

JANUARY THAW

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CHAPTER SEVEN

DIONYSUS' LYRE

It was nearly 11:00 p.m. when Lindsay and Rejeanne sat in Lindsay's vehicle as it idled, discussing the remaining course of their evening together. They had had a lovely dinner at a piano bistro and then strolled to another nearby establishment to listen to live Chicago-style blues. After awhile, however, both women were thoroughly ready to work their happy feet.

"Okay, here are our options," Rejeanne began as Lindsay warmed the interior of the SUV.

"We can go to any one of the dozen or so gay guy bars here in town. Some of them are mixed men and women; some are mixed gay and straight, while others are all guys. The disadvantage of going to a boys' bar is that they never play any slow music. Boys love their music techno, fast, and constant. But the advantage is anonymity."

"What do you mean?" Lindsay asked.

"Well, to put it bluntly," Rejeanne replied, "I lived here for three years when I was in college. I did the bar scene on occasion then. I know people. Specifically, I know women. If we go to a dyke bar, I'll likely be spotted by one of my old running buddies or former teammates. If I'm spotted, you'll be spotted. Get my drift?"

"Do you know just how beautiful you look right now?" Lindsay asked as she gazed at Rejeanne dreamy-eyed.

"Um, I... thank you, but..."

"My point being," Lindsay interrupted, "I would be honored to be spotted with you anywhere."

"Are you sure, Lindsay?" Rejeanne asked. "Because we could easily go to one of the mixed boys' bars with all of their hetero comforts."

“Will we be running into any of your old girlfriends at the women’s bar?”

Rejeanne chuckled. “Probably not,” she said. “My only true ex still living in Chicago is Jo and she doesn’t do the bars, especially since making sergeant last year.”

“And they play slow music that we could dance to at the women’s bar?” Lindsay inquired.

“Oh yeah.”

“Then there’s no debate, Jeannie,” Lindsay announced. “I came here to dip you tonight and that is what I’m gonna do.”

The two women smiled at each other just before Lindsay put the H2 in reverse to pull it out of the parking spot. As they headed for the bar, both women felt uneasy about what awaited them. Lindsay contemplated an evening of unbearable sexual tension, while Rejeanne was concerned about Lindsay’s ability to adapt to the unique surroundings of a lesbian space. She was concerned that the intensity of it all, specifically the unassuming displays of affection between women, would freak Lindsay out. Desperate not to allow her musings to give her a headache, she decided once again that small talk was in order.

“So, Lin,” she said, “why don’t you own a Ferrari or a Porsche or some ridiculously expensive vehicle like that?”

“Do you think that this SUV we’re sitting in came cheap?” Lindsay retorted.

“No, but I’m sure it didn’t cost you a hundred thou or something,” Rejeanne said. “I mean, it’s expensive, sure, but it’s also practical.”

“Ah,” Lindsay said quite dramatically. “And therein lies the answer to your question, sweetheart.”

“You choose practicality over style, Lin?”

“With cars, yes.”

“So when do you ever choose style over practicality?”

Lindsay looked at Rejeanne and smiled sinisterly.

* * * *

Rejeanne directed Lindsay to a popular women’s bar located on the outskirts of town. Lindsay immediately noticed the security guard planted firmly near the entrance.

Rejeanne immediately noticed Lindsay. “Gay bars need them,” she said to Lindsay, referencing the guard. “Protection from queer-bashers.”

As soon as she entered, Lindsay was almost overcome by the pounding of music and the cigarette smoke. After presenting her ID, she paid her way and insisted on paying Rejeanne’s as well. Once they checked their coats, the two gingerly wandered into the bar.

“Smoky in here!” Lindsay said to Rejeanne loud enough so that the smaller woman could hear her over the noise.

Rejeanne grabbed Lindsay’s arm and leaned her down so that she talk into the taller woman’s ear. “Yeah,” she said. “The one male that’s firmly planted in the hearts of the average bar dyke is the Marlboro Man.”

Lindsay looked at her friend. “Come on, Lin,” Rejeanne said. “Let me buy you a drink.”

Rejeanne escorted Lindsay over to the main bar. The music was not quite as loud there, and Lindsay was relieved that she would be able to actually talk to her companion in a normal tone of voice.

“What do you want, Lin?” Rejeanne asked as she prompted Lindsay to sit on the last available bar stool.

“No, you sit,” Lindsay said. “I’ll stand.”

As Rejeanne propped herself up on the rather lofty bar stool, she realized that it brought her almost face-to-face with her tall companion. “So, what are you having, Lin?” she asked.

