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eBook ISBN 1-59426-528-3

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Cover art © 2005 by Stacey L. King  
Edited by Tanya Davis

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IT WAS SWELTERING outside and hotter than hell inside my black SUV as I made the commute home. Even though it has air conditioning, I don't like to turn it on since we haven't been able to afford to install air at home. I try to use my commute to transition from the chilly recirculated office air to the stuffy heat of the house. This was not the time to try and quit smoking. Driving home on a day like this definitely merited at least one cigarette, maybe the whole pack.

I hardly made it to the freeway before I ripped off the cardigan I wore all day. I knew it was going to be hot, so I wore a pink summer dress instead of my usual all black ensembles. A few of the people at work even commented on my out of character pink outfit. At work I'm black and white, I save my color for weekends.

By the time I made it home, the dress clung to every part of me. I peeled myself off the seat and gathered the folders I'd lugged home with me. I'd be up until way past midnight getting everything done, but working in your pajamas trumped being at work any day—even in this heat. I threw my purse over my shoulder, pressed the folders to my chest, clutched the cardigan with one hand and the take-out I'd grabbed for dinner with the other.

Slamming the door shut with my hip, I heard the familiar rumble of his truck pulling into the driveway. This was the first time all month we arrived home at anywhere near the same time. Between his two jobs and all the extra stuff I took on at work, neither of us spent much time at home, let alone together. Good thing he was home. There was absolutely no way to gracefully open the front door.

"Hey stranger," Trevor yelled through his open window. The truck didn't have air conditioning, or much else in the way of amenities. It was so beat up from all of the summers of roofing I refuse to even ride in it. The bills had gotten the best of us lately, so he was roofing again. It was strange the way he could effortlessly transition from a banker in ironed shirts and designer shoes to a laborer in filthy pants and a backward baseball cap. When he dressed like that he seemed younger than ever. In moments like this I truly felt like I robbed the cradle.

"Hey yourself." I barked back. "Open the door." Trevor hopped out of the truck and trotted over to the front door. I hadn't seen him awake in almost two weeks. We were both putting in as many hours as we could, trying to dig ourselves out of credit card hell. Between his golf habit, my shoe fetish, and the wedding last year we were sinking, fast.

"Home before dark, and you made dinner. I'm impressed, Megan," he teased, opening the door and relieving me of the bag of food. Trevor pushed the door open for me to walk through while he inspected the contents of the bag.

"It's from Wong Kong. I went through the drive thru," I explained. "I didn't expect you to be home yet."

"That must mean you got everything deep fried with no vegetables in sight." I could hear the smile in his voice as he followed close behind me.

"If you want vegetables you should have married a rabbit." I tossed back at him as I made my way past the kitchen to the dining room. The binders hit the table with a thud. "There's stuff in there for you too. Besides, chow mein has vegetables in it."

"It doesn't count as a vegetable if you only eat the noodles." He set the bag on the counter and stalked towards me.

"I'd tell you to sue me, but I don't need any more paperwork."

"Long night ahead?" he asked, leaning on one of the dining room chairs.

"Yeah, and now that I'm home I'm thinking I should have stayed in the air conditioned office. It's so hot in here." I moved to open the sliding glass door and let a breeze in, but he blocked my path.

"Have you had a cigarette today?"

"What I do with my body is my business." I rolled my eyes at his attempts to be paternal. He had no right to act the father figure being six years my junior.

His big, work-callused hands encircled my waist as he pulled me to him; his mouth on mine, hot and insistent. Trevor's scent, an intoxicating mix of the outdoors and pure masculinity wafted through me and I relented, allowing full access to my lips, tongue, and mouth. When I was nearly out of breath, he broke away, grinning. "Good girl, you taste much better this way."

"I was just saving it until I got home," I goaded him. He'd been on me to quit smoking since the moment we met. Quitting now would be like admitting defeat.

His fingers were rough as he drew up my dress, lifting me forcefully onto the dining room table. "What are you—" was all I got out before he stripped me of my pink panties. "Come on, it's too hot to fool around," I said, trying to close my legs.

His hands kept them apart as he knelt before me, parting my lips with his tongue. Trevor was gentle only for a moment, quickly attacking my clit as my body responded. Reaching my hands back to brace myself the binders tumbled to the floor. The earliest ripples of an orgasm began to radiate out and a moan escaped my throat. His callused hands and beard stubble chafed my thighs as I peaked.

