

Excerpt from

Sucker Bet

by Erin McCarthy

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“What were you doing?” Alexis demanded, standing where they had been when she’d left them, glaring and juggling three drinks in her hands.

Kelsey giggled and took a martini glass from Alexis. “Nothing.”

“We just saw those guy’s penises,” Gwenna confessed. She was still trying to process the fact that four men had pulled out their packages at a rock concert just because Kelsey had asked them to.

“Oh, Lord.” Alexis rolled her eyes and swallowed half her drink, handing the remaining glass over to Gwenna. “Oh, look, I think The Impalers are coming on to play.”

Gwenna couldn’t see very well because she was short and it was a standing room only concert in a nightclub. There were some tables on the balcony to the side, but the majority of the room was just a vast crowd of heads blocking her view. She could see the drum set and a guy with dark hair behind it messing around adjusting things. The rest of the stage just looked crowded with instruments, mics, and amplifiers. Absently, she took a large sip of her drink and stood on her tiptoes.

Bloody hell, the martini Alexis had got her was strong. Her eyes were watering, which could be dangerous, given her predilection for blood tears. She swiped at her eyes and gave a little cough.

Someone jostled her elbow. “Hi.”

It was a guy. Another version of the jeans, black t-shirt, skull and crossbones necklace wearing shaved head guy.

“Hey. Is your name Slash?” she asked, deciding to hell with subtle.

“No.” He raised an eyebrow. “But it could be if you want it to.”

“No, I don’t. I hate that name. I despise it. If you were named Slash I was going to spit on you.”

“Ooookay.” He turned and left, practically running.

Gwenna couldn’t believe she’d just done that. She burst out laughing. “I’m losing my mind,” she told Alexis.

“No, you just coming into your own, sister. Go with it.”

Maybe that was it. She was coming into her own. It was a liberating feeling. She’d had sex on a massage table with a hottie cop, and now she was getting sloshed on a martini at a rock concert wearing

a napkin for a dress. This beat the hell out of sitting by herself in York sewing fuzzy scarves.

“Hey.” She grabbed the arm of a guy in his young twenties walking past her. “Are you Slash?”

“No.” He answered directly to her cleavage, which she actually had thanks to Kelsey’s plunging dress.

“Oh, then you can keep walking.”

“What if I don’t want to keep walking?”

“You have to.”

“Why?”

“Because I said so.”

“Oh.” He left with a disappointed look.

Gwenna was either drunk with power, or the martini that was essentially pure alcohol with a dash of apple flavoring had gone straight to her head. The room was getting quite warm and her fingertips felt slightly numb. By the time the band had taken the stage and performed their first set, Gwenna had plowed through two more martinis, had spoken to at least fifty guys, got propositioned multiple times, and was shown another three penises—confirming for her that all men were not created equal. She also had her ass fondled with no idea who the culprit was, and still had yet to find the infamous and ever elusive Slash.

He was starting to tick her off.

And she was definitely drunk. She was as drunk as her Uncle William when he’d fallen into the ale barrel and had drunk it down so he wouldn’t drown without an adequate air supply.

“Who is Slash?” Alexis yelled into her ear, The Impalers blasting out a song that Gwenna thought she might recognize. Or maybe it was just that so many songs had the word baby in them.

“I don’t know who Slash is.” Which was the damn frustrating part of the whole thing.

“What? Then why the hell are you asking all these guys if they’re Slash?”

It seemed obvious to her. “So I know if they’re Slash or not.”

Alexis frowned. “You’ve totally lost me. And you’re drunk, by the way.”

“I know. It’s kind of nice.” Fuzzy. Warm. Making her horny.

“Your brother is going to shoot me.”

“So?” Gwenna drained her fourth martini, damn proud of herself for going to the bar and ordering it herself. “It’s not like a bullet would kill you. And Ethan needs to stop treating me like a child. I’m a grown woman and I can make my own decisions.”

Her “s” in decisions did a monstrous slur. Okay, so she couldn’t manage to *say* decisions right at the moment, but she was still capable of *making* them.

“I totally applaud making your own decisions. If they’re good ones.”

“Don’t be so critical, Alexis, that really makes me sad.”

“I’m sorry, but please, can you just lay off the martinis and stop talking to strange men?”

That sounded boring, but she nodded, not wanting to argue.

“Hey, let’s try to run up on stage,” Kelsey said, her hips jiggling to the music.

“Okay.” Gwenna handed her martini to Alexis. If she was up on stage, she could scan the crowd for Slash. Even though she had no clue what he looked like, somehow the logic made sense to her martini soaked brain.

Her sister-in-law sputtered. “No! Bad decision. Bad, bad, bad. You’re going to get thrown out!”

“Nah. I know half the guys in the band,” Kelsey said. “And I had sex with the bass player back in the sixties. It’s cool.”

“See?” That sounded highly encouraging to Gwenna. “Kelsey knows the band.”

And she proceeded to follow Kelsey through the crowd, weaving and smiling and dancing with concert goers as they made their way to the front. Getting past the bouncers was a snap, since they were mortal. She and Kelsey just fast walked, vampire speed, between two of them on the side, and then leaped on stage.

Wow. It was hot and bright up there. And loud.

Kelsey pulled her behind the guitar player and turned sideways. She swayed to the music and made a few “oh, yeah, oh, whoo, ooh” sounds at appropriate times in the music.

Back-up singers in a rock band. Brilliant.

Gwenna turned and did the same. This was kind of fun. The guitar player glanced back and looked them up and down, amusement on his face.

The bouncers didn’t have the same loving feeling towards them. Gwenna felt a meaty arm encircle her stomach, and she was contemplating using her strength to break free when she glanced to the side and saw a very familiar face.

“Nate!” She waved as the bouncer lifted her completely off her feet. “What brings you by?” Not that he could hear her, but she was delighted to see him, and his very handsome face.

He looked a bit off put though.

She wondered why that was.

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