

Number

6

The Villains
Series: Book 3

LEE WINTER



Chapter 1

Vegas vs. Beirut

IN THE CHOICE BETWEEN BEIRUT and Las Vegas, Otilie Zimmermann decided it would be a close call. She had stayed in both, nearly died in one, felt like dying in the other, and would rate each as *generally unfavorable* on TripAdvisor. If she ever used TripAdvisor, which she most assuredly would not.

But now that Otilie was back in Vegas, experiencing her trifecta of pet peeves—loud noises, flashing lights, and garishness—Beirut was nudging slightly ahead.

As Otilie pursed her lips hard enough to suck the pulp from a lemon, her sharp gaze mapped the horrors surrounding her. Above, on a giant digital billboard, was a shock-pink, flashing advertisement for nightly shows by America's sweetheart, pop sensation Carrie Jordan. Next to Jordan was a Coca-Cola bottle slam-dunking itself through a basketball hoop, creating a 3D wave of brown fizz that seemed to leap out of its background.

Below, electric blue letters screamed about a Mega Poker Tournament. Opposite was an advertisement for SlotZilla, a casino tower with a zip line, that invited people to do the "Super-Hero Zoom."

Otilie shuddered, and not just because *superhero* should be one word.

Sighing, she rubbed her aching neck and turned to face Hotel Duxton Vegas's gleaming front doors. She was only here for a week or so as she tied up loose ends from her former job. And then, finally, she could retire for good, her conscience clear.

Well, clear enough. From the corner of Otilie's eye, Carrie Jordan's dazzling smile widened into smug perfection.

Assuming she could make it that long.

* * *

A man stood behind the reception desk, his name tag stating that he was Graham. He was tall, thin, in his mid-thirties, and apparently incapable of noticing Otilie. She glanced at herself, analyzing her tweed skirt, brown, flat, sensible leather heels, and an elegant cream blouse pinned down by a pearl necklace.

Ordinarily, being overlooked would please her. After all, Otilie had made it her life's work to be invisible. She cultivated a harmless persona that was exceedingly helpful when in the business of collecting and trading secrets. It was exceedingly *unhelpful*, however, when you wanted prompt service.

She cleared her throat and regretted it. Her neckache suddenly reverberated straight into her skull.

A sixtysomething woman appeared from an office behind Reception—*Mrs. Menzies*, according to the name tag. She took one look at Otilie, and then Graham, and frowned.

"Are you being attended to?" she asked sharply enough to get her negligent employee's attention.

Graham started, eyes widening at the sight of a guest. Fear flitted into them. His hands on the counter went from a relaxed curve to straightening out, sharp and flat. A common tension tell, Otilie noted. Likely, he was anticipating a chewing out as soon as Otilie was gone. He also did not like his supervisor.

Otilie examined the woman: a Mayan fertility goddess shape—short and wide—with hard, dark eyes and heated cheeks. The tips of her hair were slightly damp.

Damp? It was one in the afternoon. Why damp? Otilie mulled that over. The woman didn't seem the type to work out in the gym on her lunch break. Perhaps she'd just arrived to start a late shift?

Otilie looked closer. Mrs. Menzies's pupils were dilated. Well, that narrowed the likely causes down: drugs, adrenaline, recent brain injury, or sexual arousal.

Given her age, lack of fitness or head wounds, and that wet hair, Otilie's short list narrowed to one. On a hunch, Otilie deliberately curled her lips into a knowing smile, one that suggested she'd worked out all her little secrets.

Mrs. Menzies's nostrils flared and her cheeks flushed. And so began the most rushed room check-in in living history.

Well, well. Theory confirmed and, even better, mystery solved. Otilie did detest the unexplained almost as much as loose ends, clutter, and disorder.

"I apologize for any delay. You're in Room 613." Mrs. Menzies thrust a key card Otilie's way and beckoned a porter over. "I hope your room is to your satisfaction," Mrs. Menzies said curtly, gaze darting everywhere but at her.

