

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

Anna J. Evans

Off The  
Deep End

ELLORA'S CAVE

*Quickies*  
*Fun in the Sun*

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



[www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com)

Off the Deep End

ISBN # 1-4199-0668-2

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Off the Deep End Copyright© 2006 Anna J. Evans

Edited by Heather Osborn.

Cover art by Syneca.

Electronic book Publication: June 2006

This book may not be reproduced or used in whole or in part by any means existing without written permission from the publisher, Ellora's Cave Publishing, Inc.® 1056 Home Avenue, Akron OH 44310-3502.

This book is a work of fiction and any resemblance to persons, living or dead, or places, events or locales is purely coincidental. The characters are productions of the authors' imagination and used fictitiously.

### **Warning:**

The following material contains graphic sexual content meant for mature readers. This story has been rated E-rotic by a minimum of three independent reviewers.

Ellora's Cave Publishing offers three levels of Romantica™ reading entertainment: S (S-ensuous), E (E-rotic), and X (X-treme).

*S-ensuous* love scenes are explicit and leave nothing to the imagination.

*E-rotic* love scenes are explicit, leave nothing to the imagination, and are high in volume per the overall word count. In addition, some E-rated titles might contain fantasy material that some readers find objectionable, such as bondage, submission, same sex encounters, forced seductions, and so forth. E-rated titles are the most graphic titles we carry; it is common, for instance, for an author to use words such as "fucking", "cock", "pussy", and such within their work of literature.

*X-treme* titles differ from E-rated titles only in plot premise and storyline execution. Unlike E-rated titles, stories designated with the letter X tend to contain controversial subject matter not for the faint of heart.

# *OFF THE DEEP END*

Anna J. Evans

## Chapter One

Caitlyn had been dreaming about this vacation for four months. Since the last Christmas present under her lonely little tree had been unwrapped, she'd spent every moment anticipating the sun on her skin, the cool feel of a margarita in her hand, the sweet caress of a salty breeze. She'd been sure the soothing combination would finally banish the stress and sadness that had been her constant companions since her software company had transferred her to Anchorage, Alaska, last fall.

Geez...*Alaska*.

It was an extraordinarily beautiful state, but a horrible place to live if you happened to be an unabashedly fanatical sun worshiper. The subzero temperatures were bad enough, but the long hours of darkness were unbearable. Her coworkers kept telling her to hold out until May, and then she'd have seventeen hours of sunlight with highs in the balmy fifties, but she couldn't wait another month for a break from the winter weather.

"Fifty sch-sch-schmifty," Caitlyn stuttered, unable to believe anyone could consider a temperature under seventy-five balmy.

"Can I get you another towel?" the older woman working the cabana asked, probably noticing Caitlyn's teeth chattering over the reggae music.

"No, I'm f-f-f-fine, thank you." Caitlyn sighed, pulling her striped beach blanket more tightly around her shoulders and rising from her lounge chair.

It was nearly dusk, and there was no sense lounging when there was no sun to bask in. San Diego had been pounded with spring storms since the day she arrived at the Sand Piper Resort and Spa. The highs the past three days had been in the low fifties, the entire staff of the spa had called in sick and the restaurant by the beach had shut down due to general lack of interest. Even the margarita machine was on the fritz. Caitlyn

hadn't been out of her hotel room for more than an hour at a time. There was nowhere to go except the lobby, and as much as she enjoyed listening to people answer telephones...

"At least I can get some exercise before the rain starts in again," she muttered to herself, pulling on her sandals and setting off toward the beach.

Even with the dark gray clouds hovering on the horizon, the white sand was calling her name. She'd spent the first ten years of her life in Miami and never lost her love for beaches, summer clothing year 'round and one hundred-degree days with poach-your-brain-like-an-egg humidity. There was nothing quite like wearing nothing but a sundress while you walked down the beach, feeling sweat trickle between your breasts as the bridge of your nose started to burn.

"You are *not* waxing poetic about sweat and sunburns," Caitlyn said, knowing she would have been able to muster up a laugh at her own expense if she hadn't stupidly packed nothing but sundresses.

*Get off the beach!*

The voice sounded in her head with enough volume to make her jump. She had been talking to herself a lot since the move, but she had yet to hear herself talking back. Especially in a booming male voice that echoed between her ears.

"Maybe it's my inner masculine," Caitlyn said, struggling to recall her college class on Jungian theory, while shaking off the dizziness that had followed the mental shout.

*Run back to the grass! Get off the beach, woman!*

Before Caitlyn could yell at her inner masculine voice for being chauvinistic enough to use the word "woman" as an insult, a slap of cold water hit her mid-thigh and knocked her to the ground.

"Oh c-c-crap," Caitlyn gasped, the water so cold it immediately began to numb her legs and hands.

She floundered in the newly wet sand as the huge wave surged away from the shore, taking one of her sandals with it.

"No way," she gasped, still out of breath from the shock of the cold water, but determined to rescue her new, sparkly, on-sale-for-half-off gold sandal from the cruel clutches of the Pacific Ocean. She so rarely treated herself to anything frivolous, she couldn't bear to lose her fancy footwear before it even saw the light of a sunny day.

*Run, damn you! Are you mad?*

Something about the sheer incredulity of the voice in her head made Caitlyn take her attention away from her rapidly retreating sandal, and up to the wave in front of her.

"Oh. My. God," she whispered, her gray eyes growing impossibly large as she realized, with a strange mix of peacefulness and despair, that she was about to meet her maker.

Her last foolish thought before the enormous tidal wave crashed over her head was a regretful one. And for that, she was a little sad. Still, she couldn't believe God had taken her out without at least one final day in the sunshine. She had prayed for that day, prayed for it with every ounce of her being.

But if there was one thing she should have learned from her rotten childhood, it was that a great number of prayers went unanswered and that God probably didn't like red-haired people.

Or maybe it was just her.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lukas swam toward the woman with all the power in his body. But even with over two hundred and fifty pounds of pure muscle on his six-foot-four frame, he doubted he'd make it in time. The water would be deathly cold to a mortal woman, especially one so terribly thin.

*At least they should feed their women if they won't let them rule.*

The ways of modern humans were a complete mystery to his people. The Illuminated had been led by female rulers since time immemorial, the crown always

passing from mother to daughter. There was equality between the sexes, without a doubt, and most of their warriors were male, but there were just some things that the female of the species were more skilled at accomplishing.

A good ruler had to have the ability to multitask and juggle a variety of roles simultaneously. Most of the men Lukas knew, himself included, had a more limited focus. Males tended to fixate on the job at hand until it was accomplished, and Goddess forbid you asked them to do anything else until they were finished, whether it be tending to the needs of their lover, feeding their children or chewing a mouthful of seaweed.

A wave of bitterness as large as the one he currently fought against rose within Lukas as he thought of the father he had never known and the lifemate he himself had never spared the time to find. He was as bad as the man he had resented for abandoning his mother. Of course, in this situation, his single-mindedness might save this woman's life.

With a last ferocious kick, Lukas found himself within inches of the woman with the long, wavy red hair. Her already pale face was now a ghostly white and the curly locks that had looked so alive and vibrant when dry floated darkly around her head, twining about her neck as if to finish the job the ocean had started. Quickly, he let one arm encircle her narrow waist as the other swept the hair away from her throat. He pulled her close, fighting the urge to moan as her soft curves melded against him and the wave spun them in a swift circle, mimicking the spiral of desire that was beginning to grow low in Lukas' body.

The woman was near death. This was not the time to be thinking of how it would feel to part those pale thighs and slide his aching shaft deep inside her, of how perfect her softness would feel clinging to him, how erotic her fingers would feel clenching his buttocks as she helped him find the rhythm that would make her come. Goddess, it *had* been far too long since he'd felt the slick heat of a woman if he couldn't even keep his mind on the task at hand.

Still, there was no denying that she would be warmer without the clothes that clung to her small frame, if she were pressed tightly against his own bare skin, able to absorb his heat directly. As he deftly untied the straps that held her dress together, Lukas told himself it was purely concern for her life that motivated his actions, not the fact that he was suddenly half mad to see her bared to his gaze.

*Sweet Goddess...*

She was even more lovely without her covering—thin, but perfectly proportioned, with pale, peach-colored nipples that pebbled in the cold water, begging Lukas to taste them. His mouth practically watered at the thought and his traitorous cock pulsed with need despite the chill of the ocean, but there was no time to waste. Still, he had to struggle harder than he would have liked to ignore the fact that the waves had washed away the scrap of fabric human women used to cover their sex, and that she was completely nude as he pulled her bare skin tightly to his own.

*Open for me.*

Lukas spoke the words softly into her mind as he brought his face close to hers, brushing noses gently, teasing her lips with his using the softest pressure. There was still air inside her lungs, he could sense it in the buoyancy of her body. If she was conscious enough to take the Breath Kiss from him, he could make sure she didn't drown while they made their way to warmer waters.