“What are you going to get, Jeannie?”

“A beer.”

“I’ll have the same.”

After the bartender approached with the beers, Rejeanne looked into the eyes of her friend and extended her glass. “To us,” she toasted.

“To us,” Lindsay agreed before both women took healthy gulps of the amber liquid.

“So tell me, Lin,” Rejeanne asked as he put her glass down. “is this your first time in a lesbian bar?”

“I’ve been to a couple of bars in Manhattan with Keith,” Lindsay said. “They were

predominantly male, but there were some women in the bars as well.”

“Yeah, but were they actually lesbians or were they fag-hags?”

“I don’t know, Jeannie,” Lindsay said. “I didn’t bother to ask any of them.”

Rejeanne laughed. “So, uh, are you okay with being here... with me?”

“Yes,” Lindsay said as she slowly moved even closer to Rejeanne. “I admit that I’m a little nervous. I don’t know what to expect.” Lindsay looked around the bar. “Have you spotted any of those old friends of yours yet?”

Rejeanne turned and looked around. “See that woman way over there sitting on the couch?” she asked.

“Which one?”

“The one that looks like Cameron Diaz with a bad mullet,” Rejeanne replied. “She’s wearing the striped rugby shirt and Tommy jeans.”

“Yeah, I see her.”

“That’s Mindy Areskiewicz,” Rejeanne announced. “We played softball together at De Paul.”

“Is she a friend?” Lindsay asked, curious about the nature of the relationship.

“Just an acquaintance, Lin,” Rejeanne reassured her. “Since leaving Chicago, I come here probably no more than two or three times a year. Every time that I come here, regardless of the time of year, she’s here. Every time.”

“She must really like this bar, Jeannie,” Lindsay said.

“Oh, about a third of the women here really like it,” Rejeanne opined. “It’s a cycle for them. They come, looking for a girlfriend. When they find her, they disappear... until the break-up... and then they’re both back again, each looking for a new girlfriend. Mindy has probably dated and/or fucked a good quarter of the population in this bar. Think six degrees of separation, Lin. It’s what we in the dyke world refer to as ‘lesbian incest.’”

“What about you, Jeannie?” Lindsay asked. “Why do you come here those two or three times a year?”

“Cuz I loves to dance, girlfriend,” Rejeanne proclaimed as she snapped her fingers, diva-style.

At that moment, Lindsay took Rejeanne's hand. "Dance with me now," she said.

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The two women danced to several tunes before taking a break. Lindsay was in awe of just how well Rejeanne danced. She also enjoyed Rejeanne's playfulness as she danced, as well as her tendency to get very close to Lindsay and, in spurts, dance sensuously with her. The sensations of Rejeanne dancing so close and the rhythmic music greatly aroused Lindsay. At one point, she wanted to throw her arms around Rejeanne and grab her rear, but she restrained herself.

As Rejeanne danced with Lindsay, she decided that she wanted to have some fun with it. At one moment, she would be at arms length from Lindsay, with her arms raised and hips shaking. The next moment, she would close the distance, grinding her torso and groin into Lindsay's thigh as she ran her hands down Lindsay's sides. Of course, this turned Rejeanne on to the point of pain, but the thrill of connecting with Lindsay so provocatively was worth it.

When they were ready to take a breather, Rejeanne and Lindsay returned to the bar to find all of the stools taken. Rejeanne guided Lindsay to the edge of the bar where they could each get another glass of beer. As Lindsay was ordering two more beers, a short, stocky woman came up to Rejeanne and gave her a big hug.

"Hey Jeannie-P!" the woman enthusiastically said as Lindsay turned to notice.

"Hi Nick," Rejeanne said to the woman. "How the hell are ya?"

"I'm good," Nick responded jovially. "I'm working at the TV station now. Been there almost a year."

"That's great!" Rejeanne said as she turned to Lindsay. "This is my friend, uh, Lin."

"Hello," Lindsay said warily.

"Hi, I'm Nicole. Nick to my home-girls." Nick returned her attention to Rejeanne. "Are you still up in B.F.E. Wisconsin?"

"Yup," Rejeanne replied.

"Still at that newspaper up there?"

"Yup."

"How's that going?" Nick asked.

“Actually, not bad,” Rejeanne answered as she looked at Lindsay. “Things have been pretty damn good... at the paper.”

“Kew!” Nick exclaimed excitedly. “Well, I’m over there with my euchre friends. I had better get back to them before they send out an APB.”

“It was good seeing you, Nick,” Rejeanne said.

