



*His* to  
possess

#3: perfect storm

opal carew

HIS TO POSSESS #3:  
PERFECT STORM

OPAL CAREW



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Also by Opal Carew

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At the end of Part 2:

*“Is something wrong, Mom? You seem distracted. Are you and Dad okay?”*

*“Oh, no, sweetie. We’re fine. I just know you’re doing so well at your new job, and you sound so happy. I don’t want to upset you.”*

*She sat forward in her chair. “Well it’s too late. Now you’ve really got me worried. Is it a health concern?”*

*“Oh, no, nothing like that. Sweetie, I know how hurt you were when Storm walked out on you to go on tour. I know you were in love with him and it broke your heart. But he came to see me and ... he told me he wants to talk to you.” Her mother hesitated. “Jess, I think he’s still in love with you. He wants to find you.”*

*“Oh, Mom, you didn’t give him my number, did you?”*

*“Of course not. I wouldn’t do that, but...”*

*Jessica gritted her teeth at her mother’s hesitation.*

*“Unfortunately, your dad did.”*

*Jessica’s stomach clenched.*

*“And, honey, I’m pretty sure*

*Storm’s coming to find you.”*

Jessica gripped the phone tightly, her other hand balling into a fist.

Damn it! She had just gotten over Storm, or at least gotten to a point where she didn't ache inside every time she thought about him. And a big part of that was because Dane was such a major distraction.

Her hand slipped into her jeans pocket and she stroked the flat stone Dane had given her.

But Dane was more than just a distraction. When he hadn't even known her, he'd helped her out, given her



advice and confidence. He'd given her a job.

“Mom, did Dad give him my address, too? Or tell him where I work?”

“No, I don't think so. Well ... maybe.”

“Oh, Mom.” Jessica put her face in her palm. “Why would he do that?”

“Sweetie, you know he really likes Storm, and he'd love to have him as a son-in-law. I'm sure he thought that you would be happy to see him. He just wants you to be happy. And so do I.”

“I know, Mom. “

“You know, I was just wondering. Would it be such a bad thing if he found you?”

Her mother had always liked Storm. Well, of course she did. Mom wanted her to be happy, and she'd never been happier than during her time with Storm.

When she still thought he loved her.

Did he still love her? Even in spite of all he'd done, her heart leapt at the thought.

But all Mom had said was that she *thought* Storm still loved her. That could so easily be wishful thinking on her part. When Storm had walked out on

Jessica, she knew that her mother had been in almost as much pain as she had been. Because that's how mothers were with their kids. They wanted to protect them and make things right. Her mother would have given anything to make things right again so Jessica would be happy.

So Mom was probably only seeing what she wanted to see. Storm likely didn't want to come here to find her at all. Probably the only reason Storm wanted to talk to her was because he had left something behind that he wanted back. For instance, she remembered

finding a copy of one of the demo CDs he'd made of him playing with the band. She remembered when she'd noticed the plain white CD, labeled with a black Sharpie, sitting on her dresser. It included the song he'd written for her. She'd played it over and over again, her only tangible link to him and the love they'd shared. Remembering the way he'd played it for her in the nude. They'd both been lying entwined on his bed after making love when he stood up, retrieved his guitar and began playing a song so heartbreakingly tender it had brought tears to her eyes. But as the

reality hit her that he really had walked away from her, and their love, she'd tucked it away in a drawer, like any dream that was destined never to come true.

He probably only wanted to retrieve that CD.

“I really don't want to see him. I have a new life here.”

“I know, but ... are you sure? Because if he wants you back, then maybe you could work things out.”

“Even if he does want me back, which I doubt, *I* don't want *him* back.”

“But if you still love him...”

“I’ll get over it. Mom, please don’t worry about me. I can take care of myself.”

Mom sighed. “I know that, sweetie. And you know I’d do anything in the world to make things better for you. I’m really sorry about this.”

Jessica smiled. “It’ll be okay Mom. I know Dad’s heart was in the right place.” She held the phone with both hands, wishing Mom was here right now so she could give her a big hug. “I love you. And I miss you.”

“Me, too, sweetie.”

A few minutes after she hung up the

phone, Melanie walked into the living room.

“Was that your Mom on the phone?”

Jessica nodded.

“Hey, is everything okay?” The concern in Melanie’s voice jarred Jessica from her thoughts.

She shrugged. “Mom said that my ex is back in Bakersfield and he asked her for my number.”

Melanie’s eyebrows arched.

“And...?”

Jessica had told her about Storm and how much she’d loved him. How he’d left her and how difficult it had been to

get over him. How difficult it still was.

“My father gave it to him.”

Melanie’s eyebrows arched. “Did he give him your address, too?”

“No, thankfully, but now I’ll be on pins and needles wondering if and when he’ll call.” She hugged her knees and gazed at Melanie. “I love my father but sometimes he just doesn’t get it.”

Melanie nodded, a thoughtful look on her face. “Did he give you our home number or your cell?”

“I’m not sure. Probably my cell.”

Melanie smiled. “Okay, if it’s our home number, we can just screen the



calls. For your cell, here's what we're going to do. First we'll add a blocking app to your phone for any calls or texts he sends you that shoots unknown numbers straight to voicemail. Then we're going to forget he even exists. You know I got my new nail polish, right? How about I do your nails with this great new color I think you'll love, add a bit of glitz, then we'll hit the town?"

At her pursed lips, Melanie held up a bottle of rich burgundy nail polish in one hand and the real gold leaf flake topcoat she had been raving about for weeks in

the other, and then tilted them back and forth.

“Come on. You know you want to.”

Jessica grinned. She did love the colored polish Melanie had picked out, and she would love to see what those delicate gold flakes looked like over the top of it.

She laughed. “Okay. It’s a deal.”

Ten minutes later, Melanie had finished applying the burgundy polish to Jessica’s nails, and she sat on the couch sipping a glass of wine while waiting for them to dry.

“You know, I think what would help

you right now would be to find a hot guy and get laid.”

Jessica couldn't help laughing. “I think you're absolutely right.”

She just wouldn't tell her friend that she'd already found the hot guy, but she'd have to wait until Monday—at the office—to get laid. Again.

