

THE PLUCKING SERIES



IDON'T
Pluck
WITH YOU



Bestselling Author
L. LOREN

**I Don't
Pluck
with You**

The Plucking Series

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Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[I Don't Pluck With You](#)

[Prologue](#)

[One](#)

[Two](#)

[Three](#)

[Four](#)

[Five](#)

[Six](#)

[Seven](#)

[Eight](#)

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L. Loren

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Published by
Lisa W. Tetting Books
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Prologue



Pansy

I am convinced I was born in the wrong era. Here I am pushing thirty, but my lifestyle reflects someone who lived and thrived in the seventies. To be more specific, I love the music of that era. Give me crop tops and maxi skirts and I am in heaven. I even wear my hair in a very big cloud of natural curls that makes me stand out in a crowd. My propensity to smoke a little something every now and then adds to this theory.

My parents like to call themselves hippies. That's their deal. Unlike my parents' free love view of the world, I like to fight. It has been said that I subscribe to the Whitney Houston School of 'I beat Bitches asses'. It soothes my soul. Don't get me wrong. I am not violent as an initial reaction. I am innately an easy going, carefree vessel. However, that can go from zero to thug in ten seconds or less if the right button is pushed.

My best friend, Raven, says I am a walking contradiction. She's not wrong, but I would never tell her she was right. That chick and I have been bonded since we were babies crawling around on her mother's pristine marble floors. Thankfully, Raven did not inherit the elder Mrs. Byrd's fondness for excessive luxury. Raven and I get along because she is down to earth just like me.

We have been through a lot together. She stood by my side when others in our friend group turned their backs on me. That's why she will always have my loyalty. Not many people will stand by you through accusations of murder. Most turn tail and run. Not Raven. She never believed the lies and stayed true from the onset.

You must be shocked and appalled that I mentioned being accused of murder. It is a long story, but I guess you need to know it before you can know who I am and why I act the way I do. So, like most bad things that happen in the world, it all started with a guy. A very rich and good-looking guy that had me acting out of character.

Dude's name was Chicago, and he was just as dangerous as the city he was named after. Of course, my dumb ass thought it was cute to date a bad boy. There was nothing anyone could tell me about him that I would believe. My friends tried to warn me. My parents threatened to lock me away in a tower. He could have done the most heinous things in front of me, and I would have come up with an excuse for his behavior. And I did.

“Babe, I need you to make a run for me.”

“Chicago, you know I don't want nothing to do with your business. I told you from day one, I am not about that life.”

“So that's a no? How you gonna tell me no, as much as I do for you? Naw, bruh, you got me messed up.”

The man I loved more than life stood there looking at me like he was on the verge of choking me out. He did not take denial well. I knew he would get angry before I said it, but I let that word drop anyway. He knew I did not respond well to anger or threats. I watched as the lightbulb went off in his head. He was about to switch it up on me. I knew he was playing me, yet I still melted at the next words that left his treacherous mouth.

“Babe, I need you. Didn't you tell me if I needed you to do something for me, all I had to do was ask? Now here I am on my knees, practically begging and you're telling me no. How you think that makes me feel as your man? I'm supposed to be able to rely on you. What I hear is you telling me to get another woman to do your job. What do I need you for if I'm outsourcing what you won't do? Are you telling me I should replace you?”

“Come on Chi, you know I didn't mean it like that.”

“Naw, that’s what you said. You just stood there and told me you aren’t here for me. That leaves a man like me no choice except to get another female in here to do what you won’t.”

It was on the tip of my tongue to tell him I would do it, but I knew something was off. My Spidey Senses were going off like a Roman candle. While my inner hoe and my good girl persona engaged in the most epic rap battle ever, I hesitated, waiting for the winner to be crowned. In those few seconds, I found myself being propelled against the wall, Chicago’s mouth was on mine in a punishing kiss. He knew I couldn’t resist his good loving. It was so unfair.

Thankfully before I got too far gone, the ringer on my phone blared the song Brickhouse by the Commodores. It was my mom’s favorite song. Just the sound of the opening notes caused me to snap back to reality. There is nothing like your mom making her presence known to eliminate your sex drive.

“Wait, baby. My mom is calling me. I need to get this.”

“Fuck!”

Chicago cursed but backed off allowing me to answer the incoming call. She needed me to come home and take care of my dad who was having one of his bad days as a result of a car accident. She had to do chores and didn’t want to leave him alone. And just like that, my mom saved me from going to jail that day. Apparently, Chicago decided to replace me with another girl who walked into a police sting. She was arrested and charged with moving some heavy weight. That could have been me. And do you know my stupid ass still fucked with him after that?

He was always doing things like that. It never occurred to me that he was all about himself. He would sacrifice my ass for his any day of the week. It never occurred to me to be suspicious of him until it was too late. The day in question, he asked me to roll out with him to one of his homie’s cribs. Usually, he kept me away from all his friend and associates that were in the game. He always said he wanted to protect me in case he got busted.

It was a beautiful day and I wanted to go on a picnic. My naivety didn't allow for that little tap on the shoulder that told people with street smarts that king pens did not go on cute picnic in the park. Chicago told me he needed to make a quick stop first and then we could go on our date. I wanted so badly to have my alone time with him that it never dawned on me that he was making a drug run along the way.

Apparently, things went left. All I knew was I heard gunshots and then Chi came running out of the building. He tossed what looked like an afro wig into the bushes and jumped in the car. We sped off without an explanation, our date forgotten. After he dropped me off at home, he ghosted me. I couldn't get in contact with him to save my life. I found out later from the police, that an undercover officer had been murdered at that location. Oh yeah, I was their main suspect.

After being arrested, questioned, and treated like the scum of the earth, I was on the verge of insanity. The detectives refused to listen to me. They had their suspect and that was who they were going to crucify. Thank God for my parents' ability to afford a badass attorney who put holes in the prosecution's case. Otherwise, I would be living my best life trying to see if orange really was the new black.

Word on the street was Chicago was pissed at me for getting his side chick locked up. I was supposed to go down in that drug sting. Instead of the asshole breaking up with me, he decided to ruin my life. He set me up to take the fall. I was informed that he had been seen wearing a wig that closely resembled my crown. I should have known something was wrong when he insisted that we wear matching outfits.

I was so stupid. Chicago and I were the same height and similar weights. The wig I had seen him tossing into the bushes was found by the cops, who thought it was mine. My saving grace was when my attorney put me on the stand and proved that my big hair wasn't the wig everyone thought it was.

The prosecutor had centered his case around a video of someone who was dressed similarly to me with big curly hair. When they found that wig, they were so sure it was me, they never even bothered to check. When the cops came for me, my

hair was in cornrows. My attorney had informed me to wear my hair straight to court as that would look less threatening to the jury. I didn't like it, but I wasn't going to jail because of pride. I flat ironed the shit of my hair.

On the day I took the stand, I wore it natural, but pulled back in a bun. When that big old fro popped out after I removed the hair ties, I thought the prosecutor was going to pass the fuck out. I guess you can say I owe my life to my big hair. I am never cutting it. You hear me?

My hair was such a mood that I parlayed it into a business. I had been researching hair care products for a couple of years. I used natural products to develop my own brand and had been looking for some investors to help get my company off the ground. Before that I was just using my friends as test dummies. They loved the products and helped me with finalizing the final products. I named the products Black Pansy after a rare and beautiful flower.

