

Fiur & Vlamme
present

Dyki
Tantsi

Fiur & Vlamme 2004 (c)



Dyki Tantsi

by Fiur and Vlamme

Disclaimers:

The characters in this story are of our own creation so please don't use them without permission. Two of them might look like a certain duo from a famous TV show about a Warrior Princess and her Warrior Bard soulmate, but that's just coincidence.

This story was greatly inspired by **Ruslana the Tigress from Ukraine** and winner of **The Eurovision Song Contest 2004** in Istanbul. Her singing and dancing performance and her costume at the show were very fascinating and absolutely great!

The songs "**Play, Musician**", "**Like A Hurricane**", "**Wild Passion**", "**The Same Star**", "**The Tango We Used To Dance**", "**Dyki Tantsi**" aka "**Wild Dances**" and "**Wild Dances Part 2**" belong to **Ruslana** and were used without permission but no copyright infringement was intended. All songs can be found on the album "**Wild Dances**".

For more information about **Ruslana** and her music check out her website at www.ruslana.com.ua/intro_eng.html

There will also be a tiny bit of violence, some hurt/comfort and yes a loving relationship between two adult females that gets kinda graphic...blush...so if you are under age please stop reading now and come back later when you are old enough.

Vlamme's notes:

A big **thank you** goes to our beta reader.

Another big **thank you** goes to **The Athenaeum** for posting our stories.

And finally I would like to thank my **best friend** in the whole wide world **Fiur**. Without you writing stories would be impossible for me, so my friend that's why I'd like to dedicate this story to you!

Fiur's notes:

Vlamme, you've already said it all, so that leaves only one more thing, the most important. **Thank you** for your support. I wouldn't want to miss writing with you for anything in the world, especially in hard times such as the end of the year 2004.

Even when we are apart, I know that you are always at my side. And that's why I'd like to dedicate this story to you!

Comments and questions can be sent to fiur-vlamme@web.de

We will be waiting for feedback so don't be shy and drop us a note.

Now enough with the babbling and on with the story. **Enjoy!**

© Copyright by Fiur and Vlamme 2004-2005

Part 1

"You want what?!" The furious outcry of her fiancé, combined with the dangerous skidding of the car on the wet lane as Mortimer Hayes lost control of it for a moment, made the blonde woman jerk. For a second, she closed her emerald eyes, rubbed her temples and a sigh escaped her throat. Obviously, it wasn't such a good idea to confront him with her decision now, but Jorane Jawson was fed up with the situation. The constant jealousy and fights and, in her eyes, often absurd discussions leading to nothing but delaying the inevitable. She had to put an end to it and for the young woman, it was important to do it as soon as possible.

"Don't you understand, Mortimer? You are crushing me with your love! You are suffocating me, robbing me of any chance to breathe!"

"But that is no reason to break off our engagement!" the dark haired man argued firmly, while his hands closed tighter around the steering wheel of the dark blue Mercedes he steered across the deserted country road. "Okay, fine, I'll tell you what. You need some distance and some time for yourself, I can see that. We don't have to be together or do something every day. So, I will retreat a bit..."

Jorane shook her head, sadly.

Mortimer saw it from the corner of his eyes and his usually gentle face transformed into an angry mask. "What else do you want me to do for you?" he screamed, outraged. "I sacrifice myself for you! I shower you with gifts to prove my love for you and still it's not enough!"

"I never wanted that," she replied, quietly. Jorane felt fear rise inside her, because she had never seen him angry like that.

"Yeah, but that didn't hold you back from taking it all anyway, did it? You are so ungrateful!" His foot pressed down harder on the gas and the car sped up in the dark of the night.

"Please, just take me home, where we can talk," the young woman begged, trying to keep her voice as calm as possible and suppress the panic, which began to make itself known.

"Why wait so long?" Mortimer asked. "Let's talk right now and get this out of the way!"

"Mortimer, please..."

"SHUT UP!!!" he yelled back, took one hand off the steering wheel and brandished it in front of her face. "Don't you think I know what's going on here? Do you think I'm totally stupid, or what? So, since when?"

Jorane looked at him in disbelief. "I have no idea what you are talking about, Mortimer."

"Yes, I bet you don't!" he spat, acidly. The car's speed accelerated more.

"Please, slow down..."

But the dark haired man didn't seem to hear her. "You are spending so much time with your precious horses... it's the new stable guy, isn't it? Did you think I wouldn't notice the way he looks at you?"

Annoyed, Jorane rolled her eyes.

"So, since when has this been going on?" he demanded.

"I don't know what you are trying to suggest here..."

"SINCE WHEN ARE YOU DATING HIM BEHIND MY BACK?" His eyes flashed at her furiously and Jorane was so shocked, she needed a moment to get her composure back in order to react to the angry question.

"Mortimer, he has nothing to do with the fact that I want to break up ..."

"So, you are admitting that you have an affair with him?" he interrupted her.

"No! Dear god, you don't listen at all!"

"I think I understand just fine," he growled back, annoyed.

Jorane knew he didn't understand anything at all, but after that outburst of rage she didn't want to provoke him further. She just wanted home. "Please, drive me home."

He stared through the windshield absent-mindedly, before his brown eyes turned to her, looking at her almost fondly. "Yes, I will do that. To where you belong," he promised so softly that Jorane thought she had just imagined the outburst.

The young woman looked out the window and noticed that the landscape passed her by faster and faster. She gazed at Mortimer, whose hands were wrapped tightly around the steering wheel, so hard that his knuckles turned white and his eyes were locked on the road.

"Mortimer... would you please slow down?" Her voice pierced the uncomfortable silence.

Instead of an answer he sped up even more.

"Mortimer!" Fear and panic made her body tremble.

"It's not your fault," he finally spoke quietly. "You are so beautiful and every man wants you, I know that. But you are MY WOMAN!!!" His eyes turned to her and what Jorane saw there would forever be etched into her memories.

He stepped harder on the gas. "If I can't have you, no one else shall have you! I will make sure of that," he announced, calmly.

While Jorane's brain was trying to process what he just said, Mortimer pulled hard at the wheel and the Mercedes rolled to the other lane, where a car came at them at breakneck speed.

"MORTIMER! HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND?" she screamed, her heart beating wildly with fear, as she reached over to grab the steering wheel.

"HANDS OFF!!!" he shouted and shoved her away roughly, only thinking about putting his cruel plan into action.

At the last moment the other car managed to avoid them with squealing tires and the driver honked, loudly.

"MORTIMER!" Jorane was beside herself with terror.

"SHUT UP!!!"

"ARE YOU CRAZY? STOP THE CAR!"

"NO! It will end! HERE AND NOW!!!" Once more, Mortimer stepped hard on the gas, pressing it down until it hit the floor. The engine howled its protest, as the car flew through the night.

"Mortimer, whatever you are intending to do, please, don't," Jorane pleaded, tears running down her rosy cheeks.

A last time he looked at her. "I love you, Jorane. Nobody else will ever love you like I did. You leave me no other choice." Then he pulled hard at the steering wheel. The dark blue Mercedes left the wet road and crashed into a tree at the side.

"N000000000000000000000000!!!" Soaked with sweat and awakened by her own fearful outcry, Jorane's emerald eyes flew open. Her heart hammered wildly against her rib cage and she panted for breath. Finally she looked around the darkened room and realized where she was. "I'm home... safe... alive... " She ran one hand through her short, damp, blonde hair. Then she grabbed a pillow and rolled on her side, hiding her face in the silky soft fabric as the tears came. "Oh God, will this never stop? It's been over a year now. Why can't I just forget the whole thing?"

After the sobs and tears had subsided, she sat up and glanced at the alarm clock sitting on the night stand, beside her bed. 07:43 a.m. shone in red numbers and Jorane rubbed her face. She pulled at the T-shirt, which stuck sweat-soaked to her body, then pulled back the light blanket and felt a sharp stab in her heart as her eyes fell on the scars of her left leg. It didn't matter how often she had seen them. Everytime it was a shock all over again. Just as it had been then, in the hospital, where the horrible pain had nearly driven her insane and the seemingly endless surgeries and physiotherapies robbed her off her strength. Jorane's bottom lip trembled and she bit down on it to keep from bursting into tears again. With her right hand she reached for the cane that leaned against the bed. Finally, she rose awkwardly and limped supported by her cane to the bathroom to take a shower.

Some time later, she sat freshly showered and wrapped in a terrycloth robe at the desk in her study, her head supported on her left arm. Lost in thought, she gazed at the document she held in her right hand. "What am I to do? I'm going to lose my house if I don't find somebody, who rents the apartment upstairs. Why can't there be just one thing without any complications in my life?"

The blonde woman sighed und put the letter aside. She opened the front drawer of her big desk and took out a clean, white sheet of paper and a pen. Carefully she unscrewed the cap of the silvery pen and began to write.

But right after the first word she stopped, starring disbelievingly at the letters in black ink that stood out sharply against the white background; Loneliness.

Jorane frowned and shook her head. "No, that's not a good subject for a poem." She crumpled the paper to a little ball and threw it in direction of the paper-basket, which stood

not too far away. The ball missed its target and fell to the floor, a good couple of inches beside the basket.

"Well, today is just not my day," the blonde woman grumbled and got up from her chair. Sharp pain tore through her left leg. Jorane clenched her teeth, squeezing her eyes shut tightly. "Oh, oh, that's not good. I need to take my meds."

Carefully and slowly she moved back to the bedroom and changed into a pair of sweatpants and a clean T-shirt. Then she limped to the kitchen, grabbed the pills and a glass of water. After swallowing the strong painkillers, she made breakfast. During that Jorane's eyes fell on the ticking clock, which made the only sound in the otherwise silent apartment. "Mhh, better get some more rolls ready. David should be here in about thirty minutes and he is always hungry. I wonder where the guy puts all that stuff?"

A small smile formed on her lips with the thought of the young man, who always managed to cheer her up, no matter how bad her mood was. Yes, David Turner was her friend. Probably the only true friend she ever had in her life.

The rusty, rattly, old pick-up rolled along the street at a leisurely pace.

Ileana Surienka whistled and tapped her fingers against the steering wheel to the rhythm of the song sounding from the radio. Her long, raven hair wafted softly in the breeze coming in through the open window. On the front passenger seat, a Ragdoll tomcat lay curled up and seemed to be asleep. From time to time his pointy ears twitched.

Ileana grinned, extended a hand and stroked his head gently. He turned on his back, wrapped two paws around her arm and began to purr as she caressed the soft, light brown colored fur of his belly. "Oh Attila, you are such a pussycat." The young woman laughed before turning her azure blue eyes back to the road.

Suddenly the car bucked. It rattled, hissed and patches of white steam rose from beneath the hood.

Ileana groaned, unhappily. "Oh no! Oh no, not that too! God damn it all to hell! Shit!" Finally the car stopped at the roadside. The dark haired woman mumbled some Russian curses, got out and kicked the door shut in anger. She opened the hood and the steam fled in one mighty cloud. "Great, absolutely great!" she exclaimed, sarcastically. She pulled her cellphone from her leather pant's pocket. But after she opened the lid, she read "no service" on the display. "Well, who would have thought! Would have been too easy, right?"

Attila stood on the driver's seat, two paws resting against the door and craned his neck through the open window, his blue eyes gazing at his mistress as a questioning "Meow" sounded.

Ileana looked at her cat and lifted him into her arms, which had him soon purring madly again. "I'll tell you what, Attila. Either, it's just not our day, or this country doesn't like us at all. Since we are here, everything goes wrong. First there are turbulences causing the plane to nearly crash. Then our whole luggage disappears mysteriously at the airport... it's probably already on its way to Brazil or something. Then we get this old tin can at the rent-a-car and now this! No, sometimes life is just not fair, am I right, buddy?"

As an answer, the cat rubbed his head against her chin, as if to say "Everything is going to be fine."

Ileana chuckled and put him back inside the pick-up. She scanned her surroundings. "God, here is nothing for miles. We're stranded at the end of the world."

But then her ears picked up something. The distinct sound of a car that drew closer.

"Oh, great. Hopefully it's not a pervert or a crazy mass murderer. That's exactly what I need to really sweeten my day." Soon after these words left her mouth she jumped to the middle of the street, waving her arms madly to get the driver's attention.

Right in front of her feet, the silvery, angular car skidded to a halt, tires squealing. The young woman waved, laughing at the shocked driver. She went to the car and rapped her knuckles politely against the window.

The driver inhaled sharply, before lowering the pane. "Are you hurt, Miss?" he asked cautiously, still slightly shocked.

Ileana chuckled and shook her head. "No, I just wanted to stop your car."

The young man noticed her accent and said, "Does everyone in your country stop cars in such a crazy way as you did? It's life-threatening!"

Still smiling, she blurted happily, "Why? My car is dead and I need to go to the town. I'm sure we can get a ride with you, because you look very nice. I just get my things and Attila."

"We? Attila?" the driver repeated confused and looked to Ileana's car, where steam was still rising from beneath the hood. He couldn't give another thought to the strange encounter because a second later, the young woman was already in the passenger seat and threw her things to the backseat, while he stared open-mouthed at the hissing fur bundle in her arms.

Wrinkling her forehead, the foreign woman suddenly looked at him. Her azure blue eyes practically piercing, she asked suspiciously, "What kind of work do you do? Or how do you say here... what do you do for a living?"

"I don't understand you..." But then his gaze followed her to the open trunk and he had to laugh.

"A rolled up mattress, a folding bed, and some other weird stuff... Well, you sure got some strange utensils back there..." the young woman responded.

"No, no. You're getting this all wrong. I need this stuff when I drive to my customers' homes in order to give them a massage for example."

Ileana relaxed back in her seat and nodded her head knowingly. "Ah, I understand. But from your appearance with jeans, T-shirt and disheveled hair I wouldn't have gathered that you are one of those people." She grinned and finished, "But you are an erotic masseur."

The young man's eyes widened. "WHAT? NO! I'm a physiotherapist!" he exclaimed shocked.

"Oh, sorry. I didn't mean to offend you or anything. It's a great job."

Confused he looked at his new passenger and sighed. "Let's just start again from the beginning, okay? My name is David, David Turner." He held out his hand and she took it.

Ileana beamed at him, "Nice to meet you, David. My name is Ileana Surienka. I'm a singer and dancer."

"You sure have a strong grip," he said while glancing at her beautiful face with the azure blue eyes. Suddenly, David mentioned, "You look kinda familiar."

"Hey, is that one of those stupid pick-up-lines you have here in your country?" Ileana asked smiling, shaking her long, black mane.

"I wouldn't dare to ask out a woman using such silly words. But still, I think I've already seen you somewhere."

"Can be," Ileana replied, mysteriously.

The young man nodded. "Maybe I will remember on the way."

The drive on the deserted country road was entertaining for them both. Ileana sang to every song that drifted from the radio, even when she didn't know the lyrics. Besides that she constantly moved her slender body to the rhythm of the music, not able to hold still for one second.

After awhile David asked, "Where were you off to?"

"Well, actually I'm searching for a place, where I can stay for an indefinite period of time."

"Aha," David answered shortly and contemplated her words.

As if she could hear his thoughts, Ileana asked, "You are from here, right? So maybe you know of a place? I am a nice and peaceful person to be with." She chuckled.

"Hmm, I just had an idea. I know someone, who is searching for a tenant."

"Yes, really? Cool, tell me more," the young woman ordered.

"Well, my next patient... uh, no actually she is my best friend. She owns a house in a suburb of the city. It's a very quiet residential area..." He glanced at his passenger and felt small doubts rising.

