

Succubus Rising

An Urban Fantasy/Paranormal Romance



BR Kingsolver
Book 3 of the Telepathic Clans Saga

Succubus Rising,
An Urban Fantasy / Paranormal Romance
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Previous books in this series

The Succubus Gift
Succubus Unleashed

Look for Book 4 in the Brenna O'Donnell Telepathic Clans Saga in 2013

Also look for Book 1 in the RB Kendrick paranormal mystery series set in the world of the Telepathic Clans

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Praise for ***The Succubus Gift***, Book 1 of the Telepathic Clans:

*The novel itself is expertly written and an utter joy to read. The characters are all delightful. There were times while I was reading this that I laughed out loud, and other times when I held my breath in anticipation of what might occur. 4.5/5 stars – Night Owl Reviews*

*This book had it all; lots of action, romance, suspense and humor. Loaded with intrigue and drama ... 5/5 quills – Mel's Book Blog*

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*Fabulous, fabulous, fabulous! BR Kingsolver's second book is everything I would have hoped from reading the first book in the series, The Succubus Gift. 5/5 stars – Wren Doloro*

*The Telepathic Clans series has a little bit of everything for everyone. International mystery, romance, political drama, paranormal abilities, epic smack downs and to-die-for shopping trips. I don't think I'll ever be disappointed by what Kingsolver writes ... 5/5 HOT steaming cups - Tea and Text*

*It's like an even more surreal version of the princess diaries ... Goodreads.com*

## SUCCUBUS RISING

### CHAPTER 1

*In medieval legend, a 'succubus' (plural succubi; from Latin succubare, "to lie under") is a female demon which comes to men, especially monks, in their dreams to seduce them and have sexual intercourse with them, drawing energy from the men to sustain themselves, often until the point of exhaustion or death. This legend was an explanation for the phenomena of wet dreams and sleep paralysis. – Wikipedia*

Horrified, Brenna stared at the Senator, who unfortunately just stared back. She wanted him to do something more, such as breathe, but he didn't. He just sat there, pants around his knees in his two thousand dollar leather chair.

It had been a massive heart attack, and even with her power and skill as a healer there had been nothing she could do except push him off her. He fell back into his chair. She sat on the edge of his desk with her skirt gathered around her waist and gaped at him.

Things had been going so well ...

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Senator Carl Evans was a Midwestern farm-state champion of right wing, family-values politics with a reputation as a womanizer. He had put a hold on the nomination for a federal judgeship in West Virginia, a position Seamus O'Donnell, Brenna's grandfather and head of the O'Donnell Clan, wanted to fill with his own man. The valley holding the O'Donnell estate was in that particular district, and the man nominated was a telepath who had grown up in the valley. Seamus had paid his college and law school tuition. Evans was unaware of that. He just put the hold in to be contrary and see who would come offering him something to release it.

The offering was Brenna. She showed up at a committee hearing he attended. Using her powers to don a low Glamour and projecting Influence, she smiled shyly at him when he noticed

her, then blushed and looked down at her lap. Throughout the rest of the meeting, she used Influence to pull his attention to her.

As everyone filed out at the end, she hung back and then fell in step with him. She didn't attempt to speak to him, but brushed his arm with her breast as they walked out into the hall, then strode off with a pronounced sway in her hips.

The next day at another meeting he attended, she sauntered in swishing her skirt. When she passed him, she dropped her pen. Bending over to pick it up, she read his mind and saw her own ass as he saw it.

"Is this seat taken?" she asked as she stood, indicating the chair next to him.

He gave her his best smile and said, "I'm not waiting for anyone."

As the meeting progressed, she continued to read his surface thoughts and softly asked him a couple of questions.

"Very astute questions," he said afterward. "I was thinking the same things about that testimony."

"Some of what she was saying didn't add up," Brenna responded. Handing him her card, she said, "I'm Brenna O'Donnell. I'd like the opportunity to speak with you about a judicial appointment. One of our clients has asked us to check into the issue." She gave him a slight puff of pheromones.

He glanced from her cleavage to her card and back, then lifted his eyes to her face. Brenna gave him a look of what she hoped was earnest interest while using Empathic Projection to send him a feeling of her lust.

"Call my office," he said, his smile growing wider. "I'll tell my appointment secretary to expect you."

She showed up at the appointed early-morning time, and his secretary ushered her into his office. Kicking her Glam up to medium low, she walked closer to his desk and sat in the chair offered her.

"Senator," Brenna said, leaning forward to provide him a better view of her cleavage, "my client has authorized me to explore what might be done to lift the hold you have on the fourth circuit appointment. Of course, some help with your reelection effort would be forthcoming, and I personally would be *very* grateful if we could find a positive resolution to the issue." She released a burst of pheromones and increased her Glam.

"I, uh, have some questions about, ah, his credentials as a strict constructionist," Evans said, a light sheen of sweat breaking out on his face.

Brenna rose and walked around his desk and leaned against it in front of him. Undoing the next button on her blouse, she said, "Oh, come now, Senator. It would be a shame if I walked out of here without both of us getting what we want." She slipped off her panties and sat on his desk, lifting her skirt and leaning back on her elbows.

