



Jerks of Miami

Temping for the
JERK

AMARYLLIS LANZA

TEMPING FOR THE JERK

Jerks of Miami - Book Three

AMARYLLIS LANZA



Published by Blushing Books
An Imprint of
ABCD Graphics and Design, Inc.
A Virginia Corporation
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901

©2021

All rights reserved.

No part of the book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. The trademark Blushing Books is pending in the US Patent and Trademark Office.

Amaryllis Lanza
Temping for the Jerk

eBook ISBN: 978-1-63954-068-6

vi

Cover Art by ABCD Graphics & Design

This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

Chapter 1

I can't manage money to save my life, but I can tolerate assholes who pay well.

People want careers. They set goals. They have dreams. I'd only ever tried to keep the lights on and sometimes I failed at that. I had come home to a dark apartment and there was barely enough in my account to go get the power turned back on again. It was my fault for being careless and not taking their final warning seriously enough. I needed to keep my phone charged for work, so I crossed the street toward my Aunt Celia's duplex to spend the night. That meant I got a splendid dinner, and some hard talk to swallow.

"You need to sort your life out, Ana Rosa," my aunt said, shaking her head at me. "Find a man you can trust to look after you, keep you safe and well."

"That's not going to happen, Celia," I said, crunching on one of her incredibly flaky and tender *tostones*—fried green plantains.

My aunt had lots of skills, and cooking was definitely one of them.

Celia believed in love because she had it once. I wasn't so sure. I mean, I dated. I went out with guys for some fun, but I'd never met a man who really fit the bill for a long-term thing. The standard was high and most guys I met didn't even come close.

It was the same thing with work. I'd found nowhere I wanted to be much longer than a month. That's why I only worked temp assignments. I didn't want to make any long-term office friends or get tangled in office politics. I could just sweep in, get the job done, and be gone. I got to set my terms on what assignments I'd take. If I took the week off to drive to the Gulf Coast and soak in the sunshine, that was fine as far as my agency cared. You can't get that with a permanent placement.

My agency rarely called me late at night, but it happened. I was really grateful for the working power outlets in my old room at Celia's house when my mobile phone rang at nine. I really needed another assignment. Temping paid okay, especially because of my knack with difficult clients. It was probably my only real marketable skill. I had built a reputation for taming the grumpiest bosses because I just ignored their bullshit. I knew it was not forever, so I gave the assholes what they needed, and then I got out. I never had to see them again.

"Hey Ana Rosa, sorry to call you so late, but I just got a call on a cancelation and this job is right up your alley." It was Margarita Fields calling—the branch manager—so I knew this was a big deal. My usual contact was Lola, who had been at the agency longer but somehow wasn't promoted to running the branch when the position was open. Maybe she didn't want the responsibility. I could relate to that.

"I'll take it," I told Margarita without waiting to hear details. It didn't matter to me what the job was. FPL needed cash.

"Yeah, well, here's the thing," Margarita said. "The contact is

extremely difficult to work with. I understand he can be a bit of a bully.”

“That won’t be a problem,” I said. “Give me the address.”

“I need to tell you more before you accept.” Margarita was suspicious, as if I really should ask more questions, and maybe, I just honestly didn’t care. “There’s another issue with this assignment. I know you *don’t* want perm, but this is temp to perm.”

“Okay, never mind then,” I said, disappointed. “But I am free, so if anything else comes up I’ll take it.”

“Well, hold on,” Margarita said. “Hear me out.”

“I don’t do perm,” I said. “That’s like my one thing. I’ve never taken a perm offer.”

“I know, but if you take this one, and stick it out for three months, I’ll give you a \$1,000 bonus,” Margarita said.

I should just have said no thanks, but \$1,000 was a lot of money for me. Not that it would last, but I could use it. I figured Margarita was really only asking me to take a temp assignment, when you thought about it. After three months, I could split. I’d never been anywhere that long, but for \$1,000 extra, I could probably handle three months.

“How much does it pay and how much of a jerk is the person I’d be working with?” I asked. Now I was suspicious. They had never offered me a bonus, so they must be in real trouble with this client.

“Okay, so you’d be working at a factory in Hialeah, near to home. It’s a nice factory, tidy, with modern offices. They make the Lillian Post brand, and you can probably get some designer pieces from their QC rejects at a discount there,” she said. “It pays fifteen dollars an hour. There’s been a lot of overtime on past assignments so you can count on a fifty-hour work week, and obviously you earn time and a half for the extra ten. There’s a one month trial period. If you go perm, you’d have to be there for three months before quitting. I really want you to go perm.”

“Why?” I asked.

“This job has been a revolving door situation and I’m tired of trying to fill it,” Margarita sighed, “but we have a big fee to earn if you get hired. I’ll share the fee with you if you just hang out long enough for the placement warranty to expire. That’s it.”

“What’s the longest anyone’s been there?” I asked.

