

Unexpected



McKenna Jeffries

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Short Story



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"Watch out!"

Shari Jamison saw the couple scramble out of the way. She would have usually found it funny if she weren't the one they were getting out of the way of. The roar of the lions in their cage filled her ears as she zoomed by and another couple jumped out of the way.

"Sorry!"

Trying to stop Shari realized she couldn't and the substance on the wheels of the skates was indeed oil as she thought, not black gunk as Shantal- her twenty-five old niece- had said. It would figure that Shantal- her niece who the skates belonged to would have no traction on the skates. Shantal was going to pay for her little piece of fiction. Conveniently Shantal had left out that the skates couldn't brake anymore. Shari moaned wondering what had possessed her to agree to take her niece's and the nephew's – *trouble* and *anarchy* as they were all fondly called by the family – out to the zoo. You would think by now they would have outgrown the childhood nicknames but no they were even more trouble than when they were kids.

Swerving to miss the hot dog stand Shari cursed lightly. She could hear the traitor's -her nieces and nephews- skating frantically behind her trying to catch her. The happiness in their voices reached her and she knew that was why. They had her wrapped around their fingers as they had when she held each of them in her arms the first time and they knew it. Her niece's and nephew's were closer in age to her than her own siblings. Sighing Shari remembered her mother saying she was her menopause baby an unexpected surprise to everyone.

After she came along most of her siblings were already teenagers or starting adulthood. Barely five years later her first nephew was born and since then she was Aunt/hip big sister to the whole brood of niece's and nephews that followed. If you wanted something or needed help call Aunty Shari and she'll look out for you.

"Hump. Aunt Shari is getting to old for this crap." Shari growled.

She was starting a new job as Vice President of Marketing at *Viancom Enterprises* tomorrow and coming in with a cast on was not the impression she wanted to make to the new team she was taking over.

Shifting course again to avoid a collision Shari prayed for a soft spot to land.

A crash sounded making her wince. Glancing below the steep incline she had tuned onto she saw a clear stretch with no one or obstacles. Risking it Shari prepared to execute the maneuver the kids had talked her into teaching them yet again. The reason she was going down the hill out of control. Taking a deep breath she braced her legs as best she could on the surface of the incline. Closing her eyes and saying another quick prayer Shari grunted as she jumped twisted her entire body and legs. Her feet encased by the skates hit the ground with a clank jarring her.

The wind hit her in her back instead of her face and Shari knew she had done it.

"You've still got it." Letting out a quick yelp of victory and pumping her fist at having completed the move even in these circumstances. Shari opened her eyes then stifled a laugh as she took in the hot dog man running behind twenty-seven year old Kyan the oldest of her nephews. Kyan had what looked suspiciously like a mixture of mustard, ketchup and relish on his face and in his hair. She laughed at his appearance. No one would mistake him for a top-notch corporate attorney. Companies came from all over to retain his firm *Nivlac*. He threw back his head laughed and gestured to her.

Shari shook her finger at him and ignored the cheering of the rest of the group- Niyant, Venisa, Anisley, Samuel, Ariel, and Bradley who seemed to be carrying Shantal on his back easily as he skated behind everyone. They were twenty-six, twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-three, twenty-five, twenty-two, and twenty-five respectively including Shantal. The rest of them seemed to have no problem with their skates. Only Shantal was defective. Shaking her head she knew what her sister's would say.

'Things like this only happen to you Sha.' They would laugh and teased her about it for weeks to come. Her eyes narrowed.

Unless I can bribe my darling nieces and nephews not to tell.

Watching them her heart filled with love. They were all productive adults in various careers but just still a little wild. They loved their Aunt Shari who was as wild as they were. Her usual sense of humor kicked in and Shari laughed. She could imagine what they looked like.

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The urgency in the simultaneous cry from all of them pulled her out of her musings. Looking behind her shoulder Shari glimpsed a honey colored broad defined chest.

Wow. That's what I call a six-pack.

Shaking herself she saw with panic she was heading right for it. Cursing she swerved to the right the same time the chest did. Bracing for the inevitable Shari tried again to brake even though she knew it was useless. She hit the chest and they tumbled to the ground rolling. The sweet scent of male surrounded her as they rolled. Waiting for the hard pavement to scrape her skin, Shari after a few moments realized she barely felt anything as they continued to roll.

Finally she figured out why, the chest was cushioning most of the impact with his body. From the feel of him Shari could tell the rest of him was just as firm as his six-pack chest.