Breathless, I leaned farther back. Instantly he was in front of

me and then inside of me, pushing deeper and deeper. My body arched against the hard wood, my moans became more guttural as the pleasure of having him fill me drove me over the edge again. His hands wrapped around my ass and pulled me closer, driving him in to the hilt. He can't hold back when I come, spasming around him, pulling him inside until he can't take any more. Even through my contractions, I felt him thicken and his breath catch as he found release.

As the blood returned to my head, I sat up and looked into his warm brown eyes. Still inside me, he leaned closer, his lips brushing against my ear as he whispered, "You taste much better this way."

I touched my forehead to his and placed a tender kiss on his lips as he pulled out and stepped back. My stomach sank as I realized we made love without protection. "You didn't use a condom?"

"What? No, I didn't think to," he said, hiding himself away. "We're married for God's sake."

"Even married people use condoms." I slammed my legs shut and stood to face him, smoothing my dress down. "Especially when you know I'm not on the pill and we don't want to have a baby."

"Oh I know, because having my baby would be the worst thing that could ever happen to you," he spat out. The gold flecks in his eyes sparked like fire when he was angry.

"This isn't about you. I've told you, I am not having children just to have someone else raise them. And there's no way we can get by without my paycheck, so..."

"Fine, whatever. Sorry. Look I have to shower, come upstairs with me." He reached out his hand, his fingers brushing mine lightly as he grinned.

"Maybe in a minute." I let my hand linger next to his. He

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walked past the kitchen, towards the stairs. Looking back over his shoulder he asked, "You're going to have a cigarette, aren't you?"

"I told you, what I do with my body is my business."

"I'll give you something better to put between your lips," he teased.

"In a minute, I need to pick up the binders."

I waited to hear the water turn on. Without touching the binders, I went outside for a smoke.

\* \* \*

A SWEET VANILLA scent wafted through my nose. Megan was smoking. Thank goodness, because I could really use a cigarette. My editor had me rewriting the entire last chapter of my latest novel and the boys both refused to nap today. I deserved a cigarette. Megan was always willing to share. The flavored kind she smoked left less of a stench than the lights I hide in the planter.

Stepping off my front porch, I made my way across both driveways to Megan and Trevor's side yard.

"Going somewhere, Cassie?" Gail rang out, leaning against the siding. Gail's a little nosy for my taste, but living on the other side of Megan she has just as much right to bum cigarettes as I do.

"It's supposed to be date night, but Craig's parents are late." Megan held open the gold box of cigarettes and smiled. I thanked her as I plucked one from its bed, and again as she handed me the silver lighter.

"I thought you both were quitting?" Of course she would. Gail smoked like a chimney when we went out, but was self-righteous whenever her husband was in a one-mile radius.

I pulled the nicotine deeper in my lungs, waiting for the calm. *Not yet.* I took another long drag.

"Deadline?" Meagan asked, flicking her ashes into the manicured lawn. What I wouldn't give not to have to mow my own lawn. What I wouldn't give for a night of inspiration with Megan's husband.

"Monday. But I get to email in the revisions so I have the weekend." I motioned to her shrinking smoke. "Depositions?"

Megan laughed, long and full, throwing her head of



chestnut curls back. She never recognized herself in my romance novels. Either that or she never read the copies I gave her.

"So, a date night huh?" Gail always changed the subject whenever we talked about work. I'm home with the kids all day too, yet she's still obviously intimidated. No one but another writer seemed to understand I write for my own sanity. "Lucky you. Or maybe you would get lucky if it weren't so damned hot."

"We have air conditioning," I said automatically.

"You're so lucky. It's an oven in our place."

"Come over and enjoy the refrigeration any time you need. As long as you don't mind tripping over fire trucks and trains."

"Uh-oh," Gail whispered, jerking her head in the direction of my house. I instinctively dropped the cigarette and covered it with my sandal.

"Cassie?" Craig called from over my left shoulder. Gail did come in handy every once in a while.

I turned and smiled. I'd say I smelled like smoke because Megan was smoking. "What is it?"

"Highway 82 is closed. My folks are turning back around." He looked sorry. Was he sorry? We'd only been out twice since January, when I stated I needed more from him. Dates once a month and sex once a week. Neither happened with any consistency. I even bought a book of sexual fantasies with a different fantasy each week, but my husband had the lowest libido of any man on the planet.

