

The Warmth of the Sun

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The Warmth Of The Sun *By Donna M. Pollock*

The Massage as told from Diana's perspective... © 2017, Donna M. Pollock. Except as provided by the Copyright Act, April 2017, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the writer or publisher. *Table of Contents* Chapter 1: The massage Chapter 2: From Rock & Brews to Chela's Chapter 3: So Sunday Together Chapter 4: Monday, Monday Chapter 5: Tuesday Chapter 6: The day off... Chapter 7: Thoroughly Thursday Chapter 8: A beachy weekend... Chapter 9: The BF Week Chapter 10: The Big Chill Chapter 11: The Blow Up Chapter 12: Aftermath Chapter 13: Head-ramming the Glasgow Coma Scale Chapter 14: Total Recall Not Chapter 15: With You, Without You Chapter 16: The Massage Chapter

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The
massage...

February 28, 2017 Traffic was especially heavy heading into the health and beauty institute where I volunteer to help my friend whose once thriving business has recently slowed down. I think it's in part due to the fact that it's post-holidays, post-election and everyone's burnt out, spent out, and not going out; and, in part because my friend is slowing down but still thinks like a thirty-something as I do. The nice thing about opening this holistic center in the late morning is missing most of the heavy morning traffic - but not today. Nevertheless, I manage to get my key in the door well before the opening time of 11, and, once again, I'm the first one to arrive. My friend Sharon who owns this center has been providing a naturopathic level of care to people for over 35 years. Her services include massage, colonics, non-surgical facelifts, ear candling, foot soaks, facials, the vibra trim workout machine, migun bed, V.I.B.E. and sauna. This type of business certainly has its peaks and valleys, and Sharon is great with clients, but terrible with computers and organization. That's where I come in. I can handle a computer pretty well and before I retired fairly young, I was a professional organizer. So, it made sense for Sharon to propose a trade: facials, sauna, and any services she offers for my help in the center once or twice a week. It works for me. She's a joy to be with and I know she needs me. We have a lot in common: both divorced, businesswomen and young at heart. Besides, I'd rather be helping a friend than return to the Hospice volunteer work I've been doing these past five years. Time to help the living and not the dying for a change. Lucy, the institute's extraordinary masseuse, isn't in and only comes in when she has a scheduled client. This is not particularly a "walk-ins welcome" type of business, which also means that Sharon will be in late if she doesn't have a client expected at 11. This is fine with

me as I seem to get more done when I'm alone than when either of them is here because we always seem to cling together to go over recent events or bits of gossip, and I can't get anything done with all the chattering. While I'm finishing up the filing before getting back to the reception desk and computer, where my slow dancing play list can easily be heard from the speakers as I love working with music on, I hear the front door open from the filing closet. I hear someone say "hello," a man's voice, a nice voice, sexy actually. "Hello yourself," I call out, "I'll be right with you." When I come out of the filing closet and turn the corner to the waiting room, I see a tall man looking out the glass window part of the institute's door. He's easily over 6 feet, really built, about 180 pounds I'd guess, with very dark hair, almost black with wisps of gray, broad shoulders, slim waist and hips, definitely an athletic cut to his finely tailored suit. Wow, is all I can think from this viewpoint! He must be young, certainly no more than forty-something even with the sprinkling of gray hair I see on his head. We don't get too many men in here; some come in for colonics, most for a sauna or massage. Once they get Lucy's strong, magical, healing hands kneading their muscles, they are hooked. "Hi, may I help you?" I ask and he turns around saying "hi" then stops. I can hear Stevie Wonder's hauntingly beautiful *Creepin'* playing in the background; suddenly it sounds louder than it was and I'm feeling so flushed; maybe it's a hot flash. "Uh, hi, yeah, um I wanted to ask about the massage services," he says while he's taking in my face, hair, mouth, eyes, my mouth again, then looks into my eyes like he's trying to read me. I keep looking away and try to take in his perfectly cut navy suit, gray and navy silk tie plus his expensive looking Italian loafers, but I keep going back to his gaze. His eyes are steel blue with what looks like crystal flecks in his irises - hypnotizing, and his lips! Oh my God! I know I'm turning as red as my jeans, jersey and lipstick. I feel completely devoured by his intense stare and turn away because, mercifully, I hear Sharon come in the back door of the building and holler out "hello" in her usual happy, cheerful tone. "The owner, Sharon, is here now," I say as I turn to look at him before heading down the hallway. "Wait," he says, but I'm gone, almost running into Sharon. I feel like I need to go out back and get air. I can't breathe. Her expression changes from a huge smile to a mild concern. "Is everything okay?" she asks. "Yes, there's a gentleman in the waiting room who wants to speak to you about massage. I could use a little air. I'll be right back. I didn't get his name, sorry," I say as I run down the hallway to the back door. When I get outside I lean up against the building and close my eyes. Thankfully it's almost the beginning of March and the weather is perfect: 75 degrees and dry with a mild breeze, central Florida at its best. I realize I have to get back inside because Sharon didn't even get a chance to put her things away, so I reluctantly step back inside and stop in the hallway to hear them talking. Sharon is explaining the massage series pricing as well as telling the gentleman about all the other services offered at the institute. I can hear her tell him that the masseuse isn't in today but she can schedule him with her at his convenience. I hear him ask if I do massages, the lady in red he calls me. Sharon tells him no, that I'm her computer tech and business manager. "Oh, I see," I hear him say, sounding disappointed. I decide to get back to my desk, just in sight of the lobby/waiting room where I can see them and they can see me. The phone rings and I answer it: "Serene institute, how may I help you?" I take a message for Sharon and turn to look at the pair when I hang up the phone. The man's eyes are on me. I look away and get back to my computer work. Santo & Johnny's *Sleepwalk* is playing and sounds so dreamy with this incredibly handsome man standing here in front of me for me to feast my eyes on when I get a chance to, if he's not staring at me, that is. The gentleman tells Sharon he'll take the complete series of massages with Lucy after he decides it's a good fit for him with the first massage. I hand her the scheduling book, and the guy's eyes are on me again. I can't work like this. Why is he staring at me? I could be old enough to be his mother! "How did you burn your hand?" he asks. I look up and realize he's talking to me. "What?" I ask as an answer. "Your hand, what happened?" he asks again. "Oh, it's nothing, just from pulling a pie out of the oven and brushing up against the top rack. I should have worn an oven mitt instead of using a potholder. I always forget. It's practically gone. How amazing you could see that from where you're standing," I answer and look at Sharon who's taking in all of this exchange. "May I take a look?" he asks as he holds out his hand to take mine. I stand up and put my hand out the reception window. He takes it and I feel a shock. I try to pull it away immediately but he grips it, never moving his eyes from mine. This is so