“You too, Jeannie-P,” Nick replied. “If you should happen to see Stockholm, tell her that I said hi.” Nick turned to Lindsay. “Nice meeting you!” she said before dashing off.

Lindsay looked at Rejeanne. “Nick is perky,” she said.

“Yeah,” said Rejeanne. “We had a nickname for her at De Paul. We called her Katie-Couric-on-Speed.”

Lindsay took a sip of her beer. “Who is Stockholm?” she asked.

Rejeanne was afraid that question would surface. “She’s my, uh, ex-girlfriend.”

Lindsay looked down at her beer glass. “Oh,” she said. “Am I to assume that you two still associate?”

“No, we don’t,” Rejeanne replied bluntly.

“Why would Nick assume so?”

“Because she’s a social retard,” Rejeanne stated flatly before regretting her response. “I didn’t mean that. She didn’t really know that we were together. Most folks didn’t officially know.”

“Pardon me?” Lindsay asked.

“It’s complicated, Lin,” Rejeanne said. “I’d rather not talk about it.”

Lindsay gently rubbed her friend’s shoulder. “Okay,” she said.

Rejeanne reflected, but only for a moment. “Look, most of my friends were outwardly clueless about Stockholm because that was the way she wanted it,” she said. “She was very closeted and insisted that I behave that way as well, even to my gay friends.”

“That must have been difficult for you both,” Lindsay stated.

“It was totally oppressive for me,” Rejeanne commented, “but she was fine with the situation.”

“Why do you say that your friends were outwardly clueless?” Lindsay asked.

“Because they weren’t stupid,” Rejeanne replied. “They knew the score. They just played along with my ex’s neuroses.”

“Is her name really Stockholm?” Lindsay asked.

“No,” Rejeanne replied. “Ingrid Dahlstrom. Dykes just love nicknaming everyone.”

“Ah,” Lindsay said. “Thus the ‘Jeannie P’ moniker, although you’ve had that since childhood.”

“You remembered,” Rejeanne remarked. “I’m impressed.”

Lindsay smiled. “So, what nickname would suit me?” she inquired.

Rejeanne stepped back and gave her friend a thorough visual inspection. “Tall, blue-eyed goddess,” she said.

“Aren’t nicknames supposed to be short?”

“Okay,” Rejeanne said. “How about Conq? Short for Conqueror?”

“I don’t think so,” Lindsay disagreed.

“Okay, how about The Lindsay?”

“The Lindsay?”

“You know, like ‘The Donald.’”

“Try again,” Lindsay indicated.

Rejeanne rubbed her chin. “Fine, T-Beg.”

“T-Beg?”

“Tall-blue-eyed-goddess abbreviated,” Rejeanne said.

“Geez, for someone so literarily astute, you aren’t one for coming up with innovative nicknames,” Lindsay declared.

“Heh, that’s your opinion,” Rejeanne retorted, folding her arms.

The two women smiled at each other after their light jibing before returning to the dance floor.

After three ear jarring fast tunes, the DJ finally selected a soulful slow song. Lindsay stopped dead in her tracks suddenly, not knowing how to proceed. Rejeanne took Lindsay's hand. "Oh, I love this song," she announced. "Dance this with me."

The space that separated the two women disappeared almost instantly as Rejeanne wrapped her arms around Lindsay's waist and planted her head on the taller woman's chest. Lindsay stood dumbfounded, but only for a few seconds before wrapping her long left arm around Rejeanne's upper back and placing her right hand on the back of Rejeanne's head. As she began stroking Rejeanne's hair, Lindsay began to sway back and forth to the rhythm of the music. Rejeanne responded by swaying harmoniously with Lindsay. This went on for a few seconds before Rejeanne lifted her head to look into the eyes of her dance partner. Lindsay looked into Rejeanne's eyes and then lightly placed her fingers on the smaller woman's chin. Their faces then inched closer together, with Rejeanne stretching her neck as Lindsay lowered her head. Just before their lips met, the two women looked at each other, seemingly for approval. Lindsay, sensing an okay, slightly opened her mouth before connecting her lips to Rejeanne's. A moment after feeling Lindsay's lips touch hers, Rejeanne opened her mouth and tenderly ran her tongue across Lindsay's lips before inserting it into her mouth. Lindsay slightly bit down on Rejeanne's tongue before warmly circling it with her own.

Lindsay and Rejeanne passionately kissed on the dance floor as they continued slow dancing. In their minds, they were suspended in a different zone, totally oblivious to the people surrounding them. When their lips finally disconnected, a second slow song had just ended and people were grooving to yet another loud and fast techno tune. Rejeanne's face went red. "I need a drink," she announced.

