

**Teaser for December 2012 from Gabriel, Book III by Sylvain Reynard, forthcoming from Penguin Berkley.**

NB: This teaser is an excerpt from a work in progress and thus may be revised or eliminated when the final manuscript is published.

Julia awoke to the sound of Peggy Lee singing Fever. It wasn't Gabriel's normal choice of morning music, but it sounded promising. Curious, she pulled on her robe and walked to the bathroom.

Gabriel was standing in front of the vanity, shaving. His dark hair was damp from the shower, its edges curling. He was naked to the waist, a dark blue towel slung low on his hips. Julia wanted to trace the top of the V that extended below the towel.

As was his custom, he used a shaving brush to mix soap into a lather, spreading it over his face. His sapphire eyes were focused behind his glasses as he lifted the safety razor and began.

"Lurking about in doorways, darling?" He smirked.

"I came to see what was giving you a fever."

He stopped shaving and gave her a searing look. "I think you know the answer to that, Julianne."

"I know what raises my temperature. There's nothing sexier than watching the man you love shave."

He rinsed his razor. "I'm glad you think that because it's a daily essential." His eyes gleamed. "Unless you've grown attached to my stubble. As I recall, you seemed to enjoy it last night."

His eyes darted in the direction of her thighs.

She felt her cheeks flame. The memory of lying flat on her back, Gabriel's stubble rubbing against her ...

He waved a hand in front of her face. "Penny for your thoughts."

"Sorry, what?"

He chuckled. "I asked what time your seminar was."

"It's at two."

"My first class is at ten. We have plenty of time for some extracurricular activities after I've finished shaving."

He continued his ritual, the razor moving expertly.

She approached him and pressed an open mouthed kiss between his shoulder blades.

He stilled once again.

"You're distracting me."

"Really?"

She kissed him again, this time wrapping her hands over the tops of his shoulders, feeling the muscles tense beneath her fingers.

"I can't help myself, Professor."

She traced the lines of his biceps, moving down to his forearms, admiring muscle and sinew. She pressed her lips to the hills and valley of his spine, before tracing the dimples that winked at her above the edge of the towel.

He shuddered and placed a heavy hand on the vanity.

"I can't shave while you're touching me."

"Then maybe I should do it for you."

"Oh, really?" A heated look passed between them.

"You enjoy feeding me. Perhaps I'd enjoy shaving you."

"You're very provocative this morning."

Gabriel put his razor aside and gestured in front of him, a look of amusement playing at the corners of his lips.

She moved into the gap, facing him. In one swift moment, he lifted her to sit on the counter.

He placed his large hands on top of her knees, coaxing them apart. Then he stood in between her legs.

His eyes darted down. “No panties, this morning?”

“I haven’t gotten that far. I just pulled on my robe when I got out of bed.”

“Lucky for me.” He smiled, exposing his perfect teeth, while his fingers fumbled with the knot at her waist.

She placed her hands over his, stopping him.

“Will you teach me to shave you?”

“Shaving is overrated.”

“I’d like to do this for you.”

He made a show of sighing, as if his patience was being tested. Then he picked up the razor. “I’ll show you. Shave with the direction the hair grows, but don’t apply any pressure. The blade is very sharp.”

He stepped away from her, looking in the mirror as he demonstrated his technique. Seemingly satisfied with his display, he rinsed the razor before placing it in her hand.

She looked up at him. Then she looked at the razor, at the blade that gleamed in the halogen light.

“Stage fright, Mrs. Emerson?”

“I’m afraid I’ll make you bleed.”

His eyes bore into hers. “Then you know how I felt.”

Julia’s heart rate increased at the memory of her first time. He’d been very worried that night, but very, very gentle.

He pressed his lips to her wrist, drawing on the skin and sucking lightly. “I know you’ll be careful.”

He separated the edges of her robe, before pushing the silk over her shoulders. Then he placed his palm between her breasts, feeling her heartbeat.

Julia arched an eyebrow. "You want me to shave you, half-naked?"

"No." He moved his mouth to her ear and dropped his voice to a throaty whisper. "I want you to shave me fully naked."

He took his time unfastening her belt, as if he were unwrapping a gift. Then he stood in between her knees again. "There's nothing sexier than having the woman you love shave you, while you enjoy her body."

Julia shuddered as the cooler air swirled around her heated skin. She placed her left hand on his shoulder to steady herself.

He nodded at her and she began.

The safety razor glided simply and easily over his skin without any need for pressure. All the while, two sapphire eyes focused on her.

He placed his hands at her waist and begun stroking her hipbones with his thumbs.

"I'm not sure that's a good idea." She rinsed the razor. "I'll nick you."

"Perhaps it would be an exercise in self-control for both of us."

His fingertips traced a path up to her breasts, circling them lightly. When she moaned, he slid his hands back to her waist.

"I like the feel of your skin under my hands."

She met his gaze. "So do I."

She swallowed hard and returned to what she was doing, trying to ignore the feel of his fingers gliding over her abdomen and between her breasts. He began to tease her nipples.

"I guess you must trust me," she ground out, trying to keep her hand steady.

He stroked a finger over the prominent peaks. "I do, Julianne. More than I've ever trusted anyone."

His eyes were tender, their blue intensity communicating far more than his words could. "But I can't see you and not touch you."

He cupped her breasts, cradling them appreciatively.

Patiently, she worked the razor over the parts of his face that were yet unshaven while he fondled and teased her. She began to breathe shallowly.

He dropped his hands to her inner thighs, where the skin was slightly sensitive from being teased by his stubble. He moved higher, inch by tantalizing inch.

With a few last strokes of the razor, she pulled back to admire her handiwork. "I think we're finished."  
He kissed her, lightly. "Thank you."

"You're welcome." She put the razor aside, leaning back on her hands.

"But I don't think we're finished yet." His eyes glinted as he moved to the juncture of her thighs. His thumbs tangled in her curls.

She licked her lip.

"Now drop the towel, Professor."