"Satis-faction..." Otilie murmured innocently. "Yes."

Mrs. Menzies's eyes widened, and she looked so rattled, it was funny.

Otilie spun around and headed for the elevators, smile firmly suppressed.

* * *

Otilie unpacked her suitcase, willing the pain now at the edges of her skull to dissipate. The source of her headaches—her neck—had never been right since '85. The neuropsychiatrist at the Walter Reed traumatic brain injury unit had done his best, but what was done could not be undone.

As the years passed by, almost everything set off the clawing, radiating ache: Cold weather. Flying. Sleeping too little. Sleeping too much. Excessive desk work.

Retirement couldn't come soon enough. Otilie had been counting down for the past three years. She could almost taste the Mai Tais on a warm Pacific island of her dreams.

Opening the closet, she hung up a row of smart tailored business suits—starched gray or brown tweed skirts, jackets, and cream silk blouses—snapping the sleeves straight.

Her stockings and delicates she folded into exact triangles and placed them into a drawer. The elegance of triangles was that a pair turned into perfect geometrically pleasing squares. She appreciated the symmetry. It was beautiful.

Moving to the hotel bathroom, Otilie lined up her rows of high-end, anti-aging creams. She'd been persistently fighting her age for decades. No, she did not look sixty-five, a fact she was quietly pleased about. "Early fifties" was the age she was most often assumed to be—occasionally even late forties.

Achieving a younger appearance took effort, time, and money. Sometimes she wondered if a lifetime spent playing an older woman who faded into backgrounds had made her subconscious assert itself and demand she scrape back the years.

Whatever the reason, it didn't matter. Given all the weaknesses available to humanity, vanity wasn't a bad one to have.

Otilie shifted to the bedroom and immediately stripped the duvet from the bed and dropped it, folded, in a corner of the room. Disgusting things; rarely cleaned and harboring who knew what sort of grime—or worse.

Finding a clean, fresh-smelling blanket, she unfurled it onto her bed. Next, she perched on the end and fished out her phone. Only one message—from her realtor—informing her that a potential buyer had accepted her counteroffer on her apartment.

It was sold. Excellent. She was one step closer to her retirement dreams.

Otilie had never felt much affection for the sleek, polished one-bedroom apartment. It had been a luxurious place to sleep and a central base from which to visit the best museums and restaurants around DC. But it had never felt like home. Aside from her fish tanks, there was little she loved about the place.

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Now that she thought about it, nowhere Otilie had lived had ever felt like home. That would probably be something for a therapist to unpack, if she'd ever deign to see one beyond that CIA-mandated professional she'd once endured. Since then, she'd had no desire to ever step foot in a therapist's office.

She tapped back one word to the realtor: *understood*.

Her phone pinged with a new text message. Recognizing the number, Otilie smiled. Hannah Hastreiter. Hannah's career-climbing son might have anglicized his surname to Hastings to fit in better, but Hannah had no such interest in losing something so precious for such a risible reason. She was aged eighty-four, a former stage dancer, and had a rudimentary (at best) understanding of texting. But her ongoing efforts to connect with Otilie were always appreciated.

No matter where in the world Otilie had wound up in the past fifteen months since they'd first met, her friend could be counted on to amuse her in one way or another, and not always intentionally. Otilie opened the text.

Otilie, dear, have fun in Vegas! Will you please send me a photo of the showgirls? You know how much I miss dancers and dancing. Oh, how I love the outfits! So much pizzazz. Hannayite

A pause, and then Otilie's phone pinged again.

I mean Hannayite.

And again.

HANNAYITE!

Then: Wjat is hapenign! Didnt mean to send that. Sorry

H.A.N.N.A.H

PS I don't know even what is Hannayite?

Ottilie's lips twitched as she texted back: *Hannayite is a mineral found in animal droppings.*

Hannah replied promptly: *Oh dear. That is NOT what I meant to write!*

Ottilie snickered softly and replied: *I gathered. Your phone autocorrected the spelling. Ask your granddaughter to explain it.*

She laughed to herself at the thought of a frazzled Michelle attempting that task with her technologically challenged safta. That was a little evil of her. Ottilie resumed texting.

