

**TRUELESBIANLOVE.COM**

*by*

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## CHAPTER ONE

The soft weight of Shannon's arms drew Dylan closer. Her hands, palms flat, fingers reaching, slid along Dylan's hips. The heat emanating from her touch was palpable. Dylan arched her back as Shannon moved one hand upward to circle her aching breasts, coaxing her nipples into fine points of pleasure.

"Shannon," she gasped. "Why are you still dressed?"

Shannon looked up from the side of Dylan's neck, where she'd left a trail of sultry kisses. "I haven't a clue."

And with that less than profound statement, she yanked her shirt over her head and leaned into Dylan's waiting arms. Her taut breasts were irresistible, crushed hotly against Dylan's. She...

"Mackenzie? Mac, are you in there? I need to talk to you, right now."

Sighing, Mackenzie Lewis slammed shut the pages of *Lost Lives, Lost Loves*, undraped herself from the comfy sofa where she'd been planted for the last hour, and propelled

herself toward the door. When you own the business, you jump when someone calls.

“What’s the problem?” She addressed the man standing in the center of the small group assembled near a stack of crates outside her office.

“The Fresh Stuff produce delivery is all wrong, again,” her frazzled chef said. “I can’t keep overlooking their mistakes. I know you want to help them get started in business, but if this keeps happening, you won’t have business to give them.” He waved at the crates. “Four extra cases of tomatoes and not the right ones. I specifically ordered Heirloom and Roma. I can’t work with Beefsteaks and I don’t have time to cook them down into chutney we’ll never use.”

“Then perhaps we should wait until they spoil, so I can throw them at temperamental chefs who interrupt me with rants about produce.” Mac glanced around at the other staff. “A tomato crisis is not a cause for everyone to abandon their posts. Scatter!” She instructed Nick, “Send the Beefsteaks to the Angel Network with my sincere apologies to all the homebound patients who depend on their delivered meals, for having to endure low-class tomatoes.”

She couldn’t help but smile at the pout planted firmly on his face. Blond, blue-eyed Nick Walters was a striking figure, making even his baggy chef pants look stylish. No wonder so many cute guys flocked to the Lakeside in hopes of catching a glimpse of him. Mac liked the balance he brought to the place. She wanted her patio bar and restaurant to be a comfortable spot for all members of the Dallas community. His ability to draw a crowd was worth a few fits now and then.

“Business is good and the Lakeside is doing fine,” she assured him. “We can afford to donate a few cases of tomatoes.”

“Fine, Mac, forgive me for trying to save you from your charitable business practices.” Nick sighed dramatically. “If you don’t mind, I’ll do the next produce order myself. I have a reputation to protect, you know.”

Mac nodded. “That’s precisely why I hope you choose to stay in Big D, my friend. I want your reputation to be my reputation.”

She knew when New Orleans eventually recovered from the ravages of Hurricane Katrina, there was a chance he would return to work in his hometown. By then, she hoped the thriving Dallas economy would encourage him to stay and rise to culinary stardom here.

Nick finally let a slow, full smile creep across his face. “I promise I won’t leave until after we close the kitchen tonight.”

As he made his way toward the kitchen doors, Mac glanced at her watch. Yes, she could grab another half hour curled up with *Lost Lives* before the evening shift arrived. She turned back toward her office and promptly stumbled into the arms of a gorgeous redhead. Startled, she stared at her best friend, Jordan Wagner. “Hey, Jordan. What’s up?”

“The girls are on the Dock.” Jordan referred to the covered back patio of the Lakeside. “We’re checking out Batwoman. I had no idea you were already here.”

Mac thought about the delicious chapter waiting on the other side of the office door. Her friends could wait. She wasn’t quite ready to socialize. “Look, I’m on my way to the office to run some numbers. Order some food from the bar and I’ll meet you girls back there in about an hour.”

“It’s the weekend. Numbers are for Mondays.” Jordan grabbed Mac’s hand and pulled her away from the office door. When Mac resisted, she cocked her head and eyed her

suspiciously. “You look a little too anxious to get in there. I seriously doubt it’s numbers you’re crunching. Got a hot date waiting?”

“Didn’t you say something about Batwoman?” Mac deflected.

Jordan shrugged. “Okay, I can take a hint.” As she walked away, she added, “Let me know if you need any help.”