Ileana misinterpreted the glance and answered promptly, "Oh, it doesn't matter! If I think about it, it's actually perfect! I need silence and lots of fresh air to write my songs." She looked at David in anticipation, who stared at the street, lost in thought. More to himself he said determinedly, "Yeah, maybe that's good. At least, it can't go on like it has."

Ileana wrinkled her forehead, her body tensed and her curiosity grew. "Please, please. Tell me some more."

"Well, not much else to tell. It is a little, old house, but has a lot of charm..."

Ileana laughed. "No! Tell me more about her!" She relaxed back in her seat.

"Oh, about Jorane?"

"Jorane," the singer repeated devoutly, rolling the 'r' strongly because of her beautiful accent.

Hesitatingly, David began to talk, "I don't know what to tell you about her. It might be better if you get to know her, because I'm not so sure if she would like it when I... Jorane is a very private person in that matter."

"So, she's a lady with secrets, yes? Well, I can't wait to get to know this Jorane," Ileana said with growing excitement, a smile spreading across her features.

Some time later, they passed the first houses. Ileana could see clean streets, lined by big, old trees, well-tended gardens and nice houses. David turned into a driveway and stopped the car. Filled with happy anticipation concerning the meeting with the unknown woman, Ileana jumped out of the car. Her tomcat Attila preferred to wait, curled up in the seat.

Intrigued, she scanned her surroundings. From the car, she had already noticed the big wooden sign, stating "Room for rent".

The house was almost invisible from the street because the garden looked more like a forest, but now it held all of Ileana's attention. The front of the first floor was dominated by big windows, but the curtains didn't allow any glances in from the outside. The second floor's windows had been built into the roof.

"Now, I really want to know what my new home looks from the inside."

That said, Ileana strode along the small paved way leading her to the front door. Without waiting for David, who was busy unloading their stuff from the car, the young woman climbed the two steps to the door and rang the bell. She couldn't hear anything from the inside and so she knocked loudly against the wooden door.

It took another moment until she heard a key rattling and the door finally opened.

Instantly, somebody grumbled, "You are late!"

"I'm sorry," Ileana apologized immediately, grinning from one ear to the other. Politely, she extended her hand to greet the house owner.

Dumb-founded, Jorane looked up at the tall woman standing there and beaming at her. Her gaze travelled from the beautiful face with the piercing blue eyes, over the long, dark, cascading hair, to the short top, on to the tight leather pants and down to the tied, pointy leather boots with small heels and covered with tiny metal studs, and back up.

Again and again Jorane sized up the woman, who stood in front of her door, until she found her voice and said firmly, "Begging and peddling is not welcome!"

The door was slammed right into her face and Ileana kept standing there, completely and utterly stunned.

David arrived with his and Ileana's things and asked, "Have you knocked?"

"Yes, but I'm a bit confused right now," came the short answer.

"Jorane probably didn't hear you." Forcefully, David hammered his fist against the door and soon after Jorane opened again.

"Didn't I make myself clear? I thought I said..." she spat angered, but then her eyes fell on David and surprised her voice faltered.

"Hey, Jorane. Did you get up on the wrong foot today, or what?" he asked, while breezing past her and making his way inside the house. Ileana followed him silently, trying to give the short, blonde woman a wide berth, who was shooting her suspicious looks.

"Do you want to take up root there, or will you please close the door so I can introduce you properly?" David began impatiently, when Jorane was not moving an inch from the door, staring open-mouthed at him and his companion.

Slowly she closed the door. Leaning heavily on her cane, she limped toward them and her friend said sympathetically, "Oh, got a bad day, huh? I'll make it a fast treatment today and you can rest some more."

Jorane didn't seem to have heard him, because she asked clearly irritated, "Who is she?"

"Hey, you noticed our guest?"

The blonde woman turned from the foreigner to David, sending him a disapproving glare. "I'm not in the mood for jokes!"

The tall man swallowed his next remark, running a hand through his hair a bit embarrassed. He stepped closer to Jorane and said quietly, "You are desperately searching for a tenant. Well, here is the solution to all your problems."

Jorane's gaze slid from David to the stranger, sizing her up again. She looked deeply into David's eyes. "THAT is the solution to all my problems? Have you looked at her?"

"Ohhhh yeeaaaah," David whispered, a playful leer forming on his face.

The young woman groaned and her green eyes flashed. "You! I mean she looks like one of those biker girls. Like that kind of person, who causes problems and is not solving them."

David frowned and shook his head, uncomprehendingly.

Jorane continued to whisper, "I mean she looks like she is ready to cause trouble any second!" She wanted to point her finger at the beautiful stranger, as a hoarse cry escaped her throat. "AH! I knew it, I knew it! She's gone, probably already going through my belongings to search for worthwhile stuff!"

David looked up and turned around. While Jorane was still thinking about which federal bureau she should call for help, he just sighed, because he saw Ileana standing in the living room.

The tall woman was looking at some framed pictures, which sat on a chest of drawers.

Finally he cleared his throat and took the phone from his friend's hand, who exclaimed furiously, "Hey! I wanted to call the police!"

"No need," David answered. "She is in the living room, waiting." He crossed his arms over his muscled chest and said, "You are so unfriendly towards Ileana. I don't know you to be like that. What's wrong with you?"

"Ileana..." Jorane repeated. "That's a foreign name."

"Why are you making this so hard? Get to know her and I'm sure you two will get on well." More serious, he added, "Besides, it's not like you have much choice in that matter and you know that."

"Yes," Jorane sighed and her friend wrapped a strong arm around her shoulder. Together they entered the living room even though David was more shoving her in than she walked herself.

With mixed feelings the women stood in front of each other. Awkwardly, both cast their eyes to the floor until Jorane began, "Please, have a seat." She pointed to an overstuffed armchair and Ileana took a seat, as did David and finally Jorane. "I am Jorane Jawson," the blonde introduced herself.

"Jorane Jawson, beautiful," the foreigner breathed gently, gazing deeply into Jorane's eyes and winked at her. "My name is Ileana Surienka and I am very happy to meet you." For the first time the blonde noticed the accent and the rolling 'r' in Ileana's pronunciation.

"Are you serious? I think I have to apologize for my behaviour, but..."

"No problem," the dark haired woman chuckled. "It can only get better."

There was a short pause, nobody said anything, until David rose and mumbled, "Oh, my stomach is growling. I'm sure I'm not the only one who's hungry so I will go to the kitchen to make some coffee... yes, Jorane you'll get your tea. How long do we know each other, huh?" He didn't wait for an answer and went straight to the kitchen.

Now, the two different women were all alone in the living room. The young blonde was wracking her brain, trying to come up with something to talk about, while the brunette sat there, looking at her in anticipation and smiled.

"Well," Jorane said, "you would like to rent the rooms upstairs?"

"Yes, very much. But first I would like to take a look at them."

"They are in a respectable shape, if that's what you meant?" Jorane replied coolly.

"No, no. What I meant is, I have to see if they will be big enough for me." Ileana explained.

Astonished, the blonde asked, "For heaven's sake, just what do you want to do up there?"

But before the brunette could answer, Jorane blurted out the next question, "Do you have any previous convictions I should know about?"

She hadn't realized that David was back and leaning against the door frame.

He couldn't believe what kind of rude questions his friend asked. After clearing his throat he said curtly, "The tea needs to stand some more minutes but everything else is ready."

"Great, I'm so hungry, I could eat a bear!" Ileana exclaimed, jumped off her seat and followed the scent of freshly brewed coffee.

Meanwhile, David pulled his friend aside and asked stunned, "What was the meaning of that?"

Just as Jorane was about to reply in defiance, there was a knock at the door. Fearful, the young woman looked up at the tall man. "Who can that be?"

"I will go and open, you stay here." David opened the door, greeting the man, who stood in front of it, with a scowl. After a short, but heavy discussion he returned to Jorane, who asked scared, "Who was the man?"

David gnashed his teeth. "The slimy bank clerk."

"What did he want?"

Her big friend had to swallow before he decided to tell Jorane the truth. "He said if he doesn't get the next rate until the end of the week, they are going to put your house up for compulsory auction. You know if I had some more money I..."

Jorane pressed her lips together and nodded.

David felt sorry for his best friend and wanted to give her a hug, but she turned away, fighting to suppress the tears that burned in her eyes. Finally, she made a decision and went to the kitchen, where Ileana was pouring herself a big cup of coffee. Noticing the other two, the singer asked in indignation, "Tea bags?"

"What?" Jorane was totally lost, her confusion growing.

"Tea bags don't work. A good, delicious tasting tea has to be made with fresh leaves. It takes a lot of time and leisure."

Jorane tried to just ignore Ileana's opinion about tea. "Now, do you want to rent the rooms upstairs, or not? Payment has to be one week in advance and cash."

Behind her David stood, his eyes wide open and nodding his head wildly.

Confused the dark haired beauty gazed from one to the other before also nodding, if somewhat hesitatingly.

"Good, since we agree, I'd say we eat now before David perishes from hunger." With these words Jorane answered the loud growling of her friends stomach and took her seat at the round kitchen table that stood in front of the big window, which gave a great view of the garden outside.

Before Ileana joined them, she pulled the curtain aside a bit and gazed through the glass. The garden was surrounded by wildly growing hedges and trees. From the tallest tree hung a swing, its white color layer flaking off in places. The lawn looked more like a wild meadow. Weeds were growing everywhere untamed as were grass and wild flowers in every color. On the terrace sat some terracotta pots, dried plants hanging over their rims.

Jorane didn't miss Ileana's gaze and said, almost apologizing, "It looks hopelessly wild, I know. Needs some grooming..." Clearly embarrassed, she ran a hand through her short, blonde hair.

Ileana whirled around, sat down opposite to Jorane and bent over the table. "Jorane?"

Immediately, the young woman looked up and fell into large, sparkling, blue eyes, her heart rate speeding up.

In her smooth alto voice the brunette said convincingly, "No, don't change it. It is very beautiful like this... I love it wild..."

The last part was said in such a strange tone that Jorane had a feeling Ileana wasn't talking about the garden anymore. Roughly, she shoved that particular thought aside. Breathlessly, the blonde leaned back, her eyes searching for a neutral point in the kitchen to avoid looking at Ileana, because somehow she suddenly felt uncomfortable doing that. But again and again her eyes met those of her new tenant. Seductively, the brunette gazed over the rim of the cup she was drinking from.

Nobody said anything until Jorane couldn't stand it anymore and blurted, "David will now show you the rooms upstairs." She fought to get her composure back.

A bit sad, Ileana responded with a question, "Jorane? Why don't you show them to me?"

The whole time David had been concentrating on his breakfast but at that question he winced inwardly and looked concerned at his friend. Unknowingly, the brunette had hit a very sore spot.

Considerably cold, the blonde woman replied, "Climbing stairs causes pain I'd like to avoid." Jorane rose and leaning on her cane she limped from the kitchen, without saying another word.

Dismay was heavy in Ileana's voice as she looked helplessly at David, "It wasn't my intention to hurt Jorane."

The man put down his cup, trying to calm the upset, young woman. "I know. But, Jorane is very sensitive concerning this matter. She never talks about it, but the pain runs deep."

Ileana rose abruptly from the table, meaning to leave and exclaimed, "I have to go to her immediately to apologize."

David grabbed her arm to hold her back. "No, just leave it. Believe me, it's better this way."

At first she struggled, but then she gave in with a sigh and nodded.

Together they climbed the stairs and David noticed that Ileana was still upset. "Don't worry about it. Later she will have forgotten about it." Grinning, he added, "Do you think you're the only one?"

"What do you mean?"

"Do you think I don't have fights with her? Sometimes she drives me totally crazy with her rude behaviour."

A bit disbelieving Ileana asked, "Really?"

"Yes, but that's okay. It never gets boring."

"Boredom would be a very bad thing for me," Ileana said, already smiling again.

"I know," David replied and winked.

"There we are, your new home!" David announced, spreading his arms wide to indicate the area.

Curious, Ileana entered the apartment. First, she walked into the bright living room. "Wow, it's great! From the outside you can't guess how big the rooms truly are."

"Yeah, but it doesn't have much furniture," David mentioned.

Ileana answered, "Oh, that's just fine. I need much space to practise dancing."

The young man's eyes drifted from the parquet to the metal studs that covered the singer's black leather boots. "Alright, but do me a favour."

At the questioning look he added, "Try practising in socks first, okay? For peace's sake."

Ileana laughed loudly. "Don't worry. I'm sure we will get along just fine, Jorane and I. And now I want to see the rest of my new home."

Like a whirlwind she turned to the door that was closest to her and David couldn't help but grin wolfishly and whistled through his teeth. "What a hot chick. I'm anxious to see how this will develop."

Then he followed the beautiful woman, who had just entered the bedroom. "Now, this I would call a big bed," Ileana said and threw herself upon it. She rested on her back and stretched her arms and legs as far as she could. "Oh, a real bed. I'm just realizing how tired I am from my long journey." But soon after, she leapt up again and went to the window. "I have a view of the beautiful garden."

David nodded, while leaning against the door's frame.

"What's behind the other door?" Ileana asked and walked back to the living room, passing David on her way.

"That's the bathroom. You don't have your own kitchen up here, so I think you'll have to share the one downstairs with Jorane."

The singer smiled. "That's fine. I prefer eating with a good friend to eating all alone."

"Don't be so sure that Jorane will join you for meals."

She grinned, poking his chest with an index finger. "Take my word for it, that I will get her to join me."

David crossed his arms. "Uh, I guess you have your work cut out for you. Are you sure, you will be able to do that? It's very hard to coax Jorane out of her shell, especially when trying to cheer her up. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about."

"Just leave that to me." Ileana struck a superhero pose and the physiotherapist had to laugh. "Oh yeah, I can so totally see it. You turning on your unbelievable charm to get a heavily resisting Jorane to eat with you."

"Hey!" came Ileana's outcry in mocked anger and she glared at him. "I have many skills! You just wait! Does Jorane like chicken?"

"Chicken? Why?" he asked, frowning.

"Well, If I want her to join me for meals, maybe I should cook dinner today? Something from my home country? Chicken in sour cream?" she explained, smiling.

David looked at her in astonishment. "You can cook?"

The singer crossed her arms and lifted an eyebrow. "Like I said, I have many skills! When I was little I spent lots of time in the kitchen with my grandma and picked up some things here and there. Would you please be so kind to answer my question? Does Jorane eat chicken?"

"Of course."

"Good!" the dark haired beauty announced and rubbed her hands together. "Then I will create a delicious dinner tonight she won't forget as long as she lives!" she swore, grinning widely and wagging her eyebrows.

David laughed and left the room to get Ileana's things, which were still downstairs, laying in the corridor beside the front door.

Meanwhile, Ileana planned in her mind what she would need to turn the big living room into a dance studio. She tap-danced four steps, trying not to make too much noise and pivoted. "Hmm, this parquet floor is great, absolutely phenomenal. Some big mirrors for the walls and of course a stereo system with surround sound and I'm all set. That shouldn't be a problem at all." Again Ileana looked around her new quarters. "Yes, I think I will like it here."

"I hope so," David mentioned as he placed her things next to the bed. "But, like I said, practise dancing in socks for now."

Ileana was stunned. "You heard it downstairs? It was indeed so loud?"

"Actually no, but it's so quiet in this house every sound sticks out," the young man explained, shrugged his shoulders and lowered himself to the bed's edge.

"Jorane doesn't like music, hm?" she finally asked, hesitatingly.

"Oh, she does. Sometimes you can hear a CD or the radio playing, but it's seldom. Jorane likes it quiet to concentrate on her work. She writes poems for different women's magazines."

"Poems?" Ileana was intrigued and wanted to know more.