As a result of my recent troubles, I have decided I need a do over. A new start in a new city is just what the doctor ordered. Abandoning my hometown of Atlanta, Georgia for the unfamiliar haven of Santa Barbara proved to be less problematic than I expected. I had no idea where I was going nor what I was doing. All I knew was an opportunity for change presented itself at the right moment in my life and I would be damned if I let it pass by. My good friend Raven was a godsend. She volunteered to help me drive across country and I happily accepted.

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One



Pansy

“Pansy, I don’t know why you think running across country will make a difference. You need your family close at a time like this.”

“I get it, Mom. You want me to stay close after everything that has happened, but I need to do this. I have never lived outside of Atlanta. I grew up here. I went to college here. I almost lost my freedom here, too. It is time for me to see what else is out there.”

“But what about your father? He is going to miss you.”

“I’ll miss him too, but this is something I need to do for me.”

“Baby, you saw what living on your own got you.”

No she didn't. How dare she bring up the most tragic event of my life? I never expected my own mom to throw that in my face. Is she actually blaming the victim? If she wasn't the woman that gave me life, I might entertain cussing her out. Instead, I shot her my signature ‘fuck around and find out’ look.

“That wasn’t my fault! Are you insinuating that I was the cause of an unstable man trying to set me up for murder because he couldn’t have his way? Is that what you’re saying, Mother?”

“You know I would never...”

“Because that’s what it sounds like when you say to me, look what happened. It sounds like you’re placing the blame on me. All I ever did to Chicago, was be nice to him. Nothing I did would have given a normal person the idea that I wanted

to be owned by him. I never betrayed the man. I never would have.”

“I’m sorry, Pansy. I didn’t mean to place blame. I’m just afraid for you to be three thousand miles away from your family. You don’t even know anyone out there.”

“Yes, I do. You remember my friend, Violet? She lives there and loves it. Plus, Raven is only a five-and-a-half-hour drive from me.”

“I just don’t know. That Violet chick is not family, and we don’t know her.”

“Well, Raven is as close as family to me and if I really needed her, the flight from Vegas is only an hour. Anyway, why are we discussing this like it is up for debate? The decision has been made. I have purchased a whole house and everything. I am going. Now, can we please just enjoy my last night at home without the drama?”

“Fine. At least you’re not driving out there all alone. Thank God for Raven. What time is she coming?”

“Her flight arrived already, and she will be here first thing in the morning. She wanted to see her parents, so she’s staying over there tonight.”

“What is she going to do with her sister’s daughter?”

“I have no idea. Raven loves that little girl like she is her own child, so I am sure she is torn about what to do with her. She deserves to have a life, but she feels obligated to her niece. Whatever you do, please do not bring that up when she gets here.”

“There you go again accusing me of saying things I shouldn’t.”

“Really, mom. You literally just said something out of pocket. I am not accusing you. These are facts! You always do this. I am sick of being gaslighted. It is exactly what Chicago did to me.”

That was another reason for me to move across country. My mom was an expert at saying reckless shit and then

playing the victim. I swear granny should have named the woman Karen. Once I am out of her reach maybe we can get along better.

“I guess I can’t say anything right where you are concerned.”

I looked over at my dad who had been sitting in his chair observing the entire interaction. He gave me the look that I have come to know over the years as a plea to stop arguing. Whenever my mom and I got into it, she would eventually take it out on him. Of course, she never did it in front of me. She saved his torture for their private times. I decided to take pity on him and dropped the subject.

“So dad, how is that cooking class you signed up for? Have you finally mastered the art of vegan cooking?”

“Not yet, my girl. You will be the first to know when I have graduated. I have it all planned out. I will set up a video call and you and I will make dinner together. Save the date for me.”

“I wouldn’t miss that for the world, pops. You and I have a standing date. I expect your call once a week. Now that I will be my own boss, I can make my own schedule.”

The rest of the evening was uneventful. After dinner, I retired to my room to make sure I had packed everything I needed. I had already sold most of my furniture and was excited about purchasing new pieces. I needed to do another walk thru of the house to get the vibe before making the final decision. What little items I decided to keep were put in one of those storage cubes along with most of my stuff. The shipping company had already picked it up and would be arriving at my new place a few days after I was scheduled to arrive.

The next morning at five o’clock on the dot, Raven’s ride share dropped her off in front of my parents’ house. After loading all of our stuff in the back of my car, we kissed the parents and headed off on our three-day journey.

“Pansy, I am so excited for your move! Santa Barbara is where its at! Girl, you’re about to be neighbors with Oprah.”

“Why are you like this? My little house will be nowhere near O’s compound.”

“I know that, but can’t a girl dream? It’s what I am telling all the homies. My bestie is living down the street from Miss Winfrey.”

“You are silly.”

“What? I mean, you already have the car for it. All the Richie riches drive Range Rovers. You got a million-dollar house in a fancy smansy part of town, and you are CEO of your own amazing startup company, where you get to work from home.”

“Where do you get this stuff? The car was a gift from my parents. My house is modest and reasonably priced for Santa Barbara. My company is projected to do well, but there are no guarantees.”

“Okay, Sis. I guess what I am trying to say is I am proud of you. When people ask you about your new life, use better adjectives to describe what you do. It’s alright to be modest, but sometimes you need to step on these hoes’ necks. Pump yourself up a bit.”

“Shit, I need you to come live with me in Cali. You think your man would share your time? I get you for six months and he gets the second half of the year.”

“Bitch, please. He barely let me out of his sight this long to do this trip. You know he can’t live without me.”

Shaking my head at her antics, I laughed a little. She was so stinking happy with her new man. They met recently when a group of friends went to Vegas for our girl Sandy’s wedding. Let’s just say, Aries and Raven wasted no time getting things hot and juicy. Talk about instant love. Dude was so taken with her after a week, he came and claimed her ass in Atlanta after we returned home. What can I say about sexy bikers? When they want something, they go and get it.

“Oh, don’t act like it is all on Aries. I know your ass is going through withdrawals like an addict.”

“Yeah, you’re right. I miss my man. Don’t be surprised if you wake up in the hotel with me snuggling up against you. I hate sleeping alone, now.”

“Oh, hell naw. Keep those claws of your in your own bed. I know we are sharing a room, but we will have separate beds.”

“I do not have claws. Well, not anymore. I have tamed them since I started dating Aries.”

“A damn fool!”

We cracked up laughing. My bestie had the most excellent sense of humor. We were going to have the best time on this road trip. Raven, the ultimate party planner, had plans to stop at certain sights along the way. I had plans to drive until my eyes crossed. I was anxious to get settled in my new house.

“What are you over there thinking about?” Raven asked.

“You know how I told you I started gardening to quell my anxiety? Well, I joined a gardening club that my friend Violet runs. I am looking forward to setting up my garden.”

“I’m glad you found something to take your mind off things. Digging in the dirt and creating life is a noble cause. Have you decided what you are going to grow?”

“Yeah, I am going to grow herbs in a hydroponic setup in one of my spare rooms. Outside in the back yard, I plan to install a greenhouse where I will grow vegetables. I will also plant flowers in the yard for aesthetic purposes.”

“And dare I ask about your favorite herb. Will there be any can-i-bus in there?”

We both chuckled at her reference to the 90’s rap song by that sexy ass LL Cool J. We used to rock that song so loud our parents would call out for us to shut the music off. Raven had a thing for Ladies Love and made sure we both knew every song of his by heart.

“You already know I will have my fave past time growing in there. And get this, it’s legal!”

“Something tells me you are going to have all the fun!”