\* \* \*

Midmorning on Monday, Jessica sat by Melanie's desk with a notebook on her lap as she asked questions about the various subsidiaries under Ranier Industries' control.

The elevator doors opened and Dane stepped out. At once, awareness rippled through Jessica, but she continued to write down the most recent answer Melanie had provided.

“Good morning, Melanie. Jessica. I hope you had a nice weekend.”

“Very nice, thank you, Mr. Ranier,” Melanie answered as he walked by her desk, only a foot from Jessica.

His gaze fell on Jessica and heat washed through her.

“Yes, very nice,” she said.

Usually he threw out this kind of small talk as he continued on to his

office, so there was only time for a quick response before he was gone, but Melanie jumped in.

“And you, Mr. Ranier?” Melanie asked.

“Fine. A little socializing, a lot of work. The usual.”

Jessica wondered if the socializing included a woman. Surprised at the rise in what seemed suspiciously like jealousy, she admonished herself.

“Jessica, as soon as you’re finished here, join me in my office.”

She closed her notebook. “I think we’re done now. I was just asking

Melanie some questions about the company's infrastructure."

He nodded and continued to his office, leaving the door open behind him. She stood up.

"I'm going to go grab him a coffee. Want one?" she asked Melanie.

"Sure, thanks."

Jessica left her stuff on Melanie's desk while she poured three coffees, then dropped one off at Melanie's desk, picked up her notebook and pen, and continued to Dane's office.

She placed the mugs on Dane's desk, then went back and closed the door.

He sipped the coffee. “Thanks.” He picked up the mug and moved to the sitting area by the window. She sat across from him.

“I wanted to talk about last Friday. You’ve had the weekend to think about things, and I just want to ensure you’re still okay with what happened between us.”

He was offering her the chance to return their relationship to business only.

“Yes. I’m fine with it.”

*Fine with it?* Now there was a glowing recommendation of what they’d done. *Way to show your enthusiasm.*

His blue eyes watched her, assessing her expression.

“No regrets?”

She shook her head. “None.”

“Good.” He leaned toward her and smiled. “With our new arrangement, I will periodically set down rules or assign you tasks of a more personal nature.” He raised an eyebrow.

“Understood?”

“Yes, Mr. Ranier.”

His smile broadened, revealing his even white teeth.

“Very good. Now come over here.”

She stood up, her insides quivering



in anticipation. She'd been longing for his touch all weekend. Dreaming of their bodies entwined, his massive erection sliding into her. Melanie had tried to set her up with a male friend on Friday night, but she'd declined, even though her desire for a man thrummed through her. The problem was, the only man who she'd be satisfied with was Dane.

She stepped in front of him, wondering if he would stroke her breasts. Or ask her to strip down in front of him. Or kneel in front of him and unzip his pants, then reach inside ...

“Turn around,” he instructed.

As soon as she'd turned around, her back to him, he ran his hand along her hip, then over her ass. His fingertip plucked at the elastic of her panties through the fabric of her skirt.

“Are you wearing pantyhose or stockings?”

“Pantyhose,” she said.

“Turn around again.”

She turned back to face him and his gaze fell on her crotch area. She felt heat well inside her.

“From now on, when you're at work, I want you to wear a garter belt and stockings. And instead of these bikini

panties, you will wear a thong. Over the garter belt, not under it.”

So they would be easier to take off while leaving on the stockings.

Her vagina clenched. God, she wished he would touch her.

“Yes, sir. Should I go home at lunch and change?”

He chuckled. “No, tomorrow will be fine.”

He stood up, placing his body intimately close to hers. If she leaned forward a hair, her breasts would brush his chest. She gazed up at him, wondering if he would kiss her. At the

gleam in his eyes, she was sure he would and she raised her chin in anticipation.

He leaned a little closer, his eyes twinkling. “It’s time to go back to work.”

Surprised, she drew in a breath and took a step back. “Yes, sir.”

She retrieved her notebook and pen from his desk, and then headed out the door. When she got to her own office, she sat down and sucked in air. Damn, now she was hot and horny with no outlet in sight.

She remembered that she had left her

mug in his office. She could go back and get it and, while she was there, make it clear she wanted him. But if she did that, she would get nowhere. Dane enjoyed being in control. When they made love again, it would be because it was his idea, not hers.

For some reason, that made it all the hotter.

\* \* \*

When lunch time rolled around, Jessica told Melanie she had some errands to run and instead of eating with her friend, she headed to a little lingerie shop

around the corner. When she returned, she had on a sexy, dark red garter belt, stockings, and a very tiny matching thong under her skirt. She also wore the matching bra, and had even bought new shoes in the same color. Very sexy shoes with stiletto heels.

“Aren’t you afraid you’ll fall off those things and break your neck,” Melanie teased when she walked into the office.

Jessica grinned. “I couldn’t resist them. They’re so pretty.”

“They are very nice. And they certainly add pizzazz to your black suit.”

Melanie glanced up from the shoes. “They’re not your usual style.” She grinned. “When a woman buys shoes that sexy, I have to wonder if there’s a man she’s hoping to attract. Anyone I know?”

Jessica felt her cheeks heat. “No. I just really liked them.”

“Okay, I didn’t mean to embarrass you. But Jerrod really liked you Friday and you didn’t seem interested. I never thought it might be because you had someone else in mind.”

Jessica escaped to her desk. She did *not* want Melanie to figure out she was attracted to Dane.

Dane returned to his office around three o'clock. It wasn't appropriate to take Jessica to all his meetings and he was glad he hadn't this afternoon. This morning, he'd had to rein himself in because after touching her sexy round ass, when she'd lifted her pert little chin, clearly expecting him to kiss her, desire had rushed through him. He'd wanted to drag her into his arms and plunge into that sweet little mouth of hers, then strip off her clothes and fuck her for hours.

But he didn't want to overwhelm her with constant sex, and if he allowed



himself to have her anytime he felt the desire, that's what would happen. He'd be fucking her nonstop.

He sat down at his desk and opened his e-mail. Jessica had already marked forty messages as "handled," and flagged a handful that required his personal attention.

A knock sounded on his open door and he glanced up to see Jessica standing in the doorway. Instantly, he noticed the sexy spiked heels she wore.

"Come in."

