

Holiday Release

by Nicole Swan

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Jasmine pulled her red convertible up in front of an inner-city apartment just as the sun was setting. Before getting out she fixed her blonde hair and applied a little more lipstick, determined her boyfriend was going to be in heaven for the next 48 hours, everything had to be perfect. He was perfect, his sandy blonde hair, light blue eyes, and bright smile was like a hit of sunshine whenever she looked at him, he was irresistible. She carefully stepped out of the car, she wasn't wearing any panties and her dress was an incredibly short white little number that left very little to the imagination.

Lucca hated surprises, she had found that out the hard way, but this time he would have to make an exception. This was going to be the best couple of days whether he was ready or not. She decided to leave the huge box she had brought with her in the backseat. It was a gift, wrapped in black paper and tied with a large red bow. It was too heavy for her to carry. He could get it himself, later.

Jasmine took her time going up the steps, trying not to let her excitement rush her through the moment. With a quick hair check and brushing down of the skirt, she knocked on the front door.

"One moment," called Lucca sounding half asleep.

Waiting for him, Jasmine bit her lower lip, trying not to smile too hard. He was going to freak when he saw her. She could hear him fiddling with the chain, then finally the door opened. His reaction was not what she had expected. He was so surprised that he almost closed the door in her face, but he caught himself in time and leaned casually in the doorway. He only had his boxers on, and ran his hand smoothly over his bare chest.

"Jas," he said. "What—what are you doing here, baby?" He kept the door partially closed so she couldn't see into his apartment, his body blocking her from trying to go inside.

"It's your birthday," she said in a dead voice, feeling something strange begin to churn in the pit of her stomach.

"Not for another two days. Are you trying to make me old already?"

"Is this a bad time?" she asked.

He shook his head, and grinned. "I just wasn't expecting you," he said. "The place is a mess."

"I'm used to your mess."

He stood there grinning like an idiot, trying to hide the grimace that was beginning to surface.

Numbly, mechanically, she pushed the door open. He didn't even try and prevent it, he knew it was too late for that. A beautiful brunette was standing in the doorway of his bedroom, a sheet clutched around her body. She had evidently been listening to everything and didn't even bother to try and conceal the evidence of their activities.

"Oh, my God." Jasmine put her hands up defensively as if someone was about to leap on her. She was paralysed to the spot. Her face was deathly white.

"I had something for you in the car, but I see she already gave you your birthday present."

He stepped forward cautiously. "Jas, listen. I can explain. I

can explain.”

He tried to take hold of her, but she slapped at his hands. “Don’t touch me! Don’t touch me!”

She almost tripped down the stairs, trying to get away from him as he chased after her. She ran blindly but he caught her before she could make it back to the car.

“Listen to me,” he said, grabbing her by the upper arm painfully.

“Let me go. Let me go,” she kept repeating, almost like a chant, not listening or looking at him.

“For God’s sake, will you stop?”

“LET ME GO!”

“Fine then, go! Go!”

He released her, putting his hands in the air, then ran them through his hair, clasping them behind his head. He didn’t have a shirt on, wearing only flimsy boxers. He watched helplessly as she got into the car, slamming the door. She started to cry as she hunched over the steering wheel to hunt for the place to insert the keys. She started the engine without sparing him a glance.

She drove for about fifteen minutes before having to pull over to the side of the road because she couldn’t see any more through her tears. She turned off the engine and dropped her head against the steering wheel, crying. She couldn’t believe how stupid she had been. They’d been together for over a year and she didn’t see it coming. Why were men so cruel to their girlfriends?

Drawing a shaky breath, she wiped her eyes, fixed her hand on the steering wheel, and fiddled with the keys to start the car. She stopped and instead decided to call her friend, digging around in her purse for her cell phone.

“Kim?” she said, catching her breath.

“Hey, where are you?” said Kim. “Are you all right? What’s

happen?"

"There was another girl there," Jasmine blurted out. "At Lucca's—she was standing right there."

"What? Oh God, honey, I'm so sorry. Where are you now?"

"I'm on my way home."