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Two



Ken

“Hot damn! I’ve got great news, Ken. You are going to be the highest paid player in the United Soccer League. What a fuckin’ day. Who’s the best agent in the world?”

“Last time I checked it was your wife, Brandi. But you come in a close second.”

“I hate to admit it, but you’re right. Brandi is much better at this than I am. I’ll be sure to relay your vote of confidence to her.”

My agent, Richard Cordoba, of the famed Cordoba Agency, was a good man. He knew how to use my best assets to get the most of my contract. He had just secured the most lucrative deal of my career at a time when I needed it the most. Things in my home country of Australia were not going too well for me. I had been in a bit of a scandal with a woman who was seeing both me and my teammate.

Of course, I received the brunt of the scrutiny because my mate had put a ring on her finger. I can’t pretend to be innocent in the ordeal. I was well aware that she was seeing the other bloke. I just didn’t care. She was gorgeous and I wanted a piece of her. I had my fill and was done with her, but she apparently wasn’t done with me. The vixen was so mad that I cut her off, that she plotted a bit of revenge. She set me up in the worst way.

“Just one more time, Ken. I promise I will leave without argument if you just give me one last romp. I need it. How am I ever going to marry Victor and live a boring life with drab sex. I deserve one last hurrah.”

“Fine, but Penelope, this will be the last time. I can’t keep going on like this. I am forced to see him every day and it is on the tip of my tongue to spill the beans each time he sneers at me. The man is a pompous asshole and deserves everything we are doing behind his back.”

“Oh, thank you, Ken. You won’t regret it.”

Regret it I did. The woman was a hellcat in the bed and had me pinned beneath her as she screeched her way to an orgasm. I kept telling her to be quiet, but she got louder. Just as I was finishing up, the door burst open with my teammate standing there. He looked totally devastated. The poor fool actually believed she had been faithful to him.

Victor damn near ripped my head off. I wanted to fight back, but I let him have his go at me. I deserved every lick I received. Afterwards, in an unexpected twist, he went to the ownership and demanded that I not only be released from my contract but banned from the league. Once word got around, it was all but a done deal. My career was in the shitter.

I hadn’t played an organized game since. Banned was what they called it. No one wanted to have a mate who would openly screw their wife or girlfriend. What made it even worse was that Penelope was the owner’s daughter. No one wanted to take a chance on me. Especially given the fact that there were a hundred guys just waiting to take my place. I royally screwed the pooch on that one.

So when my genius agent came up with the idea of shopping me around to a new league in the States, I jumped at the idea. The Americans did not care about such things. In fact, I had it on good authority that it happened all the time over there. I was told I would fit right in. Of that I had no doubt, but I was determined to change my ways. One loses the gusto to sleep around after getting their nose broken.

“Ken, you still there?”

Fuck, I had drifted off into my thoughts and forgotten that Richard was still on the line. I cleared my throat to let him know I was engaged and then got back to him.

“Sorry about that, mate. I got a bit distracted. Please be sure to pass on my love to your beautiful wife.”

“Will do. You’ll be singing her praises even more once you see the house, she picked out for you. It meets all your requirements. She even had a team go in and decorate it to your specifications. All you have to do is fly to Santa Barbara and move in.”

“That Brandi sure works miracles. Does she have a sister?”

“No sir. You’re on your own with that. So let me know when you want to fly out and I will have everything handled for you. Do you need any assistance with packing or anything else?”

“I think I’ve got it. Since Brandi was a doll and had the house decorated, I will just be bringing my clothes and a few personal items. I am keeping my house here, so I just need to hire someone to look out for the place.”

“Alright, man, just let me or my assistant know if you need anything else and we’ll happily get it taken care of. Congratulations, Ken. I look forward to seeing you play in the States. This is going to be a fun journey.”

“Thanks, Richard. Take care and I will see you soon.”

My agent was right. This was going to be a new and exciting adventure for me. I had never been to the U.S. before, so I would need some help getting settled. Getting used to the customs and the fans there. I heard the paparazzi is horrible over there.

It is also going to be a lonely journey. All my friends turned their backs on me when it came out that I was screwing my mate’s girl. Even the one person who I thought would walk through the fires of hell with me, walked away. I really can’t blame him. He said I was not to be trusted and he was right. I took some time to reflect on my behavior and determined... I was a dick.

Moving to a whole new country was my chance to change. I needed to grow up and be a better man. This new start is going to be just what I needed. New city, new people and a

new me. I am looking forward to seeing the new man I will become.

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Three



Pansy

After three days of driving, fighting over the playlist and getting woken by the loudest snores known to man, I was ready to be rid of my bestie for a while. I loved the girl, but enough was enough. I never wanted to drive cross-country with her again.

“Raven, if you don’t turn that rock and roll music off, I am going to gouge my eyes out.”

“Umm, what good would that do? You will still be able to hear the music.”

“Yeah, but I won’t give a fuck because I will be in immense pain.”

“Fine, but we are not listening to that seventies music you love so much. That will make me stick a knife in my ear, pull out my eardrum and fling it across the highway.”

“Damn! You always take things too far.”

“You started it,” Raven laughed as she fiddled with the satellite radio stations”

I shook my head as I watched my friend try to find something we would both enjoy. Truth be told, I was sick of listening to music. I hadn’t had time to read in a few days and I was starting to go through withdrawals. I usually read at night before going to sleep. I found that difficult to do in a shared hotel room where my bestie was snoring so loudly, she was peeling the paint off the wall. I thought about getting my own room but didn’t want to hurt her feelings. That’s when I remembered the audiobooks on my phone. Surely Raven wouldn’t be opposed to listening to some good reads.

“How would you feel about listening to an audiobook? I downloaded a few before we left just in case.”

“I guess. It depends on the type of book. If you play a biography, I will fall asleep at the wheel.”

“No, I wouldn’t do that, but I do have this whole series that I have been dying to listen to. The author is D.A Young and I have heard great things about her Men of Whiskey Row series. You want to give it a try?”

“The title alone has me blushing. All I can think about are some sexy ass eye candy worthy men with their chests on display. Lawd! I might have to pull out my vibrator.”

“Oh my God, Raven! You certainly have changed since our trip to Vegas. What has that sexy biker of yours done to my best friend? I barely recognize you.”

“Is that such a bad thing?”

“Hell no! I love the new you. It’s about time one of us is having great sex. It is great, isn’t it?”

“You have no idea. That man has my body singing from just a look. Hell, I might write my own romance novel with him as the subject. He certainly looks like one of those fuckable cover models.”

“Don’t do it.”

“I’m not gonna do it, girl.”

We laughed at the silly words that have been trending on Tik Tok™. I scrolled in my phone to find my app and searched for the collection of books. There were six books in one audiobook. This should keep us entertained for several hours. As soon as the narrator began telling the story of Jack and Noelle, we were totally consumed with the tale. Before we knew it, we were four books deep, rolling into Santa Barbara.

“Pansy, I can’t believe you got me so into this series. Now I’m going to need to buy it so I can find out what happened to the rest of the Sullivans.”

“I knew you would like it. So, I just need to stop by the real estate office to pick up my keys and then we can head

over to the house. Are you flying out in the morning?”

“Dang, it’s like that?”

“No offense. I am grateful to you, but child, I need some alone time.”

“It’s all good. I feel you. Aries wants me to call as soon as we arrive. He’s going to roll out with a few of his brothers and scoop me up. They should be here tomorrow. Don’t worry, we plan on getting a hotel. You do not need to bare witness to all my man is going to do to me.”

