

## KILLIN' FLOOR

It started out innocently enough, the night. Great dinner at her favorite French restaurant, the sneak preview of a new film... after theater drinks. Not bad, for their first date.

Then he took her to his place. They walked in and she slouched down on the couch. The split in her skirt parted, revealing her long beautiful legs, he noticed this, but pretended not to. He headed to the bar and mixed a drink for his lady of the evening. She said “yes” when the offer of a drink came, it would give her energy she thought. She’d had a long day and the night before, working on the case, maybe she did need to relax a bit. This had been a perfect evening, up to this point.

Classical music waft through the walls of the cavernous swank loft condo that had several of his paintings scattered around in various stages of completion. The high ceilings gave her the feeling that she was in an airplane hanger designed by someone who had the best of tastes and the wherewithal to decorate it. It was outfitted with the latest of everything a man, or woman, would want. A giant plasma screen, a small computer desk, I pods, computer games, dart board, weights in the corner, the works. A Bose sound system took up a corner near the door, and rugs from Persia were also thrown around over the parquet floor. Several pieces of West African art graced the walls in a special way, that caught your attention as soon as you walked in. Little things here and there, made the huge place as cozy as a small room in a home. Things that let her know he was a world traveler and a proud black man, with great style.

In fact, he was an up-and-coming painter on a mercurial climb into the high echelons of the arts society, in this town. He has been on the short list of “Most eligible bachelors” for the last three years, since his first successful show. He was considered a major catch for anyone lucky enough to be on his arm, at any of the social affairs he attended. In other words, he was a star on the rise.

The afternoon showing at the museum, was her first outing in over a year since her breakup with Sean. Their aborted engagement had devastated her and left her man-shy. She’d withdrawn to her world of law, the world she knew best. It took her colleagues a week to coerce her to join them at the museum that afternoon. “It is your birthday, at least have some fun. March 3<sup>rd</sup> only comes around once a year, girl, have some fun.” said Sheila, her close colleague and confidante. They graduated one,

two, from Howard's law school, nearly five years ago and both had been hired by the city looking for new and aggressive legal talent. They were life long friends, having met in Jack and Jill when they were kids.

She felt good after she got there to see his last show and even more so, when he caught her eye. He made it a point of coming over and engaging her in conversation before he asked for her card. She gave it... reluctantly. At first she thought it was a setup by her friend. After all she had isolated herself somewhat for the past year, and had forgotten how to react to someone flirting with her. Sheila was as surprised as she was when he came over to talk to her. She was in her zone and it included only the case she was working on, so she was slow to react to his smooth advances. For the past few months she spent all of her time on the case, and saved her affections... for Tucker. He was always there.

The call came sooner than she thought and the invitation for a date came immediately after that. She couldn't remember how long it had been since she'd even gone out. And there was still a little hesitation on her part, in accepting the invite for an evening out. She was surprised that she answered in the affirmative so quickly.

"What will it be" he asked, from behind the well-stocked bar. He had already begun mixing her orange juice and champagne, her choice at dinner. "The same as before" she said, as she kicked off her pumps.

"Just as I thought, my lady," he whispered to himself, as he filled the tall glass with just enough orange juice to make it look more delectable. The rest was champagne. He knew that champagne was a slow and delicious kill, and all he wanted... was time.

She stretched her long legs on the white satin couch and looked around. "Make yourself comfortable," he said, to keep the flow of the conversation going. She closed her eyes and listened to the violins, as a beautiful melody floated atop the symphony orchestra. It was a classical piece she knew so well. She searched her mind for the name of the concerto, however, at the moment, it escaped her.