

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS



Candy Store
BELLA ANDRE

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



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Candy Store

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CANDY STORE

Bella Andre

Chapter One

The orgasmic moans coming from behind Callie were too loud and impassioned for her to ignore any longer.

“Ooohh, I just died and went to heaven,” exclaimed a middle-aged woman as she popped another truffle into her mouth. The teenager next to her said, “Stop hogging them all, mom,” and reached across her mother to grab several treats off the tray the waiter was holding.

Callie smiled, pleased that everyone was enjoying the truffles so much, but then her smile turned into a frown as she remembered her accountant’s words. *Your business better start picking up, and fast, or you’re going to have to shut down Callie’s Candies.* Callie slumped down in her seat with a loud sigh. Her store wasn’t bringing in enough money to stay afloat. Even though everyone who had ever tasted one of her confections seemed to love them, Callie still wasn’t able to make ends meet. Her accountant had arranged for her to meet with a renowned candy company consultant on Monday, but right now Callie wasn’t feeling particularly hopeful about it. As soon as anyone started talking about marketing and promotion, Callie always started daydreaming about new candy creations, no matter how hard she tried to stay focused on business plans.

She looked around the indoor garden at the two hundred people who were munching on her truffles with looks of utter rapture on their faces and had to blink quickly to fight back a sudden onslaught of tears. How could she give up on Callie’s Candies? Making people happy was worth so much more to her than making money, she thought as she sniffled and opened her little beaded purse to look for a tissue.

The woman behind her licked bittersweet chocolate dust off of her fingers. “Wait a minute, honey. I’ve got a tissue here in my purse for you. I always cry at weddings myself. Everything about them is so perfect and beautiful, isn’t it?”

Callie forced herself to nod and then accepted the tissue from the woman. Ignoring the chocolate smear across it from the woman's fingers, Callie blew her nose.

She liked weddings. Really she did. Especially since the happy couple had met in her store last Valentine's Day.

Callie tucked the used tissue into her purse, trying hard to clear her mind. Right now she didn't want to think about Valentine's Day. She didn't want to think about weddings. And she sure as heck didn't want to think about love.

She snorted at the thought of love—didn't one need a boyfriend or even, say, a date first?—and the woman next to her scooted a little farther away. Callie felt tears well up in her eyes again. Even a middle-aged stranger thought she was weird and wanted to get away from her. Callie reached for the used tissue and blew again.

The first few chords of the wedding march rang out and the guests leapt to their feet. Callie noted that everyone was either still chewing and swallowing or licking chocolate off of their fingers as they waited for the bride to appear. She bit back a slightly hysterical laugh.

At least there is one thing about me that people love, she thought as the radiant bride appeared from an arbor of white lattice and pink roses.

Too bad she couldn't barter chocolate truffles for love.

* * * * *

Tobey stood next to the priest and tried not to sway. Planting his feet in a wide stance he clasped his hands behind his back and focused his eyes on the woman in white coming towards him.

Ruthless memories assaulted him. *What woman in her right mind would want to marry you? Candy is for children and I want a man.*

Everything blurred and Tobey had to close his eyes to keep his feet firmly planted on the ground.

The priest leaned towards him. "This is a wedding, not a wake, son."

Tobey forced a grin even though he thought his face might crack with the strain just as James, Tobey's best friend since the first grade, turned and gave him a thumb's up.

God, how he hated weddings. After his one pathetic attempt at holy matrimony, which had ended before "I do" was done, Tobey had vowed never to set foot within a mile of a wedding ever again.

And now, here he was, the best man. He knew he was a sucker, but when push came to shove he couldn't let James down. Missing his best friend's wedding would have been the coward's way out. Tobey was going to look his demons in the eye, support his friend on the happiest day of his life, and then get the fuck out.

Were it not for several quick swigs of tequila he wouldn't have made it this far. And Tobey knew damn well that several more shots would be necessary to help him get through the reception. It was the only way.

Jane's father kissed her on the cheek and handed the bride over to the groom. Tobey saw the love flowing between them and felt nothing but emptiness inside him.

The memory tackled him again. *The Candy King? Why can't you be more like your brother?*

Tobey tried to shake the shrill voice of his faithless bitch of an ex-fiancée out of his head to focus on the ceremony that had just begun. He knew she was right, though, and that was the worst thing of all. So what if he loved what he did and was good at it? What did it matter if he was a connoisseur of candy? Who cared if he knew how to sell it, lots of it, for any company that hired him?

His skills were the skills of a child. It was time to grow up.

In a daze of self-loathing, Tobey watched James and Jane exchange rings. His best friend leaned in to kiss his new wife, but all Tobey could see was the face of his ex-fiancée, screwed up in rage at him. *You've ruined my life! I could have married someone important. Someone successful. Don't ever come near me again.* In his mind's eye Tobey could still see the shock on the faces of their guests. He could still see the hatred in Gina's eyes. But worst of all, he could see how everyone agreed with her choice.

The sound of applause pulled him from his memories and he reached out his arm to the Maid of Honor. He just needed to make it down the aisle to the bartender and then everything would be all right.

* * * * *

Callie pushed the salmon around on her plate. It was delicious, but she wasn't the least bit hungry. Her lack of appetite may have had something to do with all of the newlyweds at her table. As far as she could tell there wasn't another singleton around for miles. If she had to hear one more word about engagement rings and honeymoon trips, she was going to puke. Abruptly, she pushed her chair back and made a beeline for the bar.

A tall, broad-shouldered man stood with his back to her. Callie hadn't paid much attention to the wedding ceremony, but she couldn't help but notice the striking good looks of the best man. He had looked oddly grim throughout the ceremony, but at one point when he had grinned at the groom, it was as if the sun had come out from the clouds to pour down over everyone.

Callie cursed her unfortunate weakness for tall, dark, and handsome. Her friends liked to joke that the big brutes she always fell for were the perfect counterpart to her petite blonde curves. But it wasn't really all that funny. The truth was that if the man came with a harsh past and an emptiness in his soul, she was metal to his magnet. Which may have had something to do with her still being single, she mused unhappily. If she could only find a nice, simple, happy man—yes, short, soft, and pale would have to suffice—everything would be perfect.

Oh yeah, except for the fact that she was going to have to close her store if she didn't start making a profit.

Callie fell even deeper into her misery as she made her way past the last of the tables. The best man ran a large hand through his hair and said something in a low

voice to the bartender. The sound of his voice sent goose bumps running up her bare arms.

I wonder which tall, gorgeous, svelte woman he's married to? she thought, feeling more than a tad snarky. Callie knew she was being bad, but for once she didn't care. Not only was she totally unwedded and alone, but she was about to be out of a job too. Pretty soon, instead of spending her days making candy—the one thing she loved most in the world—she was going to be sitting behind a desk in an office typing memos for some executive, or reeking of grease and saying, “Would you like onions with that?”

Callie shuddered. Coming shoulder to shoulder with Mr. Handsome and Tortured, she said to the bartender, “Give me something. Anything. Just make it strong.”

She had never had more than a sip of wine before—alcohol wasn't her thing, not when she could do such amazing things with sugar and chocolate—but Callie didn't care. If there was ever a time to get drunk, it was now.

The best man, who was even more striking up close, tossed back a shot of something golden then turned to face her. “She'll have a shot of tequila,” he told the bartender, all the while holding her gaze with his own. Seemingly pleased by her shock at his forward behavior, he quirked an eyebrow and added, “Make it two. With lime and salt.”

Callie had never seen eyes so green. Or such a gorgeous, masculine face. She blinked and tried to tear her eyes from his, but she didn't have a chance.

“Tobey Danville,” he said, his voice warm and slightly thick.

Callie's tongue darted out to lick her lips. She knew she was supposed to say her name, but she was having the darnedest time just remembering to breathe around this guy. His name seemed vaguely familiar, but her brain wasn't working well enough for her to think about anything at all.

One side of his mouth quirked up, but his semi-grin was far from being a smile. “And you are?” he asked, his tone slightly mocking, as if he was used to women losing all use of their tongues whenever he deigned to speak to them.

The bartender placed a shot glass of tequila in front of Callie and she finally pulled herself away from her trance of lust. It was long past time for her to stop acting like such an idiot. What did it matter how gorgeous this guy was? He was probably married, she was definitely single and that was that.

“Callie Moore,” she said without looking at him again—god forbid she get stuck in his green eyes again—and picked up the little glass. She took a small sip of the liquid and nearly spit it out.

Suddenly angry at being the butt of some stranger’s joke, she turned towards Tobey, her eyes flashing. “What is this? Are you trying to kill me?”

His laughter was so unexpected that Callie took a step back.

“I take it you’ve never had tequila before?” he said, his words mixing with his laughter.

Callie shook her head, not trusting herself to say anything more to this awful, albeit incredible, specimen of a man. When he laughed his eyes lit up and she thought they sparkled like the ocean, which was a ridiculous thought given that the closest she’d ever come to seeing a green-blue ocean was during a documentary about Jacques Cousteau on television.

But before she could walk away—scratch that, run away—to her car and leave to go hide in her kitchen behind her store, he leaned down so that she could feel his warm breath across her cheek and said, “Won’t you let me show you how?”

His softly spoken words made shivers run all the way from the tips of Callie’s breasts, which were now hard points of desire, past the vee of her legs, which was suddenly hot and aching, all the way down to the tips of her toes, which were fairly curling in her high heels. Every cell in her body was quivering in anticipation of whatever it was that Tobey wanted to show her.

“God, yes,” she said in an exhale, wanting him to show her far more than how to drink the bitter beverage. Right now, as far as she was concerned, he could show her anything he wanted. Preferably naked, of course.

Callie knew she should be shocked by her wanton behavior, by her shameless thoughts, but she couldn't think straight with this man invading all of her personal space.

He slid the two glasses together and picked up a slice of lime. "First, you hold the lime between your teeth, with the flesh facing me."

Obediently, Callie opened up her mouth and let Tobey slide the small green fruit between her lips. His thumb brushed lightly over her bottom lip as he did so, and even though she knew he was touching her on purpose to tease her with his power, to show her that he already controlled her body with his own, she didn't care.

"Now tilt your neck to the side," he said as he brushed her blonde curls away from her neck. With hot, sure fingers, he lightly pushed aside the neckline of her long sleeve jersey dress to bare a small patch of skin between her neck and her collarbone.

Callie was about to burst with wanting him. All he had done was touch her mouth and the tender skin on her neck and she was about to explode into a million pieces. She was shivering, but not with cold. It was a sunny day in the first week of January in frigid upstate New York, but Callie was burning up as if it was August in Barbados.

"Good. Very good," he said in a low voice, the tips of his fingers still upon her neck.

Callie held her breath waiting for whatever came next.

"I'm going to sprinkle a little salt onto your beautiful skin," he whispered, shaking out several grains of salt onto her and Callie gasped, painfully, powerfully aware of the throbbing between her legs.

"And then," he said, in so low of a voice she could barely hear him, "it's time for the tequila."

In one smooth motion, he leaned down and sucked at the skin on her shoulder, taking the salt into his mouth. Callie groaned with pleasure as his mouth seared her with its potent heat, and then he pulled his heat away from her and downed the bitter liquid in the shot glass. Callie was so mesmerized by his every move, his every breath, she was so under his spell, that she had forgotten all about the lime between her teeth,

so it was in slow motion that he leaned towards her, closer and closer, until they were finally eye to eye. With a tenderness that she could hardly believe he possessed, he placed his mouth over hers, slowly tasted her lips with his tongue, tasting every curve and the corners between her upper and bottom lips, taking his time to brand her once again before he sucked the juice from the lime.

If Callie had known that a lime could be so potent, so blatantly sexual, she would have planted a row of fruit trees in her garden long ago. She would have become a master of lemon tarts and key lime pies. Tobey removed the lime from her mouth with his teeth. Dazed, she watched him pluck it from his mouth and put it in the empty shot glass. Loud clapping for the band playing at the reception brought Callie back to reality.

Had a stranger just licked salt off of her shoulder and then sucked a lime from between her teeth?

But before she had time to fall all the way back to earth, Tobey leaned down and whispered in her ear the two words that were to be her downfall.

“Your turn.”

Callie stood dumbly, unable to make any part of her body work. This gorgeous man actually thought she was going to lick salt from his neck and then suck a lime from his lips?

As if sensing her reservations, he said, “You don’t want to waste your drink, now do you?”

Callie slowly shook her head. “No. It’s just that I,” she stuttered, unsure of what she could possibly say to get herself out of this crazy predicament.

What was she doing? She was a nice girl who owned a candy store, for god’s sake. Not some wanton slut who picked up men at weddings. She sneaked a glance down at his ring finger and breathed a sigh of relief. At least she wasn’t a husband stealing slut. As doubts threatened to take her over, she remembered her store and how she was going to lose it. Suddenly, it was all too much for her to deal with.

"Oh, what the hell," she said. Before she could change her mind, she picked up the slice of lime and shoved it into Tobey's mouth.

Her quick action must have stunned him and pleased him all at the same time, because his eyes crinkled and he chuckled from around the lime.

Callie narrowed her eyes and looked up at him. He was going to regret laughing at her. She'd show him. She might look like a tiny blonde candy maker, but she could give as good as she got.

At least she hoped she could.

Blocking out any thoughts of where she was and how unseemly their drinking game was during the middle of a wedding reception, Callie focused on the task at hand: to make Tobey want her even more than she wanted him. She was going to set him on fire and then leave him high and dry after she took what she wanted.

Coming up on her tippy-toes, she smiled coyly and ran her forefinger over the juice dripping from the lime onto Tobey's full lower lip. "I should be gentler with you," she said, then brought her finger to her mouth and sucked the drop of juice dry.

Tobey's Adam's apple moved in his throat and Callie thought, *That's one point for my team.*

She took her finger from her mouth and brought her hands up to the bow tie of his tux. "You've got an awful lot of clothes on, don't you?"