She closed the door behind her and he watched the delightful sway of her

hips as she walked toward the desk. Those shoes were new since this morning and, if he had to guess, he'd bet she wore a few other new things, too.

“I see you went shopping.”

She glanced down at her feet. “Yes.” She gazed at him uncertainly. “Are they okay? I mean, you don't think they're too ... uh—”

“Sexy for the office?”

Someone must have teased her about them already, because there was nothing wrong with the shoes. They were extremely sexy—any high heels were because of the way they accentuated a

woman's ass—but Gina in Human Resources wore more flamboyant shoes than that.

But he knew Jessica had bought those shoes to entice him and he wasn't going to let her off the hook too easily.

He stood up and walked around his desk. “Come over here. Let me have a closer look.”

She walked toward him, then stopped. The shoes gave her extra height, so the crown of her head now reached his eye level.

“Turn around so I can see the heels.”

She turned around. The heels were

slim and tall. Definitely very sexy. But where his gaze lingered was on her backside. Pushed up and out by her changed posture, it looked even firmer and rounder than usual. His hand itched to stroke her alluring ass.

He leaned closer and murmured near her ear, “Are you trying to entice me?”

“No, sir.”

But the smile in her voice told him the truth.

“Did you buy anything else while you were out at lunch?”

“Yes, sir.”

He couldn't drag his gaze from her

body. The barely perceptible bump of panty lines seemed to be gone. His groin tightened as he realized the fabric of her skirt brushed against her naked ass. And rather than pantyhose, the stockings covering her legs would end a few inches below her panties, leaving a strip of bare thigh.

His hand fell to her hip, then glided along her rear. His cock swelled.

“What did you buy?” When she started a stuttered response, he said, “Never mind.”

He cupped her ass with his hand and squeezed, then reached down and lifted

her skirt. As he slid his hand up the back of her leg, his fingertip brushed against a garter, then he felt bare skin. He could hear her draw in a breath. Then he stroked the curve of her delightful, naked flesh.

“Very nice. Let me see your new purchases.”

He forced himself to step back, then watched avidly as she unzipped her skirt, then eased the waistband over her hips and let it drop to the floor.

Her white blouse covered her to the tops of her thighs, but the band of naked flesh above her stockings was visible,

and the red lace garters matched her shoes. Before he had a chance to command it, she unbuttoned her blouse and opened it.

“The bra is new, too,” she explained as she dropped the white silk garment to the floor.

He stared at her breasts, hiked high in the sexy lace bra, her white mounds spilling over the top of the cups. Then his gaze dropped to her panties, framed by the garter belt and stockings. It was a tiny strip of cloth that barely covered her pussy.

Then she turned around, revealing

her completely bare ass, and leaned over to pick up her blouse and skirt. As she was leaning over, her ass swaying in the air, he could barely stop himself from lurching forward and driving his hard, aching cock into her.

Then she stood up and placed her clothing on the guest chair.

“Get over here,” he growled as he unzipped his pants.

He pulled her to him and kissed her, hard. His tongue surged into her as his hand slid down her silky, flat stomach, then found her panties. He thrust into her mouth again as he tugged aside the



crotch. His cockhead felt the warmth of her flesh as he pushed it forward, then her moist heat surrounded him. She was completely ready for him.

“Oh, God, you feel so good around me.”

Then, with his hand flat on her back, he tugged her forward, driving deep inside her.

The sound of her moan sent his erection twitching. She wrapped her fingers over his shoulders, steadying herself.

He drew back and thrust again. It was like heaven inside her tight, hot

passage. He wanted to be deeper, so he lifted her in his arms and moved toward the wall. When she wrapped her legs around his hips and squeezed him inside her, he groaned. He pushed her against the wall and drove deeper still.

“Oh, yes.”

He nuzzled her long, elegant neck, then leaned down and kissed the swell of her breast. Still deep inside her, he pushed up one cup, revealing her swollen nipple. He licked it, then took it in his mouth. She moaned again as he teased the hard bud with his tongue, then he suckled.

His body demanded release, so he started to move inside her again, pulling back then driving forward. He released her nipple, needing to give full attention to the demands of his body. And hers. She liked his mouth on her breast, but her whimper told him she needed more. He thrust his cock into her again and again, driving her hard against the wall each time.

Her breathing accelerated and she moaned as she clung to him.

“Are you close?” he murmured into her ear. He knew the answer, but loved to hear her admit it.

“Yes, sir.”

Fuck. He drove deeper, grinding her to the wall.

“You know what I want to hear.”

He drew out, then glided forward slowly, torturing her.

“Yes, Mr. Ranier.” Her breathless voice sent his blood boiling.

He drove into her and kept on thrusting. Faster and faster.

She sucked in a breath, then whimpered.

“Oh, sir...” She gasped, then stiffened. “I’m ... going ... to...” Her words came out between thrusts.

She threw her head back. “Come.”

Then she wailed loudly.

His cock throbbed, then he felt liquid fire stream through him as he erupted into her hot, sweet body.

They both gulped in air as he held her pinned to the wall.

Finally, he drew back slowly, ensuring she was steady on her feet. He grinned at her, stroking back a few strands of hair that had escaped her barrette.

“Maybe next time, we should figure out how to work in a little foreplay.”

On Friday night, Jessica was sitting on the couch reading a magazine when Melanie breezed into the room in the brand new dress she'd bought at lunch. They'd spotted it in the window of a shop they passed on the way to the deli where they'd gone to eat. Melanie was taken by it, so Jessica suggested they stop in the store on the way back to the office. As soon as she'd tried it on, Melanie had fallen in love with it.

“That dress really does look great on you,” Jessica said. With its bright splashes of color and glittery trim, it

was quite different from the conservative attire she wore to the office.

Melanie beamed. “Thank you. I feel like a million bucks in it.” She pulled on her coat and then picked up her purse. “Are you sure you don’t want to join us?”

“No, I don’t really feel like partying tonight.”

“You know Jerrod’s going to be there. He really likes you, you know. I thought you were at least a little interested.”

Jerrod was tall, attractive, and

interesting to talk to, but he was no Dane.

“He’s a great guy, but I really don’t want to get into a romantic relationship right now.”

“I know, it’s too soon, but that doesn’t mean you can’t go out with the guy. Even sleep with him. *Especiallly* sleep with him. I think it would do you a world of good.”