uncomfortable for me. I feel him drawing me in, a complete stranger. "What kind was it?" he asks. "What kind was what?" I respond. "The pie you burned your hand on baking," he answers. "It was a tomato pie that Dee made for us here at the institute, and it was incredible!" Sharon chimes in - I'm certain - noticing my discomfort. "Different. I've never had one. Maybe you'll bring another one in when I'm here for a massage and share with a client?" he teases. "Perhaps," I tease back with a smile, trying to pull my hand away and he finally lets go. "Dee, is that a nickname for a more formal name?" he asks looking me directly in the eyes. I wish he wouldn't do that. I feel like my face is on fire. "Diana," I offer. "Chris," he smiles, and then he turns to Sharon. "Christopher Palmer of The Palmer Law Firm and Palmer Security," he tells her as he turns back to me. I look down at the desk. I wish he would leave, but not really. The truth is, this is the most alive I've felt in a long time. He gives Sharon a debit card and hands me his business card. "Go ahead and charge me for the full series of massages, and if there's a problem, we'll work it out. But, I don't anticipate one," he says to Sharon while staring at me. I look up at Sharon who is clearly thrilled at just having made her week and it's barely the first of March. I get up so she can sit and put the charge through. I go out to the lobby and over to the front door. I open it, hoping he doesn't see me take in a deep breath because I just cannot breathe around him. "Do you want to fill out some forms now, or take them with you and turn them in when you come in for your first session?" I ask as I turn around closing the front door and notice him taking me in from head to toe, all 5 feet 2 inches of me compared to his approximate 6'2" frame. "I'll do them now. It's comforting here. I feel like I could stay all day," he smiles and says while I blush and Sharon looks up and smiles at me. "And I like the slow dance songs you ladies play in here. Is that yours or the institute's play list?" he asks. "It's mine," I answer. "Well, I love it: *Creepin'*, *Sleepwalk* and especially the Gino Vannelli song. You need to put some vitamin E cream on that superficial burn," he says, smiling big and flashing that perfect mouth and those perfect white teeth. I am a weakling when it comes to a breathtakingly handsome guy who is perfectly tailored and groomed. I feel like mush, how will I ever get through the rest of this day. I hand him the forms to fill out on a clipboard while he takes a seat on one of the leather sofas. I offer him a pen, but naturally he pulls out an expensive looking one from inside his suit jacket and smiles at me saying, "thanks. Do you gals live around here?" he asks as he also pulls out a pair of reading glasses from his suit jacket pocket. "Yes," Sharon answers, "I live in Winter Park and Dee's in Oviedo." "Wow, what a coincidence. I live in Oviedo, too, Diana. Try me," he says as he looks up at me before I turn to leave the room. "What?" I ask at his impertinence. "*Try Me*, that's the title of the James Brown song that's playing. I love it," he says as his smile turns into a sad expression. I have to get away from him. Something about him is pulling at me, and I don't know how I feel about it. I go around the corner to the room where we have a small kitchen area. I hear him hand the papers over to Sharon and she hands him a receipt and his card back. "I see Diana put my card down for you. Here's another one. Would you please see that she gets it? I'll put my cell number on the back of it in case she needs to reach me for you, the institute or anything," I hear him tell her. "*What the hell?*" "Bye, Sharon. I'm looking forward to meeting Lucy later this week. Please tell Diana I said 'later,' okay?" "Okay, Chris, I will and we'll see you on Friday," Sharon tells him. I hear the door close. I turn the corner and look out the window to see a big BMW pull up, and the driver, a man, gets out and comes around to open the door for Chris; he gets in the back. *He has a driver!* I turn around to look at Sharon. "Oh my God, Dee! Do you realize what just happened? We got a patron, not just a client, and you should have seen his face when you left the room. He looked positively crushed! Why did you leave, he clearly wanted to talk with you?" "Sharon, I could barely look at him. He seemed to look right down into my soul. I couldn't take it anymore. I felt like one huge hot flash. I know what he was doing and he's too young for me," I tell her. She gets up and comes over to me. She places her hands on my shoulders. "It's time you took a chance with someone, and he's not too young for you. He just looks it. He's fantastic looking and professional. I googled him while he was filling out the forms. Dee, he's prominent and a widower. His wife died in a car accident with another man over eight months ago. He certainly looked ready to meet someone, you! The way he was looking at you! And the sadness that came over his expression when you left the room, you wouldn't believe how let down he looked. He wants to get to know you." "I know." I tell her. "Let me get to work, I'll get his file in the

