

"MASOCHISM TANGO"  
by Bruce Kane

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"MASOCHISM TANGO"  
by Bruce Kane

(A sexy, distant woman sits alone, perhaps nursing a drink. She is wearing a short, black cocktail dress. A man, also dressed in black, enters. He sees the woman...Slowly he begins to circle her, eyeing her from head to toe and everywhere in between. He is an emotional sadist. She is an emotional masochist. Each of his lines is the equivalent of a whip crack. She reacts to each line as though physically stung. It hurts but it feels so good. From his opening line she is drawn to him but determined to elongate the pain)

TED: I love you.

BARBARA: What?

TED: I love you.

BARBARA: Are you talking to me?

TED: Yes... I love you.

BARBARA: You don't even know me.

TED: That's why I love you.

BARBARA: If you'll excuse me.

TED: I've been looking for you all my life.

BARBARA: I've heard that line before.

TED: I mean it. You're perfect. Your nose is perfect. Your hair is perfect. Your lips are perfect. Your legs are perfect. And... Your breasts are perfect.

BARBARA: I'm going to order a drink.

TED: I need you.

BARBARA: I have no need to be needed.

TED: Perfect. I need a woman who has no need to be needed.

BARBARA: Well I don't need a man who needs a woman who has no need to be needed.

TED: I want you.

BARBARA: I'm unobtainable.

TED: That's why I want you.

BARBARA: I beg your pardon.

TED: I only want women I can't have. They never disappoint me.

BARBARA: That must make for long lasting relationships.

TED: Sarcasm in a woman turns me on.

BARBARA: We'd never get along.

TED: Is there someone else?

BARBARA: No.

TED: Are you emotionally involved?

BARBARA: I never get emotionally involved.

TED: Marry me.

BARBARA: I could never marry a man who actually wanted me.

TED: Of course.

BARBARA: A man who wanted me would also need me.

TED: I need you.

BARBARA: I know. That's why you can't have me.

TED: Have you ever been in love?

BARBARA: Hundreds of times.

TED: What happened?

BARBARA: They didn't know I was alive.

TED: Thrilling, isn't it?

BARBARA: Have you ever been married?

TED: Scarlet Johanson wouldn't return my calls. If I told you I didn't need you, didn't want you and didn't love you, what would you do?

BARBARA: Throw myself at your knees.

TED: I don't need you, I don't want you and I don't love you.

BARBARA: If only I could believe that.

TED: You hold no appeal for me at all.

BARBARA: *(close to the breaking point)* Please stop.

TED: There are thousands of other women I'd rather be with. Millions...

BARBARA: I won't listen to your honeyed words.

TED: Kiss off, baby.

*(She throws herself at his knees)*

BARBARA: I'm yours.

*(He pulls her to her feet. They kiss. During the kiss his eyes wander.)*

TED: Do you know that woman over there?

BARBARA: Which woman?

TED: The blonde with the perfect nose, perfect hair, perfect legs and perfect breasts.

BARBARA: Forget it. She has a husband and a lover.

TED: I want her.

BARBARA: You can't have her.

TED: I know.

*(He starts to leave)*

BARBARA: I thought it was me you didn't want.

TED: I've lost interest.

BARBARA: You can't. I need you.

TED: You're stifling my growth as a person.

BARBARA: She won't give you the time of day.

TED: I know.

BARBARA: But I want you.

TED: My heart belongs to another.

BARBARA: How can you walk out on me like this? After all we meant to each other. Can you forget the way I ignored you? Resisted you? Treated you like dirt?

TED: It was great while it lasted, baby, but it's over.

BARBARA: Nobody kept you at arm's length like I did.

TED: Until she came along.

BARBARA: You're breaking my heart.

TED: It's the least I can do.

BARBARA: What does she have that I don't have?

TED: She's unobtainable.

BARBARA: Well, then... Go after her. See if I care.

*(He leaves. Barbara sits alone. After a beat or two, Ted returns)*

TED: Hi baby.

BARBARA: You're back.

TED: She told me to get lost. I almost had a religious experience.

BARBARA: I know I'm the only one for you.

TED: I'll never forget the way she looked right through me like I was a windshield.

BARBARA: You don't throw away what we had so quickly.

TED: Baby, I'm yours.

*(The tables begin to turn. Barbara now holds the whip hand. Ted is the one relishing the stings that each line delivers)*

BARBARA: Get lost.

TED: Nice try.

BARBARA: I mean it.

TED: I'm in your blood.

BARBARA: Hit the bricks.

TED: You're turning me on.

BARBARA: Take off.

TED: I love you.

BARBARA: Tough.

TED: I need you.

BARBARA: Suffer.

TED: I want you.

BARBARA: Sorry, pal. You don't satisfy my needs.

TED: Just tell me what you want and I'll withhold it.

BARBARA: I need to know where I stand with a man. I need to know that his indifference is sincere. That my wants and desires will always come second, if at all. That he expects everything from me and will give me nothing in return. That way I can feel confident that there is no hope for the relationship. That I'll always be free. It's only with a man who doesn't give a damn about me that I can be truly liberated.

TED: There's someone else, isn't there?

BARBARA: Yes, there's someone else.

TED: I'm hurt.

BARBARA: I know.

TED: Thank you.

BARBARA: It's the least I could do.

TED: Who is it? Who's this two timer you haven't been seeing behind my back.

*(She points)*

BARBARA: Him.

TED: Him?

BARBARA: Him... The one with the cruel eyes.

TED: He treats women like garbage.

BARBARA: I know.

TED: He'll break your heart.

BARBARA: I'm counting on it.

TED: Then this is it?

BARBARA: This is it.

TED: Well, I gotta say one thing for you, baby. You didn't disappoint me.

BARBARA: Goodbyes are so liberating.

*(They exit in opposite directions).*

THE END