David nodded, a dreamy expression on his face. "Yes, beautiful poems. I've never been a big fan of prose but Jorane's... I don't know if I can explain it... you know, it's weird, but when you read her poems, they touch something deep inside of your heart. And I'm not saying that just because I'm her friend. It's the truth."

"I believe you," she responded and took a seat next to him, patting his knee gently. "I knew from the beginning that you are a very honest person."

David thanked her, blushing.

"Say, does Jorane own a horse?" Ileana changed the subject.

"Oh, you've seen the pictures in her living room?"

The singer nodded, looking at him, greatly interested. She wanted as much information as possible about her landlady. "Yes."

The young physiotherapist cleared his throat, rubbing his neck in embarrassment. "Well, uh... the pics were taken two weeks before the accident. Jorane was a very talented and successful rider, making her horse easily take the highest obstacles..."

"Oh God," the young woman interrupted him, shocked. "Please, don't tell me she fell off her horse and hurt herself that way."

"If only it would have been like that." He shook his dark blonde hair and his face darkened considerably. "No, the truth is much more horrifying."

Ileana waited with restrained breathing if David would continue, but the physiotherapist kept silent, his gaze turned to the window.

"Please, David. Tell me."

He looked at her. "I don't know if I should. It's not a beautiful story and Jorane..."

"Please. You can trust me. I just want to understand Jorane better. I want to know why she acts like she does."

David saw the sincerity in her azure blue eyes and came to a decision. He folded his hands in his lap and stared at the floor as he began to talk, "It was not a riding accident. At that time, Jorane was engaged to a guy named Mortimer Hayes. He was very jealous of everyone and everything close to her and he didn't like it at all if Jorane was giving attention to something else but him. Anyway, she wanted to break up the engagement. She wanted out of the relationship. They were in his car, driving home, as Jorane told him she wanted to leave him. Mortimer snapped and accused her of having an affair with one of the stable guys. He crashed the car into a tree, attempting to kill Jorane and himself."

Tears welled up in Ileana's eyes and she pressed a hand to her mouth. "How awful! I hope the bastard rots in jail for what he did to Jorane!"

"He's dead," David replied without betraying any emotion. "But he ruined her life! She had to give up riding! She has to live with a disabled leg forever! Jorane has to endure panic attacks and horrible nightmares! Sometimes she gets so depressed, it scares me! She retreats from everyone and lets nobody close! Not even her family!"

"But you are her best friend," she threw in.

David shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know why she makes an exception in my case."

They were silent for a while until David saw Ileana wiping some tears from her face. He reached into his pocket and brought out a wrinkled, but unused Kleenex, giving it to the brunette. "Here. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you cry."

Ileana took the tissue gratefully, tried her eyes and blew her nose. "It's not your fault. I did ask, didn't I? Thank you, for being so open and telling me."

David glanced at his watch and his eyes widened. "What? So late already?" He jumped quickly off the bed. "Damn!"

"What's wrong?"

"I have to hurry with Jorane's treatment. I only got one hour before I have to be at my next patient's home. See you soon." He waved shortly before leaving the room and running down the stairs.

Ileana rose and started to put the few things she still had in the wardrobe, as a sudden thought stopped her. "Attila! Oh, sweetie, I totally forgot about you!" She jogged down the stairs, out of the front door, straight to David's car, where Attila was peacefully resting on the driver seat, warm sunlight shining on his soft fur. The brunette singer opened the door. "Hey, buddy," she said softly, patting him between his pointy ears. "We're home. Time to get up."

Attila yawned widely, before slowly lifting his behind to stretch his limbs.

Ileana took him into her arms and the tomcat rubbed his head against her chin, purring contently, while they went back inside.

Soon after she had closed the door behind her, she could hear Jorane's upset voice from the living room. "WHAT? What do you mean you told her?"

"It's not so bad," David's calm answer followed.

"Not so bad? NOT SO BAD??? How would you react if I were to talk with a complete stranger about your private life? That's none of anyone's business! That's why it's called PRIVATE!"

David sighed, "I don't know why you are making such a big deal out of it. She's your new roommate. And who knows, maybe you'll be best friends with her soon."

Carefully, Ileana, with Attila in her arms, peered around the corner, glancing into the living room. She knew it wasn't nice to eavesdrop on conversations, but she was looking forward to the blonde woman's answer.

Jorane lay red faced on a foam mat, beads of sweat from exertion visible on her forehead. David knelt in front of her, her left leg in his hands, moving it back and forward.

"I don't need her to be my friend," Jorane hissed through clenched teeth. "I just want her to pay the rent on time. I'm fine on my own."

"God damnit! Why do you have to be so damn stubborn? Why don't you give her a chance? Maybe you'll like her!" David shot back seriously, stretching her leg a bit roughly.

Ileana's eyes followed their conversation like a ball in a tennis match.

Jorane bit her lip until the pain faded somewhat before she replied acidly, "Just because you like her doesn't mean I have to. If you want to date her, then ask her! But leave me alone with it, okay?"

The tall man blushed brightly.

"Aha! I knew it!" Jorane exclaimed triumphantly. "Your blushing is my proof! You've got a crush on her! David Turner and the hot leather babe, what a dream pair," she teased, grinning.

"Nonsense!" he argued firmly. Changing from remedial gymnastics to a relaxing massage of the pressure points on her feet, he also changed the subject to divert her attention from himself. "Ileana said, she'd like to cook dinner for you tonight."

Panting, Jorane lifted her head and upper body, supporting herself on her elbows. "I can cook my own dinner! I don't need her help! I can manage on my own, and neither do I need her pity nor her friendship or anything else for that matter but the rent for the apartment upstairs!" she spat, glaring.

David groaned. He knew those phrases by heart. "My goodness, Jorane! Do you actually know how you sound? Just because someone is nice to you and would like to be your friend doesn't mean they're questioning your capabilities. Who ever said you can't manage on your own? Why can't you just accept help when it is given freely? This is not about pity! But your pride is in the way like always!"

Ileana was so enraptured by the conversation, she didn't notice as Attila squirmed and writhed, freeing himself from her grip to sprint to the living room.

Jorane, who was still searching for a reply, cried out in surprise as suddenly a bundle of fur leapt on her stomach and looked at her with big, blue eyes. "What... what the hell is that?" she squeaked, starrng wide-eyed at the animal that didn't move an inch.

David couldn't suppress a grin. "I'd say it's a cat. A tomcat, to be exact."

Jorane glared at him. "I can see that myself, smartass! Would you be so kind and take him off me? Where did he come from anyway?"

The blonde man grabbed Attila to lift him off Jorane, but the animal had other ideas. The cat dug his claws deeply into the woman's T-shirt and held on. Afraid he would hurt him otherwise, David let go.

Attila moved up on Jorane's body until he was able to look directly into her emerald eyes.

'Oh, my god,' Jorane thought to herself, 'his eyes are nearly as blue as Ileana's.'

The tomcat brushed his nose against Jorane's, rubbed his head against her cheek and began to purr. The young woman just sat there, completely frozen to the spot.

"He likes you," Ileana said smiling, entered the living room and knelt beside Jorane's mat.

The blonde woman looked at her dumb-founded. "What do you mean? He doesn't even know me, how can he like me?"

Ileana stroked her cat's head, who snuggled closer to Jorane and purred even louder.

David fought with himself to keep from bursting into loud laughter, because he found the shocked expression on Jorane's face very amusing. He turned away, hiding his grin behind a hand.

Searching for help, the blond woman gazed at Ileana, who smiled at her lovingly. "Animals have a good instinct," the singer explained, taking one of Jorane's hands, who was overcome by a weird feeling at the gentle touch. "And Attila has a great knowledge of human nature."

Heat flooded Jorane's face, she felt her ears burning and quickly pulled back her hand.

David couldn't contain his laughter anymore and guffawed. Tears welling up in his eyes, he held his stomach while writhing on the floor in laughter.

"Just ignore him, Ileana. He often gets such fits," Jorane said, scowling at her friend, who tried in vain to get his composure back.

He wanted to reply something but wasn't able between laughing and gasping for breath.

Jorane looked at him, wrinkling her forehead. "If you have anything to say, David, out with it!" she grumbled.

After the young man had himself back under control, he said, "No, I have nothing to add."

"So, his name is Attila?" the blonde turned to the singer, intrigued beyond all else. "Like Attila the conquerer and leader of the Huns?"

The brunette grinned and nodded.

"The name fits, don't you think?" David chimed in. "He just conquered your lap."

"Yes, this looks like the beginning of a wonderful friendship," Ileana mentioned, sending Jorane another heart melting smile.

"You think so?" the small blonde asked.

"I know it. So, can we?"

Jorane had trouble following Ileana's thought processes and so she stared at her blankly. "Can you what?"

"Be your friends?" Ileana breathed gently, their gazes locked.

The young woman was so dazed she didn't know what to answer. The look from these large, blue sapphires confused her greatly. She stammered and stuttered until she managed a hoarse, "If you want."

Ileana smiled. She wanted to embrace Jorane but refrained at the last moment, not wishing to scare her away so soon.

Attila meowed and curled up in Jorane's lap.

Part 2

The pink tip of her tongue was poking from between her luscious lips, while Jorane sat with an expression of absolute concentration on her pale face at the desk, in her study. The late afternoon sun shone through the slightly opened window, the light fell on a sheet of paper in front of Jorane. The house was silent, for which the young woman was very grateful.

A few weeks had gone by and the noise Ileana had caused with turning the apartment upstairs into a dance studio had finally left. Now Jorane hoped that she would be able to concentrate on her poems again.

Gracefully, she guided the silvery pen across the paper, as some heavy drum beats, followed by blaring horns and also loud "**Dyki Tantsi**" and "**Hey**" cries, made her jerk. The result was one big scrawl across the whole sheet.

"God damn it all! That's not possible!" Jorane cursed, crumpled the paper and threw it angrily into the basket. "I thought they just wanted to talk?"

The music boomed through the house, together with the stomping sounds of Ileana and her dancers.

"Must be some talk! Sounds more like a public festival up there!" Jorane reached for her cane, leaned on it and slowly rose from her chair. "I should have known! Already as I saw the wilde horde standing in front of my door! They just had to test the new stereo system!"

While she was moving gingerly to the stairs to call up and demand some silence, Ileana's beautiful alto voice sounded.

**"Play a song for me, my darling
Play for me, musician
I shan't go to show business
For the recognition
You'd be playing, you'd be playing
I would sing with passion
All the world could hear this music
With the great impression"**

"Yes, and how the whole world can hear it! Since it is loud enough!" the blonde woman spat, annoyed. "Dear God, just how do they stand the volume if my poor ear drums are nearly bursting down here?"

Attila was sitting on the lowest step, observing curiously as his newest, favourite human came closer. When she was about four steps away, he jumped up, strode towards her and rubbed his body against her legs, purring.

"Hey, cute buddy. What do you want? Are you hungry? Or did you flee from the noise your mistress calls music?"

The stomping sounds of the dancers increased, as did Ileana's singing.

**"Should my mood become so bully
We will sing together
When good people come to party
We'll be dancing further
When we find a classy master
Who can lay the table
We shall dance the hot wild dances"**

**We are so much able
Don't you sway - control your breathing
Look at me, it's very easy
Play the song and stop your teasing"**

"Hmm, I guess they are doing the 'Hot Wild Dances' up there. I hope they are not going to break through the ceiling at any moment," Jorane mumbled to herself. "I don't think shouting will help anything, since they obviously wouldn't be able to hear me anyway. Come on, Attila. Let's go to the kitchen and see if we can find something to eat for you ."

Jorane had just turned around, as the door bell rang. A glance at her watch told her the identity of the visitor. "David."

Upstairs the music became even louder and Ileana sang with all her heart.

**"When I think of dateless customs
And of old traditions
There were songs and crazy dances
And without conditions
Play this song for me, my darling
Let them hear my singing
I give twenty points to Britney
My voice will be ringing"**

"Yes, I hear your voice ringing! And how!" Jorane grumbled darkly and opened the door.

David breezed in, a big grin on his face as usual. "Oh WOW!!! Is that Ileana?" he asked with a nod in direction of the stairway.

"Do you know another singer, who lives here?" came the sarcastic reply.

**"Should my mood become so bully
We will sing together
When good people come to party
We'll be dancing further
When we find a classy master
Who can lay the table
We shall dance the hot wild dances
We are so much able
Don't you sway - control your breathing
Look at me, it's very easy
Play the song and stop your teasing"**

"Hot, wild dances, huh? God, she's got such a cute accent," David gushed and winked at her. "Sounds like an interesting party up there."

"It sounds more like Hannibal and his war elephants crossing over the Alpes!" the blonde woman hissed back. "But I knew you'd like such wild music and..."

"Hey!" He cut her off abruptly and waved his index finger wildly in front of her nose. "This divine lady upstairs is a star in her home country, and if she has any success here, she will become goddess of music! And you can admit already that you like her music, too."

**"Play this song for me, my darling
Make all people stare
We could win a million dollars
But I wouldn't care
Don't be cool with me, musician
You don't get the chances
You can't go away, my darling
No more songs, no dances"**

She didn't say anything to that, just scowled at him. "If you are going upstairs right now, could you please tell your 'goddess' she may please turn down the volume? Here is one poor mortal, who has to work and needs some peace and quiet to accomplish that!" She nearly yelled to make herself heard over the booming "**Dyki Tantsi!**" and "**Hey!**" cries.

David just grinned, moving his head to the rhythm of the music. "No problem, I'll do that." He pressed some envelopes in her hand, before climbing the stairs to see the rest of Ileana's performance. "Here, your mail."

**"Play this song for me, my darling
Let us feel the fire
Let the people dance together
Jumping even higher
Let your music reach the heavens
Let the stars be violent
When the morning stops these sounds
Then we shall be silent"**

With the letters in hand and the Ragdoll tomcat at her side, Jorane went to the kitchen, asking herself how long the song actually was Ileana sang so passionately in the apartment above her. Leaning against the counter she went through the mail. During that, she unconsciously moved her right foot to the beat of Ileana's song, who was still roaring, "**...Dyki Tantsi... Hey... Dyki Tantsi... Hey... Dyki Tantsi... Hey... Dyki Tantsi... Hey... Dyki Tantsi!**"

"Mh, I wonder what 'Dyki Tantsi' means. Maybe I should ask her."

Finally the song was over, only to be replaced by loud cheering, which faded soon enough.

Jorane glanced relieved to the ceiling. "Thank you, God! Maybe now the wild horde will show some consideration for me." She turned back to her mail, "Garbage, invoice, garbage, garbage, strange winnings from a competition I never entered, garbage, invoice, invoice..."

Suddenly she hesitated, her eyes staring at the white envelope. The name of the bank stood out in deep black. Her fingers began to tremble, her throat tightened and she had trouble breathing. Jorane struggled to open the envelope, the trembling of her hands making it even harder. Her heart beat rose rapidly and cold sweat broke out, as she read the text. Gasping for breath, Jorane felt as if she couldn't get enough oxygen. Her head dizzy, she grabbed for the counter, trying to find a place to hold on.

"I'm thirsty. I will go downstairs to fetch something to drink. Does anyone else need something from the kitchen?" Ileana asked helpfully, while she dried her sweaty face with a soft towel.

Her dance troop and David declined.

"Good, that means more for me!" the singer declared smiling, and whistling she made her way downstairs. Attila came towards her. She bent down and patted him gently. "Hey, buddy! Been cheating on me again, huh? Getting some cuddling from Jorane behind my back, hm?"

Then she heard the wheezing sounds and wrinkled her forehead. "Jorane?"