Anyway, I will endeavor to locate you some dancers. The "pizzazz-ier" the better. Have a nice rest of your day.

A vomit emoji appeared, which Ottilie was entirely sure was the last thing Hannah had intended to send. She smiled widely.

Ottilie set to work on her phone, searching for casinos running showgirl productions. Frowning at finding none, she gave up and ambled into the kitchen to assess the facilities. A toaster. Rare, but she'd asked for one ahead of her stay. Tea and coffee options. Excellent, and even rarer—casinos didn't like customers in their rooms sipping beverages when they could be spending money on the main floor. Again, she'd paid well for the little things.

Satisfied, she returned to the main room, unrolled her yoga mat on the floor, and began a basic routine. It paid to keep nimble as the years passed.

Originally, she'd taught herself yoga to be agile, should it be required in the course of her job to duck or weave from an adversary. Now her routine merely ensured she could scoop things off the floor with ease, slide on stockings elegantly, and stretch to the taller shelves at the store. She was damned if she'd be old before she was ready.

At that reminder, she slowly turned herself into a pretzel and performed her best Lord of the Fishes pose. Her neck protested, and something made an ominous popping sound, but her body complied.

Ninety minutes later, hair sticking to her forehead and cheeks pleasantly warm, Ottilie rolled her mat back up and put it away. She

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settled again on the edge of her bed and checked her phone. It was early evening now, and a new message had appeared.

Michelle Hastings. Former CEO of Otilie's previous company, The Fixers. And Hannah's granddaughter. Otilie's feelings on the woman were...mixed.

Otilie, why are you telling my safta to get me to explain autocorrect to her? This took me almost TWO HOURS!! She still thinks her phone has an evil gremlin in it doing the changes for kicks. That was NOT an appreciated exercise!

She smirked. Well, *she'd* appreciated it, at least.

I'll bear that in mind, Ms. Hastings, she texted back.

Her own comment made her laugh. Unfortunately, that just made the pain radiating at the base of her skull arc up again. Otilie grimaced as she twisted this way and that. She might need a physical therapist appointment while she was here if it persisted.

After meditating a few moments, the pain faded and Otilie got down to business. She checked the time—not too late—dialed a number, and said, "I'm in Vegas. What have you ascertained?"

"Uh, Ms.—uh—Zimmermann, ma'am?" came the sputtered reply. Snakepit always sounded so surprised and unprepared, even though he'd been well aware her call was coming.

"Please tell me you've narrowed down our target's whereabouts by now?"

"Um, no new pings," came the squeaky young man's voice. "His phone's still switched off. But Hotel Duxton Vegas absolutely was where he last used it. I could hack the hotel guest registry to see if he's staying there?"

Otilie ground her jaw. "*Of course* I want you to do that."

"Oh...um...okay. I'll get right on that."

"All right." Otilie rubbed her neck again. "Text me when you have something."

"Yes, ma'am. G'bye, ma'am." The call ended.

Snakepit was a genius, if lacking in initiative and some fundamental social skills. Otilie had been benevolent in offering him this one

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last job as a paid assignment, instead of reminding him about the circumstances under which he'd abruptly left her company. He was aware of that too and seemed suitably grateful he wasn't being blackmailed.

She hoped he'd be able to deliver because anything that extended her stay here was completely unacceptable. With a scowl at that thought, she retired early for the evening.

Chapter 2

Naked Truths

MONIQUE CARSON STRODE OUT OF the hotel elevator on floor six, headed toward her room after a rather delightful lunch with her oldest friend.

Cleo had been up to her usual mischief, suggesting various women for Monique to date. And Monique, as always, batted away her suggestions with disinterest. One thing she already had in abundance was women. All ages, all types, all shapes, and all naked and desiring her. Yes, they were clients, but she had no burning urge to add even more women to her life in any capacity.