Tobey raised an eyebrow as if to say, *So what are you going to do about it?*

Even with a slice of lime between his lips he looked daunting and powerful and far, far too sure of himself. Callie matched his silent dare with a cheeky grin. Licking her lips, with great concentration she ran her small hands down the front of his tux, from his broad shoulders, down past his well-formed pecs, to what she assumed was a washboard stomach.

Callie felt a moment of insecurity reach in to her bravado. *Think quick*, she urged herself, and right as she was wondering if she was indeed up to the task of seducing the seducer, she noticed Tobey's large, workman-like hands.

Callie took one of his lightly calloused hands in her own. She ran the tip of her finger along the soft skin and muscle at the curve between his thumb and forefinger and smiled with pleasure at Tobey's exhale of breath. Her heart beating far too fast, she slowly turned his hand over and continued tracing the skin on his palm.

More turned on than she'd ever been before—and all this in public with a man she'd known for five minutes with her clothes on and intact—Callie pushed the sleeve of his tuxedo jacket up to his forearm. Working to keep her fingers steady, trying to keep herself from simply jumping Tobey right then and there and riding him in the middle of the wedding reception, Callie undid the gold cufflink from his dress shirt and let it drop to the floor.

Neither Callie nor Tobey watched the cuff link fall to the ground. They were intent on each other, wrapped up in the escalation of their game. Slowly, precisely, Callie folded Tobey's starched sleeve up once, then twice. Every time her skin brushed against his, heat surged through her.

Tobey's pulse beat rapidly under the exposed skin of his wrist and she wanted to cover his heartbeat with the heat of her mouth.

"Perfect," she breathed, as she ran her thumb over his pulse-point. The spell remained unbroken as she reached for the salt shaker and sprinkled salt on to his tanned wrist and the edge of his palm. Raising his wrist to her mouth, Callie brought her lips to his skin and waves of desire washed through her as their bodies made contact again. She groaned as she sucked at him, hardly tasting the salt, desperate for a taste of Tobey's essence, so potent and male and wonderful. Unwilling to lose contact with him, she licked a grain of salt off of the firm flesh on his palm and she heard a low sound from his throat, like a caged lion on the verge of escape.

Knowing she needed to drink the fiery liquid, promising herself his mouth if she could tear her lips away from his wrist, Callie reached for the shot glass and drank the tequila in one long swallow. But this time it wasn't bitter and she didn't think it was going to kill her. Instead it made her feel warm, even warmer than she already was, and languid and perfect. She got back up on her tippy-toes and placed her hands behind Tobey's neck and felt softness on her fingers as she threaded them into his hair. He leaned into her and she placed her teeth around the lime and sucked the juice from it without ever touching her skin to his, and then suddenly the lime was gone and she was kissing him, and his tongue was in her mouth, conquering her, showing her that she was going to have to play the game by his rules.

Callie felt his strong hands encircle her back and pull her into him. She felt safe and hot and scared and wet and she wanted to curl up inside Tobey and never come out.

"Ahem." The bartender cleared his throat. And then again, but louder this time. "I think the bride and groom are trying to get your attention."

Callie heard the bartender from within a deep red fog, but she wanted to ignore it, if hearing him meant leaving heaven.

It was Tobey who finally pulled away from her. With one last heavy look, his devil-may-care grin was back on his face. Everything hit her at once, and Callie felt as if she had been thrown from a hot tub to a cold plunge with no warning. But it was worse than that. Everyone at the wedding had just witnessed her throwing herself at a stranger.

Knowing her thoughts, Tobey leaned in and whispered, "No one could see you behind me. There's nothing to worry about."

Callie nodded quickly as tears welled up in her eyes for the hundredth time that day. Unable to meet his eyes, she turned and ran blindly away from the gathering, instinctively heading for the one place that she would feel safe again—the kitchen.

She darted through the swinging door and stepped to the left just in time to avoid a collision with one of the waiters. Her eyes wild, she ran past the prep area, past the

stoves, rounded a corner and found refuge in the walk-in refrigerator. Stepping inside, she slumped down onto an upside down milk crate and tried to catch her breath.

She was just going to have to hide in the refrigerator until the reception was over. It was either that or risk running into Tobey again. Which she definitely couldn't do. One more minute so near to him, and she'd be naked and riding him for sure.

Chapter Two

"May the bride and groom have true love forever!"

Tobey raised his champagne glass in a toast to James and Jane, doing his best to act the part of the happy best man, but all he could think about was the little blonde vixen who had just run away from him.

"Has anyone seen Callie?" Jane asked after the endless toasts were through. At her guest's blank stares, she added, "She made the incredible truffles."

People moaned with remembered pleasure and licked their lips and said things like, "Better than sex," and "Are there more?"

Tobey smiled. He should have known that Callie had something to do with candy. Candy was, after all, his specialty. And Callie was so damn sweet, especially her plump lips and the succulent patch of skin at the base of her neck. He couldn't wait to taste the rest of her. He was going to run his tongue over every inch of her body, from her lush breasts and her taut nipples, which he was guessing were a dusty rose on the light creamy skin of her breasts, to the valley between her thighs, and...

Jane's voice cut through his X-rated daydream. "Darn. I wish she was here so I could officially thank her for making those incredible truffles that everyone has been raving about." Jane reached for her new husband's hand. "Plus, if it weren't for Callie's Candies, James and I would have never found each other."

James leaned over and frenched his newly wedded wife. Tobey shifted from one foot to the other in discomfort and looked away. *Get a room*, he thought, but then, he and Callie had practically been humping at the bar, so who was he to complain?

When his best friend was finally done kissing his bride, he turned towards Tobey with a knowing grin. "Any idea where Callie might be?"

"Not a clue," Tobey answered truthfully. "But I'd be happy to go find her for you."

"I bet you would," James said with a wink. "For us."

Finally free of his best man duties, Tobey headed for the door that Callie had run through. He hoped that she hadn't left the reception altogether. They had some unfinished business to take care of. Preferably while they were naked in a room with a lock.

"The kitchen," he said to himself, when he walked into the large cooking area. "That makes sense."

"Did anyone see a small blonde woman run through here?"

One of the waiters nodded towards the hall behind the prep area and the stoves. "She went back there."

Tobey nodded his thanks. Once he had walked around the corner into the hidden, back area of the kitchen, he saw two large doors, both big enough for him to step through. Opening the door to his right, he realized it was a commercial freezer, packed full of ice cream containers and huge bags of ice.

He closed the heavy freezer door and turned his gaze to the refrigerator door, a broad grin taking over his face. He almost felt sorry for his hot little candy maker.

She may have intended on cooling off in the fridge, but he was going to make sure that she got hot, hot, hot instead.

* * * * *

Callie heard a noise in the hall and looked up through the thick, frosted glass on the refrigerator door. "Shit," she whispered. A tall man in a tux was standing just outside the door. It had to be Tobey. She tried to push herself back further into the shelves, hoping that her dark pink dress would help her to blend in with the crates of supplies. Maybe if she didn't move, didn't make a sound, didn't even breathe, he would go away. And she could be left in peace with her memory of the taste of his skin and the beating of his heart on her lips.

Callie had spent the past ten minutes rubbing the goose bumps on her arms and trying to convince herself that she had had enough of Tobey. She had firmly decided that she was going to be perfectly happy masturbating in the shower to the sexy picture of Tobey that she had fixed in her mind's eye. She didn't need to see him, didn't need to touch him, didn't need any more of his kisses.

But now that he was standing only feet from her—somehow she had known all along that he would find her and now he had—it was all she could do not to fling the door open, pull him inside the cramped 5'x5' space with her, and rip all of his clothes from his body.

Who was she kidding? She wasn't going to be content with just the memory of him, with just her dreams of what it would be like to feel him naked against her, writhing in pleasure.

At the same time, an annoying inner voice of reason was telling Callie that there was no use in giving in to her baser needs. One night of mind-blowing sex wasn't going to help anything. It wasn't going to save her business. It wasn't going to save her pathetic love life.

Although, she thought with a grin, it was guaranteed to be fun.

The doorknob turned and Callie gasped. He was coming in. What was she going to do? She stood up and backed into the wall, pressing herself up against the cold edge of the laden shelves as hard as she could.

In the dim light of the refrigerator, Tobey's warm voice wrapped around her. "I thought I might find you in here."

Callie was both alarmed and aroused by his presence, by the way he filled up the room with his essence. The crazy mix of feelings made it hard for her to speak.

"I, uh..." she said as she watched Tobey open the door and step into the refrigerator with her, his eyes drinking hungrily of her, noting her taut, cold nipples through the thin silk of her bra, noting the way she had pressed herself up against the

shelves to try and hide from him. She was sure that he could read the need in her eyes, even as she tried to hide it from him.

Less than four feet from her, which was at least four feet too close for Callie's comfort, Tobey closed the door behind him with a soft but definite click, never once taking his eyes from her.

His voice laced with humor, he said, "There's no lock, but at least it's private. We'll just have to hope no one needs any milk."

Looking for a way out, for some sort of escape path, willing herself to think fast so that she could get the heck away from him, she said, "Actually, I was looking for the milk, for, um, coffee for the reception." Picking up a carton of milk, she said, "So now that I've found it, I..."

Tobey took a step towards her and Callie, who felt as if she was the lioness being hunted by a needy lion, dropped the carton of milk on the floor. It broke open and splashed onto her shoes, but she hardly noticed.

All she could feel was his heat. She knew he could feel hers, as if she was drawing him to her via some sort of sexual infrared. No matter how many times she told herself she didn't want what he was offering her, no matter how she tried to convince herself that she didn't need the release that he promised her, she knew that she did.

Desperately.

Tobey pinned her against the shelves with one arm on either side of her. "You weren't looking for milk," he said, his voice husky. "You were looking for this."

He leaned in and captured her mouth in a kiss so sweet, so powerful, that Callie was instantly infused with a deep warmth. But even as her passion grew, Callie worried. "What if someone walks in?"

Tobey laughed off her fears, unconcerned. He nipped at her lips, biting softly at the incredibly sensitive, cool flesh, burning her up. Vaguely noting that her skirt was hiked all the way up around her waist, Callie thought, *Thank god I'm not wearing nylons.* Tobey's fingers made their way up the soft flesh of her inner thigh, teasing her with

their intent. He hiked one of her legs up against his thigh and, breathless with anticipation, Callie felt herself grow more and more swollen, until finally he pushed past the wispy silk of her panties and found her slick and ready and wet.

He pushed his palm against her inflamed mons and Callie pushed her weight into his hand, no more able to stop herself from grinding into him than she would have been able to walk away and leave him.

All the while, even as her breath caught, even as the hard flesh of his palm aroused her clitoris until she almost hurt with it, Tobey was driving her crazy with his gentle kisses.

Until now, Callie had always been perfectly happy to let the man lead in bed. She had been content to let her lovers take their time exploring her, to even show them how she liked to be touched for even greater pleasure.

But now, in this moment, Callie knew that if she didn't get more of Tobey—his mouth, his hands, the huge, hard shaft that was pressing against his black tuxedo pants and now against her palm as she cupped his heavy weight—she was going to die. She plunged her tongue into his mouth and found his, forcing it to mate with hers. She heard him make a sound of pleasure, she thought she matched his moan with her own, but she didn't care. She didn't care about anything other than mating with this glorious man, whose touch turned her skin to flames.

Lifting his mouth from hers, Tobey reached for the jersey fabric of her dress. "I need to see you," he said in a low voice.

Callie pulled her dress up over her head then reached for Tobey's jacket, roughly yanking it off of his shoulders. "I need to taste you," she said as she ripped off his bow tie and jerked his shirt open at the neck.

Her lips and tongue found the hollow of his neck, found his strong, quick pulse, and with every moment she grew wetter and readier for Tobey than she had ever been for any man.

He slid his hands to her back, stroking flames onto her skin, and then her bra was on the floor, and his sure fingers overtook hers, clumsy with cold and need as she tried to remove his shirt. Knocking off several cartons of milk from a low shelf beside them, he propped her up on it. Callie reached for his belt, but he had already dropped to his knees, his mouth at her breasts, licking and sucking at the soft, plump flesh, coming closer and closer to her nipples, but not nearly close enough.

Already puckered from the refrigeration, her areolas tightened into tiny buds of bliss as he licked slow circles around them, almost flicking against her nipples, but never quite touching them.

"Please," Callie moaned, her hands wound into Tobey's thick, dark hair, her head thrown back, her back arched. She pushed her tits into him, any remaining vestiges of modesty gone, impatient for him to put her out of this exquisite agony.

"Not yet," he said, taking her ample breasts into his hands. Reverently, he ran his thumbs lightly over her nipples, then back again, flicking the tight buds with his fingers.

"Dusty rose. I knew it," he said softly as he worshiped her. His mouth consumed her as he tasted every square inch of her glorious breasts, rising up from her rib cage to the taut peak of her nipples. "You're so beautiful. So damn beautiful."

Callie had always been more than a little embarrassed by the size of her breasts—D cups on a five foot frame had always seemed way out of proportion—but if Tobey continued to lick and suck her like that, she vowed to never have another bad thought about them again.

"Oh god, yes," she whimpered, her sounds of pleasure muffled by the thick walls of the refrigerator.

She was so hot, burning up everywhere he touched her. And then his hands were lifting her up and pulling her panties off of her, the wispy silk scratching the sensitive skin on her inner thighs. Her panties fell to her ankles and she kicked them off, along with her shoes. And then Tobey's head was between her legs, his tongue on her.

He lightly touched the tip of her clit, engorged and so sensitive. Instinctively, Callie opened her legs up wider and bucked her hips up into his mouth.

Callie knew he was intent on teasing her because he held her firmly away from his mouth, lapping at her once, then twice, then blowing lightly on her heated flesh.

"More," she cried, no longer worried about anyone walking in on them, no longer caring if anyone in the kitchen heard her scream out for him.

A smile on his lips, he reached for her and brought her lips to his, letting her taste her juices, letting her lick them from his tongue.

"You have the sweetest pussy," he said, and she said, "Please."

His hand on her thigh, only inches from her lips, he said, "Tell me what you want."

Callie didn't even have to think. "Lick me."

Tobey licked her kneecap. "Here?" he asked, his eyes devious and challenging.