For a moment, there was no response, not even the slightest shifting of her limbs to reveal that she was still fighting to stay among the living. Lukas felt desperation quicken his own breath. He couldn't lose this woman. She was a stranger, a mortal, but something within him demanded that she live. Perhaps it was because he had failed to warn her to safety, or that the wave and the battle that had caused it were entirely his doing. Or maybe it was simply that she fit so perfectly in his arms. Whatever the reasons, the overwhelming need to pull her back from death made him hold her tighter, made him plead with his mind for her to try, just a little.

*Kiss me. Open your mouth and let me taste you.*



Just when Lukas was beginning to fear that his command would be ignored, the mortal made a sound low in her throat and arched in his arms, pressing her lips to his own.

And what sweet lips they were. Lukas felt a primal sound of need burst from his body as he clung to the woman, his tongue parting her lips and tasting the sweet flavor of strawberries mingling with the salty ocean. Weak as she was, he was surprised when her tongue met his with equal urgency, swirling through his mouth before she suckled at his bottom lip, drawing her teeth over the sensitive skin with a fierceness that had Lukas' already stiffened shaft fully engorged and pulsing hungrily against her slim hips.

He felt her hands tangling in his hair and moaned again, giving in to the temptation to slide one hand down to her firm ass and clench his fingers into her flesh. She ground against him with a need that rivaled his own and Lukas wondered if they would make it to warmer water or mate right there in the middle of the freezing ocean. He was struggling to control himself, to make sure his temptress was safe from hypothermia before they took their mutual lust any further, when that unnameable essence within him suddenly burst from his chest, traveling down her throat, into her lungs, giving her the Breath Kiss.

He felt the change in the tension of her limbs immediately. She stopped her writhing against his cock, and her entire body grew limp and relaxed before her eyes opened, slow and sleepy, as if waking from a dream.

Unfortunately, it seemed she wasn't pleased with her present reality.

"Ahhhhhhh!" she screamed, her voice distorted by the water, but the expression of pure terror on her face clearly communicating her shock and fear.

Her thrashing arms and legs did a decent job as well, and soon Lukas found the heel of a ridiculous-looking piece of human footwear shoved roughly into his stomach.

*I'm here to help you, don't fight me!*

"Ahhh!" she screamed again, following the sound with another kick, this time hitting what she'd evidently been aiming for the first time.

*Goddess of the Deep, I should have let you drown!*

Lukas doubled over in pain, his cock screaming out in agony, a dull ache blossoming through his balls and up into his cramping lower belly. He moaned and let his temptress and her cruel footwear swim a few feet away as he struggled to overcome the agony in his nether regions. He suddenly recalled very clearly why he hadn't loved a woman in so very long.

Because they were insane. Every single one of them, mortal or Illuminated. They were grinding against your cock one minute and kicking you in the same seconds later. Little wonder he had become a warrior. At least men and swords were straightforward entities.

*Come back, you'll freeze to death.*

Lukas tried to keep his tone even, to seem as non-threatening as possible. Bruised...ego or no bruised ego, he had to get the foolish woman out of the ocean.

"Get away from me," she gasped as her head broke water, her voice remarkably strong, though the movements of her arms and legs were already growing sluggish.

*Let me take you back to shore. I know where we can warm you.*

"I don't need your warmth," she said, teeth chattering.

*The Breath Kiss won't protect you from the cold, only keep the water from your lungs.*

"Go away!"

*You're making yourself colder by swimming.*

"No, I'm n-n-not."

*Your core body temperature falls more quickly with movement. You're risking a heart attack.*

"Y-y-you are risking my f-f-foot in your face."

*Ah. Well, that's preferable to your foot in my cock.*

"Shut up, you're not even real," she said, her voice cracking and a sob echoing across the water.

*Woman, let me help you. I'm as real as that vicious shoe on your foot. Come to me and I'll take you back to your people.*

Lukas said the words gently, feeling like the lowest form of bottom-dwelling sea creature. The poor woman thought she was hallucinating. She was half drowned and freezing to death, he, on the other hand, had merely gone too long without a female in his bed. Of the two of them, he should have been the more reasonable.

"No, I'm not...I don't..."

Her words trailed off as her eyes fluttered closed. Lukas caught her immediately and pulled her against the heat of his body, feeling a strange wave of tenderness as her damp curls settled against his chest. Whether her face was animated with anger and passion or peaceful in rest, she was as fair as any female he'd ever seen. And there was no doubt that she stirred his blood in a way no woman had done in a very, *very* long time.

Now, if he could manage to avoid notice as he carried her nude, unconscious form to the warm bubbling water in the center of the human settlement, they might have a chance to discover if they could bear each other long enough to share a night of passion. She had desired him, there was no doubt in his mind, and it should be easy enough to convince her that he was as flesh and blood as she herself.

*Though you certainly have more pressing issues at hand than bedding a mortal.*

Lukas did his best to ignore his inner voice of reason. What could be more pressing than clearing his mind at this critical juncture in the history of his people? His half-sister, Queen Eleanor, had finally made an unforgivable error in judgment. After years of dancing the line with both her subjects and the High Council, her mad foolishness had finally threatened the very survival of their world. As a direct result of her command, a cursed race of serpents from their own enchanted seas had been loosed

into Earth's oceans, endangering the human race—a sin that none among them would be able to forgive.

Whether it was merely legend or fact, their culture was founded on the belief that the Illuminated had been granted a chance at paradise by the ancient gods because they had vowed never to make war upon the human race. Unleashing monsters big enough to devour a small ship and forbidding their recapture most certainly qualified as an act of war in most minds, including those of the High Council. When they'd ordered Lukas and his men to subdue the beasts against the Queen's wishes, Lukas had known it was only a matter of time before Eleanor was asked to abdicate. He would need his wits firmly about him if he hoped to ease his half-sister from the throne without losing his own life in the process. Therefore, it would be in his best interest if he wasn't being distracted by the unsatisfied shaft between his legs.

*Thin logic, soldier.*

"But good enough reason for a few hours' enjoyment." Lukas smiled and increased the power of his strokes toward shore, thinking of several extremely pleasurable ways to satisfy his profound craving for this mortal woman. Not the least tempting of which was the thought of his face buried between the creamy thighs that floated on top of the water, revealing a thatch of auburn hair that called to him as seductively as any Siren's song.

Of course, any Illuminated man worth his salt knew Sirens were all talk and no action. But this fiery redhead seemed to have both areas covered, and he wondered what she would scream into the night when she came. He sent out a prayer to the ancestors that it would be his name.

## Chapter Two

Caitlyn was back in the erotic dream, which was perfectly fine with her. Given the choice between the erotic dream and the freezing-cold-out-in-the-middle-of-the-ocean dream, she'd definitely take the former.

Especially if it involved that beautiful man. That's how she'd known it was a dream in the first place. No man like that had ever spared her a second glance, and would certainly never risk his life to save her from a tidal wave or start kissing her in the middle of the ocean.

"Oh yes," she breathed, her entire body tingling as the beautiful man's talented tongue swept lightly, teasingly, *perfectly* over her clit.

She couldn't recall the last time a man had kissed her there—okay, maybe she could, it had been exactly five years, seven months, three days ago—and it was so much more intense than she remembered. Waves of pleasure rolled through her body, her womb already pulsing with the prelude to orgasm, every nerve ending sizzling with awareness. It was as if he were telegraphing pleasure to every inch of her skin as he swept his tongue around and around her throbbing nub, building her need until she was dizzy and disoriented.

*Goddess, you taste like the afterlife.*

"Oh wow," Caitlyn gasped, opening her eyes and looking down between her legs, expecting to see the long, kinky black hair and startlingly gorgeous, velvet brown eyes of her dream man and instead seeing...water.

Bubbling hot water, to be specific. She must have fallen asleep in the hot tub nestled in the center of the Sand Piper's extensive gardens. Thank God she hadn't drowned. With as few staff members as the place apparently employed in April, her body could have floated there for days unobserved.

“Oh wow!” Caitlyn gasped again, her body arching in the hot water as the stroking between her thighs resumed. Her breasts grew heavy and full and her nipples tightened almost painfully, hungry for more than the swirling water to caress them.

Her first thought was that she’d somehow positioned herself on a water jet, but there were several things wrong with that theory. Firstly, that certainly didn’t *feel* like water, it felt like a very talented, very thick and eager tongue. Secondly, there were definitely two warm hands on her thighs, gently but firmly spreading her wide, and thirdly, there was a dark shadow lurking beneath the water that she was fairly sure wasn’t a hot tub shark.

And if that weren’t enough evidence, she was completely naked and she sure as hell wouldn’t have done that herself. She was a one-piece bathing suit girl, all the way. No need to draw attention to her barely B-cup breasts or shockingly white stomach with a bikini. Not to mention the fact that she hadn’t even put on her swimsuit today.

