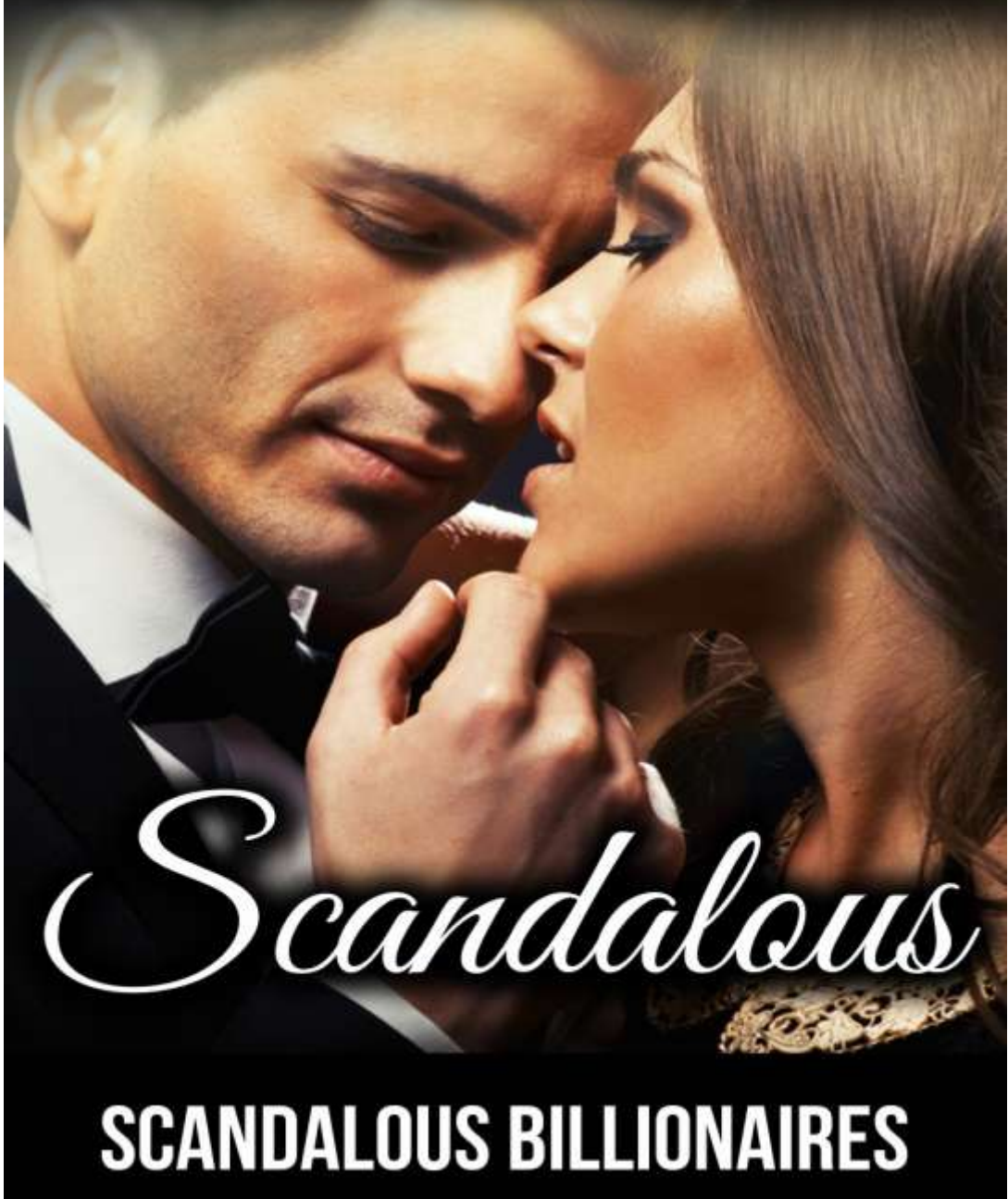


DREW SINCLAIR



Scandalous

SCANDALOUS BILLIONAIRES

Scandalous

The Scandalous Billionaires Collection - Volume One

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For the Joy of Romance and the Thrill of E-Publishing, but most of all for my beautiful little family!

