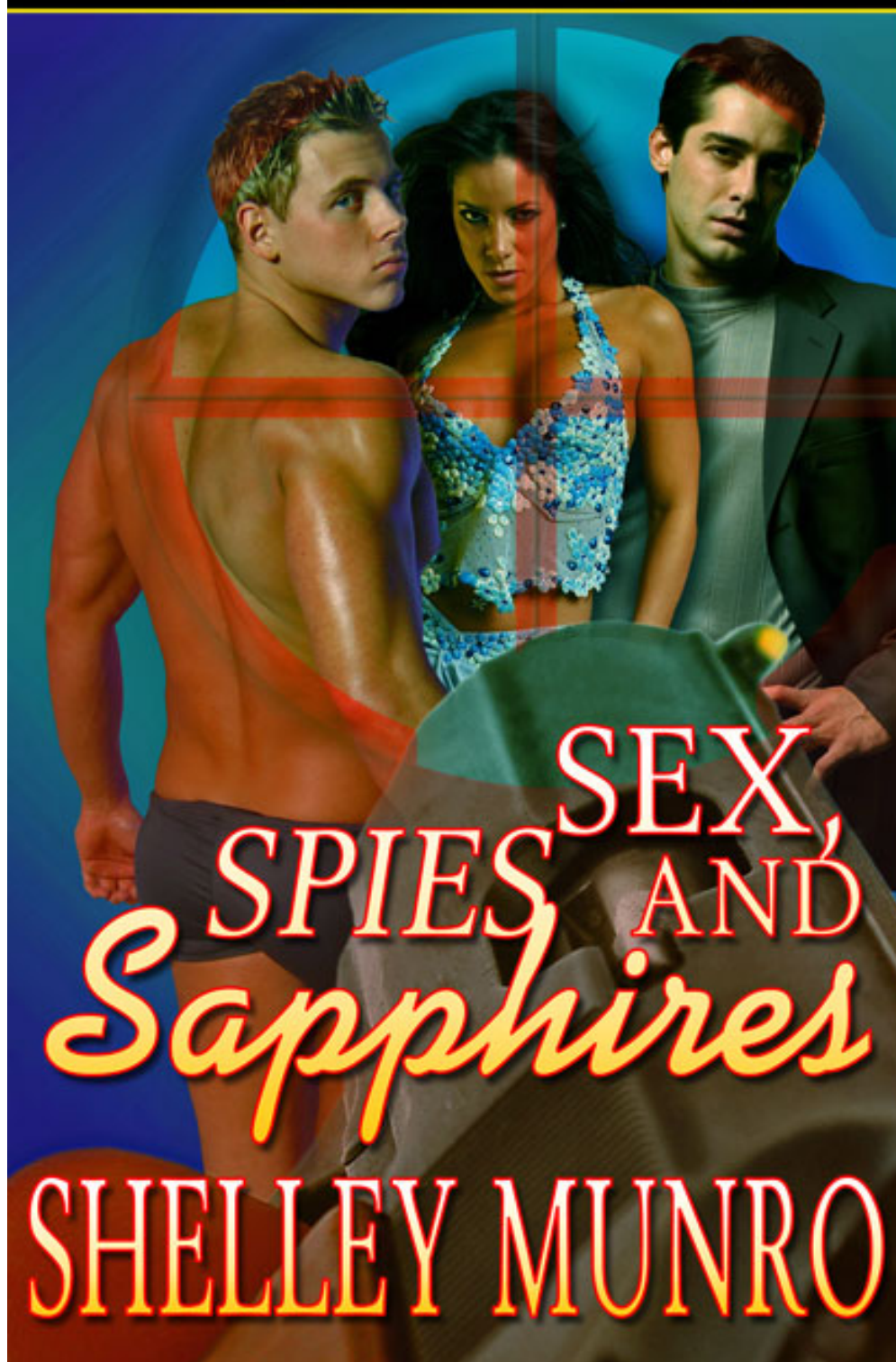


ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS



An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



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Sex, Spies and Sapphires

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SEX, SPIES AND SAPPHIRES

Shelley Munro

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BMW: Bayerische Motoren Werke Aktiengesellschaft

Boy Scout: Boy Scouts of America Corporation

Cambridge: Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the University of Cambridge, The

Rolls-Royce: Rolls-Royce Limited

Chapter One

Sarah

Sarah Walsh zipped her red convertible into a gap between a sedan and a black London cab and sped down Bayswater Road, heading toward Notting Hill. The wind tugged at her dark curls and the early spring sunshine made her feel pleasantly warm. She warbled a few notes of a top-ten hit then stopped to laugh with the sheer pleasure of being alive. It was a great day to be in the spy business.

Shifting down a gear, she made a left turn and five minutes later pulled up in Drayson Mews. Sarah leapt from her vehicle, grabbed her bag and strode over to the sparkling white door. She stabbed the polished brass button to the right of the door with her finger and leaned forward to speak into the intercom. "It's Sarah. I've come to see grandmother." Code to announce she had arrived for a meeting with Mr. Mark, the London head of Spies Anonymous.

She waited, a smile playing across her lips when envisaging the young male who would answer the door. Cute in a scholarly kind of way, Chester always blushed in her presence, especially if she flirted or teasingly leaned close and brushed a kiss across his freshly shaven cheek.

Footsteps sounded and the door flew open. Full of devilment, Sarah puckered up ready to give him the kiss of his life. But it wasn't Chester on the other side and her kiss landed on the lined cheek of Mr. Mark, her boss.

"Oops." Sarah made a moue of disappointment even as she secretly laughed at the red imprint her lipstick had left. Mr. Mark was no fun, but maybe not all was lost. She glanced past her boss. "Where's Chester?"

"About time. Come along, Walsh. My office. Now. We have a matter of grave national importance before us. No time for your shenanigans."

Sarah sobered rapidly, her curiosity piqued by his words. What would this particular mission bring? She followed him up the narrow carpeted stairs to the luxurious office on the first floor. One of her fellow operatives and very good friend Thomas MacIntyre lounged in a cream leather chair. He straightened and stood when they entered the room, winking at Sarah when Mr. Mark wasn't looking. A traditionally tall and delicious man with military short dark hair, a profile that spoke of power and a jaw that hinted at determination, he was also a lot of fun, if a person made an effort to chip away at the aristocratic reserve first. Sarah grinned, a zinger of awareness spearing through her body. A great deal of fun. Thomas' dark gaze dropped to her breasts for an instant before rising again to study her mouth. To her consternation, Sarah felt her nipples tighten against the silky fabric of her new red camisole. In an effort to hide the reaction, she turned to toss her handbag until she required it again. The black leather bag flew in a graceful arc, strap landing on the coat stand seconds before Sarah took a seat beside Thomas. *Yes!*

"No time for your games, Walsh."

Thomas' dark eyes twinkled. "Sarah thinks life is one long game."

"Of course it is." Sarah gave an emphatic nod. "Where's the fun in being serious all the time?"

Mr. Mark scowled his disapproval but refrained from speaking again. Instead, he moved behind the large oak desk dominating the room and dropped into an executive leather chair. He came straight to the point, his serious mien highlighting the importance of the mission he was about to give them. "Last month, the Commonwealth Heads of State meeting was held in Sydney, Australia. Yesterday, sources informed us that senior members of the British party had compromising photos taken of them during a...ah...private moment. The people responsible are demanding we withdraw our troops from Mundavia, plus they want three billion Euros in exchange for the photos and negatives."

Mr. Mark dimmed the lights and flicked a switch to open a small screen on the wall

to the side of his desk. Images of Julie Mortimer, the British prime minister, and Toby Longstreet, her senior aide, flashed up on the screen attached to the wall. Their faces were close. Julie wore an intimate smile that took her from studious and clever to sex siren while Toby Longstreet appeared plain besotted. It was very obvious they were more than coworkers.

"I interrupted my game of golf for this?" Thomas drawled, fiddling with one of his gold cufflinks. "Why don't they just suck it up and deal with the tabloid speculation?"

Sarah remained quiet even though she agreed with Thomas. She couldn't see what the problem was since both the prime minister and her aide were single and unattached.

Their boss clicked on a button of his laptop computer and the image changed. This time there were three people in the picture. In addition to Julie Mortimer and Toby Longstreet there was another man. Sarah's breath caught as she studied the second male.

"Ah, I see you recognize our third player." Mr. Mark sounded smug.

Sarah willed herself to remain impassive while inwardly she cursed the small sound that had given her away. She knew better than to give Mr. Mark an opening like that. "Flynn Wangford. We clashed during my last assignment."

"From what I heard it was a bit more than a clash," Thomas muttered sotto voice. "And not the first time. Maybe you could call it a sport."

"We believe Mr. Wangford is involved in the blackmail attempt," Mr. Mark stated, ignoring the interruption. "From what I've heard, he likes to play games." Distaste colored his words.

Sarah's mouth tightened to a firm line. That wasn't all he was involved in. The three were naked in this shot and they weren't having a tea party. Part of her wondered if this was jealousy talking. In the past, she'd succumbed to the gorgeous man. Yep, she'd walked the slippery path and skidded. Several times. Even now, it wasn't difficult to recall the slide of naked skin, the feel of his hard muscled chest against her breasts. His

mouth and how he used it to bring her to her knees. The decadent and torturous manner in which he licked her distended nipples, making her crazy, playing with them until she wanted to beg and plead with him to plunge into her womb. To take her. Sarah shuddered. Oh yeah. The man was talented – she'd give him that. But he was also a cunning bastard. Flynn Wangford had something that belonged to her and she had every intention of taking it back. "Are we even sure if the photos are the genuine article? These days it's simple enough to manipulate photos."

"That's true. We know the photo with the threesome is computer generated but unfortunately at this stage, it doesn't make any difference. The photos will do a lot of damage to Britain's standing amongst other countries."

Thomas cast her a knowing glance but didn't speak his mind. "The people responsible must know we're committed to Mundavia. If the rebels attempt to take over, Britain will move in to aid the royal family."

"Thomas is right. There's no way Britain will agree to release the prisoners who carried out such atrocities on the royal family and the Mundavian people. Who is making the demand?" Sarah asked.

"A group calling themselves EC." Mr. Mark steepled his hands, looking at them as though he'd set a test he expected them to fail.

"Easy?" Sarah asked, quirked a brow.

Thomas snorted. "European Cooperative."

"Yes, our expert team is convinced the Mundavia condition is a ploy," Mr. Mark conceded. "That something else is afoot. There's talk of the royal family being overthrown by another group of radicals and their leader replacing the king."

Thomas frowned. "But we don't know for sure."

"That's why we're tightening security around the prime minister when she goes to Castle Maxwell this weekend for Lord Maxwell's birthday celebrations. Unfortunately, Wangford is on the guest list since he's related to Lord Maxwell's wife, but at least that means we can keep an eye on him. At the moment we're playing a waiting game. Sarah,

you will attend as a guest. Lady Sarah Justice. You've used the cover before on jobs like this and people will recall you but Chester has provided refresher details. Your job is to watch over Julie Mortimer and Toby. I believe they intend to make their relationship public during the weekend. We will also arrange for extra security after midnight, however you will still be on call as usual." Mr. Mark tapped a pink folder with his right hand fingers. "Usual rules apply. Read, memorize and destroy." Sarah accepted the folder that Mr. Mark handed her, placed it on her lap and waited for him to continue.

"Several members of the Mundavian royal family are invited to the celebrations but I believe only one is attending. Thomas, you will be part of the royal protection squad." He handed Thomas a folder. "Your tickets and all the information you require are in there."

"Not Princess Leila?" Sarah asked, disquiet giving her a swift kick in the gut.

"Princess Leila is attending," Mr. Mark confirmed.

"I look forward to making her acquaintance," Thomas said with a smirk wide enough for Sarah to see a full set of teeth. "I've heard a lot about her."

"Humph," Sarah muttered. The princess was a barracuda on the lookout for dinner. She didn't take any prisoners. Although she was tempted to kick Thomas in the shins, she held back. There was a time and place to pick a war. Besides, she needed to concentrate on retrieving her property from Flynn Wangford. Last time they'd met, he'd stolen her sapphire pendant. It wasn't just the value, although that was considerable. The sapphire had sentimental value and it belonged to *her*. Somehow, some way she intended to regain the sapphire, and if it meant she came in close personal contact with Flynn Wangford again while achieving her goal, then so be it. The man was a bastard—a charming bastard to be sure, but she knew he'd bring the sapphire with him. He wouldn't be able to resist flaunting it. Sarah shuddered, her lips curving up in the beginnings of a smile. It wasn't the type of smile to inspire confidence in her enemies.

"Any questions?" Mr. Mark paused a beat before silently dismissing them by

picking up one of the folders from the corner of his desk and opening it.

Sarah and Thomas shared a glance before standing and heading for the safe room. Thomas opened the door for Sarah and after retrieving her bag, she swept through, hips swaying beneath the tight black leather trousers she wore. The soft curse she heard made her grin. Nothing like keeping a man off balance. Thomas and she had a history.

Friends and lovers.

She opened the door to the safe room and strode inside. Thomas followed and closed the door behind him. Out of habit Sarah took a moment to scan the room in case of intruders or other security lapses.

Two wooden desks sat on opposite sides of the room with a privacy screen between so the occupants of the desks had no distractions. The lighting was artificial with not a window in sight. Slate-gray carpet covered the floor while the walls were a shade lighter. It was a secure room—one where the operatives went to memorize details of covers and missions. It wasn't a place to linger since it was devoid of the slightest bit of ambience. Sarah dropped her folder and bag on the nearest desk.

Thomas locked the door, the bolt shooting home with a loud metallic snap.

"Sarah?" The husky voice brought chill bumps to life on her arms. She sighed softly. Of course they hadn't figured on Flynn. He was a distraction all right. Slowly she turned to face Thomas.

"Yes?"

He dropped his folder on the other desk before prowling closer. Tall and rangy, the male in motion was a real pleasure to watch. His dark suit fit him perfectly although Sarah mourned the more intimate fit of a good pair of jeans. Still, the charcoal-gray designer suit with the crisp white shirt and patterned tie came a close second. Thomas stopped a hairsbreadth away, near enough that she felt his body heat and smelled the crisp green scent of his aftershave.

