



Forks of Miami

Faking with
the
JERK

AMARYLLIS LANZA

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Jerks of Miami - Book Five

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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

Chapter 1

The pole is life, at least to me.

I'm Charlotte Taylor and I should have a gold medal. Some dancers have been pushing for pole to become an Olympic sport, though it's probably not going to happen. People make all kinds of erroneous assumptions about pole athletes like me. I really could have had a gold medal for the balance beam by now if I'd been able to keep up with my training.

It's mean little in this life. They're just more coulda-shoulda-wouldas and nobody has time for those. I sure don't.

I had a full course load—finance, in case you're curious. I wanted to be a stockbroker because they make money even when their clients don't. It seemed like a good gig to me. I worked at the Golden Clam strip club because it was the best paying job a girl could get, with little time to spare. With my athletic skills, I put on a good show and earned big tips. It was a win-win, really. I got to stay in shape while making bank.

Most of the clients weren't too bad. The club was right by

the North Miami Beach campus of MIU—which was also convenient since my dorm was there. A lot of our regulars were lonely rich guys or horny frat boys. The bouncers there were great, so I had little trouble. Particularly Marty. I knew he was a little sweet on me and I took some advantage of that, letting him walk me to my car at the end of my shift. A girl just can't be too careful, you know?

Anyway, this isn't about Marty. Nothing would happen with him because he was a platonic relationship. Like a big brother. This is about Lucas Torres, the jerk with the odd proposal.

Rachel Williams, my frenemy at the Clam, passed me the note he'd slipped in with her tip while she was working the pole on a Thursday night. He wrote it on a cocktail napkin. *Be my girlfriend this Saturday from eleven to eleven and I'll pay you eleven hundred dollars.*

"Have you ever seen anything more ridiculous in your life?" Rachel asked. I had, actually. Ridiculous things were a daily occurrence, particularly at the Clam where people often got drunk and acted like damned fools. But this was definitely high on the list.

"That's at least one-hundred dollars short, I'd say," I told her, turning my attention back to the magnifying mirror so I could glue on my long dark lashes and my rhinestone accents on my cheekbones. My own lashes were just fine, day-to-day, but everything at the pole had to be bigger, flashier, highlighted and pumped-up. The audience expects it. I didn't let my audience down.

"How do you figure?" Rachel asked, resting her fist on one generous, firm hip. Rachel had this amazing figure and an ass that I truly envied. She was the queen of twerk and I was the queen of the pole. There's a little rivalry that goes on between performers, though I have to say she was more often a friend than a competitor. At least, that's how I felt.

"Well, it's a twelve-hour shift which works out to be ninety-

one dollars and sixty-six cents an hour,” I said. “It should at least be an even hundred.”

“I would not date that asshole for a thousand dollars an hour,” Rachel said.

“It’s just a fake date,” I said, shrugging. “The time limit is a big hint. Besides, I doubt he’d go as high as a thousand, even for you. But he might be desperate enough for one-hundred and fifty. You should ask for two-hundred, as a starting point for negotiation.”

“I’m not asking for a penny,” Rachel said. “I won’t do it. Paul would lose his shit if I went out with any other guy—fake date or not.”

“You give Paul too much power,” I said. “He sees other women, right?”

Rachel had told all of us the weekend before that she’d seen her on-again, off-again boyfriend coming out of the Chili’s with a tall, skinny blonde. She’d been all in a huff about it and we’d had an earful of their ongoing drama.

“You’re a real bitch, you know that?” Rachel asked. She didn’t enjoy having facts thrown in her face. Rachel was a sentimental type. She believed in love and she’d already forgiven the wayward asshole. “You should do it.”

“He didn’t ask me,” I said. “He passed the napkin to you. Maybe you’re more his type. Who was it, anyway?”

“You know, that guy who always takes up the table at the end of the catwalk,” she said. “I think he likes you better, but he’s just too shy to ask.”

“That’s ridiculous,” I said. “If he were shy, he wouldn’t have asked you either.”

“Yeah, but see, I’m more approachable,” Rachel said. “You’re the Ice Queen.”

“What is that supposed to mean?” I asked, turning my attention fully to Rachel. She and I had issues mainly because we were both strong, opinionated women. Rachel’s opinions

were not so generous with me. I tried not to take it too personally, but calling me an Ice Queen was totally unfair. I had feelings. They were just not very useful, I'd learned. It was better not to care too much, especially about men. Besides, the only thing I wanted to feel when I was dancing was fire in my muscles.

"Look, you're professionally pretty," Rachel said. "You take beauty to a whole new level. You spend longer in front of a mirror than all of us combined. Any guy who sees you sees perfection. Then you go out there and you do your crazy shit on the pole. You're like a one woman Cirque de Soleil. It's sexy as fuck, but also a bit intimidating. The guys pay you well for the show, but they don't get too comfortable because they're scared. Plus, you've got Marty watching your back. They all know too. Nobody wants to mess with Marty."

Marty was really one of the sweetest guys on the planet—a total teddy bear of a man—but admittedly he was a seven foot tall teddy bear, carrying two-hundred and eighty pounds of hard muscle. No one wanted to get on his bad side.

"Whatever," I said. "He didn't ask me, so it's a moot point. I would totally do it, though. I could really use twenty-four-hundred dollars."

