



Friday Night Delights
by Selena Blake

Part 6

I'm more team Jackson.

Garrett's words rang in Zach's ears and his annoyance dissolved like sugar in a pitcher of hot tea. The bartender wasn't homophobic; he was gay.

Now everything made sense: Garrett's lack of interest in Cherie, his cool demeanor, the way he stared in Jackson's direction.

Cherie gasped and Zach watched her gaze darting back and forth between him and Garrett, obviously putting two and two together.

"You told him?" she cried and slapped Zach's arm. The sting to his skin was nothing compared to the guilt over disappointing her.

Then she was gone, moving into the crowd like a wet hornet. He hopped off of the stool, prepared to go after her but she was making a beeline for her girlfriends, her blond hair shimmying in that way he knew meant trouble for him later. It was as if the shiny mane came alive with indignity and oh boy, *watch out*.

“Sorry,” Garrett called before heading down bar to fill another order.

Zach shook his head at the man, wasn’t his fault, then he stared after her, unsure why she was upset.

Women. He’d cut through the crap, found out the truth and now Monica would be better off for it. There was no use pussy footing around and wasting time. Life was too short; he knew that all too well.

Cooper’s death had come too soon...way too soon. But if there’d been one good thing to come of the tragedy, Zach had learned to stop dancing around and wasting time. His best friend’s death had brought a focus and conviction to Zach’s life like nothing else could.

Coop would have adored Cherie. In fact, he might have tried to steal her away. Zach smiled at the thought. Cooper was one of the best guys Zach had ever known. Sharp as a tack and as straight shootin’ as they came. He would have agreed with Zach’s decision to cut through the bullshit.

On the dance floor, Monica froze. She didn’t look over at Garrett and Zach had to give her credit for the wobbly nod and the way she turned back to Jackson, stared at him for a moment and then kept on dancing.

Cherie and Mary watched their friend with matching worried expressions. Slowly, they too started dancing and Cherie eventually glanced over at Zach.

Sorry, he mouthed.

She shook her head at him and turned away.

He had a feeling that he was going to get an earful in the truck on the way home. And although he was second guessing his decision to come out with her tonight, he never second guessed *her*. Being with her was pure joy even when she was fired up like a wet hornet.

He sat his bottle on the bar and cut through the crush of bodies, needing to touch her. Her back was to him and though Mary and Jackie saw him approach, they didn't warn her. They simply faded into the crowd.

The second before he reached for her, a slow song came through the speakers.



Strong, warm arms wrapped around her waist and Cherie recognized Zach's touch instantly. Even though she was mad that he'd told Garrett that Monica was interested, she didn't fight Zach's touch. She never had and she couldn't think of any circumstance when she wouldn't want to feel his caress.

The thin dress did nothing to block the heat of his hands against her belly.

"I'm sorry for interfering," he murmured against her ear, swaying to the music. "I know you guys had a plan."

"Yes we had a plan."

Obviously an ill thought out plan, but Monica wasn't brave enough to just walk up to a man and ask him out. Plus, she had too much pride. Cherie could understand wanting to be chased. It was dismal to follow behind a man, sucking up whatever crumbs he left for you.

Seeing if Garrett would find her desirable was what Monica had needed, a

simple step really that would have boosted her confidence. And now it was all for nothing.

“She never saw any indication that he’s gay?” he asked.

She craned her neck to meet his gaze. “You think she would be interested in him if she had?”

“Perhaps she just wasn’t looking for the clues.”

“And you were?”

“Let’s just say he didn’t seem all that interested in you.”

She turned in his arms and braced her hands against his chest. “Meaning?”

“Show me a red blooded man who doesn’t want to dance with you and I’d say he’s gay.”

Warmth and fury rolled through her in equal parts. Just like a man. Just like this man. “Maybe he’s happily married.”

“Could be.” His admission came with a nod. “But most married men would still look in your direction with longing in their eyes. You can’t help it you’re gorgeous.”

Cherie sighed. Oh the sweet talking cowboy...he got her every time. She couldn’t stay mad at Zach; he’d been doing what he thought was right. Trust a man to cut to the chase.

She couldn’t stay mad when his hands trailed lazy circles against her back, reminding her just how good they were together. They suited, as her grandmother would say. In more ways than one and when his hands dipped down to cup her ass, pulling her flush against him, heat and desire spiraled through her.

The potent combination had her lifting her lips for his kiss but a tap on her shoulder interrupted them.

“We’re gonna head out,” Jackie said, smirking up at Zach.

Cherie glanced around for Monica and Mary; their heads were close together as if in deep conversation. Jackson was at the bar. Cherie frowned; he was supposed to be Monica’s escort for the evening.

“I’ll--“

Jackie shook her head. “She’ll be fine,” she said easily. “Just a let-down. We’ll text you when we get home. Jackson said he’d get a ride or call a cab.”

Jackie raised an eyebrow that said she thought Jackson’s phrasing might be a play on words, considering what they’d just found out about the dreamy, green eyed bartender. Cherie agreed but didn’t want to think about her brother like that. *Ew.*

“Okay. Drive safe.”

Cherie hugged Jackie good-bye and then returned to the shelter of Zach’s arms.

“Looks like Jackson might get lucky,” Zach said just before dipping her.

They glanced over to find Jackson and Garret grinning at each other across the top of the bar.

Even though Zach held her a few feet off the floor, she had no fear he’d drop her. She trusted him and his strength, relied on it.

From the moment they’d met, she’d felt completely relaxed around him which was more than she could say about most of the men she’d dated.

He just had a way about him.

The first night he’d helped her out of his beast of a truck, he’d acted like he’d dropped her, but in reality he’d engineered a precisely controlled fall that brought her chest to chest with him and she had slid down his front. Somehow

he'd pulled off cocky and sweet at the same time and she'd been a goner.

"Well, at least someone is," she murmured.

There was a quick pause in him that she felt. "I said I was sorry," he murmured, straightening.

"I meant Jackson. If Monica's dreams are dashed tonight then maybe Jackson will snag himself a good man. Someone should benefit, right?"

The erection pressed against her belly told her that Zach was hoping to benefit from taking her dancing. "That's the spirit."

He shot her a devastating smile. Nope. Couldn't stay mad at him. Couldn't help but want him.

"Hmm..." She trailed her fingers through the hair at the nape of his neck, delighting in the way he shivered beneath her touch. Those shivers made some very fine muscles rub up against her and the last bit of her annoyance vanished as if it had never been. "Take me home cowboy. I've got a surprise for you."

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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.

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