"Once we finish here, how about spending some time together? We don't have many opportunities. There's always someone else around. Distractions." Thomas

stroked her cheek with his forefinger, his brown eyes serious. "What do you say?"

Sarah gave in to the urge and melted against his muscled chest, savoring the press of solid male squashing her breasts. She brushed a lock of dark hair off his forehead and beamed at him. The good humor echoed in his eyes and his sensuous lips curved into the heart-stopping grin that had first attracted her to him. How could she say no? "Yes," she whispered.

"My flat at Notting Hill. This afternoon."

Sarah touched her lips to his, intending a quick peck to cement their agreement. Thomas took it a step further, taking over the kiss and cupping her head with his capable hands so she couldn't have moved if she'd tried. But she wasn't stupid enough to want to halt the sensation instantly rampaging through her body. He nibbled and sucked at her bottom lip, nipping then soothing with a sweep of his tongue. Sarah sighed inwardly and gave in to the instant pleasure. His lips teased her hormones into a reaction. Her nipples rubbed with exquisite friction, sensitive against her silk camisole, when his tongue pushed past her lips to deepen the taste. Sarah moaned softly, part of her chastened at the fast, wanton reaction he always pulled from her. She couldn't lie. She wanted Thomas, and a little dalliance during the afternoon would help burn away pre-mission nerves. It always made for incredible sex. Yes, her answer was definitely yes.

Finally Thomas lifted his head. He smoothed his thumb across her tender bottom lip, pushed her away from his body before she had a chance to react and stepped back. To her relief she wasn't the only one reacting to their closeness, the only one breathing hard. Thomas' cock strained against his trousers, his breathing elevated, his brown eyes dark and full of banked passion. She shivered, need spiraling low through her belly. This afternoon couldn't come quickly enough.

"I take it that was a definite yes," he said.

"I'll be there as long as I have enough time to take care of business. I refuse to go into this mission under-prepared." And the fact Flynn Wangford would be in

attendance meant she needed to keep all her wits about her. Sarah was damned if she would leave Castle Maxwell without regaining possession of her sapphire. The man was smug enough to keep the sapphire with him. He'd told her he would wear it against his skin. His mistake. She wasn't going to let Flynn Wangford triumph over her again. No way would she stand for the man's taunting emails, attempting to prod her into action. No, this time she had a solid plan. It meant she'd need to get up close and personal with the man, but that was no hardship. Sarah had done it before. She could do it again. Her pulse quickened and excitement tingled inside her at the thought of getting her hands on Flynn's luscious body. Yeah. She'd fuck him all right, and in more ways than he was prepared for – the wily bastard.

Flynn Wangford was going down.

Her gaze landed on Thomas and the familiar burn of desire swamped her even more. Sarah laughed softly. Oh she was naughty lusting after two men in the same minute, but she'd never been one to follow the rules.

"You'll be there. You like sex as much as I do." Thomas' eyes glowed when he leaned in to steal another kiss. "We're good together."

It was true, and Sarah wondered how it was possible for her to feel so much for Thomas yet crave Flynn's forbidden touch at the same time. He was on the opposite side and a threat. Yet Sarah knew she wasn't going to change her mind. Her objectives were to protect the prime minister from further blackmail threats, weed out any problems before they occurred and to retrieve the sapphire from Flynn Wangford.

Easy.

Sarah knew she made an excellent spy. She'd manage this particular assignment with her hands tied behind her back. Oh yes. This was one little game Flynn Wangford would lose.

Chapter Two

Thomas

Thomas MacIntyre heard the intercom buzz. After checking his watch, he smiled. Right on time. He wandered over to the wall speaker, depressed a button and spoke into the intercom. "Sarah?"

"Who else are you expecting?" she demanded, but the lilt of her voice told him she was laughing. His smile widened, his body reacting to her voice even though he couldn't see her face or body. Imagination was a wonderful thing, something he had little problem with, especially when his thoughts centered on Sarah. He depressed the release button, opening the front door of his apartment building for her. Anticipation at the knowledge he'd have her soon stalked through Thomas. Sarah was...well, Sarah. Petite and yet curvy, with a larger-than-life attitude about her. Independent. Sassy. Damned good at her job and a generous lover. With their crazy lifestyle, they didn't often have time alone like this and he wanted to make the most of it.

A light tap sounded on his door.

"Come in," he said.

The door opened and Sarah sauntered inside, sexy and tempting in black leather and high heels. She'd restrained her dark hair, tying the long curls back with a silk scarf, probably to keep it out of the way while driving. Sapphire earrings glittered at her ears while her blue eyes flashed pure sex. "Hello, lover," she purred. "I like you in a suit but there's something about a man in tight jeans and a T-shirt that makes me hot." She wrinkled her pert nose, instantly traveling from sex siren to next-door-neighbor cute. The faint sprinkling of freckles across the bridge of her nose reinforced the wholesome look until she smiled. The wicked look whisked away the innocence. Yep, that was his sex siren. His cock tightened in appreciation of the picture she made.

“Pleased to be of service.” Thomas had intended having a drink first, a little chat before easing into the main event. Her seductive purr changed all his good intentions in a heartbeat. Seconds later, he grasped her forearms and hauled her against his chest. His mouth slammed down on hers. Teeth clashed before Thomas moved his head a fraction to change the fit of their mouths.

Then it was perfect. So perfect.

As if of one accord, they gentled the kiss, sipping and tasting, taking it from hot and heavy to dreamy and seductive. The refreshing burn of mint danced across his taste buds when he pushed his tongue into her mouth. He explored leisurely, taking his time to trace the hardness of her teeth and the contrasting tender skin of her inner lip and cheek. When the need to breathe tugged at him, Thomas pulled away. But not too far. His hands danced across her back and measured the span of her waist. He rested his forehead against Sarah’s and inhaled, savoring the light floral scent drifting from her skin. He loved this woman and wanted to tell her, but now was not the time – not when they were about to leave for a mission that could see anything happening.

Sarah smiled at him, her blue eyes sparkling. She yanked at the scarf keeping her hair confined and midnight-black silken locks fell around her shoulders. After a teasing glance at him, Sarah unzipped her black leather jacket to reveal a thin red top that hugged her breasts like a second skin and bared most of her shoulders. She shrugged the jacket off and tossed it over the back of a chair. He was male enough to notice she wasn’t wearing a bra, her nipples pulling tight and stabbing at the red fabric.

“I love this flat.” With a flick of her hand, she indicated the luxurious cream carpet and the sleek modern lines of the chrome and leather designer furniture.

Thomas could have told her the chairs were as uncomfortable as hell to fall asleep in and after spending a few hours in the cream and silver lounge, he craved color. He could have told her how he’d leave the flat to wander through the Notting Hill market just to get a color fix but didn’t. Instead, he concentrated on Sarah the woman. She was vibrant. Sexy. A petite woman who appeared fragile but bore a backbone of steel. A

chameleon who looked a natural in tight leather but could wear something feminine with equal aplomb. *The perfect spy*, he thought with a twist of his lips.

Sarah chuckled. "I came here for a little action. I guess we could talk but wouldn't that be a waste of time? We can talk anytime."

A surge of pure lust jolted his cock to full life. Sarah was right. He could look any time as well. "Your wish is my command," he whispered.

"And don't you forget it," she shot back, her eyes hardening fractionally before her expression melted back into sweet and seductive. Sarah lifted her red top over her head and tossed it on top of her leather jacket.

The splash of red reminded Thomas of blood. He blinked away the thought and hid his reaction by removing his faded Rolling Stones T-shirt. Thomas swallowed, struggling to retain his earlier excitement and anticipation. He hated the visions that came to him. Always bad news. There was never enough in the vision for him to foretell exactly what would happen—just enough for him to know things would become rough if he didn't take care.

His chest expanded when he inhaled and an instant later he felt cool fingertips tracing over one flat nipple. His breath eased out on a hiss. If anyone could help him forget the future, it was Sarah.

"You okay?"

"Yeah."

Sarah rubbed against his bare chest, a bit like a cat with her seductive purr backing up the comparison. Her nipples dragged across his skin. Thomas' mood lightened again and his hands fastened on her shoulders, pulling her into direct contact with his body from chest to groin.

"You feel good," Sarah whispered. Her teeth sank into the smooth skin below his collarbone, nipping hard enough to send a jolt through his body. "Smell good too, but you're awfully slow when it comes to moving things to the bedroom. I need you inside me. Now."

Thomas laughed, earning another sharp nip from Sarah in punishment. He knew he'd bear bruises tomorrow but didn't care. He loved her in this mood. Demanding. Pushy. A woman who knew what she wanted and when she wanted it. "Haven't you ever heard about patience and waiting making the outcome sweeter?"

"Thomas, darling," she drawled. "I know how you'll feel inside me." She lowered her voice. "I remember exactly how you feel, your cock pushing inside me. Slowly. Bit by bit until I'm stretched and full and so turned on I want to stay like that forever. I can still feel the way your cock throbs and the way your lips fasten around one of my nipples, taunting and tugging until the feeling becomes too much."

A tinge of pink shaded her cheeks, bringing color and animation to her face. Thomas couldn't remember seeing anyone more beautiful or feeling such urgency to make her words fact.

"I think you're right." He scooped Sarah off her feet and with long strides, headed for the bedroom. His bare feet sank into the cream carpet as he rounded the glass and chrome coffee table.

The decorator had continued with the neutral color theme in the bedroom. Cream and more cream. The bedroom had a little more color though since being the rebel he was, he'd tossed his clothes and possessions around the place, making him feel more at home in the rented flat.

Sarah bounced when he dropped her in the middle of the king-size bed. He followed her down, caging her with his arms.

"I have a suggestion," she said.

His brows rose. Always trying to direct things. It made him laugh since he was so much bigger than her. Not that he'd ever hurt her or use his size to force her unless that was what she wanted. "Yeah?"

Sarah nodded, humor bringing a dimple into play. "I have to pour myself into these trousers. You should take them off first before we both become desperate. And besides, they're bloody hot. Feels like a sauna down there."

"Oh yeah?" He smirked. "I like knowing I can make you so hot so fast."

"Always," she said. "But don't let it go to your head. You can make better use of a blood rush."

Thomas snorted. "Blunt and plain-speaking. Never shy. I think I'm in love."

Sarah's eyes narrowed as they stared at one another. "I think we should keep this light," she said. "We both have a mission to complete. Neither of us needs distractions."

A sigh escaped from him. "You're right." Thomas rolled to Sarah's side and sat up. He unfastened the black button and drew down the zipper of her fly. "Lift your hips for me." When Sarah followed his instructions, he worked the leather down her hips, taking the bright red g-string off at the same time.

"You might want to take my shoes off first," she suggested with a hint of laughter.

"Good point."

"No, that is a good point," she said, indicating the bulge in his jeans. "Or it will be. Hurry up, will you?"

Thomas cupped one foot in his hands and unbuckled the delicate black strap that held the shoe in place. When he slid it off her foot, he studied it closely before dropping it over the edge of the bed. It was as delicate as Sarah and hardly looked as if it should leave the house, although that spike heel looked like a lethal weapon. Smiling at the fanciful thought, he removed the remaining shoe from her foot and tossed it aside to join its mate. Thomas eased the leather down her legs along with her underwear and threw them on the floor. For a moment he looked at her, his gaze roaming up and down her body. Firm, pink-tipped breasts. A slim waist and slender toned legs.

Thomas leaned over and kissed the tip of her nose. At the same time, he cupped her breasts, using his fingers to pluck at her nipples. Sarah relaxed beneath his body, melting and issuing a soft groan.

"Don't stop," she whispered. "I..." She swallowed audibly and closed her eyes for an instant. "I care for you too."

In Thomas' book that was pretty close to love. He'd take it and work to get her to trust him. He was the good guy. They were on the same side.

With fingers and thumbs, he tugged sharply at both nipples, knowing she liked the edge of pain in her loving. She rewarded him with a throaty moan and parted her legs in silent invitation. Thomas teased her lips with his tongue and tugged again on her nipples until they became elongated and a deep rose red in color. She undulated her hips and pelvis in an attempt for a more intimate touch but Thomas was intent on driving her higher, making her beg.

This time together alone was special and he wanted to make it memorable for both of them.

He traced her lips again before pushing his tongue into the corner of her mouth. Slowly, so she'd think of him impaling her body. Her sharp intake of breath told him he'd managed to direct her imagination. He withdrew his tongue before pushing slowly inside her mouth again. A moan came from deep in her chest. Thomas followed his seductive move with another sharp tug on her nipples.

Her breathing grew choppy, her hips rising against his thigh in silent entreaty. When he did nothing more except thrust with his tongue again, she raised her pelvis sharply, attempting to grind against his leg.

Thomas released her nipples and propped himself up on his elbow to smile down at her. "Patience, my love. I want to make you crazy. Desperate for me."

"I am," she snapped. "Do me now."

Thomas chuckled. "Patience, sweetheart. Patience. Let me make this good. Really good."

"Promises. Promises."

"Sarah, you know I'm a man of my word. Have I ever lied to you?"

She frowned and looked so damned cute, he had to brush a kiss across the pucker between her eyes.

"Have I?"

"No," she said after another long pause.

Thomas tweaked one nipple again before moving down the bed. He licked around her areola, leaving a wet path that glistened in the sunlight streaming through the window. He blew a steady stream of warm air across the tip of her breast while his fingers massaged the base and traced the fine network of veins beneath the surface. On hearing Sarah's sigh of impatience, he dipped his head and took her nipple between his lips. With deep suction, he drew hard until he heard her sound of satisfied approval. Thomas let go of her nipple with an audible pop.

"That's better," he said. "I like you pliant and willing. Keep that sassy mouth of yours closed and just feel."

"Payback can be a bitch."

He stilled before a slow grin crawled across his face. "Yeah, I know." He didn't give her an opportunity to speak again, distracting her instead with touch and sensation. He touched his lips to her rib cage and let his fingers wander across her hip and down her thigh. Sarah trailed her fingernails across his back, tensing and digging into his flesh when his hand crept over the delicate flesh of her inner thigh.

