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**TAMING A TYCOON**  
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**CHAPTER ONE**

The glass-enclosed office near the top of Chicago's Metro Tower was normally an island of peaceful quiet, but at the moment Savannah wasn't enjoying the atmosphere. It was funny how much things could change in the blink of an eye; only a minute ago she'd been feeling just fine. But then the editor of Today's Woman had tossed a manilla folder down on the desk between them and said, "Sorry, Savannah, but I don't think we can use this." And everything changed in the flick of an eyelash.

Savannah looked unbelievably up at the editor's face, and then down at the slim folder, lying so innocently on the blotter. She knew what it contained--a long, detailed, elaborate magazine article, a story she had spent weeks researching and putting together. And now the magazine's editor said he couldn't use it?

She shook her head a little as if to clear her hearing. "You said you wanted a profile of Dexter Caine, Brian."

"I said it sounded interesting," the editor corrected. "And it still does. But frankly, as you've written it..." He shrugged. "There's nothing new here."

Savannah bit her lip and then said reasonably, "It's the best information available about a man who's never been exactly easy to pin down. I dug into sources you wouldn't believe, Brian."

"No doubt. You're a meticulous researcher. But this is really no different from the piece you did on Caine last year for the Tribune."

It was different, and Savannah could show him a dozen bits of information that hadn't been available last year. But before she could decide which example to use first, Brian opened the top drawer of his desk and tossed a tabloid newspaper toward her.

Savannah recognized the shrieking headline and the grainy, slightly-out-of-focus photograph which made Dexter Caine look like a gangster. There was another copy in the tote bag at her feet, part of her file on Dexter Caine.

I ought to have known that piece of so-called journalism would give me a whole lot of trouble, she thought.

"Your story doesn't even mention the newest bit of gossip," Brian said.

"The Cassie King controversy?"

Brian's gaze narrowed. "You've read the Informant, then?"

"I'm not an idiot, Brian. I know that even a trashy gossip rag like the Informant can sometimes stumble across a real story. But there's no evidence they've gotten things

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right this time. I checked that story out, and there's no proof it's true."

"Can you prove it's false?"

"At this moment? No. But my gut feeling--"

"Well, if we go with your gut feeling and ignore it, and about the time our story appears Dexter Caine marries Cassie King, we'll look like fools, won't we?"

"You'd look even more foolish if you ran a piece speculating that he'll marry her and then he doesn't," Savannah muttered. "I tell you, Brian, there's nothing to that story but a few hints dropped by Cassie King and her publicist. You know what stars are like--any news coverage is better than none, and if there isn't a legitimate story to push, they'll make one up just to get media attention."

"Yes, I know. Still, that doesn't mean there's nothing to it. So I'm afraid we can't use this piece just now. The magazine's lead time is too long, and anything could happen by the time that issue comes out. Sorry, Savannah, but unless you can get the inside story and add something new..."

"Something new? Like what? It's going to be awfully hard to prove Cassie King's lying."

"You could get a comment from Dexter Caine. If he'd go on the record about his relationship with Cassie King, we could publish. Then even if he changed his mind and did the opposite, we'd be covered."

Savannah ran a hand through her long blonde hair in frustration. "Brian, be realistic. You know the man hasn't talked to a reporter in donkey's years. For all I know, maybe he never has."

"Well, that leaves us with a problem, doesn't it? Now if you'll excuse me, Savannah, I've got a magazine to run. Thanks for coming in."

Savannah stood up, but she wasn't finished fighting. "What about a kill fee? I knocked myself out on that article."

"Sorry. I really am. But you did the piece on spec, and I can't pay you a cent for it unless I use it."

Savannah nodded wearily. "Because if the other free-lancers heard of it, they'd want the same deal. Brian--"

"That's all I can do, Savannah. If you're interested, I could use a piece on lead poisoning. There seems to be a problem with some imported ceramics."

"Oh, that sounds exciting. It's on spec as well, I suppose?"