“Don’t worry, I’m doing fine.”

“You do seem pretty relaxed for someone who hasn’t gotten laid in months.” Melnaie pursed her lips. “In fact, maybe too relaxed.” She sat down



on the couch beside her. “If I didn’t know better, I’d think you were seeing someone.”

“I told you, I don’t want—”

“A romantic entanglement. I know. But that doesn’t mean you aren’t getting some.” Her eyes narrowed. “Is it someone at work?”

“Melanie...” But she could feel her cheeks tinge red.

“Because that’s a really bad idea. A really, really bad idea. Tell me you’re not.”

Jessica tried to utter the lie, but she couldn’t get her mouth to cooperate. So

she said nothing.

“Oh, honey, no. Who is it?” Then she waved her hands. “No, I don’t want to know. Is that what you’re doing when you’re running those errands at lunch?”

There were three times Jessica hadn’t gone to lunch with Melanie. Once because Melanie was busy, once because Jessica had some banking to do, and once was when she’d gone out shopping for the garter belt and shoes. Her cheeks burned hotter.

“Okay, it’s none of my business. I just think it’s a really bad idea to get involved with someone at work. And if

Mr. Ranier found out, he would probably be livid. You remember I mentioned that I had a little crush on Mr. Ranier's brother, Rafe?"

Jessica nodded.

"Well, it was more than a crush. I kind of fell in love with him." Melanie waved her finger at Jessica. "And that stays between us."

Jessica nodded. "Of course."

"But I never acted on it, even though every day I wanted to throw myself at him and tear off his clothes."

"Melanie..."

"I know, I said it was none of my

business.” She frowned. “And I’m not judging. Getting laid is a great idea. I just don’t want to see you get into a tough situation. If the guy is more senior than you, it could lead to all kinds of trouble if it ends badly. And let’s face it, it’s going to end. Especially if there’s only sex between you.”

“Thanks, Melanie. I’ll keep that in mind.”

“Okay. That’s all I’ll say about it then.”

“Mel, I’m sorry about you and your boss.”

Melanie nodded. “And it kills me

that he's gone. Before he left, even though I knew we could never be together, at least I could see him every day."

Melanie's wide green eyes turned to Jessica and the depth of pain and vulnerability there astonished her.

"I miss him so much."

Jessica nodded, then pursed her lips. "I tell you what. If you can wait a few minutes, I'll run and change."

A smile crept across Melanie's face, driving away the sorrow. "That's great. I'll wait right here."

That night, Melanie's words marched through Jessica's brain.

*And let's face it, it's going to end. Especially if there's only sex between you.*

She was right, of course. It would end. Then what would happen to her job?

But everything she knew about Dane told her he would do right by her. He would ensure she had a new job somewhere in the company, she was sure of it. And people changed jobs all the time. She wouldn't expect to stay in

this position forever, even though she loved working for Dane. And she would miss working with Melanie if that happened.

But all that was a long way off. She'd just started this relationship with Dane and was determined to enjoy it while it lasted.

And enjoy it she was. Every afternoon they had sex in his office and it was always fast and furious. They had yet to work out having anything more than minimal foreplay, because they were always so intensely turned on by the time they started. He was so freaking

sexy. And there was something about being in an office. She was sure they would explore other scenarios. But right now the relationship was still new and intense. Not that it would ever stop being intense with Dane. But she remembered the long, thorough lovemaking they'd enjoyed that first time.

Her body ached at the memory.

No matter what happened in the future, this time with Dane was definitely worth it.

\* \* \*



Jessica sat down at the table in the little café. She and Dane had been at a meeting on the outskirts of the city until late morning and had another across town at one o'clock, so he had suggested they grab lunch out.

This was the first time he'd taken her to lunch and, in fact, the first time they'd been together in a social setting since the dinner event she'd accompanied him to. It felt a little awkward as she watched him over her water glass while he checked his phone messages. Should she review his e-mails while they waited for lunch?

She opened her purse, which sat on the chair beside her, and pulled out her tablet.

“You aren’t thinking of working, are you?” he asked as he slipped his phone into his jacket pocket.

“Well, I wasn’t sure.”

“Relax. It’s lunchtime.”

The waitress arrived with a basket of freshly baked bread and took their order. Dane recommended she try the soup as an appetizer. The waitress returned a few moments later with two steaming bowls.

Jessica tasted it and glanced at Dane.

“This is the best clam chowder I’ve ever had.”

He smiled. “I wouldn’t steer you wrong.”

She tipped her head and smiled. It was true. Everything he’d advised her to do had worked out amazingly well. Her finger brushed against the stone in her jacket pocket.

“You know, I really appreciate the advice you gave me when we first met. It really helped build my confidence when I was at the career fair.”

She drew the light blue stone from her pocket and laid it on the table. “I

still carry the stone you gave me.”

He casually picked it up and gazed at it.

“And I’ve never really thanked you for hiring me,” she continued.

“You’re doing an excellent job.” He stroked the stone with his thumb. “You know, I originally got this for my brother, Rafe. Our mother taught us about crystals and Tarot cards and other crazy stuff like that when we were kids. Our dad thought it was all hogwash, and it didn’t much interest me, but Rafe was fascinated by all her quirky ideas. Once Dad died and the problems got worse

between Rafe and me, I bought this for Rafe, to show him I respected his beliefs, even if they were different from mine.”

“That’s really nice.”

He placed the stone back on the table in front of her. “But he left before I had a chance to give it to him.”

She would have thought he’d want to keep it as a reminder of his brother, but maybe it had become too painful.

Trying to lighten the mood, she smiled. “So you’re telling me you never believed in any of the things you told me about the stone?”

“On the contrary. It is soothing when you rub it. And that calms your nerves. Right?”

“True.”

“That doesn’t mean I believe the stone has any healing powers.”

She slipped the stone back into her pocket as the waitress took away their soup bowls and placed a plate of pasta in front of her and a steak in front of Dane.

“You said after your dad died, the problems got worse between you and your brother.” She knew she was treading on sensitive ground, but she

really wanted to know more about this man. “What kind of problems were you having?”

“Typical things between brothers.”

She poked her fork into the long strands of fettuccine on her plate. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to pry.”