"Take off your jeans." Her words were throaty and coated with need. "I want to touch you."

"You want to goad me into moving faster," he countered, but went ahead and moved away. He stood, undid the button fly of his jeans and pushed them down his legs. Seconds later his boxer shorts joined the clothes strewn across the floor. He jerked open a drawer of the dresser and pulled out several condoms before rejoining her on the bed.

Sarah laughed. "That looks a little ambitious."

A surge of tenderness filled him. She looked so beautiful with her flushed cheeks and breasts and the curtain of dark hair spread across his pillow. "I don't think so. We have all afternoon and night."

"True." She sounded breathless and her gaze was on his erection. His cock jerked and reared under her steady gaze. When he moved nearer, it left a wet trail against her leg.

Thomas pressed a kiss to her bellybutton and dipped his tongue inside. She giggled, moving restlessly. The same impatience tugged at him. He wanted to push inside her, impaling her and feeling the tight grip of her pussy flexing around him. Thomas shivered and parted her legs. Since he'd last been with her, she'd trimmed her pubic curls into a narrow strip. The rest of her was all smooth flesh, hiding nothing from his view.

"Beautiful," he whispered. "I love the new look."

"Hurt like a bitch," she murmured. "But now I have increased sensation. It was worth every pain-filled minute."

Thomas grinned. "If you say so."

"Feel me," she purred. "Then tell me it wasn't worth the time and trouble."

With careful concentration he parted her folds. Using a whisper of touch, he stroked across her clit. Already she was swollen and sensitive to his touch. Thomas glanced up when she shuddered, teasing when she wanted a more direct approach. "I can't tell," he said. "I need to conduct further experiments."

"Don't let me get in your way." The dry tone hinted at exasperation and her questing hand told him she was going to start playing dirty, giving back as good as he gave if he didn't move the program along.

Hiding his smirk, he lowered his head and blew a stream of warm air over her swollen nub. She stilled, waiting for his next move. So help him, but he didn't want to tease anymore. He wanted to fill her and fuck her in that order. And in the professional arena, they wanted the same thing even if she didn't know it yet, but he wasn't stupid enough to ask any questions before they made love. Sarah was just as likely to tell him to go to hell and finish the job on her own. Thomas had no intention of letting that happen.

His tongue snaked out to taste and he played with his fingers. He stroked the length of her cleft and pushed one finger inside her pussy while he lapped across and around her clit, pushing her higher but not giving enough to tip her into orgasm.

"Hmmm," she hummed, tilting her pelvis to give him better access. "I love the way you do that. You have a talented tongue, Thomas MacIntyre."

Thomas savored the tart taste of her juices and made one final teasing pass across her clit. Pulling back, he licked his lips.

"Kiss me."

"I've never met anyone as bossy as you before."

"And you like it," she retorted. "You like a woman who knows what she wants and isn't afraid to go after it."

She wasn't wrong. Her independent streak and sassy mouth were the first things he'd noticed about her. Once again he thanked his lucky star for arranging their paths to cross.

"Are you just going to stare at me with a dopey smile? If Mr. Mark saw it, he'd demote you in an instant." She smirked. "I might suggest he promotes Chester to your job. Chester is so cute."

Thomas moved so quickly she squealed. He whipped her over his knee and applied his hand to her naked backside. "Take it back."

"Make me," she said, laughter lurking in her husky voice. Sarah turned her head so she could see his face and pursed her lips. "I dare you."

Little vixen. She knew just how to push him, which buttons would make him explode into action. He fondled her buttocks with his large hands, fascinated by the color contrasts in their skins. Sarah was pale where he was darker, tanned from spending time outdoors. Thomas bent to place a kiss in the middle of one pale buttock before leaning back against the headboard and slapping her ass.

"Oh!" she said with a squeak.

“Is that daring enough for you?”

Sarah waggled her ass. “Do it again.”

Shaking his head and laughing at the same time because of her outrageousness, he applied his hand again. The crack when hand met flesh was loud even though he hadn’t hit her hard. A rush of blood to her butt cheeks made them glow a soft pink. Sarah squirmed a little, the wriggling moves rubbing against the flared head of his penis. Thomas bit back a groan, knowing if he loosed the sound, Sarah would construe it as a weakness and think she’d won in this battle of wills. Thomas was determined to come out victor, just as he was determined to get his hands on the sapphire before Sarah. He knew she was after it even though they hadn’t discussed the matter.

He tapped her ass again, letting his hand linger on her stinging flesh to savor the heat. Sarah lifted into his hand and rubbed. The minx created a kiss of friction across his erection with the sly move, wringing a chuckle from him.

“What am I going to do with you?” he asked, his voice close to a groan.

“Love me,” she said. “You’re going to love me.”

He was doomed. Absolutely doomed.

Thomas turned her petite body in his lap, wincing a little at the stimulation. Gritting his teeth, he tossed her back on the bed and grabbed a condom. Once he’d sheathed his cock, Sarah guided it to the mouth of her pussy. No more preliminaries it seemed. Hell, who was he to argue. He wanted to come as badly as she did. Taking her lips, he pushed his tongue into the moist cavern of her mouth at the same time as he pressed into her damp, clinging heat. A unified groan echoed in the room. Thomas pressed a fraction harder, his large frame held off Sarah’s body entirely by upper body strength. The only points of contact were mouth and at the groin. Thomas pushed deeper, savoring the sweet clasping of her inner muscles and the slick moistness of their tongues flirting together. He lifted his head, pulling out of the kiss and breathing hard.

Sarah’s eyes fluttered closed. “Open your eyes. I want to see your expression when you come.”

Slowly, as if her lids were weighted, she followed his hoarse instruction. Dazzling blue eyes stared back at him, mirrors to her soul.

"Move harder. Faster."

"Patience, my love."

"But I need to move," she wailed, following up her words with a sharp thrust of her hips. The move took him deeper. Impossibly deep.

There was a moment's silence before he said, "Damn, that feels good."

"It can feel better." The hope in her eyes made him laugh.

"One-track mind."

"Oh yeah."

Thomas gave up trying to make it last. Sarah was inventive and he had plenty of staying power. They could make love again, hell, throughout the night. Yeah. He withdrew until just the tip of his cock rested inside her before thrusting back inside. He set up a rhythm that made Sarah moan, a low throaty rumble that went straight to his balls. Thomas loved the sounds she made, her openness, and the way she always smelled of flowers. Each time their bodies slid together, the slap of flesh hitting flesh sounded. The scent of sex filled the room while the sunshine left dappled patterns over them both.

He increased the pace, starting to feel the burning of orgasm tingling at the base of his back. "Sarah." Her name was a sensual entreaty.

She pulled him down so his body was a weight on hers. "I'm close," she murmured.

Thank god. He couldn't hang on an instant longer. This delicate flower of a woman wound him in knots, sensual knots that he never wanted to unfasten. She brushed an urgent trail of kisses down his neck. The sudden bite of her teeth at his neck rocked him, the jolt of pain pushing him into a frenzy of short, rapid pumps into her pussy. The tension in his body rocketed upward. He felt the first incredible flutters deep in her womb and gave in to the seductive lure of orgasm. With a loud groan he thrust hard

and fast. He felt the whoosh of exhilaration when his load rushed up his cock, the bite of Sarah's fingernails gripping his shoulders as she ground against him, then he froze, coming with explosive contractions that turned him inside out.

Long moments later, Sarah wound her arms around his neck and drew his head down for a kiss. She beamed up at him. "That was absolutely splendid."

His brows rose. "Splendid, huh?"

"Yeah."

"Not good enough," Thomas drawled. "Let's see if we can take this into spectacular territory."

Morning came all too soon. Drowsy from lack of sleep yet exhilarated from making love to Sarah, he shook her awake. "Come on, sleepyhead. Time to rise and shine."

"Middle of night," she protested.

"No, it's morning. We both need to get our butts to Castle Maxwell."

Sarah went from drowsy to fully awake in seconds once she'd processed his words. Thomas knew he had to ask now, even though the timing wasn't quite right. He needed to know.

"How are you going to get the sapphire?" he whispered.

Sarah froze this time, her breathing stalling for a brief moment before she inhaled again. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"I know about the sapphire. I could help you retrieve it."

Sarah shoved him away and stood, unself-conscious of her nakedness. The morning light showcased her gorgeous form and predictably his cock reacted with real interest. But he knew better than to attempt to entice her back to bed. Even though she'd barely reacted, he'd rattled her. The faint widening of those beautiful blue eyes had given away her anxiety. Perfect. It was his plan to keep her off balance.

She prowled from the room in search of her clothes, still not replying to his suggestion. Too bad. He intended to grab the sapphire from Wangford because the one who held the sapphire gained control, made the rules.

He liked control.

Chapter Three

Flynn

Flynn Wangford stood in the castle turret overlooking the car park, watching the new arrivals with interest. The morning sun warmed his bare arms while a soft breeze ruffled his blond hair. From his post he could see rolling green slopes stretching as far as the stream on the boundary of the castle grounds. For the weekend, security guards patrolled the perimeter of the property, intent on keeping both the public and the paparazzi at bay.

The prime minister and her aide arrived, carefully walking toward the castle with a body length between them. Lord Maxwell's staff hustled them inside, out of range of the long lenses of the press. Flynn smirked, knowing the reasons they were so press-shy. Threesomes weren't the done thing in correct political circles, no matter how stimulating it was to make love with two people at once. Never mind that he'd doctored the photos. He'd done a bloody good job—even if he did say so himself.

No doubt his presence was part of the reason for the increased security. The officials were probably cursing the familial ties that made his invitation to the birthday festivities an automatic one. Too bad. True, he stood to make money out of the photos, but financial gain hadn't been his sole intention. No, he'd wanted to shake the royal house of Mundavia and show them how vulnerable they were. Rhyme and reason...

A gleaming black Rolls-Royce pulled up minutes later. The driver stopped the car and a man climbed out, rushing to open one of the rear doors. A pair of silk-encased legs slid from the car. Flynn knew those legs, but even if he hadn't, the small flag flying from the car would have given it away.

Princess Leila from Mundavia.

An unfortunate inclusion at this weekend event. There was something about the woman. He didn't trust her because despite her party-girl behavior, there was a shrewd calculation in her icy blue eyes. Flynn shuddered, remembering her touching him on the sly. She hadn't liked his rejection and her presence would complicate his mission. And as for the man—her companion. Flynn smiled while his hands dug into the stone sill of the turret. He'd enjoy reacquainting himself with Thomas MacIntyre. An interesting man and one of depth and real passion. Flynn hummed under his breath, his tongue doing a slow, sensual slide across his bottom lip.

The princess took Thomas' arm, hugging her model-slender body against his side. Her tinkling laugh carried on the breeze, bringing a sly grin to Flynn. It seemed with typical disregard for protocol, Princess Leila intended that Thomas MacIntyre guard her body very carefully indeed. Wonder what Thomas thought about it. As he watched, the man adroitly passed her over to Lord Maxwell and faded into the background.

Ah, cleverly done. Flynn's admiration was fleeting. This time. MacIntyre would have to do better next time because Flynn knew from experience that Princess Leila never repeated a mistake. Actually, since he wasn't the one in her sights, it might prove fun watching MacIntyre squirm.

They disappeared from sight. Flynn continued to watch the arrivals, both men and women. He recognized most of them. A pop star. A movie starlet. Lord Falconer and his wife. An interesting mix of guests to celebrate Lord Maxwell's fiftieth birthday.

A bright red sports car sped down the tree-lined road leading to the castle, a plume of dust spilling out behind. Flynn fingered the golden chain circling his neck. He watched the car pull up beside a blue BMW.

Sweet Sarah. Lady Sarah Justice.

Flynn tugged on the golden chain and rubbed the sapphire pendant that hung from it between his fingers. The gemstone was smooth and warm to the touch. Although it wasn't exactly a masculine look, Flynn liked the feel of it around his neck. A trophy. A grin bloomed. He was looking forward to seeing Lady Sarah, watching the irritation on

her pretty face when she noticed he wore her sapphire. Of course, she'd want it back. But that wasn't going to happen, not if he kept his wits about him.

Flynn watched Sarah climb from her car. His breath hitched when he saw her outfit—a short black skirt with a matching jacket, what looked like a brief top beneath it and high heels that made her legs appear miles long. She tossed her keys to one of the male staff and strolled toward Lord Maxwell. The birthday boy wrapped her in a hug, brushing a kiss across her lips.

A growl emerged from Flynn. His, dammit. Sarah mightn't know it yet but she belonged to him. By the end of the weekend, she'd acknowledge the fact herself. Flynn pushed away from the cool stone of the balustrade and strode to the narrow stone stairs leading to a lower level.

Time to put his plan into motion.

He strode down the stone stairs leading to the upper floor of the castle. When he hit carpet, he slowed to a lazy prowl since some of the guests were staying on this floor. His room was the next floor down and he'd already rigged the cameras ready for when he lured his quarry into his room. Flynn didn't know the exact identity of the man he'd sold the photos to since a broker handled the sale, and didn't really care. A man had to live and couldn't afford squeamishness in his line of business. He'd earned a pretty penny with the photos of the prime minister and her aide. The photos that included him had sold at a premium, although they hadn't done anything with them. Or at least he hadn't seen them in the papers. Yet. He would have paid some of his fee to see the horrified expression on the prime minister's face when she'd seen the photos. He chuckled and nodded to a housemaid, who hurried along beside a porter. She carried an elegant monogrammed vanity case in her left hand. Her cheeks darkened with a delicate pink but she didn't say a word.

A man and woman rounded the corner. Flynn's steps faltered for an instant before he continued, a look of unconcern on his face. Damn. He hadn't wanted to run into

Princess Leila. The woman was an insatiable barracuda. She made him look like a rank beginner when it came to eating lovers and spitting them back out.

“Ah, Flynn.” The princess emphasized his name, drawing it out with her European accent. “I didn’t realize you were on the guest list.”