system."I take the two forms he filled out.*Christopher M. Palmer*The phone number he lists must be his home landline because it doesn't match the numbers on his business card *including his cell number that he wrote out for me*. I see his address: he lives in the same sub-division as I do, actually just up the road from me! Oh my! I have never seen him before. *How is that possible? Well, I suppose here in Florida it is.* He's 54. *I would have taken him to be 42. Hmmm, he's not too young for me after all. What is it about him?*The rest of the day goes by pretty quickly. I'm able to leave by 4. I'm eager to get home so I can drive by Chris's house and check it out. Sharon has her last client of the day, so I say good-bye and tell her I'll see her next week. When I reach my neighborhood, I immediately turn onto his street, which is a cul-de-sac as is mine. His house is bigger than any I've seen in this entire neighborhood. It's a single-story sitting on two lots. It's huge and gorgeous! He must have a lucrative practice and business. I leave right away, just in case he comes home early, or someone spots me checking out his magnificent house. My mind wanders the rest of the day and all night. I can't concentrate on anything. The encounter with Chris has totally thrown me. By the next morning I'm feeling back to myself. I think of Chris briefly and shrug it off as a flirty client. The chances are slim that I'll see him again as I only work one day a week on Tuesday or Thursday, and it appears he'll be scheduling his massages for Fridays. Good. Friday rolls around and Sharon calls me just after six p.m. "Hey you, what's up?" I say as I answer the phone. "Hey, Dee! Listen, I was wondering if you could plan on working on Fridays for me instead of Tuesdays or Thursdays?" she asks. "Why, Sharon, Tuesday or Thursday is less busy and I'm able to leave early after my facials? Besides, Fridays and Saturdays are too busy and it's hard to fit me in, you know that," I answer. "Yes, I know, but Lucy told me that Mr. Palmer was not happy that you weren't here today, and he did not get the benefit of his first massage. She said he was as tight as a drum and wouldn't relax. He asked her a lot of questions about you. Dee, I think he's smitten or stuck on you, or I don't know what. When he came to the desk after his session was over he asked me what days you're here, and I told him. Then he asked me if I could arrange to have you come in on Fridays. I promised him I'd try. Dee, he's really interested in seeing you again. I did not give him your last name when he asked. What do you think? Could you try a Friday so this guy can relax, please? He looked awful and Lucy is very worried that he won't come back. I'll come in early so we can get you done first," she adds. "Okay, I'll come in Friday instead of Thursday. I'll see you then," I tell her. She sounded very relieved. Damn! What's going on with this guy? I like being home on Fridays. Now I have to change everything around to accommodate this guy for Sharon's business. I'll ignore him and he'll get the message that I'm not interested. That should get us off the hook. Yes, that's the plan. Saturday comes and I'm ready to head out for errands and to have lunch with my friend, Jan. As I'm getting ready to go out to the garage, the doorbell rings. I look out the window and see a Harry's Famous Flowers truck. There's a young man at my door with a glass vase filled with beautiful pink roses. There must be a mistake, wrong house perhaps. I open the door. "Hello, ma'am. I have a delivery for Diana Pollard." "Thank you," I say, taking the vase from him, and he's on his way. I place the vase on the table and look at the card. On it is written: Thank you for agreeing to work on Friday. I am so looking forward to seeing you again. I'm not a stalker. There's something about you. Chris Wow! Three dozen of the most beautiful pink roses I have ever seen. I decide to call him on his cell phone and thank him. I guess he didn't have a problem finding out my full name and address; a lawyer plus a security company, I guess he has resources. He answers immediately; it hardly rang. "Diana! Hi, how nice to hear from you," he says. "Hi, Mr. Palmer. Thank you for the roses, but it's totally unnecessary that you sent them," I tell him. "It's Chris, please, and it is very necessary that I sent you those. They are as beautiful as you are, and I'm certain you rearranged your schedule to help your friend out with a demanding new client. You have no idea how thrilled I am that you said yes. Sharon called and told me that you agreed. Thank you, Diana. That place is not the same without you; at least, it did not hold the same appeal for me." "Well, okay then. I'm pleased it makes you happy. I'll see you on Friday if it's not too late. I like to leave the institute by 4 so I don't hit as much traffic, even though it's not always possible," I tell him. "I understand, and I'll leave my office early to get there earlier. Just please don't leave until I see you. I don't know why but I'm very drawn to you, like something is pulling at me," he says. "I know, I felt it, too," I respond. "You did? Oh my God, Diana, you were so cool and calm. I thought you were