He gazed at her solemnly for a long moment, then sighed. “You know what? It felt good to talk about it the other day, so why not now? Let me tell you the significant incident that changed our relationship.”

He leaned back in his chair. “About two weeks before his senior prom, Rafe

skipped class to spend some time with a girl he wanted to ask to the prom. He was caught and our father, who valued hard work and a sense of responsibility above all else, berated my brother and then grounded him for a month.”

“Including the prom?” she asked.

He nodded. “I was home from college at the time. I tried to change Dad’s mind, but he wouldn’t budge. There was already a huge rift between Rafe and Dad and if Rafe missed such a memorable event in a person’s life, he would resent Dad forever. So, I decided to help. I knew if I suggested to Rafe that



he slip away to the prom, he'd reject the plan. I tended to fall in line with what Dad wanted, so Rafe didn't trust my opinions. He accused me of trying to control things and would often do the opposite of what I'd suggest."

"So what did you do?"

"I had Rafe's best friend tell him to sneak out the back on prom night and meet him down the street. I had one of the servants ready to cover for Rafe if our dad went looking for him, and I arranged to pick up Rafe's date and deliver her to the prom."

"Wouldn't it have been easier to just

have Rafe and his friend pick her up?”

“Easier, and smarter as it turns out. But there was a part of me that wanted him to know that he could depend on me.”

She smiled. “I can understand that.” She could just imagine Dane beaming with pride as he presented the young woman to Rafe. But the purpose of this story was how the rift between the brother’s had started. “So what went wrong?”

“Rafe’s date—I don’t even remember her name—is what went wrong. Years earlier, in high school, I

had dated her sister and it turns out she'd had a crush on me. Wishful thinking convinced her that I returned her feelings and this had all been a ploy for me to hook up with her.”

“So she kissed you, and that’s when your brother turned up.”

“It wasn’t just a kiss, it was a full body assault. When Rafe arrived, her arms were around me and her tongue was halfway down my throat.”

Jessica couldn’t help but laugh at his description.

“Of course, Rafe didn’t believe it was innocent on my part, and his date

insisted I had made the first move.”

“Leaving your brother believing you were stealing his girlfriend. That is so unfair.”

“True, but clearly our problems were deeper than that one incident; otherwise Rafe would have believed me.”

He sipped his water as he glanced at her almost empty plate. “I’ve been sharing a lot of my past with you. Now it’s your turn.”

“Okay.” She finished her last bite of food and pushed her plate aside. Dane had been doing most of the talking, so

his plate was still almost full. “Since you shared a painful memory with me, I’ll share one with you. I already told you about my ex-boyfriend Storm.”

“The musician.”

She nodded. “We had been living together for almost five months.” Memories of his big, naked tattooed body stretched out beside her in bed sent goose bumps along her flesh. It had been exciting to be with someone like him. And it was devastating when he’d left.

“Then one day I came home from work and he was sitting on the couch waiting for me. Said he was going on

tour in California with the band. When I asked him when he'd be back, he shrugged and said he wasn't sure he'd be back, that he was a drifter and had been in one place too long. Of course, I was devastated. All he said then was, 'Hey, you knew this was just a casual thing. But maybe if I do come back and you're still free, we can hook up again.'"

The awful pain stirred in her gut again. "Then he picked up his pack and walked out."

Dane shook his head. "The guy sounds like a total jerk to me."

She stared out the window at the street outside. “Yeah, I guess.” She gazed at him. “But the thing is, Storm had never seemed like a jerk before. He had always been caring and attentive. And I was so sure he loved me just as much as I loved him. That’s why the whole thing blindsided me.”

Dane reached out and covered her hand with his, and even with thoughts of Storm filling her head, awareness of Dane crept through her body.

“I’m sorry that happened to you. You deserve better.”

She pushed aside the painful

memories and smiled. “Well, I have better now. I have a great job.” Her smile turned to a grin. “And this interesting relationship with you.”

“Since you’ve brought up our interesting relationship ... Remember when I told you I would occasionally give you new rules or assign you special tasks?”

At his words, she became intensely aware of the satin lining of her skirt against her naked backside, and one of the garters holding up her stockings pressing into her lower thigh. “Yes, I remember.”



“Well, I have a task in mind.”

\* \* \*

Jessica couldn't believe she was doing this. She'd waited until Melanie was away from her desk to sneak into Dane's office and now she stood beside his desk, waiting.

He had an appointment in a few minutes with Mr. Lane from Human Resources about a new benefits plan for the employees. The door to the office was open and she heard the elevator bell ring, then the doors open. Melanie greeted Mr. Lane and told him Dane

would be along shortly.

At lunch yesterday, Dane had challenged her with the task of doing something to surprise and excite him. She glanced at her watch. He should be returning from his two o'clock any second now. She heard the elevator again and Melanie greeted Dane.

That was her cue. She ducked under Dane's desk. She heard Dane talking to Mr. Lane and his voice grew louder as they approached. Her heart thundered as they came into his office.

She didn't want to startle Dane when he pulled out his chair, because then her

presence would be given away to Mr. Lane, so she sent him the text she had ready to go on her phone. He received texts only from Melanie and herself, and they sent only time-sensitive messages, so she knew he'd check it right away. She heard his phone beep, signaling that it had received her text.

“Take a seat, Jerry.”

A second later, he stepped behind the desk and pulled out his chair. He dropped a piece of paper and leaned down to pick it up, then peered at her, his eyebrows arched questioningly. She grinned at him.

Her text had told him she was under the desk and it was part of his surprise. If he chose to end it now, he might whisk Mr. Lane away briefly, then order her away. Possibly exile her to his private bathroom to wait out the meeting if she couldn't sneak past Melanie.

\* \* \*

Dane sat down in his chair, facing Jerry Lane, well aware of Jessica crouched on the floor in front of him, hidden by his desk. Jerry had no idea what was going on.

Her soft hand stroked over his crotch

while Dane opened the file folder she had left on his desk in preparation for this meeting. His cock swelled as she stroked over the fabric of his pants. He glanced at the report in front of him which summarized Jerry's recommendations. It was hard to concentrate with her soft little hand gliding over his hard flesh, her fingers wrapped around him as best she could while he was still contained in his clothing.