Flynn inclined his head, not intending to go into his family tree and his black sheep branch. “Princess Leila.” Before he could move, the princess threw herself at him and kissed him squarely on the lips. The dart of her tongue brought horror and he gripped her arms firmly, pushing her away. The woman loved games and was always playing them for kicks.

She laughed off his reaction but her eyes were hard and angry. “Have you met my bodyguard? Thomas MacIntyre?” She ran her hand down MacIntyre’s back and cupped his butt lightly before he moved away.

“We’ve met,” Thomas said with a curt nod. “Wangford.”

“MacIntyre.” Flynn suppressed a grin. The man didn’t look happy. Didn’t sound much happier but then he wouldn’t like being stuck watching Leila for the weekend either. No telling what the man would have to do to keep from her clutches.

“Ah,” Leila said, arching her dark brows. “Maybe we could get together and have a drink?”

The flirtatious tone of her voice told Flynn drinking wasn’t all she had in mind. She was still pushing even though he’d knocked her back.

“I’m sure I’ll see you at dinner,” he said, avoiding her offer.

The princess winked. “Count on it.”

With another nod, Flynn wandered off toward the main staircase, heading to the ground floor. He felt her eyes boring holes into his back until he turned the corner and disappeared from sight. Oh yeah. No doubt about it. MacIntyre had his hands full with that woman.

Flynn passed several of the other guests, nodding at yet another buxom movie starlet when she slowed.

"Hello, sexy," she cooed. "Can you tell me which way to go to get to the Birch room?" She fluttered her long dark lashes at him, breathing so deeply Flynn studied her chest with great interest. He wondered how much strain the top golden button would take.

His mouth curved in a grin. "Sure, it's just down the passage there, right next to the Ash room and opposite the Chestnut room." His room as it happened.

A bell sounded, signifying afternoon tea was ready for those who wanted it. Instead of heading out to walk around the grounds as he'd intended, Flynn changed direction, striding toward the large reception room. He was vaguely aware of the plush carpet beneath his feet and the valuable artwork decorating the walls, but his mind centered on something else. Someone else.

Lady Sarah Justice.

Flynn couldn't wait to see her again, hear the tiny sound she made at the back of her throat just before she climaxed. Of course he might have to lay out the famous Wangford charm before she succumbed again. He plucked the slender chain from beneath his shirt and ran his fingers back and forth along the gold links. No, Sarah hadn't appreciated the way he'd taken the souvenir of their time together. She could have cried thief but for some reason hadn't. Flynn had wondered why but hadn't come up with an answer to quench his curiosity.

Several of the guests were already in the reception room when he entered. Lord Maxwell held court in the middle of the floor, clutching a gift in his hands that a small child had just presented to him. Helena, his wife, watched with a smile on her face. He stooped to hug the girl, her giggly delight audible to most of the occupants in the room.

Large tapestries hung on the walls depicting several gods and goddesses whose names escaped him at the moment. An Oriental carpet covered the floor, deadening footsteps. Formerly the Great Hall, this room doubled as a reception room. The ball

would take place here later in the evening, no doubt with most of the furniture cleared to make way for the dancers and the carpet rolled out of the way. At some time in the past a Howard had ripped out and replaced the stone wall along the front with windows and a terrace overlooking some of the extensive gardens.

"Sir, if you'd like to take a seat, I can bring you a cup of tea or something stronger," one of the uniformed staff said. "Any of the vacant seats will be fine."

Flynn scanned the seats and low tables scattered around the room, his gaze coming to rest on Lady Sarah Justice. Perfect. "I'll be over there with Lady Sarah," he said, manfully holding back his smirk.

"Very well, sir. Tea? English style?"

"Thanks." Flynn didn't give a flying fuck what he drank, although it would probably be better if he didn't cloud his mind with alcohol. He needed to keep one step ahead of Sarah.

Without taking his eyes off the beautiful dark-haired woman who chatted with an elderly couple, Flynn strode across the floor, dodging a model and a singer and navigating around various pieces of furniture and potted palms. Seconds later, he sank onto the two-seater beside Sarah.

"Hello, Sarah. You're looking very beautiful today." And just because he could, Flynn leaned close and brushed a kiss on her smooth cheek. She smelled of flowers and looked like sin dressed in Sunday best.

"You," she said, her voice not far off a hiss. Her spine hit the back of the two-seater, thrusting her breasts outward.

"It's great to see you," Flynn said, suppressing a smirk at her unfriendly welcome. His gaze traveled from her breasts up to her face. The woman was a spitfire—both in bed and out—and she wouldn't have enjoyed him besting her by stealing the sapphire. He grinned lazily and winked at her before turning to face the couple. "I'm Flynn Wangford," he said, extending his hand to the male.

"Arthur Boardman. This is my wife Felicity. Is that an Australian accent I hear?" He wore a suit with a white shirt and navy and red tie. He was of an age when he wouldn't feel dressed if he ventured out in anything less formal than a suit. His wife wore a navy skirt with a lavender twin set. All very right and proper. Upper class. Flynn wondered fleetingly what they thought of the rock musicians and film starlets who wore their traditional work gear with aplomb. His gaze scanned the room. Leather and denim. Silk and lace. Suits and twin sets and everything in between. It was all very entertaining, and he would have enjoyed the weekend, if there wasn't so much at stake. Flynn dragged his mind back to the present to concentrate on the Boardmans.

"Yes, sir. It is. I'm from Sydney."

"Humph," Sarah muttered. "Bloody convict."

"I heard that, Sarah," Felicity said in a chiding manner. "It wasn't very polite."

"Ah, but she's right. My ancestors were convicts, transported to Australia for receiving stolen goods. Of good birth it's true but definitely thieves. I can hardly deny it."

"You shouldn't boast about it either," Sarah said, her nose sticking up in the air. "It's hardly something to feel proud about. Stealing a person's hard-earned property is bad form."

My, my. His grin widened. They were becoming personal now. It seemed the beautiful and sexy Lady Sarah Justice wasn't a good loser.

"Ah, here is our tea," Felicity said, adroitly steering the conversation into safer waters.

The housemaid set the tray on the table and started to distribute cups and saucers and pots of tea. Another housemaid arrived with a plate of sandwiches and one of petite pastries.

Flynn stretched and placed his right arm along the back of the two-seater. He let his fingers drift across the back of Sarah's neck, biting back a smile when she jerked away and sent a glare winging in his direction. The delicate color in her cheeks intensified,

reminding him of how she looked while making love. He knew the flush in her cheeks carried down to her full breasts. Oh yeah. Lady Sarah looked just as good in the nude.

Another elderly couple stopped to talk to the Boardmans and Flynn took the opportunity to move closer, his thigh cuddling up to Sarah's under the pretense of reaching for a pastry.

"Will you stop that?" she snapped, keeping her voice to an undertone.

"What? I thought the pastries came with the tea."

"You know very well what I'm talking about," she said. "Although why you'd think I'd be interested in you after the way you left me—" She broke off, an expression of consternation clouding her beautiful face for an instant.

"I told you I had an early flight." Flynn had no intention of skirting the subject. He felt the weight of a stare and casually glanced up to check the source. Well, well. "Are you seeing anyone?"

"No!"

"Methinks you protest rather too quickly," Flynn whispered, leaning close to drag another lungful of her delightful scent into his lungs. "I'm thinking the bodyguard might have a thing for you. Am I right?"

"No, you're not right." She didn't shift her gaze or give away a thing, but Flynn knew. Acute anticipation hit him at the prospect of a little friendly competition. "Not that it's any of your business."

Flynn chuckled. "Pour some tea for me, sweetheart."

"Please." She poured milk into two cups without asking his preference then picked up the teapot and added tea.

"Please, sweetheart. Is he good in bed?"

Her eyes narrowed to slits. The teapot clattered sharply when she set it back down. Any moment now the sparks would ignite into flames or else he'd wear his cup of tea. God, he loved her fire, the way she lived life to the fullest.

"Yes, as it happens."

"Better than me?"

Her glare turned icy cold. "Yes, again."

Meow. "That wasn't very nice," he chided.

"Your question wasn't very nice. It was rude and intrusive. But then you're not a very nice person. Are you, Mr. Wangford?"

"Flynn, sweetheart. You can call me Flynn. After all, we have been very...personal...together."

"A mistake," she snapped, jumping to her feet. "It won't happen again. Excuse me, I see a friend." Without a backward glance she strode across the room, heading for the double doors at the entrance. Flynn picked up his cup of tea and leaned back, watching the subtle sway of her hips while she crossed the room to greet the prime minister and her aide. He took a sip of the tea she'd poured for him and continued watching the trio. Hmm, a challenge. He'd always enjoyed a good challenge and Sarah certainly presented that.

At Sarah's urging, the threesome moved to an empty seating area across the room from him. They'd hardly sat when Princess Leila sailed into the room. Thomas joined her instantly and she took his arm in an intimate manner. The princess quickly scanned the room before dragging her unwilling bodyguard across the floor to join the prime minister.

Flynn watched the group carefully as they exchanged greetings and pleasantries. While he took another sip of his tea, he wondered why Leila would bother herself with the prime minister. Leila wasn't exactly known for her politicking skills. No, she was a pure social butterfly who left all the politics and negotiating to her older brother, the king of Mundavia. It was possible her brother had instructed her to court the favor of the British government for some reason.

But that didn't make sense either.

While Leila spoke to Julie Mortimer and Toby, Flynn noticed MacIntyre having a quiet word with Sarah. The private smile she gave the man tore at Flynn's gut. It spoke of intimacy and friendship. Dammit, it spoke of love. Jealousy flickered inside him—a foreign emotion that he wasn't sure he liked. Something about their closeness told him they'd slept together. Recently. They were totally at ease with each other and their intimacy showed.

"Fuck," he whispered, his tone fierce even as he acknowledged his envy that the other man had spent time alone—possibly a whole night—with the woman he coveted. His eyes narrowed. He wanted the same with Sarah, even though it was a dangerous situation for him. He knew she wanted to get her hands on the sapphire.

His property.

His mouth quirked because he knew Sarah would disagree vehemently with that. It had become a game of sorts between them, a competition with an edge, to retrieve the sapphire. Flynn frowned when MacIntyre placed his hand briefly on Sarah's back and let it slip to her curvy ass before removing it. She didn't fight the intimacy. Damn, he wanted her with an intensity bordering on pain. It was possible that the princess might help him out and stop a repeat of the situation. If he gave her the nod, she'd probably keep MacIntyre busy, but of course there would be a price. Flynn scowled. He didn't particularly want to owe the princess anything because the bottom line was he couldn't trust her. Perhaps there was another way. A laugh emerged at a naughty thought. He tossed it around a little, testing the idea.

Payback at the same time.

Perfect. Sex was all about the pleasure. He wasn't fussy if his lover was female or male. He could always seduce MacIntyre. Flynn studied the dark-haired man with renewed interest. Not a bad specimen. Flynn's cock lengthened beneath his jeans, enough that he had to surreptitiously shift position for comfort.

Ah, yes. He actually quite liked the idea.

Chapter Four

Sarah

He might look outrageously handsome with his golden tan and his blond surfer-boy looks, but Flynn Wangford was working on her last nerve. Not only did he like living dangerously and spouting the most outrageous line of talk, but he was wearing her sapphire around his neck. *Her family heirloom*. Thank goodness her granny wasn't here to see it because the sapphire held great magic, good fortune and prestige. The family believed the gemstone brought luck. And so it had, earning the family a title, but it had also gained a reputation because on the two occasions when the sapphire had left family hands, it had brought great luck to the thief while the family suffered ill-fortune.

Sarah didn't want to live under a cloud of bad luck.

"Are you all right?" Thomas asked quietly. He'd come to stand by her while the princess chatted with Julie Mortimer and she hadn't even noticed. She'd noticed Flynn all right. Her body felt as if it were on high alert, her breasts and pussy aching with sensual awareness. Once again she wondered how two men could bring such extreme reactions in her. With Thomas she felt secure and loved. With Flynn she felt wild and crazy and out of control. It was as if the two men kept her balanced, supplying different things. She snorted inwardly at the flight of fancy. Flynn was definitely addling her mind. She must concentrate on her mission to protect the prime minister. The last thing she wanted was Mr. Mark on her tail.

Sarah scowled. "I'm fine, or I will be once I strangle Flynn Wangford."

Thomas chuckled and lightly touched her back. "I didn't know you were so bloodthirsty. It's quite a turn-on."

"Humph. Mind out of the gutter."

Thomas glanced across the room, his humor fading. "Don't sleep with him."

"I wouldn't sleep with him if he were the last man on Earth. He's arrogant and...and a liar and a cheat." And he'd stolen her sapphire, dammit.

"Hmmm." Thomas looked skeptic – a doubting Thomas.

"Fine, don't believe me. It's not as if I'd have time since I'm watching out for Julie and Toby. How are you going with the princess?"

"The bloody woman has more hands than an octopus," Thomas said in disgust. "My ass will likely turn black and blue overnight."

"Aw, poor baby."

"Yeah, wish you could come and kiss my boo-boos better."

Sarah sighed. "Me too. Maybe after this mission."

"I'll hold you to that," he murmured. "I enjoyed last night."

"Is this a private conversation or can anyone join?" Audacious green eyes sparkled full of life.

Bloody Flynn Wangford. Sarah froze, her body going on high alert. She didn't know what it was about this cheeky colonial but ever since their first meeting, her hormones started hopping whenever they were in the same room, which was how she'd ended up in his bed and lost the sapphire in the first place. Sarah swallowed, knowing she'd probably have to sleep with him again to steal the sapphire back. Damn, there was a weak part in every plan.

Unfortunately Flynn knew she and Thomas worked for Spies Anonymous since they'd met during earlier missions, but maybe this wasn't such a big FUBAR after all. Maybe they could use this to their advantage. "What are you doing?" she demanded, deciding to take the offensive. "You keep away from Julie and Toby. Right away."

Flynn just grinned, unabashed at being taken to task. "You gonna make me?"

"Julie and Toby have nothing to hide. They've come out in the open with their relationship this weekend. You know and I know those photos depicting the three of you were fakes. Julie and Toby have nothing to worry about."