“Your butt better be careful or I’m gonna end up as an auntie.”

“Would that really be so bad? I mean, I am already taking care of my niece.”

“Hello, do you hear yourself? You do not need to be saddled down with a baby. You guys haven’t been together that long.”

“Oh calm down. Nobody is trying to get pregnant. I’m just saying if it happens, I wouldn’t be traumatized.”

I hopped out of the car, stretching, and cracking my back. It had been a long drive and my body was tired. My knee was stiff, and my left foot had fallen asleep. Shaking my head at my body’s attempt to slow me down, I hobbled my way into the office to see my agent.

“Hello, I am here to see Jasmine.”

“May I have your name please?”

“Pansy Mitchell.”

“One moment, please.”

The receptionist shot me a weird look and then picked up her cell phone and started typing. I thought she was blowing me off, but before I could fix my mouth to give her the business, my agent came around the corner to greet me.

“Miss Mitchell! It is so nice to see you again. Are you ready to move into your new house?”

Jasmine was a bubbly woman with the brightest smile I had ever seen. No doubt that helped her sell a ton of houses. She was also smart and knew how to work a deal. She had negotiated a great price for my house since the seller was motivated. I ended up paying much less than I expected for my new digs. That was unusual for a real estate agent since they get paid from commission, but she was looking out for me. I appreciated it and would recommend her to anyone who asked.

“Yes, ma’am I am ready.”

“I just love your southern accent. I think you might be the first and only person to call me ma’am. It’s so cute.”

“Thanks, I guess. Listen, I don’t mean to rush you, but my friend is waiting in the car. I just stopped by to get the keys and alarm code to the house.”

“Of course. I have your welcome package here for you with everything you need. There was one-piece of paperwork that needs your signature, as well. I apologize that it wasn’t ready when you were here for the closing a few weeks ago.”

“Not a problem. May I borrow your pen.”

After signing the paperwork and snagging the envelope, I exited the office. My stomach started doing flip flops. For the first time it hit me that I was a homeowner. This was going to be so much fun!

Four



Pansy

As we drove through the Mission Canyon neighborhood, I felt at peace. There were people jogging and families in their yards enjoying the day. Nobody stared at us like we were aliens and the neighbors seemed to be a diverse lot.

Pulling into the driveway of number 2941, I stopped the engine and looked around. It was just as I remembered. A Spanish style two-story home, built in 1955. It was too big for just me, but I wanted something in the area worth the money and that gave room to grow. Plus I could convert one of the four bedrooms into my indoor plant room.

“Oh, this is nice!!!” Raven boasted in her Tiffany Haddish voice.

“As of two weeks ago, this is home. Welcome.”

“Bitch, I know you dropped a grip on this house. It is beautiful.”

“Yeah, well, that trust fund wasn’t doing anything except getting bigger. I figured I should spend some of it before I get too old to use it.”

“Pansy, you know I love you, but girl, who is going to decorate this big old house?”

Raven wandered from room to room after I opened the door to let us in. I had to admit she was right. I couldn’t decorate my way out of a paper bag. Nor did I have time to learn. It just wasn’t something that interested me. Sure, I wanted a home that reflected my personality, but I would be damned if I knew how to pull it together.

“Yeah, that’s where the interior designer I hired comes in. She’ll be here next week after the small amount of furniture I saved gets here. I am going to give her a budget and let her have full reign.”

“That’s smart. You’ll have to send me pictures when its done. Especially of this room. These windows are amazing.”

We stood in a room with amazing natural light. It led out to a second-floor patio that overlooked the backyard. Both of us were drawn to the relaxing oasis. Stepping out on the deck I spun around like a little girl in a princess story. I found myself engrossed in my blissful twirling, taking great pleasure in the sun beading on my face. The gasp from my friend startled me so much I almost busted my ass. Thankfully, Raven was there to stop my fall.

“Don’t look now, but we’re being watched.”

“Raven, you can’t say things like that to me. It makes me think of Jurassic Park. Are we being hunted by raptors?”

“No, clever girl. We are being stalked by your nosey neighbor. I think I’d rather take my chances with the raptor. At least it would be over quickly. I have a feeling this guy is going to be watching you for many years to come.”

I looked to my right and saw a tall blonde man peering at us through his window. The asshole was using a pair of bright red binoculars to spy on us. He had no shame as he watched us. I expected him to at least attempt to act like he wasn’t watching us, but no, the brazen man adjusted the lenses to get a better view. Appalled that he didn’t even try to duck and cover, I flipped him the bird and dragged Raven back inside the house.

Unfortunately, that only served to fuel his curiosity. The lack of curtains on the windows allowed him a perfect view inside the house and he took full advantage of it. Realizing I had nothing in the house to cover the windows had me on the move. I grabbed my bestie’s hand and dragged her toward the door.

“Where the hell are we going?”

“I need you to google the nearest Target. I need curtains ASAP.”

“Wait, Pansy, you need to measure the windows first.”

“I can’t. He’s watching me. It’s freaking me out.”

“We don’t even have a measuring tape.”

“Oh, yes, we do. There’s one in the glove compartment. Don’t ask me why.”

“Pansy, you know good and well if you say something like that to me, I’m always going to ask why. Tell me and I’ll measure your windows.”

“Fine. It’s a long story, but I was on a date with this guy who like to brag about the size of his manhood. I needed to make him show and prove.”

“What? Girl, did he pass the test?”

“Hell, no! That sucker was lying his ass off. There wasn’t a small enough notch on the measuring tape to get a proper reading.”

“A damn fool, I tell you. That’s why I love you. Be right back.”

An hour and a half later, Raven and I had hung curtains on the windows facing the nosey neighbor’s house. His ass was gonna learn today. There wasn’t a neighbor on the other side, just lots of trees. Those windows could wait for the designer to fit.

After hanging up the shower curtain and digging out the towels, we both took showers and collapsed on the floor in sleeping bags. Exhausted from our long trip, we decided to skip dinner in lieu of sleep.

Pounding on my door jolted me from my sleep. Raven was nowhere to be found, so I stumbled my way out of my sleeping bag to see what the ruckus was. Snatching my door open without a care about what I looked like, I was shocked to see a pristine woman standing there smiling at me.

“Good morning, neighbor!”

For fuck's sake! It was seven o'clock on a Sunday morning and this cheery bitch was standing on my doorstep smiling at me. At least the intrusive troll had the manners to bring coffee. However, I would be damned if I was going to drink it. No way was she going to drug me, drag me out of my house and sell me on the black market.

“How may I help you?”

“Oh, forgive me. My name is Joy and I live just down the street. I saw you and your girlfriend moving in yesterday and wanted to welcome you both to the neighborhood. I wanted you to know that we are a progressive community and fully support the LGBTQIA couples.”

The presumptuous woman grinned at me like she had said something admirable. I guess she thought I would praise her for being open and accepting, but all she received was an eyeroll.

“That’s good to know. Is there a reason that you chose this ungodly hour to let me know how woke you are?”

That little diddy wiped the smile off her dumb face. She now looked uncomfortable and nervous. Good. I didn’t want this woman thinking she and I were going to be yoga partners or some shit. I hated yoga and she looked like she lived for it. I did not need her hanging around my house, intruding on my privacy. I moved here to get away from that sort of thing.

“I’m sorry. I didn’t realize. I was up doing my morning yoga and thought I would make you all some coffee. I didn’t even think about the time.”

“Let me guess, you thought since you were up, everyone else should be. Right?”