As Jerry began to discuss the first point in his report, Dane felt her fingers slide down the length of him, releasing

his zipper. As Jerry talked about the benefits of extending the number of sick days allowed to employees, Dane stiffened at the feel of Jessica's fingers slipping into his pants and wrapping around his erection.

He drew in a slow breath as she drew his shaft from its confines. He asked Jerry a question about how many sick days he recommended for each employee per year and if it should differ based on seniority, even though he vaguely remembered seeing the answer in the report.

It was hard to concentrate with the

soft fingers gripping him firmly and stroking his length.

Jerry gave him an answer and he nodded, but had no idea what the man had said. Then he felt dampness on the end of his cock as her warm tongue licked his tip.

Oh, fuck, that felt good. Then her lips wrapped around him and she took him in her mouth.

“Is something wrong?” Jerry asked.

Dane’s gaze jerked to Jerry, who stared at him with concerned gray eyes. Damn, had he made a sound, or did he just look dazed?

“Sorry, just a little distracted.” Fuck, actually majorly distracted as Jessica swirled her tongue over his cockhead. He drummed his fingers on the desk, pretending to examine the report. Jessica drew back from his hard flesh, which gave him a moment to breathe.

“Please continue,” he said to Jerry, but Jessica seemed to take his words as a command and wrapped her lips around him again.

Jerry moved on to the next point and Dane steeled his will to stay calm as Jessica slid forward on his cock, taking him deep into her warmth. Then she



drew back and glided deep again. He clenched his stomach as he resisted the urge to moan at the exquisite pleasure. Then she sucked, and a noise escaped his throat. He glanced up at Jerry.

What must the man think with Dane sitting here, his hands clenched into fists, his face probably flushed?

He coughed. “Sorry, I think something I ate at lunch must not agree with me.”

As her warm mouth moved up and down his cock, her tongue stroked his shaft. He shifted in his chair.

“Maybe I should take one of those

sick days we're talking about.”

“Would you like to reschedule?”

Jerry asked.

Dane's automatic reaction was to say no—he could control his response to her delightful touch—but her fingertips grazed his hairless balls as she sucked again and he found himself nodding.

“Good idea. Talk to Melanie on the way out to set up a time tomorrow.”

Jessica caressed his balls, then wrapped her hand around his shaft and stroked as she continued to suck his bulbous tip.

Jerry nodded. “Anything I can get

you?”

“What?” Dane’s gaze jerked from his closed fist to see Jerry standing in front of his desk. “Oh, no. Thanks.”

He gritted his teeth as the man walked the length of the office and then, finally, opened the door and exited. As soon as the door was closed, he slumped back in his chair. His eyes closed as she pumped him with her hand. His groin ached with the need to release, but not yet.

He grabbed her wrists as he rolled his chair back, and pulled her forward and into his arms. His cock dropped

from her mouth into the cool air. He captured her lips and plunged his tongue into her mouth.

“What the hell were you doing distracting me like that?” He grinned at her. “I should punish you right now.” He cupped her head and pulled her to him again so he could ravage her mouth.

As soon as he released her, she stood up and walked to the window behind his desk. She drew up her skirt and bent forward, then rested her hands on the window ledge, presenting her perfect, naked ass to him. His office was high enough that no one could see her

from another building, but right now, he didn't really care if they could.

He stroked over her smooth, round flesh, then drew back and smacked. Her skin flushed a soft rose color. He smacked again, and at her small gasp, he wanted to keep on smacking, but his cock ached painfully.

“If I wasn't so fucking close, I'd continue this. You were a very bad girl.”

“Yes, sir.”

He stared at her delightful ass in front of him and he stroked his thumbs over it, then pulled her thong down and drew apart the flesh to reveal her folds

which glistened in the light. “I’ve been very patient with you, but I can’t tolerate this kind of thing. I need to teach you a lesson.”

He pressed his hard cockhead to her slick opening, intending to glide into her slowly, but as soon as he started to press into her hot, moist flesh, he couldn’t help himself. He grasped her hips and drove forward until he filled her to the hilt.

He twitched inside her and she groaned. He couldn’t resist giving her delightful backside another hard whack. “Do you like this?”

“Yes, sir.” The need in her voice

sent his hormones soaring.

“We can’t have that,” he said, with an edge to his voice, and then he gave in to temptation and smacked her ass again.

His cell beeped in his pocket, but he was damned if he would check a text now. Whatever it was, Melanie would deal with it.

He drew back and thrust forward again. Her smooth passage, so hot and wet, hugged his cock in a tight embrace. Then she squeezed her intimate muscles around him and he groaned at the exquisite sensation.

He drew back and thrust forward.

Filling her so deep. Then he thrust again. She moaned.

His office door opened. "I'm sorry, Mr. Ranier," Melanie said, "Mr. Lane was concerned so I thought I should..."

Jessica stiffened in front of him. Dane didn't glance behind him, but Melanie hesitated as she seemed to realize what was going on.

"Oh, my God, I'm sorry."

He heard the door close behind her.

He felt Jessica start to pull away, but he tightened his grip on her hips. "You stay right here." He thrust again, driving deep into her. He reached around and



found her clit and teased it with his fingertips.

“Does that feel good?” he asked.

She groaned and pushed back against him. “Oh, yes, sir.”

He was so close, but he wanted her to come first. He stroked her clit a couple more times, until she was gasping. He corkscrewed inside her, then began to thrust in steady strokes. She moaned as he filled her again and again. She squeezed him and he felt her body tense. Then she gasped and began to wail.

Watching her reflection in the glass,

he could see the euphoric expression on her face as she catapulted to heaven. He pumped deep, the spasms of her passage massaging him, until his groin tightened and he shot inside her with steady spurts of liquid pleasure. Ecstasy consumed him until he collapsed against her folded body, holding her tight against him.

Finally, still sucking in air, he drew her to her feet and continued to hold her.

“That was incredible, but I see I’ll have to be careful what *tasks* I assign you in the future.”

He grinned as she turned to face him, but she gazed up at him uncertainly, as if

she was worried she'd done something wrong. He kissed her, loving her soft, sweet mouth against his.

“Don't worry. That was perfect.” He nuzzled her neck. “In fact, I love your creativity.”

