

Chapter XI

If I Fell

“...mmph...”

“...hjckrrh?...”

“...well. Hello there.”

“H’lo yourself. (Yawn.) ‘Scuse me—I always fall asleep afterward. Not very ladylike.”

“Rather after than beforehand. Or during—”

“Please! No chance of that, smart guy. (Yawn.) Told you this’d be romantic.”

“As I recall, you said ‘Now *isn’t* this romantic?’”

“Well *isn’t* it? Falling asleep in each other’s arms?”

“I suppose.”

“You suppose right. Me, I feel like a song coming on: ‘If I fell asleep with you /would you promise not to sue /and put meeee on the stand?’ (Cackle.)”

“Rather keep you here in bed.”

“Why thank you, sir!” (Smooch.)

“Thank *you*, ma’am.”

“Hey! Who’re you calling a ma’am?”

“Miss, then. As good as a smile.”

“(Cackle.) So. Go on. Tell me I’m scrumptious. Say I’m the best you’ve ever had.”

“Certainly superlative.”

“You betcha! I’m a *good* li’l girl. I bet I could open a School of Boinkology. Oh quit laughing.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it.”

“Yeah well I can *feel* you laughing. Mock me, will you?”

“Mock you?”

“Mock me...”

“You mean like this?”

“*Yeeeeeek!* That tickles!”

“—sorry. Sorry. Sorry—”

“No no no, in a *good* way, honey, you just surprised me is all—c’mon, try it again. Right there... a little lower... a little *slower*... ooh yass... hee hee hee *hee hee*—keep doing that!”

“Ma’am yes ma’am!”

“Hee hee hee who’re you *hee hee calling* MAA’AAMmmmm... hoo! Hunh?”

“Ah... miss, then.”

“Good as a smile, all right! C’mere—” (Smooch.) “Hee hee hee—” (Smooch.)

“Just as well you clued me in ahead of time about all this giggling.”

“Hee *hee!* Throws a few guys for a loop, lemme tell you.” (Smooch.) “They expect sobs and moans and *oh God oh Gods*. But when I’m having a good time I’m happy, and when I’m happy I just gotta laugh.”

“Glad to hear it.”

“...I haven’t had a whole lot to laugh about lately, though.”

“No. I suppose not. Nor have I.”

“No?”

“No. Not for two, three years.”

“Jeez...”

“Just so...”

“...I hate sleeping alone. All by myself.”

“Not alone here.”

“No.”

“Sorry it took me so long, though—”

“Sweetie, that’s something you *never* have to apologize to a woman for—”

“Not once you’re under way, maybe. But I should have *set sail* a lot sooner.”

“Hey, remember who you’re talking to—a veteran of the ‘Belgian Bulge’ here! In fact you can consider yourself seduced by an able-bodied sailor-girl on shore leave. I’ll jot you down in my little black book, and next time I heave into port I’ll wheedle you up.”

“Well, you wheedle superlatively.”

“Do I? Really? Wheedle wheedle wheedle, coax coax coax—CAJOLE! *There’s* a good word. Allow me to *cajole* you a little... and feel free to *coax* me back... okay! I’M all the way waked up! What time is it? Never mind, it’s the weekend. I need a cigarette. Mind if I smoke in bed? (Silly question.) Where’d I leave my poke? You’ll have to start keeping a humidor for me, here on this end table... Can you see me? I wish the moon was out tonight—”

“Yours is, anyway—”

“You *can* see me! But I’ve been told I look *especially* cute by moonlight. Like something out of an R-rated *Midsummer Night’s Dream*—”

“Titania, I presume.”

“Oh funny! Just mock me all over, why don’t you? (Here’s my poke.) Well, better Titania than Moth or Mustardseed. Hey wait a sec—how’d that act begin? The fourth act... oh yeah! (I’m striking a pose here, if you can’t tell.)

*Come sit thee down upon this flowery bed
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy—HEE HEE HEE!—thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.*

—boy is *that* ever on target!”

“Well, bring on your musk-roses.”

“Will do. I’m also getting a few more love gloves.”

““Love gloves?””