"No," she cried, wishing he would give her what she wanted, wishing she didn't have to say the words.

He licked the tender flesh on the inside of her elbow. "Here?"

Callie gave in. "My pussy," she whispered, amazed to hear the word roll off her tongue. "Lick my pussy," she said again, her voice louder, more sure as she realized how much she liked the feel of the word as it rolled from her tongue to her lips and then out into the cold air of their private refrigerated world.

Tobey kissed her hard on her lips, bruising them, before kissing a trail down her flesh, from the hollow of her neck to the valley between her lush breasts.

"I," he pulled at her nipples with his mouth, causing shivers of ecstasy to race down Callie's spine, "would be happy," his tongue dipped into her belly button, "to lick," and then lower still to the very tip of her clit, "your pussy."

In an instant his mouth was on her, hot and insistent. His tongue plunged in and out of her canal, he sucked on her swollen clit, and Callie cried out as all of the pressure that had been building up since she first saw Tobey standing at the bar threatened to

explode into a million glorious pieces. Impossible tremors wracked her, knocking her back against the shelves, pushing her off the counter into Tobey's lips and teeth and hands. He slipped a finger into her slick, pulsing canal, then two. Callie felt her muscles clench around him, trying to take his thick fingers even deeper and she envisioned his cock pumping in and out of her, just like his fingers were doing, rough and powerful and perfect. Her heart pounding so hard, faster than she thought it could, the rainbow of colors faded away, and Callie fell limp in Tobey's arms.

* * * * *

Still on his knees, sticky in a pool of milk, Tobey could hardly think. He could hardly breathe. He was no stranger to sweaty, grinding sex, but he couldn't help but be amazed by what happened to him with this woman. He got within five feet of her and he lost his mind. He had to have her. Every perfect inch of her.

He grinned as he felt the last of her contractions press down on his fingers. He was pleased, more pleased than he could ever say, that Callie obviously felt exactly the same way about him. He had always had a thing for stacked little blondes, but this one was putting every other woman he'd been with to shame. She was heedless in her passion, shy yet demanding, hungry, yet waiting for him to make the next move.

His grin fell away. His cock throbbed in his pants, demanding attention. Tobey hadn't been this hard since he was sixteen, about to stick his dick into his first pussy. He didn't think he could hold off much longer.

With his free hand, he undid his belt buckle and unzipped his pants, then reached for the condom in his back pocket. Steadying Callie, who had leaned her weight against him as she recovered from the huge orgasm that had ripped through her, Tobey slowly slid his fingers from her, pressing one last kiss to her sweet cunt, licking her sweet juices off of his lips before he rose up from his knees.

Finally, the tip of his cock rested at the incredibly wet, pink entrance to her vagina, his hugely swollen head red with insistence. Tobey wanted to plunge into her, roughly,

forcefully, until he exploded. He wanted to overpower her, to squeeze her enormous breasts, to feel them heavy in his hands as he rode her, dominated her. He wanted to grab her ankles and push them over her shoulders, opening up her thighs wide so that he could watch his cock sink into her, inch by inch.

But even though he wanted to do all of this and more, he didn't. Because even more than Tobey wanted to take Callie for his own pleasure, he wanted to please her all over again. He wanted to hear her cries of ecstasy and watch her as she came beneath him.

He slipped the condom on in one smooth move, and smiled into her beautiful blue eyes. She looked up at him, shy again, and Tobey opened his mouth to murmur something comforting to her, to let her know that she was safe with him, that he was going to take his time, even if it killed him.

And then her eyes changed, turning from a clear ocean to a swirling, deep dark blue. Before he knew what had even happened, Callie had bucked her hips into him and swallowed his cock. All of it.

"Callie," he groaned against her lips. She shut him up with a kiss so full of ownership, Tobey knew right then and there that he would be hers forever.

Bucking and rearing, Tobey slid in and out of her, delirious with pleasure. Her breasts struck his chest with every thrust and Callie's kisses sucked all of the breath from him. Barely coherent, Tobey felt her muscles begin to tighten around his shaft.

Mustering what little control he had left, he held her ass still with his big hands. "Look at me."

As if from a dream, Callie opened her eyes slowly. Hazy with passion, she watched him watch her.

Tobey slid out one inch, and then another. Callie's eyelids fell shut and so he stilled again.

"Open your eyes," he said, his voice shaking with need even as he gave her his command.

Slowly she re-opened them and he thought he saw defiance in their depths.

He was right. "They're open," she whispered. "Now show me a good time."

Tobey would have laughed if he could have. Instead he thrust his cock into her pussy again and again, watching her eyes change again from a deep blue to a dark purple. As Callie's orgasm overtook her, Tobey closed his eyes, threw his head back, and came hard and long. It seemed to go on forever. He thought he would never feel so good again for the rest of his life.

But then, just as he relaxed, feeling much like he did at the end of a marathon, out of breath and exhilarated, Callie's body language changed beneath him. It might have been an imperceptible change to some men, but Tobey recognized it immediately for what it was.

Regret.

Embarrassment.

He refused to let her do it and tried to capture her mouth in a kiss, but she turned her head to the side and his lips just grazed her cheek. She wriggled her butt cheeks back into the shelves behind her and pushed at his chest. He fell out of her and she moved quickly, reaching for her bra and her dress. She threw them over her head and slipped her feet into her shoes and Tobey, figuring he'd have a better chance of reasoning with her if he had some clothes on too, quickly dressed back into his now-wrinkled, slightly milky tuxedo.

"Callie," he said. His voice was low and warm and he felt like he was trying to coax a frightened cat to drink from his bowl of milk. But he didn't get the chance to say anything else.

Loud voices sounded from the hall just as Callie put her hand on the doorknob. She turned to him. "Stay in here until everyone is gone. I'll distract them."

Tobey frowned, then nodded. He didn't want to embarrass Callie by giving away his presence, but at the same time, he couldn't let her get away.

"Wait for me," he said, but she was already out the door and gone.

Sitting down on an upside-down milk crate, Tobey rubbed his eyes with the heel of his palms. Her scent was everywhere on him.

"She's not going to get away," he promised himself as he looked around at the mess they'd made in the commercial refrigerator with a smile. "Who knew a refrigerator could be so damn hot?"

Chapter Three

The next morning, Tobey's smile could have lit up a small theatre. He planned to check in at his office, have his assistant clear his schedule, and then he was going to track down Callie Moore.

Sweet, delectable Callie Moore.

Tobey walked past the large, colorful *Sweet Returns: Candy Company Consultant* sign and into his office building in downtown Albany, New York. Alice, his assistant, looked as if she had already been hard at work for several hours. He was certain that she had been writing up invoices, balancing their accounts, keeping everything running so smoothly that all he ever had to do was think about the best ways to sell candy, even though it was just past eight in the morning.

"The king has finally arrived," she said, her mouth tight as she glanced towards the clock. Alice had managed his office since the day he'd hung out his shingle fifteen years ago and often treated him like he was no more than an unruly son who needed a ruler taken to his backside every once and again to stay on the straight and narrow. "And not a minute too soon. You need to read through several things before you meet with your new client."

Tobey sat down in a chair, guilt momentarily weighing him down. How was he ever going to let Alice go? When he closed up his candy consulting business and joined his older brother, Ed, in the accounting firm next month, he knew Alice was going to be heartbroken. Not to mention the fact that she was going to disapprove of his choice.

The smile reappeared on his face. Alice loved to disapprove of whatever it was he did. Getting her all riled up was part of the fun of working with her.

Promising himself that he'd sit down and have a talk with Alice soon, he pushed it from his mind. "I need you to clear my calendar for the day." *And hopefully for the next month or so*, Tobey thought.

He was already envisioning a trip to the Hawaiian Islands with Callie wearing nothing but a string bikini on a hot, sandy beach. He and Callie would explore their desire endlessly. Long days in the sun, followed by perfect nights under the stars. With Callie. Adorable, sensuous Callie.

Cutting into his fantasy, Alice said, "No can do. You have an important consultation today." Her voice was full of censure. Tobey wondered if she had used x-ray powers to guess his most intimate thoughts.

He was firm. "Cancel it."

Alice shook her head. "I can't and I won't. The woman I spoke to sounds sweeter than sweet, truly in love with making candy, and, most importantly, desperately in need of your help."

Tobey frowned at Alice, then got up out of the leather chair and stalked to her desk. "Fine," he said reaching his hand out for the packet of client information. "I'll go." He grabbed the file without looking at it, impatient and displeased that he wasn't going to be able to go see Callie right away. Who cared about selling candy when what waited for him was so much better than any saltwater taffy, sour ball, or chocolate bar could ever be?

"Who's the client?"

Alice surprised him with a smile. "Callie's Candies."

Tobey nearly dropped the folder. "Did you just say Callie's Candies?"

A curious glint in her eyes, Alice nodded. "That's right. My sister lives in Saratoga with that horse-crazy husband of hers and last time I went out to visit her, we dropped into Callie's Candies. Best damn truffles I ever had."

"I know," Tobey said, remembering the rapturous faces of the wedding guests as they ate Callie's truffles. They had the same look that was currently drawn across Alice's face.

"I've never seen you get so excited about candy before," he said, teasing his assistant.

"There are a lot of things you haven't seen," she snapped at him as if he were a little boy who wouldn't know up from down without her help. Returning to an all-business demeanor she said, "She's expecting you at 10 a.m. Don't be late. And don't you dare let her down."

Intent on finding out everything he could about Callie's Candies before 10 a.m., Tobey stepped into his office and closed the door. Opening the thick file of information that Alice had assembled for him, he started reading.

* * * * *

Callie's alarm went off at 7 a.m. and she burrowed down under the covers, trying to ignore it. She felt like hell today, which was no wonder, considering she hadn't slept more than fifteen minutes all night. Her dog, Wolf, got up from his big doggy bed on the floor and pushed his chin up on her pillow.

Feeling the weight of his big, shaggy head hit the bed, she emerged from beneath the down duvet. "All right, I hear you. I'm turning it off," she said. Silence descended again and Callie was certain she heard Wolf sigh with relief.

She sat up in bed, pulling the sheets up with her, and scratched Wolf's head between his ears. Just like she knew he would, he got so relaxed that his head slid off the bed and he stretched out on the rug beside her bed to go back to sleep.

The sheets scratched the tender skin of her breasts and Callie lightly ran her hands over them. Still sore and aching, they were a potent reminder of what she had done at James and Jane's wedding only a day before. All night long, images of her coming in Tobey's mouth, of his teeth grazing her shoulder as he sucked salt from her, of her

thrusting into him, fucking him, desperate for him, assailed her. How could she have behaved like that? She hadn't even recognized herself in the woman she had become yesterday in his arms. Now all she wanted to do was put a closed sign on the door of her candy store and take a sleeping pill that would knock her out 'til tomorrow. She wanted to drown out her stupidity with sleep. Maybe if she slept long enough, it would all go away.

And then her life would return to normal.

Unfortunately, Callie knew that wasn't possible. Not only did she have potential customers to sell candy to—not many, of course, but the ones who came were loyal and she loved each and every one of them—but she had an important business meeting. Her accountant had set up an appointment for her with a renowned candy company consultant, Sweet something or other was the name of his company. He was going to be coming by her store at 10 a.m. this morning. No matter how bad she felt today—like a cheap, tawdry slut to tell the truth—she couldn't miss this meeting, or she'd really be screwed. Literally and figuratively.

She dragged herself out of bed, almost stepping on one of Wolf's big mutt paws. She bent over to drop a kiss on his muzzle in apology and then stepped into the shower. She turned it on full blast, praying that water could wash away some of her sins.

"I'm supposed to be the nice candy lady," she muttered, roughly soaping up her skin. "Not the truffle slut who picks up the best man and fucks his brains out."

She lathered up her arms, her legs, her stomach, trying to avoid the inside of her thighs until the last minute. She didn't want to touch herself, had held off from touching herself all night, even though her every waking moment had been filled with arousing images of her and Tobey at the bar and in the refrigerator. Her short dreams when she had fallen asleep had been even worse than that. After only a few minutes of sleep she woke up, drenched in sweat, the apex of her legs—she couldn't believe she had actually said the word pussy yesterday—throbbing with need.

But no matter how she tried, she couldn't control herself, the need Tobey unleashed in her was that great. Her hands had a mind of their own and before she knew it she was touching herself, rubbing herself, pretending that Tobey's tongue was on her again. Her clit grew huge and hard and her legs were trembling so badly that she had to lean back against the wall for support. She imagined him in the shower with her, her legs wrapped around his waist, his cock driving into her, his strong arms supporting her weight, his tongue in her mouth.

The orgasm hit her like a city bus and nearly knocked her down. She rubbed herself frantically, not wanting the tremors to end, not wanting the fantasy of Tobey being with her to be erased when she opened her eyes.

But when it was through, she shampooed her hair and dried off, utterly disgusted with herself. Forcing herself to push all erotic thoughts away, Callie dressed in her one suit, the most severe outfit she owned. The light pink suit accented her curves, the one button on the jacket showcasing her tiny waist and lush breasts and hips. Underneath the jacket, she wore a see-through silk camisole. She didn't intend to take her jacket off for the meeting—the suit was more like armor than clothes in her mind—and the white silk looked the best of anything she owned peeking out from underneath her jacket. Callie usually wore jeans and a t-shirt that said Callie's Candies on it, so today she felt business-like and stern in her suit.

She brushed her hair violently, trying to tame her unruly curls, and finally gave up. "Who am I kidding?" she said, taking one last look in the mirror. Wolf followed her out of the bedroom and she let him into the little fenced backyard to take care of his business.

"I'll come back at lunch," she called to him and he stopped sniffing the grass and turned his furry face to hers, wagging his tail as if he understood.

Sliding the screen door shut, Callie sighed. "At least somebody loves me," she said, then went to the garage to get her car. Downtown Saratoga, home to the famous horse

paces, was only ten minutes from her cottage. It had snowed the night before, but by 8 a.m. the streets were nicely plowed and the sidewalk slush had melted.

