

Driven to Distraction

A HOLLYWOOD HEAT NOVEL

A man with short brown hair is holding a woman with long dark hair in his arms. They are in the back of a car, with the interior and a window visible in the background. The man is looking down at the woman, who has her eyes closed. The scene is lit with warm, orange-toned light.

ashleigh raine

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Driven to Distraction

Ashleigh Raine

Dedication

Just like a movie can't be made without the blood, sweat and tears of hundreds of hard workers, this book wouldn't exist without the advice, inspiration and support of the following:

To Angie, for telling us, "Damn it, I want *Driven to Distraction*." She's our Set Medic for this endeavor, cleaning up our boo-boos and setting us back on our feet.

To Michael Leahy, for giving Jen the opportunity to experience moviemaking magic. It was a blast. You'll always be my favorite producer, and one of the nicest guys in the business. Thanks, for everything.

To Fosters Freeze, the best hotdog makers on the planet, and our personal choice in craft services.

To Laura, our Laura body double. It might only be fiction, but in DTD you get two men wrapped up in one. We won't tell if you won't...

To Adam, for letting us use and abuse his name and likeness as the stunt double for our Second Assistant Director. And no, for the last time, we're not going to write you a sex scene. Euw. Ick. Wrong!

To the guy at Chuy's. We don't know your name, we only saw you for five seconds while you were walking in the door and we were walking out, but you could've stepped straight off the pages of this book. You were Jay in looks (blond hair cut short, blue eyes behind sunglasses and a chiseled jaw), dress (tight ocean blue T-shirt, black work boots and snug jeans...wowzers!) and attitude (it's all in the walk). For that reason alone, you're our Jay body double...thanks for the inspiration.

To Bobby Porter, a real Stunt Coordinator whom Lisa met while working for a day on a TV show. Thank you for introducing yourself and not laughing when she said she was working on a novel and had a few questions about how stunts are *really* done.

To Dave, the snake handler who gave Lisa a shed rattlesnake skin and more inspiration than he realized while working on that TV special.

To Jay, the extra and sportbike rider whom Lisa met while working on quite a few sets, for helping to keep the boredom away while unknowingly inspiring a character.

To *Threat Matrix*. Although the show was short-lived, it deserves high praise for helping Lisa find out how a set reacts when someone takes a good fall.

To the hot-looking guy with the broken down '69 Firebird on Burbank Blvd. whom Lisa stopped for but was shooed away. You made a wonderful "extra with car". If it wasn't for your car overheating, the opening of this book might have gone much differently.

To Jim Wilkey, a distinguished career stuntman, for spinning his wheels so fast, so long and so well as a kickass stunt driver.

To Bobby Ore, the amazing stunt driver who everyone has seen driving a car on two wheels, for teaching Lisa how to stunt drive.

To Alex, Jen's "key grip", "personal assistant" and love of her life. You make every day a romantic comedy.

To Jason, for being the Art Department and Lisa's "Best Boy".

And to our number one fans, the ones who email us weekly for updates on what we're working on and to offer encouragement, and who, just from their presence, remind us why we write. You deserve the red carpet treatment.

If there are any goof-ups in this book, blame the authors. We tried to perfectly serve the industry, so consider any mistakes our "special effects" to enhance the story.

Cast and Crew List

(In Order of Appearance)

Blaina Triton: Stunt Double for Meleta Bianchi/ Stunt Driver
Samantha Clarey: wife of actor Connor Clarey/ Blaina's best friend
Connor Clarey: lead actor, plays Wes Freeman/ husband to Samantha Clarey
Jay "Flip" Williams: Stunt Coordinator/ Stunt Double for Connor Clarey
Gina Clarey: daughter of Samantha; Connor adopted her when he married Sam
Caleb Clarey: son of Samantha and Connor
Meleta Bianchi: lead actress, plays Credence Dash
Laura Gruffudd: Key Costumer
Levi McKade: Animal Handler
Adam Poling: Second Assistant Director
Bryan "Smitty" Smith: Stunt Driver/ Utility Stunts
Marty Cash: Stunt Driver/ Utility Stunts
Marcy Rhodes: Stunt Driver/ Utility Stunts
Neal Atcheson: Producer
Mike Cope: Producer
Daniel Whitman: First Assistant Director
Lukas Ossman: Director
Lachlan McIntyre: Prop Master
Wes Freeman: Hero in *Dangerous Intentions* played by Connor Clarey
Credence Dash: Heroine in *Dangerous Intentions* played by Meleta Bianchi
Timmy Calhoun: Key Hair
Mandy Ostrowiak: Costume Designer
Sarah Flaherty: Wardrobe Assistant
Lynn Marks: Set Medic
Casey Fernandez: Special Effects

Mike and Lanie Friedman: brother and sister stunt team

Christie Lopez: Key Makeup

Jimmie Maxson: Producer

Kellan O'Shaunessy: actor, plays Cyprian James

Cyprian James: Villain in *Dangerous Intentions* played by Kellan O'Shaunessy

Ronny Litman: Special Effects Makeup

Ted Banks: Helicopter Pilot

Chapter One

Left turn. Right turn. Twist and turn. Left turn. Left turn.

Blaina Triton cruised the streets of Encino, driving to her best friend Sam Clarey's place for an old-fashioned girls' night in—pizza, ice cream and gossip. Of course gossip was just a nice way of saying they were going to talk about men and sex.

The traffic light turned green and Blaina made a right onto Burbank Boulevard near Woodley Park. One of the only decent breaks from buildings at the south end of the Valley, it was wide enough to smash the pedal and go like a bat out of hell if there weren't any cars around.

A sliver of moon chased the sun as warm evening breeze poured through her open window, bringing with it two of her favorite smells, trees and car exhaust. Driving through Encino was the long way to Sam's house. The very long and much-preferred way. Just Blaina and her yellow '69 Camaro, the way life should be. Then her cell phone rang.

"Blaine? Please tell me you're not already on your way over?"

"Yeah, Sam, I'll be there in maybe twenty, thirty minutes, depending on traffic. You know me, I'm taking the scenic route over the hill. What's up?"

"You're gonna hate me," Sam said hesitantly.

"Oh right. Me hate you. You married the most gorgeous man in Hollywood and I don't hate you yet. What else could you possibly do that'd actually make me hate you?" Blaina rolled her eyes and laughed. "You canceling on me or something?"

"Well...yeah..." Sam drew out each word then spoke in a rush. "But it's for a really good reason. Connor's home. He rearranged his schedule so he could come home a day early and surprise me and—"

"And you'd rather fuck him than hang with me? *Duh*. I should hope so." Blaina snickered and shot a glance at the gaudy, neon pink bag on the passenger seat. "Now that Connor's back

home, I guess you won't need the gift I bought you. Too bad, I'll just have to add it to my collection."

"Hey, now. You can't tell me you bought me a present and then say you're keeping it for yourself."

"*Pshaw*. It's not like you need it. *You* are getting laid tonight. I'm going home alone—with your present. A portable penis. Ten inches of glowing green, vibrating pleasure."

"Only ten inches? Connor's bigger than that."

"Shut up and stop bragging." Blaina chuckled, then saw something that gave her a better buzz than anything plastic ever could.

A dark purple 1970 Barracuda convertible parked on the side of the road, hood up, complete with hard-body owner leaning against the fender just in front of the driver side door. Muscular bronze arms crossed over a white T-shirted chest. Faded blue jeans that looked so well-worn they'd be soft to the touch, showcased his long legs, ending with black, work-booted feet, one crossed over the other. It was like the man had stepped out of her favorite car fantasy, instantly popping the clutch and throwing her libido into high gear.

She tried to tamp her excitement, telling herself that a smart woman would not jump a strange man on the side of the road. But there was no reason she couldn't offer help. And whatever happened afterward... "I think my night's gonna be great anyway. Go rock Connor's world. I'll catch ya later, Sam."

Sam laughed. "Okay. Thanks, Blaine. Be good." Sam's last words were barely heard as Blaina flipped her phone closed and tossed it onto the passenger seat next to the plastic bag from the sex shop. At a break in the center median, she hooked a U-turn. The Camaro's tires squeaked as she whipped the car around.

Come to mama, baby. Her nipples tightened in anticipation under her white cotton, ribbed tank top and she squirmed to give her cunt some breathing room in her painted-on, low-rise, dark green camouflage jeans. As she passed on the opposite side of the street, she stole glances at the fine hunk of manflesh, wanting to verify he was real and not a sexual mirage.

Wait a minute. Was he checking her out, too? His dark sun-glassed gaze followed her path as she U-turned again at the next intersection and pulled up behind the Barracuda.

When she stepped out of the car, his gaze locked on her. Even through the sunglasses, she felt his stare searing her body from head to toe—pausing at a few choice places in between—with each of her approaching steps. Or maybe it was the Southern California heat causing her body's temperature to rise.

Slowly, he peeled himself away from his car and turned his damn fine body toward her, looking relaxed and sexy as he looped one thumb in a pocket. Sweat trickled between her breasts, her temperature jumping another ten degrees. This close, the man was an even tastier roadside attraction. His blond hair was cut short, accentuating his strong cheekbones, a slightly crooked nose and chiseled jaw. One half of his mouth ticked upward in an interested grin as he gave her another slow once over, pausing at her braless chest.

Blaina cocked her head to the side and returned the favor, undressing him with her eyes. Holy moly, if reality was anything like the carnal picture her mind was presenting...

Somehow she managed to choke out through all the accumulating drool, "I've got tools. You need a hand?"

"A woman with tools, huh?" His grin shifted into a scowl as he smacked a fist against the roof. "Unless you've got a magic wand, a gallon of water and a roll of duct tape there probably isn't much you can do."

"I've got a gallon of water and a roll of duct tape. I left my magic wand at home, though. Sorry, I don't need it much. I drive a Chevy." She winked, then began walking back to her car, adding what she hoped was a mesmerizing, follow-me-back-to-my-car swing to her hips.

He chuckled. "Oh, I see how it is." The crunch of gravel beneath his boots as he followed had her ready to do cartwheels. *Reel him in, Blaina.* "You tease me with your tools and then put down my new ride before she's proven herself? Give me a weekend and I'll get this here pile of scrap metal to smoke your Chevy like it's tied to a tree."

"Oh, please. You gonna slide in a hotter camshaft and switch the gears in her rear-end just so you can have a shot at my machine? I dare ya." Blaina popped her trunk and grabbed a rag, a jug of water and slid a roll of tape over her wrist. She needed something to keep her hands busy. Her fingers itched to rip the clothing off Mr. Hardbody and explore all of his pieces. "I'd love to see your hotrod pull out ahead of me. But tell me this, what are you gonna do when I squeeze the

juice and you find yourself working extra hard and heavy only to eat my dust?” She tossed a saucy grin back over her shoulder.

He leaned a hip against the edge of the trunk next to her and although they weren't touching, his arresting presence practically sucked the air from her lungs. The steamy twilight air resonated with his intense magnetism, drawing her to him like a moth to a flame...and oh how she wanted to burn. “I guess you'll have to wait and find out what it's really like to tangle with my big block Barracuda. Bring it on. I love a good...hot...race.” His words slid down her neck like a heated caress, letting her know she wasn't the only one who wanted more than just a roadside attraction.

Blaina swallowed hard, suppressing a breathy pant. This man had revved her engine from zero to sixty in less time than it took to say, *I want you. Can you please fuck me right here on the trunk of my car?*

Visions of that fuck filled her mind, the full length of him driving hard into her, the feel of his breath ragged and hot against her skin. Her body tightened with unspent desire and she swallowed a moan. This was the fastest her body had ever shifted into overdrive.

Damn, girl, come to your senses. You've spent less than five minutes with this man and you want him to check your oil?

She stood up quickly, trying to clear the lingering sexual fantasies before her nipples drilled holes through her tank top. The jug of water she'd clenched so tightly hit the edge of the trunk and bounced out of her grip, landing inches from her feet.

“Whoa. You okay?” He lunged downward, but she'd already leaned over to retrieve the jug. She took that moment to push all thoughts of sex with him out of her mind, before she ended up dropping something much heavier and more painful on her foot. *Calm...cool...collected...c'mon, Blaina...*

But when she lifted her head, his lips were only inches from hers and that ragged breath she'd been fantasizing about only moments earlier washed over her face in a feverish caress.

“Yeah...I'm f-fine.” *You're incredibly fine, actually. I need to pour this water over myself to try to cool off at least a tiny little bit or I really will jump you on the trunk of my car, passing motorists be damned.* “S-So, did you overheat?”

His tempting lips curled up in a suggestive smile.

“I-I mean, your car.”

“Radiator hose.” A car part had never sounded so sexy before. His voice had dropped, becoming a deep husky growl, more sex beast than mechanic.

His gaze stayed riveted on her for a second longer than necessary, before he turned and headed over to his engine compartment.

And talk about a fine *rear* view. Wow. Blaina followed, staring at his firm, tight ass while taking deep, calming breaths to decelerate her heart back to normal cruising speed.

She set down the jug of water—carefully this time—and laid the duct tape on the front fender.

“Big block engines... They get *real* hot, don’t they?” She tilted her face toward him, and lowered her voice provocatively. “Ever let a woman caress your big hose?” Blaina gave him her naughtiest smile, but at his snorted reply, she erupted into laughter.

He shook his head. “Honestly, I never imagined a woman would want to caress a hose as big as the one I’ve got.” His grin turned positively feral as he moved in behind her, so close the heat of his body cradled hers, and whispered into her ear. “Careful, it’s very...hot.” He drew out the last word and Blaina shivered at the sensual intensity in his tone.

Using the rag, she placed her fingers around the radiator hose and began stroking up its length. She’d only traveled three inches when he grasped her hand, trapping it between the heat of the hose and his skin. A current of electricity shot from where he touched her to every erogenous zone in her body. If she hadn’t known better, she would have thought she’d gotten crossed up with a spark plug wire while the engine was at full throttle.

His hands were large and work-roughened, the kind that could rebuild a carburetor and undress a woman with equal care, and oh God how she wanted to experience him doing both.

“I’ll take over from here,” he rumbled, working the rag and her hand up the hose’s length. His arm grazed hers, the coarse hairs causing goose bumps to rise on her flesh.

Blaina closed her eyes, letting him manipulate her hand and her senses. Fixing a car had never been this erotic before. If they were to fuck, would he show her how he liked to be stroked? It wasn’t hard to imagine pumping his thick, hard cock, taking the large, round head into her mouth and working him until he came.

Oh hell, she almost came at that image. Her pussy flooded with moisture, her stomach clenching with deep-seated longing. It was everything she could do not to rub up against him, throw him down and shift his gears like he kept shifting hers.

Fuck it. If he hadn't figured out by now that she wanted him, she might as well make it more obvious. But as she leaned back to feel his rock-hard chest, he leaned in, giving her an added bonus of washboard abs pressed to her rib cage. Her ass grazed the large bulge in his pants, but it was enough to send sharp ripples of longing to her core. His entire body strung tight and a sharp breath hissed between his lips.

A gurgling sound called her attention back to the car. As if on cue, some water dribbled out of the break in the hose, sizzling as it hit the water pump. But neither one of them laughed. Heat seared her body from every direction. The car was hot, this man was hot, the ground was hot, her pussy was hot...everything was scorching hot.

Needing an escape before she completely lost control, threw him down and fucked him on the side of the road for all to see, Blaina slid her hand out from under his and stepped away. For a moment he watched her, his hand fisted at his side, his breathing as sharp as hers, before finally returning to his work.

She walked a few feet, trying to catch a breeze, something, anything to cool the raging fire burning through her. The asphalt ignored her plea, the heat of the day still rising off it.

He glanced back at her. "You rescue guys like this all the time?"

She shook her head.

"Well, I guess it's just my lucky day then. And to think I was pissed off about breaking down one lousy mile from home."

Damn she wanted him, more than she could remember wanting any other man. So what next? Was she supposed to climb back into her car and let Mr. Hardbody drive away? Buh-bye. It's been fun.

That would be a serious crime against humanity. Or at least against her dismally boring social calendar.

She moved to face him, just as he stood up. He gestured toward his car. "Can you start her up so I can fill the radiator?"

Blaina nodded, not sure that if she opened her mouth to reply, anything but “Please fuck me” would come out.

Before her wits left her for good and she ended up on her knees supplicating, she reached through his open window, turned the key and the engine chugged to life. Pulling back out of the car, she caught him watching her before he leaned over and began pouring the water in. He’d been checking out her ass. That was it. She was not spending this evening alone.

Decision made, she walked around the front of the car.

He looked up at her approach. “You got anywhere you need to be?”

“I’m following you home to make sure you get there okay.”

He nodded. “Let’s go.”

Blaina followed the Barracuda into an older, well-kept neighborhood in Encino.

Even though she’d teased him on his choice of a ride, Blaina knew that with just a few modifications, the Barracuda would be a sexy speed queen.

She hoped Mr. Hardbody liked his women as fast as he liked his cars.

When the Barracuda brake lights dimly lit up and he turned into a driveway, Blaina stopped in front of the house, watching as he pulled into the garage.

He lived in one of the older houses in the neighborhood, a single story home painted beige with cream accents with matching fifties-style decorative rock facing. The lawn was simple and well-maintained. An extra garage had been tastefully added on, turning the standard two-car garage home into a car lover’s dream—room for a workshop and four cars.

As if she wasn’t already panting for the guy.

Blaina grabbed the gaudy pink sex shop bag off the passenger seat and pushed the ten-inch vibrator out of the way, revealing a box of multicolored condoms. Ripping the box open, she took in the rainbow of rubbers—red, blue, yellow, green, purple...

What was wrong with her? Why was she pondering colors? Blaina yanked out a condom and stuffed it into her back pocket.

She looked up to see Mr. Tall, Blond and Sexy walking her way, hands in his pockets, sunglasses no longer camouflaging his face. Her stomach flip-flopped at his approach, his long,

confident strides, the way the denim clung to him in all the right places. Blindly, she reached back into the bag for more rubbers. One condom was *not* going to be enough.

Cramming the handful of condoms into her back pocket, Blaina tossed the bag back onto the opposing seat, cringing as the ten-inch vibrating monstrosity thumped against the passenger door. Hopefully she hadn't broken the damn thing.

The man's shadow crossed the window, and Blaina forgot about the stupid vibrator as she climbed out of her car and stared into crystal blue heaven.

The man had the most gorgeous cerulean eyes she'd ever seen. Why the hell would he hide those beauties behind sunglasses...ever?

His grin widened, creating matching crinkles at the corners of those sexy eyes. How long had she been standing there ogling him, mesmerized by his gaze?

Shaking it off, she leaned against her closed door, trying to look casual and flirty and oh-so-ready for hours of naughtiness. "So, you got home okay. Guess my job's done."

"Well now, the least I can do is offer you a drink. For going out of your way and all."

She cocked her head to the side as though she were considering his offer. "Throw in a tour of your garage and it's a deal."

"Done." He winked and extended his arm to her, unintentionally revealing corded muscle bulging beneath tanned skin. "Come on."

Blaina was smitten, charmed and ready to go anywhere with him. She pushed away from her car and he settled a hand on her upper back, leading her into the garage. He barely touched her, more of a guiding hand than an erotic caress, but it was enough to send her senses reeling.

Then they walked into his garage, and the last bit of sense she had went flying out the window.

Welcome to paradise. Blaina's mouth fell open as she took in her surroundings.

Next to his Barracuda, a blue '63 Corvette split window coupe with freshly polished chrome twinkled in the twilight. At the far end sat a custom-painted teal with detailed orange and yellow flames '49 Ford Panel Truck, chopped, channeled and ready to roll. But if rolling wasn't fast enough, next to it was a sleek, black '97 Viper roadster. That baby didn't just look fast, it was fast.

This garage was incredible. A huge workshop took up most of the back wall. In the dim light, she vaguely made out a drill press, brake lathe and chop saw, but knew there had to be tons more. If this wasn't automotive foreplay, what was?

"Okay, what do you like? Diet or regular? Or maybe a beer?"

His deep, gravelly voice yanked her from her musings and she snapped her mouth shut, hoping he hadn't caught her drooling. Turning his way, she pasted on a smile, swallowing her tongue at her new view—jeans pulled tight over a flawless male ass as he bent over and studied the contents of his steel-plated fridge.

Blaina walked up behind him, lifting her hand and cupping the air around his butt. *Oh yeah, soooooo nice...*

When he tossed a raised-eyebrow glance her way, she jolted her hand back and said, "I like it all."

His eyebrow arched higher, laughter dancing in his eyes. "Really?"

"Oh yeah. I'm easy to please."

"Good to know." He handed her a soda and grabbed a bottle of beer for himself. A few pizza boxes crashed against the door as he closed it. "Obviously I wasn't planning on having company tonight or I would've been more prepared." Twisting off the bottle cap, he leaned against the workbench, his long legs stretched out in front of him, crossed at the ankle, his gaze one hundred percent focused on her.

Blaina thought of the condoms filling her back pocket. Although that probably wasn't what he was talking about when he mentioned being prepared, it was a perfect opening to learn his relationship status. "Do you live alone?"

"Just me and my dog, Bo, out back."

Yes! Yes! Yes! But just to be sure she confirmed, "No wife, girlfriend, significant other or anyone else who'd be a teeny-tiny bit jealous that I'm lusting after your...cars?"

One side of his mouth tilted upward. "Nope. Cars are usually women repellant."

"I think you've been talking to the wrong women."

He chuckled. "I think you're probably right."

"Of course I am."

His grin didn't disappear as he lifted the beer bottle to his mouth. His head tipped back, throat moving as he swallowed. She wanted to brace him against the workbench and nibble on his neck, lick a line up to his mouth and then suck the extra moisture from his lips. His really sexy lips. Lips made for sin, sex and seduction.

Shockwaves of lust caused her engine to overheat and her driveline to shimmy with desire. And she'd thought that only happened in cheesy romance novels. But no, her legs were quaking and she squeezed her knees together to keep them from knocking. She skimmed her can of soda over the steamy, exposed flesh above her tank top, and swore she heard a sizzle. But the cool relief was short-lived. His eyes sparked electric blue fire as they followed the trail the condensation left on her skin, heating her right back up again.

He clunked the half-empty beer bottle onto the workbench next to his hip, and stood up straight, aligning their bodies. "You still interested in that tour?" His fingertips grazed her hips, burning a hole through the denim.

If they were naked, all Blaina'd have to do is wiggle and jump and she'd be shifting her way to paradise.

Why weren't they naked already?

"I'm ready when you are," she offered hopefully. If the large lump in his pants was anything to go by, he was just as ready as she was.

"How fast do you like to go?"

Her heart accelerated, setting new land speed records. "Why don't you take me for a test spin and find out?"

The words had barely passed her lips when he yanked her toward him and crashed his mouth over hers.

Oh Christ, the man was talented. His lips were warm and smooth as he teased hers, nibbling the sensitive flesh, then using his tongue to soothe the slight sting. Blaina didn't normally like beer, but the faint taste of it on him was an intoxicant, a flavor she'd happily drown in if given the opportunity.

Calloused hands skimmed up her bare arms, leaving a trail of pure arousal in his wake. His palms came to rest on her neck, his thumbs stroking her jaw line. But still he didn't deepen the

kiss or rip off her clothes or any of the wonderful things that would get them closer to raw, unbridled sex.

Although maybe this going slow thing had its benefits. There was time for exploration, and this man had a body that demanded a fourteen-point inspection. But where to start. Did she want to polish his chrome? Dabble beneath his hood? Lengthen his driveshaft?

She placed her hands on his chest, beginning her journey by stroking him through the soft cotton, moaning her endorsement of every taut, hard, chiseled inch. Her fingertips skimmed lower, feeling the ridges in his abdomen. It was a roadmap to paradise.

Where had this man been her whole life? She sent up a quick prayer of thanks to the god of broken down vehicles for having this perfect specimen of a man's car stall when and where it did.

His lips separated from hers and she blinked up at him. Why was he stopping? Stopping was bad.

"Do you want to go inside?" he asked as his thumb made lovely, erotically charged sweeps across her cheek.

Okay, that was definitely not bad. That was very, very good. Except she didn't want to go inside.

She shook her head and he frowned. His hand fell from her face and Blaina realized she'd better explain really fast before he retreated completely. She tangled her fingers with his and smiled. "Why would I want to go inside? You and the cars are out here. The garage is perfect."

He dropped a fast, hard kiss on her upturned lips. "Follow me." The man tugged on her hand, pulling her with him toward the Corvette. He let go of her as he reached through the open window of the 'Vette. The hood popped and he straightened, tilting the hood up on its front-mounted hinge and securing it in place.

Blaina knew she should have been disappointed. They weren't getting naked yet. But the automotive masterpiece laid out in front of her was so spectacular it was foreplay of a different kind.

She leaned against the fender, inhaling the essence of speed. This car wasn't all original. In fact, it was far from it. He'd turned a seemingly plain-Jane Corvette into a tri-power beast that could smoke pretty much anything on the road without thinking twice about it.

"You do all this yourself?"

Pressing from behind, he curled his hands around the top lip of the fender, trapping her between hot man and hot car. The evidence of his arousal bucked against her ass, and she knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that there was definitely nothing wrong with his fuel pump. It was cocked, primed and ready to...um...pump.

"Every last bit," he said against her ear.

She tilted her head, rubbing her cheek against his. "I like what I've seen so far..."

"What else do you want to see?" His warm, musky male scent filled her every breath. She needed to taste him again. All of him.

"Every last bit." This time she initiated the kiss, but the end result was still the same. She nearly forgot to breathe. Hell, she nearly forgot her own name. But what a way to go.

His lips offered more tantalizing torment, more promises of what was to come. And when she thought she'd die without him inside her—anywhere inside her, at this point she wasn't picky—his tongue plunged deep, owning her completely.

He stroked through her mouth and she swore she felt the wet caress in her sex. She turned to face him and rubbed herself against him, without words—since there was no way in hell she was ending the magical kiss—begging him to ease her rapidly escalating ache.

The sound of a car honking drew her attention and they turned as one toward the open garage door. As much as she wanted him, she wasn't interested in giving the neighbors a freebie. She glanced downward, seeing the answer to her problem lying on the dashboard. Reaching through the car's open window, she slapped her hand on the button of the garage door controller. With a squeak and a groan, the door began to shudder closed, blocking out intrusive eyes and the last, violet and mauve streaks of twilight as night encompassed Los Angeles.

As the door shut, the garage lit up with the incandescence of several naked droplight bulbs hanging from the crossbeams of the roof.

Now on to more important things—getting naked.

“Watch your hands,” he murmured as the Corvette hood fell closed.

She had no problem following his order. Her hands were otherwise occupied, starting where they’d left off earlier, continuing their tactile perusal of his sublimely beautiful male form. This time she studied his arms, beginning with his shoulders. The man was in top physical condition. Either he had a hard labor job, or he worked out on a regular basis.

As her wandering hands trailed down to fully appreciate his biceps, she got an up close and personal feel of how well they worked when he placed his hands on her hips and lifted her onto the edge of the Corvette.

His thumbs slipped beneath her tank top and caressed her belly. That was all, a swipe of his flesh over hers and Blaina couldn’t stop her shiver. Had she ever wanted anyone this badly before?

Oh hell no. This man was as intoxicating as the sweet smell of nitro-methane on a hot August night with waves of heat rising from the drag strip. Guys like this were rare. And if all the car talk was just the tire-squealing, burnout warm-up for the real race, she was ready to pop her clutch, slam the pedal and get on down the track.

Blaina curled her fingers around the waistband of her fantasy man’s jeans and yanked him between her spread legs until his erection nudged the seam at her crotch. Why were they still wearing clothes? She was going to explode if they didn’t get down to business soon.

And get down to business he did, as his mouth latched onto her neck. Involuntarily, her head tipped back, allowing him full access. His lips, teeth and tongue trailed a path of liquid fire, alternately licking, suckling and nibbling at her exposed flesh. The slight abrasion of stubble on his jaw grazing her skin added to the heated seduction. If this erotic treatment of her neck was a small hint at what he was capable of, she needed to get naked...and fast.

“You know,” she said between muted gasps, “clothing is really overrated. Let’s take ours off. Now.”

He chuckled against her throat in response, the vibration of his laugh sending ripples of desire straight to her tingling pussy. But her clothing stayed firmly in place. *Dammit*. His mouth broke from her neck and he lifted his face to meet her eyes. The heated spark in his gaze left no doubt where the night would lead.

“There’s still a lot we can do while fully dressed.” To prove his point, he latched on to her nipple, pulling and sucking through the thin cotton material of her tank top. Her eyes crossed and she bit her lip to keep from whimpering. “See?” he whispered huskily, then ran a fingertip over the damp circle of fabric he’d left behind.

When she’d gotten dressed for her evening, she’d planned for a girls’ night in with Sam and hadn’t bothered with a bra. It had been a good idea at the time—girls’ night in was all about comfort and relaxation. But the idea seemed even better now. It was one less item to dispose of. Plus the needy, aroused expression on his face as he stared at her dark rose nipple protruding prominently through the white fabric was an added benefit.

“You’ve made your point,” she emphasized. “Can we get naked now?”

He shook his head and, increasing her torment, blew a cool stream of air over her wet, erect nub. Like lightning striking her flesh, the electric current rocketed through her system, straight to her throbbing cunt.

Blaina cried out as her whole body reacted to his torture. Any foreplay was a rarity for her. This much foreplay was likely to propel her overstimulated body into shock. It was time to take matters into her own hands.

Grasping the hem of his T-shirt, she tugged it upward, exposing his bronze abdomen and a sprinkling of golden curls trailing down into his jeans. Her tongue stuck to the roof of her mouth. *Yowzers and yum.* He had a six-pack she wanted to drink every ounce of. Somehow she managed to say, “Lift up your arms, ’cause this shirt is coming off.”

“And if I don’t...” He raised a mischievous eyebrow.

“I’ll rip it off.” To prove her point, she yanked on the fabric.

“Well, if that’s what the lady wants...” He took the T-shirt from her grasp and peeled it off his magnificent body, dropping it to the ground at his feet. If Blaina hadn’t been sitting, her knees would’ve given out.

Adding one more notch into the column of perfect fantasy man, a wicked Celtic flame tattoo covered the skin over his heart and licked upward, singeing the chiseled muscles on his chest with orange and red fire. Even without the tattooed flames, his chest was causing her insides to

combust. She may have felt those muscles through his shirt, but looking at him, and touching him, more than doubled the pleasure. The man was a work of art.

She traced a finger over the complex design of the tattoo. It was gorgeous. He was gorgeous.

Her finger brushed over what felt to be a deep scar, masked by the bright colors of the tattoo's flame. Before she could explore further, he took her hands in his, pinned them above her head and prompted, "Your turn." He skimmed his hands up her sides, taking her tank top with him. The white fabric looked so tiny in his hands. He tossed it onto the hood behind her.

Unable to withstand the temptation, she pressed her breasts against his chiseled frame. Her nipples turned into tiny, fiery darts as she traced them along his chest, expecting the friction to light small flames in her wake. His quick indrawn breath masked her sigh of delight.

Now they were getting somewhere.

His lips locked onto her mouth again, this kiss one of barely restrained urgency. His tongue whipped through her mouth, tangling with hers, taking command of her senses with every stroke. It was a power play, one she was more than willing to acquiesce to. His denim-clad cock bucked, charging her pussy, and she wrapped her legs around his waist and ground against him. He growled and the rough sound of his need made her pussy cream even more.

She forced her hands between their bodies and undid the top button of his jeans, desperate to get her hands on the fiery length of his cock.

He grunted and pulled away from her. "Not yet, sweetheart."

"Give me one good reason why."

"Because I want to taste you first, and if you undress me I'll lose my patience."

"I lost mine a long time ago."

"Then I better get busy." His hands lowered to the waistband of her super-tight jeans and he smirked. "So are these man-resistant pants? Maybe I should get my pry bar."

Blaina kicked off her funky, blue-flame shoes and returned his smirk with a bad girl grin. "That depends on what you plan on doing with your *pry bar*."

"My pry bar is a multifunctional tool..." He wiggled his eyebrows and she laughed.

"Why don't you show me what you can do with it?" She leaned backward, flattening her palms on the smooth hood.

With a practiced hand, he undid the button and zipper on her jeans and tugged them off like an old intake gasket, leaving her lounging on his Corvette wearing only a tiny pair of red panties.

He stepped between her splayed thighs and dropped a wet kiss on her stomach, teasing her navel with his tongue before venturing lower. “Red means stop,” he stated rather matter-of-factly as strong fingers traced the line of her panties, but didn’t delve beneath.

“If I’d had any idea where I was going to end up tonight, I would’ve worn green. Or better yet, nothing at all.” She squirmed, trying to force his fingers and mouth where she so badly wanted them.

“Nothing...that sounds rather promising.” As he spoke, his hot, moist breath caressed through her panties. If she got any wetter down there, she might slip off the car like a greasy hand on an oily wrench.

“I’m really not attached to my underwear.” She lifted her hips in an encouraging fashion. “Make them go away. Far, far away.”

“Not yet,” he replied, then lowered his mouth to her sopping center and licked her through the clinging material.

“Okay...” Blaina let out a strangled moan and her head flopped back onto the Corvette. There was a time to argue. Now was not one of those times. Especially not if he continued on his current path. He centered his mouth over her cleft and huffed out warm air.

She huffed out warm air as well, in the form of a long, drawn-out, pleading moan.

“Are you uncomfortable like that?”

In a breathless daze, Blaina lifted her head and stared at him. “Huh?”

“If this isn’t comfortable for you, we can move—”

“No.” She locked her ankles behind his neck in case she wasn’t making herself clear. “Hell no. No. No. No. No. No.”

He nipped the inside of her upper thigh. “No?” A large finger curled beneath the flimsy yet unfortunately well-positioned barrier of her underwear and pulled the fabric away from her opening. He rumbled low in his throat, a sound that could only be described as reckless craving. “I don’t want to start something we can’t finish.”

“We’ll finish.” Blaina dropped her head back onto the hood and groaned as he forged a liquid trail along her slit. “We will most definitely finish. Multiple times.”

His mouth still making magic down below, he hooked his fingers around the waistband of her panties and carefully slid them off her pelvis. Seconds later she was finally free.

“Multiple times, huh?” He skimmed his hands up her inner thighs. His scintillating touch made her needier, hotter. “Guess I better get started.”

One finger reached between her legs and toyed with her clit. Her already overstimulated body went into meltdown and she replied with a moan instead of the smart remark on the tip of her tongue.

His teasing finger slipped inside her cunt and if he hadn’t been bracing her against the hood with his body, she would’ve slid right off. That most definitely wasn’t the way she wanted to cross the finish line. He twisted his hand and ground his palm over her clit, a second finger joining the first. Breath ragged, heart pounding, she closed her eyes and pushed her mound against his hand, wanting him to go faster and harder now.

He must have understood her game of sexual charades because he pistoned faster, masterfully fucking her with his fingers. The pressure built in her like a combustion chamber just before the power stroke and she gasped and moaned, and then screamed when he lightly bit down on her clit. The tension released in a burst of relentless pleasure, and her body went limp, languidly melting into the Corvette.

Jay stared at the woman draped over the hood of his Corvette, her eyes closed, body flushed pink from the orgasm he’d given her.

Watching her get off, listening to her rising moans, tasting her orgasm as she climaxed, was a hell of a lot more satisfying than his original drive-home, work-on-the-car, drink-a-couple-beers, go-to-bed plan.

The woman was a firecracker. Since the moment she’d climbed out of her car and offered him tools, he’d wanted her. It had been a long damn time since any woman had caught his interest for more than a minute. He was easily bored, and would rather be alone than suffer through monotonous conversation and uninspiring sex.

Everything about *this* woman was inspiring.

Her eyes opened halfway as she lazily stretched and arched her back, resembling a cat waking up from a nap. Every move she made was sensual, bordering on animalistic.

“That was quite the test drive.” She pushed herself upright, scooting to the edge of the Corvette and dropping her feet to the cement floor. “Now I wanna see what’s under *your* hood.”

His dick throbbed like a sore tooth. He couldn’t remember ever craving a woman this much. Patience at its limit, he said, “That can be arranged,” and lifted her in his arms.

“Until then...” Her lips curled up in a wayward smile then she leaned in and marked him with her tongue, licking his collarbone, his neck and along his jaw.

Jesus, if she got any more enticing he wasn’t ever going to let her go.

He carried her to the Barracuda and somehow managed to get the door open as she continued to burn his flesh with hot, wet kisses. Using her fingernails, she lightly scratched down his arm, leaving trailing imprints. His blood was boiling, his balls heavy with the need for release and he was seconds from throwing her down on the front seat and fucking her there, halfway out of the car.

But apparently she wanted the full tour. Expertly undoing the seat latch, she started to shove the seat forward. He followed, pushing it with his elbow then depositing her in the backseat.

He hurriedly climbed in after her, and the moment his ass hit the seat, she jumped on him, straddling his legs.

“We need to get your clothes off,” she ordered, reaching between his legs and releasing another button on his fly. Her knuckles scraped over his cock as she worked and his breath hissed out in a sharp groan. Shit, if she kept that up he was going to shoot his come all over her hands.

He bracketed her wrists with his hands and lifted them to his mouth, dropping kisses on both palms. “I didn’t think this all the way through. I should’ve gotten undressed before I got in the car.”

“Oh darn, I guess that means I have to strip you down, piece by piece.” She started to move her hands back to his jeans, when he shook his head. “What?”

He raised his leg and wobbled his still-booted foot. “You might want to start a little lower.”

Her tongue peeked out between her lips as she pondered the situation. “You just want me on my knees in front of you.”

“I just want you.” He anchored his hands on her hips and nuzzled her breast. Between teasing licks on her nipple he murmured, “I’m going to fuck you.” He tugged the rigid peak deep into his mouth, relishing the soft pants huffing from the back of her throat, the way she clung to his hair, bracing him against her. He released her nipple, licking it a final time. “I’m just taking the scenic route.”

“I think it’s time for a shortcut.” She turned, straddling his leg, and began untying his boot.

Damn, what an image she made, her sexy ass tilted upward, back curving forward as she worked. He palmed her ass, letting his thumb flirt down the seam between her perfect cheeks.

She shuddered, her breath coming faster.

His dick silently screamed for mercy.

“Other foot,” she said shakily and he heard one boot thump to the floor.

He shifted the denim-covered leg she straddled, pressing against her hot pussy. She let out a strangled moan as he moved his leg, sliding it back and forth with slow, gentle movements. Her moisture soaked his jeans and she gasped, digging her fingers into his thighs for support.

Caught up in the sexy vision playing out in front of him, he said, “I know you’re close. I can feel your heat drenching my leg. Fuck me. Now. Just like this.” His words came out sounding dangerously harsh. The woman had him by the balls and she didn’t even know it. She was addicting. Enticing. If he didn’t fuck her soon, he was going to explode. But damn he wanted to see her getting off on his leg first.

Then he was going to take her until they both screamed.

His hands on her waist guided her as she rocked back and forth on his thigh. Her orgasm hit her sharp and hard, sucking the air from her lungs. If his hands weren’t still holding her up, she would have collapsed back against him.

He rubbed his palms over her hips. “That was the hottest fucking thing I’ve ever seen,” he rumbled appreciatively, carefully lifting her off him and depositing her on the seat next to him. With a speed borne of desperation, he yanked off his remaining boot and pulled off his jeans and briefs. “I need to fuck you now.”

Her wide-eyed gaze landed on his cock. Leaning forward, she stroked him from base to tip, and he nearly lost control. “Yes, please,” she whispered, in a voice full of such sexy yearning, a spurt of semen shot from his dick.

Before he could stop her, she bent over and licked the pre-come. He jerked his hips, barely able to restrain himself from fucking her mouth. But he was too damn aroused and knew he wouldn’t be gentle.

“Shit,” she mumbled, bolting upright and staring out the car window. “Don’t go anywhere.” She started to climb out of the car.

He yanked her back, crazed at the thought she wanted to leave. “Where are you going?”

“Condoms. I left them in my back pocket.”

Relief hit him hard and he couldn’t stop his laugh. “You mean these?” He reached for his discarded jeans and pulled several packets from his pocket.

“How?”

“When I took your pants off the condoms fell out. I thought they might come in handy.”

“Smart man. I think you’ll look good in blue.” She stole a condom from his hand and tore open the wrapper. As she slowly unrolled the neon blue sheath over his cock, he locked his jaw to keep from losing control.

As soon as she was finished, he grabbed her by both ankles and yanked her across the seat toward him until she was almost completely reclined. “I’ll take over from here.”

Then he lowered himself between her widespread legs and in one swift thrust was buried to the hilt inside her.

He groaned as her pussy boiled him alive. There was no going slow now. He’d never needed to come this badly before.

She wrapped her legs around his waist and arched up to meet his thrusts. The friction as he lunged in and out of her slick channel overpowered his senses. He drove into her harder and faster, as her cunt gripped him in a tight embrace. It was unending nirvana and as he reached the pinnacle, he looked at her face. Her mouth was open on a quiet moan, her body trembling around him, her hooded eyes seeking his.

It was everything he wanted. He grunted, his whole body shuddering as he came deep inside her willing body.

Lounging in the back of a beat-up old car, the comfortable weight of a gorgeous, sated man covering her, Blaina felt utterly content. His breath was warm against her throat, the skin of his back slick with sweat beneath her wandering hands. She didn't even care that the seat belt was probably permanently lodged between her shoulder blades because he'd pounded her so hard.

God, she could get used to this.

Whoa...where had that thought come from? *This* had all the markings of a one-night stand. A glorious one-night stand she wanted to someday write into her Hollywood memoirs, but only a one-night stand all the same.

She did her best to ignore the twinge of regret. Her track record spoke for itself. She didn't have long-term relationships. And as fun as a romp through a garage full of cars was, it didn't constitute a relationship. She needed to enjoy the moment while it lasted and savor the memory when it was done.

Rumbling deep in his throat in the sexy way that made goose bumps rise on her skin, he nuzzled her neck, braced his arms against the seat and pushed himself upright. Blaina watched as he removed the condom. His dick was still half hard, and still very impressive. It looked like the man might have as much stamina as she did.

Proving her point, he pulled her onto his lap. "Ready to continue your tour?" The words teased her lips, while his cock teased her swollen folds, assuring her that the night wasn't ending yet.

She wiggled against his erection, drunk in the knowledge of his continued sexual appetite. "So far the results have exceeded my expectations."

"Mine, too."

They shared a smile, and a sharp jolt of regret pitched her heart into her stomach. Men this incredible didn't just happen to be on the side of the road, waiting for her to drive up.

Brushing a kiss on the curve of her neck, he slid out from beneath her. “Follow me.” Picking up his jeans, he climbed out of the car and chucked his pants onto the Viper. He reached back a hand to help her out.

Although she didn’t need assistance, there was something absurdly enchanting about a gorgeous, naked man offering his hand, acting as though they were climbing out of a limo at a movie premiere rather than tumbling around naked inside a garage.

This was way more fun than a movie premiere.

Her hand disappeared into his much larger one, his strong, warm fingers massaging her palm. As she climbed out of the car, she took in every beautiful inch of golden flesh and chiseled perfection. And his smile. The light in his eyes. She yearned for more time to learn what made him laugh, what made him tick, what made him...him.

Damn, he was making her philosophical—or maybe just possessive. Either way, he’d wormed his way inside her and she wanted him to herself for longer than one night.

Fearing she’d speak the words she shouldn’t say, she lifted their clasped hands to her lips and kissed the back of his hand, then as their fingers unfurled, she kissed his palm, his fingertips.

When she looked into his eyes, she saw the same inexplicable desire mirrored there. In a swift flash, he swept her off her feet and carried her to the Viper. Since it was topless, he settled her on the passenger side before hiking himself over the door and standing on the seat.

She shivered at the raw power of his moves, the way each muscle stood out in sharp definition. There was no doubt in her mind that he was used to getting what he wanted, when he wanted it. He wasn’t the type to accept anything less.

He was strong, commanding, potent male...and for this moment in time, he was all hers.

She got to her knees on the leather, bringing her face level with his magnificent shaft. “My turn,” she whispered, before sealing her lips around the head of his thick, ruddy cock. Teasing him at first, she drew her tongue over the slit on the tip, savoring the tangy evidence of his earlier orgasm. He tasted as good as he smelled—warm, musky, masculine. She moaned her enjoyment of his flavor and suckled harder.

He let out a low, primal growl and leaned back against the roll bar, weaving his strong fingers into her hair, holding her in place.

She thrilled in his barely contained fervor, enjoyed every second of controlling this powerful man. Gradually, she took all of his length, relishing every one of his grunts and groans, sucking him deep against her throat and to the edge of his control before retreating back down his member. Only to start all over again, wanting to drive him wild, the way he'd driven her.

She experimented with him. Changing her rhythm and adding her hand to the base of his cock. When she felt him nearing climax, she changed again. And again.

Soon, he caught on to her game. He tugged on her hair, forcing her to release his shaft with a wet popping sound. She looked up to meet his gaze.

Her heart nearly stopped. She'd never seen a look like that before, was almost afraid to define it. Sex, lust, need and greed all rolled into one, mixed with something deeper, more vulnerable.

Without a word, he produced a condom from a pocket in the jeans he'd thrown over the windshield. After rolling a rubber into place, he turned her to face the front of the car. There was a desperation in his actions. Like their very lives depended on joining. Holding her to him, he lowered both of them so that she sat on his lap in the seat, his cock sliding easily into her eager pussy.

While his shaft rocked in and out of her willing body, the rest of him began a gentle assault, lips brushed the curve of her neck, hands wandered over her flesh.

This felt different than before. It was more than a seduction. More than a fucking. With the simple touches of his fingers, he was putting his mark on her memories so she'd never forget him.

His pace was agonizingly slow, but at that speed she became aware of every nuance of their lovemaking. The feel of his coarse leg hair beneath her thighs...his solid stomach muscles against her back...his hot breath against her neck...his strong thrusts as he increased speed, bringing her to the edge. All of it compounded, making the experience so much more than a marathon fuck session.

One hand settled on her lower belly where he started an effortless massage on her clit. Every sensation amplified until she wanted to beg him to make it stop or to make it never end.

It was all way too much. She fully surrendered, letting him take her into oblivious orgasm along with him. Blaina shuddered and gasped as her world collapsed in on her, then rebuilt itself even more beautiful than before.

He caressed her stomach, his long fingers stroking over her rib cage while warm lips lay little kisses on the side of her neck, and she knew beyond any doubt that he was feeling the same vast surprise at their connection, too.

In an overwhelmed daze, she willed strength back into her legs. This was much bigger than smoothly picking up a guy for a one-night stand. Slowly and carefully she separated from him, climbed out of the Viper and walked over to the Corvette to grab her clothes.

As she got dressed, her mind swirled like a kaleidoscope of confusing emotions. How could she feel so strongly for a man she'd only just met? This was dangerous, uncharted, unfamiliar territory. Staying with him longer was not an option. If she couldn't control her feelings now, how would she feel in another hour or two?

No, she needed to get far, far away before she did or said something stupid. Before things got messy and her heart got involved and this great moment turned into something ugly.

Snagging her shoes, she slapped the button to open the garage door and finally looked back at her fantasy man.

To avoid flashing the neighborhood, he stood behind the Barracuda, his jeans bunched in one hand.

"You can give me the tour of the panel truck later, okay?" she managed to say, although her voice quivered as much as her knees.

When he looked toward her, his eyes shone with a whirlwind of emotions a lot more complex than simple afterglow.

Drawing in a deep breath, she took in the hot male scent of him as well as some good clean motor oil. It was what every garage should smell like.

This place, and everything in it, had become her private sexual paradise.

Shaking her head in an effort to regain her sanity, she walked out of the garage. Dusk had plunged into deep night while she'd indulged her wildest fantasies. Crickets called to their mates

beneath the slender crescent moon hanging high in the star-spotted sky. A breeze did little to chill the heat still tingling over her flesh.

His voice followed her into the darkness. "Tell me your name."