Brian's voice was gruff. "Write me a quick-and-dirty proposal of how you'd

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approach the subject, and I can probably make it an assignment. Pay on delivery of the finished piece."

Savannah sighed. Brian was doing the best he could; he didn't owe her any further work at all. It wasn't his fault that she'd let herself count on the fees from the Caine article to pay her next month's rent. That was her own short-sightedness.

"I'll take a look at lead poisoning and let you know," she said.

She kept her smile in place till she reached the elevator, then slumped into a corner while she rode down to street level.

It wasn't that Savannah hadn't gotten used to rejection; she had. She'd learned in the last two years that the odds were heavily against a freelance journalist. For every sale, it seemed there was at least one article which never paid a dime, and usually a half dozen ideas which fell apart during research and never even got to the writing stage.

But Savannah had thought she'd found the inside track at Today's Woman. The last four pieces she'd proposed had sold, and Brian had been fascinated when they'd talked about Dexter Caine just last month.

Besides, the Caine piece was good. Savannah had done her homework, and she was a talented writer who could turn a difficult subject into a highly readable article. And Dexter Caine was certainly a difficult subject.

It was a perfect September day with just a hint of autumn crispness in the air, and Michigan Avenue was busy as always on Friday afternoons. As closing time approached, shoppers bustled from store to store along the Magnificent Mile.

Savannah shifted her tote bag to the other shoulder and headed toward an outdoor coffee shop just across the street from the Metro Tower. She'd take a break and then go to the library. She had a couple of ideas that needed more research before she could present them to an editor; that was why she'd lugged her laptop computer along on this trip downtown. She could at least look around for another place to sell the Caine article. And while she was at it, she might as well find out what had been published recently about lead poisoning. A whole lot, she suspected. Finding a new twist was going to be a real challenge.

Darn Cassie King and her inconvenient timing, anyway, Savannah thought. If the woman just hadn't picked this month to delicately hint that after a five-year relationship, Dexter Caine was finally going to marry her...

Of course, every tabloid in the nation, and a good part of the serious press as well, had jumped on that particular bandwagon. Cassie King was a gold-plated singing star, with a dozen number one hits in the last few years, so anything she did was apt to be news. And as for Dexter Caine--well, when a man avoided attention for as many years

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and through as many billion-dollar deals as Dexter Caine had, the least hint of information was apt to be treated with the same attention as an announcement from the Archangel Gabriel, whether there was any truth to the story or not.

In this case, Savannah would bet the rent money she didn't have that there wasn't a shred of fact involved. She couldn't put her finger on why she was so certain, except that Cassie King occasionally told terrific stories which didn't turn out to have happened the way she said they did. Besides, in Savannah's opinion, if Dexter Caine actually wanted to marry the woman, he'd had more than enough time to do so. He wasn't the indecisive type; when Dexter Caine made up his mind to do something, it got done.

Savannah wondered what he thought of all the hoopla. He could save himself a lot of annoyance if he'd talk to the press, she thought. Not the press as a whole, of course; that would be overdoing it. But if he'd give his side of the story to one sympathetic reporter, it would end most of the wild conjecture...

Right, Savannah, she told herself dryly. And I suppose you think you're the sympathetic reporter he should choose!

She finished her cappuchino and started down Michigan Avenue toward the library. No matter how annoyed Dexter Caine was, the interview of the century wasn't going to happen, so she might as well get on with real life and see if she could find a way to pay her rent.

Besides, maybe the man wasn't annoyed. He might not even deign to notice the press speculation about him and Cassie King. He'd ignored a good many similar things in the last few years.

The library was a half-mile from the Metro Tower, and the leather-look vinyl shoulder bag Savannah carried was heavy. Her laptop computer weighed only ten pounds, but as the blocks went by it seemed to grow heavier. She could hail a cab, of course, but she had a better use for the few dollars the ride would cost. Besides, traffic was slowing down. Either rush hour was starting early tonight or there was an accident or an obstruction ahead. Walking would probably be faster, she told herself.