Besides, what woman would want to date someone who pleased other women for a living? Hers was not a popular profession for suitors. Every woman she'd ever gone out with in recent years had, sooner or later, asked her to quit or inquired as to when she'd be retiring from her job. The question meant they didn't understand her at all.

Any woman she seriously considered a relationship with would have to accept her exactly as she was. And where did one meet a special woman like that? They didn't just materialize in front of you.

As she neared her room, a woman who Monique had never seen before approached. Not unusual in a hotel, of course, but Monique was quite sure she'd have noticed this one.

Dressed in a tweed skirt suit, she strode at a devastating pace. Her eyes were sharp and cool, her expression determined. The woman was

of average height with a slightly rounded stomach and hips, and generous breasts hidden by a tightly buttoned-up ivory blouse. Not a hint of cleavage showed, which seemed a rather large pity.

The woman's hair was blonde, streaked faintly with gray, and curled into her neck just above the collar. At her forehead, her hair swirled softly up, sweeping to kick up just above her right, formidably arched eyebrow. Her skin was flawless and unlined, quite a feat given her age, which Monique judged to be just over fifty.

Her neck hinted she might be a little older than that—necks and hands on women were age's true indicator, Monique knew full well. No amount of makeup or surgery could hide all one's secrets. So, perhaps, closer to sixty.

Age was irrelevant, though. Because, from Monique's point of view, this woman was utterly magnificent. Her grace, poise, and commanding stride said she was someone to be reckoned with.

For Monique, there was no more impressive sight than a woman of a certain age who knew her own worth, oozed charisma and confidence, and had absolutely no fucks to give.

At the exact moment the woman sensed Monique, her impatient pace instantly slowed. Her countenance shifted from determined to serene. Suddenly, it was as if the stranger had always been some refined, elegant grandmother out for an afternoon stroll.

The transformation was so swift, so unlikely, that Monique wondered if she'd imagined it. As the woman drew level, Monique tried to meet her eye and offered a "hello." It came out throaty because Monique was weak in the orbit of powerful women.

Monique's sensuous voice was almost always guaranteed to get a response. People couldn't help reacting to her. She was used to the attention and well aware she had a "presence" that was hard to overlook.

There was a lot to look at: her tall height could be considered impressive. She had long, thick dark-brown hair, prim teacher-glasses eternally perched on the end of her nose, and a maroon bra peeking from beneath a plunging black executive jacket. Even those who loved to be outraged by her overt sexuality invariably sneaked another peek. They couldn't *not* look.

Not this woman.

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She didn't react at all. There was barely a glance in her direction before she strolled past, and then she was gone.

Monique was overwhelmed with questions.

Who was she? Someone who could change her whole persona in a split second and someone utterly impervious to Monique's presence.

She prided herself on being able to read people within moments, but now here she was, confounded. That was new.

Oh, how Monique loved a mystery.

Chapter 3

Take Me

IT WAS SEVEN THE NEXT evening, and Timmo, aka Tiffany Monahan, was Monique's last client of the day. She never took many. Why would she? Monique didn't need the money, and she liked to be on top of her game for the women she shared her skills with.

Timmo was the shortest, butchest woman Monique had ever met, and she was an absolute delight: a bundle of charm and cheekiness and youth with an irrepressible grin that could not be wiped from her face, not even when Monique explained her fee.

"It's all right, y'know," Timmo said. "I've been saving all summer for this."

"Is that so?" Monique purred, eying her unbuttoned blue-and-red flannel shirt over a black tee. That form-hugging shirt was tucked into worn black jeans above brown boots. "What do you do?"

"Farmhand, officially. Shitkicker, more realistically. Think of the grossest jobs on a ranch in nowhere, Nebraska, and I'm your boy."

"*Boy?* Would you prefer to be called by male pronouns?" Monique asked gently.

"Nah, it's just what the crew calls me." Her voice deepened and she bellowed, "Hey, boy, there's a pile of shit that needs shoveling, get on it." She shrugged. "Doesn't bug me in the least. I get mistaken for a boy so often, I just roll with it. They think they're pissing me off, but they ain't."

