



CINNAMON

Ms. H, looking spectacular in black lycra Bells and a spaghetti strap Tank, slithered across the lawn holding the morning paper.

“Rise and shine, Goldilocks.”

Sprawled out on the front stoop, I cracked an eyelid and spied my approaching neighbor. Not the most masculine pet name I’ve been given, but one look at this beauteous creature and I doubt you’d be apt to complain.

“Hey Cinnamon.”

Not her real name, of course. Merely a stage name, façade. A veil we all hide behind in various degrees at one time or another. I knew her real name. I just thought it best not to use it in public. Lest the Vultures that abound be in earshot of the Sound.

She lived on the top floor of the two story stucco I seemed to have been guarding that dawn. Just your typical girl next door (upstairs) who happens to be an Exotic Dancer. Yeah that’s right—Stripper.

“Rough nite, Johnny?”

“Damned if I know. But it sure feels like the day’s starting out that way. How you doing, Baby?”

“A helluva lot better than you, Sunshine. Made some serious Bank last nite. How bout I take you for breakfast?”

“Aw, that’s right neighborly of you, Cin. But I think just some aspirin and an ice pack is what I need.”

“Oh, pooh. A shot of Cuervo is what you need. Cures what ails ya. How bout it, Amigo? And then I’ll fix you something to eat.”

Who was I to argue. I was nursing a hangover that could’ve toppled the Berlin Wall. Oh, right. Well, how about the Great Wall of China, then? Anyway, I was in no condition to fight my Sugar n’ Spice and Everything Nice Neighbor.

I followed her upstairs.