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Chapter One

"This looks like an intervention." Jason Demovic said drily. He wasn't smiling and neither was anybody else. His mother had asked him to come by the family home for a private talk but instead he found himself confronted by Rodney Smyth, the Demovic corporation CFO, Ernst Pitchford, the family lawyer and his two brothers, Zach and Harrison.

Jason wasn't the type of person to back down; something all these people knew very well.

The atmosphere was tense.

In looks he was very alike his two brothers. All three were Mediterranean in skin tone, hair and eye color, but tall, angular and Scandinavian in their build. All three were strikingly, impossibly good looking by any standards and a picture of the three brothers together at a function or a night spot was pure gold to the local celebrity media.

At just twenty-nine years of age Jason was the eldest of the three.

"As nobody here seems to want to speak, let *me* begin." He said. "What exactly is this all about?"

An uncomfortable silence reigned for five long seconds.

"Jason," his mother said in a frail voice, "we all appreciate that what you are doing is good. Good for the world, good for the individual charities involved and in many ways good for the Demovic Corporation as well."

"I agree. So why are we here?"

CFO Rodney Smyth interjected.

"You've given away nearly 10% of Demovic in the last six months alone Jason. This can't go on."

"The current net worth of the Demovic family remains at over 75 billion dollars." He replied with a cold economy of expression. "There's plenty more we can give away before anyone has to cut back on the champagne."

Zach, the middle brother of the Demovic family and its technical genius, weighed in.

"I think we're all aware of the numbers here Jason, so that's not the issue and neither is the champagne, but if you continue to donate like this then there won't be anything left to give. If we want to maintain the philanthropic tradition of our family then it needs to be done at a sustainable rate."

"I understand that Zach, and you don't need to worry. I know exactly what I'm doing." His face betrayed no emotion but his steely gaze spoke volumes. It was a gaze that inspired loyalty in some, fear in others, but obedience in everyone.

Nearly everyone.

Today he was speaking to his inner circle; his fierce independence of spirit and natural leadership was matched by almost everyone he could see. It was the

reason his mother had invited them; not only was he looking at the entire board of directors of the Demovic corporation, but if anyone in his world was able to stand up to him, then they were sitting right in front of him.

Harrison, the youngest of the three brothers, spoke up. If the impulsiveness of youth had long ago left the two older brothers, Harrison still held an edge of fieriness that his mother and older brothers hoped would soon soften with age.

"We all get it Jason, we all miss dad--"

"You? Miss dad?" Jason said accusingly. Harrison hesitated, looking briefly away from his older brother before continuing.

"We all respect the tradition of giving, but this is just crazy. Give it all away and then what happens? We're just as poor as the people we're trying to help. That's no good to anybody."

"Every donation is tax deductible. Charity is good for business." Jason said, refusing to give an inch.

"Don't patronize us Jay." Zach said. "We all know that, but 10% of Demovic in just six months? It's financial suicide. Speculation in the media that something is wrong at the heart of Demovic Inc is rife and sooner or later it's going to affect business."

Jason held up his hands and the group went silent, waiting for him to speak as he looked each of them in the eye, slowly, one by one.

"I'm acting CEO of Demovic Corporation." He said. "Now unless there's something else to discuss, I have somewhere I need to be."

He stood up to go.

"Sit down Jay." Zach said. The tension in the air was near unbearable. The Demovic family was not accustomed to internal strife in business matters since the passing of Mr. Demovic senior. Normally they spoke as one voice, guided by Jason's acknowledged razor sharp business sense.

That guidance had been accepted without resentment or question until his seemingly endless spree of philanthropy threatened to bankrupt the corporation.