Standing between her legs, driving into her, Evans suddenly stopped, his face turning bright red. He clutched his chest and fell forward, pinning her to the desk. Brenna lay there, with a large man lying on top of her, and tried to figure out what had happened. She entered his mind and felt it fade. Stunned, she sent her mind into his body and saw that his heart had stopped. Checking further, she saw large areas of ischemic damage, indicating previous heart attacks, and a spreading area of dead tissue from the current attack. She tried to stimulate the nerves and nothing happened. The last spark of life, the light of his soul, dimmed and went out.

She tried to push him off her, but he was too heavy. She pushed with Telekinesis, and he straightened and fell back into his chair.

Rebecca? We've got a problem, she sent to her best friend and leader of her Protector team, waiting in the halls outside the senator's office. She provided Rebecca with an image of the senator.

Oh Jesus, tell me you're kidding.

I wish I were. What do I do?

Rebecca had a well-deserved reputation for extensive and creative cursing, but the string that ran through their mental link was impressive enough that Brenna momentarily forgot the problem sitting in front of her. Then Rebecca went silent. When she came back, Jeremy was with her, speaking to Brenna's mind.

First thing, put your panties on, came Jeremy's calm thought, filled with dry patience. *Then start blanking out the fact you were there from everyone in the office.*

Brenna edged off the desk, avoiding the Senator, picked up her panties and put them on. *Should I have the secretary erase my appointment?*

Oh hell no, Rebecca responded. *Things on a computer aren't really erased. Just put in her mind that you called this morning and cancelled, and have her log the call.*

Oh, okay.

Jeremy sent, *Think hard, who saw you there? Is there anyone who can place you there that isn't in the office?*

Yeah, one of the Senator's aides, a guy named Donald Sorenson. He was leaving when I came in and he leered at me ... hang on ... okay, I checked with the secretary, and he was going to a meeting over on the House side.

Jeremy and Rebecca sent a squad out looking for Sorenson, then stood in the hall and blurred the memories of everyone who walked by. Brenna fixed the memories of the office staff. She came out of the senator's offices and they whisked her away.

"I wonder how they're going to explain him," Rebecca mused.

"I think the person who's going to find him is one of the filing clerks," Brenna said. "She goes in about ten every morning to give him a blow job, at least that's what I picked out of the secretary's mind."

"An upstanding family man, huh?" Jeremy snorted in disgust. "Let's get you out of here."

As they reached the bottom of the steps of the Hart Office Building, an ambulance pulled up with its siren and lights.

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"Brenna, when I said to do anything necessary to make Evans lift the hold, I didn't mean to kill him," Karen MacIntyre told Brenna with a mock disapproving glower.

"Karen, don't. Please? I know everyone probably thinks this is funny, but I don't. I need a drink."

"It's not even noon yet."

"Oh goody, still time in the day for things to really go to hell," Brenna walked over to Karen's sideboard and poured herself two fingers of Irish whiskey, took a drink, then sat in the chair in front of her boss. Blonde, blue-eyed and pretty, Karen was slender, of medium height, with breasts almost too large for her frame.

"I know I'm a newbie and I do some stupid things sometimes," Brenna said, "but I suggest you remind people that although I'm the youngest and most junior lobbyist, I'm also Vice-Chairman of the Board. Laughing at me where I can hear it is probably not a good long-term career strategy."

Karen immediately laughed. "Oh God, honey, I'm so sorry this happened to you, but you have to admit it's almost unbelievable. Cindy screws Congress for fifteen years without a single problem, and the first one of our elected gentlemen you touch croaks on you."

"I think I'll have another drink."

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Collin drove in from West Virginia that afternoon. He had been out of the country for his birthday, and Brenna had been geared up to take him on a hot date as a makeup. Finally seated in the restaurant, Brenna threw her original idea of ordering champagne out in favor of whiskey.

"I hear you had a rough day," Collin placed his hand on hers. "Thanks for still trying to make tonight special."

"Honey, you are special. All day I kept thinking that if I just held on, you'd be here, and then everything would be better. Every time I kill someone, you show up and hold me and take me home," Brenna told him, fighting back tears.

He stood and walked around the table, pulled her to her feet and into his arms. She clung to him, feeling how strong and solid he was, marveling at how safe he made her feel.

"You didn't kill that guy today," he whispered. "You just happened to be there when he died. Do you want to go home?"

"No, I want to be here with you. I'm okay now. I'm always okay when I'm with you." Giving him a weak smile, she pushed away and sat back down. "Thank you."

They had a nice dinner and talked of other things. It was late when they got home, and she was in a much better mood. He took her in his arms and kissed her. Passion flared and she pressed against him, running her hands over his broad back and opening her mind to him. Their minds merged and they read the need each had for the other.

He pushed her against the wall, his mouth on hers and his hands all over her. Her sweet scent rose to envelop him. The silk of her hair and the smooth soft feel of her skin against his hands sent flames through his body. She clutched his hard buttocks in both hands, and then his hand was up her dress between her legs. She gasped, pressing against it.