She laughed somewhat shakily, incapable of tearing her gaze away from him. She'd never even thought to ask his. Yet one more thing that emphasized how weird this connection was between them. She shouldn't feel so attached. So possessive.

Except in every way that mattered, he didn't feel like a stranger. Even without knowing his name, in the time they'd spent together talking and flirting, she knew more about him than all the guys she'd ever dated. "I'll tell you next time," she promised.

"Next time?" He raised an eyebrow. Her insides got weak all over again. Damn, the man had that extra something that made her tick.

"Next week? Same time, same place?" *If I can wait that long...*

He jerked a nod, his eyes piercing her soul. "Same time. Same place."

Before she changed her mind and asked if she could stay indefinitely, she got in her car and drove off into the night, still marveling at living a fantasy.

Chapter Two

Blaina made a hard, tire-squealing right on Front Street, singing along to her *Queen Greatest Hits* CD with all her might. The heavy guitar strain thrummed its rhythmic drug through her veins and Blaina swayed her body to the intoxicating beat.

But it was more than just the music lighting her blood on fire. The sexual euphoria buzz from two nights prior hadn't dimmed. The way that man had manipulated her body, tuning her engine until she purred—her pussy contracted sharply at the memory.

Next Saturday night couldn't come soon enough.

Her cell phone rang, barely heard over her loud and enthusiastic singing. Turning the stereo down, she flipped open her phone. The screen said it was Sam calling. Blaina answered, still yowling at the top of her lungs, "We Are the Champions!"

Sam laughed. "Someone's in a good mood. Looking forward to your first day on *Dangerous Intentions*?"

"Looking forward to a lot of things, girlygirl. I'm Meleta Bianchi's stunt double again. You know this gig is gonna kick some serious ass. It's pure heaven. And I've gotta tell you about this guy I met. *Mreow* the man is hot!"

"Blaina, babe. I can't keep up. Which guy is this?"

"I don't know his name, but we need to reschedule our girls' night in because I have some award-winning sexual exploits to share."

"Oh, anonymous sex. Tell me more."

"I'm almost to the set, so I can't do the man or the sex justice. But we're still doing lunch today, right? I'll tell you all about him then. All the luscious, dirty, tasty details." She laughed.

"I'm holding you to that, you tease. Once I get Gina to school, and run some errands I should be there. Did I tell you? We close on the property in Valencia today. The fourth *Sweet Impulse* will be open in a few months."

“Congrats, girl! Looks like we both have something to be happy about. You’re bringing little Caleb today, right?”

“Of course. You know what a daddy’s boy he is.”

“Good. I bought him another Hot Wheels to add to his collection.”

Sam half-laughed, half-sighed. “You spoil him too much.”

“A boy can never have too many cars. Hey, I gotta jet now. I can see the big white production trucks of base camp from here. See you in a few.” Blaina closed her phone and turned left, following the signs leading to the day’s location. A shiver of anticipation shot through her, the same feeling she got every time she started on a new project. She was living her dream, making money doing what she loved. Damn, life was good. And with Mr. Hardbody on the horizon, it was getting even better.

Blaina waved at the security guard, then drove through the lot packed full of trailers, big white semis and various other production equipment, until she found an open space in crew parking.

Although she had his name memorized, Blaina consulted the small notebook she carried with her. *Jay Williams—Stunt Coordinator*. She had to check in with him so she could get started.

Blaina was excited to finally get a chance to work with the illustrious Jay Williams. Her stunt-driving teacher had used Jay as the best example of how to succeed in the business. Now that she had finally found the job in production that fit her—keeping her adrenaline pumping and her body stimulated like a hard round of rigorous sex—she had no intention of giving it up. This movie was all about impressing Mr. Williams with her abilities, because with his recommendation, there’d be no stopping her.

But she had to find him first, somewhere in the maze of trucks that comprised base camp.

A voice stopped her as she passed the wardrobe trucks. “Hey, Blaina, I didn’t know you were working *Dangerous Intentions*.”

Blaina peered around the multiple racks of clothing, looking for the face behind the voice. A blonde woman’s smile shone back at her, stacks of clothing draping one arm. Blaina grinned and

hugged her. “God, Laura, I haven’t seen you since *Third Man Down* wrapped and that was what, a year ago now? Are you the key costumer on this show?”

“You bet. You can’t get away from me that easily.” Laura squeezed Blaina with her one free arm.

“How are you? How’s the family?”

“The kids are running me ragged, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. How ’bout you? Still dating Gregory?”

Blaina rolled her eyes. “Thank God, no. The man was all hands, which would have been okay if he’d actually known what to do with them. You’d think a man skilled with intricate sculpting tools would know how to unhook a bra. He seemed to think my boobs were modeling clay. I swear I still have the bruises from his attempts at foreplay.” She playfully shuddered and Laura laughed. “Hey, you wouldn’t happen to know where Jay Williams is, would you?”

Laura’s blue-green eyes widened. “Oh baby... Are you working with him? That man redefines hot. I had him in for a fitting the other day, and let me tell you, I could have smoothed out the wrinkles in his pant legs for at least another hour and a half. My hands were shaking when I had to measure his inseam and then his girth...and I don’t normally measure and tell, but that man...” She licked her lips. “I doubt he’s ever left a woman wanting. If I didn’t have my Jack, I’d work on getting Jay *out* of costume. I haven’t seen him today, though.”

“That big, huh? Then what am I doing talking to you when I should be looking for him?” They both laughed. “I’ll catch you later, okay?”

Laura grinned and shooed her away.

Blaina walked on, passing the prop truck, camera truck and grip truck, then the hair and makeup trailer. On one of the larger trailers in the back, she caught the letters “CC” and assumed that was Connor’s trailer. She’d look for Sam there later.

Cruising past the trailers toward some smaller trucks, she almost walked into a man unloading some boxes labeled *Handle With Caution—Live Snakes*.

“Whoa, sorry.” Blaina stepped back and out of his way.

A cowboy hat appeared from behind the boxes as they lowered to the ground. The man lifted his head and Blaina got her first good look at him. Stormy gray eyes shone out of a deeply tanned face.

Blaina smiled. A hunk in a cowboy hat. Movie sets always had the best variety of eye candy. “Maybe you can help me. Any idea where Jay Williams is? He’s the stunt coordinator.”

The cowboy returned her smile and pointed in the direction she’d been heading. “Just keep on walkin’ and you’ll run right into ‘im.”

His slow southern drawl had her curling her toes. A real cowboy. Or a damn good pretender. In Hollywood it could go either way. “Thanks.” She stepped around the southern hottie and nearly plowed right into another guy. He was writing something on a clipboard lying on the hood of one of the big white grip trucks...right next to the catering tent.

“Are you Jay Williams? I’m Blaina Triton.”

The man turned and adjusted his baseball cap, familiar cerulean blue eyes narrowing as he met her gaze.

For probably the first time in her life, Blaina was speechless. Her mind kept trying to tell her she wasn’t seeing who she thought she was seeing, but her body recognized him all the same. Her skin flushed, itching to be stroked by those large, rough hands, and she actually felt her pussy lips swell in anticipation.

His jaw twitched. “You’re Blaina Triton?”

Hearing his gruff voice say her name for the first time sent her pulse racing. It was everything she could do to keep from leaning into him, licking a path up his neck and tasting his dangerously addicting lips over and over again.

Instead, she curled her lips upward in a “damn it’s great to see you again” smile and said, “I guess next time came a little earlier than expected.”

Jay didn’t return her smile. “Go see Adam Poling, the second A.D. He’ll check you in and give you your papers. You won’t be working until after they do the first turnaround so you’ve got plenty of time to go through wardrobe, hair and makeup.” He dismissed her, grabbed his clipboard off the hood of the grip truck and walked away.

Feeling like she'd been cold-cocked, Blaina watched his retreat. What the hell had just happened? She rewound the last minute and came to the same conclusion.

The man she'd had a phenomenal night with, the man she'd thought she had connected with on more than a sexual level, had totally blown her off like she was a three-bit hooker! No "good to see you" or "when ya wanna come over so we can tour the panel truck?" or even "let's talk about the movie". Nothing. Just a cold stare and a colder attitude.

Well, screw him. If he wanted to pretend that Saturday night hadn't happened, two could play at that game. There were a plethora of single, willing men on every shoot. Hell, the past five—no make that six guys she'd dated had been coworkers. She didn't need a certain stunt coordinator to get laid...a stunt coordinator she was going to be spending the next twelve weeks getting up close and personal with.

Oh fuck...

At lunchtime, Blaina flopped down next to Sam and barely avoided tossing her food tray across the table. She let out a long, dramatic sigh.

Sam glanced up, pinning Blaina with a concerned gaze and a worried-mom expression. "Okay, spill. What the hell happened between this morning's Queen-singing, anonymous-sex-bragging, this-gig-kicks-ass Blaina, to the solemn-faced girl sitting next to me now? Someone die?"

"I need to whine and bitch for a few minutes, then I'll be fine. It's nothing unusual, at least not for me. Just my normal tendency to screw a guy whose cock is bigger than his brain."

Sam stifled a laugh. "Isn't that most men? Other than Connor, of course. Both his cock and his brain are huge." Sam grinned and Blaina couldn't help but smile.

"I think you got the only decent guy available, Sam. I'm serious. The rest of them...oh hell, I shoulda kept on driving Saturday night." Blaina grabbed her iced tea and took a long drink, wishing it were something a tad stronger.

"Okay, okay...you're going to have to start at the beginning because I'm lost. Does this have something to do with the movie, or with the hot man you mentioned on the phone earlier?"

Blaina rolled her eyes. "Both. And that's what makes the problem so much more of a bitch."

“Spill, Blaina. Now. And don’t leave out any details.”

Ten minutes later, Sam was still shaking her head. “I swear, Blaina. Only you. How the hell do you get yourself into these situations? And what type of crappy luck do you have to screw the asshole you’re going to be forced to work alongside for the next three months?”

“You know, you’re supposed to make me feel better, not remind me of the daily torture my work environment is going to be.”

Sam wrapped an arm around her. “Oh shit, Blaine, I’m sorry. It’s just...dammit, I want you to be happy. Happy is good, remember? You need more than the daily work grind, the one-night stands—”

“Need I remind you that Connor was a one-night stand?”

Sam squirmed. “I was lucky. But that’s not my point. Your date list for the last year looks like today’s call sheet. Do you really want more than a one-night stand because...” She paused, chewing on her lower lip. “Damn, Blaine, don’t be mad at me, okay? But you deserve soooo much better than the men you’ve been sleeping with lately.”

“Don’t I know it. But you know what the kicker is? I thought Jay was different.” When Sam raised an eyebrow, Blaina shook her head. “No, really. I mean it. I may have only spent a couple hours with him but we had this connection that defied logic.” Blaina blew out an exasperated breath. “But obviously it just defied my own personal logic and I need to let the bastard go.”

Sam leaned her head on Blaina’s shoulder. “I’m sorry, hon. I really am. Men suck. But you know what? You shouldn’t focus on the ass when there are so many cocks around.”

Blaina nearly sprayed the iced tea she was drinking across the table. “Sam!”

Sam laughed. “Sorry! But I can’t take credit for it. I read it in one of the scripts Connor’s considering.”

“Well, it’s a good line—and so true. I gotta remember that one. Hey, you got any plans for Saturday night? I was supposed to meet Jay again, so to avoid temptation and thinking of all the naughty positions I could be enjoying, I was hoping maybe we could get together, go shopping for useless things, spend more money than I’ll make this year...just do something.”

“Shoot, Blaine, I’m sorry. Connor’s taking me to a small resort up the coast. An early anniversary present. My parents are watching Gina and Caleb. Do you want me to reschedule?”

“Oh, hell no. Don’t you dare. You and Connor need alone time. I know how you both get when you go more than an hour or two without ripping each other’s clothes off.” Blaina winked and Sam grinned shamelessly. “Go away this weekend. Have fun. Sleep and fuck and don’t do anything else. I’ll find something or someone to occupy my time on Saturday night.” Sam narrowed her eyes and Blaina sighed. “I know what you’re thinking. Not Jay. Believe me, I’m not into rejection sex.”

A smooth voice from behind them asked, “Did someone say sex?”

Sam stood and turned toward Connor, her whole face glowing with a smile. Connor returned Sam’s smile, his blue eyes sparkling with the special bond the lovers shared. Caleb squirmed out of his daddy’s arms, clambered over to Blaina and started tugging on the pockets of her cargo pants. She began playing with him, giving the lovebirds a few moments to themselves.

“Hey, Blaine, get in any trouble yet today?” Connor dropped a kiss on her head and then swung his leg over the bench, straddling it. He pulled a beaming Sam down onto the bench between his legs, wrapped his arms around her and nuzzled her neck.

Blaina turned away from the lovefest and shrugged, deciding not to tell Connor about the Jay incident. “Nothing worth mentioning. I think my afternoon consists of driving around in circles. Should be exciting.”

He grinned. “Yeah, you won’t start falling off buildings or crashing cars for at least another week. Gotta save the exciting stuff, you know. So have you had a chance to meet Jay Williams yet? He’s a pretty intense guy—he doesn’t mess around. He was my double a couple years ago on *Fighter’s Fury*. He’s probably around here somewhere...”

Blaina gave Sam a pleading look. The last thing she wanted was to hear more about Jay. Taking Blaina’s cue, Sam turned and administered a passionate and hopefully mind-numbing kiss to Connor.

Problem solved. At least for now.

Caleb settled himself on Blaina’s lap and began munching on her forgotten lunch. She couldn’t help but smile as she rubbed her nose against his downy blond hair. If only life could always be this simple...

But then she wouldn't be Blaina, with the uncanny ability to get into trouble even while trying to be good.

Voyeurism was never something Jay participated in, but dammit, what the hell else was he supposed to do when the woman he'd spent two hours fucking, and then the rest of the weekend aching to fuck again, was eating lunch only four tables away? Her costume of the day was a sexy black leather, easy-access, zip-up halter-top that had her breasts shoved up and on display.

It was killing him.

This morning, when she'd stood so eagerly before him, ready to do whatever he needed, all he'd wanted was to slam her against the hood of that grip truck, rip her clothes off and pump his cock deep inside her until everyone on set knew she belonged to him. He'd known she wanted the same thing, had seen the evidence of her arousal in the hitch of her breath, the flush of her skin, the way she subtly leaned toward him...

Goddammit.

It was just his luck to finally meet a woman who matched him on every level, and he couldn't get involved with her because it was far too dangerous in far too many ways.

He huffed out an angry, frustrated breath. Shit. Just how the hell was he supposed to keep away from her? She was Meleta's stunt double, he was Connor's. They were going to be spending the next twelve weeks together, dodging explosions, jumping off buildings and crashing cars. He couldn't even count the number of stunts that required them to be wrapped around each other. And if he was going to be wrapped around Blaina, he damn well wanted to be naked while doing it.

This was a fucking nightmare.

Jay hacked off a slice of tri-tip and shoved it in his mouth, willing himself to think of anything besides Blaina—which was easier said than done.

For the last thirty-six hours, she'd dominated his thoughts. Blaina was the sexiest, most responsive woman he'd ever been with, taking everything he gave and offering more of herself with every breath. She was smart, sassy and had a mouth that could bring any man to his knees. Whenever he'd walked into his garage, his cock got as hard as a breaker bar and he'd ended up

back in the shower, yanking his shifter to images of her getting off on his leg or writhing on the Corvette's hood.

But there wouldn't be a repeat of Saturday night. Not as long as she was on his movie. He couldn't want her, couldn't think about her, couldn't remember the way she shuddered when she came.

He heard Blaina laugh and his gaze automatically landed on her, eating lunch with Samantha Clarey. By their familiar gestures, hugs and body language, they had to be close friends.

Then Connor Clarey walked up, holding his son in his arms. Samantha and Connor kissed—making Jay feel even more the asshole voyeur—then Connor dropped a kiss on Blaina's head before sitting next to her. Well, shit. Just how well did Blaina know Connor?

Jay cursed under his breath. He sure as hell didn't like the way this situation was starting to look. Sure she physically resembled Meleta, but it had to be Connor who got Blaina on the movie. The rest of the people on Jay's team were ones he'd worked with before, drivers he knew and trusted. To avoid any wild variables, he'd booked them all himself.

Except for Blaina. He'd been wondering who the woman was because production had hired her separately. Damn the incest of Hollywood. Jay's hand clenched into a fist. Just because she looked the part, didn't mean she could do the part. Nothing in Hollywood was ever what it appeared to be. She probably didn't even know how to drive on camera. Although anyone could drive in a straight line, whipping a car into a three-sixty required real talent. Not the talent of pulling strings to get on a movie. Hell, had the woman even worked on a set before? He slammed his fist down on the table, spilling some lemonade onto his tray.

He shoveled a forkful of potatoes into his mouth but it tasted as bitter as his thoughts. Pushing the tray away, he picked up his clipboard to leave and realized he hadn't even looked at the schedule to see what shots were up next. He'd been too preoccupied with the nepotistic vixen, wannabe stunt driver to notice.

He tugged off his hat and wiped his brow as he looked down at the clipboard. Thankfully, this was a light day. No cars flipping over or pyro. After lunch, they were shooting Connor and Meleta on the sidewalk in front of the restaurant, but not running cars until the turnaround on Meleta. The setup after that was traffic weaving and Blaina, the queen of questionable liability,

was supposed to be working. Shit. What made production think that just because Connor had forced her name onto the roster, she was safe enough to do the job?

Taking a drink of sour lemonade, he looked toward Adam who was rounding up the extras, telling them lunch was over and that they needed to get back to the set. The camera crew vacated their seats as well. Back to work. He'd figure out what to do with Blaina before her shot.

"Hey, Flip."

Responding to his nickname, Jay turned around. Cash, one of his precision drivers and jack-of-many-stunts, smiled as he approached. He'd worked with Jay for five years now. Safe, dependable, yet an absolute wild man behind the wheel. In other words, predictable...unlike Blaina.

"You headin' to set?" Cash casually asked. But Cash never did anything casually. What was he up to now?

"In a minute. Why?" Jay scanned the crowd, but when he didn't see Cash's partner in crime, he pinned a glare on Cash. "What happened to Smitty? You're covering for him again, aren't you?"

"Umm...no."

"You're lying, Cash. What's he doing? Trying to score a date with one of the extras?"

"I think he's got a chick believing the Ferrari's his."

"When's he gonna learn to separate business from pleasure?" Jay scowled.

Cash shrugged. "He's not in the next setup anyway."

"And he better not be taking her for a ride in the goddamn hero car. If he fucks it up, it's my ass." Not only was the Ferrari F430 Spider an expensive picture car, it was also appropriately spit-shined for a spot later on. One change in its appearance could noticeably mess up continuity.

The deer-in-headlights look gave Cash away. "Guess I better call him, huh?" He whipped out his cell phone and began walking toward set.

Jay shook his head and called after Cash. "Quit fucking around."

Less than an hour later Smitty safely returned with the hero Ferrari, looking part-sheepish and part-satisfied as he exited the vehicle with a tall blonde at his side. One problem solved. If only Jay could solve the Blaina problem as easily. For every thought of the upcoming traffic-

weaving scene, there was one of the infernal woman. Blaina, naked and waiting for him to fuck her. Blaina, teasing him with her sexy walk and naughty smile. Blaina, her body broken and bloodied from a car accident on set.

It was that thought that made the decision for him. She increased the already high level of danger on the movie. If he'd worked with her before, things might have been different, but she was an unknown, brought in through Connor and there was no way in hell Jay could let that fly. Decision made, he beckoned Adam. He was young for an A.D., but damn good. He'd understand.

"What's up, Flip?" Adam said as he tucked a pencil behind his ear.

"I need you to pull Blaina from the traffic-weaving scene. Marcy will take her place." Jay gave Adam the don't-ask look.

Adam nodded. "Sure, I'll let both of them know." He turned and headed toward base camp.

Jay looked back at his clipboard and crossed Blaina off today's call sheet so he wouldn't have to see her name and think about what he was doing to her. Cutting her out of the scene was the right thing to do. He ignored the flicker of guilt that told him he was doing it for all the wrong reasons.



Blaina walked away from Adam, a small, hard knot resting heavily in the pit of her stomach. What was really going on? Why was she being pulled from the scene? And why was an A.D. issuing the order, rather than her unfortunately good-looking, ex-lover, asshole superior?

Feeling on the edge of a rampage, she stormed through base camp and down the sidewalk toward the set. She tried to calm down, forcing herself to take deep, cleansing breaths as she approached the buildings that were the backdrop for today's filming. She knew it would be a bad idea to get completely worked up when there could be a simple explanation behind getting pulled. But instead of calming down, her breath came out in angry pants and her pace quickened as she sought out the only man who could answer her questions.

She *knew* this had nothing to do with her qualifications. She was a damn good driver. The one thing she got out of her pissant relationship with Dave was going with him to stunt driving

school. She had done so well and liked it so much that she'd saved up to take the advanced classes just for the thrill of it and ended up in the top third of her class. It had spiraled from there until she was not only a certified stunt driver, but a stuntwoman as well.

So her removal had to be because of Jay. If he thought he could get rid of her that easily he was dead wrong.

Her hands fisted at her sides, wanting to punch someone. No, not someone. Jay. Thankfully he was striding right toward her.

Blaina blocked his path on the sidewalk and crossed her hands over her chest to avoid hitting him, or touching him, or circling his neck and throttling him. "What the hell's going on? Why was I pulled?"

Jay tore the sunglasses off his face and glared at her. The muscles in his arms flexed until it looked like they were going to rip through his shirt. "Don't play me, Blaina. I saw you with the Clareys. It doesn't take a genius to figure out how you got on this picture and I don't need inexperienced people on my show. I don't have time to baby-sit you."

Blaina's jaw dropped and the knot in her stomach fell to her toes. Then the rage kicked back in. "You think the only reason I got on this show was because of Connor? My qualifications mean nothing to you? I've doubled for Meleta before. I've worked with Neal Atcheson and Mike Cope before, too. I am fucking good. No...I take that back. I am fucking awesome. But you already know that, don't you? I don't need your bullshit. I came here to do a job, and I'm damn well gonna do it. Don't you dare try to sabotage my career because I made the horrible mistake of fucking you."

Blaina saw Jay's jaw tighten before she pushed past him and stormed away, heading down a quiet alleyway behind the buildings. He would either fire her or realize she meant business...and at this point, she didn't really care. But she wasn't going to work with him like this.

Blaina heard the loud stomp of Jay's footfalls overtaking her shorter strides. Oh, so the bastard wanted more of her wrath?

Raising her fist, she spun to face him just as his strong hand circled her upper arm and yanked her toward him. Her breath rushed out in a hot whoosh as she smashed against his rock-hard torso.

A flash of fire illuminated Jay's eyes before his snarling mouth slammed down over hers.
Son of a bitch.

Chapter Three

Blaina knew she should strike out, struggle, do something—anything—to let Jay know he couldn't treat her this way, but her goddamn body wouldn't listen to her brain.

Instead, her fisted hand unfurled, and rather than push her nemesis away, her fingers curled into soft cotton, scraping against his chiseled chest.

His tongue forced through her lips, and Blaina moaned at the startling invasion. There was nothing tender about this kiss. This kiss was about possession, dominance, a reminder of how good it was with him. And she couldn't summon the will to care. She wanted it hard, fast and rough—as long as it was with Jay.

He plundered her mouth with his lips, tongue, teeth, he stole her breath, replaced it with his own. She wanted to stay that way for days, hours, breathing of him.

What the hell was wrong with her? After the way he'd treated her today, how could she still want him?

But want him she did. Consequences be damned.

Still ravaging her mouth, he circled her waist and carried her to a closet-sized, semi-private, enclosed doorway. Her back slammed against the brick wall and his front slammed against her, keeping her trapped. Blaina wasn't sure which hardness was less forgiving—and she didn't care.

His erection was like a battering ram, pressing into the vee of her thighs. She hooked her left leg over his hip to give him better access and shuddered and mewled as his shaft rubbed her clit.

The zipper on her halter top made a soft *ffwpp* sound as Jay yanked it down, freeing her breasts. He removed his mouth from her lips, and she sucked in huge gulps of air, then practically sobbed as he latched onto her breast, curling his tongue around her nipple and drawing it into his mouth until she felt the pull in her pussy.

“Oh, Jay, Jesus,” she moaned and arched her back, clinging to his shirt like it was a life raft in the middle of a violent storm.

“Shhh,” he demanded, switching to her other breast, biting the tight nub, then licking, then biting again.

She closed her eyes and sank her teeth into her lip to keep from shouting at the bursts of sharp pleasure each of Jay’s expert touches evoked. Just a building away, the film crew was busy prepping the next shot. Blaina did not want to give them a reason to come investigate.

His hand arched between her legs and he cupped her pussy, making her cream flow faster, soaking her cargo pants. Four strong fingers rubbed circles into the opening of her sex, and she squirmed and pushed down against his touch, wanting the fabric to disappear so he could reach inside her. A quiet moan escaped her throat as he worked her harder, creating a spiraling neediness in her pussy. His thumb centered on her clit, massaging the tender pleasure point.

“Come for me, Blaina,” he growled.

There was nothing on this planet that could have kept her from following his order. Her mouth opened on a silent sob of blissful pleasure, her climax hitting like a jolt of electricity from her clit, to her nipples to her mouth to her pussy—everywhere he ravished her. Her body shuddered so hard if he hadn’t been holding her up, she would have sunk to her knees in front of him.

She leaned her head back against the wall, her breath coming in quick gasps, her heart pounding in her ears. Jay studied her through narrowed eyes, his entire body strung tight like a lion ready to pounce, his shoulders lifting and falling as he caught his breath.

“Jay?” Blaina whispered, making his name a question. There was so much she needed to ask him, but couldn’t find the words. Even with all they’d shared, Jay was a virtual stranger. And with the extremes in his behavior today—ignoring her, trying to fire her and then finger fucking her senseless fifty feet from set—she had no idea what the hell was going through his mind.

“Jay?” This time an anonymous female voice shouted for him. Ridiculously, Blaina felt jealous that another woman was calling his name.

Oh, this was bad. Very, very bad.

Running a violent hand over his hair, Jay muttered “*Fuck*” under his breath, and tore away, the echo of his boot falls fading into the distance.

Yeah, this was bad. Very, very bad.



Blaina was invisible today.

She'd shown up on set this morning not knowing whether she was going to be escorted off the premises, or sent to work. Six hours later, no one had kicked her to the curb, so apparently she still had a job, but her goddamn fuck-and-dump boss wouldn't even look at her. When he'd given her today's directions, he'd wielded his clipboard like a shield, never lifting his gaze from the attached paperwork.

Granted, today only had some easy drive-forward, back-up stuff, but still, there was no legitimate reason for him to avoid her. No valid excuse to hide in the hero car, fondling his fucking clipboard.

Blaina really hated that clipboard.

Evidently, she didn't need to ask him questions to get some answers, he was making it pretty damn clear what he thought. Unless her legs were spread, he wanted nothing to do with her.

The man was such an ass. In fact, Jay could kiss her ass as far as she was concerned. There was no excuse for the way he was treating her. Maybe she could take it up with Neal and Mike. They should still remember her. It hadn't been that long since she'd worked on an Atcheson and Cope production.

Of course, what was she going to tell them? *Excuse me, guys, remember me? Your stunt coordinator and I fucked like rabid bunnies the other night and now he's treating me like I'm sludge at the bottom of a gas tank.*

Yeah, that would go over like a fart in a car.

Blaina blew out an angry breath and headed for the craft service table. She needed a bottle of water to help cool off before an afternoon of fun and exciting driving in slow circles.

But the water didn't help. She crushed the empty bottle and tossed it in the trash. Maybe a walk would cool her down. Her entire body raged with pulsing, angry energy and other than hopping in her Camaro and racing for a few hours, she didn't know how to get rid of this ire.

Jay was an asshole. And what was it Sam had said yesterday at lunch? Don't focus on the ass when there were so many good-looking cocks around. So she'd shift her focus and forget

about Jay, forget about on-set grope sessions and off-set garage romps. For the next twelve weeks she'd come to work every day with a smile pasted on her face and her legs glued shut. She'd shove her abilities in Jay's face and prove to him that she was just as good a stunt double as she was a lover—even though he'd never get to touch her as a lover again. And she'd find another good-looking cock to play with in her free time.

As though someone had been listening to her thoughts and was granting wishes, the hot cowboy from yesterday walked past her carrying one of his snake boxes. He stopped at a truck and set the box on the ground, digging in his pockets for his keys.

"Need help?" Blaina leaned against his truck, gracing him with a cocky grin.

"Thank you, but I think I can manage." He pulled the keys from his pocket and smiled, finally meeting her gaze. As he studied her, his expression changed, a subtle tightening around his eyes, the smile slowly fading. "Well, you look like you've just seen the devil. Here, hop on up and unlock that first cage there. I'll hand up ol' Sugar here. She's kind of heavy."

Blaina climbed onto the truck, intrigued by the cowboy who could read her so well. She was usually pretty good at masking her true feelings.

The odd scent of what she assumed to be reptiles permeated the interior of the vehicle. It wasn't an unpleasant odor...more of an earthy smell. She'd noticed it the first time she'd walked past Mr. Hottie Cowboy. Natural scents on a man were a million times better than any expensive cologne. Give her a man who smelled of oil and sweat and she was happy.

Blaina frowned as she remembered how good Jay smelled—those scents would forever be intertwined with him in her memory.

Determined not to think about that creep anymore, she returned her attention to the reptile truck and looked at the makeshift grillwork holding several boxes in place. "Each of these boxes have someone in it?"

"Yes'm. M'name's Levi, by the way." He handed her the box, making sure she held it securely before he let go. Whoever Sugar was, she was a bit on the chunky side despite fitting in that long, flat plywood box.

His gray eyes assessed her every move, almost as though he could see into her soul. When he caught her watching, he winked.

“Pleasure to meet ya.” She slid him a wink right back. “I’m Blaina. So, you’ve got all sorts of snakes, huh?”

Levi hopped up into the truck to help properly seat Sugar’s box. “Sure do. You’re lookin’ like you just might want to hold one, huh? They don’t scare you?”

“Not one bit. I actually *like* holding long snakes.” Blaina chuckled at her bad pun.

“Do ya, now? Well, how long of a snake are you talkin’ about? There’s all kinds of ’em in here. Some are thicker and heavier than others, though. And some might bite you if ya get too close.”

“Snakes that bite, huh? Well, they better be careful or I just might have to bite ’em back.” Blaina licked her lips and grinned. Levi crossed his arms over his chest and shook his head, his lips twitching as he fought a smile.

He moved toward the front of the truck. “Here, I’ll let Bessie hang on ya. She’s a corn snake. And she won’t bite.” He opened one of the boxes and turned around with a charming snake, mostly cream colored, but with a golden-orange spotted pattern on its back.

Levi settled the snake around her shoulders and it immediately slithered down her olive green button-down shirt. Blaina couldn’t help but laugh as the snake teased across her boobs. Levi cocked an eyebrow and watched with interest.

As Blaina absorbed his reaction, Sam’s voice echoed in her head. “*You shouldn’t focus on the ass when there are so many cocks around.*”

With a mischievous grin, Blaina said, “Since you’re gonna have to go down my shirt to retrieve Bessie here, how about you take me out this Saturday night?”



Behind his sunglasses, Jay scanned the film crew, looking for short, tumbled, rust-colored locks, wide, coffee-colored eyes, and a provocative, come-hither smile. But Blaina was nowhere to be found.

Jay climbed out of the Ferrari and took a moment to stretch his legs. The car wasn’t designed to be an office, but today he’d needed a metal and glass barrier between him and Blaina.

Even that wasn't enough. He'd spent too much time staring through the Ferrari's windshield, watching Blaina move, talk, walk, breathe.

His rigid control had taken a nosedive, and if he didn't figure out a way to quell his lust for the tempting stunt double, there was a damn good chance he'd go down in a ball of flames.

He had no excuse for yesterday. When Blaina had thrown down the gauntlet and said that fucking him was a mistake, all rational behavior had fled. He'd just wanted to prove to her how right they were together—in the heat of the moment forgetting that they couldn't be together anymore.

Shit, he had to stop wanting Blaina. She was his coworker and he damn well knew better than to mix business with pleasure. He'd witnessed the mortal destruction caused by a slip in concentration and had vowed to never take that risk.

Pulling off his sunglasses, Jay palmed his eyes, hoping to rub away the desire to see Blaina.

"Hey, Flip, you okay?" questioned Adam.

Replacing the sunglasses, Jay lowered his hands and forced a detached smile. "Just ready to get this scene underway."

Adam shrugged. "Aren't we all."

Over Adam's shoulder, Blaina appeared, jumping out of the back of a white truck. A tall, cowboy-hat-wearing man followed, lazily unfolding himself from the truck before moving beside Blaina. Showing way too damn much familiarity, the cowboy looked Blaina over from head to toe, grinned and tipped his hat before walking away.

Son of a bitch.

"Excuse me," Jay managed to say to Adam before pushing past him toward Blaina.

Her back was to Jay as she watched the cowboy walk away, but he heard her say, "See you Saturday night."

"You already have plans Saturday night," he reminded her, coming to a stop a few feet behind her to avoid grabbing her and physically jogging her memory.

Ever so slowly she turned around, her eyes narrowed. She drew her hands to her hips in a defensive stance. "My plans have changed," she bit out.

Jay ground his teeth together as he took in the erotic picture Blaina made. His sexy little vixen was rumpled, the buttons on her shirt off by a buttonhole making one end of the shirt hang down at a jaunty angle, a sure sign that she'd recently been undressed—and hurriedly redressed.

His woman was wearing another man's touch. Jay's dick pounded like a jackhammer against his jeans, wanting to mark her as his, again and again until no man dared touch what belonged to him alone.

He was going to rip the cowboy in two, but first... "We need to talk. Now," Jay rumbled, quiet enough to avoid being overheard by the crew, but loud enough for Blaina to hear the directive.

She lifted a challenging eyebrow. "Unless it's about the upcoming scene, I have nothing to say to you...boss," she hissed.

He fought the urge to grab her and remind her that he was more than just her boss. "I'm not paying you to fuck the cowboy during work hours. I damn well have some say in that."

Blaina's eyes widened and her mouth dropped open, before shifting to a look of disgust. "Oh, so let me see if I have this right. I can get paid to fuck *you* on set, but no one else?" Syrupy sweet sarcasm rolled off her tongue like acid. "Sorry, my pussy's not for sale." She did a quick about face and stomped away.

Anger made him blind as he charged after her, and he nearly ran her over when she slammed on the brakes and spun to face him, ramming a fist into his chest, grating against his scar. "Quit following me, Jay. You don't own me." Her breasts heaved beneath her disheveled top with each fierce exhalation.

"Come over. Tonight." The words were out before he could consider the ramifications. But he couldn't deny it was what he wanted. He softened his voice. "I want you, Blaina."

Her fingers uncurled and she pushed him away. "But I don't want *you*."



"Well, the way I see it, this is just foreplay," Blaina said as she slathered her food in oil.

"Foreplay?" Levi asked, raising an eyebrow as he placed his bowl of raw meat, veggies and noodles onto the counter of Maddy's Mongolian BBQ. "How ya figure?"

She set her bowl next to his. “Well, we stand here in line starving, waiting for our dinner to be cooked. Watching other people get theirs. The longer we wait, the hungrier we get. Then, when the cook finally puts our dinner on the big, huge, round, grill thing, he walks around in a circle sliding it along, letting us be voyeurs as he fondles the meat with his long spatula tool to make sure it’s cooked, letting us hear how our meal sizzles. If that isn’t the ultimate food foreplay, I don’t know what is.”

Levi laughed, a deep, throaty sound that should have had her panting for him. “Do you ever think of anything but sex?”

Blaina winked and smacked her hip against his. “No. Not if I can help it.”

Levi shook his head, his lips curling up in a crooked grin. He had such a sweet demeanor. Coupled with a physique like Jay’s he was perfect eye candy. How could she not think of sex when around him?

Strange thing was, whenever she thought about what might happen when Levi took her home that night, it wasn’t Levi she was picturing scoring with.

Damn Jay.

Blaina wanted to hate him. Last week he’d put her through ten kinds of hell. At least at first. After she’d made it clear that she was no longer up for grabs—lying through her teeth when she told him she didn’t want him anymore—he’d backed off. Now they were just boss and crew member. He gave her orders and she followed them.

And stupid, stupid Blaina kept waiting for her boss to grab her, rip her clothes off and become her fantasy man again.

“So, is this the climax?”

Blaina looked up at Levi, eyes wide. What the hell had she missed while she was deep in Jay-thought? “Um...what?” *Smooth, Blaina. Maybe next time you can grunt or something.*

Levi held up his fully cooked, steaming hot bowl of food. “If watchin’ is foreplay, then the presentation is climax.”

God, the man was gorgeous and he competed with her sex talk. Why the hell couldn’t she get her cunt to throb for him like it did for Jay? Damn, was she broken? She gave Levi what she hoped was a mega-watt smile while she continued to chastise her stupid body for not playing

along. She was with an amazing man tonight, and she was damn well going to stop thinking of Jay. Really. No more.

When her food climaxed—and with the way her body was so oblivious, her noodles, meat and vegetables were probably going to be the only things climaxing tonight—they returned to their table. Levi proved yet again how much of a catch he was, not sitting until she was seated, pouring tea for her, essentially being the perfect gentleman. And still her body remained calm, nary a buzz over her flesh.

Dejectedly, she stared down at her food, pushing it around in the bowl, her physical appetite as misplaced as her sexual one. She was definitely going to the doctor next week because this was the furthest from normal she had ever been.

“You know, you talk a big game, but I’ll bet if it came down to it I don’t even have a chance with you, do I?”

Her head shot up so fast she nearly gave herself whiplash. “What?” Was Levi reading her mind? Aw hell, she might as well go home and learn to knit or something because she’d lost all ability to score with a good-looking man.

“See, between Jay and food foreplay, you don’t even know I’m here half the time. And that’s fine. I’m not sure a guy like me could keep up with a girl like you.” He winked. “Not that I would’ve minded tryin’.”

Astonished, Blaina gaped at him. “Levi, before I get to the rest of what you just said, do you really think you don’t have a chance with me?”

“Not with Jay in the picture.”

“Well, shit. I’m not with Jay.”

Levi chuckled. “Doesn’t stop you from thinkin’ of him now though, does it?” He picked up the bowl of rice and paddled some onto his plate. “So tell me about Jay.”

Blaina continued to stare at Levi, absolutely blown away by his accurate assertion. “Am I wearing a big sign or maybe have something tattooed on my forehead? How the hell do you know Jay and I have—” she shook her head, “—had a thing?”

“I’m a handler. I’m used to reading subtle physical actions. And Jay and you were far from subtle last week on set.” He shoveled some meat and vegetables into his mouth.

She tapped her fingers on the table, trying to decide what to tell him. To hell with it. Levi had already figured her out, she might as well spill her guts. “I met Jay last weekend. I...um...helped him with his car.”

“And?” He poured the contents of his bowl over the rice and continued eating, but it was obvious that he was listening closely to every word.

“Okay, so yeah, I fucked him. I didn’t know I was gonna end up on set with him two days later. I didn’t even know his name.”

“You fucked a guy and didn’t even get his name? Now I’m *sure* I couldn’t keep up with ya.” Levi laughed, his gray eyes shimmering with mirth. “But at least that explains a helluva lot more about him.”

“Like what? What do you know about him?” Blaina shoved a forkful of meat and noodles in her mouth. This night had turned from a date into an impromptu therapy session, yet for some reason she was okay with it.

“I know he’s ultra careful with you. Making sure that whenever there’s fire or cars spinning or whatever, you’re far from harm’s way. Even when Meleta is supposed to be right there in the heat of the action. Clever, isn’t he?” Levi poured more tea for both of them.

Okay, so she had noticed that. But she never took it as him caring about her. She figured he was trying to piss her off by keeping her from doing all of the things she really wanted to be doing. Maybe Levi was on to something. She definitely liked his reasoning better than hers. “Yeah, real clever. But he’s not letting me do my job.”

“Sure you are. And a damn fine job you’re doing, too. But you prob’ly wanna be closer to the action. See, I’ve never worked with Jay before, but I know he’s been around. And safety is always his biggest concern.”

“So then, maybe it’s not me he’s specifically watching out for. He’s just doing his job, making sure his crew is safe.”

Levi shook his head. “It doesn’t change the fact that he watches you when he thinks no one’s lookin’. And how he’s wound tighter than a rattlesnake ready to strike. He wants you, plain and simple.”

“Then why does he have to be such an ass?”

“Well, by lookin’ at Jay you can tell he’s all about control. You shake him up and now his heart and mind are fightin’ over you. You just better hope the right one wins.”

“All right, all right.” She exhaled loudly, and jerked her fingers through her hair, not quite ready to believe things with Jay would ever work out. “While we’re on the subject of him, why do people call him Flip sometimes? Please tell me it isn’t the obvious.”

Levi’s lips twitched in a half grin. “And you’re all about the original nickname now, aren’t you?”

Blaina actually blushed. “All right, cowboy, you’ve made your point, now tell me the story.”

“Okay, but from what I heard, it’s not only cars. He can flip anything that moves. A buddy of mine was there that day, but this is all set gossip, so who knows if it’s really true or not—but the stunt had three parts. First, jump from a moving car to a moving semi. One of those long flatbed trailer kind. That was no problem. Second, get into the car that was sitting on the truck. That was fine, too. Third, well, he never got that far. The car was supposed to slide off the truck and he would get control and drive it. But instead of rolling right off the back, it fell off the side and flipped because one of the rails that was supposed to guide it back snapped clear through. He caught enough air to flip the car like crazy. He was lucky to be alive but he still managed to get control of the car even with its suspension completely mangled. I heard the frame looked like a banana after that.” Levi grinned. “I’m sure you’ve seen the flick. *Take Mine.*”

“Yeah.” Blaina hadn’t known Jay worked that show. “I thought it looked too good to be true. Like they got real lucky when the car did that crazy-ass, double end-o flip right in front of the camera. I’ll bet the guys on the camera truck were cleanin’ out their shorts after that take.”

“Yeah, add a little unintentional ramp, a whole lotta speed and toss in Jay Williams. You’ve got one helluva stunt. And now you know why the man is in such high demand. He makes magic.”

Yeah, he did... Blaina shook off those thoughts and turned her attention to her cowboy. He was going to make a lucky lady real happy someday. Too bad it wouldn’t be her. But a little harmless flirting never hurt anyone. “So where are you takin’ me after dinner? Wanna go back to my place?” She gave him a bad girl grin and winked. If he threw her over his shoulder and

proceeded to do naughty things to her, she'd do naughty things right back, but she knew there was no comparing him to Jay. And that was a damn shame.

"Hmmm... Tempting, but knowing what I know about you now, I'm gonna have to say no. When I'm with a woman, there's to be no doubt that I'm the man she wants to be riding."

"Damn, cowboy..." Blaina dramatically fanned her face. "Why couldn't I have met you before Jay?"

He grinned and popped a wonton into his mouth.



"That was great, Blaina," the director, Lukas Ossman, called out. "That fall was money."

"Moving on. New deal," Daniel Whitman, the first A.D. added.

Blaina tossed the rubber prop gun over to Lachlan McIntyre, the prop master, then dodged the high-powered inflating fans while shimmying off the airbag. If the take was good and they were moving on, she would have time to get changed for her next setup. Thank goodness. After the fifth take, falls went from being fun to painful. She'd rather be driving. At least doing a hundred takes into a pile of garbage cans wasn't going to hurt much if she was plowing them with a car instead of her body.

"You're a crazy girl, Blaina."

Blaina crossed to where Meleta stood near the monitors. The two women were dressed identically in skintight black leather jumpsuits. The costume designer preferred using the real thing rather than something more flexible...or something that breathed. It may have looked great on camera, but Blaina would've enjoyed wearing something that didn't make her feel like she was being nuked under the midday sun. Of course Meleta still managed to look perfect, while all Blaina wanted to do was rip off the blonde wig and pour ice down the front of the jumpsuit.

She grinned. "Yeah, but you love me anyway. If it wasn't for me, you'd be the one making the two story fall over and over and over again until they got the shot right."

Meleta laughed. "Um, no. If actresses had to do their own stunts, I'd stick with making romantic comedies. Action-adventure girl I'm not."

"Keep making these movies, Mel." Blaina winked. "I need the paycheck."

“I’m in talks for a few more right now, babe.”

Blaina’s grin widened. “Great. Mention my name.”

“Already did. You make me look better than any of the other doubles I’ve had.”

“Mel, we need you over here,” Daniel called out.

“Duty calls.” Meleta tossed a smile over her shoulder as she walked away.

Blaina waved, then spun around, biting her tongue to keep from shouting her excitement. She’d heard rumors that Meleta was in talks to star in a series of action movies. With Mel’s recommendation, Blaina could be working nonstop for the next several years.

“Blaina, have I mentioned lately that you kick serious ass?” Smitty grinned as he ran a hand over his slicked-back, dark brown hair. His green eyes were alight with that “oh-baby-you-know-you-want-me” look.

“Yeah, Smitty. But I still won’t go out with you. Not that I don’t think you’d be a good lay, but I don’t think you could keep up with me.” She made a gun with her thumb and forefinger, aimed and fired.

He clutched at his heart as Cash slapped him on the back. “Better luck next time, man.” He gave Blaina a thumbs-up. “Maybe I should take you for a ride.”

“Only in your wettest and wildest dreams, Cash.” She laughed as they raised their hands for a team clap. These guys were great sparring partners. Fun to shut down and they always came back for more. “When you two gonna learn?”

Her smile faded as she caught Jay watching the exchange. Even behind those silver lenses, she knew his eyes were locked on her. Levi had said Jay watched her because he wanted her, but Blaina wasn’t convinced that was the only reason. He was judging everything she did, waiting for her to make a mistake so he could boot her off the show.

Well, he could just keep on waiting, because it wasn’t going to happen.

As long as he stayed out of the way and let her do her job, she’d pretend his lack of faith in her didn’t still sting. She’d pretend her pussy didn’t still ache to be filled by him. She’d pretend that she didn’t still want him, that she wouldn’t rip his clothes off given the first opportunity.

She raised an eyebrow, daring him to say anything. His jaw locked and he returned his gaze to his ever-present clipboard.

Well, fuck you, too, buddy.

Glaring at his lowered head, she stormed away.

Out of the corner of his eye, Jay watched Blaina stalk away from him, her feet angrily slapping the ground. Small clouds of dust rose behind her, but not enough to obscure the vision she made. The leather jumpsuit hugged her body like a second skin, leaving nothing to the imagination. Long legs, tight ass and a tiny figure that packed a powerhouse of energy. A constant reminder of what he'd had, what he still wanted and what haunted him every moment of every goddamn day. He wanted to taste her fire again, rip off that damn fake blonde wig, tangle his hands in her flyaway henna-colored hair and pound away inside her until he'd finally slaked his lust.

Not that anything was going to come of it. Last week she'd made it damn clear that she didn't want anything more to do with him. And he couldn't blame her. Around her, he turned into a certifiable jackass, unable to think beyond the need to brand her as his own.

Somehow he'd managed to stay away from her for nearly a week now...only eleven weeks of shooting left. Eleven more weeks of untucked shirts and a lowered clipboard to conceal his perma-hard cock.

Fuck. He needed to do something to regain control of his life...and his dick. Blaina had snuck inside him until he couldn't think of anything else but her. When Saturday night had rolled around, he'd caught himself waiting for her arrival—even though he'd known she was out with another man. Tortured by the image of Blaina fucking the cowboy, he'd punched his fist through a wall.

A few swollen knuckles calmed him down, and he'd tried working on his Barracuda. But when he started to attach a spark plug wire to the air cleaner stud on the carburetor he called it quits and went for a drive. Usually a wide-open road and a full gas tank were the cure for all his ills, giving him the necessary freedom to solve problems and clear his mind. But not that night. Instead he found himself a hundred miles up the coast, listening to the roar of the ocean, his thoughts still wrapped up in Blaina. Always Blaina.

