingers

trembling? It's been a while, but it's not as if I'm inexperienced. I fumble with my zipper, trying clumsily to get it to go down. Finally, the dress falls down at my feet, and I'm standing in front of this sexy man dressed only in high heels, and my black lace panties and bra.

His face is unreadable. What should I do now? Go to him? Remain standing and wait for him to come and take what, as far as he knows, has been paid for? While all the thoughts are running through my mind, he arches a brow at me.

“All your clothes.”

God, that voice! I take a deep breath and reach behind me to unhook my bra, freeing my breasts as I pull it off my shoulders, before dropping it on the ground. His eyes drop from my face to my exposed breasts, and as if he's actually touching them, my nipples respond to his gaze, the pink tips tightening and extending. I hook my fingers into the elastic band of my panties and pull them down far enough so they can fall on their own, and then I step out of them.

His expression doesn't change, but his eyes don't leave me. I watch as they move from my breasts down the length of my body.

“Get on the bed,” he orders, his voice a little rougher than before.

The bed is a king sized beauty. I imagine us, bodies, entwined, rolling around on it. Swallowing nervously, I walk over to the edge, turning around to face Landon before I lower myself onto the soft sheets.

Suddenly, he gets up from the armchair, towering over me as he starts first to undo his cuffs, and then to unbutton his shirt. "Take off your shoes, Rachel," he says. "Pull up your legs and spread them, I want to see you touch yourself."

My lips part almost involuntarily, and nervously, I wet them with my tongue. This should feel weird. But as I watch him undo his buttons to reveal the perfectly defined muscles of his chest, I can only feel the insistent pulsing increase between my legs, making me eager to do as he says. I kick off my shoes and lift my feet to the edge of the bed, lying back and spreading my legs slowly, relishing the fact that his eyes are focused on me. My fingers reach between my wet folds, slipping easily over the most sensitive parts of me, and I close my eyes, letting out a small moan.

"Open your eyes." The words are a command. "Don't close them. Don't do anything unless I tell you to."

I obey. His shirt is off now, and the sight of the

hard muscles and the flat board that's his stomach totally take my breath away. His body is perfectly sculpted, not bulky, just lean, strong, and flawless.

His trousers soon follow the path of the shirt. At the sight of the hard, straining ridge in his briefs, I lick my lips again, transfixed. I want to see him. I want to touch him. I want to run my tongue over his nipples and lick the taut skin over his muscles. I feel unlike myself, as if the girl I usually am has disappeared, leaving a hedonistic alter-ego to take over. I want him in my mouth, inside me. I want him to grab hold of my legs and hold me still while he plunges deep into me. The thought is almost enough to make me come... I release a soft, helpless moan and rub myself harder. My insides are throbbing with desire. I want to beg him to hurry. I move a finger down to the wet pulsing entrance to my body, then slip it inside. My body clenches sweetly. I want more.

My eyes follow his movements as he pulls down his briefs to reveal the full length of his throbbing erection, and I moan again, begging him with my eyes to hurry. He reaches for the condoms, and I watch as he rolls one onto his hard, turgid length.

My breathing is coming in pants now, and I can't take my eyes off him. He advances towards me, his erection fisted in his hand. I've never wanted

anything more than I want him inside me at this moment.

Kneeling on the bed between my legs, he reaches for my hand, stilling the movement of my fingers. Then he takes over, palming me while he slips two fingers inside me.

My body clenches eagerly and I groan, spreading my legs wider as his fingers slide in and out, stroking the sensitive places inside me. His thumb finds my clit, and he plays leisurely with the swollen mass of nerves, driving me crazy. I grab hold of the sheets, my hips moving shamelessly to meet his fingers.

“Don’t stop.” I moan, feeling the beginning of an orgasm. I need this so much. “Oh, please don’t stop.”

In reply, he inserts another finger and my brain shuts down. I cry out as my body tightens, then shatters in a massive explosion of pure pleasure.

I don’t even have time to catch my breath before he grabs hold of my legs and pulls me towards him, plunging into me with one swift movement. I cry out helplessly, surrendering myself to the pleasure as he fills me, thrusting deep with every rock-hard stroke.