*Tell me your name, I know that you’re awake. Tell me your name so I can know whose sweet cunt I’m tasting.*

“Caitlyn,” she said softly, more than a little shocked that the manifestation of her internal masculine used the word “cunt”. But then, he wasn’t at all what she’d expected.

She’d never had fantasies about men who were over six feet tall, composed of pure muscle. And even if she had, they’d never had deep mocha skin and dreadlocks down to their shoulders, or a little goatee that scratched delightfully against her lips when they kissed. Not that she wasn’t open to dating someone of a different race, but no one had ever asked, and Caitlyn tended to fantasize about the familiar. That way she was less likely to long for things that were out of her league. Her mother had always made it clear that her daughter’s shockingly white skin, bright red hair and freckles were thoroughly repulsive to most of the male population, so Caitlyn had learned at an early age not to get her hopes up.

*Touch yourself, Caitlyn. I don't want this sweet cunt floating away from me or I'd do it myself. Put your hands on your breasts.*

Shaking slightly, her breath growing more erratic as her dream man continued to work his tongue against her clit, driving her just to the edge of orgasm but not beyond, Caitlyn moved her hands to her breasts. It was a completely foreign thing for her to do. Even when she used her vibrator she rarely spent time touching herself, especially not cupping her own swollen flesh or erotically tracing circles around the aching buds of her own nipples.

But it felt perfect to do so with her dream man. Just a little bit wicked, but in the nicest, most pleasurable sense of the word.

"Oh," she heard herself cry out in a strangled gasp, the electricity of her own hands on her body shooting down to join in the riot of sensations as his busy tongue swept from her clit to her throbbing entry and back again.

When she felt him part her folds and slide one thick finger inside, she almost lost it—almost came with a ferocity that she knew she'd never experienced before—but instead she pulled her hands away from her nipples, sucking in air and struggling not to fall over the edge. She didn't want this to end so quickly, wanted to draw out this pleasure, to hold on to this dream and never wake up.

*But you are awake, idiot!*

This time, it was her own inner critic voicing its opinion inside her thick skull, the very *awake* skull that was resting on the rough concrete of the very real hot tub that was surrounded by the very real gardens of the very real resort where she was enjoying the weirdest vacation on record.

And where a very real and apparently telepathic man was presently challenging the record for underwater cunnilingus.

*Come for me, Caitlyn, come on my mouth.*

If the command hadn't been accompanied by the teasing nip of his teeth on her throbbing clit and the vigorous movement of two thick fingers between her thighs,

Caitlyn might have followed her natural inclination and jumped out of that hot tub faster than you could say “strangers with candy”. As matters presently stood, however, all she could do was come—long and loud and hard.

“Ohhh!” she screamed, arching into his mouth so deeply that her breasts rose from the water and tingled in the cool night air.

Her entire body shook with the power of her release, her thighs trembling as her hands thrust beneath the water to tangle in mystery man’s hair. With an abandoned sound, she pulled his mouth closer to her, grinding her slick center against him with a shamelessness that nearly shocked her out of her pleasure.

This just wasn’t Caitlyn Saunders. She was a computer geek with fewer notches on her bedpost than fingers on one hand. She sat shyly in corners, hid behind her mass of hair and blushed a shade of pink bordering on fuchsia whenever an attractive man so much as glanced in her direction. She did not touch herself in front of people, she did not have sex in public places with strangers and she did *not* press a man’s mouth against her pussy.

*Oh, sweet woman, I’ll crave the taste of your come until I die.*

His words, accompanied by the thrust of his tongue deep into her center, were enough to banish all doubtful thoughts and bring on a second orgasm that rocked her more thoroughly than the first. She was sobbing by the time the powerful contractions finally started to abate, tears of happiness rolling down her face.

She had been completely off base when she’d wished for one more day in the sun before she died. What she had really needed was one night with this man. Now she knew she could go to meet her maker finally understanding what all the damn fuss was about. *This* was what sex was supposed to feel like, *this* was what she’d read about in those books under her mother’s bed, *this* was what the girls in the office were talking about when they said their boyfriends made them come so hard they nearly forgot their own name.



She could safely say that at this moment she had no idea who Caitlyn was, nor did she care.

"The next time, I'm going to watch you come," her dream man said, shaking his black dreads loose as he emerged from the water like some ancient god who ruled over oceans, rivers, streams...and probably women's vaginas.

"Next time?" she panted, still struggling to regain her breath after the orgasm-to-top-all-orgasms.

"I can't wait to be inside you," he said, his voice thick with need and colored by an accent she couldn't place.

"Oh well, I—" Caitlyn began, completely losing the ability to form language when his massive hands moved to cup her face and his eyes found hers.

No man had ever given her a look like that, a look that said she was a goddess come to Earth and that he would worship at the temple of her body until he shuffled off his mortal coil. He took her breath away and made her already sated body start to yearn for more of this man, so much more that they might need years to fit all the more in. They might even need a lifetime.

"I think you must have me confused with someone else," Caitlyn said, pressing back against the side of the hot tub, trying to distance herself from the man and the thoughts he inspired. She had never let herself get swept away in some happily-ever-after fantasy. She was a logical woman who knew that love didn't spontaneously erupt at first sight and that no man this gorgeous could really be interested in her. Unless, of course, he were completely insane.

"Are you...crazy?" Caitlyn asked, wanting to slap herself the second the words were out of her mouth. Crazy people didn't *know* they were crazy, and even if they did they wouldn't admit it. Especially if they were trying to score some ass.

Oh my God...*she* was the ass this unbelievably handsome nutcase was trying to score. The thought made her dizzy with pleasure, despite the fact that she considered herself a feminist and above taking advantage of the mentally ill.

"I am not the one without the sense to run from a giant wave," he said with a smile that reminded her of how perfect it felt to have her tongue in his mouth, to bite down on the firm pillow of his bottom lip. God, she wanted to suck that lip into her mouth more than she wanted a transfer out of Anchorage.

"Can you feel how much I desire you?" he asked, moving his hips forward and pressing what had to be the largest and throbbingest of all large and throbbing erections between her legs.

Caitlyn gasped at the intimate contact, a gasp that he swallowed as he brought his lips down to hers. His hand tangled in the hair at the back of her neck and fisted, angling her head so that his tongue could thrust into her. Within seconds she was moaning into the warm, wet cavern of his mouth, returning his rough kisses with equal passion, claiming him as surely as he claimed her—and shocking the hell out of herself in the process.

Shouldn't she be caring that she didn't even know the name of the man whose long finger traced the crevice of her most private of private places?

"I don't know —"

"You *do* know."

"You don't even know what I was going to say," she gasped, her nipples calling for an end to all this ridiculous talk as her breasts pressed into the planes of his smooth, hard chest. He felt like living, breathing marble, warm, dark marble that she wanted to smear with her suntan oil and slip and slide all over on the king-size bed in her hotel room.

"I know what your body is telling me," he said with a wicked grin as he slid a finger deep into her center. "Feel how slick you are?" he murmured into her hair as his finger started to fuck her with slow, sensuous strokes that had her womb clenching with need.

"Well, I did just come...twice," Caitlyn said, her voice beyond breathy as his lips brushed hers again.

This time his kiss was as tender and insistent as the hand between her legs, and the combination brought her near tears a second time. No one had ever touched her like this, no one. She'd grown up with a mother who'd handed out more backhands than hugs, and her few encounters with men had been rushed, furtive couplings that had left her feeling lonely and unfulfilled. She'd never dreamed another human being's touch could bring such comfort, could ease something in her heart even as it brought her body to life with unbelievable pleasure. She knew that if she and this man were to come together she would finally understand what "making love" really meant.

"Twice is not enough. I want you to come again. I want to feel your sweet cunt throb around my cock," he said.

"We're in the middle of the resort, someone could see," Caitlyn protested weakly even as she continued to return his slow, sensual kisses and ride the two fingers he now worked inside her. She knew she should care that they might be discovered, but for some reason the idea almost excited her.

"My people aren't ashamed of such things," he said, kissing the column of her throat before using his tongue to trace a path down to her breast.

"Oh yes, please," Caitlyn moaned, arching into his mouth as he kissed and nibbled her swollen flesh before sucking her nipple inside the wet heat of his mouth. His rough tongue swept across her tightened tip, again and again, with the perfect teasing pressure, quickly banishing any thought of protest.

"I can't wait to please you," he growled against her skin, making her gasp as his teeth bit down on her sensitive skin, the slight pain quickly giving way to exquisite pleasure.

And then, before her body could recover from the magic of his mouth on her breasts, his lips were meeting hers and his large, throbbing cock was meeting the slick entry to her sex.

"No, wait, we should – oh God!" Caitlyn cried, whatever sensible thing she'd been about to say flying from her mind as his cock tunneled deep inside her, stretching her to

the limits of what her body could bear, filling her so completely that it nearly brought her to the edge of another blinding orgasm.