She shifted her bag to the other shoulder, crossed the Chicago River, and trudged on.

It wasn't long before she saw what was slowing traffic. A black limousine, its windows too dark to see if anyone was inside, was double-parked on Michigan Avenue. A uniformed chauffeur leaned against the driver's door, arms folded across his chest, face impassive, ignoring the annoyed comments of drivers who had to squeeze into the one remaining southbound lane to pass.

A big shot, Savannah thought. Or--more likely--someone who only thought he was important.

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The car was parked directly in front of a corner building, a century-old structure with Italianate moldings, rounded corners, and elaborate arched windows. It wasn't one of Chicago's most striking or famous, and if she hadn't noticed the number gold-leafed above the main entrance, Savannah would have paid no more attention to the building now than she ever had before.

But she recognized the number from the research she'd been doing in the last month. This building was one of a multitude that Dexter Caine owned, and it was one of the main hubs of a business empire that stretched across the country and around the world.

She remembered being surprised when she'd stumbled across this address, buried in an obscure little business publication. She wasn't startled that Dexter Caine had business connections in Chicago; he had them in a dozen cities, so why not here? But an old building on Michigan Avenue seemed a strange place for Dexter Caine to choose for his American headquarters. A shiny, sleek, glass-and-steel tower in Manhattan--now that would have made more sense.

But it seemed he hadn't built himself a monument anywhere. Instead, he'd bought buildings like this one.

Savannah paused on the sidewalk and looked up at the seven-story brick and terracotta facade. The building was a sturdy, unpretentious example of the first so-called skyscrapers, built just after the great Chicago fire of the 1870's when the city's builders invented a new style of architecture. The structure was pretty enough, and it appeared to have been meticulously cared for. But it wouldn't land on anybody's list of most important buildings in the city.

And if she hadn't remembered the number, there would have been nothing to give her a clue. There was no name on the door, no neon signs, no logos--just the number.

And, of course, the limousine in front. Did that mean--could it mean--that Dexter Caine was here?

What did she have to lose by walking in and asking? Maybe he wanted to talk to the press--but it was a sure thing he wasn't going to call Savannah Seabrooke and invite her over to have a chat. On the other hand, if she just turned up and asked if he'd like to air his side of the story...

She'd get thrown out, that's what would happen.

Well, she'd had worse experiences. And at least then she could tell herself she'd tried everything. What kind of a reporter was she, anyway, if she didn't seize the opportunity--no matter how much of a long shot it was--to save her story?

She pulled open the heavy plate glass door before she could talk herself out of it.

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The lobby was at the precise center of the building. It was larger than she would have expected from the age of the building. It was also bright; from a skylight seven stories up, golden sunlight cascaded past brass and iron balcony railings to warm the marble floor of the lobby. Savannah paused for an instant to admire the effect--gleaming polished brass, dark twisted iron, gray and black marble. They were all hard surfaces, and yet the lobby wasn't cold and indifferent.

Of course, it wasn't precisely warm and welcoming, either. A young man was standing at an octagonal marble desk in the center of the room, studying her over a heavy brass rail. "May I help you?" he asked. His voice wasn't precisely unfriendly, but he sounded as if he had his doubts that he could be of service.

Savannah wished she'd stopped somewhere and looked into a mirror. Her hair must be wind-blown from her walk, and she vaguely remembered running her hands through it in Brian's office. She wished she'd put on a dress for her interview instead of her usual, more comfortable garb--boots, trimly-cut designer jeans and a soft dark blue wool blazer. She wished she'd taken that cab after all; at least she'd have been cool and collected...

No, she didn't wish that, for if she'd been riding by in a cab she wouldn't have paid attention to the building's number, and she wouldn't be here now.

She stepped up to the desk with a confident smile. "I'm here to see Mr. Caine." Her voice echoed a bit in the huge space.