“They want to rile you up? Why?”

“I pull more chicks than they do!” She laughed hard, and her bulk shifted and rolled like the incoming tide. It just made her all the more delicious to Monique.

“My, my. Are you a lady-killer, then?”

Timmo’s eyes crinkled. “Yes and no. I’ve never had a *lady* before. Every woman I’ve ever been with has been rougher than a cowboy’s butt after ten hours in the saddle. I’m not knocking my lovers, y’know. I like ‘em all. We are what we are, and it’s fun, but that’s not what I dream about.”

Monique leaned in. “And what do you dream of, darling?”

“It’s been my fantasy to be with a lady for so long, I can’t even tell you.” She ran her eyes appreciatively over Monique’s form. “Someone real pretty, y’know? With manners and elegance and who dresses so lovely. Maybe she comes from old money and has actual refinement? Like she’s seen the inside of a ballroom or a concert hall. Not another grunt like me who thinks cutlery’s more a suggestion than a requirement.”

“I understand.” Monique subtly shifted until she was indeed posed more gracefully. “If it helps, I do know which one’s the salad fork and how to do a Viennese waltz, and while I’m not ‘old money’, I’m well off enough to be in no need of it.” Her expression was teasing. “So, what would you do with your lady?”

“I’d worship her,” Timmo said, her intense gaze fixed on Monique. “Every inch of her. And I’d probably faint like a sack of potatoes if she worshipped me right back.” She ran her fingers through her slicked-back blonde hair. “God, I’m so excited, I’m about to burst.”

Monique smiled. “Did you come to Vegas just for me, darling?”

“Oh, no. My best friend from school, Marty, is getting married. He wants an Elvis wedding. I’m the best man. Soon as I heard where it’d be, I wondered if maybe I could tick that fantasy off my list. There’s a lot of beautiful ladies here. Have you seen the dancers?”

“Indeed I have.” Monique’s smile widened. “And been with one or two.”

Timmo’s eyes became rounder. “Wow. Lucky you.”

Monique smirked and pushed her laminated page toward Timmo. "I'm sure you've probably already seen this on my website, but it's my menu of choices. What number appeals to you?"

Briefly, Timmo scanned the page, but it was clear she'd already seen what was listed. "Number one."

How surprising. "That's usually selected by women new to sapphic delights, or those who are questioning their sexuality. It's like a primer of what lesbian sex is like."

"I know." Timmo's cheeks reddened. "Honestly, I want to know if I'm doin' it right. And more than that, I want to know how to treat a lady. Or improve my technique if I'm doin' okay. A fumble down her pants behind the cowshed ain't exactly the best education on what to do. I want to start with the...uh...fundamentals. Work my way up from there. When you're horse riding, you start with walking, not galloping."

Monique nodded. "I like the way you think."

"You do?" Timmo grinned hard. "Good, cos I like you a whole lot."

She reminded Monique of an enthusiastic puppy. A terribly cute one. "Do you wish me to use toys?"

Timmo shrugged. "Never used 'em before. Wait, do I get to use one on you?" Her eyes went wide, as if she were suddenly considering the possibilities.

"I'm afraid not," Monique said with a chuckle at Timmo's hopefulness. "I adhere strictly to the menu. You may touch me only if I allow it. And you will not be granted permission to enter me, toys or no toys."

"Really?" Timmo bit her lip. "So I can't tongue you or anythin'?"

"That I might allow. I'll let you know if I approve when we're in the moment. But fingers and toys inside me, no. If you do want that from a sexual partner, I have a list of lovely women who are experienced, talented, and full-service."

Monique half expected Timmo to opt for going elsewhere. She'd come so far to be here, it seemed likely she wouldn't want to waste her time on not getting everything she'd fantasized about.

Instead, Timmo just grinned and said, "Nah, that's fine. I'd like to stick with you, if that's okay."

