



## Double the Pleasure (Wild Hart)

By Lori Foster, Deirdre Martin, Jacquie D'Alessandro, Penny McCall

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**Get a double dose of sexy fun with this contemporary romance collection—featuring a *Winston* novella from *New York Times* bestselling author Lori Foster.**

Think of the man you'd give anything to be with. Think of what you'd like to do to him...and what you'd like him to do to you. Think of the fun you could have. Now, double it!

*New York Times* bestselling sensations Lori Foster, Deirdre Martin, Jacquie D'Alessandro, and Penny McCall come together to deliver four playful stories of games between friends and lovers in this tantalizing anthology, including a novella featuring Foster's *Winston* cousins—sexy twins who use their knock-out mirror-image good looks to switch places and tantalize the girls of their dreams.

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**Editorial Review**

About the Author

**Lori Foster** is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of many contemporary romances.

**Deirdre Martin** has written scripts for the daytime drama *One Life to Live*. She lives with her husband and her dog, Molly, in Ithaca, New York.

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***Deuces Wild***

Lori Foster

To Kathy Andrico, photographer, reader, and friend. I appreciate all you do and all that you contribute, not only to me personally but to the entire romance community.

You're the best!

***One***

Dexter Winston paced across the floor, but Hart, his twin, didn't let him go far. When he turned, Hart was right there, black eye flinching, a purpling bruise on his forehead, and determination in every line of his body.

He wanted an answer.

Blocking Dex's restless pacing, Hart said, "Quit trying to think of reasons to refuse, will you? It's not like we haven't fooled people before."

"Our family, as a joke."

"And girls, to see if we could."

Knowing those youthful antics weren't among his finer moments, Dex scowled.

"Oh gawd, don a hair shirt, why don't you?" Hart laughed at his reaction. "It's not like we switched beds or anything."

No. They'd fooled girls to see if any of them could tell them apart. Unfortunately, they couldn't.

Ever.

You'd think the inherent intimacy of dating a person would enable a woman to know the difference, but . . .

"We haven't duped neighbors," Dex pointed out. "We haven't duped"—he gestured—"everyone."

"Think of it as a challenge." Hart plopped down on Dex's sofa and spread his arms out along the back. These days, he was more muscular than Dex. Harder edged. And he had those very distinguishing bruises.

It all seemed so obvious to Dex. "It'll never work."

"All you need to do is hang out at my place, reply to my e-mails, and go through the snail mail, let me know about anything important . . ."

"And if you get a commission?" Dex asked. "Am I supposed to paint it for you, too?"

"Hell no." Hart snorted. "Not that you couldn't, but your work is too damn morbid. Folks would either catch



on that it wasn't me, or they'd think I went off the deep end."

Cursing low, Dex strode into his kitchen and grabbed a soda. Automatically, he got one for Hart, too.

As twins, they shared not only looks, but tastes and talents, too. Either of them could have chosen a career in writing, or art. But Hart was right—Dex was far more somber, bordering on pessimistic. Hart enjoyed life more. He played harder and took greater risks just for the joy of it.

The total opposite, Dex stayed holed away in his office, glued to his computer while he created his stories. As a published novelist, he relished his privacy.

As soon as Dex seated himself beside his brother, Hart started in on him again.

"I have to do my training out of town. Not only is this an opportunity to get in with an excellent camp, but SBC promoters will be visiting."

"To hand out contracts?" Hart was a great fighter, but he wanted to be great in the Supreme Battle Challenge.

"Possibly. I don't know for sure. But if I stuck around here to train, the family would show up and start badgering me for details. Joe especially."

"Or Cole, or Chase. Somehow they always know when family stuff goes down." Dex shook his head. "Nothing ever stays secret with the Winstons."

"Even if they don't catch on that I'm training, there'd be questions about my bruises."

Dex lifted his drink. "Nah. Most would figure a woman popped you for being a jerk."

Rather than dispute that, Hart shrugged at the possibility. "If I'm going to give my all to the big opportunity, then, Dex, I need your help."

Dex didn't know enough about the professional side of mixed martial arts fighting to be sure, but he assumed the training would take months. "I am not you."

Hart looked him over. "Close enough. I'm a little more bulked up now, but thanks to our sparring matches, you're still plenty fit."

