

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

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ZANE'S WAY



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ZANE'S WAY

Maggie Casper

Prologue

A grunt of completion filled the air rising above their heavy breaths. Rena fought to bury the feelings of inadequacy as Zane rolled away, his broad shoulders now facing her. Before her heart had time to resume its normal pace, the TV was turned on, its dim light flickering around her, intensifying the feelings tearing at her heart.

She distractedly smoothed her hand across the sheet trying to absorb its warmth. Her body shivered in response to the loss of heat.

Her insides mourned the loss. *You should feel blessed*, her mind scolded. And yet, she didn't. Being in a long-term relationship should bring a feeling of contentment, but for Serena Keller the only thing it brought, at least when it came to her sex life, was a heavy ache that reminded her daily of what was missing.

"Zane," she called softly.

The only answer from his side of the bed was a grumpy rumble. Not allowing that to dissuade her, Serena asked, "Did I satisfy you? Was it good?"

"Why do you ask that?" It was obvious he was annoyed, but why? She tried to keep her voice calm when she answered.

"Just wondered..." she finally said, her voice trailing off.

"You're always wondering things, Rena. Just let it be."

She didn't say anything—just lay there, thinking to herself.

So many times in the past year, she had silently fought with herself. How could she possibly fix the problem? In every other way, her relationship was one to be envied. The fact she lived week after week, month after month through monotonous sex shouldn't really matter. Right? Wrong! Her body screamed as it craved more. So much more.

Staring at the ceiling, she thought about the man next to her. His body wide and warm as his arms welcomed her. Why wasn't it enough?

So often, she witnessed his hooded eyes following her as she moved about their home. The way they traveled over each inch of her as if remembering every freckle, every crease. Just thinking of it made her shiver. Often she could feel the vibes coming off him in waves. The only way to describe the vibes he bestowed upon her was molten. So hot, she felt as if the areas his gaze raked would be singed.

There was a sense of unbridled passion lying just below the surface. Although he never ever lost control there had been several times she'd backed down from a heated argument due to a specific look his eyes took when he was close to the edge. The way he narrowed them when mad. Even angry, he kept himself together.

Serena often wondered what would happen if she gave that extra little push. As a child, her smart mouth and sassy attitude had gotten her into her share of trouble. As an adult, she learned to choose her battles wisely, to control herself. She often wondered if the fierce control she held over herself these days was a protective mechanism. A way to help prevent the past from intruding.

A hoot made her jump, reminding her she wasn't alone. The football game blared through the speakers as her body fought its lingering need. Although an assertive woman, Serena often wished she could be more aggressive. She could only remember a handful of times over the past four years that she had initiated sex. Even though she knew her lack of confidence was part of the problem, she just couldn't bring herself to do it, to initiate intimacy between the two of them. So much had taken place in her youth leaving impressions she longed to forget. She knew she couldn't because they were so deeply integrated into who she was. A person she hoped to change.

The tips of her fingers tingled with the need to stroke the tanned skin of his shoulders. To caress him with her hands while her mouth attacked his, her teeth nipping at his full lower lip. Why couldn't she give in?

Over the past year, she had begun to look deeply inside herself. To find the things she wanted to change, things that were very hard to admit, even to herself. The fact she wanted to be dominated in the bedroom had come as an utter shock. It had been hard enough to admit it to herself, but how did you go about admitting it to another?

It was mind-boggling that she would crave the precise thing that had ended her marriage.

Even during the best of times, the horrible memories came flooding back. Serena ran a shaky hand along her throat, then through the tangles of her hair. She would not think about it.

Would things be different this time? She wasn't sure, but even if she thought they would be she just couldn't bring herself to the point of making her desires known. The thought of disappointing Zane scared her. If she admitted her needs, would he think she was twisted? Would he want her less?

The pessimistic thoughts brought a frown to her face, but in the semi-darkness of the bedroom, there was no one to see it.

It was as if she were stuck between a rock and a hard spot. If she said nothing, things would never change. Could she go on forever wondering "what if"?

Her life was simple. Kept busy by a job she loved and a deep fondness for Zane. Those two things kept her comfortable. Of course, that was another part of the problem—she no longer wanted things to merely be comfortable.

The thought of being a bit uncomfortable, of feeling the generous length of Zane's shaft as it tunneled with fierce thrusts through her sopping center was what she wanted. It was what her body was all but demanding.

She needed for Zane to treat her as a woman, a woman whose body was made for loving. Not as a hothouse flower, touching her as if she was delicate glass.

The fact they had always gotten along well together both in the bedroom and out was comforting, but had there ever been that spark? The one talked about over and over in the erotic romance books she devoured.

Feelings ran deep, but Serena could not remember a time where they had let loose resulting in hot, sweaty sex.

How could she forget everything she'd been taught in the past and just go for it?

Would she be able to explain that more times than not, her sexual fantasies consisted of bondage? Sex where she was utterly dominated and brought so much pleasure she thought she would expire from the sheer force of it.

Could she explain to the man lying next to her that sometimes a woman wanted to be fucked instead of loved? She gave an unladylike snort at the thought. Shaking her head, she brought herself back into the present. There was no way she would ever in a million years be able to tell Zane what she longed for.

Back to square one and feeling a bit down in the dumps about the whole thing, Serena swung her legs off the edge of the bed and padded silently down the hall. Ice cream would make her feel better. There was nothing like double chocolate chip to solve the sexual problems of women everywhere.

* * * * *

Zane O'Malley felt like a man possessed. Watching the gentle sway of Rena's hips as she walked down the hall brought his semi-erect cock to attention. The curve of her ass as it met the uppermost part of her thighs was one of his favorite parts of her body.

There was just something about her that had his libido engaged in a constant battle. If that wasn't the damndest thing, he didn't know what was. Over the years of their relationship, he had learned to keep a tight rein on his lustful thoughts. Afraid that if he let loose, she would pull away from him and they would never have a chance to see where their relationship would end up.

Sometimes it was harder than others, but so far, he'd managed to control himself. Moving halfway across the United States was the only thing that kept the knowledge of his past from Serena. He often wondered what would happen if they ran into an old

flame or one of his brothers. How would she take the news that he was not the man she thought him to be? The news that he liked his women submissive and ready.

He thought of packing up and moving home in order to be closer to his family, but had yet to bring it up in conversation. What would her reaction be if she were to find out just how much he had been holding back over the past four years? Knowing about her past helped keep him in control, but it was getting harder and harder to keep the animal at bay. Something was going to have to give, and soon.

His feelings for Rena were genuine, he would never intentionally hurt her, but he felt trapped, unfulfilled. Like a caged animal willing to do anything for release. It took every ounce of willpower to let her go every morning when what he really longed to do was to fuck her into oblivion. He often thought of taking her aggressively, or rubbing his cock between the cheeks of her ass before breaching the tight passage.

The messages drummed into his head throughout childhood kept him from treating her in a way she might find offensive when what he really wanted to do was take her in every position possible while she was bound and blindfolded.

He would then release his pent-up fantasies by pounding into her tight sheath with every inch of his rock-hard cock. She would cry and beg for it and in the moment her ever-explosive body found its release and satisfaction, she would shudder through one orgasm after another until he was sure she was thoroughly drained.

At that time, he would come deep within her. Keeping himself buried to the hilt, allowing no separation throughout the night, forcing his length deep every time she tried to move. Keeping her body hostage, at the same time imprisoning his within her.

Breaking through her controlled exterior was a goal, almost an obsession if the truth were told. If he had his way, there would be no more quiet lovemaking. Tiny moans and muffled gasps were not enough when what he longed to hear were screams. Begging, pleading and pleasure-induced sobs telling of the sweet torture her body could no longer resist.

Instead, he treated Rena as if she might break. Sometimes he wondered what would happen if he pushed. If instead of giving her the choice, he took her the way his body ached to, hard, deep and fast.

Would she balk if he insisted she submit to him in every way where sex was concerned? Would she leave if he pressed? So many questions and no damned answers! It was extremely frustrating.

Every nerve in his body tingled at the thought of his Rena blindfolded, hands cuffed high over head while he worked her over until she could no longer remain the quiet, controlled woman she struggled to be.

He had taken to doing something, anything as soon as they were finished with sex in order not to push her. From there, things went downhill. It was almost to the point of penciling in a time and date for intercourse.

To make matters worse, they seemed to only have sex in the dark and never got very inventive when it came to positions or exploring. Boring sex was almost as bad as no sex. Well, not quite, but close.

A lot of the blame could be pinned on him, he would be the first to admit. They were stuck in a rut and it seemed neither did a thing to change it. He didn't press and she didn't offer. It was comfortable.

He realized a short time ago that they were probably still together because it was easier to stay together than it was to split up. Thinking of it that way grated on his nerves, but it was the truth.

The thought of having a fling had crossed his mind on many occasions, but as of yet he hadn't been able to bring himself to do it. Without assessing his feelings for Rena too closely, he just didn't feel right about it. And yet, his body yearned to feel the power coursing through it as had happened when he'd been a single man bedding a submissive woman.

The excitement and control was unlike anything else he could think to compare it to. Giving that up for the past four years had turned him into a different man, one he

wasn't sure he liked much. The outgoing Zane O'Malley was gone. He'd been replaced by an uptight, nine-to-five, three-piece suit. It was time some changes were made. He just needed to figure out how to go about doing it without hurting himself or Rena in the process.

No longer willing to dwell upon an unpredictable future, Zane left the warmth of the comforter covering him and went to see where Rena was.

He found her standing at the kitchen counter, foot tapping in time to classic rock softly sounding from the speakers. It made him hurt. His body always seemed to go on alert where his sassy lover was concerned. Her pink tongue kept darting out to lick ice cream from a cone. His shaft pulsed with every flick of her tasting tongue.

He could picture the same pink tongue licking him. With his eyes closed, he could almost feel each lick she bestowed upon the creamy confection.

If only he could do what his body hungered to do. Only the thought of alienating her stopped him. Instead he did what he knew would keep him on track. He started a conversation having nothing to do with their physical relationship.

"So, have you heard anything from your new clients?" he asked trying to focus on anything besides the way she lapped at the ice cream cone.

Serena whirled around, upending her cone in the process. The ice cream fell top down with a splat onto the floor.

"Sorry," he said watching as she moved silently back to the counter where she retrieved a wad of paper towels.

"That's okay," she said as she bent to clean the sticky mess. She then leaned over giving him a peck on the cheek. "I have a meeting with the business owners tomorrow, so I won't know anything until then."

He knew Rena loved her job and she was good at it. Making personal and business websites kept her busy and it was a job she could perform from home. "Is it a personal or business website they want to hire you for?" he asked conversationally.

"I really don't know," she said. Nose scrunched, she shook her head. "They were sort of secretive in their e-mail to me. It said they preferred to meet me in person to speak about the details. I don't even know what type of site I'm being hired to build."

Her face remained scrunched up. It was a look he loved. One reminding him of a disgruntled Kewpie doll.

Zane thought it over for a minute before he cautioned her.

"Be careful, baby. Don't go anywhere alone with them."

Rena assured him she would be meeting her prospective clients in a public place at lunchtime so there would be nothing to worry about.

With that, he gave her a slow gentle kiss just the way he always did before going to bed, then left the kitchen.

It was quite a while before Rena joined him. Where had she been? What was she doing? He could picture her sitting in front of her computer, staring at the screen with her green eyes glazed in concentration.

Did she think about their lack of sex or the fact their sex life was as boring as a Mr. Rogers rerun? Probably not, he thought with a half smile.

If everything his mother had taught him about women was true then Rena more than likely never gave sex more than a passing thought. He wondered how women could be so different. His mother, a true gentle woman warned him of his overbearing bedroom manners after hearing stories of his sexcapades. It probably didn't help any that he had been caught in the act on one occasion.

He still grimaced every time he remembered the look on her face at that very moment. To find him plowing the prom queen right there on the living room couch probably hadn't been the highlight of her life either.

She had repeatedly scolded him for treating women improperly. So often, she tried to make him believe that any woman who liked the dark, lustier side of sex was deranged. He still laughed at the thought, but felt the need to heed her teachings when

it came to Serena Keller. Her slight build and milky-white complexion brought out the protective side of him. Even if it was someone like him she needed to be protected from.

He watched from beneath lowered lashes as Serena slipped silently into the room and climbed back into bed. Within moments, she was asleep. The deep even breaths coming from the woman beside him were relaxing.

He snuggled up close behind her, his mind wandering back to a time before Rena. A time when his body insisted on taking what it needed from the women he brought to his bed. He could no longer remember names or even faces—only the explosive coupling remained with him.

He missed the wild abandon. The difference was that the other women had known about the O'Malley brothers. They went into the relationships, no matter how short-lived, knowing exactly what to expect.

That wasn't the case with Rena. She grew up pretty much alone. Marrying young had not been a good experience for her, leaving her unsure and wary about men. He never wanted her to feel the shame and humiliation she'd felt while in the arms of her ex-husband.

Memories assailed him. He wanted to wrap his hands around the throat of the bastard who dared to treat Rena like a slab of meat. That night so long ago, when she'd bared her soul, unburdening her heart, had left him shaken. Had his unusual sexual tastes ever left a woman feeling the same? Thinking back, he was sure that wasn't the case. He might have loved being dominant when it came to sex, but all present had been willing and eager.

Pleasing a woman, hearing the sultry words spill from her lips as he pushed her over the edge, that's what got him off.

Such thoughts kept him awake until finally his eyes grew heavy, then the dreams took over. Dreams of bondage and total capitulation with a woman he loved. Exciting sex that kept both parties teetering on the edge. Did such a thing exist? It must, his

sleep-drugged brain taunted him. It's just a matter of finding and training the right woman.

Chapter One

Serena checked her appearance one last time in the mirrored closet door. The hug of her navy blue skirt was neither too tight nor too loose. As always, her attire was completely professional. The white silk shirt never dipped too low, a button never left undone. She often wondered how the woman staring back at her could be so outwardly different from the one buried deep inside.

Nylon-clad feet slipped easily into comfortable pumps. Tiny gold studs graced her ears, the only jewelry except her watch to adorn her body. A pink-tipped finger ran the length of her collarbone moving inward until it reached the dip at the base of her throat.

Her green eyes watched the movement in the mirror. Never once, as her fingers slid smoothly over her skin, did she long for a shiny gold necklace. No, her taste ran more toward the exotic, a collar. One, that would show ownership of her body. A body longing to be lovingly possessed.

It was hard to get used to. The fact she was no longer the conservative woman she strived to be. The exact moment things began to change couldn't be pinpointed. It was like a slow transformation, one she wasn't sure would ever be complete. That may very well be what frightened her most, the fact that she had no time limit to follow. It was like being left dangling on the end of a rope. A very precarious feeling for a woman who insisted on always being in control.

Control and the need to always feel it was what disturbed her. It was okay in her everyday life but no longer worked for her private life. How would she ever learn to experiment, to experience, if she couldn't give up the control she held so tightly?

And yet, if she did give up control of her body, of her sexuality, would she lose herself in the process? Too many questions and not enough answers. It was so

frustrating to need so deeply and not know how to go about finding a means to satisfy that need.

“Good luck with your meeting, Rena. You’ll knock their socks off, I’m sure.” The way he came up behind her all quiet and controlled startled her. She’d been so engrossed with her inner thoughts that she’d missed him in the mirror as he’d come up behind her.

“Thank you,” she whispered as he leaned in and kissed the side of her neck just below her ear. “I’ll call you when I’m finished,” she added when normal brain function returned. Her neck still felt warm and tingly from his kiss and the feathering of his breath across her skin, as he talked low and husky near her ear.

Serena listened intently as he once again cautioned her, reminding her to stay in the restaurant and to call if she needed him for anything.

When he left for work, she couldn’t help but wonder what her relationship with Zane would be like had they started out communicating instead of just letting things happen. Would things have evolved into a more open relationship? Would they be having knee-buckling sex on a nightly basis? Under those circumstances, would she have been able to tell him of all her secret fantasies without the inner turmoil she now felt?

There has to be something I can do, she thought as she made her way into the kitchen to retrieve her purse. Some way to get what she longed for, what her body, mind and soul craved without being unfaithful. Could she find a way? And if so, how would she know it was the right decision?

The twenty-minute drive to the restaurant left her a lot of time to think. What exactly was it she was looking for? There were so many sides to eroticism. She had to be sure of her wants and needs before she could even begin to make plans. And yet how could she be sure without any experience?

Domination. Bondage. Loss of control. These were among the things her mind mentally checked off. To be able to have a loving trusting relationship with a man who

would leave her no choice. Those thoughts alone were enough to make her skin tingle, the flesh of her inner thighs heat causing her to become slick with her own juices.

Damn! Good thing she'd taken to carrying extra panties in her bag. Erotically sensual thoughts seemed to keep her aroused and wet.

Hell, the way things had been going lately she might be better off to forego panties altogether.

Would she be able to find a man who could take her in hand and teach her submission without humiliation? The thought of being degraded or hurt was not at all appealing. A little pain could go a long way, so how could she know for sure what a partner might do?

She couldn't, that was part of the excitement. The fear factor. Fear of the unknown—of letting go.

Pulling into the large parking lot, Serena took one last look in her rearview mirror to be sure no wisps of hair had escaped the tight twist at the nape of her neck. Probably one more thing on the long list of things she could control.

Upon entering the restaurant, Serena was met by a hostess.

"May I help you, ma'am?" the neatly dressed woman asked.

"Serena Keller. I'm meeting the Bennetts," Serena answered politely nodding her thanks when the woman motioned her to follow.

Immediately, she was whisked away into the dimly lit interior. With chin lifted and back straight, she followed the woman through the cozily furnished room. The whole time her eyes were riveted on a couple sitting closely together at a table in the far corner.

The voluptuous brunette was smiling into the face of a handsome man with hair the color of sand. He idly stroked the back of her hand where it rested on the tabletop.

He looked as if he might devour her on the spot. She looked like a woman who would willingly climb onto the center of the table and let him have his way right there for all to see. There was no discomfort, no unease in their movements.

It was a brief second before Serena realized she'd been led to and stood staring at the very couple she'd excitedly watched on her journey across the room.

Moving as one, the couple stood. Glad for a tiny respite, she gave her drink order to an eager waiter. Fighting her embarrassment at being caught staring, Serena stuck out a hand.

"Hello," she said. "I'm Serena Keller."

The handsome man standing across from her took her hand in his. "Nice to meet you, Ms Keller." His palm was warm and his firm grasp sent a jolt of awareness straight up her arm. This man may seem relaxed and carefree, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Continuing, he said. "I'm Josh Bennett and this is Jenna."

"Please, call me Serena." She wasn't quite sure, but something about this couple was different. The difference might be subtle, but it was there.

"Okay, Serena," he said as he released her hand.

Serena shifted her gaze to the woman standing beside him. She was of average height, but that's where anything average about her stopped. Exotic almond-shaped eyes stared back. Golden flawless skin covered perfect bone structure and her body was to die for. She had yet to speak.

Josh leaned in and whispered something in her ear, making the woman smile. A blush crept from her chest to her neck then higher. Serena could tell the woman wore no bra. Pierced nipples stood proudly erect against the peach shirt highlighting her golden tan. The neckline was square and low. Collarbones thrust out above full breasts.

That's when she noticed it, the collar. It wasn't a necklace, not in the sense of what she considered normal. Wide and fitted, it was an intricate work of gold and about the sexiest thing she'd ever seen.

The woman introduced to her as Jenna fondly fingered the collar. Then her husky deep voice broke the spell Serena had fallen under.