“Well what do you call them? Candy wrappers? Spanky hankies? Wienerhosen?”

“Good God... How about ‘dunce caps?’”

“(Cackle.) I’ll buy that! I bought *these* at a drugstore on my way over here. You should’ve seen the cashier’s face; she obviously thought I was up to no good... Permission to come back aboard, Cap’n!”

“Permission granted.”

“—BELLY FLOP!—”

[WHUMP]

“MMPH!!!”

“*Hee hee hee hee hee!*—I just couldn’t resist—*hee hee hee hee hee!*... Oh, boy. Oh, wow. Did I hurt you?”

“No more than usual.”

“Awww.” (Smooch.) “‘My gentle joy!’ I promise to kiss you all better—after I finish my smoke.” (Flick; drag.) “Want a puff?”

“Still recovering from the last one, thank you.”

“Well, I said I was sorry. Or did I? Well, I... does this sound familiar?”

“Mmph.”

“Um... it doesn’t bother you that I brought the rubbers, does it?”

“Only if I couldn’t make use of them.”

“It’s just that ever since, you know, Buddy-Buzz...”

“Say no more. Best to be careful.”

“That’s why I spread out the towel first, too. Just as well I didn’t do your laundry yesterday. Are you *sure* you don’t mind—”

“Speaking of careful, watch where you drop that ash!”

“Ve haff vays uff vheedling you, Yankee dog.” (Drag; snuff.) “All right, it’s out. I may be a natural-born arsonist but I wouldn’t set your chest hair on fire—not with a *cigarette*, anyway. Kind of reminds me of this shag carpet I had in my place on Garfield Street, back in Demortuis—except *that* was lime-green. And less curly.” (Nibble nibble nibble.) “Making love on that carpet was like doing it outdoors, in a field or meadow. I sure

have missed that carpet. Till tonight, that is.” (Nibble nibble nibble.) “Am I talking too much again? I do make you listen a hell of a lot. Avay ve’ll go to Der Mutterland, where ve’ll mumble und mutter to vun anutter...” (Smoooooch.) “I’m not too heavy, am I? I keep thinking I *feel* heavy.”

“Ah... no. Just... right.”

“Really? Call me Baby-bear Goldilocks!” (Smooch. Smeerp.) “Let’s see how long we can hold on being jussst riiiiight...”

“Hold *out*... you mean...”

“Oh you’re such a stickler.” (Smoooooch. Smeeeerp.)

“*Uhhhh*—I will be pretty damn soon, if you keep doing that.”

“Okay, Cap’n, simmer down; we’ll just snuggle for awhile... like this:

*N-E-S-T-L-I-‘ng’
nestling makes my heart go ‘bing’
(chawww-clutt)
(hee hee!)*

...so ANYway, I’ve told you all about *my* love life. What about yours? When’d you go all the way for the first time?”

“The first time? All the way? That would be the summer I was sixteen. On a road trip outside Rapid City, South Dakota.”

“You’re kidding! How rapid was it?”

“Pretty damn. They don’t call it Mount Rushmore for nothing.”

“(Cackle.) So who with?”

“A lapsed Catholic girl I found in my cousin Jazzbo’s sleeping bag.”

“Your cousin *Jazzbo!*”

“That’s Jacques Derente VI—eventual heir to the family bonanza.”

“He wasn’t there in the sleeping bag *with* you and the Catholic girl, was he?”

“No—Jazzbo was busy with a Carly Simon lookalike who had a waterbed in the back of her Jeep Wagoneer.”

“You’re making this up!”

“Not at all. It was definitely a Jeep Wagoneer.”

“Uh huh. So what was her name, this Catholic girl?”

“*Lapsed* Catholic. Something redundant—Donna O’Donoghue or Sheila O’Shea, something like that.”

“A Jeep Wagoneer you can remember, but not your First Time’s *name*? How do you know she was a lapsed Catholic?”

“She told me so. Said the nuns would ‘drop their teeth’ if they could see her now. And assured me the next morning that she didn’t feel pregnant.”

“Worse and worse!”