They were both runners, both natural athletes, and both blessed with the Winston physique—or so their cousins always claimed. Joe especially seemed to gather attention for his physical presence. But then, Joe worked at it.

If you looked around the family, it appeared to be an inherent trait. The men were tall and naturally strong. Even into their advanced years—a description Hart liked to apply to Joe, just to see him riled—they retained their muscular forms.

"I've only lived in my apartment for six weeks now, and I've been so swamped, I haven't really made friends with anyone yet. Thanks to your last deadline, you haven't visited me there, so no one knows I have a twin brother."

All true, but still . . .

"We look enough alike," Hart continued, "that as long as you're in the right place and cop the right attitude,

no one will question it.” He chugged back half the soda, belched, and then, with an annoying, cocky grin, said, “The fact that we’re both currently unattached makes it easier. Just think if I had a steady girlfriend you had to appease.”

*Appease?* Dex rolled his eyes. “I’d definitely tell you no.” Hart’s preferences in female company were not his own.

His brother laughed. “You could use a hot date, man. It’d do you good.”

“News flash, brother: I don’t need your leftovers. I can get my own dates.”

“Yeah, I know.” Hart gave him a look. “But you *won’t*.”

Exasperation prompted Dex to a verbal challenge. “How do you know? You think I keep you informed of my every move?”

That got Hart’s interest in a big way. “You sly dog, have you been holding back on me? C’mon, brother, spill it. Who is she?”

Knowing Hart wouldn’t relent, Dex slumped into his seat. “No one.”

“Yeah, that’s what I thought.” Disappointed, Hart settled back. “Know what your trouble is?”

“I have an annoying twin brother?”

“Yeah, but other than that.” With a friendly punch to Dex’s shoulder, Hart said, “You’re too damn particular. Every date doesn’t have to lead toward a serious relationship.”

“Yeah, well, tell that to the women. One date usually gives them all kinds of ideas.” And that did pose a problem, because Dex had an aversion to theatrics. Why couldn’t he meet an upfront, honest, independent woman who wanted him, enjoyed his company, and shared his likes and dislikes—but didn’t act like she *needed* him? “It can get insufferable.”

Watching him, Hart said, “But that’s not what bothers you, is it?”

Cradling the soda can against his abdomen, Dex shrugged. The biggest problem was his own disappointment, but he saw no reason to get into it with Hart.

As usual, ignoring Hart didn’t slow him down.

“I know, and I understand, because I want the same thing.”

“Yeah?” Dex took the bait. “And that is?”

“A real connection. Not just perfect sex—though I have to admit, really great sex makes it almost worthwhile.” He winked before turning serious again. “I’d like to think if I ever find the right woman, she’ll know the difference between you and me right off.”

Dex gave him a bemused stare. Hart was such a die-hard bachelor that the idea of him settling down seemed ludicrous. Many ladies had tried to get him to commit, but they’d all failed.

Dex, on the other hand, wanted hearth and home—with the right woman. Like Hart, he needed her to

separate him from his brother, to see him as an individual. He had a very specific idea of the woman he wanted, and so far, no one even close had shown up.

And that's what she'd have to do: show up.

Other than family gatherings, he didn't expend much effort socializing. There were so many plots and characters in his head that he couldn't seem to drag himself away from his computer long enough to dedicate the time necessary to finding that perfect significant other.

Disgusted with his own thoughts, Dex shook his head. "You were the one just saying we're enough alike that we *should* fool everyone."

"Sure," Hart said. "Everyone other than *the one*. When I find her, that's how I'll know she's right."

Sounded like a good plan to Dex—if the right one ever presented herself.

Done with that topic, Dex got the subject back on track. "So why don't you just tell everyone you're fighting? I think it's cool. And the sport suits you, anyone can see that." It took an extreme sport to satisfy his extreme brother.

"It'd suit you, too, if you'd shake off the fictional world long enough to do more than fill in as a sparring partner for me."

"No thanks. It's hard enough for me to type with bruised knuckles. I don't want to try it with anything else damaged." Dex enjoyed watching mixed martial arts, MMA, competitions, and he especially enjoyed sparring with his brother; the physical exertion left him feeling alive.

