

Chapter IV

Lustdaze

Hi there! How are you tonight? “Mmmm-wah!” (Word of advice: when somebody blows you a kiss, you’re supposed to catch it like a falling star and put it in your pocket.)

Tsk tsk tsk. After that *lapse* in etiquette, I better not find this fridge empty... A full jug! Of sangria! Ooh luscious! All right then, you’re forgiven for muffing my blow-kiss. If you’ll pardon my expressing it that way. (Cackle.)

¡Arriba arriba!

(Clink.)

Hee hee! (Slurp.) Speaking of blows and the Nothingbutt Theater, this really ugly but supertalented guy named Joe Biggins and I once did that wonderful sex scene from *Jane Eyre* for them. You know: “I’ve got a blow—I’ve got a blow, Jane!” “Oh, lean on me, sir!” So here I am staggering around under Joe, who goes and *drapes* himself over me; it was disgusting but hilarious. Hee hee hee! “My little friend!” sighs Joe. “Thank you, sir!” gasps me. “Tell me what to do, I’ll try at least to do it!” *Hee hee hee hee hee!...*

[CLUMP]

‘Scuse me. Hee hee! Sorry. Sometimes I’ve just gotta roll around on the floor, in *utter ecstasy*. (And dust bunnies. Have you got a vacuum cleaner? Remind me and I’ll apply it to this nice grey carpet sometime.) Lucky I didn’t spill my drink. But Jeez, that was funny. Joe Biggins! Too bad he was so repulsive. (Cackle.) I think I saw him once years later on *The Merv Griffin Show*, but that was during my margarita phase so who can be sure.

(Slurp.)

That scene from *Jane Eyre*, by the way, is the *second* most romantic one in world literature. The MOST romantic scene is the one in *Tom Sawyer*, where he asks Becky Thatcher if she loves rats and she says no, she hates them! and he says no, he means dead ones you can twirl around on the end of a string, and she says what *she* likes is chewing gum and Tom can chew hers for awhile if he'll give it back to her afterward.

You can't get much more romantic than that.

Or can you? Pour me a little more sangria, and we'll *scrutinize* the situation...

¡*Gracias!* (Slurp.)

Soooo for instance, I like to take these romantic drip-dry showers. Hop in, scrub-a-glub-dub, hop out—no turning pruny (yugg)—and let Mother Nature take care of the drying part. 'Cept for my hair; absolutely need a blowdryer for that. (There I go coming to *blows* again, har har.) But I don't believe in towels anymore—can't find any good ones, towels with a RASP to them, that can put roses in all your cheeks.

(Slurp.) I believe I've already mentioned my preference for red lingerie. *Bright* red; the color of your true heart's blood. Though, when I'm feeling demure, I'll unbend far enough to wear shocking pink. Right now I'm in more of a magenta mood. As you can spy for yourself... if I just kind of *loosen*... this one li'l button here. See? Magenta. Goes so well with my blooming complexion, AND I could spill a whole glass of sangria down my front and it wouldn't leave a stain—

Why, may I ask, are you scowling like that?

Oh yes you are! (Slurp.) And yet the very first time I came over here, the very first thing you did was look *right* down my front. Oh yes you did! For which I really ought to have slapped your face (you cad!) except that I'd already bloodied your nose earlier that day.

Maybe you were just staring at the floor, and my boobies kind of *impeded* your viewpoint. Men, of course, always tend to zero in on the boobs or the buns or the legs. And since I'm way down here to begin with, and the boobs and the buns and the legs are all even *further* down, you men can give yourselves a regular neckache doing the zeroing in. Serves you right, too! (Cads!)

So let's change the subject, why don't we?—say, to kissing. (Slurp.)

