

The call came out of the blue on New Year's Eve. Natalie Moreno answered the phone over the New Year's Eve din of extended family gathered at her parents' house. "Hello?"

"Hello," came a courteous, deep voice. "May I speak to Natalie, please?"

The caller sounded just like Shane Copeland, Ph.D student at Fordham and the T.A. for the Medieval history survey course Natalie just finished. But while she'd spent the semester flirting, tempting, and beguiling while working her ass off in his class, Shane spent the semester tenaciously limiting their conversations to Medieval history. Relationships between instructors and students were strictly forbidden, a line he would never cross. No way he'd called her at home over the break. She was dreaming about him. Again.

"This is Natalie."

A pause, then, "This is Shane Copeland."

Three of her nieces, dressed in tulle skirts and waving star-topped wands, and two of her nephews, dressed as ninjas and swinging lightsabers, all five whooping at the top of their lungs, ran past her and out the other side of the kitchen. Her mother's dog, a hundred-and-thirty pound Saint Bernard, trotted along at the rear, a rhinestone crown hanging lopsided from his enormous head. Slobber strings hung from his mouth but thankfully he wasn't barking.

So not dreaming. Natalie stepped into the pantry and shut the door. "Professor Copeland?"

"I turned in grades today, so it's just Shane now."

Her heart, already pounding from the unexpected phone call, shot into quadruple time at the mention of grades. Getting into a top business school like Harvard or Wharton depended on a near-perfect GPA and GMAT scores, and that was just the beginning. She wanted to get into a top ranked B-school as badly as she wanted to go to bed with her TA. First things first. "How did I do?"

"You got an A. Your final paper was excellent. The best work in the class."

Yes! The praise from Shane meant as much as the grade she'd earned, but the phone call meant something more. "Are you calling all your students over Christmas break to tell them their grades?" she asked.

"Just you," he said. "Will you have dinner with me tonight?"

"I'm back in Hoboken," she said. Which he knew. He'd called her at home. Embarrassed, she closed her eyes and thumped her forehead on the doorframe. "You know that already."

“I’m calling from the PATH station.”

She straightened. High-pitched little girl giggles ascended into shrieks, a hiiiiii-ya yell and the zzzooooom-swoosh of the lightsaber from the living room, then a crash. Perfect timing. She considered the state of her hair and makeup. “I’ll be there in thirty minutes.”

During the semester she’d spent an hour getting ready for his eight am class. Tonight she ran upstairs, ruthlessly evicted her older nieces from the bathroom, took a ninety second shower, pulled on lace underwear, clean jeans and a tight white turtleneck sweater, then applied fresh mascara and lip gloss, and brushed out her shoulder blade-length hair. Ponytail? Too casual. Braids? Too school-girl, a look she desperately wanted to avoid tonight. A twist? Too professional. She wasn’t a Wharton grad yet and she had ten minutes to get to the PATH, so she left it loose.

“Mom?” she called from the foyer as she pulled on her coat. “I’m meeting a friend for a drink.”

Her mother appeared from the family room. “In this weather?”

Wet, thick snow falling outside the dining room windows gave her a moment’s pause. “I’m not leaving town.”

“Anyone we know?”

“No,” she said truthfully. “It’s someone from school. Don’t wait up for me.”

Her Nissan Sentra started reluctantly, but she was at the PATH station within thirty minutes of hanging up the phone. She swung through the kiss-and-ride drop off area but when she didn’t see Shane outside she parked in the nearly empty lot and trotted into the station.

He sat in one of the chairs in the waiting room, elbows braced on corduroy-clad knees, seemingly lost in thought. His close-cropped blond hair gleamed under the lights. At the click of her heeled boots he looked up, dark blue eyes serious, his mouth unsmiling.

“Hi,” she said.

He looked up at her for a few seconds, then got to his feet. He wasn’t much taller than her, but broad through the shoulders, and as his gaze skimmed her body in the tight sweater in jeans in a way he’d never done before, the point of his visit became clear. Sleeping with her was no longer a violation of the university’s code of conduct. So here he was. Dinner was just the obligatory courtesy.

*Be happy. This is what you wanted.*

“Tell me you’re twenty-one,” he said.

“I’m twenty-one,” she said obediently, then waited a beat. “Do you want to know how old I really am?”

A hint of a smile. “Yes.”

“Twenty-three. I took a gap year before I started at Fordham. I’m seven years past legal, not your student, and if it helps, I’m not a virgin, either.”

Relief and amusement mixed in his eyes, but he continued to study her face. He’d steadfastly ignored every overture to make their conversations personal. They never met in his office, only at the union or a coffee shop near campus. She mentioned family, friends, her time in Costa Rica and India, her plans to go to business school. He would smile that distant, enigmatic smile, and turn the conversation back to women’s roles in medieval society, or the emerging middle class, and with every conversation she wanted him more.

“Do you want to get dinner?”

No point in delaying the inevitable. “I’ve done nothing but sleep and eat my mother’s cooking for the last ten days, so no. Do you want to get a room?”

The banked fire in his eyes flared into heat. Hands still in his pockets, he tilted his head toward the door to the parking lot. “After you.”