The strange noises led her to the kitchen. Shortly after the brunette had entered the room, Jorane's legs gave out beneath her and the singer managed just in time to reach her, before the blonde woman fell to the black and white checkered tiles. "Jorane!" Ileana's arms shot out, wrapping themselves around Jorane's upper body to catch her and slowly the singer sank to the floor with Jorane in her arms, until the blonde head was resting safely in her lap. "Jorane!"

The brunette's heart hammered wildly in her chest and she cried for help, her fearful gaze never leaving Jorane's way too pale face, who was still gasping and wheezing heavily for breath. "DAVID!!! DAVID!!!"

Jorane's whole body shook and trembled, her eyes rolled back until only the white was visible.

Caught in distress, she didn't know what else to do and so the dark haired singer screamed again, "DAVID!!! DAVID!!!"

For Ileana it felt like an eternity when actually it were only some seconds before her panicky outcry reached the young man's ears and he came storming down the stairs. He hurried to the kitchen and found the women on the floor. "Jorane! Damn!"

Scared, Ileana looked at him. "What's... what's wrong with her?" Unconsciously, she gently stroked Jorane's sweaty forehead.

The medic in him took control and he knew what to do. David opened a drawer beside the counter. "Panic attack. She's hyperventilating." He whipped out a brown paper bag, pushed Ileana aside and took her place.

The singer kept kneeling on the floor and held Jorane's hand. She noticed a letter the blonde was clutching tightly between her fingers. Carefully she pried the document from Jorane's vice like grip, whose body convulsed and shook.

David narrowed the opening of the paper bag and placed it over Jorane's blue lips, while trying to soothe the young woman. "Jorane... Jorane, everything is okay... shhhh... You are safe... But you have to calm down... shhhh... it's alright..."

Due to the hurried breaths the bag was filled with air and emptied rapidly. The sight made Ileana's heart clench painfully in her chest. She held Jorane's hand, hoping to somehow give her an anchor.

"Jorane, Jorane... breathe easy... easy... shhh... everything's okay, calm down..." David looked up from his task as he heard someone clearing his throat.

"Is there anything we can do to help?" Ileana's dancers and musicians had come down to see what was going on.

The physiotherapist shook his head. "No, but thank you. What she needs right now is rest and the feeling of security."

Eventually, Jorane's breathing became normal and David took the bag off her mouth. She opened her eyes, seeing the concerned faces hovering above her. "David?" she croaked hoarsely through her dry throat. "It happened again?"

The young man nodded silently.

Jorane removed her hand from Ileana's grip and touched her own forehead. "Oh God, no." Tears welled up in her eyes and ashamed she turned her face away.

Carefully, David slid one arm under her neck the other under her knees and lifted her in his muscled arms, while rising from the cold floor.

"No, don't," Jorane begged, crying. "You don't need to carry me. Just give me a minute and I can walk on my own, please! I don't want the others to see me like that." She buried her face at his chest.

"And how is that?" he asked softly. David knew how much Jorane hated to give up her independence. She had to have control of everything.

"Weak... helpless," she sobbed as an answer.

But the physiotherapist wasn't disconcerted and carried the vulnerable, young woman to her bedroom, the sad eyes of Ileana and her dancers following them.

One hour later, Jorane was asleep. Attila was curled up on the pillow next to her, while David and Ileana kept vigil beside her.

The dark haired woman gave him the wrinkled bank document she had found in Jorane's hand. "I'm sure that's the reason for the panic attack."

David took it, his eyes flying over the printed lines. His face darkened and he gnashed his teeth. "That bastard! He rose the rate for the mortgage again!"

Ileana hesitated for a moment before asking, "Jorane needs more money? Hey, I could pay more for the apartment, that wouldn't be a problem..."

David forced a weak smile on his face. "That's very nice of you but not necessary. I'm going to settle the matter with that vulture." He glanced at his watch and realized that the bank was still open. "In fact, I'll do it right now!"

David said goodbye to Ileana. He wanted her to keep an eye on Jorane and the singer promised to do that without giving it another thought.

For awhile she sat there, looking at the peacefully slumbering Jorane. But Ileana's thoughts didn't find any rest. Again and again she saw the trembling, convulsing body of the wheezing blonde in her mind's eye and a shiver ran down her back. "If David hadn't been there, I wouldn't have known what to do," she whispered to herself.

Her sapphire blue eyes fell on Attila, who was about to snuggle closer to Jorane. "No, no, buddy. Leave her be." Ileana leapt up to hold him back, wanting to avoid any disturbance of the blonde's slumber. She reached over Jorane, lifted Attila off the bed and placed the protesting tomcat on the carpet, who finally left, meowing offended.

As she went back to her chair, something rustled underneath her foot and she looked down. She was standing on a sheet of paper. Unintentionally, she had swept it from Jorane's nightstand in her haste to get Attila off the bed.

The singer wanted to return it to its place, as she noticed the delicate handwriting. Ileana knew from David that Jorane had the peculiarity to write the first version of her poems with a pen on paper. A smile curled around her lips as she realized what exactly it was she held in her hands, because up until now she hadn't dared to ask Jorane about her poems. She sat down in her chair beside the bed and began to read.

*Come to me
Run to me
Sweep me off my feet again*

*Come to me
Run to me
Lift me up like a hurricane*

The work wasn't signed and so the singer knew it wasn't finished yet, but these few words were enough to cause an avalanche of emotions und feelings inside her. "That gives me an idea," she whispered in the silence of the dimly lit bedroom.

A small whimper sounded from the bed and Ileana took Jorane's restlessly roaming hand in hers. "Shhh... everything is okay... You are safe, Jorane."

But the small blonde didn't calm down. She frowned in her sleep, her head thrashing from one side to the other. "Mortimer...no..."

The name made Ileana's heart clench and she lowered herself to the bed's edge, gently stroking Jorane's forehead while she began to hum a melody from her home country. It was a lullaby her mother used to sing for her whenever she had been plagued at night by terrible dreams as a little girl.

The mixture of soothing singing and gentle caresses didn't fail to calm the blonde, letting her slip into a deeper sleep without any nightmares.

Ileana gazed at the small, slender hand in her own. It seemed to be a perfect fit. The singer lifted it to her lips and breathed a tiny kiss against delicate knuckles. "I'll always be there for you, Jorane," she promised quietly. "You only have to let me."

Some more weeks went by and, against all odds, the two women became friends.

Ileana was about to give her first performance at a big TV show, for which the singer had trained very hard and for a long time.

The whole day, the brunette had been jumping through the house, excited beyond all else and driving Jorane crazy, who sat on the couch in the living room, her legs elevated. Today of all days, her left leg ached badly, but she tried not to show it in front of Ileana. In her hands she held a ticket for the show and smiled. "First row, right in front of the stage."

Suddenly, the young blonde bit her lip, her face contorting as a sharp pain ripped through her scarred leg. It felt like a million needles stabbing hotly into the tissue. "Damn," Jorane hissed through clenched teeth. The ticket slid from her fingers as she rubbed her leg with both hands, trying to ease the pain.

Exhausted, she sank back, closing her eyes tightly as Ileana came floating into the room, her whole face beaming. "Jorane? You aren't changed, yet?"

Reluctantly, the blonde opened her eyes. "I won't come with you," she explained, quickly. She saw the disappointment in Ileana's gaze and that hurt her even more.

"Well, it can't be helped then..." came Ileana's quiet and hesitating response.

Finally Jorane couldn't stand it anymore and overcame herself for a tiny moment, "I would have liked nothing more than to go with you and watch your performance live!"

"Really?"

"I... I'll watch the show on TV, okay?"

"Promise?" A weak smile formed on Ileana's lips.

"Scout's honor!" Jorane replied smiling, and all of a sudden she felt light and elated, as if a weight had been lifted off her shoulders.

Ileana seemed to notice that and said, "I'm glad, if I can be with you again, soon."

Jorane's smile turned to a wide grin, but before she could say anything came a honking from outside.

"Oh, that must be David. He wanted to pick us up," Ileana explained.

"Don't keep the poor guy waiting and... uh... good luck. I'll think of you."

Ileana beamed again. "I will think of only you," she promised and left. Just before the front door closed she called back, "Rest well!"

Jorane relaxed on her couch. "What's happening with me? Whenever Ileana is in my presence I feel so different," she mused. "Like... before the crash... can it be that... no, no." She tried to shove these thoughts away and during that fell into a dreamless sleep.

The show had started and Ileana just entered the stage, where she was greeted by thundering applause. Under other circumstances she would have thought only of the elated

audience, but today everything was different. The bright sparkle in her azure blue eyes was due to one single thought. The thought of Jorane and her beautiful smile.

As the audience quieted down, Ileana opened her performance with the words, "Today, I'll perform for the first time live and in front of an audience, here in this country. I'll present my newest song 'Like a Hurricane'. I was inspired by a person, who is very close to my heart and also an awesome poet. The first lines of the lyrics were taken from a poem. And I owe it to this special person that I can be here tonight to sing for you."

The audience cheered and after a short pause Ileana looked directly into the camera and said almost imploringly, "I love you."

The music began, the dancers stormed on the stage to join her and the breathtaking show started.

At the same time, Jorane awoke, feeling like a truck had rolled over her and not exactly rested. Tired, she rubbed her eyes, but was wide awake a second later as her gaze fell on the clock above the TV. "Ileana! The show! Oh no, it has already started!"

In a hurry she fumbled for the remote control and switched the TV on, browsing through the channels until she found the one she needed.

Her song already finished, the singer sat grinning widely in an armchair, answering some questions from the audience. For a short moment David came into view with a small text fading in and Jorane froze. She listened to the moderator for only a second before switching off the TV with trembling fingers and staring in shock at the black screen. Jorane couldn't believe what she had just heard and seen. Tears rolled down her cheeks she couldn't and didn't want to hold in. "I'm such a fool. I'm so stupid, how could I have thought that..."

Crushed, she reached for her cane, got up and went to her bedroom.

After saying goodbye in the driveway to David, who had to be at a meeting, Ileana sprinted over the lawn to the front door. Before she unlocked it, she leaned against the frame, taking some deep breaths. "I'm so glad that I've finally admitted it to Jorane."

Happy feelings coursed through her veins. "And on TV no less! Live! In front of a million people! Now, Jorane just has to believe me and realize that I'm serious about my feelings."

Jorane winced in her chair, in the bedroom, as she heard Ileana coming home.

Excited the singer called, "Hey, Jorane! I'm back! And? Did you see the show? Jorane? Where are you?"

Sooner than later, her search led her to Jorane's bedroom. The curtains had been closed as usual, darkening the room, even though it was actually just afternoon. "Ah, here you are hiding." Ileana grinned. "I want your honest opinion about my stage performance..." She trailed off as she saw the weird expression on Jorane's face.

Jorane turned away, shrugging her shoulders.

Ileana couldn't understand why the blonde was suddenly so cold and rebuffering. "Since you inspired me to 'Like a Hurricane," she added and winked at Jorane.

"What? I inspired you to a hurricane?" the blonde snapped at the singer, sharply. "You can sing whatever you want to whom ever you want, for all I care! I sure as hell can't stop you!"

Ileana thought she knew why Jorane was so irritated. *'She's been here all day enduring horrible pain. I need to cheer her up. She mustn't ignore what I feel for her.'*

Demonstrative, the blonde looked in the opposite direction, crossing her arms over her chest.

Confused, Ileana wrinkled her forehead. *'Maybe my love confession didn't come across as I had hoped it would. Perhaps it needs a more intimate atmosphere to tell her my feelings.'*

Having made the decision Ileana stepped forward until she stood right in front of Jorane. "**Hey-ya hey come to me...**" she began, singing in her beautiful alto voice. "**Hey-ya hey run to me...**"

"T-that... are... m-my... w-words... you d-did..." Jorane stammered in shock.

"Of course! I already said so on the show! Please take this song seriously and as a confession."

The blonde swallowed hard and a strange feeling came over her as she looked into azure blue eyes that gazed at her in expectation. But in her mind she saw only the pictures of the show and so she verbally attacked the singer once more, "What do you mean? It won't change anything if you sing the song to me in person!"

"Why?" Ileana was close to tears, the words hitting her hard.

"For you they may be just empty phrases but to me words actually mean a lot!"

"The song is for you! I said that! What do you think it means to me?"

Uncomprehending, the young blonde looked up into sparkling, blue eyes.

Ileana put all her heart in the song to finally show Jorane what she was feeling. "**Hey-ya hey, sweep me off my feet again...Hey-ya hey, come to me... Hey-ya hey, run to me...**"

Hey-ya hey, lift me up like a hurricane... Hey-ya hey, come to me... Hey-ya hey, run to me... Hey-ya hey, sweep me off my feet again... "

Even though she didn't want to feel any emotion, Jorane couldn't help but be drawn into the beautiful singer's spell. Her fingers closed around the fluffy blanket that covered her, clutching it tightly.

"Let our feet move to the music..." Ileana placed her palms over her fast beating heart before extending her arms to her adored Jorane. **"Let our hearts sing to every beat..."**

Jorane's eyes widened in fear as Ileana reached for the blanket and pulled it off slowly, totally unexpected. **"Watch as our bodies glisten in the heat..."**

In her desperation, Jorane clamped down on the chair's armrests.

Ileana let go of the blanket, her gentle hands slowly creeping to Jorane's white knuckles. **"Come to me, run to me... Sweep me off my feet again... Hey-ya hey, hey-ya hey... Lift me up like a hurricane... Hey-ya hey, hey-ya hey... Come to me!"**

The brunette's slender hands stroked tenderly along her arms, up to the shoulders. Pleasant shivers ran down the blonde's back and goosebumps rose all over her body.

"I wish upon a shooting star..." While Ileana continued singing, her fingertips wandered across Jorane's chest to her throat. **"I want you to stay in my arms... And shelter me when it starts to rain..."** Warm hands cupped Jorane's face, who wasn't able to move or form any clear thought. **"You're my rock, you're my mountain... Come to me, run to me... Sweep me off my feet again... Hey-ya hey, hey-ya hey... Lift me up like a hurricane... Hey-ya hey, hey-ya hey..."** The air between them crackled with erotic tension and Ileana's words lit a desire in Jorane, she had never felt before in her life. With a graceful movement the singer sank to her knees in front of the other woman. They couldn't take their eyes off each other. Great devotion was evident in her voice, as Ileana sang the final but to her most important part of the song, **"I'm not too proud to say, I need you in every way... Oh baby can't you see, I've fallen to my knees... Cause life's too short to hide, your feeling deep inside... One thing you need to know, I'm never letting you go!!!"**

Tense, and her heart pounding wildly, Ileana waited for Jorane's reaction.

For a couple of moments complete silence ruled, until the blonde managed to find her voice and snapped, "And what was this little show all about, if I may ask?"

The cold rebuff wounded the singer deeply. She hadn't expected something like that at all. "Didn't you feel the magic between us?" she asked softly.

The blonde snorted. "That doesn't mean anything! I don't know what game you are playing, but I want you to stop it this instant!"

Ileana's whole world broke down and she stared at Jorane with big, sad eyes.

"Don't look at me like that! I heard what the moderator said and as the cameras showed David there was even a fade-in to explain!" Jorane spat, bitterly.

"David? What does he have to do with this? I don't understand. Just what did the moderator say that has you so upset?"

Hot tears collected in Jorane's emerald eyes and the face of the singer became blurry in front of her. "I would have never expected this from my best friend and from what I thought to be a new friend. Why didn't one of you tell me that you are lovers?"

"What? Come again!" Ileana was thunderstruck.

The blonde realized that the singer was truly surprised. "Didn't think I would find out, huh? But the guy on TV explained quite thoroughly that David is your new lover." The last part of the sentence came very scornfully over her trembling lips.

A smile of relief formed on Ileana's face and she relaxed.