"No, *you* are a goddess. Look at me, let me see your eyes," he said, halting his thrust when he was buried to the hilt, pulling back to cup her face in his hands. "I've only dreamed of such passion. You are beautiful."

"Oh...God," Caitlyn sobbed, clinging to his shoulders and struggling to maintain the terrible intimacy of eye contact with a stranger.

"Am I hurting you? You're so tight, so amazingly tight," he groaned, his face clearly showing the restraint he was exercising to keep from ramming inside her. It was a gesture of concern that touched her, but not in the way she wanted to be touched just now. This was sex, fabulous sex and nothing more. The only thing stupider than fucking a stranger was falling in love with said stranger, and she wasn't about to add another notch to her stupid post today.

"You're not hurting me," she said, moving in to kiss his lips, more than ready for the soul-deep meeting of eyes to end.

"But you feel so —"

"You're not hurting me. I want you to fuck me. Please, fuck me now," she begged, wiggling her hips wildly, showing him how desperately she needed for him to move, to fuck her, to take away the worries of her heart with the passion of his body.

"With pleasure," he said, a dark note in his voice as he gripped her buttocks in his impossibly large hands and began to give her exactly what she'd asked for.

Caitlyn cried out and raked her fingernails down his muscled back as the tension low in her body built to an unbearable level. There was a hint of pain when he thrust his deepest, but it was far overshadowed by the heavenly feeling of his thick cock stretching her as he pounded in and out of her pussy, the crisp, curly hairs on his chest brushing against her nipples.

"I'm going to come, I'm going to —"

“Lukas, my name is Lukas. I want to hear you scream my —”

“Lukas, oh God, Lukas!” Caitlyn screamed, bucking onto his shaft as her orgasm claimed her. She’d never come with a man inside her before and it was more intense, more intimate, than she would have dreamed possible.

“You feel so amazing. You’re going to make me come, fill you with —”

“No, you can’t,” Caitlyn managed to gasp out though her body still shuddered with the strength of her release, making it difficult to even remember how to breathe.

“I can. I will. Right now,” he said, his words followed by a purely masculine sound of satisfaction as his cock began to pulse inside her.

Caitlyn sucked in a deep breath, shocked to find that she could feel the hot streams of his cum shooting against her womb, and even more shocked at how exciting she found it. She could be risking unplanned pregnancy or worse, but the sensation still made her indescribably hot. Without a second thought she squirmed her hips into tighter contact with his, taking his pulsing length deeper inside and rubbing her clit against the base of his cock until she felt the tension crest within her once again.

“Lukas,” she moaned, wrapping her arms around his neck and holding on for dear life as she started to come again.

As the violent pleasure coursed through her body, Caitlyn somehow managed to keep her eyes open, gazing over Lukas’ broad shoulder—and immediately wished she hadn’t.

“Oh my God,” she screamed, shocked to see two, maybe three, men hiding in the dense foliage at the edge of the hot tub, watching as her orgasm finished having its way with her. She was simultaneously embarrassed and incredibly excited, and then stunned when the walls of her pussy started to contract with even more passion, responding to the unexpected eroticism of having such a private moment become a public event.

“What’s wrong?” Lukas asked, holding her close and nuzzling her neck as the waves of pleasure finally started to subside.

"There's someone there, behind the... Well, they were there a second ago."

"They? How many?" Lukas asked, turning to look where Caitlyn indicated, every muscle in his body tense as he quickly pulled himself from her body and protectively positioned her behind him.

"Two or three men, I'm not sure."

"No women?" Lukas asked, some of the tension easing from the arm that held her behind him.

"No, I didn't see one. Why? Do you know them?"

"I may," he said vaguely, then added with a devilish grin, "If I do, I'll be sure they know that you enjoy being observed."

"I do *not* enjoy being observed!" Caitlyn protested, suddenly embarrassed.

"The way your body milked my cock would say otherwise."

"I don't care what my body says, you need to listen to my mouth," Caitlyn said, starting to get more than a little annoyed.

"But women so often say no when they mean yes," he teased, taking her back into the circle of his arms.

"Did you just say women say no when they mean yes?"

"Are you hard of hearing? If so, I can speak directly into your mind," he said as he trailed kisses over her forehead. "It is no trouble."

"What's your name again?" Caitlyn asked, her tone as innocent as his was condescending.

"Lukas," he said, pulling back to give her another wide smile. "Don't tell me you've forgotten the name you screamed into the night?"

"Lukas, you are a jackass. No wonder you're hard up for pussy," Caitlyn said, shoving his hands from her body and pulling herself from the hot tub with a speed and strength that surprised her almost as much as speaking the word "pussy" out loud. But

hell, why pull any punches when the jackass in question had just had his cock in said pussy mere seconds before?

"Where are you going?" he asked, his handsome face a study in complete confusion.

"Back to my room. *Alone,*" Caitlyn said, looking around for her clothes. She'd settle for a beach blanket or used towel some other sun-worshipper had left behind, but there wasn't a stitch of fabric of any kind to be found. She was going to have to make a naked run for her room. Nothing like being forced to streak for the first time in her entire life to put the cherry on this melted-ice-cream-sundae of a day.

"I have offended you," Lukas said, his eyes troubled, his goatee seeming to wilt around his full mouth. "I apologize. I'm not familiar with your ways. It's been many years since I have interacted with humans."

"Wh-wh-what?" Caitlyn asked, her teeth starting to chatter again now that she was out of the warm water and away from all that hot, silken skin. She wanted to accept his apology, wanted to crawl back into the bubbles and lose herself in his strong arms. She couldn't remember the last time she'd felt so safe, let alone so sexually satisfied. Too bad he hadn't stopped talking after the word "apologize".

"Come back into the water."

"Did you say it's been *years* since you interacted with humans?"

*I have visited this settlement many times, but always late at night when there is no one to observe me as I make my way from the ocean.*

"The ocean?"

*My people enter your world through portals under the sea.*

"My world?"

*Beautiful Caitlyn, I will not think less of you if you have weak ears.*

"What?!" Caitlyn said.

*We all have parts of our body that betray us.*

"Like your brain?"

*I am Lukas of the Illuminated People, First Officer of the Queen's Ocean Warriors and –*

"Oh God, you really are completely crazy."

*Crazy? My people were building civilizations when humans still birthed their children in the dirt!*

His angry words echoed in her head as she turned and fled down the garden path, an unexplainable aching in her chest. She hardly believed in love, let alone love at first sight. But then, if there were such a thing, it made sense that she would fall for a bossy, overbearing man who thought he was some sort of mermaid.

"He is no *maid*, woman. He is a man, most assuredly," said the beautiful woman lounging against the railing of the wooden bridge not ten feet ahead of her.

"Excuse me?" Caitlyn asked, not sure what else to say, but certain that freezing where she stood would be a good idea. No need to get any closer to a person who practically radiated unfriendliness.

"Perhaps you were not enough of a woman to arouse our Lukas. He does have a reputation for bedding only the most beautiful, sensual women. You look to be hardly more than a girl. And an unattractive one at that," she said, the smirk on her face supremely unpleasant.

Whoever this was, she was a witch. She was at least six feet tall, with bottomless black-brown eyes and raven hair that flowed in wild curls down to her ankles. Her skin was nearly as pale as Caitlyn's own, but with a hint of olive that said she would tan well if she were to spend the afternoon in the sun. It looked like she hadn't had the time lately, however, since there wasn't a single tan line on her completely nude frame.

Was the Sand Piper a nudist resort? They hadn't said anything in the brochure, but this was California, and Californians were notorious for being very blasé about things that would completely scandalize the rest of the country.

"Are you deaf and dumb as well as ugly?" the woman asked in a syrupy-sweet voice that was, without a doubt, the bitchiest thing Caitlyn had ever heard.



She was usually cowed by women like this when she was clothed, let alone buck-naked with tears in her eyes, but something about the repeated questioning of her ability to hear or understand simple sentences got to her.

"I don't know, are you socially inept or just a raving bitch?" Caitlyn asked, crossing her arms under her breasts.

*I've killed for less.*

The woman hissed the words into Caitlyn's mind and started walking toward her with calm, measured steps. The menace in the air was palpable, and for the second time in less than twenty-four hours, Caitlyn was completely convinced that she was about to die. Given the choice between the ocean and the Amazonian mer-bitch however, she suddenly wished she had a couple of lungs filled with seawater. At the least the ocean wouldn't have taken pleasure in her death.

From the gleam in the soulless eyes now coming way too close for comfort, this lady was going to enjoy wringing her scrawny neck. She was going to enjoy it a heck of a lot and there was probably nothing Caitlyn could do to stop her. Self-defense courses relied far too heavily on attacking your assailant's groin. Just another example of sexism at work and she hadn't thought twice about it. Now she would pay the price.