Jason gave Zach a long, cold look before he sat down. Like all of them, he was used to giving orders, not taking them.

"This better be good." he with quiet intensity.

Their mother spoke quickly, hoping to defuse the situation.

"It is good Jason. Good for everyone. We have come together today simply to discuss how much money Demovic Inc. should give away in philanthropic contributions in any given financial quarter, that's all."

"I've already decided how much that should be." Jason said.

"Jason Demovic does not equal Demovic Inc," Harrison said with evident irritation, "no matter what you think."

Jason looked at him, his expression giving nothing away.

"Of course I don't think that, but this specific decision is mine and mine alone, just as our father said it should be and as the board, including everyone here agreed upon. Now if you'll excuse me--"

"If you won't discuss this with us then we will have no choice but to ask you to stand down as CEO." Zach said. Jason was motionless for a moment. The two

brothers had fought many times as children but never as grown men. They had always been equally matched and neither feared the other.

The room held its breath as Jason looked to Ernst Pitchford, the family lawyer. He didn't need to say a word to the tough old legal shark.

"It can be done." Ernst assured him.

Jason looked around the room again. If Ernst said it was true then it was true. No one in the world knew the Demovic family legal affairs like Ernst Pitchford. He had been defending the family's interests since the brothers were in diapers.

Jason took a long deep breath and then looked at Zach.

"Give me a proposal and I'll think it over. *Now* if you all will please excuse me--"

"There's one more thing." Zach said.

Jason waited, his face still betraying no emotion but his family knew him well; he was surely enraged at this challenge to his authority.

"Well?" he said.

As confident and strong willed as Zach was, the words stuck in his throat. It fell to their mother and her 49% interest in the Demovic Corporation as a whole, to save the moment. Her voice was frail but her power in the corporation was formidable.

"We'd like you to consider getting some help son." She said softly.

"I already have all the help I need. My team is excellent, the best in the world."

"That's not the kind of help we mean."

Even the human barracuda Ernst held his breath in anticipation.

"Exactly what kind of help are you talking about mother?"

She reached into a small pocket in her pleated skirt and put a card on the table.

"This person comes highly recommended."

Jason Demovic read the details from where he sat. He didn't deign to pick the card up. It was the name and contact details of a psychological counselor in Manhattan.

He looked back into the eyes of his family and then to Ernst who returned his gaze with all the steel he could muster. The lawyer was capable of staring down a high court judge without flinching an eyebrow but his heart skipped a beat as he nodded his head to assure Jason Demovic Jnr. of the binding nature of what his family was 'suggesting' to him.

Jason stared defiantly around the room again. The board of directors held its breath...

Chapter Two

One Month Later

"Mr. Demovic will be about ten minutes late." The smooth, feminine voice informed Dr. Melissa Price. "Please wait for him." She started to thank the caller but the line went dead.

She sat back in her leather bound chair, realizing that she now had twenty minutes of free time to kill. She decided to call her little sister. She liked to check in with her frequently, even if only for the briefest of exchanges.

"Hey Suzy, how are you feeling today?"

"I'm doing great." Her sister tried to sound enthusiastic, but her voice was listless. "Just a little tired. You know how it is. Sometimes the dialysis is like that. I'll be better in a few hours."

Melissa knew that the treatments had been taking more out of her sister each time. She needed to get that kidney donation fast but they had been waiting for years. Melissa would have donated herself but her blood type was incompatible.

"If you need anything at all, just call me."

"I'm fine, now come on, leave me alone, you've got work to do."

"Actually I'm free for--" The call ended without even a goodbye. "--the next twenty minutes." Her voice trailed off. The shortness bothered her but she knew that even a phone call could be exhausting to Suzy on some days so she held her peace and put the phone down. Her eyes wandered to the degrees and certificates on her office wall. Her graduate degree was from Harvard and her doctorate from Stanford. She had attended both colleges on scholarships and graduated in the 97th percentile. Although an outstanding student she had not been in practice long and was still trying to build up her business. From struggling to study and pay bills with evening work, now she finally had the letters after her name but less money than ever since you can't be a psychotherapist and a waitress at the same time.

