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Excerpt from

Heat Wave

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“Hold! Hold! Please!” Bre’a called as she raced across the marble foyer throwing herself into the elevator just as the doors slid shut.

“Whew! 32nd floor please. I hope I’m not late.” Bre’a said politely as she sat her small duffle and saxophone case down nervously pulling the belt to the trench coat a little tighter as the elevator began to move upwards.

“This elevator is private. It only goes to the Penthouse.” A hard voice stated.

“Oh no! I’ll be late!” She groaned breathless from her hurrying.

She took a good look at the man across from her. Handsome was her first impression. Boring as hell in that business suite was her second impression. And his frown lines were way too deep for someone in their thirties and his voice held a hard edged note to it. She knew his type. She’d dated one. All business. Serious. Cold and calculating. Married to their cell phones, palm pilots, lap tops, blackberries-electronic dayplanners.

“Sorry. I’ll just ride it back down and get on the correct elevator.” She smiled politely over at him.

He returned her smile but it didn’t light up his dark eyes as he skimmed her attire and made a strange little frown at her before glancing at the elevator buttons. She noticed they were almost to the top floor. Suddenly the elevator lurched, stopped and the lights went out.

“Aht!” Bre’a gasped.

“Another damn blackout!” The voice said with hard exasperation. “It’s this damn heat wave gripping this damn city.” Curt, with more than a mild bit of frustration.

She heard his brief case being set down and it sounded like he was shuffling for something in his suit coat pocket. Yeap, sure enough, a little light went on as he studied his palm pilot and began punching some buttons on it.

Ruthless, she added to her adjectives about the stranger. Although, there was something familiar about him. Bre’a knew she’d never met him before, she’d remember the sexual charge she felt emanating from him. Okay, she told herself, maybe he wasn’t emitting anything, maybe it was just her feeling sexually attracted to him. She couldn’t understand why. She’d never been attracted to a total stranger before. Certainly not a businessman. Musicians and artists, yes. Men in Armani suits, no.

But somewhere she’d seen his profile. Television? Newspapers? Tabloids? Yes, that was it. His face was all over the tabloids the last few months because he’d had that nasty divorce a year or so ago and recently hooked up with some high-powered attorney. Oh yeah, Bre’a recalled, the attorney was that gorgeous blonde assistant prosecuting attorney. It was a big big deal in all the newspapers and gossip tabloids. After all, this man was some hotshot self-made millionaire, or billionaire or whatever big dollar amount the tabloids stated. Now she wished she’d bought the rag and read more than just the front cover lead lines.

He shut his palm pilot off and she heard more shuffling before a click and the light of his cell phone screen shot to life casting shadows over his strong chiseled face. The bluest tint softening the deep furrows of his forehead and the hard lines around his mouth and she suddenly thought him very handsome. She almost sighed from the sculpture of his handsome profile.

“Farmsworth, we’re in another blackout. See how long it’s predicted to last then call me back. I’m stuck in my elevator. It’s a damn heat wave in here.”

He flipped the phone shut just as the emergency lights came on in the elevator. They both blinked from the bright light, exchanging cordial smiles.

She watched in interest how he tapped the phone against his square chin, obviously considering whom else he needed to call. He pulled his tie knot out and slipped it off, rolled it up and put it into his suite pocket before taking his suite coat off draping it neatly over his brief case and then unbuttoning his shirt two buttons for comfort in the warm elevator. As he was doing this he was looking at her attire and a speculative frown furrowed his brow.

Still looking at Bre'a he flipped his cell phone open again, scrolled down and punched a button.

“William. I’ll have to cancel that dinner meeting with you and Kramer this evening. I’m stuck on my elevator. We’ll reschedule for next Friday. By then you should have all the financials on the O’Connor takeover. I need the legals on my desk tomorrow for the McHenry and Mahon Publishing Company. What’s taking so long with that?”

Bre'a was thinking what a gorgeous hunk of man he was and it was too bad all that manly-body was wasted by an overactive business brain because she thought he'd be a damn fine fuck if he could let go of his business interests long enough to concentrate on making love. But his kind never did. Even after business hours their minds were still in overdrive on some financial report or some stack of spreadsheets or they were strategizing a legal move. Or revenge tactics. Yeah, she knew his kind and although she could feel the sexual tension inside of her for him she told herself he wouldn't be interested. Besides, she told herself in no uncertain terms, she wasn't the career type a man like him was interested in anyhow.