Maybe if they could talk like normal coworkers he'd start thinking of her like one. Maybe if he apologized for being such an ass at the get-go, he could work through the production and not compromise his duties or the safety of his team.

And maybe apologizing would cure him of remembering how perfectly her pussy enveloped his cock...how she incited him with a simple look, a lingering touch...

What the hell was he thinking? No amount of apologies would make him forget how easy it was to lose himself in Blaina.

Decision made, he strode after her, weaving through production trucks until he caught up to her.

"Blaina, wait. I need to talk to you."

Her whole body stiffened when she heard his voice. While turning toward him, she started yanking pins from her hair. The image made him forget the reason he'd come after her, and, nearly starstruck, he stared longingly as she did what he'd been fantasizing about doing.

Eyes flashing angrily, she pulled off the wig and said, "I'm trying to get to wardrobe for my change. What do you want? Did they rework the scene or something?"

"No. It's okay. I actually wanted to talk about something else." Jay glanced around to make sure no one was within earshot. "I just... Good job back there."

Blaina's eyes narrowed suspiciously, her words tentative. "Thanks. All in a day's work, boss." She paused, her mouth partway open like there was more she wanted to say, but then she pursed her lips and sailed back around, heading toward the trailers.

"I'm sorry," he called after her.

She tossed him a wary look over her shoulder, one eyebrow raised in disbelief.

He took a deep breath. For the first time in over a week, he felt like he was doing the right thing. "I'm sorry for being an asshole, sorry I've made life on this movie hell. And I'm sorry I underestimated you. Every time you've been behind the wheel, you've hit all your marks. You've driven miles in reverse without screwing up. I was wrong."

Her lips lifted in a wry grin and she completely turned to face him. "Yeah, you were. Nice of you to finally notice."

“In trying to keep the integrity of my driving team, I almost lost my own. You’re damn talented and I’d be a fool to let you go.” He realized that both the personal and professional side of him were talking. He promptly shoved the personal side away, told his dick to forget about ever having her again, readjusted the clipboard to hide his erect friend and finished by saying, “I don’t want what happened between us to put a strain on our working relationship. So, I guess what I’m asking is if we can put the past behind us, start over fresh?” He extended his hand in hopes of sealing the deal and making things between them strictly professional. No more thoughts of her naked.

Yeah, right. As if only one handshake could accomplish that.

Slowly, she sized him up, as if unable to decide whether he was worth the trouble. But something he said must have convinced her because she took his offered hand.

Her hand disappeared into his larger one. That simple act proved his undoing.

He remembered the last time she’d taken his hand, their first night together. She’d lifted it to her lips and layered kisses over his calloused flesh.

Those sincere touches had affected him in a way nothing else ever had before. He’d never forget her.

“Done.” She shook his hand and smiled and he saw some of that earlier Blaina spunk which had won him over that first day.

Raw, fervid desire whipped through him like a sandstorm. He forced it down, not willing to scare her away, and put on an easy grin.

Not noticing his turmoil, she continued beaming at him. “If you’re worried about your driving team having integrity, you might want to take a second look at Smitty and Cash.” She laughed, and the sound sank beneath his flesh, turning the sandstorm into a violent hurricane.

He held onto her hand, the only calming point in the storm of his arousal. “You’ve got a point,” he managed to admit, the grin tight on his face.

Blaina shook his hand one final time and then dropped it, leaving the storm raging inside him with no outlet for relief. She walked away, calling back over her shoulder, “Be prepared because you ain’t seen nothin’ yet. You’re gonna want me on every film you work.”

He watched her go, a new bounce to her step, her hips swaying back and forth so damn invitingly.

Blaina was right. He was gonna want her. No matter what he did, that wasn't going to change.

Chapter Four

“Martini shot!”

Blaina perked up when she heard the first A.D.’s announcement. Last shot of the night, unless something went wrong. But nothing was going to go wrong, at least not on her end.

“Roll sound!”

She glanced in her rear-view mirror. Camera crew, Jay, everything and everyone looked ready to go. All she had to do was speed through frame and lock up the brakes before hitting the sandbox. She’d done it twice already, but the director wanted a cleaner shot. This was the last scene of the car chase where Meleta’s character, Credence, was cornered in the park by the villain’s henchmen. Connor’s character, Wes, races in for a last-minute rescue. At least that’s how it would look when audiences saw it. Tonight, Jay, Smitty, Cash and Blaina did the stunts. The actors would do their parts another night.

“Sound speed.”

Hell, when she’d met Jay, they’d only been about a block away from this park.

“A-camera mark.”

It felt like eons ago, but not even two weeks had passed. At least Jay wasn’t being a dick anymore. Not that much else had changed. He was still all business. She saw him every day, but talk never went beyond the next take, the next scene, the next shot.

“Background!” the first A.D. called out. The two extras, playing lovers unintentionally caught in the action, began making out on the park bench. Their job was to run as soon as Blaina barreled toward them.

She’d come to the conclusion that her relationship with Jay—the confusing, exciting sexual one, not the crew member, boss one—was over. It was disappointing, but like all the men who came before, she’d get over Jay, too.

She hoped...

“Action!” The director’s voice was all Blaina heard as she pushed the accelerator in the modified Lotus Elise and blasted toward the jungle gym. The extras did their job and bolted out of frame. Although midnight had passed a couple hours ago, both streetlights and spotlights lit the park well enough that she safely gauged when she needed to slam the brakes for a good skid.

And the time was...right...*now*.

Blaina smashed the clutch, punched the brake pedal and held on to keep control of the wheel. Easy as pie. Looking up in her rear-view, she watched as Jay slid his Jaguar, coming to a stop right next to her. Beautiful. Like an automotive ballet.

“Cut!”

Lights shone through Jay’s windshield, illuminating his eyes, reminding her of the Pacific Ocean at sunset. He was speaking into his walkie-talkie, and even wearing a crappy brown wig, he looked happy and damn near irresistible. The shot must have gone well. When he flashed her a killer grin and gave her a thumbs-up, Blaina’s stomach clenched in painful longing.

“Checking the gate!”

Dammit. Not longing. Hunger. Yeah, that was it. It had been several long hours since the nine p.m. “lunch” break.

After unhooking her seat belt, Blaina climbed out of the car and looked back toward the camera crew, hoping the gate was clear. They opened the camera and she waited for their response. *Please, oh please*. As much fun as she was having, the day had droned on too long. Doing this shot a fourth time would bite.

“Gate’s good. Great job everyone. That’s a wrap!”

Jay emerged from his car, still grinning as he unzipped his super-tight leather racing jacket. The skid shot was a perfect end to a perfect night. And it was about time. Fourteen hours on set, a dick of a time trying to disable the anti-lock braking system on both cars even with Jay and transpo working on it, three costume changes and half-a-dozen scenes in the can, Blaina was ready to de-wig and become herself again.

“Flip, we’re out, okay?” Cash hollered. “Check you later, Blaina.”

She blew him a kiss and ducked back into the Lotus Elise.

“Cool. You grabbed call sheets, right?” Jay asked.

“Yeah, we got ’em,” Smitty said. “And I made sure Bozo signed out with Adam this time.”

Jay chuckled. “Good, then get outta here. Safe weekend everyone.”

Blaina started the car to take it back to base camp. Jay came around the side and gestured for her to stop. “Hey, don’t worry about it, Blaina. Let transpo handle it.”

She hopped right back out, happy to leave the car for the Transportation Department to take care of. “Cool. You don’t have to tell me twice.”

“Good job today.”

She turned around and put her hand up to her ear. “What?”

“You heard me.” Jay smiled.

“Not often enough, though.” She smirked playfully. “When do the long driving sequences happen? Is that next week? I mean, not that I’m tired of screech forward, back up, but a little spice wouldn’t hurt.”

He consulted his clipboard, flipping through page after page while they walked back toward base camp. “Next week. You think you can keep up?”

“Don’t even go there, buddy. You know I can walk all over you. The Jaguar corners like a brick compared to the Elise.” Blaina grabbed her duffel bag from the back of one of the transpo trucks and shuffled through it to locate her timesheet.

“Oh really?” Jay countered, his tone cocksure, arrogant and so reminiscent of their first meeting, her body heated in response. Before she could reply, he threw out another volley. “You lost confidence in driver experience, did you?”

She snorted. “Driver experience, my ass. You need more than that. It really depends on how far and how fast you wanna go. And what you’re willing to do to get there.” She bit her tongue to keep from slipping further into sexual innuendo and handed him her paperwork.

“Is that so?” Jay raised an eyebrow as he filed away her timecard in his clipboard.

She studied him in the light from the streetlamps as they walked toward the trailers. Was he flirting with her? He flipped through paperwork in his clipboard again, still an all-work-and-no-play boy. Definitely not flirting, just business talk between two coworkers. She sighed. “Yeah, Jay. Actually, it is.” She turned away from him and toward the honey wagon, ending the conversation. Not like it could go anywhere—well, at least not where she wanted it to go.

Once in her dressing room, she slithered out of her costume and hung it on hangers. One by one, she pulled the pins from her wig. Usually Timmy Calhoun from Hair did it, but Blaina wanted to get out of there fast tonight. Away from Jay. Away from the gravelly sound of his voice and the memories it evoked every time he spoke.

Damn, it was definitely late, her thoughts going all melancholy like that. She'd get a good night's sleep tonight, then spend the weekend haunting some of her favorite car shows, looking for a man to permanently erase Jay from her memory.

With new resolve, she put on her tired, old, well-worn jeans and rumpled T-shirt. Heaven. She pinched and pulled at her hair, scruffing some life back into it, feeling better already.

After dropping off her costume and wig, she weaved through the remaining vehicles in the parking lot, heading toward her car. She'd get up early tomorrow and do a spa day for her Camaro. Starting with a good wash, inside and out. Rub on some wax. Detail the interior. Shine up the chrome under the hood. Nice little tune-up to get her purring—both Blaina and her car. Then, to show off, she would cruise from her place to Hollywood and everywhere in-between before settling on her favorite cruise night at Bob's Big Boy in Toluca Lake. If all went well, she'd have a boy-crowd of spectators around her car, drooling over both her and her machine. From there, the choice would be all hers who she'd hook up with. Would he have brown or blond hair? Long or short? Wearing jeans or leather? What kind of car would he drive? Maybe something convertible. Big engine. Big cock...and know how to use it.

"You wanna put that theory to the test?" a gravelly voice asked.

Yanked out of her musings, she jumped, her heart pounding all the way down to her toes. She stared at Jay, leaning insolently against his car, and she desperately tried to erase her thoughts of big engines and big cocks. His arms were crossed over a blue T-shirt the same haunting color as his eyes. His jeans were faded, more gray than black, and he wore the work boots she remembered so well.

Dammit, he'd done it again, stepping out of her fantasy, exactly what she wanted. But he'd said something, hadn't he? She just couldn't remember anything beyond how damn good he looked. "What?"

“Your theory. Experience versus...” Jay paused, looking her up and down, “...desire. Your desire to show me up.”

She shook her head, unable to hide her smirk. “You really think I’d let you win?”

His Barracuda was parked behind her, a bit more polished than the last time she’d seen it. Still the same old rust bucket, but the front end looked lower. He must have done a few upgrades. “I don’t think you’d ever just *let* anyone do anything.”

“Right you are.” She unlocked her car and tossed her bag onto the floor. “Hmmm...check that out.” Blaina gestured to her car, then his. “Your nose is up my ass this time. You must really like rear end. Care to see more of it?”

“Actually, I was hoping you’d push that rear end around the next corner while I slid in front of it. ’Cause I know you wanna check out my ass.”

“Right. You gonna shake it for me, too?” Blaina hopped in her car and started it up before sticking her head out the window and calling back. “I’ll believe it when I see it. Hell, last time, you looked more like a Ford...Found Off Road Dead. Yeah, Mopar Barracuda as in More Parts. When are you gonna put all your parts together into a *real* ride?”

“Why don’t you shake that ass of yours and let’s blow this joint?”

Blaina wrinkled her nose at him. Poor boy didn’t have a snappy comeback. “Start blowing, sweetheart.” She licked her lips and blew him a kiss, laughing when he made shooing motions with his hands.

She ducked back into the car, ignoring her galloping heart. Ignoring everything but the powerful metal under her control and the powerful man she was going to blow off the asphalt.

She revved her engine before popping it into gear and taking off for the exit. As she paused to check oncoming traffic, she heard Jay’s Barracuda roar up behind her. Wow. He’d definitely spiced it up. The idle loped, sounding like a ferocious beast ready to devour anything in its path.

Didn’t mean he’d be able to keep up.

Stomping the gas pedal, she fishtailed onto the street and high-tailed on down to the intersection. While waiting for the light to change, she considered the best places to take this race. The freeway held some good potential. After two in the morning was one of the only times

Los Angeles freeways were clear of traffic. As long as there weren't any cops around, they could race wide open.

Jay whipped around the corner as the light changed, but she held him off, in fact, cutting him off as she turned onto the on-ramp. Shifting up through the gears, she merged onto the 405 South, not sure where to go other than straight ahead...and ahead of Jay for as long as possible.

But his big block 'Cuda caught up and passed her as soon as the lanes opened up. Then her cell phone started ringing. She grabbed the earpiece and shoved it in her ear as she pressed *talk*. "Hey."

"Whose nose is up whose ass now?" Jay's laugh crackled through the phone.

"Oh, give me a break, Jay. I'm driving a small block. Am I supposed to be impressed that you can floor it and pass me? You may have a big engine, but it doesn't mean you know how to use it. Quality is better than quantity."

He chuckled and hung up.

At their speed, they finally caught up to a cluster of cars, humming down the road at normal, predictable speeds. She dropped a gear and came up on Jay's left just as he was about to switch lanes. Tossing him a grin, she shifted into fifth and blocked him in behind a semi and a U-Haul. He hit the brakes hard and pulled around behind her where he rightfully belonged. She changed lanes, sliding between the U-Haul and a station wagon. Jay was stuck in second place as she hung behind the truck until there was a little over a car length between it and the wagon. She swept into the right lane and downshifted to put some distance between her and Jay.

The 10 freeway was looking like it could be fun, especially if Jay couldn't get over in enough time. He'd have to backtrack and catch up with her—she might even be nice and wait for him, just to rub it in. The off-ramp was empty so Blaina took the curve, barely sticking to the pavement without drifting out of her lane.

Once onto the 10, she checked her gauges. She had plenty of gas, the car was running cool and her oil pressure was steady. It was perfect weather for messing around. She passed a few cars before Jay finally caught up. He got right next to her and grinned before dropping his foot. So he wanted to play pin the needle, did he?

Not much of a sparring sport watching your speedometer rise and top out, but equally as wild. She stomped the pedal to the floor. One ten... One fifteen... One twenty...

And Jay was flying far ahead.

Her needle was pinned...no longer moving...stuck at one twenty, but her car was still pulling.

He was about five car lengths up. Then he slammed on the brakes, keeping control as he slowed. Blaina reacted in kind. Must be a cop ahead.

Sure enough. She slid behind Jay as they brought it back down to sixty-five. Her phone rang again. "What do you want?"

"Are you impressed yet?"

"Your ability to turn a wrench doesn't surprise me since I can do the same. And why would I ever be impressed that you can see a cop?"

"No, impressed at how nice my ass looks, since you've been staring at it for the past five miles."

"You may have a fine ass, but I prefer a man pinned to my rear, sliding in from behind." Blaina hung up on him, body humming, feeling naughtier than ever and loving every damn minute.

The cop got off at the next exit and Blaina wasted no time hauling past Jay as the 10 emptied onto Pacific Coast Highway. He didn't immediately catch up to her. Why was he taking it so slow? Did the cop get back on the freeway?

No, Jay probably just wanted to set her up to eat his dust. Down to two lanes, it wasn't as easy to keep Mr. Big Block at bay. She let him pass. It was fun to let him lead anyway. Although she couldn't help but wonder when he'd throw it into a slide and try to lose her at a corner.

The next light was red. She switched lanes to get next to him, but the light changed and they both had the same idea. Squealing tires, smoke everywhere, they launched together. She had him off the line, but he caught up before they'd fully crossed the intersection. She fought her way through the gears, hoping he'd be too zealous and miss a shift, allowing her to get ahead.

Wish granted, she pulled out in front of him and swished in his face. Her phone rang and she answered it.

“I never thought Camaro ass would look so pretty shaking in front of me.”

“I guess Plymouth spent extra money making that front end look so good in a rear-view mirror. Care for some dust on that rust?” She grinned. This was the moment she’d been waiting for. Switching her nitrous oxide system to ready, she pressed the button and promptly lost traction before hooking and taking off faster than Jay could compensate for. But she knew it would only be a matter of moments before he was back on her tail.

“Squeezing the juice is cheating, my dear.” At least he sounded amused.

“Run what you brung, pal.”

“Injection is nice, but I’d rather be blown.”

Oh God, she couldn’t hold back, even if someone were to gag her. Flames of desire licked over her flesh, her cunt burned and it didn’t matter how many times she shifted in her seat, her pants weren’t getting any looser. “Oh really? That’s not what I remember. You seemed rather impartial as to which you preferred.”

This time, Jay hung up, speeding around her. She stayed right on his tail, watching his every glide, swerving right along with him as though their bumpers had been chained together. He tried to shake her, but she refused. She was on him...wishing he were on her...wishing he were in her.

Without warning, he threw his car around a corner onto one of the small canyon roads. Like he could shake her that easily.

Whipping after him, she caught up as he pulled off in a turnout. Brake lights flashed as he came to a halt. She parked behind him, not even caring that the race had ended with him in the lead.

He stepped out of his car and she did the same, grinning from ear to ear. “Calling it a night already? You know I could’ve taken you—”

She froze in mid-sentence as he stormed toward her, eyes dark, body tight. All those hard sculpted muscles wrapped up in such a beautiful package, determinedly striding her way, like a predator ready to strike. Her natural fight or flight instinct kicked in, fiercely pumping adrenaline through her bloodstream, making her already hot body burn. But even as his chosen prey, there was no way in hell she was running away from him.

Jay drew to a halt a foot away from her, his chest rising and falling in rapid succession, his arms at his sides, hands curled into fists. Not angry. At least she didn't think so. Just tense. Powerful. His normal stance when he didn't have a clipboard, a tool or her breast in his hand.

Nipples growing tight, she crossed her arms over the announcement of her arousal and stared at his chest, remembering the way he looked standing naked in front of her. Sun-stained bronze liberally sprinkled with crisp golden curls, muscles tight beneath her exploring fingers. The Celtic flame tattoo that burned along his breastbone, adding an air of danger and intrigue that drew her in like a moth to a flame. Her fingers itched to rip off his blue T-shirt, to force him to show some emotion other than the steely gaze currently pinning her in place.

Blaina tilted her head back and met him stare for stare. "Are we just gonna stand here all night staring at each other?"

"Maybe."

His simple reply, or perhaps it was how he said it, a deep sizzling vibration of sound, had an annoying effect on her libido, making her stomach clench and toes curl. How sick was she that an indecisive word could make her pant like a dog in heat? If he said a full sentence would she hump his leg? Good lord, she was pathetic.

She blew out a furious breath, angry with both herself and Jay. Even knowing the consequences, she was ready to throw her brain and clothing out the window for one more chance to fuck him.

To avoid pulling him down to her level for a game of tonsil hockey, she tucked her hands in her back pockets. But her forced air of nonchalance had another side effect, thrusting her breasts, erect nipples and all, out in a "please fondle me" manner.

Jay inhaled sharply.

So the man could emote on occasion given the right stimulus. She tested her theory, leaning back against her car, keeping her breasts aimed outward and upward. His gaze followed her tits like they were bouncing black balls on karaoke night. It made her want to break out into song. Maybe "Damn, I Wish I Was Your Lover" would do the trick.

But making Jay deaf with her wailings wasn't exactly what she wanted to accomplish tonight.

He moved in close until the only way she could escape would be to climb over her car. As if she'd chance denting it like that. His gaze remained locked on hers. Blue had never been such a warm color before.

"You know, Jay, today was long and hot and tiring and as stimulating as this game of 'let's see who blinks first' is, I'm gonna have to—"

Before she could finish, his body met hers, sandwiching her between hard metal and even harder Jay. His calloused palms scratched over her bare arms, making her gasp, making her flesh ache for more, for deeper penetration, for her body to be consumed by his hands and mouth. She was ready to beg for him to end the torment, when his grip moved to her neck, tipping her head back.

"You blinked," was all he said before his lips ground down against hers, sucking away all rational thought. He devoured, tongue driving into her mouth with volatile force. In return, she dished out everything she had. Pouring into him, marking him, trying to ensure that come morning, he couldn't wipe her from his mind. She breathed his taste deep into her lungs, the raw male power that seeped from every pore.

But it wasn't enough. Clawing the wash-worn cotton of his shirt, her fingers dug into his pectorals and scraped down over a chiseled abdomen. Lower still, she grasped his bulging erection, feeling soft, faded denim and hard, relentless male.

His cock throbbed against her touch and she tightened her grip, circling his length through the forgiving fabric, fucking him with her hand. She purred and he growled, ripping his mouth from hers. "No. I won. It's my turn to take."

In fast, jerky movements, he undid her jeans, yanking them and her underwear down to her knees. He spun her around, pinning her against where her fender met her door, leaning toward the cowl, one hand against her spine holding her in place. With his other hand he traced down the crack of her ass and into the moisture seeping between her legs.

He paused there, swirling two fingers over her wet flesh, not quite entering. She wondered what he was waiting for. Her light was green and if he didn't race through her intersection at top speed, she'd implode.

She tried to spread her legs wider, anything to give him a clue that she wanted to be taken, but the hand pinned to her back and the jeans and underwear bunched at her knees kept movement to a minimum.

Those damn swirling fingers finally thrust their way inside and she just about hit peak velocity. He fucked her with his fingers like he would with his cock, slamming into her harder and faster, his leg pushing against hers, his hand flattened against and kneading her spine. She reached behind her, trying to grab him, to bring his body even closer. But his questing fingers slightly curled, adding an abrasive torment to the pleasure, and she completely surrendered, letting him control her like only he could, building her higher, making her not give a damn about being half naked against a car less than a block from the highway.

Stars burst in her vision when his thumb pressed against her anus. Oh God, she was going to die. She pushed back against his fingers on a strangled moan, wanting to scream but not wanting anyone to call the cops. It would be just her luck to get arrested for indecent exposure before she climaxed.

He removed his hand from her aching pussy. Denim rustled, a zipper lowered and plastic ripped. “So you like a man sliding in from behind, do you?” He traced his shaft up and down her aching slit, soaking his head in her juices, spreading the moisture between both cheeks. “Pinned to your rear, watching your ass move...”

She bit her lip, swallowed a moan and pretended to be one hundred percent in control. “That’s where he belongs.”

He slammed inside of her hard enough to lift her feet off the ground, filling her pussy in one swift stroke. A shattering orgasm surged from her core outward, rocking her world like the epicenter of an eight point nine quake. This time she couldn’t stifle her scream. It bounced against the canyon, getting lost in the sound of traffic passing on PCH.

Jay braced one hand on the car, the other on Blaina’s hip as he pounded away inside her. He needed to lose himself in Blaina, to sink so deep that everything he’d done wrong in his life would disappear and he’d find himself in a place where fucking her was allowed, and wouldn’t land him in shit so massive he’d never be able to dig himself out.

She was so goddamn sexy sprawled over the car, slamming back on him as hard as he slammed into her. Never before had a woman gone toe-to-toe with him like this, driving him to the edge with just a look or a casually thrown suggestion. Not that anything she said was casual. She knew how to play the game and win.

That was only one of the things that made her so damn dangerous. He was addicted to the feeling of her pussy massaging his dick, rippling like tiny fingers up and down his length. To keep from coming as fast as a teenage boy during his first lay, he gritted his teeth and started thinking about the airflow diagram he'd drawn for the carburetor he was modifying.

But when her hand covered his, lacing their fingers together against the cool steel of the car, all bets were off. That simple touch did him in and he jerked hard, grunting as the orgasm crashed through him. Rocketing adrenaline and lust blasted through his veins, and his cock bucked, shooting hot semen into her clenching pussy. It seemed to go on for minutes, hours, her silky wet embrace shuddering around him, milking every last ounce of come from his balls.

Sweat dripped down his face, blurring his vision. The cool night breeze washed over him, recalling his senses. He'd just fucked a woman against a car in plain view of anyone who might happen to drive by. And he was an asshole for doing it.

He slid his hand off her hip, wondering if he'd bruised her flesh in his frantic desperation. There'd been no tenderness when he'd touched her. He'd stolen what he could, what he wanted so fucking badly he'd thought of little else since they'd first met.

His hand trembled as he circled her waist, holding her against him. Just a few more moments of bliss, then he'd apologize for losing control. He buried his face in her hair and inhaled, smelling sex and arousal, naughty temptress and sweet redemption.

A flash of headlights turning onto the street brought his bliss to a rapid end. Jay spun Blaina around so she faced him, using his body as a shield so the passerby wouldn't see that her jeans were around her knees, that her pussy lips were still wet and swollen from his fucking. He kissed her, hoping they'd look like a couple sharing a good-night kiss instead of two people who'd just finished rutting like wild animals.

The car passed, disappearing down the street. Jay pulled back, taking a deep breath, staring at Blaina's reddened lips. He swiped his thumb over the inflamed flesh, wishing he could wipe away all evidence of his attack.

Her mouth opened beneath his questing thumb, drawing it inside. He groaned as she nipped and sucked his skin.

Cursing himself, he withdrew from her wicked mouth. He knelt before her, lifting the tiny slip of fabric she called underwear back up her legs, then returning with her jeans.

With the zipper only raised halfway, her hands covered his. "So next time I see you, are you going to push my jeans down around my knees, or button 'em up to my neck?"

Well, that was a loaded fucking question. Maybe in a thousand years he'd be able to come up with an answer that wouldn't get him killed. He buttoned her jeans, allowing only a moment of arousal to cloud his senses when the back of his fingers accidentally brushed over her bare stomach.

He watched her as he righted his clothing, tucking his half-hard betrayer of a dick back into his pants. Her lips were pursed and she lowered her hands to her hips. "Answer my question, Jay. You're not getting off that easy."

His lips curled up in a sardonic grin. "Around you, getting off isn't my problem."

She raised an eyebrow. "And you still haven't answered my question."

"Oh, I'll answer," he said, moving a step away from her. "But I'm putting my dick away first before you use it as a leash and yank me back to you."

She pushed away from the car, her eyes wide. "Whoa, whoa, whoa. What the hell is that supposed to mean?"

"It means I can't get you out of my head, Blaina."

"Yeah, and?"

"Yeah and...I don't know." And he didn't. Sex hadn't been on his agenda tonight. He was supposed to avoid Blaina, but her saucy banter while they were walking out of work had drawn him in, and he'd been unable to drive away alone. Even then it was only supposed to be a race, a way of getting his fill of her without touching.

And he'd been a dumbfuck to think that would work.

“Don’t know what, Jay? What don’t you know?”

“I don’t know how this can work.”

“Simple. You either fuck me or you fuck me over. Which is it?”

“It’s not that fucking simple, Blaina. We have to work together. *Work*. Not fuck. Not thinking about fucking. We can’t be like this on set.”

“Like what? Like this?” Blaina stepped within an inch of him. “You mean I can’t get close to you? I can’t touch you?” She lifted her hand, barely grazing his chest. “I’m gonna have to touch you on set, Jay. If we can’t touch each other, we can’t work together. And that won’t work for me.” She lowered her hand, hovering above his cock. The damn thing stiffened, straining to reach her. She gave him a knowing smile and added, “But hey, you are my boss, so you make the rules, huh?”

He was supposed to be her boss, but dammit, the way his body responded to her made it feel like the other way around.

He’d already learned he couldn’t stay away from her. And fucking her tonight hadn’t leached the lust from his system, it had only exacerbated the problem. So what the hell was he supposed to do? He didn’t date coworkers. Ever.

But not having a relationship with Blaina for the last two weeks hadn’t stopped him from thinking about her.

Shit. There was no right answer here, and he was stepping into shades of gray that made him damn uncomfortable. But it wasn’t as uncomfortable as the thought of never being with her again.

“On set there are rules, Blaina. Distraction can be fatal. And you are one hell of a distraction...” He trailed his fingers down her cheek, loving the spark of hunger flaring in her eyes, the way she tilted her face up to meet his fingertips. “We have a job to do, desire can’t get in the way of that.”

This time her eyes sparked angrily. “Have I screwed up so far? I can do my job, Jay. That’s never been a problem.”

“Good. Because I can’t seem to get enough of you.” His fingers trailed lower, skimming between her breasts. He wanted to cup them, to suckle a tight nipple through the cotton. But he

wouldn't. Not until some rules were laid down. Not until she had the chance to tell him to fuck off and walk away. And if she didn't... "I want to see you, I want to be with you. Off set. But nothing can change at work. Nothing. We can't acknowledge whatever this is between us. On set, when we touch, it's got to be purely professional. Can you handle that?"

She studied him, her eyes narrowing. Jay didn't know what he wanted her to say. Hell, he wasn't even sure what yes or no would really mean. On one hand, "yes" could mean having his fill of her whenever they weren't working. But "no" might send his life into some semblance of normalcy, and he could force her into the dark recesses of his memory.

Who was he kidding? He should've preferred the idea of normal, but having a hard dick with no place to put it lacked appeal. And if he had to spend every day of the next several weeks around Blaina, he was going to be hard more often than not.

"So let me see if I have this right." Blaina licked her lips, and his dick jumped at the thought of her tongue circling him that way. "On set, I can't touch you like this..." She wrapped her arms around him and cupped his ass, rubbing her body up against his aching cock.

"That would be a negative, Ms. Triton," he rasped into her ear, his intended forceful tone marred with lust.

"Okay, I can handle that." She pulled away and walked around him, trailing her fingers across his chest, shoulders, back before returning to face him. "So, on set, I can't kiss you like this..." Standing tall, she ground her lips over his, opening beneath his demand, their tongues whipping together in a swiftly growing frenzy.

Hunger for Blaina flaring, he lifted her, carrying her the few feet to her car. She clung to him as he opened the door and flipped her seat forward with his foot. Still tangled together, he lowered them onto the backseat.

Breaking their kiss, she shimmied backward and folded the passenger seat forward allowing more room to maneuver. He crawled in after her, shutting the door behind him. In only seconds the heat they generated began to fog the windows, offering a small semblance of privacy. It was enough.

"Time to christen my car?" She lounged on one arm, the other sprawled across her stomach, her fingers resting on the front of her jeans. No, not resting, slowly tracing small circles over the

apex of her thighs. Her eyes sparked dangerously, provocatively, luring him ever deeper into her world.

“Does it count if you get yourself off?”

“If all it takes to christen a car is me masturbating in it, then this car’s already been christened.”

Well, shit. Now his mind was full of images of her naked and needy, legs spread as wide as the small space in the car allowed, pumping those slim fingers in and out of her pussy until she came with a strangled cry. Those same fingers fixing her clothing before clutching the steering wheel and driving away.

“Take off your pants,” he demanded, needing to see up close and personal the images her words had inspired. “All the way. I want to watch you fuck yourself.”

Blaina smiled that naughty girl smile, letting him know she had him exactly where she wanted him. She unbuttoned her jeans and lowered the zipper, all the while keeping her challenging gaze on him. Looping her thumbs in the waistband, she lifted her hips and began a slow shimmy out of the clinging fabric. He’d just glimpsed the top of her small thatch of dark curls when she stopped. “You know,” she murmured huskily, “I don’t think solo masturbation counts when christening a car. There should be two people involved. Lower your pants and we’ll watch each other get off. When we both come, the car will be properly christened.”

And she’d probably be cleaning his come off the headliner. Shit. He’d have to prevent that embarrassment.

Blaina remained frozen, hips arched up, until he’d lowered his zipper and freed his cock from his briefs. Then she wiggled her way out of her jeans, her shoes making matching thumps as they hit the floor.

Sprawling backward again, she resumed the same position as before, her head resting on one arm, the other smoothing over her hungry pussy. Even in the dark he could see wetness dampening her curls.

He’d already begun stroking his cock. Watching her masturbate was a stimulus that had him reacting without forethought.

She touched herself like a woman who knew exactly what she wanted, the rhythms and sensations that made her body sing. Two fingers lazily circled the entrance to her cunt, and she let out soft, purring mewls of desire.

He flicked his gaze from the show she was providing, up to her face. She was staring shamelessly at his dick, and he realized her sounds of desire were as much about what he was showing her, as it was for the pleasure she was giving herself. His balls tightened, and he grimaced, fighting the urge to come. He loosened his grip, slowing his movements, prolonging the inevitable.

“Spread your legs wider,” he commanded. “I want to see more of your pretty pussy.”

For once she did as she was told without a naughty comeback, a sure sign that she was as far gone as he was. Her pussy lips shone a deep wet rose in the moonlight.

Her wandering fingers dipped inside, and her whole body began moving with each thrust of her hand. She arched upward into her touch, her breath coming out in desperate pants.

He circled his dick, using smooth strokes from base to tip. It was easy to pretend that it was his cock penetrating her, that every response she made was because of him. His body hummed, the indescribable burning that started at the base of his spine, bursting through each vein.

“You gonna...come...for me, Jay?” Blaina huffed. It was a request made with pure longing as she arched and moaned, moments from the edge. Her eyes had narrowed as her body shook, but still she watched him, demanding that final satisfaction before she came.

Blaina’s pleased cries were fuel to the fire burning through him and he exploded, milky fluid erupting into his palm. His hand jerked once, twice more as he finally drew empty.

Feeling a mix of exhaustion and gratification, he leaned back into the seat, his head turned toward his favorite temptress.

She sat up and smiled at him, a cross between self-satisfied woman and Cheshire cat grin. “So, I take it we won’t be doing that on set?”

His rumbling laughter echoed in the enclosed space.

Chapter Five

Jay's ass was a work of art. Completely beautiful. One of those asses that made you want to reach out and squeeze. Blaina's hand itched to palm it, then slyly maneuver beneath the tight fabric to fondle bare flesh. Which of course she couldn't. Not now. Damn rules...

Blaina squirmed in her constricting leather pants as she continued her perusal of Jay's ass. He was leaning over to pick up the clipboard he'd dropped when she had walked up to join the stunt crew in the shade of a tree near today's set. Damn he looked good, the jeans outlining every curve she'd gotten to know up close and personal. Maybe she could walk a little closer, accidentally rub up against that sexy posterior...

She swallowed her sigh of disappointment as he straightened back up, destroying her perfect view. But even without the view of his ass, she still squirmed. Decked out in today's costume of leather jacket, jeans and boots, Jay didn't look much different from his normal attire. If she just removed the stupid wig, he'd look the way he had last Friday night after their race. Before he got naked in the back of her car and stroked himself while she watched, fulfilling another favorite fantasy.

And those wild and wicked thoughts brought about another round of squirming.

If she was being completely honest with herself, she was beginning to think that watching Jay do just about anything would fulfill some type of fantasy. He was delicious, multi-flavored eye candy all the damn time.

Blaina couldn't tell what made her squirm more, the hot leather, the hot man or the memories of their hot night together, but darn it her pants were causing all sorts of chafing. Hopefully, they'd loosen up by the time the camera started rolling.

"Okay, here's the sequence," Jay announced from where he stood in the middle of the group. "I'll ride into frame and come to a halt in front of Blaina. She jumps on as Smitty comes out of the alley and fires. She returns fire as I pull away and go around the corner. Cash and

Marcy, you'll add to Smitty's firing when you follow him around." Jay eyed his crew. "Everyone following me?"

Everyone nodded.

"What part of the sequence are we doing first?" asked Cash.

"We've already shot my solo stuff leading up to this. It'll be pretty standard. Lukas wants most of it in one take. I think there'll be inserts of you, Smitty and Marcy coming around the corner and probably one of Blaina getting on the bike, but there won't be any dialogue to worry about. It's all MOS."

Mute out sound. Blaina nodded, glad to hear they were shooting the scene without having to worry about audio. During stunt sequences there were so many people and things moving in the shot, the director or first assistant could call each beat, coordinating the timing, which helped get good film in the can in fewer takes.

"Okay, so when you ride up to me are you gonna skid?" Blaina asked, mentally rehearsing the action. "And where's the camera? What side should I jump on the bike from?" As she spoke, she stretched and bent, still trying to loosen her unfortunately tight pants.

Jay looked at her as she asked the questions, catching her bending at the waist. Blue fire sparked in his eyes, but was quickly extinguished as he shifted attention to his ever-present clipboard. Well, damn. If the huge grins on Smitty and Cash's faces were anything to go by, Jay had probably gotten an eyeful of cleavage. Hmmm... So she wasn't the only one lusting on the inside. Just how well would he follow the rules he'd laid out during their torrid romp on PCH?

As she straightened up, Jay glanced her way, but this time his gaze was purely professional. "I'm not sure yet. The guys are still getting the camera squared away. They're setting up the track for the dolly, but after that, we'll shoot some stationary stuff, too. Once we see where the camera will be for the establishing shot, we'll decide if you're jumping on from left or right and then we'll keep it that way. I'll definitely skid on my approach, though." Jay gestured toward the camera crew as they unfolded the metal track and started placing wooden wedges every few feet.

His attention returned to the crew and he made eye contact with each person, except for Blaina. His gaze skimmed over her face then focused somewhere over her left shoulder.

“Everyone understand so far? I’ll do a safety meeting when we get ready to rehearse. We’ve got the Set Medic standing by in case something goes sideways.”

The meeting drew to a close, with everyone heading off to finish up their job before the shooting began. Blaina stayed in the shade of the tree, trying to get her pants to be more flexible. She tugged on them, she squatted, she lifted each leg and gave practice kicks, but nothing convinced the leather to stretch. These darn things were worse than the jumpsuit during the falls. It was time to hunt down Laura. Hopefully something could be done or the stunt was going to be even more difficult.

Thankfully, Laura was on the wardrobe truck. Blaina stepped up onto the lift gate at the back. The trailer was filled to the brim with clothes and shoes and hats and gloves and belts and anything else clothing-related that might somehow at some point be needed on this show. Blaina was in absolute awe of how much stuff fit inside. “Laura,” she called toward the front. “I’m sorry, but I can’t lift my leg high enough in these things. The jacket’s fine, but these pants aren’t very forgiving.”

Laura met Blaina at the back and tugged on her waistband. “Let me see if we’ve got another pair. Who gave you these? They look like the close-up pair.”

“They were in my dressing room, so I put them on.”

Pulling her walkie-talkie from her belt, Laura said, “Mandy, go to four,” then turned her channel knob from one to four and waited for the costume designer to reply.

“Mandy.” The radio crackled.

Laura pressed the button. “Do we have another stunt pair of Credence’s pants? I think we gave Blaina the photo-double pair instead of one of the stunt pairs because they don’t bend and she can’t get her leg up.”

As Mandy approached the trailer, she put down her radio. “Yeah, Sarah probably gave her the wrong ones.”

“Sorry about that.” Laura grimaced. “Sarah’s new. She just got in the union last week and it shows. She used to do theater and doesn’t seem to understand the difference.”

“Hey, no biggie.” Blaina grinned. “I think I made some of the guys swallow their tongues when I was bending over trying to make these pants stretch.”

Laura laughed. “Let me guess. Smitty and Cash?”

“Of course.” Blaina smirked as Mandy handed her a pair of pants that looked identical to the ones she had on except they weren’t made of leather. Testing the resistance, she tugged the fabric in both hands. It stretched. *Phew*. Too bad the jumpsuit she’d worn last week when she’d done those falls hadn’t been made out of this stuff. Once changed, she should be able to swing her leg over the motorcycle without a problem.

“I’m so sorry. Those should be much better for what you’re doing today.” Mandy smiled.

“Cool. Thanks.” Blaina stretched the pants an extra time just to make sure they’d work. “These will be great.” Waving at Laura and Mandy, Blaina headed to the female stunts changing room in the honey wagon.

Hearing the purr of an engine, Blaina glanced toward set. Jay, wearing a black helmet, mirrored face shield up, sat on a blue and gold sport bike, talking to Smitty. Jay took off and then skidded to a halt. After further discussion, Jay wheeled the bike back around and did the same skid a little more sideways. Both men nodded and made a few gestures, before Jay took off and did the skid a third time.

Blaina had to pry her gaze away. Damn, Jay looked sexy on that bike. And she was supposed to hop on the seat right behind him, wind an arm around him, and not think about the tight muscle she was grabbing on to. This was exactly what Jay had been talking about the night they’d created their rules—they had to touch and keep it completely professional. Easier said than done. But dammit, if he could pretend indifference, so could she. Besides, she’d turn into a machine once the camera was rolling, and wouldn’t have time to think of anything but the stunt, her timing and doing a clean take.

“Hey, Blaina, glad I caught you.” Laura stopped next to Blaina, holding out a pair of boots. “Looks like Sarah gave you the photo-double boots as well. This pair should fit a little better. Just leave everything in the honey wagon and I’ll have Sarah collect it all up.”

“Thanks.”

Laura’s attention shifted to where Jay was still running through his stunt. “So how you like working with Mr. Williams so far? I know he’s a devil for details, but hot damn he’s easy on the

eyes...and the hands...and every other body part. It's such a chore fixing his costume between takes." She winked.

Blaina glanced toward Jay again, doing her best to ignore the heat pooling low in her abdomen. "Yeah, he's definitely a perfectionist."

"A perfectionist?" Laura sputtered. "That's not the first thing I'd expect you to say about him. Lickable, yes. Enjoyable to the last drop, maybe. But perfectionist?"

Blaina laughed and began walking again, Laura following behind. There was a mile long list of things she wanted to say about Jay, starting with how damn fantastic of a lover he was, his amazing stamina, his clothes-melting grin, the possessive look in his eyes when he was inside her. A whole list of things that would make Laura's eyes widen and jaw drop. But those damn rules of Jay's haunted Blaina, so she kept her mouth shut.

Well, almost shut. "Okay, he's a hottie. I'll give you that. But he's my boss and having fun little dirty thoughts about him will only get me in trouble."

Laura shook her head mournfully. "Now that's a damn shame. But, you know, he won't be your boss forever." The radio at her hip flared to life, requesting her assistance. "Duty calls. Have fun out there."

"Will do." Waving goodbye to Laura, Blaina climbed up into the "female stunts" compartment in the honey wagon.

He won't be your boss forever... Laura's casually spoken fact echoed in Blaina's ears as she locked the door behind her. When it came to relationships, she usually didn't think beyond the here and now—which was probably why they never lasted for more than a few weeks. But did two nights of good sex with Jay—scratch that, how about, eye-rolling, jaw-dropping, hot-and-sweaty, down-and-dirty sex—make up a relationship?

Someone had cranked the air conditioner way down, cooling her thoughts and libido as she peeled off the leather and exchanged it for what felt like PVC. She had to lie backward on the padded bench in order to get the pants zipped up, but once on, they fit like a second skin. Testing the flexibility, she stretched her leg, lifting it above her head without any problems. The replacement boots fit better, too. Bouncier, and the soles were easier to bend.

She scratched her head through the wig. Every now and then a bobby pin would shift and yank a few hairs. Once she was all back together, she headed toward set, ready to work. Hopefully the camera guys had the track set up and the grips were almost done erecting their twenty by twenty silks to knock down some of the sunlight.

“Blaina!” Cash jogged toward her, his shaggy, caramel-colored hair shining in the bright sunlight. “Is there anything in that wardrobe trailer that doesn’t look sexy on you?”

“Yeah, the washing machine.”

“You look hot.”

“Sweltering. But that’s just because this shit is black and it’s a hundred fucking degrees out here.”

“No, I mean, damn girl, you look *hot*.”

“Ummm...Cash...I know, and thank you, but I’m ignoring you. Should I try harder?”

“Oh that’s cold.”

“I thought you said I was hot.”

“Yeah, but—”

“Yeah, but no matter what you say, I’m still not gonna go out with you, babe.” Blaina slid him a crooked grin. “But thanks for the flattery.”

“Don’t you have something better to do, Cash?” Jay, helmet in hand, looked from Cash to Blaina, then all the way down her body. He was wearing his sunglasses, so she couldn’t see the look in his eyes, but the subtle tightening in his jaw made it clear that he liked what he saw and didn’t like Cash noticing it as well.

And it wouldn’t hurt to rub it in a bit. “Cash was just paying me a very nice compliment. He’s a sweetie, huh?” Blaina winked at Cash, who in return puffed out his chest.

“If you say so.” Jay tried to smile, but with his jaw so tight, it came across as a grimace.

Blaina swallowed her grin. She loved the way Jay wore jealousy.

“Rehearsal’s up. Let’s do this.” Jay motioned for the crew to gather around. “Safety meeting. I need everyone to pay attention.”

The noise and work died down as everyone faced Jay.

“All right. This is a pretty action-packed sequence. If at any time you’re afraid of anything going on, please by all means, step away and tell an A.D. or myself and we’ll make sure you’re at an even safer distance from the action through the rest of the day. At no time do we want anyone to be uncomfortable, so don’t be afraid to speak up. Even if the camera’s rolling. If you see something that doesn’t look right, don’t be afraid to holler. We’re here to make a movie, not get people hurt. We clear on that?”

The crowd murmured their agreement.

“Okay, I’ll be on the motorcycle. If I have to dump it, I’ll try to throw it toward the sidewalk, so under no circumstances is anyone allowed over there. Does everybody hear me?”

Adam gave a thumbs-up. “Cool, Flip. I’ll keep the extras away from there.”

“I can’t imagine anything going so wrong that I have to dump it, but Blaina, if I’m coming up too fast or it doesn’t look like I’m hitting the right mark, just step away and we’ll do another take.”

Blaina nodded. “Copy that.”

“Otherwise, I think we’re ready to do the first part. I’ll drive up, Blaina gets on. I’ll take off and we’ll cut before the first shot is fired. Your gun will be empty in this shot. When we do the turnaround, you’ll have a full clip. It’ll be loud and should have some nice flare, so stay away from the business end.” Jay scanned the crowd. “Mike and Lanie are here to help and will be working background close to the action.”

Mike and Lanie waved at the crew and Blaina smiled in reply. She’d eaten lunch with the brother and sister stunt team earlier and found out that they had been born into the business—their parents met on the set of *Funny Girl*. Last week, Mike and Lanie doubled some day players. They were on Jay’s A-list, so he called them back for today’s sequence.

Jay continued. “Lynn, our set medic, will be standing by under the tree over there. Any questions before we rehearse?”

Lots of “no” and “nope” hovered in the air.

“Okay, let’s give it a try.” Jay stepped back from the crowd and turned to Blaina. “If I miss, you get the fuck out of the way, okay?”

“Don’t worry about me. Worry about you.” Blaina turned toward Casey, the special effects guy, who was holding out her gun. She got a good grip on it and liked the way it felt in her hand. “It’s empty, right?”

“Sure is. For now,” Casey replied. “Are you all set?”

“I’m good. Thanks.” Blaina pushed a few stray locks of wig hair out of her face. She was nervous about not wearing a helmet for this, but at the same time, it felt exhilarating to live on the edge. As she walked to her number one mark, she surveyed the space plus the distance she’d travel on the back of Jay’s bike. If she were to fall off, other than the ground, the only real trouble would be if she ended up too close to the curb. She mentally prepared herself by burning the whole path into her head, making sure that at any point she’d know where to aim herself if something went wrong.

After her millionth mental run-through, she heard Jay start the bike and rev it.

“Rehearsal’s up,” Daniel, the first A.D., called through a megaphone.

Blaina did another practice leg lift to test her pants. She was ready. She looked to Jay and nodded. He responded with a matching nod before flipping down his face shield.

“Okay, everyone. There will be no separate call for background. You’ll go on action. Let’s roll on rehearsal... Annnnnnnnd... Action!”

Jay popped the clutch and headed for Blaina. She watched his hand contract the front brake lever while his foot pushed down the rear. He’d likely hit his mark just fine. She heard the engine wind down as he slowed, then he kicked the back end out, offering it as casually as he would offer an arm to escort her.