There was silence on the line for a while. “Two days,” Margarita said. She sounded tired to the bone. “The one who just quit made it through a full day on Friday, but decided it’s not for her on Monday. I guess the weekend didn’t help.”

“Why don’t people stay longer?”

“He’s a shouter,” Margarita said. “And apparently very intimidating. And very demanding.”

“Who is he?”

“He’s the new CEO, well actually the new owner,” she said. “His investment firm just took over the factory and they’re doing this whole turnaround thing. He’s from New York and he can be a little harsh. It’s just his style. Nothing to worry about, really, but not everyone can handle that. I know you can.”

“Name?”

“Patrick Black,” she said.

“When do I have to be there?”

“Officially, tomorrow at eight. But, if I were you, I’d show up at seven thirty. Can you do that?”

“I guess,” I said. “Text me the address. I won’t make any promises, but I’ll try to go all the way.”

“You’re a godsend,” Margarita said. “See you on Friday when you come by the branch to get your first check.”

“Thanks,” I said. “See you then.”

And that’s the other thing. When you work temp, you get paid every Friday, which was just right for me since I was always spending more than I earned.

Celia blamed my dad, her brother, for that dangerous habit of mine. She said he spoiled me rotten. I was his only child and my mom died when I was born, so I guess that’s why he did. I

had the best *quinceañera* party in Miami and Dad took a mortgage on the house to pay for it. If he'd lived long enough to see me get married, he probably would have mortgaged the house a second time. As it was, he died in a pile-up on the Palmetto, wedged under a tractor trailer, just before I graduated high school. A hurricane destroyed the house before the bank took it.

Life is funny, and I don't mean in a way that makes you laugh.

Before I went to sleep, I did a deep internet search on Patrick Black, which wasn't easy. That was one of my tricks, by the way. I always researched my potential grumpy bosses before I started work so I had some idea what their likes and dislikes were and where their weak points might be. It's good to have some sort of strategy when you're going into a battle and that's what these jobs usually are.

It was hard to come up with any kind of strategy for Patrick, though. He practically didn't exist. I found an article in the Wall Street Journal that mentioned his name and his small private investor firm—the slicers and dicers as the article described them. Apparently, they cut all the fat from any company they took over, made it profitable and then sold it at a profit to someone interested in keeping it long-term, or they broke it up and sold the assets. They never spent longer than a year with a company either way. There wasn't even a photo of Patrick Black in the article, though, and the man had zero social media accounts, so I was going in blind. I ran a background search on him, paying \$25 on my last remaining credit card that still had \$300 credit left on it, to find out more.

From that, I learned that Patrick Black was born and grew up in the Bronx. He was forty-six years old and a widower. His wife had died of breast cancer, apparently. I learned that by

researching her. She had a more public online presence, though not by much. There were some mentions of her on social media and a picture in a local paper in White Plains taking part in some charity fundraiser. She had been beautiful in a blonde WASPy sort of way, all lithe and long and elegant, like Gwyneth Paltrow. Every one of her friends was really sorry to lose her. There were some memorial posts, but none of them mentioned Patrick. There was one picture of her at a party with a man I figured might have been him. He looked like a pro-wrestler, not a finance kind of guy, even in a tailored suit. He was tall and dark and had a fierce expression on his face, even though everyone else in the photo was smiling. Yeah, this had to be him, I figured, and he was nothing like her. How they ever came together was a mystery, but it made me think he liked soft things which gave me an idea of what to wear for my first day at work and how to behave so I could make it through three months to my big pay day.

By the time I went to sleep, I was feeling pretty sure of myself. The alarm went off at five and I showered and changed into the outfit I borrowed from my aunt's collection. My aunt had worked for a factory similar to the one I was going to for many years. She was a really talented designer and a gifted seamstress, but when my uncle got sick, she switched to working from home. She ran a *cantina* service for women who were too busy working during the day to cook. Many of her customers were former friends from her factory, and their friends. She was already up getting an early start on the bulk cooking preparations for the day, so we shared some *café con leche and tostada* and she wished me good luck before I headed out.

"Maybe this will finally be the perfect job for you," Celia said, smiling. "And maybe you'll meet a nice accountant, or a sewing machine mechanic. They make good money."

Celia was beautiful when she smiled, even in her house robe, wearing rollers and with no makeup. I thought again about how

sad it was that she was alone. She had lost her husband, Julio, to cancer. She thought no one could ever match him, so she had turned her passion to cooking and religion instead. That was the only reason I didn't live with her anymore, by the way. My aunt's views were very conservative, and she was against sex out of wedlock. Celia definitely didn't approve of my dating lifestyle. We loved each other very much, but my dad's older sister and I always got along much better if I wasn't around too often.

So, it was important that I pay my electric bill and cover my rent, even if it meant putting up with the biggest grouse in Miami. I was going to earn my bonus and then I'd reclaim my freedom.

I didn't worry too much about what came after that.