He flipped the phone shut, tapped it against his chin again. Opened it, scrolled down, punched a button and repeated the process several more times as he checked his palm pilot and made phone calls, canceling and rescheduling appointments that this evening was going to screw up for him.

Bre'a's phone played Beethoven's fifth loudly and it took her a few moments to dig it out of her small duffle bag but not before she seen his eye brows lift at the unusual cell phone ring sound and his beautiful mouth spread into a small grin of surprise.

“Hello Lisa. I’m Lisa? I can’t hear you? Lisa?” The line went dead so Bre’a punched in her friend’s number and smiled at the man across from her as they both waited for answers.

The new dancing gig Lisa had talked her into wasn’t getting off to a very good start. Damn, too bad she thought, cause she really needed the two hundred fifty bucks from the gig.

Worst than her dwindling finances was the audition and interview for the South Side Manhattan Orchestra she was set for at eight o’clock this evening. She was going to put that call off till the very last minute in hopes the power was restored in time for her to make it ten blocks over for her appointed time.

“Agghh.” The man groaned as his cell beeped twice in the middle of a call and went silent from a low battery.

Bre’a stood with hers to her ear waiting for Lisa to answer but all she got was the voice mail. She flipped it shut. The man was watching her with his damn deep furrowed brow. She so wanted to reach out and gently rub it smooth.

“May I?” The man asked politely. “Mine died. I still have a few more calls.”

“Ahhh, sure. At 7:30, if we’re not out of here, I need to make a very important call and reschedule an audition.”

As she handed him her pink phone he lifted a brow and took in her attire again. His eyes straying to the fishnets and red stiletto heels with interest.

“7:30. Right. Thank you. This is very kind of you. My name is James Kenyon and yours would be?”

Well his name sealed who he was. The big money mogul whom the tabloids loved because of . . . well, his money, big power businesses and especially because of his very public nasty divorce. Hadn’t his wife left him for some playboy actor? Wasn’t she a CEO of some big publishing company? He was probably still carrying a torch for her even now after a couple of years.

“Bre’a Bennett.”

“Bre’a. Different. Hmmm. Bre’a.” He said again playing the name over his tongue. She liked the way it sounded coming from him in his deep voice. “Thank you again, Bre’a Bennett.”

Well, at least he was polite, she told herself watching him punch in a number on her cell phone.

He gave her a devastatingly wide white smile that shocked Bre’a into silence but had her smiling back at him as his one dimple fascinated her. Who would have guessed she thought, that Mr. No Nonsense Businessman had such a beautiful smile and a dimple to match? Too bad the smile didn’t last longer. And she was certain smiles didn’t come frequent to him because the pictures in the tabloids and the newspapers never showed him with that adorable dimple.

James scanned the lady’s attire again and raised a brow. She had on red stiletto heels, black fishnet nylons and a trench coat big enough to almost wrap around her twice. She had pulled the belt of it tight and tied it off letting the buckle dangle down. The hem of the coat hung loosely past her knees and skimmed across the tops of her well-developed calves.

He thought if he was hot from the heat of the elevator in just his shirtsleeves she must be even hotter in that long trench coat. He looked at her red-gold hair piled up into a ball atop her petite head held by a couple of gold clips and admired her slender neck and nice shaped ears. She had big green-gold eyes outlined in black pencil and fringed with long dark lashes. James thought she was way too pretty and young to be wearing such heavy stuff around her eyes. Maybe she was in her early to mid twenties. She was definitely one good looker. Nice voice. Great legs. She had graceful hands and a friendly, honest, inviting smile that touched her eyes.

When she smiled back at him he could have sworn she was flirting with him. Nawh. She was too young. He was too old. He must have been mistaken. Although

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“Mason! Listen, we’ll have to reschedule the double date. This blackout has me stranded in my elevator and I’m in the mist of rescheduling everything for the next few days.” He waited. “Okay, put her on.”

She watched the frown lines deepen as he watched her while he talked.