Gun in her right hand, she took one quick step, taking care to gather momentum before swinging her right leg up. Shifting her weight and lightly jumping, she landed on the back seat of the bike, steadying herself by wrapping her left arm around Jay’s torso. She looked over her right shoulder and pointed the gun toward the alley where Cash, Smitty and Marcy would appear during the next setup. As Jay took off, she had to splay her fingers over his chest to avoid being thrown from the bike, but she gritted her teeth and held on tight until he came to a stop about twenty feet from where she’d hopped on.

And wow, it was incredible to get a flat hold of raw Jay muscle like that. He was so in tune with her, too. Cranking the throttle hard, but not enough to dump her off the back as her hand kept her body in line with his.

Jay called over his shoulder, his voice muffled by his helmet. “Nice work. Did everything feel okay?”

Blaina bit her tongue to keep from telling him exactly how fantastic *everything* felt. “Great, actually. You can even slide it more if you think it’ll look good. I’m okay as long as you land in the same spot.”

“Okay, good. What about getting on the bike from that side? Any problems?”

“It felt bizarre. I haven’t done it that way in years. But it wasn’t a problem.”

Jay nodded as Daniel hollered, “That was great. I hardly had to call any beats. Back to one everybody. Let’s do it for real this time.”

The crew made their final adjustments as Jay drove back to Blaina’s starting point. Shutting off the engine, he leaned the bike onto its kickstand.

She got off and waited for Jay to do the same. When he didn’t, she walked around to face him, quickly discovering why he’d remained seated. A very large bulge in his pants threatened to dent the tank.

Her mouth went dry as all the moisture in her body moved south, pooling between her legs, soaking her thong. “Damn, stunts get you off as much as they do me, huh?” Blaina kept her voice low.

Jay flipped up his shield and grinned at her. “Hell yeah.” He readjusted on the seat, giving a slight grimace. “You busy tonight?”

“No.”

“We should go over the shooting schedule for tomorrow.”

“Okay...”

“How about we meet at Fosters Freeze after we get done here? We can hook up over hotdogs and work things through.”

“Uh...yeah...okay. Fosters. Sure.” She gave him a dumbfounded nod.

“Good.” He started the motorcycle, flipped the kickstand, then returned to his number one position.

Had Jay asked her out? Did she hear that right? Maybe she needed to clean her ears, but that distinctly sounded like setting up a date.

Or maybe he just really wanted to prepare her for tomorrow’s shooting schedule. He was a workaholic—always thinking about the next shot, the next stunt.

Wow. She was going out with Jay tonight, and whether for work or play, it was better than the go-home-alone-and-nuke-a-frozen-dinner alternative.

She forced her focus back to the scene and her role in it, as Christie Lopez, the makeup lady, approached with a tissue out and poised to wipe the sweat off Blaina’s face. Timmy spritzed a few frizzies and patted down her wig.

Once her face was sweat free and her fake hair perfect, she thanked the duo and continued to mentally rehearse her part until the first A.D. called through his megaphone, “Picture’s next. Last looks.”

Since Christie and Timmy had already touched Blaina up, her last looks were taken care of. She glanced toward Jay as Laura straightened his jacket and brushed something off his knee. What was on tomorrow’s schedule that was so important they needed to go over it together? Or was tonight going to be an after-work rendezvous? Hell, did it really matter?

Get your mind back on the shot, Blaina.

“Picture’s up. Everyone clear frame.”

Blaina stared at the gun in her hand. It was time to stop thinking about Jay, time to put their date—or whatever it was—out of her mind and focus only on becoming Credence, running from the bad guys and doing the best damn stunt possible.

“And...we are... Rolling!”

When Jay started his engine, Blaina looked up, ready for him to get in motion.

“Action!”

Jay took off exactly like in rehearsal. Every action matched. As he approached, Blaina readied for her step and jump. When he was within range, he kicked the back end out, sliding

sideways a little longer than in the rehearsal. Blaina didn't even flinch, she knew he would still land in the right spot.

Absolute graceful perfection. She swung her leg over and aimed her gun back as he took off. Her hand steadied against his chest. Damn, everything felt downright perfect in this take.

"Cut! Fantastic everyone! Beautiful!"

As Jay slowed the bike, Blaina heard Lukas calling out, "That was money. We don't even need another one. That was beautiful. Holy shit. Check the gate on that. Wow." He looked toward Blaina and Jay. "You guys kick ass. Thank you. Thank you." He went so far as to blow kisses.

"Guess he really liked it, huh?" Jay said as he brought the bike to a halt.

She laughed. "Guess so."

"You ready to shoot the bad guys?"

"Ready as I'll ever be."

It took four takes before Lukas got what he wanted, but Blaina didn't mind one bit. Wrapped around Jay, she was getting off on the stunt, the gun, the vibration of the bike and his damn nice chest.

She only hoped that tonight was a date, because Fosters didn't have enough chocolate on the menu to keep her from jumping Jay.

Chapter Six

A cool breeze blew through the open window of her car, bringing with it the scent of greasy French fries and fresh grilled hotdogs. The perfect Fosters meal. Blaina's stomach growled in appreciation as she whipped into a parking space and turned off her engine.

It was a nice night for a date, or whatever this was supposed to be. Not too hot. Not too cold. The sun had lowered in the sky—although it wasn't completely dark yet—lowering the temperature as well. And in street clothes rather than the faux leather she'd worn all day, she felt more relaxed and comfortable. There was nothing like an old pair of loose-fitting jeans and a blue-flame T-shirt to make her feel human again.

And why the hell was she sitting in her car having a boring mental conversation with herself? Maybe she should get out, sit in the patio area and wait for Jay. Even better, maybe she should grab a hotdog and drink, so that when—if—he arrived, she'd look totally nonchalant and unaffected regarding their "date".

"I am so fucking pathetic," Blaina huffed under her breath, ready to start her car back up and get out of there. She'd probably imagined the entire date conversation with Jay—it had been hot enough in that damn costume to cause hallucinations. Caught up in the moment of the stunt, the thrill of being wrapped around Jay...

But if she'd hallucinated that first time, it didn't explain the "see you at Fosters" he'd said as she headed to her dressing room at the end of the workday. Had she imagined that one, too? Was it some weird cryptic thing where "see you at Fosters" actually meant something entirely different?

Okay, now she'd moved beyond pathetic into the realm of the feeble-minded. Using her rear-view mirror, she fluffed her hair, spiking it out in every direction. It was practically orgasmic to run her fingers through the short strands after having the damn wig smashing them all day.

A shadow crossed her rear-view mirror. “No need to primp, Blaina. It doesn’t suit you.” Jay walked around to her door, braced his hands on the doorsill and peered inside. He didn’t smile, he didn’t laugh, he just looked her up and down before stepping back and opening the car door.

Her heart pounded, palms growing sweaty. What was the once-over for? If he was trying to make her nervous, it had worked. “No need to be a gentleman, Jay,” she quipped. “It doesn’t suit you.” As she stepped out of the car, she looked him up and down, returning the favor.

Whoa. Where was his clipboard? This was not the all-work-no-play Jay she was used to seeing on set. This was the Jay she’d fallen in instant lust with when she saw him on the side of the road, leaning against his broken-down jalopy. Except this time he was dressed more comfortably. Black nylon workout pants and a red T-shirt with checkered flags, skulls and pistons. He looked like an average bench racer who couldn’t put his money where his mouth was. But she wasn’t fooled. Jay was more than just talk. He was the real, hot and fast, deal, in and out of a car.

“You don’t think so?” he asked.

Lost in Jay-lust-land, Blaina had to quickly rewind their conversation to figure out what he was talking about. Gentleman. That’s right.

She smirked. “You’re just as much a gentleman as I am a lady.”

He chuckled. “Well, don’t we make quite the pair?”

There were far too many ways Blaina wanted to take that statement. But before she could put her foot in her mouth, Jay added, “Let’s get dinner,” and began walking toward the line of people waiting for their Fosters grease fix.

“So, what’s on tomorrow’s agenda?” Blaina tossed out.

Jay gave her a befuddled look then said, “Uh, well, there’s lots to do. You know, stunts and stuff.”

“Uh-huh. Sure.” Okay, now this was plain weird. If they were supposed to discuss those “stunts and stuff” why was he being so vague?

Just as she was about to grill him about tomorrow, Jay walked up to one of the windows and started to order. Should she follow? But that would look like she was assuming he’d pay—which would mean this was a date. And that had been far from ascertained.

Sheesh. She needed a sign—a real, honest-to-God sign that couldn't be misinterpreted. Like Jay grabbing her, throwing her against the wall and having his way with her. That would make it pretty darn clear that tonight was about them and not about the darn movie.

When a second window opened, she vaulted to the counter and ordered her hotdog, fries and iced tea. There. She was being professional, paying her own way, acting absolutely blasé.

"I could've gotten that for you, ya know," Jay said against her left ear.

So much for being blasé. The moment his breath soothed over her flesh, her nipples began viciously demanding Jay's attention. She shoved her change and claim ticket into her pocket, then grabbed her iced tea. Using the cup and one arm as a barricade to hide her rigid tits, she faced Jay and forced herself to say something proving her indifference. "It's okay. I got it." She stuck the straw in her mouth and slurped, inwardly cringing at how lame she sounded.

"Suit yourself." He shrugged. "Just trying to be nice."

She rolled her eyes, then bumped him with her hip. "For a change."

Dammit. Why'd she have to go and touch him? Her nipples strained even harder against her T-shirt, small beacons of desperation. Thank God she had little tits, otherwise there'd be no hiding how he affected her.

"Hey, I can be nice." He proved it by crooking his arm around her neck and teasingly ruffling her hair. She waited for him to let her go, but he didn't, instead circling her shoulders, a hand coming to rest a few inches from one needy breast.

"This is nice." She tried to make it a question—to sound all cocky and laid-back—but now her vocal cords were betraying her as much as the rest of her body. So she zipped her lips closed and let herself savor being hip-to-hip with Jay.

Although enjoying the weight of his arm wrapped around her and the heat of her body against his, her stupid brain wouldn't stop evaluating the situation, adding marks in her "yes, tonight's a date" and "no, you're not fucking Jay anytime soon" mental columns. With the addition of physical contact and the offer—although late—to pay for her meal, the "date" column was in the lead.

It would be too easy to get her hopes up though, and wasn't business talk usually started over dinner? Jay was probably waiting until their food was ready and they were seated before

pulling out the clipboard and becoming all business. At least with a hotdog and fries, she'd have something other than her foot to put in her mouth.

"Number Forty-eight. Cheeseburger and fries."

"That's me," Jay said, walking to the window.

Without his body heat burning through her clothing, she was able to think more clearly. But the only damn thing she could think about was that she wanted to be smashed against him again.

Dammit.

He was back in seconds, munching on a fry. "I'm gonna grab us a table," he told her, walking past her to the patio beyond.

"Sounds good," she called out cheerfully. *Not a date...not a date...business, business, business...*

"Number Sixty-nine. Hotdog and fries."

Number Sixty-nine. Blaina suppressed her giggling inner teenager. She glanced around, waiting for someone to claim the to-go bag.

No one walked to the window.

Oh man, was that *her* order? She pulled the claim ticket from her pocket and stared at it in horror. All humor about the situation was abruptly lost and she prayed and pleaded to any higher being who happened to be listening that Jay hadn't heard anything. Was she cursed tonight?

"Hey. Is that your number?" Jay asked as he returned to her side. The tone of his voice and the slight twitching of his lips revealed just how much he was enjoying the situation.

"*Sixty. Nine,*" the server shouted, enunciating each word, making sure no one in a five-block radius could possibly miss Blaina's embarrassment.

"Uh...yeah...I guess it is," Blaina mumbled as she walked to the counter. Where was a ten-point-oh earthquake to crack open the ground and swallow her whole when she needed one?

Grabbing the bag, she turned back toward Jay in time to see laughing eyes and a shit-eatin' grin. The humorous sparkle in his gaze made her hungry for something Fosters couldn't provide. She bit her tongue to avoid suggesting that after dinner they head to the hotel across the street which advertised special hourly rates. Instead she returned his smile and changed the unspoken subject. "I thought you were gonna grab us a table?"

“All the tables were full. There wasn’t even anyone getting ready to leave. How about we go to Woodley Park? I’ll drive.”

Woodley Park. Only blocks from where they first met and the place where their romp last week had begun. Heck, it could be declared the starting point for most of their sexual encounters. Was that why Jay had mentioned it? She put another mental mark in the date column.

“Woodley Park,” she replied. “I’ll drive.”

“Oh, I dunno. Might be too much horsepower for me. Could get scary.”

“Then put on your seat belt and brace yourself.” She faked a concerned façade. “I promise, I’ll try to be gentle.”

Jay laughed as she handed him her bag and drink so she could unlock her car. While walking around to the passenger side, he said, “You? Gentle? I didn’t think that word was in your vocabulary.”

Well, shit, with an opening like that she was going to get herself in trouble. Oh, to hell with it, tonight had been trouble from the very beginning. Maybe if she stopped biting her tongue, by the end of the night Jay would be biting her tongue instead. “You caught me, Jay. I like it rough. A hard, fast, rough-and-tumble ride. I hope you’re prepared, ’cause I don’t take it slow for anyone.” She dropped into her car, leaned over and opened his door.

“That’s my girl,” he rumbled appreciatively while climbing in.

Those three words went straight to her core, filling her with warm fuzzies. She studied his profile as he got situated, balancing the drinks and food bags on his lap. Chiseled jaw, slightly crooked nose, strong cheekbones. No hat or sunglasses tonight to hinder her view. Jay was probably enjoying being wig-free as much as she was. He looked entirely relaxed and carefree, more so than she’d ever seen him before. It was a side she longed to explore, this free-wheeling, lighthearted Jay.

She barely resisted the urge to reach out and stroke his face. Yearning knotted her stomach, taking her breath away.

Before desire completely flooded her senses, she had to have an absolute answer about what tonight was. “Do you need me to stop at your car so you can grab your clipboard?”

“Nope.” He faced her, his lips quirking up in a knowing smile, those beautiful eyes warm and welcoming and offering way too many promises she couldn’t wait to hold him to. Before she could pant or drool or do anything else wholly unappealing, he added, “Let’s get out of here. And take it easy, would ya? Don’t make me spill anything.”

She gave him a naughty-girl grin. “Now that’s not something I can promise, Jay.” After two engine revs for the fun of it, she pulled out of the parking space and into traffic. Lots of traffic. Sepulveda Boulevard resembled one giant parking lot. She tapped her fingers on the steering wheel, waiting for the light to turn green.

Jay chuckled, but didn’t say anything.

“What?” Blaina asked, turning her attention to him since she wasn’t going anywhere anytime soon.

“Looks like we found the one thing that can make you go slow.”

“Har har. Besides,” she lowered her voice and purred, hoping to make Jay squirm, “I thought you liked me fast?”

“Oh, I do—” his gaze caressed her body before returning to her face, “—but slow has its benefits as well.”

Great. Now she was the one squirming, her temperature soaring. Had she accidentally turned the heater on?

Nope, but with Jay so close, she was hitting her melting point. They needed to get to the park, eat and then progress to other, more interesting endeavors. Hopefully with nudity involved.

When the light turned green, she nearly shouted her pleasure. Her joy retreated as she hit the brakes again, staring glumly at the endless row of brake lights ahead. “If only this car could sprout wings and fly,” she said exasperatedly.

“Hang a right here. We can get around some of this traffic.”

“Okay, road warrior.” Blaina pulled to the side and made the turn. “Hope your shortcut works or by the time we get there, our food’s gonna be cold.”

“You that hungry? I could give you a bite.” He held out a fry.

She opened her mouth, and he placed the food inside. As she chewed the hot, salty goodness, calloused fingertips traced her lips before pulling away. Her mouth went dry and she

struggled not to choke. How was she supposed to focus on driving when all she wanted was to focus on Jay?

It was time to up the ante—to wind Jay up as much as she already was.

At the next red light, she leaned over, putting her face right into his lap where her cup of iced tea was perched, and took a long, deep drink. Jay shuffled the bags and mumbled a curse under his breath. A rather large lump swelled the front of his nylon pants, threatening to tilt the cup over, and he lowered a hand to hold the drink steady.

She lifted her head and gave Jay an innocent smile, inwardly cheering at his now obvious *enthusiasm*. “Must be hot down there. The ice in my tea is melting.”

“The light is green, Blaina,” he growled. The addition of several honking cars proved his point.

She chuckled and stared at his crotch. “That it is.”

Jay shook his head as Blaina returned her attention to the road. She took temptation to a whole new level, making it a competition, one he wasn’t sure whether it was better to win or lose. Either way he ended up rigid as a damn steel pipe, dick hurting for Blaina.

Anytime he got near her, he wanted to touch, taste, consume her, to ease this compulsive longing. She’d crept under his skin, into his blood, he felt her every time he breathed. Fucking her hadn’t lessened the obsession...at least not yet. So he had to learn to live with it until he regained control. Blaina deserved better than a wild beast bent on mating with her anytime they were alone.

When he’d asked her out, the catalyst had been his damn electric boner. He’d needed to know that after work he’d be able to get his hands and mouth all over that tight little body. But as the day dragged on, and he watched Blaina so focused on her work, perfectly hitting every mark, he found himself looking forward to the date for other, non-sexual reasons. He wanted to spend time talking with Blaina, getting to know the woman who enchanted him more every day.

But damn, she was walking, talking, breathing temptation, and it was going to be fucking difficult, if not impossible, to keep from ripping her clothes off and driving himself deep inside her body the moment they had some privacy.

Traffic eased and she made it the rest of the way to Woodley in minutes, driving in to the same parking lot Production had used last Friday night. The park was busy, families eating at the picnic tables, kids playing on the jungle gym and kicking soccer balls. Not exactly the kind of place where he could throw Blaina against her car and have his way with her again.

And that was a good thing. Tonight he'd focus on getting to know her, and not just getting inside her.

As Blaina pulled into a space, he said, "Too bad it's so crowded. I was hoping to see you slide this car like you did the Elise last week."

She grabbed her food and tea off his lap. "Oh, I can slide anything. If you're nice, maybe I'll show you later tonight."

Maybe he should work on keeping his stupid mouth shut. He might even make it through the night if she'd stop being so damned inviting.

Like that was going to happen. He opened the door and got out of the car. "Best incentive I've ever had to play nice."

"Good." Lifting her cup, she teased the straw in and out of her mouth, sucking it, sliding her lips up and down before getting enough liquid to swallow. He tore his gaze away. Not that he didn't want to watch, but then his cock would stay rock hard and there wouldn't be a damn thing he could do about it until after they finished eating, the sun went down and he found a spot amid the reeds and bushes far away from children's eyes.

"Don't tease me like that or there's gonna be a lot more than just cars sliding."

"I thought that was the point."

"Only one of them."

"Oh? Intriguing." She winked.

The picnic area was overcrowded. Without either of them saying a word, they moved in tandem toward the marshy edge of the park, eating their food while they walked.

Jay studied her in the fading light. The baggy jeans concealed her slender figure, but they didn't hide the power in her stride. It was like she couldn't do anything halfway—full of reckless, unrestrained energy seeping out of every pore, infecting those around her. He'd noticed it the first moment she'd stepped into his life, sliding out of her car, offering tools then a night he

would never forget. Even when they'd been at each other's throats she'd been full of that fiery passion. No wonder he couldn't get enough of her—she always had more to give.

In an effort to shift the date into safe, non-sexual territory, and to appease his curiosity about this enigma of a woman, he asked, "What got you into stunts anyway?"

"Hmmm..." Blaina munched a fry. "An asshole ex-boyfriend and my own damn thrill-seeking. What about you?"

There was too damn much to that story, things he didn't talk about with anyone. The guilt-ridden memories that had turned him into the man he was today. He shrugged and gave her the abridged version. "It kinda found me. I've been spinning cars since high school. Where else could I get paid to do that?"

The scar on his chest throbbed with a dull ache. He ignored it, nudging the paper down and ripping into his burger.

"I hear ya," Blaina said. "I've been driving like a lunatic since I got my license the day after my sixteenth birthday. When my ex gave me the opportunity to go with him to stunt driving school, I took it. That was," she paused as though counting back, "almost three years ago now. I've just been taking gigs as they show up. I don't really specialize. I still do background sometimes when I need the money. But nothing compares to stunt work. Nothing. I finally found a job I wanna do the rest of my life." She peeled the paper from her hotdog and took a hearty bite.

The duskiness of approaching night surrounded them as they continued their walk, both quietly munching on their dinner. He watched the way the shadows caressed her face, letting the toxic memories sink back into the dark recesses of his mind. Tonight he'd pretend that being with her wasn't breaking every one of his self-imposed rules. Wouldn't think about the reasons he'd made those rules in the first place. He couldn't walk away from Blaina. That had been made painfully clear. There was something between them, a buzz he usually only got from a perfectly executed car flip. And like a junkie, he craved that high.

As they walked past a trash can he tossed his empty bag and cup, then turned to Blaina. "Finished?"

“One sec. I think there’s a rogue fry at the bottom of the bag.” She grinned triumphantly and held one up. “Score!”

He laughed. “Those are the best ones.”

“Yeah they are.” She held the fry to her mouth, but stopped short of plopping it inside. “You know what? This one’s yours. I mean, you loaned me one in the car and I always repay my debts.” She stepped closer, holding the fry to his mouth. “Open up.”

It was the first time he’d ever gotten hard at the thought of eating a fry. He looked down into those gorgeous coffee eyes, radiating humor, lust, desire and fire. A tiny smear of ketchup stained the edge of her bottom lip. He opened his mouth and pulled the fry inside. Two quick bites later he swallowed, not even tasting it.

“So was it as good as we thought?” Blaina asked.

“Would’ve tasted even better with ketchup,” he said gruffly, circling one hand behind her neck and lowering his mouth to hers. He wanted to be tender, to prove to himself that he was more than just a rabid animal when it came to her.

It was the hardest damn thing he’d ever done.

He sucked her lips, tugging each one into his mouth, tasting ketchup and salt and the underlying Blaina vigor that utterly captivated him. She let out a rumbling moan and clawed his T-shirt, dragging him toward her.

But he denied her...and himself, too, pulling his mouth away. His heart thundered in his ears, breath ragged. After only seconds submerged in her fire, his control prepared for defeat. Lightly, he teased her nose with his. “Later, Blaina.”

“Now, Jay.” She rubbed her face against his, soft flesh against coarse stubble, humming low in her throat.

“I want to know more about you.”

“Aren’t I obvious?” Her fingers curled under the waistband of his pants. “I’ve got nothing to hide.”

“Then talk to me.” Taking her hands in his, he lowered them to her sides before she could rip the clothing from his body. She countered by pressing her damn hardened nipples to his

chest. His cock raised the white flag of surrender, and still his mind struggled to maintain control. "I know those well...and wanna know more, but later. Not now."

"Liar," she whispered before closing all distance between their bodies, lips searing his, tongue darting inside.

And he was as helpless as a day-old puppy to resist.

In time with his need, she ground her hips against his throbbing dick. Shit, this wasn't what tonight was supposed to be about, but he couldn't find a way to tear himself out of her grasp. He ran his hands over her curves. Grabbing her ass, he fought with himself. Shove her away, slam her closer. How the fuck did she do this to him? He deepened the kiss, opening her mouth wider, tasting the wicked treat that was Blaina.

"W-wait." She pulled back, further fueling his war between body and mind. "*Dammit*. My condoms are in the car."

Jay let out a huge, heaving breath and pushed himself arm's-distance away. "Good."

"Good?" She wrapped her tantalizing lips around what would have been more words, but nothing came out.

"Yeah. I'm gonna sound like a...ummm...well...you stay right there. I'll stay right here and... Y'know, Blaina, this is really hard... But can't this just be a regular eat-dinner, talk-a-little, fireworks-later kind of date?"

Her eyes registered a certain, but very large amount of shock, then amusement. "You've got to be kidding me."

Great. Why'd she have to make this so damn hard? He needed to drink all of her, not only her body. Prove to her and him both that he was more than a rigid dick every time he was around her. "Dammit, woman, I'm trying to do this for you."

"For me?" She laughed. "Jay. Let go. I don't want to wait anymore." She took a small step forward. "We'll do whatever you want later, but right now, I can't hold back from what could be my last chance with you. Every time we come together, we explode and then you back away." Her breath wafted over his neck, heating his blood and sending it directly to his engorged cock. He clenched his fists, the internal battle growing increasingly bloodthirsty by the minute. "Well, how about this time, we explode and you stay. Maybe until the sun comes up. Maybe longer."

Then you can regale me with stories from the set, or ask me what my favorite color is. But right now, Jay, I gotta have you.” She took his fist, eased his fingers to uncurl, then led his hand underneath her shirt until he palmed one lace-covered breast.

With night’s shroud, it was difficult to see anything other than desire on her face. And difficult to feel anything other than her intoxicating flesh. And difficult to care that once again, he was breaking his self-imposed rules.

“I’ll show you what I want,” Blaina breathed. “Then you show me what you want.”

“Babe, I know what I want, what I’ve wanted endlessly since that first night in my garage.” He lightly squeezed her breast, circling her erect nipple with his thumb.

She sighed and arched her back, thrusting deeper into his grip. “Then take it.”

“You’re not the only one without a rubber.”

“I can think of a lot of ways to have sex without a condom.” She pulled her shirt over her head and tossed it beneath a large maple tree. Continuing the clothing evacuation, she unhooked her bra and added it to the pile, destroying his last smidgen of control. “Use your imagination.”

Distant lights offered enough illumination that he felt the instant need to cover her body with his, to protect her from prying eyes. She was his, and he didn’t share. “And what if someone sees us?” he rasped out.

“That didn’t seem to bother you last week.”

At the reminder of his near brutal attack on her, he cringed. “I’m sorry. I—”

“Don’t,” Blaina interrupted, holding her hand over his mouth. “It’s a touching thought, but I don’t want an apology. And don’t you dare back away from me, either. Don’t hide who you are. Did you not hear me earlier? I like it hard and fast and rough. And if I don’t like something you’re doing, I’ll tell you. So stop holding back. Fuck me, Jay. I’ve never had to beg like this and I don’t like it.”

“Oh, we’re going to fuck, Blaina,” Jay said against her hand. Before she could pull back, he circled her wrist, holding her in place. His tongue darted out and tasted her fingertip. Sweet, salty, sexy... Wanting more, he pulled her finger into his mouth. A light moan filtered from her lips as he sucked the digit, teasing the soft flesh between her fingers with his tongue. He worked back to her fingertip and let her escape. “But we’re gonna do it my way.”

“And what’s that supposed to mean?” murmured Blaina. Her eyes were barely open, breasts heaving, beautiful rose nipples standing at attention. Not a man on this planet could resist her. No way in hell. She looked good, smelled good, tasted good. There was nothing bad about her except how easily she made him forget his rules, turning him into putty in her hand. Now it was time for him to return the favor.

“It means I call the shots. And you obey. You afraid to lose control, Blaina?”

“Maybe...” Her breath hitched as she finished, “Try me.”

Stepping back, he ripped his shirt off, tossing it to the ground. “Lay down.”

Sinking to the grass, she kicked her legs out in front of her and leaned back on outstretched arms. She acted so casual about being half-naked in the middle of a public park, looking decadent and wicked and goddamn enticing. It was all he could do to keep from jumping her now, taking her hard and fast like she’d requested.

But Blaina needed to see a different side of him, a different side of sex. It was time to tame his little hellion, teach her that sometimes it was better not to get what you think you want, but what you really need instead.

“Take off your jeans,” he ordered.

“About time, I thought you were just going to stare at me all night.”

“I still might. Take. Off. Your. Jeans.”

“Oh. Demanding. I like it.” She removed her shoes and shimmied out of the denim, tossing everything to the side. Her toes curled in the grass, digging into the soft dirt as she returned to her previous position. A small slip of dark fabric was all that remained on her body, embracing her pretty cunt.

He watched the distant lights play over Blaina’s mostly nude form. Her skin seemed to glow with a life of its own, shimmering with magic and vivacity. She was so alive, so fucking beautiful, his dick grew impossibly larger, needing to be encompassed by that spark.

Jay stepped out of his pants and underwear, long past caring whether anyone saw them having sex. Before Blaina, he’d never been into public sex. Hell, he still wasn’t, but at this point he wouldn’t stop even if they had an audience cheering them on. As long as he was inside Blaina, nothing else mattered.

“On your knees.”

Before he'd finished saying the words, she was in motion, kneeling in front of him, her mouth right at cock level where it belonged. “Take my dick in your hot little mouth, Blaina. I want you to suck on me like you did the straw earlier. Slide your lips up and down until you get enough of me to swallow.”

“Oh yes, please, Jay. I've been dying for a taste all night.” The witch leaned forward, her tongue slipping out and circling his cock head, her gaze locked on his face.

Good God, the view from above made him want to push her back down to the ground and plow into her, sating the both of them. Somehow Jay refrained, anchoring his feet in the grass, his heart pounding like he was running a four-minute mile. Around and around and around her wicked tongue swirled, but she didn't pull his dick inside her mouth. Defiant little hellion.

He twined his fingers through her hair, tilting her head up to meet his gaze. “Do you have a problem following directions, Blaina? I said suck me. Use your mouth to fuck my cock.”

That damn teasing tongue slipped out again, this time to circle her lips. “Guess I'm not the only one who's impatient,” she purred.

Fluid leaked from the slit in his dick. Shit, if he wasn't careful he was going to come just from the look in her eyes and her damn husky voice. She greedily lapped up his pre-come, her tongue curling around his shaft, her lips following. Closing her eyes, she treated his cock like that straw from earlier. Sucking his length, her strokes growing longer, deeper, until he was fully encased in her warm, wet haven.

Christ, she was stunning. He could tell how badly she wanted to be fucked, her passionate body mimicking her desires, moving in the age-old rhythm of sex.

“Yes, Blaina. Fuck me with that hot mouth of yours. You're so good, babe.”

She arched her back, rubbing one breast against his thigh as she continued working him, tempo increasing in time with his need for release. One of her hands latched onto his ass cheek, guiding his hips in time with her movements as she loudly moaned around his cock.

“*Fuck, Blaina.*” The orgasm hit him hard, a bolt down his spine, through his balls and into her mouth, leaving him dizzy and spent and barely able to stand. Blaina's mouth stayed sealed around his dick, soothing and punishing, sucking him dry.

She finally let him free, looking up at him with a Cheshire cat grin. “See. I can obey when I want to.”

Sinking to his knees, he ground their mouths together. The musky sweet smell of her arousal was thick and heavy in the air. She wrapped her arms around him, wriggling against his body, nudging his rapidly growing cock. Shit, he’d never been able to come so hard and reload so fast. Blaina was a fucking miracle drug.

She nipped along his jaw. “My turn,” she mumbled, rubbing her slick pussy over his cock. He cupped her bare ass, realizing that at some point Blaina had ditched the black lace and was now completely naked. Completely wet. Completely ready to be fucked. Before he could stop her she’d impaled herself on his length, a long breathy moan surging from her throat.

He clenched his jaw, his eyes almost rolling back in his head. “Not until I say so,” he growled. Arms shaking, he lifted her off his dick, spun her around, then carefully and non-sexually settled her back on his lap. “It’s time to talk.”

“No fucking way!” Blaina cried. She struggled in his arms, trying to turn toward him. He tightened his grip around her body, gritting his teeth when her soft curves skimmed against him.

“Yes fucking way. No arguments.” His voice sounded strong, but he wasn’t sure he could live up to that strength.

All fiery and seductive, she rubbed her leg against his thigh, moving up toward his promised land. “No arguments, huh?”

“None.” Jay circled his arms around her tighter if only to stop himself from ravaging her. “You’re gonna talk to me for a change. Tell me your favorite color.”

“Favorite color? Is that the best you can do?” Even her laugh was sexy. “Besides, I’ve only tasted your cock. I said I wasn’t going to tell you my favorite color until after we fucked. Yes fucked.” She turned her head and licked his shoulder. “As in your cock ramming into my slick, wet pussy where it belongs. Driving me like a stolen car. Come on, Jay... Isn’t that a helluva lot more interesting than *colors*?”

All right, two could play at this game. He rearranged their bodies so his dick rested against her inner thigh. When she tried to wiggle her cunt to swallow it, he reached a hand between her legs, taking control of her crotch while mentally pretending his hand was a chastity belt—a very

wet chastity belt that was going to thrust deep inside her body whether his mind gave the okay or not. Why was he doing this again? Oh yeah, he wanted more between them than sex. Easier done when not naked. He compromised. “You talk to me a little and my hand will bring you pleasure. You talk to me a lot and you’ll have my cock buried all the way inside of that hot little pussy of yours. The choice is yours, Blaina. What’s it gonna be?”

“Red, sometimes teal. Depends on my mood.”

“Nice start, babe.” Jay spread his fingers, massaging her clit with the ball of his middle finger.

She inhaled sharply. “This is torture, Jay.”

“This is foreplay, Blaina. Sex shouldn’t always be a race to the finish line.” He couldn’t keep himself from laving her neck, tasting her sweat and trying his goddamn patience. Where the hell was his focus?

“Easy for you to say,” she grumbled. “You already got off.”

“I’ll get you off.” He bit her shoulder, just hard enough to leave a mark. “But I want to know more about you first.”

“Then ask me another goddamn question.”

“Tell me about Blaina.” He spoke against her neck. “Outside of fucking and driving, what else does she like to do?”

“Well...” She chuckled. “As of late...not much.”

Hell, his answer would have been the same but he needled her on. “Blaina, you can do better than that.”

“Fuck you, Jay,” she huffed, chest heaving as she pressed her back against him as though trying to melt her skin to his. “Why don’t you answer questions for me?”

For some reason, he was inclined to give in to her request. It had nothing to do with the way her hips started rocking, forcing his arousal through the roof. “Such as...”

“What’s your favorite color?”

“Blue.”

“What was your first car?”

“Sixty-eight Mustang GT fastback. Yours?”

“My yellow sixty-nine Camaro. Do you still have your Mustang?”

“Nope. Wrecked it canyon racing when I was seventeen. Went off a cliff.”

“Over the edge?” She gasped and he wasn’t sure if it was because of his car wreck, or because his finger was still working her throbbing clit. “Tell me about it.”

“No. I’m supposed to question *you*. Don’t you want me to pleasure you, Blaina? Don’t you want me to tease your clit, your cunt?” He palmed her clitoris, folding his fingers down, stroking her folds. She was so slick, so sweet, so responsive...he’d happily do this for hours.

“Yesssss...” She writhed against him. “Then tell me how long you’ve known Connor.”

“Babe, you’re not listening to me. I’m supposed to ask the questions. If you want, just start talking and I’ll touch you accordingly. Why don’t you tell me how long *you’ve* known Connor?”

“Three years ago, I got Sam...his wife...on the guest list for a party at Jimmy Maxson’s. Yes...ewww...I know, I know...he’s a creep and so are all his fake friends. But she met Connor there. They fucked on a bench in the rose garden. I formally met Connor shortly thereafter.”

“Good girl.” No matter how hard he fought, it was still difficult to keep his resolve. All of his muscles were tense, wanting to dive inside the firecat on his lap and fuck her until sunrise. “How long have you known Sam?” One finger waited at her opening, ready to delve within if she gave him a satisfactory answer. He prayed she’d give him a satisfactory answer.

“Forever. Her parents live next door to my dad and stepmom. I spent every weekend with her growing up.”

Jay slid his finger into Blaina’s molten heat, working through her cream. His other hand cupped her breast, kneading its pebbled point. Her back arched, offering her neck, inviting him to taste, to lose his last ounce of control and...goddammit...proving that he didn’t have any self-control whatsoever. But one kiss wouldn’t shatter his resolve.

That was a lie. As soon as his lips touched her skin, drinking of her essence, he was hooked. He needed her. Needed to bury himself within her. Two fingers pumped in and out of her clenching pussy, bringing moans from her throat, causing her fingernails to dig into his thighs. Jay was ready to come just looking at her, watching her powerful little body react to his touch.

“One last question,” he grunted. “You on the pill?”

“Yessss,” she hissed out on a sharp exhale.

“Then get on your hands and knees so I can fuck you.”

“Thank God.”

Moments later her perfect heart-shaped ass tilted up at him, wriggling in erotic invitation. In one lightning-quick stroke he was buried to the hilt inside her sweet pussy. Her hot, wet sheath cloaked his bare dick like a satin glove, coating him with her slick need. Simmering juices rained down, soaking his balls. He was being boiled alive in her liquid fire.

He began to move, planning on going slow, but Blaina writhed and rocked against him. “Oh God, Jay, please...make me come.”

Curling his hands around her hips, he fucked her with deep, sure strokes, angling so his balls slapped her clit with every thrust. Blaina moved with him, slamming back onto his dick before he could pull too far out, her pussy swallowing him whole.

“Jay, Jay, Jay!” she shouted, her body going tense and then exploding around him, her cunt clamping down on his entire length, pulling him deeper with every convulsion until he finally came, his sperm violently discharging against her womb, wringing him dry.

Jay sank to the ground, pulling Blaina tight against his body, keeping his dick in the warm, welcoming cradle of her thighs. He kissed her neck and back, residual shivers still coursing over her flesh.

She sighed and turned her head to face him. “This is the part where one of us usually gets in our car and drives away. I hate this part.”

“Then let’s stay awhile. I’ve got nowhere else I’d rather be.”

Chapter Seven

“Do anything exciting last night?”

Christie Lopez smoothed another layer of blush over Blaina’s cheeks. The rest of the chairs in the makeup trailer were empty. Her call time was five-thirty a.m., probably an hour or so ahead of Meleta’s. Blaina waited until the powder settled before replying with a shrug, “I went to bed early.”

“Bah! You’re barely an adult, what are you doing going to bed early?” Christie shook her head and clucked as she ran the soft bristles of a makeup brush over Blaina’s face. “If I had your youth, your body and your sexual aura, I’d *never* sleep.” She dabbed the brush in more powder laid out on the workstation.

Blaina laughed. “Don’t try and play me like you’re too old to tango, Christie. I’ve seen you flirting with Casey Fernandez—and I’ve seen him flirting right back. I’m thinking Casey doesn’t just make sparks fly on set.”

A hint of red tinged Christie’s cheeks. “He’s young enough to be my son.”

“Uh-huh. Sure. If you had a son when you were ten. You like him, he likes you, so how about you stop worrying about my sleep habits and start not-sleeping with Casey.”

“All right, missy. That’s enough outta you.” Christie set down the brush, placed her hands on her ample hips and gave Blaina a teasing, narrow-eyed glare in the light-bulb-ringed mirror. “But don’t think this lets you off the hook. I expect you to find a man before the next time your ass hits my chair.”

“My ass is in your chair every morning, Christie,” Blaina said dryly.

“Then you better get busy,” Christie huffed, then searched through her makeup box, deciding on a thin brush before opening a compact full of what Blaina guessed were eye shadows. Unless there were characters who needed blue foundation.

“Yes ma’am.” Blaina chuckled.

“Okay, look up.” Christie stood ready with a skinny eyeliner brush.

Doing as directed, Blaina studied the collection of magazine snips depicting examples for the look of the show, all sleek and sexy, dark colors, with bold statements for the villains. A few stylized wigs rested on forms above the mirrors. In the reflection, Blaina saw Connor's serious-eyed headshot taped to one of the white cabinets. Meleta's was next to his. Kellan O'Shaunessy, the big, bad, tortured villain of the movie, Cyprian James, was included as well, his wide smile and laughing gray eyes at odds with the character he was portraying in *Dangerous Intentions*. Blaina had only met him in passing, but his soft Irish brogue and dark brown hair that brushed wildly against his shoulders were going to woo female audiences all over the country. A bunch of day players surrounded the three principal actors.

Beneath their shining faces were labels that read *scars and wounds, wigs, cleaning supplies, mustaches, beards, sideburns*. At the far end, Blaina's dreadfully itchy, long blonde wig cascaded down over the last cabinet, slightly obscuring a label that read *Timmy's crap STAY OUT!* Blaina swallowed her chuckle to avoid getting lectured by Christie for moving. The only thing in that cabinet was the protein shake Timmy always brought with him but never actually drank.

"Now close your eyes."

Blaina was glad to oblige. Relaxed under Christie's gentle ministrations, Blaina let her mind wander back to last night. She'd told Christie she'd gone to bed early—what she hadn't told her is that she hadn't gone to bed alone. And Blaina had most definitely *not* been sleeping. Jay had made sure of that, over and over again, until he'd finally left her house in the wee hours of the morning.

Just thinking about Jay and his lovemaking made heat pool between her thighs. Blaina squeezed her legs together to ease the ache. She had a long day ahead of her—getting horny now would only lead to hours of grumpiness and frustration.

After their first official date at Woodley Park—over three weeks ago now—she and Jay had established a routine, spending time together almost every day either before or after work. The rules were still the same though. On set they were completely professional, no unnecessary touching, no sexual sparring, just two coworkers getting their jobs done. Most of the time they

didn't even eat lunch together. And the deceit was obviously working. Aside from Sam and Connor, no one on *Dangerous Intentions* had a clue the two of them were lovers.

And sometimes Blaina really hated that anonymity. She would have loved to tell Christie the truth about her nights—and just how little sleep she'd been getting. In the past few weeks she and Jay had gone to Santa Monica, where they'd walked the Third Street Promenade, shared a BBQ Chicken Pizza at California Pizza Kitchen, then hopped over to the pier and ridden the Ferris wheel and walked the beach until after midnight. Some nights they spent hours driving and talking about life and philosophy. They'd gone out to the movies, they'd stayed in and rented movies. Everything a normal couple did...except Blaina couldn't tell a damn soul.

The trailer door swung open and heavy footsteps climbed inside. "G'morning, ladies."

Like Jay always seemed to do, he stepped out of her thoughts and fantasies and into the trailer. Every tall, luscious inch of him. Damn, no one should look that good so early in the morning. Hell, she'd been getting made up for the better part of an hour and she still felt tired and frumpy.

As he stepped closer, Blaina's heart ricocheted against her ribcage. Didn't seem to matter how often she saw him, her body still reacted the same way.

"Good morning, Jay," Christie crooned. "You don't need any makeup magic, so what brings you to my little trailer?"

Jay grinned sheepishly. "Wrong. I do need you to work your magic, Christie." He lifted his chin, baring a small, dark red mark.

"My boss has a hickey?" Blaina beamed, unable to hide her glee. Although she hadn't meant to leave a mark, she liked seeing the small sign of ownership—even though she couldn't publicly claim him.

"Seems a shame to cover up a love bite." Christie clucked then said to Blaina, "All right, honey, I'm through with you. Ronny will goop your arm with blood when you get to set. The shot's wide, so I doubt they'll actually put a wound on you. Now scoot your ass down to Timmy's station. He'll be here any minute."

Jay sat in the chair Blaina vacated. Christie dug through her makeup box, holding up several different flesh-colored tubes before deciding on one that matched his tan physique. “So, Jay,” Christie said as she dabbed the cover-up on his neck, “who’s the lucky lady?”

“Now you know I don’t kiss and tell, Christie. I’m a gentleman.”

Blaina snorted and Jay cocked an eyebrow at her in the mirror. “Something you want to say, Ms. Triton?”

With that direct challenge, there was no way Blaina could keep her mouth shut. “Gentleman? Who you trying to fool? C’mon, Jay. Regale us with stories of your naughty ways. You know that no one will believe you anyway.”

“Just ignore Blaina,” Christie intervened. “She’s just jealous because you’re getting some and she isn’t.”

“No fair, Christie.” Blaina stuck out her tongue.

Jay laughed and Blaina wanted to wring his neck. She glared at him in the mirror and he only laughed harder. Tonight she was going to cover him from head to toe with hickeys. Hell, she’d write her name in hickeys. See if he could cover *that* up. Revenge was going to be sweet.

“All’s fair in love, lust and movie-making.” Christie finished blending the makeup over Jay’s throat, effectively hiding the hickey. “All right, Jay. You’re good as gold. Now all this talk of sex has made me hungry. I’m gonna grab breakfast. You two want anything?”

Jay shook his head. “Thanks. I already ate. I’ll just wait here for Timmy. I’ll put up with Blaina, maybe even do something constructive and go over the shoot list with her until he gets here.”

“Bacon and hash browns sound good,” said Blaina. “And a man to feed them to me.” At Jay’s narrow-eyed stare, she added, “Wait. Scratch that. Make that two men, Christie.” Blaina leaned back in the chair and gave Jay a triumphant smile.

“I like the way you think, honey. Soon Jay won’t be the only one wearing love bites.” Christie waved as she walked out of the trailer, the door swinging shut behind her.

The trailer was quiet for all of three seconds before Jay growled, “Two men?”

“Hey, a girl’s gotta do what a girl’s gotta do. Guess I’ll have to start accepting applications for a hickey applier. How does one interview for that? Do you have them audition their suck technique? Offer up various body parts to see who leaves the best mark?”

In less time than it would take to blink, Jay stood, stalked to where she was sitting and braced each of his hands on opposing arms of the chair, effectively pinning her to the seat. Not that she wanted to escape. His eyes were dark and his voice came out in a husky whisper. “Don’t tease me, babe. There will be no other mouths on your body but mine. No one else will put their mark on your flesh. No one.”

Her pussy throbbed in time with her rapidly pounding heart. “Then I guess you better put your mouth on me, Jay. Stake your claim.”

His eyes sparked dangerously. “Blaina—”

The trailer door swung open and Timmy called out, “I’m here. Now the party can begin.”

Jay and Blaina’s party came to an abrupt end. Like she had the plague, Jay shoved away from her and returned to his seat. *Bastard*. The hard-on tenting the front of his camouflage pants—the costume of the day—was the only evidence that he’d been affected by their heated exchange.

Seeming completely oblivious to the heat, lust and passionate tension brewing in the tiny space, Timmy crossed the trailer and deposited his protein shake in his sacred cabinet.

Blaina shifted in the chair, trying to find a way to sit that didn’t add to her horny discomfort. Jay wasn’t the only one who could pretend indifference. Pasting on a flirty smile, she purred, “Morning, Timmy. Christie’s supposed to be sending me breakfast and two men to feed it to me. You wouldn’t happen to be one of them, would you?”

“You’re a naughty, naughty girl, Blaina. And that’s only one of the things I love about you. But I’m not here to feed you. I’ll still use my magic fingers on you though.” Timmy wiggled his fingers at her in the mirror and winked.

“Oh how I love your fingers, Timmy. Rub me hard and deep this time. I could use a good scalp massage. That wig’s almost done me in, but you always know how to make me feel better.”

“But, of course.” Timmy dug through his work box. “It’s a little bit of heaven having you waiting for me when I arrive at work. Sitting here, waiting for me to touch you, to play with your hair. Makes me quiver.”

“Timmy, did you get laid last night? There’s a little extra somethin’ somethin’ in your eyes and I don’t think it has anything to do with me.” Blaina winked at Timmy, then tossed Jay a sideways glance. He was the picture of stoic indifference, arms scissored across his chest, gaze fastened on his wig like he expected it to start doing tricks.

“If only. My sexual spark hasn’t lit anyone’s candle in way too long.” Timmy squeezed a large portion of hair glop into his hands, then started working it into Blaina’s henna-colored hair, smashing it down, readying it for the wig from hell. “Blaina-love, this enthusiasm is all for you. What man wouldn’t want to come to work every day if it meant they got paid to put their hands on you? Don’t you agree, Jay? Blaina’s got that sizzle—you want to touch her even though you know you’re going to get burned.”

Jay stood and headed for the exit. “I’ve got stuff to do. Let me know when you’re done *playing* with Blaina.”

If the door could have slammed shut it would have. Timmy’s eyes widened. “Well. Looks like he got up on the wrong side of his cold and empty bed this morning. Guess I’m not the only one in need of a good screw.”

She forced a grin, her stomach tied up in anxious, frustrated-with-Jay knots. “Aren’t we all.”



Blaina had gone through the jump a million times in her head. And talked it through a million more times with Jay and Ted, the helicopter pilot. If she missed, it was no big deal, a fully inflated airbag would catch her. The building was only two stories, but through movie magic when the audience watched, it would appear to be a skyscraper.