"Turn back around. Come stay with me."

Jasmine ran her hands over her eyes. "I just want to get home. Thanks."

"Okay, well, call me when you get there. Okay?"

"I will."

"I can't believe him. He's such an asshole."

Jasmine squeeze her eyes shut, and made the tears roll down her cheeks. She was trying to get a hold of herself but it wasn't working.

"I'll call you when I get home," she said.

"Okay. Love you."

"Love you, too."

* * *

It was an hours drive to get back home. Not finding the initiative to move, Jasmine sat in the car a moment. The night had turned out to be more than a disaster. It was a tragedy. Her heart had been ripped out and her pride stomped on.

The house was dark, very quiet. Jasmine took off her high heels before venturing upstairs, and tossed her keys on the table. She switched on a lamp and sat down on the bed, her arms limp at her sides. What she needed was a nice long shower.

Jasmine stood up and taking her hair down first, began to slip her dress off, when the bathroom door opened. She pulled her dress on again in a hurry. Jake, looking tall dark and handsome, came out zipping up his jeans.

"You're back," he said.

Jasmine put her hand on her chest to steady her heart. "Jake! What are you doing here? You nearly gave me a heart attack."

"Kim called me," he said. "She told me what happened."

"I wish she hadn't of done that."

"Why?"

"Because it's none of your business." She didn't mean to sound so nasty, but she was hurting badly, and Jake was the last person she wanted to know about her humiliation.

"I think you could use a friend right now," said Jake, his blue eyes gazing at her from under a deep frown, which crinkled his forehead in the most adorable way.

She went on undressing, and did not contradict him. She kept her dress on while she slipped off her bra, a little trick he loved to watch.

"You've got to stop letting yourself in," she said, tossing the lacy pink thing aside. It had been wasted on Lucca, but Jake stared at it as if he'd never before seen a woman's bra, not hers anyhow. Jake still had the keys to her apartment from when he used to own it three years ago. She had bought the place off him. She kept meaning to change the locks but never did.

Jasmine went into the bathroom and closed the door, locking him out. She slipped her white dress off over her head, then leaned into the shower to adjust the water.

"I just didn't want you to be alone right now," he said, and she could tell by his muffled voice that he was just outside the door. He'd be leaning his head against it, trying to imagine her naked. He had told her before, many times. "I'm here for you, you know that," he said.

She rolled her eyes. She knew what he wanted, and it wasn't just to lend a friendly shoulder for her to cry on. Every single time Jake let himself in, he had to try his luck with her, but when he wasn't trying to get into her panties, he was a good friend, the best. As she stood in the shower with the warm wa-

ter running down her back, listening to Jake talk meaningless drivel outside the door, she found herself grateful he had come tonight of all nights.

Jasmine dried herself with the towel, then wrapped it around her body under her arms like a strapless dress. She went out of the bathroom, and Jake stepped away from the door.

"Now that's just plain cruel," he said.

Jasmine snatched her nightdress and panties from under her pillow. "Well, you come into my home uninvited you suffer the consequences."

She pulled the nightie over her head and brought it down over her body before letting the towel slip off, so that she didn't give him even a glimpse of anything. She climbed onto the bed and hugged her knees. Games aside, she felt completely destroyed. Jake became serious, too. He sat on the bed with her. He was contemplating what to say, and she waited for the words of comfort he always managed to provide.

"You know, I was thinking," he said at last. "You should come away with me this weekend. I'll even pay for the hotel. You need to get away for a while. And you could use a tan. We'll lounge around by the poolside, drinking martinis . . . eat whatever we want . . . We're good friends. We're both adults. Why not try to find some solace in me?"

His hopeful words made her heart ache, but it also irritated her. He was supposed to be comforting her as a friend, not trying to take advantage of her.

"Jake this is the wrong time to be hitting on me," she said. "Stop trying to cash in on this really horrible situation."

He looked as if she'd shot him in the chest. "I'm not trying to cash in on your pain."

He glanced down at his hands, becoming silent, as if she had cheapened his attempt.