"So do I," Lindsay responded.

The two women practically sprinted back to the bar. "What'll you two have?" the bartender asked.

"A shot of Absolut," Rejeanne replied.

"A shot of J.D.," Lindsay said.

After downing her shot, Rejeanne looked down at her shoes. "I didn't mean for that to happen," she said. "You know, the kissing."

Lindsay downed hers. "Are you sorry that it did?" She asked.

"Why, are you?" Rejeanne responded with a question as she looked up at Lindsay.

“Hardly,” Lindsay replied. “So, are you?”

“To be honest, yeah,” Rejeanne confessed. “At least a part of me is sorry.” She breathed a heavy sigh. “This is such a mess. You’re rich, powerful, and married. And I’m not sure what this weekend is to you. I mean, is this some bi-curious fantasy for you? Is this revenge on Marty? Are you writing your autobiography and need juicy material? What is it?”

“None of those things, Jeannie,” Lindsay said. “This is simply me wanting to spend time with you and hoping that the feeling is mutual.”

“The feeling is mutual, Lin,” Rejeanne revealed. “That’s what’s scaring me.”

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Lindsay and Rejeanne stepped into their hotel room. Lindsay had wanted to book a suite, but Rejeanne insisted that the two stay “in an ordinary hotel room at an ordinary hotel,” adding, “It’s not like we’re going to get around to swimming in the heated pool or getting a full body wrap or something.”

Rejeanne plopped her overnight bag down on one of the two queen-sized beds, opened it, and pulled out a bathrobe. She then turned on the TV. “I wanna take a shower to get the smoke out of my hair,” she announced.

“Okay,” Lindsay replied.

“Are you hungry?” Rejeanne asked. “Wanna order room service, or we could order out for a pizza?”

“A pizza sounds good,” Lindsay said.

“Okay, but it has to be either Giordano’s or Pizzeria Uno’s,” Rejeanne said. “One doesn’t come to Chicago and not eat pizza at one of those two places.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Lindsay said.

After calling in their pizza order, Lindsay listened to the sound of the shower coming from behind the bathroom door and pondered the course of her evening with Rejeanne. They had left the bar shortly after their fateful dance, but barely spoke to each other during the drive to the hotel. There was so much that Lindsay wanted to tell Rejeanne, but she found herself unable to articulate those thoughts. At that moment, she looked over at the television. A commercial for eyeliner was airing. Thinking about an earlier conversation that she had had with Rejeanne, a mischievous smile crept across Lindsay’s face as she grabbed the bathroom door handle and opened the door.

Rejeanne was washing her hair and humming the theme song to “Friends” when she felt a burst of cold water. “What the fuck!” she yelled as she turned to see Lindsay’s hand on the shower knob and her eyes on Rejeanne.

“You still need to give me a proper nickname, little girl,” Lindsay announced with a wicked grin.

“You bee-och,” Rejeanne smirked as she half-heartedly covered her nether regions. “Wait ‘til I get out of this shower, chickie.”

“Why, should I be afraid?” Lindsay asked, still grinning.

“Yeah, be afraid.”

Lindsay backed away, but grabbed one of the towels off the rack before heading out of the bathroom. Sometime later, when Rejeanne emerged wearing only her robe, she was startled to see Lindsay, also wearing a robe, twirling that towel. Rejeanne immediately grabbed her wet towel. “Oh, you think that you’re gonna give me a whoopin’?”

“Maybe,” Lindsay said seductively.

She is so fucking hot right now, Rejeanne thought as she began twirling her towel. “Well, my towel’s a little wet so the sting may be more harsh.”

“Oh, you think so?” Lindsay asked.

“Yes, I do,” Rejeanne replied. At that moment, she whipped her towel at Lindsay and was startled to see the taller woman grab it and yank it from her hand. Now armed with two towels, Lindsay began twirling both, one in each hand, as she gracefully inched toward Rejeanne.

Rejeanne raised her hands in front of her and began backing up. “Hey, let’s talk about this,” she said dramatically.

Lindsay’s grin grew bigger and more sinister as she snapped the right towel at Rejeanne, purposely missing her. At that moment, Rejeanne leapt on one of the beds and then off and onto the other bed. Lindsay gave chase as the two women ran around the room as if they were a couple of third graders.

Rejeanne began taunting Lindsay. “Conqueror, Conqueror, Conqueror can’t catch me!” At that moment, Lindsay dived and, grabbing Rejeanne’s waist, forced her supine on one of the beds. Lindsay then straddled her and pinned her hands above her head.