"Are you glad it's finally out?"

Ileana looked compassionately at the blonde woman. "I think I need to explain something." Gracefully the dark haired singer rose from her knees and stood in front of Jorane. "David is my friend and there will never be anything more between us. He is a great guy and I like spending time with him, but..."

"But?" Jorane asked haltingly, her tears starting to dry.

Ileana smiled and shrugged her shoulders, "But I don't like men that way. I prefer women."

Jorane's jaw hit the floor, thoughts and feelings mixing and whirling around in her head, making her unable to reply something.

An unsure expression lay on Ileana's face as she carefully asked, "Did my confession scare you? Was it more than you wanted to know?"

Nothing coherent came out of Jorane's mouth, her tongue seemed paralysed.

"Didn't you see the beginning of the show?"

Jorane shook her blonde hair and Ileana threw her head back, because now she knew what was going on. She knelt at Jorane's feet and took the blonde's trembling hands in her own. "Jorane, before the song I said I love you!"

Jorane felt her head swimming and she asked, "Does David know? Because he likes you very much."

"Jorane? Did you hear what I just said?"

"Does he know?" The blonde insisted on an answer.

"Yes, I told him a while ago to leave no room for any misunderstandings. He's okay with it."

"Why didn't you tell me sooner?"

"I guess I was scared."

"Scared?" Jorane was astonished.

"You never know how people will react. If you go and just blurt out, 'Hello, I'm gay'... it can cause unfriendly after-effects. I experienced that myself."

"Yeah," Jorane responded softly, casting her eyes down.

But Ileana needed to know. She lifted the smaller woman's chin, locking their gazes. "And what are your feelings for me?" she asked, tenderly.

For awhile Jorane said nothing, until she finally admitted timidly, "It's all so... so sudden. I... I need some time... to think about it."

"But, you do feel something for me, right?" the singer prodded further.

Ashamed, Jorane looked away and whispered, "Please, don't force the issue. I'm so confused."

Ileana wanted to reply something, but Jorane's whole body began to shake hard and she begged, "Please, go now!"

Reluctantly, the dark haired beauty rose and left the bedroom, closing the door behind her gently.

Weeks went by, but the two women didn't mention Ileana's confession again. The singer left it at that, not wishing to scare the young blonde away and to give Jorane all the time she needed to realize her own feelings.

Ileana continued meeting with David nearly every day. She spent a lot of her free time with him and they became close friends, having a lot of fun together.

Meanwhile, Jorane retreated more and more into herself. She tried to tell herself that it didn't matter that the two spent so much time together, but the truth was it bothered her greatly.

Ileana nearly laughed her head off at David's newest joke, as he stopped the car in the driveway. She brushed a tear from the corner of her eye and her gaze fell on the dark house. Her chuckling stopped abruptly and she sighed.

Concerned, David leaned forward and asked, "Are you okay?"

"If you want to know the truth, no. Nothing is okay," came the sad reply.

"Does it have anything to do with that confession of love to Jorane you told me about?"

The singer nodded, almost imperceptible.

"And since then..."

"Nothing. Absolutely nothing! I know she has deeper feelings for me, but up until now she hasn't said one word. Yes, sure we talk about everything and nothing, we joke and fool around and sometimes I even manage to get a small smile out of her. But then she suddenly retreats in her shell, acting as if nothing happened. It's like she built one big wall between us."

"Do you know the reason for this wall?" David wanted to know.

"I just don't know! I think she's hiding something. Something that is bothering her so much, making it impossible to open herself to someone completely."

Wanting to rise her spirits a bit, David patted her hand gently. "Don't give up. If somebody can get through to her it will be you."

She looked at him with large, blue eyes. "You think so?"

The young man nodded, confirmingly. "Sure. Don't get discouraged, okay?"

"I just don't know what else I should do," she sighed, depressed.

"Listen, I'll tell you what. Use your most powerful weapon... your voice."

Ileana thought about it for a moment and then came up with an idea. With happy anticipation she announced, "You're right! And I already have the most suitable song for the occasion."

"Yeah? Which one is it?"

A roughish smile spread across her face as she answered, "Oh, you don't know it. It's called 'Wild Passion'."

David whistled through his teeth. "Oooh, sounds interesting." He waggled his eyebrows and leered playfully. "Well, if that doesn't help, I really don't know what else we can do. Good luck."

"Thanks, but I don't think I'll need it!" Ileana said and left the car, running to the house to carry out her plan.

With the excuse of feeling unwell, Jorane had been in bed all day, her thoughts occupied by one specific person. She had closed the curtains, casting the room in dim light. Evening fell and the blonde woman maneuvered herself in an upright position. She shoved a pillow behind her back and stared at the first drafts of some new poems, laying on the nightstand. Sighing, she removed her gaze from the sheets of paper and closed her eyes. She was exhausted and felt weak.

Suddenly, the blonde's ears picked up a sound and her eyes flew open. Caught of guard, she looked into Ileana's deep pools of azure blue, who stood at the foot of her bed, wearing a short dress made of red chiffon, her slender figure underneath clearly visible.

Jorane reacted unintentional fiercely. "I want to be alone! What are you doing in my bedroom, anyway?"

Ileana sat down on the bench at the foot of the bed and said in a velvety voice, "Jorane, I want to present my newest song. You shall be the first to hear it."

"Why me of all people? Sing it to your dancers," the blonde woman suggested. "Or David, for all I care," she added grumpily, instantly regretting the words.

Ileana shook her dark mane. "No. Only you shall hear it, since I wrote it just for you."

Jorane had to swallow at that and she looked at her fearfully before asking, "What's the name of the song?"

The tall woman smiled and her blue eyes sparkled. "Wild Passion," she breathed sensually and began to hum the melody.

Jorane's body tensed as she heard the title. "What are you doing?" she asked, a touch of panic evident in her slightly trembling voice.

Ileana just smiled, rose and started to sing, gently swaying her hips from side to side. **"Tonight it's on... tonight is the night..."** Ileana's eyes locked with the blonde's. **"We can't go wrong..."** On her bare feet she turned gracefully around the bed, coming closer to Jorane. **"We'll dance in the moonlight..."** She fell to her knees, resting her elbows on the bed. **"Just look at me..."** Ileana extended her left arm, gently touching Jorane's throat and letting her fingers drift upward to the chin. **"You know what I know..."** The gentle touch ended with Ileana stroking the blonde's heated cheeks and a tiny moan escaped Jorane. **"See what I see, go where I goooooo..."** The brunette jumped up, stretching her body, while throwing her arms up in the air and shaking her long, dark mane. **"Hey, Hey..."** With every graceful turn her azure eyes held the emeralds that followed her every movement in admiration.

Speechless, Jorane just watched and listened as Ileana danced and sang. **"What about going wild with me... What about passion breaking free... What about falling down and down... And down to fly again..."** Now and again she flashed Jorane bewitching glances, while running her hands sensually across her own body. **"What about going wild with me... What about who you want to be... Do you know you have to cry... And cry and cry to love again..."**

Jorane flinched slightly as Ileana threw herself onto the bed. Otherwise unable to move she was completely under the singer's magical spell. Sexy, the brunette writhed on the sheets until she rose and was on her hands and knees in front of Jorane. The small blonde didn't have any defence against the singer's charm, who played with a strand of her long dark hair, running the tip of her tongue across her slightly opened lips lasciviously. Like a wildcat stalking its prey, she crawled closer to Jorane, who gasped and pressed herself back into her pillows. But Ileana wasn't discouraged and crawled over Jorane's legs until she straddled the smaller woman's body and sang, **"I want to try..."** She hesitated for a tiny moment and a seductive smile formed on her features. **"The taste of your lips..."**

Jorane's eyes widened as Ileana's face came closer. Thousand thoughts whirled in her head as she felt Ileana's warm breath on her face and the long hair tickling the bare skin of her throat. Her heart pounded strongly and pure adrenalin coursed through her veins. Jorane closed her eyes and tasted the soft kiss Ileana's silky lips bestowed upon her. She blushed brightly and before she was able to squeak a protest against the singer's impertinence, Ileana removed her lips gently and continued singing.

"I want to fly... Don't care where this way leads..." She was still hovering over Jorane's trembling body as emerald eyes opened. Ileana recognized the longing in them and sang the last part to encourage Jorane to finally let go of the tight control she kept on her emotions and admit her feelings. **"Just take my hand... And feel what I feel... And see what's meant to be... In the end..."** Hopeful she extended a slender hand to the blonde.

But Jorane couldn't take the loving invitation, the fear to let go was too strong. Her emerald eyes glistened with unshed tears as she turned her gaze away from Ileana's honestly disappointed sapphires.

Obviously sad, the dark haired beauty slid off the bed and without saying another word she left the bedroom.

Jorane couldn't hold back the tears anymore. She buried her face in her pillows, her whole body shaking with the force of her sobs.

At the other side of the closed door Ileana leaned against the frame. Tears welled up in her eyes as she heard her beloved Jorane sobbing. Her heart heavy she came to a decision. Hurriedly she climbed up the stairs to her room and pulled the big suitcase from beneath her bed. She placed it on the bed, opened first the lid and then the wardrobe. Sobbing, she threw in all her clothes and other things. Suddenly she stopped, panting for breath. "No, no... I can't go. I can't leave Jorane now."

In the end, she unpacked her things and put it all back to the place it belonged.

Restlessly, Jorane had tossed and turned all night, unable to find sleep. Her thoughts circled constantly around yesterday's evening. It was very early in the morning as she finally rose, put on a cardigan, grabbed her cane and limped to the garden. The fresh air did wonders for her mood and she relished the quiet of the dawning day. Stars slowly disappeared with the fading night sky.

She stepped upon the meadow, walked to the old swing and sat down. The blonde woman's feet barely touched the sweet smelling grass as she pushed up to gain momentum. For a while she just sat there, swinging gently under the tree, lost in thought. She flinched slightly as she noticed Ileana standing in front of her. "Oh, it's you."

A bit embarrassed and her hair in complete disarray the beautiful singer explained, "I saw you from my window."

"Did I wake you?" Jorane asked.

"No, I didn't sleep well last night, " the brunette confessed.

"So did I. I'm sorry about yesterday," Jorane said. "I didn't mean to rebuff you like that." She didn't know what else to say, but Ileana accepted the apology gladly.

Awkwardly they looked at each other, until the tall singer reached for the thin chains that kept the swing hanging. With a gentle push she set the swing in motion. "**Baby if you look**

up, whenever you're down... I will hear you calling out, before you make a sound... We can climb this mountainside, we can cross the sea... 'Cos all I am is you and all you are is me..."

With every swing their faces drew closer, until they were about to touch. Without losing eye contact, Ileana continued in a soft voice, "**Wherever you are, I am with you... 'Cos we wish on the same star... 'Cos I can feel you... If you are near or far, 'cos we wish on the same star..."**

Jorane relaxed so much her eyes closed on their own. She felt the gentle breeze in her hair and Ileana's voice reverberating through her body. "**I would give my hand but you would need my heart... I could give it to you, before we fell apart... I would give my all you'd see, but only if I knew... That all you are is me... And all I am is you..."**

At these words, Jorane's eyes opened wide and their gazes locked. Ileana saw, that this song struck a cord deep inside Jorane and a loving smile graced her rosy lips. "**Wherever you are, I am with you... 'Cos we wish on the same star... 'Cos I can feel you... If you are near or far, 'cos we wish on the same star..."**

In this moment of togetherness, Jorane felt her heart expand with unlimited trust for the dark haired singer.

"Sometimes a caged bird sings, when a free bird flies away... In the waterfall of stars, you're calling out my name... We can climb this mountainside, we can cross the sea... 'Cos all I am is you and all you are is me..." Ileana stopped the swing and pulled Jorane into her arms. Soft lips met and melted in a heated kiss.

The small blonde moaned in ecstasy as she felt a velvety tongue tracing her lower lip, begging for entrance and receiving it. Ileana tightened her embrace while she explored the heat of her beloved's mouth. Jorane swore she could see stars behind her tightly closed eyelids. Never in her life had she felt anything as intense as this one kiss. Her tongue began to play with the singer's and she could feel Ileana's rapid heartbeat against her own chest, as her hands tenderly slid into raven tresses to hold the brunette closer. The world faded away and nothing else mattered to them but the gentle embrace.

After they parted, Jorane stared at Ileana, completely dazed. "*Oh, my God, what have I done?"* she screamed in her mind. "*How could I let myself get carried away like that?"* Abruptly she pushed the brunette away, who was still reeling from happiness and didn't know what was going on. The blonde grabbed her cane and hurried as fast as she could inside the safe house.

Grinning stupidly, the singer sat in the grass, her eyes glassy. Wrapped up in happy thoughts, Ileana traced her lips with a fingertip. She imagined she could still feel the other woman's warmth. "She kissed me back..."

Despite their first real kiss, Ileana knew that Jorane wasn't ready for more and so she left the next step to the blonde.

The tea kettle whistled and Jorane took it off the stove to pour herself a cup. This time she refrained from adding the usual drops of lemon juice and sugar cubes. Instead she took out the brown, already opened bottle and added a generous splash of rum to her tea. "I've been brooding for days now and finally I came to a decision. I'm going to end it before I get hurt again. My heart just couldn't take it. I'll go up there and tell her, because I don't want her to keep hoping for something that will never happen." She took a big swallow from the cup. The rum burned in her throat and her eyes teared up. She wasn't much of a drinker and only did it on special occasions. As she reached the bottom of the stairway she took some deep breaths and gazed up. Slowly she climbed up the steps, the music she heard earlier growing louder. She stopped at the threshold, frozen to the spot as she saw Ileana practising some dance steps.

The singer wore a short top and hotpants, beads of sweat glistened on the naked skin of her body.

Transfixed by the sight, Jorane's heart grew heavy, but it was too late to back off now, because the singer had already noticed her.

Ileana was more than happy, since it was the first time the small blonde had entered her domicile. "Hi," she greeted her, smiling brightly. "You wanna watch?" Quickly she fetched the chair from her desk and wheeled it close. "Since you came up here just for me, I want to show you something special. Sit down and get comfortable."

Jorane couldn't get out an answer, because the brunette pushed her into the seat and wheeled the chair to the middle of the room.

The blonde found herself surrounded by mirrors. She snapped out of her rigidity and said, "Wait... I have to tell you something."

Ileana ran to her stereo system and changed the disc. She was so happy to have Jorane with her, she didn't hear her words.

Only as the blonde yelled, "STOP!" again, did she look up from her task and noticed the serious expression on Jorane's face.

"Ileana, we have to stop before it's too late," Jorane declared quietly.

The singer became also serious, as it hit her where the problem lay. "It's a matter of trust, am I right?"

The young blonde avoided the questioning gaze of azure blue eyes and said, "Let's be friends. I can't take the risk of this being more than that."

"But I can," came the soft reply. "You are the love of my life and nothing will change that."

Jorane was about to cry. "Why do you make me suffer so? Why can't you accept it? I just can't!" she pleaded, tearfully.

"That leaves me only one choice. To express my feelings for you the way I know best," the singer announced determined, pressing the play button.