She had no idea how to take out a six-foot woman and running far enough, fast enough, wasn't going to happen, no matter how many endorphins were pumping through her system. So she exercised her only option.

"Help me! Somebody help, call the police!!" she screamed, her voice echoing through the quiet gardens, a strident, terrified sound that made the evil woman laugh, firmly erasing any hope for a swift, painless death.

*The humans are bespelled. They will sleep until you are dead and my brother imprisoned for treason.*

"Lukas, help me! Please," Caitlyn screamed again, squeezing her eyes shut as the woman lunged toward her with her claws bared. He'd helped her once before, maybe

he would help her again. If not, she was royally screwed, and not by something one-tenth as pleasurable as his thick, pulsing cock.

## **Chapter Three**

Lukas ran the second he heard Caitlyn scream, vaulting from the hot tub and cursing himself for letting her leave his side. He shouldn't have taken her words so lightly, shouldn't have assumed that his warriors were the only ones observing them—despite their history of spying on each other as they bedded mortal women. Eleanor had to know by now that the High Council had gone against her express orders. Her days of ruling were already a thing of the past, but Lukas knew his half-sister. She would never give up her throne without a fight, would seek to destroy the brother she considered the only possible heir.

The Illuminated had never had a male ruler, and Lukas had tried his best to convince Eleanor that he had no interest in being the first. No matter how much he disagreed with the often-cruel practices of her regime, he had no wish to violate ancient custom. He would have served her until the day she died, but she had given him no choice but to oppose her. Even if the High Council hadn't given the order, he would have gone after the serpents. They were a curse upon his own world, but they were the Illuminated's curse to bear. Endangering thousands of Earth species who were all but defenseless against such fierce, ancient creatures was unforgivable.

He could understand that Eleanor had grown tired of losing warriors and fishermen to the bloodthirsty beasts, but that was no excuse for opening the portal directly across from their nesting grounds. The serpents had always made their home in some of the Illuminated's most fertile fishing grounds, but even those rich waters couldn't compare to the cornucopia of succulent marine life found in Earth's abundant seas. Eleanor had known the creatures wouldn't be able to resist traveling through the open passage between the two worlds and had ordered the portal closed as soon as the last serpent had roared away into the Pacific Ocean.

When she had expressly forbidden any of the Illuminated People to recapture the creatures, she had sealed her own fate, and forced Lukas into the position of rival to the throne.

He had known when he led his men through the Earth portal that he would have to face the Queen's wrath. He just hadn't expected it to be so soon, or that she would dare to take an Illuminated dispute to the Earth's surface. But there was no mistaking the cold magic that shivered across his skin as he ran through the gardens, and he sent out a prayer to the Goddess that he wouldn't be too late to keep Caitlyn safe.

*How touching, the great Lukas praying for his scrawny mortal lover.*

*Get out of my thoughts, Eleanor. It is against our laws to violate the sacred privacy of the mind.*

*Careful, Lukas, or I'll make sure the girl dies more painfully than I had planned.*

"Stop this, sister. You have no quarrel with the mortal woman. Let her go back to her people and we will settle this dispute between ourselves," Lukas said aloud, slowing his steps as he came to a clearing in the path and saw his delicate Caitlyn dangling from Eleanor's strong grip. She had scooped up the smaller woman by the neck and only Caitlyn's two tiny hands clenched at either side of Eleanor's fist kept the hold from turning deadly.

"So *now* I am your sister? I think not, Lukas. That was not a name you used when my father was still your mother's *whore*," Eleanor hissed, causing a strangled yelp to burst from Caitlyn's throat as her grip tightened around her neck.

"Your father was mad. He took you from our mother's home against the wishes of the family. You know that our mother searched —"

"Not nearly hard enough. Queen Laini didn't give a damn if I was ever found. She wanted her precious little boy to be the first male on the throne."

"Put the woman down, immediately," Lukas ordered, moving toward the sister he had always secretly thought at least ten times as mad as her sire. He didn't remember Eleanor's father, had been barely three years old when he'd left the palace, but surely

his mother wouldn't have bedded down with someone so clearly out of their head as their present Queen.

"You do not give the orders! You will *never* give the orders for our people!" she screeched, drawing back her arm and hurling Caitlyn from her with a strength fed by her fear and madness.

Lukas lunged after his woman, determined to keep her delicate bones from connecting with anything more damaging than his own body. Whether it was rational or not, he already thought of Caitlyn as his, and the idea that a single flaming red hair on her head would be damaged due to her association with him was more than he could stand. He knew he would kill Eleanor, sister or no, if he didn't succeed in keeping his future mate from harm.

With a deep bend of his knees, he hurled himself into the air after Caitlyn, breathing a small sigh of relief as his hands closed around her waist. He spun their bodies so that his would take the impact of connecting with the ground. A few brutal scrapes and a bloodied back were nothing he couldn't handle—seeing his love in pain was a completely different matter.

His *love*? Had he really used the word? Was it possible to love a woman with such deep, insistent, immediate passion?

*You know nothing of love!*

Lukas snarled as Eleanor's voice broke into his most private thoughts and his body connected hard with the ground. Thankfully, he landed in freshly planted earth. A bit of dirt and a few broken flowers were the worst of the damage and Caitlyn appeared completely unharmed but for the bruises on her neck, bruises that strengthened the urge to kill his half-sister.

"Run back to your lodging. I will come for you when it is safe," Lukas said as he pulled them both to their feet and pressed a quick kiss against Caitlyn's forehead.

"I'm not going to leave you alone with her," Caitlyn said, her voice hoarse from the damage Eleanor had inflicted on her delicate tissues.

"Do as I say, woman. I will battle better when I do not fear for your safety."

"Quit calling me 'woman' and let me help you," she insisted, her eyes wide with fear as she watched Eleanor stalk through the plants toward them, but her small hands fisted in front of her as she prepared to defend him.

In that instant, Lukas felt the suspicion of love grow into an incredible certainty. How could he not love a woman who was brave and bold, as well as a clever goddess whose cunt he would gladly feast upon for the next several hundred years?

"Your newfound depth of feeling is touching, Lukas. It's a shame your little human will have to die before you can claim her," Eleanor said as she quickly closed in on their position.

"Stop this, Eleanor. Return to our world and await the judgment of the High Council, or continue to threaten Caitlyn and die. The choice is yours," Lukas said, moving to block Caitlyn's body with his own.

"You *dare* threaten your Queen?"

"We both know your rule is over, Eleanor, and through no fault of mine."

"No fault of yours? *You*, who have done all that you could to turn my own people against me?"

"I have done no such thing, your own actions —"

"My actions could have freed our people of the serpent curse forever. But you would rather see Illuminated People die than risk a single human life."

"You know the law as well as I."

"Damn the law, and damn *you*, brother. We'll see before this night is over how you enjoy seeing one you love ripped limb from limb."

"Do not threaten Caitlyn again."

"*Do not threaten Caitlyn again*," Eleanor mocked. "You're too large for her child's body in any event. You would break her, Lukas. But maybe that's what you enjoy."

“Ocean Women don’t tear and bleed quite so easily as mortals, do they? I wish I’d known you had such bloodthirsty tastes, sweet brother. I would have invited you to come play with me much sooner,” Eleanor said, stopping a few feet from where he stood, close enough that he could smell the sickeningly sweet scent of the Hawaiian reef fish she consumed on a daily basis. He would never understand why the woman insisted on ingesting hallucinogenic fish when she was already as crazy as a great white shark in a feeding frenzy.

“I don’t know about *your* culture, psycho, but sleeping with your brother is considered pretty gross here,” Caitlyn’s voice piped up from behind him.

“Shut your mouth, mortal,” Eleanor hissed.

“And I didn’t have a problem accommodating Lukas. I’m actually really looking forward to having him inside me again, feeling his thick cock moving in and out of me until I come —”

“Silence!” Eleanor screamed, her face nearly purple with her rage.

Despite the fact that Caitlyn’s unexpected words were making his cock surge to a state of maximum attention, Lukas could see the wisdom of her tactics. He’d never realized Eleanor desired him in that way, but the jealousy in her nearly black eyes was abundantly clear, and more than a little disturbing.

What was the word Caitlyn had used? *Gross*. Yes, it was completely *gross* to contemplate bedding your half-brother in their culture as well, but there would be time for shuddering with revulsion later. At the moment, he needed to decide how best to use his Queen’s obvious distraction to his advantage.

“He’s also really talented with his tongue. Too bad *you’ll* never know how it feels to have him lick your pussy until you think you’re going to die from pure pleasure,” Caitlyn said as her hand slowly wrapped around his waist to close around his burgeoning shaft.

Lukas felt his breath hiss from his body as her soft hand stroked him to his full length, teasing him from the tip of his cock down to his base, pausing to fondle the

heavy weight of his tightly drawn balls before moving back up to the head once more. There she paused, swiping away the pearl of his essence that had already beaded at his tip, and brought her finger up to her mouth.