This made her current situation with the ethics committee even more galling. One tiny mistake, one human error after years of study.

It didn't seem fair. It was a beginners mistake and she prayed they would see it like that too.

Just hang in there. She kept telling herself. *We've been through worse times than this, the light is there at the end of the tunnel. Just a little longer now. We can beat this.*

If her little sister was stoical about her illness, Melissa herself always put on a brave face about the medical bills, but in reality she was almost to the point of paying interest only on their accumulated medical debts. She never said a word of this to Suzy and never would as long as she could keep on paying the bills.

The ethics committee would have to clear her and the business would have to be a runaway success because there was no other option.

Just hang in there.

She took a small mirror out of her bag to check her appearance. Her auburn hair was pulled back tightly into a neat, if not particularly attractive bun, but it made her look older and more professional which was the desired effect. Her spectacles were serious rather than fashionable and tended to make her look older; something else she needed with her youthful face. The glasses also made her face look thinner. Although petite she often thought she was a little too rounded. With college, work, looking after her sister and now setting up a psychotherapy practice as well, she had never had the time to worry about getting into better shape.

Needless to say dating had been out of the question since forever.

She heard the door in the reception area open and sat up straight. Her receptionist Sandy was behind schedule today so she would have to meet and greet by herself unless that was him arriving already. She had left the door open to allow her first client to come into the waiting area.

She stood up and went to her office door but it opened abruptly after a short, heavy knock before she could get to it. The man who entered the room was unbelievably good-looking, even to Melissa; with all her worries and pre-occupations it took a lot for her to notice attractiveness in the opposite sex.

"Where's Dr. Price?" The well dressed man said gruffly.

Someone needs manners. She thought.

"I'm here to see Dr. Price." He added.

"Mr. Demovic?" She asked.

"Jason." He said, softening slightly. "Look, I'm already late. Are you Dr. Price?"

Melissa held out her hand.

"Dr. Melissa Price. It's a pleasure to meet you Mr. Demovic. Won't you take a seat?"

"Pleasure." He said, and took her hand, sending a sharp jolt of electricity crackling through Melissa's body. She jerked her hand away and a hint of a smile came to his face.

"You need to get that carpet changed. Too much static." He said. To her complete surprise a vivid image of herself making love on the carpet to the mouth watering man in front of her flashed through Melissa's mind.

Come on Melissa. She berated herself. *You're a trained psychotherapist, not a schoolgirl.*

She smiled and indicated her analysis area to him to one side of her office, where there was a coffee table an armchair and a couch.

"Mr. Demovic, would you like to take a seat?"

He nodded and began to cross the room. Melissa followed behind him, watching his tall, muscular frame move in front of her. She couldn't help but notice that he was superbly healthy, radiating strength and athleticism. The suit he wore looked like a thin veneer of civilization on a man who was obviously a primal and instinctual being. Most of her few clients were older, or had the

appearance of age. They were fatigued, anxious, worn down by their troubles, but not this tall, straight and self-assured man. He was downright hot and Melissa was feeling the heat.

He sat down on the couch and she took a seat next to him in the armchair.

"Make yourself comfortable." She said. "This is your hour, so I suggest we get started before anymore time is wasted."

"I'm all for that." He said. "I don't want to waste any time at all with you Dr. Price."

What did that mean?

Before we fuck. The words crossed Melissa's mind like a voice from a stranger in her head. She sat up straight in the armchair, taken off guard by her own reactions. She had been attracted to clients before but never quite like this. If she had felt things before it was after a period of getting to know the person, gaining insight into who they were and building a relationship of sympathy and trust. No one had ever walked into her office before and made her just want to...