"You should go," Megan offered, nudging me in the shoulder. "Trevor and I will come over and chill with the boys." She laughed at her play on words.

"Are you sure? You don't have to." Please say you'll do it. I've been storing up my courage to do fantasy twenty-six all month.

"Your boys love Trevor. And besides, you have cable. The

boys will go to bed in an hour and Trevor will be glued to the tube all night. Stay out as long as you need. I'll be working in air conditioned comfort."

~ ~ ~

"I'M BORED." Trevor rose from the sofa and came into the dining room where I had everything organized. The boys went to sleep without incident twenty minutes ago. Not that I'd seen much of them. They adored Trevor, and he was better with kids than I was anyway.

"I'm busy." I answered him without looking up. This toxic mold case was so tedious. Trevor cocked his hip against the table, right next to my laptop. "I'm only going to warn you once. Knock the papers off and I'll be a widow."

"You're so feisty tonight." He was smiling that broad, dimpled smile that heated my blood...and it was hot enough. "I need to work. Go watch television. They have cable."

"How late are they going to be?"

Very, I hope. "I'm not sure. I told Cassie to take as long as they need. They're having trouble."

"What kind of trouble?"

"Bedroom trouble."

Trevor grimaced at the thought. "He can't..."

I smiled. Men always went there. "No, he can. She just wants to be more creative to get inspiration for her books, and he's not interested lately."

"Oh, I get it."

He got it? "Fill me in, oh wise one."

"He doesn't want his every move chronicled for the world. It is weird. I mean, you've read her stuff. Don't you think about them acting it out?"

*Not once.* "It's fiction, Trevor."

"It's porn, Megan."

"It's not porn. It's romance. Sensual romance, but still."

Have to clue Cassie in on his theory tomorrow.

"It's hotter than Penthouse letters."

"You still read Penthouse?" My temperature rose and not from the smile he gave me. Like I could compete with airbrushed teenagers.

"No, because it bothers you. But if I catch you smoking again I'm going to get a subscription."

"Trevor, you can't tell me what to do." One cigarette a day. One. It used to be two packs. What more does he want from me?

"You need to stop. Especially if you were serious about being pregnant earlier."

"I'm not." Back to work. Not getting goaded into this conversation with the world's cutest, best-behaved grade-schoolers upstairs. "I'm not ovulating until next week. We're in the clear."

"Then why did you bring it up?"

Because it never leaves my mind, not even for a second. But now I wish I hadn't. "Trevor, I need to get through these files before they get back and I have to move them. Just go watch TV."

\* \* \*

YOU CAN do this. *You can do this*. No I can't. My stomach clenched nervously as I made my way back to the table. *Could I really?*

I slid into the booth next to Craig. "What are you doing?" He killed what little confidence I had with that annoyed look of his.

Still, I was going to do this. Even though the first twenty-five fantasies in the book had only marginal success. I was determined. I would save my marriage, no matter what. Even reach into my bra and pull out the panties I'd just removed in the ladies room. I handed the scrap of purple lace to Craig under the table.

"What are you doing?"

"If you don't know, I must be doing it wrong." I was even batting my eyelashes and twirling my fingers in my hair. Come on. Give me something.

"Would you like to see the dessert menu?" I jumped at the sound of the chipper voice, and cursed the twit and her perky breasts.

"We'll split the strawberry shortcake. Extra whipped cream." Craig smiled at her over my shoulder. Hello? Panty less woman more than willing to fuck you two inches away, and you want the bimbo with the fake boobs?

"She probably has no sensation." I sat so that one leg was on the floor and the shin of the other rested between us.

"Who?" He twirled the ice in his empty water glass, finding it so much more fascinating than fantasy twenty-six.

"The waitress. When you have a boob job it can damage the nerves on your nipples, leaving them in that permanently

hardened state."

A low chuckle rumbled through me as his head slowly nodded. "Good to know. Did you find that out in your research?"

"Yes." The last heroine was a former stripper. I love researching my stories.

"Is that what this is?"

"What?"

He pulled the panties from his pocket and set them on the table between us. On the table! I grabbed them and shoved them under my leg.

"No. This is me trying to have an affair proof marriage. Pretty hard to do with a guy who refuses to have sex with me."

His knuckle rubbed at my chin. "I'm not going to cheat on you. Why would you ever think something like that?"

