

Another Dance

Book 3:
A California Belly Dance Romance
Sexy Short Story

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A sound at the door pulled Taz Roman from his hazy morning thoughts. Instantly alert, he grabbed the bed sheet and pulled it over Melanie's bare shoulders and his own naked body before the familiar silhouette was in the room.

"Mr. Roman! Oh dear, I didn't know you were home."

The short, round woman with her hair wrapped beneath a scarf shielded her eyes from the sleeping couple.

"It's all right, Anna," Taz said, trying not to move so he didn't disturb Melanie, who was lying on his chest. He looked to see if she was awake, but her eyes were closed, and her chest rose and fell in the gentle rhythm of slumber. "The party ran late last night, so we took a cab home."

"Shall I give you a few minutes?" she asked, turning toward the hallway.

He glanced at Melanie again. This time one eyelid was lifted and she was peering at him, dazed and half-conscious. She shook her head.

"Maybe you should skip this room," he said to Anna. "We might be a while."

"We?" Confused, Anna turned back and noticed Melanie. She whirled away again. "I had no idea. I'm so sorry. Of course. I'll be downstairs. You just... Well, I—"

"It's all right, Anna," he said with a chuckle. "Thank you."

Without another word, his housekeeper pulled the door closed behind her.

"That's a first," Melanie said after a yawn. "I've never been awakened by a maid before."

"Sorry about that. I should have left her a note downstairs, but I wasn't exactly thinking about the housekeeping last night."

Melanie moaned in that deep, sexy way of hers and wound her legs more

tightly around his.

“I hope not,” she said. “I was trying very hard to keep your attention on me.”

Feeling her bare skin and her heat against him brought it all back. First, killing it onstage at the Belly Dance Divas’ premiere. Easily his best opening night performance ever. Being out there with his drum as Melanie danced made it the most incredible opening night ever. From the moment they’d stepped off that stage, all he’d wanted to do was get her into the dressing room and lock the door.

He might have managed it, too, if Garrett hadn’t already been in the wings, bragging about the after party he’d arranged. Taz would have skipped it, but Melanie refused. It was her first big show and the official launch of the show’s ten-week world tour. She told him she didn’t want to miss anything, including the after parties. Then she’d nibbled his ear and promised there’d be time for everything else later.

Later had turned out to be three in the morning.

By the time the cab had delivered them home and they’d stumbled through his front door, they’d barely made it to the bedroom.

But they hadn’t even made it to the bedroom, had they?

A quick rummage for food in the kitchen had turned into something else entirely. He imagined the look on Anna’s face when she discovered the streaks of whipped cream on the kitchen island that had been left when Melanie emptied the can in her creative—and incredibly seductive—use of that frothy sweet topping. And then there were the clothes they’d stripped off and left on the floor before running upstairs for a shower that was supposed to clean them up but had turned fifty shades of dirty instead.

A satisfied grin stretched across his face at the memory of it.

By the time they’d actually made it to bed, they’d both collapsed with exhaustion.

He tugged again at the sheet and adjusted his head against the pillow. It had been one hell of a night in so many ways, and now with Melanie sprawled over him, it was the perfect morning. He brushed his fingertips across her arm and her hair, enjoying her softness and her warmth.

How in the world had he gotten so lucky?

“Damn,” she said, interrupting his thoughts. “I didn’t bring an overnight bag. I don’t have anything with me.”

“I’m right here. What else could you possibly need?”

She slapped his chest playfully.

“A toothbrush, for starters. A decent hairbrush, a flat iron. Shall I go on?”

“You don’t need that stuff, and we’ve got all day. Besides, the car service will be here before dawn tomorrow to pick us up for the airport, so you might as well sleep while you can. It’s only nine.”

“It’s already nine?” She shot up and rubbed her eyes. “You shouldn’t have let me sleep so late. I’ve never packed for a tour before. I have a million things to do.”

He slid his hand up her thigh. “Relax. The only thing you have to do is me.”

He worked his fingers between her legs.

She kissed the top of his head but wiggled out of reach.