“You like it?” she asked. “Josh gave it to me,” the woman added while she openly let her eyes roam over the curves of Serena’s body. Serena could feel the blush converging over her features and was helpless to do anything about it. Before she thought to speak, Jenna continued. “Please forgive my rudeness upon your arrival. I was waiting for Josh’s approval.”

Approval? Approval for what? Serena silently wondered. Josh waved them into their seats. Once they were both seated, he once again took his.

“I can tell by the look on your face that you have questions. I’d also venture to say that your questions aren’t only professional in nature,” Josh said to her before continuing. “Please allow me to explain. Jenna is my wife, my love. She also happens to be my submissive. She was a bad girl yesterday, part of her punishment is that she cannot speak today unless given permission to do so.”

Part of Serena bristled at what the man across from her just said, but the look of love and contentment written all over Jenna’s face quickly changed her mind.

She longed to ask Josh what the rest of Jenna’s punishment was, but didn’t dare.

As if reading her mind, Jenna reached out and began to stroke the back of Serena’s hand. It was an odd sensation. Never before had she been touched by a woman. It wasn’t repulsive, but it didn’t arouse her either.

When Josh did the same to her other hand, she fought the need to pull away. His slight touch raised chill bumps that ran the length of her arms. He was a man in control, one who would ask and expect to be answered.

How she knew, she had no idea. It was a feeling she had, just the same as the feeling that the man across from her could be trusted. His every movement, every touch, proved the love and respect he felt for his wife. His feelings were obvious and ran deep.

“Have you ever been spanked?” Jenna asked quietly leaning closer as she did.

For a minute, Serena was struck dumb. Did she have a darned sign stamped on her forehead or something? Did it say *I want to be dominated or spank me?*

"N-no," she croaked.

"That's what the rest of my punishment was. That was what you were wondering wasn't it?"

"Yes," she admitted through suddenly parched lips.

"First he made me remove my clothes and then I was told to kneel before him. With my elbows on the floor and my bottom in the air, he used my favorite paddle. The sting burned forever," she said in a hushed voice. "But then he took me in his arms and made love to me, long and slow."

Oh god, she could feel her blush deepen and spread. Great! How professional would she seem now? Serena was having a heck of a time controlling the urge to grind herself into her seat. Just the low-lidded look on their faces was enough to make the room feel ten degrees hotter. Not to mention what it did to her dry panties.

Stifling a groan, she opened her mouth to speak, but was abruptly cut off by the firming of Josh's grasp upon her hand.

"I don't know who he is or if he even exists for you yet, but I can see it in your eyes. In the way you carry yourself. You crave to be dominated, it's written across every feature of your face. The way your face is flushed, the color riding high on your cheeks. It's in every breath you take."

His voice was soothing, almost coaxing in its deep sensuality.

The circles his finger was making on the back of her hand punctuated every word he spoke. "If you have no one and are ready to delve into your submissive side, Jenna and I will be glad to help you."

Holy moly! She couldn't get a word out, but it didn't matter because Josh wasn't done. "You would like that, wouldn't you, Serena? I could see it on your face as you watched Jenna's fingers stroke the gift of my possession. A gift I bestowed upon her the

first night she completely submitted to me. Would you like to wear proof of my possession too, sweet Serena?"

"Uh," she couldn't get her brain to form thoughts much less coherent words. "I'm in a relationship right now, but thank you anyway."

Not sure of what to say, Serena decided to stay where she was comfortable. "What type of website were you looking to have designed?"

Josh gave her a knowing smile. "We own an online adult business. Part of the site is free. In this part, we offer free stories, personal want ads and general information. The paid area of our site is an adult store where we sell pretty much everything you can think of." He gave Jenna's hand a gentle squeeze, she continued where he left off.

"I've been the webmistress since we opened, but I can no longer keep up with the traffic and my other duties, so we decided to hire someone to rebuild it. We surfed around and kept coming across your name. Would you be interested in working for us?"

The whole way home Serena could not stop thinking about Josh and Jenna. They were so different and at the same time they were...normal. In a way, she wished she would have asked some personal questions. They seemed open to discussion. Several times her curiosity had almost gotten the best of her.

* * * * *

Several days later, Zane lay in bed, his laptop computer set across his thighs. Sounds of the modem connecting awoke Serena. She stretched her hands above her head rolling toward the muffled sounds.

"Zane?"

"Hmmm?"

"When you finish what you're doing, would you give the new site I'm building a once-over?" she asked through a yawn.

"Sure, Rena," he said, head bent forward, fingers flying across the keyboard.

Serena mumbled out the web address, rolled over and before he could ask questions, she was once again sound asleep. Surely, he'd heard her wrong? No longer able to concentrate on the work in front of him, Zane saved the file and typed in the address Rena had just given him.

Without even a glance at what the site had to offer, he scrolled to the bottom of the page. Sure enough, right there for all to see was her name and business e-mail address.

Zane chuckled, he wondered how his straitlaced, prim and proper Rena had been roped into building an erotic website?

He couldn't hold back his curiosity so nudging her shoulder, he woke her up. "Rena?"

"Yeah?" she answered sleepily.

"How in the world did you end up with this job?" He couldn't help the amusement lacing his voice. Evidently, Serena also heard it because she sat up in bed and gave him a harsh look.

"Don't get all bent out of shape, babe. I'm just saying it's hardly you."

"Would you just look it over, Zane? I didn't ask for your opinion, just your help. Click on the links and browse around and make sure everything is working." He held back his chuckle knowing damned well she was pissed.

When he started checking things out, she added. "Besides, when I met with the owners the other day, they didn't seem to mind if I was the type. Since they propositioned me, I'd say they didn't mind at all."

After dropping that bomb, she promptly rolled over showing him her back.

"What in the hell do you mean they propositioned you?"

He watched as she once again sat up in bed. The bedspread dipped low around her waist completely baring the top half of her body to his view.

The filmy pink tank top she wore wasn't nearly thick enough to conceal her nipples. The darker brown of her areolas circled the pink tips. His mouth watered thinking about what he wanted to do to them. How he wanted to suck them deep into his mouth, tugging and tonguing until she was mad with need.

Forcing his gaze from her breasts, he decided that now she just looked plain annoyed.

"Just what I said. Just because you think of me as a geek doesn't mean someone else might not find me sexy." She was on a roll now and there would be no stopping her. "The owner and his wife asked me if I'd like to spend some time with them. I told them no, of course."

"Of course," he mumbled more than a little unnerved about someone else wanting what was his. When Serena scooted lower on the bed to lie down, he stopped her.

"Let's look it over together?" he asked.

She nodded her head in answer.

The next thirty minutes or so was spent checking the site over. The graphics were just amazing. Explicitly erotic. Some were home shots of the average housewife while others looked more professionally done.

Beside him, Rena gave a groan of what could only be embarrassment at a detailed photo of a couple engaged in oral sex.

Just looking at the photos had him hard as steel. The few times he'd glanced at Serena made him even harder. Her face was flushed a rosy red, her eyes seemed to dart around the room while snatching quick glances at the screen of his laptop. She couldn't seem to sit still. Her squirming movements beside him only made matters worse. His arousal was at an all-time high. And dammit, he knew if he didn't let her off the hook now he'd embarrass them both. Besides, she was a good sport sitting by his side the

whole time even though it was obvious she was uncomfortable doing so. The least he could do would be to let her go back to sleep.

Settling a chaste kiss on her brow he said, "Why don't you go ahead and go to sleep? I'll finish looking it over and let you know tomorrow if I found anything."

When she'd settled in, he took up where they had left off.

Well, she'd asked him to take a look around, so that was exactly what he would do.

The site was an educational experience. For a man who loved to dominate his women sexually, he was a bit surprised by the amount of traffic the site generated. Were there really that many people out there interested in pushing the envelope? It was sort of like a balm to know he and his brothers weren't the only ones out there who preferred more than straight vanilla sex.

He clicked on links to make sure they worked, reading all the while. When he came across a section devoted entirely to personal want ads, he decided to take a peek. There were many options, much more than any newspaper could boast. Depending on your lifestyle, sex and sexual orientation, to name a few, you could find anything or anyone you ever dreamed about.

Zane clicked on a link that took him to ads for single submissive females. There were hundreds of them. All short, sweet and to the point. That was one thing about the Internet—inhibitions ran low. People felt comfortable to let loose, to say things about themselves they might not be able or willing to admit face to face.

As he scrolled the page, some of the ads leapt out at him. The things some of the women wanted seemed barbaric. He couldn't picture himself physically hurting a woman. A lot of pleasure and a tiny bit of pain could bring a woman to an explosive orgasm. The right combination could make a woman beg and plead for more.

Closing the page for submissive singles, Zane decided to take a peek at what type of ads dominant males were submitting. Once again, he was struck by some of the out-there posts he was reading.

Before he could comprehend completely what he was doing, he typed out an ad of his own. What would it hurt? No one would probably answer, he told himself. And if they did, well, he would deal with that when the time came.

His conscience warned him. The steady, deep breaths of the woman lying next to him reminded him, but he couldn't give up such a chance. When opportunity knocks, you answer the door.

Unsure fingers quickly finished the ad to his specifications. The cursor flashed over the send button, there was no fighting it.

The need within him was overwhelming. His cock strained against his sweatpants, nudging the underside of his laptop. For so long he'd fought the truth. Tried to hide from the fact he was different. He should have known he couldn't hold back the beast forever.

Hell, just talking to his brothers on the phone was enough to bring on a raging erection. The three of them had always been close, but once they became sexually active, that closeness blossomed. He missed his brothers. Moving home seemed more promising every day.

Back in the now, Zane clicked the button. It was done, the message was sent. Now for the wait. There was no guarantee it would even be answered.

He could always answer some of the others. Now that he had taken the step, brought the possibility within reach, he knew there was no going back. He was beyond the point of no return.

Soon he would have to give consideration to Rena. How could he tell her the reason for their split? How could he not, she deserved at least that much. Guilt ate at him.

He couldn't do it. The one ad was enough. If he didn't get an answer back, he would have to think of something else, but for some odd reason he wasn't worried about it. Something about the ad he placed felt right. Without analyzing it, Zane decided to just go with the flow.

Chapter Two

Serena stared out the kitchen window watching, wondering. The past week swam through her mind as her still shaky knees led her to a stool at the breakfast bar. Lord have mercy! The fingers of her right hand traveled over a love bite marring her tender skin. It was unlike anything Zane had ever done to her.

Excitement and apprehension flowed through her veins in remembrance. Her body longed to be completely taken in the same way as he'd started to earlier in the day.

The feelings were new and frightening. Never in a million years could she picture stuffy, straitlaced Zane as the aggressor. They always sort of just came together. Until just a few minutes ago, their relationship had been based on convenience. Nothing more, nothing less.

He'd come out of nowhere, silent as a slight breeze. She didn't even know he was there until she felt the length of him pressed to her back.

Within moments, the unmistakable presence of his jutting arousal was nudged snugly against her backside. In reaction, her body began to tremble. It took no more than his touch and her imagination to cause such an immediate response.

Serena lost count of how many scoops of coffee she was at as Zane's large hands ran the length of her spine. The light pressure at her back caused her to lean slightly forward.

Serena could hear Zane's ragged breathing. It sounded much like her own.

Take me dammit. Take me! Her mind screamed and yet she couldn't force the words from her lips.

Splayed fingers snaked around her front. Finding her breasts, they squeezed and plucked at already pebbled nipples. A small whimper escaped her throat a second later when she felt a sharp nip on the tender skin where neck met shoulder.

The pain was brief, but intense, leaving her breathless. Her heart raced with the possibilities. Combined with the heat of his cock rubbing against her bottom and the fingers rolling her nipples, her knees could no longer hold her weight. They finally buckled.

Had it not been for the close proximity of Zane, Serena was sure she would have melted to a puddle right there on the kitchen floor.

A string of muttered curses cleared her head and brought strength back into her legs. When she felt able, she turned to look at Zane.

“Son of a bitch,” he said. “I’m sorry, Rena. I...I... Aw, hell!”

Serena watched as emotions played across Zane’s face. Self-loathing flashed quickly as well as, what? What was that? Guilt? He felt guilty for what had just happened. Serena wanted to laugh, or cry. She wasn’t sure which. He felt guilty and all she wanted was more. Why in the hell couldn’t she just tell him how excited she felt? How hot she was. If he’d only check for himself, the wetness of her panties, the slick juices coating her pussy were surely proof enough.

Working up the nerve, Serena opened her mouth then quickly closed it. She tried again then shook her head to clear it. She’d just managed to pry her still shocked lips apart when Zane pushed his hand through the waves of his brown hair, spun on his heel and stalked out the front door.

Still sitting at the breakfast bar, she let her mind wander over the past week. At first, she thought it had all been her warped imagination. Tiny changes no one else would notice, but she had.

Things as simple as slight mood changes. Zane seemed to sit with a brooding look on his face. Something he’d never done before. His normal happy-go-lucky self had become deadly serious on more than one occasion. Another facet of Zane Serena had never before witnessed.

Smoldering eyes spent a lot more time following her as if studying her the way a scientist would study a specimen. It was disconcerting. He seemed to be battling some sort of internal conflict.

The whole thing only brought closer to the surface just how far apart their relationship was that Zane didn't feel he could talk to her. And at the same time, she didn't feel as if she could go to him and ask what was wrong. She often wondered if this was the beginning of the end for them.

Those were some of the things she would love to change. Another was the fact that during the past week Zane had become violently aroused on several occasions. She'd even noticed it last night when they had gone over the website together. That was something she was enjoying and didn't want to see change.

And yet, he hadn't even so much as kissed her.

Today was the first day he'd acted on his severe state of arousal. That he'd shown any loss of control. It made Serena wonder just what she could do to nudge him in the right direction.

Even if she could push him, what would it accomplish? It would probably just make things worse. If she backed him into a corner, forced him into taking her the way she wanted to be taken, he would probably run.

Later that same afternoon, Serena sat in front of her computer remembering a past that haunted her. A past that was always just a thought, a nightmare away.

How could she want so desperately to once again attain what had taken all her will to break away from?

It won't be the same with someone who loves you, she reminded herself.

Getting married so young was not the problem. The problem was that her ex-husband had been a sick bastard. His sole purpose in life was to humiliate her.

At first, Serena thought his commanding presence to be exciting. The thought of being tied to his bed, of being loved recklessly, had heightened her arousal. That was before her dreams had become reality. A reality she wouldn't wish on her worst enemy.

It was before the man in question taught her never to trust. To never give herself completely to man or woman, emotionally or physically. It had been a lesson learned the hard way. One she'd fought tooth and nail.

She wondered if she would ever again be the carefree soul of her youth. The answer came quickly. There was no going back, only forward.

With her head bent, Serena began doing the final checks on the erotic site she was finishing up. After an hour or so of surfing from page to page, she couldn't help but take one last look at the *Single Doms Looking for Single Subs* page. Many posts were new. The site had an enormous amount of traffic, but one post in particular caught her eye. It was a Dominant man looking for an intelligent, independent woman with submissive tendencies.

He went on further to say she must be willing to give over all control in the bedroom.

Serena scanned the rest of the ad, her heart beating double time. She scanned down until she could read his username then scrolled to the bottom of the board until she could see who was online. He was active.

Her breath caught as she made her way to the chat room he was logged into.

* * * * *

A week later as Zane made his way to his office, he was still mentally kicking his own ass. Things just seemed to get worse by the day.

Damn, damn, damn! What in the hell could he be thinking? His body ached with need. Good god, he could still feel the soft curve of her ass cheeks as they'd warmed his straining erection. And it had been damned near a week since that little episode.

A week of torturous hell.

A week of doing everything in his power to stay away for fear of devouring Serena whole.

A fierce need to take her right where she stood had set his feet in her direction before his brain had thought to engage.

Switching on his computer, he made his way to the coffeemaker.

During the past week, Zane had fought himself. Fought his needs. He was like a hunter stalking its prey. And because of their living arrangement, Serena had become his prey.

He no longer felt happy when he looked at her watched the movements of her luscious body. No, now he felt unrelenting heat. Barely contained lust he was having a hell of a time hiding. The online conversations with the submissive woman who had read his ad only made matters worse because now he realized just how bad off his relationship with Serena really was.

Cup of coffee in hand, Zane settled in front of his computer and as was becoming habit, he logged into the chat room where he would meet ESKAY. It was a private chat room. The moment her username popped onto his screen, his cock hardened and lengthened.

How's it going? he questioned.

Real good, and you? she answered. Polite conversation wasn't at all what he was in the mood for. Right now, he wanted to hear her deepest, nastiest secrets.

All is well here, but it'll be even better as soon as you start sharing more of your fantasies with me. The cut of his slacks left him much needed room, which was a good thing because just the expectancy of more of her stories was enough to make him come.

You with me? he typed when she didn't answer.

Yeah, I'm here. What was it you wanted to know?

He could tell from how slow she was responding that she must be nervous.

I want to hear all of them, eventually, but for right now, your naughtiest will do.

Several seconds ticked by before there was an answer.

Well, I want to be made to submit. You know that, but I also want so much more.

There was another pause before more words began showing on his screen. *I've not tried very much so I guess you could say I'd like to try it all. One of my biggest fantasies is to be spanked.*

Oh hell, his palms itched at the thought. His raging erection was turning into a monster insisting on release. Lowering the zipper of his slacks, he palmed himself. The feel of his heated skin within his own hand made him think of insisting ESKAY experience the same.

What are you wearing right now? Typing with one hand was slow going.

Wearing?

Yeah, darling. What are you wearing? Whatever it is I want you to take it off and play with that pretty pussy of yours just as I'm stroking my cock. I want you to tell me piece by piece what you've removed.

No new message flashed across his screen. Was she removing her clothes or was she thinking? Hell, for all he knew she'd left. Damn, this was frustrating!

I just unbuttoned my blouse, popped up on his screen. His cock did the same, popped up, that is, at the typed words.

Now what, your bra?

I'm not wearing one today, only a white lace chemise. Oh, shit! He wondered if her nipples were puckered and pressing against the lace. Were they petal pink or a natural brown, maybe just a shade darker than the rest of her skin?

It's off too, as is my skirt. Now I'm only wearing my panties and hose.

What kind of hose?

The kind that stop at the thigh, but they're not held up with garters. They're white with lace tops.

His hand worked the length of his shaft in an up and down pumping motion as he read her words. He tried to picture her, what she looked like based on the description she'd given him, but couldn't seem to do it.

For some reason a woman with sparkling green eyes and lustrous strawberry blonde hair kept popping into his mind only it wasn't the woman he was chatting with. The woman who kept invading his thoughts was Rena and it made him feel guilty as hell.

Pushing away the guilt, he continued to work his length with one hand while typing directions to her with the other.

Leave the stockings on, but remove the panties...slowly. Pull them down while thinking about the width of my cock. Try and picture how it'll be the first time I spank your ass until it's red and hot. How you'll squirm and cry out every time the palm of my hand lands on your flesh. If she were there with him now, he wouldn't be able to hold back. He was having a hell of a time controlling it now, and he was alone.

Think about how good it'll be the first time I tie you up and take you. Can you imagine it? I can. I hear your cries of pleasure in my sleep as I dream about forcing every inch of my cock into your tight hole. Both of them. Eventually I'll take you every way there is for a man to have a woman.

Panting with excitement. The need to release overwhelming as his spine tingled. His balls were drawn up close to his body as if seeking comfort and release.

When the word *done* flashed on his screen, he almost lost his load.

Now tell me how you want to be spanked.

Oh, god, she typed. I want to be stripped or made to strip. I've seen it in my mind so many times. I've dreamed about it.

And after you're stripped? he prodded getting quickly closer to his own release.