He took her right there, standing with her back against the wall, his hands under her bottom and his face buried in her hair. It had been over a week since they'd last seen each other, and it seemed like an eternity. She could feel what he felt in his mind and knew he felt her pleasure as well. When his climax came and his energy flowing into her triggered her orgasm, she touched that place in her mind that channeled his energy back into him, changed and enhanced by her Succubus Gift. They soared, pleasure building until they felt they might explode with it. Their souls touched, merged and became one.

When Brenna came back to herself, leaning against the wall with Collin panting above her, she reached up and pulled his mouth down to hers. "I love you so very, very much," she breathed and kissed him.

They managed to get undressed before they reached the bed. When he finally slept, the first light of dawn showed through the window. She held him close and stroked his hair.

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Brenna O'Donnell, PhD, heiress, telepath and succubus, was the newest employee of MacIntyre and Associates, a lobbying firm that was a wholly-owned subsidiary of O'Donnell Group, the company owned by Brenna's grandfather. As an organization staffed entirely with telepaths, it had a distinct advantage over its competitors and its targets. A secret minority that felt itself under a millennia-long siege, the telepaths' ethics were those of a society under assault. The Clans were only marginally a part of the larger societies they lived in. They knew from bitter

history that head-blind normal humans would massacre them without a bit of regret should the Clans' existence be discovered.

With their extraordinarily long lives, the people of the Clans remembered times when the thin veneer of human civilization had been washed away by irrational fear. Brenna knew a man whose mother, a healer who had never harmed anyone, had been burned at the stake in nineteenth century Ireland. No one inside the Clans had ever suggested revealing themselves to the outside world.

As a result, although Clan O'Donnell generally tried to be good citizens and good neighbors, they didn't flinch from reading people's minds, influencing their decisions and actions, and even occasionally dominating someone and compelling them to do the telepaths' will. And the best manipulators were the succubi. Their natural predatory instincts served the Clan well. Their tactics included seducing a congressman and draining his life energy to prevent him from showing up for a crucial vote, seducing him to influence his support for or against legislation, or using a hidden camera to blackmail him.

MacIntyre's practice included not only furthering the fortunes and ideologies of O'Donnell, but the objectives of paying clients. They managed political campaigns, schmoozed campaign contributors, gathered and sold political and business intelligence, and occasionally engaged in political sabotage. They primarily worked for liberal and progressive causes, but didn't let shortsighted ethical qualms get in their way. If the other side used some rather questionable methods, MacIntyre could do it better. After all, they were all telepaths.

Brenna was just the kind of woman Washington DC loved, or at least the men did. With thick black hair cascading to her waist, sapphire-blue eyes in a high-cheekboned classically beautiful face and a voluptuous wasp-waisted figure, Brenna often dressed the part of a femme fatale. At twenty-three, and looking younger, she could don a look of wide-eyed naïve innocence, the kind of young woman who attracted powerful men. Brenna, however, had a very different view of such men than the interns who usually filled the role of a sweet young thing in Washington.

Karen and Cindy Nelson had explained the expectations of the job to Brenna.

"We use the Talents of Succubi to influence people, especially men, to get them to do what we want them to," Cindy said. "Every lobbying firm, foreign government and corporation uses whatever they can, including sex, to influence Congress and powerful regulators. Some are more blatant about it."

"Brenna," Karen said, "I'll be asking you to seduce, influence, manipulate and blackmail people. It's pretty ugly sometimes, but the stakes are very high. My ethics and morals are very situational, and I truly don't give a damn about the souls of these humans. All of them mortgaged their souls a long time ago. Every one of them has sold himself many times over."

"Yeah, I get it," Brenna said. "I'm not under any illusions as to how you use succubi." She took a deep breath. "I don't mind being a prostitute, especially if the payoff is to keep us safe."

"It's not always that easy," Karen said. "Some of what we do, especially for clients, is straight-out dirty tricks. Compromising and blackmailing someone are part of the paid services we offer."

Brenna realized they were suspicious of her ability to do the job. Growing up in the head-blind world had taught her, to their way of thinking, some strange and unrealistic ethics.

"I understand that," Brenna told them. "I'm really not as dumb and naïve as you seem to think. I understood what this job entailed before I ever talked to you about it. I mean, really, what

else would you want a succubus for? Taking notes? There are a lot of pretty women you could use if all you wanted was someone who looked good.”

She saw Cindy and Karen relax, sitting back in their chairs.

“When I was up on the Hill last fall looking for Cindy’s kidnappers,” Brenna said, “I identified seven succubi working up there, none of them ours. I don’t delude myself that they’re being choir girls. People have repeatedly tried to kill me. It took my Protectors a long time to pound it through my thick head, but I finally got the message. We’re engaged in a war. I get it. And if I’m going to lead the Clans someday, I need to understand how the game is played. So blow the whistle. Let’s play.”