The young man didn't betray by the flicker of an eyelash that he'd ever heard the name.

"Mr. Dexter Caine. My name's Seabrooke." Savannah lowered her voice a little to diminish the echo, but she kept her tone firm. She'd learned early in her journalism career to make statements, not ask questions, in situations like this. For one thing, to make a request implied that the person being asked had the power to refuse permission, while the statement seemed to say that authority had already been granted.

Besides, she hadn't said she had an appointment. If the receptionist asked straight out, Savannah wouldn't lie. But making a simple implication was another thing entirely.

He didn't ask. Instead he turned away and picked up a telephone. Despite her best efforts, Savannah could catch only a word or two. She thought she heard him say something about Mr. Caine, and then her name, and the word blonde. Interesting, she thought. What did the color of her hair have to do with anything?

He put the telephone down, and she braced herself for questions. But the young man said, "Sixth floor. Take the elevator at the far end."

Savannah almost gasped in astonishment. Then she walked briskly to the elevator

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before the young man could change his mind.

Of course, she reminded herself, getting past the receptionist hardly guaranteed she'd get into the executive offices; there'd no doubt be a couple of layers of secretaries to brave. But she'd already done better than she'd expected.

The sixth floor had no signs, no name plates on doors, no receptionist, and no hint of the man she was looking for.

Great, Savannah thought. I'll probably manage to give myself away just by asking where I'm supposed to go!

But there didn't seem to be anyone to ask, either. She had almost circled the balcony before she saw an office with an open door. Inside a man sat on the corner of a desk with a telephone in his hand. It was not Dexter Caine--he was too young and too fair-haired--and Savannah hesitated for only an instant before walking on.

"Just a minute," the man murmured into the telephone. He put the receiver down on the desk blotter and came across to the door. "It took you long enough to get up here," he said. He sounded just a little peevish.

Savannah didn't see why he was complaining. In her opinion the elevator had been unexpectedly fast for its vintage, but of course she had wandered around a bit before reaching his door. "Some directions would have helped. Have you ever considered putting signs up?"

"Not really. People who come here usually know where they're going."

Dandy, Savannah thought. Why don't you just open your mouth and stick your foot clear down your throat next time?

He smiled, and the irritable lines between his brows disappeared. "At any rate, let's forget about signs and get down to business. It's Friday, and we're all in a bit of a hurry, I'm sure."

Savannah shifted her bag slightly. "Now that you mention it--"

"Here, let me help." The man leaped forward and took the bag from her, drawing her into the office.

"Actually, I'm looking for Mr. Caine," she said cautiously.

"Of course. I'm Mr. Caine's personal assistant, Peter Powell. And your name is...I'm afraid I didn't write it down when the receptionist called up."

"Savannah Seabrooke."

"Ah, yes."

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He looked thoughtful, as if the name had a familiar ring. Savannah wondered if he'd read the Tribune piece last year. Rather than give him a chance to think about it, she said firmly, "I'm sure Mr. Caine will want to see me himself."

"Oh, yes, I expect you're right."

Savannah almost choked. Could it really be as easy as that?

"In fact," he went on easily, "I've got a limo waiting for you downstairs."

But he couldn't have--the car couldn't possibly have been ordered for Savannah. Peter Powell had obviously mistaken her for someone else. But if she kept silent and played along...

Whoever Dexter Caine was expecting, he'd get a bit of a shock if Savannah turned up instead. A tinge of guilt tugged at her at the mere thought of taking advantage of this misunderstanding. No, she couldn't do that.

Though... why couldn't she? She wasn't likely to have a chance like this ever again. She could get into that car and be taken directly to Dexter Caine. And once there, all she needed was a couple of minutes. He'd have to say something to her, wouldn't he? If she turned up at his table at the fanciest restaurant in town, or at his box at Wrigley Field, or at his seats at the theater, he couldn't just toss her out without a word. And all she needed was one answer to one question...