First guy I ever kissed for real was Jeff Scolley. *No*, not “Jeff's collie!” Oog! I'll have you know the Scolleys were a very crème-de-la-crème family in Marble Orchard. And that, mind you, is the *county seat*—it's not all frog-gigging and sorghum festivals out there, nossir. Jeff's dad was a bigwig buyer at Winslow's Department Store and drove a Buick Riviera, and they lived in a fancy house on Locust Street with lawn flamingoes and everything. Jeff looked exactly like Jonny Quest, only with brown hair and an overbite. Which I got thoroughly acquainted with, har har. No, it was all very innocent, mostly 'cause I left town before my eleventh birthday. (Just as well too, 'cause Jeff was getting fitted for braces at the time.)

So then I moved to the big city Demortuis and “took a shine” to this Cool Boy named Troy Janssen, who was a Laplander through and through. I mean he had a chin-dimple and hair like flax and these tell-tale empty-bedroom eyes—the whole Nordic smörgåsbord. Don't even get me STARTED on Sven-types, those goddam slalom-instructors—I've had my ever-lovin' finger-lickin' fill of them. And Troy Janssen was the very first one.

Well, not my very first one in *that* sense. Not that he didn't *try*—and not just with me by myself: he tried to seduce me AND this friend of mine, simultaneously! But we (um—was it Natalie? no—*Ginny*, that's right, it was Ginny Kirschwasser—boy, talk about your virgins) Ginny and I were too crafty for him, even if he *was* practically a teenager. We allowed ourselves to be lured up to his bedroom, where Troy started taking off his clothes—and how typical! absolutely *tip o' the pickle* that he'd start with his OWN clothes! But we tangled him up in his own shirt and pants before piling on top of him and pinning him down and spanking and tickling him till the bastard hollered Uncle. Or should I say Auntie, since after that encounter he wasn't worth half a damn buck. Never did ask either of us out. Complete waste of chin-dimple talent. Oh, that's a Sven for you, all right.

(Grrrr.)

I think maybe I'll just refasten this button. The late-night buffet is no longer open for your sampling pleasure, and you can lay the blame for that on all those Cool Boys from Scandinavia. So nyaah to them and nyaah to you too, Mister Monsieur...

*

Um, that was the sangria talking last night.

Also that was me flirting, sort of, in case you missed my drift. I'm a wee bit out of practice. At *flirting*, that is, NOT teasing—I'll own up to being a Flirty Gertie (there's that name again!) but I'd take a heap of offense at being labeled a tease. Maybe you don't think there's a significant difference but I'm here to tell you there *is*, with a big old capital S.

I know what I'm talking about 'cause the Totalbitch Queen of the Teases was a personal acquaintance of mine, back in high school. Her name was Pamela Pillsbury and some cockeyed idiots were stupid enough to say we looked a lot alike. Untrue! There's more to "looking alike" than both of us being blonde and short. (And built; I'll grant you that.) But Pam was a downright trifler when it came to guys, and a Blue-eyed Meanie too: I remember her making this one guy Mike (or was it Mark? or maybe Malcolm? probably all three) break down and *cry* at some dance or other, right there in the gym in front of everybody. Betcha some shrink's gotten rich off *that* little incident.

Pamela Pillsbury—I called her The Dough Girl, partly 'cause I'm so clever-brilliant and partly 'cause her folks had a lot of money but lost most of it, so they ended up in dear old Demortuis where poor Pammy had to snippy-drip to the hoi polloi. And her *voice!* She had the nerve to say I sound like a cartoon chipmunk and maybe I do, but SHE talked like a big bowl of marshmallow fluff left out in a hailstorm.

The funny thing is we actually got to be almost friends (for want of a better word) our senior year, when we ran the Drama Club and wanted to do *Candide* for Operetta, with Pam as Cunegonde and me as Paquette. But of course it was hopeless, what with "Glitter and Be Gay" and the Old Lady's cannibalized buttock and whatnot. They made us put on *Flower Drum Song* instead, for crying out loud! I mean "I Enjoy Being a Girl," but come *on*.