She cajoled her little car a few blocks through the slushy streets to the W hotel on the waterfront. For all her brazenness she felt self-conscious at their lack of luggage and bare ring fingers, but the clerk didn’t bat an eyelash. One hand at her back Shane guided her to the elevator, down a plushly carpeted hall, and into a room on the seventeenth floor.

Once inside she shrugged out of her coat and walked to the windows. Across the Hudson, the lights of the Manhattan skyline twinkled through the fast-falling snow. “Wow,” she said.

His coat landed on top of hers on a chair, then he came up behind her, slid his hand into her loose hair and fisted at the nape of her neck. With a gasp she tipped her head back, trying to ease the sting, but his lips and teeth on her jawline made her gasp again. The hand not in her hair rose and tugged down the white wool turtleneck to bare her nape. A rough nip made her jump, but the steady sucking pressure on the bundle of nerves where her neck connected to her shoulder made her shudder and sag against him.

“Off,” he growled, then whisked her sweater up and over her head, leaving her in jeans and a white lace bra. Her nipples, dusky shadows behind the lace, tightened almost painfully as

his mouth found her nape once again. Her hands lifted jerkily as sensation coursed lava-like through her to pool in her pussy. She grasped the back of his head with one hand and the forearm, wrapped around her waist with the other.

Then his arm tightened, lifting her feet off the floor to dump her face-first onto the king-sized bed. Eyes wide, she rolled to her back, tossed her hair back from her face, and finally took in what he was wearing. Dark green cords, a navy wool sweater, and a buttondown shirt underneath.

“How do you make professor clothes so hot?” she asked.

He put one knee between her legs and crawled up to drop to his elbows. One hand took some of his weight while the other gripped her jaw and throat. The first touch of his mouth on hers was a rough nuzzle demanding she open to him. The second was a full-on plundering. She took his weight, his tongue, his hand back in her hair, holding her still as a semester’s worth of longing exploded inside her. She arched up and he forced his thigh against her pussy to keep her in place, the heat and strength of his erection shoved against her hip. Desperate to get her hands on his skin she tugged up his sweater and shirt and found the muscles at the top of his ass, flexing as he ground against her.

He broke the kiss and backed away. She gripped the tail of his shirt, tugging both sweater and shirt over his head when he pulled back to flip open the front catch of her bra and bare her breasts. The blond hair dusting his chest drew her fingers until he straddled her and cupped her breasts. A gentle knead and her breath caught. A pinch to her nipples and her mouth dropped open. A harder pinch combined with a rough massaging movement and she moaned and writhed under him.

But this was no inexperienced boy. Shane read her response as white-hot arousal and continued until her hands found his belt and began to tug it open.

“I’ve wanted you since September. Now, Shane. Please.”

He opened her jeans and skimmed them off while she worked at button and zipper. He got a condom from his wallet and smoothed it on, then parted her legs, lowered himself into the cradle of her thighs, and began to push inside.

“Oh, fuck,” he said as he slid into her wet heat.

Something very feminine and possessive smiled smugly at the realization she’d reduced her articulate professor to single syllable words. He bent his forehead to hers. “You’re not the

only one who's wanted all fall."

The softly murmured words made her heart kick crazily in her ribcage. "Start," she whispered back. "And don't stop."

He gave a few firm, testing thrusts, then adjusted the tilt of her hips. The next thrust sent electric heat sparking and crackling along every nerve in her body, tightening muscles and the clench of her fingernails in his shoulders. Within a minute she was gasping, pleading little noises forced from her throat as each stroke glided over her g-spot. The high-class bed wouldn't dare squeak, so the silent air of the room highlighted the slick sound of their coupling, her whimpers, his soft grunts as their bodies strained together and he hurled her into orgasm. He followed moments after, body shuddering as his cock pulsed inside her.

With four months of drawn out desire finally satisfied, she expected some relief from the longing. Instead the scratched itch left her wanting more.

He lifted his head and gave her an oddly sweet kiss. "Now can we get some dinner?"

She blinked, and the lingering tingle of his lips against hers made her stupid. "What?"

"Dinner. You're familiar with it, I assume. The chief components include a meal, your choice, and conversation. I want to hear about your holiday. Costa Rica and India. How the GMAT prep is coming. About your nieces and nephews and their Christmas." He gave her an oddly crooked smile and tugged a strand of hair free from her mouth. "If you're not familiar with dinner, allow me to introduce you to the concept, and perhaps another one called foreplay."

"You didn't come to Hoboken just to fuck me?"

"I didn't come to Hoboken just to fuck you," he said with some asperity, then his voice gentled. "Natalie, I remember every single thing you said about your life in my hearing. I didn't respond because I knew if I took one step down that path, I'd violate your trust, Professor Harris's trust, the university's trust, and jeopardize any future we might have."

"Even one step?" she asked.

"Even one step."

Iron-willed, and smart as hell. She couldn't stop the smile that danced around her lips. "Dinner sounds great."

He glanced out at the falling snow, then gave her another kiss, this one less sweet, more promising. "Room service?"

"Even better," she said. She licked his lower lip, then nuzzled into the warm hollow of

his throat. “We can get a head start on that foreplay lesson.”

~\*~\*~

Read the next installment in Shane and Natalie’s relationship in FIGHTING FAIR, available now on [Amazon](#) and [Barnes and Noble](#).