totally disinterested in me. Please don't hang up so soon. I want to talk with you. Is there any chance you'd meet me for coffee or lunch, or dare I ask, dinner? I live just up the road from you, and would love to see you today. Say yes, please, make my day," he pleads. "I wasn't cool and calm. I had to step outside for air. I couldn't breathe. I felt a pull, too," I admit. "Damn, Diana, you have to see me today, please?" "I'm meeting a friend for lunch and have errands to run, so..." I try to finish but he cuts in. "Please tell me it's not a guy friend today. I weaseled out of Lucy that you're not dating anyone and that you do a lot of volunteer work. I know how busy you keep, but please see me today and not another guy?" he asks. "I'm not seeing a guy. I'm going to my friend Jan's for lunch. She's sort of housebound under cancer treatment, and I go over there weekly to clean, then sometimes spend another day just visiting or bring her lunch or eat what she cooks. She's wonderful company. It's good therapy for both of us," I tell him. "You must see me today. I am so relieved it's not a guy you're seeing. Have dinner with me, please. You say where and when. I just want to see you. We can talk and get to know each other, that's all; but I have to tell you, I already know we're going to get along and it's going to be great between us. Please, Diana," he pleads again. "Okay, I'll meet you at Rock & Brews up the street, 7 o'clock, jeans," I answer. "Fine but make it 6 so we can spend more time together. Please say yes," he implores. "Yes, 6 o'clock," I giggle. "I love your young, soft voice and the way you smell. Later, Diana," he says and hangs up. *Uh oh...*

Chapter

2

From Rock & Brews to
Chela's

I'm already in jeans and a black knit jersey, so I can go to Rock & Brews to meet Chris right from Jan's. I know she'll want me to stay and visit with her after our lunch. I'm going to eat light at lunch since I'm meeting Chris. Even if he and I don't eat right away it's still a lot for me since I usually only eat once a day. Jan and I spend a very pleasant afternoon together. I fill her in on our new "client" at the institute and his intense interest in me. Jan, who was once a successful job recruiter and is now a prominent document examiner for many local lawyers and numerous court cases, is the ultimate matchmaker and most interested in this new wrinkle in my life. As I freshen up in her bathroom I look at myself in the mirror and realize my cheeks don't need any liquid blush applied. They are pink enough! What's going on? Men haven't turned my head in a very long time. I've been too busy to even consider dating, although I have been retired since I was 48 and was needed to take care of family matters. The gal looking back at me in the mirror doesn't look like the one I've been seeing these past few years. The facials and non-surgical facelifts have erased the tired look of this sixty-something face, and there's something else going on, just in the past few days, a glow. This man is causing hot flashes in me, bringing my blood to the surface. What is it between us? As I'm brushing my teeth and hair, spraying another touch of Opium eau de parfum while getting ready to leave, I'm aware that my body is tingling and I can't wait to see Chris again. This is not like me at all! I promise to call Jan tomorrow with details and get on the road. I usually put the A/C on in the SUV, but it's dry and perfect weather, so, I open my window and pump up the volume on the radio. I start laughing when I hear the song that's playing: *Let Me Love You* by DJ Snake with Justin Bieber. I crank it up; I love this song and I do believe it's an omen. As I'm sitting at a light and singing along to it, I turn my head and there's a guy looking at me and smiling. I laugh out loud at this whole scene. I guess I look happy and it's noticeable. My heart starts pounding when I pull in to the parking lot of the restaurant. It's Saturday, great beers and rock music; there are a lot of cars in the lot already. Chris might be inside. Here goes...