A feeling of foreboding crossed over her. This client was bad news. Somehow she could feel it.

Just tell him to leave. Another voice inside her spoke with urgency, but she dismissed the thought. *Don't be ridiculous, Dr. Melissa Price! This is just a client like any other. A little more attractive than usual but nothing to come undone about. Just pull yourself together.*

And besides, she needed the money. What kind of therapist would send a new client away just because they felt an unusually strong sexual attraction to them?

"Would you like some water?" She offered.

"No thank you." Jason looked around her office, first to her degrees and then to the collection of prints next to them. Melissa watched and waited.

"You obviously like Fernanda Salazar." Jason said without inflection, as though the preference were commonplace and the artist well known. Melissa was stunned. Almost no-one had ever commented on her wall art and not a single person had ever known the artist's name.

"Yes I do." she said. "Do you know her?"

"Not that well, but she has been over to the house a few times. I see you have one original."

Melissa tried hard to look unimpressed at his intimacy with her artistic hero. Fernanda Salazar was an artist she revered not only for her work but for her dedication to the plight of poor women in rural Latin America.

"Mr. Demovic, as much as I would love to, we're not here to talk about my interest in art--"

"It's what I want to talk about. It'll help me with my problem."

"And your problem would be?"

"Well, firstly, that my new therapist is an extremely attractive woman."

"Mr. Demovic--"

"We need to deal with that. I have it on good recommendation that you are one of the best new psychotherapists in the city, but I hadn't expected you to be the most beautiful as well."

His voice was calm and totally serious.

"Mr. Demovic--"

"But that's not the main problem. The truth is that I don't really need to be here at all."

Melissa laid down her pen and pad on the table between them and then sat back in her chair.

"Okay, then. If you don't need to be here, can you explain to me why you are here?"

He watched her silently for a moment, thoroughly considering his reply.

"Not quite yet." He said at last.

Melissa had infinite patience for those she believed she could help with her training, but for silly mind games she had no time at all. 'Not quite yet' sounded like playing around to her.

"That's odd Mr. Demovic, because you give me the impression of being someone who likes to get straight to the point. Why don't we cut to the chase here and save us both a lot of time."

Jason looked mildly surprised, but not unpleasantly so.

Are you here for therapy or for something else?" Melissa continued.

"I thought mental health professionals liked to do everything slowly Dr. Price. Are you rushing me for answers? I've only been in therapy for..." he checked his watch, "just under fifteen minutes and you want to cut to the chase already?"

He looked her fully in the eyes and Melissa had the awkward feeling of being caught out. Had she been too hasty in challenging him?

His intense eyes watched her mercilessly as color began to rise from her rapidly beating heart, through her slender neck and then slowly, slowly into her face.

This is ridiculous. She thought. Ridiculous or not, her blush response was outside her conscious control.

"Is it getting hot in here?" Jason asked with a hint of a smile that Melissa couldn't help but find incredibly sexy. She gave a resigned sigh, took off her glasses and then lifted her reddening face defiantly towards him. She sat up straight again.

Okay Mr. Beautiful Asshole. She thought. *You win. For now.*

Jason continued to smile as she undid the top button of her blouse. It surely was getting hot in there. He raised an eyebrow and then frowned in disappointment when she stopped after the second tiny button.

She folded her arms across her ample breasts and felt the subtle swell of her nipples. No man and certainly no client had ever made her feel quite this way before.

"Well done Mr. Demovic." She said. "You managed to make me feel uncomfortable. Are you happy now?"

"It's only fair." He grinned. "You've made me feel uncomfortable from the moment you looked at me with those gorgeous green eyes of yours and now I'm supposed to tell you about my problems? Just imagine how I feel."

Melissa looked at him and mercifully felt her heat and color gradually recede.

"Do you always blush when men comment on how attractive you are?" He said.

Bastard. She thought.