"You two were never right for each other," he said. "He

didn't deserved you. You could never risk disappointing him, and yet somehow you always managed to. He was a prick. I'm just glad you found that out now rather than later."

Jake got up without another word. He left her speechless and strangely breathless.

She thought a lot about Jake after that. Everybody else could become unreal, almost non-existent to her, but he couldn't. He seemed to be the only thing fixed in her life.

* * *

Jasmine ignored all Lucca's calls. She couldn't handle hearing his voice. She was so angry. Finally, she answered one to tell him to leave her alone. She snatched her cell phone off the bed.

"Stop calling! Harassing me isn't going to change anything."

"I want to start it over," he said, as if confident she would jump at the chance to mend things with him.

"You are four—you are four years old!" she said. She ran her hand through her hair, trying to catch her breath. "Lucca when you're in bed with her, I hope you remember you'll never touch me again." She pressed the button to cut him off.

She fell flat on the bed, exhausted. For half an hour or so she lay in a sort of trance, dreaming of some of the times they had shared together. How good he always smelled. She was almost asleep, when she started to grow awful lonely. A feeling of heat began to stir between her thighs, and she ran her hands down under her panties to put it out, rubbing slowly up and down. Aching, she turned over into her pillow. The lips she was imagining kissing were comforting and soft, but they weren't Lucca's . . . they were Jake's. She sighed, and rocked gently on her fingertips. He was inside her, pressing against her. She increased the pressure of her fingers, moaning with frustration. It just wasn't happening for her. She rolled over to

the bedside table and got out her vibrator, slipping under the blankets to finish herself off. For some reason even though she was alone, she preferred to have the security of the blankets. She took her panties off and kicked them aside. She was going to enjoy this. She lay on her back, sighing as she guided the vibrating tip up and down her sensitive clit, then dipping the whole thing deep inside. Her knees were wide apart and she increased the pressure, accelerated the rocking of her hips. Sensation was building and she was getting closer to the edge when her bedroom door suddenly opened, and Jake came in.

Jasmine half sat up, shielding herself under the blankets. She was too embarrassed to have any other emotion than shock. She turned the toy off, concealed under the sheets.

Jake had a huge smile on his face. "Were you just having fun by yourself?" he asked.

"Oh, my God! Get out! You're such a bastard."

Instead of leaving, he walked over and sat on the end of the bed. She moved her legs out of the way so he didn't crush them.

"The offer still stands," he said. "Let me take you away next weekend. It doesn't have to mean anything. I can be your human vibrator."

"Have you ever considered, I don't want to be filled with your poison?"

"It's not poison, it's medicine."

She sighed. "I can't."

"Why not?"

"I don't move on as quickly as you do, Jake. Now can you get out?"

"When you're ready for some real affection, give me a call." He stood up, and tossed the blankets into the air getting a good view of her before he left. "Nice legs!"

She threw the vibrator at his head. It hit the wall.

"Missed!" he called back as he scooted from the room.

She flopped facedown into the mattress. "Bloody hell," she said. The moment had gone. Her clit was numb and unsatisfied.

* * *

After a few tortured nights, Jasmine finally caved to her need for sexual gratification and called Jake.

"All right," she said, as if selling her soul to the devil.

"All right, what?" asked Jake, as though he had no idea what she was talking about.

If he wanted her to beg, it wasn't going to happen.

"Let's get away," she said, almost begging. "I'll even pay for the hotel."

A moment of dread, then she could practically feel him grinning through the phone.

"I'll take care of it," he said. "This is my treat, remember? I'll pick you up tomorrow afternoon. Be ready, baby, and I don't just mean your suitcase."

Knots were already beginning to wrestle in her tummy as she stood in front of the cupboard, trying to decide what to pack. She lingered on her little red dress and wondered if there would really be an opportunity to wear it. Knowing Jake, he probably wasn't going to let her out of the bed, let alone the hotel. She decided to take it anyway, slipping it off of the hanger, and walking back to the bed.

She nervously chewed on her thumb as she inspected everything stuffed into the suitcase. She was actually getting really excited.

* * *

Jake picked her up at three o'clock sharp.