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CHAPTER 2

A whore should be judged by the same criteria as other professionals offering services for pay--such as dentists, lawyers, hairdressers, physicians, plumbers, etc. Is she professionally competent? Does she give good measure? Is she honest with her clients? It is possible that the percentage of honest and competent whores is higher than that of plumbers and much higher than that of lawyers. And enormously higher than that of professors. – Robert A. Heinlein, The Notebooks of Lazarus Long

Karen assigned Brenna to shepherding a trade treaty through Senate hearings and a final vote on the floor. In the world of Washington politics, it was a small sideshow, but Callista O’Donnell, Brenna’s Aunt Callie and President of the Clan’s business interests, had targeted it as a major strategic initiative for the O’Donnell Group. It could provide an entry into South American markets as well as an entry into the government of Ecuador. Powerful factions in control of the Ecuadorian government wanted it and came to MacIntyre to help get the deal done.

“It’s a case where a client wants something that O’Donnell also wants,” Karen told her. “They’re willing to pay for your time, and we can throw Irina in there also. We already have her working as an interpreter on the project.”

“How long does it usually take for something like this?” Brenna asked.

“This one has been in the works for about three years,” Karen replied. “You should be able to get it out of committee in the next month, and if you play it right, we might be able to sneak it onto the floor for a vote this fall.”

Dismayed, Brenna stared at her, “I thought you said this was a quick and easy one.”

“It is, my dear. We’re in the final stretch now. We have several high-ranking officials of the Ecuadorian government in town. They’re wining and dining senators and their staffs like crazy. The major thing you need to do is keep track of everything. Keep track of the votes, and take care of any votes that might stray or need extra convincing. And take very good care of our clients and their nerves. Got it?”

“Sure, clear as mud. Are you my hand holder on this one or Cindy?”

“I am, but use Irina. Her Spanish should help a lot. If she isn’t around and they’re speaking Spanish, eavesdrop like crazy. There’s a fairly strong consortium of Clans in South America, and the Vargas Clan in Ecuador is one of the most powerful. They’ve always loosely aligned themselves with the Center for a Better World, but the word is that Vargas wants this deal to go through. So you never know exactly who you might be dealing with on this one. The alliances might be a bit confused.”

“Rebecca’s fluent in Spanish,” Brenna said.

“That’s good to know. It would give us a little more flexibility with Irina’s time. But use Irina for now. First thing you need to do is go over to the House and talk with Margaret

Townsend, Representative from Illinois. Find out what she wants to swing the junior senator from her state. Tell her I sent you.”

Over the next couple of weeks, Brenna came to know Rep. Townsend rather well, and in spite of herself, found she liked the affable, pretty congresswoman.

“Brenna,” Representative Townsend said on their first meeting, “Senator Johnson won’t be a problem. I doubt he cares very much, but he could use some help on a bill he introduced that’s going nowhere in committee. Give him some help there and he’ll love you. He’s also a little short on campaign contributions, but of course, your Ecuadorian clients can’t contribute to political campaigns.”

O’Donnell, however, could.

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Brenna contacted one of the senator’s aides and asked for a meeting. She explained very frankly the advantages that O’Donnell and other American manufacturers, including several companies in the senator’s home state, would gain from the trade legislation passing.

Then she produced a check made out to the senator’s campaign fund.

A quick visit to another senator’s office allowed her to read his mind as he walked out the door. It turned out he was devoted to his wife, but his chief aide liked the intimate company of young women. Brenna wasn’t really his type, though. It was enough to give a girl a complex. Rummaging around in his mind, she discovered he had plans to go to dinner with a young intern that evening. A spear thread to Irina sent her to show up at the restaurant, and a spear thread to another McIntyre operative sent him to intercept the intern.

Of course, Brenna could seduce any man with the barest trace of a libido, but this was an assignment that required subtlety. If he had a fetish for tiny blondes, she’d give him a tiny blonde.

Irina Moore was a British-Russian succubus that Brenna and Siobhan O’Conner had discovered in New York the previous year. Barely over five feet tall with an hour-glass figure and the face of an angel, Irina was a natural golden blonde. At twenty-two, she didn’t look a day over seventeen and could play the wide-eyed intern without any effort at all. In addition to her enthusiastic enjoyment of men, her other value to the Clan was her facility with languages. Irina spoke eight languages fluently and added a language a year to her repertoire.

Irina showed up at the restaurant and hung around looking distressed.

Approaching the maître d’, she asked, “Is there a man, about five-foot-ten, forty-five years old, short brown hair and hazel eyes waiting for someone?”

Checking his list, he replied, “Yes, there is. Please follow me.” Irina nodded and she was shown to the man’s table. Confusion and embarrassment followed. He was the wrong man, she was the wrong young woman, but it seemed both of them had been stood up. After some exposure to her Glam and Influence, he asked her to stay and have dinner with him.

As much as Irina would have liked to drain him that evening, she played coy and wrangled a Friday night invitation, which she blushingly accepted. She sent a thought burst to Brenna at the end of the evening that she’d reeled him in. Brenna was impressed.