I wrap my legs around his waist, urging him

deeper. My whole body feels warm and sweet. I can already feel another climax coming as heat spreads from my core. He picks up his pace, his chest tightening as he pumps harder and faster. He grunts softly with each sure thrust, his eyes closed, his lips slightly open as he grinds his hips into me. I come with a loud moan, my body spasming as the waves of pleasure wash over me. He plunges deeper, a loud groan escaping his lips as his climax seizes him and leaves him panting, his chest heaving as he releases my legs.

Three

MY legs fall back on the bed, shaking uncontrollably. Even though the air in the room is cool, there's a sheen of sweat on my skin, and on Landon's too, making his chest and arms gleam in the soft light of the room.

He pulls out of me, still slightly hard, making my body pulse with post-orgasmic pleasure. I sigh and fall back on the pillows, watching him through

heavy eyes while he gets up and takes care of the condom.

He returns to the bed to join me, handing me a tissue. After I've cleaned up, he takes it back from me and tosses it. We're both silent, and I start to wonder what he's thinking. I shouldn't care. It's just a one-night stand after all. Although, if I'm honest, it has turned out to be the best sex I've ever had in my life.

"I can't feel my legs." I almost don't realize I've said the words out loud, and when I do, I chuckle softly, slightly embarrassed.

"If it makes you feel any better," Landon replies, "I can't feel mine either."

We both laugh. Even his laugh is sexy, deep and soft. He's so good-looking, so perfect. I can't even fathom why he would ever need a hooker.

"Can I ask you a question?"

"Go on," he says.

"Why would someone who looks like you ever need a hooker?"

His eyebrow goes up. "Looks like me?" he repeats.

I roll my eyes. "You know what I mean. Someone as hot as you are."

"Not to mention devastating in bed," he adds with a grin.

I hold up my hand. "I didn't say that."

"No," he's still grinning, "but you said you couldn't feel your legs."

"Okay, devastating in bed," I concede with a small laugh. "Why would you ever need a hooker?"

He thinks for a moment. "Are all your clients unattractive?"

Ha! My clients. I pause, wondering what to say. "Yes," I reply finally, imagining a string of lonely older men. "Some are too busy for relationships, others are just adventurous."

"Maybe I'm busy and adventurous."

My gaze travels over the raw beauty of his face. A man who looks like him wouldn't even need to snap his fingers for women to come running. He was obviously rich too, and yes, devastating in bed. So devastating in fact, that right now, all I want is to run my hands down that hard chest and over his stomach...

The silence stretches, and I wonder if I should go, or wait for him to tell me that he's done with me for tonight.

"Do you want another drink?" he asks. "Some water?"

I shake my head. "I'm fine, thanks."

He sits up to look at me, affording me a better

view of his still naked body. He's still hard, I notice, excitement making me wet my lips before I realize that he's watching me stare at his cock.

I blush, embarrassed.

"You're not tired," he asks, "are you?"

Slowly I shake my head.

"Good." He runs his hand down the side of my body, burning a path from my shoulder to my hip. I'm suddenly trembling, my skin tingling as he touches me. His hand moves to my back, sliding over my skin until he's cupping my butt.

My breath quickens, and he smiles at me. Gently, he turns me over so I'm lying on my stomach, with my back to him. He runs his hands over my buttocks, softly stroking the sensitive skin before kneading each cheek firmly.

I let out a soft sigh, and in response he places his hands under my belly on both sides, pulling me up on my hands and knees. Then with one hand still on my stomach, he slips the other one between my legs from behind, feeling how wet I am before sliding two fingers inside me.

I close my eyes, my body twisting as he moves his fingers, spreading them even while he moves them in and out again. "You're so wet," he murmurs, his voice raspy, "so wet and so hot."

My body tightens and I move my hips impatiently, desperate for him to be inside me. I wait as he reaches for the condoms again, then his hands are on my waist, positioning me so he can slide slowly inside me.

He takes his time, pushing in slowly to the very hilt. His fingers tighten against my waist. "You're so fucking tight," he whispers, flexing his hips slowly as he slides out, then in again. "You feel so good."

His voice, combined with the slow, sure thrusting of his cock inside me, pushes me over the edge. My body starts to shake uncontrollably as hot pleasure builds in my core. He bends over me, plunging faster as he reaches for my breasts, teasing my unbearably swollen nipples. I cry out, my whole body tightening with the intensity of my climax.