"Ah, but think of the damage I could do meantime, the mischief I could cause. I could make the country fall to its knees—or at least the Conservative party."

"You've already caused problems," Thomas said in a low growl. "You sold the photos to the rebels, given them the ability to start a rebellion."

"Shit happens." Flynn folded his arms across his broad chest. "Try telling someone who cares. I make my living any way I can."

"Yeah, that's right. You don't care as long as you get the money. You don't care who you hurt," Thomas said. "You've fueled a damned rebellion in Mundavia. Innocent people are going to die."

Flynn shrugged. "A business transaction. Nothing personal. Ah, looks like your princess is on the move." He wagged his fingers in a goodbye motion. "Toodle pip."

Thomas cursed. "See you later, Sarah." He stalked off after the princess.

Sarah turned back to Flynn. His smug smile made her want to hit him. Nothing personal. Yeah, right. *Try telling that to Julie Mortimer. She was the one dealing with the fallout and the gossip in the press.* The rebels had released the photos of Julie and Toby to show they were serious, but so far, they'd kept their word, and the photos including Flynn Wangford remained private and unpublished. She glowered at Flynn. The arrogant so-and-so was heading for a fall, and she was just the one to give him a push.

"Go away," she snapped, trying not to react too openly to his handsome face. "Leave Julie and Toby alone."

"I'll go." Flynn moved closer and cupped her cheek briefly—the merest touch—before smiling. The stainless steel band of his watch was cool against her cheek. "I'm in the Chestnut room, if you get lonely tonight."

Sarah gave an inelegant snort. "In your dreams."

"See you later, sweetheart." Flynn kissed her on the lips and strode off in the same direction the princess and Thomas had taken.

"I can't believe the brass balls of the man," Toby muttered in disgust.

"It's too late now," Julie said in a soft voice. "The mischief is done. We've counteracted with damage control as best we can. All we can do now is wait and offer aid to the Mundavia royal family should they require it. You know we don't deal with terrorists. That's not going to change no matter who they are or which group they belong to."

Sarah smiled at the prime minister and settled on an empty chair next to them.

"Darling, I don't know how you can remain so calm." Toby's hands clenched and unclenched around his teacup. "Every time I see that man, I want to commit a violent act."

Sarah knew just how Toby felt, except her feelings ran the gamut from violence to hot and heavy sex.

"One day he'll skirt the law a little too closely," Julie said. "We have more important things to worry about."

"Problem?" Sarah asked.

"Politics," Julie said with a smile. "Maneuvering among the ranks. It will sort itself out in a while."

"Have you finished your tea, Julie?" Toby asked. "The meeting starts in five minutes."

"I thought this weekend was purely social," Sarah said.

"The prime minister is always on the job," Toby said dryly. "We usually manage to fit in a few meetings. This weekend is no exception."

"I know you're meant to watch us, but the meeting is going to last for at least three hours and we intend to go to our room directly afterward until dinner. Why don't you enjoy yourself until dinner? Join the others playing croquet on the lawn."

Sarah nodded, appreciating the offer. "I'll escort you to your meeting." Besides, it might give her an opportunity to search Flynn's room or even better, lift the sapphire before the weekend party fully started. Oh yeah. The thought of snaring the gem

quickly made the adrenaline surge. It had nothing to do with the fact she might tangle with Flynn in an intimate manner. Nothing at all.

The threesome stood and Sarah escorted them to a room in the west wing of the castle. Their footsteps echoed on the highly polished wooden floor of the sunroom that they passed through to get to the meeting. It was really more of a conservatory with one wall consisting of windows. Tasteful nude statues inhabited small alcoves and there were casual seating areas designed for lovers to linger and enjoy the view out over the garden. At night with the gardens illuminated by colored lights, the view was both romantic and attractive. Sarah remembered another night, a few months ago, when she'd spent a few delicious hours with Thomas. Her body tingled at the memory.

"Are you sure you don't want me to wait for you?" Sarah asked.

"Don't be silly," Julie said. "The attendees will probably walk back to the accommodation wing together anyway. Toby and I will make sure we're not alone."

Sarah nodded and forced a smile when another thought occurred. What if Flynn had decided to film the couple again? She'd check their room while they were at the meeting. It would cause less alarm if they weren't aware of her search. "Have fun."

Ten minutes later, Sarah let herself into the prime minister's room and pocketed the set of picklocks she'd used to open the secured door. She relocked the door and stood for an instant to soak in the ambience of the room. This was definitely one of the better rooms available to guests. Decorated in shades of greens and browns, it was restful and yet chic. The bed was king-size and modern while the rest of the furniture and artwork were antique. Somehow it all worked together. Sarah started her search, systematically going through the room. Nothing. Her breath eased out with a relieved hiss. One less thing to worry about.

A sudden sound made Sarah freeze. A key in the door. Damn, it wasn't Julie or Toby because they were in their meeting. Housekeeping? Sarah slipped out of sight, pressing up against the wall that was flush with the door, and waited for the new arrival to enter.

The door creaked sharply when it opened. The person froze before sliding inside and shutting it again. Sarah glared at the blond man and sprang, determined to take him by surprise. They crashed to the floor with Flynn taking the brunt of the fall. She pinned him without difficulty, which made her suspicious. The man was bigger, stronger than her and they both knew it. He was on the bottom of the heap because that was exactly where he wanted to be. The bag he'd carried had fallen to the floor during their brief scuffle. It dug into her hipbone and she wriggled out of range. Her move rubbed their groins together and she realized he was aroused. She froze, mortified by her body's instant betrayal, the dewing between her legs.

"Fancy meeting you here."

Sarah's irritation rose when she realized excitement swept through her body. Wrestling with him had turned her on. How sick was that? "What are you doing here?"

Dark blond brows rose and his lips twitched in the beginnings of a grin. "What are you doing here?"

"I asked first." No mistaking her mood for anything but snippy.

"Room service?"

"Huh! I think not." Her brows drew together. At this rate she was going to have a permanent frown. "What have you got in your bag?"

"I packed lunch," he said smoothly.

"Open it."

"How can I with you sitting on me?" A reasonable question given the circumstances but it made a growl rumble deep in her throat. The man was impossible. She shifted slightly and he pounced, rolling them both over so quickly she gazed up at him, her lips forming an O of astonishment. *Shit.*

Sarah stared at the bronzed skin visible in the V of his shirt. She hated him. She really did. Oh yeah, she hated him, but he made her desperate for sex. At the moment

all she could think of was licking her tongue across the smooth V of skin. She trembled, a soft moan emerging unbidden.

"Ah, Sarah," he murmured, his voice huskier than normal. He lowered his head and pressed a kiss to her lips. When she didn't react or protest in any manner, he took the kiss deeper, nibbling at her lips and soothing the sting with his tongue.

Damn the man. She couldn't resist him. *She didn't want to resist him.* And even worse, she didn't trust him. That fact alone should have made her cautious. Damn hormones.

He took the kiss deeper, pressing her into the thick, soft carpet, fitting his body into hers.

Sarah ripped her mouth away from his, panting. "No. No! I don't want this."

"Liar. Of course you want it. We both do."

Damn, she might as well wear an illuminated sign above her head. Great spy she was. "We're in the prime minister's room."

"She's at a meeting."

"How do you know?"

"I make it my business to know these things," Flynn said.

Because he was a rogue and a thief on the lookout for opportunity. "Let me up."

"Sure," he said, rolling smoothly to his feet. He held out his hand to her. "We'll continue this in my room."

Sarah was about to give him a blunt no when she noticed the gold chain around his neck. "All right." She managed to surprise him with her cool reply, saw it in the slight widening of his beautiful green eyes. Maybe that was the way to do it. Keep the man off balance. Well heck. She could do that without a problem. Sarah accepted his extended hand and stood.

The corner of his mouth curved upward in a half smile. "You're agreeing to come to my room? I'm not offering you a cup of tea and a friendly chat."

"No?"

"I had something more elemental in mind. Perhaps I'd better show you before you change your mind." Flynn picked up his bag and went to the door. He opened it a crack and peeked outside into the corridor. "All clear. Coming?"

Sarah knew she was making a mistake but she still slipped from the room and walked at Flynn's side, her body humming with anticipation. Every step she took tugged at her sensitive flesh. Her panties pulled across her swollen folds. The built-in support of her camisole top rubbed back and forth against her nipples. Her full skirt swished against the tender skin of her inner thighs. Sarah suppressed a shiver of pure longing. To take her mind off the urgent need thrumming through her veins, she asked, "What are you doing here this weekend?"

"Lord Howard invited me. It's his birthday."

"That wasn't what I meant," Sarah said, although why she'd expected a straight answer, she didn't know.

Flynn stopped at the door of the Chestnut room and opened it. Sarah suppressed a snort. He hadn't even locked the door. Arrogant. He stood aside for her to enter, closing the door the instant she stepped inside.

Trapped.

Her heart beat a little faster.

Now what did she do? How did she part him from the sapphire?

Seduce him then knock him over the head. That was the answer. *The solution.* Sarah's jaw lifted a fraction when she turned to him. This was no time for squeamishness. She wanted the sapphire. It was hers...as long as she acted decisively and took it.

"I came because I knew you would be here," Flynn said. "And of course, Helena likes to have family stay. She's classy that way."

Sarah frowned and cocked her head to the side. He what? One look at his face told her he meant it. He was telling the truth. "You had my phone number. If you wanted to see me that badly you could have rung."

Accusation hung in the air between them. The last time they'd been together he'd slipped away with her sapphire during the early hours of the morning. A memento, according to him. She maintained it was theft.

Flynn maintained his silence, his infuriating smirk fully intact.

"You have something of mine," Sarah said in a hard voice. She prowled toward him, backing him into the nearest wall. His back hit with a dull thud.

"Your heart?" he asked, his green eyes laughing at her.

Sarah stilled, gentling the grip she had on his biceps to seductive. She trailed her finger across his cheek and traced his mouth. "Quite possibly."

Flynn groaned. The green of his eyes darkened to jade. "I thought you worked for a spy agency. Aren't spies meant to lie through their teeth?"

"I might be lying," she whispered, leaning into him. She traced the curves of his mouth again.

Without warning, he opened his mouth and drew her finger inside. Heat suffused her body like a tidal wave. All-consuming. She gasped. His tongue swept across the tender pad of her finger and he sucked, his lips tight around her finger. Sarah's eyes drifted shut to concentrate on the sensation. Her knees weakened and she slumped against his chest. Flynn picked her up and strode to the bed. Seconds later she hit the mattress. Sarah swallowed and her eyes flickered open when he unbuckled her shoes. One at a time, he dropped the delicate sandals onto the carpet. It was time to call this off now...if she was going to. She thought briefly of Thomas and a sliver of guilt swept through her. She hardened her heart. Whatever got the job done. She wanted that sapphire and she intended to get it.

Flynn massaged one of her feet until she slowly relaxed again, sinking into the mattress with a moan of pleasure. Gradually he moved his hands up her legs, kneading the muscles in her calves, gliding beneath her skirt and upward to her inner thighs.

"What? No weapons? What sort of a spy are you?" he mocked, busy fingers stroking the silky skin.

"I have a gun in my bag," she said after rolling her eyes at him. Sarah could have told him she was competent, extremely competent, in improvisation and especially when it came to weapons. There were weapons everywhere if a person used their imagination.

His brows rose. "Where is your bag?"

"In my room."

"Ah. Good thing we didn't go to your room then."

Sarah laughed at his exaggerated grimace and barely resisted the need to purr when he continued to pet and tease her, gradually moving his fingers closer and closer to her core.

"God, you're beautiful. I dreamed about you last night." To her regret, Flynn removed his hands from beneath her skirt and moved up the bed. He smiled down at her. "I woke up hard and aching. Had to jerk off before I could sleep. I thought about you when I came and remembered what it felt like climaxing inside you, the tight squeeze of your pussy around my cock. The soft sighs you make when you come."

Ah, heck. She remembered too. And how good it felt with his long, thick cock filling her, stretching her. The climax. Her toes curled just thinking about it. *Them*. She smirked slightly. They'd done it more than once. Yep, hot and heavy vigorous sex several times.

"That's a dirty smirk if ever I saw one."

Sarah didn't comment, merely wished he'd hurry up. Dammit, who said she had to wait for him to move? Her smirk widened and she rolled, pushing him back onto the

mattress and straddling his body. He was bigger than her, stronger, but she still managed to surprise him.

He grinned up at her. "Do your worst."

She dragged off his slip-on shoes and dropped them beside the bed. No socks. That made it easier. With nimble fingers she unfastened the buttons on his shirt, freezing slightly when her gaze lit on the sapphire hanging from the chain around his neck. Sarah forced a smile and pushed the blue shirt aside, pretending calm even though her pulse fluttered like a panicked bird. The sapphire—it was right there for the taking. Her gaze slid to the right and then the left, searching for something to thump him over the head with.

"If it's any help, I have an extremely hard head. You'd have to hit me pretty hard to knock me out."

Sarah stilled, her mouth wreathed in a frown, and looked at him. Unwillingly. The cheeky colonial bore a toothy smile and it pissed her off, making her more determined than ever to gain possession of the sapphire. But not this afternoon. Obviously. She needed to lull him into a false sense of security. Yeah, let his cocky confidence runneth over. She would have the last laugh. And meanwhile, she'd enjoy herself.

"I don't know what floor your brain is on, but you're mistaken," she said in a haughty voice. She could do upper-class disdain with the best of them.

Flynn merely leered at her. In fact he was grinning so hard a cute dimple had sprung to life. She fingered the indentation at the corner of his mouth before replacing her finger with her lips. It disappeared and when she raised her head, his humor had disappeared.

"How about sitting up a bit so I can take off your shirt?"

Wordlessly, he followed her prompt before lying back down, his green eyes hot and full of sin when they watched her. She leaned over to taste him, licking along his collarbone. He tasted faintly of salt and musky male. Sarah ran her hand across his biceps and explored his chest, kissing, licking and giving in to the need to bite as well.