"Do you always use flirtation as a means to gain power over women?"

"Only those I find unusually attractive."

"Mr. Demovic, this isn't going to work if you continue to behave like this. Now why don't you tell me why you're here and then we can decide if we want to continue our professional relationship together or not."

Jason's expression became serious again.

"I'm here because my board of directors insists that I see a therapist. They say I'm giving too much of their money away to charity. Of course the idea is nonsense. There is no issue here--I'm just continuing a tradition of philanthropy begun by father. Therefore, I would like to propose a deal with you."

"A deal?"

"Yes. A deal. I propose that we save your time and my money. You sign off on twenty-four hours of therapy and I'll make sure that you're more than adequately compensated. I'll even consider putting you on retainer and having Demovic Inc refer employees to you who might need counseling. Say at a cost of one hundred thousand dollars per annum?" He spoke matter of factly, as though it were already agreed.

Melissa had to hide her amazement yet again, but the truth was that one hundred thousand dollars a year would be an instant fix to all of her and her sister's immediate problems. She was slowly realizing that the smoldering guy in front of her was not just a successful man but one of quite considerable means--definitely not just a pretty face and a smoking hot body.

She felt her mouth go dry as she considered her response. Another first from a client.

Jason Demovic waited for her approval and his gaze felt like a hot midday sun beating down on her. She was used to all kinds of pressure as a responsible adult and as a psychotherapist, but business world financial negotiations were outside of her comfort zone. One hundred thousand dollars was a lot of money and would enable her to do a lot of good, but for sure the ethics committee wouldn't see it that way.

"I'm sorry Mr. Demovic, but I'm afraid it doesn't work like that. How about you explain to me why the board thinks you need to see a therapist? I think that might be a good starting point for our session today."

"I don't have time for this." He said shortly. "I run a multi-billion dollar company so every minute of the day counts and I absolutely have no need for any kind of psychotherapy."

"If you don't have time for any of this then why the silly game? Why even come here to see me? And for goodness sake, why try to flirt with me?"

Jason watched her, considered her. She had refused his offer, which he didn't like, and she had rebutted his attempts at flirtation. On the other hand, she was tilting her head ever so slightly to the left as she waited for him to speak and watching him with rapt attention through her nerdy glasses. All of this he liked very much indeed.

He liked it enough that his cock began to stiffen under the thick fabric of his hand cut, tailor made business suit.

He had taken in every detail of her office in a moment. Her credentials with Harvard and Stanford he had known about already but her appreciation of Fernanda Salazar had been unexpected. His attraction to her had been unexpected as well. She wasn't his usual type but there was something about her he knew he really wanted. He had chosen her because he knew she was a young, inexperienced therapist in trouble both professionally and financially. He had counted on her being a push over and easy to manipulate, but that seemed to be backfiring.

Her resistance to him was annoying, but somehow it only made him want to fuck her even more than he had wanted to when he first laid eyes on her.

That buttoned up little outfit.

That miss prim hair bun and the serious glasses hiding the sensuous, beautiful girl underneath.

You want to play hardball little lady? You don't know who you're dealing with.
He smiled.

"I'm here because of the board Dr. Price." He paused. "But I'm flirting with you because I like you."

"I'm flattered Mr. Demovic but unfortunately that complicates our relationship."

"We don't have a relationship Dr. Price--not yet--and don't make the mistake of thinking that just because I like you that I'm going to let that get in the way of my goals. I'm here to achieve an outcome and one way or the other it's going to happen, with or without your compliance. But trust me, your compliance will make things go a lot smoother, a lot quicker and will work very, very much to our mutual satisfaction."

Mutual satisfaction. The words echoed in Melissa's mind.

"Am I right in thinking you are trying to intimidate me Mr. Demovic?"

"An offer of one hundred thousand dollars per year is hardly a threat. However, I should warn you that I will only make the offer once. If you refuse it then there's no going back. If it's a question of the amount then there is room for negotiation. I'd be willing to go to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars per annum if that will change your mind, but that's my final offer."