“Hello, Julia. No this isn’t my phone.” After a pause he said, “It’s Bre’a Bennett’s, she’s stuck in the elevator with me. My cell went dead.” He gave Bre’a another smile across the small elevator and wondered about who she was and why she dressed so . . . strangely for a heat wave gripping this city as it was. How the hell she’d mistaken his private elevator for the common house elevator? But some perverse emotion ran through him telling him he was glad of her mistake and happy to have her company in this situation. James knew himself well enough to know he hated to be totally alone. That was why he had so many businesses and acquaintances and family and girlfriends and meetings and meetings and meetings. He was only alone when he was at his penthouse late in the evenings. And hell, most of the time he would spend the night with some woman at her place. Lately it was Julia. When their schedules matched up. Obviously, he thought with a grim grin, the relationship wasn’t moving according to how Julia thought it should.

Bre’a wondered if he was testing his Julia on the other end by giving her too much information about his immediate situation.

He frowned again. She could tell he wasn’t used to this kind of a conversation nor did he like being rung over the coals for circumstances beyond his control. He seemed too much a control freak give up power in a relationship. She wondered who this Julia person was and what kind of a hold she had on James Kenyon. He didn’t look like the type of man to let a woman pull his strings, at least not often and never too tight.

“I realize you’re very busy and you made room in YOUR busy schedule for OUR date tonight, but Oh Jesus OH HELL NO . . JULIA, FUCK OFF!”

He snapped the phone shut, exasperated that the woman was trying to lay a guilt trip on him over a damn broken dinner date. It wasn’t as though he had much

control over this heat wave choking the city and giving it a blackout. He suddenly wished for nothing but his penthouse and his piano. Music was his one soul soothing lifeline in his crazy overfilled life.

“Fucking career women.” He muttered.

He needed to find better dates than what his friends connected him up with. Thing was if it weren't for all his married friends he probably wouldn't have a date at all. He knew he was just too damn busy to punch in women's phone numbers and addresses and emails and contact them and set up dates. And, frankly, over the last few years the dates had become boring, tiresome affairs. A bad waste of his good time.

Perhaps, he considered watching the girl across from him looking at a sheet of . . . MUSIC? -he was at an age where dating was just wasteful weeding and what he needed was a committed relationship and to build his own family life. However, the women in his social circle were all power women and what he was becoming aware of was the fact that accomplished career women, power women, women who lived, breathed, talked, walked and slept their chosen careers, were not what he needed in a wife.

Didn't anyone understand how much James wanted to walk out of his office in the evening, come home and NOT talk financials, spreadsheets, stock options or takeovers? At the end of the day he would love to stretch out on the sofa and abandon himself to a good book with a soft sweet woman curled up against him reading to him. A sexy woman reading a cheap dime store novel, yeah a piece of fluff, to him as he allowed his mind to unwind from the day and visualize the romance in the book. Yes. That'd be nice. And music. He loved music. Strong and vibrant chords mixed with soft and sensuous melodies. Ahhhh. He'd love someone to share that with. Someone to play music with, share the melodies with. Yes.

But, he mused tapping the phone against his chin, what did he want to talk about? With whom? What kind of woman would be appealing to him on a long-term basis? If she didn't have a career wouldn't she be boring?

“It’s stifling in here, would you mind if I unbuttoned my shirt?” He asked the girl.

“Ahhh. No. Hummm. Not at all.” Bre’a stammered looking at the wide thick set of shoulders and the crisp hairs at the nap of his neck enjoying the feel of the little rush of sexual heat spreading through her.

She had been watching him and listening as he made his phone calls and thinking how handsome and suave he was. Okay, a bit ruthless in his dealings, especially with the Julia person, but so different than the twenty something’s that hung out at her girlfriend Lisa’s apartment. This man was a take charge, get-it-done-now type of businessman. She’d already watched him make several calls, reschedule appointments and he’d re-set several things on his palm pilot. And, she grinned recalling his last conversation, he’d neatly told Julia to Fuck Off. Unlucky lady, Bre’a thought with a little smile.

“What’s so funny?” He asked as he unbuttoned his shirt cuffs.

She didn’t realize she’d been smiling and almost chuckling over his Julia call.

“Oh. Nothing really. Well . . . I was just thinking I wouldn’t want you pissed at me like you are with that Julia woman.” She grinned.