She let his reactions tell her what he liked, in no hurry to finish. Lull. Yeah, she was busy calming his suspicions. She flicked her tongue over his masculine nipples in a provocative manner, feeling the thunder of his heart beneath her cheek and glorying in the low moan at the back of his throat.

Sarah sat back and noted his erection with satisfaction.

"Are you going to make me suffer?" he asked, his voice husky.

"Why would I do that?" Sarah unbuckled his belt and unsnapped his jeans. He lifted his hips for her and she tugged the denim down his lean hips, leaving him dressed in black briefs and nothing else. "Condoms?"

"In the side pocket of my bag."

Sarah grabbed a couple and wriggled out of her clothes before returning to the bed.

"Nice," he said.

"I didn't say you could take off your briefs."

He shrugged. "I wanted to hurry things along."

Desire kicked in her belly. The man was gorgeous.

"Come here."

"I'm not sure I'm ready for you yet," Sarah said. She cupped one breast and fingered her nipple, tugging strongly on it until she felt a corresponding pulse in her pussy.

"I can fix that," Flynn said with a lazy grin.

"I'm not helpless."

"I never said you were. What I am is impatient."

A heavy pulsating sensation started at the intimate juncture of her thighs. She licked her lips and saw he watched avidly. Good. She had his attention. That was very good. She licked her finger and stroked it around her nipple until a glistening circle showed.

"I don't react well to teasing," he said. "Especially when I'm impatient."

Ah, but she was enjoying it. She was wet and ready for him, arousal simmering through her like a magic tonic, but where was the fun in surrender? Sarah widened her stance and let her fingers drift down her body, slipping her fingers between her legs. Flynn groaned when he heard the wet sound of arousal.

"That's it. I warned you."

He moved so fast she scarcely had time to blink. One second she stood and the next she was beneath him on the bed. He held her in place with his weight, straddling her body. His cock waved in front of her mouth and she wrapped her lips around him, licking across the flared head.

"Jaysus." His large frame shuddered when she stroked the sensitive underside and used light suction. "No, sweetheart," he said, although it was obvious he pulled away with real regret. "Not that way. Not this time." He made quick work of putting on the condom and rolled her onto her stomach. Parting her legs, he rubbed his cock across her swollen folds.

Sarah's mouth was dry, her heart throbbing while flames engulfed her entire body. He slipped one hand beneath her belly, lifting her for his first stroke. She felt the gentle prod at her entrance and the tentative pressure to embed his cock. Sarah shivered, biting her lip against the pleasure she felt with the slow stretching. Slowly he filled her moist, aching pussy. She swallowed, drowning in the sensations. For once she was glad of the dominant position he'd placed himself in. She certainly didn't want him to see how much he'd unraveled her, how much she was enjoying his possession.

Fully embedded, he paused and kissed along her spine. Sarah moaned, her breathing unsteady. "Please. Please, I need you to move."

"Good idea." The whisper was languid and lazy and he stroked in and out of her body in the same way.

The flames turned molten. Her breasts ached for his touch. Her clit throbbed but still he kept his thrusts slow and easy. The spicy tang of arousal filled the air. Her hips jerked while raw need built higher and higher.

"Do you want me to touch you?" She was becoming wetter and wetter while his cock seemed to swell to impossibly big inside her womb. She teetered on the edge of climax.

"Yes," she whimpered. "Please."

He slipped his finger between her legs and rubbed with the lightest of touches while continuing to thrust. Sarah squeezed her eyes closed, concentrating on the sensations. Momentum gathered rapidly with the teasing of his finger across her clit, the savage throb shattering into a maelstrom of pleasure that brought a gasp. Flynn thrust harder. Once. Twice. And then with a groan that was half curse, he stilled and she felt the pulse of his cock deep inside. It triggered another series of mini explosions in Sarah. She bit her lip. Two men. Great sex both times. Oh boy. Talk about a pickle. She bit down harder to force herself to focus and get with the program.

A long moment later, Flynn pulled free and dealt with the condom before rejoining her on the bed and tugging her against his chest. He was sweaty and hot but it didn't matter. She was sure she'd lulled him sufficiently to grab the sapphire...

Sarah woke suddenly, disorientated for a moment. Naked but warm. Slowly, she turned her head toward the source of the warmth. Flynn Wangford. Oh shit. She remembered now. His eyes were closed and his breathing steady. He wore the sapphire around his neck, the rich blue shining in the last of the afternoon sun. Without further thought, she reached for the chain, intending to rip it off his neck.

"Oh no you don't." Flynn seized her wrist before she grabbed the chain. "I was wondering if you were going to try to take it."

"Why shouldn't I? It's mine."

"Possession is nine-tenths of the law. Don't you think it's time to head back to your room? You'll need to dress for dinner and the ball afterward. And won't you be on duty for most of the night?"

Sarah checked her watch and cursed inwardly. Bloody cocky Australian was right, dammit. She had until midnight before she could relax her vigilance since Mr. Mark had arranged extra cover in the form of security guards. Anger sliced through her, icy and full of frustration. "I should have conked you over the head with your water jug."

"Ah, but, Sarah, you like to play fair. It's a nice little quirk you have, one that suits me fine."

Sarah muttered under her breath and bound off the bed. Aware of his eyes taking in the naked lines of her body, she grabbed her clothes and dressed rapidly. She wouldn't make the mistake of going out without her gun again. Next time she'd shoot first and ask questions later.

"I'll see you at dinner. Save me a dance?"

"Not if I see you first," she retorted, her mind working furiously. There must be some way to get that sapphire. "And you stay away from Julie and Toby. I know you had your camera gear in that bag."

"Aw, come on, Sarah. Don't be such a sore loser."

Huh! She'd give him sore loser. Sarah perched on an uncomfortable antique chair to put on her shoes, aware of his interested gaze the entire time. Fuming silently, she stood and strode to the door. She opened the door to inspect the corridor. When she found it was empty, she slipped out, but not before hearing his final words.

"Come back again, you hear. It was fun."

"In his dreams," she muttered. When she'd regained possession of the sapphire, he wouldn't hold on to his cavalier attitude quite as easily.

Chapter Five

Thomas

God, Sarah looked beautiful. It had been difficult to refrain from staring at her all during the long six-course dinner. She wore a close-fitting blue dress—about the same color as the sapphire. Thomas wondered if she'd worn that particular color on purpose. Probably. Sarah was an intelligent woman who loved a good challenge and she wasn't above issuing her own. That was what he loved about her—her pure spunkiness and the way she faced each situation head-on with a wide streak of integrity. He spied Flynn Wangford across the other side of the dance floor and cursed. The Australian was watching Sarah like a hungry dog eyed a meal. Thomas scowled, not liking the idea of competition. Sarah belonged to him—she just didn't know it yet.

He turned back to watch Sarah. Thin straps held up the bodice of her gown while her soft curves were on full display. A side split displayed a creamy thigh with each step she took. Sapphire studs twinkled at her ears but other than that she didn't wear jewelry—didn't need it. She wore her dark hair in loose curls that fell on her shoulders and carried a small beaded bag in a darker blue. His mouth pursed thoughtfully. The bag was big enough to fit a gun. He wondered if she were carrying tonight. As a rule, she preferred not to use guns and it worked for her. The woman was a genius when it came to using everyday items as weapons.

"Thomas, darling. I want to dance."

Thomas froze for an instant before turning to the princess. "I'm your bodyguard, not a toy for you to play with."

"But you're so pretty to look at. You could be my boy toy."

"I don't mix business with pleasure," he said in a stiff voice—every inch the Englishman.

"Really?" One neatly plucked brow rose in a taunting manner. "Why are you studying Lady Sarah Justice so closely then?"

"She's an attractive woman. I'm not the only man tonight who is enjoying the view." Thomas took a moment to glance at Sarah again and froze. Her dress appeared red—the bright color of fresh blood. When he breathed deeply he could smell the coppery scent of it in the air. He blinked rapidly, his heart pounding, and when he checked again, Sarah's dress was blue once more. Hell. He inhaled deeply, trying to grasp the reins of control.

A bit difficult when he knew someone was going to die. Bloody vision. His charge was unharmed, even though she didn't deserve to be. Quite a few of her acquaintances and the men she cast off casually like laddered stockings probably wished her to the devil for her selfish ways. He scanned the rest of the room. The prime minister was present with Toby. They were fine. No one had died. Yet. He hoped they'd keep it that way but knew it wasn't likely, not with his vision. "Damn," he whispered, unsure of what to do. He couldn't blurt it out because people thought it was crazy mumbo-jumbo.

"Are you going to dance with me or not?" Princess Petulant to the fore.

"How about if I introduce you to one of my friends? I'm sure you could convince him to dance with you and that would leave me to watch over you, like I'm meant to."

The princess stepped closer and stood on tiptoe so their mouths were almost touching. "I'm very, very good in bed."

"I'll let my friend know."

"That's not what I meant." It was easy to discern her irritation since her accent deepened and became more prominent.

"Princess, really, I thank you for your offer and turn it down with regret. Though I promise you will like my friend."

"I hope he's more respectful than you," the princess snapped.

"It makes you see me as a challenge," Thomas corrected, smiling at her with the first honest smile he'd used since meeting her.

Princess Leila grinned suddenly, an open, sunny smile telling him everything would be all right. "You're probably right. I like a challenge. Since you're not interested, where is this friend of yours?"

"He's chatting with Elizabeth Hurley. You know, the model and movie star."

The princess followed the casual jerk of his head with her gaze, her mouth rounding and her brown eyes sparkling. "Very nice," she approved. "Very well. Introduce me."

Thomas led the princess around the dance floor. It was a slow, tedious business since the princess felt it necessary to stop and flirt with just about every male she passed on the way. Luckily for Thomas, Jason had taken one look at the princess and fallen hard. Thomas had tried to tell his old friend the woman was a man-eater and would toss him away like all the others, but it hadn't made the slightest difference. Jason had said it made her interesting. His friend had promised not to leave the princess' side the entire evening, as long as the attraction was mutual. Thomas mentally crossed his fingers but when he'd thought of the idea earlier this morning, he'd seen a vision of the two naked in bed. He knew the two would hit it off, leaving him free to pursue both Sarah and the sapphire. And besides, he trusted Jason and the man was ex-military.

All he needed to do was get the couple together so it could happen. At this rate, they'd still be circling the dance floor this time tomorrow night.

"Princess, that new movie starlet—you know the one in the soap everyone is talking about..."

"Yes?" Princess Leila pouted at the interruption.

"She is making a move on my friend, and you know what sort of reputation she has."

"Darling, please excuse me," she said to the ruddy-faced lord. "There's someone I simply must speak with. Come along, Thomas. We'll never catch up with him if we stop to chat!"

Thomas bit back a retort, inclining his head instead. He pressed his hand to the small of her back and guided her through the crowd. Finally they reached Jason.

"Jason, I'd like you to meet Princess Leila of Mundavia. Jason and I went to Cambridge together."

Jason took the princess's hand and placed a lingering kiss on the back. Thomas grunted. His friend did sophistication well. He watched the princess closely but was fairly confident with his vision. At least he hoped the vision was of this particular weekend since he was in trouble if it wasn't!

"Why don't you go and enjoy yourself?" the princess said in a throaty voice.

Thomas suppressed a grin when he noticed her heightened color. Well, well. This was interesting. He'd never seen her blush before. In fact, if asked, he would have said it was impossible. "Thanks, I will. Take care, huh?" He looked at Jason when he said it. Jason's surreptitious nod reassured him. His friend worked for Spies Anonymous on a casual basis. No one would harm the princess while Jason was on duty.

He ambled off, blending with the crowd. Sarah sat with the prime minister's party, a splash of blue amongst all the black. He knew she would remain there for the rest of the evening or until Julie Mortimer left and returned to her room. Sarah was dedicated and took her job very seriously, which was good for him, since he intended to have a private talk with Flynn Wangford. Thomas scanned the crowded reception room and finally caught sight of the man just as he slipped outdoors. Good. That would make their confrontation easier.

Thomas skirted the crowds of visitors seated and standing around the edge of the huge ballroom. Overhead the chandeliers blazed with light while a string orchestra and a well-known diva took care of the music. Lord Howard held court, flushed from drinking toasts at dinner. A young starlet gripped his elbow, looking as if she'd never

let go. Judging by the looks Howard kept sending her, Thomas didn't think the woman had a problem. Howard didn't want her to leave. His wife Helena however, might have other ideas.

Both the prime minister and Toby were dancing but not together. Additional guests had arrived to attend the ball and Thomas didn't recognize the man dancing with the prime minister. A flash of blue confirmed who Toby's dance partner was—Sarah. Hell, she was beautiful. He couldn't wait to jump into bed with her again even though he knew he'd have to wait until this weekend was over. Some things were worth waiting for.

Thomas checked his watch and slipped out the same patio doors Flynn Wangford had used. Quarter to eleven. He frowned. Not long to go until midnight. He was going to run out of time if he weren't careful.

It was much cooler outside and very welcome after the clammy warmth inside. A breeze ruffled his hair and picked up his tie, tossing it over his shoulder. Thomas couldn't see Flynn and chose a path at random. It led between beds of roses, their scent full and fragrant. Headly. The gardens were beautiful but all Thomas could think of was finding Flynn. It was a compulsion.

A feminine laugh snagged his attention. The maze. He headed in that direction but didn't really believe Flynn was dallying with an anonymous woman in the maze. Thomas scowled. He'd seen the expression on the man's face, the way he watched Sarah when he didn't think anyone else was looking. His frown intensified. He knew Sarah loved him. He had to hold on to the thought. In the end only one could win...

Thomas decided to bypass the maze, instinct telling him the man with the laughing woman wasn't Flynn. He strode past a fountain, the water playing in uneven musical spurts. Still no sign of Flynn. Bloody Australian. The man had annoying down to an art yet he managed it with a charming grin at the same time. Thomas gave his head an impatient shake and scowled.

He kept searching, aware of the passing time. Turning yet another corner in the huge garden, Thomas spied the summerhouse. A silhouette showed in the window. "Bingo," he whispered, recognizing Flynn's profile.

The door of the summerhouse was unlocked. Thomas opened it and stepped inside, shutting the door after him.

"That you, Thomas?"