(Cackle.) I *do* enjoy it, you know—being short and cute and built and all. I don't suppose Pam ever did—not among the hoi polloi, anyway. So she ended up a totalbitch tease while *I* got to play Wonderflirt. But even *I* wasn't all that thrilled Being a Girl the first time I "did the deed," which was (cough) with this second-string basketball player named Punchy Frid. His real name was Christopher Robin Frid, but he got called "Punchy" by people who

called him “Christopher Robin” first, and he was all the time fouling out on the basketball court. And not just there, either.

Punchy Frid—no relation to the *Dark Shadows* Barnabas actor, I’m sorry to say. No, he was another slip-sliding Swede. Don’t know if my first time was his too, but he sure didn’t seem to know which end of the rubber went on where. For a week or so afterward I was absolutely convinced I was carrying around Punchy Jr. An empty threat as it turned out (THANK YOU JESUS!) but, to avenge my virtue, I kept old Christopher Robin convinced of it for the *entire goddam winter*. Every time I saw him I’d double over and go “OHHHhhhh, I think I felt the baby kick!”

(You should’ve seen Punchy try to sink free throws that season, with me in the bleachers clutching my tummy.)

(No, I would *not* call that “teasing.”)

Needless to say, I’ve done a lot better since. Although there’s a helluva lot of Punchy Frids in the world. Not to mention Troy Janssens. And I’m afraid I’m a bit elderly for the Jeff Scolleys and their overbites, nowadays. Not to mention nowanights. A couple weeks ago my friend RoBynne got me into the BoogaBloo Angel, this breakers club downtown, and I found myself spinning round the dance floor with these inner-city *boyhunks* who definitely weren’t Sven-types, fer shure fer shure. But we’re talking beardless fake-I.D. expecting-me-to-drool-over-their-flaunted-lack-of-chest-hair *kiddies* here! Sorry, I don’t feel qualified yet to play the role of Experienced Older Woman They’ll Remember Fondly After They’ve Grown Up À La *Summer of ’42*.

So, like I said, I’m a teensy bit rusty at flirting.

But every once in awhile...

Um. Well. How do I describe this, without getting too naughty or racy or anything? Not that it’s X-rated subject matter, necessarily; just sort of—“intimate.”

Okay. Let’s see. You head out someplace. It could be to a party, or taking a walk in the park, or—or dropping by the corner Pizza Hut, maybe. Whatever. Anyway, you’re alone, by yourself, and then OOH: suddenly you look, and you see, and you *need*—

—and it’s like it’s meant to *be*. Know what I mean? Like you’re singling each other

out. So then you touch, and you hold, and you *feel*—

—and it’s such a feeling you can’t hide it, with your heart going bing-bang-zoom and the rest of you not-to-get-graphic but turning all-sort-of-melty, like the very best butter (as the Dormouse said). All creepy-crawl and goosey-bump and deeLISHusly lavishful—

—but it’s not just your ordinary everyday lustdaze. You know? ‘Cause it’s *romantic*, it’s SO romantic and some kind of magical. Right? And then—

—this’ll sound sappy but it really DOES get all Rodgers & Hammersteinish. Like some enchanted evening followed by oh what a beautiful morning after a hundred million miracles happ’ning ev’ry day!

(I can’t believe I just said that.)

(But it’s the *truth*.)

(Hee hee hee!)

Wanna know a secret? A beep-beep toot-toot Bad Girl secret? Lemme whisper in your ear—

When it’s good for me, I laugh my fool head off. I go from grins to giggles to guffaws and finally outright *peals* of laughter, the more “intimate” and “lavishful” it gets.

My face feels all tingly. Am I blushing? Oh my God, you’ve got me *blushing!* Holy Baloney—I haven’t had anything to blush about for years and years. Or months and months, anyway.

I forgot how sort of glowy it makes you feel.

Um—

Anything left in that jug of sangria?...