But not in the same way that writing did. He took real satisfaction in typing "the end" to a world of his own creation.

Grinning, Hart flexed his bruised knuckles. "It's addictive. I love everything about it."

Dex shrugged. "You've always been more competitive than me."

"Ha!" Hart gave him *the* look. "That's bullshit and you know it. You're competitive."

"I let you win when we spar, don't I?"

"You let me?" Laughing, Hart grabbed him and put him in a headlock. For a few minutes, they scuffled as they'd done when they were young. They almost knocked over the coffee table and a chair.

Dex laughed so hard, he couldn't get many insults out, but he did manage to say, "That's the best you've got?"

"I'm trying not to maim you, idiot."

"Wuss." Dex tried to free himself and couldn't, and finally said, "Uncle!"

"Oh yeah!" Hart lunged to his feet. "Victory is mine."

Sprawling onto his back on the floor, Dex said, "We haven't done that in ages."

“Five years ago, on our twenty-first birthday.” Hart plopped onto the couch, reminiscing with a smile. “We knocked over a lamp and Mom had a fit.”

“Then Joe grabbed us both and threw us in the pond.”

Together they laughed some more. “God, that water was freezing.”

Dex sat up, elbows on his knees, and pressed his brother again. “We have a tight family, Hart. When are you going to tell them you’re fighting?”

“I’m not.”

“What do you mean, you’re not?” Dex couldn’t believe his brother expected to keep something so monumental a secret. Not from *their* family. “Everyone will be majorly pissed when they find out.”

“The fights are preliminary. And if I fuck it up and get an old-fashioned ass whooping, I’ll never hear the end of it and you know it.”

“No way will that happen.”

“Besting a book geek doesn’t mean I’m invincible.”

“Book geek?” Dex feigned a renewed attack.

Hart held up his hands. “A joke, that’s all. I’ll take it back if you let me rest in peace.”

“Wuss,” Dex said again. But he had a lot of faith in his brother’s abilities. They’d started wrestling in a kids’ club when they were barely out of diapers. In junior high, Hart added boxing to his mix of sports, and Dex chose track to help build his stamina. They often intertwined, with Hart running alongside Dex, and Dex sparring with Hart. But they each had their preferences.

Hart just kept improving, and during high school he was a three-time state wrestling champion. Thanks to those skills, he got a full college ride, and then went straight into Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

For a few years he’d been competing in matches at local gyms, and he’d racked up an impressive record. Now he was ready for the next big step, possibly a career-altering step—and he had cold feet?

Disgusted, Dex walked to the couch and stood before his brother. “You’re good and you know it.”

Hart’s mouth tightened. “Maybe. But there’s good, and then there’s *good*. Anyone can lose, so that doesn’t bother me. I just don’t want to get annihilated.”

Dex laughed. “Stop being a baby. If you weren’t ready, you wouldn’t be given a shot.”

“They like my wins.”

“TKOs,” Dex said, nodding. Not only did Hart have a lot of wins under his belt, most were knockouts.

Looking smug, Hart said, “They’re calling me The Finisher.”

“Huh.” Dex held up a hand. “See, that beats Knucklehead, doesn’t it?”

Hart threw a pillow at him. “I’m still going to wait until after I see how I do in this trial bout to tell

everyone.”

After tossing the pillow back to the couch, Dex pointed out the obvious. “They will not be happy that you let them miss it.”

“Yeah I know.” His mouth quirked. “But God, can you imagine all the Winstons crowding into the gym? The roar would be deafening.”

“Likely.” The males of the family were of the boisterous variety. Alphas, all of them. Overwhelmingly so, sometimes. “So we’re talking a month, right?”

Hart gave his attention to finishing his soda. “It could run a little longer.”

“Hart.”

“I can’t give you a definite time frame.” And with a straight face, he said, “You’re a writer, you can work anywhere, damn it.”

Dex knew it was a facetious comment. Most people thought he sat at home and watched sports while drinking beer and eating chips. But Hart, more than anyone else, knew just how hard he worked at his career. He understood the deadlines, the research and edits, the endless appearances and other promotional chores.

“You’re between books, right?”

Reluctantly, Dex nodded. “Yeah. But I’m under contract, so I’d planned to get started on another book real soon.”