□□□ When I go into the restaurant I notice it's packed. It's very noisy. The walls are covered with flat screen TVs and rock memorabilia. Chris is at the bar and waves to me. I walk over to him and he gets off his stool and lifts me up onto it, kissing me on the cheek. "Hi," he says with a smile. "Hi yourself. Gee, I guess it's a little crowded here today," I say to him but it's hard hearing yourself let

alone anyone speaking to you, so I move closer to his face to speak closer to his ear. I catch the scent of his aftershave. That does it for me, his scent is heavenly and I'm lost in it. "I'm sorry, Chris. I didn't think it would be so crazy here this early," I say into his ear, my cheek against his. He closes his eyes as if he's savoring the moment, lightly kissing my neck and inhaling my scent. He whispers in my ear. "It's okay, Diana. I'll stay here all night with you if it means you'll stay this close to me, but I'd like to talk to you. Can we go someplace quieter after we have a drink here?" he asks looking deep into my eyes. Blue Oyster Cult's *Burnin' For You* is loudly coming through the sound system in this place. *How appropriate!* "Yes," is all I say, and he closes his eyes again. "I love this song that's playing," I mention. "Me, too. It sure captures how I'm feeling," he says earnestly and I know I'm blushing at his intense gaze. I get down off the stool and tell him to sit for a while so I can stand. I position myself between his legs and press my body up against the stool seat so his thighs are on either side of me. I look straight at him and can tell my nearness is affecting him. "What are you wearing that smells so divine and sexy?" he asks as he kisses my neck again. "Opium by Yves St. Laurent, and I was wondering the same about you," I respond. "Sauvage by Christian Dior," he tells me and pulls me into him so we're cheek to cheek again. "I've thought about you all week, Diana. When you weren't at Sharon's I went into a funk. I don't know what's happening to me, but you're in my head, and there's nothing to be done about it. Now that you're up this close to me I think I'm a goner. Please tell me you'll see me again after tonight. I think you already know I'm a decent guy and would never hurt you. I guess it's obvious that I want you in my life," he says with a sad look in those gorgeous crystal blue eyes as he pulls back to look at me. "I will see you again, but I have to get to know you, Chris. I don't want any mistakes. I'm past all that. You understand? You have to know this: I'm 10 years older than you," I whisper in his ear. He whispers in mine as he puts his arms around me, "I don't give a shit. I have to be with you. There's something between us. I know that you know it, too. Right?" he looks at me. "Yes, I know it," I answer. "Diana, if I move fast with you it's because I don't want to waste a moment. Neither one of us is kids anymore. I recently got out of a loveless 25-year marriage, and I haven't seen anyone since. It wasn't divorce but a death by accident. You probably found that out on the internet," he says. "Sharon did and told me all about it. You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to," I tell him. "You have to know that I stayed true, always, but didn't love her. She loved someone else and died while having an affair with him. I'm sorry about how she died but glad I'm free and here with you now. You understand?" he asks. "I do," I say and kiss his cheek and he smiles and looks down shyly. "It was an arranged marriage from the beginning, high school. I never bucked the system. My father was a powerful senator from a powerful family. I come from money, power and privilege. I always wanted to do the right thing, make everyone happy, and I got lost in the mix. That loss of myself has been my catalyst in life. I've grown my own empire in a short time. I have a lot of money, and I know you don't care about that. You'd like me if I had nothing. I was going to be a doctor - that's why I examined the burn on your hand - but preferred helping people in a different way. So, I became a lawyer; at first I worked criminal cases but hated the courtroom plus all the attention and press. I have a head for math, so, I opened a tax and estate planning practice, plus handle corporate matters for companies that don't want to carry in-house law staff. Besides the law firm and security company, I own a private detection agency, fleet of airplanes for lease by other law firms as well as my own personal plane and a lot of real estate. I know none of this impresses you, but I don't want to hold anything back from you. I also run the family foundation. I do a lot of fundraising and attend a lot of functions although I hate the attention and exposure. I live here in Oviedo because I don't want any attention, and, of course, now I understand that it was to find and be near you," he says. I kiss his cheek again from his tender revelation. He puts his arm around me again and presses me into him since he's moved to the edge of his stool seat. "Oh my God, Diana, you have no idea the effect you have on me. I haven't held anyone for most of my adult life it seems. What a waste of time. You are so beautiful. I love your light blonde hair, your eyes that look like smoky topaz, your mouth that I want to devour and your lovely petite body that I just want to hold onto forever. I saw the way the guys in here looked at you when you walked in, even the ones you'd think are young enough to be your sons or grandsons, although they don't see it that way. Please let's finish our drinks and get out of here," he pleads. "Okay," is all I say as he hands me my