Looking over the side of the building, she memorized the position of the air mattress. Her adrenaline was already pumping, making it near impossible to stand still. She’d done all of her stretches, made sure her costume could handle any maneuver without blowing a seam. Ronny Litman, the special effects makeup guy, had glooped fake blood from a slice in the arm of her

costume. That crap was rivaling her wig for itchiness, but she'd trained herself to ignore it. There was nothing left to do but the stunt itself—and hot, sizzling damn she couldn't wait to take a flying leap off the roof and land on Jay. Hell, at this point she was so ready, she was willing to take a flying leap off the roof and land on Smitty, Cash or even Meleta. As long as she got to fly, she didn't particularly care who caught her. Now if only everyone else was as ready as she was.

As she paced, she watched the various crews finish setting up the cameras, make sure the monitors were working, and properly secure the reflective scrim that made the sun brighter and hotter against her back. Lukas wildly gestured like he, too, was impatient to get the show on the road. Jay talked on his radio, and Cash and Smitty nodded and pointed as they looked at the monitors.

Jay lowered his radio and strode toward her. "You ready to do this?" he asked, one hand shading his eyes from the harsh glare of the sun.

Since their earlier encounter in the hair and makeup trailer, he'd remained nothing but cool and professional toward her. His ability to so easily play on again/off again lover was beginning to wear on her nerves. But she couldn't let that show now. Not before Credence's big leap of faith.

"Beyond ready. Where's the 'copter?"

"I called it in. Ted's standing by. Roger is still futzing around with his crew. Lukas wants three cameras on this to maximize coverage. Once they're done, the chopper's a go."

"Good. I'm getting antsy."

"Me, too."

Blaina scanned the tops of nearby buildings in the industrial area a mile east of downtown Los Angeles. Roger Jenkins, the director of photography, held a small, ultra-dark, round lens to his eye as he looked toward the sun. Camera crews were loading film, adjusting dollies, doing everything they do to make Hollywood's magic appear as real as possible. The post-production team would add to that magic when they digitally inserted the giant explosion Credence was escaping by jumping onto Wes and the rope ladder hanging from the helicopter. With the bad guys vanquished, the two of them would fly off into the sunset together and the closing credits would roll. Nothing like a Hollywood happy ending.

She studied Jay out of the corner of her eye. Yup, nothing like a Hollywood happy ending. It took explosions, car chases and multiple rounds of gunfire to get there. And that was the easy part. Where would she and Jay stand after the credits rolled on *Dangerous Intentions*?

“So, no stunts tomorrow,” Jay said casually. “We got a three day weekend.”

Blaina turned to face him, one eyebrow cocked questioningly. Jay wasn’t the casual conversation type. At least not when he was working. What was this about?

He glanced over his shoulder, then turned back to face her, his voice lowering conspiratorially. “I was thinking—”

The radio in Jay’s hand crackled. “Flip. What’s your twenty?”

Reverting to normal, at-work Jay, he lifted the radio and said, “With our leaping lady on the roof.”

“Ted says he’s got the go-ahead to fly whenever you’re ready.”

Jay lifted his eyebrows. “You ready, Blaina?”

“Didn’t we just have this conversation?”

He pressed the talk button. “I’ll be right there.”

Before Jay could give her his normal, pre-stunt lecture, Blaina held up a hand to stall him. “Yes, if something doesn’t look right, I won’t jump and I’ll give the hand signal. Got it, Jay. Now go get on your rope ladder so I can...ummm...jump you.” She stripped all enthusiasm from her voice on the last phrase. No way in hell was she going to blatantly show interest in something she’d been forbidden to enjoy. But really, how long did he think they could keep their relationship a secret? She was a stuntwoman not an actress.

He didn’t give her a censuring look, but he might as well have. “Okay, okay. Let’s do this, then.”

As the helicopter came near, Blaina watched Jay hop onto the rope ladder and climb up to get himself clipped in and situated. Damn. The man even managed to make climbing a ladder sexy. With a self-deprecating sigh and a quick shake to clear her head, she turned around and headed to her starting spot as the ’copter flew out of frame for the opening of the shot.

“Kick ass, Blaina.” Cash waved and grinned as Smitty playfully socked him in the gut.

“No worries, Cash. Ass kicking is my specialty.”

Daniel's voice blasted through a bullhorn from somewhere near video village. "All right, everyone. Rehearsal's up. Clear frame. It's a very wide shot."

Smitty, Cash and everyone else who wasn't necessary to the stunt backed away toward Lukas and the monitors. Blaina did a few more stretches and jumped up and down in place, getting her motion fluid and ready for her leap of faith. It was time to make the audience believe Credence could fly.

The helicopter approached, getting louder, the *thwup, thwup, thwup* echoing off the surrounding buildings.

"And action!" Daniel's voice was barely audible over the helicopter's blades.

From the middle of the rooftop, Blaina hopped into a full tilt run. Jay came into view, climbing down into position on the rope ladder, and she locked her gaze on him.

Step, step, leap. She was airborne, swan diving, arms stretching toward Jay as he waited to catch her. About halfway through her flight, a thick lock of damn blonde wig whizzed in front of her face. Shaking her head, the hair dislodged just in time for her to see Jay's eyes before she collided with his body. The rope ladder swung back with her momentum. She wrenched her arms and legs tightly around him as he threw an arm around her, holding her against his chest...which was heaving as much as her own.

Wow. What an adrenaline rush. She looked up at him. "Not bad, huh?"

"No, not at all." His breath was hot against her neck. "Think you've got another one in ya?"

"Hell yeah, Jay. Since when have I ever backed down?"

Ted brought the helicopter back to Blaina's building. She hopped off and Jay followed after unclipping himself.

They were met by Lukas, Daniel and Roger and a plethora of "That was great" and the like from the rest of the crew nearby.

"All right you guys." Lukas took a deep breath, then started in. "As we all know, I'm the best director in the world and I have this wonderful idea and I think you two are the best stunt people in the world and only you guys can make my idea look as fabulous on film as it does in my head, so here's what I need you to do for me... Kiss." His eyes widened, glowing with enthusiasm as he looked from Jay to Blaina. Before either could respond, he continued selling

the idea. “We need to see that Wes and Credence are going to live happily-ever-action-packed-after with one big, triumphant kiss. And I know Connor and Meleta would look fab in close-up. What do you think? Could you do that for me?”

A string of long and nasty curse words flittered through Blaina’s brain. When Lukas asked something, he wasn’t really asking. Even though he made it sound like the idea could be vetoed by any party involved, for one take minimum, it had to be tried. If that one take looked like crap, the action would go back to original.

So she’d be kissing Jay. Really, what was the big deal? She could do that. She liked doing that. Liked doing it so much he had the makeup-covered mark to prove it.

“Sure. No problem,” Jay replied.

“I can handle that.” Blaina shot a glance toward Jay. The man was cold as stone. Great. Well, she’d just pretend she was kissing stone.

Yeah, right. If only it was that easy. All she had to do was look at the lips in question and she started to sweat.

Even though she thought it might be important, she refrained from asking how big or small of a kiss. No sense in calling attention to it, making it look like she was really serious about kissing Jay in front of all these people and recorded on film for posterity.

Shit. She had to kiss Jay. On film. In front of an audience. And she had to act like it was no big deal, that her heart wasn’t racing, palms weren’t sweating, her entire body wasn’t celebrating the upcoming mouth-to-mouth, public display of affection. Ugh.

“Good then. Make it money.” Lukas dismissed everyone and headed back to the monitors while Smitty radioed Ted to come and pick up Jay. Everything was falling into place.

Everything except Blaina and her goddamn expectations. She stretched out and jumped up and down again, ignoring the chaos around her until the helicopter closed in and she heard Daniel shouting through his bullhorn. “Roll sound!”

Going over the maneuver in her head, she decided to do an exact repeat of the previous jump without backing off any. The impact wasn’t beyond manageable. She’d do it again, but add a kiss to the end. Probably a nice sweet kiss. No tongue. Nothing but G-rated in the mouth department. Of course being wrapped around him, the darn thing would look a whole lot

naughtier than G, but the details would be left for Connor and Meleta. At this point, all Blaina had to do was touch her lips to Jay's. Shouldn't be a problem.

"Action!"

From a hop to a run, Blaina bolted for the edge of the roof, locking her sight on Jay as the helicopter came into view. After another perfect flying leap, she collided with Jay and took hold of his nice, firm body. It was time for the moment of truth. Tilting her head back, she offered Jay her lips, ready to kiss him for the camera.

But when his mouth touched hers, she forgot who she was, where she was and why she wasn't supposed to melt into Jay. He separated her lips and dove hungrily inside, scorching her mouth with the fiery sweep of his tongue. His mouth dominated all her senses, lips grinding over hers, hot breath filling her lungs, tongue leading her even further down the path of delicious temptation. God, had any other man ever tasted this good? Kissed this good? Owned her to the point nothing else mattered?

Suddenly, the rope ladder shook, breaking both Jay and Blaina from the kiss.

Oh shit. They'd landed on the roof. When had Daniel hollered "cut"?

Blaina blasted away from Jay like he was a contagious disease she wanted no part of. But she couldn't make it believable enough. She knew her face was flushed, nipples tight, and if her groin got any hotter they'd have to peel off the remains of her melted leather costume.

Unclipping, Jay stepped off the ladder, tucked his hands in his pockets, and faced Lukas. "How was that?"

"Beautiful. *Ab-solute-ly* money. I don't even need another take." He started blowing kisses. Damn. He hadn't done that in weeks.

"Great." Jay looked at Blaina, then turned away. Even with both hands shoved deep in his pockets he couldn't hide the considerable lump. Good. She hoped he was suffering. He'd broken the damn rules. He'd made the kiss bigger, X-rated, and so much better her knees were still wobbly.

"Triumphant. Magnificent. The two lovebirds fly off into the sunset." Smitty placed the back of his hand to his forehead and melodramatically sighed as he skipped across the rooftop toward them.

Cash laughed at Smitty's antics, then added, "Didn't you two hear the eighteen calls of 'cut'? Or were your tongues shoved so far into each other's mouths it blocked your ears?"

"You try hearing something above the helicopter, dipshit," Jay retorted. "I did my job. Don't make it more than that."

Blaina's heart plummeted to her toes. Jay's dismissal was just too thorough, too vehement, too...painful. Screw him. She didn't sign on to this relationship to be insulted.

"Whoa-ho. Touchy subject for ya, Flip?" Smitty countered. "Just admit it. You enjoyed tasting our little Blaina here."

"That kiss was fucking hot." Cash shook his head. "Smoke was pourin' off you two."

"Oh, please..." Blaina forced past the lump in her throat. She swallowed hard then continued with renewed force, "You actually think either of us were into it?" She snorted out a laugh. "Puh-lease. I've got vibrators warmer than Mr. Iceman here."

Masking her anger, Blaina stalked away, leaving a chuckling Cash and Smitty and her stone-cold lover behind her. As she maneuvered past the monitors and down the stairs, a few people told her how great she and Jay had looked. She just smiled and nodded until she found a quiet refuge in a corner of the building...and kicked it. Hard.

Jay watched Blaina stomp away. Shit. Something was up with her. It wasn't like her to take off so fast unless she had a quick turnaround. Although things between them had been awkward since Timmy's interruption earlier that morning in the trailer. A real shining moment for him—getting all territorial with her on set. He needed to keep his damn cock on a leash around her.

Fuck it. What he needed was to talk with her, apologize for the caveman routine, then tell her about the surprise he'd planned for this weekend. Dismissing Cash and Smitty, he crossed the rooftop toward the stairwell.

"Jay, you are a god." Lukas stepped in front of Jay, holding out his hand for a hearty shake, bubbling over with more excitement than any grown man should ever exhibit. Jay took it and found himself in an ironclad grip completely at odds with Lukas' current enthusiastic-cheerleader persona. "You and Blaina—Oh! Magnificent. I can't thank you enough."

“Really, it’s quite all right. It’s just my job.” *And I wish it included kissing Blaina more often.*

“Just your job... Don’t be so modest.” Lukas still clung to Jay’s hand, his other clamping down on Jay’s shoulder like a proud father. “You and Blaina have evolved into this unstoppable team. It’s like magic. You’re so together, so in tune, so *on*...I-I-I’m inspired. I’m going to see if Mike and Neal have any other scripts like this for me, so I can get you two in on them again. Amazing.”

“Wow. Thank you. I have to go tell Blaina.” Jay tried to retract his hand, but Lukas remained oblivious, shaking and squeezing Jay’s abused flesh while animatedly discussing all the details of Blaina’s jump with Daniel and Adam. The force of her weight as she perfectly collided with Jay’s body. The way she wrapped around him like her life depended upon it. How effortless she made jumping off a roof look. And the kiss that had the women swooning and the men—himself included—walking crooked.

He’d wanted to kiss her since Timmy interrupted their exchange early that morning. Hell, he’d wanted to do a lot more than just kiss her. She was getting harder and harder to resist during work hours. At first, Lukas’ request for a kiss between them had been a godsend. Seeing *his* woman flying through the air toward him, her intense gaze locked with his, trusting him to catch her, had been one of the hottest moments of his life. But kissing her hadn’t relieved the pressure—now his relentless need raged like an out-of-control firestorm.

Dammit. What he wouldn’t give to lose himself inside Blaina right now. Pump into her tight, wet pussy...listen to her scream his name as she came for him. *Fuck*. The workday couldn’t end fast enough.

“Jay? Jay, are you hearing me?” Lukas waved a hand in front of Jay’s face. “I said you’re working with me on my next picture no matter what it is. I want you and Blaina there.”

“Great. Sounds great. Now I really gotta tell Blaina. Excuse me.” He extracted his hand from Lukas’ grip and peeled himself away from the group.

This was good news, wasn’t it? Blaina and stunts. His two favorite things. His two favorite things that weren’t supposed to happen simultaneously.

Fuck. What the hell were they supposed to do now? Could they keep their relationship a secret indefinitely? They'd have to. This offer left them no other choice. No, it left them one other choice. End their relationship. And Jay sure as shit wasn't going to let that happen.

As he headed down into the building, he searched for Blaina's distinctive blonde wig through production equipment and people. Casey stood near the base of the stairs in front of a table covered with assorted guns. He held one in his hand, prepping it for another scene.

"You seen Blaina anywhere?" Jay asked.

Casey shrugged. "Nope. Sorry. But you guys kicked ass today."

"Thanks." Jay hurried away before he got engaged in another never-ending gush session.

Laura, carrying a stack of various leathers on one arm, nearly ran into Jay. "Oh sorry. Excuse me."

"No problem. You seen Blaina?"

Her face lit up. "You guys were so great today."

Trying to hide his exasperation, Jay grinned. "Thanks."

"Last I saw, she was at crafty, grabbing a bottle of water. I didn't see where she went though."

"Cool." Jay headed toward the craft services table. Blaina couldn't have gone far. Or at least he hoped not.

But she wasn't there either. Shit. The place wasn't that big. Scattered chairs and tables were set up for catering. The rest was a barrage of camera and grip carts. Sunlight filtered in through the old windows making electric lighting pointless.

Over a pile of heavy cables, Jay finally caught sight of Blaina, sitting on an ancient barrel in the furthest corner from where he stood. The woman was bathed in sunlight from the windows she was sitting against, one foot up on the barrel. She tilted back her head and took a deep drink from a bottle of water. As she lowered it, she harshly wiped her mouth with her hand, then chucked the bottlecap toward the far wall.

"Hey. You okay?"

"Fan-fucking-tastic," she said dryly.

He didn't let it faze him. "Good job out there. Great job actually. We blew Lukas away. He wants us to work together on his next project."

"Whoop-de-do." She stared at the opposing wall, unconsciously scratching at the fake blood on her arm.

"Look. I know you're pissed at me for earlier, but this is still a really cool thing."

She jumped off the barrel and faced him, her eyes widening in disgust. "Cool?" She shook her head. "No. Nothing about this is *cool*."

"What? Why not?" Jay couldn't remember opening a can of worms. Okay, he'd had the same doubts for a few moments, but at least he could see the big picture. "What the hell is up with you, Blaina? This is a golden opportunity here. For both of us."

"No it isn't. I'm done with this." Her gaze darkened. "With you." She pushed past him, heading toward the mass of carts.

Oh hell, no. She wasn't getting away from him that easily. He circled her arm, pulling her down a short, empty hallway. Under his breath, he rasped, "Don't. We're talking. Now."

She yanked her arm out of his grasp and glared at him. "Fuck you, Jay."

"Dammit, Blaina. Where the fuck is this coming from? I thought you'd be happy that we get to work together some more."

"I'm just work, huh?" Her eyes shot daggers. "Kissing Blaina is just all in a day's work for Mr. Safety. 'Don't make it more than that.' That's what you told Smitty and Cash. Well, let's make it easy on you. Let's not make *it* at all. Not ever again."

"Are you kidding, babe? If kissing you could be a day's, night's—whatever—work, I'd be first in line to sign up for that job."

"Don't feed me bullshit, Jay. You go out of your way to make sure no one knows we're together. What the hell did I do to deserve that?"

The scar on his chest ached and he rubbed a hand over it to ease the phantom pain. "It's not bullshit, babe. I just want my private life private. That's all. When relationships become center stage on set, bad shit can happen. But that doesn't change how I feel about you." He tried to meet her eyes, but she turned away. He sighed. "Look, I tried to ask you earlier but got interrupted."

Come away with me this weekend. Just you and me. No work. No distractions. No nothing but you and me—”

“Go by yourself, Jay. I’m not interested in sneaking around with you anymore.”

“That’s not what this is about. Give me this weekend to prove what you mean to me.” He put his hand on her face. She didn’t pull away, but she didn’t lean into him either. “Blaina, it’s never been this good for me. You make me—”

Excited voices and laughter approached, interrupting his plea. He cursed under his breath and dropped his hand from Blaina’s face as Connor and Sam turned down the hallway toward them.

“*Blaina*,” Sam exclaimed, her cheeks flushed. “Damn, girl, you’re a hard woman to find.” She paused, looking between Blaina and Jay. “Ummm...am I interrupting something?”

“Nothing we can’t talk about later,” Blaina replied with forced cheerfulness. “Didn’t know you were gonna be here today. Where’s the little one?”

“With Laura and Christie. Last I saw they were fighting over who got to hold him.” Sam wiggled back against Connor as he drew her close and dropped a kiss on top of her head.

Jay gritted his teeth. He liked Connor. He liked Sam. But seeing their obvious and overflowing love for each other when Blaina was on the verge of walking away from him was enough to make him want to put his fist through a wall. Again.

“C’mon, beautiful,” Connor said. “You better tell Blaina or I’m gonna blab.” He nuzzled her neck and Sam’s smile beamed even brighter.

“Tell me what?” Blaina asked, looking between the two lovers. “Connor get nominated for some big award or something?”

He shook his head. “Nope, it’s better than that.”

Sam grinned, overflowing with elation. “I’m pregnant.”

Whooping, Connor picked up Sam and swung her around. “Damn, beautiful, I love to hear you say that.”

“I’m pregnant,” Sam repeated, her laughter echoing in the hallway as she bounced toward Blaina for a loud giggly, girly hug.

“Congratulations,” Jay said to Connor. At least someone’s relationship was going well.

“Thanks, Jay.” Connor shook Jay’s hand, but his eyes stayed on Sam. “I’m so damn lucky.”

Jay nodded, his gaze straying back to Blaina.

“You take care of her, man,” Connor warned, shocking Jay into shifting his attention back.

“Blaina’s like a sister to me now. I know you don’t fuck around, but she doesn’t deserve to be jerked around, either. You’d be real damn smart to hold on to her.”

Looking back to Blaina, Jay let out a heavy breath. “Yeah, I know.”

Connor stepped to Sam’s side, interrupting the girl-talk. “All right, beautiful, we told Blaina first. Now let’s go tell the world before PerezHilton.com gets hold of this story and breaks it first.”

Blaina’s smile stayed wide until Sam and Connor turned the corner and were gone. The smile faded as she took a deep breath and faced Jay. “What time tomorrow are you picking me up?” Her voice was carefully devoid of emotion, but relief washed over Jay all the same.

“Why don’t we leave early? I can pick you up tonight.”

She shook her head, and his earlier relief was eclipsed by doubt. “No. Not tonight. I need time to think. Alone. Pick me up tomorrow morning. Seven a.m.”

Blaina walked away. And this time, as much as it pained him, he let her go.

Chapter Eight

The doorbell rang as Blaina zipped her zebra-print, nylon overnight bag closed. Seven in the morning—Jay was right on time.

Last night had been miserable. Lying alone in her bed, smelling Jay on her sheets. Thinking about the ultimatum she'd thrown down, wondering if she'd been unreasonable with her demands. Was a public acknowledgment of their relationship so important? Was it worth the possibility of losing him forever?

If only she knew why Jay was so intent on keeping silent. She didn't believe his "private life should stay private" line. Hollywood was full of relationships that had developed during the course of making a movie. When you lived and breathed a picture, intense emotions were bound to develop. Blaina'd had her fair share of brief flick flings, but with Jay, from the first moment she'd set eyes on him, she had felt a deeper connection than just sexual movie magic.

So was he ashamed of her, embarrassed to be screwing a subordinate? She didn't want to believe Jay was capable of being that coldhearted. But why else would he so adamantly deny their relationship?

Maybe after this weekend he'd change. Maybe he'd stop hiding that they were together.

And maybe she had a larger capacity for bullshit than she'd ever before realized.

Blaina scrubbed a hand down her face as she trudged to the door, the bag hanging heavy at her side. It was time to put a stop to the constant push-pull of emotions tying her up in knots. She needed answers from him. It was that simple.

She opened the door, and her heart flip-flopped. Framed in her doorway, the early morning sun created a halo around Jay, giving him the appearance of a Greek God. No. Scratch that. More like a fallen angel—rough and tumble, his clothes soft and worn. His baseball cap was pulled low, shading his eyes. A faded black T-shirt, near gray from too many washings, clung to his sculpted chest. He wore his favorite pair of jeans—her favorite too—frayed along the waistband and cuffs. Her palms itched to stroke hard, powerful male wrapped in soft cotton.

Pain lanced through her heart, burrowing deep into her soul. How would she survive walking away from this man?

Jay jerked off his cap, giving Blaina a glimpse into his eyes. Haunted. That was the only word to describe them. He forced a small smile, but the dark circles beneath his eyes told her that he'd gotten about as much sleep as she had.

He replaced his cap—backward this time—and let out an uneasy breath. “Fuck, babe, I missed you last night.”

“I missed you, too,” she said quietly, nervously clenching and unclenching the straps of her overnight bag.

“Need me to get that for you?” He reached out, aiming for her bag, but stopped short as though waiting for permission.

“It’s okay. It’s not that heavy...I didn’t know what to pack...didn’t know where we were going.” She stumbled over her words, hating every ounce of awkward tension clouding the air between them.

“I wasn’t even sure you still wanted to go with me.”

“I do. This weekend...I—I just kind of need you.”

Jay took a deep breath and smiled for real this time. “You’ll have me...whatever you need. I promise.”

Returning his smile, she said, “Then let’s get this show on the road.”

“Not yet.” Tentatively he reached for her, cradling her face. When she didn’t withdraw, he stroked his thumb over her cheekbone. His gentle touch combined with the scent of warm male made her weak in the knees. One night away from him had been too much. “I really need to kiss you.” He lowered his mouth, tenderly brushing his lips over hers. She didn’t hesitate, dropping her bag to the hardwood floor and wrapping her arms around his neck. No one else had ever made her feel the way he did with only a look, a touch.

Powerful and heated, his kiss lit her blood, filling her body with warmth and desirous longing. When one hand slid possessively up her back, the other down to her ass, cupping it, lifting her off her feet, she willingly succumbed to his masterful touch, hooking her legs around his hips and grinding against his burgeoning erection.

Slapping the door closed, he carried her to the nearest piece of furniture—an upholstered bench. She sprawled backward onto the cushion, his weight bearing her down into the plush fabric. Hands and mouth paid homage to her body, suckling her neck, skimming over her curves. He lifted her shirt, dropping kisses on her flat stomach, rubbing his face over her flesh. His stubble was the only roughness in an otherwise gentle seduction. The slight burn made her ache for him even more.

Moving down her body, he slipped off her pants and tossed them to the floor. Large hands slid up her bare thighs, pushing her legs further apart, exposing her sex to his reverent gaze. “I miss your taste.”

And oh God she missed him tasting her. “Then taste me, Jay.”

For a moment he just stared at her pussy, feasting on her with his eyes, making arousal course through her veins like liquid sunshine. Submerged in his worshipful affections, she grew warmer and warmer, the heat from his nearness a balm to her wounded soul. His jaw was tight, nostrils flaring as he looked his fill. Her juices seeped from her core, wetting her inner thighs, inviting him—begging him—to come inside.

“Please...” She spoke on an exhale, unable to hold back her plea. Tilting her pelvis, she offered herself to him.

The hands on her thighs soothed over her flesh, pinning her to the bench. He leaned down and inhaled deeply of her arousal. “I love the way you smell, babe.” He breathed over her swollen folds, making her shiver. “Sexy woman, hot and wet and oh so sweet. Your slick little clit, I wanna lick it. You do this to me, babe, you make me want you. All the time. I can’t get enough. Your tight pussy, squeezing my cock, so hot, so right. I gotta touch you, Blaina. Gotta have you. Every inch of your beautiful body.”

When his open mouth centered on her gaping pussy, sucking her wet flesh, Blaina cried out, her world narrowing down to only Jay and the exquisite sensations he evoked. He drove his tongue inside her sheath, working her so deep she felt his touch in her soul. One night away from him had left her feeling empty and alone. But every worshipful touch, every time he murmured her name against her flesh, made her feel *whole* again.

Jay's strong fingers plunged inside her, his thumb swiping over her clit. Her impending orgasm simmered over her flesh, like waves preparing to crash on the shore. Her breath came in rapid pants, heart pumping frantically. She glanced down her body, needing to see Jay. As though knowing she watched, he looked up at her, eyes hooded with arousal, mouth glistening with her juices.

"Come for me, babe. Let me watch you come."

She shattered, eyes slamming closed as the orgasm crashed over her. But it didn't stop, Jay didn't stop. White heat surged from the inside out, washing over her until she could only breathe to say his name. Only existed to feel his touch.

And when the tremors subsided, Jay was still there, soothing her flesh with soft, sure strokes of his large hands, kissing her stomach, whispering her name...completing her.

Her eyes fluttered open and she gave Jay a sated smile as he brushed hair off her forehead. He knelt at her side, face level with hers, a pleased glint in his eyes. "Now I'm ready to go."

She rolled onto her side facing him. "But what about you? I may have been pleasantly out of it, but I know you didn't get off. And that just doesn't seem right. You know I always repay my debts."

"Guess that means I have something to look forward to." He winked and dropped a kiss on her nose. "C'mon. We've got a long drive ahead of us."



Blaina blinked open her eyes and lazily stretched. Not long after leaving her house, the rumble of the car engine combined with the satisfying buzz of afterglow had lulled her into a pleasant nap. The heat of the sun caressed her through the windshield, making her feel languid and content.

"Morning, sunshine," Jay said in that deep, husky voice that never failed to make her shiver. "Sleep good?"

"Damn." She rubbed her eyes, wiping the remnants of sleep from her vision. "How long was I out?"

"You were out awhile. Needed the sleep, huh?"

“Yeah, I guess I did.” She surreptitiously swiped a hand across her mouth to make sure she hadn’t been drooling. Her mouth was dry and no suspicious wet spots stained her clothing. Thank goodness.

“Thirsty?” He reached behind his seat, grabbed a brown fast food bag and handed it to her. “There’s a bottle of water inside. It’s probably not cold anymore. Sorry. I picked it up a few hours ago.”

“As long as it’s wet, it’ll work.” Blaina pulled the water from the crumpled bag, unscrewed the top and took a long swig. She studied the passing scenery on the small, two-lane road. To their left, the coastline filled her view, brilliant blue ocean, craggy, rock-strewn beaches. They had to be somewhere in Central California, near Santa Cruz or San Luis Obispo. Off in the distance, signs of civilization dotted the landscape.

“You’re still not going to tell me where we’re going?”

He chuckled. “You’ll know soon enough.”

The bright sun bathed him with a golden glow. The hickey she’d given him still stained his neck, although it had dulled to a light brown—only a shade or two darker than his normal skin color. She reached over and traced the fading mark with her fingertips.

It felt good to touch him, not to have to worry about where they were and who might see them. And it didn’t seem to bother him. A slight smile lifted the corners of his mouth, but he didn’t say anything.

From his neck, she worked her way to one broad shoulder and down his arm, trailing over every inch of corded muscle, rubbing her palm over the crisp blond hair laying flat against his tanned skin.

She sighed at the pure joy of having this perfect male specimen all to herself. He was hers to do with as she pleased. And right now there were so many things she wanted to do to him. It was time to pay up, to give him his due.

Unhooking her seat belt, she slid closer, sweeping her hand across his chest, then down over his six-pack. She lifted up his shirt, trailing her fingers through the soft dark-gold hair rising above his jeans.

He glanced sideways, but didn’t say anything.

Struggling with the awkward angle, she unbuttoned his fly, feeling the heat of his cock as it hardened beneath her working fingers. She pulled open the denim, mouth watering in anticipation as she studied the impressive bulge shielded only by his briefs.

She fondled him through the white cotton, stroking down his length. Jay's breath hissed out between clenched teeth and his shaft jerked beneath her questing fingers. "Blaina..."

Tilting her head up, she graced him with an oh-so-innocent grin, while her hand slipped into the slit in his briefs. "Your turn, Jay."

She worked him back through the opening, until his long, magnificent cock stood proudly away from the fabric. Curling her fingers around his shaft, she stroked slowly from base to tip. He nearly singed her palm, hot satin smoothness stretched taut over long, hard steel. That was her Jay, a mess of beautiful contradictions.

His entire body was strung tight, from his locked jaw, rigid arms fastened on the steering wheel, his thigh muscles bunched beneath her hand. "You're playing with fire, babe."

"Then maybe I should put it out," she said, folding her body over the console and taking the head of his cock into her mouth.

"Fuck, Blaina," Jay muttered, his hips jerking involuntarily. "How the hell am I supposed to drive?"

She removed her mouth, and he swore again under his breath.

"Don't stop driving," she ordered. "Or I'll stop playing."

He lowered his hand to the back of her head, pushing her back to his waiting erection. That was a clear enough answer. She took him back inside, running her tongue over the small opening in the top, tasting his pearly essence.

Hopefully the road wouldn't get twisty while she was taking her fill. The engine changed speed as he shifted under her work, but as long as he didn't slam on the brakes or start swerving, she had no plans on stopping. Oh hell no. She needed this just as much as he did. And he tasted so good, so familiar. She flicked her tongue over the ultra-sensitive flesh below the head, and was rewarded with another grunt from Jay.

Using one elbow to keep herself upright, she slid lower on his cock, taking his entire length inside her mouth. His hand on the back of her neck kept her steady, his fingers imperceptibly

tightening along with every low groan rumbling from his throat. Humming, she began a slow withdrawal only to repeat the process and pull him deep again. With her free hand, she reached for his balls. The denim was a tough barrier, but she still felt his heat through it. God, she'd missed him.

Increasing her rhythm, she rocked back and forth, caressing his sac while she worked. She knew he was getting close, felt the tension building inside him.

His whole body drew tight and he tugged on her hair. "Blaina. Stop."

She shook her head. Was he crazy? She wasn't stopping until he was done. And even then she might keep going. Everything about him was way too delicious.

To show him she meant business she drew extra deep and lightly scraped her teeth along his length.

"Blaina. Stop," Jay repeated. "A truck. Two guys inside. Coming up on our left."

He released his death grip on her neck as she lifted her face, then swallowed hard when he saw her determined, mischievous smile. "I guess they're going to get a show then."

"Shit," he mumbled on a labored breath.

She returned to her task with new vigor, turned on by the thought that she was going to have an audience while giving head to her man. She almost wished there were more people watching. Jay was hers and even if he wouldn't allow it, she wanted to show the world.

Sheesh, when had she become such an exhibitionist? She'd never been tame in her sexuality, but since meeting Jay she'd discovered just how extreme she liked her sex—as long as it was with him.

Her pussy was sopping. The musky smell of their combined arousal filled the car. More than anything she wanted to taste her man's essence, feel him lose control because of her.

All of her got into the action, mouth rapidly moving up and down his cock, her hand manipulating his tight sac. She sensually swayed and moved her body, caught up in the sexual rhythms.

When Jay's hand began stroking the seam of her ass, she shuddered and only worked him harder.

“Oh fuck, babe.” He tightened beneath her, giving her a moment to prepare before his semen spurted into her mouth. She swallowed greedily, taking every last drop.

When he was done, she started to retreat, only to be stopped by his hand. “Babe, fair warning. The truck...they’re right next to us. Have been for awhile.”

Heated awareness washed over her—but not embarrassment. She lifted her face from Jay’s lap, rubbing against him as she moved up his body, stopping to kiss the corner of his mouth before smiling—and waving—at her audience.

Jay shook his head and let out a hearty, satisfied laugh. “That’s my Blaina. Now get back into your seat before these guys follow us all the way there and ask if they can spend the night.”

“Oh no, no, no, Jay. Those guys can find another man ’cause you’re mine. I don’t share.” Blaina flopped back down in her seat, grabbed the water bottle and chugged the last remaining drops.

Jay sputtered. “Babe, somehow I don’t think they were interested in me.” Belying his words, he quickly tugged his shirt down, hiding his crotch as he tucked his dick back in his jeans.

Blaina hid her grin, and gave him a wide-eyed, excited stare. “Wait? Those two guys want me? Well, hell yeah, let them follow us. Bring on the ménage. Woohoo!”

“Don’t tease me, sweetheart,” Jay growled. “I don’t share either.” He dropped the car down a gear and took off to get away from the truck.

This time, Blaina didn’t hide her grin. As far as claims on her person went, it wasn’t the best, but it was a start.

Thirty minutes later, they were comfortably checked in at a beachfront hotel. Blaina still had no idea where exactly they were, but really didn’t care. Everything that mattered was right in front of her, naked, erect and grinning lasciviously at her. “You had your chance in the car. Now, it’s mine. Now you’re mine...with no one watching and holding up little signs with scores on them.”

“What?”

“I guess you missed that, didn’t ya, babe?”

“Ha, ha, real funny.”

He cocked an eyebrow. “I’m not joking. They rated you an eight. Care to go for a ten?”

She shoved him down on the bed and went for a ten plus.



So far, Jay had given her the weekend he'd promised. Her and him and no distractions but the sexual kind. Blaina had begun to wonder if, while she'd slept, Jay had driven down a rabbit hole into an alternate world where the sun shone brighter, the grass grew greener and the sex managed to be even more toe-curling, body-arching and coma-inducing.

They'd never left the hotel Friday evening. Jay had arranged for room service to set up dinner on their balcony. Candlelight and an ocean view complemented the steak and lobster, and the chocolate cake and ice cream had been an impeccable way to start dessert.

Saturday morning had begun early. Both used to climbing out of bed before the sun, they greeted the morning by walking hand in hand on the beach. The first streaks of orange fire bathed them in dawn's glow while they kissed, the salty ocean water lapping at their bare feet. It had been simple, beautiful, perfect.

And now this.

Blaina tried not to drool as her gaze wandered over row after row of gleaming paint and polished chrome, fiberglass and go-fast hard steel. This was California's largest car show—a gearhead's dream come true. And Jay had given her the next best treat to sex by bringing her here.

She'd been trying to attend this show for years, but her plans had always fallen through. Boyfriends backed out, she got a gig on the same days or she just plain forgot.

But this year made up for all the previous years. Crushed against Jay, one hand tucked in his back pocket and his arm tight around her waist, made the event better than she ever could've imagined. She was surrounded by tons of hot cars and hot men, with the hottest male in the bunch right there at her side.

How lucky could one girl get?

Blaina squeezed Jay's ass and was rewarded with a wide and wonderful grin that warmed her from the inside out. He stopped walking and lowered his smiling mouth to hers, kissing her thoroughly.

One girl could get really damn lucky.

As she considered shoving Jay into a distant, quiet corner of the show so she could get even luckier, he broke the kiss and said, “What do you wanna see next?”

“Something big...hard...and fun to play with,” Blaina suggestively suggested.

“Well, you’re in luck ’cause we’re heading for the lowriders.”

“Oh...lowriders...of course,” she drawled. “That’s exactly what will satisfy my bigggg, harrrrrd need.”

Jay didn’t reply, but the smug grin on his face said it all. He was having as much fun as she was. Cars and sex. It didn’t get much better than that.

“Now there’s something you don’t see every day,” Jay said, pointing to a fully chromed-out Impala. The car reflected the sun’s rays, blinding everyone who came near.

Blaina lifted a hand to shield her eyes. “You’d think that whoever owned this bucket of bolts could at least paint *something* on it. *Sheesh*.” She playfully mocked it, but damn, it was sweet.

“Yeah, but you know the old saying. ‘If it don’t go, chrome it.’”

“Oh, honey, this baby can go,” a throaty female voice purred. A tall, expensive-looking bleached blonde strolled over. Her tight, red, low-cut top exposed bolt-on boobs so big that one sneeze would topple her plastic-nose-first onto the concrete. Even her eyebrows were fake, light brown crescent moons tattooed halfway up her forehead, giving her a permanently surprised expression. Her fingers resembled red-tipped claws, equally as ill-fitting as the rest of her. She looked more like a hodge-podge kit car than a real human being.

Pushing past Blaina like she was a stack of used tires, the bitch plastered her fakies against Jay’s chest and said, “Come back later and I’ll show you how fast I like to go.”

Oh hell no. Blaina puffed out her barely-a-handful chest, prepared to throttle every inch of walking and breathing silicone and plastic.

Jay stopped Blaina with the subtle tightening of his arm around her waist. Jerk. Didn’t he see that she needed to kick some surgery-enhanced ass?

He stepped backward, disengaging the synthetic rack from his chest. “Thanks but no thanks.” He looked from the designer broad to Blaina. “I’ve already got the fastest ride I need.”

Okay, Jay was forgiven. As soon as they were alone she was going to remind him of exactly how good he had it.

As one, they turned to walk away, but the bitch wasn't done yet. "Honey, when you get bored with your arm candy, you know where to find me."

Some things you just couldn't walk away from. Blaina spun in her tracks. "Arm candy? Me? For starters, my '69 Camaro isn't a useless, un-drivable trailer queen. It's the real thing. Yours? Well, I bet you got a good deal on it—buy two big tits, get a sweet ride free. Look, babe, I work on my car with my own—not some sugar daddy's—money. Do you even know how to crank a wrench? Or would that break your pretty red claws?" Blaina lifted her hands to show off her grease-stained fingernails. The bitch flinched, either from disgust at the dirty nails, or because she was afraid Blaina was going to haul off and punch her. Maybe both.

Satisfied that she'd made her point, Blaina shot one last glare at the suddenly quiet blonde pretender and turned back toward Jay. His lips were smashed together in a tight line. Not anger though. It looked like he was trying to keep from laughing.

"You enjoyed that, didn't you?" she asked as they walked away.

"Of course. Seeing my woman bench race is a major turn-on."

"Yeah, well parking a kit next to my muscle car here"—she bumped his hard thigh with her hip—"wasn't something I could let slide. Not in a million, trillion light years."

"My hero." He grinned. "And speaking of racing, let's go check out the real muscle cars," Jay said, guiding her as he weaved through the crowd.

The scent of scorched asphalt and clean motor oil warred with the smell of grease coming from the hotdog and burger stands. Her stomach growled in appreciation. The blast of adrenaline she'd gotten from facing off with the bimbo had made her hungry. And horny, but she couldn't easily take care of that here. She stopped moving and pointed at the closest stand. "Food first, cars second."

"You're kidding, right?" Jay teased, his eyebrows lifting above his sunglasses. "We ate just a couple hours ago."

“Shut up. Breakfast was three hours ago. And being surrounded by all this testosterone is making me hungry. So unless you want to go back to the car for a quickie...” She winked. “I need something else to satisfy my urges. Should I get you one?”

He leaned down, his lips teasing against her ear. His whisper was hot and throaty, making her knees weak as electric shivers skittered down her spine. “Don’t bother. A hotdog won’t satisfy me. I want you tied up, at my mercy. I want to see your pretty ass flushed red from me spanking it. I wanna hear you beg me to fuck you. I want to listen to your moans while I make you come hard and soaking wet all over my cock.” He grinned and smacked her butt, nudging her toward the concession stand. “Enjoy your hotdog.”

“And where are you going?” she rasped out, flushed and wanting and so damn desperate for him she could barely see straight.

At least she wasn’t the only one affected. His jeans looked mighty tight and uncomfortable around the crotch.

“I’ve got to pick up a few things.”

“I thought we were waiting until right before we left to do our shopping?”

“I’m ready to go. You?” To win his point he slid a hand down her back and along the crease of her ass, pressing hard enough to make her squirm.

She nodded, her mouth going dry as all the moisture in her body moved south.

“Good. I’ll meet you at my car in a half hour.” He dropped a quick, unfortunately chaste kiss on her lips and walked away, calling back over his shoulder, “And try not to get in any trouble in the meantime, okay?”

“I can’t promise anything.”

He flashed a smile before disappearing into the crowd.

Her heart fluttered like a schoolgirl with her first crush. Yup, she was pathetic. Certifiably pathetic.

But still nonetheless hungry, so she waited for what felt like an eternity in the chow line before finally placing her order. The oblivious teen behind the counter plunked down Blaina’s drink, but neglected the straw. Ugh. “Excuse me, where are the straws?”

“Oh sorry.” The girl put a straw and a bunch of condiment packets in the brown cardboard box along with the foil-wrapped hotdog. Thank goodness. Blaina scooted her fine meal away from the window, getting everything prepared.

Once the straw was in the drink, dog unwrapped and glistening with ketchup, mustard, onions and relish, she grabbed her food and shoved the cardboard into the trash.

She took a huge bite and sighed. Meat in a bun had never tasted quite so good.

“Dude, I told you it was her. Look at the way she’s going down on that dog. You owe me twenty bucks.”

Mouth full of processed meat product, Blaina looked up at the duo standing across from her. They had matching doofy grins, and were watching her like she was a half-naked, snake-oil-pushing, side-show act. Although they looked vaguely familiar, she couldn’t place them. Probably two guys from some car event she’d attended in the past. She had obviously made more of an impression on them than they did on her.

She swallowed carefully, but before she could say anything, the other one said, “And she swallows, too. Da-yum, what a go-er. Where’s your man, babe? Or are you flying solo now?”

And that’s when it hit her. The two guys in the truck who’d witnessed her oral attack on Jay. Of all the damn luck...

Not that she was worried. Guys like these were a dime a dozen at car shows, full of pathetic come-ons and lots of lies about how big their engines were. She’d been dealing with loser gearheads since putting on her first training bra. And it didn’t matter how gigantic your motor was, if you didn’t have enough rubber hooking it to the ground, all you did was spin your wheels and get absolutely nowhere—like these two dorks.

Blaina looked them up and down, making it clear she was examining the goods and finding them lacking. “Lemme guess, you want to offer me a ride?” She pursed her lips and shook her head. “I’m gonna have to disappoint you. My man and I have plans for another front-seat rendezvous in a few minutes. And no one else is invited.”

Dweeb number one glared. “You were only an eight anyway.”

“Only an eight, huh? How many blowjobs you get on the ride up here? Certainly less than *my* boyfriend.” She widened her eyes dramatically. “Unless you two are into that kind of thing.”

“Bitch,” the second dweeb spit out.

“Hey, man. Whatever floats your boat.” She shrugged off their glares, casually pinching a piece of bun off her dog and plopping it into her mouth. “But hey, I hate to send you two away empty-handed. I’ve got a friend here at the show who’s lonely and wanting to find someone—or someones—to hook up with tonight. Go check her out. She’s the blonde who owns the fully chromed ’64 Impala lowrider. You can’t miss her or the car. And tell her ‘arm candy’ sent you. That’s her little pet name for me.”

They studied her with matching suspicious stares, although dweeb number two glanced over his shoulder toward the lowrider section. “You better hurry,” Blaina insisted. “She’s been trying to hook up with someone all day—hell, she might already be taken.”

“See ya later, Eight,” Dweeb number one snarled before turning and heading toward the lowriders.

As they stumbled away, dweeb number two elbowed his buddy and said, “I ain’t never done a lowrider chick.”

Blaina smiled and waved as the two of them walked away. Revenge was sweet.

Now it was time to quietly depart before trouble found her again in an even bigger and badder way. She glanced at her watch. Fifteen minutes until she had to meet Jay. Enough time to buy him a thank-you-for-the-fan-damn-tastic-weekend present and get to his car.

And then to the hotel, where she could show Jay her thanks in a personal, sex-slave kind of way.

Oh yeah, one girl could get really damn lucky.



Bag of assorted goodies in hand, Jay waded through the crowd, heading for the show exit. Near the end of an aisle there was a table piled high with colored rolls of duct tape.

Blaina. Duct tape. The first night they’d met.

Damn, every little thing made him think of her. The entire shopping trip had become Blaina-focused. Did she need a new gas cap? He’d forgotten to ask. How about a jar of chrome polish?

Jay picked up a roll of duct tape the same yellow color as Blaina's car and handed the clerk a fiver. Tossing the tape into his bag of tricks, Jay made a conscious effort to stop looking at all the booths full of merchandise. He'd already bought enough toys for him and Blaina to enjoy, and if he took any longer he'd be late.

Only a half hour since leaving her side and he already ached to feel her body next to his. He felt...better, more alive, more everything when she was near.

Blaina was an addiction, plain and simple. He'd never get enough of her.

His stride quickened in anticipation of seeing her again. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the blinding lowrider and the kit-chick from earlier, sandwiched between two men whose gazes didn't lift from her tool rack. She seemed pleased as punch that she was finally being appropriately worshipped.

Looked like Jay wasn't going to be the only one getting lucky tonight.

He hustled through the front gate and into the packed-to-capacity parking lot. Amid the sea of cars and trucks, Jay spotted the object of his affection waiting at his car.

But she wasn't alone.

Three guys circled both his Barracuda and his woman—and Blaina didn't seem to mind a bit. Her laughter echoed through the parking lot. Were they hitting on her? He knew how infectious Blaina could be. How could they *not* be hitting on her? She was, by far, the hottest, sexiest woman at the show.

Still several rows away, Jay sized up the men, in case he had to physically convince them to find someone else to play with. The little guy with the curly mop hair would be easy to take out, but the taller one with the shifty eyes looked like the type who'd have a gun hidden on him somewhere. The last one was all muscle—big, brawny, knows-how-to-pack-a-punch muscle. This could hurt, but so be it. No one was going to poach his woman.

As he approached, Blaina's enthusiastic words reached his ears. "When I first met him, this thing was a piece of shit. Since then, he's gone through the whole motor and done some suspension mods. He's got the need for speed and this car shows it. I'm sure it'll be painted and pretty in no time, too. You should see his other cars. They're gorgeous."

“Not half as gorgeous as a chick who knows cars.” The little guy grinned and nodded at his buddies for approval. “I don’t see too many ladies who know the difference between a carburetor and a carnation.”

“Jake, chill out. Can’t you see she’s not interested?” The taller man smirked and shifted his gaze to Blaina. “Just ignore him.”

“Oh, I have been. Should I have been more obvious?” Blaina scoffed. Her eyes lit up when she noticed Jay rounding the car toward her. “Hey!”

“Hey, yourself,” he said, dropping the bag to the ground with a clunk before pulling Blaina tightly against him and not-so-subtly staking his claim. His woman was bragging about him. And it felt good. So good he wanted to steal her away and lose himself inside her until she was feeling just as good. “Something I can help you boys with?” he asked the men still milling around his car.

“Sweet ride, man,” Muscleboy spoke up. “You interested in selling?”

“Not likely.”

The man reached into his pocket and pulled out a card. “If you change your mind, call me. I’m Ryan. Number’s on the card.”