“You always do a ton of research first. Use the computer at my place for it. You can be me, and get work done at the same time.”

Glad that his brother hadn’t asked what the next book would be, Dex agreed. “I guess that’d be all right. But it’s under duress, and in case anything comes up, you better be accessible by phone.”

“I’ll keep my cell charged and check it on a regular basis.” With that settled, Hart got to his feet. “Help yourself to my wardrobe, drive my car, and accept any commissions that sound interesting, but with the caveat that I’m booked for at least a month, and can’t start until after that. And, brother, relax. This’ll be fun. I guarantee it.”

So why did Dexter have his doubts?

On his way out, Hart winked. “Who knows? Maybe you’ll get inspiration for the next bestseller.”

*The first week wasn’t so bad. After moving in and setting up all his files for the next story, Dexter went about familiarizing himself with his brother’s neighbors. He didn’t want to be taken off guard if he should know someone who approached him. Hart helped, but not much. The time he’d spent at the apartment had not been used to socialize. He was far too busy with his training.*

With reluctance Dex met the neighbors face-to-face over the next few days, but none of them seemed aware that he wasn't Hart. They greeted him amicably, were social and totally obtuse to the deception.

That is, until Dex met the slight female across the hall from Hart.

Seeing her, Dex stopped dead in his tracks. *Wow*. Why had Hart not mentioned her? She came up the steps with her head down as she perused her mail. That gave Dex an opportunity to look her over.

When she felt his stare, she looked up in surprise, and then nodded her head in a reserved show of politeness. "Hello."

Smiling, Dex indulged an interested double take. "Hello yourself."

She faltered, gave him a long look followed by several questioning and maybe worried glances.

Fumbling over her reaction, Dex toned down his smile and his obvious interest. "Everything okay?"

She blinked. "Oh, sure. Yes." But she frowned and gave him another quick look before blushing and darting into her apartment. "Have a good day." She shut her door.

Dex stood there, half smiling, curiosity growing. She was skittish, but cute, with red hair and very piercing green eyes. Thanks to his brother's rundown on the apartment complex's inhabitants, he knew the only redheaded female had to be Christy Nash.

But he didn't know much else about her. Hart had only mentioned her once, and he hadn't described her that well. He hadn't told Dex about her long auburn hair, her incredible green eyes. He hadn't mentioned that she was so pretty, or so petite, or so sweet on the eyes.

Sometimes Hart could be such a dunce.

Over the next few days, Dex got to know Christy better. They met at the mailbox and the front door of the complex, and once he ran into her doing laundry. He'd watched with interest as she rushed to put her lacy, colorful undies at the bottom of the basket.

Because most of the women he met were pushy to the point of annoyance, he found her modesty adorable.

It didn't take long for Dex to discover that Christy left the apartment each morning around nine and returned around six. She appeared prompt and well organized. Since he was the same, that part of her personality appealed to him, too.

With the knowledge of her routine in hand, Dex was determined to get to know her better. He made a point of returning from jogging right at six, and his timing couldn't have been more perfect. As he loped into the parking lot, she was just getting out of her car.

He paused, giving her the opportunity to do the same.

Eyes wide, she stared at him.

At all of him.

Her gaze darted from his face to his sweaty chest, then down to his abdomen, and farther down to his legs before creeping slowly back to his chest and lingering there.

She definitely liked what she saw.

And for Dex, her appreciation was both flattering and frustrating—because she thought he was Hart.

Had his damned brother flirted with her after all? It didn't seem likely, not when Hart had struggled to remember her name.

Dex inhaled deeply to catch his breath. Her eyes widened. He smiled. "Hi again."

Jerking her attention to his face, she blinked fast and stopped with a slight puzzled frown. "Since when did you start jogging in the evening?"

The question threw Dex. Pulling his limp T-shirt from the back waistband of his shorts, he used it to swipe the sweat from his brow and buy himself some time to think.

Did Hart have a specific routine that he hadn't mentioned? Probably. This half-baked plan had been flawed from the get-go.

Too late now to correct a mistake.

Dex shrugged. "It seemed a good day for it."

Brow pinched, she glanced around at the hot pavement, the still-blistering sun and cloudless blue sky. "It's probably high eighties."