She looked shocked but tried to smile her way out of the confrontation. Joy attempted to hand me the cups of coffee, but I did not reach for them. Who the hell had take out cups complete with lids for coffee they brewed in their own kitchen? This chick was weird.

“If you don’t mind, I have a ton of things to do, seeming as how I just moved in yesterday evening. Thanks for stopping

by. Don't make it a habit."

Just as I was about to slam the door in her face, I heard the unmistakable sound of motorcycles roaring down the street. It looked like Aries was very anxious to see his woman. They must have left last night to get here so early. Miss Joy's face contorted into a disgusted look before she sneered at the noise.

"Eww, gross. Bikers. I wonder what they are doing in this neighborhood. I think I should call the police."

I guess her open heart had a limit, huh. She was graciously willing to accept a gay couple, but no dirty bikers in her neighborhood.

"Call the cops for what? Those bikers haven't done anything except wake a few people up at seven in the morning, same as you. Should I have called the police because you knocked on my door so early? Maybe I will the next time you do."

"Point taken."

She stomped her self-righteous ass down my driveway as the motorcycles made their way up. I laughed at the shocked expression on her face. Suddenly, like a flash of lightning, Raven shot past me and straight into the arms of her man. Lord, my friend had it bad.

As Aries swooped his woman up in his arms and planted a soul-stirring kiss on her mouth, I turned to see my nosey neighbor in his window with those damn red binoculars. *Stalker much?*

Five



Ken

She was breathtaking. My new neighbor had a head full of luscious curls that she must have been growing since birth. It was so big and noteworthy that you couldn't help but notice her. You could see her coming a mile away. Her small frame supported a gorgeous rack. The woman had a body that made me sit up and notice. Her delectable backside was plump and juicy, not unlike an apple. The slim waist she had no problem baring for anyone to see, was adorned with some sort of beaded jewelry. It dipped down below the waistband of her jeans, making me thirst for what lay beneath. I wanted her.

The only thing that gave me pause was the timing of everything. I moved into this house because my agent said nobody had moved into this neighborhood in the last ten years. Not less than two weeks, after I moved in, the house right next door has a new resident. It screamed paparazzi to me. The rags have been known to partake in this sort of behavior just to get a story. Was this woman moving there because of me? It certainly was suspicious.

As a way to keep my eye on my new neighbor, I decided to pull out my trusty bird watching binoculars. She and another beauty arrived as I was sitting down for dinner. Needless to say, my food went cold as I observed the ladies. I had to resist going over and offering my services to help them unload the Range Rover. *Did paps drive a fancy vehicle like this?* Maybe in the U.S. they had better pay.

I spent the rest of my day trying to figure out who this woman was. My fear that she was sent to ruin my life overwhelmed me to the point that I was becoming obsessed. After watching her twirl on her patio, I had to admit either this

woman was genuinely a new homeowner, or she was the best damn actress I had seen. The bliss on her face told me she was truly enjoying the moment.

At first, I felt bad for watching her like a pervert, but then she looked at me. Our eyes met and she had this glare that intrigued me. When she flipped me the bird, I laughed my ass off. This woman had some spice to her. It was my kryptonite. Knowing this, I should have stayed away from her, but my mum always said my skull was thick.

Once she realized she was being watched, she and her friend rushed out of the house. That gave me time to go snooping. She hadn't had time to have video surveillance installed yet, so I took the opportunity to spy around her property. I should have thought out my plan a little better. The woman had just moved in. She didn't even have any furniture. What the hell did I think I was going to see?

As I was headed back to my house, I stopped dead in my tracks at the sight of the neighborhood pest, Joy. The woman was hell bent on making everyone on the street her friend. I had been avoiding her like the plague. She had a way of talking at you that made you feel less than. Just when I thought I had evaded her, my damn phone rang so loudly it gave away my position. *Fuck!*

“Ken, is that you? What are you doing over there?”

“Yeah, hi Joy. I came over to greet my new neighbor, but it looks like she may have stepped out.”

She looked at me with narrowed eyes. It was evident she didn't believe me. Hell, I wouldn't believe me either. I was acting nervous. My palms were sweating, I was sweating and stumbling over my words seemed to be a new pastime. Just as she was about to deepen her interrogation, my phone buzzed again. *Thank fuck!*

“I need to take this. Excuse me, Joy.”

The phone call was just the excuse I needed to hightail it out of there. Wouldn't you know it, it was my agent on the

line. Richard Cordoba really was a superhero coming to save the day, once again.

Watching my new neighbor had become my new habit. Much to my dismay, she installed curtains on her windows, keeping me from peering inside her house. However, the curtains did not keep me from seeing the band of bikers that arrived the next morning as Joy was making a fast retreat from the lady's door. Apparently, she was just as unwelcomed next door as she was at my house. I think I like this lady more.

The bikers sat in the driveway while the friend of my girl ran out of the house and launched herself into the arms of one of the men. The way he kissed the woman, it was clear they were very well acquainted. They made me blush at the intensity of their affection. *Damn!* I hadn't had a kiss like that... well, never.

After her friend drove off with the bikers, I watched as she excitedly went back in the house. Waiting to see if she would come outside again, I was pleasantly surprised when the back door opened, and she started walking around her yard. Dashing upstairs, I rushed to the window in my bedroom to get a bird's eye view. She was walking around the yard as if surveying the land. She wasn't trying to see what I was up to. It was as if she couldn't care less what I was doing. Maybe I was wrong about her. I had a feeling she was just a normal woman living her regular life.

Of course, that didn't stop me from watching her some more. I was too far gone down the rabbit hole to stop now. To put my mind at ease, I decided to do some investigating. Snagging my phone from my pocket, I called the only man I knew in town.

"Richard, this is Ken. I need some help with a neighbor situation."

"Ken, are you aware that I am a sports agent? I really don't do neighbor disputes."

"Come on, man. I need your help. Besides, you're the only one I know in town. I haven't met any of my teammates yet."

“Fine, I’ll help you this time, but if Brandi gets pissed at me your ass is on your own. It’s Sunday and that means family time. I love my wife and I don’t need these problems. This is a one-time only deal.”

“Great. I need you to pull the public records of my neighbor. She just moved in, and I think she might be a journo. You know a paparazzi.”

“What would make you think that? Is she watching you?”

“On the contrary. She’s a slick one. She’s acting like I don’t exist. I have taken to watching her with my binoculars.”

“Oh, hell no. You’re on you own with this one, Ken. I can’t be involved in any illegal activity. I love you, man, but I am not going back to jail for anyone.”

The line went silent. That mother fucker hung up on me. He actually accused me of being the stalker. I guess in a way I was. Maybe he was right. I should leave her alone. Naw. I needed to know for sure. Since purchases of homes were public record, I decided to pay the online fee to find out my new neighbor’s name.

Pansy Mitchell. That sounded like a made-up name if I ever heard one. My google search led to some interesting findings. She might not be a journo, but she was accused of murdering a cop. I spent the better part of my Sunday researching this bird. She had an interesting background. She went from socialite to prisoner in the blink of an eye. Most of it had to do with a man. I guess she moved here to start over. Didn’t we all.

By the time I was finished cyber stalking my new obsession, it was dark outside. Where the hell did the day go? I hadn’t showered. I hadn’t eaten, and most of all, I hadn’t seen what she had been up to all day. Her house was dark, so I assumed she was sleeping. There was no light from a television, and I didn’t hear any noise coming from her place. Maybe tomorrow I will introduce myself.