After that, I want to be placed over your knee. To feel your strength beneath me. Then I want you to make my bottom burn. I've read it will make me burn not only on the outside but on the inside also. Do you know if it's true?

Holy hell, he wasn't going to be able to hold out for much longer. His grasp grew steadily stronger around the flesh of his staff as his hand jerked up and down.

You making yourself wet, baby? I want you to come while you talk to me. I'm almost there myself.

I am...oh, I am. She typed. Normally everything she did was in perfect English. Complete sentences. It was strange to see a fragmented post, she must be close. How he wanted to be there with her.

Now, baby. Come now. Pumping his hand, he did so himself. Shuddering through his release, he vowed that the next time they wouldn't be talking online. Next time he would be seeing her face. Up close and personal.

The time was getting close. Soon they would have to meet.

Later that day, his thoughts reverted back to Serena and all that had happened between them over the past week.

How he would catch himself watching her. The force of his arousal was instant as he pictured all the things he wanted to do to her. Different ways to make her beg for more.

He was sure she would be disgusted if she could take a trip into his mind. A faint flicker of interest had quickly crossed her face, but interest in what? She could have no idea of the things he would do to her. How he wanted to push her to the limit and then push her some more.

He could imagine what her face would look like when he told her step-by-step what he wanted to do to her. Her parted pink lips would glisten as her tongue peeked out to moisten them. Cheeks flushed with desire and shock only made the paleness of her complexion that much more intense. The woman looked shocked, confused. If given half the chance, Zane would keep her that way.

There was no use in trying to keep the animal at bay. Soon he would sit Serena down and tell her what was in his heart. In his mind.

Guilt had become a big part of his day. There was so much to think about, it made his head throb. Should he tell Serena of his cyber-relationship now or after meeting *ESKAY*?

If he told her now and gave her the choice, would she choose to submit? If she chose not to, wouldn't that make things easier? He would no longer have Serena to worry about. He would then be free to follow through with finding a woman to fill his life. One who would relent in every way thinkable. So why did the thought of not having Serena in his life bother him so much?

Fingers pinched the bridge of his nose trying to keep the monster headache away. There was no time to delve into his feelings just now. He had a choice to make. Would he tell Serena about the mystery woman before or after meeting her?

God, he needed to talk to his brother.

There was just something about Hayden's slow drawl that could soothe the wildest of beasts. Picking up the phone, Zane punched in the numbers that would link him with his big brother. With home.

"Yeah," a voice answered on the other end of the line. Zane's brow creased in confusion. The voice was Hayden's but it was anything but calm.

"Dammit! Is anybody there?" the voice growled. Yep, it was definitely Hayden's voice.

"I'm here. What in the hell's wrong with you?"

"Hey, baby brother. How's it goin' out there in sunny Californ-I-A?" It was a standing joke between the O'Malley brothers how Zane had opted to move far away in order to get out from under their father's thumb.

"Sunny," he answered feeling better than he had just a few brief moments ago.

Zane could hear something in the background. It sounded suspiciously like a screaming woman. And possibly even glass breaking.

"What in the hell is that, Hayden?"

“Oh hell, don’t mind her none. It’s just The Hellion and she’s done got herself in trouble with Judge Gumar again.”

“Austin?” Zane couldn’t help but chuckle. They had aptly named her The Hellion when she was about ten years old. All of a sudden, Zane felt even more homesick.

“What she do this time?”

“Her and that damned car, tearin’ up the roads, sellin’ her wares,” he added in a disgusted voice. “Judge told her she could either have a real job by the end of the week or she could spend thirty days in jail. She opted for the job and I needed a bookkeeper.”

This time there was no chuckle about it. Zane’s laugh was outright loud and obnoxious. The thought of Hayden, the rough and ready rancher and Austin, The Hellion, thrown together on a daily basis was almost more than he could imagine.

When the background noise got too loud to hear the phone conversation, Hayden hung up saying something about an ass whoopin’.

Ten minutes later, when Zane settled in front of his computer, he was still wiping tears of laughter from his eyes.

The click of the mouse sent him to the private chat room where he’d been meeting his mystery lady, *ESKAY*. Slowly, methodically he read over each message she’d left him, each fantasy she’d shared. It probably wasn’t wise to save them, but he couldn’t seem to help himself.

ESKAY knew he was in a long-term relationship, she admitted to being in one herself. Further conversation between the two revealed neither was completely happy. They were looking for more. They talked about their lack of communication with their partners and how it had caused a gap that could not be comfortably bridged.

ESKAY insisted she was looking for a monogamous relationship, not a fling. How happy he’d been to hear that. At the age of thirty-two, Zane was ready to settle down. After being married for a few years, he looked forward to starting a family. Life would be grand. All he needed was a woman who shared his ideas and views on life. A woman he could communicate with in every way.

Once again, his mind wandered to Serena.

He could picture her long strawberry blonde hair flowing over creamy bare shoulders in a mass of curls. Her green eyes could bore a hole through to the heart of any man. Eyes that had witnessed too much at a young age.

His revelation would hurt her. Zane couldn't remember a time where he'd given a shit about a woman's feelings enough to worry whether breaking off a relationship would cause her pain.

He didn't want to start now, but it seemed he had no choice in the matter.

He would meet the woman first. However things turned out, he would be completely honest with Serena. A deep breath whooshed out of full lungs as he turned his gaze back to the computer screen in front of him.

The click of the keyboard sounded in the noiseless room of Zane's office as he typed out a message.

It's time we met. I cannot wait a minute longer to see if you are who I've been waiting for. Tomorrow at noon on the corner of Ocean and Cape at a small pub called Patrick's. We'll talk then.

ZAOGUARD

His hand fisted after sending the message on its journey through cyberspace. There was no going back now. No returning to the life he'd led for the past four years.

It would be a new beginning. Zane replayed in his mind the phone conversation with his brothers. The excitement in their voices when they found out he soon planned to move back home. His heart rate increased at the thought of once again being close to the two people who meant the most to him. And since he was being honest with himself, the thought of seeing his father again wasn't nearly as bad as it used to be.

After the death of their mother, the O'Malley brothers had been inseparable. Returning home as a wealthy man would be nice. No longer would he feel the need to prove his worth to a father who had once felt let down by the fact that none of his sons chose to follow in his footsteps.

A small envelope flashed on the bottom corner of his computer screen notifying him of incoming mail. His pulse sped. This could be it. With another click, the message was open. Zane began to read.

I know where it is. I'll be there.

ESKAY

Damp palms slid along his slacks. Soon. Soon he would meet the mystery woman who could make him feel whole again. His conscience was nagging him, but not nearly as much as his cock. He hadn't seen the woman yet. Had never heard her voice and yet his body was responding. He was hard and ready. In need.

In need of control. To feel a warm body pressed tightly to his. Hands bound and out of the way. Totally at his mercy. It was such a heady thought to know that the possibility of a dream come true was so close at hand.

Zane's chair squeaked as he levered himself up, stretching the kinks out of his six foot sinewy frame. The snip of the lock clicking into place filled the room. Fully engorged, Zane lowered himself back down into the chair parked in front of his desk then lowered his zipper. It may have only been hours since he and ESKAY had gotten off while chatting, but he couldn't seem to help himself. He was so hard he hurt.

The teeth of his zipper grated along his throbbing sex as it was slowly lowered. His fully erect cock sprang free of his trousers. Its engorged head glistened with a drop of pre-cum as his large palm fisted its length.

Damn, but he needed the woman now. He needed the feel of a hot mouth gliding over his unyielding length.

A slow sigh fell from his lips as his head fell back against the chair. The rhythm of his hand caused his hips to buck. Up and down, squeezing and tugging, he brought himself closer. He kept his eyes closed, allowing his mind to wander.

Long hair shielded the face of the woman kneeling in front of him. His hands tangled in her hair as his hips rocked to and fro, his cock delving deep into her mouth.

"That's it, baby. Just relax and take me."

The heat of her mouth, as he imagined it would, inflamed him. His grip tightened as the woman submitted. Hands bound behind her back made it impossible to keep her balance with the quick thrusts of his pelvis.

His hold on her head would keep her right where he wanted her. In his mind, he could see the bliss on his own face. He could see his lips moving, he would be giving directions. Commanding her to do as he wanted.

“Suck me. I’m going deeper, Little One. Relax your throat and take all of me.”

The woman’s face was still hidden from his view. What would she look like?

Would her eyes be closed lightly, dark lashes sweeping the contour of her cheeks? Would she look him directly in the eye if he demanded it of her? The thought of staring directly into the windows of her soul as he exploded in her mouth kept him teetering on the edge. It would be a dream come true.

Serena had always avoided eye contact, keeping her eyes tightly closed during sex. Even though she never balked at oral sex, she also never offered to swallow or watch.

If the woman he was meeting worked out, she would consent to both. There would be no hiding, no holding back.

“Open your eyes, baby. I want to watch.” If she didn’t immediately respond, he would give the hair wrapped around his hand a tug until her eyes found his.

The sensations grew as his hand continued to stroke and tighten. Keeping himself on edge, but holding off the inevitable. Sweat beaded on his upper lip. Close, he was so close.

“Oh yeah...oh honey, I’m going to come.” He would then pull back until just the head of his shaft remained in her mouth.

“Here it comes, baby. Take all of it, swallow it all,” he groaned as his balls drew up with the imminent explosion. Then he came in the warm recess of her mouth holding her head in place as she worked frantically to swallow all his body offered.

His free hand fumbled for tissue as the other hand worked furiously between his legs. Once, twice, on the third stroke he broke. A low groan, ripped from the back of his throat, echoed off the walls as he tightened his hold, milking the last drop from his semi-rigid length.

At the same time, the face of the woman in his mind was revealed. A devilish smile curved a full, sassy mouth. Emerald green eyes sparkled as she licked her lips.

Just as quick, she was gone, but not before he recognized her.

Serena.

Oh, if only his Serena could be the same as the Serena he so often dreamed of.

Chapter Three

Serena faced her reflection in the mirror. It was not a pretty sight. After a long, sleepless night, she was left with dark shadows under her eyes. Her complexion was drawn, haggard-looking.

A hot shower would surely work wonders. If not, she was screwed. She pushed all thoughts of her lunch appointment away. Right now, she would focus on making herself presentable. Put all of her concentration into a relaxing morning.

After clearing the breakfast bar, Serena padded silently up the hall. Back in the bedroom, she stripped off her nightgown and panties. The full-length mirror hid nothing. Turning her back to the mirror, she looked over her shoulder.

The pale skin of her back seemed almost transparent. Never one to sunbathe due to fear of burning, her skin stayed a milky white. It seemed that no amount of sunscreen was enough to keep her fair skin from turning lobster red.

Freckles lightly covered her shoulders. With a critical eye, Serena let her gaze roam lower. Average was the first word that came to mind. Never had she considered her shape or assets to be above average. That was okay, she could deal with it.

Many times in her life, she had heard that if she only dressed more fashionably, or more provocatively, she would gain more attention.

As a businesswoman, she only wanted to seem professional. As a woman, she wanted to be noticed. There was a time when low-cut blouses and tight skirts were the norm for her. Then she had met Zane. As she got older, more comfortable, she no longer worried much about how she dressed, except when it came to business. That would all change today, she thought as she eyed the green slip dress hanging from the closet door.

Its thin straps would show off her shoulders. The rounded neckline would show just a hint of cleavage. The store clerk had assured her the length of the dress would enhance her legs.

To finish off the look, she had picked out a lacy white thong and lace top thigh-highs. Spiked heels would round out the look and make her calves look great. Now if only she could gain the confidence to wear an outfit so unlike what she normally wore. Thoughts of the silky dress caressing her bare bottom made her shiver. Her skin grew hot. She could feel the moistness begin between her legs. She squeezed her thighs together in an effort to ease the growing pulse there, but it did little to help.

Leaning over, Serena turned the faucet until the water temperature was just right. As the large, circular tub filled, she settled herself. Warm water caressed every smooth curve of her body. She felt light and carefree, except for the yearning deep inside.

A yearning she could no longer ignore. The round tub was one of the reasons she so loved the house she shared with Zane. Four years ago, she had thought it would be a relaxing place to get away. Then as time wore on, Serena often hoped Zane would join her, only he never did. Recently though, as her hunger grew, she was often thankful for the positional jets placed around the sides and bottom of the tub.

Serena pressed a button on the side panel, which caused the jets to come to life. Bubbles tickled her hardened nipples as she positioned the streams of water right where she wanted them. Her hips rocked in unison to the needy pulse within her. With her eyes closed, she could pretend the fingers plucking her nipples belonged to Zane. The hand snaking slowly up her thigh to nestle against her pink folds would take what it wanted without explanation. Serena could feel the cream of her body even as she was surrounded by warm, bubbling water.

Panting through shallow breaths, her body shuddered through its release. It was better than nothing, but far from enough.

With the edge taken off her sexual frustration, she rose from the tub and quickly dried herself. Donning her robe, she strode into the bedroom to sit in front of her vanity

mirror. One look at the clock told her just how much time had passed. Now she would not have nearly enough time to prepare.

It was probably a good thing Zane had left for work so early. She would have had a hell of a time explaining why she'd spent an hour in the tub.

Pulling the brush through her already drying hair until it was tangle free, she turned on the hairdryer and went to work. The constant hum of the machine could not mask the beating of her heart. Being nervous was not something Serena enjoyed. It made her feel vulnerable, an emotion she wasn't used to dealing with.

Serena could not believe what she saw in the mirror. After drying her hair, she artfully arranged it high on her head. It was supposed to be a sophisticated look—instead she looked as though she'd started out as a runway model only to end up as a green-eyed siren.

Her hair looked mussed, as if a man's fingers had fought the pins controlling her curls. Wisps of hair had already escaped the entrapments and were curling gently around her jaw. One in particularly unruly curl was lying nestled in the shadowed valley of her breasts.

That single curl stood out in sharp contrast to the deep green of the slip dress just covering her body. Its length landed just above the knee, but hugged every contour. A slit up the right side continued to mid-thigh giving off a wicked glimpse of leg. The shoes were much higher than the conservative pumps she normally wore, but they were sexy.

The feel of soft fabric against bare skin made her core heat. Her nipples pressed into the fabric making the unruly lust coursing through her body even more intense.

Even the slightest movement caused friction. It was heaven and hell all rolled up in one.

The drive across town was full of misgivings and excitement. This meeting was extremely important to Serena. It could mean a change in her future, a big change. Would it be a change for the better?

There was so much to be unsure of and yet, at the same time, if she didn't at least try she would never know. No, this was not something she could back down from.

It seemed weird to feel so unsettled after being comfortable for the past four years. It wasn't until recently that Serena realized being content wasn't nearly enough. Some days she wanted to scream from the sheer monotony of the situation. She had been pushed in no way, not to love or to hate. She was merely there and it was no longer enough.

Soon she would be forced to look deeply into her heart. To see where things would stand with Zane. Were the feelings deeper than they appeared on the surface? If so, why had she never given more or expected more?

She knew the answer – the difference was that never before had she been willing to admit it. She vividly remembered the day she told Zane of her past. How she had been married as a teenager to a man she loved with all her heart only to learn he felt no tenderness or love to return.

She'd always dreamed of marrying a strong man. Her gift to her husband would be her virginity. Never in her wildest dreams could she have imagined a more ruthless bastard.

It wasn't long before Serena learned that her husband couldn't care less if she was a virgin or not. In the bedroom, he treated her no better than an animal and out of the bedroom he ignored her. The naïve dreams of a new bride didn't last long in their house. Neither did her sunny disposition. It didn't take long to turn her into the cynic she was today.

Some of the things he had expected her to consent to still made her shudder. As a young, untried woman, they had frightened her to death. She wasn't sure how she'd managed to hold on as long as she did.

Hopes of love were doused and depression had taken their place. If only he'd loved her, she would have done anything for him. It took her a while before she realized that

a man who loved his wife would not live to humiliate her. Once she'd learned that valuable lesson, Serena had left never to look back.

The past and her knowledge of what could happen is what made everything so confusing. It was hard to understand why when she was finally in a relationship where things were calm she would want to give it all up to a dominant who would push her to the limit. The desire was so fierce she could not back down from it. Soon she would make her decision.

* * * * *

Zane scowled at the computer screen, staring at the flashing cursor that sat still. He couldn't concentrate to save his life and he was weary. Sleep had eluded him again last night. Was he doing the right thing?

Guilt ate at his gut. Serena's face flashed before him. The woman he lived with was a comfort, but did he love her? He wasn't sure. Even if he did, would it be enough? Could love take place of the physical and mental needs he would be missing as a dominant?

It was almost time to meet her. The muscles in his shoulders were tense. The broad expanse covered by a button-up shirt. The top two buttons left undone exposing a small amount of tan flesh.

Feeling a bit uneasy, Zane strode to the restroom adjoining his office. The sight to greet him in the mirror was a bit intimidating, he admitted to himself. Damn! If he didn't get a grip and relax he would scare his submissive off before they had the chance to get to know one another.

His normally smooth chin was covered with dark stubble. Disheveled brown hair reached just to the top of his collar. One disorderly curl hung rakishly over his forehead. Intense hazel eyes, currently the color of weak tea, were positioned below

thick brows. Not normally a vain man, Zane gave himself a last once over before he slipped into his tan sports coat.

Zane decided to walk the two blocks, allowing himself some time to think. The weather was neither hot nor cold. He could easily do without all the traffic and the noise that went along with it.

That was one of the things that made it so tempting to move back home. Not only would he be close to his brothers, but he would be out of the city.

Early on, city life had been fulfilling, but not any longer. Now it felt stifling. Too much traffic. Too much noise. It no longer held any promise. The idea of moving home brought along with it a whole new set of circumstances. One thing at a time, he muttered to himself. *Let me get through today then I'll focus on the move.*

Once he reached his destination, he pushed through the heavy wooden door. The interior was dark, and it was like a second home. His early days in the city had been lonely ones until Patrick O'Connor had taken him in as a friend. Now everyday he spent his lunch hour with Pat. The white-haired pub owner was a stout man of undetermined years. His heavy accent told of his Irish upbringing. Zane was sure a friendlier, more loyal friend could not be found.

The inside of the pub reminded him of O'Malley's, his brother Sean's place back home in Texas. It was probably one of the reasons he felt so comfortable there.

"Hey, O'Malley," Pat called. "Will you be having your usual today?"

"Not today," Zane answered. At Pat's questioning glance he added, "I'm meeting someone."

Pat gave a wink and a knowing smile as he skirted his way back behind the bar. "Fine then, lad. You just be lettin' me know when you're ready."

Zane picked a booth in the far corner of the room. It was shadowed and fairly private. His fists clenched and unclenched in an attempt to release some of the tension coiled in his body. It didn't seem to be helping one bit. He couldn't understand why on earth he was so nervous.

It wasn't like he was going to take the woman somewhere and start right in.

They would talk and get to know one another before things could progress. Then if they were compatible and in agreement to the terms they'd both set forth during their brief cyber relationship, they would proceed.

Zane would not allow things to go any further than talking until he opened up to Serena. His throat worked furiously past the lump there at the thought of causing sweet, unassuming Serena pain. He would also ask the same of *ESKAY*.

She would have to break free of the relationship she was currently involved in if she wanted to go any further with him. It was something they'd already agreed upon, but he would be sure to bring it up again because once he found a submissive to love he would never let her go.

He watched absently as the lunch crowd milled around while he casually sipped at the glass of water Pat had insisted on delivering to his table.