glass of wine and downs his beer. "We'll drop off your vehicle at your house then go get something to eat. All right?" he asks. "Yes," I reply. When we get to my SUV, he gently pushes me up against the side of it, puts his hands on my cheeks and kisses me gently at first, then more passionately until I gently push him away. I open my eyes and see him looking at me with such desire and sadness that I feel bad I pushed him away. *He really is drawn to me!* "I'm sorry, Diana. I have such a desire for you. Please don't let that scare you away. I really want you in my life, on your terms if necessary, whatever it takes. I'll back off," he says dejectedly. I look up and take his face in my hands. "Listen to me. You're not scaring me. Nothing about you scares me, and I don't smother easily. I have a history of running away very quickly if you catch my meaning, but I feel grounded with you. I don't care where you come from or what you have. I care how you make me feel and how you feel to me. I'm a physical, sensual, instinctive, empathetic, sexual and intuitive creature. It's just who I am, and every fiber of my being is telling me this works. So, I don't want you to be scared either. We have a lot to learn about each other and we will, all of our deal-breakers and hard limits, but we have time for that. I feel that you're desperate for a physical connection with me initially more than the rest because you already know all the rest will be fine and fall into place. Am I right?" I ask looking into his terrified eyes, like he can't believe how much I get him. "Yes," he says looking down. I take his face in my hands again. "Look at me. We are going to hold each other a lot, all the time in fact, but that's going to be it for tonight and going forward until I'm ready. You okay with that?" I ask. "I'm totally okay with that," he says as he hugs me pulling me into him and kisses me again so softly at first, then more urgently. Oh, his beautiful lips! I love how he kisses me. I feel him getting intensely aroused and have to apply the brakes, pushing him away again. "I'm sorry, Diana," he says. "Don't ever say you're sorry for wanting me! Do you understand? Now lets go and dump my Highlander. Follow me." I tell him. "I'll follow you anytime, all the time! I'm an Aries, by the way," he grins. "Lioness," I answer, "We're in trouble," I smile back at him and his face lights up. *Yeah, two passionate fire signs, it could be an almost perfect union. We shall see.* He walks away after he closes my door and I start my SUV. I see him get in his big 760i xDrive sedan BMW and start it up with a smile on his face. I pull out and he follows me to our sub-division. He opens the passenger door for me and leans in the car to get the seat belt around me as a ruse to kiss my lips and neck again so he can inhale my scent. I have a feeling this man is relentless, or will be when it comes to me. "I'm putting on lipstick, so you're going to have to stop doing that!" I tease. He laughs out loud. "Okay, Diana, until after dinner, anyway. What do you feel like having?" he asks as he chuckling. "You don't really want to know, but anything will do," I say while looking directly at him and his jaw drops. "Oh my God, Diana, I feel as though I've met my match. I am in such trouble," he says. "We're both in trouble, Chris. How about some music?" I prompt and he pushes a button and the DJ Snake's song, *Let Me Love You*, comes on. "Oh, wow, Chris! This is incredible. This song came on the radio as soon as I left Jan's, and I immediately thought of you!" I exclaim. "That's amazing because all this week I've been hearing contemporary stuff which I rarely listen to, but so many songs reminded me of you, so I made a play list. Usually I stick with classic rock or oldies, but the energy of Sia, Bruno Mars or DNCE just struck a chord with me all week and I couldn't stop playing it and thinking about you, dancing with you, and other stuff," he teases as he looks over at me. "Good, because I love dancing to *Cake By the Ocean* and I prefer the explicit version," I say. "With whom do you love dancing?" he asks looking pissed. "My crazy self around the house with the volume pumped," I answer. "Thank God, lady! Forgive me. I'm jealous and possessive. You need to know that. Give me your hand," he says as he takes my hand and kisses my knuckles, slowly, savoring each one. Oh wow. He's making me crazy doing that. "I can handle jealous and possessive because I feel the same way; you're making me crazy doing that," I say as I pull my hand away and he howls. "Italian sound okay to you?" he asks. "Sure, if we're able to taste anything sitting close to each other," I say. "I'd rather be tasting your luscious lips and can't wait to taste your mouth. I'm not into French kissing, but I want to be inside you and taste you everywhere, if you know what I mean," he says very seriously and I'm burning up. "I'm not into French kissing either, but your lips and mouth, well, I guess I want you in me, too... You're going to give me a hot flash. Stop it!" I exclaim and he howls again. "I can't help it. I'm burning for you. I'll control myself. You have no idea how measured and controlled I am at work. I have a staff of 25