Callie had spent her whole life in Saratoga, but the Saratoga of today was very different from the town she knew so well as a child. Now that she might have to close her store in the near future, she took in the Main Street with renewed interest.

When Callie was a little girl, she used to ride her bike into town with her friends, fifty cents in her pocket, straight to the candy store. They'd fill up their bags with jujubes and Necco wafers and jawbreakers and then head to the park and stuff themselves full of sugar under an elm tree. As a teenager, when Callie realized she had been blessed with the gift of candy making, she knew that, as soon as she could, she would open up her own candy store on Main Street.

Her dream became a reality when she was twenty-five years old. She had saved every penny from her various cooking and catering jobs over the years, only spending the bare minimum on her cottage, and all of the sweat and grease was worth it when she signed the lease for her very own candy store.

The first time she walked by the vacant storefront that was now Callie's Candies, the old rundown ice cream shop didn't look like much good for anything other than for breeding spiders and mice. Narrow but deceptively long, with a large kitchen in back, it was covered in dust and neglect.

But for Callie it was her first brush with true love. She immediately envisioned the space a buttery yellow, glass display cases full of truffles and fudge, old wine barrels on the floor with fresh, homemade saltwater taffy.

The past five years had been the most rewarding time of her life. She made candy in the evening and sold it by day. She loved watching the glee on the children's faces as they flew in off of their bikes, strewn haphazardly on the wide sidewalk, anticipation glowing in their eyes.

They knew that Miss Callie would always give them free samples of whatever she had just made that day, whether it was vanilla swirl fudge or chocolate turtle pie. And

even when they pulled the dollar out of the dirty shorts and handed it to her for a bag of taffy, they couldn't wait to get outside and see what little "extra" Callie had thrown in for them, maybe a lollipop or a wax-paper-covered slice of fudge.

Sometimes, if they were really lucky, and they had been given money from their mothers for a box of truffles to take home, Callie never let them get out of the store without a handful of lollipops and gummy worms.

But now that popular chain stores ruled the street along with swanky restaurants and wine bars that seemed to multiply by the week, Callie's rent had doubled, then tripled in the past five years. With every year, she found it harder and harder to put something away in the bank after she had paid her bills. People were always telling her to put up a website and advertise, but she didn't know the first thing about that kind of stuff.

And she didn't want to. She just wanted to make candy and watch the joy on her customers' faces as they ate it.

Callie pulled into the plowed parking lot behind her building, then walked through the narrow alley between buildings to the sidewalk. She always made it a point to enter her store by the front door in the morning. Her first sight of the pretty yellow, blue, and white striped awning over the window and the fanciful cartoonish painted letters of Callie's Candies on the flag beside the door made her incredibly happy.

She unlocked the front door and walked in, pulling up the shade on the door, scanning the glass for smudges or smears. Satisfied that it was clear and clean, she headed for the back room, breathing in the scent of sugar and cocoa powder, feeling settled for the first time since the wedding the day before.

Her store didn't open until 11 a.m., Monday through Friday, but Callie always had plenty to do in the morning. The best was making fudge or coating truffles in coconut and peanuts. The worst was going through her inventory and doing her orders for the week.

Today was inventory day, of course. Callie sighed with dismay. Today of all days, she could have used a long, therapeutic session with some caramel and nougat.

"It figures," she muttered, as she walked into her small office at the back of the store and put her purse down. She took off her suit jacket and laid it across the back of her desk chair. Unbound by the jacket, her breasts felt free and immodest in the white lace camisole, reminding her yet again of her wanton behavior at the wedding.

"Forget about it. You've got work to do," she lectured herself and got straight to work, intent on ignoring the new sensual sensations her body was sending her.

Picking up her clipboard and supply spreadsheet, she went to her dry storeroom first and noted what was low. Moving to her tiny walk-in refrigerator, she checked materials off her list from the top shelf first. The bottom shelves were deep and she had to get on her knees to count cocoa bars. The position was awkward, with her rear end pointing straight up, her hands and knees sprawled unladylike on the floor. For the past five years, Callie had planned on putting in sliding shelves on the bottom of her refrigerator. Unfortunately, the project never made it to the top of her ever-growing to-do list so she hadn't gotten to it quite yet.

Squirming around, trying to get comfortable in her clumsy position, she said, "One, two, three, four," aloud as she counted stacks of the finest imported cocoa bars. Immersed in her counting and in the painful crick that was building up in her neck, she was surprised by a familiar scent that suddenly overwhelmed her senses. Her inventory forgotten, she stopped counting cocoa and heard footsteps coming up the short hallway and then stopping at the doorway to her storeroom.

One thing was absolutely certain, she thought with a thudding heartbeat, she was no longer the only person in Callie's Candies.

"We've got to stop meeting in refrigerators like this."

Callie's heart stopped beating altogether. She would have recognized that smooth, deep voice anywhere. Her breasts had grown full and tight after just that one sentence. And now that she heard his voice, she knew the scent that had tipped her off was one

she would never forget again. Tobey smelled like the perfect mixture of passion and heat and masculinity all rolled up in one.

Callie froze in place, unable to get her limbs to work. She couldn't believe that Tobey's first image of her outside of the wedding refrigerator was like this—could she be any less feminine, she wondered dejectedly—in her own damn commercial refrigerator. Her face, she was sure, was going to be flushed a deep shade of red when she finally stood back up, considering that the man she had been lusting after for the past twenty-four hours had just walked into her store unannounced, just in time to witness her pawing through her shelves on her hands and knees with her ass sticking straight up in the air.

"On second thought," he said, his voice washing over her like hot caramel, "I think I like it."

For a millisecond, Callie considered trying to crawl onto the shelf, hoping that Tobey would just go away. Then again, she thought, she hadn't invited him to her store. In fact, she hadn't even told him she had a store, so how could it possibly be her fault that he had found her looking less than ideal.

Trying desperately to rouse up some anger—otherwise she was stuck with embarrassed and horny, and that was a terrible combination—Callie crawled backwards and stood up, brushing invisible specks of dust off her knees and skirt.

Her arms folded across her chest, she said, "What are you doing here?"

Tobey was leaning against the door, looking more gorgeous than any man had a right to in his pin-striped shirt and well-tailored coat and slacks. He grinned widely and Callie wanted to smack the smile from his lips. And kiss him senseless, of course, but she was going to have some control over herself if it killed her.

"This is Callie's Candies isn't it?"

Callie nodded, keeping her lips firmly pressed together, forcing herself to back up into the refrigerator shelves, rather than jump Tobey's bones like the slut that she was turning out to be.

Tobey smiled. "I'm here for our appointment."

Callie's mouth dropped open. She quickly shut it, but no question about it, her brain wasn't firing correctly anymore. She couldn't manage anything better than, "For our appointment?" She was utterly mortified, sure that her skin was turning pinker and pinker by the second. If things got any worse, she would definitely fade away completely into the fabric of her pink suit.

"10 a.m., Monday morning. My assistant set it up with your accountant."

"You can't be. I mean, you couldn't be. Oh god," she said, leaning her weight into the cool air of the refrigerator as the full ramifications of her actions came crashing down upon her.

Thoughts rushed around her brain, knocking into each other as the magnitude of her mistake sunk in. *I slept with the Candy King. I had a one-night stand with the one person who could save my business. Oh god, what am I going to do? What if he thinks I knew who he was all along and did it on purpose?*

Trying to think quick, she said, "Oh yes, of course. I was so wrapped up in doing my weekly inventory that I forgot all about our appointment." Her voice was as crisp as she could make it, but to her ears her words still sounded far too much like soggy pie crust. Struggling to sound impersonal, she said, "Please forgive me. You're with Sweet..."

Callie let her voice drop and looked up towards the ceiling as if she obviously knew the name of his company but had momentarily forgotten it. She hoped against hope that he would fall for her act.

The truth was, she was such a bad business owner she didn't even know the name of the company that had been sent in to save her from ruin.

"Sweet Returns," he said smoothly, his eyes running past her flushed face to her chest and getting stuck there. "And of course," he added, never taking his eyes from her breasts, his voice husky and full of the very need she herself was trying to fight off, "I forgive you."

Too late Callie realized that she was flashing Tobey through the translucent white silk of her flimsy camisole. She crossed her arms across her chest, wanting to hide her telltale arousal from Tobey, but it was no use. With her arms crossed beneath her breasts, the soft flesh rose indecently up out of the v-neck top of her skimpy shell. She didn't know which was worse: her hard, pink nipples shooting through the fabric like darts, or the bounteous mounds of her breasts spilling from her top.

Wishing she weren't always doing the wrong thing at the wrong time, Callie bit her lip and said, "Should we get down to business?"

No matter how hard she tried to act professional, her voice was tentative and breathy. Callie knew she sounded like she'd rather get kissed by Tobey than look at the bottom line with him. But she couldn't help it. Tobey was so damn gorgeous. And sexy. And...

Oh my god, he was standing right in front of her. The next thing she knew, he had crossed the small space between them in the storeroom. With the intimacy that comes from knowing just how a woman needs to be touched, he brushed back a curl from her cheek. Callie shivered.

Just like the visions that had kept her awake all night long, Tobey was right there within stroking distance. She needed him desperately. Against any good sense she had ever possessed, her arms uncrossed and moved across his shoulders to entwine around his neck and she pressed her breasts up against his hard chest. "Callie," he said. The word wrapped around her like a deep fog and then his mouth was on hers and her lips were open and greedy and she was moaning. He felt so good, so damn good, she was nearly sobbing with need.

Tobey sucked at her lower lip, letting his teeth graze her skin, still sensitive from their lovemaking at the wedding, before moving his mouth down past her chin and then the side of her neck.

"I was awake all night dreaming about doing this again." He sank his lips into the crook of her neck and sucked at it. Callie groaned.

"Me too," she admitted, unable to stop the confession from rolling off of her tongue.

"And this," he said. He hooked his thumb under the strap of her sheer camisole and slid it off one shoulder, baring the top of her breast to him. Gently he rubbed the soft flesh of her breasts and then bent his head further and sucked at the soft tissue. Callie felt her nipples jut out even further, she heard herself crying out his name as she let her neck fall back and pressed her tits into his eager mouth.

She had forgotten everything—where she was, that she hardly knew Tobey, that she was a good girl, the kind of girl who had a good time in bed, but at least the good time had always been in a bed. All Callie cared about was the feel of Tobey's lips and tongue and teeth on her breasts, the way his light stubble felt sandy against her soft skin, the way his hands were cupping her ass, molding her hips into his hardness, just the way she wanted.

Her hands reached for his coat and she roughly pulled it off of his shoulders and threw it on the floor, her mouth taking his, her tongue plunging in and out of his mouth, mating frantically with his. Needing to touch his naked skin more than she needed to breathe, Callie pulled his shirt out from his pants, finally sighing with pleasure when her fingers found the warm, rippling muscles on his back.

With his foot, Tobey closed the door to the storeroom and spun them around, pressing Callie up against it. She felt Tobey's hardness, still covered by his wool slacks, press into her panties, which were already wet with her need. The wool felt rough and scratchy through the thin silk of her panties and she ground her hips into his. Callie felt desperate for release, on the verge of coming apart against Tobey's hard, hot thighs.

"Go on, sweetheart," Tobey urged her.

Callie opened her eyes and she looked into his, dark with passion. Passion for her. It was her undoing.

She threw her head back and Tobey's mouth found the wildly beating pulse in her neck. One hand found her clit, hard and throbbing and ready to explode, the other her

aching nipples. One touch, then two and she was gone, exploding against him, shoving her hips into his hands, against his hard cock again and again.

Somewhere in her fog she realized that his hand had dropped from her breast and that his pants had fallen to the floor and he had rolled a condom on. But all she cared about was the hot, stretching sensation at the opening of her vagina, that Tobey was about to plunge his thick penis into her.

All night long Callie had dreamt about Tobey fucking her again, about riding his shaft and crying out his name. She felt him slide into her, sure and fierce, and she found his lips again, wanting to show him how much she loved the way she felt when he was touching her.

She tasted his lips, his tongue, his mouth. "Callie," he groaned, her name sounding like worship, and all of Callie's visions from the sleepless night before merged with their sweaty sex in the refrigerator and the tequila shots and her rubbing herself in the shower dreaming of Tobey.

Her muscles clenched around his cock and she sobbed into his mouth, his tongue pumping in and out of her mouth in the same rhythm that he was thrusting into her. Callie clung to Tobey, her eyes clenched shut, never wanting to wake up from the best dream she had ever had.

"Miss Callie?"

A small voice from the hallway was calling out her name, but Callie was too busy throwing herself at Tobey, too intent on coming against Tobey, to hear.

Tobey called out, "Callie will be out in a minute." Her legs were shaky and she felt so helpless all of a sudden that she stood completely still while Tobey righted all of her clothes. Pushing her hair back from her face and tucking it behind her ears, he said, "That was wonderful, sweetheart."

Callie blushed, feeling suddenly sick at her out-of-control behavior and bent down to pick up Tobey's jacket so that she wouldn't have to look him in the eye. She handed

it to him and Tobey quickly rearranged his own clothes then stepped back from the door to give Callie room to open it.

Jonah, a ten-year-old whose mother owned a gift shop on the other end of Main, poked his woolen capped head into the storeroom. He beamed when he saw Callie.

"My mom needs a box of truffles for her store and she sent me over here to see if you could give me some before we open. I sure am glad you're here or else I'd have to ride my bike all the way down here again later."

Callie suddenly saw herself through the innocent eyes of a child and she couldn't help but feel dirty. Forcing herself to ignore Tobey's presence in the room, she walked through the doorway on shaky legs. Laughing, the sound obviously forced, she ruffled Jonah on the head. She kept her voice light and said, "Oh no, Jonah. I'd hate for you to have to ride your bike all the way down Main Street. Again."

Callie heard the trembling behind her teasing words and hated herself for it. She was sure that Tobey could hear it too. Why, she wondered, couldn't she be calm, cool, and collected around him? Why did she have to be so pathetically *attracted* to him?