“Ah... regarding *your* cousin—”

“Which one?”

“Ah... ‘Cousin Flo’—”

“Um—yes?”

“She won’t mind our... ‘nestling’ and so forth—will she?”

“Oh sweetie! Oh honey, *believe* me, she is tickled piggly-wiggly PINK! I mean we could’ve maybe waited a couple more days, but...”

“But what?”

“...I didn’t want to wait. I’d rather have to do your laundry. Oh quit laughing, you *know* what I mean. Does it bother you?”

“At the moment I don’t think there’s anything you could say that would bother me.”

“Really? How about ‘You’ve got a big nose!’”

“Why thank you miss!”

“*Hee hee hee!*” (Smooch.)

“—providing that there aren’t, in fact, any ‘Red Gap’ consequences.”

“Well you do know what these rubber thingies are *for*, right? Plus I’m a Pill-popper besides. So don’t be nervous; relax...” (Smooch.) “Okay then: did you ever go to bed with Sadie?”

“...well, *that’s* a floopmaking question.”

“She claims she can’t remember, ‘after all these years.’”

“Mmph. I think I made a pass at Mercedes when she first came to campus. After all, a red-headed woman makes a choo-choo jump its track—”

“HEY! You’re saying that with the redhead’s blonde little sister lying here *naked* on TOP of you!”

“—let me finish—she paid no attention to my pass, and we settled for being friends. Then *you* came along, Blonde Little Sister, and derailed me completely.”

“Is that right?”

“On several occasions.”

“Okay then. Howzabout another glass of that yummy Amontillado? I’ll go get it and you can admire me from every angle... There! Aren’t I jiffy-quick? Here’s your glass. Where’s your hand? *Don’t*, you’ll make me drop it! (Turk!) All right, no sudden moves now—nice and gentle—lift your arm—help me down... and here we are. Isn’t this cozy? Not to say romantic? What’d you do with your glass? Cheerios, deario!” (Clink. Gulp. Smooch.) “Bet you didn’t see that one coming.” (Smooch.) “Or that one either! This sure is a really *fine* wine.”

“And truly you are a feast for all senses.”

“What a sweet and accurate way you have of putting things! Hee hee—of putting *Thing*, that is—”

“Love Addams Family Style.”

“Hey I loved that show! When I was little I made up jump-rope routines about it:

Who do we find when we make our search?

Wednesday, Pugsley, Itt and Lurch!

Who do we find when we want to pester?

Gomez, Morticia, and Uncle Fester!

—but I never worked Thing into it. That had to wait till my teenage years—”

“No Uncle Fester jokes, now.”

“(Cackle.) Hey feel that—you’ve gotten all bristly up there! See, being with me’s even making your *hair* grow! I’ve gotten ‘beard burn’ from making out with unshaven guys, but never ‘scalp scrape’ before.”

“A memorable night all around.”

“...Peyton?”

“...Skeeter?”

“Could I shave it for you?”

“Are we still talking about my head?”

“*Yes*, your head! Don’t spoil the moment! So can I? Please? I’ll be really, really careful—”

“Let’s talk about it in the morning.”

“It *is* morning.”

“After *daybreak* then.”

“It’d mean a lot to me. It’d be like we’re sealing our deal.”

“Our deal?”

“You know—our *pact*.”

“Our compact?”

“ExACTly!”

“*You’re* compact, anyway.”

“Ooh I can hardly wait! I’m so excited—gimme your glass—”

“You’re wheedling again—”

“Superlatively, too! The best you’ve ever had, right? C’mere—” (Smooch. Smeerp.) “DAMN, I’m good!”

“(Guffaw.)”

“See that? Just gotta laugh! I’m your good li’l acorn and I make you grow into a mighty oak. See? See that? *My* mighty oak. *I* make it, so it belongs to *me*. And *I* get to put on its ‘pocket protector.’ So you just forget about those other girls—hee hee! those lapsed girls—and get downright with me. I’m... all... yourrrrrsss...”

“—you’re right (*huff*) about the downright (*huff*) anyway—”

“—always! (*Hee hee hee hee hee!*) Always!—”