*Brenna, Irina told her on a mental thread, I may be new to the Clan, but I’m not new to being a succubus. I’ve been playing with men since I was thirteen. Dirty old men who like young girls are my bread and butter. The SOB never even asked my age. Did you know the intern he was meeting is only nineteen? Tell Karen that after Friday he’ll be mine forever. If she wants him to bark like a dog on the National Mall, she’s got it.*

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“Irina, I was talking to Antonia, and she said there’s a service she uses to schedule dates here in DC,” Brenna said. The two women were having a drink at a trendy bar near the Capitol.

“Yeah, I told you about that months ago. Why, are you finally interested?”

“It’s starting to sound more attractive. Going to bars and hunting in hotels is just so sleazy.”

“You think? My, Brenna, what a revelation,” Irina said, rolling her eyes.

“Okay, you can skip the sarcasm. Geez, I thought you were supposed to be submissive.”

“Submissive, yes. Dumb, no.”

“Got it.” Brenna clinked her glass against Irina’s. “So tell me about the dates you’ve had in New York.”

“The agency sets up the date. Usually the men are late thirties to mid-sixties, successful, wealthy and sophisticated. I usually meet them at a restaurant, we have a nice dinner, then we go to the theater, the symphony, a fancy gallery opening, a charity event, something like that. Then I call the agency and tell them I’ve completed my assignment. The client affirms that, and the contract is finished. All perfectly legal. Then I go home with them, shag them and usually they give me a present when I leave,” Irina held up her wrist, showing Brenna a very fancy new watch. “All completely legal. I don’t ever ask for money. There’s no transaction involved.”

Irina smiled. “The agency takes twenty-five percent and forwards the rest to a bank account I set up. I got a 1099 at the end of the year and declared it on my tax return. The beauty is, I have an enjoyable time with someone who’s interesting, can carry on a conversation, and treats me with respect, treats me like a lady. I’m getting a lot of return business, too. When was the last time you had a date like that?”

“The last time Collin was in town. The problem is when he’s not around. That’s what got me to thinking about it. Antonia’s out with the head of a museum tonight. Nice dinner, tickets to the Kennedy Center, and she’ll get laid. You and I will have a good time together, but we won’t get a Glow.”

“Yeah, we could catch a Glow, but that’s all we’d get. Cheap sex.”

Brenna considered this. “So what do we need to do?”

The next day Brenna found herself at the agency with Irina. They were told to bring six outfits, from an evening gown to casual dress appropriate for the racetrack or a football game. A photographer took pictures of them in each outfit, and they were given a questionnaire. The last part of the form was a long checklist of sexual activities. Mark what you like, what you don’t like, things you’re willing to try. She filled it out, amazed at some of the items listed.

“People actually like that?” she asked.

Irina laughed and nodded.

“That’s kind of sick,” Brenna said. “I can’t imagine how that could be pleasurable.”

The woman who would be working with them helped them to set up a link from their phones to her computer so she had access to their schedules. Being out of town so much, this was a necessity. They both were pretty good at keeping their schedules up-to-date and checking them, but she emphasized they needed to be religious about it. Brenna reflected that would make Karen MacIntyre happy.

The price they set was five thousand dollars for an evening, twenty-five thousand for a whole weekend, from Friday evening at six through Sunday midnight. Irina said those were the same rates she had at the agency in New York. It seemed outrageous to Brenna.

She received her first call the next day. A man wanted her to join him for dinner and then accompany him to a reception. Her date would be forty-four, black, and an entrepreneur. He was

hoping to further his business interests at a reception being held at the Ugandan embassy. She accepted.

She arrived at one of Washington's finest restaurants wearing a sleeveless cream sheath gown with a pleated bodice, the V terminating between her breastbone and navel. The front slit ended four inches above her knees. Sexy, but somewhat conservative.

Lionel Collins greeted her warmly and ordered expensive wine, encouraging her to try one of their lobster dishes. Over dinner, after scanning his health and assuring herself he wouldn't die on her that evening, she learned that he had grown up in New York, earned a Master's degree in business from Columbia, and made his first fortune on Wall Street. Striking out on his own, he traveled regularly to Africa and Europe on business. He was well spoken, knowledgeable, told funny stories and treated her as if she mattered. He was impressed by her job as a lobbyist and asked if she'd brought her business cards.

"Well, I have a few in my purse, but I'm here to accompany you, not to compete with you for business."

"We don't compete, Brenna. And if you engage a client and they're pleased, then hopefully they'll remember who introduced you to them. This is a back-scratching town, my dear. Don't ever miss a chance to get yours scratched."

She smiled back at him, "You know, Lionel, I'm really glad you gave me a call. I can't remember when I've met a finer gentleman. It's rather rare in this town."

He laughed, then reached across the table and took her hand. "Thank you. That's the nicest thing anyone has said to me in a long time."

She also had cards given to her by the agency. Those simply said "Brenna" with the agency's phone number.