Every ounce of his willpower was currently being used to keep his baser needs at bay. He wanted to pounce on the woman the minute she walked through the door. At the moment he could care less what she looked like, or even what she wanted or needed. He had an almost overwhelming need to dominate. Just the thought caused his cock to thicken. Thoughts of a woman bound increased the pressure behind the zipper of his slacks. At least one good thing came out of his change of dress since becoming a businessman and living in the city. There was a lot more room behind the zipper of slacks than there was behind the button fly of a pair of jeans.

He'd given some consideration to dressing like he used to. Jeans instead of slacks, and a Stetson to cover his unruly waves. Replacing his loafers with a pair of comfortable boots would be great, but that look was of the past. Not something he'd given into since leaving Texas four years earlier. Soon enough though, he would be back home. And as the saying goes...when in Rome.

He chuckled a bit. He could only imagine the look on Serena's face. She would probably have to be reminded to pick her jaw up off the floor when she finally saw him in his cowboy clothes.

The last thought was like a bucket of ice water. Thinking of Serena while meeting with another woman was more than enough to cool Zane's ardor, leaving him with emotions he wasn't quite ready to deal with.

Zane checked his watch. Five minutes after the hour, which meant she was five minutes late. If she were already his submissive, he would surely have to think of some way to punish her for her tardiness. His idea of punishment was completely different from what he'd read of other dominants.

The idea of hurting or humiliating never entered the scene in his mind. Instead, he would tease and tantalize until she begged for release, then make her wait. A good spanking could also prove useful if both parties were to consent. There was much to talk about between them before a relationship could begin.

Many ideas had been gathered from the Internet. A large number of Dom/sub couples signed contracts specifying what they were willing to do. A safe word would need to be agreed upon. He had even prepared a sexual questionnaire for *ESKAY* to fill out. It would help him better prepare for their time together if he knew her likes, dislikes, things she was willing to try and others that were completely off-limits, before they took the next step.

Just as his mind moved back to sensual punishment the front door opened. The silhouetted figure standing just inside the door was very familiar. His pulse increased as the figure moved further into the room. His eyes raked the lone form from top to bottom then slowly back up again. No way! It couldn't be, but it was.

"What the hell!" Zane swore as he rose to his feet. Raking a large hand through his hair, he moved away from the booth and into the light. The sight before him took his breath away.

Spiked heels covered tiny feet. Sexy as hell legs were encased in thigh-high hose. He knew they were thigh-high because he could see a single lacy top peeking out the side slit of her dress.

A dress that left bare as much as it covered. Green soft-looking fabric hugged every curve of the voluptuous braless body. Beaded nipples begged for release from the confines of the low-cut bodice that was held up as if by magic by extremely thin straps.

What caught his attention most of all was the wide-eyed angelic face staring back at him. He knew every curve of her body. Instant recognition of the slight smile tilting her soft bow-shaped lips brought every nerve in his body to full attention. Upswept hair looked as though it had been thrown carelessly together. It was perfect. About the time she finally spoke, it finally hit him. This was his woman!

"It's you," she whispered. "Oh, my god, Zane! It's you."

Chapter Four

Sit or fall, those were pretty much her options. Her head felt light, and emotions ran rampant through her overloaded brain. Serena moved, her legs shaking so badly she wasn't sure she would make it to where Zane was standing.

"I need to sit," she said. It was all that was necessary evidently because Zane was by her side instantly, helping her into the seat of the booth. He slid in next to her and watched as her eyes lowered abruptly blocking his view of the emotion-filled orbs.

She couldn't bring herself to look up. There was so much to think about, her mind couldn't grasp it all. She drew a blank. For that brief moment, she probably couldn't have remembered her name to save her life. It was a strange feeling. More than likely a defense mechanism.

Slowly, it was all coming back. She wanted to be angry, but at what? Yeah, he may have placed the ad, but she was the one who answered it.

Had he been meeting with other women? Did he answer other ads? The idea hurt more than she could imagine. It felt as if a fist had gone and squeezed off her air supply at its source. When had she become so emotionally attached to Zane?

She peered at her white knuckles as she brought her hand up to her mouth. Serena then pushed the tiny fist against her teeth welcoming the small bite of pain. It shook her enough to keep the keening wail from escaping. What in the world had she done? And why now? Why must she only now realize she was in love?

Holy shit! Love?

"Oh, no," was muffled behind the hand still at her mouth.

"Stop that!" Zane said sternly. "You'll hurt yourself, Rena."

She felt the warmth of his hand as it tugged hers down and patiently unclenched her fisted fingers. Once done, his large hand did not release her, instead the thick, hair-smattered fingers intertwined with hers, holding her tight.

How could a basic touch feel so intimate? The heat radiating from his body made her skin sizzle. Her hand felt hot where his palm was pressed tightly to hers.

So much of the past few weeks suddenly made sense. The fierceness he had showed her in the kitchen. The sexual aggressiveness that was not usually present. The feeling of drifting apart from him, it all made perfect sense now.

Finally, Serena felt strong enough, brave enough to look up into Zane's face. Starting at the thick cords of his muscled neck, she worked her way up. His square jaw looked stubborn. It was something she'd never really noticed. He seemed much more tenser than the easygoing man she was used to. The right side of his lip curved just the slightest bit. It wasn't really a smile, but it helped to ease her nervousness. Bronzed skin was stretched taut over strong cheekbones and a straight nose, but it was his eyes that held her. Hooded, hazel eyes stared back with a hunger like nothing she'd ever witnessed.

Goose bumps appeared on her arms and a shiver ran the length of her spine. Serena's body wanted to take over. Its fight or flight system was evidently malfunctioning because she didn't know whether to run far and fast or throw herself in his arms begging him to take her home.

She sensed his inner turmoil when his hand tightened almost painfully on hers taking the choice from her. The corner of his mouth curved the tiniest bit higher. Between the wicked little grin and the twinkle in his eyes, Serena was lost.

His voice broke the silence. "Rena, I never knew..."

He couldn't seem to go on. Instead, he continued to watch her. His intense perusal of her face left her shaken.

The skin covering her thighs tingled with anticipation. Memories of their shared e-mail confidences flashed before her. Things she had only ever dreamt about. Things she

had never felt comfortable telling another living soul. She could remember what he wrote as if it were in front of her.

If this works for us you will belong to me, I will settle for no less. I will use your body and bring you great pleasure in the process. My will, will be your will.

How could the man sitting next to her have written those words? They were nothing like what her Zane would have written. He was laid-back, a man not afraid to compromise. The e-mails she'd received were from a commanding presence. One used to being obeyed. Could two such personalities live inside one man and did she want to find out?

He already seemed so different. If she gave herself to him the way her body craved, the way he would now insist upon, could they ever reclaim their carefree selves? For some reason she didn't think so.

Over the past few weeks, so much about him had already changed. It brought home just how much she didn't know about the man whom she'd lived with the past four years.

Zane was watching her. His hazel eyes raked over her as he waited. The flash of heat within those eyes bore right into her soul. She would never again be free, she would never escape. Serena feared that from this moment on she would do whatever he asked of her. What if he asked too much?

"Don't look at me like that, Rena," Zane growled. "If you keep it up, begging me to fuck you with those wide, green eyes of yours, I'll do just that no matter who is watching."

Her gasp was audible. "Zane!" she cried while looking around to see if anyone might have heard.

His smile was slow coming and then its strength was torturous. Her mouth had attracted his attention. In her nervousness, she licked her lips then jumped at the growled curse Zane released.

"Damn Rena! I won't warn you again," he said in a deadly calm voice.

She could feel her eyes widen as her hands began to shake. Lord, what in the world had she gotten herself into? Quickly, she looked away. She wasn't sure what she was doing wrong, but evidently it was making Zane angry. In the four years they had lived together, not once could she remember a time when he had been truly angry.

"I don't... I mean... I'm not sure wha—" She was cut off by Zane's deep baritone voice.

"Don't, Rena," he said soothingly. "It's not just you, baby, it's both of us. We have a lot to talk about. I want to get that over with now, okay?"

It might have been phrased as a question, but Serena felt it more as a demand. They *would* talk now, she bristled a bit at that thought, but he was right. Now was just as good a time as any. With a nod, Serena gave her answer.

"I still can't believe it's you, but now that I know, we need to get things straightened out. You do realize we can never go back to the same old dull routine?"

Still unable to speak, Serena once again nodded.

"As I'm sure you now realize, I'm not the man you thought I was. It's been a hell of a long four years hiding my true self from you. I wanted to protect you, especially after you told me about your ex-husband, but now that I know what you want and need, there will be no going back. If you want out, say so now, Rena, because once I have you where I want you, I'll never let you go."

Serena couldn't quite swallow past the lump in her throat much less talk. Realizing she loved the man sitting next to her had been a surprise. The timing was way off and it left her at a disadvantage. Vulnerable. "I don't know, Zane," she whispered hating the weakness in her voice. "I don't know you anymore."

"You know all the important stuff, Rena." She watched as a brief flash of panic crossed his features.

"It's my sexual preferences that are new to you, nothing else. I know what you like, baby. What your wants and needs are. You know I would never hurt you or force you, but I won't lie to you, Rena. I'll push you every step of the way."

He wasn't leaving anything out. Laying it all on the line. Right up front so there would be no confusion. There could be no turning back. "I can be rough. Damn, but it's been hard holding myself back. I'll challenge you every chance I get. Just as we talked about in our anonymous e-mail, you are your own person in all aspects of your life, but in private, you will belong to me. I won't go back, I can't. Not now, now that I've read your fantasies. Now that I know what you crave."

"Oh, god," she groaned aloud. Her fantasies! How could she have forgotten the things they had shared during their time online. Things that were much easier said while typing at a keyboard. She could feel the slow burn in her body. The heat in her cheeks was nothing compared to what she felt between her legs.

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Zane watched as a flush worked its way up Serena's neck and into her cheeks. He could only imagine what the rest of her body would look like all pink and pretty.

It angered him to know that they'd wasted so much time dancing around each other. The fact it had taken for the both of them to go as far as looking for another to fill those needs upped his blood pressure.

He watched as she once again licked her lips. His mouth ached to taste her, but now was not the time. Now was the time for answers.

"Tell me what you're thinking, baby."

"I know what we—what we shared in our e-mail," Serena cleared her throat. Zane could tell by her flushed cheeks that her embarrassment was mounting. "I meant it. All of it, but that doesn't mean I'm not afraid, Zane."

"Afraid of what?" he asked as he rubbed the back of her hand with his thumb. The normally warm skin felt chilled, her eyes seemed a bit panicky.

"Mostly of myself, I guess. Of my feelings, my needs. I'm not sure if I can put myself in this situation again."

Zane's eyes narrowed. He didn't like where this conversation was going. "It took me a long time to trust again, to find myself. Now I'm used to doing pretty much what I want, when I want. I don't know if I can give that up."

"First of all, don't ever, and I mean *ever* put me in the same category as your lowlife ex. We may not have had the best relationship these past four years, but I believe I deserve at least that much. Now, as for the rest—I'm not asking you to give up your life, but I will from this day forward demand total obedience in our private life. Can you live with that?"

He could tell she wasn't sure, at least not one hundred percent sure. Her emotions were plain for all to see. Of course, he hadn't given her much choice.

"I can try, Zane. That's all I can promise."

"It's a start, Rena and for now that's enough." He felt triumphant, it was just the tip of the iceberg, but it was a start.

Fear and frustration were evident in the way she held her body so still and stiff. As if she might shatter at the slightest move. He wouldn't ease her fears just yet. Fear of the unknown could be a good thing. It would increase the intensity of her arousal while honing her senses.

Senses he wanted to send into overdrive. Of course, that would have to wait because Pat chose that moment to collect their order.

"Have you decided what you'll be having, O'Malley?" he asked.

"Hey Pat, you remember Serena, don't you?" Zane said in way of a reintroduction since Rena had only been there a few times before. Serena, polite as always, murmured the appropriate response. Once the introductions were made, they ordered their meal. Zane ordered a beer for himself and a piña colada for Serena. For several minutes, they sat in silence.

Zane watched Serena. She was tense, the air fairly oozed with it. When she started to fidget, he decided to break the silence.

“Tell me Rena, why did you never say anything to me?” He was trying not to sound angry, but wasn’t at all sure he was accomplishing the feat. The amount of time they had wasted left him feeling deep displeasure.

“I’m not sure. I mean, for the first few years I was content, happy with our relationship. After my ex...” When he scowled, she backtracked. “I mean...well, it took me a while to trust again. Once I was able to trust, I felt as if something was missing.”

He wasn’t sure who or what his anger was aimed at. He wanted to rage, to yell and pound his fist into a solid object at the thought of how much time they had lost. How they’d almost lost each other over their lack of communication. What a loss that would have been.

“Why didn’t you say anything once you trusted me? Why look elsewhere?”

Her coral-tinted lips opened, but no sound escaped. He watched as she lowered her eyes as if to close out the outside world. That was something he would no longer allow. If things were to work, they would have no more secrets.

A knuckle placed just under the center of her jaw lifted her chin. Once her eyes settled on his, she opened her mouth.

“I could ask you the same. About looking elsewhere, that is.”

She was completely right.

“I can only tell you how I feel, Rena. I don’t know if it will answer your questions or not. When we first met, I spent every daydreaming about having you. I wanted you at my mercy, bound to my bed.” He watched as another soft flush stole over her delicate skin, but refused to stop. She would know it all.

“I have always had different sexual preferences which is one of the reasons why I’d never been involved in a long-term relationship before we met. I need to possess. I want to brand you as mine, Rena and now that I know you want the same, we can never go back.

“It had originally been my plan to seduce you slowly. To show you all that I could give you, especially after I had a taste of you. I knew right away we would suit each other. Then, our first night living together, you told me about your ex-husband. I knew then I couldn't follow through. I didn't want to pressure you, but I also wasn't prepared to lose you so I tried to change who I am. As you can see, it didn't work.”

He watched as his words slowly sunk in. The awestruck look on her face. “You did that for me?”

The words seemed to stumble from her mouth. Her clear green eyes glistened with tears. “I was embarrassed, and afraid. I knew that if things continued the way they were it would only get worse. I felt ashamed to tell you what I wanted, what my body needs.” With a wobbly smile and a nervous giggle she continued.

“You have always seemed so cool, aloof almost. Our relationship was more congenial, never passionate. I was afraid you would think less of me if you knew.” He opened his mouth to speak, but Serena held up her hand to stave off his words.

“Now I know that isn't so, but I didn't at the time. I was willing to look elsewhere for my physical needs because no matter what our relationship was like, I didn't feel complete. Please understand though, I never would have been unfaithful to you. I would have come to you before going further than a meeting.”

Zane believed her, she'd said as much in her e-mail. He was still completely baffled by how he could have missed such intimate details about her. Had there been clues? It was almost too much to take in.

His fingers itched to feel the warmth of her skin. Once again, his large hand engulfed her much smaller one. He could feel the slight tremor that shot through her, making his cock twitch. Seeing her so compliant, so willing to share her thoughts made him horny as hell. There was definitely no turning back now.

Chapter Five

Two hours after their revealing lunch, Serena realized there was no way in a million years she would be able to concentrate on work.

Every nerve ending sizzled at the thought of what was to come. Her stomach was coiled tight and damned if the mere thought of Zane tying her up didn't drench the clean pair of panties she'd just put on.

A giggle escaped her lips. She was a nervous wreck. The anticipation was almost unbearable. Tonight would mark a new beginning for both of them. It continued to amaze her.

How could she be frightened and still have no doubt as to the path she would choose? The thought of being dominated brought so many emotions to the surface. Emotions she had tried to suppress.

Tonight would be special, a new beginning for the both of them. Serena saved what she was working on, then shut down her computer.

The rasp of soft carpet beneath her bare feet let her know that she had made it to the bedroom. One look at the huge bed and her mind began to wander. How would he want her? Would he prefer her on her back, her legs spread wide so he had easy access to her center? Her breasts would also be ripe for his touch.

Or would he want her on her stomach, her hips elevated on pillows, allowing him access to the tight virgin entrance of the one spot he'd never tried to take her?

Zane. His name whispered through her mind. Even though he was at work, she felt closer to him than ever before. She felt her body sizzle with heat from deep within just begging to be released. It was going to be one hell of a long afternoon. What was a woman to do with so much time on her hands?

Serena made her way to the foot of the bed where she sat on the edge. Her hand slowly made its way over the gentle swell of her stomach then continued on its journey between her aching breasts.

With her head thrown back, hair trailing behind her, Serena rolled her nipple between her thumb and finger until it beaded to a diamond-hard point.

While the one hand relentlessly fondled her breast, the other zoned in on the warmth at the apex of her thighs. Firm pressure on her clit caused the muscles in her upper legs to jump. She could smell her own arousal. Feel her dampness through the slacks she wore.

If only I had the time, she thought to herself. *Then I could do a proper job of releasing some of this tension.* But time was something she was running low on. If she planned to make tonight a night they would never forget, she would have to start now.

Paying attention to the opposite breast, Serena brought herself closer and closer. Thoughts of Zane and the possibilities tonight could bring gave Serena the last little push needed to drive her over the edge.

A gentle wave of sensation moved through her until her back arched and her hips bucked against the hand between her thighs.

When her breathing returned to normal, Serena changed her clothes, grabbed her bag and left the house. So much to do and so little time to do it in.

There was so much she wanted to experience with Zane. Some things that still made her feel ashamed or frightened and yet she couldn't seem to get them out of her mind.

It was hard to come to terms with something she'd always seen as the dark side of herself, but Serena vowed she would follow through with it. No way was she going to back out now.

She wondered what she should pick up for tonight. During the short time she'd spent with Zane at lunch, she had gotten a glimpse of the type of man he really was. Should she take the initiative and buy some of the adult toys she had dreamed of using

during their lovemaking? If Zane were really a dominant man, would he insist on doing the shopping? Oh hell, she couldn't make up her mind.

To stay on the safe side, Serena decided to stick with a nice dinner and some sexy lingerie. Her mind went through a mental list of what was needed for Zane's favorite pasta dish. When all the ingredients were in the basket, she headed to the checkout counter throwing in some candles along the way.

Groceries were soon unloaded into the backseat. A loaf of fresh French bread rested along side a tiny bag containing satin and lace from a small boutique located just up the street.

Her heart was pounding, palms sweating. The anticipation was going to give her a coronary, she thought as her pussy clenched, leaking more of her natural juices, soaking another pair of panties.

She hoped Zane would like what she'd planned. The thought of aroused hazel eyes watching from under lids heavy with desire sent what felt like tiny fingers walking up her spine.

I can do this. I can do this, she told herself over and over, as she parked the car and unloaded the groceries. When she finished, Serena took a glance at her watch then she headed to the bedroom to prepare.

First a warm bath was drawn. Vanilla scent was added to the water making the air in the bathroom not only relaxing but also very sensual.

Wisps of cream-colored satin and lace were removed from the bag. Once the tags were removed, the tiny garments were carefully laid on the bed. Then Serena removed her clothes and sank into the soothing warm water.

Eyes closed, trying her hardest to relax her body, Serena wondered if Zane was having as hard a time. Maybe he was sitting at his desk aroused and ready. Was he as hard as she was hot? Every little touch to her own body sent fingers of desire up her spine. Maybe Zane was doing the same, masturbating to release the pent-up tension of what tonight held.

There were so many questions that needed answered. Things she forgot to ask during their lunch. Several of the messages Zane had sent talked about his brothers. About plans to move back home in order to be closer to his family. He often talked about Hayden and Sean, but she had never met them. Was he serious about moving? If so, would she be welcome?

So many questions and no answers. Serena pushed away the nagging fear of being left behind instead focusing all her effort in preparing herself for Zane.