What kind of reporter are you, Seabrooke? she asked herself. How can you even think of turning down this opportunity?

"Thanks," she said coolly. "That's very thoughtful of you." She reached for her bag.

"I'll walk down with you and carry that."

Her throat tightened. All she wanted was to get out of here as soon as possible, before Peter Powell recognized his error. "Don't bother, I'm used to carrying it. And I don't want to keep you from your telephone call."

"Oh--I'd forgotten that. If you're sure..." But Peter Powell was already reaching for the phone as Savannah picked up her tote bag.

The chauffeur had moved around to the street side of the car, and he looked Savannah over as she approached. "Excuse me," she said firmly. "I believe you're waiting for me. I'm Mr. Caine's guest." Then she held her breath.

Test number two, she thought. Would the chauffeur realize that she wasn't the passenger he was waiting for?

He snapped to attention and held the rear door for her. Savannah climbed in,

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trying her best to look as if she maneuvered in and out of a limousine every day, and he almost ran around to take his seat. A moment later the car nudged its way into rush-hour traffic.

And now what? Savannah thought. She eyed the two-way telephone built into the console in a corner of the limo. But she could hardly pick it up and ask the chauffeur where they were going.

It was quickly apparent they weren't headed anywhere in the Loop, or even in the city itself. That eliminated most of the fancy restaurants. And a good thing, too, Savannah thought; she hadn't considered before that her jeans wouldn't get her past the door of most of the city's elite dining spots. At least she wouldn't have to suffer the frustration of coming so close to Dexter Caine and missing out after all.

So where were they going? The limo turned smoothly onto the Kennedy Expressway, and Savannah drew a short, sharp breath. O'Hare? Surely they weren't headed for the airport!

They were; forty-five minutes later the limousine swooped off the expressway and past the main terminal--

Past it? Savannah thought in astonishment. She realized she was clutching the strap of her tote bag as if it were a security blanket, and loosened her grip.

The limousine drew up on an out-of-the-way bit of tarmac where a gleaming blue and white airplane waited. Savannah's experience with aircraft was limited, but it didn't take an expert to know that this one was new, expensive, and very fast--it looked like a miniaturized version of the jetliners she was used to. She studied it warily while the chauffeur came around to open her door.

Actually, she decided, it wasn't such a bad turn of events. In the limited space and isolation of a small aircraft, she stood a pretty decent chance of getting something quotable out of Dexter Caine in the couple of minutes it would take him to react and throw her off the plane. Then she'd hike over to the main terminal and catch a shuttle back downtown. It would be dead easy--comparatively speaking.

A uniformed man appeared at the aircraft's door. "Good evening, Miss," he said politely, and extended a hand to help Savannah climb the stairs.

The chauffeur still stood at attention beside the limousine door. Savannah glanced back at him and was touched when he raised two fingers to his cap in salute. She waved, feeling foolishly that she was losing her only friend, and took a deep breath before turning toward the cabin and her encounter with Dexter Caine.

The interior of the plane looked like a space-age living room, with low tables, built-in consoles, and wide plush seats that looked almost like easy chairs. There were

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only a few, though there was room for more.

And every seat was empty.

Savannah looked around wildly for a moment. He had to be somewhere, didn't he? Was there another cabin somewhere?

Behind her, the door closed with a soft click. She spun around to see the crewman indicating a seat. "If you'll just get comfortable and fasten your seatbelt, Miss, we'll be on our way momentarily."

"Mister--" Her voice was harsh, and she had to stop to clear her throat. "What about Mr. Caine?"

The crewman's eyebrows rose slightly. "You'll be our only passenger this evening, Miss."

"But--" She swallowed the half-formed protest. Better not say anything more till she'd had a chance to think. Not that a couple of minutes delay was likely to do any good--if she had a week, she'd still be figuring out all the implications of this twist.

