

Max led Blanche to the art gallery where they pulled the cork from the wine that was half-finished bottle of wine they'd taken to the creek. With glass in hand, Max gave Blanche the grand tour.

"This is amazing, Max," Blanche said as she examined one of the pieces of art.

"Yeah, I love that one. I wish I was in the painting looking out. There's one more I want you to see. Max led her to a window.

"Do you see the shop diagonally across the way?"

"Yes,"

"Imagine it as an empty canvas just waiting for you to paint on it."

"Max, I can't. I've told you why."

"And I just happen to know where there's a loan with your name on it,"

"You fascinate me, Blanche!" Blanche made no comment, but continued to stare out the window at the shop Max was offering her. Then she sighed and turned away.

"Are you sure? You will regret this forever," he chided her.

"Will I, Max?"

"Yes, this is about having one of your dreams come true."

"Yesterday, I got a job offer in Prescott with good pay and moving expenses. I'm accepting the job on Monday. Rents are lower there, too, so I can put a little money aside. And maybe separating Dean from his drinking buddies will help, too."

"What? Move? What about Sydney and Lexy?"

"Sydney knows and she doesn't want to move. But I need to and don't try to stop me because Sydney is Lexy's only friend,"

"I not going to say anything more," Max told her.

Blanche gazed out the window at the shop for a moment. *Well, there would be no harm in just looking at it...*

“Max, I will look at it. If I say no to the shop, I want your promise that you will let it be.”

“Agreed.”

Max walked her over to the shop, opening the door with his master key. “Welcome,” he said turning on the lights.

“Wow, this is it!” Blanche said falling in love.

“Yup, it’s in pristine condition because I never found the right person to rent it to.

“Why me?”

“I know in my heart that you are the person to make it come alive.”

“It’s even got a fireplace?”

“There’s a light switch in the kitchen that turns it on. Come along and I’ll show you the kitchen.”

The kitchen was the top of the line—spacious and filled with every appliance and utensil imaginable. Blanche could picture her coffee house in every nook and cranny of the shop. She began to suspect that this was the place Sydney had seen and envisioned as a new start for them both.

“So, what do you think?”he said.

“I’m scared. It is a huge undertaking.”

“Is that you talking or someone else?” Max asked as he gently turned her face toward him.

“Please don’t.”

“Do it for you.” They looked at each other for a few sweet moments.

“I can’t. Sorry,” Blanche said turning away from him.

“Because I’m Max Heller the billionaire?”

“Yes. I have very little education and a drunk for a husband. I know nothing about art or fine wines. We can’t afford to buy either,” Blanche told him. “You are in another league a world apart.”

“Why? You have an appreciation for the art and you liked the wine. It doesn’t take a life of study to know what you like and enjoy what you see.

“I love it! It’s everything I have dreamed about, and more! I must be crazy, but I want it!”

“Great, I am happy to hear it. The girls will be, too.”

“But how am I going to afford it?”

“Don’t worry; I will give you a really good deal,” Max said with a gleam in his eye. “I believe in you, and I will invest in your shop.”

“Great! Wow, I guess there’s some truth to what people say—you never know who you will meet and where you will be at the end of the day! This morning when I got up, I never dreamt that I would meet you, or end up renting a shop!”

“No, we never know how each day will end. There is something special about you,”

“Thanks, but I’m just a ‘plain Jane.’”

“I don’t think so.”

Blanche laughed. “Thanks for everything!” “You’re welcome, Blanche.”

They shook on it, business partner to business partner, but their clasped hands lingered.

“Oh, one last thing. I am having a summer party at the mansion the Saturday following the last day of school. I would like to invite you, Sydney, and your husband to join us. It will be a great opportunity to meet your other business neighbors.”

“Yes, I know Sydney will be set to go.” “I bet that Lexy already invited Sydney.” They both laughed at this.