Once back in her secure den of an office, Mac reached for her “hot date” and snuggled back onto her slipcovered sofa, flipping through pages to find her place. She felt a twinge of guilt for taking this small break from her day, not to mention leaving her friends to fend for themselves. Lowering the book, she glanced across her office, past the gravity bike rack where her two favorite rides awaited her, a frosty silver white Terry Isis road bike and a Trek Fuel EX 9 mountain bike. The adjoining wall was lined with shelf after shelf of lesbian romance novels, with a few mysteries sprinkled in here and there to keep her from looking like a total lesbian Harlequin junkie.

Obviously it wasn’t healthy to prefer the company of imaginary characters in a book when she had friends waiting, so she vowed she would finish the next chapter and emerge before they gave up on her.

It had been an hour since their first touch, but Shannon was just as responsive at sunrise as she’d been at sunset. Dylan let her fingers drift over the hills and valleys open to her exploration. As the ample mountains of Shannon’s chest moved, she moved also and began another ascent to ecstasy.

“What would you like me to do now, dear?” Dylan asked her new lover, knowing the list of unexplored

possibilities was shorter now than it had been the night before.

“Well, darling, I want you to put one hand here.” Shannon gently directed Dylan toward her left breast. “And, the other hand here.” She gasped, motioning to her right breast. “And your lovely and talented tongue...”

The sharp ring of the office phone jerked Mac away from the pages. Closing the book for good, she reached for the phone, and snarled, “Hello?”

“Hello, yourself. Is that a demonstration of the fabulous hospitality one can expect at the Lakeside?”

Recognizing the voice of her friend Aimee, Mac softened her tone. “Sorry, I was trying to grab a few minutes, but that’s apparently not possible.”

“Jordan said you were in your office with some woman and we wanted to make sure you didn’t need our help.” Aimee let loose a slight snicker as she spoke.

Hearing more giggles in the background, Mac resigned herself to admiring the foxy lezzy superhero. “Fine, I’m on my way. How can I resist all this clamoring for my attention?”

She tucked *Lost Lives*, *Lost Loves* behind a cushion and made her way through the Lakeside Patio Bar & Grill, enjoying the touch of exhilaration she felt every time she realized this was her place. A walk through the restaurant was more than a walk, it was a patrol. Though she maintained a relaxed demeanor, her employees knew the Lakeside was her baby and that she expected a good explanation for any bumps and bruises that occurred while they took care of it. She swept a quick look around the tricked-out commercial kitchen, the heart of the restaurant. The shiny stainless surfaces were briefly

immaculate in the interval before the dinner prep began. Nick was in the house and he had no tolerance for clutter.

She continued out into the restaurant, stopping at the stone and mosaic-tiled hostess stand located near the front doors. She'd used the work of local artisans in the design of the Lakeside, and this unique stand was a showpiece. The surrounding walls formed a mini-gallery that sported a rotating series of work by local artists. Sally Gannon, her restaurant manager, was near the stand, showing their newest hostess the ropes.

Mac paused to check in. "Need me for anything?"

Sally shook her head. She was a no-nonsense woman who'd worked at the Lakeside since the doors opened. "Looks like we're in good shape for tonight. Have some fun and don't worry about a thing. Will your friends want to stay for dinner?"

"No, we'll graze a little and then head out. Jordan and I have dates for the Resource Center fund-raiser later."

Mac left the bar, which was situated near the front of the restaurant, and strolled through the empty dining room to the covered back patio of the restaurant. In the late afternoon hours before dinnertime, most visitors to the Lakeside assembled on the Dock to enjoy a taste of the outdoors. The patio offered a fantastic view of White Rock Lake with the unique Dallas skyline looming large in the background. The temperate Dallas climate allowed the wood-framed glass doors that stood between the guests and the lake to stay open most of the year, and an abundance of ceiling fans kept things cool during summer's heat. The Dock was Mac's favorite room in the place. She and her friends spent many hours on this patio, kicking back in the comfortable sofas and chairs that were grouped as if in mini-living room settings. The reclaimed hardwood floors of the restaurant interior extended out onto

the Dock, giving the outside room the same cozy feel as the interior.

Mac spotted her friends camped out as close to the open glass doors as possible, obviously enjoying this sunny Saturday afternoon. Jordan was leaning against the rail, looking on as Aimee Howard read aloud to the rest of the group from a magazine. Aimee owned a boutique real estate agency and had made herself wealthy selling homes in some of Dallas's most unique neighborhoods. They'd known each other since college, and it didn't surprise Mac to see her addressing the group as if she were holding court.

"Now, this is my dream girl," Aimee said. "What a total babe."

Sliding up behind her, Mac remarked, "Talking about me again?"