Jay took the offered card, pocketed it, then shook the guy’s hand. “Don’t hold your breath,” he said honestly.

“I don’t blame you.” Ryan looked at the car one last time. “Catch ya later.”

The other two guys filed after Ryan, the shorter one—Jake—calling back, “Nice talkin’ to ya, Blaina. If you’re ever in town again, look me up. Maybe we can ignore each other next time.” He gave her a cocky wink, waved and then they were gone.

Blaina chuckled. “You can relax now, stud. The enemy has retreated.”

“They were checking you out.”

“They were checking out your car.”

“And they were checking you out.”

“Well, yeah, of course.” She winked, tucked her fingers in his waistband and yanked him close. “But they learned we were both off the market.” She kissed him then bounced away. “So what’s in the bag?” she asked, pointing to his purchases.

Jay reached into the bag, pulled out the yellow duct tape and tossed it to her. “I saw it and thought of you. I couldn’t find a magic wand though.”

Blaina laughed. “Maybe I should leave it in your car. I think you need it more than I do. What else is in the bag?” She leaned over to sneak a peek.

He cinched the bag with his hand, opened the trunk and put his goodies inside. “Something for later.”

“Oh, a man of mystery. I like it.” She threw the tape into a bag she’d left near the passenger door.

“So what’s in your bag?”

Blaina tucked her bag into the trunk and saucily mimicked, “Something for later.”

Chapter Nine

The moment they entered the hotel room, Blaina jumped on Jay and hooked her legs around his waist. “Is it later yet?”

“Someone a little impatient?” Humor and desire sparkled in his eyes. He lightly smacked her ass with his free hand, then circled a muscled arm around her and walked from the entryway.

“Always.” She wiggled against him, hoping to increase his impatience.

He carried her across the room and lowered her to the edge of the bed. The plastic bag in his hand fell to the floor with a clank as he leaned over her, all warm, musky, tasty male. His palms hit the mattress, framing her between his tanned arms.

Blaina couldn’t help her shiver. He looked so powerful, poised above her like a barely restrained animal, wanting her, wanting all of her to succumb to him.

Oh darn.

But first she wanted to see *her* animal stripped of his clothing. She pulled his T-shirt from the waistband of his jeans and moved upward, revealing his beautiful bronzed chest and the bright colors of his Celtic flame tattoo. He lifted his arms, letting her rip the shirt off his body.

Sexy, sexy, sexy. She shivered again, laying her palm over the tattoo. “Have I told you that this is one of the sexiest things I’ve ever seen?”

“I’m glad my chest meets with your approval,” he rumbled.

“Not your chest, although now that you mention it, it is pretty damn near perfect. I’m talking about your tattoo. Makes me tingle every time I see it.”

Jay barked out a laugh. “Makes you tingle, huh?”

“Oh yeah.” She traced her fingertips over the design, feeling the roughness of damaged flesh hidden beneath the flame. “It screams raw, virile masculinity.”

He covered her hand with his. “I got it in memory of a friend who died.”

“Oh. I probably shouldn’t think it sexy then.”

“You can think whatever you like.” He pressed her flat to the mattress, his weight settling over her in that primal, dominating, you’re-mine kind of way that she enjoyed so much. Hot breath washed over her throat moments before his teeth scraped up her neck. Her head fell backward on a moan, giving Jay more room to work. His mouth made it to her ear, where he nipped and suckled on the tender flesh. When she was panting and squirming and making it obvious that she was oh-so-ready for him to move south of the border, he stopped.

Gone.

No more wonderful touching. No more sucking, groping, rubbing, fondling or other naughty-ing words.

Her eyes shot open—she didn’t even remember closing them—as he pushed off the bed, away from her. “What?” she gasped.

“Strip,” he commanded.

Blaina narrowed her eyes and shot him a semi-angry glare. “You are a tease,” she chastised.

His lips quirked up at the corners. “Have I ever left you wanting?”

“Uh, yeah, like right now.”

“Then get your clothes off like I asked.”

“You didn’t ask. You demanded.”

“Now who’s causing the delay?”

“Fine,” Blaina harrumphed, finding it hard to keep from laughing. “But I’m only stripping because I really need you to fuck me, and not because you ordered me to do it.”

“Sure.” His fake cough didn’t mask his snort.

She slid off the bed. “I hope you weren’t expecting a show,” she said as she drew her shirt over her head, giving her hips a little shake and shimmy to tease him. Not that it did any good. The jerk wasn’t even watching her. He yanked the bedspread, pillows and blanket to the floor, leaving only the cool white sheets behind.

“Did you say something, babe?” Jay asked way-too-innocently as he inspected the slats on the decorative metal headboard. “You’re supposed to be getting naked.”

“Not that you’ve noticed or anything—” she kicked her shoes across the room and sloughed off her pants and undies, “—since you’ve suddenly become an interior decorator, but I am naked. Mostly.” She unsnapped her bra and added it to the pile on the floor.

Jay tossed a glance over his shoulder and nodded approvingly. “Oh, good, you’re finished.” He turned back to the headboard and yanked on the slats, dismissing her naked form without so much as a lustful grin, a lascivious wink or drool forming at the corners of his mouth.

“And...” She anchored her hands on her hips and tapped her foot impatiently.

“And what, babe?” He wandered around the bed, eyeing it from all angles.

She was the one he was supposed to be eyeing from all angles. Eyeing and screwing and tonguing and... “And I think I’m going to sunbathe on our balcony. I’m not letting all this clothing-free skin go to waste.”

“Don’t get sunburned. I’d hate for your pretty pink parts to get red and blistered.”

Blaina paused, fingers curled around the handle of the sliding glass door, ready to pull it open. “Oh. Good point. That might suck—” Her words were lost in a gasp as Jay lifted her up from behind and carried her to the bed, tossing her onto the center of the mattress. “About damn time,” she huffed between bounces as Jay settled over her.

“Some things are worth the wait.”

“Oh really?” She incredulously raised an eyebrow. “You’re setting yourself up to fail, boyo.” Like Jay could ever fail. All it took was one look from him and she got hot. One touch from him and she prepped for meltdown. And right now he was gripping both her wrists in one of his very large, very strong hands and lifting them above her head, pressing his full weight into her body. He was still wearing jeans but she’d make do. As soon as he freed her hands she’d unzip the zip and unsnap the snap, yank a bit of fabric out of the way and they’d be home free.

Something foreign tightened around her wrists, locking her hands together. She tugged but her arms stayed stretched above her head. “What the—” Tilting her head back she saw the results of Jay’s handiwork. Zip ties. The man had zip tied her to the headboard. One pinned her wrists together, a second tie was looped around a metal slat and a third one linked the two together, securely chaining her to the bed. So that’s why he’d been testing the headboard. Well, if he did

naughty, erotic things to her, she'd stay like this all day. As long as he fed her, fucked her and gave her multiple orgasms. And let her have potty breaks whenever she requested them.

Jay climbed off her—again—not even gracing her with a tongue swipe to her nipple or a finger massage on her clit. What was he planning on doing to her, leaving her alone to become sexually dehydrated? “Okay, stud. You got me where you want me. Let’s play now.” She arched and bucked on the bed, spreading her legs and curling her toes into the sheet, hoping to inspire a violent burst of lust in her lover.

It didn’t work.

Bastard.

Blaina would’ve thought he’d forgotten about her but for the wicked grin he tossed her way before turning his back and taking the bag of tricks to the table in the corner of the room. The bag rattled and clanked and clunked as he dug through it.

She tugged on her bindings again, realizing the futility of her movements. There was no way she was going anywhere until Jay cut her free.

What if he’d forgotten his knife? The fingernail scissors in her bag wouldn’t cut through the heavy-duty plastic. If they had to call the front desk for help, Jay was going to owe her a lot more than a thorough fucking.

With nothing else to do but wait for Jay to make his move, she allowed herself the joy of studying her lover. The man was seriously drool-worthy. His back was a beautiful expanse of golden brown, sun-kissed skin over chiseled muscle. Strong, broad shoulders tapered down to lean hips. And his butt—mmhmmm. Made you want to grab tight and hold on for the ride. Anyone looking for the definition of burnin’ masculinity didn’t need to look any further.

The furnace between her legs reached critical temperature levels. Too much more heat and the sheets beneath her would turn to ash. It was time to fight fire with fire, to tempt her man beyond reason so he’d come and douse her flames. Or ignite her further. Hell, she didn’t care as long as he put his hands, mouth and body all over her.

Blaina carefully rolled onto her stomach, thankful for the extra give in the zip-tie chaining her to the bed. Once on her belly, she inched her legs up until her weight rested on her

widespread knees with her hands clasped around the metal headboard to keep her upright—a fuck-me-now position that always got Jay’s attention.

She tossed a glance toward Jay, who was still facing away from her. “Jay, babe?”

“Hmm?”

Blaina frowned. His response, or lack thereof, left much to be desired. He hadn’t even glanced up from whatever he was doing.

She continued as though she wasn’t ready to launch herself at him and fuck him senseless. “Did you know that cops use zip-ties whenever they have more suspects to arrest than they have handcuffs?”

“Yup. Think I saw that on an episode of *COPS*.”

“Well, then—” she shook her hips enticingly, which was a waste of energy since he still wasn’t looking, “—why don’t you come over here and frisk me? I’ve already assumed the position.”

“Be there in a sec.”

“In a second? Jay, you’re killing me. I’m naked. I’m tied up. I’ve assumed the position. And you’re more fascinated with a plastic bag than with me. Do you have porn in there or something?”

“Not exactly.” Chuckling, he turned around to face her. In his hands he held what looked like a car rag, folded over lengthwise until it was about one and a half inches wide.

“Oh, what now,” Blaina said, “you going to tie my ankles together with that thing?”

“Hmm, not yet. This is for your eyes.”

And the last thing Blaina saw were his big baby blues and the flash of white from his cocky smile before the fuzzy yellow rag covered her eyes and was tied around her head.

“Okay, now I can’t see you, I can’t touch you and I can’t jump off the bed and stalk you around the room. Am I being punished for some unknown faux pas, or have I worn you out so much that the only way you can get any rest is by incapacitating me?”

“If I wanted to rest, I’d have to gag you, too.”

“You wouldn’t dare.”

“Oh, I would. But I’m not interested in resting.”

That was encouraging. “So what *are* you interested in doing?” She didn’t bother hiding her enthusiasm. Her body was lit up like the night sky over the Hollywood Bowl on the Fourth of July.

“This.” One of Jay’s strong, masculine hands swatted Blaina on the rump.

She squealed. Or maybe it was more of a squeak. Either way, her vocal cords couldn’t form any sounds resembling words—not that she had any idea what to actually *say* about what he’d just done.

Her mind and body reeled. Jay had spanked her. Jay had honest-to-God taken his hand and smacked her with it. Her butt even burned a little.

Regaining the language skills she must have swallowed during the attack on her posterior, Blaina sputtered, “Jay, I’m warning you. When I get free I’m going to—” Her words faltered as the heat from the smack spread lower, making her ache in a whole ‘nother way. She swallowed a moan and tried again. “I’m going to...I’m gonna...”

“You’re gonna what?” Jay inquired. Blaina heard the very large smile in his voice.

If it were any other man she’d rip the headboard from the bed and beat him with it. But God help her, Jay was the exception to every rule. “Fine,” she retorted. “You win this round. Now shut up and spank me.”

Jay stroked a hand over her newly sensitized flesh. “Sweetheart, I have a whole world of plans for your ass.” Three swats landed in rapid-fire succession, one on each cheek and one a bit lower, right above her aching center. “Spanking’s just one of them.”

“Promises, promises,” Blaina gasped out, trying to sound cocksure and unaffected. It didn’t work. A five-alarm fire was blazing down below and her fingers ached from squeezing the metal slat she was chained to.

And she’d never been more turned on in her life.

Without the ability to see Jay or to retreat from his erotic assault, Blaina was able to completely immerse herself in every carnal sensation. The sharp bite as each slap met its mark followed by smoldering heat that sank beneath her flesh and stimulated every sexual neuron in her body. She knew her ass had to be day-glow red by now and that she was generating enough heat to significantly increase global warming.

The smacks slowed and Jay rubbed over her skin with long, soothing, reverential caresses. “I love your ass, Blaina.”

“I’d hate to see what you’d do to it if you didn’t like it,” she challenged.

He smacked it again and a soft mewl of pleasure escaped her lips.

“Blaina, I have fantasized about your ass since the first time you bent over in front of me, there on the side of the road, half-in, half-out of my car. At that moment, all I could think about was getting my hands on every sexy inch of you.”

His index and middle fingers traced down the juncture between her cheeks, pressing hard enough to make her squirm. When he brushed over her anus, she moaned and widened her stance, hoping that the obvious signs of her arousal would compel him to take further action.

He shifted his wandering fingers lower, nearing her pussy, as he continued, “And even though, by now, I’ve gotten up close and personal with every part of you, I still can’t get enough. I want more of you. I want to be with you every minute of every day. Hell, I want to be inside you every minute of every day.” He rimmed the opening of her vagina, sliding easily through her juices.

Behind the soft yellow rag, Blaina saw stars. Soooo close. “I could work with that,” she huffed, tilting her hips in the hopes his fingers, arm, hell all of him would fall inside her and shoot her to the moon.

But no, his fingers only fluttered over her labia and no matter how hard she strained back toward him, he didn’t breach her cunt. “Please, Jay,” she cried.

“Soon,” he murmured. The bed dipped as he climbed off and retreated back to the corner of the room.

The damn bag that had so intrigued her earlier rustled again. A part of her wanted to throw the stupid thing off the balcony into the Pacific so it wouldn’t draw Jay’s attention away from her anymore. Patience had never been one of her strong suits, especially when she was horny. And right now she was standing on the highest peak of the Mount Kilimanjaro of sexual stimulation.

Of course, another part of her couldn’t help but wonder what else Jay had in his bag of goodies, and what exactly he planned on doing to her with those mystery items.

“Jay, I’ll do whatever you want me to do. Just please, please, *please* come over here and get me off.”

She swallowed a “hurrah” as Jay returned to the bed, dropping something onto the floor next to it. The begging and pleading had worked. She’d remember that.

The fingers that had tormented her earlier slipped through her hair, pushing it away from her face. He leaned in close, teasing her with his scent. “You’re already doing exactly what I want you to do,” he said gruffly. “Lying there, so goddamn beautiful. Taking everything I dish out. Letting me bask in your fire. Damn it, Blaina, you take my breath away.”

There was so much emotion in his words, so much need. Blaina’s heart lodged in her throat, yet somehow she managed to whisper, “Take my breath away, Jay.”

Both hands cradled her cheeks as he brought his mouth to hers. His tongue sought immediate entry, delving inside, melting her beneath his strong and demanding presence. He kissed her, deeper and deeper until she felt him in every corner of her body. Her heart beat in time with his and they breathed as one. And still he kissed her, his hands and mouth becoming her entire world.

That scared her, a man making her feel complete.

Abruptly, Jay pulled away and Blaina gasped for breath. She trembled, intimidated by the extreme, tender, ineffable feelings rioting through her system. Lust and sex and bondage and spanking were a lot easier to deal with than this rush of emotion smacking her heart around her body like an out-of-control pinball.

Light hit her eyes, making Blaina aware that the blindfold had slipped during their kiss. Tilting her head just so, she saw Jay standing next to the bed. Unaware that he was being watched, Jay studied her with a fervent longing. But at the same time he appeared fearful, apprehensive.

Just as scared as she was.

That made her feel a teensy bit better. At least they were driving down this crazy relationship road together.

As though he'd come to a monumental decision—and was okay with it—Jay's face lightened. His lips quirked up in a self-mocking smile and he shook his head. "Blaina, babe, you did it again."

"Did what?"

"You distracted me." He chuckled. "You are a constant distraction. Even when you're not around, I can't stop thinking about you." His hands moved to the waistband of his jeans and he released the snap, revealing the dark gold curls below his bellybutton.

God, she hoped she didn't distract him now. Blaina tried not to drool, not wanting to make it known that she could see a little bit.

Make that a big bit. A very big bit. Jay's jeans and briefs dropped to the floor with a muffled thud. Blaina's gaze stayed on his impressive cock. What was that saying? Locked and loaded? She had no idea what it meant, but it seemed extremely appropriate right now.

Jay knelt on the bed. His beautiful shaft drew closer and closer and Blaina opened her mouth, desperate to taste him.

But he stopped barely out of reach. Wondering what he was doing now, she shot her gaze upward toward his face and got caught.

"You're a bad girl, Blaina." He ticked his head back and forth. "The purpose of a blindfold is to be blind." His hands lowered to her face, adjusting the rag and reducing her vision to fuzzy yellow. He reached behind her and tightened the knot.

"Don't blame me," she pouted. "You should have tied it right the first time."

"Cheater," he smirked.

"Bad knot tier," she shot back. With him so close she took advantage of the situation, turning her head and biting his forearm hard enough to leave a mark. She hoped.

He only laughed and climbed off the bed. "I love it when you get feisty with me."

"Yeah, well, you bring out the best in me." She quietly savored the salty, tangy taste of him she'd gotten with the quick nip. More please...

Blaina jumped as Jay swatted her ass. But this time it wasn't his hand doing the swatting. Something rubbery, something... She paused as he ran the item over her flesh. It felt like

hundreds of thin rubbery strands tickled her. What the hell was that thing? “Is that a bunch of wet noodles?”

“Wet noodles?” He snorted. “You hungry again, Blaina?”

“Not for food,” she growled. “Is it wires of some kind?”

“I didn’t realize we were playing twenty questions.” He slapped low on her ass. The very tips of the strands landed right on her needy spot.

“Oh God, Jay,” she moaned as reckless nirvana popped and fizzled through her cunt. When the pleasure zaps dissipated to the point where she could contemplate thinking again, she replied, “I have a right to know what you’re sexually harassing me with.”

“Then keep guessing. I’ll even be nice and give you a freebie. It’s smaller than a bread box.”

“Well, there goes my theory that you were driving a Mustang over my ass.”

“Smart ass.” Jay whapped her harder, the rubbery strands making a soft *thwap* sound as they hit home. Tiny stings zapped across her skin before arrowing straight to her achy core.

“So did you get it at the show?”

“Yes.” He dipped the mystery item lower, teasing the outskirts of her pussy with the pliable fiber. “C’mon, babe, you can figure it out.”

Blaina’s eyes rolled back in her head. How was she supposed to keep guessing when he was making her feel abso-posi-lutely divine?

As though it were a paintbrush with super long, rubbery bristles, he doodled a picture on the back of her thighs. “What kind of a car chick are you? I could find a sexual use for just about everything at that whole damn show.” Sweeping upward, he grazed her labia, the tickle turning hot as he slapped the odd whip against her ass. “I’m still waiting...”

So am I. But she managed to garble out another guess. “It feels too gooooooooood to be rope.”

“Some assembly required, my dear.” He lightly danced it along her back, making her muscles tighten as she tried to retreat from the ticklish torment. Then he laid the strands flat, and using his fingertips massaged the rubbery bristles into her skin. “If you don’t start guessing, I’m gonna have to start punishing.”

She wasn't sure if punishment would be better or worse—everything felt so tingly, tickly, tantalizingly terrific already. As he pushed, the strands stretched and retracted, gently scraping against her skin. Inside, she felt as taut as an over-tensioned power-steering belt, ready to fray from all the incredible friction.

Fray. “That’s a frayed bungee cord, isn’t it?” Just like the one she’d used to hold down her trunk lid back when her car was fresh from the junkyard.

“That’s my girl. I knew you’d figure it out. Guess that means you deserve a reward.” His hands latched onto her thighs, holding her steady. Then warm wet pleasure had her careening toward paradise as Jay French kissed her pussy. “Mmmm, you taste sweet as sin, Blaina,” he murmured between licks. “Potent and addictive.”

Climbing, climbing, climbing toward orgasm, Blaina trembled in Jay’s embrace. A few more strokes, a few more kisses...

“No,” she cried out as Jay’s mouth and tongue retreated, and the surging need inside her quieted to a slow simmer. But her temper went straight to boil. “Dammit, Jay. You are cruel. Cruel and mean and—”

“Shhhh,” Jay hushed. “I’m not done with you yet, sweetheart. You were so good at guessing before, I want you to do it again.”

Before she could respond with a “bite me” or “screw off”, something hard and thick pressed against her swollen folds. Hmmm, this could be a mutually satisfying guess-fest. Hopefully.

“So what do you think?” Jay asked as he rotated the object. Hard plastic, covered in what felt like hundreds of tiny grooves, slowly breached her vagina. Her juices combined with Jay’s eased its passage, stretching her open. “Any guesses?”

This time, Blaina cried out blissfully as Jay began rocking the item in and out of her. “If I tell you what it is,” she hurried, “will you promise not to stop until I come?”

“I won’t stop until you come at least twice.”

“A flashlight. Hopefully waterproof.”

“Very good. How’d you know?”

“I keep one in my car,” she replied huskily, pleasure pulsing through her as he moved the flashlight a little faster, “for, ummm, emergencies. Just not all my emergencies are car related.”

Jay paused in mid-thrust. “You fucked a flashlight before?”

She pushed back, forcing the light deeper inside her. “It was handy. I was horny.”

“Shit, babe. Do you have any idea how hard my dick just got?”

“What? You mean you weren’t hard before?” she teased, and was rewarded with a long, slow, deep thrust of the flashlight and a slap to her ass. After she moaned, gasped, panted and made a few other sounds of sexual wonder, she said, “You know, if you’re so horny, you could, I don’t know, have sex with me. Using your poor, neglected cock.”

He dropped the flashlight. Blaina heard it fall to the floor with a loud thunk. Then Jay rammed his dick inside her. “Like this?” he said gruffly.

“Yes!” Her body swallowed him eagerly, so tightly wound that within two thrusts she was shivering with the force of her impending orgasm.

“And this?” he said, reaching underneath her and rubbing two fingers over her swollen clit.

“Yes!” The air shot out of Blaina’s lungs in a pleased scream and she hit the ceiling. Or she would have if she hadn’t been fastened to the bed. The storm that had been building and building inside of her exploded in thundering waves of ecstasy, until she didn’t know up from down. Behind her shuttered eyes, the world exploded in beautiful colors, pinks and purples, reds and teals. It was like being in the center of a stunning meteor shower.

Lifetimes later, Blaina’s heart returned to her chest and she remembered to breathe again. The rest of her quaked in the aftermath of her off-the-Richter-scale climax.

Sometime during her orgasm she’d collapsed to the bed. Jay was rubbing something cool and creamy over her recently abused ass. Would she ever sit down again without remembering—in an incredibly happy way—what he’d done to her? The cream soothed and relaxed the still tender flesh, while his touch stimulated and made her ache for more. More spanking, more touching...more Jay.

She smiled then cursed as she yawned, which made Jay chuckle. “Did I wear you out?” he asked, sounding way too smug and proud of himself.

“Of course not,” Blaina denied, swallowing another yawn. She’d never had an orgasm knock her unconscious before. But being the glutton for punishment that she was, she countered, “I thought you weren’t going to stop until I came twice.”

“I haven’t stopped.” A finger, covered in the cool ointment, slicked over her anus and carefully delved inside. “I’m going to fuck your ass, Blaina. Is that okay with you?”

“As long as that’s not car wax or motor oil you’re using to, um, grease my gears. I’m a car chick, but I do have my limits.”

Jay’s laughter bounced off the walls. “Just plain ol’ ordinary hand lotion. And it’s good to know that you have *some* limits.”

“Very few.”

“I like that even better.”

He worked his finger inside her anus until he easily slid in and out then added a second finger and stretched her even more. By then, all remnants of exhaustion had disappeared and Blaina’s engine was revved to go.

She heard the sound of lotion being squeezed from a bottle and knew Jay was coating his cock in the cream. “I wish I could do that for you.”

“Babe, I wouldn’t last if you touched me now.”

“You do realize I’m going to torture you later.”

“I’m looking forward to it.”

The velvet head of Jay’s cock pressed to her puckered hole, and with a smooth thrust of his hips he cautiously advanced, using careful, digging movements. Her body accepted him like it always did, recognizing its master, accepting the pleasure that this man knew how to offer in spades.

Strong fingers, still greasy with the lotion, locked on her hips. Jay let out a long, low groan. “Christ, Blaina. It feels too fucking good. This just might kill me.”

She pushed back, meeting his thrust and they both groaned. “I can think of worse ways to die. So fuck me. Hard. And we’ll go out together.”

With a growl, he plunged inside her like a madman, snaking one hand beneath her and fucking her pussy with his fingers. She clung to the headboard and shoved back against Jay with everything she had. Their bodies were coated with sweat and grease and sex and all of it felt so good, so right.

Jay shattered first, grunting her name as his come jetted deep into her ass. The rhythmic pulsing ricocheted through her, setting off frissons of energy that encompassed her body and soul with blissful fulfillment.

Tired and replete, she barely noticed when her wrists were freed from their bindings and the rag removed from her eyes. Jay wrapped himself around her like a fierce and loving protector as Blaina lost herself in dreams of cars and stunts and Jay, always at her side.



“So what did I do to deserve this?” Blaina whispered, her voice hushed in respect to the quiet opulence surrounding them.

Jay looked at Blaina, the soft flicker of candlelight caressing her face, making her wide coffee eyes shine with an amber glow. She stared awestruck out the floor-to-ceiling window overlooking the dark Pacific Ocean. Her full pink lips were slightly parted, bringing to mind just how good it felt to slide between that soft seam of moist flesh and into the warm, wet heaven beyond.

He shifted in his chair, his dick throbbing against the zipper of his gray suit, his chest growing tight. She did this to him. Whenever they were together, it was all he could do not to touch her, to stroke the curves he already thought of as his. It had only been a couple hours since he’d tied her to the bed and thoroughly had his way with her, but still, his yearning didn’t surprise him. Since he’d met her, the craving hadn’t lessened. He needed her more every day.

You put up with me, Jay mentally replied to her question. You let me keep you as my little secret. You’re beautiful. Amazing. More than I ever imagined I’d find. Because you deserve so much more than I’ve given you so far.

But the coward in him replied with a shrug, “I haven’t taken you to a really nice restaurant before.”

“Restaurant?” Blaina laughed. “I’m pretty sure Dante’s is considered a ‘fine-dining establishment’.” She said the last with a snooty, imperialistic tone. “They don’t serve dinner here, they serve *supper*,” she purred.

He chuckled. “Is milady content with these surroundings or should we adjourn to a more *humble* location? I believe I saw a hotdog stand on the beach.”

“We’ll go there for dessert. Besides, you’re dressed up all fancy in that suit of yours. I’m enjoying pretending you’re a gentleman.” She winked.

If he really was a gentleman, he wouldn’t have been stringing her along for so long. He would have told her the truth about his past, and why he couldn’t commit to her beyond what they shared now. But if he spoke those words, she’d walk away. He knew that, just as he knew that losing her would cause him more grief than all he’d kept locked inside for the last twelve years.

The scar on his chest ached, subtly reminding him of those past mistakes. Fuck being a gentleman. He’d be the selfish asshole if it gave him the means to spend a few more days with Blaina. Maybe in that time he’d be able to convince her to keep their relationship a secret, because there was no way in hell he’d willingly let her go.

Jay tucked his hand in his suit pocket and fingered the present he’d purchased for her at the car show. All the other toys had been a part of the fantasy afternoon, but the slim silver chain with its suspended charm was the real gift—something that would last beyond this weekend, something he hoped would show her the depth of his feelings. He’d planned on giving it to her earlier, during their bedroom romp, but things had spun out of control—he’d gotten lost in the fantasy and Blaina’s responses to everything he did. By the time he’d remembered the chain, she had been fast asleep, her body soft and warm spooned against him.

“So, any idea what the *carte blanche* is?” Blaina asked. “Or is it such a big secret that even the chef doesn’t know until he prepares it?”

“Oh, but even then, we still might not know what it is.” Although it had been awhile since his last fancy dinner, he’d never forget the delicious main course that turned out to be marinated cow tongue. “And whatever you do, don’t ask.”

“Don’t ask?”

“If you don’t recognize it, just shove it in your mouth and enjoy. It could be peppered tri-tip or octopus brain.”

“Oh God. Ewww. Good point. Let’s hope for the tri-tip.” Blaina pressed her stemmed water glass to her lips, then the moment she set it down, a waiter refilled it from a full-sized glass bottle and replaced it in the ice bucket. She thanked the waiter, but he had already moved on to the next table where he refilled a man’s wine.

She grinned. “I’m almost liking the hotdog stand idea after all. I didn’t know that ordering spring water would mean these guys would give me a refill after every sip.”

Before Jay could formulate a retort, a man carrying a rather large basket of assorted bread appeared next to Blaina. “Would you care for some bread? We have cheese twists, olive loaf, rosemary garlic slices, sourdough mini baguettes and whole grain rolls.” He pointed out each flavorful piece as he spoke.

“Well, now we’re talking.” Blaina grinned and chose an array for the man to present on her bread plate.

“You, sir?” he asked Jay.

Why was choosing bread such a difficult decision all of a sudden? Jay considered all his options before taking the easy way out. “I’ll have what my lady’s having.” Wow, it felt good to say that. *My lady*. He rolled the words around in his brain. Maybe someday, he wouldn’t be asking for bread when he said those words in reference to Blaina.

As soon as the bread master left their table, Blaina let out a muffled snort.

“What?” he asked.

“Me a lady? You a gentleman? We’re like two kids playing dress up. I keep thinking we’re going to be escorted out of here for using the wrong fork or for not folding the napkin over our lap properly.”

“The napkin’s supposed to go in our lap?” he replied in a mock horrified tone. “Damn, I was just about to tuck mine up like a bib.”

Her eyes lit up and she exploded with laughter. A few heads turned their way, wondering what the commotion was about. She hastily slapped a hand over her mouth to squelch the sound.

He smiled, her sparkling laughter temporarily pushing away his uneasiness. Tonight, she’d practically pulled off the impossible. A white peasant blouse and weird multicolored scrappy skirt would look too casual on anyone but Blaina. Something about her added so much flair,

elegance, that she could probably waltz into this place wearing the proverbial potato sack and trick everyone into believing it was a floor-length formal gown.

Dammit, why did she have to be a coworker? If they didn't work together they'd be free to publicly announce their relationship. Shout it to the whole goddamn world. But now Lukas considered them a stunt team, and if they were going to be working together indefinitely, Jay couldn't allow their private life to become public. He'd witnessed the destruction caused by public spectacle and shoveled dirt on the grave of a life cut too short.

He'd briefly considered asking her to give up stunt work, but just as quickly dismissed the idea. She loved her job. Even if she hadn't made that clear to him, anyone with a working set of eyes could see it. Asking her to choose him over her job would make him a bigger asshole than he already was.

A waiter pushed a cart to their table, and with majestic flamboyance, lit the food inside a small casserole dish, then settled the still burning entrée in front of Jay. The fiery soufflé petered out before singeing Jay's eyebrows. On Blaina's plate, a thick hunk of meat about as large in diameter as a silver dollar rested in a bed of some kind of potato product. Jay had no idea what was in his soufflé, nor what vegetables were artfully arranged around it on a plate the size of Cincinnati. The waiter disappeared with only slightly less pomp and flourish than his arrival.

"Looks like your carburetor backfired." Blaina stifled a snort. "Oh, baby, you're so damn hot. Fiery!"

He stared intently at her—those laughing coffee eyes, her alluring smile—and opened his heart completely. "You're more than enough fire for me, Blaina. And I just don't need—or want—anything else but you."

Blaina blinked. Gaped at him and blinked and didn't say a damn word. Jay's heart flopped somewhere around his toes. Had he said too much? Too little?

His fiery little temptress jumped to her feet, her chair teetering on two legs before righting itself. Jay scooted his chair back from the table, ready to chase after her and apologize for whatever stupid thing he'd said or done this time. But he didn't have to. Blaina stalked toward him, sat on his lap, wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him.

He growled, the sound coming from deep in his throat. Parting her lips with his tongue, he savored the taste of Blaina. His hands roamed her back, needing to touch her everywhere, claim her so that no one else dared even look at her. Screw dinner. Screw the snooty people watching them in pretend outrage. Screw everything else that got in the way of being with her. His dick throbbed against her perfect ass, his heart pounded like a jackhammer where her breasts were smashed to his chest. His woman. His perfect, beautiful, fiesty Blaina.

With a soft sigh, Blaina pulled her mouth from his. Her lips were puffy and red and he wanted to take them back in his mouth, to nibble on her, suck on her, listen to her moan and pant beneath him. Those damn tempting lips quirked up as she said, “You are the hottest hunk a meat in this joint.”

He grinned—an expression he did a lot more often since Blaina had entered his life. She started to shuffle off his lap but he grabbed her tighter, not letting her go.

One eyebrow shot up questioningly. “Are you going to feed me or—” she nestled her ass against his burgeoning erection, “—did you have something else in mind?”

He barely suppressed a groan, and leaned in and whispered in her ear. “If I fucked you every time I got a hard-on because of you, we’d never get dressed.”

“And that’s a problem why?”

“Troublemaker,” he rasped, biting her earlobe. As she shivered, he reached into his pocket and pulled out the chain. Before she could question him, he strung it around her waist and fastened it at the base of her spine.

“What are you doing?” She twisted around, trying to see where his fingers brushed her back.

“Giving you this.” He lightly tugged on the tiny silver key charm dangling from the end of a secondary chain attached to the one he’d wrapped around her waist.

Blaina’s eyes widened. “It’s beautiful.” She jumped off his lap and spun around, modeling the belly chain. The chain rested low on her hips and the key fell at a prime location, several inches below her bellybutton. She leaned over and kissed him, breathing the words into his mouth, “Makes me feel sexy. Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.” There was so much more he wanted to say, but the words stayed locked inside.

To his utmost regret, Blaina returned to her side of the table and dug into her food with the same energy and spirit she did everything. They shared bites from each other's plates and laughed and joked at the spectacle they were making.

And Jay fell even more in love with Blaina. Because that's what it was. He knew that now. He'd fallen completely under Blaina's spell. Listening to her laugh, watching her eyes light up mischievously, even the way she ate her dinner turned him on. He chewed his food, swallowed it, and could even admit he enjoyed it a little, but nothing compared to the joy he got just from being with Blaina.

As they finished their dinner, the waiter returned with another cart, this one covered in desserts. Every color of the rainbow was represented in various fruits and confections, but other than the dark chocolate cake, Jay couldn't figure out what anything actually was. With practiced flair, the waiter started to run down the list of names, but Blaina interrupted.

"I want the purple one. Whatever that purple stuff is with all those other toys." She pointed toward a plate of questionable small balls made from different substances. Once again, the only thing Jay recognized was a chocolate truffle. The other little balls could have been garnish for all he knew.

"Excellent choice." The waiter nodded. "And for you, sir?"

"Nothing for me, thanks."

The waiter nodded once and rolled the cart away.

Blaina leaned forward and whispered, "What the hell do you think that stuff is? I mean it looked like ice cream, but it was light purple. That's just downright weird, don't you think?"

Jay shook his head. "At this point, nothing's weird to me, babe."

She leaned over the empty table and gave him a small, conspiratorial smile. "You do realize you just challenged me to find or do something weird or crazy to prove you wrong."

"Bring it on, babe. I'd like to see you try."

She sat back in the chair, her eyes glistening impishly. Keeping their gazes locked, she lifted her water glass, circling her tongue around the rim before taking a deep drink.

He raised an eyebrow. "Is that all you can come up with?"

"Oh no, Jay. I haven't even started yet. I'm just...testing the waters."

“Test away, sweet thing.” Pretending to relax, he sat back in his chair and kicked his legs out in front of him. He watched her, studying the way she tilted her head, the way she subtly shifted her body, the way her eyes lit up whenever she smiled.

Losing her would destroy him. That was pretty damn clear now. He didn’t know how he was going to make it work, but he was on a mission to try. Whatever it took. Whatever he had to say, whatever he had to do, to make her understand his reasons. Because having her walk out of his life would destroy him, but at least she’d be walking...and alive. He’d suffered the alternative, and if Blaina were to die, it would kill him.

The waiter arrived with what looked more like a plate of assorted gumballs than a real dessert and placed it in front of Blaina. She smiled up at the waiter, but he was gone before her “thank you” came out of her mouth.

On an average-sized plate for a change, there were three small sugar-topped butter cookies with a leaf of...mint maybe...next to them. On the other half of the plate were three brown—had to be chocolate—balls drizzled with various colors. Or more accurately, they were part of the drizzle-art. The dessert centerpiece was this...this...crystal-drizzly-bowl-shaped thing where the creamy purple ball sat.

“Jay?” Blaina waved a hand in front of his face. “Hello? You want some? It’s just dessert. It’s not gonna kill ya.”

He found himself mesmerized by the purple thing. It didn’t look like ice cream. Or at least not like any ice cream he’d ever seen before. “What the hell is that?”

“I don’t know. I was about to find out, but you looked like you were traumatized by it.” Blaina dug her spoon into the little ball, then placed the creamy stuff in her mouth. “Mmmm... Ohhhh...” Her eyes lit up and he wished he’d been the source of her pleasure.

“That good, huh?”

“Try it.” She dove her spoon into the ball and proceeded to feed it to him. “Lavender ice cream. Isn’t it to die for?”

It was good, but nowhere near as entrancing as Blaina. He nodded, relishing her little squeals of delight as she swallowed each spoonful. Damn, he was hard as fucking steel and still

wanted more—wanted every ounce of Blaina, every noise she made to be because of him, every aroused look to be because he put it on her face.

“Mmmhmmm...” She finished off the last speck of ice cream, leaving only the weird bowl behind. “I’ve got to know what this is.” She smacked the crystal-like bowl with her spoon. An edge of it broke and she put it in her mouth. “It’s sugar.” She chuckled, then picked up the whole bowl and chomped off another section of it. “Yeah. Hardened sugar.”

People at other tables were mortified, but not Jay. Oh no. He was proud of his adventurous little vixen. The only thing he wished was that she was savoring him, rather than all that lacy sugar.

She picked up the last remaining truffle dripping with red sauce. “Here, have some chocolate. Some people say it’s an aphrodisiac.”

“Babe, maybe I haven’t made it obvious enough, but to me, *you* are an aphrodisiac.” He leaned forward, more interested in getting a taste of her fingers than whatever sugary sweetness she was about to deliver.

With a wicked grin, she popped the chocolate into his mouth, pulling her hand back before he could indulge in what he really wanted. “Oh no, you’ve made it plenty obvious. I’m just wondering exactly how much temptation you can take.”

He chewed and swallowed the truffle before saying, “You’re into testing me today, aren’t you?”

“After what you did to me earlier, turnabout is fair play.” Her tongue teased over her front teeth. She stood, taking her small purse with her. The key he’d given her shone like a beacon, sliding back and forth above the apex of her thighs as she moved. Jay couldn’t take his eyes off it. “I’m going to the little girl’s room to get freshened up.”

She walked away, hips gliding intoxicatingly from side to side, a fascinating mix of fairy-tale princess and naughty wanton...everything he wanted in one enticing package. His arousal thrummed heavy and hot through his veins.

Jay paid for the meal, finishing up as Blaina returned.

“Ready to go?” she asked.

His eyes were drawn to the chain around her waist. The links rested on her belly, but the key had disappeared, its strand now tucked out of sight. Jay's gaze dropped to where the key was bouncing...beneath her skirt...right up against her clit. Christ, how the hell was he supposed to drive knowing that the key was right where he wanted to be?

Without a word he stood, put his free hand on the small of her back and ushered her out the door.

"Someone getting impatient?" She looked pointedly at the erection tenting his pants, largely apparent beneath the bottom of his suit jacket.

He jostled the chain at her waist, pleased when she let out a small squirm. "I'm not the only one."

They waited at the curb for the valet to bring his Barracuda. As the car appeared around the corner, something fell out of Blaina's purse and onto Jay's feet. In a much-too-innocent voice she said, "Whoops. Can you get that for me, Jay?"

He retrieved the small piece of fabric, letting out a muted groan as he realized it was the blue thong he'd seen her put on earlier as they were getting dressed for dinner.

She smiled knowingly at him as the valet held open the passenger door and she slid inside. Jay shoved the girly panties into his pocket and threw money at the valet before jumping into the car and driving away.

"You had a hard time being good during dinner, didn't you?" Jay said, seriously considering running every red light so he could get back to their hotel room faster.

"Who? Me?" Blaina laughed. "I can't help it. I love turning you on. Knowing that as soon as we're alone, you're going to make me pay in all sorts of wicked ways."

At a stoplight he turned and gave Blaina an intimidating stare. "Why should I wait until we're alone? Lift up your skirt, babe. Now. I want to see your pretty pussy."

She smiled at him slyly. "Guess we know now how much temptation you can take."

"You're stalling. Lift up your fucking skirt."

She shivered. "I love it when you get all demanding." Reaching down, she grasped the edge of her skirt and ever-so-slowly slid the stretchy velvet up her thighs.

A car honked behind him and he let out a muttered curse, realizing that the light had turned green while he'd been staring at his woman. "Stop, babe. Don't move. I want to watch as you uncover every inch." Hitting the gas, he accelerated through the intersection, then pulled to the side of the road directly under a streetlamp. Blaina was illuminated by the soft yellow glow, her hands fisted in the fabric bunched at mid-thigh.

"Okay, Blaina. Now you can continue."

Her eyes widened. "Here? Now?" Even though it was after nine, the streets were still busy, cars passing by them in a steady stream, joggers making their nightly run.

"Since when have you been shy?" Jay let his gaze wander her curves, landing in her lap. "Lift up your skirt and show me, and anyone else who happens to look, how wet you are. How swollen your beautiful pussy is."

Bit by bit, she eased her piecemeal skirt upward until her hands came to a stop on her hips. Several strips of velvet still obscured her thighs from full view. One of the delicate scraps rested right down her center. "Guess I'm even more of a tease than I set out to be. What are you gonna do about it, Jay? Hmm?"

He stared at the slip of fabric shielding her cunt. It was like an arrow, pointing him toward paradise. Several strands of dark pubic hair curled over the fabric, teasing him, making his mouth water, fingers itch to rip the offending material away and bury themselves inside of her.

But Blaina wanted him to lose control. So he wouldn't. Not yet.

Meeting her taunting eyes, he pierced her with a no-nonsense stare. "I'm not going to do a damn thing. You're going to lift the skirt like I told you."

Her breathing hastened, lightly fogging the windows, but this time she followed his demand. Slim fingers inched down her legs, leisurely removing each individual strip of fabric, leaving the most important one for last. She slid a hand down the soft material, letting out a moan as she cupped her mound, rubbing the velvet, and the key hidden behind it, between her folds. Her eyes fluttered shut as her hips arched upward against her cloth-covered hand.

"Blaina..." Jay warned. His hands curled into tight fists. "I can't see it..."

She opened her eyes. Her lids were heavy, eyes glassy with arousal. She met his gaze and her breath hitched before she spoke. "I want you to fuck me, Jay. Now. I'm so hot it feels like

my pussy's boiling. See?" She peeled the now wet velvet away from her sopping pussy and it was Jay's turn for his breath to hitch.

Her cunt was laid open for him, the folds swollen and dark red with her need. Her proud little clit protruded from her brown curls, begging for his attention. And the key sparkled like a jewel, glistening with her juices, imploring him to unlock his primitive desires and capture his prize.

His control quickly waned. Blaina was his to claim. His to take. His to do with as he pleased. To lose himself in. For now. For always.

He took several deep breaths, trying to hold back the demanding primal urges. *Mate. Fuck. Mine.*

The animal in him won.

"Mine..." he growled as he lunged over the console, scooping one hand behind her neck and pulling her to him before clamping his mouth over hers. She was so soft and pliant beneath him, relinquishing her mouth willingly to his demanding tongue. He thrust into her warm opening, tasting chocolate, lavender and sweet Blaina. Her tongue curled around his and she made quiet little panting noises deep in her throat, urging him on.

Deeper he kissed her, pushing her back against the seat. He braced a hand on the passenger door, landing his weight against it for easier access to her. His knee, wedged against the console, would probably never forgive him, but he didn't care. He needed Blaina and a little bit of pain wasn't going to stop him from having her.

His free hand darted between her thighs, sliding through the thick moisture coating her outer folds. She groaned into his mouth, arching her hips into his touch, trying to force him inside. Somehow he kept himself from instantly penetrating her, palming her instead, coating his fingers with her slick dew, gently manipulating her swollen flesh, soaking in her heat, her desire.

He burned for her, ached so bad he knew he'd come the moment he sank his dick inside of her. Even then he'd stay hard for her. He'd come over and over and over again, filling her with his sperm. Marking her like a raging animal in heat.

She moved against his hand, her body crying out to be filled. The tangy scent of her arousal filled the car. He pulled away from her mouth, needing to see his woman aching for him, her

body flushed and hot and open. He kept his hand buried between her legs, rubbing the outer lips of her pulsing cunt.

Blaina's eyes were dark, hooded, her lips swollen from his rough kiss. He glanced down, nearly coming at the sight of his hand covered in her cream.

Unable to hold back any longer, he pushed two fingers inside her pussy, watching in awe as she easily swallowed him.

"Jay, please," she cried out, bucking off the seat and taking his fingers even deeper. Her sheath rippled, clamping down, trying to keep him from retreating.

"Fuck, babe," he grunted, lost in Blaina. "You're so beautiful like this. God, I love you."

It took him a moment to realize what he'd let slip. Shit.

"Jay!" She climaxed hard, her pussy flooding his fingers as she grabbed his neck, pulling his mouth down to hers so fast he almost lost his balance.

He struggled to remain upright, his arm burning from holding his weight, his heart burning from what he'd said. This wasn't the time or place to admit the depth of his feelings for her. Dammit. Why did he always jump the gun when it came to Blaina? There was no way in hell she'd believe him now. He was a fucking animal, not a man.

But the animal in him refused to be ashamed. Blaina was his. She needed to be aware of his intent.

Her pussy still shuddered around him. He gentled his strokes, keeping her arousal thrumming, wanting her to stay lost in the pleasure. Build her up higher and higher, take her to heights she'd never reached before. Make her come so many times her body would instinctually recognize its master.

And maybe eventually her heart would recognize him as well.

A flashing red light pulled him out of his ruminations. He lifted his mouth from Blaina's to see a cop car coming to a stop behind them. A bright white spotlight came on, illuminating their vehicle.

Fuck.

Blaina tossed a glance over her shoulder and laughed huskily. “Looks like we got company.” A moan ripped from her throat as he swiped his thumb over her clit. “Which unfortunately means you should probably find another resting place for your hand,” she panted.

“No.”

“No?” Her eyes widened.

“Not yet.” Jay looked toward the police car, narrowing his eyes to avoid being blinded by the floodlight. The cop hadn’t exited the vehicle yet. They had a few moments. “Come for me first. Again.”

“W-what?” she stammered, mouth dropping open.

“I’ll remove my hand when you come for me again. Not before.”

“You want me to perform under pressure?” But her pussy was already straining toward climax, her juices flooding his hand. His little vixen was enjoying the thrill of possibly getting caught.

Using the key, hot and wet from her climax, he circled her clit. She gasped and moaned, hips grinding against his palm.

Sparing a glance toward the cop car, he saw the door swing open and a uniformed male step out with flashlight in hand.

“Babe,” he rumbled, “five more seconds and I won’t be the only one witnessing your climax. Come for me. Now.”

“Oh fuck, Jay.” She shuddered, dropping her head back. Tremors raced through her and her legs slammed shut, trapping his hand against her weeping pussy.

“Good girl,” Jay said, stealing a second to kiss her swollen mouth. His breath was just as ragged as hers, his heart beating painfully fast. And his cock was so enlarged he wouldn’t be surprised if the cop suspected him of hiding a deadly weapon down there. God he loved his woman. Needed her more than his next breath.

As much as he hated to, he pried his fingers from her still shuddering cunt, lowered her skirt and maneuvered back into his seat just as the cop rapped on the glass of the driver’s side door. Jay cranked the window down and, trying to obscure Blaina from the cop’s view, turned outward

and dug for his wallet. Since she liked walking the voyeuristic line, he'd play the game, but when it came down to it, no one should see her sated and glowing except him.

