

Another Cup of Java
A Java Jarvis Thriller
by Erin Wade

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Book three of
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by Erin Wade
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DEDICATION

To the one who has always supported me in everything I have ever undertaken. You have encouraged me and have always been my biggest fan. Life is sweeter with you.

Erin

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Chapter 1-Walking to New Orleans

“Don’t be such a baby,” Kat teased. “I’ll only be gone a week. I must go. My mother is scared, and Daddy is no help. He is terrified.”

Java pulled her wife’s back against her chest and wrapped her body around her. “I do understand. It doesn’t mean I like it. I’ve grown accustomed to sleeping with you.”

“Mm-hmm, I know what you’ve grown accustomed to,” Kat hummed turning to face her wife. “I wish you could go with me.”

“I’m almost tempted to disobey Karen’s orders and accompany you.” Java agreed. “But sure as I do, another woman will die. We’re so close to our serial killer, I can feel it.”

“I know, baby. I will miss you like crazy, but I understand Karen’s reasoning. I’ve spoken with the doctor performing Mom’s surgery. She assures me it is a routine operation, and the biopsy showed the tumor is benign, but it needs to be removed before it gets any larger and turns cancerous. I’ll be back in time to help you handcuff our serial killer if it is the one we suspect.”

“You know if we stop talking and make love, we’ll be able to take our time and savor every touch,” Java murmured against her wife’s full lips, “before we have to report to Karen.”

“What are you waiting for, darling,” Kat moaned pulling Java on top of her and kissing her breathless.

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Karen Pierce hid her smile from her two top agents. She couldn't help notice that they never missed an opportunity to briefly touch one another. Kat Lace and Java Jarvis had been married over five years and still acted like newlyweds. *I'd give up everything for a love like theirs*, she thought.

Karen motioned toward the two straight-back chairs in front of her desk and prepared to deflect their pleas to let Java accompany Kat to Alabama.

"Kat, all of us will be praying for your mother's quick recovery. We will miss you," Karen started their meeting. "Java, do you have good news for me on the Masquerade Murders?"

"We're waiting to hear from Penny," Java responded. "If we get a DNA match then we have the serial killer or at least one of them and hopefully she will turn on the others we suspect."

"It will be nice to wrap up this one," Karen commented. "It has been particularly savage."

Java nodded trying to dismiss the murder scenes flashing across her mind. Each one bloodier than the last.

Karen shuffled the papers on her desk then addressed Kat. "Does your flight leave tomorrow morning?"

"11:40 a.m."

"I suppose you want to take her to the airport?" Karen addressed Java.

"Of course, but what I really want to do is go with her," Java answered.

"You know I'd let you, if we weren't so close to the arrests in the Masquerade Murders case." Karen declared. "I'll need all hands on deck for the roundup."

"I know," Java agreed. "But if we do make arrests tomorrow, I'll be on the next plane to Birmingham so I can be there for Kat."

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“I would expect nothing less from you,” Karen smirked. “As soon as I hear from Penny on the DNA, I’ll take the arrest warrants to the judge. They are filled out awaiting her signature.”

“I’m packed and ready to go,” Kat said, “so we’re going to be at Java’s Place tonight going about our private citizen business as usual.”

“Are you going to perform this evening?” Karen asked.

“Yes, I’ll do the early dinner performance and I’ve arranged for a friend to fill in for me while I’m gone. She will take over the supper performance and be the entertainment until I return home.”

“I’ll be there for dinner,” Karen said.

##

“Would you play the drums tonight?” Kat slipped her arms around her wife and rested her cheek between Java’s shoulder blades.

Java leaned her head back until it rested against Kat’s. “Who could say no to you?” She turned in Kat’s arms and kissed her slowly.

“Oh, the burn,” Kat whispered. “You know what you do to me.”

“Um-hmm. Just remember what is waiting for you at home.”

“As if I could ever forget,” Kat returned the smoldering kiss.

A knock on the office door was followed by “Showtime, Kat.”

“I’ll grab my band jacket from wardrobe and meet you on stage.” Java sprinted from the office wanting to be on stage in time to play the intro for Kat’s appearance. She slid

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behind the drums, grabbed the sticks, and joined the band as the lead guitar player introduced Kat.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our very own singing sensation, Kat Lace.”

The dinner crowd gave Kat a standing ovation as she floated onto the stage and began singing “Way Down Yonder in New Orleans.” She drifted back to Java as the sax player rocked the house with the upbeat music. She touched her wife’s shoulder then moved back to the front of the stage to end the song.

Java had to admit accompanying her wife was electrifying. Diners always cheered Kat and often yelled requests from their tables.

Kat held up her hand to silence the crowd. “I must leave for a week to be with my mother who is having surgery.” A groan came from the diners. “But I have a wonderful replacement that you will love. So be sure you hear her while I’m gone.”

“Just make sure you return,” a voice yelled from the audience.

“I will return even if I have to walk back.” Kat laughed and cued the band as they began playing their last number. “Walking to New Orleans.” The crowd roared their approval.

Damn, I’m going to miss her in every way possible, the blonde drummer thought as she watched her wife sing the last song.

Chapter 2 – Bats and More Bats

They checked Kat's bag at the curb and Java walked her to her gate. "I miss you already," Java mumbled as she pulled Kat into her arms and hugged her as if she would never let her go.

"I know, baby. I'll miss you too." Kat pulled Java's lips down to hers and kissed her slowly. "I'll call every chance I get. Please be careful. You know more agents are injured making arrests than any other time."

"I promise. I just want to get this over with and get back into your arms."

The call to load Kat's flight blared from the loud speakers. Java clutched the brunette tightly against her committing ever soft inch of Kat to memory. "You should go," she said reluctantly releasing her.