I looked deep into those gray blue eyes. The ones I was so happy both boys got. Hazy, calm, sweet and loving. "Lack of intimacy is one of the first signs."

"Here you go!" Miss Perky Tits was back. She should be working at the colorful restaurants we took the kids too, not a high dollar place like this. Craig thanked her and she mercifully went on her way. But Craig seemed to be done talking. He dug right in to the strawberry shortcake. Of course food would be more important than me trying to fool around in a public place.

"You want some?" He had the nerve to ask, waving a forkful of whipped cream in my face.

That's what I needed. Sugar laden fat calories. I shook my head. What I wanted was for him to want me, like he used to.

Again with the fork in my face. "You sure? It's good. Not as good as yours, but good."

Backhanded compliments were as good as it got lately. Might as well give up. I turned and started to slide my other leg to the floor. His icy fingers held my knee at the back of the

booth. Hard.

"These strawberries aren't as sweet as the one's you grew." He spoke calmly; as if his fingers weren't pressing so hard into my thigh they were leaving marks. "Your cream is better too."

He ate the dessert coolly, as his hand traveled further up my thigh. I smiled, realizing what he was doing. So this was how he wanted to play. He didn't need to be so secretive; my back was to the dimly lit restaurant. I swiped my finger through a mound of whipped cream and looked into his eyes as I licked at the dollop with my tongue once, twice, then plunged the finger between my tight lips.

He licked his lips and went back to the shortcake. What the hell did I have to do to get a rise out of this man? Most women had their husbands begging them for sex as often as possible. I couldn't get mine to – Hello! His hand slid to cup my mound with his palm. He held it perfectly still, except for his thumb stroking my curls as if petting a cat. Thank you number twenty-six.

My pussy had been humming ever since I decided to go through with the plan and remove my panties in the ladies room stall. I never expected him to go through with it. It. Whatever it was. What did I want him to do? In the book they went so far as to actually have sex. I tried for the life of me to remember how, where, but my brain stopped caring as his hand slipped further down, his middle finger sliding effortlessly between my moist lips.

"We should go." Now. *Now*.

"I'm not finished yet."

He acted as if nothing was going on, as if his fingers weren't centimeters from being inside of me. Please be talking about me. Please.

"Do you want more or should I finish it?"

Yes on both counts. How to answer? I clenched my muscles, praying he could feel my need, my desperation. I dragged my finger across the whipped cream. I offered it to him, but he grinned and shook his head. I licked at it with the tip of my tongue, but he seemed to find the plate of shortcake oh so interesting. I plunged my finger into my mouth and froze as his finger did the same in me. Yes. I pulled my finger from my lips only to gasp as he followed suit.

"What did you do that for?" I hissed at him. This was no time to tease. When he wanted to, he could get me off with his fingers in two minutes. His dexterity was spectacular. All day long his fingers danced over the keyboard, and once upon a time they danced over me all night.

"More whipped cream?" How could he sound so damned nonchalant with his hand between my legs? I dipped into the foam anew. Was this what he wanted? Easy enough. I didn't want to be teased. I wanted to go back to the time when we were hot, when I didn't go to sleep alone, wondering what he was doing, and with whom.

I opened my mouth, showing him my tongue as I laid my finger flat against it, closing my mouth slowly. The pad of his thumb pulsed against my clit as a finger slid inside. It was fantastic. The thrill, the sensation, the tensing beginning deep inside.

My head snapped up as he stopped. Stopped? What the – oh. My finger came out of my mouth. His eyes were trained on the plate. He stabbed a strawberry, then bit into it. I know he purposely closed his lips around it as he pulled away. Just to remind me of what he withheld. He hadn't gone down on me in a year.

I dragged three fingers across the plate this time. He wanted me to show him what I wanted. Fine by me. No one could see



what I did, no one but him. Spreading my fingers I used the tip of my tongue to slowly lick up each finger. His thumb pulsed insistently in time with my ministrations. The thrill of being out in public coupled with the wonderful sensations had me on the verge of an orgasm. What brought me there, as I sucked the sweetness from my fingers, was that he wanted me. Wanted me badly enough to play games in the booth of a restaurant.

As the waves crashed over me I fell forward, leaning against him as I came back to earth. He didn't move his hand until I sat back up. He stared at me as he sucked each finger. If only we'd thought to bring the van. There was no possible way for that to happen in his tiny sports car.