The fluffy towel felt like heaven as she rubbed her still wet body. Once she was dry enough, Serena sat on the edge of the tub with a bottle of lotion in hand.

The lotion smelled good enough to eat and felt like silk as she smoothed it over the satiny skin of her legs. With a quick comb of her wet tresses, Serena wrapped her towel around her, securing it in the center of her chest then stepped into the bedroom.

Waiting was hard, but not knowing what to expect was even worse. Would she be able to handle what Zane expected of her? The challenge of his stubborn chin had been unmistakable. Disturbingly intense. He would insist upon total submission. Could she do it? Could she follow him to such an erotic destination? One, that could either end with astonishingly wonderful results, or a seriously shattered heart. With her body leading the way, there was only one answer. Yes!

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Damn! Damn and double damn! If he didn't get out of the office he was going to go fucking nuts. He had tried. More than once as a matter of fact, but there was just no way in hell he was going to be able to work knowing damned well Serena was at home waiting for him.

Nerves made his shoulders tense. Anger still flowed through his veins. He completely understood where they were both coming from so no blame was being placed. It just seemed so stupid that they'd been dancing around each other all this

time. What a waste. It was time he could have spent with Rena getting her used to his ways. Training her to please him and pleasuring her in the process.

The thought of his Rena wearing the wide gold chain he planned to have designed for her melted the anger he held within. He knew the perfect jeweler for the job. By the time it was ready, she would also be ready.

Zane had seen it in her face. Flashing green eyes could no longer hide the hunger she'd buried so deep. Nope, no more would there be secrets between them.

Zane left his office early, wicked thoughts swirling through his mind. It was time. He had to know just how far Serena was willing to go. In order to do that Zane would need a plan. One was already taking shape it just needed a little fine-tuning to be successful.

Using the backdoor to the local adult bookstore brought Zane into a large room. Shelves held every type of sex toy imaginable. Remembering the e-mail where Serena had told of her fantasies would help him pick the right products. Soon he had a basket filled with the things he considered necessary.

He gave a mental wince as the cashier totaled his purchase. Whew! Prices sure had gone up in the past four years. Of course, it was money well spent if he could make even one of Serena's fantasies a reality.

All the way home, Zane thought of the contents in the plain brown paper bag on the passenger seat. Vivid images thundered through his head like a stampeding herd of cattle. Images of how Serena's body would accommodate not only the jewel blue vibrator, but also the lifelike dildo.

In preparation, he'd purchased a small anal toy and a tube of lubricant. The sooner her body was ready, the sooner he could take her there.

Vivid images of her body filled to capacity with not only his length but also one of the toys made the wait seem insurmountable. But wait he would, until Serena's body was ready. Until she could physically, mentally and emotionally handle the loss of control that would inevitably come with the type of possession he had in mind.

He could hardly wait to teach her how to pleasure herself with his benefit in mind. Would it take her long to learn to control her release? To hold on until he commanded her to come. There were many lessons to be taught and learned before she could truly be his submissive.

He would proceed slowly and cautiously and yet, at the same time, his determination was at an all-time high. His eager cock, which was causing a substantial tent at the front of his slacks, seemed to pulse in time with the beat of his heart. A beat, that just happened to be following a double time rhythm at the moment.

The aching arousal of his shaft combined with wicked thoughts was enough to make Zane's mouth water. Because he knew that where some lessons would be taught, some would also be failed. It was the prospective failures that made the palm of his hand tingle.

Would Serena really go through with it? In one very specific conversation, Serena had talked extensively about being spanked.

The thought of pulling her warm, wiggling body over his lap after exposing her full, rounded ass cheeks made him groan. Watching her skin turn pink, knowing she would be wet and hot with her arousal almost sent his car skidding off the road.

Damn! Get a grip, Zane. If you don't kill yourself trying to get home, you'll surely end up scaring her to death.

With much effort, Zane slowed his car to a more normal, less illegal speed. Then he cleared his head of wicked thoughts instead replacing them with calculated lesson plans and memories of home.

Upon reaching the house, Zane noticed that not only was Serena's car in the drive, but all the blinds had been drawn closed. So, his sassy-mouth, soon-to-be submissive wanted privacy, did she? He briefly wondered if she would be surprised that he'd decided to come home from work early?

Zane grabbed the bag off the front passenger seat and made his way to the front door. Using his key, he let himself into the house.

Wonderful smells assaulted his senses before he even got close to the kitchen. Garlic and fresh bread were among them.

As always, their home was clean, nothing out of place. Zane set the brown paper bag on the end table and made his way up the hall.

His sense of smell was still being challenged, only this time it was something much more sinful than garlic and fresh bread.

It was the smell of woman. His woman. The smell was comfortable, soothing. Just the same, as it had been for the past four years. He hoped this was one aspect of their relationship that could remain pretty much the same. It was like coming home to a warm summer day even in the dead of winter.

Would she be dressing, he wondered as he continued on his journey up the hall. What had she chosen to wear? Would it be the comfortable white cotton briefs that hugged her every curve or a sexy thong that made him want to jump her without the benefit of foreplay? Knowing the contents of her drawers, it could be anything in between.

Finally, he'd made it. He was standing in the hall in front of their closed bedroom door. Should he knock and wait as he normally did when he knew damned well she was dressing or should he jump right in to their new Dominant/submissive roles? He decided on a compromise since they had yet to talk through all the details of their new relationship.

He knocked and then without waiting for an answer opened the door and let himself into the room where he was drawn to a standstill just inside the door.

A stocking clad foot was perched on the edge of the bed while small hands rolled cream-colored silk up an equally pale thigh. He was sure at that moment his face must have looked like that of a schoolboy with his first glimpse of a skin magazine. After schooling his features, Zane said in a cool, controlled voice, "How far do you intend to push before I push back, baby?"

He knew damned well she'd heard him enter the room and yet made no move to cover herself or to change the purely sexual pose she still held. Not that he wanted her to.

It was just the fact that she was already playing him. Pushing to test their new boundaries. To see how far she could go before something happened.

Zane had an idea that the next few weeks would prove to be damned interesting.

With every ounce of willpower left, Zane skirted the opposite edge of the bed until he was facing Serena. Once there, he settled himself into a chair trying with all his might to keep an unreadable look on his face when really he wanted to whistle and howl like the horny man he really was.

Serena's gaze snapped up to where he could see it, the blush of her cheeks told a tale all their own.

"Zane," she said. "You're home early."

Not giving an inch, as a sort of test, Zane nodded his head and said, "Continue."

He watched as she cocked her head to the side and narrowed her eyes just the slightest bit. She did that when annoyed, it made his lips curve at the corners.

"Continue?" she finally asked.

"Continue," he repeated not giving an inch. "Where you left off, Rena. I'd like to watch."

The blush once only covering her cheeks now made its way down her throat until it beautifully covered the uppermost swell of her breasts.

When her slightly shaky hands started seductively rolling a stocking up the other leg, Zane knew he was lost. He may be able to teach Serena to be his submissive and with proper training, he might even be able to dominate her body and own its every release, but in the grand scheme of things, she was the one who held all the power. It was a sobering thought.

Following the movement of her hands, Zane for the first time, noticed the rest of her outfit. It was new which told him she'd made the effort to go shopping today.

For some strange reason it made him happy that she would take the time and make the effort. Especially given the fact that she probably didn't figure she'd be wearing it for long.

Well, he would just have to make sure she had the chance to keep it on. Maybe her first lesson, and his as well, would be patience.

The camisole top had wide straps, which seemed to lightly caress her shoulders. The low-cut lace curved with her breasts playing a game of peek-a-boo with dusky nipples that were begging for attention if their tautness was any indication.

The silk of the bodice shimmered in the subdued light of the room making it look like falling water. The shorts bottoms were cut high showing the most tantalizing view of curves he'd ever witnessed.

All-in-all, the outfit covered more than most bra and panty combinations, but good god did she look sexy as hell!

Moving to the closet, Zane pulled out a thin wraparound dress he had only seen her in on a few occasions. It was sage green in color. Its design caused the side slit to open to about mid-thigh while sitting and showed off her lovely cleavage.

The only thing holding the dress together was the thin belt that would wrap snugly around her waist.

Moving around the bed, Zane handed the dress to Serena. He watched as she eyed the skirt and blouse she'd evidently already picked. When she looked back up at him, he merely raised an eyebrow in challenge.

Once again, she narrowed her eyes causing a small furrow between her brows.

Oh yeah, this was going to be fun. His gut clenched with arousal. His cock anticipating every moment of Serena's training because, from now on things would be Zane's way.

Chapter Six

Fingers trembling, Serena took the dress from Zane. Inside she bristled. It was a test—she knew it. She was well aware that he knew she would get ticked because he'd picked her clothes out when it was something she'd already done.

Not quite sure how to deal with the whole situation, Serena looked up into Zane's face. His expression was inscrutable, all except for the slightly raised brow and a twinkle in his eyes showing his amusement.

She could feel her anger rise and opened her mouth prepared to give a sassy retort. The change in his eyes was instantaneous. One second there was merriment and the next cold steel. A tremor of awareness flashed over her skin as Zane moved closer.

Without a thought, Serena took a step in retreat but it did no good. As if he were stalking her, Zane moved slowly, silently closer. He matched her step for step until she was backed up against the hard frame of the bathroom door.

The bite of pain and the overwhelming sensations of pleasure exploded through her body as Zane's large hand tangled in her hair, tugging until her head was angled right where he wanted it.

Her mouth opened on a gasp as he moved closer. Lips almost touching, Serena could smell the mint candy Zane favored.

Just as she thought he would kiss her, he said. "Don't push, baby. We have a lot to talk about, a lot to work out."

She wanted to argue, about what she wasn't exactly sure. The man was driving her insane. Couldn't he just throw her on the bed and have his way with her already? Hell, if he'd do that she'd be willing to talk about anything.

Serena opened her mouth to say as much but never got the chance before warm lips were pressed to hers. Slow and deep the kiss went, until she could no longer remember what she'd wanted to say.

Once again, her head was angled so she was staring right into the face of her lover. "Do you understand?" he asked.

Lowering her lids, Serena could only nod her acceptance. Slowly, she felt Zane's hand fall away. For a second, she just stood there. Staring. Waiting. Then he said "Get dressed, Rena. I'll be waiting. You did make me dinner, didn't you? Those wonderful smells have to be coming from somewhere."

Oh, crap! Dinner! She'd been so caught up in the moment, she'd already forgotten. With lightning speed, Serena finished dressing.

Once in the kitchen, she finished the final preparations for dinner. Her body tingled and ached with its need for release. Bat-sized butterflies had taken up residence in her stomach and she wasn't exactly sure she would make it through dinner without begging Zane to take her.

She squeezed her thighs tightly together trying in vain to dull the throbbing that had taken over her swollen clit, but it didn't help. She felt so hot and so sensitive.

With each passing minute, Serena's anger mounted. Damn it! Did the man have any idea what he was doing to her?

With everything ready and hands full of food to be carried to the table, she turned and ran right into Zane.

The breadth of his chest was like slamming into a wall and almost knocked her to the floor. Sinewy arms stretched out to catch her, trapping her against his hard body.

Great! She couldn't keep her mind off of him as it was and now she'd have to start all over. Trying to cool down with him in the same room was almost as impossible as keeping her panties dry.

His face showed much more calm than any man had the right to be and it pissed her off. She could feel the flush of anger on her cheeks and was having a hell of a time keeping her tongue in check.

Evidently, Zane was aware of her inner struggle. His mouth curved ever so slightly at the right corner and his eyes, although still watchful and intense, showed the slightest twinkle.

“Relax, Rena.” His voice low and gravelly.

“Relax? Yeah—sure. Whatever,” she answered a bit peeved at herself for not being able to hold onto her composure the way he so easily seemed to be doing.

“Don’t get sassy, Rena. We haven’t had a chance to talk yet, but I bet I could find something to keep your delectable mouth occupied until you have the chance to calm down.”

His voice was seductive and commanding all at the same time. He may be trying to soften his censure of her attitude, but she had no doubt he meant every word.

Taking a deep breath, she said. “Ok, Zane.” Then handing him a bowl, she added, “Here you take this and I’ll get the salad.”

Placing the bowl of salad on the table, Serena asked, “Wine?”

After pondering the question for a moment, Zane nodded. She’d just made it back to the table and was pouring wine for the two of them when Zane signaled for her to stop. She looked up, not sure what was wrong when he said, “Just one, Serena. I want you sober for tonight.”

She wasn’t at all sure if this is what she’d signed up for. The use of her full name let her know he would accept nothing short of total capitulation. Her body was on edge, her mind confused. What else could she do, but wait and see what the night had in store for her?

With dinner in full swing, Serena watched as Zane ate with gusto while she was barely able to swallow a bite here and there. Mostly she just pushed the food around her plate. Waiting. For what, she wasn't sure.

From the corner of her eye, she watched Zane. His movements were conservative, fluid. Like a sleek animal ready for anything. The muscles of his arm bunched as he brought each forkful of food to his mouth reminding her of his strength.

Her stomach fluttered and her heart rate increased when he finally wiped his mouth and pushed his plate back.

Tentatively, Serena lifted her head. Zane was watching her. His hazel eyes seemed to be looking straight through her, it made her uncomfortable. It took all of her willpower to resist the need to squirm and wiggle in her seat.

The silence grew as his gaze bore into her. Just when she thought she could no longer handle it, he spoke.

"We have a lot of things to talk about, Rena, but first I just want you to listen."

She could feel the smirk on her lips. She'd never really been one to sit quietly by and listen and was ready to let loose with words to convey that thought when Zane added, "Not a word. Do you hear me? I've got some things to say and you'll sit and listen until I'm done or I'll tie you to the chair."

Realizing that tying her down would do little to keep her mouth shut, he added, "Lips closed or I'll find something to occupy them with."

He took what looked to be a deep, calming breath then added, "I warned you not to push me. I won't repeat myself. After I've said what I need to, then we'll talk."

Serena watched as Zane pushed himself away from the table and stood. He paced a few steps then turned to face her from across the room.

The slight stir of air created by his movement caused his scent to drift over her.

Musk and man clung to her nostrils causing her mouth to water. His biceps bunched beneath the sleeves of his shirt as he clasped his hands behind his back. The

movement caused his shirt to pull tight across his chest. A chest her fingers ached to stroke.

She couldn't pull her gaze from his body. To look into his eyes just now would be a big mistake because there was no way she could hide what she was feeling. The longing. The need, it was integrated into every cell of her being.

* * * * *

The slight tremble of her hands where they lay in her lap made him want to hold her tight, but it couldn't happen just yet. There was so much to get through before they could start their new lives.

With his hands clasped tightly behind his back, where they would remain so he didn't drag her to him, he stood across the room from her. Her eyes burned him everywhere her gaze touched.

How would she react to what he was about to say? Would his demands be too much for her to handle? His stomach clenched and his heart ached. The thought of losing Serena nearly drove him to abandon the new life he had planned for the two of them.

He was leery of pushing too hard too fast due to her background, but knowing what he knew about her secret fantasies, her deepest desires made him move ahead. Really, he had no choice in the matter. They couldn't go back and keeping things the way they were wouldn't work so forward was the only option.

When she continued to keep her eyes averted, he went to her and gently tilted her chin. After he was sure he had her complete attention, he once again moved back clasping his hands behind him.

"We talked about many things in our online conversations. Because of those chat sessions we know more about each other now than ever before. I won't ask you to stay until I'm sure you know exactly what you're getting into."

He tried to choose his words carefully. She needed to know everything he expected of her.

“I’m not the man you thought I was, just as you aren’t the woman I thought you were. There is so much more than we could ever have imagined. Now that I know this, things can never go back to the way they were.

“If you decide to stay with me, Rena you need to know this. I’m a hard man. I want all of you and I won’t settle for less. I know what you like, what you’re willing to try and what your fears are. I’ll never intentionally hurt you, but I will push you and just when you think you can go no further, I’ll push you a little more.”

Some of her fantasies echoed in his ears. He would make them all come true, if she would let him.

“I’ll have total control of what happens behind closed doors and even some of our outside relationship, but I don’t want a robot, Rena. I want a woman who isn’t afraid to tell me what she needs and wants. A woman with opinions and thoughts.

“I may not agree and I’m sure we’ll have our share of arguments, but we’ll work it out.” He tried to keep his voice level. If she knew just how hot he was and what he intended to teach her, she would probably run far and fast.

“Don’t get me wrong, baby. If you push me, I’ll retaliate. You may not always like your punishment, but if you trust me, you’ll understand.”

It took every ounce of his remaining willpower to keep the ice out of his voice. “I’m not and never will be like that sorry bastard you married. I know deep down you’re aware of the difference or you wouldn’t be here, but I had to say it anyway.”

Her eyes had grown wide. He was sure a little of it was fear of the unknown, but from the way her breath heaved in and out of her bowed lips, and her nipples tightened to little points against the thin fabric of her dress, he was sure just as much of it was from arousal.

“There is one other thing we talked about in our e-mail, but have never spoken of. I’ve been giving some consideration to moving back home. I want to be closer to my

family, my brothers and my father. If you decide to stay in this relationship, you'll be going with me. Once I have you Rena, I won't let you go. So be sure, give it some thought and let me know once you've made your decision."

He prepared for the worst and hoped for the best. Her green eyes glittered with moisture and she opened her mouth to speak, but nothing came out. Kneeling down to eye level, he took her hands in his and held tight. "It's okay, baby. Tell me. I'll listen to whatever you have to say. As I said earlier, I may not like it, but I'll always listen."

This time when her soft, pink lips opened everything seemed to spill out at once.

"I've been doing nothing but giving our online conversations thought, Zane. There is nothing here for me without you. I want to be yours, but I have to know that I can also be myself. I trust you with my body, but I don't know that I'll ever be able to give one hundred percent of myself to anyone ever again."

He watched with narrowed eyes as a small, wobbly smile curved her mouth. "So, when do we move?"

With purposeful strides, Zane walked around the table. When he was finally behind her, he turned her, chair and all, completely around until she was facing him. Placing both hands on the table on either side of her chair, he lowered his head until his mouth was scant inches from hers.

"We move as soon as we have our affairs in order."

He tugged at her full lower lip with his teeth causing her to gasp then lapped away the sting with the tip of his tongue.

"And make no mistake, Rena. You'll be mine. One hundred and ten percent all mine. I won't settle for anything less." With those words barely spoken, he took her mouth in a kiss so hungry he thought he might explode.

Serena arched her back tearing her mouth from his in the process. He felt her small, panting breaths where her face was buried at his neck.

"Zane," she said on a winded whisper.

"It's all right, baby. Come to me. Let me take you where you've only dreamed of going." His hands gripped hers, bringing her to her feet. He gave her little choice but to follow.

When they reached to doorway to their bedroom, he took notice of her flushed cheeks. Her eyelids were heavy, the green of her eyes glazed with lust. Just the way he wanted her, he thought with much satisfaction.

"Serena, look at me."

It was a command growled low into the silence of the room. When she looked up, he held her in place with a hand at each side of her face. His thumbs brushed lightly over the smooth skin at the corner of her eyes.

"If I do something you don't like, I want you to tell me. Do you understand?" When she hesitated to answer, still staring into his eyes, he leaned forward and once again nipped her bottom lip. This time no tongue followed to soothe. Her eyes widened and became a bit wild, wary.

"Answer me, Rena. Do you understand me?"

Her head started a forward motion as if to nod, but he held her still. "Tell me what I want to hear, Serena. I'll ask only once more. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," she answered in an exasperated voice that made him struggle to hide his smile. "Yes, I understand you."