It hadn't occurred to her till this instant that Dexter Caine might not be in Chicago at all. The limousine that had prompted her to go into the building in the first place had been waiting for an unknown passenger, not him--why hadn't she remembered that sooner? And though the reactions of the receptionist and the personal assistant had led her to believe that their boss was nearby, that was no more than an assumption. Peter Powell had said only that he had a car waiting for her...

The hum of the engines grew a bit louder, and Savannah had to grab for a seat to steady herself as the plane suddenly began to move. "I think I'd better get off," she said. She felt as if her teeth were chattering.

The crewman was watching her warily. "If you're afraid of flying, Miss, let me assure you that Captain Johnson is very skilled."

"Oh--no, I'm not afraid to fly. It's just that..." Her voice trailed off helplessly. Her brain felt absolutely blank.

"There are snacks and cold drinks in the refrigerator," the crewman said. "I'm afraid we're not really prepared for dinner, since we anticipated you'd arrive earlier."

That reminded Savannah that she was substituting for someone else, someone who had been expected to make this trip. The woman who had stood up Dexter Caine was causing trouble for a lot of people, that was sure.

Why wasn't that woman on this plane instead? And who was she? Not Cassie King, that was sure--nearly everyone in North America knew her face. Besides, Peter Powell had accepted Savannah's name without question. That must mean the woman was

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a mystery to him as well...

My head hurts, Savannah thought.

"We'll only be in the air for a few hours," the crewman went on, "so I don't think you'll find it too inconvenient."

"Where are we going?"

It was a stupid question, but it was out before Savannah could stop herself. She waited, breath held. The worst that could happen was that they'd throw her off the plane now, right on the runway.

But the crewman showed no surprise at a passenger who didn't know her destination. He was either used to such things, or so well-trained that he was never at a loss. "Las Vegas, Miss."

Vegas. Well, she supposed that made sense; Dexter Caine had business interests there. At least it wasn't Hong Kong, or Sydney, or New Delhi, or any of the many more exotic places where he also had business interests.

The plane was at the end of the runway, about to start its takeoff roll. That fact alone would have told Savannah something about its owner, if she'd been in any condition to think about it. O'Hare's delays were legendary, but it seemed the control tower had been waiting on this plane, not the reverse.

With a fatalistic sigh, Savannah dropped into a seat and pulled the belt tight.

The crewman seemed to relax. "If there's anything you need, miss, just press this bell." He pointed at a button on the bulkhead near her seat, and then passed through a narrow door into the cockpit.

Now I'm in for it, Savannah thought. Nothing like a quick side trip to Vegas.

If she managed to get Dexter Caine to talk to her, maybe Brian and the magazine would stand the cost of her flight home. Though considering Caine was getting Savannah instead of the woman--whoever she was--that he was waiting for, he probably wasn't going to be in a chatty mood.

Savannah settled back in her seat and nervously chewed her thumbnail all the way to Las Vegas.

The sun was setting when the plane landed; Savannah tried to enjoy the spectacle of the desert aflame with the last rays of daylight. A limousine--white this time--was waiting in an out-of-the-way corner far from the terminal, with another uniformed chauffeur beside it.

Without a word he ushered her into the car. Savannah held her breath till she

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realized she was alone, and then couldn't quite make up her mind whether to be anxious or relieved that Dexter Caine still hadn't shown up. At least the limousine would have been a quiet, private place to have a chat--and she wouldn't have had to find her way back to the airport.

She'd spent a good deal of the flight mentally reviewing what she knew about Dexter Caine, so she wasn't surprised when the limousine drew up in front of one of Las Vegas' older hotel-casino combinations, not one of the new and glitzy theme resorts.

He'd come into possession of this property only recently, and there had been some speculation about precisely how and why he'd ended up owning it. A hotel was one thing, but Savannah agreed that a casino seemed an odd thing for a man like Dexter Caine to want. He was the sort who preferred gambling on other things besides cards and dice and slot machines.