The man had seen him. "Yeah." Thomas' heart gave an erratic thump. He walked toward the dim area where Flynn stood, stopping in front of the other man. "Keeping out of trouble?"

"Always," Flynn said with a broad grin that was visible even in the poor light.

"Yeah right, mate. You couldn't keep out of trouble if you tried." Thomas took a deep breath. He needed to get the sapphire.

Whatever it took.

Flynn's smile took on a challenging air.

Working on instinct, Thomas stepped nearer, close enough for him to smell the other man's spicy aftershave. He closed the remaining distance between them, placed his hands on Flynn's shoulder and kissed him full on the lips. Flynn stilled, giving a start of surprise before he kissed Thomas back, tilting his head so their lips met in the perfect fit. Thomas groaned deep in his throat. Man that felt good – the bruising grip of Flynn's hands at his shoulders, the softer touch of his lips and the brush of their erections. From zero to go in thirty seconds...

Thomas opened his mouth and took the kiss deeper, twirling his tongue with Flynn's and sucking lightly. It was like setting a match to a box of fireworks. Explosive. Spectacular. He took great pleasure in Flynn's moan, the reflexive grip at his shoulders and the increasing tension in the other man's large frame.

"Wait!" Flynn tore his mouth away, panting. His gaze was troubled when he looked at Thomas. "Are you sure this is a good idea?"

"Hell if I know," Thomas said with a shrug. "It sure feels good."

Flynn grinned. "You're not wrong, but do we carry on?" His smile died while he watched Thomas closely.

"Do you want to?"

A snort emerged. "Answer a question with a question, why don't you?" Flynn grasped Thomas' hands and pressed them to his groin. "Does this feel like disinterest to you?"

"More questions, huh?"

"Fuck, I'd be happy to get an answer." No mistaking the sarcasm there.

Thomas cupped Flynn's erection and gently massaged. The big blond closed his eyes and pushed against his hand to get more pressure. Pleasure simmered across his tanned face, the same pleasure that washed through Thomas' veins. "I need you."

Flynn's eyes popped open. "Now you're talking. Come back here where it's a bit darker and take off your shirt. I want to touch."

"So this isn't gonna be a quickie?"

"Hell no."

A smile formed on Thomas' lips and he ripped off his jacket and tie, started unbuttoning his shirt even as he moved toward the far end of the summerhouse with Flynn. His clothes left a trail. A pleasant buzz filled him, the pooling of blood in his groin enjoyable rather than at the painful not-gonna-stop stage.

"Here," Flynn said, jerking his shirt and loosened bow tie off, discarding them haphazardly.

"We're right in front of a window back here," Thomas said, glancing out at the moonlit garden.

"It's the rear of the summerhouse. Besides, all the guests are roaming around the formal gardens with its pretty lights. I doubt they'll venture this far from the ballroom."

"You did."

"I wanted privacy," Flynn said.

Thomas' brows rose. "Do you want me to go?"

"Hell no!" Flynn ran his fingers across Thomas' mouth and bumped against his groin. "I need you too."

"Lube? Condoms?"

"Yeah, I was a freakin' Boy Scout. Always prepared, mate." Flynn chuckled. "You want me to finish undressing you?"

Thomas thought about the other man's hands on his body. His heart jolted, racing into an excited beat. He swallowed before nodding. "Yeah."

"Come here then." Flynn unbuttoned the last couple of buttons Thomas hadn't already unfastened on his shirt and peeled the heavy cotton off his shoulders. He flung it aside before bending his head to lave one flat nipple. He followed it up with a sharp nip.

Thomas shivered at the quiver of nerve endings and lifted his hands to cup the other man's head, enjoying the springy texture of his short blond hair beneath his palms.

Flynn unbuckled his belt and slipped cool hands beneath his black trousers to cup and knead his buttocks. "I wanna go slowly but that's not gonna happen."

"I don't need slow right now," Thomas said. All he wanted was this brash man. Right here. Right now.

"Good call. Better get your shoes first. I don't want any clothes to get in the way."

Thomas glanced through the window but knew Flynn was right. It was unlikely anyone would see them and quite frankly, when Flynn touched him like that, he didn't really give a shit. He stood patiently while the other man dealt with his laces and slipped his shoes and socks off his feet. Flynn slid his trousers and boxers down his legs, letting his cock spring free. The man stood still while Thomas repeated the favor.

Finally they were both naked. They stared at each other, as if taking measure of each other.

"We gonna do this?" Flynn asked.

A blip of excitement shot straight to Thomas' cock. He went to answer and had to clear his throat. "Yeah." And to emphasize his decision, he leaned in to kiss Flynn. Their lips slid together slow and easy. They were both big men, broad and powerful, of similar heights. They rubbed their bodies together, going slowly despite their earlier need for speed. Thomas cupped Flynn's buttocks and ran a finger between until he reached the puckered entrance. He rubbed his finger back and forth with varying amounts of pressure, wringing a groan from Flynn.

"Damn that feels good. More." He shook his booty from side to side in a show of encouragement.

Thomas pushed his finger inside and Flynn's eyes fluttered closed. He groped for Thomas' cock and pumped, stroking his hand over the sensitive underside until moisture leaked freely from the head.

"Another finger," Flynn ordered. The man actually squirmed and pushed against his fingers, drawing him deeper inside. Slowly Thomas stretched him, preparing him for entry. "Mate." Flynn sighed, punctuating it with a sharp quiver. "I love the way you do that."

"Condom," Thomas snarled, withdrawing his fingers in a sudden rush. "I'm topping."

"No arguments from me, mate." He sauntered over to his trousers and removed a condom and a sachet of lube from his wallet, handing them over to Thomas. Grinning, he pressed a lingering kiss to Thomas' mouth. Then he turned and pressed his hands flat on the nearest wall. "Have at me."

Thomas rolled the condom down his cock and ripped open the packet of lube. He squeezed the cool gel over his fingers and smeared some over his encased cock before turning to Flynn. With his heart thudding he bent him over farther and rubbed the lube

into his hole. He carefully stretched him again, scissoring his fingers and stroking across the other man's gland. Flynn moaned his pleasure, one hand dropping from the wall to stroke his own cock. He turned his head so Thomas could kiss him on the lips.

Shaking with need, Thomas pressed his cock forward and pressed slowly inside Flynn. "You okay?"

"Yeah. I've done this before. Move a bit faster. You're not going to hurt me."

Thomas took him at his word, thrusting without his previous tentativeness. Hell, it felt good, the tight squeeze and the muscular body he was holding. He changed the angle of his strokes just a fraction and Flynn moaned loudly. He couldn't last much longer. He increased the pace, his balls drawing up so tightly they ached. A familiar prickle started at the base of his spine.

"Yeah, like that," Flynn muttered.

Thomas was dimly aware of the other man shaking. He thrust again, his climax roaring through him, his cock spurting for long moments. Thomas pulled from Flynn and removed the condom. He turned the other man away from the wall and pulled him into his arms. They kissed slowly. When Thomas opened his eyes, the first thing he saw was the sapphire. Ah, yes. About that sapphire...

* * * * *

Sarah – Smoke and Mirrors

"Go and have some fun," Julie said. "You don't want to be stuck with us all night. Besides, Toby and I intend to stay here for the rest of the evening. It's when we're on our own that we seem to get into trouble." Her mouth twisted in a grimace at the dark humor of her words.

Sarah had seen Flynn disappear and later Thomas. Her gut had tightened and niggling aches arced across her temples, a sure sign of impending doom. She had to get her hands on the sapphire. There was no other alternative. This might be her only

chance. She checked her watch. Shit, it was almost midnight. "Are you sure?" she asking, glancing from the prime minister to Toby.

"We're sure," Toby said. "We promise not to leave the ballroom."

"The restrooms are outside."

"We went after dinner," Julie said in a prim voice that made Sarah chuckle.

"Okay, you've convinced me. Take care, please?"

"We will. Enjoy the rest of your evening."

With a wave Sarah wandered toward the nearest exit, glad to escape the constant chatter and celebratory shouting along with the wail of the singer's voice. In Sarah's opinion, she shouldn't attempt to sing the Shania Twain ballad. It was singer suicide. Although she could have exited via the terrace doors, she decided to leave through the main ballroom entrance in the hope of meeting up with fewer partygoers. The instant she left the ballroom, the assault on her ears lessened and her tense shoulders relaxed. Now all she needed to do was find the sapphire.

Sarah checked Flynn's room first. Simple since he'd left the door open again. The room was empty and of course, he hadn't been stupid enough to leave the sapphire sitting on the bedside table. Sarah stomped to her room and pulled a small gun from her evening bag. She strapped the gun to her thigh and checked to make sure it wasn't visible when she walked. Perfect. No one would suspect she was armed and now the bag wouldn't hinder her, leaving both hands free. Sarah left her room and on impulse stopped via Thomas' room. No one answered her tap. Frowning, she decided to check the rest of the public rooms on the ground floor before going outside to search the gardens. Flynn Wangford could be anywhere. Heck, the man was probably shackled up with a lover, not giving her a second thought despite the way they'd spent the afternoon. Heat suffused Sarah's cheeks. No doubt about it—she'd made it easy for him to seduce her. Yep, an easy woman. That was her.

Rapidly, she searched the downstairs rooms. Her search yielded nothing. She opened the library door and heard a groan. Sarah reached for the light switch just inside the door and turned it on. A muffled curse sounded from the far corner.

A pasty-white bottom quivered, the muscles bunching before it disappeared from her line of sight. Sarah clapped a hand to her mouth to stifle the laughter bubbling up inside.

"This room is taken," a man said, his very proper English accent taking on a tinge of panic.

"So sorry," Sarah said, backing up. That bottom did not belong to Flynn. His was tanned, muscular. Beautiful enough to entice a girl to bite. She opened the door to leave the lovers to it.

"Turn off the light," the woman snapped.

"Oh yes. Right." Sarah flicked the light off, plunging the room into darkness again. Flynn Wangford wasn't indoors. The garden it was.

The air was cooler outside, tugging at her curls. Sarah paused on the flagstone steps, wondering which way to go. Left or right? Left, she decided. Her heels tapped a sharp tattoo when she strode down a lavender-edged path. A small gazebo was ahead, spotlights highlighting the elegant plaster arches. A feminine laugh floated to Sarah but the man with her wasn't Flynn. She recognized the smooth, rich tones of the parliamentarian and wondered if his wife knew.

She walked farther down the path, passing the gazebo and leaving the giggling and high-pitched grunts behind. Where was Flynn? The maze? Down by the carp ponds? Or wandering down the wide expanse of green that led between the trees and ended at the edge of the cliff overlooking the valley below?

Systematically, she searched each location until the last place left to search was the summerhouse. Hot, tired and grumpy, she could hardly believe she'd find Flynn there. No, she must have missed him. She approached the summerhouse from the rear, deciding to peek in the windows because quite honestly, she was tired of interrupting

lovers. Everyone seemed to be getting some except her. And she was no closer to stealing the sapphire back from Flynn.

She rounded the corner and came to an abrupt halt. Her eyes widened and her mouth dropped open. Flynn. Thomas.

Together.

Shock held her immobile. She didn't want to look but couldn't tear her gaze away.

Their lips met in the way of lovers, clinging with familiarity. Thomas' hand cupped Flynn's head, holding him tenderly. A sharp pain in her palms made her realize she was clenching her fists so tightly her fingernails were likely drawing blood. She uncurled her fingers and flexed them, her gaze fixed on the two men. They were naked with not a stitch of clothing in sight.

A choked sound whispered from her while she watched their embrace, the intimate way they ground their erect cocks together. Sarah shifted her weight from one foot to the other, suddenly fidgety. Hells bells! She couldn't believe it. Her lips moved in a silent curse. Her nails dug into her palms again and this time she welcomed the pain. It helped her focus her emotions even as she watched the slide of pleasure across the men's faces. It...unsettled her, made her stomach jump and her breasts pull to tight achy points even while anger poured through her. *Betrayal*. She hadn't expected it or suspected for a moment that the two men would work together...

Another curse passed her lips. What the hell sort of spy was she anyway? She had enough experience to know to expect the unexpected. A masculine groan drifted on the air, deep and full of pleasure. Unbidden, she continued to watch while inside she fumed.

And burned.

Dammit, Sarah. Concentrate. Go in there and do what you have to. Don't let the hurt and betrayal castrate you. Don't let them win this game.

Sarah glowered at the men. They were lost in their own world of sensation, of firm muscles, stiff pricks and passion. Thomas cupped Flynn's sac and rolled it gently before

kneeling to take the man's cock into his mouth. Oh yeah. They'd done this before. This didn't look like a journey of discovery to Sarah. It looked like a voyage of remembrance.

Her nostrils flared and a vein ticked to life at her temple. Flynn Wangford and Thomas MacIntyre would pay for this treachery. If they thought they could team up to beat her, then they could think again because she would win, she would retrieve *her* sapphire. They'd better watch out because she was about to grind them into the ground. Wrapping determination around her shoulders like a mantle, she slid into the shadows and skirted the stone and glass building. The trick would be entering the summerhouse without them hearing. Once she was inside, Sarah was confident she could ambush the amorous couple before they knew what hit them.

Bastards!

Her eyes narrowed while she seethed all over again.

She slinked along the side of the rectangular building, taking care to keep to the shadows. When she heard voices, she paused. Two men. For one horrid moment she thought they would enter the summerhouse and rob her of payback. She wanted Thomas and Flynn naked and off balance. She wanted to catch them in the act and to make them feel shame. Sarah snorted at the thought. Given the expressions of pleasure on both their faces, shame was the last thing they'd feel. When the two new arrivals turned down the side path leading to the lily ponds, her breath eased out in a relieved hiss. One barrier out of the way.

The moon peeked from behind a cloud, leaving her very visible when she scuttled the last few steps to the entrance. Her heart thumped loudly when she tugged down on the door handle. To her relief the door catch drew back with the barest snick of sound. Taking another deep inhale, she inched the door open. Again the sound was slight but it still caused her pulse to race. She stepped inside the steamy warmth of the summerhouse and closed the door, only breathing properly when the door shut again. Moving cautiously to allow her eyes plenty of time to adjust to the dimmer light inside,

she made her way to the far end and darkest corner, passing the display of tropical orchids and heat-loving flowers and ferns.