He did his best not to be insanely distracted by the sight of her pink tongue darting out to taste his desire, but it was a difficult thing. Far more difficult than slaying demon serpents or managing the dynamics of his royal family – which only went to prove that he had completely lost his heart.

“Mmm. And he tastes *amazing*. I can’t wait to take his cock in my mouth, to have him come down my throat as I swallow down every delicious drop,” she said, the look of pure ecstatic anticipation on her face nearly enough to make Lukas come, and evidently enough to drive Eleanor completely out of the last vestiges of her right mind.

*You die! Now!*

The Queen’s lunge at Caitlyn was clumsy, bringing her far too close to Lukas’ own powerful hands. He intercepted her easily, grabbing her smaller wrists and wrestling her to the ground. His raging erection died a quick death as he landed atop his sister, but the rest of his body remained completely unharmed as he pulled her arms behind her back and pinned her to the earth.

“What now? Do I get a rope or something?” Caitlyn asked, her breath coming fast as she bounced lightly from one foot to the other, adrenaline obviously still coursing through her body, though a moment ago she had seemed as calm and collected as the most skilled seductress.

“I don’t think a rope will be necessary,” Lukas said, smiling at his clever girl as he sent out a mental call to his warriors, certain that at least a few of his men were still nearby.

*I will kill you, Lukas. You and your woman. Set me free this instant!*

“I don’t know about you, but I’d feel better if she were tied up,” Caitlyn said, nervously eyeing the still-raging Eleanor, who bucked beneath him with amazing



strength, even for an Illuminated woman. Still, she was much smaller than he and it would be no challenge to immobilize her for a few more moments.

"I think I would feel better if you were tied to my bed," Lukas said with a wicked grin in Caitlyn's direction. "I hope your words were spoken for more than distraction's sake."

"Are you flirting with me? At a time like this?" she said, the smile teasing the corners of her mouth belying her stern words.

"Is there a wrong time to tell your woman you find her irresistibly desirable?" he asked, letting his eyes rove over her body, thrilled to see a delicate blush start to spread across her breasts and up toward her lovely face. Her nipples tightened and puckered, practically begging for the attention of his mouth, attention he couldn't wait to devote entirely to her and her complete satisfaction.

"You're crazy," she said, a smile lighting up her gray eyes, eyes as beautiful as the most peaceful, untouched depths of the ocean.

"Perhaps it runs in the family," Lukas said, his tone and heart amazingly light for a man who was getting ready to commit treason.

*My people will not betray me. Your men belong to me, they will not –*

*I will not speak for the rest of our race, but we four are ready to follow our Prince's orders.*

Lukas looked up to meet the stern face of Mercury, one of his dearest friends and the only man he'd want at his back in battle. They had soldiered together since they were both too young to know how to properly please a woman, and Lukas knew how little respect the man had for their present ruler. Mercury had specifically requested to be included in the mission to recapture the serpents and Lukas had no doubt that he would deliver Eleanor straight into the hands of the High Council.

"Seize him, men. Take him to the darkest holding caves and –"

*Where would you have us hold her, Lukas?*

"No, you do not follow his command! A man will *never* rule our people!" Eleanor screamed, her desperation clear in her voice as Lukas allowed two of the younger men to grasp her around the elbows and pull her to her feet.

"That is for the Council to decide. Ask them where they would have her, Mercury. I will not assume more than my station until the will of the people is known," Lukas said, coming to his feet in front of Caitlyn, conscious of the need to shield her nude body from the eyes of his men. The bastards had already watched them mating in the hot tub, but for some reason he no longer wanted to share her lovely form with anyone – at least not until he'd claimed her completely as his own.

"The people will be for you, Lukas," Mercury said. "We are an honored race to have such a man as our first King."

Lukas acknowledged the words with a nod, more than a little overwhelmed as the reality of his friend's words hit him full force. Whether he'd coveted the throne or not, it was highly likely that he was within weeks of being asked to ascend to it. He only prayed he could prove himself worthy of his people's confidence, and knew his own confidence would be greatly bolstered if Caitlyn would agree to be by his side.

*The High Council will never accept a mortal as your consort, you will never –*

"She won't *be* a mortal once the Breath Kiss is permanent," Mercury said, obviously enjoying the newfound ability to put the woman who had made nearly a hundred years of his life a living hell in her place. Lukas had endured enough hardship as a relative of the Queen, but he knew that those who hadn't shared her royal blood had fared much worse. "He's already given her a taste of the Kiss, *and* they've mated – I watched it with my own eyes. Now there's only one last –"

"So you were the men by the hot tub?" Caitlyn asked, poking her head around Lukas' torso to shoot a murderous look in Mercury's direction. The movement caused her breasts to press against the middle of his back, making Lukas struggle to keep from getting too obviously aroused as he wondered how long he would be forced to wait before bedding her again.

"We've been observing our captain since before the sun set this day. My apologies, Lukas, but I was concerned for your well-being and the boys were concerned with other matters."

"Ah, I see," Lukas said, shifting his gaze to the three other soldiers who managed to avoid meeting his eyes. "I assume there were bets made as well?"

"Only minor wagers, my captain," Mercury said, having the grace to suppress the teasing grin Lukas knew was pulling at his lips.

"Well, if the winners of the wagers will deposit their spoils in my mate's dowry box before our official joining ceremony, I will forgive them their indiscretion," Lukas said.

"And tell them I don't like it and to never do it again," Caitlyn said, standing on tiptoe to whisper the words into his ear, her breath on his skin making him long to turn around and take her in his arms, to ravage her right there on the newly plowed earth without a care as to who might decide to watch.

"She doesn't enjoy being observed and I will castrate the next man I find spying on us while we mate," Lukas said, making his words sound suitably threatening, even though he suspected Caitlyn might enjoy performing for an audience once she became more comfortable with the ways of his people.

"As you wish. We'll take our leave, captain, and await further word," Mercury said.

"Will you also *convince* Eleanor to release the humans from whatever spell she's cast?" Lukas said, fully aware that enchanting humans against their will violated their law, but secretly glad Eleanor had done so. If she hadn't, the tidal wave created as he'd banished the last of the serpents to the Illuminated realm would have drawn a great deal more attention. Part of the beach had been washed away, as well as many of the boats docked at the nearby Marina. Only the poor weather had kept more humans than Caitlyn from being swept out to sea.

"I will convince her, one way or another," Mercury said, the threat in his words making even Eleanor pale.

"You will live to regret this day, Lukas, I swear it by the depths of the seas of —"

"Quiet, Eleanor. You're embarrassing yourself," Mercury said, his use of her given name shocking the Queen into silence as they pulled her to the beach and out to the undersea portal that would transport them back to their home world.

"I can't believe this," Caitlyn murmured as she watched them go.

"It will become less fantastic with time. After a few months among our people you will forget that the Illuminated were ever something to find amazing," Lukas said, turning to Caitlyn and taking her in his arms, feeling his cock harden between their bodies as she shifted her hips against him.

"No, I mean I can't believe a bunch of men really watched me have an orgasm and run naked through the garden and everything else. I know the killer mermaid-Queen business should be bothering me more than that right now, but I'm just so embarrassed," she said, tears starting to gather in her wide gray eyes.

"Never be embarrassed by your pleasure," Lukas ordered, taking her face in his hands and willing her not to cry.

"I'm not embarrassed by my pleasure, I'm embarrassed that someone was watching—and that a part of me enjoyed it," she protested as tears started to spill down her pale cheeks and roll onto his much darker hands.

"There's nothing wrong with that. I'm proud to bed you, and proud to have others see me bring you ecstasy," Lukas said, a strange, out of control feeling starting to grow in his chest. "But if you want me to blind them all, I'll do it. I can't bear to see you in pain."

"No, don't blind them," she laughed, then looked up at him with a shy desire that took his breath away. "But I can think of one thing that might make me feel better."

"Anything," he said, ready to slay any number of demons of land or sea on her behalf.

"Take me back to my room and...stay with me?"

“There is nothing that would please me more,” he said, a heated smile on his face as he lifted her in his arms and aimed them both in the direction she indicated. He couldn’t wait to be alone with her, to remind her just how perfectly their bodies could come together in passion and, he hoped, in love.

## Chapter Four

“Almost ready,” Caitlyn shouted over the sound of the bathroom fan, wiggling her toes in the cooling bathwater. The truth was she’d finished bathing and shaving a good ten minutes ago, but for some reason she couldn’t bring herself to leave the bathtub.

The man had already seen her naked, had already kissed her “where the sun didn’t shine”, and made love to her in front of a small crowd of his friends. So why was she so terribly nervous? Was it just residual angst left over from helping him take down his psychotic half-sister, or something a little closer to home? He had mentioned something about a dowry, hadn’t he? What the hell did that mean?