"Your turn." I reached for him but he scooted against the wall and reached into the pocket of his jacket for his wallet. Pulling out far too many bills he nudged me out of the booth without a word. As I grabbed my purse I watched him snag the underwear crammed against the booth and slide them into his pocket. Thank you number twenty-six!

With his hand in mine, he hauled me out of the restaurant. I was breathless in my efforts to keep up with him while he pulled me to the edge of the parking lot where he'd parked his car. He always parked his car so that no one would ding it when they opened their doors, usually as far away from the other cars as possible. Strange, the difference between men and women. I always parked as near to the entrance as I could, under a light if possible. Men never worried about safety.

My heels clicked on the asphalt and the smell of car exhaust from the neighboring freeway bit at my nose as the darkness surrounded us. From the edge of the parking lot I could see taillights gunning their way westward, the whoosh of their speed echoing in my ears.

Would he want me to blow him in the car? Should I remind

him we tried that when he bought it and it was a logistical nightmare? There was no back seat, the seats didn't recline, and if I got on top of him in the drivers seat the horn would go off each time.

Releasing my hand he shoved me forward, against the hood of the car. The metal was hot against my stomach through the thin silk of my dress. What the hell? In a decade together he'd never been rough before. Not once. His foot was between mine, kicking my legs apart as he pressed his hardness against me. "Say yes." His breath singed my ear with the smell of sugar, strawberries and me on his lips.

"Yes," I moaned. His hands were already on my hips, pulling me to him. I stared into the night, watching the cars, wondering how many people could catch the show if they only thought to look out their window. I heard his zipper release, felt his fingers sweep across my cunt, testing my readiness. His hands moved up to my back, my need mixing with the sweat from the heat of the night.

"Thirty-seven." He whispered the words as he thrust, burying himself completely inside of me. I was so lost in the sensation I didn't even care to think what he meant. Just that he not stop...that he never stop.

His hand at the small of my back pressed me against the hood of the car, my flushed cheek scalded by the metal. I could hear our bodies slapping together, feel him opening me thoroughly to him. I tried to do something, meet his thrusts, squeeze him, but I was only able to receive.

"Sshhh," he breathed into my ear. It was then that I heard my moans. Sounds I couldn't stop if my life depended on it. The world was watching me receive the best fuck of my entire life. No way was I putting a lid on that.

Rough material scratched at my lips when his fingers

stuffed something in my mouth. A gag. He was gagging me? My tongue chafed and I realized he'd stuffed my own panties in my mouth to muffle my sounds of ecstasy.

He didn't let up his onslaught, sandwiching me between his body and the car. His thumb pressed against my anus. I loved it when he fingered me while he went down on me but he'd never done it while he fucked me. His free hand left my hip, pulling my hand between my legs. He pressed my fingers against my clit, but when he withdrew his hand I slid them back farther, making a vee with my fingers so I could feel him plunge in and out of me, claiming me as his.

Once his hand returned to my hip, his finger claimed my ass, sending more pleasure through me. It sent me over the edge, and he stretched the orgasm for me with his long full strokes. I was gasping when he withdrew from me, feeling hot liquid squirting against my bare back. He must have lifted my dress higher than I realized, far too high for my comfort, even in my current post-orgasmic state. I tried to stand up and cover myself, but he held me against the hood while he rubbed his seed into my skin.

~ ~ ~

STOWING EVERYTHING I needed for my early morning deposition, I snuck in through the back door. It was easily twenty degrees cooler in their house. Thank goodness they needed to go out so I could work in comfort. The documentation I'd brought home was done, as much as it could be until tomorrow. I'd be so glad when this case was over.

Mold litigation was a hot topic right now. Every major insurance company and contractor pointed the finger elsewhere, leaving homeowners to pay exorbitant amounts of money just to make their houses livable again. But not this time. The largest developer in town was dead to rights. They'd caused the leak that led to the mold, they knew it, and they'd be paying for it, big time. The case would be a big moneymaker for the firm. The bonus might pay off some of the more pressing bills.

My bills, not his.

Trevor lounged on the living room sofa, flipping through the channels. He wasn't the one who ran up the credit cards buying shoes and purses. He hadn't doubled the budget for the wedding. He'd turned off the cable, stopped drinking, and taken on roofing work with his brother's company just to make ends meet.