On the way into the front of her shop, she grabbed her jacket from her office chair and put it back on, wishing she had stayed with her plan of keeping it on, no matter what. If she had known she was meeting with Tobey she would have worn her most chaste outfit, something from the back of closet that covered every square inch of skin from her chin to her ankles.

Callie buttoned the one button at the waist and wondered how she could have ever possibly felt stern and business-like in the suit. Wearing this suit was, she now realized, as good as wearing a sign that said, "Fuck me, please. I like sex with men I don't know." What she wouldn't give for a coat of armor now.

She pulled a large chocolate box off of the shelf and handed it to Jonah. "Why don't you pick out your favorites, honey?" she said, knowing that her hands would be shaking so hard she'd barely be able to get the truffles into the box.

Jonah gave her a look of surprise, but quickly stripped off his mittens and got to work loading up mint and dark chocolate truffles into the box. Even as she chose a lollipop for Jonah from her stash of goodies below the cash register, Callie was far too aware of Tobey's large, hot presence behind her. Everything about him radiated power and sex, all of the stuff she had always been a sucker for.

And look what it had gotten her so far, she reminded herself harshly. She was alone and broke, with nothing but a failing candy store and a mutt to keep her company.

"Miss Callie, I'm done now," Jonah said, snapping her out of her self-pity. "Here," he said, putting a \$20 bill in Callie's hand.

She put the bill away in the cash register then handed the little boy his special treat.

"My favorite!" he exclaimed as he shoved the lollipop into the pocket of his down jacket. "Thanks, Miss Callie," he added, getting on his tippy toes to give her a peck on the cheek before he ran out of the heated store into the cold and shot back down Main Street on his bike.

Callie's heart swelled with love. What she wouldn't give to have a child of her own. But since that obviously wasn't about to happen any time soon, she thought, at least she had her candy store and the joy of being with children every day.

"Cute kid," Tobey said, walking around the front of her display counters to check out her displays.

Callie jumped. She had almost forgotten that Tobey was there, invading her sanctuary with his ungodly sexiness. And she had almost forgotten, yet again, that her beloved store was in danger.

And only The Candy King could save her.

Enough is enough, she told herself firmly, her heart fluttering just because of Tobey's intense presence in her store. *You need to focus on business, not pleasure*, she insisted, trying to get the wayward slut inside of her to obey her serious dictate.

"Do you always give away candy like that?" Tobey's tone was light, but she sensed an edge behind his words

"Of course I do," she replied. She hated that she felt like she needed to explain herself, but she said, "Kids love getting a little surprise."

Tobey stopped his perusal of her storefront. "And you like to surprise them?" he asked, pinning her with his hot gaze.

Callie swallowed convulsively, but her mouth felt dry and her tongue refused to fit within the confines of her mouth. All she could do was nod.

The silence in Callie's Candies was almost a live being. Callie wished she knew what happened to her when Tobey was near, that way she might have had a chance in hell at fighting it.

But when he finally said, "I like that about you, Callie. I like that a lot," she knew she was irrevocably lost.

"Lock the door," she said, then turned and walked back into her storeroom. She heard the lock click shut and undid the button on her jacket. Shrugging out of the pink wool, she threw it onto her desk.

She reached for the zipper on her skirt just as Tobey walked through the door. Still unable to look him in the eye, she let her skirt drop to the floor. Standing before Tobey in her see-through white silk camisole and white silk thong panties, she said, "One more time. And then we'll take care of business."

Chapter Four

“Remind me again,” Callie said as she stamped her feet in the snow to stay warm. “Why are we doing this?”

Tobey laughed and put the huge cooler he had been carrying into the snow on the edge of the rink. “Ice skaters love two things,” he said, taking a moment to admire how cute Callie looked in her form fitted pink down jacket and tight black ski pants. “Perfect ice, obviously, and, even more importantly, chocolate.”

Callie humphed and rubbed her mittened hands together. “If I weren’t so cold I might care.”

Tobey wanted to say, “I’ve got a surefire way to warm you up,” but he knew that given their business relationship, such obvious flirting was totally out of line. Even more than that, though, he wanted to suck that pouty lower lip of Callie’s into his mouth.

It really was too bad that after leaving Callie’s Candies on Monday, after their crazy, perfect sex on the steel kitchen island in the middle of her store’s back kitchen, Tobey felt he had to make the only decision possible under the circumstances—to back off until Callie’s Candies was back in the black and running smoothly. It was perfectly all right to fuck Callie’s brains out before they discussed business, but once the first professional word had been spoken, Tobey felt that not touching Callie was the right thing to do. Not, of course, that he would hesitate to rip all of her clothes off and keep her naked in his bed for a week once their business transaction had ended.

But for the time being, the last thing Tobey wanted was for Callie to think that the success of her business was in any way linked to whether or not she put out. For the past fifteen years he had always been the consummate professional with his clients. He didn’t mix business with pleasure, although, truth be told, he had never been tempted

to lick cocoa powder off one of his clients before. In any case, given that this was his very last job in the candy business before the world of accounting took him in, he felt an even greater motivation to do his very best.

Not to mention the fact that he had a very strong personal interest in his gorgeous, talented, oh-so-fuckable client.

So he was going to stick to his decision. Even if it killed him. And just looking at the way Callie's ass rounded up at him as she bent over to unlatch the cooler, Tobey was pretty damn sure that keeping his hands off the delectable little candy maker was, indeed, going to destroy him.

But what a way to go.

After their "meeting" on Monday, Tobey had spent the week holed up in his office day and night, working up a plan of money-making action for her. After looking through her books, he saw that although she was doing fairly well in sales, she was in such a high-rent district that she'd have to either move to another town or double her daily sales.

Their conversation on this matter had been short and sweet.

Tobey: "Have you thought about moving to another location?"

Callie: "No."

Tobey: "The rent is lower and you wouldn't have to worry about losing your shop."

Callie: "I grew up here and I'm staying here. Isn't it your job to figure out a way to make that work?"

Tobey grinned. Just looking at Callie, all blonde and small and round and pink, her fiery, sharp mind wasn't inherently obvious. But it was there. Along with her ravenous sensuality. He couldn't wait to finish the job so that he could get another taste of her incredible lovemaking.

Plans for saving Callie's Candies consumed him. He had already had a web site built for her at a reduced rate by his sister-in-law, who was one of the best in the

business, by promising her all the truffles she could eat for the next decade. He was planning on trying the same trade with a hot public relations firm. Next week, he was going to look into national distribution through the major gourmet food chain stores.

In any normal consultation situation, Tobey would have met with her again in person to run his ideas by her, but the sad truth was that he knew he wouldn't be able to control himself around her. Callie had said, "I want to focus on making candy," and so Tobey was able to justify his unorthodox behavior of making do with phone calls by telling himself that it was how she wanted things to be.

Somewhat wryly, he admitted that he might as well have met with Callie in person, considering that even though they had been apart for nearly a week he had been possessed by visions of her. Naked thighs and breasts spread across satin sheets. In the shower with soap suds dripping from her nipples.

Tobey shook the vision from his head and went to work unrolling the new banner that spelled out www.calliescandies.com. He hung it from the roof of the gazebo where he and Callie were setting up shop. The gazebo was situated on the far edge of the large outdoor ice skating rink in Saratoga, less than a mile from the world famous racetracks. Based on his experience of taking his nieces and nephews skating over the years, Tobey knew that on Saturdays and Sundays in January, the rink was packed with kids of all ages and their parents. The perfect audience to spread the word about Callie's incredible confections.

Tobey stepped back to make sure that the banner was straight. Callie stepped beside him and he swore she was searing him even through all of their layers of clothes, even though it was freezing outside.

"I'm still not sure about the web site," Callie said. "Wouldn't people rather come into the store?"

Feeling incredibly protective towards his luscious client, Tobey wanted to allay her fears. "You've got a great store, Callie. It's warm and inviting and who can resist your little surprises?" he said with a small suggestive smile.

Tobey saw the responsive spark in Callie's eyes and caught himself just in time before he lost sight of business altogether. *Focus, buddy. Focus.*

He cleared his throat. "But what about people who don't live in Saratoga and can't get to your store on a regular basis?"

Callie looked confused. "How would they even find out about my store in the first place?"

"You see all of these people out here today?" Tobey asked, gesturing to the growing crowd of skaters that were sliding across the ice. "People are willing to drive quite a distance to skate at such a great outdoor rink. Not to mention the fact that locals often have friends or relatives visiting them for the holidays from out of town."

"And these people will love my truffles and hot cocoa so much that they'll want to order more from my web site when they get home?"

"Exactly," Tobey said, pleased that Callie was letting herself be open to the array of possibilities for her business.

Shyly she looked at him. "Thanks," she said, her lips turning up in an uncertain smile. "I never would have thought to do any of this without you. The web site. Being here today. Getting plans together for a special Valentine's Day gift box. It would have all seemed so hard without you."

Tobey tried to mask his delight at her thank you. He strode over to the cooler and opened it up, pulling out boxes of truffles and putting them on their sales table.

Callie had no idea what hard was. Not in the least. His cock was huge and ready to plunge into her cunt. Even during their brief phone calls, he had gotten so overheated he'd had to walk out of his office in just his shirt and slacks until the cold weather had frozen him completely through. Only then could he concentrate on business again.

Thirty minutes later, just before the doors to the rink opened up to the crowd that had gathered in the parking lot outside, Tobey and Callie had finished setting up the temporary Callie's Candies booth, complete with steaming hot cocoa and truffles in ten

different flavors. Callie had packed toffees, taffies and lollipops into small wicker baskets on the table.

They took a few steps back to check over their candy display.

"Looks great," Callie said, not quite meeting his eyes.

Tobey nodded and smiled at the top of her head. "It certainly does. The table is colorful and inviting. I'm certain that Callie's Candies is going to make a huge splash with both the locals and the out-of-towners today."

Callie walked back to the table and fussed needlessly with the display. Tobey knew she was feeling nervous around him.

The problem was, everything was said that needed to be said, and yet none of the important things were being said at all. Thus, an uncomfortable silence fell between them.

It was taking every ounce of control for Tobey to keep his mind on business, when all he really wanted to do was strip off Callie's winter clothes. It was so cold he was starting to add intense visions about hot tubs and saunas to his previous beach and bikini fantasies.

Not for the first time that day, Tobey gave thanks that they were conducting their business together in the frigid outdoors. He didn't think he could keep himself from tearing her clothes off if they were alone and indoors. Even as it was, the cold wasn't working its magic on his overcharged libido.

Callie's pull was just too damn strong.

* * * * *

Callie looked at her watch and prayed that her twelve-year-old niece would show up already. She had asked Ellen to help them sell candy as a buffer. Being alone with Tobey was harder than she had ever thought it would be. And she had thought that it was going to be pretty damn hard.

He was so dark and tall and gorgeous, her breath caught in her chest every time she looked at him. She wanted to drag him behind a tree and pull him down onto the fresh snow with her. She wanted to feel his heavy weight on her, his thick penis plunging in and out of her.

But it didn't matter what Callie wanted. Simply put, the facts were not in her favor.

Fact: He was her hired consultant. It would be morally wrong for her to engage in sexual acts with one of her employees. Under no circumstances did she want him to feel that he had to sleep with her or else she'd bad mouth him in the candy industry.

Fact: He wasn't the least bit interested in her anyway, so all of the high and mighty morals she was desperately trying to cling to didn't matter for much at all. She would have had to have been blind not to notice that since the day they had fucked in her kitchen, he had made it a point to keep away from her. Even his phone calls were oh-so-brief, as if he could hardly stand to talk to her again. Every time she thought about the way she had stuck her tongue down his throat in her store, with absolutely no provocation on his part, every time she remembered the way she had stripped off her clothes and begged him to touch her, Callie felt more and more ashamed by her behavior.

"Aunt Callie, I'm here."

Callie spun around and hugged her little teenage salvation just a little too hard.

"Ouch."

"Sorry, honey. I'm just so glad to see you."

Ellen raised an eyebrow, looking far older than twelve. "Yeah. Whatever. Hey," she said, elbowing Callie in the ribs, "who's the hot guy? Your new boyfriend?"

Callie turned a hundred shades of pink. "No," she insisted, but Tobey was already making the introductions.

"I'm Tobey," he said, as he reached out his hand to shake Ellen's. "I've been working with Callie on her business. I'm a candy company consultant."

Ellen smiled and then looked back at Callie. "That's cool. I'm Ellen," she said. Callie thought she was off the hook, but then Ellen added, "I just thought you were her new boyfriend or something, 'cause she always goes for guys who look like you."

Tobey grinned and trapped Callie with his hot gaze before turning back to Ellen for more information. "So Callie likes guys who look like me, huh?"

Ellen shrugged. "Big. Brown hair. Lots of muscles. They usually treat her like dirt, though, so I guess it's a good thing you aren't her boyfriend after all." Not realizing that she'd said anything out of line at all, Ellen turned to Callie, "So, what do you need me to do?"

Callie was having trouble keeping on her feet at that moment, so she certainly couldn't open up her mouth to reply. Tobey, bless his heart, stepped in and saved her.

"We need your help selling the candy and the hot cocoa on the table. Make sure that you tell everyone who buys something about the web site and hand them one of Callie's cards."

Ellen nodded. "That sounds easy." She looked up and saw the web site address on the banner. "When did you get a web site, Callie? I'll check it out when I get home. You're practically gonna be famous now."

Callie still couldn't get any of her synapses to fire. Ellen's words kept playing in her head. *They usually treat her like dirt, so I guess it's a good thing you aren't her boyfriend after all.*

Was she really that bad at choosing boyfriends? How sad it was that she was only getting a clear picture of her bad choices out of the mouth of a babe.

The doors to the rink opened and within a matter of minutes, Callie, Tobey and Ellen were swarmed with skaters. People started with the hot chocolate to try and warm up, but then after they exclaimed with rapture over the exotic flavor of Callie's cocoa, and after the adults inquired about purchasing the mix to take home, people turned to truffles and toffee and taffy. Tobey made several trips to Callie's car as their boxes of backup supplies quickly disappeared. Between bites of candy and sips of

cocoa, Callie heard snippets of conversation: "Did you know that she has a web site?" and "I'm going to tell all of my friends out in California about her." and "This is the best truffle I've ever had. I wonder if she does gift baskets?"