Was he talking marriage? Love? Little mer-children with his mocha skin and her gray eyes? Was she ready for something like that? Sure, she lusted after him with every fiber of her being, and something deep inside her thrilled to be near him, but was that enough of a reason to run off to sea with the man? Was such a thing even possible? She *did* have to breathe air and all, which was no small obstacle. Not to mention her job and family and friends.

Okay, so her job was going nowhere fast, her only living family member was the abusive mother she’d run away from when she was sixteen, and her friends probably wouldn’t even notice if she ran off for a few years. Well, they might notice, but she wasn’t sure if they would really care. Caitlyn just didn’t feel that she was that vital to anyone’s existence, which made her wonder why this amazing man—a man who sounded like he was about to inherit a throne and kingdom, no less—would want her.

She’d already established that he wasn’t crazy, so that had to mean there was another reason for his obvious interest. Whatever that reason was, she doubted her terminally low self-esteem was going to help her figure it out in the next few minutes. She was going to have to go out there and face him. Too bad the hard questions she had

to ask probably wouldn't lead to the night of pleasure she had hoped for when she had invited Lukas back to her room.

But there was no way to avoid asking them now. She'd made the mistake of allowing her brain time to process information, always a big mistake if you were really interested in losing yourself in a night of hot, sweaty, delicious, intimate, loving, mind-blowing sex. She was completely sure it would have been all of those things, deep down in her soul.

"I'm well past ready," Lukas said as he loudly opened the bathroom door, causing Caitlyn to squeal in surprise.

"You scared the crap out of me."

"Who did you think I was? The Loch Ness monster?" he said with a wry grin as he stared hungrily down at where she lay in the tub.

"Is that a mermaid joke?"

"I'm an Illuminated man, not a *maid* of any sort. What do I need to do to convince you of that fact?" he said with another indulgent look, accompanied by the slow, teasing stroke of his hand up and down his rapidly swelling cock.

And lord, what a cock it was, thick and the loveliest shade of light brown, stretching all the way to his navel and graced by a fleshy head that was, without a doubt, the most gorgeous, plump top to a penis that she had ever seen. She wanted to put her mouth on him more than she'd ever wanted to do anything. She wanted to taste the salty, musky flavor of him against her tongue, wanted to feel him lose himself in her mouth and smear his essence across her lips. She'd never let a man do that before, but with Lukas she knew that it would turn her on, make her as hot to give him pleasure as it had to take her own.

"I told you I liked to wash in privacy," she said, covering her breasts with her washcloth—to conceal their aching tips more than to make any pretence at modesty. She couldn't let him know how aroused she was becoming if she hoped to have any chance at a rational conversation.

"You smell quite clean," he said, squatting down and plucking the washcloth out of the water.

"I was wondering if...your people could smell," she gulped, her words catching in her throat as his finger starting tracing delicate patterns on top of the water, inches away from where her skin nearly shook with need for him.

"We can. Exceptionally well, in fact. So well that I can catch the scent of your cunt even when *it* is underwater and *I* am not," he said, his voice husky and eyes homing in on said body part.

"I'm not sure if I like the word cunt," Caitlyn said, sucking in a deep breath as his finger brushed casually over her nipple before resuming its lazy movements through the water.

"You like the word. It makes you wet, makes you ache for my cock between your legs."

"You're very sure of yourself," she said, her entire body humming out the truth of his words. She wanted him badly, had been aching for him to slide inside her since he'd put his arms around her in the middle of the frigid ocean.

"No, I'm sure of your body's desire, but your heart is a complete mystery," he said, his eyes moving back to her face and nailing her with a look that was completely vulnerable and unsure, a look that said she had a strange sort of power over him that even he might not be completely comfortable with.

"Lukas, I'm not sure how I feel. This entire experience has been a little overwhelming. I don't know, can't even think—"

"Then don't think," he said, joining her with a swiftness that made water slosh over the side of the tub and Caitlyn cry out in surprise.

"You're too big for this bathtub," she whispered, struggling not to close her eyes and moan in pleasure as he braced his strong arms on either side of her head and lowered his body over hers, his knees gently urging her thighs apart so that he could settle between her legs.



"I think the fit is quite comfortable," he smiled, softly brushing his lips against hers as he lowered his hips and pressed the shaft of his cock ever so lightly against her pulsing clit. It created an electric connection between them that was unlike anything she'd ever felt. The sense of rightness, of comfort and safety, was almost her undoing. She suddenly wanted to weep as much as she wanted to beg him to push his thick cock deep into the aching slickness of her pussy.

Emotional and physical desire, tenderness mixed with a passion that was too powerful to be restrained, wasn't that what she'd always dreamed of? She hadn't believed it possible, at least not for her, but hearing a small choked sound escape from Lukas' throat and seeing the look of almost painful need on his face, she could almost believe that he felt the same way.

"I've never wanted a woman like this, Caitlyn," Lukas breathed against her lips before his tongue demanded entrance to her mouth.

Caitlyn wanted to tell him that she felt the same, but could only moan and open completely to him, lost in the commanding sweep of his tongue dancing with hers, in the frantic hunger that grew even stronger when his hands moved to her breasts, teasing her nipples until her breath came in desperate little pants and her hips bucked into his cock, demanding that he fill the horrible emptiness between her legs.

"Lukas, I—"

"Don't," he groaned, bringing the pad of his finger to her lips. "Let me show you how I feel for you before you speak."

"But I—"

"No, Caitlyn, feel this first, remember how right it feels for my body to be joined with yours," he said, using his free hand to spread her pulsing folds and slide just the tip of his thick cock into her body.

Caitlyn moaned at the wonderful fullness as her body stretched to accommodate his girth, and soon found herself gasping and writhing beneath him. Hungrily, she suckled the finger at her lips and stroked him with her tongue, mimicking the way she

wanted to love him with her mouth if he'd ever stop being commanding and forceful long enough to let her.

But God, she loved that part of him, loved the way he demanded she abandon herself to the pleasure of their bodies together. She loved the way his brown eyes darkened to a shade that was nearly black, the way his jaw clenched as he struggled to move slowly, gently, into her tight sheath, the way his hands were tender and strong, giving and commanding all at the same time. She loved the expression of wonder on his face as he started to delve a little deeper into her channel with shallow little thrusts that had her aching, weeping pussy begging for more—more of him, *all* of him.

"I love you," she said, feeling the rightness of the words despite the fact that she'd known this man less than a day.

"Thank the Goddess," he moaned, her words apparently shattering the last of his control.

Caitlyn arched her back and cried out as his cock tunneled deep into her center, bumping against the entry to her womb before she claimed quite all of his length. There was a hint of soreness, as her body hadn't quite recovered from their first time together, but it was far overshadowed by a deep sense of relief as her most basic animal instincts cried out that she had finally found her other, her mate, the man who was made to fit her more perfectly than she could have even imagined.

"Be with me, come back to my home and be my partner for this life," Lukas said, holding his body still within her and looking deep into her eyes. "All that is left is for you to choose me, Caitlyn. The magic of the Breath Kiss is simple, but more powerful than anything I've ever known."

"Are you crying?" Caitlyn asked, feeling a little teary herself as she looked up into his soft velvet eyes, suspiciously shiny around the edges.

"I am a warrior with over a hundred battles behind me."

"And warriors don't cry?" she asked, brushing a hand down his handsome face, feeling a tenderness for him that went beyond desire.

"Only if their love says *no*," he said, dipping his mouth to suckle one of her nipples, teasing and stroking the tight, puckered flesh until Caitlyn was moaning, fisting her hands in his hair and doing her best to force him to move his cock in and out of her, to fuck her hard and fast, with all the passion that was thick and heavy between them.

"Yes. Yes! Lukas, please, yes," Caitlyn begged.

"Yes, you'll come with me?" he asked as his mouth abandoned her breast for her lips, his tongue plundering her so thoroughly that it was hard to breathe, let alone formulate words.

"Yes, even if I drown, nothing could stop me," Caitlyn said, shivering as a rush of energy surged through her body, a foreign charge of something "other" that reminded her of the first time she had kissed Lukas, out in the ocean. It raced through her cells and was gone as quickly as it came, leaving her feeling warm and content, but with the sense that something had been altered deep within her.

"You won't drown, my love. Now that the Breath Kiss is permanent you won't even feel the chill of the water," he said with a smile.

"That's it? The...magic is permanent? I can't believe it. Shouldn't there have been sparks or something?" Caitlyn asked.

"I'll show you sparks," Lukas laughed, sealing her mouth with his before he rolled them both under the water.

Caitlyn felt a brief flash of fear as the water closed over them, but then Lukas was moving hard and fast between her legs and she couldn't think of anything but arching to meet his thrusts.

Dear God, they weren't using a condom, *again*. The thought was almost enough to make her ask for a brief timeout, when the wonder of the fact that she'd gone a good five minutes without breathing finally penetrated her lust-fogged consciousness.

*I'm not breathing.*

Caitlyn heard herself speak the words inside her mind, the same way Lukas' voice had first come to her that afternoon on the beach.