Trevor was amazing. Smart, kind, thoughtful and drop dead sexy. I grinned, remembering how when we were first together I called him C&H sugar. Cut & Hung. His body stayed toned and bronzed from the roofing and his mind stayed sharp dealing with financial markets all day. I know the way other women look at him, at us, trying to figure out just why he's with me.

Long ago I gave up trying to make sense of it. We had something that was bigger than us, something I was grateful for,

when I took the time to realize just what I had. I crossed the room, kneeling in front of the couch where he lay.

He smiled, tangling his fingers in my hair as he pulled my face to his. "You had a cigarette."

I felt my smile fall to the floor. Hours ago. I'd brushed my teeth since then.

"I'm not kissing you after you've been smoking." Was he teasing or serious? Didn't matter.

"Okay," I smirked. I hadn't planned on much kissing anyway. I reached for the button of his shorts.

His hand covered mine. "Go check and make sure the kids are asleep first."

I nodded in agreement and hit the stairs, kicking off my slides as I went. I hadn't even thought about the boys. Some babysitter I was. Peeking through the door to their room I caught myself sighing. Kids were beautiful when they slept. One still clutched a tattered green blanket; the other kept a menagerie of stuffed elephants at the foot of his bed. I loved those boys, but always kept a safe emotional distance. I wanted a family so badly I ached when one got too close.

Softly pulling the door closed I turned and almost leapt out of my skin. Trevor was right there, so close our chests were touching. I might have screamed if not for his finger pressing against my lips, his head shaking in a warning to be quiet. His head jerked in the direction of the door at the end of the hall. The master bedroom?

A thrill danced down my spine. We crept silently across the carpet and into Craig and Cassie's bedroom. What was it about having sex in someone else's bed?

We'd have to hurry. It was late and they could be home any minute. The realization would have dampened my panties, if I wore any. Mine probably still sat on my dining room floor. I

backed away from him and reached around to unzip my pink dress. As I stepped out he pulled his shirt over his head and added it to the pile. His taut muscles rippled. He'd earned every one through actual hard labor, not in a gym.

Stepping to me, he leaned down and whispered. "I love you in pink." His fingers expertly unhooked my bra, almost without touching my skin. "Show me pink."

Here? I obeyed, retreating to the king sized bed and sitting on the edge. Trevor followed step for step, his eyes never leaving mine, until I lay back on the bed and spread my legs.

Some men liked breasts, others legs, but Trevor was all about pussy. There was something about mine that fascinated him. His hands forced my legs further apart as he stared spellbound at my cunt. His nostrils flared as he breathed deep and with his fingers pried me open even more. I squeezed my inner muscles and his eyes closed for the briefest second.

"You are so beautiful."

I never knew if he was talking to my pussy or me, but it didn't matter. It had the same effect either way. I wanted him deep inside me, feeling the part of my cunt he couldn't see.

I reached for my breasts, palming, and kneading, desperately trying to stave off my need. I heard his shorts fall to the ground in a swish. Instead of plunging inside, his body loomed against mine, his throbbing need pressed insistently against me, teasing me as he leaned down to lave the breast I held.

He had the most amazing tongue. Licking and nibbling one nipple and then the other as I ground against him. Releasing my breasts I shoved gently at his shoulders, needing that tongue against the bud between my legs. He rose up slightly and shook his head. He crouched down and whispered in my ear, "I'm not kissing you after you've been smoking."

What?!. No way. He had to be joking. But it wasn't funny at all.

He stood up and stared into my eyes. I writhed in discomfort but his hands firmly held my hips. "Don't deny us both the pleasure Megan. Or all we'll ever do is this."

He traced my pussy with the tip of his cock. Could he really just tease me forever, just because I smoked a single cigarette? As he neared my entrance I squeezed, trying to pull him inside of me. I felt his laugh as he slid inside of me a millimeter at a time. Didn't he know he had to hurry? Didn't he know they'd be home soon?

\* \* \*

"YOU'VE READ the book?" I asked incredulously.

"Every page. I can't believe you thought I would do twelve."

"I haven't gotten to thirty-seven, but I'm sure I wouldn't have thought you'd do it." Which one was twelve? Candle wax? Wearing my underwear for the day? He'd flatly refused both.

"You only read the one you're going to try?"

"Of course." It was in the rules at the front of the book. If he'd read every page he'd know that.

The corners of his eyes crinkled. "Do you need anything at the store? I need to pick up something."

