

The Iguana Prince

“Listen, Tanya. You’re not going to believe this. I mean I don’t believe this and it happened to me!” I switch the phone to the other ear and open the refrigerator. “First off, here’s this gorgeous hunk, who appears in my office as my last potential client for the day. He says he really needs a lawyer and not just any lawyer, but the very best. Therefore he needs me, since I am the best civil lawyer in the city. But I’m telling you, he was so goddamn good looking – we’re talking movie-star looks here – that he was distracting.”

I pull out a carton of skim milk and raid the freezer. Sorting through a stack of Jenny Craig dinners, I pick out grilled salmon and asparagus and pop it in the microwave after peeling off the cover. “No - not just distracting - riveting! You know how I like to watch my client’s eyes when he’s telling his story, so that I can tell if he’s lying? I couldn’t do that. I’d look into those deep blue eyes and every thought in my head would disappear. I mean gone – poof – nada! I found myself leaning over my desk, inches from his face, lost in the azure pools of his eyes – drowning!” I squirm a little at the memory. “And drooling.”

The microwave dings and I pull out the dinner and cradling the phone between my shoulder and ear, juggle the hot food and milk into the living room. “Yeah – damn straight it was embarrassing! I’m hanging over him, spittle on my chin, and he’s got this look on his face, like he’s trying to decide if he can make it to the door before I go into heat.”

Sitting on the couch, I grab the remote and flip the TV on. “I know - I turned flaming red. Anyway I sit back behind the desk and concentrate on taking notes as he tells his story. But even then I’m having trouble listening because I wonder if those unruly black curls would feel as soft as silk and....I’m stealing glances..... Then I have to pull myself back to my seat again. And he’s starting to make excuses for leaving and I have to do something, so I tell him that if he goes out that door, he’ll regret it for the rest of his life. While I’m thinking about how much I’ll regret it.”

I flip through a bunch of channels and settle on the jewelry channel so I can moon over the rings and talk at the same time. “So I put a stranglehold on my hormones, lift my chin and look him in the eye and tell him to start over. And after a long pause, he does. I think he’s been through this kind of female reaction before.”

The busty blonde on TV is showing off a tourmaline ring, dark green, surrounded by peridots. Gorgeous. The ring – not the blonde. “So he says that he doesn’t think I’ll believe him because his story is just too fantastic. I’m starting to go all googly-eyed on him again and I pinched myself to snap out of it.” I write down the order number for the tourmaline and peridot ring.

“And then – you’re just not going to believe this, Tanya – then he tells me that he has just escaped from an evil witch who was keeping him captive in a basement under her home in the foothills. But she has cursed him. The curse is that he has to spend half his time as an iguana.” After chasing the last bit of salmon around the disposable container, I get up and toss the container and the asparagus in the garbage.

“Tanya – Tanya! Stop laughing – I’m serious here. Well, yeah – I laughed, too. Hey – it’s not that hilarious – calm down!” I click the TV off and start pacing back and forth. I’m beginning to regret calling Tanya. “Look – there I am – staring at this absolutely sumptuous man who has just classified himself as seriously mentally ill. So to give myself some time to think, I ask him why does he need a lawyer.”

“Yeah, yeah – I know – he needs a psychiatrist more than a lawyer – or at least that’s what I was thinking at the time.” I wander into the bedroom and flop on my bed, kicking my heels off. “Well – get this – it seems that he’s a prince from the ruling house of Montenegro – a knjaz actually – he said it differently – I can’t pronounce it. But the ruling house hasn’t been ruling for about a century. Anyway according to Danny – that’s the hunk – the evil witch wants to take over the world and she’s starting with Montenegro. Danny says that as far as he’s concerned, she can have it. He also says that he thinks she’s going through menopause because of the incredible hot flashes she’s having. But he’s got to get out from under this iguana life and he’s tried everything he can think of – wizards, witches, magic

potions and wands. Nothing has worked. And the last attempt simply landed him in her basement as a prisoner. So now he's going to take her to court. And he wants to start with a restraining order.