She stood out at the reception more than usual. At least her hair was black. But the attention she garnered was a good thing. She handed out a dozen of her MacIntyre cards, three to people who talked to her about her work on the Ecuadorian trade deal. She also handed out three of her personal cards, one to a Tanzanian diplomat, one to a Norwegian businessman, and one to a lobbyist who asked if she would be interested in occasionally entertaining clients of his. If he called, it would be a gold mine. She hoped he didn't find out she worked for a competing firm. All three of them were introduced to her by Lionel, and he prompted her to give them her 'other card'.

They went for drinks, coffee and dessert after the reception, then he took her to his townhouse. "When you're ready to leave, my man will take you home," he told her.

She called the agency, then handed him the phone. When he hung up, she smiled and placed her hands on his chest. He bent to kiss her.

His man took her 'home' at two o'clock in the morning, dropping her off in front of an apartment building owned by a Clan member. Her Protectors pulled up in her limo as soon as Lionel's driver turned the corner.

"So what do you think?" Irina asked her the next morning at breakfast.

Brenna was surprised that she felt like a high school girl after a big date.

"I liked it. I had a lot of fun, and you're right, the people I was around were adults. I like to go out and shake my booty occasionally, but for getting laid by a stranger, this was at the top of the list. Irina, he introduced me to three more possible clients, and he gave me this."

She held out her wrist, showing a diamond tennis bracelet. Life was good.

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### CHAPTER 3

*People like to pretend that money and looks don't matter, but they*

*do. It's supposed to be a big meritocracy, but people here are just as shallow as anywhere else. The thing about D.C. is it's not Miami or New York where there are all these hot people everywhere. – Jessica Cutler, The Washingtonienne blog*

Brenna was coming home from the hotel where she and Irina had spent the night administering to the nerves of various Ecuadorian VIPs. They were on edge as the committee prepared to vote on the trade bill the next day. She left three whiny, privileged politicians and diplomats snoring peacefully, hoping that when they awoke their concerns would be gone. Her cell phone rang, and she saw with consternation that Rep. Townsend was calling.

“Representative? You’re up awfully early,” Brenna answered, looking at her watch. It was six o’clock.

“Brenna, I have a problem. I called Karen, and she told me to talk to you. Can you meet me for breakfast?”

Arriving at a small diner a few blocks from the Capitol, Brenna found a rather distraught congresswoman. She had talked mentally with Karen and then with Cindy, both of whom had coached her on how to approach Townsend’s problem.

“I just found out that one of my biggest backers, a man who controls thousands of jobs in my district, is planning on backing someone else in the Democratic primary next year,” Townsend said. “It seems one of my votes pissed him off and he’s going to be nasty about it. I talked to Karen, and she said I should talk to you.”

Townsend’s mouth pursed in an expression of distaste. “Brenna, I’ve always tried to do the right thing, play it straight and not get caught up in the dirty way things are often done in this town, but I’m looking at being unemployed this time next year.” She shrugged, “Maybe that’s a good thing, but I’m so close to getting a committee chair and power that would actually enable me to accomplish something.”

“What do you want me to do?” Brenna asked. “I don’t think that having a lobbyist talk to him is going to change his mind if you can’t.”

Townsend wrung her hands, anguish on her face. “I’m not naïve. I know why MacIntyre employs you. Karen and I have known each other a long time, and although I’ve always tried to stay above the political dirty tricks, I know how they’re played. If Karen sent me to you, there was a reason. Considering your age, inexperience, and incredible good looks and charm, I assume you, well ...”

Brenna nodded, “There are services for sale in this town that a reputable firm such as MacIntyre wouldn’t employ. Services that require the utmost discretion and, if offered for payment, might be considered unethical or even illegal. I wouldn’t know anything about such services either. I would never consider doing anything that would cross the line of professional ethics, and I would never do anything illegal.”

The tension in the congresswoman’s body relaxed a bit. “Well, I’m glad to hear that. Really, I don’t know what I was thinking. I’m sorry to have bothered you.”

“Representative, I may be inexperienced, but I know there’s a lot of horse trading in this town. I think you’re one of the good guys, and there aren’t too many of you. I’m sorry you have this problem. I’ll look into it and see if there’s anything I can do.”

Townsend’s eyes widened.

“I’ll do this, not as a MacIntyre employee, but as your friend. If I’m able to convince this gentleman to continue to support you, I assume I’ll be able to call on your friendship

occasionally if I need it.” Brenna raised one eyebrow. “Do we understand each other, and do you still want my help?”

Townsend stared at her, “Yes, I’d like your help,” she said quietly, and looked at the ceiling. “I’ve never sold my soul before. You’d think it would hurt more.” Her gaze returned to Brenna. “I thought you were young and inexperienced. I guess I’m the one who’s naïve.”

“Representative Townsend, I’m not asking for your soul, just your friendship. There’s a difference, and although you may not understand that difference, I do. It’s not your soul that you’re giving up, but your illusions that anyone in this town is clean. If it were up to me, I’d pull down the Capitol dome during the State of the Union address. But if I have to work within the system, I don’t try to fool myself as to how the system works.”