just in the office, and I think they find me aloof, intimidating and a bit tyrannical, which I probably am with them, but I never will be with you, except maybe a little intimidated by you," he says. "Intimidated? Why?" I ask. "Because I have no experience with women, just my imagination and all the right working equipment which has hardly been used, pun intended," he chuckles. "We'll take care of that. You'll catch on and catch up fast I'm thinking," I tease and he takes my hand again kissing my knuckles while we pull up to the best Italian restaurant in town. "So, lioness, huh?" he asks, kissing each knuckle slowly, savoring. "Yes, and don't cross me or I'll scratch or maim your heart. I know how," I tell him and we both become silent until we reach the restaurant. "How can you get us in this place on a Saturday night without a reservation and us in jeans?" I ask him. "I gave the owner the money to open it and won't let him pay me back. I have a private room here and can wear whatever I like. I often came here alone. In the eleven years I've lived here, I can count on one hand how many times Liz and I came here together for dinner. All that's over. You're with me now and I plan to keep you by my side, Diana. You will be mine," he says as he takes my hand and we walk to up to the entrance. "Oh, you've made up your mind, have you?" I tease. "From the moment I saw you, I knew," he chuckles. "Then I did a background check on you, and that was it. Anything you tell me about yourself, your likes, whims, dislikes, soft and hard limits, deal-breakers, etc., well, they're just dessert. I know what I want," he flatly states and I have to pick my jaw up off the ground. "Ah, so you already knew I'm a lioness?" I ask. "Yeah, and a size 6 bordering a size 4, a registered democrat who votes candidate and not necessarily party like me, a BC grad with honors, into aromatherapy, music and hydrotherapy, a terrific cook that your friends rave about; they love you to death and can tell you anything. You have a brother that you fiercely protect and worry about. There are several guys on Facebook that want you and you're not interested in the least. You're close friends with an old flame who broke your heart and is waiting for you to make a move, but you won't. I knew when I met you that you're going to rock my world, and I'm so ready for you, baby," he says smiling at me. We enter the restaurant and the owner's son greets Chris who introduces me to him. We are taken to Chris's private table in an alcove away from the main dining room, and Chris insists on pulling my chair out for me, and sitting next to instead of across from me. The place smells delicious and there's some lovely violin and cello music in the background. "Some wine, Mr. Palmer?" the maitre d' asks. Chris looks at me. I tilt my head and he nods. Without my saying it, he knows I want him to take charge of that. This works. He tells the maitre d' that we'll have a bottle of their best Italian white that pairs with the seafood we'll have tonight as he looks at me and I nod, knowing that's what we'll both be ordering. *He just knows.* "Very good, sir. I'll take care of it," he tells Chris then smiles at me. "What would you like to have tonight, Diana?" Chris asks me. "Besides you?" I tease and he smiles and looks down. "You're getting me crazy and we'll have to leave," he whispers in my ear as he pulls my chair right up close to his. "Oops, sorry about that," I tease again. "The fuck you are," he levels at me and I start giggling because he looks so serious and uncomfortable. So, I really let him have it. I get up off my chair, sit on his lap, and kiss him passionately since we're in a private area of the restaurant. I start singing Rihanna's song in his ear, *Love On the Brain*, "No matter what I do, I'm no good without you, and I can't get enough, must be love on the brain..." Oh that really gets him! He squeezes me so tight kissing me fiercely; he forces my lips open to get his tongue in me and I'm feeling a heat build in me I haven't felt in years! I have to pull away and get up. He grips me and looks at me with such intensity; I know he's fighting a powerful urge to get us out of here. I can't play with him this way. He's an intense, serious guy right now. He is burning. My teasing ways will drive him crazy. In time he'll mellow out, I think. His grip holding me in place on his lap is like a vice. I whisper in his ear, "I'm sorry, Chris, I shouldn't play with you like this. Not now anyway. Forgive me and let me know when it's okay to get up." "Make it better, Diana, kiss me. I want to make love to you so bad I can't stand it. You've got me on fire. Fuck!" he whispers. "I know, me too!" I tell him. "I'll stop so we can eat our dinner. This is too intense," I admit and kiss him again, very softly, then proceed to get up off his lap and back onto my chair. "Will you see me tomorrow, please?" he pleads. "I'm due at Jan's all day. I know you checked me out, so you know I go over there weekly to clean for her since she's battling cancer and lives alone. Today was just lunch and chatting. Tomorrow is work," I tell him. "Oh, Diana, c'mon. See me. Can't you do Jan's on Monday, or I'll send a cleaning service over

for her and pay for everything?" he pleads. "No, Jan likes my company. We're close, no service. Excuse me a moment," I say as I get up looking at him, and he looks puzzled at first then a bit panicked. "I'll be right back," I say to calm that look on his face. I go outside of the restaurant and call Jan. She answers immediately and I tell her I'll come Monday instead of tomorrow. She's fine with that. I go back to the table and Chris stands to get me seated close to him. "All set tomorrow," I tell him. "Really, you'll see me? Can I have you all day?" he asks. "You are such a fast mover, lucky for you it doesn't bother me! Don't you play golf or wash your car or something in the morning? I know by the looks of you that you work out? How about later in the day, even though I am an early bird," I admit. "How about in the morning and all day? I can play golf another time. I usually do play on Sunday mornings, but I just want to be with you. I won't sleep at all tonight, Diana. I just know you and I are going to be great together. Please give me all of tomorrow and the promise of all of you in the future," he pleads. Oh those crystal flecks in those blue eyes of his always make him look like he's going to be in tears when he looks so sad like he does now. He melts my resolve in an instant. "Maybe yes, to all of it, sweetie," I say as I place a kiss on his lips before the waiter brings a tray with an array of dishes for us that we never got to order. Chris is beaming and takes my hand again, putting it up to his lips so he can kiss my knuckles again. The waiter brings us several dishes plus an appetizer and soup that the chef had prepared specially for us since we mentioned a preference for seafood. He places the bowls and dishes on our table and tells us what they are: cioppino and fried calamari to start, shrimp scampi, lobster fra diavolo, stuffed calamari, salmon and spinach fettuccine, linguine with cherrystone clams in white clam sauce, crab Alfredo, and mussels Italiano. Wow! What a feast for Chris and me! For sure we won't sleep tonight. The waiter pours the wine and Chris hands me a glass. "To us, Diana; we are going to happen," he says with complete conviction. "To us," I say back and smile at him. The owner comes over to greet us. Chris stands up and they man-hug. Chris introduces me as his girlfriend and Roberto kisses my hand. I look at Chris who's grimacing as he watches my hand being kissed. *That's his, Roberto, and probably the rest of me as far as he's concerned. Don't fuck with Chris and what's his...*