"If you want me to stop what I'm doing at any time, for any reason, simply say *stop*. We'll then discuss what the problem is. If it's something that doesn't bring you pleasure, I'll never ask it of you again. You'll have to be the one to bring it up. If you're just unsure, we'll talk it out and it'll be your choice whether to continue or not."

He watched her face as what he said sank in. "If you just need a breather, I want you to tell me. We'll talk about it, but I can't guarantee I'll always allow it. I may want to make you come until you beg for mercy. It'll be so explosive you won't know what you were begging for."

It was as if her feathers ruffled. Her eyes flashed a wicked green and he could see what effort it took for her to hold back what he was sure would be a sharp retort. There was something about the word *allow* that didn't sit right with her.

It amazed him just how much he enjoyed seeing her in a snit. He could almost feel the sting on his palm, as it surely would the first time he placed her facedown over his knees and paddled her sassy little ass. Zane held tight as she tried to back away, wiggling free of his hold. Oh yeah, this was going to be very, very interesting.

Chapter Seven

Serena's heart thundered in her chest. Her head whirled with all that had taken place. Her knees felt jelly like yet strong enough to carry her weight as she turned and fled, heading back toward the kitchen. She knew Zane would follow. The sound of his curt steps on the tiled floor rang out like shots through the silent room causing Serena's heart to beat wildly.

Serena stopped when she reached the kitchen counter. Facing away from Zane, she tried desperately to calm herself. Her trembling hands gripped the kitchen counter where she stood staring out the window. The white of her knuckles gave away her unease even while she struggled to slow her ragged breaths.

The man had changed so completely it was mind-boggling. He seemed larger than life. Like he'd morphed from your normal, average Joe into a true-life, macho dominant in a matter of hours.

The whole thing caused her insides to liquefy. The deep timbre of his voice alone was enough to set her nerve endings into spasms. Add that to the new glint in his hazel eyes and it was enough to unbalance even the most sure-footed person.

Her brain was yelling for her feet to move, but they seemed to be rooted to the floor. Every inch of skin prickled with awareness as Zane moved closer. She couldn't see him, but she could feel him. Heat seemed to radiate off his body and arc to hers.

She was now in a dangerously sensual situation. Her heart was in jeopardy, and this was just the beginning.

Her body felt alive. Every pore, every inch of flesh longed to be touched. Not in the soft, almost carefree manner it had been treated to in the past.

She wanted to be loved. Truly loved in the way that was so overwhelming neither party would be aware until completely sated.

It was scary and went against everything Serena had been taught as a young woman. Not only that, but giving herself so completely to a man like Zane meant there was no going back.

He had said as much himself. His words played like a broken record over and over in her mind.

You'll be mine. One hundred and ten percent all mine. I won't settle for anything less.

"Rena," he whispered in her ear as he came up behind her, making her shiver.

A near breathless whimper escaped her lips as she felt his warm, muscular body so close to hers. He was already hard. The feel of his length pressed into her lower back was extraordinary.

Then bending at the knees, he slowly tilted his hips forward snuggling his raging erection firmly within her cleft causing her body to tremble.

The sensation of him pressed so intimately to her along with his tantalizing masculine scent nearly brought her to her knees.

Snaking an arm around her waist, Zane expertly began to remove her belt. She stood like a statue, unable to move, to think. The only thing Serena was capable of at the moment was to feel what Zane was doing to her. To experience the multitude of sensations his every touch produced.

His fingers moved with slow and steady perfection, which she thought to be very unfair considering she was having such a hard time not sliding to the floor in a helpless heap, until her wraparound dress came fully open, top to bottom, exposing her already peaked nipples. Her breasts felt heavy with desire. Desire she struggled to fight although she had no idea why.

Serena lowered her chin until she could watch Zane's large hands as they moved to just beneath the swell of her breasts. One wicked finger from each hand moved in sync around and around her areola never quite touching her aching nipples.

As the sensations grew, Serena wiggled into Zane's groin. *Maybe if I tempt him*, she thought silently, *he will cease with the torture and get down to business*. She soon learned that wasn't the case as Zane's hips lurched forward. She was now pressed so tightly against the counter she couldn't move even if she wanted to.

Of course, that didn't stop her from trying.

"Stay still," Zane huskily whispered as he nipped her earlobe. His actions caused her to shiver earning her another nip.

"Zane." She couldn't think. Did his name actually make it out of her mouth? She couldn't be sure. Nothing was clear except for the need churning deep within her.

With her hands braced on the counter, Serena arched her back. It was pure instinct and need. The need to get closer to those hands. To drive him to the edge so he would give her what she wanted.

When he still didn't move his hands to cover her breasts or touch her in any way differently, she whimpered, "Zane?"

"Be still, baby," he answered in a soothing tone.

She could feel her blood begin to boil. The need to climax was overwhelming making her edgy. Before Zane finished murmuring in her ear, Serena tried to turn in his arms, shaking her head all the while.

Instead of allowing the movement, Zane pinned her arms to her side and leaned in to her until she could only pant with anticipation.

"Don't tell me no, Rena. Tell me what you want. Ask for what you need. Talk to me, but please don't ever tell me no. It makes me crazy, baby."

He said it softly. His tone was once again soothing, but lined with just an edge of steel. She knew he meant the words, but she wanted to deny him. To deny the hold she'd permitted him over her body, her heart. She couldn't do it though, all she could do was accept him as he was. Accept her body and its needs.

"All right. But please..." she began then abruptly stopped when two very skilled fingers began rolling her already taut nipples.

"Please what?"

"Oh, god, Zane. Please...please let me come." The words were torn from her lips as she felt the swipe of his tongue along the outer shell of her ear.

Then she felt him move. The pressure of his hand, fingers spread wide, remained at the small of her back, but the warmth of his body was gone, missed.

Soon her dress was pulled from her shoulders leaving her in only the cream-colored lingerie she'd bought just for him. Before she could move, his hand was once again splayed across her lower back. It pressed just enough to let her know he wanted her to stay, but her body wouldn't listen.

As soon as his hand was gone, Serena tried to turn and reach for him. Her body inflamed with her need to join with his. To feel the length of his cock gripped tightly within her depths.

Her movements earned her a stinging smack on the fleshy part of her right ass cheek.

"Ouch!" she gasped reaching for the hot, tingling spot on her derriere.

"I warned you not to move, Rena. Now stay still and you'll get what you want. Move again and you'll get something completely different."

Zane moved his hand ever so gently over the patch of flesh now marred with his print.

She shouldn't have liked that. She assured herself she didn't, but there was no denying the wetness between her thighs. The sting was now just warmth. More heat added to the inferno already bubbling in her almost sending her up in flames.

* * * * *

Zane knelt behind Serena and smiled against the back of her thigh as she went completely still. She was a fast learner. He wasn't so sure that was a good thing.

He kissed his way up one leg, then down the other, stopping here and there to explore. He paid special attention to every place that brought sweet sounds from Serena's lips. He could smell her arousal and longed to taste her heat, but it wasn't time yet.

Tonight he would explore her body in a way he'd never dreamed she'd allow. Every swell, every dip, every newly discovered part would be his to taste, to touch.

Very gently and very slowly, so as to draw out the torture, Zane lowered the shorts of her lingerie set. Once the garment was around her ankles, he lifted first one foot, then the other until she was free from its confines. He then tapped the inside of her knee.

"Spread those sweet thighs for me, Rena."

Obediently, she responded. Ever so slowly, his hand traced up the inside of her leg, stopping just short of the place he was sure she wanted him to touch most.

Soon he would give her just what she wanted. Her anticipation would make it so much better for both of them.

As his hand slid gently from the inside of one thigh to the other, she began making low moaning sounds in the back of her throat. He could tell she fought the urge to move as he cupped her wet sex. His middle finger slightly pressed her clit as his teeth grazed her ass.

The combination of sensations must have been just right because she bucked her hips forward searching for the release he relentlessly held away from her.

He knew the moment she realized what she'd done because she stilled mid-thrust. Being the ever-consistent man he was, Zane delivered a stinging smack to the opposite cheek at the same time he thrust a finger deep inside her wet channel. He thought he heard her gasp *oh shit*, but couldn't be sure.

Backing his finger out, he added another to it and returned them deep inside her warm reservoir, making little “come here” motions, in search of that sensitive bundle of nerves. His tongue snaked out to lick and taste the bounty of his labors. She was delicious, like warm honey.

He was sure his actions didn't remove the sting from her flesh. If anything, it brought more blood flowing to the area, which sent her over the edge. Her body shuddered just as he felt her inner muscles clench his probing fingers. She was hotter and wetter than he'd ever seen her before. And this was just the beginning.

Waiting until she could hold herself up, he removed his fingers from her dripping sex. Then slowly he slid his way back up the length of her body.

Her head hung forward, her hair covering her face. Next time he would watch her climax. Next time she would watch while he made her come over and over again.

But for now, he would hold her. Soothe her. He was curious what her reaction would be to his treatment of her. When she regained her composure would she be angry? He couldn't be sure what she would do.

Every message her body sent him told just how much those two stinging slaps turned her on, but would her mind cause her to balk at such treatment? They would have to talk about it. Discuss her feelings and work through them until they were both satisfied.

The heat on the palm of his hand was a reminder of just how much the pink flush of her bottom had turned him on. The little yelp she'd given at the time of the first slap made him a bit wary, but when she didn't ask him to stop, he had to wonder. The wetness of her swollen cleft told a story of its own.

The scent of her arousal, musky and sweet, almost sent him over the edge. He hadn't been so hard in years. Hell, he'd almost shot his load right in his pants at the taste of her and he'd never even made it to the best part.

He gathered Serena in his arms and headed for their bedroom. The night was young. The lessons just beginning. He would taste her cream. Lap every bit of it up until she begged for mercy. Then he would start all over again.

And when the time was right—when he could no longer hold back, he would sink his length into Serena’s sweet depths. The first time would be fast and furious. His engorged cock was beyond ready to pound into her over and over until they were both sated.

After that, he would bathe her and prepare her all over again for a slow and sensuous journey from which there would be no return.

Upon entering the room, Zane laid Serena on the bed. Her eyes were open, staring straight at him. A beautiful flush moved from her neck up. The color reminded Zane of the pink handprints he’d left on her delectable ass cheeks, he groaned.

Grabbing her hands, he slowly pulled until she was sitting up. He couldn’t help himself so he leaned forward until their lips met. She was warm and smooth and tasted like bliss.

His tongue traced the seam of her mouth until her lips parted. Beyond thought, Zane let loose. His tongue delved deep as he devoured her mouth. When he finally regained control and pulled away they were both panting.

Serena’s wide-eyed stare made it impossible to go slow. There was no fighting the urge to take. It was primal, instinctual. He had to have her. Mark her as his, dominate and control. Later would be the time for slow loving.

“Hold your arms up.”

She arched a questioning brow, but did as asked.

“You won’t be needing this,” he said as he removed her camisole over her head as if he were undressing a child. But that’s where all parent-like behavior came to a crashing halt.

On the way down, his massive hands closed over two rounded breasts. When her back arched, he lightly pinched both nipples, she immediately stilled. If he wasn't so damned hard he might have smiled, but as it was it took every ounce of control not to mount her like a wild animal.

"Lay back, baby. Stretch your hands way up high and grab the headboard. Don't let go until I tell you to."

Her already wide eyes went just a fraction wider. Their green depth flashed just before the color deepened to that of moss. Her pupils were dilated. She looked like a wild, wanton creature with her hair flowing free around the pale skin of her shoulders.

He was sure she was going to argue, but she must have thought better. After the slightest hesitation, she lay back. Her lids lowered and her arms extended making her breasts lift in offering.

"Open your eyes. I want you to watch everything I do to you. I want to see your soul through those pretty green eyes when you shatter."

His words made her squirm. She tried to press her legs together, but he was too fast. With his body stretched over her, his hips nestled snugly between hers there was nowhere to go. Unless she let go of the headboard. He watched the realization flicker briefly across her face and gave her a smug smile in return.

It was a silent challenge and she was well aware of it. He could tell she had decided not to push him—at least not this time. If he knew his Serena at all though, he knew it wouldn't take her long to test the limits he'd set for her. He was looking forward to the day.

When Serena stilled, Zane lowered his head to a rose-tipped nipple. Lightly flicking it with his tongue while grinding his shaft into her, he brought her back to the peak. All the while never taking his eyes from hers.

Just when she showed every sign of falling over the edge, he pulled back. He moved slowly, deliberately until he was standing at the foot of the bed.

Serena raised her head, spearing him with her gaze. He watched as her eyes followed the motion of his hands as they removed his shirt. Sitting, he proceeded to take off both shoes and socks, then stood and cupped his hard length through the fabric of his pants.

The tip of her pink tongue peeked out to moisten her kiss-swollen lips. Her hair was fanned against his pillow. His eyes roamed lower until they met with the glistening peak of her nipple still moist with his saliva.

His fingers fumbled with the catch of his pants. He wanted her so much he felt crazy with it. As he knelt on the bed between her still spread thighs she made as if to move her hands.

“Stay just the way you are, Rena,” he warned.

“Zane. Oh, Zane, I want to touch you.”

“Not yet, baby. One touch from you and it’s all over. I can’t wait, Rena. I can’t wait. I’ll make it up to you.” Before the words had completely left his mouth, he was on her. In her.

Slow, deep thrusts brought him closer by the minute. Lifting Serena’s legs until they were wrapped tightly around him, he thrust into her causing her to cry out.

He prayed she wouldn’t ask him to stop, he wasn’t sure he would be able to. Never had he used her so fiercely, but there was no stopping, no slowing down.

“Oh, god, Zane,” she panted. “I need...I need...” Her words trailed off as his teeth tugged at one pebbled nipple.

“Come with me, Rena.” Once, twice, on the third stroke he felt his body stiffen. He came with a force he’d never before experienced. Serena cried his name, her body convulsed around his softening cock. In exhaustion, his spent, sweat-dampened body collapsed against her.

A few hours later, Zane awoke to Serena's warm body snuggled in close next to him. Her hair, loose and wild was flowing about her shoulders all but begging for his fingers to tunnel through it.

His cock was hard and ready but he wouldn't take her as he had before. This time would be slow and torturous for the both of them. Slipping silently from the bed, Zane made his way to the living room where he collected the nondescript brown paper bag he'd set on the end table upon returning home.

With bag in tow, Zane made his way back up the hall and into the bedroom where he set the bag on the nightstand before going into the connecting bathroom. He took out a small ceramic washbasin and filled it with warm water. A fluffy washcloth was the only other item he would need. After dropping the washcloth into the water-filled basin, Zane carefully made his way back into the bedroom anticipating what was to come.

"Rena," Zane said, his voice low and soothing. "Wake up, baby," he added when she only snuggled deeper.

When Serena finally turned onto her back, Zane crawled onto the bed beside her. He was rigidly aroused but it would have to wait. He had plans for Serena that took precedence over his cock.

As quietly as possible, he pulled the blue vibrator and dildo from the bag then set them beside where she lay on the bed. With his hands, he spread her thighs wide running his fingers up and down their silky length. His touch caused Serena's eyes to flutter open. For a moment, she looked a bit confused but Zane knew right away when she'd come fully awake because her cheeks turned the prettiest shade of pink.

"What are you doing?" she asked, her voice low and soft.

Zane wrung out the dripping washcloth then proceeded to lay it over her mound. "Just taking care of what's mine."

"Mmm, that feels wonderful." The more she spoke in her low, almost purring voice, the harder his cock got.

When Zane felt he'd sufficiently cleansed and soothed Serena's pussy, he set the blue vibrator on its lowest setting and ran it in circles around her clit basking in her moans and cries of pleasure. His ever-decreasing circles came close but never quite touched the tiny bundle of nerves now swollen with arousal.

She was wet. He could see her juices glistening on her labia even in the dim light spilling from the slightly opened bathroom door. With slow yet sure movements, Zane introduced the lifelike dildo he'd bought into Serena's sex, watching as she opened for its invasion.

Her body bucked beneath his hands trying to get closer to the buzzing of the vibrator even while her hips moved urging the dildo deeper. She was hot. This time he did nothing to stifle her movements. He merely watched in awe as her body took over, its need consuming her.

When Zane felt that he'd sufficiently tortured them both with his sensual play, he removed the dildo from her tight sheath, its surface covered with her juices. Zane handed the vibrator to Serena as he moved to his knees between her still spread thighs. With his hands on her hips, he tugged until her bottom was elevated and in perfect alignment with his cock then placed her feet flat on his chest.

With one hand under her, cupping her bottom and the other grasping his throbbing shaft, Zane invaded Serena inch-by-inch fighting to keep control as he did so. With his now free hand, Zane urged Serena to pleasure herself with the still buzzing vibrator.

Within moments of doing so, Zane could feel the tiny tremors of her pussy as his body built towards its climax. When it hit, Serena's body grew taut mere seconds before claspng his cock. Her body held him so tightly he had no choice but to follow with an orgasm of his own. Even afterward, he could feel the tiny spasms that continued to rack Serena's body and knew that the position he was in was right where he always wanted to be.

After regaining his breath, Zane removed the toys and the washbasin to the bathroom leaving behind only the paper bag. It still held a few items Zane was sure would come in handy at a later date.

Zane climbed back into bed and pulled Serena to him spoon fashion. He lifted her leg until it rested on his thigh then worked his already hard shaft back into her still wet pussy.

"Zane?" she asked drowsily.

"Shh, it's okay. I just need to feel you, baby. I'm not sure I'll ever get enough of you," he said then buried his nose in her hair. Her soft sigh was like music to his ears as he drifted off to sleep.

Chapter Eight

The next few weeks flew by in a blur of activity. Sometimes it seemed as if her life had been flipped upside down. So much change in such a short amount of time made her head whirl.

And yet, some things in her life hadn't changed at all. She still worked hard doing a job she loved. Only soon, she would be doing it from Texas.

Zane was keeping longer hours preparing for the move. Even while working such hours in preparation to move his business, he never neglected what Serena considered to be her lessons.

She smiled at the thought. Often over the past few weeks, she'd pushed Zane. Just enough to see what she could get away with. It amazed her just how much she was willing to trust him. How easy it was to give herself to him over and over again, night after night.

At first, she worried about following through with this new sensual side to their relationship. Would Zane ask too much from her? Would he not ask enough, leaving her wanting and needing more? Would her needs bring back memories of her ex, a relationship better left in the past?

Now she knew the answer to all the questions pounding through her head.

He may push but he'd never ask for more than I'm willing to give, she realized. A small shiver went up her spine. Never had she been left wanting unless it was what she considered to be part of the learning experience.

She recognized it early on. Like a kid in a candy store, she wanted to gorge on everything in sight only to be left with a bellyache. Zane had insisted on patience. Sometimes he was as hard-pressed as she was to hold out. To let the passion build until

it could no longer be held. In those instances, she would writhe and plead for him to finish with her. To give her the release her body so desperately needed.

Then there were the times where she wanted to wring his neck. He always held so tightly to his control. Even when he was so hot and hard he could do no less than take her with deep, hard, animalistic thrusts, he was still in control.

To think that he could accomplish such control while she screamed with the intensity of her release made her see red.

No matter how hard she tried, his wicked tongue, nimble fingers and engorged cock were always too much.

She longed to see him deep in the throes of passion. To see him lose his control. It would happen very soon, even if she had to push a bit more than she was comfortable pushing to get him there.

Going into this type of relationship was new. She was well aware they wouldn't always agree, but this new side of him, the autocratic side he'd never shown before, was sometimes very hard to deal with, Serena thought, as she felt her smile turn to a frown.

Thinking back to last night, Serena followed their discussion from beginning to end through her mind and was still in shock over the outcome.