"Sweetie, you know I love you, but Kate Kane rocks my world."

"Who in the hell is Kate Kane, when did you meet this dream girl, and more importantly, when do we get to meet her?" Mac demanded.

Aimee grinned and shook a comic under Mac's nose. "Finally, a lesbian superhero. Kate Kane is Batwoman. Tall, gorgeous, a red-haired spitfire. Millionaire socialite by day and sexy, powerful superhero by night." She fluttered her eyelashes. "That's something we have in common."

"Are we in time for an intervention?" Mac addressed the friends sitting around the table. "Or have we lost Aimee to the lures of the comic book girlfriend?"

She sometimes wondered if Aimee grew tired of being badgered about her serial monogamy. Aimee typified the U-Haul lesbian stereotype, except that her prospective soul mates were usually the ones doing the moving in and out of Aimee's spacious Lake Highlands residence. Mac was secretly happy

that Aimee's travails distracted the group from their other favorite topic, her own depressing love life.

"Hey, I'm no worse than you," Aimee retorted. "Lusting over all those woman in books. At least I actually get out and date real women on occasion. Those who *live* in fantasy worlds shouldn't criticize those of us who make the occasional trip into reality."

"Ease up, girlfriend," Mac protested. "I date. I have a date tonight, in fact."

Her friends guffawed as Aimee taunted, "Another Jordan setup?"

"What if it is?" Mac tried not to sound defensive.

She couldn't remember the last real date she had been on. It was true that the last few times she had been out, it was on a double date with Jordan. Devastatingly good looks and a highly successful plastic surgery practice made Dr. Jordan Wagner one of the hottest tickets in town. Somehow the women she attracted always seemed to have a sidekick, and Jordan would entreat Mac to make up a foursome. Mac found the invitations convenient. It wasn't that she didn't want to be dating someone, or that she wasn't desirable herself, but it seemed like such a pain to get out and meet women. Frankly, she'd been on her own in the dating scene for so long, she wasn't even sure she knew where to start.

"Honey, you don't need Jordan to get you a date." Aimee sought to soften her taunting. "You could have anyone you wanted."

"Thanks for the vote of confidence." Mac glanced past Aimee to the newly married couple of their circle. Megan couldn't seem to stop hugging her wife, making the usually stoic Haley blush deep crimson. They appeared to be on cloud nine. It probably helped that they'd fallen in love with real

women, not fictional superheroes like Kate Kane. She wasn't quite as fortunate. "Where are these legions of desirable women from whom I can have my pick? It's not like they're parading themselves by my house asking for a date."

"Yeah, well, you kind of have to give it some effort," Aimee said. "You know, put yourself out there where they can find you."

"Then you'll be happy to know what I'm doing tonight. I'm taking what is sure to be a beautiful woman to the Resource Center benefit, and maybe she'll be my soul mate."

"Oh, I'm sure she'll be beautiful," Aimee said. "But have any of Jordan's setups been soul-mate material so far?"

"Hold on there, matchmaker," Jordan objected. "What's this about a soul mate? Are you suggesting it's impossible to have a good time on a date unless you think she's a marriage prospect? In my experience, thoughts like that can kill an evening."

"Well, I will concede that your experience is vast," Aimee teased.

"Hey, I'm not ashamed of the fact I put myself out there. In my line of work, I think it's important to be an ardent observer of the human form." Jordan illustrated her point by drawing curves in the air with both hands.

"Sure, Dr. Wagner, you can call your serial dating 'research.' But we all know you're only interested in one thing, and once you get it, you move on to the next 'experiment.'"

"Ouch. It's a dirty job."

"Enough, you two." Mac interrupted the friendly sparring and playfully pushed her best friends apart.

"Break it up, ladies," Nick called as he approached. "Your food is here and I won't have your fighting ruin the presentation."

Aimee glanced longingly at the platters of scrumptious-looking appetizers. “Don’t worry, the only fighting we’ll be doing from here on out is over the last morsel.”

Turning to Mac, Nick said, “Sorry to disturb the festivities, but your assistance is needed in the bar, something to do with beer, ice, and not enough glasses.”

“Don’t wait on me, girls. There’s no telling how long I’ll be.” Mac grabbed a crab cake off the nearest platter. “Jordan, are you picking me up tonight?”

“Yes, see you at your place at seven.”

As she walked away, Mac heard Aimee ask, “Who’s Mac’s date? Is she hot?”

“A ten out of ten, and *very* willing,” Jordan replied. “If Mac doesn’t score with *her*, we’d better start thinking about an intervention.”