Townsend nodded, took a deep breath, and said, “I’m yours. God help me, I hope I don’t regret this.”

“Representative, there are other services that Karen has offered you in the past. I suggest you consider using some of them. We can do a lot for you if you contract us to help with your reelection campaign. Now, what’s this man’s name and how do I find him?”

That evening, Brenna went to a hotel near the Capitol where Townsend’s troublesome campaign contributor was staying. He stepped out of the elevator into the lobby and ran into Brenna, who was pretending to be walking by, knocking her to the floor.

“I’m so sorry,” Devin McCourty said, leaning over and offering Brenna his hand. “Are you all right?”

Brenna hesitated, letting him have a good look at her legs while her skirt was hiked up to her panties. Breathing deeply, her chest heaving with the effort, she said, “I, I think so.”

McCourty helped her to her feet. Brenna rubbed her hip and took a tentative step, then stopped with a sharp intake of breath. He stepped forward and took her arm, concern evident on his face. A sharp burst of pheromones brought a glassy look to his eyes. She turned toward him and leaned against his chest, her breasts pressing against him. She realized she was becoming a bit neurotic when she found herself scanning his heart, but she had nightmares sometimes of Senator Evans’ blank eyes staring at her.

“I guess I’m not as steady as I thought,” she said in her best sultry voice. “I feel a little dizzy.”

“Let’s find a place to sit down,” he said, putting an arm around her shoulders. He led her to the lounge and helped her to sit at a table. “Can I get you something to drink?”

“A glass of wine, perhaps,” Brenna said, taking a deep breath that strained the buttons of her blouse.

He went to the bar and came back with a glass of white wine for her and a drink for himself.

“Thank you,” Brenna said, taking a sip and giving him another puff of pheromones. “It’s so pleasant to find a real gentleman.”

He missed his dinner appointment, as well as his appointments the next two days. Sex with a woman with the Kashani Gift, also called the Succubus Gift, drained three-fourths of a man’s life energy. It took days for him to recover completely. While he slept, she subtly influenced him in favor of Margaret Townsend, and also influenced him away from Townsend’s potential opponent. He left Washington firmly in Margaret’s camp and unsure why he had ever considered backing someone else.

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Brenna, Irina and Rebecca dressed for the celebration at the Ecuadorian embassy. The full Senate had ratified the treaty on a 78-22 vote. Eduardo, the primary trade delegate, and Pedro,

the deputy minister of trade, were escorting the two succubi. Emiliano, Pedro's bodyguard, was escorting Rebecca. Karen was being escorted by the chief of staff to the ambassador. Although the ambassador himself had been the recipient of services supplied by MacIntyre's staff over the years, he was escorting his wife this evening.

Brenna wore a green charmeuse mermaid-line dress, strapless with a dipping sweetheart pushup bodice. It hugged her curves like a second skin. Rebecca called her a show-off.

"Hey, as long as she doesn't pop out, it covers her nipples," Irina smirked.

Irina was attired in a halter-topped red chiffon sheath with a crisscross bodice, slit to her hip, and Rebecca wore a teal taffeta empire-waisted gown with a faux halter-top. The cut made her look even taller than she was, and with four-inch stilettos, she easily topped six feet.

This was the first formal occasion any of them had attended in Washington, and they were nervous enough to hit Brenna's Middleton's and not dilute the alcohol in their veins. The O'Donnell limo delivered them to the embassy, followed by a van full of tuxedoed Protectors. Their escorts met them at the door and led them inside.

While her friends were fluent in Spanish, Brenna didn't speak Spanish at all. She was able to follow conversations by reading people's minds, but unable to respond except in English.

The young ladies had been thoroughly briefed as to their expected behavior and made to study the State Department's protocol guide. Karen was quite insistent they should represent MacIntyre as though they were trained diplomats representing a foreign country.

It was a formal black-tie affair and the women in their evening gowns floated like colorful flowers through the ballroom. The three friends were introduced to so many people their heads began to swim. Brenna received extensive praise and thanks for her work on the treaty. The stack of business cards in her clutch diminished as she handed them out to anyone who asked.

After a couple of glasses of champagne, she made her way to the ladies' room, Rebecca quietly shadowing her. On exiting, she was searching for her escort when a tall man in a formal military uniform stepped into her path.

He was very handsome, a couple of inches taller than Collin's six feet two, with slicked-back black hair and a thin mustache. His broad chest displayed dozens of medals and ribbons. She brushed his mind and encountered telepathic shields.

"Senorita O'Donnell? I am General Carlos Martin de Vargas y Saenz. I'm delighted to meet you."

Brenna dipped her head in acknowledgement. "Good evening, General. Are you in town for the celebration or are you stationed here?"

"It is my honor to serve my country as the Military Attaché at our embassy here," he replied, probing her shields enough to irritate her.

"Then you must be very pleased that all the hard work your colleagues put into this treaty has been rewarded," she said.

"Indeed. I have heard a great deal about you, and about your work on our behalf," he replied, still probing her shields.

Suddenly, Irina appeared by her side.