"I won't melt." In fact, he enjoyed the exertion and fresh air. His research had stalled, especially for his female protagonist, and Dex blamed the unfamiliar surroundings and subterfuge.

"If you say so." Her gaze drifted over him again.

Dex liked the way his brother's little red-haired neighbor looked at him.

She remained quiet, but she didn't leave. They stood there in the hot lot, quiet, uninterrupted.

"Christy?" he said, enjoying the sound of her name. "Something bothering you?"

"What?" Her startled green eyes met his. "No, of course not. It's just that you always jog at the crack of dawn when it's cooler."

Figures Hart would forget to tell him that. But a more pressing issue caught Dex, and he narrowed his eyes at Christy. "You noticed that, huh?"

As soon as he said it, she blanched, and Dex wondered if Hart had talked with her during his early morning jogs, making his comment bizarre.

Instead, bright color flushed her cheeks and she forced a grin, at the same time lifting her chin with bold regard.

Shy, but not a coward. Another appealing trait.

"You caught me," she said. "Yes, I've watched you coming and going. My window faces the lot."

"And you've watched me from the window?" He'd love that idea—except that meant she'd been eyeballing

his brother, not him.

Her chin firmed. “Come on, Hart, don’t make it sound so pathetic. You’re easy on the eyes and you know it. Given half a chance, most women would watch you.”

“Is that so?” Both of Dex’s brows lifted. He’d never expected such a ballsy comment from her. Her honesty was refreshing, but startling. She was an enigma, for sure. “Well . . . thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

They stood there in the parking lot, gazes locked, until she suddenly cleared her throat. “Well, you might not mind the heat, but I *am* melting, so it’s time for me to go in.”

Dex noted her suit, and the dampness on her brow because of it. She was all prim, buttoned up, and suffering for it. “Those are pretty stifling duds for summer. Where do you work?”

As she hitched the strap of a large purse over her shoulder, her mouth pinched. “You’ve forgotten, huh? That shouldn’t surprise me.”

*Oh hell.* If Hart knew, why hadn’t he told him? “I’m sorry.” And he was. His brother couldn’t be expected to think of every scenario that might occur, but with this particular woman, Dex wanted to be informed. “It’s just . . .”

She waved a hand, laughing without humor. “Don’t worry about it, Hart. It was a quick conversation, easily forgotten.”

Hoping that was true, which would mean there’d been little conversation, and therefore little interaction between Hart and her, Dex prompted, “So why don’t you refresh my memory.”

“I’m a secretary for the middle school. Yes, the teachers are off for summer break, but my job runs year-round.”

“A school secretary.” Dex surveyed her again from head to toe and decided the job suited her. There was a definite understated quality to her demeanor.

It teased him.

Even the very school-worthy clothing couldn’t hide the tantalizing curves of her slight, slender frame. The damp heat had urged her long red hair into ringlets and enhanced a fair sprinkling of freckles over the bridge of her nose and soft cheekbones.

Half under his breath, Dex said, “I don’t remember anyone at my school looking like you.”

She shot a disbelieving look his way. “Thank you.” Then she faltered. “I think. I mean . . . was that a compliment?”

Smiling at her uncertainty, Dex lifted one shoulder. “It was a complimentary male observation.”

“Oh. I see. Then . . . thank you.” She fanned herself. “This heat is sweltering, huh?”

“Yeah.” He smiled knowingly. “Let’s head in.” Gesturing for her to precede him, Dex trailed behind and drank in the back view of her rounded butt in the slim-fitting skirt.



Very nice.

Damn it, he needed to ask Hart just how far his involvement went with this woman before he dared to go any further himself.

At her door, she whipped around to face him, hands clasped together, expression watchful. "So." Her smile flickered with cautious hope.

Nice lips. Nice nose, too. And damn, but he'd never considered freckles so sexy until seeing them on her.

Before he could think better of it, Dex said, "Want to go for a swim later?"

Her reaction was more appropriate for a request to donate a kidney. She blanched, backed into the wall, and started visually dissecting him again.

Running a hand through his sweat-damp hair, Dex sighed, wondering how he'd blundered this time. He waited for her to refuse.

Instead, with a lot of skepticism, she asked, "Why?"

"Why what?"