□□□I behave myself for the rest of the meal. We spend the time enjoying this fabulous spread and talk. I fill in some blanks that he didn't get from a background report, and he tells me about himself. Although he came from old money, he's a self-made billionaire. All of the family money he has he placed in trust. His own money is used for investments and all of his businesses. He's a Harvard Law School grad, summa cum laude, and he played high school and college football as lead quarterback. *No surprise there with those gorgeous hands and long, smooth fingers.* He sticks to basic facts and in particular points about his marriage of propriety whereby neither was in love with the other and they were not compatible, in fact, they were opposites; however, he reminds me he wants to get into "deeper stuff" when we're alone, and winks at me. *He makes me blush so!* Chris orders us a small single tiramisu to share and feeds me then licks the same spoon. He gets some of the cream on his finger and swipes it across my lips then kisses my lips and licks it off him and me. *How sensual he is!* When we go out to his car he puts me up against the door and leans into me very hard. He is rock solid and I can feel the heat all over him. I feel chilly from the cool March night air and he's warming me up with his intense body heat. "Oh, Chris you feel so good! Keep me warm," I tell him, and he hugs me so tightly; I just love it. We kiss passionately and he wants in my mouth, but I pull away and whisper in his ear, "let's save that for in bed," to which he replies, "okay, baby, whatever you want. Come home with me." "No, you get why," I tell him. "I'll behave, I promise you, Diana. Please. I need to hold you so much," he pleads as he looks intently into my eyes. I can't resist him. I close my eyes and relent. "Okay, but we're not doing anything, just holding each other. If I stay and we fall asleep, don't freak if I slip out and go home in the middle of the night," I tell him and see a smile curl at the edge of his magnificent mouth. "Oh my God, you're killing me. Spend the night with me, please. I'm ecstatic just from the thought of it and what you said," he implores. "Maybe, but I want to go home first. I'm fanatical about hygiene, oral and bodily. You may as well know this up front about me. I want my own toothbrush and stuff. Capisce?" I tease him. "I feel the same way about personal hygiene, and I'll take you any way I can have you. Just please let me have you, even if it's only side by side while we sleep, and can I come in your house

with you?" he asks. "Sure," but don't expect much. I saw your house, it's twice the size of my 2400 square foot single story," I tell him. "I know more about you than you think, Diana. I know about your career as a District Manager and your own business as a professional organizer and designer, besides the fact that you were able to retire in your forties after your father passed away from a heart attack when he was only 66 and you needed to take care of family matters, especially your mother. I know a lot more about you, and I love everything I've learned so far. I know four guys asked you to marry them and you said yes twice when you didn't mean it; one proposal you never took seriously because he drank, and one you did take very seriously. He was the one that broke your heart and you became a heartbreaker pretty much after that, even though you did marry just to get your mother off your back. You fascinate me! I've been by your house every day this week since I saw you on Tuesday, even before I learned about you. I couldn't stay away. The draw was phenomenal," he admits. With that I take his face in my hands and kiss him softly. Oh the way he closes his eyes! When I pull away, his eyes are still closed. Slowly he opens them and they look misty to me, like he's holding back some powerful emotions. "Let's go," I tell him because I have a strong feeling that he's unable to talk at the moment.

□□□When we get to my house Chris slowly looks around when we get inside. "Wow, I thought I was clean and neat!" he exclaims. "Professional organizers are never hoarders," I respond. I watch him take in everything, close his eyes and breathe in the scent of my home, lemon. He is a sensual creature, like me, I see it. He opens his eyes and there's that intense desire again in those beautiful crystal blues. I hit a switch on my receiver and Melody Gardot's *Our Love is Easy* comes on. "What is this, Diana? I love it! Oh, baby, dance with me. This is so slow and sultry," he pleads and I go over to him and put my arms around his neck while he pulls me in close to his body and we slow dance to this beautiful tune. Oh can he move, grinding his hips into mine while we sway! When the song ends he kisses me softly as if I were a fragile bird he's afraid of hurting. "Our love is going to be easy, I just know it," he says. "No it's not. She sings that she likes how he makes no demands; that's not you. I have a feeling you'll make many demands, but in a loving, nice way; although, as she sings, I like the touch of your hand," I smile up at him to get that worried look off his face and it softens. He knows I'm not turning him down, just facing the realities of loving an Aries in general. "C'mon, Diana, I want to get us home so I can hold you in bed," he says. "Okay, let me get some stuff and wash up. Make yourself at home; look around if you want. I won't be long," I tell him.

While volunteering at her friend's naturopathic health and beauty clinic, an older woman has a chance encounter with a strikingly handsome younger man, a client asking about the massage services. The two are instantly and uncharacteristically drawn to each other and forge a love each of them has never known, until a terrible misunderstanding wrenches them apart, forever changing them both.

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