Kat brushed her wife's lips one last time. "One week. I'll be back in one week, darling." And she was gone.

Java's phone rang as she watched Kat go through the doors to the plane. "Java, here," she croaked around the lump in her throat.

"The DNA is a match," Karen crowed. "The team is ready as soon as you return."

"Give me thirty minutes. I'm leaving the airport now."

Driving from the airport to her team's rendezvous spot Java ran the case through her mind. The FBI's SKIRT (Serial Killers Investigative Resolution Team) had been called into action after the third woman's body had washed onto the shore of Lake Pontchartrain. It was originally thought that she had jumped from The Lake Pontchartrain Causeway, but further examination by New Orleans Medical Examiner Penny Short verified that she had been tortured and

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molested, the same mode of operation found on two previous victims. The third victim opened the door for New Orleans Police Lieutenant Beau Braxton to request the FBI serial killers team to join the investigation. After three months and three bodies they had zeroed in on a gang of sex traders smuggling women across the border from Texas. The women were brought across the Mexico border then trucked to New Orleans.

Java parked her Jeep a block from the old two-story house believed to be the headquarters of the gang. She slipped on her FBI vest and joined her team.

“We’ve had eyes on them all day,” Karen informed her. “There are three armed men, a woman, and approximately a dozen enslaved women. Beau and his team are on the other side of the house. We have them surrounded. We are trying to decide how to draw them out to keep the women from being hurt.”

“I have an idea,” Java said eyeing the van parked in front of the house. “Instruct Beau to be ready to move fast when he hears a loud crash.”

She ran to her Jeep, slipped off her Vest, and cranked the vehicle. Revving the engine then taking her foot off the brake, she fishtailed down the block slamming into the van in front of the house.

Three men and a woman charged from the house carrying assault rifles. Java fell forward onto the steering wheel making the horn scream as loud as possible.

“It’s a woman. She’s knocked out,” one of the men yelled.

“Get her off that horn. The whole neighborhood will be over here,” the woman commanded. “Drag her inside. She is gorgeous. We will get a pretty penny for her.”

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“Drop your guns,” a bullhorn echoed the command as the criminals turned their attention toward the agents encircling them.

Java shoved her Glock into the stomach of the man unfastening her seatbelt. “Drop the gun or I’ll give you a complete gastrectomy.”

The man dropped his assault rifle. “Now join your friends.” Java nudged him with her gun.

The female ringleader slowly inched out of the circle trying to put the Jeep between her and the agents. Java watched until the other three criminals had been handcuffed, scooped up the assault rifle, then bent low to run to the back of her Jeep. As the ringleader rounded the rear of the vehicle Java slammed the butt of the assault rifle into her face.

The woman screamed and fell onto her back as blood covered her face and clothes. Java kicked her in the side. “Get up.”

“I’m hurt,” the woman wailed.

“If you don’t get up, I will shoot you,” Java growled.

The woman struggled to her feet as Java pulled her hands behind her back and handcuffed her. “You are the scum of the earth,” Java spit on her then pushed her toward the circle of government agents.

“She’s the ringleader,” Java yelled. “Do not let her cut a deal.”

“Load the women in the house into our van,” Beau bellowed, “and put these four into the paddy wagon. Java, do you and Déjà have this?”

“Yeah, we got it.” Java responded. “Come on Déjà let’s get inside. Barbie, pull my Jeep around back then join us in the house.”

The three waited inside the rancid house. “This place is unbelievable.” Barbie snorted. “It smells like an outhouse.”

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“Because it is,” Déjà huffed. “Those women were bound and lying in their own filth.”

“Heads up,” Java said. “A black panel van just pulled up. They watched as three hulking men emerged from the vehicle.

“Oh goody, one for each of us,” Barbie exclaimed. “I want the blonde one.

“I’ll take the fat one,” Déjà declared. “He will sizzle.”

“I guess that leaves me the bald one.” Java nodded and stepped into the shadows at the back of the room as the other two women hid on each side of the door.

“Don’t kill them,” Java said. “They know who sent them for the women. We want that info.”

The door swung open and baldie filled the door frame. “Why don’t you have the women down here? We need to load and go.” He advanced quickly on Java followed by his buddies.

Java leveled her gun at his heart. “On the floor. I will not tell you twice. The man swung around to face his friends reaching inside his jacket for his gun. A shot rendered his arm useless as the blow from the bullet took him to his knees.

“Face down, arms above your head,” Java yelled again kicking his useless arm above his head. The man obeyed as blood spread around him.

Déjà moved her fingers slightly and bats that were nesting in the corner swarmed the fat man. He screamed and ran but could not get the Big Brown Bats off him. They screeched, bit, and clawed, until he was bleeding from his eyes, ears and mouth. They shredded his face. He dropped to his knees and Déjà handcuffed him.

“Make them stop! Make them stop!” he screamed.

Déjà moved her hand slightly and the bats returned to their resting place in the corner.

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“Surely you didn’t think you could get away with this,” the blonde man roared waving his gun at them. “Uncuff my friends.”

Barbie, the queen of poison, slapped her hand around the man’s neck injecting enough poison into him to kill a horse. He dropped to his knees as his gun clattered to the floor. “Sorry,” Barbie shrugged. “You should have given me the fat one. I may have overdosed this one.”

“Remind me to never shake hands with you,” Déjà exclaimed.

Barbie held up her hand and turned the ring on her finger. “It is only dangerous when I push the tiny button that ejects the needle.”

Java called the officers waiting to take the gangsters to jail. “I think we have had a good day,” she said. “I’m starved. Let’s go to the restaurant, have dinner, and listen to Kat’s replacement.” *As if anyone could ever replace Kat*, she thought.

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