"It's more than okay. I'm sure we'll have a lot of fun."

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Timmo beamed from ear to ear. “What happens next?”

“Next, I ask cash or credit? And after that, you get wet and naked... in the shower.”

“Right. And, uh, it’s cash.” She pulled out a worn, black Velcro wallet and slapped it onto the desk.

* * *

Timmo’s tanned expanse of flesh was a delight to explore. She was so responsive to every touch and trailed finger. Her large, pillowy breasts gleamed from the wetness of where Monique’s tongue had been, and her ample stomach rose and fell sharply as she gasped out breaths.

“Uh...Ms. Carson?” she gulped as Monique tongued her clit with expert swishes.

Timmo had an impressive clit that was large and swollen. A mouthful to be toyed with. Delightful. Monique *really* loved her job.

She met Timmo’s desperate eyes and let go of her clit. “Yes, darling?”

“I don’t often beg, but I’m prepared t’ do it. Let me have a memory to go home with? Can I do the same to you?”

Monique considered the request. She knew she was privileged to live in a large city with everything—and everyone—at her fingertips. Timmo lived in the middle of nowhere and couldn’t fulfill any fantasy without the investment of a great deal of time and money.

“I’ll think about it,” Monique said and then plunged her tongue deep inside her.

Timmo wailed in pleasure.

Monique ran her hands all around Timmo’s large thighs, smooth as could be except for a scar at the knee. Timmo had already explained that as a farm accident. “Me versus a bull. Didn’t win.”

She was so gorgeous, so enthusiastic, with all that flesh to rub and tease and fuck. Monique was quite certain Timmo was having the time of her life too, given that every part of her body was quivering and she was moaning.

Maybe she would indulge the young woman. It wouldn’t be the worst thing to have those cheeky lips nuzzling her clit. She was also

rather curious as to whether Timmo had any talent. It might be interesting to find out. She hadn't exactly allowed Timmo to worship her, which had been a big part of the woman's fantasy.

Five minutes later, Timmo's eyes grew very wide as Monique shimied out of her pants and panties and turned to face her. She still wore her white blouse and a black bra, but nothing else.

"Well, darling, it's time to see what skills you possess." She offered a cocky smile. "Think you can please a lady?"

"Oh my fucking God." Timmo whimpered. "Oh my *God*. You're so beautiful."

Monique preened a little. "Well. May I sit on your face?"

Timmo nodded hard.

"No fingers, though," she cautioned.

Timmo shook her head.

"Good." Monique got into position, lowering herself onto that eager mouth. "Make me come, darling. Show me what you've got."

Timmo's strong, rough hands clasped her ass to hold her in place. Her mouth opened and seemed to swallow Monique's pussy and then wetly swirled her tongue all over her, from clit to entrance.

And, yes, it felt nice. Really nice.

That roaming tongue prodded her entrance a few times, and Monique squirmed. *More than nice*.

Then her tongue was hard against her clit, pressing with force, until Monique felt arousal hitting.

A smug delight lay in Timmo's eyes now as she tasted Monique's essence. Timmo's hands began to make squeeze-and-release motions on her ass.

Monique was dripping. Aching. She undid her shirt and pushed her breasts from her bra.

Timmo's tongue froze in mid stroke. Then her eyes clenched shut, and she began to quiver.

The woman was coming? Monique ground herself against Timmo's mouth, taking over where she wanted the pressure and how. Her pleasure was building rapidly, and it intoxicated her how much she was enjoying herself.

Timmo's eyes opened again, a glazed look in them, half stunned, half stupefied. Then she took Monique's clit between her lips and sucked it as if she were trying to force ice up a straw.

Monique came. Shuddering and shaking, she put her hands on either side of the wall behind the bed and thrust against Timmo's mouth, reveling in the little shudders. Then she stilled.

Gently, she extracted her body from Timmo's mouth and rolled over onto her side.