"So—" the cop swept the interior of the car with the flashlight, making Jay squint again, "— I see you're having a little party here on the side of the road."

Jay didn't quite know what to say, so he nodded instead. He was about to hand over his license, but the cop didn't appear to be interested.

"I was going to ask if your parents knew about your little...get together, but I can see you're a few years out of your teens." The cop grinned. "Do you know that you're in a No Parking zone?"

"I'm sorry. I hadn't noticed." Jay put on his best humble-pie act.

"Right. You had a more pressing matter to attend to, didn't you? More like an emergency, huh?" The cop raised an eyebrow like he wanted Jay to play along.

"Yeah, actually it was quite an emergency." Jay left out that there'd been more than one. This wasn't the time to brag.

"Everything okay, then?"

Blaina leaned over, placing her hand high on Jay's thigh. "Oh hell yes, Officer. And we promise to have our emergencies elsewhere from now on."

Jay couldn't help the watermelon grin that overtook his face. That was his girl, not ashamed of a damn thing she did.

"Hmmm..." The cop noticed Jay's grin and Blaina's hand clamped possessively around his upper thigh. He chuckled. "In that case, you two have a good night." He rapped his hand on the roof of the car and stalked back to his vehicle.

"And I didn't even have to flash him," Blaina kidded, looking over her shoulder as the cop climbed into his car. Her attention shifted back to the front seat and she smiled at Jay, sliding her hand up to cup his erection. "How fast can you get back to the hotel? I've got an emergency I want to take care of."

Chapter Ten

Blaina listened to the waves crashing against the sand below the hotel.

Jay had told her he loved her.

If he'd grown a second penis she wouldn't have been more surprised. Men didn't say they loved her. They told her they liked her, told her she was great in bed, told her she was "sweet", "crazy", "naughty", "hot", and a million other adjectives. But love had never entered the equation. Did Jay plus Blaina really equal love to him? To her?

Four hours had passed since he'd said the words. Four hours of her brain repeating them over and over and over again, trying to make sense of them like they were some kind of puzzle. It was the middle of the night, she should be sleeping. But no, those three little words were playing havoc with her mind and heart, interrupting her ability to achieve even the smallest amount of relaxation.

Jay slept soundly next to her, one arm circling her torso, cradling her against his warm body, not affected by her dilemma in the slightest. She wanted to smack him, ask him what he meant by his declaration. Except then they'd have to talk about it. And Blaina hadn't figured out what to say.

Careful to avoid waking the man who'd turned her world upside down...again, she slid out from beneath his arm. Her feet landed with muffled thumps on the plush carpeting. The belly chain Jay had given her at dinner fell to her hips and the key greeted her mound with a cool caress. When he'd given it to her, she'd thought it was just another sexual toy. Now she wasn't so sure. Hell, she wasn't sure about anything anymore.

Cloaked in darkness, she swept one foot back and forth in front of her, feeling for any of the clothing they'd ripped from each other's bodies when they'd returned to the hotel room.

Jay's shirt was closest to the bed. Blaina slipped it over her shoulders and rolled up the cuffs a couple inches to free her hands before buttoning it enough to be considered decent. The shirt fell to mid-thigh. It covered enough.

She opened the sliding glass door and stepped outside, quietly closing the door behind her. Walking to the edge of the balcony, she leaned against the cold metal railing, letting the cool salty air wash over her, filling her lungs, clearing her mind. The roar of the ocean blocked out all other sound as she stared out into the deep, dark expanse.

I love you.

Did he really mean it or was it just a figure of speech?

I love you.

Did it matter in the grand scheme of things? As long as he satisfied her, didn't screw her over and treated her like an equal, love wasn't really necessary, was it? It's not like she'd ever needed it for anything before now. But she'd never had it offered to her either.

I love you.

If this didn't stop haunting her soon, she was going to be in agonizing misery the rest of their weekend together. Forget sleeping. Forget relaxing on the beach. Forget mind-blowing sex.

Maybe not. Mind-blowing sex might help her forget that she had no idea what the hell to do with Jay and those three friggin' words.

I love you.

If only it wasn't the middle of the night. She'd never needed Sam's advice more. Although Blaina already knew what her best, romantic-minded friend would say. Since finding Connor, Sam was a firm believer in love and happily-ever-afters.

But Blaina'd worked in Hollywood long enough to know that happily-ever-afters were rarer than tickets to the Oscars.

I love you.

Uttering a long, dramatic sigh, she leaned her forehead against the railing and closed her eyes. The chill ocean breeze ruffled her hair and gave her goose bumps, but it didn't blow the words out of her head. It didn't stop her heart from fluttering every time she remembered the sound of his voice when he'd said those words.

If she were to jump into love's abyss of unknown horrors and delights, would Jay catch her or simply let her fall? Great. A goddamn broken-hearted splat at the bottom of a pit of love's rejects. She'd rather die alone.

Although Jay had shown her he was pretty good at catching her when she fell.

Dammit. Why couldn't a freaking billboard fly overhead and light up with a message telling her what to do? It'd be a hell of a lot easier than all this torturous deliberating.

The door slid open behind her, and she lifted her head, peering over her shoulder as the cause of her most recent misery joined her on the balcony.

He was naked.

Erect.

Beautiful.

Her stomach fluttered, like it always did when they were together.

I love you.

Jay crossed the tiny balcony in one long stride, circling her waist with his bronzed arms and pressing tight against her body. He emitted a low, satisfied growl as he rubbed his face along her neck, his stubble rough against her flesh. "Blaina." His voice was husky and heavy from sleep. "What are you doing out here? Wishing on a falling star?"

"Plum out of falling stars tonight," she forced out through her suddenly tight throat. Being surrounded by Jay felt too good, his arms around her waist too right.

"I guess that's okay. My wish has already come true."

"You don't seem like the wishing type."

"I can be. But sometimes you get what you were looking for without realizing you were even looking." He kissed the top of her head, acting sweet and content and one hundred percent happy to just hold her in his arms.

I love you.

Blaina tilted her head back, needing to see Jay's face. His lips curled upward in a comfortable smile, his blue eyes pools of warmth and love. She'd seen that look before, on Connor's face when he looked at Sam.

Her stomach flopped, heart pumped so hard against her ribcage it was painful to breathe.

Jay loved her.

He really loved her in a way she'd never been loved before—in a way she'd never expected to be loved. What did you do when someone gave you something you'd never expected to have?

“Kiss me,” she whispered.

Jay’s smiling mouth descended and warm lips brushed across her mouth. Not demanding, not pushing, just the welcoming glide of flesh over flesh.

Trapped between hot Jay and cool metal, she turned in his arms, pressing her back against the railing, crushing her front against her man. She wrapped her arms around his neck, sighing when he fisted his hands in her hair, tipped her head back and deepened the kiss.

His tongue circled her lips, teasing each corner before gently breaking through the seam of flesh and slipping inside. Her breath caught in her throat but it didn’t matter, he breathed for her, his mouth becoming the center of her entire world. She gave up all control, losing herself in the simple pleasure of winding tongues, hot breath and panted moans.

When the kiss ended and they held each other, she spoke quietly, “Make love to me, Jay. Right here. With the ocean as our witness.”

His hands slid down her back, slipped beneath her borrowed shirt and landed on the curve of her ass. The ocean air misted across her bare thighs, doing nothing to cool the heat simmering between them.

Palming her flesh, Jay lifted her. With only her back braced against the railing, her arms instinctually tightened around his neck, legs anchoring over his hips.

“I won’t let you go,” he murmured. “I promise.”

“I know.”

Jay rocked his erection against her swollen labia, not demanding entrance, just rubbing slick skin against slick skin, creating heat and moisture, enflaming their desire. Their breathing matched, ragged and needy, their hearts pounding in sync.

When her fluids coated them both, he slid inside, filling her with one long, smooth stroke. She was stretched tight and full around him, on the brink of cataclysmic discovery.

He held himself still for a few moments, deep against her womb. “God, Blaina,” he said, his words shaky. “I want to stay inside you forever.”

“I love you, too.” The words tumbled out, surprising her. But she knew they were true. She waited for her pronouncement to paralyze her with fear. Now Jay had the key to hurt her worse

than she'd ever been hurt before. She'd bared her heart, stripped herself down to her rawest form.

Lifting her gaze, she met his eyes, finding sanctuary in the love visible there. He began to move again, slowly thrusting inside her. Blaina welcomed him completely, opening herself body, heart, mind and soul. Already poised on the edge, they reached climax together...and rather than falling, they soared.



On hands and knees, Blaina crawled underneath the table in the corner of the hotel room. "Found 'em." She grabbed her fugitive panties and shimmied backward, bumping into Jay as she retreated.

Jay captured her between his legs. "How'd they end up back there?"

"How do you think, Mr. Caveman? My underwear doesn't tend to stay on me for more than a minute or two when I'm around you."

"Then maybe you should stop wearing underwear." He dropped to his knees, trapping her between his thighs, and mercilessly tickled the exposed flesh between her shirt and shorts.

Blaina giggled and squirmed, managing to flip onto her back. She arched her hips upward, rubbing her groin against his. "I will if you will," she taunted.

His eyes darkened and his cock strained against his zipper. He glanced at his watch and cursed. "We have to check out in the next five minutes."

She smoothed a hand up his thigh, coming to rest over his erection. "Five minutes is plenty of time."

"Not for what I want to do to you." Sighing uncomfortably, he got to his feet and extended his hand to help her up. "But later, when we get to your place. And maybe in the car." He looked her up and down. "Definitely in the car. *And* when we get to your place."

Laughing, she chucked her underwear into her open overnight bag on the bed. "Work tomorrow's going to suck. We'll have to go the entire day without ripping each other's clothes off."

“Don’t remind me.” Jay picked up the flashlight and handed it to her, his lips quirked upward in fond remembrance. “Here, take this in case of an *emergency*—” he wiggled his eyebrows, “—to hold you over until after we wrap.”

“Very funny. I’ll just come get the real thing from you.” Blaina tossed the flashlight into her bag on top of the rest of her stuff. “There’s plenty of trucks, trailers and cars at base camp... We can always sneak away for a quickie.”

“Naw, we can’t be messing around like that at work. It’s too dangerous.”

“Dangerous?” she smirked. “I promise I won’t try to fuck you while we’re riding motorcycles, crashing cars or jumping off buildings.”

“I’m serious, Blaina.”

“Fine.” She rolled her eyes. “I wouldn’t want Smitty or Cash to catch us in the act anyway. They’re going to give us enough trouble when they find out we’re an item.”

“They’re not going to find out,” Jay stated firmly.

Warning blared inside Blaina’s gut. She rubbed her stomach and turned to confront Jay, who was carefully packing the last of his clothes. “And why not?” she challenged, praying that she’d misinterpreted Jay’s tone and his statement.

He zipped his bag closed and faced her, crossing his arms over his chest. “We gotta keep it low, Blaina. No one needs to know about us—”

Her heart ground to a halt as Jay’s words pummeled her soul. Then the betrayed organ immediately started up again, fueled by instant, red-hot fury. “Why the hell not? You tell me you love me, but you don’t want anyone to know. That’s bullshit. We’re not in fourth grade, Jay.” She stomped into the bathroom and snatched her toiletries bag, needing a moment away from him to calm down.

But the bastard followed her into the tiny room and laid his hands on her shoulders. He tried to meet her eyes in the mirror, but she avoided his searching gaze. “I do love you, Blaina—”

“Don’t,” she ordered, not wanting to hear those deceiving words. *I love you* obviously hadn’t changed a damn thing.

She shrugged him off, pushed away and left the bathroom.

He grabbed her arm. “Listen to me.”

“No.” She pulled out of his grasp. “Listen to *me*. I won’t be used. I told you before I was done with your games. Did you think you could whisk me away for the perfect weekend, woo me with gifts, treat me like I mean something and then shuffle me back in secret? I thought we were over that.” Tears burned behind her eyes but she blinked them back. Not now. Not in front of Jay. She wouldn’t give him that power over her.

She shoved her toiletries into her bag and yanked it off the rumpled sheets, not bothering to zip it closed. The flashlight fell out, hitting the floor with a loud thump before rolling beneath the bed. Leaving the light behind—and hoping the memories stayed with it—she made tracks for the door.

“*Blaina*.” Jay stormed after her and jammed a hand against the door, preventing her from opening it.

“Nice. Entrapment, too. It was fun yesterday, but not now, nor ever again.”

“Where are you going?”

“I’m leaving.”

“Wait.” He eased off the door and raised his hands in supplication. “Let’s talk—”

“Check out’s in five minutes, remember?” she said mockingly. “Just long enough to fuck me over, but not long enough to talk about it afterward.”

Jay flinched, his eyes going dark. Was he angry? Hurt?

Well, fuck him. For a few hours he’d made her believe in love and happy endings. Obviously, neither existed. Not for them. Jay was just another dick she’d fucked.

She shot him a glare. “Find someone else to yank your dipstick, Jay. I’m not interested anymore.”

Before she caved like the hood of a cheap car, she threw the door open and blasted into the empty hallway, aiming for the elevator. Where she’d go after that, she didn’t know. She just had to get away. Away from Jay. Away from all the lies. Away from the hollow emptiness burning a hole through her heart.

She punched the down button on the elevator panel as Jay reached her side. “Goddamn it, *Blaina*. Wait. Let me explain.”

“I’m not interested.” Rapidly she punched the button, as if by sheer force of will she could get the damn elevator to show up. Miraculously it did. The soft ding announced its arrival. Blaina forced her way inside before the doors had opened all the way and slammed her hand on the lobby button.

Jay followed her and before she could dart back out, the doors slid shut and the elevator began a downward descent. He paced back and forth in the small space. An air of mad desperation surrounded him, making the elevator feel even smaller. “I lost someone...my best friend...twelve years ago in an accident on set. He fell in love and lost his head and died. I can’t...” The harsh anguish in his voice ripped at Blaina’s battered heart. Only Jay could so easily influence her emotions, shifting her bitter resentment to grief on his behalf. She curled her fingers into her palm to avoid reaching out to offer comfort. If she touched him, she’d lose her waning hold on control.

Jay stopped pacing and pinned her with an intense, almost angry gaze. “If Jordan had been paying attention, if his focus had been on the stunt and not on Emma, he’d still be alive today. I won’t take that chance. Not with you.”

The elevator came to an abrupt halt and the doors slid open with their soft chime. Habit had her exiting without thinking twice. The bright beach sun welcomed her to the lobby, shining through the floor-to-ceiling windows. Her eyes watered and she blinked a few times, trying to suppress the tears that kept threatening to fall free.

She didn’t pull away when Jay placed his hand on her back and guided her to an unoccupied corner of the lobby. He scraped his knuckles down her face, then brushed her lips with his. She knew she should push him away, but she couldn’t deny herself one final kiss.

“I love you, Blaina,” he whispered against her lips.

“Do you?”

He jerked back as though she’d slapped him. “Hell yeah, I do.”

“Then what’s your point? You said your friend died because he fell in love. How does keeping our relationship a secret change this?”

“Because there’s a lot of people counting on me and Jordan’s memory is the one thing that has spurred me on—kept me from fucking up—all these years. Distraction is deadly. I will not make the same mistake he made.”

“So pretending we’re not together—lying to our friends—is less distracting to you than telling the truth? Maybe you should have been an actor.”

The pain in his eyes pierced her soul. “I don’t like it any more than you do.”

“Then how long, Jay? You’re the one who told me that Lukas wants us to work together on all his pictures. So what, until we stop working together or one of us retires we have to stick with being coworkers on set and lovers off set, sneaking away whenever we can for extended weekends where we can pretend we’re normal? No. I won’t do it. I won’t live a lie. And you shouldn’t expect me to.”

He didn’t reply, giving her the only answer she needed. Blaina backed away, gritting her teeth so as not to let the despair ruling her heart overtake the rest of her body. She needed to escape. To put as much distance between herself and the biggest mistake she’d ever made. Frantically she looked around, spying a line of yellow cabs waiting in front of the hotel.

She spun through the revolving door and ran to the closest cab. “Airport,” she called to the driver as she tossed her bag on the seat and jumped inside.

“Which one?” the cabby asked.

“Whatever one offers flights to LAX.”

The driver nodded and started his car.

“Blaina, wait. Where are you going?” Jay’s urgency filtered through the haze of bitter betrayal. She steeled her spine, refusing to let him sway her resolve. “Get out of the car. You should come with me.”

“No.” Trying not to lose her composure, she stared him straight in the eye. “Goodbye, Jay. Your ‘distraction’ is over. You can go back to being Mr. Stone-Cold Safety now.” Blaina told the driver, “Let’s go.”

She kept her shoulders back, remaining perfectly still until the hotel was no longer in sight and she knew Jay wasn’t following her anymore. Then, like a dam breaking, the anguish burst through her angry determination.

Blaina curled into a ball and sobbed. Against her better judgment she'd jumped into love's abyss, and learned that Jay would only catch her body when the cameras were rolling—her heart be damned.



An hour into the drive and Jay still couldn't get his mind off Blaina and the hell his life had quickly become. The ache in his heart leeches through his system with every mile traveled, every turn in the road, every second he was apart from her. The moment where things between them had gone from heaven to hell played over and over in his mind. How had things gone so wrong, so fast?

Right after she'd driven away, he'd used his cell phone to call her, hoping to catch her before she got to the airport so he could convince her to give him another chance. But she didn't answer. A voicemail would have been futile so he'd hung up. He couldn't remember the last time he'd felt so shunned, so utterly forsaken.

He took off his sunglasses and rubbed his eyes, trying to clear the vision he had of Blaina, brown eyes wide and wet, looking shocked, deceived and finally resigned as she pushed him away.

The California coast held no beauty, no distraction from the torture of knowing that she didn't want to listen to his explanation, his justification for the reason their actions on set couldn't be out in the open. Why wasn't love enough?

A loud crack followed by incessant ticking in rapid succession temporarily shifted his mind off Blaina and onto the head gasket his engine had possibly blown. He shut the car off and coasted to the side of the road. "Shit!"

He yanked the parking break and got out. The midday sun beat down on him and before he'd even walked the six feet to his trunk he was sweating from head to toe. Wasn't this just dandy? He was out in the middle of butt fucking nowhere with no Blaina, no car, and, he noticed as he pulled out his cell phone, no fucking cell service. What next? In the space of three seconds—the time it had taken Blaina to walk away from him—he'd lost his top-of-the-world

feeling. His car had died in less than two. Everything was going to shit. The scar above his heart ached. Dammit. He had to get a handle on his life.

Jay dug through the contents of the Barracuda's grimy trunk. The ancient vinyl liner didn't keep the flakes of rust from coating his duffel bag, or his tool bag, or...

There was an extra bag in there. Where'd it come from?

Then he remembered Blaina laughing as she tossed a bag into the trunk after the car show. "Something for later," she'd flirted. And he'd promptly forgotten about it in his desire to get her naked.

Jay leaned against the back of the Barracuda and sighed, then opened Blaina's mystery bag.

And found a brand new set of gauges for the Barracuda.

Blaina must have spent a fortune.

How had she known? He'd never told her that the one and only thing that kept him from restoring the dash was that he didn't want to put together the interior without a shiny new set of gauges. But they were about a grand and he had more important, roadworthiness-determining stuff to take care of—like a new engine.

Too bad it was still on a stand in his garage.

As he carefully repackaged the gauge set and placed it into the trunk, Jay reorganized his thoughts and discovered the only thing that mattered. Blaina loved him. Even though she was mad at him now, she still loved him. He needed to take care of her, make her understand how much he loved her, and show her how important their relationship was to him.

Hefting the tool bag, he headed toward the front of the Barracuda. Somewhere in his mass of equipment there was a telescoping mirror and a pair of heat-resistant gloves. If the problem wasn't on top, he'd find it by Braille.

And fix it.

Fifteen minutes, three wasted oil-soaked shop rags and two scraped and burned knuckles—damn the missing gloves—later, Jay knew what was wrong. A rocker nut had spun, leaving the arm dangling and an exhaust valve closed, but the real fucker was that the heat had blown both head gaskets. And he fucking didn't have what he fucking needed to fucking get back on the fucking road.

Six hours later he was on his way home. He'd lost ten gallons of sweat walking God knows how many miles to the closest town where it had taken him way too long to find a hole-in-the-wall shop that carried the gaskets and other miscellaneous shit he'd needed. Once back at his car, it took him another hour to slap the engine together enough to make it home.

Thoughts of Blaina and constant self-flagellation kept him company as he drove to L.A. It was almost midnight by the time he crossed through Calabasas into Woodland Hills, only about ten minutes from her place. He dialed her number.

It went straight to voicemail without ringing. Blaina's phone was off. Hearing her cheerful voicemail message only made him yearn to hear her voice in person.

He dialed her home number. He needed to talk to her. To convince her that what they had was worth fighting for.

But she still didn't answer.

Fuck it. Now he had to go to her place, not just to talk to her, but to make sure she'd made it home okay.

Five minutes later he was at her house, pounding on the door. He'd apologize if he'd woken her up. It was just one more apology to add to the list.

A minute passed and Blaina didn't come to the door. No lights came on. Nothing.

Worry escalated to fear. Where the hell was she? Had something happened to her on the way home?

Somehow, over the rapid pounding of his heart, he heard the soft click of her lock sliding in to place. Dammit. Why hadn't he tried opening the stupid door? "Blaina, please let me in." He placed his palm flat on the door and lowered his voice so he didn't wake her neighbors. That wouldn't win him any points. "Babe, please. Just give me a few minutes. I saw the gauges you bought for me. We need to talk. Please."

"No, Jay. Those gauges were a small price to pay for the lesson I learned with you. Just go away." Her voice caught on the last few words. "Please." It was barely audible through the door.

"But, Blaina, there's so much more—"

“No, there isn’t. Tomorrow—hell, today, five hours from now—I’m gonna show up on set ready to work and have fun doing what I love with the man I love and you’re going to pretend there’s nothing between us. I’m done being ignored like that.”

Jay slammed his hand into the door. “Dammit, Blaina, let me talk.”

She went absolutely silent and he cursed himself. Fuck. Yelling at her was only going to prove her point, that he was an unadulterated fucking asshole around her. “Baby, I’m sorry I yelled at you. I love you and I’m losing my mind here. I just want you to understand so we can go back to the way things were. Jordan died because he was too busy focusing on Emma and trying to protect her and he wasn’t focused on the stunt. I don’t want what happened to him to happen to us. I’m doing this because I love you and want to keep you safe.”

Blaina was quiet long enough to make him think she’d walked away. But then her voice came through the door, cold and concise, leaving no room for argument. “Whether we’re in an emotional relationship or not, you need to trust me to do my job as I trust you to do yours. That’s how a professional relationship works and since you don’t think it’s possible for those two things to coexist, we can’t be together. Good night, Jay.” Her footsteps echoed along the hardwood floor as she walked away.

Jay stayed at the door for another half hour, waiting for her to return. His heart went numb, but his mind went into overdrive, nearly knocking him ass over teakettle with the truth.

Blaina was right.

He’d been fooling himself the last few weeks. Pretending they didn’t have a relationship on set hadn’t stopped him from thinking about her. It hadn’t stopped him from making her his primary focus. Stunts had become secondary.

And that was suicide—inexcusable, negligent behavior that could have gotten any one of his stuntmen killed. Or Blaina. He swallowed hard. Especially Blaina.

No matter how much they loved each other, they couldn’t be together. Not anymore. Not ever again.

He had to find a way to stop loving her...

That was going to be suicide.

Chapter Eleven

Blaina walked off Stage Fourteen and directly across the trailer-lined street between soundstages. She'd been through costume, hair and makeup...and managed to avoid seeing Jay, a tiny blessing in her world right now. If only she could go the rest of today—no, the rest of the shoot without having to see him again.

Before opening the vestibule door to Stage Fifteen, she checked to make sure the red light wasn't on. It was habit. Even though she knew the first setup was her fall—meaning no one should be shooting anything—she looked anyway before entering onto the stage.

In the middle of the vast space was a cutaway of a mansion. A grand staircase with full banister wrapped in front of three doorways with partial rooms beyond. There wasn't much more on the first floor. A very thick high jump pit—for her and Jay's heroic landing—dominated the area below the breakaway part of the railing. The effects crew worked on an upstairs doorjamb and door while carpenters put the finishing touches on the banister. The lighting and grip crews adjusted equipment while the director pointed and conversed with the camera operator and director of photography.

"Hey, Blaina. Good, you're already here. I guess I don't have to hunt you down, too, then." Adam waved as he passed by, heading for the door. "Stay close. We'll be starting as soon as I can find Jay."

Why the fuck wasn't Jay already in there? *Mr. Safety, my ass.* But instead of letting her indignation be known, she replied, "Cool," managing to muster enough enthusiasm to disguise her emotional turmoil. Last time she'd seen Jay was when her sick sense of perversion wanted the final heartbreak of watching him walk away from her house—and out of her love life—in the wee hours of the night. Of course, at the time, she'd had no idea that the real heart-crushing hell would happen today when it was her job to see him again...touch him again.

She hated the small part of her craving that specific misery.

A half an hour later, Blaina sat in a director chair near the monitors, downing the last of a bottle of water. The bane of her agonized existence—Jay—had arrived and was giving everyone the safety speech, the rundown of the stunt speech, the reiterated safety speech and the obligatory reiteration of the reiterated safety speech. Yeah there was dangerous stuff going on, and yeah there was a set medic standing by, and yeah they could back out at any time, but everyone there had done this before on this very show so his speechmaking was redundant.

Blaina yawned.

“...Let’s get this going,” Jay finished, shooting Blaina an icy lightning bolt of a glare. A bruise painted on his cheek made him appear even more hostile.

She gritted her teeth against the jolt and shot daggers back at him. Misery loved company.

The group broke up and started heading toward their positions. Blaina turned her back on Jay—hopefully giving him a taste of his own stone-cold medicine—before walking up the stairs and waiting for Lachlan to bring her the fake gun. She inspected the squibs on the wall and doorjamb. The tiny explosions were to simulate gunfire as she escaped from the room. Scrutinizing the breakaway banister, she plotted how she was going to fall backward toward Jay so that they’d aim for the best spot, smash through and land with the least amount of railing fragments on the fall, sprung foam pit below.

Once Blaina had the gun and her *so-called* hero was in position down the hall, the shot was ready for rehearsal. She afforded herself glances at Jay’s feet to make sure he was ready. He stood about seven paces away, one black-booted foot in front of the other, like a runner about to start.

“Blaina and Jay are phenomenal, let’s shoot the rehearsal, too,” Lukas excitedly shouted.

“Live?” Casey replied, holding the squib detonation remote control.

“Yes,” Lukas called back. “I wanna see the whole thing.”

“Fire in the hole!” Casey hollered for everyone’s benefit.

Blaina positioned herself inside the doorway and cast a quick glance toward Jay, to make that all-important “are you with me on this stunt?” eye contact.

He was a whole lot more than just “with” her. His eyes seemed to sear through hers, begging, pleading, demanding. For what, though? Forgiveness? Understanding?

She shifted her attention away before she gave in to any of the possibilities.

“Roll sound!”

Blaina took a deep breath, getting into her character, getting into the stunt...and getting out of Jay. His presence was overwhelming, nearly clouding her vision.

“Sound speed!”

But she wouldn't let Jay take any more from her than he already had.

“A-Camera mark!”

In fact, she wanted part of herself back from him.

“B-Camera mark!”

Starting with her heart, which still beat faster when he was around.

“C-Camera mark!”

Fuck. She needed to stop loving him.

“And action!”

Amid a cacophony of exploding wood and pounding footsteps, Blaina threw herself into Jay's path, hoping to bounce off him and make a bigger action for the camera to catch as the two of them fell through the railing. When she hit Jay, the confounded fake gun was jostled out of her hand and she almost cursed out loud for blowing the take so soon.

Then, before her shoulder hit the banister, Mr. Macho yanked her against his chest causing her to lose a breath. During the fall, he twisted beneath her and they crashed onto the thick foam pit wrapped tightly together, her head plastered against his pecs, broken baluster bits and her goddamn gun bouncing alongside.

Maybe it didn't look too bad. Hopefully the camera didn't see her rubber gun bounce.

Still smashed against Jay, Blaina inhaled, trying to catch her breath. But along with the much-needed oxygen came the familiar scents of her ex. The recognizable smell of the soap and shampoo he kept in his shower took her back to all the times they'd washed each other after a long day at work. The way the water coursed down his chest and abdomen, darkening his golden curls to deep brown. How she willingly spent hours detailing his flesh the way she detailed her car, and the ride she got when her job was done.

Her breath whooshed from her lungs in a barely masked moan, but she refused to inhale again. Passing out from lack of oxygen was better than letting more hungry memories invade her subconscious.

Finally, Jay's grip loosened allowing Blaina's escape. She pushed upward with her arms, trying to disentangle their bodies, but all that did was grind their crotches together. The cursed friction had her body reacting, liquid heat pooling in her sex.

Blaina dove off Jay, not caring how ridiculous she appeared flailing around on the pit. Looking like an idiot was better than being smashed against his rock-hard erection, unable to control her body's telling response.

"Reset, everybody!" Daniel hollered as Lukas hurried to meet Blaina and Jay on the edge of the foam.

"What happened? You two are usually stellar...on-the-money."

Before Jay could get his grimacing mouth open, Blaina started in. "I'm so sorry. I dunno what happened up there, but I'll get it on the next one." She tried not to choke on her aching heart which seemed to have permanently taken up residence in her throat. If she'd been paying more attention to the stunt than her fucking *ex-lover*, no apology would've been necessary. They would have been perfect. No, she would have been perfect, she amended. No more *they*.

"I sincerely hope so, but really, you were fine. The gun was blocked when you two fell." Although not pissed off, Lukas wasn't happy either and Blaina didn't quite know how to react to that.

"Any notes, though?" Jay asked.

Lukas let out a breath. "This isn't a kidnapping. You're helping a capable woman escape an enemy. She doesn't need smothering. We need to see that you're looking out for her, but as soon as you entered the C-Camera frame, we lost her completely. And B-Camera saw you envelop her like a snake swallowing a rabbit. Now let's do this again...the right way...the Blaina and Jay, Jay and Blaina way...like the helicopter, but without the kiss. Can you two do that?"

Blaina nodded.

"Copy that," Jay replied on a frustrated sigh.

“So, how does it feel to fuck up, Flip?” Cash approached and teasingly punched Jay on the shoulder.

Smitty was close behind. “I’ve never seen it happen before.”

“Fuck you guys.” Jay managed a smile, but it was fake.

Blaina didn’t stick around for the bashfest. It would take the crew a while to reset the banister and the squib-infested door and jamb so she headed out of the stage and to the only place she knew Jay wouldn’t be able to follow her—the ladies room.

She stayed in there for forty-five minutes, forcing Jay out of her mind, focusing on the stunt and only the stunt. Once it had run through her head about a million times, she deemed herself ready to go back onstage and do the damn thing right.

Quietly taking a seat on one of the director chairs near the monitors, Blaina picked up her fake blonde hair and pushed it behind her shoulders. The wig had gotten easier and less itchy—or at least she didn’t notice it when she was properly focused. She consciously didn’t look around for Jay.

And when “Picture’s up!” was finally called, she got out of the chair.

Lachlan brought her the fake gun. “We’ll stick it to your hand if you need us to, okay?” He smiled, but all she did was nod her thanks, staying wholly immersed in the stunt and her path through it.

Regaining her starting position, Blaina inspected the breakaway section and the squibs in the replaced doorframe. Everything looked great physically—and mentally. She was beyond the valley of ready to do this.

So ready in fact that when she saw Jay, she did nothing but nod that she was set, refusing to allow the intensity of his gaze to sway her from the path of the stunt.

The crew called out their usual top-of-the-take commands and answers, but Blaina was only listening for one.

“Action!”

Tiny explosions began and she heard Jay’s footsteps. As she was about to put herself in his path, something stung her arm, directly below the hem of her sleeve.

She stopped and put her hand over her arm, expecting it to be wet.

Jay was already on the trajectory to fall through the railing. When he saw that she'd balked, he teetered on the edge, trying to stop himself, but inertia drew him into the wood. Wildly, he swung his arms, but three balusters fell.

Blaina instinctively grabbed his arm and yanked him from the edge as Daniel hollered, "Cut! Medic!"

There was a tiny smudge of blood on Jay's arm where Blaina had caught him, so she expected to see a whole lot more when she looked at her own. But it was barely a flesh wound. In fact, the impact had hurt more than the minor sting right now. She must have been hit by a splinter from one of the squib ignitions.

"Get your ass downstairs to Lynn," Jay ordered through a clenched jaw.

"Thanks for not letting me fall through the banister, Blaina. I really appreciate that," Blaina shot back at him.

An arctic stare was his only reply.

She stormed away, meeting the set medic at the base of the stairs. "Lynn, can we go outside. I need some air." To the crew, she yelled, "I'm fine. Just got a little too close to the doorway, I guess. Sorry." She tossed the gun to Lachlan.

Lynn led her off Stage Fifteen and onto Stage Fourteen where the catering crew was setting up for lunch. She set her kit down on a table and searched through it for what she needed. "Looks pretty small. How bad does it hurt?"

"Hardly at all." Blaina looked at the thin slice as she flopped down on a folding chair. "I hope there isn't a nasty splinter underneath the blood."

Lynn doused a cotton ball with alcohol and swiped the cut. There was a slight burn as the alcohol hit the open wound, but in seconds the sting faded away.

"Splinter-free," Lynn announced. "I'm done here. Christie should be able to cover this up no problem. I'll send her your way."

"Thanks, Lynn."

"No problem. Just keep the injuries minor and I'm happy."

"You and me, both," Blaina replied as Lynn walked away.

Blaina turned around and caught Jay watching her from a shadowed doorway. There was no emotion in his gaze, just cold, hard determination to finish the take.

Well, that was fine with her. Finish the take, finish the movie and she'd be finished with Jay.



“Love the man-in-chains look, Wes. It’s so you.” Wearing one of her traditional leather cat suits, her shiny blonde hair untraditionally swept up in a fancy ’do, Credence strode through a door and across the lavish room that had become Wes’s prison. One side of the room looked like a regular bedroom, a four-post mahogany bed covered in thick burgundy comforters, with a matching mahogany armoire and dresser. A large wooden door next to the bed, not the one Credence had just walked through, remained closed.

The other half of the room resembled a dungeon, complete with torture implements and chains hanging from hooks near the high vaulted ceiling. Credence came to a halt directly in front of Wes and shook her head. “What were you thinking, Wes? That you’d just waltz in here, be my rescuer, and I’d fall at your feet and pledge my undying devotion?”

“No,” said Wes, looking nonchalant and unfazed even though his arms were chained high above his head, the toes of his booted feet barely touching the ground. “I figured you were probably bored out of your mind, so I allowed myself to get captured so you could rescue me. We can figure out who will do the pledging of undying devotion after we get outta here.”

“Dumbass,” Credence whispered huskily, her hand coming to rest over the bruise marring Wes’s cheekbone.

He smiled cockily. “I love it when you call me that.”

“You get to hear it often enough.” Smirking, Credence walked to a lever on the wall and yanked it downward. The hook holding the chain creaked as it lowered, giving Wes more freedom to move.

He rolled his shoulders. “You didn’t happen to bring a key...”

His voice trailed off as Credence lifted a hand to her upswept hair and freed her blonde locks to tumble over her shoulders. She held up a sharp and nasty-looking pick that had been hidden in her tresses. “Keys are too easy,” she challenged.

Wes casually held his chained wrists out for her handiwork.

Credence slid the thin instrument into the lock and within moments Wes was free.

He lifted his hands to Credence's face and swept back errant strands of her hair. "You got anything else hidden on your body that'll get us out of here? A .45? A weapon of mass destruction?"

"Just me."

"That'll do."

Their bodies strained toward each other, but before they could culminate their shared desires, the door next to the bed opened and Cyprian James coolly joined them. "You never disappoint me, dear Credence," he said, his soft Irish accent sharper than usual, illustrating his anger.

Two beefy men followed Cyprian through the door, book-ended their boss and aimed guns at the escaping duo.

Credence tipped her head at Wes. "Remember when you asked about my body?"

Wes grinned. "Your body is a constant source of conversation, sweets. And I remember everything about it."

"I lied." Quick as a whip, Credence yanked a .45 from her boot and aimed it at the villainous trio.

"Cut!" Lucas yelled, then added, "Check the gate!"

Jay stepped away from the monitor and over to the banister as the camera crew checked the gate and started breaking down their setup.

Today they were filming on location, in the real mansion that last week's days on the soundstage had mimicked. This house belonged to a friend of the producer, which allowed them a lot more freedom than a private party's residence.

Jay leaned against the banister and took a deep breath, letting his gaze wander through the large window onto the driveway and lawn at the front of the house where the next stunt was taking place.

Blaina was there, sitting cross-legged on the grass, dressed in jeans and a T-shirt. Samantha and Christie sat with her, enjoying the sun. Connor and Samantha's son Caleb was the center of attention, bouncing between all three women.

Jay allowed himself the agonizing pleasure of watching Blaina. She wasn't scheduled to film anything until later this evening, so she wasn't wearing her Credence gear. This was his Blaina, comfy, over-sized jeans, wrinkled tees and the hot body hidden underneath, not the "hands-off" coworker he was forbidden to enjoy.

And it was that type of thinking that was slowly stealing his sanity.

God, he needed some distance from that woman. His dick was prepared to go on strike. Too many days of Blaina climbing, jumping and slithering around him as part of the job, without the off camera, bedroom climbing, jumping and slithering antics to make life tolerable.

His dick hardened, but not his heart.

And that was an even bigger problem.

After this gig was done, he couldn't see her again. No more ache. No more fire. He was going insane because of her. And how the hell was he supposed to work on Lukas' next movie with that woman?

Never in a million years. Lukas was going to have to find someone else.

"That's lunch, everybody. One hour lunch," Daniel called out.

Jay pushed away from the banister and walked over to Lukas, determined to let him know immediately that any future Blaina/Jay teamwork was out of the question.

Lukas looked up at him with a smile. "Everything set for the Ferrari slide?"

"I'm good to go."

"Great," Lukas said. "Now get some lunch." And before Jay could say anything else, Lukas walked away and began talking with Meleta and Kellan. Fuck.

Fine, he'd just make it a point to tell Lukas before the end of the day. It would be one more step to getting his life back on track.

"Jay, hold up a second," Connor yelled over the noise of everyone setting up to leave for lunch, interrupting Jay's departure. Connor handed Laura Wes's tattered leather jacket and jogged over. "You got a second?"

“Yeah, what’s on your mind?”

Connor gestured down the hallway away from the crowd. So it was to be a private conversation. Somehow Jay doubted they were going to be discussing any of the upcoming stunts.

When they’d gotten far enough away from the crew, Connor faced him. “I’ve got a little problem.” The dark look in his eyes didn’t bode well. Add to that the fake bruise on his cheek, and Connor came across as all-out menacing. “I’m hearing your name on my wife’s lips more than I’m hearing mine.”

Jay set his jaw and braced himself for the onslaught he so rightly deserved.

“What the hell’s going on between you and Blaina? This on-again, off-again bullshit is getting old.”

“Which is why we’re over.” Damn, it hurt to admit that out loud.

Connor snarled. “Then stay the fuck out of Blaina’s way and let her get on with her life.” He stormed back the way they’d come and headed down the staircase.

Great. He could add Connor’s name to the growing list of people who now hated him.

And that was yet another reason why dating a coworker was the biggest slack in judgment he’d made during his entire career. He’d lost the respect of someone he held in high regard. And he’d lost self-respect, both for his choices and the way things had ended up.

Sliding his sunglasses into place, Jay left the house and hurried down the long driveway, dodging grip carts and wardrobe racks as he headed toward where catering was set up off-property. Blaina was no longer sitting on the lawn, which probably meant she was already at catering with Sam and Connor. The idea of lunch lost some appeal.

His last interest in lunch disappeared when he arrived at catering. Blaina waited in the line, gabbing with Sam and Connor. Cash stood next to her, one arm thrown casually over Blaina’s shoulders. The four of them laughed and Blaina smacked her hip against Cash. He retaliated by pulling her against him in a bear hug and Blaina laughed even harder.

Jay’s stomach clenched angrily. What the hell was going on here?

Then Connor’s words came back and hit him in the gut. *Let her get on with her life.*

Was this what Connor had meant? Were Blaina and Cash together?

Fuck, no. Not on his time or his movie.

Let her get on with her life.

Jay stopped dead. Someone bumped him from behind, muttering a “sorry” before continuing on.

He had to let her go. Whether it was to be with Cash, or any one of the other men who would gladly take Jay’s place in her bed. She wasn’t his anymore. He didn’t have the right. No matter how much it hurt. He’d made the choice. He’d walked away.

But there was no fucking way he could sit here and watch Blaina with another man. Jay grabbed an apple off the craft services table and headed for the Ferrari. It was parked around the corner, and right now anyplace away from Blaina was an improvement. He could take the car for a good hard drive, paddle shift up and down through the gears, test the suspension on some turns, do a few practice slides to make sure he could get solid, easy lock-up. Clear his goddamn mind of the sound of Blaina’s laugh as Cash pulled her close.

To avoid throttling the unsuspecting Cash, Jay kept a death grip on his clipboard and walked away from catering. Blaina actively ignored him as he passed.

It was exactly what he deserved.

Blaina crossed toward the table where Connor, Sam and Caleb were already seated. Trying to look as though she wasn’t searching for anyone in particular, Blaina casually glanced around the lunch area. No Jay. He’d left as quickly as he’d arrived. Well, good. She didn’t need to feel his stare while she was trying to eat. She didn’t need to think about how close he was and yet so far away.

Hell, she didn’t want to think about him at all. Unfortunately, her mind hadn’t figured that out yet.

Cash caught up to her as she set her tray on the table. He gave her puppy dog eyes and a beseeching smile.

“Wait a second.” Blaina arched an eyebrow at Cash. “Did you think that just because I let you cut in the chow line with me that I’d let you sit with me, too?”

“Don’t go breakin’ my heart, Blaina. A man needs hope.”

“And I need a napkin,” she said. “Get me one and you can sit with me...this time.”

“Whatever my fair Blaina needs,” Cash replied like the gallant hero he wasn’t. He dropped his lunch tray on the table next to Blaina. “Is there anything else your heart desires?”

Thoughts of Jay crashed like a raging tsunami into Blaina’s mind. She rapidly shook her head to remove the images. Cash took it as an answer, dropped a bow and took off for the table next to the catering truck and salad bar.

Blaina watched him go, then, rolling her eyes, turned back to meet the matching, questioning gazes of Sam and Connor. “Oh, no you don’t.” Blaina held up her hands to stop either of the happy couple from making any crazy suggestions. “C’mon, you two. I love Cash, but in the ‘fun to put down’ role. Not in the ‘make him my lover’ role.”

“He’s kind of cute.” Sam fed Caleb a bite of pasta from her plate. “And he obviously adores you.”

Connor pointed his fork at Blaina and put on a bad mobster accent. “You wanna that I shoulda talk to him?” He wiggled his eyebrows, continuing the mafioso act. “Find out iffa his intentions are honorable?”

“No, no, no, no, no.” Blaina laughed. “I know his intentions and they’re far from honorable. Thanks though, both of you. But I’m fine. I’ll stick with the occasional Kiefer sessions with Sam. Other than that, I’m off men for awhile.”

“But you’d look so much better on men, Blaina,” Cash pleaded as he dropped back into the seat next to her and handed her a stack of napkins. “Particularly me.”

Blaina gave Sam and Connor the “I told you so” look. “Like I was saying, Cash takes dishonorable to a whole new level.”

“But I will honor you,” Cash continued to dig himself in deeper, “any way you’ll let me.”

Blaina lifted a bite of pasta toward her mouth. “You can start by—”

“*Jesus Christ*. What the hell’s wrong with you, Jay?”

“Get the *fuck* out of the car. *Now*.”

Blaina’s fork clattered to her plate. That was Jay yelling. And Smitty. But where...? Their voices were bouncing off the trucks surrounding catering.

Cash exploded out of his seat. “*Shit. Smitty.*” He took off at a run, heading toward the trailers.

“What the hell were you thinking?” Jay roared. “I’m done with you. You’re a fuck-up and I don’t need mistakes like you on my team.”

Blaina had never heard him this out of control before. She got to her feet. Adam, Daniel and assorted burly grips bounded toward the argument.

“Blaine, don’t get involved,” Sam warned. “This isn’t your fight.”

“I have to.” Blaina followed the angry shouts down the street, past the honey wagon and makeup trailer and into a crowd of curiosity seekers. She pushed her way to the front, just as Jay slammed his fist into the door of the hero Ferrari.

Oh my God, what the hell was Jay thinking? Hitting a production vehicle—the hero car no less? Was the man insane? That was enough to get him fired.

Blaina expected to see a dent marring the finish, but when Jay moved his hand, there were no visible marks. One catastrophe avoided. Must be a carbon fiber body.

Eyes blazing with fiery rage, Smitty—whose top jeans button was undone—put one hand on top of the windshield rail, one on the driver’s side roll bar and heaved himself out of the car in one acrobatic jump directly in front of Jay. “Y’know, boss,” Smitty snarled, “maybe if you got laid once in awhile, you wouldn’t be such a fucking dick.”

Jay lunged at Smitty. Cash swooped between the pair, interrupting the potential brawl. “You don’t want to do this, man,” Cash said calmly, although Blaina didn’t know if Cash was talking to Jay or Smitty.

“Get out of my way, Cash,” Jay rumbled. “Or you’ll be off this movie as fast as Smitty. You’re both liabilities I should’ve dumped ages ago.”

A confused, terrified blonde in a rumpled French maid outfit bolted out the passenger door. Adam caught her and escorted her away from the car. Blaina had seen her earlier, an extra in one of the scenes filmed that morning. Apparently she’d caught Smitty’s eye as well. That wasn’t unusual. So what had Jay so pissed off?

Probably the same thing that had her ready to explode. The tension between them was making work a hellhole. *Shit*, she couldn’t let Smitty take the full brunt of Jay’s anger.

Blaina looked around at more than a dozen wide-eyed faces. Someone had to put a stop to this before it got even more out of control. If only Levi were still on set. Somehow she didn't doubt he could've subdued this outburst with little effort.

She stepped into the standoff, nearly wrenching her ankle on the remnants of an apple smashed next to the front wheel well. Blaina kept her voice calm and quiet, forcing the three men to listen. "End this. Now. You've already caused enough of a show that the gossip will be flying thick and heavy. Is this really how you want to be remembered?"

Jay shifted his anger toward her. "Stickin' up for your boyfriend now, Blaina? Bad idea, unless you want to suffer the same consequences."

Blaina lowered her voice so the lookie loos, and hopefully Smitty and Cash, couldn't hear. "If you have a problem with me, take it up with me. But right now we have an audience, and if I remember correctly you're not a fan of your private life going public."

Startled, Jay looked up, realizing the brouhaha had drawn quite a crowd. He frowned, then turned back to Smitty. "Sign out. You're done for the day. We'll talk about this tomorrow." His attention shifted to Blaina. "You...with me. Now."

Blaina considered Jay's order. "Yeah, boss, whatever." The shit had hit the fan and it was gladly her turn to fling.

Cash led a still-furious Smitty away and, realizing the entertainment was over, the rest of the crowd began to disperse.

Jay stared at her, the vein in his temple throbbing, his jaw locked so tight if she were to haul off and punch him she'd probably break a few fingers.

Still, it was tempting.

They walked in shared, tongue-biting, anxious silence for several minutes until they arrived at a secluded bungalow at the back of the mansion. Trees surrounded the small wooden structure making it an ideal rendezvous point for lovers—or the perfect place to tell a boss to fuck himself.

The door had barely shut behind them before Jay started in on her. "What the hell was that about back there?"

Just to piss him off even more, Blaina didn't answer right away. Instead she circled the lone piece of furniture in the place, an overstuffed, royal blue velvet chaise. "Which part? You acting

like an asshole, or me stepping in and stopping you from making an even bigger ass of yourself?”