The song's rhythm filled the room. With the first beats Ileana took wide steps towards Jorane. She stopped directly in front of the chair and stomped first her right leg, then the left. One arm rose and she pointed it at the young blonde. **"Sure you can pretend... That you can forget... Every kiss we had... Everything you said..."** Without taking her eyes off Jorane she slowly walked around the chair, while stroking her palm over the smaller woman's shoulders. **"Sure you can let go... Long days of romance... Everything except... The tango we used to dance..."** Ileana supported herself on the armrests, leaned forward and breathed gently into a small, pink ear, **"Everywhere you go... You'll be shown, that you're running from yourself..."**

Jorane's heart rate increased dramatically and she became dizzy, as the singer danced light-footed in front of her. **"Coz every day you hear this line... Day-na-day-na-day-na-day-na-day-na... You will never run away... And every time you'll try to hide... Day-na-day-na-day-na-day-na-day-na... In the night you call my name..."**

Again the brunette leaned forward, gazing deeply into her emerald eyes. **"Whatever happens... I am with you..."**

For a moment Jorane closed her eyes tightly. She didn't want to believe what she heard and vehemently refused Ileana entrance to her heart.

But the singer wasn't about to give up. A gentle caress to her cheek had the blonde opening her eyes again. **"You don't talk to me... Since the day you've gone... You want me to see... That I'm not the one..."**

Ileana gazed at Jorane with piercing eyes as she turned the chair to follow her movements. **"I know that you would say... We don't have a chance... But your heart will play... The tango we used to dance..."**

Jorane swallowed hard and felt very uncomfortable. Desperately she tried to find a way out of this situation, but at the end she cast her eyes helplessly to the floor. Her breathing hitched as Ileana cupped her face in both hands, forcing her to look into clear azure eyes. **"Everywhere you go... You'll be shown, that you're running from yourself..."**

In her innermost part Jorane knew that the beautiful singer was right, but she couldn't find the courage to admit it. She was afraid of what Ileana demanded of her now, but actually there was no reason to be scared.

The brunette stroked her cheek one last time before backing off a few steps to dance to her music.

Jorane was sorry that she couldn't feel the gentle caress anymore.

"Coz every day you hear this line... Day-na-day-na-day-na-day-na-day-na... You will never run away... And every time you'll try to hide... Day-na-day-na-day-na-day-na-day-na... In the night you call my name..."

The song had reached its end and Ileana went to the stereo to stop the disc.

Jorane knew the singer was waiting for an answer, but the blonde couldn't give one.

Dismayed, the dark haired woman nodded. She whispered softly, "I'm sorry about that," indicating the door without looking at Jorane.

Hesitating the blonde rose from the chair and took some steps towards the door, before stopping again to glance at Ileana. Her heart clenched painfully as she saw the silent tears rolling down the singer's cheeks and falling to the floor. She turned away from the sight and limped downstairs to her own apartment.

Ileana wrapped her arms tightly around her body, trying to suppress the loud sobs that wanted to escape her throat. With a last look to the door, where Jorane had disappeared mere seconds ago, she whispered, "Whatever happens, I am with you."

Part 3

Wearing grey sweatpants and a matching T-shirt, Jorane stood in the cellar of her house doing laundry. In her mind's eye, she saw herself sitting in the chair in Ileana's living room, the singer kneeling in front of her and gently stroking her cheek.

"Whatever happens, I am with you..." the blonde muttered to herself, lost in thought. Reaching for the next piece of cloth to put it into the washing machine, she noticed it wasn't one of her T-shirts but one of Ileana's tops trimmed with many tiny colored pearls. She leaned her back against the machine and stared at it, her fingers running over the white cotton and a heavy sigh escaped her throat.

Slowly, Jorane slid down until she was sitting on the cold stone floor, and rubbed her cheek against the piece of cloth. "Oh, Ileana," she whispered into the silence of the cellar. "What have you done to me..."

Her nose picked up the singer's sweet smelling perfume. She sat there for a while with her eyes closed. A great battle was taking place in her innermost being between her head and her heart. One was practically screaming at her to trust Ileana, to open up to her and to finally tell her the truth about her own feelings.

She felt a slight pressure against her leg and looked down. Attila had come downstairs and now sat next to her, rubbing his head gently against her thigh and purring.

Jorane smiled, placed the shirt aside and let the tomcat climb into her lap where he writhed and stretched as the blonde patted his fur. "Hey, my cute buddy. Did you feel a bit lonely upstairs?"

He sat up and looked at her with his blue eyes that reminded Jorane so much of Ileana's. "Shall I tell you something? Your mistress has the most beautiful eyes I've ever seen."

The tomcat meowed and she tickled him beneath the chin. He seemed to enjoy that immensely and purred even louder.

"Just what am I to do, Attila? Ileana says again and again that she loves me and that she's always going to be there for me. I so want to believe her. But there was someone who told me the same things, and it turned out to be a bitter disappointment. After all, who would want a cripple?"

Attila snuggled closer to her.

"But maybe its time to get over the fear before I live the rest of my life in loneliness."

The tomcat purred contently, wanting the gentle patting to never cease.

"It might be all too late now, anyway. Ileana hasn't been here often in the last few days. We didn't talk much. And I have not seen her today either." She glanced at her watch. "Hmm... three minutes to 8p.m... did I miss something important today?"

Jorane rose with some difficulty and Attila protested loudly as his warm pillow was taken from beneath him. "Calm down, you little bawler."

Slowly, she climbed the stairs and went to the kitchen to look at the calendar. Indeed, today's date was surrounded by a big red circle, stating, 'David's move'.

Jorane slapped her forehead. "Oh, I totally forgot about that. David is moving into his new apartment today. I still don't know why he wants to live in a skyscraper in the midst of the

loud city of all places, but if he likes it then that's fine with me. And now I also know why Ileana isn't here, since she and her dancers promised to help David."

Nervously nibbling her bottom lip, she opened a drawer and pulled out the notepad. She opened it and stared at the scrawled letters in David's handwriting. "The new address... if I just...it takes about an hour by taxi..."

Jorane exhaled sharply and made a decision.

David took a contented look around his new apartment after letting the dancers out. They had worked hard all day. Ileana sat exhausted between some brown cardboard boxes, wiping sweat of her forehead. "Oh, God," she groaned in pain. "My poor arms are about to fall off. If I want to help willingly the next time you move, please, hold me back."

He chuckled and lowered his tired body to his bed. "At least you don't have to work out today. Moving furniture and my other stuff saved you from it."

Ileana smiled weakly. "I'm completely worn out. I bet I'll be able to feel that in my bones the whole of next week."

"Ask Jorane. I'm sure she wouldn't mind taking care of you a bit, or kissing your boo boo's," the young man answered matter-of-factly and went to the kitchen.

"If only," the singer mumbled sadly.

Meanwhile, Jorane had reached the skyscraper. "Wow, this thing is big."

The doorman, a friendly middle-aged man, opened the glass door for her and let her in. "Good evening, ma'am. Whom do you wish to visit?"

"David Turner."

"Ah, the young man who moved in today. Would you like me to call up and tell him that you're here?"

"No, thank you." Jorane grinned. "I want it to be a surprise."

The doorman smiled back. "Yes, ma'am. You can find him on the 17th floor. Apartment 1703."

"Thank you very much and have a great evening," she said before heading to the elevators.

"The same to you, ma'am." he called after her.

Jorane turned around once more and sent him a smile before pressing the big silver button for the elevator.

David returned with two cans of Coca-Cola and saw Ileana sniffing at her T-shirt before her eyes crossed and her face contorted in disgust.

"Hey, you wanna take a shower before going home?"

The singer nodded. "That would be great. Do you have something clean to wear I could borrow? Wouldn't make any sense wear the same smelly clothes after the shower."

"Yeah, sure." He rummaged through a box for some sweatpants and an XL T-shirt. "But it's going to be a bit big on you."

"That doesn't matter, as long as they don't smell." Gratefully, she took the clean bundle of clothes and disappeared into the bathroom.

"Towels are in a box there. Take a look, I wrote it on the box!" he yelled after her.

With a "*Bling*" the elevator doors opened and Jorane stepped inside. She was so excited that her heart beat a mile a minute and her palms started to sweat. "It's now or never. I'm going to tell her."

David sat down on his bed and pulled at the cold can's metal clip. It hissed and brown fluid came shooting out, spraying his shirt, jeans and bedsheets. "Argh, damn it!" he cursed as he saw the mess. "Which stupid idiot shook the damn cans? Shit!"

In the elevator, Jorane was rehearsing the words she wanted to say to Ileana in order to finally confess her love. "Okay... it can't be that hard, can it? I walk up to her, take her hand and say, Ileana, I love you." Nervously, she ran a slightly trembling hand through her short hair.

"*Bling*"

"Seven more floors... I can do it...It's very easy...Just say, Ileana, I love you..."

"*Bling*"

"Four little words. I know I can do it!"

"*Bling*"

"Five more floors..." Jorane closed her eyes tightly and inhaled sharply. "Just don't panic."

"Bling"

David gathered the soiled sheets and took off his shirt, which was covered with brown, sticky spots.

The elevator doors slid open and Jorane stepped on to the seventeenth floor. At a leisurely pace, she walked along the thickly carpeted corridor. As she reached the door with number 1703, she extended a shaking hand and turned the silver knob. Cautiously, she entered the apartment and saw David putting fresh sheets on his bed, his upper body bare. His shirt lay in a lump beside the bed.

"David?"

Astonished, David looked up from his task. "Jorane? Hey, now this is a surprise! What are you doing here?" He blushed because he was very embarrassed that his best friend saw the mess.

"I wanted..." Jorane began.

At that moment, Ileana returned from the bathroom. Her beaming smile lit up the whole room as she recognized the small blonde. "Jorane!"

Jorane was paralysed and her eyes widened as she saw that the singer wore David's clothes. Her eyes wandered from Ileana, whose hair was still wet from the recent shower, to the half naked David, who blushed even brighter and finished the messy bed. She felt as if a dagger had been stabbed into her heart and tears filled her eyes. "Well, I guess I was too late," she uttered.

Ileana and David looked at each other, frowning. "What do you mean?" Both were obviously confused.

Jorane roughly wiped her tears away before looking again at Ileana. "I hope you will be happy now. Do svidaniya, Ileana." She turned on her heel and stormed out as fast as her wounded leg allowed it. The tears rolled hotly over her pale cheeks as she stumbled to the elevator.

"Goodbye? Why goodbye? I hope you will be happy now? What did she mean by, 'I guess I was too late'?" Completely flabbergasted, Ileana looked at David, who was also having trouble processing what was going on. But then it hit her. "She thinks that you and I..." The singer's eyes flew open and she ran after the fleeing blonde. "JORANE, WAIT!"

Ileana saw her disappearing into the elevator and managed to squeeze in shortly before the doors closed.

Sobbing, the younger woman crouched in a corner of the moving elevator. The sight nearly broke Ileana's heart. She squatted next to her and took a small hand in hers "Jorane..."

But the other woman pulled back, retreating further. "Please, just leave me alone." It came out strangled.

The singer was persistent and cradled the crying face of her beloved, making the blonde look at her. "Jorane, whatever you think you saw..."

At that moment, the elevator lurched and came to a halt. Ileana lost her balance and fell onto Jorane, her head colliding painfully with the metal wall. The lights went off, plunging both women into darkness.

Somewhat dizzy, Ileana rubbed her forehead gingerly. "Uh, that's going to be a nice lump soon." She rolled off Jorane's trembling body, who started to wheeze and gasp for breath.

Ileana's heart clenched. She knew the symptoms and also what would follow. "Okay, okay, keep calm," she told herself.

In the dark, she found Jorane and pulled her towards her, placing the blonde head in her lap. She held her cold clammy hands and tried to soothe her. "Jorane, everything is going to be fine... Breathe easy. I'm here and I won't let anything happen to you."

Desperately, the blonde held onto Ileana's hands but the panic attack was on its way and her body began to spasm.

Then, the singer remembered something. She reached into one of the sweatpants' big pockets and took out the large candy bag. She always carried some sweets with her because she had such a sweet tooth. "Thank God I took that with me when I changed clothes." Impatiently, she ripped it open and emptied the bag of wrapped cherry candies on the floor. She narrowed the plastic bag's opening and placed it over Jorane's lips.

The bag rustled with each sharp breath, expanding and deflating quickly. Ileana ran gentle fingertips across Jorane's sweaty forehead. "Easy, darling, breathe easy. Everything is okay. I'm here with you. I always will."

The bag, combined with the gentle stroking and the soothing words, helped and eventually, Jorane's rapid breathing grew more normal. Her body slowly stopped shaking.

Ileana had no idea how much time had passed since they had been trapped in the elevator.

"What... where are we?" The halting words of her beloved shook her out of her thoughts.

"Shhhh, darling." Ileana placed her hands under Jorane's armpits and pulled her up, until she sat between the brunette's long legs, her back resting against Ileana's chest.

"Did I have another attack?" the blonde asked in a small voice.

Ileana wrapped her arms around Jorane's hips, holding her tightly. "Yes. The elevator stopped. Seems we lost power."

"Something landed on top of me and pressed me to the floor..." Jorane tried to come to terms with what had happen.

"Uh, I guess that was me," the singer explained. "Sorry about that, but the sudden lurch..."

"For a moment, I was back in that night. When I was trapped in the car for hours until the rescue party found me and got me out. I couldn't feel my leg while the rest of my body hurt like hell. Oh, God, it was so horrible... I could see Mortimer... bent over the steering wheel... blood dripping from him as he took his last breaths..."

Ileana just held her, stroking the short hair while Jorane bared her soul and her pain.

The emergency light came on, bathing the elevator in a dim red glow.

"Oh, great!" the singer exclaimed and jumped to her feet. "Finally, I can see the emergency button, we can call for help." She pressed the button and spoke into the small mike next to the speaker. "Hello? Hello? Is there anybody, who can hear me? We're trapped in the elevator!" Ileana listened but there was no answer.

"Wonderful!" she spat sarcastically. She lowered herself next to Jorane. "Nobody's there, and I don't have my cellphone with me. It's still in my jeans in David's apartment. I remember the candies but forget the cellphone, great!" Angrily, she hit the carpeted floor with her palm. "It will take some time until they know that we're in here. But maybe that's good, too."

Jorane looked at her, wrinkling her forehead. "Oh, yeah? What the hell is good about this situation? Please, enlighten me."

Ileana grinned. "You can't run and hide if I want to talk with you."

Jorane quickly turned away. The longing shining from those blue eyes made her weak in the knees, and feelings rose inside her that she didn't want to confront. Especially not after what she had seen in David's apartment.

A slender hand turned her head back around. "What are you thinking right now?" Ileana asked, softly.

"That... uh... that I'm sorry for trapping you here with me and for spoiling your wonderful evening with David."

'She truly thinks there's something going on between David and I?' the singer thought to herself. "Why did you come here?" she prodded on.

Jorane sighed. "Because I wanted to tell you something," she answered in a small voice.

"Yes?"

Tortured, Jorane closed her eyes, while Ileana's thumb tenderly caressed her chin.

"I'm sure it wasn't to say 'do svidaniya', was it?" the brunette continued, when Jorane didn't say anything.

"It doesn't matter!" Jorane snapped, roughly pushing the hand off her chin. "It's too late, anyway."

"If it doesn't matter you can also tell me, since you came all the way here."

"Yes! And I regret it deeply, you can believe that!" Jorane shot back venomously and turned her back to Ileana. "I could have done without the scene upstairs!"

"Jorane, whatever conclusions you've drawn, from what you've seen earlier, are wrong."

"Yeah, sure," she retorted defiantly. "Tell that to someone who wants to know it. But don't worry, I won't disturb your next rendezvous with David."

Exasperated, Ileana rolled her eyes. "For your information, I just took a shower after having moved furniture all day. I borrowed some clothes from David so I wouldn't have to drive home smelly and sweaty. I have no idea what David was doing half naked in the living room with his sheets, but..." She turned the blonde to her, cupped her face and looked firmly into her eyes. "... I did NOT sleep with him. I love only you!"

Jorane stared at her. "You did not..."