He doesn't stop. Instead, he leans back up, gripping my thighs and lifting my legs off the bed. I clutch at the sheets, moaning weakly with each hot, sweet stroke. His grunts blend with my weak cries, as he thrusts into me with an intense sexual abandon. Heat gathers in my core, pulsing, spreading, and my body tightens again as another orgasm washes over me. In the next moment, I hear his loud groan as he slams deep into me and comes.

He releases my legs and collapses on top of me.

Our bodies are slippery with sweat as we both try to catch our breaths. He pulls out of me and gets rid of the condom.

“Now, I definitely can’t feel my legs,” I whisper, half panting.

“Me neither,” he says, surprising me by pressing a kiss on my shoulder. I smile at him and he smiles back, the expression on his face almost boyish. Then he falls back on the pillows on his side of the bed.

In the silence that follows, our breathing slowly returns to normal. What now? I wonder. It’s probably time for me to go. I stare at his naked body with regret. This has undoubtedly been the best night of my life.

“The elevator doesn’t require a code to leave,” he says, as if he knows what I’m thinking. “Just press the call button.”

I don’t say anything. I feel unaccountably sad. He turns to his side to look at me, a small frown on his face. Then he gets up and picks his trousers from the floor. He retrieves a black leather wallet and removes a couple of bills, coming around to place them on the nightstand on my side of the bed.

“I know you’ve been paid,” he says, “but consider that a bonus.”

I give him a small smile, but I can’t think of

anything to say. Thank you? Is this when I tell him that I'm not the hooker he was expecting? He comes back to lie on the bed beside me. "You can leave when you're less tired," he says, already dismissing me, "and don't forget to leave your number."

He closes his eyes. I don't know if he's sleeping. Briefly, I toy with the idea of leaving my number, but I soon dismiss the foolish thought. He thinks I'm a hooker, which means he's probably already forgotten about me. I've had a beautiful night, filled with great sex, and I can go back to my life and try to work on the things that matter, like getting over Jack.

I wait a while, then I get up and pull on my clothes. Leaving the money on the nightstand, I make my way back to the foyer. Like he said, the elevator doesn't need a code to leave, and in a few minutes, I'm out on the sidewalk hailing a cab to take me back home.

Four

SOMETHING is tickling my ear, persistently trying to drag me away from the dream where a beautiful man with dark gold hair and beautiful blue eyes is kissing a sweet path from my navel down between my thighs.

The tickling intensifies, and the dream disappears. “Go away,” I mutter sleepily, covering my ear with one hand. The tickling moves to the skin behind my ear. Sighing, I open one eye, and then the other. My room is bright with early morning sun, even though it seems like I just stumbled into bed at 1a.m. a few minutes ago. I still feel a little tired, but my

body also feels light and sweet, with a delicious ache between my legs. As the memory of last night fills my head, I can't prevent the small smile that comes to my lips.

"So?" I turn around. Laurie is sitting on the other side of my bed, still wearing her favorite sleep attire of a thigh length t-shirt. Her instrument of torture, a frilly scarf, is dangling from her hand. At the moment, one perfect eyebrow is raised questioningly, waiting for a reply to... whatever she's asking me.

"What?" I scowl at her, but she just smiles, ignoring me. At times like these, I start to rethink our decision to get an apartment together after college. At the time, we'd been so excited, refusing our parents' offers to help as we looked forward to finally striking out on our own. After spending two weeks looking at rat-infested apartments that we couldn't even afford, my dad had recommended a new agent, who showed us a beautiful apartment on Murray Hill. It was perfect, and we both fell in love with it, only discovering later that the lease had already been paid, by our parents.

We'd sulked and complained, but we'd moved in, because it was close to both our offices and we'd already fallen in love with it.

"You can always pay us back," Laurie's mom,

Aunt Jacie had said diplomatically, enabling us to call a truce.

Now Laurie rolls her eyes, bringing me back to the present. "Sweetie, don't you think there's stuff you need to tell me?"

I shake my head. "No... It's Saturday, I want to sleep."

"Come on..." she cajoles, lying down so her head is just inches away from mine on the pillow, "I want to know what happened last night." She taps the pillow in front of my face. "You can't just go to a party, come back in the a.m., and have nothing for me."