"I didn't know that manners were so sorely lacking in your country, Senior. In this country, we consider probing a woman's shields as rude as groping her," Irina said, speaking to the general in rapid-fire Spanish. Rebecca translated for Brenna on a spear thread.

The general turned bright red.

"May I introduce my friend Tinkerbelle?" Brenna said with an arched eyebrow. The general barked out a laugh and Irina giggled. "This is General Carlos Martin de Vargas y Saenz, the Ecuadorian Military Attaché."

Still in Spanish, Irina replied, "I'm so disappointed. I had heard the Vargas Clan was very sophisticated and elegant. They must have shipped you out of the country because they were ashamed of you." An observer might have considered Irina's smile pleasant, but Brenna could see the hard edge. Her friend was angry, and letting the general know it.

His face turned even redder. He bowed to Brenna, "My apologies, Senorita. Your friend is correct. My manners are inexcusable. I hope you will forgive me."

"Oh, I'm sure I will," Brenna said airily, "as soon as you fall on your sword."

His eyes danced and a slight smile twitched the corners of his mouth. "I'm afraid I forgot to bring it this evening. Perhaps I could instead buy you dinner some evening and show you that I do know how to behave in a civilized manner."

Careful, Rebecca sent. *Wasn't it an apology that got you mixed up with Colin?*

Stifling an urge to laugh, Brenna slipped a card from her clutch and handed it to him. "You may call me if you wish. You do understand that I don't have much privacy, and you would be taking my security team with us."

"Washington can be a dangerous place," he agreed, glancing at Irina, "but it seems you have a rather small team this evening."

Irina's smile froze, and the sparkle in her eyes disappeared as her pupils dilated almost fully. Brenna had never seen Irina rise to the killing edge before, but General de Vargas had triggered her. She wondered if he knew how close he was to dying.

Evidently he did, because he took a nervous step back. Rebecca's voice behind him caused his eyes to widen.

"We can be unobtrusive. In fact, the last three men who were rude to her didn't even know I was there. They seemed quite surprised when I slipped the knife between their ribs," Rebecca said in Spanish.

He spun around, his eyes looking down, expecting the woman behind him to be shorter than he was. Instead, he found himself looking at Rebecca's cleavage. His eyes traveled up and discovered her eyes were almost even with his.

"General de Vargas, this is the head of my security team, Rebecca Healy. Rebecca, this is General Carlos Martin de Vargas y Saenz," Brenna said.

"Protector Healy," he bowed slightly. "O'Donnell Protectors have a reputation for being well trained, but not for being so beautiful. I see that my intelligence is faulty. Tell me, were you in charge of Senorita O'Donnell's security in Paris?"

Rebecca cocked her head, studying him. "I've been with her for a long time," she answered.

"It was a remarkable accomplishment, outnumbered three to one and still you were able to take all your charges out unharmed." The corner of his mouth quirked, "Although you did leave a lot of bodies on the street."

A small grin appeared on Rebecca's face, "The way these things grow in the telling ... it was only two to one. You probably also heard the rumor about lightning shooting out of someone's head. As to bodies on the street, we didn't choose to be ambushed, especially while on holiday in an open city."

He nodded, "A dark-haired woman shooting lightning. I had assumed that was Senorita O'Donnell."

"We had several dark-haired women with us that day," Rebecca said, probing his shields much harder than he had probed Brenna's and making considerably more progress.

"Well, I would be curious to hear the real story."

"It's good for a man to be curious," she said with a flip of her hair. "Women need to carry an air of mystery."

"Well, I won't keep you ladies any longer." He nodded at each of them in turn, "Senorita Healy, Senorita Tinkerbelle. Senorita O'Donnell, I will call."

"I'll be breathlessly waiting," Brenna replied.

General de Vargas beat a hasty retreat, once turning to look at them from halfway across the room.

After the reception, their escorts took them back to the hotel housing the Ecuadorian delegation. Rebecca finally called for their limo at two o'clock in the morning. Riding back to the O'Donnell compound, Irina said what they all had been wondering. "What in the hell was all that about at the reception? De Vargas acted a bit strange, don't you think?"

"Just a little bit," Rebecca replied, shaking her head.

Brenna's brow knitted together. "I think he wanted to talk to me about something, something other than trade agreements and Paris. I don't know why, but there was a feeling of nervousness about him. He acted like he wanted to pull me away to somewhere private, and not for the normal reason."

"He is damned good looking," Irina smiled, rolling her eyes to the ceiling. "He can pull me away to somewhere private any time he wants to."

She was ready to kill him over that 'small' remark, Brenna sent Rebecca.

She's a succubus, Rebecca replied. People make a mistake in thinking she's all sugar. Don't piss her off. She'll kill you and be sorry later.

Is that how you see me? Brenna asked.

That's how anyone with any sense sees you.

Links to buy the book:

Barnes & Nobel: <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/succubus-rising-an-urban-fantasy-paranormal-romance-br-kingsolver/1114569480>

Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/Succubus-Fantasy-Paranormal-Telepathic-ebook/dp/B00BG2XTNG>

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