Her nipples peaked and goose bumps skittered across her skin in response.

He'd walked through the door to her office at half past seven last night. It had been a rough day and the medication she'd taken for the thrumming in her head was wearing off.

She sat bent over her keyboard typing furiously trying to ignore the fact that someone else was in the room. If she could just get the rest of the information saved before she lost her train of thought, she would be finished for the night. But that wasn't to happen evidently.

"Rena," he said as he kissed the side of her neck, which was stiff with stress.

"Just a minute, Zane," she answered not aware of the curtness in her voice.

It had taken no more words. Zane reached over her, pressing the appropriate keys to save her work while holding her hands still. When she'd turned to him, furious at the interruption, he'd silenced her with a harsh kiss.

"It's late, Serena. You can finish tomorrow."

She narrowed her eyes at him. "Why you...you," she sputtered completely oblivious of his growing arousal.

"Be quiet, baby," he growled.

"I will not be quiet. And you had no right to do that, dammit! I wasn't done."

She no sooner got the words out of her mouth than she found herself hauled up and out of her chair to be plastered against Zane's solid length.

One hand was tangled in her hair. She felt the pull at her scalp, but gave no consideration to it. She was angry and was spoiling for a fight. Now was as good a time as any, she remembered thinking. Then all hell had broken loose.

She felt a telling dampness between her thighs as memories paraded, one after another, through her mind.

While one large hand had held her head immobile, the other cupped her denim-clad backside pressing her close. He ground his hips into hers making it impossible to ignore the bulge beneath his zipper.

Just about the time she was ready to give in—to melt against him, he said, "I want you ready when I come home, Serena. That's why I called earlier, to let you know I was on my way." His voice was gruff, commanding and the use of her full name let her know he meant business.

She wanted to rant and rave, but every time she opened her mouth, he silenced her. Finally, she freed her mouth from his. Placing her hands flat against his chest, she pushed. The rock-hard wall of his chest was warm under her palm, but it didn't budge an inch. All she managed was to arch her upper body away from him. In the process, she brought their lower bodies impossibly closer together.

Serena gasped as Zane once again began to lower his head.

"Zane, wait!" Something in her voice must have alerted him. His head stilled mid-swoop.

Nervously, she smoothed her hands against the shirt stretched tight over his chest and tried not to breathe too deeply of his mesmerizing scent.

When he finally loosened his hold, she continued. "You said you'd listen to me, Zane. But every time I try to talk you kiss me."

She could tell he was struggling not to laugh. The darned man was infuriating!

His full lips quirked up at one side. "Go ahead, baby. I'm listening," he crooned.

Now that she had his full attention, she couldn't think of what she'd wanted to say. His loose hold in no way masked his arousal or allowed her freedom. The burgeoning length of him was hard to miss at any distance.

Heat flashed behind his cool façade making her hunger for what he had to offer.

Serena buried her face in his chest inhaling deeply. It did nothing to help clear her head of wayward thoughts.

His fingers grasped her chin and tilted it up until her eyes met his.

"Say what you want to say, Rena. If you keep rubbing up against me like that, I'll take you right here on your desk."

He was getting impatient. She could tell by the tenseness of his jaw, the way his hands flexed and relaxed against her body.

Good, make him wait. She'd given in to his every whim over the past few weeks, it wouldn't hurt him to wait just a little bit.

You may have given in to his every whim, her mind taunted, but you've received pleasure back tenfold.

His arm tightened around her as his head slowly lowered. He stopped when his mouth was just a breath away from hers causing her skin to prickle with awareness.

"You're running out of time," he said as his palm kneaded her backside.

“Please, Zane. I can’t think when you hold me this close,” she said pulling away from him, giving a silent prayer of thanks that he’d let her go. She paced away, placing the entire length of the room between them. It was purely a defense mechanism. She needed room to breathe, to think. To be out of Zane’s grasp and to keep her senses clear until she said what she needed to say.

“I know you called, but I lost track of time.”

Running her fingers through her hair, she sighed.

“It’s been a long day and it seems like nothing’s gone right. Then, you just waltz right up and shut my computer down like what I do doesn’t matter.”

She was getting angry all over again. The blood was pumping in her veins making the pounding in her head more pronounced. There was little she could do to stop it.

* * * * *

Agitation showed in every movement she made. From the rigid set of her shoulders to the furrow between her daintily tweezed brows. Her white-knuckled hands were fisted and resting on the swell of her hips, which were cocked sassily to one side, foot tapping a fast-paced staccato.

She was royally pissed and beyond gorgeous. The flush high on her cheeks, pouty kiss-swelled lips and the flash of her emerald eyes made her look like a wanton goddess. Damn but he wanted to sit her on the smooth surface of the desk and settle himself between her thighs.

Serena in a snit was a glorious sight to behold. No longer could he hold back so he started for her. Slow and steady, he made his way across the room. He watched as warily, Serena took several small steps in retreat. When she could go no further, she started moving to the side.

Zane had the hardest time containing the laugh eager to burst forth. He was curious as to where she thought she was going. Casually, as if he had no care in the world, he stopped his forward progress.

Serena's eyes narrowed. She was waiting. He could see the wheels spinning, trying to figure out what his next move would be. When he moved away from her, in the direction of the door, she made to move back to the chair at her desk. But when the lock clicked into place, she froze. She was so still, he wasn't sure she was even breathing.

Once again, he moved toward her. "I said I'd listen and I did. I never said a thing about agreeing though, which I don't," he said as he advanced upon her.

"This is our time, Rena. Time to learn what we thought we knew. I won't have work getting in the way of our future whether it's your work or mine. The sooner you learn that, the easier it'll be."

He thought steam would soon be flowing from her ears as red as her face was. Her body nearly vibrated with anger. About the time he finished his little speech, she made a beeline for the door.

This time he did chuckle, he couldn't help himself. Her antics were nothing less than entertaining. Upon hearing his laugh, Serena turned on him and advanced, completely forgetting her need to flee the room.

Her small finger poked his chest in time with her words.

"I-don't-care-what-you-think," she enunciated slowly as if he were slow in the head all the while poking his chest with a manicured nail. He wasn't quite sure if he wanted to laugh or paddle her ass. Her next words made his decision.

"I'm going to finish my work now. If you're so damned hard up you can't wait until I'm done, then go fuck yourself!"

A deep, rumbling bark of laughter filled the room. He'd never seen the little hellion so pissed. This was exactly what he'd been waiting for. A legitimate reason to get his hands on that cute little ass of hers.

He held out a hand to her, raising an eyebrow when she didn't comply with his silent demand. He could sense her confusion—it made his lust stronger.

His shaft twitched with the strength of his arousal. He wanted her to fight him. To kick and scream, first with uncertainty tinged with fear and later from sheer pleasure. A pleasure almost as hot as her bottom would soon be.

“Don't make me come for you, baby. I can't guarantee you'll like the outcome,” he threatened in an ominously quiet voice.

She backed further away from him. “Zane?”

He circled his wary prey. Once around her, he leaned against the still locked door and crossed his arms over his chest. All outward appearances showed him to be in complete control. Loose-limbed and relaxed from head to toe. Only he knew the truth.

He was hotter than a schoolboy making a play for his first score. Silently, he hoped with everything in him that she didn't call his bluff. He wanted her to come to him of her own free will.

He was one hundred percent sure she wouldn't enjoy herself right off, but everything he'd learned of her in the past few weeks told him she would absolutely love the heat and arousal she'd gain in the semi-forced scenario he planned to see through.

Giving Serena a brief respite, he remained leaning against the door trying to force every ounce of concentration from within his lust-filled brain, trying to retain his composure. Slowly, he willed every muscle in his body to relax. Every muscle obeyed the silent command except for the important one. The one tenting his trousers in defiant erectness.

Once again, he held out his hand and once again, she backed away. It was quite comical and he might have laughed if his senses weren't on such high alert. There was no way the sassy-mouthed vixen was going to get away from him.

“Serena, baby. If I come get you, you'll be over my knee so fast it won't be enjoyable for either of us.”

He watched as her mouth fell open, revealing pearly white teeth and a pink tongue. It almost immediately snapped closed.

"Enjoyable," she sputtered.

"Yes, enjoyable. Can you already feel it, Rena?" he asked in a near whisper as he closed the distance between them.

He kept her eyes glued to his, willing her to move toward him. His eyes bore into hers; he saw her shiver and knew he had her complete attention.

"I bet you're already wet for me, baby. Just anticipating my hand on your ass is making you hot."

Her head was shaking side to side. He interrupted before she had the chance to start protesting.

"Don't tell me no," he growled reminding her of his earlier warning. "And don't lie to me. You're so hot those luscious nipples of yours are already pouting at me."

By the time he finished, he was close enough to test his theory. With the pad of his thumb, he grazed her left nipple through her clothes, wringing a gasp from deep inside her.

As his hand threaded through her hair, he was reminded of the softest silk. She was smooth all over. Inside and out. His penis dripped pre-cum at the thought of being buried within her silky depths. His mouth watered at her remembered taste. Sweet and musky, all woman and sensual as hell. The thought of feeling her smooth buttocks against his palm brought forth a rumbling groan.

Nostrils flared, Zane tugged her head back at the same time his free arm locked her body to his.

"I can smell your heat," he said inhaling deeply. Leaning forward, he blew warm air into the curve where her neck and shoulder met feeling tiny bumps on her skin raise in response.

Then with a long, slow swipe of his tongue, he licked the lobe of her ear just above where his breath mingled with her scent. She melted in his arms causing him to grasp her even tighter.

She was right where he wanted her. Relaxed and aroused, now to get rid of her clothes.

As his mouth plundered hers, taking everything she gave and more, he lowered the zipper of her jeans, then worked them over the swell of her hips until they pooled at her feet.

Thankfully, there were no pantyhose to contend with and the tiny triangle that was her panties did little to detain him. Soon they joined her jeans, around her ankles on the floor.

She was so caught up in their scorching kiss and the fingers rolling her nipple, she showed no sign that she realized he had just undressed her from the waist down.

She tasted of citrus and sunshine. The warm sounds she made as his tongue traced her lower lip damned near made him forget what he was doing. His body begged him to take her swiftly, but he had other plans.

With both hands, he held her head still for the pursuit of his mouth. She wiggled against him trying to get closer, to ride the thigh he'd just wedged between her legs.

He slowed the heated kiss until it was tender, yet thorough. He heard her sigh with contentment when one hand traveled the length of her spine until it reached the swell of her bottom where he squeezed once before a resounding slap filled the room.

When she cried out hands flying to cover her stinging parts, he let her go and slowly moved to the chair at her desk where he then sat.

"Take off your shirt and bra, baby. Then come here so we can do this the right way."

"Zane?" she panted, hands still moving behind her.

He watched as Serena lifted first one foot and then the other, removing her jeans and panties from their tangled position around her ankles so that she could walk to him unencumbered.

“Now, Rena,” he said in a tone new to her. One that brooked no argument. Combined with the predatory look he knew was plastered across his face and he was sure she was wondering just what in the hell she’d gotten herself into.

Chapter Nine

She could feel her body tremble. She quivered with need, fear of the unknown and an arousal so deep she wasn't sure she'd ever be able to wade herself out of its depths.

When he stood from his seated position on her desk chair, her feet involuntarily gave a little hop. *So much for showing only outward calm*, she thought wryly when one brow lifted in response to her jerky movement.

Mesmerizing, that was what he was. She couldn't have torn her eyes from his fluid movements to save her life. So, she stood like a stone statue and watched.

She watched as he removed a square box from the pocket of his sport coat and set it beside her keyboard on the smooth surface of the desk. His tie, which already hung loosely at his throat, was removed next. When his deft fingers pushed first one button and then the next through their respective holes, her insides protested. The shiver running down her spine only made her weakness more pronounced, at least to herself.

His movements caused the air around him to stir and when he finally removed his coat the rich aroma of musk and male monopolized her senses.

With each flick of his wrist, his sleeve inched higher until it was neatly rolled, just under the elbow. Her eyes were still glued to his every movement. Serena watched as Zane rolled the opposite sleeve noticing how the movement caused the muscles in his forearms to contract and relax.

It had seemed like hours, but in reality must have only been minutes. However long it was, it hadn't been long enough before he once again resumed his seat. This time he chose a ladder-back chair.

She was still trying to understand why he would choose the most uncomfortable chair in the room when he cleared his throat. Too soon, she was once again aware of exactly what he expected of her.

Did she dare deny him? Did she want to? The answer to both questions was a quick no.

Not just no, but hell no!

Serena stifled a nervous chuckle and tried to concentrate. It was so hard to do with him sitting as big as you please at the side of her desk. Arms bared and large hands resting on thighs she knew for a fact were strong and corded with lean muscle.

Thighs she was supposed to drape herself across for her first-ever, honest-to-goodness spanking. Damn if that thought didn't make her wet.

She was once again brought out of her reverie when Zane said, "Serena dear, you pushed, now it's time to pay."

She could tell he was getting impatient. His eyes may have been glittered with lust and there was definitely a flush of arousal high on his cheeks, but his voice was edged with steel and his hands no longer sat idly on his thighs.

Taking a deep breath, she blindly moved forward. With every tiny step, she reminded herself that this was exactly what she'd been looking for. Precisely what she wanted.

She was so hot the scent of her arousal wafted up filling her senses until she thought she'd burst. So turned on she was sure her juices would be coating her inner thighs before she ever made it to him.

Her mound throbbed with each shuffled step, squeezing her thighs together did nothing to ease the mounting tension coiled low in her belly.

It was an odd feeling to walk across a room bared from the waist down while your man sat patiently—or in this case, not so patiently—by and waited for you to arrange yourself across his lap to feel the sting of his palm against your backside.

Would the bite of pain be as wonderful as she'd imagined it would be? Would the resulting heat radiate through her body and make her all but beg to be taken? These were questions she couldn't wait to have answered.

When Serena finally reached the spot just before Zane's seat, she stopped and waited. And wondered. The quirk of his lips made her a bit uneasy. It was a mischievous smile. One, that knocked her a bit off-kilter making her vulnerable and uneasy. These feelings in turn made her defensive, possibly even a bit angry.

She tried to remain calm, but when he motioned with a finger for her to turn around, all thought ceased to exist, melting her anger away in the process.

This was it. It was time. Stiffening in anticipation, she felt the muscles in her bare bottom clench. When the touch finally came, it wasn't at all what she'd expected.

A warm hand ran the length of her spine from the cleft of her butt to where her bra was still fastened. It was then that she remembered. He'd told her to remove her shirt and bra and she hadn't done it.

Damn, damn and double damn! She berated herself. Sure, she'd wanted to push him. To see if he would follow through with the erotic promises of a spanking if she didn't comply with his every whim.

Hell, she'd spent the past week sashaying around the place like a bitch in heat trying to get him to lose the control he held to as tight as an old spinster held on to her virginity. And now she'd done it. Only this time she thought there was a chance she may have gone just a smidge too far.

"I asked you to remove these, baby," he said as his fingers worked the clasp of her bra.

She tried to turn in order to face him. She desperately wanted to make amends, to show that she would comply. That she wanted to experience his loving hand, but she couldn't seem to gather her thoughts enough to form a few words much less a sentence.

His hands at her hips held her firmly, not allowing her to turn or step away. And when she finally forced enough brain cells together to speak, she was stopped by his next words.

"Now, turn around and remove your shirt and bra, Rena. We'll add a bit extra to make up for this little discrepancy," he said as she turned in his hands head dipping

forward. The open-mouthed kiss he placed just below her navel once again caused her brain cells to scatter.

The bat-sized flutters tearing their way through her stomach combined with the trembling of her hands and the moist, warmth of his mouth moving along her heated flesh and Serena wasn't so sure she'd ever get her shirt off.

When she finally managed to release the last button, she sighed in relief. Next came the cream-colored lace bra, which already hung loose. When both were pooled at her feet, she straightened her shoulders, lifted her head and once again waited.

The kisses peppering her abdomen and the large hands firmly grasping her thighs made her head spin. Without thought, she leaned into Zane. Hot need kindled deep inside.

His throaty chuckle as he eased her away snapped her back to attention.

"Not yet, baby. Not for a while, we've got other business to attend to."

His voice was smooth and deep and although her body and mind felt torn, it soothed her.

"Place yourself over my lap, sweet thing. I want that ass of yours right where I can reach it."

"That's a girl," he crooned when she lowered herself until her belly rested on his thighs.

Serena could feel the blush of embarrassment as his hand moved over the bare skin of her bottom. Zane shifted beneath her, spreading his thighs, allowing her more room. Making her more comfortable—if that were possible. One thing became crystal-clear just after she moved to shift her weight.

With his legs held wide the way they were, her clit was finally getting the attention it had been demanding. This revelation caused her to squirm even more.

"Uh-uh," tsked Zane. "Not yet," he said as he held her steady with a strong arm across her lower back.

“Now I want you to hold on to the chair the best you can, and keep those sweet hands of yours out of my way or I’ll tie them.”

When she complied, he gently stroked a hand up the inside of one thigh and down the inside of the other. “Open your legs, baby. I wouldn’t want to miss anything.”

She couldn’t help the shiver that ran the length of her body. Oh, god, she inwardly moaned. She shouldn’t like this. She shouldn’t want to be tied and spanked, but she did.

And for once, coming to that conclusion didn’t leave her feeling dirty or deranged. It left her hot and so damned horny if he didn’t get on with it already, she’d find herself in even bigger trouble.

The sting of the first smack was much lighter than expected. It wasn’t harsh or hard and neither were the several that followed causing her skin to tingle. Soon though, the heat began to build. Serena fought to stay still, but as each subsequent blow landed, her pussy was ground into his leg bringing her higher and higher until she was sure the next would send her into orbit.

* * * * *

His hand was on fire. He could only imagine what her ass felt like. It was hot and almost the same color pink as he knew her nipples to be after they’d been sucked vigorously. His cock was rock-hard and he wasn’t sure he’d be able to wait much longer.

He’d started off peppering the twin-rounded globes, gradually graduating to her upper thighs. A couple of throaty moans escaped her lips causing him to slow a bit. Lust tore at him. Take, his body demanded, but he couldn’t take the chance that he’d hurt her so he slowed and waited. Waited to hear if she panted the safe word. Would he be able to let her go if she did?

She was so wet. He could see the lips of her pussy glistening with the moisture of her arousal. He could feel her heat. When she seemed to calm down, but didn't utter a word, he continued. This time his hand lifted and lowered much slower, but each strike was harder than those he'd started with. Her body quivered under his arm. He could feel her hips move as she tried to grind her clit against his leg.

When her movements became frantic, she panted out his name.

He had to know.

"You okay, baby?"

"Y-yes," she breathed out, nodding her head at the same time.

"That was for not being ready when I got home. This is for defying me too many times to count since then."

The sound of the next three swats rang out clearly into the quietness of the room along with her voice.

"Ohhh," she cried as the sound of flesh on flesh once again filled the air. When he knew she was ready, he ceased his movements instead running a finger along the cleft separating her magnificent ass and ever so slightly grazed the one spot on her body he'd never praised.

Lowering a finger until it reached her drenched sex, he collected the moisture found there and returned to the spot between her cheeks.

Teasing and testing, he gradually added pressure until his finger breached the last of her body's virginity. She gasped and moaned.

That was all it took, bucking under the pressure of his finger, she cried out his name. He could feel the tight muscles of her anus grasping the tip of his finger and knew he'd die of bliss when he was finally able to take her there.

With a hand between her legs, covering her mound, he turned her tucking her close to his chest until the spasms of her orgasm eased.

Her breath came in short gasping pants. Zane could feel the sheen of moisture covering her body. When she wiggled to get closer, his shaft throbbed in protest.