"I'll tell you anything you want after I get some sleep," I plead, even though I know it's useless. Laurie is an old hand at bugging a person relentlessly until the victim has no choice but to give in to her.

"You've slept enough," she argues firmly. "Come on... Did you have sex with him?"

I frown, then realize there's no way she can know about Landon. "Who?"

"Chadwick, of course. Who else?" She peers at me. "I kinda assumed you finally gave in, throwing caution to the wind and all that."

I shake my head. "No, I didn't. You know I don't find him attractive."

She gives me an exasperated look. "A man with

Chadwick Black's looks is attractive to everyone."

"I wonder what your boyfriend will think about that statement," I chide. "Where's Brett, by the way? I thought he was spending the night."

"He's asleep in my bed. He had a very tiring night." Laurie winks. "So what happened? Why'd you come in so late?"

Even though she's my cousin and best friend, I find myself hesitating to tell her. There's something about what happened last night that makes me want to keep it to myself. To treasure every moment in my memories, and bring them out to ponder when I'm alone, selfishly, like a miser over his hoard of gold.

But I know Laurie. And she knows me. There's no way I'll get away with lying to her.

I sit up on the bed and rest my back on the headboard. Sensing that there's a good story coming, Laurie grins and sits up, sliding easily into the lotus position, a commonplace feat I've never been able to accomplish. Unlike me, Laurie continued with ballet until she was fifteen. So in addition to being stunningly beautiful, she moves so gracefully that it's a pleasure just to look at her. She picks up her bowl of cereal from the nightstand, watching me expectantly as she continues her breakfast.

I sigh. "So I went to the party."

“Yeah... ok. And...?”

“And...” I pause. “Jack was there.”

“No!” Laurie looks as if she’s swallowed something gross. “Please tell me you didn’t sleep with him. Please tell me you didn’t.” She frowns. “Is that why the jerk was here last night? Did something happen?”

“Jack was here?”

She presses her lips together and rolls her eyes. “Yes, around eleven. He buzzed, I didn’t let him in. I told him you were out with Chadwick. I may have insinuated just a little that you were getting it on with the sexy photographer.”

“I doubt he would have cared,” I say with a frown, wondering what Jack could have wanted. “He’s engaged.”

“Jack?”

“Yeah,” I tell her, “to Claudia Sever.”

“That asshole,” Laurie mutters. “I’m sorry,” she adds gently.

I shrug.

“I thought he didn’t have it in him to commit to one woman,” she says drily.

“No, just me.” I trace a pattern on the covers on my bed, the sadness from last night coming back.

“Stop feeling sorry for yourself,” Laurie says.

“You deserve so much better than a guy who keeps toying with you. Either he wants you or he doesn’t. Seriously Rach, he gives you enough attention to keep you in love with him while he fucks everyone else but you.”

“You’re right,” I say. “Now, do you want to hear the rest of the story or not?”

“Ohhhh There’s more...” She loses her serious expression. “I hope it doesn’t involve Jack Weyland.”

Shaking my head, I start to tell her the rest, watching her eyes grow wider and wider when I get to the part about Landon.

“Holy hell!” She whistles. “You had a one night stand!” She starts to giggle. “And he thought you were a hooker. Wow! You’re not the girl who left this apartment last night. Where’s Rachel?” She asks dramatically, “Where’s my cousin, what have you done with her?”

I smile. “I think I gave her something she really needed.”

“Ha!” She exclaims, then frowns. “Landon... The Swanson Court penthouse... Was it Landon Court?”

“Who? I don’t know, I didn’t ask for his last name, you know, one night stand and all that.”

“No, you were too busy trying to get a ride on

his disco stick.” She snickers.

“Actually, two rides,” I correct.

“Whore!” she exclaims, giggling along with me.

“But seriously, Swanson Court, penthouse apartment...She hands me her bowl of cereal and bounds up from the bed. My computer is on my desk by the window, and she lifts the lid and starts it up.

“What are you doing?” I ask, stealing a spoonful of her cereal.

“Hold on,” she replies, “and don’t eat my cereal. You haven’t even brushed your teeth.”

I shrug and take another spoon, watching as the laptop starts. Laurie opens a browser window and types a few words before hitting the ‘enter’ button. The search results appear almost immediately, with a few images down the page. I wait while she clicks on something and then the screen is filled with pictures.