One hundred and fifty thousand dollars... It was more money than Melissa had ever considered in her whole life.

She took another deep breath but then shook her head slowly.

"It's not a question of the amount Mr. Demovic, it's a question of ethics. I can't accept that money in exchange for lying about your therapy."

"Ethics, Dr. Price?"

His inflection made her uncomfortable, as though he knew more about her than he was letting on.

"I don't see a conflict." He continued. "There's nothing wrong with me. I'm an adult and I can decide if I need therapy myself or not. My decision is that I don't. You are a highly qualified psychotherapist starting out in your career and this retainer would be very significant for you and for any dependents you may have."

Besides, if you come to work for us then you never know if I might have need of your services myself at some time in the future. It would save me having to find someone new."

Melissa fixed his eyes with her own, he was persuasive, the offer was very, very tempting and god but wasn't he damnably attractive...

She sighed again.

"The answer is no and that's my final word on this Mr. Demovic. Now either you find another therapist who might be able to accommodate your needs or we continue in therapy, real therapy, and I'll be happy to sign off on your twenty four hours when they are completed."

For a moment a flash of wild anger passed through the handsome man's dark eyes and Melissa wondered what she might just have let herself in for. If she said yes and was caught out then it would be the end of her career. One slip up might be okay, but two? The ethics committee would never hear of it. On the other hand, she really had no idea who this Jason Demovic person really was or what he was capable of if crossed. She didn't want to waste time thinking about that. Hopefully he would just take his business elsewhere and not add to the problems she already had.

"It's the wrong decision Dr. Price." He said and made ready to leave. "I hope you won't live to regret it." He stood up and pulled his jacket on. Melissa stood up as well and extended her hand to bid him goodbye. One part of her was relieved but another was strangely disappointed. Jason Demovic was no ordinary client and the mystery of why he was giving away so much of his money and why it was of such concern to his board would have to remain unsolved.

And she would never see this sexy man again unless it was in her dreams.

"I'll have my PA book in the next appointment." He said as he took her hand. His firm, tanned grip was delicious around Melissa's soft white palm.

"I don't understand." She said. "I just refused your offer. You're free to look elsewhere."

"You're my third therapist Dr. Price. Three strikes and I'm out. The board will initiate legal proceedings if we don't work together."

Stupidly, crazily, Melissa's heart began to race. She was going to work with him after all. For better or worse she would be getting to know the mysterious Jason Demovic very personally and very intimately over the course of the next six months or so.

"I hope you're going to be worth my time and money."

She was caught off guard this morning yet again.

"I'm worth both your time and your money." She said and then mentally kicked herself in the shins. She sounded like a cheap hooker instead of a serious Harvard educated Dr. of Psychology.

Jason nodded his head and then turned to leave with Melissa trailing behind. Outside in the reception area her receptionist Sandy was seated at his desk and the homely looking gay man's jaw dropped as he watched Jason cross the room without even a nod in his direction.

Once they were alone Sandy looked at Melissa with his jaw still hanging open.

"Girlfriend." He said, breathlessly, "have I died and gone to heaven? What I wouldn't give for one night with that man. Does it get any more perfect than that?"

Melissa rolled her eyes.

"Be careful what you wish for Sandy. That could be one night in heaven or one night in hell."

"I'll settle for a night anywhere with him boss lady." Sandy replied. "By the way, you've got mail." He said in a more serious voice. Melissa returned to the door and saw an ominously dark envelope on the desk in front of him.

"Is this what I think it is?" He said. Melissa picked it up and tore it open. Even though she knew it was coming, still her heart sank to see the actual date set.

"The disciplinary hearing is next week." She said. "So I guess you'll know if you still have a job by then or not. I'm so sorry Sandy."

