

Palm of Her Hand

by Linda Simoni-Wastila

When Lorelei emerged from the Bentley draped in pink silk and pearls, E.B. Whiting's heart quaked all the way down to his RocketBuster boots. For over a year he had pursued the Geisha, through the cobbled streets of the French Quarter to the high rises of Hong Kong. Rebuffed in every city, he paid for her best courtesans instead. The next morning, he sent her ivory roses, accepted but never acknowledged.

He strode across the foyer, Dom Perignon clutched in his hand. She followed him to the window. Below, the Dallas skyline glittered. American flags and Whiting banners floated ghostlike from dozens of cranes silhouetted in tiny white lights.

"You have built a kingdom," she said.

"As have you." They clinked flutes. "Have you considered my proposal?"

She rested the champagne on the table and took his hand. The subtle scent of vanilla wafted from her. He trembled as she splayed open his palm and traced the left side with her finger.

"Long career line. And success, but the two do not intersect." She pulled his hand closer, her breath warm on his skin. "Love line also long, but see?" She drew quick perpendicular cross-hatches with her nail. He winced.

"Marry me," he whispered. "Please."

"Life line starts here." She slowly trailed her forefinger from the base of the thumb to the middle of his palm, and stopped. A frown creased her forehead, then smoothed.

"Yes," she said and smiled. "Let us marry."