Between sales Callie stole glances at Tobey. Her breath went as she watched him joke with the customers. He was so warm and engaging, he had everyone eating out of his hands. She had to hand it to him. He had most certainly earned his Candy King title. His love for candy came through in everything he did and his quick mind and charming personality sealed the deal.

It was too bad he obviously didn't want to kiss her ever again. Because she couldn't think of anything she wanted to do more.

* * * * *

Several hours later, when the initial crowds had finally died down and Callie was busy mixing up a new batch of hot cocoa, Tobey whispered to Ellen, "Can you hold down the fort for a little while? Your Aunt Callie didn't want to leave you here all alone, but she's been dying to go ice skating with me. And you've been doing the best job out of the three of us. I know a candy selling natural when I see one."

Ellen nodded, clearly pleased to be left in charge of the Callie's Candies booth. "Sure thing, Tobey," she whispered back. "By the way, I think Aunt Callie kind of likes you."

"Really?" he whispered back, enjoying the conspiracy. "What makes you say that?"

"Every time she looks at you she gets all dreamy eyed."

Tobey grinned and started to get up, but Ellen grabbed the elbow of his jacket. "You're not gonna break her heart too, are you?"

Tobey sat back down, suddenly serious. "I don't intend to."

Ellen stared him down and he was surprised by the intensity in her young eyes. "Promise? 'Cause I really like you."

Callie's niece sure loved her, Tobey thought, to be giving out such stern warnings to prospective boyfriends. His face solemn, he said, "I promise. And I really like you too."

Ellen grinned and turned to greet a new customer who had just walked up to the table. Tobey waited until Callie put the top back on her metal pot of cocoa and then grabbed her hand.

"What's going on?" she asked, trying to pull her hand back out of his. "Where are we going?"

Over his shoulder he said, "It's time for a little break, Miss Callie."

"A break? Now? But what about Ellen?"

"Ellen's got it covered. Now tell me," he said, "What size are you?"

Callie flushed and looked down at her chest. "What size am I? What kind of a question is that?"

Tobey mock-leared at her breasts. "Get your mind out of the gutter, Miss Callie." She turned pink and he said, "What size shoe do you wear?"

"Six, but what does it have to do with..." Her words fell away as he let go of her hand and picked up one set of rental skates in a six for her and twelve for himself. Dangling the skates from his fingertips he said, "You and I are going skating."

Callie shook her head. "I don't think so."

Tobey grabbed her hand again and steered her over to a bench. "Put 'em on. Consultant's orders."

Callie giggled uncertainly, but took the skates from him. Staring at them, she said, "I haven't skated in years."

"No time like the present," Tobey said, as he quickly removed his shoes and slipped his feet into the skates. "Besides, you deserve a reward for all of your hard work today."

Tobey hoped that Callie would let herself have a little fun. With him. He saw her shoulders relax a little and breathed out an inaudible sigh of relief. And when she shot

him her pixie grin, he made a new decision—to forget all about his earlier decision about not mixing business with pleasure.

If ever there was a time for pleasure, it was now.

And by god, he was going to take it.

* * * * *

Callie had just finished tying the laces on her skates when Tobey whirled her out onto the crowded ice skating rink. Her legs wobbled beneath her and she found herself holding onto Tobey just a little too tightly.

“I need to get my skating legs back,” she said by way of explanation, letting herself enjoy the feel of Tobey’s warmth pressed up against hers while she could. He had one arm firmly wrapped around her waist and she could feel his warm breath on her forehead. His arms were heaven to her.

“No rush,” he said, pulling her closer to him.

They skated several circles around the rink in a comfortable rhythm and for the first time all day Callie let down her guard. If she was able to contain her raging hormones even now, she thought she just might be able to keep it together until she could get home and play with the new dildo she had bought on Tuesday. Cold vibrating plastic wasn’t nearly as good as Tobey, but Callie was realistic enough to accept that it would have to do.

Suddenly, Tobey steered them over to the far, deserted edge of the rink and pointed to the sky. “Did you see that bald eagle over there?”

“Where?” Callie shaded her eyes with her hands, but all she could see on the pine trees was white powder from the fresh snowfall.

“In the forest. Come with me.”

Tobey grabbed her hand and pulled her into the dense forest with him. Callie’s skates sank into the snow, but Tobey was moving so fast, she didn’t have a chance to get stuck as she tried to keep up.

By the time he stopped, they were far enough from the skating rink that the sounds of children playing had completely faded away. Not letting go of her hand, he turned and looked into her eyes. "I guess he flew away."

Callie found herself laughing. "Was there really a bald eagle out here?"

Tobey pulled her into him and leaned his face down close to hers. "Maybe there was, but all I've been able to focus on today is you."

Callie breathed in his scent, unable to mask the raw need his words aroused. "Don't tease me Tobey," she said, her voice thick.

"Not even if it makes you feel good?"

"How good?"

Callie felt the familiar liquid rush building up between her legs, pooling at the tip of her breasts.

"Let me show you."

He guided her over to a patch of ground far beneath the huge canopy of an oak tree and pressed her back into the bark of the tree, then leaned into her, shielding her from the cold. "One day we're going to have to do this lying down. Properly. Warm and cozy in bed."

Callie shivered at the thought of getting to do this with Tobey one more time. In a bed, even. It was too delicious to believe. But then again so was the velvet feel of his lips as they stole her breath away. Feeling bold, she said between kisses, "I like doing it standing up. I like being bad with you."

Tobey smiled against her lips. "Me too, sweetheart. I love the way you wrap your legs around me. How slick you get when I'm pumping in and out of you. How ready you are for me all the time."

Callie swallowed and licked her lips. "I'm ready now," she whispered.

Deftly he threw his gloves to the ground and unbuttoned the fly on her snow pants. Unzipping them, he slid his warm hands onto the soft skin of her belly. "I need to see if

you're telling the truth," he said as his hand dropped another inch, just grazing the edge of her already damp mons. "Mmm," he murmured against her ear lobe, sucking it into his mouth, "good so far."

The feel of his mouth against her brought goose bumps to her skin that had nothing to do with the cold. She arched her hips into his hands, forcing his fingers to slide across her swollen nub into her wet folds. "Oh god," she moaned.

"I want to see you come again, Callie," he said. He made several slow, torturous circles on her clit and then slipped his fingers down into her labia, finally pushing her open with one thick finger.

Callie drove her hips into his hand.

"Come for me, sweetheart," he said against her lips and Callie, who wanted to please him more than anything else in the world, felt everything inside and outside of her go perfectly still, as if the whole universe was waiting for her to explode.

Tobey's hand stilled. He looked into her eyes. One simple word, "Now," was all it took. She closed her eyes as the earth starting spinning fast, too fast. She came out of her body and lifted higher and higher. Everything turned red, then black, as pleasure coursed through her. And then she was kissing Tobey and he was kissing her back, their lips mating in perfect rhythm to her waves of ecstasy.

Tobey quickly stripped off his winter coat and laid it on the ground, seemingly impervious to the cold. Gently, he lowered Callie onto it. She lay back on her elbows and looked at him, excitement making her breath come out in short, quick white puffs of air.

"I wish I could take off all of your clothes and see you naked," he said as he pulled her pants and soaked panties down far enough to spread her thighs.

"Later," she moaned, not feeling the least bit inhibited about lying in the snow in the forest, naked from her waist to her ankles.

Tobey nodded. "Later," he echoed as he bent his head over her mound, lapping at her sweetness with his tongue. He ran his tongue up her lips, from her anus to her clit, giving equal importance to every square inch of engorged flesh.

Callie arched up into his mouth. She felt like she could come and come and come and come and it still wouldn't take the edge off her arousal.

Tobey slipped his tongue inside of her vagina in one firm, long stroke and then another. Callie gasped and her muscles clenched around his tongue. His thumb found her clit and he plunged his tongue in and out of her as he swirled her firm bead.

She cried out as the orgasm ripped through her, her cries muted by the thick canopy of the pine tree. Tobey replaced his tongue with two fingers and sucked her clit into his mouth, faster and faster, harder and harder. Callie writhed beneath him, her fingers tangled in his thick brown hair as she pushed his mouth harder to her. She was tumbling through space, dizzy with pleasure.

Tobey reared up over Callie, pushing her thighs open just a little more so that he could kneel between her legs. Callie opened her eyes and saw his perfect cock, so hard and pushing out from his dark pubic hair, already sheathed within a condom. She wanted to reach out her hand to stroke him, to fill her small hand with the heavy weight of his shaft, but before she could even think about taking off her gloves, he was unzipping her coat and running his hands over her turtleneck, teasing her taut peaks and plunging his hips into hers.

"Squeeze your thighs together," he said.

Callie barely managed to obey him, she was so concentrated on the feel of Tobey over her. On her. In her. She wrapped her hands around his shoulders to pull him closer to her while she squeezed her thighs together as tight as she could.

She felt his cock growing impossibly bigger within her with every stroke and suddenly she was floating and he was coming and saying her name and she was moving with him, bucking her hips up off the blanket of his jacket, trying to get closer to him, as close as she could possibly get.

* * * * *

Afraid of crushing Callie, Tobey tried to prop his weight up on his forearms, but she was holding him so tightly to her that he decided to just let himself go.

He rolled them over slightly, so that he was cradling her in his arms, their bodies still joined together. The truth hit him like a bolt of lightning.

He was in love with her.

He had never been so sexually compatible with any woman, but it was more than just the sex that made him so positive that Callie was the one. She was funny and bright and just seeing her smile made him want to do or say something to make her smile again.

Callie's breathing began to slow to normal and he rubbed her back, savoring the feeling of having found the woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with.

He knew they needed to get back to the rink, but he didn't want to move too fast, to fall back into real life. He slowly pulled out and zipped his pants back up.

Callie blinked and then fumbled for her snow pants. Pulling her to her feet, Tobey took care of getting her back in order within seconds.

He took her face in his hands and kissed her, long and slow and sweet with all of the love he had in him. "This isn't a one-night stand," he said, his voice firm and tender all at the same time.

Callie smiled back at him and covered his hands with her own. "I know."

Chapter Five

The next two weeks were the best weeks of Callie's life. After their incredible lovemaking in the forest, they had gone back to the rink to pack up her sales table. Much to Callie's surprise, Tobey had insisted that they talk about their relationship. She had never met a man like him before, one who was willing to broach difficult subjects. Every man she'd ever known before had hidden from emotions, had ignored anything that wasn't cut and dry.

"I want to date you," he said, and she said, "Me too."

"I know I'm working for you," he said, and she said, "And I've hired you."

"I want to be your lover as well as your business associate," he said, and she said, "Thank god."

They had both laughed and suddenly the air was clear and full of endless possibilities.

Not only was Callie constantly glowing with joy, but her business was growing by leaps and bounds as well, with a huge spike in business from Internet orders.

One night after a romantic dinner at her house where they had done more hand-holding and kissing than eating, Callie said, "You really are the Candy King, you know," her tone teasing.

Tobey stiffened slightly at her words, but then relaxed again so quickly she was certain that she had imagined it.

"How did you know that you were so darn good at selling candy?" she asked.

Tobey kissed her on her neck, right below her ear, in just the way that was guaranteed to make her nipples hard and aching. "You don't want to hear about my boring business," he said, trying to coax her into another incredible sexual interlude, his

palm coming to cup her between her thighs, searing her with his heat even through her jeans.

But even though Callie was already responding to his touch, her breasts heavy, her mons throbbing, Callie had had enough of his putting her off. Last night after making love in her bathtub, she had finally realized that whenever she asked him questions about his company, he deftly changed the subject. Usually by kissing or touching her, until she was naked and coming beneath him, all thoughts of business gone.

Callie scooted away from Tobey on the couch, hating how empty she felt without his touch, but knowing they needed to have this conversation more than they needed to have sex. "Why do you keep pushing me away?"

Tobey looked at the empty place on the couch where Callie had been just seconds before and then up at Callie, now several feet away from him. His voice gruff, he said, "What are you talking about?"

Callie sighed. "Every time I bring up your business, you change the subject. For the past two weeks all we've talked about is Callie's Candies." Her voice softened. "I want to find out more about you, Tobey."

When she felt Tobey tense, Callie scooted back into the circle of his arms and planted several kisses on his forearms and hands, pulling his strong arms around her. Tobey's muscles relaxed slightly. But still, he didn't offer Callie any information about his past.

Trying to hide her growing exasperation, Callie said, "What was your favorite kind of candy when you were a kid?"

Tobey, who was clearly surprised by her innocuous question, laughed. "That's easy," he said, as he let his guard down. "Necco Wafers."

Sticking her tongue out, Callie scrunched her face up. "Yuck," she said.

He tickled her stomach playfully and the fuzzy feeling throughout Callie's body intensified. It was taking everything she had not to forget the whole conversation and

just fuck his brains out instead. She could feel his large erection pushing into her bottom, and she wriggled up against him.

"They're sweet and sort of chalky," he whispered in her ear. "Just like somebody I know, minus the chalk of course. All sweetness."

Callie sucked in a breath as his fingers moved to the curve of her breast. She laughed, but the sound was breathy and aroused. "That was a close one, buddy," she said. "I don't know any women who like to be compared to tasteless chalk."

Keep him talking, she told herself, but at this point, she wished that he would talk a little faster so that she could tear off all of his clothes and take his cock into her mouth.

Callie had always thought that patience was one of her strong suits—after all, she dealt with children as customers on a daily basis—but in the silence that ensued, where all she could hear was the crackling wood on the fire and Wolf's heavy dog breathing, she realized how wrong she was. She was about to give up on ever finding anything out about Tobey's past when his hand stilled on her breast.

"I worked for Mr. Jonas after school at his grocery store. He had a small candy section in the corner and he put me in charge of it."

Aha, now they were getting somewhere. "Free candy?"

Tobey grinned against the top of her head and he scooted her in more snugly against his lap. "All I could eat. I started arranging things differently, putting up new signs, created some package deals, and by the time I graduated from high school, Mr. Jonas's candy store was about ten times bigger."