She felt herself begin to tear up. She was letting everyone down. Her professors, her clients, herself, Sandy and most of all Suzy.

Before she knew it the tall young man was by her side and was holding her in his arms.

"It's okay boss lady." He said. "You're only human too you know. Come on, we'll get through this. And hell if they take away your license I bet you'll make one great receptionist. I'll even recommend you myself."

She looked up at the ridiculous expression on his face and couldn't help but laugh. He was such a good guy and a great receptionist when he wasn't arriving late. She would miss him so much if they shut her practice down.

Outside on the street Jason Demovic walked down the steps of the squat building that housed Melissa's office.

A limo pulled up in front of him. The window rolled down and his brother Zach peered out at him.

"How did it go big brother?"

"How did what go?"

"The therapy session? What do you think? Don't forget that you're on to number three, so please tell me that you have an appointment with Dr. Price for next week."

Jason smiled. "Just hold on a minute." A homeless lady with a shopping cart full of garbage bags and three oddly shaped dogs lay all piled up together on the steps of the building. He walked over to them and sat down.

"Oh Jesus Christ." Zach muttered.

Jason gently shook the woman's shoulder but she didn't move. The animals lifted their sleepy heads but made no move to defend their owner as Jason reached into his wallet and slid out five new one hundred dollar bills and put them gently inside the woman's coat together with a card containing the details of a homeless shelter downtown.

His brother rolled his eyes.

"Are you booked in for next week?" he called out.

Jason moved slowly and gently so as not to disturb the old lady and then walked back to his waiting brother.

"Don't worry. She's the one." He said.

Zach looked at his brother with deep suspicion.

"Come on." he said. "Get in."

Jason complied but Zach felt ill at ease; somehow, he just couldn't imagine that his brother would go into therapy, no matter the amount of pressure on him.

Chapter Three

Jason Demovic's lips pressed against Melissa's and his hands searched lower. Finding the top of her panties he slid them off her ass and left her fully exposed. He was barely clad himself with his shirt hanging open to reveal his ripped, movie stars six pack and tousled 'I'm ready to fuck you now' hair.

"So what would you like to talk about today?" David's voice was soft, unhurried, gentle and wrenched Melissa back from her reverie into reality. She looked at him as though he had just appeared out of thin air before her. Since the news of her disciplinary hearing she had been meeting with her counseling supervisor at least once a week just to keep her on track. He was the only person who knew how deeply the whole ethics committee thing was getting to her.

The highly experienced psychologist was tall, good-looking and ruggedly handsome in a blonde blue eyed sort of way, but Melissa felt no attraction to him physically or romantically. As a therapist who she respected and looked up to however, she certainly felt drawn to him and the truth was that just at the moment he was the support to her that no-one else in her life could be.

"Melissa. Did you hear me?" He said.

"I'm sorry David." She shook her head. "I'm so distracted lately and today I had this unusual client--" She cut herself off. She hadn't planned to talk about her unsettling experience with Jason Demovic. She had other much more pressing things to deal with.

"Unusual? How so?" David smiled at her in his comforting big brother way.

"Not unusual just... different. Look, can we forget about him--"

"Him?"

"Yeah, it was a guy, just some guy--"

"You said he was an unusual client and you mentioned him as a reason for your being distracted. I think that might be worth discussing, don't you?"

"Can we come back to him later? I got the letter today with the date for my hearing. It's getting to me David, no matter what I do I just can't shake this anxiety."

David didn't say a word.

"It's next week. and this could be it. All those years of hard work and dedication, gone. For nothing. Just because of one tiny, stupid..."

David waited.

"God damn you." Melissa said. "Why are you so good at this?"

Her supervisor smiled.

She knew he wouldn't let it go and she knew he was right. Demovic was an issue. It was no accident that she had mentioned him, she knew better than that. In psychotherapy there was no such thing as an innocent slip of the tongue. Sure she was worried about the hearing but somehow her encounter with the

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