

Mel stopped, stood looking at her friend. "We are talking about the dig?"

"Sure...what else?"

"Just checking," she started walking again.

"Darlin', do you think you could get your beautiful ass down here and help me with this?"

Melinda Pappas hiked up her tailored tweed skirt and gingerly made her way into the dig. Jan was lying on her back in a precarious position attempting to make a rubbing from a low overhang.

"What do you need?"

Janice Covington allowed her eyes a momentary flicker over the southern bred beauty now crouching beside her. "That's a loaded question. But right now...I thought a whiff of that perfume might be rather therapeutic." Mel huffed and made to stand, but Jan said, "Seriously, I can't move my arms at the moment and my neck is getting awfully stiff. You wanna roll my jacket there and tuck it under my head?"

"Why, of course, Janice, why didn't you just say so?" She bunched the battered safari jacket and reached into the crevice.

"Thanks." Jan squirmed slightly and resettled.

"Is it getting any more interesting?"

"Maybe. Why don't you pull up that tarp over there and have a look for yourself."

Mel glanced over her shoulder and found the canvas within arm's reach. Yanking it loose, she inspected it uncertainly, a little sand, shook it and slid it in next to where Jan was working.

Lying on her back she scooted in next to her colleague.

Jan grinned. "Hello, come a little closer."

"I can see from here."

"I know."

Mel felt the heat rush to her face, Jan still loved to torment her like that. She was quite sure it was all bluff. Well, mostly anyway.

"Damn it."

"What?" Mel asked, alarmed at times by the archeologist's mercurial temperament.

"Still not high enough."

"Here," Mel offered and eased her right hand in under Jan's head. "How's that?"

"That? Oh...that's perfect. Just perfect." The smaller woman swallowed audibly. But added, "Thanks, doll," with what she hoped was a touch of matter-of-fact bravado. "Hand me that little brush in my breast pocket, would you?"

Mel smirked as she complied, reaching across their bodies awkwardly with her left hand, careful not to touch...any sensitive areas. It was difficult. Jan did not wear a brassiere, Mel felt herself blushing again. Her twitching fingers made the tentative foray and found the wished for object nestled against a soft mound of heated flesh Mel gulped and pulled her hand out quickly.

"Here."

"Put it in my mouth." She used it to brush the charcoal from parchment and it sifted like black powder snow onto her face and neck and blouse.

"You'll need a bath," Mel noted, mother hen.

"You wanna give me one?" Jan asked, grinning crookedly around the stick of wood between her lips.

Mel breathed slowly, in, out, in, "Keep your mind on what you're doing."

"Oh, I do. I always do." Jan had dropped the brush before she spoke and it landed between her breasts. "There. That look familiar?"

"Ancient graffiti," Mel squinted, "not much more I'd say."

"Think that's meant for a chakram?"

"Now that you mention it...maybe."