



Friday Night Delights
by Selena Blake

Part 4

By Wednesday afternoon, Zach had had it with his business trip. Halfway across the state, he'd picked up the perfect wood for the Briar House project which was nowhere near as fun as watching Cherie sashay around her kitchen in nothing but an apron.

He pressed his foot down a little harder on the accelerator and watched the dial pass seventy miles per hour. Then eighty. He let his foot up. No need to arrive in a casket.

The wail of a siren had him looking in the mirror. And biting back a curse.

He smacked his hand against the steering wheel after he'd pulled over. Cops in this

state were notoriously slow at writing tickets. One more delay that he didn't want right now.

"Where ya headed in such a hurry?" the officer asked. He looked about Zach's age and had a thick southern accent. Not that Zach was one to talk.

"Headed home to see my girl," Zach said, hoping the guy would cut him some slack.

The guy nodded as if he understood Zach's predicament. But hell, even Zach didn't understand his predicament. It was unnatural to want to spend every waking moment staring at a woman. Watching her smile. Listening to her hum songs while she painted her toe nails.

"You realize you were goin' fifteen over?"

Zach glanced at the speedometer. "I thought I was doing nine or ten over."

"Yeah. All right. Try to keep it under eighty. I'm sure yer gal wants ya back in one piece."

"Thank you officer." Zach nodded.

He made it back to Briar House in record time. The sun was dipping low in the sky and he didn't feel like unloading the truck. He checked the weather via his smartphone on the way to Cherie's front door. Clear and cool tonight.

Sliding his phone back into his pocket with one hand, he pushed her front door open with the other.

The scene before him was not what he'd expected. Cherie in that sexy little apron and nothing else had crossed his mind. As had the idea of her stretched, nude and waiting, on the couch.

Instead, she dangled in a man's arms as he dipped her back toward the floor. Music blared out of an iPod on the sofa table. Three women stood at the edge of the room, each holding a glass of wine as they watched the dancers.

As if sensing his arrival, Cherie blinked and turned her head toward the front door. Toward Zach. Her beautiful blue eyes began to sparkle as she smiled.

"Zach." The breathless way she said his name was familiar...and still one hell of a turn on. "You're home."

Early. Was that what she meant? He was home early?

The man righted her and turned.

Zach stared the man down, taking in the sandy blond hair and blue eyes. Recognition pinged through his brain.

"Zach, you remember Jackson," Cherie said.

"Your brother. Of course."

Her grin kicked up a notch as she started toward him. He felt that familiar kick in the chest as she slid her arms around his waist and lifted her lips to his.

He kissed her, more briefly than he'd have liked. The whole way home he'd been playing the 'welcome home' scenario through his mind. A chaste kiss in front of company was not what he'd had in mind.

She pulled away too quickly and turned back to their guests. "And you know Mary, Monica, and Jackie."

Zach shook hands with Jackson and nodded at the women.

"Jackson's helping us out with a little problem."

“Is that right,” Zach drawled, his pulse almost returning to normal. He liked to think of himself as a civilized man, not particularly possessive. But seeing Cherie in another man’s arms had kicked his protective instincts into overdrive.

That was a foreign experience for him but he was learning to expect that with Cherie. Everything with her was different than any relationship he’d ever had before.

“Garrett won’t ask her out so she’s going to take Jackson to the club.”

“You’re trying to make him jealous?” Zach asked, depositing his tool belt at the end of the couch.

“You don’t think it’ll work?” Monica’s dark eyes studied him and she worried her full, lower lip.

Zach didn’t like games. Sure, he and Cherie might tease and tempt each other, but he’d made no bones about letting her know that he was interested from the moment they’d met.

Suddenly he was craving a beer. Stuck in the middle of women problems was not his idea of a relaxing evening. But he answered her honestly, “I say you just ask him out. There’s no law against that.”

“That’s what I said,” Jackson agreed.

“I--I can’t just ask him out,” the woman stammered.

Zach gave her his most charming smile. Then he turned his gaze to Jackson. “Want a beer?” He didn’t wait for an answer, simply headed in the direction of the kitchen. As he opened the refrigerator door he heard the women speaking in quiet tones.

Southern girls...you just had to love them. For brazen, sweet talking, corn shucking, hog tying women there was an equally quiet, old fashioned beauty to

them.

He popped the lid on a brew and handed it over to Jackson.

“How’d you get suckered into this?”

Jackson gave a short grunt-style laugh and shrugged as he held the bottle to his lips. After a long swig he said, “I have two sisters, remember?”

Two very southern sisters. Both of whom fell more into the sweet talking category than demure and ‘waiting to be asked to dance.’

No, Cherie would definitely ask him to dance if she wanted to dance. She wasn’t the type to sit on her hands. She’d do the asking, thank-you-very-much. That was just one more reason he was so crazy about her.

She was soft spoken when she needed to be, but she never missed an opportunity to tell him, to show him just how much she wanted him.

Damn, he was a lucky man.

He’d gone to every rodeo with two missions: stick an 8-second ride and find the girl of his dreams.

Who would have thought that she’d been waiting for him in his home state?

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About Selena

An action movie buff with a penchant for all things supernatural and sexy, Selena Blake combines her love for adventure, travel and romance into steamy paranormal romance. Selena's books have been called "a steamy escape" and have appeared on bestseller lists, been nominated for awards, and won contests. When she's not writing you can find her by the pool soaking up some sun, day dreaming about new characters, and watching the cabana boy (aka her muse), Derek. Fan mail keeps her going when the diet soda wears off so write to her at selenablake@gmail.com.

Visit her online: <http://www.selena-blake.com> or look her up on facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/authorSelenaBlake>

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