She rolled her eyes. "Why do you suddenly want to swim with me?"

No, she was not a woman to give expected replies. He stared into her eyes. "You look hot."

Her jaw went slack. "I look . . . ?"

With no intention of clarifying that double entendre, Dex added, "A swim would be . . . nice. It would refresh us both." And then he could see more of her, as in every curve, every freckle, lots and lots of soft skin.

Beneath the starchy blouse, her chest expanded on a deep breath. "No." She exhaled. "Sorry. Busy."

"You are, huh?"

She nodded hard and fast. "Very."

"Got a big date?"

Scoffing, she said, "No."

He couldn't help it. He stepped closer to her. "Got a fiancé? A steady guy?"

She frowned. "No."

"Good." The sooner she understood his interest, the easier it'd be for both of them.

Eyes wide and hands behind herself, Christy fumbled with her lock and opened her door, then practically fell inside. Again somewhat hopeful, she said, "Another time, maybe?"

"I'll hold you to that."

She started backing farther in. “Okay then. I’ll . . . see ya.”

“Count on it.”

As she eased the door shut, her confusion was plain to see. Hart hadn’t come on to her.

At all.

She couldn’t understand why he was coming on to her now.

And truthfully, Dex couldn’t say what it was about her that got to him. Maybe it was the need for a distraction as he struggled with his plot. Maybe it was the sheer boredom of being out of his own place, and stuck in Hart’s.

And maybe it was the long bout of self-imposed celibacy.

But maybe, just maybe, it was that Christy Nash was the most appealing woman he’d met in a very long time.

Right before the door shut, she said, “Enjoy your swim.”

Oh yeah, he definitely would. After that tantalizing exchange, he needed a dip in the cool water of the pool. Unfortunately, her window didn’t face the right way, so she wouldn’t be able to watch him. Of course, he could make a trip around front for . . . something. Now that he knew to watch her window, he’d enjoy her reaction to seeing him in trunks.

Suddenly being at Hart’s didn’t seem so bad after all. He was still stuck on the final details of his story, but it no longer bothered him so much.

*Christy* Nash shut her apartment door and collapsed against it, her eyes closed and her heart racing. In her mind’s eye, she saw Hart’s face, his sculpted cheekbones, that straight nose, sensual mouth, and sinfully sexy eyes.

He had the darkest, thickest lashes she’d ever seen on man or woman. They framed clear blue, intelligent eyes that suddenly saw her.

Not just a glance at her for polite purposes.

But *really* saw her, almost *through* her, to her soul. Based on his very knowing gaze, she would bet money that he knew her heart pounded and her pulse raced.

What in the world had happened?

Had the universe tilted? Since when did Hart Winston, hunk extraordinaire, give her any notice, or talk to her beyond a perfunctory hello, or ask her to *swim*?

Never.

Not once.

Regardless of how obvious she'd been in her dogged pursuit of him.

Maybe he'd hit his head or something, because there was a definite, although indefinable, difference to him now.

The second she'd laid eyes on him, she'd noticed it. It was there in the tilt of his head, the deep thought in his startling blue eyes, the way he walked, the way he smiled.

And oh yeah, the way he looked at her.

So different in so many ways, and it . . . fascinated her. As if he hadn't been potent enough already, he now assaulted her senses like a double dose of a powerful aphrodisiac.

Insane!

Biting her lip, Christy wondered if she dared find a reason to meander over to the pool. If she could get one quick look at him all wet, wearing only snug trunks that would hug his lean hips and his . . . Oh boy. That'd be enough fodder for a dozen fantasies.

Not that she needed help in that department. She had it so bad, she already dreamed of him every night.

Well, okay, not *him*. She didn't know Hart Winston well enough to dream about him, the man. But she wasn't blind, so she'd had plenty of fantasies about his gorgeous body and overwhelming sex appeal.

Perhaps she'd just sort of feel him up . . . no, feel him *out* on this new friendly mood of his.

Yes, that's what she'd do.

She'd make the attempt to get to know him, and maybe this time he'd be more receptive. Her birthday was in a few days. Maybe she'd even be able to ask him out to celebrate with her. And maybe he'd accept.

It couldn't hurt, right?

Or could it?

***Two***

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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**Livia Wilder:**

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