*Yes, you are, just quite a bit more slowly – it's the magic of the Breath Kiss. You'll need to surface every few hours to breathe, but that's more than enough time to reach the portals to our world.*

*So I'm really a mermaid?*

*How many times must I tell you that we are the Illuminated –*

*Don't take that tone in my head when you're fucking me!*

*I'd rather not take any tone when I'm fucking you, I'd rather just fuck you.*

He followed those words with a swift roll in the water that brought her on top of his body, her breasts within reach of his unbelievably talented tongue. Caitlyn gasped as the need built between her legs, but no water entered her lungs. It was like an invisible membrane covered her body, giving her the sensation of being surrounded by water without it actually touching her skin.

*This is amazing, will it always feel like this?*

*Only if my cock is inside you.*

*You know what I mean, Lukas, don't be –*

*Yes, my love, we are mated for life and the effects of the Breath Kiss are permanent.*

*Will I grow a fish tail?*

*Do I have a fish tail?*

*No, but you have a huge and wonderful cock. Have I told you how perfect you feel inside me?*

*Goddess, I don't know if a few hundred more years will be enough. I could fuck you forever.*

*Oh God, Lukas, I'm going to come.*

*Come, woman, I want to feel your cunt pulsing on my cock.*

*Don't call me woman!*

Her last words ended with a moan as his deep thrusts finally tipped her over the edge, making her womb clench and her channel start to spasm with waves of pleasure that were unlike anything she'd ever known. Her nipples tightened and her hands clawed into the flesh of his ass. She pulled him deeper and deeper, twisting and thrashing beneath the water, feeling a second orgasm start to build before the first had thoroughly abated.

*I love you, Caitlyn.*

His words spoken softly in her mind, combined with the very primal, male sound he made as he came inside her, sent her spiraling into her second orgasm. This one they rode out together, her pussy milking the last drop of hot cum from his body as their fevered joining slowly transformed into a languid thrusting that allowed them to float to the surface of the water.

"I'm really glad this is a big bathtub," Caitlyn finally said as she shifted slightly to rest her cheek on the smooth planes of his muscled chest, sighing with the deepest contentment she had ever known.

"And you said it was too small," Lukas murmured as his hand leisurely traced a path up and down her thigh.

"It's definitely not too small. It's big and thick and —"

"Are you ready to be fucked again so quickly?"

"What if I were?" she asked, running a teasing hand over his spent member, which was still larger in its resting state than the other penises she had met in her somewhat limited acquaintance.

"I would do my best to rise to the occasion," he said, his cock twitching slightly in her hand and indeed starting to swell, though not to anything near its full glory.

"Now you're just showing off."

"Perhaps," he said, a smile in his voice.

"Lukas?"

"Yes, my love?"

"We didn't use a condom – either time."

"There will be no child unless we both consciously choose to conceive. It is part of the magic of our people," he said, hugging her close to his side. "But you do wish for us to have children?"

"I do, but not at this exact second. I want to make sure that we're going to last. My dad was never around when I was a kid and my mom was, well...I just want more for my son or daughter," she said, the words not as painful to speak as they had been in the past. Somehow, lying this close to the man she loved, old hurts didn't cut quite so deeply.

"My father was a stranger to me, as well," Lukas said, pulling her on top of him and planting a soft kiss on her lips. "We will do a better job. With two such brave parents, our offspring will not lack for guidance or love."

"You think I'm *brave*?" Caitlyn asked, surprised by his choice of words.

"Incredibly brave. You stood with me against Eleanor and are willing to venture into a culture that is completely foreign to you so that we can be together. Two very brave choices from a brave woman," he said.

"I'm not brave, Lukas. I'm afraid."

"Bravery is not the absence of fear, but the strength to act in spite of it."

"That's a nice thought, but what if it's not bravery, what if we're both just crazy?"

"Love is a crazy thing, but it is also a treasure I've longed for. I'll not pass it by simply because it came more quickly than I would have dreamt possible," he said with a shrug as he began to idly massage the cheeks of her ass, building her need for him more swiftly than she would have imagined possible after such profoundly satisfying sex mere minutes before.

"What if I can't stand the dark?" Caitlyn asked, finally giving voice to the thoughts that had been nagging at her since this whole under-the-sea life had become a possibility.

"The dark?"

"It's dark under the water and I've spent the past four months being so depressed because I can't stand the dark. I need sunshine and —"

"What are you laughing at?" Caitlyn asked, scowling as the muscles beneath her grew even harder as Lukas began to quake with laughter. Sure, he looked beautiful when he laughed, and all those wide, white teeth were bright in his dark face, but this was a serious problem. "Quit it, you're being a jerk."

"Our land is not dark. We occupy the uppermost level of Underworld, a land of great beauty with a sun more ancient than even the star that lights this Earth. It's a world our people believe was granted to us by the ancient gods."

"What?"

"We're from a different dimension, my love, an entirely separate realm. The portals to our home are under the sea, but we are not creatures of the deep. We still breathe as humans do, but simply need to do so less frequently. We still die, but live for hundreds of years longer than Earth people," he said, still smiling at her as if she were a simpleton as he moved one hand to her breast and began playing with her nipple.

"There's no need to be condescending," she said, though pouting was difficult when she was already squirming on top of him, half dizzy with the need to have him inside her again.

"I would never condescend. I'm just happy to be able to put your fears to rest. You will have all the sunshine you need, and anything else that is in my power to give you," he said, the truth of his words warming Caitlyn to the depths of her being.

"Right now, I just want this," Caitlyn said, rising up and positioning his shaft at her entrance, slowly impaling herself on his length until her auburn curls were snuggled against his dark brown ones, the perfect melding of their two very different bodies

giving her hope that the meeting of their two very different worlds would find equal success.

"One more question," Caitlyn said, bracing her hands on his chest and staring down into his eyes, already dark with his love and desire.

"Ask anything and I will answer, if you promise to take your pleasure from me in the next ten seconds," he said, his hands coming to her hips and his fingers digging into her soft flesh as he thrust even deeper into her body.

"God," Caitlyn moaned, struggling to keep from starting to fuck him that very second.

"No, I was never a god, but a small island off the coast of Africa once made offerings to me as a way to appease the tides," he said with a wicked grin.

"I was going to ask if I'd get to come back to my world when I need to. Just in case I get homesick," Caitlyn said, gently slapping Lukas on his manly pectorals. Her future husband had the manliest chest she had ever seen, a detail that was almost as much of a surprise as the fact that he was a merman.

"Anytime you wish. I spend quite a bit of time in your dimension."

"You can't get enough of hot tubs and Earth women?" Caitlyn teased as she slowly began to ride the man beneath her, knowing with a peaceful certainty that she was going to be the last mortal notch on his bedpost.

"The hot tubs are nice, but it's the fishing that draws me. Underworld has nothing that can compare to Earth's deep sea spear fishing," he said, tightening his grip on her waist and guiding her clit into more intimate contact with his hips, which were now rolling in a circular motion that quickly brought her within reach of another mind-numbing orgasm.

"I like deep spearing," Caitlyn said, her laugh turning to a moan as Lukas caught her nipple in his mouth and the tension within her grew even higher, hotter, almost more than she could contain.



*Is this deep enough?*

*Oh...yes.*

*Will you come for me now?*

*Oh God, yes.*

As she did, Lukas pulled back to watch her face as he'd threatened to do in the hot tub. But she didn't feel embarrassed or ashamed, she felt beautiful, sensual, complete and more loved than she could have imagined possible.

*I love you, Lukas.*

*And I you, my love.*

*Will you fuck me from behind now?*

*Goddess, yes, but don't speak like that again or I'll lose myself in your sweet cunt.*

*I like it when you lose yourself in my sweet cunt.*

Caitlyn laughed when Lukas moaned with the effort it took to maintain his control, a smile still on her face as he flipped her over in the water and slid into her from behind. Then he was slowly thrusting in and out of her, his hands finding her breasts and clit, coaxing her to another orgasm before he spent himself inside her with a final deep thrust.

Still tangled in Lukas' arms, floating in the rapidly cooling bathtub water, Caitlyn fell asleep, certain for the first time in ages that she was exactly where she needed to be, and that morning was something she was definitely looking forward to—no matter what the state of the weather.

## **About the Author**

Anna J. Evans is a multipublished author who thinks romance is sexier with a sense of humor. She loves reading and writing paranormal romantic adventures and is thrilled to hear from fans. You can visit her website, email her, or join her Yahoo group (Anna\_Evans\_lolsexy-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) for free reads, the latest publishing news, and monthly member-only give-aways.

Anna welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).



Discover for yourself why readers can't get enough of the multiple award-winning publisher Ellora's Cave. Whether you prefer e-books or paperbacks, be sure to visit EC on the web at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com) for an erotic reading experience that will leave you breathless.

[www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com)