"And then?"

He sighed. "And then I went to college, got an MBA with a focus in food retailing, and the rest," he said with a note of finality, "is history. Now let's good to the good stuff."

Callie tilted her head up and reached around behind her to lace her fingers into his thick dark hair. Pressing her lips to his, she kissed him with all of the growing love in

her heart. She wasn't ready to say the words to him yet, but every time she touched him she knew that her feelings were obvious.

"Thank you for telling me all that," she said, her lips bruised with their passionate kisses.

Tobey leaned down and licked her full lower lip. "You're welcome, sweetheart."

Callie shivered. She loved it when he called her sweetheart. Even though they'd only been formally dating for two weeks, she felt closer to him than she ever had to another person. She had shared her body and soul with Tobey and somewhere in the back of her head she knew she wanted to continue doing so for the rest of her life.

She was so relaxed and content in his arms that when he said, "Now is probably a good time to tell you that I'm closing my business and going to work with my brother," she jumped with surprise and the top of her head knocked into his chin, clacking his teeth together.

She spun out of his arms. "You're doing what?"

Tobey's face instantly turned from loving to grim in the space of a heartbeat. "You're my last client."

Callie forgot all about being supportive and gentle in her shock. "Why would you do something like that?"

His eyes steel, he said, "It's time to finally grow up."

"What are you talking about? You have a wonderful business. And from working with you, I know for a fact that you love what you do." She narrowed her eyes. "What are you planning to do instead?"

Tobey nearly winced. "Accounting."

Callie's eyes grew wide. "Excuse me? I must have heard you wrong. I thought my talented, creative boyfriend just said he's going to give up his dream job to go into accounting."

Tobey got up off the couch and headed for the door. "You heard right. My brother Jed is going to bring me into his department." His voice was hard and Wolf, who was lying on the rug in front of the roaring fireplace, whined. Looking angry and hurt, Tobey said, "I'll call you later." He walked out the front door and closed it behind him with a deliberate click.

The tears that were welling in Callie's eyes started to fall. Wolf got up and padded over to her, licking her face several times before plopping his head on her lap.

"I've really blown it this time, Wolf," she said, her heart heavy. "No wonder I always date jerks. The one time I find a great guy I drive him away."

Callie scooted out from underneath Wolf's head. She walked into her kitchen and pulled out the ingredients for cocoa fudge. She knew she wouldn't be able to sleep tonight, not for one single minute, not with the distressed look on Tobey's face playing in her head on repeat every five seconds. The only thing that would keep her from going crazy would be baking. She wiped at the tears on her cheeks and put on her apron.

"Here I am again," she said aloud in her empty kitchen. "Just me, my dog, and sugar."

* * * * *

By the time Tobey got back to his large loft, his anger was gone. All he felt was a deep sense of shame at the way he had treated Callie. She had called him her boyfriend, a word that made him feel better than any industry award ever had, and he had stomped out of her home in a huff.

Idiot.

He dropped his keys onto the slate kitchen island and looked around his home with new eyes. He had always thought that he was suited to the hard lines of glass and concrete and slate, but after spending so much time at both Callie's homey store and her cute cottage on the outskirts of town he found that he was craving softness. And color.

And comfort. What he wouldn't give to be back in Callie's house, kissing her in front of the fire, with her big mutt lying at their feet snoring.

Chapter Six

The next day Tobey walked into Callie's Candies holding a bright bouquet of yellow and white narcissus. She was down on the ground with her back to the front door, helping a couple of little girls pick out a gift for their mother's birthday while their father watched with pride.

"Mommies love these boxes of truffles," she said to the girls as she showed them a heart shaped box with a thick velvet ribbon on top.

The two girls solemnly nodded their agreement and handed her a five dollar bill. Just as solemnly, treating them as if they were forty-year-old women buying thousands of dollars of merchandise instead of little kids, Callie took their money and walked around to her register. Tobey noted that her eyes and face looked swollen and puffy and inwardly cursed himself. He had done that to her with his callous, selfish behavior. Right then and there he vowed never to treat her badly ever again.

When Callie looked up and saw him standing awkwardly by the door, holding the flowers as an obvious peace offering, she nearly dropped the box of truffles on the floor. She caught the box in mid-air and placed it on her gift-wrapping table, her hands shaky. She gave him a tremulous smile and was about to say something when Tobey smiled back and leaned against the wall, making it clear that he could wait until she was done helping the girls.

Callie finished wrapping the truffles with trembling fingers. She handed the girls a lollipop each and then followed them with her eyes as they took their father's hand and skipped out the door.

Tobey approached her at the same time that she ran around the counter. Their words intermingled, "I'm so sorry," he said, and she said, "No, I'm the one who's sorry."

He handed her the bouquet and she clutched them to her chest as if they were more valuable to her than gold or diamonds. "Can you forgive me?"

Tobey stroked her cheek with his fingers. "What did I ever do right to deserve you?"

Callie shook her head. "I'm the lucky one. And I want you to know that I'll always support you. Whatever you do, I'll still love you," she said.

She gasped and took a step back into the counter, dropping the flowers onto the floor as she realized what she'd just said.

Tobey closed the space between them, stepping into the circle of flowers on the floor. "I love you too," he said and then dipped his mouth to hers. He buried his hands in Callie's soft curls and tasted her sweetness. Her hands wrapped around him and she pulled him tightly to her. Even the bell ringing on the door to the shop, indicating that a customer had entered, was not enough for either of them to want to pull away from each other.

"Ahem," a firm voice said from behind Tobey's back. He pulled away from Callie's sweet lips and groaned, knowing that voice could only belong to one person.

Looking over his shoulder he said, "Alice."

Shaking her head as if they were two kids goofing around during class, Alice said, "I thought I might find you here."

Callie slid out from Tobey's arms and held out her hand, looking charmingly disheveled. "I've been so looking forward to meeting you, Alice." Callie blushed and said, "Under different circumstances, of course."

Alice yielded slightly under the weight of Callie's charm and shook her hand. Turning back to Tobey, the older woman said, "I'd like to know if you think your behavior is going to sell more candy in this store, or less? You've got an important phone call to return in the office."

Tobey grinned shamelessly and held his hands up in defeat. "Point taken, sergeant." He leaned over the counter and placed another quick kiss on Callie's lips. "Are we still on for dinner tonight? My family has been dying to meet you."

Callie whispered, "I can't wait," and they made do with one more quick peck.

Callie stood in the store alone with Alice, feeling more nervous than she had since she was a schoolgirl. But Alice wasn't one to beat around the bush.

"I'll get straight to the point," Alice said and Callie nodded, her heart pounding even though she knew she hadn't done anything wrong. Trying to break the ice, Callie interrupted and said, "Can I offer you anything first? Maybe some hot cocoa and a truffle?"

Alice looked momentarily flustered. "Why yes," she said. "I could use a hot drink to warm my bones." Callie went to pour her a steaming cup and Alice said, "And if you wouldn't mind, I'd love a truffle. I had one last year and I still haven't forgotten it."

Callie breathed a sigh of relief. Tobey's assistant seemed a whole lot less scary when she had chocolate smudged on her lips. "I didn't mean to interrupt you," she said, after Alice had bitten into the truffle with a sound of delight.

Alice held up her hand, making it clear that she wanted to finish the chocolate in silence. Callie grinned, pleased that her candy made people so happy. But her grin fell away as Alice said, "I wasn't sure that I approved of your relationship with Tobey at first—it is unprofessional for a consultant to date his client, after all—but now I can see that you're the best thing that's happened to him in some time."

Callie was frozen where she stood. Alice continued, "I love him like a son and he's about to make the biggest mistake of his life. I want you to stop him."

Her brain struggled to catch up. "Do you mean how he's closing his business?"

Alice nodded, her lips tight again in disapproval.

"Has he talked to you about it?" Callie asked.

"No. But that boy can't hide anything from me. Never could, never will. I've known for months. But I also know that he hasn't made it official yet by firing me because he doesn't want to shut down his dreams."

Callie shook her head. "Alice, I appreciate you coming here to try and help Tobey, but I don't think he's going to listen to me."

Alice's eyes were bright. "Honey, that's where you're wrong. You could tell him to jump off of a cliff and he'd do it. It's up to you to make sure he doesn't make the biggest mistake of his life. I'm counting on you."

* * * * *

That night as Callie sat in the chic new restaurant surrounded by Tobey's parents and his brother and wife, she was still trying to get Alice's words out of her head. *He doesn't want to do it. It's up to you to make sure he doesn't make the biggest mistake of his life. I'm counting on you.*

Callie tried to focus on getting to know Tobey's relatives, all the while wondering when things had become so complicated. One day she was happily running her business and the next she was dating a passionate, complex man who was turning both her little store and her life upside down. Everything was getting so big, so fast.

Tobey's mother, Joan, turned to her and said, "So you're the famous Callie from Callie's Candies?"

Callie blushed. "I don't know about famous."

Joan waved her hand in the air. "Nonsense. My women's group has been enjoying your truffles for years. And besides," she said, lowering her voice, "John and I haven't heard about anything else for weeks."

Callie stuttered unintelligible monosyllables, but Joan wasn't expecting a response. "John and I think it is just perfect that you and Tobey found each other. Two candy lovers who are obviously in love with each other."

Callie had to clamp her teeth together to keep her mouth from falling open. She tried to smile, but she was sure her attempt looked pathetic. Thankfully, Joan was drawn into a conversation with her husband and Tobey. Callie turned to Tobey's older brother, Jed, with relief.

Jed leered at her and she barely repressed a shudder as she took in his beady eyes, oily hair, and bad breath. His wife, a thin dour woman, sat like a mouse beside him. Her eyes were glassy and Callie didn't envy the woman one bit. "So you own a candy store," he said, more a statement than a question. His words struck her as being almost snide and she was sure that she must have misread his intentions.

"That's right. Callie's Candies is just down the street."

Jed rolled his eyes. "Candy," he scoffed. "Good thing my brother has finally come to his senses."

Callie sucked in a breath. "Excuse me?" she said, her voice soft and still, working hard not to betray her growing anger. How could it be, she wondered, that Tobey and Jed were related by blood? They were polar opposites.

"I've worked on him for years to join me in the accounting firm. Something he'll finally get some respect for. Do you know how embarrassing it is to be related to the Candy King?" The words 'Candy King' sounded like spoilt milk coming out of Jed's mouth.

Callie curled her fingers tightly into her fist, fighting the overpowering urge to punch Tobey's jerk of a brother in his fat mouth.

"No. I don't," she said, deciding her only hope was to humor Jed until dinner was over.

As she nodded in all the right places during Jed's endless discourse on his importance and value as a high-powered accountant, everything became crystal clear to Callie. Jed was jealous of Tobey's success and happiness. Obviously, Jed was the one that had been putting pressure on Tobey to "finally grow up," since Tobey's parents

clearly loved and supported him in his career choice. She knew they were proud of him, just as they somehow managed to be proud of their other brute of a son.

It was as if a huge weight was lifted from her shoulders. She knew what she needed to say to Tobey. Maybe, just maybe, she would have a fighting chance at succeeding at convincing him to keep Sweet Returns in business.

Callie planted a smile on her face and knew that nothing else Jed said to her tonight was going to bring her down. She would keep up the small talk when she had to and focus most of her attention on getting to know Tobey's wonderful parents better.

Whatever she had to put up with to be with Tobey was worth it.

* * * * *

Tobey sat back and watched Callie charm his family just as she charmed every single person she came in contact with. Even his brother, who could be somewhat standoffish with strangers, was talking animatedly to her.

"Being the VP at an accounting firm is a big responsibility," Jed said, his chest puffed up with pride at his accomplishments.

Tobey shook his head as he caught snippets of Jed's conversation with Callie. Tobey didn't begrudge Jed any of his success, but sometimes Tobey thought he rode the fine line between pride and arrogance. Thank god, Tobey thought, that Callie didn't care about stuff like that. She just wanted him to be happy.

Callie leaned in towards his brother and said, "Wow. Your job sounds *really* exciting. And important."

Tobey blinked hard a couple of times. What the hell was she saying? Jed's job sounded important? And exciting? Jed said something in response which Tobey couldn't hear, but he couldn't miss Callie's impressed response. "That figure was your bonus for last year? Wow. I didn't know accountants did quite so well."

Suddenly the room felt too small and Tobey grabbed at his tie to loosen it from around his neck. As the awful truth crashed in around him, he could no longer breathe.

He shot up out of his chair without a word to anyone and made it as far as the parking lot before he bowled over into a hedge of snow covered boxwood and threw up. He could hardly believe what he had heard, even though now that he had seen the evidence for himself, there was no denying it.

Callie wasn't the woman he thought she was.

Instead of the cute, sweet, supportive woman he thought he loved, instead of the woman who looked at a bouquet of flowers as more precious than jewels, she was a power-grubbing bitch, just like his ex-fiancée had been.

Tobey got in his Ferrari and sped off into the night, leaving behind the woman who had broken his heart forever.

* * * * *

Callie nodded absently at Jed's bragging—he didn't require any help from her to prod his boasting into the stratosphere—wondering where Tobey had rushed off to without a word to anyone. When he had been gone more than five minutes, she excused herself and asked the host to check the men's restroom. But Tobey was gone.

Callie slumped into the coat rack, wondering what had happened. One minute everything was great, the next minute Tobey was gone. She went back to the table and asked his parents, "Did Tobey say anything to you about needing to leave early?"

His mother and father shook their heads, looking worried. "No. I wonder if something he ate didn't agree with him?"

Callie murmured something that was supposed to be comforting, but her heart wasn't in it. Her boyfriend had walked out on her for the second time in twenty-four hours. She fought back the tears that threatened to spill, not wanting his family to see her looking so pathetic.

Jed, clueless as ever, sneered and said, "Geez. The dumb little brother of mine doesn't even know how to take care of his lady."

Something inside Callie snapped. "You don't know the first thing about your brother," she said and then turned and walked out the restaurant. Once she made it out the front door, she ran down the street until she could find an alley to hide in.