“What about...” Her cheeks turned deep red. “Melanie came in.”

“I know. Don't worry. She couldn't see you. My body blocked her view. She probably couldn't even tell there was a woman here.”

“You really think she thought you were alone?”

He couldn't help grinning at the

thought that Melanie might have thought he'd been masturbating in front of the window. But Jessica had been making sounds, and Melanie would definitely have heard them.

“No. But there's no way she could tell it was you.”

“What are you going to say to her about it?”

He smiled. “Absolutely nothing. And she won't ask.”

\* \* \*

Jessica sat on the couch in Dane's office while he walked outside to send

Melanie on an errand. How he could face her only moments after her catching him having sex in his office, she didn't know. But then Dane was used to being in control and no one questioning him. Especially his staff.

A moment later, he reappeared.

“The coast is clear,” he said.

She stood up and smoothed her skirt, then walked to the door. She peered out to ensure no one, let alone Melanie, was outside the office, then she strode quickly to her office. Even before she sat down, her cell phone beeped. She pulled it from her pocket as she sat down and

checked the display.

*I could really use a coffee. Want to join me in the lobby?—Melanie*

Jessica drew in a deep breath, then typed in her response.

*Sure. Be right down.—Jessica*

She collected her purse from the drawer and walked to the elevator. Melanie was waiting for her in the lobby. It was a warm day today, so they didn't need their coats.

She forced her mouth into a smile and waved as she walked toward her friend. "You decided to enjoy the sunshine?"

Melanie just nodded. “I can use the fresh air. Starbucks okay?”

“Sure.” She followed Melanie out the glass door and they strolled two blocks down to the Starbucks they often went to in the afternoon.

Once they bought their coffees, they sat down at a table by the window. Jessica’s stomach clenched. She wasn’t sure what to say or, worse, what Melanie was going to say. Did Melanie know she was the woman in Dane’s office? Would she confront her about it?

Melanie stared at her coffee cup, and the anxiety on her face made Jessica

realize that Melanie was just as uncomfortable about this as she was.

“Um ... is something up?” Jessica asked, finally breaking the silence.

Melanie glanced at her, then back to her cup, nodding.

She waited, but the silence continued.

“Do you want to tell me about it?”

“Yes, but ... no.”

“No?” Jessica’s nerves frayed. Oh, damn, she must know.

“I mean ... I shouldn’t.”

*Shouldn’t?*

“Why not?”



“It’s ... about Mr. Ranier.”

A wave of relief washed through her.

“And someone else,” Melanie continued.

She tensed. “Who?”

Melanie shook her head. “I don’t know. All I know is, I walked into his office...” She clenched her hands into fists. “Oh, damn, I really shouldn’t tell you. He trusts me. But ... you are his assistant. You should know what you might be walking into.”

“Please, just tell me. I promise it won’t go any further.”

Melanie nodded. “Okay.” She drew

in a deep breath. “He had that meeting with Mr. Lane from Human Resources.” She glanced at Jessica as if for reassurance that she should continue.

“Yes.”

“Well, Mr. Lane left Mr. Rainer’s office after about fifteen minutes and said he needed to reschedule the meeting. He said that Mr. Ranier was feeling sick. After he left, I texted Mr. Ranier to see if he needed anything, but he didn’t answer.” She leaned forward. “He always responds, so I got worried. What if he was really sick? What if he’d passed out or something? I knew he was

in there alone—at least, I *thought* he was—so I broke his most basic rule and walked into his office.” She stared at Jessica with haunted eyes. “I was just concerned about him.”

“And he wasn’t in there alone after all?”

“That’s right. He was with a woman and...” She leaned in closer and lowered her voice. “They were doing it.”

Jessica bit her lower lip. “Oh, my God. Did you see who it was?”

Melanie shook her head. “No, all I saw was a little of her backside, but I’m

sure it's someone who works at the company.”

Relief surged through her.

“You poor thing. That must have been really embarrassing.”

“It was. That's why I needed to get out of the office. I'm not even sure how to face him.” Her hands clenched into fists, her pink-polished nails digging into her flesh. “Oh, damn, I wish I hadn't walked into his office. He's going to be so angry about that.” She stared at Jessica. “Do you think he'll fire me?”

“Oh, no, Melanie. I'm sure he won't. Don't you think he's just as embarrassed

as you are?”

She stared at Jessica in amazement. “Really? You’ve met the man. Do you actually think he’s even capable of embarrassment?” She shook her head, toying with the plastic lid on her coffee. “No, moments later he walked out calm as you please and sent me on an errand, no doubt so he could sneak the slut out of his office.”

Jessica’s stomach clenched. “Is it really fair to call her a slut?”

Melanie’s head jerked up and her eyes narrowed. Then they widened.

“Oh, my God, it wasn’t you, was it?”

Jessica's gaze jerked away from her friend's. Oh, damn. Why couldn't she have kept her mouth shut?

“Was it?” her friend prodded.

No matter how much she wished otherwise, she couldn't lie to Melanie. But she couldn't say the words either. She just gazed at her friend with a guilty expression.

“Oh, Jessica. That's a really bad idea.”

“I know. You already told me what you think of office liaisons.” She couldn't bring herself to say office *romances* because that's not was she

and Dane had.

“But Mr. Ranier? Oh, Jessica.”

“Melanie, look, it’s not the same as with you and Rafe. I’m not in love with him. And I made it clear that I don’t want anything more than a physical relationship.”

Melanie shook her head. “I can’t believe he would go along with this. Having sex with someone who works for him. It’s *such* a bad idea.”

She wrapped her hands around her coffee cup. “Well, I didn’t work with him the first time we did it.”

Melanie jerked her head to stare at

Jessica with wide eyes. “What?”

“You remember he gave me a ride when I came here for the job fair?”

“Don’t tell me you had sex in his limo?”

“No, we wound up having dinner together that night and we hit it off. That led to us going to my room together.” She shrugged. “I’d never had a one-night stand before, but I was really attracted to him.”

“So it must have been a total shock when you found out he was your boss.”

She remembered those heart-pounding, stomach-fluttering moments



when she'd first walked into her new boss' office only to see Dane sitting there.

“The biggest shock of my life. I almost walked away.”