Suddenly they stopped. Shari realized they had probably reached the bottom. Her rescuer straightened hauling her up with him. He let her go stepped back looking around. Shari looked at the side of his face. His skin was smooth like caramel and looked just as sweet. He looked back at her, startled Shari watched into the most angriest and arresting emerald green eyes she had ever seen.

"You should watch where you are going. Some people come to the zoo for peace."

The sexy cadence of his voice enchanted her almost making her miss the obnoxious in his tone. Shari eyes narrowed as she watched him. He was the one who had no shirt on in a public place. He may be sexy but he had the personality of a porcupine. She opened her mouth to apologize. He rudely continued before she could say a word.

"Really what some women do to get a man's attention is disgusting. Have you ever heard of being a lady?"

Anger blasted through Shari. Her fist clenched as she took a step forward ready to belt him in the kisser. Someone grabbed her from behind.

Kyan whispered in her ear. "I don't want to have to bail you out of jail." Squeezing her in warning Kyan continued in a normal voice. "Sorry about that. Those hills can be tricky."

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The man ignored him and continued to watch Shari with a distasteful look on his face. Returning his look with interest Shari growled in a low voice to Kyan. "Just one punch. To the moon Kyan."

He started to laugh and let her go knowing she wasn't going to hit the man after all. Glancing around she saw the rest of the nieces and nephews standing some distance away watching them.

"Next time keep her on a leash." The man said recapturing her attention.

She turned in time to see him turn and run back towards the adjacent hill.

After swearing softly and colorfully Shari said. "He better run if he knows what's good for him."

As if hearing her the man stopped looked back at her and gave a mocking bow. Shari gritted her teeth then growled. Companionably Kyan stood beside her swung his arm over her shoulder and steered her towards the rest of the family.

"Come on Rocky. He's gone now and you'll never see him again." Kyan laughed.

Reaching the nieces and nephew's Shari shrugged him off and waited until he went to stand with them. Putting her hands on her hips she gave them her best "I'm going to get you face". They backed away then they broke into a fast skate. Growling Shari chased them while her mind raced about the handsome rude man.



A week later, Shari sat in her office at *Viancom Enterprises* trying to finish up the details for a new ad campaign she was presenting the next day.

"Night Shari."

Shari glanced up at her assistant Randi standing in the doorway. Surprised she saw Randi was all spiffed up.

"Hey where are you going?"

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Randi rolled her grey eyes. "It's Friday. Date night and I have a hot date. So I'm out of here."

She waved and left. Glancing at the crystal clock Shari was surprised at the time. It was after six. Quickly she gathered her things. She had dinner reservations for eight with Niyant and Kyan to celebrate her first week in the job. Grabbing her briefcase she stuffed everything in and headed to the elevator. A quick glance around confirmed to her that everyone had already left for the night. Impatiently she tapped her foot waiting for the elevator to arrive. Her cell phone chirped as it arrived.

Stepping in she juggled her briefcase and took the phone out of her purse answering it. "Yes."

"Sha I have to cancel. I'm caught up at work." Kyan's said in an absentminded fashion.

Disappointed but understanding Shari teased. "Okay. I'm glad you remembered to at least call."

When Kyan got caught up in work he was notorious for forgetting everything and everyone.

"Now you know I'm not that bad." He laughed.

"No you're worst."

Kyan made a tsking sound. "Whatever. We'll do it sometime next week okay. Bye."

"Bye." Shari dropped the phone back in her bag.

Shifting the briefcase around she looked up at the numbers as they flashed by. The chirp sounded again. Shifting everything again she opened her purse searching for the phone. Cursing as it continued to ring Shari opened her bag wider bending her head searching for it. The elevator dinged signaling the ground floor.

Still searching she rushed out and hit something that felt like a wall. A grunt sounded making her know it wasn't. She opened her mouth to apologize before she could say it everything she was holding fell on the floor. Swearing she bent to pick it up. Her head cracked into something. Falling backward she sat abruptly. Pain radiated from her butt. Slightly woozy from the impact Shari groaned. Gentle hands pushed her head between her knees.

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"Breath." A soft voice said.

Only too happy to comply Shari took some deep gulps of air. After a few minutes she felt better. Glancing up Shari looked at her rescuer then groaned again loudly. It was same man from the park staring at her.

Dropping her head back between her knees Shari wailed. "Why me? God, I've been good so why torture me."