Some of them are of a building, which I recognize as the Swanson Court hotel. The others are mostly of a man. I move towards the edge of the bed so I can see the screen better. There are pictures of him in suits, in tuxedos, a shot with his dark gold hair tousled, blue eyes vibrant. There’s a picture on a large boat, one at the airport as he walks across the tarmac with a beautiful blond woman who looks like a model, and lots more.

I get off the bed and move forward to check the search term Laurie used. It's 'Swanson Court Owner.'

"Is that him?" Laurie asks.

I nod slowly.

"He's the fucking owner!" She whispers, uncharacteristically awed. "I've seen his name on the gossip blogs. He's always on those lists, the 'most eligible bachelors in the country' lists. He's a gazillionaire, and he's fucking hot!"

He is. I'm transfixed by the sight of him on my screen. Lauren goes back to the search results and I read some of the information in the box beside the results. Landon Court, hotelier and real estate magnate, the billionaire owner of the Swanson Court hotels and residential apartments with branches all over the country.

He's beautiful, rich, and sexy.

And I slept with him.

"Wow!" I release a breath. "I had no idea."

Laurie clicks on the Wikipedia link and starts to read his biography out loud. But I'm looking at the picture at the top right of the page. This one shows him in a tuxedo outside a building that looks like the Met. He looks like a movie star, only more handsome than any of the ones I can name. In all the pictures, he looks detached, remote even. Like a solitary man in a

room full of strangers. I remember his smile from last night, and suddenly I feel privileged to have been on the receiving end of a familiarity he obviously denies the public.

Even if he thought I was a hooker.

“I can’t imagine why he would want to sleep with a hooker,” Laurie muses beside me. “No offense to you, obviously. You’re not a hooker.” She sticks her tongue out at me. “But he’s been linked with lots of attractive women. I’m sure he can have anyone he wants without having to pay for it.”

I remember asking him the same question. “Maybe he was being adventurous,” I tell Laurie. “After all, I was supposed to be a birthday present.”

Laurie sighs sadly. “Now I feel bad for your sake that you didn’t leave him your number. I mean look at that body! I’d pose as a hooker to hit that.”

“Jeez Laurie. Remember Brett? Your boyfriend, who loves you. He’s in the next room.”

She giggles. “If he hears me, he’ll probably challenge Mr. Rich and Handsome Hotel owner to a duel or something.” Going back to the Wikipedia article, she starts to read again. “He’s only twenty-nine,” she says. “Fancy being so rich so young.” She pauses. “His mother was Alicia Creighton, OMG!” She turns to me, eyes wide, then realizing that I have no

idea who she's talking about, she shakes her head, "The prima ballerina. She died in a car crash before I started dancing, but my ballet teacher practically worshiped her."

"He must have been very young at the time," I say with a small frown. I can't imagine life without my mom, or even Aunt Jacie, even if they both drive me crazy at times.

Laurie reads on. "He supports various charities, and likes opera, ballet, and the theater." She looks at me. "Rachel, I believe this man is exactly your type."

"Don't be ridiculous," I say, "It was only a one night stand. I'm never going to see him again."

"Said Cinderella, but then she got drunk and 'forgot' her glass slipper," Laurie does her thing where she winks continuously for a few seconds. "Seriously, if you had a chance to date him for real, you'd say no?"

I gaze at the Wikipedia picture. "I don't... After Jack, I don't need another guy to fixate on."

"Jack again," Laurie says wryly. "Forget about him Rach." She looks back at the screen. "A man like this would reboot you with his hard drive."

"Jesus!" I exclaim, shaking my head. I have no idea where Laurie picks up her references. The law firm where she works while attending her final year of

law school is as old fashioned and staid as it is possible to be in twenty first century New York, so it's definitely not at work.

I turn back to the screen. She's right though. Landon could probably help to wipe Jack off my mind, but then I would likely fall for him. Who wouldn't? And I'd be right back where I started, hung up on a man.

"It doesn't matter," I tell Laurie, pulling my eyes away from Landon's face on the screen. "I don't have his number, and he doesn't have mine. We hooked up for a night, and as hot as it was, we're never going to see each other again."