"NO! I told you I prefer woman." Ileana insisted vehemently. "Damn it, Jorane. I told you again and again, I said it on TV in front of a whole nation. I love you! I'm not like Mortimer. I would never hurt you. David is a good friend, nothing more and nothing less. What else do I have to do that you will finally believe me?"

Jorane was still unable to answer. The thoughts whirled in her head and Ileana could clearly see on her face the inner battle Jorane fought with herself.

"Shall I get my butt tattooed? A big, red heart, stating 'I love Jorane'?" the singer asked smiling lovingly at her and caressed her cheek tenderly. "I'd do it, if that's what it takes to finally convince you."

Jorane shook her head and hugged Ileana tightly. "I'm... I'm sorry," she choked out.

Ileana stroked the head that was tucked under her chin.

"I'm so sorry that I'm so damn unsure, so scared and such a coward. But all the things you said ... somebody else already said them to me and then, she suddenly changed her mind."

The singer pricked up her ears. *'She? The reason for Jorane's trust issues is a woman?'*

"She was the main reason why I wanted to break off my engagement with Mortimer."

"She?" Ileana quietly asked.

"Shannon Dellaware. I never told this to anyone. Not even David knows about it."

The singer tightened her embrace, placing a tiny kiss on Jorane's forehead. "Nobody will hear it from me," she promised.

Jorane swallowed hard. It demanded a lot of her but she finally confided in Ileana.

"She was a member of the riding club. Shannon was very attractive, you know- tall, dark hair, beautiful brown eyes. We used to talk, trained together and became friends. One day, we took our horses for a ride when it suddenly started to rain and we had to find some place to stay until the downpour was over. We found an old barn and... well, Shannon told me that she was in love with me. I told her she was crazy and she kissed me. This one kiss made me feel more than Mortimer ever could. Shannon and I saw each other every day and the feelings inside me became stronger and stronger, until I finally admitted to myself that I was in love with her, too. So, I decided to break up with Mortimer, and you know how that ended." Jorane shivered again as she remembered the horrible hours in the car.

Ileana's hands slid gently over her back, soothing the blonde. "And Shannon didn't love you anymore after the crash?"

"No," Jorane responded forlornly. "She came to visit me after the first of countless leg surgeries. I was so happy to see her. I thought together we would get through this. I truly believed that with Shannon at my side I could overcome all. But she said she couldn't love a cripple like me. She told me I was just a millstone around her neck and it would hinder her career if she had to take care of me. That was the last time I saw her."

"That bitch!" Ileana growled angrily.

"But she's right. Who would want a cripple?"

Ileana grabbed Jorane's arms, pushed her back a bit to look at her. "I don't want to hear that ever again. You are not a cripple! You are the woman I love with all my heart."

Jorane sighed. "You say that now. But what about in a few months? There are so many things I can't do because of my leg."

Ileana cradled her face in both hands. "In a few months, in a few years, it doesn't matter, I will still be madly in love with you. I don't care, even if you were bound to a wheel chair or had to be nursed because you would be unable to leave the bed. That doesn't change my feelings for you. It is not your handicap that makes you the person that you are, but this..."

Ileana placed a palm over Jorane's wildly pounding heart. "This makes you what you are. A great poet, one who can touch people deep inside with wonderful words. Your inner values make you the woman I love, and nothing will ever change that, okay?"

Jorane could only nod. Ileana's words moved her so much, she didn't know what to say.

"And if this Shannon Dellaware ever crosses my way, I will rub her nose in that she let the greatest, most beautiful woman of the known world slip through her fingers... before I kick her ass so hard it will send her flying to planet Pluto," the singer promised, grinning widely.

Jorane chuckled and leaned her forehead against Ileana's throat. "I'm so glad fate brought you to my doorstep," she confessed.

"Yes, thank god that David took the country road that day. Who knows who else would have picked me up and where I would be right now."

Silence fell and the women just held each other, relishing the embrace.

"Will you tell me now why you came all the way here? What's so important you needed to tell me right away and couldn't wait for me to get back home?"

With her heart pounding so hard she feared it would break through her chest, Jorane whispered, "I wanted to tell you that..." and again the courage left her and she cast her eyes down. *'Damn! Why can't I just say it? They're just four easy words!'*

"Tell me, please," Ileana whispered back.

When finally Jorane blurted it out so fast, the words blended together. "Ileanaloveyou."

But the brunette understood her well and felt her heart skip a beat only to resume pounding at a rapid speed. She had been waiting for so long to hear these words from her beloved. A wide grin spread across her face. She closed her eyes as Jorane's face came closer and their lips met in an incredibly, gentle kiss.

In the tender moment, the speaker over their heads crackled and their ears picked up David's tinny voice saying, "Girls, are you alright?"

Ileana jumped to her feet and pressed the button while Jorane stayed on the floor, completely dazed and with her eyes still shut. Her head was swimming with happiness.

"David! How much longer will it take to get us out of here?" Ileana demanded.

"I have no idea, but I guess at least another hour. We lost power but we are trying to find a guy who will rescue you from the elevator."

"Alright, we'll wait, since we have no other choice."

"Okay, till later."

The speaker was turned off.

"Another hour? Just what are we supposed to do the whole time to keep from going mad? Do you have a deck of cards in those big pockets?" Jorane was a bit tense. Being trapped in small closed rooms for a long period of time made her very nervous.

"Sorry to disappoint you. I've only got some more cherry candies." Ileana waggled her eyebrows, leered playfully at the blonde and pulled her into her arms. "We could continue where David interrupted us, or..."

Jorane blushed brightly from the tip of her toes to the roots of her hair. "We could just talk," she cut the singer off quickly.

"Talk, huh? What would you like to know?" the singer said huskily into her ear and pleasant shivers ran down Jorane's back.

The blonde wracked her brain, trying to come up with something that would divert their attention to something else. She gasped when she felt Ileana's hot lips tracing her throat, "What...uh...what does 'Dyki Tantsi' mean?"

Looking at her with smouldering eyes, the singer replied, "You really want to know that?"

Jorane nodded, keenly.

Ileana bent her head forward until her lips were hovering only an inch from Jorane's, and whispered, "'Dyki Tantsi' means... Wild Dances."

Jorane's breath left her and her eyes closed as the singer bridged the last distance and their lips melted into a heated kiss.

Thundering applause broke out as the showmaster, Edward Granger, wearing an elegant suit, stepped onto the big stage. No seat in the hall was free. Many celebrities, not only those from the music business, had gathered for the Melody-Star Awards.

Ileana walked to the stage's edge and belted fervently into the microphone she held in her hand, "**Just maybe I'm crazy...The world spins round and round and round...**"

While the others danced around her, she threw seductive glances at the audience and the cameras, flirting with them. "**Shi-di-ri-di-duy, shi-di-ri-di-da-na... shi-di-ri-di-duy, shi-di-ri-di-da-na...**"

Ileana grinned, her eyes searching for Jorane among the guests. Their gazes locked and Jorane felt her heart skip a beat.

"**I want you to want me as I dance...round and round and round...**" The tall singer whirled across the stage, her long dark hair whipping untamed in every direction. "**Shi-di-ri-di-duy, shi-di-ri-di-da-na... shi-di-ri-di-duy, shi-di-ri-di-da-na...**" Ileana raised her left arm high. "**Forever and ever go, go, go wild dancers!!!!**"

She and her four female dancers formed a V, the dark haired beauty in pole position. Their hips swayed to the music while two men danced around them. "**Day-na-day-na, wanna be loved... Day-na, gonna take my wild chances... Day-na-day-na, freedom above...Day-na-da-na-day I'm wild'n'dancing!!!**"

They broke the formation and now stood in one line. "**Hey!**" Fire columns shot from the stage's edge and the audience cheered and screamed in delight as Ileana and her dancers stomped their dance steps until the floor vibrated.

And again, the brunette singer had only eyes for Jorane, who sat spellbound in her seat. "**Desire, inside two... My head spins... Round and round and round...**" She rotated her head. "**Shi-di-ri-di-duy, shi-di-ri-di-da-na... shi-di-ri-di-duy, shi-di-ri-di-da-na...**"

The female dancers formed a semicircle in the background while the men crept closer to Ileana, ensnaring her. "**I want you to want me... So I dance... Round and round and...**" The singer shoved them both aside and they fell to the floor.

She raised an arm high, took two steps forward and belted into her microphone, "**Heeeeeeyyyyyy dan-day... Shi-di-ri-di-duy, shi-di-ri-di-da-na... Forever and ever go, go, go wild dancers!!!!**" The women gathered to the V formation again, while the guys whirled across the stage in wild tumbles.

"**Day-na-day-na, wanna be loved... Day-na, gonna take my wild chances... Day-na-day-na, freedom above... Day-na-da-na-day, I'm wild'n'dancing!!!!**"

Once more, they stomped their leather boots. The men grabbed Ileana's legs and lifted her high over their heads. Now, the singer had a great view over the whole hall and everybody was staring at her open-mouthed as she roared, "**He-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-ey!!!!**" while the other women danced around the trio.

She focused on Jorane's eyes among the crowd. "**Dance forever, come and be mine...**" The dancers brought her carefully back to the floor. "**Dance together, till the end of time... Dance together go, go, go wild dancers!!!**"

They reached for their whips and pulled them from their belts. Ileana switched the microphone from her right hand, which was now holding the whip, to her left **hand**. "**Day-na-day-na, wanna be loved...**" The short leather whips cut through the air and cracked to the rhythm of the music. "**Day-na, gonna take my wild chances... Day-na-day-na, freedom above... Day-na-da-na-day I'm wild'n'dancing!!!**"

They let go of the whips and stomped their last dance steps.

Shortly before the final drum beats sounded, the dancers threw themselves to the floor, pounding their fists rhythmically against the stage.

A rain of bright sparks shot from the stage's edge and the audience cheered in delight, awarding the performance a standing ovation and loud, "Encore," cries.

Grinning from one ear to the other, Ileana and her troop bowed and threw some kisses before disappearing backstage.

It was the last hour of the show and the last artist for this year was about to be awarded. Spellbound, the audience stared at the big screen where the nominees were shown.

The moderator looked up and announced the name of every nominated artist. "And last, but not least, also nominated for 'Best Singing And Dancing' is Ileana Surienka!" All cameras were aimed at her and Ileana's face appeared on the screen.

She exchanged a tender smile with Jorane who sat next to her, before turning her blue eyes back to the stage.

Edward Granger whipped out a white envelope and very slowly, he removed the bright red seal. He pulled out the small card and read the golden letters, "And the winner is..." For dramatic effect, Edward paused and the crowd waited with bated breath.

"... ILEANA SURIENKA!!!"

The audience was unstoppable. They jumped cheering and clapping from their seats.

Beaming, Ileana hugged Jorane and went to the stage to accept her trophy. Standing ovations and deafening applause accompanied her on her way and the singer was overwhelmed.

The moderator greeted her with a big grin and embraced her. After trading some pecks to the cheek as was usual, Edward handed her the Melody-Star sculpture, a golden mermaid sitting on a stone and holding a star shaped jewel in her raised hand.

Ileana looked at her prize for a second, then she bent down to the microphone to give her speech under the non-ending cheers and cries of delight from the crowd. "To tell you the truth, I really don't know what to say. I'm happy beyond anything to have won this award and that you like my music so much and..."

Again, the singer was drowned out by the cheering audience.

Ileana waited for a minute and then continued, "The list of people who deserve my thanks is so very long that it would probably take hours to name them all. That's why I'm narrowing it down a bit. I'd like to thank my management and my fans, my family and my friends who supported me in so many ways. David, I hope you can hear me now. Thanks, big buddy, for leading me to the love of my life!" Her blue eyes fell on Jorane and she sent the small blonde an adoring smile.

Deeply touched, Jorane felt tears gathering in her eyes.

Ileana grinned wildly at the crowd and declared, "Okay, that was all. Thanks to everybody!" She lifted the Melody-Star high in the air and roared powerfully into the microphone, "GO! GO! GO, WILD DANCERS!"

Accompanied by loud applause and spraying sparkly fountains, she left the stage with her trophy and went to her changing room.

Countless flower bouquets, fan presents and the rest of her troop were waiting for her there. The dancers greeted her with a group hug. "We did it guys! We really did it! Now we are playing in the first league, so to speak."

Their little party was interrupted by a knock. Alexej, one of the dancers, opened the door. "Yippee! More fan presents!"

"Don't get so excited," Ileana mentioned, smiling. "It's for me, anyway." As soon as these words left her mouth, Jorane entered.

Ileana couldn't suppress a big grin in the direction of the visibly disappointed dancer. "See? What did I tell you?"

Everybody laughed, only Jorane seemed a bit confused. "Did I miss something?"

The singer shook her head and spread her arms wide to welcome her beloved.

"Oh, no!" Alexej exclaimed in mock torture. "Let's leave quickly. It's going to get schmaltzy real soon."

Ileana just poked her tongue at him and embraced Jorane firmly. "You're just envious."

"Yeah, that's right. Not only do you get all the fan presents, but also the cute girls. That's truly unfair, you know? Anyway, we are going to leave you two lovebirds alone," he declared and left the changing room with the others. But before he closed the door behind him, he called over his shoulder, "Have fun, be nice kids and don't do anything naughty I wouldn't do too!"

Ileana grabbed a stuffed toy from the nearby table and threw it after him. Alexej ducked and the small tiger sailed over his head. "Missed me!" Grinning triumphantly, he pulled the door shut behind him.

Jorane's head rested on Ileana's chest and the singer leaned her chin against the blonde head. She pulled the small woman even closer and gently stroked her back while rocking their bodies tenderly from side to side.

"How do you feel being a Melody-Star-Award winner?" Jorane teased.

Ileana grinned. "Simply overwhelmed. I wouldn't have thought it possible to win. But, it's great to know they like my music."

Jorane's fingertips danced over the smooth, warm naked skin of the singer's lower back, a place that had been left bare because of the brunette's short leather top.

Relishing the arousing caress, the dark haired beauty closed her eyes and whispered into a small ear, "Your touch is driving me totally crazy."

A week had gone by since Jorane's confession and their kiss in the elevator. Ileana longed to feel Jorane completely. But she didn't want to push her so, she left the next step to the blonde.

Jorane chuckled. "I drive you crazy? Do you want me to stop?"

"No, do whatever you want."

Jorane continued with the tender caress. "Whatever I want, no matter what? How about this?" she asked and placed a tiny kiss against Ileana's throat.

"Mhhhhh." Ileana's fingers slid into blonde hair to cup the back of Jorane's head.

Jorane hugged Ileana tighter. "What you said during your speech, did you mean it?"

"Could you be a bit more specific? I can't seem to remember so well."

The blonde blushed, her heart pounding out of control, as she stuttered, "T-That D-David helped you t-to f-find the l-love of your l-life?"

Ileana cradled Jorane's face, gazing deeply into her eyes. "Yes. And she is standing right in front of me."

"That's... that's good to know... because... because..." Jorane couldn't find the words to express what she was feeling in this moment. Sometimes it was better to say nothing at all and let actions speak for themselves.

Ileana was caught of guard and her eyes widened as she suddenly felt Jorane's silky lips brushing across her own. She surrendered willingly and let the blonde explore her mouth.

They parted, breathless, but maintained the tight embrace. "I never felt so much for anyone than I do for you, Ileana."

"Is that good or bad?" the singer gasped, still trying to get her breathing under control.

"Good, definitely good," the blonde affirmed her answer. "Can we go home soon?"

"Are you not curious about the after show party?"

"Do we have to go there? I don't know what I'm supposed to do at the party. I can't dance anyway," Jorane said sadly.