I went for my morning jog before stopping at the coffee shop, Ground Zero. There was always an assortment of flavors

and pastries. I had no idea what this woman would like so I took a chance and purchased regular coffee with cinnamon sprinkled on top. The cinnamon buns were looking quite tasty, so I purchased two and headed to my neighbor's door.

Okay, Ken. Get yourself together. Smile sweetly and introduce yourself. Sometimes I talked to myself to get a boost of courage. Convinced that this encounter was going to go well, I raised my hand and knocked lightly on the door. It was then that I realized the time. *Fuck me!* It was only seven in the morning. Most people were still asleep at this time of day. Panic set in as the porchlight flipped on. I took a deep breath and waited for her to open the door. She was either going to be grateful for the breakfast or I was going to get a thorough thrashing for waking her up.

Before I could turn and flee her property, the door was snatched open and there she stood looking at me with the fiercest stare I had ever seen. She wasn't exactly welcoming. Oh well, I was there, and I needed to push through my hesitation.

"G'day! My name is Ken and I live next door. I was at the coffee shop and decided to bring you a welcome cup of coffee."

Her stare never wavered. She was definitely not happy to see me. I thrust the hand that held her coffee forward and she recoiled, like I offered her one of those Jell-O™ molds with the ham and peas jiggling in it. *Damn.* Maybe I should have thought this out. Oh well. I wasn't a quitter, so I continued stumbling over my words.

"I got you a cinnamon roll, too. They're bonzer."

"What the fuck is bonzer?"

"It means awesome."

"No thank you. I am not in the habit of taking food and drinks from a strange man who is stalking me. I saw you watching me."

"You saw that, huh?"

“Who could miss you with those bright red binoculars. You didn’t even have the decency to try to hide.”

“Sorry about that. If it makes you feel better, I was only watching you to make sure you weren’t the paparazzi.”

“Boy, please. Who the hell would want to spy on you?”

“Oh, you’d be surprised.”

“I don’t see it, but whatever you tell yourself to get through the day. Now, if you will excuse me, I had a ton of work to do.”

Before I could say anything else, she slammed the door in my face. Fuck, she was beautiful. The sassy tone she took with me made me want to get to know her more. She didn’t know it, but Miss Mitchell had just issued a challenge to me. One I was going to win, hands down.

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Six



Pansy

Over the next few weeks, I found myself immersed in getting settled in my new home. The interior decorator I hired was a gem. Evelyn took one look around the house, had me show her some pictures of rooms I liked and then my favorite things I owned. From there, she designed a home fit for my queendom. She really got me. In fact, she and I got along so well that we had plans to hang out. She and I were going to be great friends.

The movers had come and gone with all my stuff and Evelyn's crew had put everything in its place. All I had to do now was concentrate on building my plant room and the greenhouse in the backyard. I was scheduled to host a meeting of the Plucking Ladies Garden Club in a couple of months, and I needed to make sure my garden was on point. I needed to call my friend, Violet for a little advice.

“Violet, this is Pansy.”

“Hello, Pansy. How's it going? Have you gotten settled in your new home?”

“I'm getting there. As a matter of fact, I could use some advice if you have a minute.”

“I always make time for my friends. What can I help you with?”

“Well, I am building a greenhouse in my backyard and wanted to pick your brain on how to keep myself organized.”

“You have come to the right person. Organization is my middle name. Let's get started...”

By the end of our conversation, I felt ready to tackle this project. The greenhouse was being delivered this afternoon, along with plants and supplies to get things up and running. My landscape architect, Aiden, was just about finished setting up my yard. All I had to do was maintain it. Unsure if that was considered cheating, I really didn't care. I had no talent in the area of design. Zero. I mean none. He had taken what I told him in my initial interview with him and turned it into paradise.

I had nicknamed my backyard the Garden of Eden, even though there weren't any apple trees there. I much preferred lemon trees and so Aiden had planted one for me. Along with walking pavers that trailed across the yard underneath wooden trellises that were covered in trailing pansies. It made for a very serene and colorful experience. The pavers led to the space that would become my greenhouse. The area was all laid out, just waiting for the delivery men to arrive.

Not long after I ended my call with Violet, I heard a knock on my front door. Thinking it was the delivery men, I rushed inside only to find my nosey ass neighbor. If working my last nerve was a person, he would be it.

“G'day, Pansy.”

“I see you're back again. Over the last few weeks you have come to my house every day. And every day I have denied you. First it was the coffee. Then it was donuts, fruit trays. You even brought me a damn coloring book. What can I do to make you stop?”

“Invite me in and have a chat with me. Since the first time we met, that's all I have wanted. A chance to talk with you. To see if we are compatible.”

“Why would you think we are compatible? I made it clear I want nothing to do with a stalker.”

“That's where you're wrong. I am not a stalker, Pansy. I simply saw someone I liked and decided to express that. You denying me, has fueled something in my soul. It is a challenge. I will not stop until you say yes. I just need a chance. I am sure once you allow me in, you will happily spend time with me.”

The man was certifiable, but he was wearing me down. For weeks he had bothered me every day. He would bring me a gift. It was always some sort of peace offering. The thing was, it was always something that I liked or wanted. How he knew what I liked was beyond me. I knew he was still watching me, but not as much as when I first moved in. It was weird, I could tell when his eyes were on me. I always knew without turning around and he never hid. Not once.

“I don’t know about that. What did you bring me today?”

“Here, I brought you this plant for your garden. It is a pansy. The lady at the store said it was rare.”

What the hell? He brought me a black pansy. Fuck yeah, they were rare. In fact I had never seen one. I always wanted to and had planned to search online to see if there was any at the botanical gardens. Then I started overthinking things. Was he trying to say something without saying something?

“Why did you choose the black one? What are you getting at?”

A look of confusion marred his face and then the light bulb went off. Now he was getting it. I was black and my name was Pansy. Was this supposed to be a double entendre? Some sort of fetish thing? I wasn’t sure, but I wanted to get to the bottom of this and be rid of him.

“Oh, I can see how this might be misconstrued. Believe me, I have nothing but good intentions. I did my research before purchasing this gift. I put a lot of thought into it. Pansies represent love. I am well aware that we are nowhere near that kind of thing between us. However, I think it is something we can work toward.”

“What are you talking about?”

“I’d like to grow our relationship. You know we grow as the plant grows. The color represents the rarity of your beauty. Like this flower you stand out in a crowd. You are eye-catching and draw people to you. I want to watch you bloom as a woman in love. I want to nurture you. To plant seeds and watch you blossom. I just want to have a chance to be near

you. To smell your delicious fragrance and bask in your presence. Is that something you are willing to allow, beautiful Pansy?”

My breath caught in my chest. My God, the things he said to me. He had me rethinking everything. He was kinda cute and that accent was swoon worthy. Over the last few weeks, he wasn't the only one watching. I had seen him when he went on his morning run. The man ran shirtless, and let me tell you, he was ripped. Snap out of it bitch. You know you can't do this. Look where that last guy you were with got you. The memory of murder charges quickly quelled my lust.

“I'm sorry, Ken. You know I don't pluck with you. Not like that, anyway.”

“I think I can change your mind, if you let me.”

That look he gave me had me on the fence. After all the gifts and funny banter we had engaged in these last few weeks, he was starting to grow on me. Before I could process my thoughts, a delivery truck pulled up in my driveway. By the name on the side of the truck, it was my new mattress. I had received all of my furniture except this one last thing.

“I have a delivery for Miss Pansy Mitchell.”