Back to reality. "I'll pick it up tomorrow. I don't want Megan and Trevor to have to wait for us. They were so great to fill in; I don't want to take advantage."

Craig nodded and drove past the store. "I'll drop you off, then be right back. It'll take me two minutes."

"What do you need so badly it can't wait until tomorrow?" I asked as we turned into our neighborhood.

"Number forty-three."

Why hadn't I cheated and read ahead? "You're really getting into this. What's number forty-three?"

"I thought it was research for your novel, but now that I know it's just for us I'm into it. I've always wanted to try forty-three, but you always said it would make too much of a mess."

What the hell could he be talking about? A mess? "It's both, my novel and us."

My head jerked forward and back as he slammed on the brakes on the uphill slope of our driveway. "If you want forty-three you can't put it in a book."



I rolled my eyes. "I don't even know what forty-three is. It might not be spicy enough for one of my stories."

"Whipped cream," he growled across the console.

Whipped cream?

"Fine. If it bothers you, I'll never write about whipped cream...unless my heroine is a pastry chef." I smiled at my own joke. I had to, he was not amused.

"I'm not joking, Cassie. No one ever reads about tonight, or it ends now. It's your choice." The motor was still running. He knew how I would answer, so I didn't. He waited to pull away until I'd slipped into the house. Tiptoeing into the living room, I was surprised to find it empty. I crept up the stairs, hoping the boys hadn't given them too much trouble going down for the night.

I couldn't hear anything once I reached the landing, and the door to the boy's bedroom was closed, but the light in our room was on. Oh no, had they conned Megan and Trevor into sleeping with them in our room? I walked softly, hoping I could move the kids without waking them up. I wanted whipped cream, damn it.

The world spun by as I peeked into my own bedroom. Megan lay back on the bed, pinching her nipples while Trevor's rock hard ass pumped into her. I should leave, look away at least, but I couldn't. I'd often fantasized about Trevor, his young bronzed and beautiful body.

I could feel my clit swell as I watched him hammer into her. He held her thighs wide apart and stared at their joining. I'd never watched anyone else have sex before. I hadn't seen porn since college. I knew I should walk away. I didn't want to be branded the neighborhood voyeur, yet I couldn't make my feet move. They were in *my* bedroom, after all. On *my* bed. I'd wondered what it would be like to have Trevor on that bed.

Their rhythm became more frantic and he wrapped her legs

behind his back. They were beautiful together, moving in cadence. Even from here I could tell their eyes were locked together. They weren't merely racing to orgasm, they were making love. I pressed my back against the hard plaster and watched their tempo peak and wane. Before they were completely finished I crept back downstairs and out the back door. Such a wonderful thing to share, I didn't want to interrupt it, to embarrass them in any way.

The night offered little respite from the heat. It was so hot most of the neighborhood had their windows open and fans running. I'd slipped off my shoes inside, so the grass was cool on my feet as I crossed the driveways and made it to Megan and Trevor's perfectly manicured lawn. Leaning against the siding of their house I realized what I found so perfect about Trevor. Sure his body was part of it, but it was the way he looked at Megan. As if she held the power to make his dreams come true.

With a sigh, I sank further against the wall, wondering just how long I should wait to go back in.

"You like to watch?" A voice hissed in the blackness.

My blood froze in my veins. Who could possibly know?

"You want to watch me, don't you?" The voice was quiet, but insistent. Almost threatening. To hell with embarrassing the neighbors, I needed to get home. I stepped forward to go, but froze at the sound of a whip cracking. Quietly, as if it were far away. "Say it," the voice demanded.

"I want to watch." A thick baritone drawled through the night. I knew that voice from somewhere.

"We'll just see about that. Lick it. Now." I shook my head; relieved the voices weren't talking to me. Curiosity tilted my head as my ears strained to tell just where the sounds were coming from. "Harder. Yeah. Eat me. Eat me you cunt licker."

Next door. Gail and Dean's house. Dean, the football coach

was being whipped by his happy homemaker wife? I couldn't resist. I crossed the side yard and pressed against the side of their house, just next to their open window. This was wrong on so many levels. Yet I couldn't stop my ears from listening, or my cunt from throbbing.

"Ye-e-e-ssss." A voice I couldn't believe belonged to Gail hissed. After an awkward silence her rant began anew. "You want to watch, don't you?" I did, but I didn't dare. What if they caught me? What if Craig came home and spied me in the neighbor's yard?