She grimaced on hearing a guttural cry. Thomas. She'd heard the same sound only seconds before he climaxed while embedded deep in her pussy. Her teeth clacked together, making a sharp sound of irritation.

Payback. That was exactly what she needed.

Sarah crept closer, taking care not to catch any of the overhanging leaves and make them rustle. Each step she took was slow and cautious. It wouldn't do to give them a warning. After five long drawn-out minutes, Sarah found herself in a position where she could see Thomas and Flynn clearly.

The two men were totally engrossed in each other. Thomas kissed Flynn deeply and gripped his cock, pumping it expertly, if Flynn's groans were any indication. The sapphire glinted in a shaft of moonlight.

Once again Sarah felt the pull, the tug of attraction to both men, despite her anger at their duplicity. She swallowed and silently removed her gun from the thigh holster. Taking a deep breath, she stepped from the shadows, gun at the ready.

"Having fun, boys?"

"Sarah?" Thomas said, springing away from Flynn. Shock and horror filled his face when he saw the gun. He backed up a fraction. "I didn't think you carried a gun."

"You thought wrong."

Flynn scowled and looked uncomfortable, like a small boy caught with his hand in the sweets jar. He checked his watch before his frown deepened. "Damn, you weren't meant to —"

"Weren't meant to find you? To learn you were playing me? Both of you!"

"Put the gun down." Thomas took half a step toward her, his cock swaying in an enticing manner. "We can explain —"

The gun in Sarah's hands remained steady and aimed directly at them. "Stay right where you are. Don't move a muscle."

Flynn's green eyes gleamed and he shared a quick glance with Thomas. As one they leaped toward her. Sarah fired. Her first shot hit Flynn in the middle of the chest, the shot explosive in the confined space, echoing for long seconds afterward. He dropped with a pained shout and didn't move again.

Thomas was almost on her. He grabbed her, trying to knock the gun from her hands. They struggled.

"Don't do this, Sarah."

"Dammit, you're not winning!" With strength she didn't realize she had, her hands shot upward, thumping Thomas in the nose. He groaned and fell back with a curse, his hands covering his nose. Blood gushed from between his fingers, droplets spraying across the strewn clothes on the ground. With another savage curse, he stooped beside Flynn and grasped the chain holding the sapphire.

"Oh no you don't!" Sarah pointed the gun at him and fired, the crack of sound thunderous. "That sapphire is mine."

Thomas stopped, glancing down at the bloom of red on his chest. When he looked back up at Sarah, disbelief covered his face. "I thought you loved me." He dropped to his knees before falling to the ground with a pained groan. The bright red from his wound was a stark contrast to the expensive white cotton that lay beneath him.

"I do love you," Sarah whispered. "But I hate betrayal." *And I wanted to win so badly.*

"It was a good idea." Thomas coughed and glanced over at Flynn.

"Not good enough," Sarah said crisply. While she didn't need to worry about concealed weapons, she kept a wary eye on Thomas while she retrieved the sapphire.

Her fingers trembled while she unfastened the catch and refastened it around her neck. The stone felt warm when it settled against her skin. With a final glance at the two men, she turned to walk away.

"Sarah," Thomas gasped out. "You can't just leave us here. Help me."

"Why not?" she demanded, unable to resist the urge to pluck the sapphire up and raise it to her lips.

Without warning, the alarm on her wristwatch went off. Similar alarms went off on Thomas' and Flynn's watches.

"Gentlemen, my game I believe." Sarah's lips quirked in the beginnings of a grin and she stalked from the summerhouse, leaving the men behind lying on the ground.

Chapter Six

The Game Concludes

The door to her bedroom flew open, bouncing off the doorstep.

Flynn strode inside followed by Thomas. Both men bore identical expressions of disgust.

"Dammit, Sarah. Did you have to shoot us? It hurt." Flynn rubbed his chest, smearing the red into the white cotton of his shirt.

"Is the paint water soluble?" Thomas demanded. "This shirt cost a fortune and my nose aches like the devil. Fuck, I should have seen it coming when I started having my visions again."

"You had visions? Dammit it, man. You should have told me," Flynn snapped. "Together we might have worked it out before Sarah beat us both."

"Ah, the walking dead," Sarah mocked. "You shouldn't have underestimated the female of the species." She plucked the sapphire from her cleavage and kissed it, her eyes full of laughter. The light made the blue jewel sparkle and sent dappled shadows over the wall. "They can be extremely deadly. To the victor, the spoils," she added.

"Only until the next game," Thomas growled. "I'm lucky she didn't break my nose," he complained to Flynn. "I wish she'd shot me first instead of you."

"Huh! You guys are just sore losers. I won this round of the game fair and square. Julie will be thrilled to hear I won." She rubbed her fingers back and forth over the gem, admiring the way it glinted so prettily. "I'm about to jump into the shower."

Thomas growled under his breath while Flynn bit off a curse. Thomas took a step toward her, stopping when a tap sounded on the bedroom door.

"Will you get that for me, please? It will be one of the staff with the bottle of champagne I ordered." Sarah twirled around to head for the luxurious en suite. "I'm celebrating," she said over her shoulder.

In the en suite, she dropped her robe, letting it slither to the floor. She reached into the shower and flipped the water on. It ran hot almost instantly. Ah, the marvels of modern plumbing. Sarah opened the shower door, jumped under the water and closed her eyes, letting it pour over her upturned face. The soft snick of the door closing again was the only warning she received. An instant later she was sandwiched firmly between two males. A laugh of delight escaped.

"I wouldn't laugh if I were you," Thomas said in a low growl. "We have you surrounded."

She felt the prod of his cock against the small of her back while Flynn was just as demonstrative at her front. A frisson of excitement zapped the length of her body. "And now you have me, exactly what are you going to do with me? The sapphire is mine now. You can't take it. Those are the rules."

"Screw the rules," Flynn said.

"It's two against one," Thomas agreed, his voice dark with promise. "We're going to make you pay."

Flynn turned his body to grab a bar of soap and slapped it into her hand. "You can wash off the paint first. Me first and then Thomas."

Sarah laughingly accepted the soap. "I never knew such a pair of sore losers." She washed Flynn's chest, teasing flat masculine nipples and purposely rubbing against his erection. The red washed down his legs and ran down the drain.

"Next time we'll be prepared. That gun thing won't work for a second time. Besides, we know how to punish disobedient women," Thomas stated, briskly washing the last of the red paint off his chest.

Flynn drawled, "Sure do." He flipped off the water and hustled Sarah from the shower heedless of the water dripping from their bodies onto the floor. Thomas

grabbed a towel and rubbed the worst of the water off her with rapid and economical moves. He rubbed a towel across his chest before seizing Sarah and tossing her over his shoulder.

Ass slung in the air, she shrieked with laughter. She was still laughing when she hit the mattress. The two men crowded her—a sandwich filling once more.

Thomas kissed her mouth, sucking her bottom lip into his mouth. Flynn nuzzled her neck, taking tiny bites that made her nerve endings sizzle. Sarah gasped, the twin sensations produced by the two men and the potent male heat kindling a fire inside. She'd missed this during the last few days. Making love with them alone was fun but two really was better. Double trouble. She snickered.

"We amuse you, my lady?" Flynn's warm breath fanned the whorls of her ear, bringing a tremor of awareness.

Sarah grinned. "I love you both."

"Yet you had no trouble shooting us," Thomas said, his tone dry.

"You're just jealous your nefarious plan didn't work," Sarah scoffed.

"Damned straight," Flynn drawled. "And don't think we won't get you next time. You won't beat us in the next game. One of us will win."

"Huh!" Sarah snorted, laughter not far under the surface. She didn't regret her unorthodox relationship with the two men for one moment, even though they'd scandalized their families when they'd moved in together five years ago. While other relationships stagnated, ground away from day-to-day stress, they kept their relationship alive with games and fun and laughter. *And great sex.*

Thomas kissed her again, sliding his tongue into her mouth while Flynn caressed her ass and one hand snaked between them to tweak her nipples in the manner she enjoyed.

"On your back," Thomas whispered.

Sarah smiled. "Are you going to torture me?"

"Bet on it," Flynn said. "We have a lot of payback in mind."

"That's right," Thomas growled.

"Oh color me scared," Sarah said with a chuckle.

Flynn tugged on her feet until her back was flat on the mattress. His blond brows arched toward his hairline. "She laughs."

Suddenly her laughter left, replaced by acute anticipation. Masculine fingers probed, dipped and delved. Mouths laved and sucked at her breasts until heavy arousal rode her. The two men spread her legs and nipped at the tender skin of her inner thighs. They paused to kiss each other and Sarah rose up on her elbows to watch her two men.

"Hey," she protested. "Have you forgotten about me?"

"Not likely we'd forget about you, baggage," Thomas said.

"Yep," Sarah said with satisfaction. "I'm pretty unforgettable."

Thomas lifted her hips and after glancing at Flynn and grinning, he parted her delicate nether lips and in a delicious assault dragged his tongue the length of her cleft. A moan fell from Sarah's lips when Flynn joined in the game. A familiar low pressure gathered when the sensations collided and spiraled downward.

"Flynn, you still playing Boy Scout?"

"Yeah, there's more lube in my pants pocket." The mattress moved a fraction when Flynn moved off the bed, but he was back in seconds, his hand cupping her ass.

"Okay, sweetheart," Thomas said, lying back on the mattress. His eyes gleamed and a hint of arousal showed in his cheekbones, should she have been in any doubt. "On top of me now."

"So you're not calling me baggage anymore," she teased.

"Not if you follow directions," Flynn said.

"Can't have that." Her smile was mocking but she straddled Thomas and guided the velvet flare of his cock to her entrance. Slowly she sank down, impaling herself increment by increment until fully seated. Thomas pulsed inside her, eyeing her with

hot intent. She knew this was going to feel good. It always did. And for a change she'd won, making this so much sweeter.

"You okay, Sarah?" Flynn bathed the puckered crest of one breast with his tongue. The delicate brush of his fingers across her ass brought a rush of goose bumps. Okay? She rose slightly and pushed back down on Thomas' cock. The pressure of him stretched her inner walls adding to the tension already simmering inside. What a way to celebrate. She had the sapphire and she had her two men.

"I'm fine." She wagged her butt at Flynn, the movement dragging a moan from Thomas.

"Flynn, mate. Hurry."

"Yeah, what he said," Sarah said.

Flynn chuckled, the throaty, cocky sound that always made her grin. He ran his finger between her buttocks and teased her puckered rosette. An instant later, cool lube smoothed the travel path of his finger. The teasing pass back and forth made her womb clench, setting off a chain reaction. She groaned and so did Thomas. Flynn pushed a finger inside, working slowly and building the tension.

"Can you go any slower?" she asked in a protest of sorts.

"You shot us," Flynn said.

Right. Looked as if the boys were going to act the sore losers for a while. Sarah buttoned her mouth and tried to enjoy the torture. There was plenty to appreciate and she used the time to reacquaint herself with Thomas' very fine body, figuring he'd tell Flynn to hurry up if he became hot enough.

Gradually Flynn added another finger, scissoring them and stretching her for his possession. It felt good. It always did—the way he took her to the edge of pain but never hurt her. When Flynn removed his fingers, she whimpered at the sense of emptiness. The distinct crinkle of a condom wrapper opening let her know Flynn had stopped his teasing. Things were good to go. He licked down her spine because he

knew how much she liked it before lining up his cock and pushing inside. When fully impaled, he paused.

She'd missed this, the intimacy, the closeness between the three of them even though it had only been a few days.

Flynn and Thomas set up a rhythm, withdrawing and thrusting in counterpoint. Although she'd experienced this before—stretched to capacity by two men—they always took her to the edge of control, allowing her to hold nothing back. Her womb fluttered and she groaned. Thomas stroked faster and Flynn increased his pace. He grasped one of her nipples between forefinger and thumb, tugging it sharply. Thomas caught her cry of pleasure with his mouth.

Tendrils of sensation raced through her with each thrust. They grew in intensity until Sarah couldn't take any more, balanced on the knife edge of pleasure and pain. She shattered, her womb clenching so tightly she sobbed with the intensity. She was dimly aware of the men climaxing, the rub of their cocks against one another sending another series of shockwaves through her sensitized body.

Slowly, they moved apart, falling into a sweaty pile of bodies, all breathing hard. Flynn stroked her head while Thomas ran a soothing hand across her back.

"What will we do next time? I think you'd look good dressed as a pirate wench," said Flynn. "One of those tightly laced tops with lots of cleavage."

"You'd look great walking the plank," Thomas agreed with an evil leer.

"No way," Sarah protested.

Flynn nodded thoughtfully. "We could do a bondage weekend."

"Or what about dressing as a demure Regency miss in your bid to retain the sapphire?"

Sarah snorted. "None of those ideas work for me. Besides, plans for our next break can wait. I'm more worried about arriving home to find our house in one piece. Both of our boys are hellions. Understandable given their fathers," she added dryly, glancing

from one to the other. Besides, she wanted to savor her victory. It wasn't often she managed to best her men. She bit back her triumphant smile. "How about sharing a glass of champagne with me to celebrate my win?"

Yeah, she definitely wanted a little time to rub it in...

About the Author

Shelley lives in Auckland, New Zealand, with her husband and a small, bossy dog named Scotty.

Typical New Zealanders, Shelley and her husband left home for their big OE soon after they married (translation of New Zealand-speak: big overseas experience). A year-long adventure lengthened to six years of roaming the world. Enduring memories include being almost sat on by a mountain gorilla in Rwanda, lazing on white sandy beaches in India, whale watching in Alaska, searching for leprechauns in Ireland, and dealing with ghosts in an English pub.

While travel is still a big attraction, these days Shelley is most likely found in front of her computer following another love—that of writing stories of romance and adventure. Other interests include watching rugby and rugby league (strictly for research purposes *grin*), being walked by the dog, and curling up with a good book.

Shelley 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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