The man growled, standing there with a king size mattress on a dolly. He had a nasty scowl on his face like he was having the worst day ever.

“That's me,” I said with a smile.

“Can you sign here?”

“Sure, but after the delivery is complete.”

“It is complete.”

“Umm, no it isn't. I paid for delivery and setup. That means you take this mattress into my bedroom and set it up on my bedframe.”

“Well, I don't know what you were told, but we are not authorized to enter the client's home. Delivery means leaving the merchandise on your property, not entering the property.”

What the fuck? The salesman specifically told me they would set up the bed. I am pissed off. My mind flashed to a video of a Karen lying down in front of a truck, preventing a delivery man from leaving, in a situation just like that. I was no Karen, but chile, some days I wanted to be. No way was I going to end up on social media acting a fool. Besides, it wasn't the delivery guy's fault. He was just doing his job.

I turned to look at the mattress. It looked too damned heavy for me to maneuver it into my house alone. Sighing in defeat, I watched as the furniture truck pulled out of my driveway, leaving me to figure this shit out on my own. Before I could snag my phone, Ken turned to me with a smile on his face.

“Looks like I came over at just the right time. Let me help you with the mattress.”

“Are you sure you don't mind?”

“It would be my pleasure. I finally get to see the inside of your bedroom. Hot damn! I've been trying to get in there for weeks.”

Say what? The man was looking at me like I was a snack, and he was starving. I was excited and scared at the same time. Did I really want this man in my house? Well, I was never going to get that mattress inside otherwise. I waved at the bed furniture and moved to help carry it into my bedroom.

Ken took the brunt of the weight as we lifted that heavy bitch. I directed him up the stairs and down the hall to my master bedroom. It had been brilliantly decorated by my designer and was just waiting for the mattress that had been on backorder. The matte black wall that she painted as the focal piece of the room stood out immediately as you walked into the room. She had placed the bedframe up against that wall and it looked amazing. Above the bed hung a few artistic photos of me in black and white. They had been taken years ago, when I was a teen and into modeling. The designer ran across them and insisted I allow her to hang them. Personally, I thought it to be narcissistic, but she assured me it wasn't.

There was a black bookshelf in the corner between the matching black headboard and the window. Sheer white curtains were hung to bring a bit of contrast to the look. Of course, my sheets would also be white, while the comforter was black. A black and white throw would complete the bedding once the mattress was in place. A wooden bench sat at the end of the bed to allow me somewhere to sit to put on my shoes. Before my shoes were in place, I could run my feet over the tan throw rug.

My favorite part of the room was the light fixture shaped like a pear hanging above the bed. It was painted matte black and had a clear light bulb for maximum lighting. That room was going to be my sanctuary and I couldn't wait to sleep in that bed.

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Seven



Ken

No sooner did we enter Pansy's room did I get a massive hard on. The room was sexy and made for sin. I wanted this woman in the worst way. She was my aphrodisiac. Just being in the same space as she made me want to do wicked things to her. I should have felt bad for what happened next, but I was too consumed with lust.

After placing the mattress on the bed frame, I just about attacked the poor girl. Not in a creepy stalker way that you might be assuming. It was more of a 'I've been waiting a lifetime to kiss your lips' kind of way. When she reciprocated, I was stoked. I half expected she would push me away and banish me from her home. Instead, she wrapped her arms around my neck and gave me one hell of a kiss. She pulled away first, needing to catch her breath.

"Fuck, baby. Who knew you could kiss like that?" Pansy proclaimed, shocking the hell out of me.

Her words fueled my need, so I leaned back in to get more of what she was serving when she stopped me. Confused at the sudden rejection, I stopped and looked at her.

"What's wrong, beautiful?"

"I'm sorry, Ken. I can't do this. At least not now."

"Why not? This is the perfect opportunity."

"I told you before. I am just not ready for something like this to happen. It's not just you. I am still healing from a past hurt. I need some time to figure out what I want instead of being a pawn for a man. I can't let myself be consumed with a man again."

“Fine, all I heard you say was you want to take things slowly. Slow I can do. Just don’t shut me out, not when it has taken this long just to get a kiss. I barely got through the door today. If you hadn’t needed help with your mattress, I would still be standing outside.”

“Okay, you got me. I may be a little closed off, but if you knew my story, you would understand.”

I already knew her background after hours of researching her, but I had only read about her troubles. Situations are tricky and hearing her side of things would make it more organic. I needed to hear the emotion in her voice when she told her story. Plus there was no way a journo could tell me what she was thinking or feeling in the moment. Only Pansy could do that. It was something I found myself craving. So like the asshole I am, I plopped my behind down on her brand-new mattress. I sat looking at her expectantly.

After what seemed a lifetime of silence, Pansy took a seat next to me and began pouring her heart out to me. It was the breakthrough I had been waiting for. She was finally letting me not only into her house, but into her life. She allowed me to see her at her most vulnerable. I vowed that she would never regret it.

Pansy’s ex was a total asshole. I wanted to choke the shit out of him. I would if I ever ran across him. Then I realized that would be unlikely because he was in prison for life. What he had done to this beautiful creature with her head on my shoulder, was just as bad. It had imprisoned her heart. I was going to make it my mission to set her free.

Since she had entrusted me with her past, I told her about my shameful exile from my home country. She was intrigued to find that I was a professional athlete. She was used to American football players and not soccer players. I told her we had way more stamina and I would love to show her sometime.

Our talk was interrupted by a knock on her door. She sat up, wiped the tears from her face and trudged down the stairs. I followed closely behind her, not wanting to stay in her

bedroom alone. What do you know, there was another delivery man standing there. This one had better do what he was paid to do or there was going to be a problem.

“Good morning, Miss Mitchell. I have your greenhouse for you. Is it okay to start the installation?”

“Oh, hello Aiden. It is nice to see you again. I am so excited! It is finally here. There’s a path on the side of the house that will allow you access. Let me grab my shoes and I’ll show you. Oh, what am I saying? You designed the yard, so you know better than me. Feel free to get started and let me know if you need anything.”

Aiden? Greenhouse? I knew she was into gardening from watching her rooting around in her backyard. The men she hired did a bang-up job of whipping her backyard into shape. It went from drab to botanical garden in a matter of weeks. This Aiden guy did good work. Though, I didn’t like the way he was looking at Pansy. I would need to keep my eye on this one. No way was he pushing his way in. She was going to be mine.

Over the next couple of weeks, I continued my daily visits. Since the day I helped with the mattress, Pansy has allowed me entry into her home and even offered for me to stay for lunch a few times. Most days she was either shut up inside working or in her garden relaxing. I had to admit, Aiden and his team did a great job on that green house. The install of the structure didn’t take long at. However, I noticed the man lingering long after his job was complete. He called himself smiling at my woman, which pissed me off. I also noticed he came back to do a ‘follow up’ visit to see if everything was going well.

I couldn’t let that shit stand, so I made my way over to her house and inserted myself into the conversation. It was time for my daily visit anyway. That particular day I brought her favorite matcha drink from the coffee shop, along with a couple of pieces of carrot cake. Both were favorites of my lady. That bastard, Aiden was grinning from ear to ear as I approached.

“G’day Pansy. I’ve got your matcha here.”

I handed her the cup of cold deliciousness and she smiled at me like I had just given her a million dollars. She hugged me and kissed me on the cheek before taking a big swig of her drink. Aiden glared at me as I stood there preening like a peacock.

“Thank you so much, Ken. You remember Aiden, my landscape architect? He stopped by to make sure the greenhouse was doing okay. Wasn’t that nice of him?”