He raised a brow at her in surprise of her impertinence and then saw himself from her angle and smiled.

“Don’t worry sweetie, I bark louder than I bite.”

“Hmpt. I bet you bite if pushed enough.”

“I suppose. Don’t you want to take that coat off? It’s like an oven in here.”

He scanned her nice legs again and almost sighed at the sight of her red heels. God he loved red heels on a lady. It always looked sexually wicked to him. Almost like a glaring red light saying, “*Yeah, I’m hot and horny and ready to fuck.*” Oh yeah, he loved red heels.

“I can’t.”

“Huh?” Then he remembered his question. “Why not?”

“I . . . ummmm . . . I don’t have much on under it?”

He cocked a dark brow up at her just before the emergency lights went off and total darkness engulfed them.

“Ahht.” Bre’a screeched and grabbed his arm.

“It’s alright. Our eyes will adjust in a few minutes. Here, at least my palm pilot is good for something.” He flipped it open and the little screen let off an eerie blue glow.

“Go ahead and take that big coat off and get comfortable.”

“I can’t.”

“You must have something on under it. Don’t you?”

Now he was interested and could feel the sexual tension building deeper in his groin. He’d been sexually aware of her from the moment she’d stepped onto his elevator in red high heels and black fishnets. Now his cock was telling him he was very aware and very interested.

“Well. Yes, I do, but . . .”

“Then don’t be embarrassed. Take the damn coat off. Toss it on the floor and let’s get comfortable. This might be a long hot wait.”

“Well . . . ummm . . .” Bre’a hesitated.

“Listen honey, is it any less than a bikini you’d wear at a beach?”

“Well . . . no.” He had a point she thought.

He sat down, his shirt unbuttoned and open and she swallowed and wondered why she was so suddenly hot. Was it from the coat, the heat wave or all that muscular hairy chest of his glaring up at her and her fingers itching to bury into it? Her stomach fluttered. She felt shy and unsure of herself. He was probably very experienced with women she was thinking as she debated whether to take the big trench coat off.

“Well?” James asked in a softer voice interested as to just what the hell she did or did not have on under the too big coat. He scooted into a more comfortable position, leaned against the wall and stretched his long legs out before bringing one knee up and leaning his arm casually across it.

“Alright. Don’t laugh though. I was on my way to a gig.” Bre’a said as she untied the belt and then pulled the coat open and off. She watched his dark eyes widen in disbelief as he slowly took in her skimpy lingerie ensemble.

“Whewww.” He whistled appreciatively wishing for better light. “Some gig. You always run around Manhattan in nothing but red and black lacy lingerie under a trench coat?”

She watched him drink her in again. This time slower. She felt almost giddy from his sensual lusty look over her body. Maybe taking the coat off was a positive move.

He had to still his hands from wanting to reach out and take hold of those lusciously full breasts of hers. They were made fuller and higher by the under-wire push-up bra she had on. Red satin. Black lace. Nice. She had on a matching garter belt that held her fishnets at her slender upper thighs. Garter belt. Had he ever seen a woman actually wear a get up like this out of a magazine? Hummm. Never. The little thong barely covered her wisp of golden-red curls beneath it.

He suddenly wished he had a woman whom he could lavish garter belts and thongs and push-up bras on just so he could slowly take them off. But his kind of women would never take the time for such sexual nonsense. His kind of woman was too filled with business to enjoy all the nuances of sexual pleasure. Even Tiffany, his ex-wife, was nothing but a boring black and white show under her business suits and evening dresses. Sure she had the body for this type of . . . candy, but she was too much of a prude to wear something so provocative. And, although he still stung from the callous way she’d dumped him for *Mr. Pretty Hollywood*, James recalled their sex life hadn’t been all that hot. Sex once or twice a month was fine with her, but he’d wanted sex once or twice a night. But, damn it all, he still harbored feelings for the damn woman. At least he had a burning desire for revenge against Mr. Pretty Hollywood. He’d love the chance to cuckold the pretty faced bastard. After doing that, maybe he’d have his final fill of Tiff too.

“I, ummm. I was suppose to dance for a party this evening.” She explained.

“You mean strip for a party?”