The man started to laugh. Shari eyes were drawn up at the sexy sound of his laughter. His whole face was alight with laughter. His emerald green eyes-, which this close up she could tell were real-crinkled in the corners, tears streaming down. Shari joined him laughing as she saw the comedy of their situation. The man dropped down besides her wiping his eyes.

Suddenly he turned and stared at her. "You really know how to make an impression don't you."

Shari grinned. "I try."

With a smile still curling his lips he watched her. "You look familiar. Have we met?"

Shari couldn't believe he didn't remember her from the park. She debated a second if she should remind him.

Deciding to Shari replied. "The park last Sunday. I was on the runaway skates."

His eyes widened then narrowed. "That was you."

She nodded.

He grinned sheepishly. "I'm sorry about the things I said that day. I was in a bad mood."

"Why." Shari asked automatically then slapped her hands over her mouth.

The man chuckled again in a matter-of-fact way said. "It's okay. A few months ago there was an article in a magazine listing me as one of the world's most eligible bachelors. Since then everywhere I go women are

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throwing themselves at me. Just before I ran into you a woman attacked me in on the trail. She ripped my shirt off my body."

The disgust mixed with embarrassment in his voice was endearing. Glancing closer at him Shari saw the same in his eyes. Not recognizing him Shari studied him. He let her watching her reaction.

She smiled and shook her head. "Sorry but who are you?"

His smiled devilishly. "Marry me. You're the only woman who has said that to me in a long time."

Enjoying his flirting she flirted back. "We'll have to get to know each other better first."

Standing he put out his hand. Looking at his face Shari placed her hand in his then felt like she had touched a live wire. The interest in his eyes turned genuine. He pulled her up close to his body.

"That can be arranged. How about having dinner with me tonight?"

With regret Shari refused. "Sor-" The chirp of her cell phone interrupted. Looking around for her purse Shari saw it by his foot. He bent and handed it to her. Smiling her thanks she opened her bag and after searching pulled it out. "Hello."

"Sha. I had an emergency at the hospital."

Hearing the urgency in Niyant voice on the other end of the phone Shari didn't ask any questions. Figuring since Niyant was one of the foremost cardio surgeons not to mention youngest Shari agreed and let her go. Closing her phone she dropped it back into her bag and looked at the man. He had gathered her briefcase and the rest of her things. He was still looking at her. Pleased at the way things turned out Shari grinned.

"So where do you want to go to dinner?"

He smiled and put out his arm. "Anywhere the lady desire's."

Taking it Shari let him led her towards the front door.

She stopped abruptly. "Wait a minute. I don't even know your name."

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He let go of her and with a bow he replied. "Spencer Mercer at your service."

At his name Shari goggled. Spencer Mercer was the owner of *Viancom Enterprises*. He was known both for his serious attitude and as a hit maker. He took the company from a hole in the wall and made it the leading talent Management Company in the country.

The stars he molded ended up having multiple platinum and gold records. If a record company wanted a hit maker they scrambled to get *Viancom Enterprises* and Spencer Mercer. The man standing before her looked nothing like the pictures she had seen of a somber man always in black with wrap around shades. Uncomfortable now she knew who he was Shari tried to come up with a good excuse to back out.

"Umm.. look I have .."

He grabbed her hand stopping her retreat as she backed away. "Now, now none of that. I still put on my pants one leg at a time. Hey I even forget to put the cap on the toothpaste and put down the toilet seat."

Shari laughed at his silliness.

"And I want to get to know you better." He stopped taking a step closer.

Shari looked up into his face noticing how dark his eyes had gotten.

"I don't even know the name of the woman who has captured my attention." Spencer waited expectantly.

Shari gulped. "It's Shari Jamison. I work in Marketing."

He nodded. "The new VP."

She nodded. He smiled then kissed the back of her hand softly watching her.

Straightening he took her hand and tugged her towards the door. "Come on. I'll teach you how to skate correctly another day if we have dinner."

Shaking her head at his assumption Shari grinned. "Sure we can."

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I'll skate circles around you buddy boy and you won't know what hit you. She added silently.

Spencer watched her narrowly then chuckled escorting her to the stretch limo waiting at the curb. He opened the door himself and escorted her into the car.

Taking his seat next to her he looked at her. "So when do you want to get married."

Shari returned his look and whispered. "Surprise me."

Spencer laughed and whispered back. "It'll be unexpected."

Snuggling deeper into the seat Shari laughed, that's the way she liked it.

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