“Nice isn’t the word I would use. Tell me, Aiden, do you do these follow-up visits with all your clients or just the beautiful single ones?”

If looks could kill, I would be greeting Saint Peter right about now. I watched as a blush crept its way up his neck and grew up over his face. He was embarrassed that I called him out. Good. Now he needed to go.

“Umm, no. That is to say... yes. Umm, I was just doing a bit of customer service. These days that is hard to come by.”

“And now that you’ve seen how sturdy the structure is, what’s next? Will you be coming over to water the grass, next? I think we’ve got it from here. No need to put yourself out.”

“Ken...”

Pansy started talking, but I put my hand up to stop her. It would piss me off if she opened her mouth to defend this man to me. I didn’t need to hear any of that. What I needed was for Aiden to leave. I turned to the man that was annoying my soul and stared at him. He wasn’t a stupid man. He turned tail and left, not even saying goodbye. Once he was gone, I turned to Pansy to see a shocked look on her face.

“How dare you? That man was just being nice.”

“I don’t care what you say, Pansy. That man wants you. I want you too. What I just did was eliminate the competition. He didn’t even put up a fight, he just left. If some man had come up to me being rude asking me to leave, I would have told him where he could go. I wouldn’t have left unless you told me to.”

“Okay, so now I’m telling you to go. I don’t like being in the middle of a tug of war. I am not a prize to win. I am a human with feelings. What’s more, I am an independent woman who will not be told what to do.”

“Shut up!”

“What?”

“I said shut up. Nobody said you weren’t independent. This has nothing to do with that. What I need for you to do is get over here and kiss me. I have been dying to taste you again.”

She looked at me like I had grown another head. I stepped closer to her, never breaking eye contact. Pansy didn’t know it, but her time of running from me and pushing me away was over. I needed her to know just how much I cared for her. After getting to know her and spending so much time together over the last few weeks, she had become the most important person in my life.

I pulled her into my arms and kissed her. It was important not to force the issue. The kiss started slowly and intimately. I wanted her to feel everything I felt as I caressed her. The idea was to make love to her with our clothes still on. To get her so worked up that she would give herself to me, willingly and wantonly. As soon as that delicious moan left her mouth, I knew it was working.

“Pansy, I want you so bad that I can’t stand it. Stop me now if the answer is no. Otherwise, I am going to fuck you so good you will be mine forever.”

“Fuck, Ken. Please don’t stop. I want to feel you inside me.”

Eight



Pansy

I was done for. I had been avoiding this moment since I met Ken, but now standing there with his hands all over me, I had no more will power to resist. I wanted him and he wanted me. What was so wrong about that? We were both single. We were both attracted to each other, and I was hornier than I had ever been. Why should I stop him? Especially after he promised to fuck me so good, I would want him forever. Shit! That was something I needed in my life. What woman wouldn't let the man hit after he said that. I needed to see if he could do it. Challenge!

Ken felt amazing. His lips were so freakin' soft. The way he wanted me turned me all the way on. Instead of taking me inside the house, he led me underneath the row of trellises and laid me down. Lifting my sundress, he slid his hand into my panties and began playing with my clit. I tell you, I almost jumped out of my damn skin at the initial touch of his fingers on me. It had been so damn long since a man had touched me, I almost forget how it felt.

For a soccer player, the man definitely knew how to work his hands. The things he was doing to me made me feel alive again. I hadn't felt this good since long before the trial.

"Oh my God, Ken. Please don't stop."

"I'm never going to stop loving your beautiful body."

He moved down my body and planted his face between my legs. After removing my panties, he went to work tonguing my pussy. The feel of his hot wet tongue on my most sensitive space made my juices gush. He lapped up every drop and worked to receive more. I was happy to deliver. Once he had

his fill, he moved back up my body, focusing on my breasts. He unbuttoned the front of my dress to find my bare breasts. I hated wearing bras, especially when it is warm outside.

“Fucking beautiful. Your breasts are amazing.”

Taking my right breast in his mouth, he made sure to lick and suck me into a frenzy. When I couldn't take anymore, I allowed my hands, who had been on his back or tangled in his hair, to travel down his abs. Fucking A! The man's body was drool worthy. I literally had to wipe the side of my mouth. I played it off, not wanting him to see that I was panting after him.

When my fingers snaked their way down the front of his pants, I was happily surprised to feel a very large, engorged penis. I started wiggling underneath him, doing my happy dance. I half expected him to be small. I figured with abs like that, he couldn't possibly be blessed with a nice cock. Boy was I wrong.

“What are you doing?”

“My happy dance! Hurry up and get naked. I need you.”

After snagging a condom from his jeans, he rolled it down his length and looked down at me.

“Hold on to something.”

“FUCK!”

Lawdamercy! That man shoved inside me with enough force to literally crack my back. Bitch, this man was going to be fun. He began pumping inside me with gusto. I met him thrust for thrust, my body aching to come. I hadn't had a real orgasm in months. Ever since the trial I had been unable to get myself off. It looked like the drought was over. As soon as he bit down on my nipple, my body exploded. My walls squeezed the shit out of his cock, and it felt divine.

My pleasure drew his to the forefront, causing him to growl his release. We lay there panting in the shade of the trellises, trying to catch our breaths.

“Oh my God! That was so good, Ken. How long does it take to recover? I need to do that again.”

He laughed and kissed me. It was like he was starved for me. After a few minutes of him playing with my tits and clit, he was ready for another go. Shout out to the man upstairs for giving my new man stamina.

Over the next few weeks, Ken and I must have fucked in every space of my garden. We made our way throughout my entire house. I swear, once the band aid was ripped off, there was no putting it back. We were the horniest people in the state of California.

I spent a lot of time in my garden and greenhouse tending to my plants. My black pansy the most beautiful of all the flowers. Ken was in training camp most of the day, so we made the most of our time together.

I could always feel him watching me. We made it into a game. He would stand in his window to signal he wanted me, and I would move around in my yard giving him a show. By the time he made his way over to me, we were so hot for each other I was shocked we didn't start a fire.

The day I hosted the garden club party, I was so nervous. I had attended meeting at other members' houses, but this time they would be judging me. I was the new girl in town and wanted these ladies to like me.

I decorated the garden and made it into a tea party. Each lady was instructed to wear their best hat. Violet, our president, was the first to arrive. She was a stickler for being on time. After everyone arrived, I gave the ladies a tour of my garden. They all gushed about the trellises and the greenhouse. I took great pride in my yard so that made me happy.

As we sat down for lunch, I felt him. He was in the window looking down at me. The hair on the back of my neck started doing the Nae Nae. Ken always made me feel hot and ready. I watched as Violet and Ivy argued over the last lemon cookie. I smiled thinking about how long it took me to bake those damn cookies. Ken kept distracting me, causing me to burn two batches. He was so insatiable. I was looking forward

to our sexy time after the ladies left. We had a date under the trellises. I guess I really do pluck with that man.

About the Author

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USA Today Bestselling author, L. Loren holds a Business Management Degree from the University of Mount Olive. As a former call center supervisor, her desire to write lay dormant for years, until she found the courage to live her dream. She is currently based in North Carolina with her loving and supportive husband.

L. Loren created her own brand of erotic romance that she dubbed LoveRotica - Love stories with an edge of sexy. Her catalog of sexy stories is self-published and available on Amazon.

Her stories and poems have been featured in magazines, and several anthologies. L. is also the curator of the Love is Color Anthology, available for free on Smashwords.

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