“As appealing as that sounds, I can’t stay.” She dropped her head back and groaned. “And my mom will be up by now, which means on top of everything else, I get to start the day with a walk of shame.”

He traced figure eights in the bed sheet. “You know, you wouldn’t if your things were already here.”

“What do you mean? Like an extra toothbrush?”

“Yeah. A toothbrush, or maybe all your stuff. There’s plenty of room.”

Too much room. Lately, that’s how it felt when she wasn’t around. Sharing his house with her when she was his fake girlfriend had changed everything. Now it only felt like home when she was in it.

The horrified look on her face, however, made it clear she didn’t feel the same.

“Please tell me you didn’t just ask me to move in with you. That would be insane. My mom needs me, and seriously, how would that even work?”

His brain went numb. He stared at the sheet, at the wall, at anything but

her as he tried to think of something to say. Because she was right. It was a stupid idea. It was insane. Right? He wanted to say so but the blow to his gut was making it difficult to get the words out. He managed a shrug. “Of course I’m kidding.”

She hit him with a pillow. “Like I’d move in with you. Do you think I’m crazy?”

She was laughing.

He tried to laugh, too, and grabbed the next pillow she had aimed at him. “I definitely don’t think you’re crazy,” he said softly. He locked glances with her, and he wanted to say more. For a split second he thought maybe he should say what he was really feeling. That he’d never been happier than he’d been these past few weeks. That he couldn’t imagine his life without her.

But what if she laughed at that, too?

He dropped the pillow on the bed and turned away, debating what to say or whether to say anything. He opted to say nothing. Instead, he rose, and pulled a fresh pair of boxers from the dresser. “You’re right,” he said, stepping into the shorts and yanking them up. “It’s late. We should get moving.”

Melanie frowned. “You’re leaving?”

“Yeah. I don’t know what I was thinking. I’ve got a ton of stuff to do. I have to swing by the drum shop and the office. Check on the instruments to make sure everything gets packed right. I don’t need any broken drums in London.” He ticked off several more small and tedious tasks—tasks he’d already delegated to a tour assistant. Since he needed someplace else to be right now, he might as well attend to them himself.

“When do you think you’ll be back?” Melanie asked.

“I don’t know. This stuff could take a while.” It was going to take all day and then some, if he could manage it.

The creases around her mouth deepened. “But don’t you have to pack?”

“I’m done. Mostly. You know, we don’t have to go to the airport together. I can have Garrett send a car to your mom’s place.”

Her brown eyes locked onto his green ones. “But I want to go together. I just have to get a few things. I told my mom I’d spend the day with her, but I can be back before dinner. You know, if you want to grab something later.”

He shrugged, like it made no difference. “Sure. Fine.” He opened a dresser drawer and rummaged for a clean T-shirt.

“How about seven-thirty?” she asked. “Wait, seven would be better.”

Her voice cracked with a hint of emotion, and it twisted his insides. His conscience told him to wrap his arms around her and tell her everything was all right. He just couldn’t. Not yet.

“Don’t worry about Anna,” he said. “Stick around as long as you want. She won’t get in your way. See you later.” He grabbed his wallet from the top of the dresser and headed for the door.

“Hey, wait. You don’t have your Jeep. My car’s still parked on the street. I can drive you back to the club.”

“No,” he said. “I’ll get a cab. Don’t worry about it.”

By then, Melanie was off the bed and shuffling toward him with the sheet wrapped around her. She stopped in front of him, rose to her tiptoes, and wrapped one arm around his neck. “Well, you can’t leave without a kiss.”

He leaned down and quickly pecked her lips.

She shook her head, tightened her arm around his neck, and held him closer, pressing her lips against his and waiting for him to soften.

He didn’t want to give in, but, damn. Being this close to her, feeling her skin and smelling the warm, clean scent of her, he lost his resolve. His hands wound around her waist as if they had a mind of their own. He pressed her against him and gave in to her deep, ardent kiss.

But then, in his mind, he saw her horrified look again. “That would be insane,” echoed in his mind and pierced his pride again. He pulled back.

“I’ll see you later,” he said, turned, and disappeared down the hall.

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