Sniffling, Callie didn't want to give into the awful misery that was sucking her in. He didn't want her. No man who was worth anything had ever wanted her.

Callie had been dumped before, but this time, she realized, everything was different. He had said he loved her. No one had ever said that before.

And by god, she was going to fight for him. Even if it killed them both.

Chapter Seven

Callie walked the three blocks to Tobey's loft in a driving rain. She didn't care that she was getting soaked to the bone. She didn't care that her teeth were shattering. Love like this only came once in a lifetime, and no matter what Callie had to do, she wasn't going to let it go.

Her hand a tight, frozen fist, Callie banged on Tobey's steel door with all of her might. When he didn't answer immediately, she banged again, using the pain of the crashing of her bone and flesh against metal as a reminder of all that she was fighting for. Of what she was fighting against.

The rain poured down on Tobey's front stoop in sheets and still Tobey didn't answer the door. Intent on waiting for him for as long as it took, Callie slid down to the floor, shivering in her thin sheath dress and heels. She wrapped her arms tightly around her and rocked back and forth, finally letting the tears that she had been holding back merge with the streaks of rain across her face.

* * * * *

Tobey pushed his Ferrari as hard as it would go on the farm roads outside of Saratoga. On a night like this, where the hail was as big as his fist, everyone else had the sense to keep off the roads. Which suited Tobey just fine as he watched his speedometer inch past eighty, then ninety, then one hundred. He drove like a madman, heedless of his own safety, until finally he skidded to a stop, narrowly missing both a large deer and a deep ditch.

His heart was pounding in his chest. "No," he cried in the car, the sound harsh and wild, like an animal that has lost its mate. Laughing bitterly at what a fool he had been, not once but twice, he gripped the wheel tightly and skidded back onto the road,

heading for home. He was going to drown his sorrow in anything other than tequila—Tobey was never going to drink tequila again, all it did was remind him of Callie's taste, of Callie's treachery—and then he was going to take care of something he had been putting off for too long.

He was going to shut down Sweet Returns.

What did he need with true love and a job he loved anyway, he asked himself.

All they'd ever done was cause him trouble.

Tobey came to a screeching halt in front of his loft and flew out of his car, unable to believe what he was seeing. Callie was curled up like a sick child on his front steps, her eyes clenched tightly shut to keep out the rain, her bare skin full of red welts from the hail.

His anger forgotten in his fear, Tobey ran to her and picked her up in his arms. Murmuring sounds of comfort into her hair, trying desperately to warm her with his heat, he fumbled with the lock in the door. Finally managing to get it open he hurried inside and kicked the door shut.

"I'm so cold, Tobey. So cold," Callie said through the loud clacking of her teeth. Goosebumps covered her skin and Tobey hugged her tighter to him.

"I'm going to run a hot bath for you, sweetheart," he said, flinching as the endearment slipped from his lips. Nonetheless he felt compelled to comfort her. "Once I take these wet clothes off of you, I promise you'll feel better."

Callie didn't say anything, she just shivered and looked up into his eyes as if she was trying to tell him something important. But Tobey couldn't let himself think about anything other than getting Callie warm. Otherwise he would have to face anger and pain and hurt so strong he thought he might never laugh or smile again.

Sitting on the wide rim of his large whirlpool tub, still cradling Callie in his lap, he leaned over and turned the knobs until steaming water was pouring into the tub. Quickly he stripped her dress off and as he undid the clasp of her bra and slid it from her shoulders, he tried not to notice that her breasts were tight and her nipples were

hard buds from the cold. He stripped her panties from her legs and forced himself to ignore the pull her mons had on him, to ignore how much he wanted to bury his face between her lips and taste her one more time to memorize her before he let her go forever.

Gently, Tobey lowered Callie into the tub. His hand brushed the soft mound of her breasts and he heard her gasp. Knowing it was wrong, hating himself for being so out of control, Tobey leaned into her and took one of her nipples in his mouth, suckling hard, wanting to punish and pleasure her in equal parts. Callie arched up into his mouth, and threaded her fingers behind his head.

With a groan that hid none of his anger at himself or at her, he pulled away from her and ripped off his own wet clothes. Callie reached her arms up to him and within seconds he was naked and between her legs and pumping into her.

"I love you, Tobey," she cried as her wet, slick canal throbbed around his cock. Tobey tried to block out her words. He tried to concentrate on the wet warmth that encased his penis, her huge, perfect breasts rubbing against his chest, her round ass in his hands as he pounded in and out of her. But even as he tried to use her for his pleasure, he couldn't escape the truth.

Cupping her cheeks with his hands, Tobey stilled. "I love you," he whispered. "I love you," he said again and then thrust into her hard. In the space of one heartbeat, they both came apart. After the madness had subsided, the water sloshed around them in the tub and Tobey pulled away from Callie.

"Don't leave me again," she said. "We need to talk."

Tobey stood up and water poured off of him into the tub. "Fine," he said, trying to rouse his anger at Callie again. "Talk." He grabbed a towel and roughly dried himself off.

Callie stood up too and grabbed a towel. "Why did you leave the restaurant like that?"

Tobey answered her question with a question. "Why did you lie to me?"

Callie sat heavily on the rim off the tub. "I've never lied to you."

"Bullshit," Tobey said, his eyes flashing dangerously. "I saw the way you were fawning all over my brother." His voice grew high pitched as he imitated her. "Your job sounds really exciting and important." Tobey snarled then resumed his parody. "Wow, I didn't know accountants made so much money."

Callie gasped in outrage. "How dare you make me sound like, like...like such a money-grubbing bitch."

Tobey grabbed her by the shoulders, forcing her to stand face to face with him. "Isn't that what you are? Haven't you just been playing at being the nice little candy maker, pretending you wanted me to live my dreams, when all along you just wanted money. And power. Just like Gina."

Callie's fighting stance fell away. "Gina? Who's Gina?"

Tobey let go of her shoulders, trying not to wince at the red marks his fingers had left on her smooth skin. "My ex."

Callie's voice was soft. "You've never mentioned any ex before."

His voice low, Tobey said, "She left me at the altar. On the day of our wedding."

Callie took a step closer to Tobey and put her hand on his arm asking, "Why?"

Tobey pushed her comfort away and stepped out of the tub with a harsh laugh. "You should understand her motives perfectly. After all, who would want to be married to the Candy King?"

Callie licked her lips and swallowed once before saying, softly, "I would, Tobey."

Tobey turned back to her, anguish etched in the lines of his face. "No, Callie, you don't. You want me to be just like Jed, just like she did. Just like everyone does."

Carefully stepping out of the tub, Callie came toe to toe with Tobey. "Your brother is jealous of you, Tobey. I was stroking his ego in the hopes that he would shut up so that I could get to know your parents better. I thought you knew me better than that," she said, her voice shaky. "I thought you knew how much I love you for being you."

The tears were rolling down her cheeks and she wiped at them angrily. Everything in her was telling her to run away, to leave Tobey, to give up on them. But Callie knew it was the coward's way out. She had vowed to fight for their love and now she was being put to the ultimate test.

Tobey didn't say anything, he just clenched his eyes shut, so Callie forced herself to keep talking, hoping that she could keep him from leaving again, hoping that something she said would break down the walls of hurt he had built up so long ago.

"I'm not the only one who's proud of you, Tobey. Your parents are incredibly proud of you. Alice loves you like a son and it's been killing her to watch you try and shut down something so beautiful that you created from love."

Tobey's eyes opened with surprise. "How do you know these things?"

Callie reached out a hand to his chin and was so glad when he didn't push her away. "They all love you, Tobey. Just like I do. Even a blind man could see it."

Suddenly, Tobey wrapped his arms around Callie, dragging her breasts against his chest. "What about a stupid man?" he said, his voice husky yet hopeful.

Tears fell down her cheeks. "Even a stupid man," she said as their mouths found each other. "Especially if he's the most amazing, intelligent, loving man I've ever met. Now take me to that bed you always talk so much about and love me."

Chapter Eight

February 14th. Valentine's Day.

Callie opened up her shop and tried not to feel sorry for herself. After all, now that everything was out in the open between her and Tobey, she had everything she'd ever dreamed of and more.

She had true love.

She had a man she could talk to about anything, a partner that she could depend on and who could depend on her.

The only thing she didn't have was a date for Valentine's Day.

Again.

Now that Tobey was committed to keeping Sweet Returns up and thriving as a candy consulting business, he had been setting meetings with all of the potential clients that he had put off for the past several months. It just so happened that he had to fly out for an overnight trip to Chicago on Valentine's Day.

He had been incredibly apologetic and of course Callie had been understanding even though she wanted to beg him to rearrange his schedule. It was all for the best, she told herself. Valentine's was one of her busiest days of the year and each year, by the time she flipped her sign from open to closed, she could barely do more than drag herself off to bed.

Settling into another "Holiday of Love" at her store, Callie did brisk sales all day. With a smile on her face, she sold out of the expensive gift baskets that Tobey had helped her put together and in any spare time she had she filled last-minute orders for chocolate and candy that came in over the Internet.

By 5 p.m. it was completely dark outside and Callie was exhausted. The big rush was through—most people were at home sharing a romantic evening in front of the fire

together by now. Callie had been hoping that Tobey would call and wish her a happy Valentine's Day from Chicago, but every time she picked up her phone it was another customer making an order for a box of truffles or a gift basket.

She was on the phone with a long-distance customer when a delivery truck parked outside her store and a man walked in with a vase of roses. And then another. And then another.

Callie quickly wrapped up her call. "Excuse me," she said to the delivery man. "I think you're delivering these roses to the wrong place."

The man looked at his clipboard. "This is Callie's Candies, isn't it?"

Callie nodded, her heart beginning to blossom with joy.

By the time the man drove away, Callie's Candies was filled with vases of roses of every color—on the floor, on the counter, on every shelf. Callie headed for the phone to call Tobey's cell phone to thank him for being the most wonderful boyfriend in the world, but before she could wind through the vases of flowers, four men in tuxedos walked through the door carrying musical instruments.

Hardly able to believe what was happening, the string quartet began to serenade her with her favorite symphony. Tears pooled in her eyes and she had to lean against her display counter to stay steady.

No doubt about it, Tobey was the most romantic, wonderful boyfriend in the whole world. Callie couldn't believe she had doubted him for even one single second. Even from all the way in Chicago, he was giving her the best Valentine's Day she had ever had.

And then her heart stopped as the man she loved walked through the door. She ran into Tobey's arms and he swept her up against him and kissed her passionately.

"Happy Valentine's Day, sweetheart," he said and she kissed him back with all of the love in her heart.

Silently, the string quartet left them alone in Callie's Candies while they gave each other soft kisses and murmured words of love.

"I think we're alone now," Tobey said in a voice laced with passion and love.

"Lock the door," Callie said, wanting to drag Tobey into the back room to rip all of his clothes off and show him just how much his romantic deeds meant to her.

Tobey grinned. "I'm always locking the door when I'm with you."

Callie planted another kiss on his succulent lips and whispered, "That's because I'm always taking off my clothes whenever you're around."

"I knew there was a good reason," Tobey said as he quickly locked the door and pulled down the blinds.

Callie reached for his big warm hands and pulled him into the back room with her. Propping him up against the door, she dropped to her knees and began to undo his belt loop. Tobey laced his fingers through her hair and closed his eyes. In seconds, Callie had his hard, throbbing shaft in her greedy fingers.

"Just what I was looking for," she said, as her hot breath wafted over Tobey's pulsating head. "My big, tasty Valentine's Day treat."

Tobey groaned as Callie tasted him with the tip of her tongue. She took his length into her mouth, sucked and pulsating in a perfect rhythm until he couldn't take it anymore.

Pushing her head away from his cock, he dropped to the floor and had both of their clothes off in record time. Naked, facing each other on their knees, Callie climbed on top of Tobey, setting his penis just at the base of her pussy.

"Will you marry me?" he said, and as she slid down on his cock, taking all of it, loving every inch of it as it throbbed inside her, she said, "Yes," and then everything exploded in the ultimate expression of love. The kind of sweet, passionate love that lasts forever.

The End

Callie's Cocoa Fudge

2/3 cup powdered cocoa

3 cups sugar

1/8 tsp. salt

1-1/2 cups whole milk

4-1/2 T. butter (real butter, not margarine or “spread”)

1 tsp. vanilla

Note: This recipe needs two people to take turns stirring and watching and beating the fudge. Clothing optional—it’s going to get *really* hot in here, and not just because of the cooking!—but be extra careful during boiling.

Step One: Dip your finger into the cocoa powder and let your partner lick it off slowly. Next, combine cocoa, sugar, and salt in a large pot (3 qt.). Add milk gradually, mixing thoroughly.

Step Two: While your partner nips and kisses your neck, bring the mixture to a boil, stirring constantly (or at least when you remember to between kisses). Turn heat to medium, continue to boil, stirring often, until it reaches 236 degrees F (soft ball stage)—about 45 to 60 minutes of exquisite foreplay. Every few minutes, change places with your partner and kiss his or her neck, while letting your hands roam freely. (The person nearest to the stove should wear a sexy apron to protect against splattering.)

Step Three: Carefully remove pan from heat, add butter and vanilla, stir. Cool fudge to 110 degrees F (about 20 minutes, giving you time to kiss a little lower than the neck).

Step Four: Take turns beating (the fudge, not each other!) energetically by hand until fudge thickens and loses some of its gloss—about 10 minutes. (The person not

beating the fudge should find something else creative to do with their hands.) Quickly spread fudge in a greased 8"x8"x2" glass dish. Cool before cutting. To test if fudge is cool, put a dab on the inside of your partner's thigh and slowly lick it off, savoring every last bit.

Feed each other a small piece of fudge before engaging in other sensuous activities.

About the Author

Before plunging wholeheartedly into writing erotic romance, Bella got a BA in Economics at Stanford University, worked as a marketing director, and strutted hundreds of stages as a rock star. She currently lives in Northern California with her fabulous husband, who thinks his wife is cooler than his friends' wives, because she writes *Romantica*TM.

Bella welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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