"You won't be watching this time." Grunts and groans that sounded more like a struggle than sex emanated from the room. What was she doing to him?

"You're mine to do with as I want. My living dildo. My fuck toy. And you won't cum until I tell you. Mmm. Yeah. Do you like that? Do you like my hungry snatch?" I couldn't imagine ever talking to Craig that way. Would he ever let me dominate him? "Stop it. Stop, or I tie your legs too."

My neck craned involuntarily. I could barely make them out in the darkness, and prayed they couldn't see me either. Each of Dean's arms was tied to the bed with nylon rope, duct tape covered his mouth and a blindfold shielded his eyes, but not mine.

Gail bounced on his naked pole. I'd never seen a grown man without pubic hair. It was stunning, the way she commanded his body, his spirit. They weren't the physical specimens Megan and Trevor were. No one would envy his rounded belly or her saggy tits, but their beautiful union, the dominance and submission, affected me. So much so, I finally walked away and left them to their moment.

When I entered my home this time, Megan and Trevor were snuggling on the sofa in the living room, blushing at the secret they thought they shared.

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IT WASN'T so much to ask, really. I was down to one cigarette a day. And it was best to give them up entirely, just in case. When I did get pregnant I'd have enough to deal with. Best to check quitting smoking off the list now.

I crept out of the house with my last pack of cigarettes. Early morning dew coated the grass, but even that was warm. Why couldn't the temperature drop just a little bit, at least in the morning? I crossed our driveway and Cassie's, slipping the cigarettes in the planter where she kept hers hidden. I was halfway across her drive when I heard the door open.

"Megan?" Cassie's straight blond hair smoothed into a ponytail, her face pink and refreshed. Of course, she slept in an air-conditioned house. I slept in an oven with a man still locked in his sexual peak.

I ran my fingers through my unruly curls and smiled at her. "Good morning. I brought you a present."

"Quitting again?" She stepped outside and shut the door behind her.

I noticed the tiny shorts, tank top, and running shoes hooked onto her left hand. The woman was a wonder. A successful romance novelist, two great kids, gourmet cook, and she found time to exercise?

"The things we do for our men." Cassie sat on her front steps and pulled her shoes on.

"Speaking of that," I sat next to her on the step, unsure how to proceed. I wanted to tell her what Trevor said, but didn't want her to think I was gossiping about her behind her back. "How did things go last night?"

"Better than usual. Why?" Her eyes darted around. Of

course she would be uncomfortable discussing this. Who wouldn't be?

"I've just been thinking about your situation. Things started to go downhill once your books came out, right? Do you think that might have something to do with it?"

Cassie shook her head. "That he's jealous of my career? No. He's always saying writing makes me easier to live with. Writers who keep it bottled up are more than a little crazy."

"No, not like that. Do you think he could be bothered by the content of what you write? That it's like an open door on your bedroom?"

Cassie's blue eyes opened so wide I thought they might pop from her head. "What do you mean?"

I shrugged. What did I mean? This would be so much easier if Trevor could explain it. "Men are strange, public and private at the same time. They want the world to know you are in their bed every night, but they want no one to know what goes on there."

Cassie stared straight ahead. "I think you're right."

Trevor was right, but getting credit was another upside to being married to him. "You probably don't have to change a thing, what you write is fiction anyway."

Cassie turned her face at me. "You're right. Besides, I can get my inspiration from a lot of other places." She leaned in and kissed my cheek for a beat longer than was necessary before hopping to her feet. "Thanks for everything last night. I really needed it." Cassie gave me a wave and took off on her morning run.

I shook my head, trying to forget Cassie's soft lips on my cheek. Trevor's all night assault on my body had my senses going haywire. I pushed off the step and walked across the damp grass and up our driveway, just in time to watch Trevor step out the front door.

He was dressed to perfection. A crisp white shirt he'd ironed himself, a solid cobalt satin tie hanging down his torso. His tailored navy dress slacks fit perfectly, the silver of his belt glistened in the early morning sun.

I licked my lips as I walked toward him, wondering if he'd be late, just this once.

*About the Author*

Voices whisper their stories to Jenna Allen at the strangest times. It's all she can do to remember their tales when she gets a free minute to attack her keyboard. If she doesn't they stalk her, their story growing and curling around others until blossoming into a full-length novel. But always romantic, and with a happy ending. There can never be enough of those in the world.