Her lips, now roaming his neck, only made matters worse. It was as if his body had been taken over. The caged animal had been let loose and would never again agree to such confinement.

He could only hope she'd understand, he thought, as he stood and carried her to their room.

After laying Serena on the bed, Zane removed his clothes. During that time, she'd lifted herself up on to her elbows and was watching him. Her gaze was intense. Green eyes stared at him as though seeing him for the first time. When he opened the top drawer of his bedside table and removed a length of black silk, those green eyes widened. The depth of color and dilated pupils made him want to roar with triumph.

Instead, he motioned her to him. When she was stationed on her knees on the bed, he moved forward. His large hands cupped her elbow pulling her close for a heated kiss.

His mouth devoured hers, nipping at her full lower lip, sucking it between his lips when she gasped. Lifting her against his chest, he stepped away from the bed then slowly lowered her down the length of his body until her feet touched the floor.

Zane watched as Serena's head titled just the slightest bit to the side. She wanted to question him, he was sure, but had yet to open her luscious lips.

He raised a single finger to his mouth in a gesture for her to remain silent. Her eyes immediately sparked in response. The glittering emerald of her irises remained locked to his face as he gently turned her until she faced away from him.

Caressing her ass with his right hand, he asked, "How do you feel, baby?"

She turned her head his way looking at him over her shoulder. Raising one arched brow, she challenged him. He could almost hear her wheels spinning. Why had he told her to keep quiet to then ask her a question?

When she remained silent, he patted her ass and nipped the back of her neck.
“Good girl, Rena.”

She stiffened at his words, but the hand roaming her still tender flesh must have given her pause, still she didn't speak.

He chuckled as he gently but firmly added pressure to her shoulder until she took the hint and slowly dropped to her knees.

“Cross your hands behind your back,” he commanded in a voice low and sensual.

When she followed his orders, he wrapped her wrists in the length of silk, firmly but gently binding her. Now to turn the fantasy he'd so often masturbated to into a reality.

Chapter Ten

The carpet abraded her knees, but not to the point of discomfort. Her senses were reeling. Every smell, every sound was magnified. She could almost taste his heat, his utter maleness. Her mouth watered in response.

The strength of the black silk binding her wrists was surprising. The thin fabric was silky smooth. The length left hanging skimmed the heated flesh of her bottom causing an overabundance of already heightened nerve endings to protest. Or beg, Serena wasn't sure which.

She seemed to tingle all over after Zane securely bound her wrists together. The feel of his warm hands grazing her body ever so slightly while insisting she stay still and quiet, made her want to scream.

Now she was at his mercy. His every command would be hers to follow or pay the consequences. Sitting back on her haunches, Serena watched as Zane silently left the room, closing the door behind him.

Every emotion imaginable ran through her mind at that point in time. But the one prevailing emotion that took precedence over all others was trust. Her trust in Zane was unequivocal. Just as her love was all consuming.

Damn, there it was again, she thought as her shoulders slumped and her head fell forward. She loved him. There was no denying it, and no longer could she hold it back.

She was so lost in the magnitude of her feelings that she didn't hear when the bedroom door opened to admit a nude Zane.

Nor did she see the frown upon his face as he noticed her stooped shoulders, her look of defeat. The frown marring his polished good looks was one of concern.

"Rena baby, what's wrong? Did I...? Do you...?" He didn't finish, voice trailing off as his hazel eyes stared into hers.

The concern in his eyes brought tears to her own. Tears she tried desperately to blink away, to no avail. This was a turning point for them, a new beginning. She wasn't supposed to be blubbering like a baby.

One hand rested on her shoulder while the other tilted her chin up.

"Oh, god, Rena," he started only to be interrupted.

"No, Zane, don't," she said softly wishing her hands were free so she could smooth his furrowed brow. To cup his face in her hands and kiss him tenderly.

"I'm... It's just that..." Damn, they made a good pair. Couldn't get a full sentence out between the two of them. Taking a deep breath, Serena swallowed then tried again.

"It's just that I love you, Zane O'Malley. With all my heart and soul, I love you." There, it was finally out. There would be no taking the words back. Not that she wanted to.

The waiting would kill her, she was sure. He said nothing in return, just stared. His eyes bore holes into her soul and yet, he remained silent.

She felt as if she were choking. Swallowing past the lump lodged in her throat was virtually impossible. Until she saw stars dance before her eyes, she didn't realize she'd been holding her breath. It came out in a whoosh.

With its release also came the tears. They snaked like twin rivers down her cheeks and she was powerless to stop them. Serena closed her eyes and dropped her head. The rasp of a warm finger across her wet cheek was the first move Zane made since she'd spilled her guts.

He pulled her close, kissing the tears from her eyes, from her cheeks. He uttered words she couldn't understand as he stroked her hair away from her face.

In his intense gaze, Serena saw everything. Love and passions like she'd never before witnessed. She could feel the smile as it slowly but cautiously spread across her face. Zane's eyes sparkled at her in return.

“I’ve never heard words more beautiful. With all my heart and all that I am know that I love you, Serena Keller,” he said as he continued to kiss her face.

“Also know that from this day forward you will belong to no one but me.”

With those spoken words, Zane picked up the square box Serena hadn’t even noticed sitting on the bed. Next to it was a plain brown bag. She had no time to consider what might be inside of it because at that very moment, Zane opened the velvet jeweler’s box.

Inside laid a gold choker. The intricate pattern looked ancient. Set flush into the gold was tiny emeralds sparkling as if winking at her.

Serena gasped and struggled with the silk still holding her wrists captive. Zane’s chuckle brought her gaze back to his. Her breath hissed out at the sight. He was bent on one knee in front of her. His shaft proudly erect, curving slightly toward his abdomen. On his face, he wore a look so possessive, so primal Serena could only stare mutely in return.

“We’ll just leave you like you are, baby. I’m not done with you yet.”

With those softly spoken words, Zane clasped the gold choker around Serena’s neck then stood to his full height bringing his penis in direct line with her mouth.

Serena couldn’t help but lick her lips in response. His scent wrapped itself around her like strong arms in the night. Taking all she had to give while making every moment special.

She leaned into his embrace, a bit unsteady without her hands. Leaving everything to Zane, she sighed when she felt his fingers tangle in her hair bringing her forward until the smooth head of his shaft was pressed to her mouth.

She snaked her tongue out until the tip peeked from between her lips and stroked him ever so slightly ‘round and ‘round the sensitive bulb of his cock head. When his hips bucked, she smiled.

Sitting lower against her heels put her in the perfect position to tease and tantalize. With soft strokes, she licked him from base to tip, then paid homage to his swollen testicles. It was hard to balance with her hands bound, but Zane helped guide her.

Taking one completely into her mouth, she sucked and then released.

Soon her head was grasped firmly from both sides. Her hair moved away from her face, then she heard the growled command. Or was it a plea?

“Look at me, Rena. I’ll watch you take me. And when I come, I’ll feel your eyes on me as well as your mouth.”

The words alone wrung tiny orgasmic spasms from her already taut body. With her eyes fastened on his, Serena took him completely in.

* * * * *

The feel of her hot, little mouth surrounding his cock while the depths of her green eyes stayed trained on his face was almost too much. It took what was left of his willpower not to plunge his length to the back of her throat.

Her hair was wrapped around his fingers. The amber highlights against the skin of his tanned hand was such a turn-on. When his hands tightened, tugging her closer, she lost her balance. The tiny whimper of need that escaped her throat when his length was dislodged from her greedy lips caused his mouth to tilt at the corners.

She raised an impatient brow at his blunder then resumed where she’d left off. The swelling of his cock was a fair warning causing his toes to curl. When she pulled him to the back of her throat then stroked him with swallowing motions he was lost.

Balls tight against the base of his shaft, Zane’s seed spewed forth, all but erupting from his body. A strangled cry burst from his mouth and filled the room while grass green eyes watched, never leaving his face as she swallowed all his body offered.

Spent and hardly able to stay upright, Zane collected Serena into his arms. His woman, his submissive woman, the woman who not only let him spank her, but also tie

her and fuck her mouth. When she was sitting comfortably on the bed with a smug smile drifting across her face, Zane leaned in to remove the length of silk still binding her wrists.

When her arms were free, she moaned softly.

Zane turned Serena onto her stomach. When she was lying flat, he straddled her hips and began to massage her shoulders and arms.

Rena's lean muscles were tight beneath his palms. Zane continued over her upper body until he felt her relax. When he was finished, he made his way down her neck and back, nibbling, kissing and licking a direct path down her spine.

It shouldn't have been possible, but the sweet sounds and the rolling of her hips made it so. His flaccid cock sprang to life once again. He didn't think he'd ever get enough of their new relationship. Of this new Serena, his Rena.

Slowly, languidly, Zane continued the path he was on until his tongue was darting over the curves of her ass. Using his shoulders, he spread her thighs wide. Blindly reaching out, he snagged a plump pillow pulling it beneath her. Once Serena was settled onto the pillow, Zane strategically placed her sex where it was most convenient for him and his voyage.

With thighs opened wide and hips raised, Serena would be the one doing all the writhing and moaning this time around.

Zane slowly kissed his way up her inner thigh. When he reached the apex, he stopped and inhaled deeply. Her scent was all woman. She was sexy as hell with her ass in the air, open and ready for all he had to offer.

A chuckle escaped his lips and she wriggled trying to get closer to his mouth. With both hands, he tortured and tormented her dripping sex, keeping her teetering on the edge.

His breath fanned over her wringing a moan from deep inside her body. When she was frantic in her search for release, he buried his face between her thighs, dipping his tongue deep within the warm recess of her body.

Licking and lapping, he brought her closer and closer, yet refused to send her over. She tasted like honey, sweet and smooth on his tongue. He told her so, the words dark and erotic causing her breath to hitch, then pour out of her lungs.

“Oh, god, Zane. I love it when you talk to me like that.”

He could feel the tiny spasms of her imminent release on his tongue. Now was the time. Time to make her fly. Dipping his head lower, Zane deftly licked at the swollen nub of her clit while his roaming hands worked the cheeks of her ass teasing the cleft parting them so he could reach all her hidden treasures.

“Hand me that bag, baby.”

“Bag?” she asked looking back at him over her shoulder. Her face flushed, her eyes glazed.

Pointing to the brown bag, Zane continued with his foray through her folds. Although he had slowed down, he knew Serena was impossibly close to her release. He intended to make it an unforgettable one.

“What’s in it?” she asked.

“Just turn around and relax, baby. You’ll love this, I promise.”

Dumping everything out of the bag, he found the anal toy he’d bought. It was a smaller size for beginners and would be perfect for Serena. Generously lubing the toy, he caressed her cheeks while completely letting up on his tongue torture. She groaned in response.

“Don’t stop! Please don’t stop.” Her voice was gruff, her breathing ragged as she moved her arms as if to lever herself up from her awkward position perched atop the overstuffed pillow.

“Stay there, Rena. I’m not going to stop, baby. Not until you’ve come so many times your body has no more to offer.”

His words made her shiver causing chill bumps to immediately spring to life all over the surface of her skin.

When the toy was slick enough, he took the bottle of lube and prepared her body. Her moans of pleasure and gasps of pain were beyond arousing as he prepared her tight, virgin entrance with the width of his finger. Her body clenched tightly as he slowly reversed his motion. A feminine moan slipped from her lips, her body shuddered.

“You okay, baby?”

“Oh, yeah,” she answered, her body screaming for its release.

Slowly, he worked the toy into her tight hole. Breaching the ring of muscle caused her to still, her breath to hiss out with every breath. The widest point wrung a whimper. Its fully seated width and length got a groan.

Zane gave the toy a slow twist before rising to his knees. Below him, Serena’s back heaved with the effort to breathe. Her smooth skin was covered with a glistening sheen of perspiration making it seem almost glittery.

Her position was perfect for his entrance. With slow determined thrusts, he entered the cream-covered length of her cunt. Her already tight sheath was made impossibly tighter by the toy lodged deeply within her anus.

“Zane!” she screamed as her climax overtook her body.

At the very moment her voice filled the room, he thrust full and deep, imbedding himself completely within her.

“Damn, baby. This is so good. You’re so good,” he groaned mindless with arousal.

Leaning forward, he nipped her neck, tasting her sweet skin. He could feel the base of the toy against his pelvis and gave a small thrust stimulating not only the fist-tight length of her cunt with his deeply buried cock, but simultaneously her nether hole.

The sensation must have been overwhelming because she was thrown immediately into another orgasm. This one was all consuming, causing not only her inner muscles to spasm but her whole body seemed to go rigid with the intensity causing his own

release. It was just as emotionally and physically earth shattering for him as he imagined it was for her.

When her body relaxed with only small tremors of her release remaining, Zane pulled her into him and held her close. Held her tight.

"Rena," he whispered into the darkness later that evening.

"Hmmm?" she replied drowsily as she changed positions, turning her body to face him.

Fingering the gold choker clasped around her neck, he said. "You have this, but it's not enough, baby. I want you to wear my ring."

She peered at him in the darkness of the room then blinked. It did nothing to remove the confused look from her face.

When she said nothing, he sat up. Once he'd turned on the small lamp on his bedside table, he turned to her.

"Your ring?" she squeaked.

"I'm asking you to be my wife, baby. Will you do that for me? Will you wear my collar and my ring?"

He watched as tears spilled over onto pale cheeks. She was shaking her head no, but her mouth said yes.

"Yes," she repeated still fighting her tears.

"Don't cry, Rena."

"Oh, god, Zane. I love you!"

She was in his arms in a flash. Her enthusiasm tumbling them backward onto the mattress. He held her to him, over him so that he could see her face.

"Everything is almost ready for the move. I want to get married at home, in Texas, with my brothers close by. How do you feel about that?"

She hesitated for a moment before answering. "What if your family doesn't like me, Zane? What then?"

He kissed her forehead, a big smile on his face. "They'll love you, baby. Just as I do. I've already told them I was coming home and they're ecstatic. Last night before I came home, I called and left a message telling them I was bringing you with me. I'm expecting a return call first thing in the morning, knowing my brothers."

As he'd expected, early the next morning, the shrill ring of the phone seemed to scream through the room. With fumbling hands, Zane reached for his alarm to shut it off before realizing it was the phone. With a grumble and a few choice words, he picked up the cordless phone and punched the talk button.

"What?" he grouched.

A deep chuckle met his ears. "Wake up, baby brother," the voice said.

"Dammit, Sean! Do you know what time it is?" Zane asked as he swung his legs over the side of the bed, his hand scratching his bare chest.

"Yep, sure do. It's morning. What, do people in California sleep the morning away?"

When they've been up all night making love they do, Zane thought silently as he looked over his shoulder where Serena had curled onto her side and was softly snoring.

A smile crossed his lips when he answered. "There is a two-hour time difference, you moron."

"Oh, sorry. I didn't think about that one," Sean answered not sounding the least bit contrite. "You going to tell us what's going on, Zane?" This time he sounded worried.

"I'm coming home for good, Sean, and I'm bringing Serena with me."

A slow whistle sounded on the other end of the phone. "Why now, Zane? Why after all these years?"

Without going into specifics, Zane told Sean how he'd placed a singles ad and Serena had answered it.

"Well, I'll be damned!" Sean managed to get out between hoots of laughter.

"Sean, I've asked her to be my wife and I want to be married at home. I've talked to Hayden about staying at the ranch until we buy our own place." Just saying it made it seem so real. He was finally going home for good.

"Are you sure about this, Zane? I mean, these damned women are enough to drive a man crazy."

Hostility from Sean was not a good thing. He may seem like a big ole teddy bear, but the man could be downright scary when he wanted to be.

"What women, Sean?" The other end of the line remained silent. "Spill it already. I don't have time for this crap."

A whoosh of air was the first sound he heard since asking the question.

"Do you remember Honor Rollings, Zane?"

"Vaguely," he answered not at all sure where this conversation was going. "Wasn't she that scrawny kid who came to live with her aunt?"

"Yeah, that's her, only she's not scrawny anymore and she's definitely not a kid. She's back. The widow Rollings passed away a few weeks back and she came home to get things in order."

Zane scratched his head, then ran a hand over his face. Serena had turned toward him and was now curled up around his hips while he sat at the edge of the bed. Her closeness was making his cock as hard as a fence post, leaving him with little patience.

"Tell me all of it, Sean and do it quick because I've got to go."

A deep chuckle once again sounded in his ear. Then it was gone, to be replaced by a sobering voice.

"She's working for me waiting tables. Seems she's been traveling from place to place all these years. She's never settled down."

The edge in this brother's voice had him a bit worried. "Some people are just like that, Sean. What is it to you if she doesn't stay put for long?"

“Because she’s mine!” Sean answered in a possessive growl. “She doesn’t know it yet, Zane, but she’s mine. I fell in love with her the moment she walked into my place and I won’t let her go. I can’t.”

“What did you do, big brother? Tell her you want a house load of kids and scare her away? You know some women don’t want that.”

His brother was a big man. Intimidating. But he had a heart of gold and since the time Zane could remember, he talked of marriage and family.

“No, I didn’t quite make it that far. I told her she belonged to me and if I caught her with another man I’d beat him to a pulp and paddle her ass until she couldn’t sit.”

Zane’s laughter woke Serena. Her tiny hand snaked around his hip until it rested low on his abdomen making his semi-rigid shaft throb in anticipation.

“From your tone, I’m assuming your words didn’t sit too well with her.”

Serena mumbled some appreciative words along his right hip as her fingers walked their way to the thatch of hair surrounding his now proudly erect penis.

“So, Zane, is that her I hear? And why all of a sudden has your breathing turned ragged?” Sean teased.

“Can it, Sean. I’ve got to go. I’ll see you in about a week,” he groaned then promptly hung up the phone.

In one swift motion, he was poised over Serena. He nibbled once on her ear and in an agonizing breath whispered, “Sorry, baby. I can’t wait, I’ll make it up to you, I promise.”

The words were no sooner out of his mouth than he thrust himself into her. This was no gentle loving session. It was raw, untamed sex. The sounds of flesh on flesh filled the room until his head spun and he came with the ferocity of the animal he felt within himself.

Serena's cunt gripped him tightly; tiny spasming flutters were all that remained of her orgasm when he finally roused himself enough to remove his weight from her body.

The rest of the day was spent doing exactly as he'd promised – making it up to her for his fierce lust and lack of finesse. He accomplished that by playing with her until he thought they'd both go insane. Then with bodies entwined, they slept.

About the author:

Maggie Casper's life could be called many things but boring isn't one of them. If asked, Maggie would tell you that blessed would more aptly describe her everyday existence.

Marrying young and being loved by a great husband and four gorgeous daughters should be enough to make anybody feel blessed. Add to that a bit of challenge, a lot of fun and an undeniably close circle of friends and family and you'd be walking in her shoes.

Speaking of challenges and fun, when not writing, Maggie's alter ego spends her time fighting fires and treating patients as a Lieutenant and Advanced Emergency Medical Technician with the local fire department. These awesome people are like her second family, no picking and choosing, they're just stuck with her.

A love of reading was passed on by Maggie's mother at a very early age, and so began her addiction to romance novels. Maggie admits to writing some in high school but when life got in the way, she put her pen and paper up. Seems that things changed over the years because when she finally decided it was time to put her story ideas on paper, the pen was out and the computer was in. Took her a while to catch up but she finally made it.

When not writing, Maggie can usually be found reading, doing genealogy research or watching NASCAR.

Maggie welcomes mail from readers. You can write to her c/o Ellora's Cave Publishing at 1337 Commerce Drive, #13, Stow, Ohio 44224.



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