I roll over and stare out the window at the rolling hills and the city. "Anyway I'm so tantalized by this time that I would do almost anything to find out if this guy is as beautiful in bed as he is in my visitor's chair. But he's certifiably crazy and I'm trying to remember if I have my shrink's number on speed dial when he tells me how large the retainer will be."

The memory of the moment sends a thrill through me. "So we discussed finances for a few minutes. He's starting to look a little ill – breaks out in a sweat – turns a little green. And I'm wondering if he's actually good for the retainer, when he jumps up and races to the door, then back to my desk and then to the door – he does this three or four times, then scrapes at the rug with his shoe, turns around a few times and lies down in the middle of the rug, curled up in a fetal position."

I sit up and start rubbing my feet. "So I'm standing, leaning over my desk with my mouth hanging open and saying a silent goodbye to that retainer, when I notice that he looks funny. What? Yeah – funnier than curled up in the middle of my rug." I get up and go into the bathroom and rummage in the drawer next to the sink, coming up with Flaming Puce nail polish and sit on the side of the tub.

"The guy is shaking a lot and he's looking greener every moment. I'm reaching for the phone to call 911 when I notice that his face is changing! He's getting really ugly with warty things growing out and his eyes are protruding and a few minutes later I have a very large, wart covered green lizard in the middle of my rug instead of the studly prince."

I carefully put cotton puffs between my toes and start to apply the polish. "What? No! No, I haven't been using any drugs. I gave that up years ago. What's that smell?"

A vile odor has wafted in from the living room, mingling with the scent of the nail polish. "Hang on, Tanya. Something smells really bad."

I walk out into the living room and shriek "Danny! No!!!! Bad boy!!!! Noooooo!!!!!" I wail, forgetting that I still have the phone at my chin. "Ok, ok! Sorry, Tanya! Stop shouting! The fuckin'

iguana just shit all over my Persian rug!"

I whap Danny on the rump and shove his warty nose in the direction of the bushel sized poop. He slinks off into a corner and buries his face in his tail, back to me.

Grabbing Windex and paper towels, I get down on my hands and knees with the phone still propped between chin and shoulder. "Gross! You have no idea how much shit a seven foot long iguana can produce."

"What? Well, he's the same size as he was as a man. But he's got a tail, too." I use a spatula to shovel the poop off the rug and into a garbage bag.

"Anyway I haven't gotten to the point of this conversation. I'm not violating attorney-client privilege you know."

"Yeah. I thought you'd have that part figured out. I want you to start checking out the witch. Her name's Esther Hardcastle. I'll text you her address. We are going to take her down, as well as take her for everything she has." I take the rug out and hang it on the balcony railing. "We are going to force her to reverse the iguana spell so that my sweet Danny boy will revert to his Adonis form and we'll both be happy. Besides I think he might have trouble accessing his funds in this state. What? Hell, yes! That's an important consideration."

Danny comes over to me, eyes sad, tail hanging down. I relent, patting his head. The huge tail thumps on the floor. "That noise? That's Danny wagging his tail. I'm petting him." I gag. "Don't be disgusting, Tanya!"

Heading into the kitchen, I put away the Windex and paper towels. I'll have to get professionals in tomorrow to clean the rug. Or - on second thought - maybe I'll just take the rug to them. Explaining a lizard as big as a Komodo dragon in your condo will not be easy.

I continue giving instructions to Tanya. "He says he's exhausted the magical possibilities. Hmm? The kissing a frog option? Well - I actually tried that. You would not believe how foul iguana breath is. And the kiss didn't work. He told me earlier that he usually reverts to human in a few hours. So we'll

discuss it further when he regains his senses and his body. His gorgeous body.....mmmmm."

Walking back into the living room, I notice that Danny is sitting up, looking a lot less green and his eyes are not protruding any longer. I grin. "Well, gotta go, Tanya. Let me know what you find out.

Yeah - that's right - talk to you later."