I'll keep that for my second question, Savannah thought. Always assuming she was allowed time for more than one.

At the hotel's side entrance, the chauffeur handed her over to the bell captain, who whisked her straight through the lobby and up the freight elevator, without even a glimpse of the casino area or the main lobby. "This is standard procedure," he apologized as he unlocked the door of a penthouse suite. "Mr. Caine prefers his privacy."

Savannah's eyes widened in appreciation. She had never seen such an incredible array of Art Deco furnishings outside of a museum, but the way it was arranged made the rooms comfortable and welcoming--almost cozy--not at all like the usual hotel room.

A fire burned brightly in a classically simple polished-marble fireplace. Nearby a couple of couches were arranged at an angle to provide the best view of the blaze. Wall sconces cast a welcoming glow. On a low table was a fruit basket and a dish of chocolate truffles. Off to one side of the big room was a starkly simple dining area; beyond it she could see the corner of an all-white kitchen.

A white-haired man in a dark suit came out of the kitchen. "Thank you, John," he said, and bowed slightly to Savannah. "Good evening, Miss. I'm Robinson, the butler."

This was obviously how the other half lived--a suite with its own butler. Savannah had never in her life encountered such a person, and she hadn't the vaguest idea how to proceed. She took comfort in the fact that she did know how to treat the bell captain; she fumbled in the side pocket of her tote bag for her wallet, but by the time she found it, he had silently vanished and her tip stayed folded in her fingers.

Obviously a gaffe, she thought. The butler looked even more wooden, but at least he didn't comment.

"If you'd like to freshen up, Miss..."

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"Seabrooke," Savannah supplied warily, and relaxed a little when he merely nodded. So Robinson didn't know who the mystery guest was, either, she concluded. Savannah was beginning to feel extremely curious about that woman. "Is Mr. Caine in the hotel?"

Robinson's tone was stifflingly flat. "I really couldn't say, Miss."

Which meant exactly nothing, Savannah deduced. "I'd love to freshen up," she said. She couldn't do much, of course--she had only the bits of makeup that she carried in the side pocket of her tote bag. But at least she could hide for a while from the butler's all-seeing eyes.

She let him carry her tote bag to a bedroom at the far end of the suite. Then she firmly closed the door behind him and took a deep breath of relief.

The room was huge, with a king-sized bed covered with a satin comforter the color of polished pewter. French doors led onto a spacious balcony. Near the windows was a small square table and two straight-backed chairs. It was nice enough, but much less welcoming than the living room.

The clock on the bedside table said it was only eight, but Savannah's body was still on Chicago time, and she was starting to feel a bit woozy from exhaustion and stress. She looked around for a comfortable chair, but there wasn't one, so she sagged onto the end of the bed. "What kind of hotel is this, anyway?" she muttered. "A butler, for heaven's sake--but no easy chair in the bedroom!" The sound of her own voice made her feel a bit better, but the apprehension at the pit of her stomach remained. What had she gotten herself into? How was she going to get out? And where the devil was Dexter Caine?

Much later, Savannah remembered taking her boots off, because it had felt so good to flex her toes. And she vaguely recalled that round about midnight she'd pulled the pillows into a more comfortable position and curled up to wait for Dexter Caine. It was no wonder that she'd dozed off; her eyelids had been so heavy it would have taken props to keep them open.

So when the dream started, she had no trouble figuring out what was happening to her. She'd had a few wildly romantic--even erotic--dreams in her time. They were most likely to occur when she was stressed and short of sleep, and that description certainly fit her current state. In fact, her stress level probably explained why this particular dream was turning into a doozy.

And considering that she'd had Dexter Caine on her mind when she dozed off, it was no wonder that he featured in her dreams as well.

Still, she'd never experienced anything so realistic. She'd never been kissed so expertly before, or held so warmly close, or...

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real. Deep in her brain a voice of warning sounded. This isn't realistic, it said. This is