"Wow." Timmo gasped. Her mouth was red and her lips swollen. A sheen of wetness was smeared across most of her lower face. "You're... *Wow.*"

"It turns out you do know how to please a lady," Monique said dryly. "Just so you know, it's rare I allow that."

"Thank you," Timmo said, her tone reverent, holding Monique's gaze. "I mean that."

"Was it everything you fantasized about?"

"Nah." She grinned.

Monique blinked. "It wasn't?"

"It was so much more. I mean, *fuck*. I don't even have words for how amazing that felt." She looked up at her from her eyelashes.

Monique smiled, pleased.

"You really are so beautiful," Timmo said quietly. "I could just stare at you for hours."

"You're pretty adorable yourself."

"Eh, I'm a short, fat little butch." She shrugged.

"You say that as though they're bad things. They're not, darling. Every woman is beautiful to me. Some more inside than outside. I think you're both. I do hope you'll visit me again sometime."

Timmo blushed hard. "I'd love that, but unfortunately I had to save six months to afford this."

There was a slight edge there, a question perhaps.

"I'm sorry it's hard for you."

"Yeah." Timmo hesitated. "I'm just wondering, though. If you don't need the money and someone who really needs to see you is, um, financially strapped, would you ever consider a discount?" Her tone rose to hopeful.

"I can't," Monique explained gently. "I don't do discounts, not even for the cute ones. I know what I charge is a lot. But I have to charge that, or I'm sending a message I don't like. It's about valuing myself at a level I'm comfortable with. If I discount my rates, I'm discounting my body, and it tells people I'm not worth much. I won't do that."

Timmo sagged.

"But I argue that access to me is well priced for what I'm offering. Most people sell their brain or their muscles to employers. But they don't also include their vulnerabilities and being stripped bare, emotionally and physically. When I charge a client, I'm giving a lot for that. I'm not just a body. This isn't just sex. I'm giving them access to so much more. And I'm worth it."

"Yeah." Timmo nodded. "You so are. Sorry to ask. I just really want to see you again, and I won't be able to afford it for ages."

"I understand. I'll count down the months till we meet again." She grinned.

Timmo laughed. "Thanks." She sat up and began dressing.

Chuckling with her, Monique rounded up her own clothes, dressed, then saw Timmo out. She put her hotel phone back on the hook, her cell phone off silent, and sprayed a little air freshener.

As she tidied up, she smiled. It was satisfying being with someone so enthusiastic, so delighted by being with her. Timmo had been undemanding, easy to please, in touch with her body, and in love with being aroused.

Not every woman came to her with so few hang-ups or so much self-awareness.

And while Monique loved all the interesting challenges her many and varied clients presented her with, sometimes the Timmos of the world were a wonderful breath of fresh air. A woman who took one look at Monique and knew *exactly* what she wanted.

It was flattering being desired. Yet that wasn't why she did what she did. What she also loved was being *needed*. She took a great deal of pride in unfurling the petals of a tight bud: the moment of awareness of a woman discovering her own pleasure, sometimes for the first time. When that happened, she felt like an all-powerful queen.

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Being worshipped as one was fun too. She smiled to herself as she remembered the way Timmo had looked at her with burning hunger and complete wonder. Some days—hell, most days—that was enough too.

Monique went to strip the sheets.

A knock sounded, short and sharp.

Monique frowned. She wasn't expecting another client until tomorrow. Monique's plans were a sedate room service dinner while she looked over some company prospectuses that her business manager, Ray, had sent over. He'd flagged them as ripe for investment.

Opening the door, Monique drank in the unexpected sight. The stranger from the hallway yesterday whom she hadn't been able to get out of her mind.

"Ms. Carson?" she asked, gaze darting about.

"Yes?"

"I'm in need of your services," she said. Her words were curt and clipped, her accent faintly German. How intriguing.

Monique rapidly tried to go through her mental schedule as to when she could make room to book in this intriguing woman. One thing was certain: she could scarcely wait.

She smiled and said, "Well. Do come in."

TO CONTINUE READING,
PLEASE PURCHASE

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BY LEE WINTER

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