"Now it's up to twenty-four-hundred?" Rachel laughed.

"Well, I wouldn't budge from two-hundred an hour for any man," I said. I still wondered about any man who had to pay for a one-day girlfriend. "Is he just really ugly?"

"No, he's hot," Rachel said.

"Seriously?"

"Yeah," she said. "I don't know what his game is, but he might expect more than just a pretend date for that kind of money. Not that it's my business what you do with your free time."

"Like I said, if he wanted me, then he should have asked for me," I told her. "Personally, I think you're finding reasons not to

do it and you totally should. It will be good for you to have a break.”

“Stop it,” she snapped. “Don’t go making trouble for me and Paul. We’re all settled now.”

“This week,” I said, checking the laces on my extreme en-point platform ballerina shoes. They added four inches to my height, and they made men wonder how I could stand, much less dance in them. The answer is I could dance on a bed of nails. “Anyway, I’m on.”

I rose from my make-up chair and did a last-minute check in the mirror, just to check everything was firmly in place. My typical dance outfit was barely more than a thong bikini with a flirty little skirt. This one was a shimmery tutu. It was almost invisible—a close match to my ivory skin—so I looked naked, with my breasts covered in rhinestones. I gave Rachel a little wave and then went out to saunter on the catwalk and ride my pole.

What the audience enjoyed most was seeing me stretch like string cheese, so as my soundtrack played I did a slow combination of back flips and splits making my way to the end like a sexy slinky, giving everyone a good look at what nature endowed me with. I’m not the least bit ashamed of using my body as an asset. It is. I have long legs, a long torso, a reasonably nice heart-shaped ass—though it’s nothing as generous as Rachel’s—and a good pair of breasts that I didn’t have to pay for. I also have double joints and extreme elasticity. Part of that is nature and part of that is lots and lots and lots of hard work. Making money for all that hard work just made sense, I believed.

I rarely made eye contact with the audience during my pole work. That might explain my Ice Queen reputation, I guess, but it was really just about concentrating on my moves. What I do on the pole is dangerous. It requires my full attention.

Most guys were staring at my breasts, or my crotch, or distracted by my long, dangling blonde hair as it hung and waved

like a golden flag while I twirled, dangled, and split. They were not trying to make eye contact, either.

Still, I was curious about this guy, after what Rachel said. I slithered up the pole, upside down, starting with an elbow stand and a wide split before gripping the steel between my thighs and thrusting my upper body up to climb higher. I took a peek at the man at the little table as my head hung down facing him. He was in his thirties and definitely handsome. The dim light didn't help him, though. He looked more menacing than anything else. Our eyes met briefly, and I thought I saw him grin, just slightly.

After that, I went on with my routine. I had a strange music mix for this performance, combining Donovan's *Season of the Witch* for my entrance, with *Point and Kill* by Little Simz for the upper pole acrobatics, and *Dip* by Stefflon Don and Ms. Banks for my combination pole and floor work. Then *Up* by CardiB for what I like to call my slither and collect. That's the one time I looked at the guys, when I gave them a good close-up of my assets and a peek down the channel of my cleavage so they could choose where they'd rather put the bills. I left the mystery guy at the head for last, sliding way along the length of the stage like a tongue working magic on a hard-on. When I finally worked my way back to him, I gave him a good look at all the above and below before transitioning to an elbow stand and a wide split. He stuck the bill in my panties, the fresh bastard. I stuck my tongue out at him and then bent back onto my impossible heels and did a combination of slow back flips and cartwheels all the way offstage.

I'd made three-hundred dollars in tips, all counted, and one of those was a hundred-dollar bill nestled near my mons. Well, if that's what he would pay for twenty minutes of performance, then Rachel should really charge him more for Saturday. She wasn't around to tell, though. Rachel was outside having an argument with Paul.

I hung around in the dressing room for a while, drinking

water and checking my phone, before changing into the outfit for my second set. Technically, they wanted us to walk around the bar, maybe put in some lap dances, but I wasn't in the mood for that. I knew I could get away with taking a break to review some of my notes from class. Howard, the manager, was a little sweet on me, too. Mostly. Except that night, before I had time to go on stage in my red outfit—for my lady in red performance—he called me over to his office across the hall from our dressing rooms.

“You're doing a private set at the back. Rachel's covering you on stage,” he said.

“Why?”

“Because someone paid for a private dance in the large VIP room,” he said.

“Who?”

“A customer,” Howard said. “What do you care? Just go. There's two-hundred in it for you. Make it worth his money.”

“Two-hundred, huh?” I said. “No funny business.”

“You know I don't allow that.”

“Yeah, but does he know?”

“He's a regular, and he's never caused trouble before,” Howard said. “Anyway, Marty will keep an eye out. Just whistle if you need him. You know how to whistle, don't you?”

I knew he was referring to that scene between Bogie and Bacall in *Have and Have Not*. One reason Howard had hired me was that he thought I looked a little like Lauren Bacall, which apparently turned him on. I didn't see the similarity myself, but I never argue with the boss. Instead, I nodded, and put two fingers in my mouth, then whistled loudly.

“Not quite what I had in mind.” Howard laughed.

“Okay, Bogie,” I said, giving Howard a wink and a shake of my red tassel skirt before heading out to the one private VIP room which had a pole in it, usually reserved for small private parties.