Ileana felt her heart clench at the words and again, she cursed Mortimer in her mind for everything he had done to hurt her beloved. She tried to cheer her up a bit. "There are going to be a lot of celebrities. Just imagine how many signed autographs you could get in one hour."

"I don't care. I only want to be with you."

"Okay." The singer pressed a tender kiss to Jorane's temple. She smiled at her love. "Let's go home."

After changing into a comfortable pair of jeans and a button down shirt, Jorane sat on the couch in her living room, holding the Melody-Star-Award in her hands and inspecting the sculpture from every angle.

Ileana, who had also changed into something more comfortable entered carrying some drinks. She placed the glasses on the low table and took a seat beside Jorane. "Looks beautiful, huh?" she asked.

Jorane just nodded, never taking her eyes off the golden trophy.

Faced with the crushed expression on the blonde's face, Ileana wrinkled her forehead. She leaned forward and lifted Jorane's chin to look at her. She felt a sharp pain slicing through her heart as she saw tears glistening in those beautiful eyes. "Jorane, what's wrong?"

The smaller woman just shook her head and turned away.

Ileana didn't let up and pursued, "Come on, darling. Please, talk to me. What's bothering you?" An hour ago everything had been fine and Ileana wondered what could have happened to make Jorane so sad. "Is it me? Did I do something or have I said something to hurt you?"

Jorane whirled back around. "No! It's... it's... argh, damn it!" She hid her face in her hands.

Ileana pulled her into her lap, wrapping her arms around Jorane tightly. "Please, tell me."

"I'm acting silly. I'm sorry. Just forget it and don't let it spoil our evening," the blonde mumbled against her throat.

Ileana stroked her blonde hair. "If it makes you cry it has to be something serious. Please, love, you know you can tell me everything. Talk to me, please." She placed a kiss on the smaller woman's forehead.

Jorane sighed. "It's really silly."

"Let me decide that and tell me in spite of it, hm?"

Jorane leaned her head against Ileana's chest and intertwined their fingers. Hesitatingly, she began to tell what was burning in her soul. "Tonight, as I saw you on stage... so wild and free... the epitome of Wild Dances... I... I only had one wish. I wanted... I wanted to leap on the stage to join you and dance with you."

Ileana hugged Jorane tighter. "You like the song that much?"

The blonde nodded. "Just once, I would like to dance to it with you. But I can't because... because of my damn..." She motioned to her disabled leg.

"Shhhh. I know," Ileana soothed.

Silence fell for a moment as the women just held each other. Jorane buried her free hand in Ileana's raven mane. Playing with the dark strands, she closed her eyes in contentment. She thought the singer had fallen asleep until Ileana whispered into her ear, "Did you know that there is a second part to 'Wild Dances'?"

Surprised, Jorane looked at her. "Indeed?"

Ileana nodded and smiled. "Yes." Slowly, she trailed one gentle fingertip over Jorane's cheek down to her rosy lips, making the blonde shiver. "So, would you like to dance with me?" she asked, still smiling tenderly.

Jorane averted her eyes. "Ileana, you know I can't..."

The singer's soft lips against her own stopped any further protest and a sigh of pleasure escaped the blonde's chest. The kiss went on for moments, growing in intensity. They parted breathlessly and Ileana gasped, "Yes or no?"

Jorane thought about it for a second, then nodded. "I still don't know how, but okay."

"Great." The singer placed another sweet kiss on her lips before getting the music to accomplish her mission. Jorane's eyes followed her every move as the dark haired beauty placed the CD in the player, searched for the correct track and pressed the play button when she had found it.

Smouldering blue eyes met equally blazing green ones as the first notes drifted from the speakers. Drums beat a rhythm similar to a human heart pounding. Jorane felt her excitement growing as Ileana came closer, her eyes never leaving the blonde's gaze.

Horns and violins sounded and then, Ileana added her beautiful voice, "**He-e-e-e-y!**"

She was now right in front of Jorane. She extended her hands for the blonde to take them. Carefully, Jorane took the hands in her own and rose from her seat. Ileana guided her gently to the middle of the room, mindful of her hurt leg. Smiling at her, she lifted Jorane's hands to wrap them around her neck. "**I am your dream tonight...**" She pulled her closer until they were belly against belly. "**The one that you can't fight...**"

Jorane's breathing and heart rate increased while she stared into electrifying blue eyes.

"**The stars are clear and bright...**"

One hand traveled down the back of her jean-clad thigh and lifted it. "**And I will dance for you all night...**"

Jorane's other thigh was grabbed and pulled up. The singer swept her into her strong arms and the blonde wrapped her legs as tightly as she could around the singer's waist. Jorane gasped as she felt the heat of Ileana's body through their thin shirts.

Ileana bent her head down until her lips hovered over a small ear and continued singing. "**Tell me have you ever been to magic land...**" Goosebumps rose all over Jorane's body as the warm breath met her tender skin.

Ileana placed a small kiss against the lobe and Jorane intertwined her fingers in the dark hair, cupping the back of her head. "**Tell me have you ever seen the magic dance...**"

Ileana's hands slid down Jorane's back, gripping firm buttocks to hold her tighter to her own body. "**He-e-e-e-y...**"

Jorane's eyes closed, her heart sped up even more and seemed to be out of control. Ileana sang the chorus while dancing and whirling across the room with her precious bundle in her arms, "**Go, go, go wild dancers! Na na na na na na... Go wild dancers! Na na na na na na na... Go, go, go wild dancers! Na na na na na na na... Go wild dancers! Na na na na na na... Go, go!**"

Then she stopped and just swayed her hips to the rhythm of the music. A warm hand slid underneath Jorane's shirt, fingertips dancing across her tight stomach muscles that twitched at the tender touch, before it wandered over the side to her back. Ileana sang huskily into her ear, "**I know this all is new...**"

Jorane didn't know what turned her on more, Ileana's voice or her tender touch.

"**It may look strange to you...**" The hand on her back reached the clasp of her bra and Jorane moaned, arching her back and throwing her head back. "**Tonight each move is true...**" Ileana's mouth found the silky smooth skin of Jorane's throat. Her tongue came out and tasted the wildly beating pulse point.

She felt the smaller woman trembling in her arms, her own desire grew with each passing second. "**Whatever we will do...**" Still supporting Jorane with one strong arm, her left hand slid to the back of Jorane's neck and guided the blonde's lips to her own. "**Tell me have you ever been to magic land...Tell me have you ever seen the magic dance...**", she whispered against the silky skin. She laid a small kiss upon Jorane's lips. Jorane tightened the grip she had on long, dark hair and slid her tongue into Ileana's mouth to explore the hot cavern.

The singer's eager hands travelled to Jorane's jeans and opened the button and the zipper while Jorane stared deeply into fiery blue eyes. Panting for breath, Jorane's nimble fingers fumbled to open the buttons of Ileana's shirt. Ileana's heart pounded wildly and her voice broke several times as she tried to sing the chorus. "**He-e-e-e-y! Go, go, go wild dancers!**"

Jorane rocked her hips against the singer's body and it took all of Ileana's will power to just continue with her song instead of taking the other woman to her bedroom. "**Na na na na na na na... Go wild dancers! Na na na na na na na...**" The dark haired beauty closed her eyes as Jorane was breathing harshly into her ear, sending shivers down her spine.

One of her hands slid under the waistband of Jorane's jeans, gently caressing a well rounded buttock, making the blonde moan in pleasure. Never in her life had Jorane imagined that dancing could feel so good. "**Go, go, go wild dancers! Na na na na na na... Go wild dancers! Na na na na na na na... Go go!**" Ileana felt her legs buckle and she went down on her knees.

Keeping Jorane on her lap, she cupped her face, gazing tenderly at her soon to be lover. **"Come on... Let's bring on the fire..."** Her heart missed a beat or two as she saw her own want reflected in pools of deep green. **"In the night of desire..."** Her fingertips began to caress smooth cheeks, Jorane mirroring the gentle touch. **"I can read what's on your mind..."** Ileana threw her head back, and Jorane took the chance to bury her face against the newly exposed skin of her throat. **"And it's making me wi-i-i-i-i-i-ild!"**

The rest of the song went on without the addition of Ileana's singing because the small blonde drew her head down and claimed her lips in a fiery kiss. Their tongues met, swirled around each other and battled for control. Hands slid beneath shirts, trying to touch as much warm skin as possible. Heavy breathing and moans of pleasure filled the room.

Ileana released the soft lips in front of her and leaned her forehead against the blonde's. "Oh love, we have to stop... please..."

Jorane stroked her face. "Why? It feels so good..."

"I know, believe me I know, but if we don't stop now, I won't be able to restrain myself much longer and I..."

The blonde rubbed their noses together while gazing into deep blue eyes burning with desire and love just for her. "Ileana?"

"Yes?" Ileana's lips were swollen from the passionate kisses they had exchanged.

Jorane took a deep breath before saying, "Take me to bed. Make love to me."

The singer just sat there stunned.

"Please, I want you so much", Jorane begged, never ceasing the gentle stroking of the brunette's face.

"Are... are you sure?"

"Yes," came the blonde's reply before taking the singer's breath away with another fiery kiss.

That was answer enough and Ileana carried the smaller woman to the bedroom and laid her gently on the bed. She switched on the small lamp on the nightstand, bathing the room in warm, golden light.

Jorane reached out and pulled her down on top of her. She held Ileana tight and placed a gentle kiss against her temple. "Thank you for the dance."

"You are welcome. I will dance with you any time again. You just have to ask."

They could still hear music from the living room. "What song is that?"

Ileana smiled down at her and began to unbutton Jorane's shirt. She spread it open, her eyes roaming over the newly revealed skin and the lacy white bra. "Do you remember the song I said I wrote just for you?"

"You mean 'Wild Passion'?"

The singer nodded.

Jorane grinned. "Of course I remember. You performed it here and I was already so in love with you but way too scared and unsure of myself to say anything."

"Well, I'm glad you are not scared anymore," Ileana said. "Are you going to take my hand this time?"

"Your hand and everything else you want me to take." Right after these words had left her mouth, Jorane blushed a bright red and turned her head away. "Oh, God, I can't believe I actually said that."

Ileana chuckled and softly caressed her cheek. "It's okay, my darling. No need to worry. I'm happy that you want me as much as I want you."

"I do," Jorane responded, reclaimed Ileana's lips and rolled them over until she was on top. "So much... mh... feels... uh... feels so good... mh... love to touch you... you're so soft..." she mumbled between kisses.

Ileana's talented fingers slid beneath her bra, cupping firm soft breasts in her warm hands. Her thumbs slowly circled the nipples until they became hard.

Jorane broke the kiss and moaned, her eyes squeezed tightly close. Never in her life had anything felt so good like the singer's tender hands on her skin.

The brunette pushed herself into an upright position, grabbing the blonde's hips she pulled her close to straddle her lap. Her hands travelled from the breasts to the open shirt and slowly slid it off her shoulders. She flung it away, not caring where it landed and her fingers returned to the bra's clasp. Opening it with a dexterous move, she revealed beautiful breasts to her hungry eyes as the fabric fell away from her lover's body. A groan escaped her when Jorane wrapped her fingers into her long, hair and pulled her head toward her heaving chest. Carefully, Ileana closed her lips around a pink tip, her right hand stroking up and down Jorane's arching back.

Jorane gasped and threw her head back as the singer began to suck her nipple like a hungry infant while her free hand tenderly caressed the other breast. She held the dark head close to her and felt the heat burning a path from her nipple down to the very center of her being.

Unconsciously, she started to rock her hips, the seam of her jeans pressing and rubbing deliciously against her aching clit. "Ohhhhh...yes...Ileana..."

The sound of her name so breathlessly spoken was music to the singer's ears and Ileana decided she would never get enough of it. She rolled them over and knelt beside the blonde to take off her jeans.

As soon as she felt hands on her waistband, Jorane stiffened and her eyes grew fearful. "No."

Ileana let go of the pants and looked at her lover. The fear she saw in her gaze nearly broke her heart. "It's okay, my darling. I won't do anything you don't want," she said, tenderly running her hand over Jorane's trembling stomach. "It's alright if you have changed your mind..."

"That's not it," the blonde interrupted. "I just don't want you to be disgusted... and I know you will be."

Ileana frowned. "Now, why do you think that?"

"When you see the scars on my leg..."

"Jorane," the singer cut her off gently. "I will not be disgusted. I accept you just as you are. I only want to love you, darling." Tears welled up in emerald eyes and the brunette felt a tightening sensation in her chest. "Please, please believe me, Jorane," she begged.

The blonde's breathing hitched and she closed her eyes. She wrapped her arms tightly around her lover as she felt Ileana placing gentle kisses on her eyelids.

"I believe you," came her small voice and then, Ileana felt her hands being guided to the waistband.

"Are you sure?"

Jorane nodded and lifted her hips slightly to give Ileana better access. Fearfully awaiting Ileana's reaction, she slid down the pants and the ugly, red lines of scarred tissue came into view. Ileana dropped the pants beside the bed then ran her hands gently over the wounded leg. "Does it hurt when I touch it?" she whispered.

Jorane bit her lip and shook her head. "Not so much anymore."

"Good, because I never want to hurt you," the brunette promised and began to place tiny healing kisses all over the scars.

The blonde gasped as she felt the warm tongue tracing the red lines from her ankle to her knee. She had no idea that the tissue would be so sensitive to touch.

"You are so beautiful, my love," Ileana murmured against her skin as she worked her way upward. The rasp of her tongue travelling now over Jorane's twitching stomach muscles.

The smaller woman grabbed her face and pulled her up for another passionate deep kiss. "You are the most beautiful woman, I know, Ileana. Beautiful inside and outside," she declared. "And now, I want to see and feel you. All of you..." Another heavy blush worked its way across Jorane's delicate features as Ileana disrobed for her as fast as she could.

"Your wish is my command," the singer replied grinning wildly and then, she lowered her naked body onto Jorane's. Both women moaned in pleasure as finally, skin made contact with skin. Arms and legs wrapped around each other as their lips met and melted together in fiery kisses of barely restrained passion.

The sweet scent of desire filled the room and Ileana growled softly as she felt Jorane's rocking hips against her own. A hand travelled down, parting both their nether lips until their clits touched.

"Ohhhh... yes... Ileana..." Jorane grabbed Ileana's firm buttocks and pressed her harder against herself, while thrusting up against the singer's tight body.

"I'm so close," the blonde moaned, small drops of perspiration formed on her body and her eyes closed in ecstasy.

"So am I," gasped the taller woman.

Jorane tightened her grip, her blunt nails digging into Ileana's soft skin. "Please... together... ohh, yes... don't stop... ohhh... Ileaanaaaaaaa!"

The sound of Jorane's climax was enough to push Ileana over the edge and she too reached the point of no return. "Mmmh... Jorrane!"

After their breathing had returned to a more normal level, Ileana rolled onto her back. Cradling the small body of her beloved against her chest, Ileana said huskily, "Ja tebe ljubju."

Jorane smiled at her. She loved it when Ileana spoke in her native tongue. "What does it mean?"

The singer ran her fingers over Jorane's bare back, leaving goosebumps in her wake. "It means 'I love you'," she explained, placing a tender kiss on Jorane's cute nose.

The blonde hugged her tightly, then she rested her head on the singer's chest to listen to her strong heartbeat.

"I will love you forever and for always."

Jorane lifted her head to gaze into warm blue eyes shining with so much love. "Is that a promise?"

Ileana smiled gently and shook her head. "No, no promise. It's a vow," she said seriously. "A vow I intend to keep." She lowered her head until their lips were only a mere inch apart. "And now, I'm going to seal it with a kiss."

"Okay," was the only word Jorane could get out before rosy lips claimed her own.

HAPPY END

Let us know if you enjoyed the story!