“Your instincts were right on, but,”—Melanie bit her lip—“I'm glad you didn't turn down the job.” She shook her head. “So this has been going on since you got here?”

“No.” She really didn't want Melanie to think that. “When I told him I couldn't work for him ... because, you see, I was worried he'd hired me because of the sex, you know?”—and

she didn't want Melanie to think that was true—"he said he really wanted me to work here and that we could keep a business-only relationship if that's what I wanted."

The look of disappointment in Melanie's eyes faded a little. "I hope you're not worried that you don't deserve this job, or that you were hired for the wrong reason. You are exceptionally qualified for this position, and you're doing an excellent job."

"Thank you. That means a lot to me."

"Obviously the agreement between you fell apart." A grin spread across

Melanie's face. "So he was that good that you barely lasted a couple of weeks?"

"Well, he does excel at everything he does."

Melanie laughed. It started out as a chuckle, but quickly grew into full-blown laughter. "I can't believe that was *your* butt I saw in there. And with Mr. Ranier! *So* awkward!"

Jessica couldn't help laughing herself. "Well if anyone was going to walk in on us and see my butt, I'm glad it was you. And you don't have to worry about Dane ... I mean Mr. Ranier ...

talking to you about coming into his office. When I asked him about it, he said he wasn't going to say anything."

Melanie smiled. "Well, I guess there are some advantages to being a friend of the boss' girlfriend."

"No, not his girlfriend. I don't want a romantic relationship. It's just a physical thing between us." It made her uncomfortable admitting that out loud to someone.

"Well, you're a grown woman and you can make your own decisions. I just hope you know what you're doing."

Jessica smiled sadly at her new

friend. "I hope so too."

\* \* \*

Jessica glanced at Melanie's empty desk as she walked toward Dane's open door. She must be off on an errand. She slipped into Dane's office, carrying a stack of folders. Dane was at a late lunch, and she wanted to ensure that he had all the information he needed to review for this afternoon.

She set the folders on his desk, and then turned to the wooden filing cabinet behind it. She was sure she'd seen some useful background material on the

electric car battery design in there last week. She crouched down to open the bottom drawer and started scanning through it.

“Hello, excuse me, miss.”

Her heart stopped cold at the familiar male voice. She glanced around and almost toppled over at the sight of Storm standing in the doorway, big as life. But instead of wearing faded jeans and a T-shirt, he wore a tailored suit, and his normally spiky hairstyle was combed down smooth.

Her heart thundered in her chest as she stood up. “What are you doing

here?”

Oh, God, how had he found out where she worked?

“Jess?” He strode across the large office and before she could react, he’d pulled her into his arms. “I can’t believe you’re here.”

She knew she should pull away, but the feel of his strong, familiar arms around her numbed her wits. It felt so good, and she’d missed him so much.

His lips found hers and she melted against him.

She couldn’t believe she was in Storm’s arms again. She’d missed him

so much.

Longed for him.

Been so lonely without him.

But, damn it, the bastard had walked out on her without a word of remorse.

She pressed her hands against his chest and pushed until he eased away. He gazed down at her, his sky blue eyes glittering with happiness.

“Why are you here?” she demanded.

“I was hoping to find you. I can’t believe my luck finding you so quickly. What are you doing here?”

“I work for Ranier Industries. I’m Mr. Ranier’s personal assistant.”



He smiled. “You’re kidding.” Then his smile faded. “But you don’t know...”

His words trailed off.

“Know what?”

He shook his head. “It doesn’t matter right now. All that matters is that I found you.” He captured her lips again and her heart stammered as a turmoil of emotions swirled through her.

She wanted to be happy he was here, to believe that they could rebuild what they’d lost ... but she couldn’t. He’d caused her too much pain. How could she trust him again?

And what about her relationship with

Dane? She didn't want it to end that for something that might fizzle out the first time Storm decided he didn't want to be tied down again.

She pushed on his chest. He released her lips, but his arms stayed firm around her.

“Let me go,” she said with gritted teeth.

“I suggest you do what the lady requests.”

Her gaze shot to the doorway where Dane stood, his arms crossed. She blanched. Just what she needed. Her boss—and lover—catching her in his

office in a clench with her old flame.

Storm's arms loosened around her and he turned around.

“Hello, Dane.”

Dane's gaze jerked to Storm's face and his eyes widened in surprise.

“Rafe?”

A numbness crawled through her as she heard the name Dane called Storm, but she couldn't quite conceive of what it meant. She glanced from one man to the other.

The embarrassment and concern at having been caught in Storm's arms was replaced by shock as a shiver raced

down her spine.

It couldn't be.

She'd been mistaken when she'd thought Dane was Storm the first time she'd seen him. But now seeing them side-by-side ... She sucked in a breath. Their features were indeed similar, especially with Storm dressed as he was in an expensive suit with his dark hair combed back.

Astonishment coiled through her.

“Oh, my God,” she murmured.

With eyes wide in astonishment, she turned to Storm.

“You're Rafe Ranier!”

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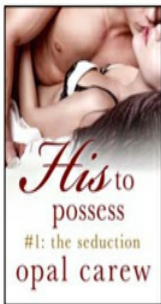
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Opal Carew is the *USA Today* bestselling author of thirteen previous erotic romances for St. Martin's Press. To learn more, visit her on the Web at [www.opalcarew.com](http://www.opalcarew.com).

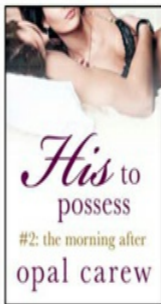
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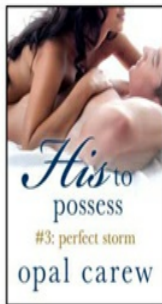
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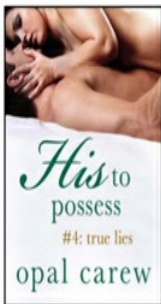
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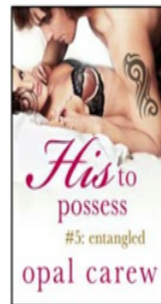
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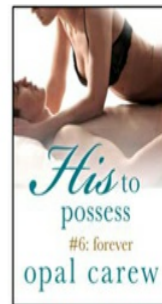
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