



The Weekend Wife Preview

“I need a woman.”

“Don’t we all.”

“I don’t need a woman for *that*.” Max Tate cast a dry look at Frank Marsallis. Then he took a sip of the scotch Frank had just shoved into his hand. “If I want *that*, I can get it. I need a partner for a job.”

Frank lifted one stubby finger in the air as he gave a somber nod. “Ah—I should’ve known you weren’t here just to crash my party.”

Standing in Frank’s lavish entryway, Max took an absent look across the expansive space his one-time mentor called a living room. Stylish-looking people stood in clusters drinking trendy cocktails as a slow, bluesy tune cascaded from speakers hidden in the vaulted ceiling. Not really his scene, or at least not by choice. All things considered, he’d rather be having a beer at a neighborhood bar. Especially considering the way he looked at the moment. “Crashing parties isn’t my style, Frank. Anyway, the job starts tomorrow.”

Frank stroked his salt-and-pepper beard, his gaze landing on his fellow P.I. “Nothing like waiting ’til the last minute, Max.”

But he didn't have time to deal with Frank's annoyance. "Look, I've been busy with a job that went longer than planned. Can you help me or not?"

"One question first. Why do you look like you've been living in a trash can?"

"Like I said, I've been busy. I just came from doing a little undercover work." Undercover assignments were his specialty.

"As what?"

"A garbage man." He slanted Frank a look of warning. "And no cracks please—I don't have time for your wit right now. I need to know if you can get me the woman."

"All right, all right," Frank said, offering an exaggerated sigh. "What are the parameters?"

"She needs to be quick-thinking," Max told him, glad to get down to business. "And she has to have good instincts. She should also be a decent actress."

"Anything else?"

Max snapped his fingers. He'd almost forgotten the most important part. "Yeah. She has to be drop-dead gorgeous."

Frank shook his graying head—either in irritation or judgment, Max couldn't tell—then returned to the matter at hand. "So why do you need a good actress?"

"She's going to pretend to be my wife."

"And why does she have to be gorgeous?"

"Same reason."

Frank cast him yet another cutting look, but this time Max turned a sly grin toward his friend. "Actually, the job calls for it, Frank, in a big way. The guy I'm trying to nail only goes after extremely hot women."

Frank took the last sip of his drink and lowered his glass to a nearby table. "So she'll be bait."

Max knew Frank didn't like the sound of that, but it was often the nature of the business for women who chose this line of work. "Something like that. That's where the quick-thinking and

good instincts come in. Besides, I'll be there the whole time—either out in the open or in hiding, keeping an eye on things.”

Max waited impatiently as Frank sighed again, scanning the room. If Frank couldn't come through for him on this, he was sunk. In between stints of playing garbage man, he'd spent the last two weeks drawing Carlo Coletti into this scheme, and he'd made it clear to Carlo that not only was he loaded, but that he had a beautiful wife to shower his riches on. Without one, the whole case would flop. And Frank was the only guy in town he trusted enough to borrow another P.I. from. He knew from experience that Frank hired only the best.

Frank's head suddenly darted around to face him. “I thought you were quitting.” It sounded suspiciously like an accusation.

Max tilted his head derisively. “Not quitting, Frank. Stepping back. Growing the business. Bringing in some new blood.”

“Quitting,” Frank repeated.

Well, so what if he was? He'd been up to his ears in this business for fifteen years—since he was twenty years old, for God's sake. He'd had his own firm for the last three of those years, and now he finally had the money to hire enough good people that he could get out of the field himself. He liked the work and was damn good at it, but he'd fallen into it accidentally all those years ago and had now decided to see what it was like to have a job where he didn't risk his life every single day. So he planned to *manage* the P.I.s he'd soon hire, be the brains behind the operation and let someone else be the brawn—and *the garbage men*—for a change.

“Anyway,” Max said, “I just finished up the garbage gig, so this next one is my last case. Worth a tidy fee if I can pull it off. But like I said, I need a woman. Do you have one for me?”

Frank gestured across the room. “See the brunette in the blue dress?”

Did he ever. She stood with her back to them, talking with another woman as they studied an impressionist print that hung above Frank's fireplace. She had legs that went on forever, silky hair that fell in waves past her shoulders, and a nice shape inside that dress to back it all up.

Even without seeing her face, Max knew she was a beauty—just what he was looking for. So he didn't hesitate—he looked at Frank and winked. “I'll take her.”

[Order The Weekend Wife today!](#)