“Okay, you’ve got me,” Rejeanne conceded.

“Yes, I do,” Lindsay replied as she gripped both of Rejeanne’s wrists with her left hand and began tickling her with her right.

Rejeanne began laughing and flailing her legs. “Stop... please, stop!” she exclaimed between fits of laughter. As she squirmed defensively, her robe opened, revealing her left breast. At the mere sight of it, Lindsay’s already tingling groin began to throb. She stopped tickling Rejeanne and released her grip of her wrists. Lindsay then gently opened Rejeanne’s robe wider, revealing first her naval piercing, then the top edge of her pubic hair and finally her right breast as Rejeanne stared at Lindsay, stunned. Lindsay then opened up her own robe and closed the gap between the two women. Tenderly resting her body on Rejeanne’s, Lindsay intentionally touched her right nipple to Rejeanne’s left and watched as both became hard. She then looked at the beauty beneath her.

“You are so amazing,” Lindsay said as she brought her lips to Rejeanne’s. As they kissed, a whirlwind of thoughts flew across her mind. *Her lips are so succulent... I want to touch her clit... I want to kiss her clit... I want to rub our clits together... I could kiss her all night... I want to love her all night... I love her...*

Lindsay opened her eyes. *Is she that woman from my dream?*

At that moment, hands cupped her face and the kissing stopped. “Lin,” Rejeanne whispered. “We have to stop this.”

“Why?”

“For one, someone’s knocking at the door,” Rejeanne replied. “I think that our pizza’s here.”

Lindsay climbed up off Rejeanne and closed her robe before opening the door. The pizza delivery boy gasped at the sight of the slightly disheveled but beautiful woman standing before him. “Twenty-one eighteen,” he croaked.

“Here’s thirty,” Lindsay replied as she grabbed the pizza box and liter of soda. “Keep the change.”

After setting their order down on a dresser, Lindsay turned to see Rejeanne sitting at the edge of the bed, a single tear streaming down her face. “Come sit here,” she said to Lindsay as she patted the space next to her.

Lindsay sat. “I’ve upset you,” she said.

Rejeanne took Lindsay’s hands in hers. “Before the pizza gets cold, let me explain something to you,” she started. “Ingrid and I broke up because I couldn’t handle being closeted anymore. We were together almost four years and let me tell you, Lin, the situation was repulsive. She refused to take me to any of her family functions and

wouldn't attend any of mine. I only met her parents once and she refused to meet my folks, because she knew that they knew I was a lesbian and would assume that she was one too. We lived together, but I was just a roommate to anyone who asked. When I suggested going on a gay-themed vacation, like to Provincetown or Key West, she wouldn't hear it. She wouldn't accompany me on my softball tournaments and wouldn't be caught dead at the Chicago Pride Parade or any gay festivity for that matter. In her outside world, I didn't exist beyond being the chick that paid half of the rent.

"After awhile, the lie was causing me chronic anxiety. So, I began confronting her about it. We fought and fought, but she never compromised. Not an inch. Finally, I threatened to bail. Of course, she had a tantrum. Out of the bedroom, she was this perfect Swedish-American, dick-lovin' hetero-chick. In our bedroom, she was one hundred percent dyke. She could go all night with her head between my legs and love every minute of it. But I didn't want a fuck buddy. I wanted a partner. I wanted someone who would dance with me in a room full of people, who would walk with me hand-in-hand at the June dyke march, who wasn't afraid to be seen reading 'Girlfriends' magazine, who wasn't afraid to be seen with me... and I vowed after I left Ingrid that I would never subject myself to that personal cruelty again."

"But I would never insist that you act like someone that you aren't," Lindsay said.

"I'm not saying you would," Rejeanne retorted. "But let's say that we go all the way tonight... fuck each other's brains out... and then tomorrow comes. You drive me back to your place, I get my Subaru and go home and you're still married to Martin."

"But I don't..."

"...what, sleep with him?" Rejeanne interrupted.

Lindsay nodded.

"Yeah, but who knows that besides you and him... and me now? And what will change tomorrow in the lie that you two have created for yourselves?"

Lindsay sighed. "I see what you're saying," she whispered.

"Is it fair to me, Lin?" Rejeanne asked. "Do I deserve what little I ask for?"

"You deserve more, much more," Lindsay responded. "I never meant to hurt you, Jeannie."

"I know, Lin," Rejeanne said as she took her right thumb and gently wiped away a tear on Lindsay's cheek. "C'mon, let's eat this pizza."

CONTINUED IN CHAPTER EIGHT...