“I’m in charge.” He closed the distance between them, an obvious attempt at intimidation. “Don’t get involved in my business, Blaina.”

She stepped closer, negating his threat. “And don’t take your anger with me out on someone else, Jay.”

His lips curled up in a smile that could only be called condescending. “Not everything’s about you, dear Blaina. Unless...” His eyes narrowed fiercely, jaw clenching as though baring fangs. “Are you sleeping with Cash? ’Cause if so, then yeah, it is my problem.”

“It’s none of your fucking business who I sleep with now. I could screw both Smitty and Cash at the same time and you couldn’t stop me.”

“No.” Something inside Jay snapped. Blaina saw it in his eyes, the shift from raw anger to primitive desire. And rather than scare her, it empowered her.

She gave him her back and moved toward the door, replying with a succinct, “Yes.”

Jay’s hand shot out and locked around her upper arm.

She jerked away, but his grip remained tight. “Let me go,” she snarled.

Jay didn’t say a word, but his other hand skimmed over the few inches of flesh on her stomach that due to their tussle were now in plain sight. She pulled down on her too-short shirt, but it was too late. Jay wrapped his fingers around the belly chain, tugging the dangling key charm out from where it had been tucked beneath her jeans.

Damn, damn, damn. Why the hell hadn’t she stopped wearing it?

Because it made her feel sexy. Because it reminded her of him. Because she was an idiot in need of a lobotomy to permanently remove Jay from her memory and her life.

She shot him a defiant glare, daring him to say anything. One word and she’d give in to that urge to punch him. A few broken fingers would be well worth it.

He slammed his mouth over hers.

Oh hell.

She’d forgotten how good it felt to kiss Jay. To be kissed by Jay. His tongue rubbed against hers and she purred. *Dammit.*

He rumbled his satisfaction and dove deeper into her mouth and she responded by cementing her body against his. Just a few more seconds of pleasure, then she'd end it.

But Lord only knew she had zero willpower when it came to Jay. The last two weeks of emptiness exploded into frantic desperation and in no time at all they'd ripped off each other's clothing and she was flat on the chaise with his cock buried in her pussy. He fucked her hard, fast, furiously and she climaxed within seconds, shuddering uncontrollably with the impact. His orgasm claimed him moments later and he collapsed over her, his familiar weight pressing her into the soft comfort of the chaise.

He buried his face into her neck and murmured her name.

And that's when reality hit her like a frying pan to the back of the head.

She couldn't do this. Couldn't open herself up to Jay and the yo-yo of emotions that would undoubtedly end with her heartbroken and alone. Again.

Blaina pushed against his shoulders, and when he lifted up and looked at her questioningly, she wiggled free.

"This was a mistake." Blaina yanked on her jeans and top. "It doesn't change anything."

"Fuck, Blaina. I'm sorry." Still naked, Jay strode toward her. "We should talk."

Shaking her head, she retreated. "No. There's nothing to say. We're over." She cracked open the door.

"Blaina, don't—"

She shot Jay a glance over her shoulder. Like the first time she'd left him alone in his garage, Jay stood naked, watching her go, his eyes full of complex emotions.

This time however, Blaina wasn't ever going back to him. "Leave me alone, Jay." The door closed, her on one side, him on the other. She took a deep breath and softly repeated, "Leave me alone."

Chapter Twelve

A party atmosphere had invaded today's set. Balloons were taped on all the trailer doors—bright bubbles in yellows, blues, reds and greens whipped around in the hot, dry Santa Ana wind. People were laughing, smiling, joking, hugging. In a few hours, principal photography on *Dangerous Intentions* would wrap for the final time.

And Jay could move on for good. Blaina would be out of his life. He'd no longer have an excuse to wrap his arms around her, no longer be cursed with the constant reminder of everything he'd lost.

But he couldn't remember why that was supposed to be a good thing. Jay craved those moments when, because of his job, he could touch Blaina. When she'd walked out of the bungalow a month ago, she'd essentially walked out of his life. She didn't speak to him, except about the stunts, didn't look at him, except when her job required it.

So congratulations to him. The life he'd set up for himself was still on track. He had his integrity. His career was intact. The rules he'd lived by for so long had been challenged, but Flip—Mr. Stone-Cold Safety—had overcome temptation and survived.

He'd gotten everything he'd ever wanted.

Except for Blaina.

And he had no one to blame but himself.

"Jay, I need to talk to you," Lukas said, breaking away from Adam and Daniel and blocking Jay's path.

"Did the shot change again?" Jay couldn't think of any other cause for Lukas to interrupt him right now. For some reason the studio had a bug up their ass about this stunt. It was the first big car chase in the movie, when all the nonstop action began. They'd filmed the original version months ago—the night scene with Credence being cornered in the park by the henchman, and Wes sliding in for the rescue. The studio got a look at the dailies and nixed that idea even though

it was all in the can, inserts and everything. Atcheson and Cope didn't like that the scene took place at night and was in a park instead of somewhere spectacular.

It wasn't Jay's place to have an opinion, just to do the job.

So now the scene took place in the middle of the day, with Credence being forced to ditch her malfunctioning Lotus Elise. Wes would slide up in the Jag, rescuing Credence as she jumped from her car, leaving the Elise to smash against a building in a riot of Hollywood explosions.

Blaina had done the car ditching yesterday—and damn flawlessly, too. If the studio had a problem with it, they were fucking nuts.

Lukas shook his head. “No. This isn't about the stunt. I'm just not letting you walk away until I get an answer from you. *Chasing Reality* is going into production soon and I want my favorite stunt coordinator on board. So what do you say?”

Shit. Jay had avoided this moment for too long. It wasn't like him to turn down an offer, especially on a car picture. But he couldn't do it. As much as he'd love to have a reason to keep seeing Blaina, for his sanity, for her safety, for the safety of everyone he worked with, they had to go their separate ways. Permanently. No more on set distractions. Jay opened his mouth to say no, but Lukas interrupted with a wave of his hand. “You're killing me, Jay. I've already lost Blaina. Don't make me do this without you, too.”

“Blaina backed out?”

“Can you imagine?” Lukas pouted. “She turned me down to work as Mel's double on her next few projects. Whatever.” He rolled his eyes. “So don't you break my heart, too, Jay. Tell me you'll do *Chasing Reality*.”

“Yeah, I'm in.”

If Blaina could move on, so could he. It was for the best.

And maybe some damn day he'd believe that.

Lukas “hoorahed” and grabbed Jay's hand for an enthusiastic handshake. “Find yourself a good female stunt partner, Jay. Someone you can make the same type of Blaina/Jay magic with.”

Forcing a smile, he said, “I'll do my best.”

“Do you know how to do anything but your best?” Meleta stepped to Lukas's side, a large picnic basket dangling from one hand. She stuck a hand beneath the lid and returned with a

fancily wrapped chocolate in the shape of a car. “As promised, dear Lukas,” she said in the teasingly seductive way that earned her millions per film.

“Plying me with homemade chocolate, Mel, my love?” Lukas wiggled his eyebrows and snatched the offered chocolate. “Makes me think you’re feeling guilty for stealing Blaina away from me.”

Even though the words were spoken in jest, Jay’s heart thumped angrily. Fuck, now he was jealous of Meleta? He needed to get a goddamn grip.

Mel let out a throaty laugh. “Not even a little bit, Lukas. Blaina makes me look better than any other stunt double. I’m holding on to her for as long as she’ll let me.”

“Smart woman,” Jay said.

Meleta gave Jay a curious look then handed him a chocolate. “Smile, Jay. We made a great movie.”

“Hey, Mel,” Adam called out. “We need some chocolate over here.”

“What happened to the ones I gave you earlier?”

“What ones?” Daniel replied as he innocently swiped a hand across his mouth.

Meleta laughed and walked over to them.

“All right, then.” Lukas grinned and slapped Jay on the shoulder. “Now go find your leading lady. We’ve got a stunt sequence to shoot.” He jogged back toward where Adam and Daniel were trying to sneak chocolates out of Meleta’s basket.

Jay strode toward catering, looking for his “leading lady”.

No. Not his. Not anymore.

Suddenly the day couldn’t end fast enough. He was so damn tired of wanting Blaina. So damn tired of missing her. He needed a goddamn reprieve so he could get on with his excuse of a life.

As Jay moved beyond the honey wagons toward the big trucks, he heard Cash’s laughing voice, “You really do work on cars, then. I believe you, I believe you.”

“Don’t mind Cash, he’s a little slow, Blaina,” Smitty said. “I believed you from the start. There’s just something about visualizing your ass while you’re bent under the hood of a car. Damn. I’m tellin’ ya. We need to hook up.”

“Smitty, if you had the last penis on the planet, I’d still choose my finger.” Blaina chuckled.

Jay rounded the generator truck to see Blaina lounging between Smitty and Cash on the hood of the Ferrari. The three of them were leaning against the windshield, munching on Meleta’s chocolates as though they didn’t have a care in the world.

God he missed her. His leather-clad vixen with the naughty-girl smile. The fiery temptress whose deep and sexy laugh could lead him anywhere. The denim and T-shirt girl who had stolen his heart with a jug of water, a roll of tape and her sassy double talk. He loved every last bit of her. Even the part of her sticking to her convictions and not letting him back into her life.

She was so much stronger than he’d ever be.

Jay stepped closer to the trio, but as soon as they saw him, their carefree grins disappeared.

Smitty and Cash eyed him warily. Jay’s relationship with them had been shot to hell the day he’d caught Smitty with his pants down. But Jay hadn’t fired either of them. He couldn’t—not after his indiscretion with Blaina in the bungalow. The irony of the situation hadn’t been lost on him.

Blaina took another bite of chocolate, pretending—or maybe feeling—indifference.

Jay swallowed all his anger, woe, frustration, furor, terror, jealousy and dejection and said, “Blaina, you got a second to go over the stunt? It’s time.”

“Sure, boss.” She nodded and dislodged herself from the stuntman sandwich. “I can’t wait.”

They walked together toward where their cars were parked.

“I’ll save you the big safety speech—”

“If something goes wrong, I’ll back away,” she succinctly replied.

“Good. That’s what I like to hear. I’m only gonna skid about ten feet when I throw the Jag into the one-eighty. Just be ready.”

“I’ll be ready.”

Her short, pithy responses were starting to get on his nerves. “Any questions?” he snapped.

“Nope. Let’s do the stunt. Then we’re done.”

“Then we’re done,” he angrily repeated.

She shot him a narrowed-eyed glare before stomping away.

Jay scrubbed a hand down his face. Only a few more hours, he reminded himself.

Once the camera was set up, lighting taken care of, the crew safety meeting was over and everyone was settled in for today's excitement, Jay climbed into the Jaguar.

He watched Blaina double-check the shifter, preparing to let the car roll forward in neutral when she got out of it. The action was cheated up the street to make room for a long, thick piece of wood fastened across the pavement in order to provide a stop for the Elise so it wouldn't hit the opposing building. Jay had personally checked it out with the effects guys after the safety meeting.

Everything looked good.

"Rehearsal's up!" Daniel hollered.

That call hustled last minute fine-tuning. Some grips adjusted a scrim while an electrician refocused a gigantic fill light more toward the action. A prop woman put a piece of wide, black tape over a trademarked logo on the side of one of the cardboard boxes in the background.

"Let's go people!" Lukas added.

"As soon as the frame's clear, we'll go!" Daniel yelled.

Blaina stepped into her car.

Jay sank deeper into the seat as he mentally ran through the stunt. Come into it doing about twenty, twenty-five, lock up the brake, whip the car around, wait for Blaina to throw herself in, then lay some good scratch peeling out of frame. Easy.

Except he was more interested in driving off into the sunset with Blaina than resetting to do another take.

"Ready for rehearsal. Go when you're ready, Jay!" Daniel called out.

Casting one final glance at Blaina, they shared the ready signal and he hit the gas. She slowly moved her car forward. He locked up the brakes and threw the wheel hard, breaking the back end loose to skid toward her exactly as she hopped out of the Elise.

Right on cue, he landed next to her. She jumped into the Jaguar, closed the door and he slammed the gas, squealing tires as he drove out of frame. The Elise rolled to a stop.

Everything was perfect. The producers were right. The stunt was ten times better this way.

Satisfaction welled within Jay and he turned to Blaina. "You blow me away, Blaina. You really do."

“You ain’t so bad yourself.” Her smile lit up the interior of the Jaguar and his heart lurched. This was the way he wanted to remember her. Happy and smiling at him. “Now take me back to one so we can do this for real.”

He nodded, driving toward her starting point. “Let’s do it again.”

Blaina paused at his words. Was she wondering if he was referring to something more than the stunt? Before she could reply, he added, “It’s been good, Blaina. Even when it’s been bad, it’s been good.”

She took a deep breath and opened her door. Before closing it, she leaned over and said, “Let’s make our last day worth remembering.”

Like he’d ever forget her.

“Picture’s up, everyone!”

“Jay, that was magnificent. I knew I should’ve shot the rehearsal.” Lukas called through a bullhorn. “Come on, everybody, let’s get this done. My chocolate is melting.”

Jay chuckled in spite of himself. In the middle of shooting a dangerous stunt, Lukas was more concerned with his chocolate?

Then again, there were plenty of things Jay was more concerned with.

“Rolling!”

Blaina.

“Sound speed!”

More Blaina.

“A-Camera mark!”

More and more Blaina.

“B-Camera mark!”

If only Blaina were more concerned with him...

“Action, Jay!”

He brought the Jaguar up to speed and watched as Blaina jumped out of her car. He locked up the Jag into the slide...

But he was late.

He was late stomping the added brake pedal and in that frustration, whipped the wheel too much, causing the car to slide at the wrong angle.

His heart lodged in his throat as the Jag hurtled toward Blaina. Releasing the brake did no good. The steel beast was sideways, skidding out of control, aiming for her.

“Move, Blaina! Move!” Jay screamed, hoping she’d hear him over the racing engine and get out of the way.

But it was too late. Blaina’s body flew up in the air and metal crunched against fiberglass as the two cars collided.

Chapter Thirteen

“How many fingers am I holding up?”

Blaina considered giving Lynn one of her trademark smartass responses, but figured that would only prolong the questioning. “Three.”

Lynn shone a penlight in Blaina’s eyes. “Where are you?”

“Trapped in a honey wagon on the set of *Dangerous Intentions* by three well-meaning but overprotective individuals.” Okay, a little smartass never hurt. To take the sting out of her words, she wagged her fingers at Smitty, Cash and Lynn and smiled so big she thought her face might crack open. “I don’t have a concussion, guys. I’m fine. Really. I swear.”

Okay, maybe wiggling her fingers hadn’t been the best idea. Her right wrist hurt like a son of a bitch. But she wasn’t going to let them know that or they’d never let her finish the stunt. So she kept the idiot grin pasted on her face and prayed they’d let her back on set before her wrist turned black and blue and swelled to the size of a muffler.

None of them returned her smile. Blaina had never seen Smitty or Cash look so serious before. Like an overzealous bodyguard, Smitty stood in the open doorway of her dressing room, keeping anyone from entering or leaving. Not that there was room for another person inside. Cash was practically sitting in the sink, and Lynn was smashed next to Blaina on the miniscule, cushioned bench.

The only one missing from the verification-of-Blaina’s-health party was Jay. After the accident, when she’d first opened her eyes—a tad surprised to see the sky stretched out blue and cloudless above her—Blaina’s first thought was to let Jay know she was okay. Even though accidents happened to everyone, Blaina’d known he’d be worried, devastated, even guilt-ridden.

But Smitty and Cash had swooped in before she’d caught her breath enough to say “boo”. Ignoring her protests that she was fine, Lynn had done a quick assessment and determined it was okay to move Blaina. Cash hadn’t even tried to cop a feel when he’d carried her through the

hovering crowd, Smitty leading the way. Jay must have still been in the Jaguar because Blaina never saw him.

Now, trapped in her tiny honey wagon compartment by her three self-appointed protectors, all she wanted to do was go find Jay and finish the scene. Before she'd ended up sprawled on the ground like a boxer after a knockout, she and Jay had been on the road to recovery. Not that they would be getting back together, but the animosity and tension had begun to dissipate and she'd felt *right* working at his side. This accident wasn't how she wanted either of them remembering their last stunt. She wanted one more moment of perfect stunt magic with him, then she could move on. Emotionally and physically. It was the relationship closure they both needed.

"Come on, clear me, doc," she teased Lynn. "I need to go back to work."

"No," Smitty and Cash said simultaneously, then Smitty added, "Blaina...c'mon, you need to take it slow. You got hit—"

"No," she clarified. "I jumped and fell backward. The car didn't hit me. The ground did." Blaina chuckled at her joke, but the serious trio frowned.

"You definitely hit your head if you think that's funny," Cash continued. "You need to take it easy."

Blaina slowly shook her abused noggin. It hurt. A little. Not enough to stop her though. "I. Am. Fine," she repeated for what must have been the billionth time. "For once this damn hot-as-hell costume came in handy. My ass would've resembled ground beef if I hadn't been wearing leathers." She reverted to sparring, hoping the usual flirty insults would sink past the hovering testosterone. "You two just want an excuse to sweep me off my feet. When you gonna learn? Even if I were hurt—which I'm not—I'm not goin' out with either of you. Lynn, tell my two rusty, wannabe knights I'm fine, would you?"

Lynn sighed and daubed a scrape on the palm of Blaina's right hand. "I've been trying not to believe you, but by some miracle you didn't get a concussion and I can't find anything wrong other than a few scrapes."

"Ha! See, I'm fine. Now go tell everybody to dust off the spare cars and get ready to do the shot again. We've got a movie to finish."

In the doorway, Smitty scowled. “Blaina...” With her good hand, she blew him a kiss and he shook his head. “Stubborn woman,” he muttered as he backed out of the room. The spring-loaded door swung shut.

Cash pushed away from the sink and knelt down in front of her. Worry lines were etched around his eyes and mouth. He took a deep breath. “Blaina, I’ve never been so fucking scared in all my life as I was when I saw that car barreling down on you and I thought you’d been hit.”

She gave him a genuine smile. “That’s the sweetest thing you’ve ever said to me.”

“You need anything, anything at all, tonight, tomorrow, whenever, call me. Even if you want me to pick up toilet paper, I’m your man.”

Blaina laughed, which forced a small smile onto Cash’s face. “Thank you,” she said.

In another completely unlike-Cash gesture, he lifted her sore hand and kissed the back of it. “I’ll see you out there,” he finished, dropping her hand before standing and walking out the door.

Blaina nodded as he left, her jaw clenched to avoid muttering a few choice expletives. Her wrist was sprained. No doubt about it. But that wasn’t going to stop her from finishing the scene.

“Okay, Blaina, now that your cavalry has retreated, let’s talk turkey.” Carefully, Lynn lifted Blaina’s injured hand. “Your wrist looks awfully red. Can you move it for me?”

Very gently Blaina rotated her wrist. “See. Just fine,” she lied.

“Now, move it forward and back.”

Oh damn, damn, damn that was going to hurt. Blaina clenched her teeth and fought back the automatic wash of tears and did as the doc requested. “See. No problem,” she bit out.

“You’re a bad liar, Blaina.”

Blaina huffed and leaned back against the wall. “It’s the last day of filming, Lynn. I can’t hold up production. I swear, I’m fine. It’s nothing to worry about.”

Lynn glared, indecision washing over her face. Blaina was ready to drop down on her knees and beg when the door was yanked open. For one excited heartbeat, Blaina thought it was Jay. She tried not to look disappointed when Lukas stepped inside.

“How’s my girl doing?” he asked.

Blaina stood. “Ready to get this done,” she said enthusiastically.

Lukas smiled, but his concern was still evident. “You gave us quite a scare back there. You sure you can do this?”

“No doubt.”

“Lynn?” Lukas questioned. “Is our girl good to go?”

Holding her breath, Blaina looked at the medic. Lynn tossed the used gauze into the trash. “She’s a trooper.”

“That’s what I like to hear.” Lukas stuck his hand out to shake Blaina’s.

Blaina held up her scraped palm, using it as an excuse to avoid shaking his hand. “It’s bad form to bleed on your director.”

Instead, Lukas patted her on the back—*Ow. Ouch. Ow.*—and said, “If you ever get tired of working for Meleta, let me know. There’ll always be an opening for you on my films.”

“Thanks, Lukas. And tell Jay I’ll be ready once I get a replacement costume and Timmy fixes my wig.”

Lukas halted before walking out the door. “Jay’s gone. Smitty’s getting costumed up right now.”

“Jay’s gone?” Blaina blurted, wondering if her hearing had gotten screwy when she’d hit the ground.

“Yeah, he signed out a few minutes ago,” Lukas confirmed. Outside, someone called his name. He excused himself and left the dressing room.

Jay hadn’t stayed. He hadn’t bothered to check on her. Hadn’t bothered to apologize.

So much for thinking things were better between them. If he’d cared even a little bit, he would’ve made the effort to see things through—with her and the movie. And that hurt a hell of a lot more than the rest of her injuries.



The empty beer bottle made a satisfying clank as Jay added it to the collection littering the patio table next to him. So how many was that now? The bottles blurred together but it looked like there were five of them.

He blinked. Now there were six. Maybe seven. The sun made the dark glass shine reddish brown, the same shade as Blaina's hair.

Blaina.

The Jaguar hurtling toward her. The crunch of metal screeching against fiberglass. Her body flying backward.

The damning sound of silence as the motor cut out and his heart stopped beating.

Voices shouting for help, Smitty and Cash kneeling on the ground. A crowd gathered and Jay hadn't been able to see her. Hadn't known if she was alive or dead.

Just like the day Jordan died so many years earlier, time had slowed to a relentless crawl and terror eclipsed Jay's every move. He didn't remember getting out of the car. Didn't remember forcing his way through the crowd. Didn't remember anything other than interminable fear until he saw Cash carrying Blaina and heard her reassuring everyone that she was fine.

But Jay wasn't. Doubted he ever would be again.

He reached into the cooler for another beer. If he could still remember, he wasn't drunk enough.

God, he was a fuck-up.

His black lab Bo lifted his head and whined pitifully when Jay popped the top on a fresh bottle and downed half of it in one long swallow.

Even his dog thought he was pathetic.

Jay leaned back in the lawn chair and closed his eyes, not wanting to see condemnation in his mutt's stare. But the memories waited for him behind his shuttered eyelids. Jordan and Blaina. The two most important people in Jay's life. One dead and one lost to him forever.

Halfway through second grade, Jordan's family had moved to Southern California from Louisiana. On his first day of school, Jordan had walked in with a wide smile and a thick Southern accent, charming everyone he met. Within five minutes all the kids were fighting to be his friend. For some reason he'd taken a liking to Jay and from that day forward, he and Jordan were thick as thieves.

It was Jordan who'd convinced Jay they should get into stunt driving. It had made an adventurously crazy sort of sense at the time. Their two obsessions were cars and girls. Working

in movies would get them both. So not even a month out of high school, Jordan walked onto a movie set, sweet talked the stunt coordinator and got both he and Jay onto the team as precision drivers. On their second movie a few perfectly executed tandem box nineties made them a valued up-and-coming pair of stunt drivers in the industry.

Five years and at least a dozen movies later, Jordan met Emma. Hollywood's sweetest young thing, Emma was only twenty years old but back-to-back number one hits had the entertainment world believing everything she touched turned to gold.

Jordan believed it, too. From the first day of shooting, the two were inseparable. Somehow, Jordan came even more alive. Jay had never seen him happier. After the first month, Jordan and Emma were already talking marriage.

But nothing in movie making was sacred. Hollywood's golden girl had a golden boy, and the paparazzi smelled money. Jordan and Emma couldn't look at each other without cameras being shoved in their faces.

No one was supposed to end up dead.

Bo's sharp bark yanked Jay out of dismal reverie. He shot upright, spilling the remainder of his beer down his shirt where it puddled in his crotch. "Shit!" He jumped to his feet, cursing Bo, the beer, himself and life in general.

"Do I need to go buy more beer?" Cash came from the side yard, Bo running enthusiastic circles around him.

"What the hell are you doing here?" Jay growled. He stank of beer, sweat, and self-reproach and company wasn't welcome.

"I came to kick your ass, but it looks like you're doing a good enough job of that yourself." Cash dropped onto the matching lawn chair and helped himself to a beer.

"Kick my ass? Give it your best shot."

"Don't tempt me, Flip." Cash shrugged. "Bo could kick your ass right now." He scruffed the dog's neck. "Couldn't ya, boy?"

"How's Blaina?"

"She says she's fine..." Cash took a swig of beer.

"But?"

“But what? She’s banged up. She didn’t let it stop her from finishing the job though.”

Ouch. Direct shot from Cash. “So, shooting’s over then?” Jay asked, outwardly ignoring Cash’s barb.

“Smitty got it on the first take.”

“Three cheers for Smitty.” Jay held up a fresh brew in mock toast. “Good thing I didn’t fire him, huh?”

Clonking his bottle onto the table, Cash pinned Jay with an incensed glare. “Dammit, Flip. What the fuck happened today?”

“I missed my mark.”

“Yeah, and it’s not the first time.”

“I could’ve killed Blaina.”

“Maybe. Except she’s damn good and got out of the way in time.”

“It shouldn’t have happened,” Jay said with finality. He didn’t want to talk about it anymore. Didn’t want to think about how close he’d come to killing the only woman he’d ever loved.

“What is up with you and Blaina?”

Jay met Cash’s unwavering stare. “Nothing.”

Cash shook his head in disgust. “Don’t bullshit me. Someone’s got your dick in a knot and I know it ain’t me or Smitty.”

“Fuck off. You don’t know the half of it.”

“Really? I know what I’ve seen the past three months and that wasn’t Mr. Safety, Flip or even Jay Mother-Fucking Williams running the show.”

“What the hell does that mean?” Jay growled.

“Come on, man. Bo might let you get away with playing dumb, but I won’t. You’ve been on and off your game this entire flick. Half the time you kicked ass, doing shit better than I’ve ever seen, the other half...you weren’t focused, and you took being a moody asshole to new heights. That’s just not you, man, and I know there’s more to it.” Cash readjusted in his chair and pet Bo. “Let’s try this again... What’s with you and Blaina?”

“You really wanna know?”

“You really think I don’t?”

“I love her.”

“Okay.” Cash nodded. “And I’m guessing by the fact that you’re here and Blaina’s not, that she doesn’t return the sentiment?”

“Halfway through filming she...we ended it.”

“And you’ve been a miserable fuck ever since.”

“Pretty fucking much.”

“And you held this back from everyone why?”

“I don’t know.”

“You’re lying.” Cash took another swig of beer. “You can’t even look me in the eye. You’re in love with one of the best chicks I’ve ever met and you’re not trying to steal her away from the rest of the world. You let her go. What the hell is wrong with you, man?”

“Hey, you said it yourself. I was off my game this movie. I couldn’t get my mind off Blaina. And look what happened. I could have killed her. *Shit*. That’s an even bigger reason I gotta stay away from her.”

“Then if you’re staying away from Blaina, you won’t care if I—”

Jay slammed his still full bottle of beer on the table and lunged out of the chair. “Don’t even fucking think about it.”

Cash scoffed. “You should be kissing her ass right now, not threatening mine.” He looked down at the cooler then back up at Jay. “You wanna grab more beers while you’re up? If you’re going to sit here and mope all night, we’ll need more.”

Jay stared at Cash. “You think this is fun for me? I’d rather be with Blaina. But if anything ever happened to her because of me...I couldn’t...” He jerked a hand down his face. “It would kill me.”

“You are the dumbest fuck I have ever known.” Cash pushed to his feet and stood toe-to-toe with Jay. “You take chances every day, Flip. You weigh your actions in each stunt, figure out all the possible outcomes—even death—and then you do it anyway. That’s what we—including Blaina—do. It’s our job. Now you have the chance to be with this incredible woman and because of one possible—although unlikely—outcome you’re giving up and not going after her? *Shit*. You don’t deserve her.”

The hot air and anger keeping Jay on his feet evaporated beneath the truth of Cash's words. It seemed so simple, so obvious when Cash said it. For twelve years Jay had lived with the weight of a promise made to a dead friend. A promise Jordan would never have wanted Jay to make in the first place. Jordan had lived life without apology. He'd loved with his whole heart, not letting anyone or anything stop him. And he'd died. But was love to blame? Jordan had screwed up, missed his mark, just like Jay did today. A tragic accident. Who's to say it wouldn't have happened even without Emma in Jordan's life?

Feeling defeated and exhausted, Jay sank back into the chair. There was no easy answer here. No particular choice that would guarantee a happy ending. But living without Blaina—that felt more wrong than anything else.

Working with Blaina had irrevocably changed his life. Before, he'd felt almost guilty enjoying his job. He was there for only two reasons, to perform the stunts and keep his team safe. But watching Blaina do her job, working at her side, there was no end to the high. Emotional, physical, sexual...all because of one extraordinary woman. She made him live again. Made him feel again.

When they'd been lovers, their stunt work had been seamless. They'd been in synch in a way he'd never experienced before. How could Jay have thought that was wrong? That they shouldn't be together? They belonged together, on set, off set, everywhere in between.

"I screwed the pooch on this one, huh?" Jay muttered, then looked at Bo. "No offense, boy. Blaina's made it pretty damn clear she's not interested in trying again."

"So you blew take one. Reset for take two. Duh. When the hell did you become a quitter?" Cash flopped back down on the lawn chair. "Get your head out of your ass for a second here. If you try to get her back, there's two possible outcomes. One, you end up the happiest, luckiest mother fucker on the planet, right?" He didn't wait for Jay to respond. "The other, you end up miserable the rest of your life. Oh, but wait, you're already miserable." Cash chuckled. "Far as I can tell, it's a win/win situation. You win her back, you'll stop being an asshole. She tells you to get lost, I'll be there to make her feel better." Cash shot Jay a wide grin.

Shaking his head, Jay gave Cash a wry smile. "If Blaina takes me back, I'll still be an asshole. Just a lucky one."

Cash saluted with his beer. “No doubt about that.”

“So any idea where Blaina is?” Jay got to his feet, fumbling in his pockets for his car keys. Where the fuck were they? He’d spent too damn many hours away from her. That needed to end now. “Did she leave with anyone? Was she going anywhere for dinner? Do you think—”

“Whoa, boy.” Cash stood. “You’re not going to win Blaina back smelling like a drunken shit. I’ve seen bums that look—and smell—better than you do. Christ, do I have to figure out everything for you?”

“Shut up.” Jay crossed to the back door. “I owe you one.”

“Fuck that. You owe me three. A redhead, a blonde and a brunette. Unless... Does Blaina have a sister?”

Laughing, Jay walked into the house and headed for the shower—hopefully the last one he’d take alone for the rest of his life.



“Ow! Mother-fucking car. What the hell’s wrong with you?” Blaina untangled the carburetor from the intake manifold and set it on the floor next to the air cleaner. “Can’t you break on a day when I have the time, desire and I’m not already in pain? Is that too much to ask?”

Who had she screwed over in a past life to get this type of karmic payback? All in one day she’d fallen on her ass and sprained her wrist while almost being run over by a car driven by her former lover, her own car had sprung an oil leak from under the intake manifold, leaving a cloud of smoke the entire length of her drive home and now, to top off this beautiful—note the sarcasm—day, she was doused in gasoline, which felt less than pleasant in the scrapes on her hand.

Maybe she’d get even luckier and create a spark and light herself on fire. What an ideal ending to a perfect day.

Fighting all the stinging in her hand, she flexed and released her fingers, but there wasn’t a damn thing she could do about the teeth-gritting agony plaguing her wrist. She had plenty of braces to choose from, but that’d be an exercise in futility. By now, the darn thing would’ve been soaked in gas and oil, and probably have caused more damage than helping by getting caught on

the accelerator linkage spring. She promised her wrist a new brace and two ice packs if it lasted long enough to fix her car.

Picking up a ratchet, an extension and a socket, she assembled the tool and snarled at her Camaro before sitting on the front radiator brace. She put her feet on the sub-frame and leaned in to start removing intake manifold bolts.

The first seven came out easily, but eight, nine and ten got progressively harder. On eleven, she climbed out of the damn engine compartment to get at the last two bolts from over the fender. She used her left hand and *clink* the bolt gave way.

But on the other side of the engine, she couldn't get her left hand in there. The angle was wrong and she had no leverage. One push with her right—and the answering scream from her damaged wrist—had her cussing again.

To hell with it. This called for her favorite tool—an extra long, half-inch drive breaker bar she'd lovingly nicknamed her man basher. A couple years earlier, a hopped-up junkie had decided Blaina would make an easy carjacking victim, until she'd broken his arm with the breaker bar. Now she never left home without it.

After slamming the socket and extension onto the end of her trusty basher, she fitted it onto the bolt head. Let one thing go right today, she silently prayed. Let one thing not cause her pain, grief or suffering. Just one...

Blaina cranked the handle. Her head spun from the pain in her wrist, but that damn bolt didn't spin a fucking millimeter.

She jumped onto the front bumper, smacking her head on the jutting hood latch. Great. The way her day was going, she'd have a concussion before the night was through. Growling, she leaned down, practically standing on the engine itself. Left hand on the head of the tool to keep the socket over the bolt, she swung her body sideways, put her foot against the handle and when one push didn't break the bolt free, she kicked her man basher. "*Fuck you, you fucking fuck!*"

Falling forward as the bolt gave way, Blaina scrambled so as not to impale herself on the exposed carburetor studs.

"Wow. And I haven't even started talking yet." Jay's voice came through the open garage door.

Blaina looked heavenward. “Whatever I did,” she muttered beneath her breath, “couldn’t have been bad enough to deserve all of this.” She sat on the radiator mount, settling her feet on either side of the fan. Her knuckles went white around her man basher, tempted to do just that to Jay.

Maybe if she ignored him he’d go away.

And maybe the sky would open up, angels would start singing, and she wouldn’t look like a gasoline-soaked version of Carrie on prom night.

The familiar sound of Jay’s boots crossing her garage floor proved her point that ignoring him wouldn’t work. He stepped around to the front of her car, and Blaina actually blinked at the sight of him.

How many dozens of roses was the man carrying? Pinks, oranges, yellows, reds, all packaged up nice and beautifully. Jay was packaged up nice and beautifully as well, wearing faded jeans paired with a red button-down shirt.

He gave her a wide and sexy smile, reminding her of better times.

Keeping a tight grip on her man basher, she climbed out of her car and glared at him. “Whatever you’re selling, I’m not interested.”

Setting the flowers down on the cowl, their petals a riot of color peeking under the edge of the open hood, Jay leaned into the engine compartment and said, “You blow a gasket?”

“My car did,” she said acerbically. “Although I may join her shortly.”

Jay chuckled. “Well, we don’t want that.” He rolled his sleeves and picked up the ratchet and another socket.

“I don’t need your help.”

“Okay.” Jay shrugged and snapped the socket onto the ratchet. “Then I’ll just sit back and watch.” He set the tool down on the lip of the fender.

“No.” Blaina let out a strangled growl. “I don’t want you here.” There. She’d said it. True, part of her wanted him there, but that was the tired, sore, weak part of her which still pined for him in the middle of the night, and during the day, and all those lonely hours in between. She’d gotten pretty good at ignoring it.

Rather than continue to study her car, Jay's gaze washed over her. Although he didn't reach out to touch her, he might as well have. Her flesh reacted all the same, goose bumps rising along the path of his distant caress. Concern, desire and love were evident in the way he looked at her. As though she were the only thing in the room. The only thing that mattered.

He frowned when his gaze landed on her right arm, and before she could raise the man basher menacingly, he'd crossed to her side and cradled her elbow. His touch generated the spark she'd feared earlier, but rather than ignite her gasoline-soaked T-shirt, it fanned the flames within her.

"God, Blaina. I'm so sorry." Gentle fingers traced from her elbow to wrist then down to her fingertips before letting go.

Hiding the way her body reacted to his touch, she crossed her arms over her chest. "I've been hurt worse."

"Not by me."

And just when she was starting to like him again. Damn arrogant bastard. "I beg to differ," she said sarcastically. "Now if you're done making yourself feel better, you can put the flowers in that big black vase over there on your way out." Using the man basher she pointed toward the forty-four gallon trash can.

Without a word, Jay walked out of the garage. Blaina hadn't realized her heart could still hurt because of him, but watching him leave without a fight stung more than she'd expected.

Taking a deep breath, and inhaling enough gasoline fumes to get her high, Blaina leaned under the hood and went back to work...

Only to jump back out again when Jay reentered the garage. He held her garden hose in one hand and was filling her trash can with water.

Blaina stared, gape-mouthed. "Wh-what are you doing, Jay?" she sputtered.

"Putting water in your vase."

"Oh my God. You're crazy."

Jay's lips quirked, but he didn't say anything. When her trash can was full, he turned off the water, gathered the flowers from the cowl and settled them into the "vase". Stepping back, he admired his handiwork. "Not bad." He nodded.

Head spinning from the fumes, Jay and the day from hell, Blaina stomped toward her lunatic ex-lover. “Okay, cut the crap, Jay. What do you want?”

“You,” he said calmly.

“Argh!” she replied, not so calmly.

“So, can I take that as a ‘yes, I want to be with you, too, Jay’?” He smiled.

She shoved the man basher against his chest and pushed him away. “Did you think you could come here and be all cute and funny and I’d just forgive you and hop back into your bed?”

“No, babe, I didn’t. You’re too strong for that.”

If he was trying to confuse the hell out of her, it was working. “Then why are you here?”

“Because there’s nowhere else I’d rather be.”

Her broken heart banged restlessly against her ribcage, trying to launch itself at Jay. But she couldn’t hide her suspicions. “Until when, Jay? The timing on this is just a little too suspect. Shooting wraps and you can be with me now?” Feeling weary and exhausted and more than a little vulnerable, she shook her head. “No. I told you before that won’t work for me. I’m tired of feeling like I’m not good enough for you.”

“Not good enough for me?” Surprise and shock registered on Jay’s face. “Blaina, babe, *you* are *too good* for *me*. I’m just hoping I can spend a lifetime convincing you that I’m worth taking a chance on.”

“And how many more chances am I supposed to give you?” Blaina lowered onto a step stool and rested her elbows on her knees. “The next time something bad happens, are you gonna climb in your car and drive out of my life again?”

He fished his keys out of his pocket and knelt in front of her. Taking her damaged hand in his—she still held the man basher in her other one—he carefully dropped the keys into her palm and closed her fingers around them. “I can’t drive out of your life without these.”

The gesture, coupled with the sincerity of his words, pierced the wall she’d erected around her heart. God she wanted him. Missed him. Ached for him with every fiber of her being. It took every ounce of swiftly failing willpower to keep from dissolving against Jay and losing herself in his touch.

Blaina squeezed the keys in her fist, needing to feel the bite of ragged metal digging into her flesh. That was the type of pain she could manage. Not so manageable was the anguish that came from broken trust and a shattered relationship. That misery was unrelenting. Maybe she was a coward, but it was easier to walk away from Jay than suffer the potential, agonizing consequences.

“I can’t do this, Jay,” she forced out past the lump in her throat. She tried to return the keys, but he ignored her outstretched hand and began unbuttoning his dress shirt.

“What are you doing?” Blaina nearly fell off the back of the stool in her rush to get away from him. “Do you think a striptease will convince me to take you back?”

Jay shrugged the shirt off his wide shoulders, leaving him naked from the waist up. Blaina pinched her eyes shut so she couldn’t stare at the broad expanse of bronze, muscled flesh and the hypnotic flame tattoo curling over his heart. She saw it enough in her memories, there was no need for a debilitating refresher course.

“This isn’t a seduction,” he said reassuringly. “I need to tell you a story, and it requires a little show and tell.”

She opened her eyes and guardedly looked at him. “I’m listening.”

“Give me your hand.”

“I thought this was show and tell, not show and touch.”

“Please.” His eyes were open and honest, and as much as Blaina wanted to keep away, she couldn’t deny his simple request.

Reluctantly, she placed the man basher to the side and offered Jay her non-damaged hand. He took it between his and pressed it against his chest, over the brightly colored flame. “Do you feel that?” he asked.

His flesh was so warm. So familiar. How many times had she touched him this way? Stroked him as he stroked her into beautiful oblivion?

Jay’s heart raced beneath her fingertips as she traced over the intricate details of the tattoo, stopping when she felt a deep gash and the roughness of damaged flesh. “Your scar?”

He nodded. “I got it the day Jordan died.” As though fortifying his strength, he took a deep breath and forged onward with the story. “Jordan and I were a stunt team. A package deal I guess

you could call us. We'd known each other for so long that we could read each other with a glance. We thought we were this invincible, unstoppable stunt-driving machine.

"We were working a 1930's gangster flick when Jordan met Emma. The first time Jordan saw her he told me, 'That woman is mine.' And just like that—" Jay snapped his fingers, "—he swept her off her feet. That was the way he was. When he wanted something, not a damn thing got in his way. Kinda like you, Blaina. Your take-no-prisoners, live-life-to-the-fullest attitude."

Blaina smirked. "It has its moments."

"I know." His eyes sparked. "I have quite a few fond memories of those moments."

And so did she. Way too many of them were assaulting her memory banks, weakening her resolve. She steeled her spine. "I'm sure you do. But that's not the memory lane we're strolling down right now."

"I never stop thinking about you."

She raised an eyebrow but didn't say a word. She couldn't trust what would come out of her mouth.

"Okay, okay, I can take a hint." Jay sat on the cement floor and tucked his legs around Blaina's stool. He leaned forward and placed his hands on his knees. It was comfortable having him so close, and she struggled with the urge to pin his thighs with her feet, or to sink to the ground and wrap her legs around his waist and bury her head against his chest.

Her arms fell to her knees and she kept her legs firmly closed.

"Okay, where were we?" Jay asked.

"Jordan swept Emma off her feet."

"That's right. Well, Emma was the *it* girl of the time and the press constantly harassed the two of them. They took it in stride until an overzealous photographer snuck onto the set and hid in Emma's trailer. Jordan beat the shit out of the guy, but that only made the reporters want a bigger piece of him. Security was tripled, but so was outside interest.

"Tension ran high on set. Emma was easily spooked, and Jordan was worried about her. He was only going through the motions with his job. I knew that, but I figured he was good enough, we were both good enough, that it didn't matter. I was wrong."

For a couple moments, Jay stayed silent. Blaina studied him in the waning sunlight. His hair had grown out since they'd met, enough that she'd be able to tangle her fingers in it, to hold him still as she kissed him. And God how she wanted to taste Jay again, to get lost in the tangle of tongues, to feel the warmth of their flesh pressed together.

Jay started talking again, pulling Blaina from her foolish fantasies. "We were on location, a tiny one lane strip of road carved out of a mountain, pinned in on both sides by rock wall. Jordan was in a 1929 Bugatti T35 and I was driving a 1934 Rolls Royce Phantom II. It was a game of chicken. We were supposed to race at each other, and at the last possible second Jordan was to swerve, squeezing by me with mere inches to spare. We rehearsed it several times and it went off without a hitch. First take was fine. But on the second take Jordan didn't swerve fast enough. I tried to correct but it was too late. He hit the front of my Rolls, spun out and the driver's side slammed into the rock wall. I was impaled on the steering wheel mounted timing and choke controls and lost consciousness when I hit the windshield. I woke up two days later. They told me Jordan died on impact. His head smashed into the rock. There was nothing they could do."

Blaina curled her hand over his. "Jesus, Jay. I'm sorry," she whispered. "But you didn't do anything wrong."

"I know." Jay picked up her hand and kissed it. "But knowing that doesn't stop the guilt. A part of me hated him for screwing up and I blamed his death on his relationship with Emma. He'd never screwed up and gotten himself killed before Emma, so of course it had to be because of her, right?" He shook his head. "Grief doesn't always make sense. At his funeral, I made a vow that I would never get involved with anyone I worked with. And I never did. Until I met you."

He lowered his face and pressed it against her hand, rubbing back and forth over her flesh. Her heart ached for him, for them. For everything they'd lost because of a tragic accident.

Jay lifted his head and pierced her with a soul-searching gaze. "That first day you walked up to me on set and I realized I was working with the woman who'd rocked my world that weekend...I nearly came outta my skin. I wanted you more than I'd ever wanted anyone, and you were forbidden. But I couldn't stay away from you. I still can't. Blaina, I love you. That's never going to change."

Blaina swallowed hard, the lump in her throat and the tightness of her chest making it difficult to breathe. “Jay...”

“Shhh, I’m not done. I know I’ve hurt you. Let me make things right. I want to be with you. On set. Off set. Wherever you’ll have me. I know I fucked up today—”

“It was an accident.”

“And it scared the shit out of me. I don’t wanna lose you, Blaina. You turned my orderly, boring world upside down and made me live again. I want to spend the rest of my life with you, starting now.”

“Jay...” Blaina tightened her fingers around his keys. The twinge in her wrist was nothing compared to the ache in her heart. Everything he’d said was what she wanted. But at what cost? Could she open herself up to him, take a chance that in a month or two or ten he’d change his mind and walk away from her again. “I need some time,” she blurted out. “I can’t do this right now.”

She tried to pull away, but he kept a hold of her hand, intertwining their fingers. “When, sweetheart?”

“I don’t know. I...I leave for Africa in two weeks. I’m working with Mel on her next feature. You know that right?”

He nodded.

“I’ll be there for four months. Maybe...maybe when I get back...we can talk. Have dinner. Figure things out. If you still want—”

“Blaina, I will always want you. Time isn’t going to change that.” He let go of her hand, only to grab her hips, lift her off the stool and lower her to his lap. “I love you, Blaina.” His mouth bumped hers, warm and tender. “I love you,” he repeated in a whisper of flesh brushing flesh, his lips drawing over her jaw before returning to her mouth. “I love you.”

She kissed him back, opening her mouth beneath his questing tongue, wrapping her arms around him and pulling them together, skin pressed against skin until they were separated by only the thin material of her gasoline-covered shirt. He held her in the comfort of his embrace, stroking her back, her legs, her arms, everywhere he could reach, rousing her desires to a fevered

pitch. His erection nudged her hip, but he made no demands for more than she was willing to give.

Her body ached for him, to take this inside and forget about the misery she'd suffered without him in her life...in her bed. But she was too damn afraid.

Out of breath and slowly coming to her senses, Blaina broke the kiss and leaned her head against his shoulder. She inhaled his familiar scent, soap combined with raw, sexy, virile male. Her man.

And then she pulled away, untangling their bodies and getting rather unsteadily to her feet. "You need to go," she whispered hoarsely, handing him his keys. "I just...I just can't do this now."

Grabbing his discarded shirt, Jay pushed to his feet and slipped the red cotton over his shoulders, leaving it unbuttoned. He curled a wisp of her hair around his finger and tucked it behind her ear before lowering his mouth to hers for a final, heartbreaking kiss. "I'll be waiting for you."

A sob lodged in her throat as she backed toward her house. She couldn't watch him get in his car and drive away. It may have been her choice, but damn if it wasn't ripping her in two. Before she could call him back, beg him to stay with her, she dodged into the house, stripped off her clothing and jumped into the shower.

Blaina stayed there until the water ran cold and shivers racked her body. But inside she still burned for Jay. She didn't think that would ever change.

After toweling off, she changed into a tired pair of jeans and T-shirt, and went back to her garage to finish fixing her car.

But it was already done. The intake gaskets were replaced. Everything was hooked up, bolted down and secured. Jay had even washed it for her.

A single red rose was tucked beneath a wiper blade. The rest of the roses still resided in the trash can, a flourish of color brightening her garage. Blaina plucked the single rose from her car. If Jay was still there maybe...

As Blaina stepped out of her garage, the evening breeze caressed her flesh, still damp from her shower. She shivered and wrapped her arms around herself, staring at the empty street.

Like she'd requested, Jay was gone. The four months without him stretched endlessly before her.

Chapter Fourteen

Blaina weaved through the passengers huddled around baggage claim, looking for a friendly face. Sam had agreed to shuttle her to set for reshoots on *Dangerous Intentions*. And talk about a quick turnaround—Blaina had only landed a few minutes ago, her call time was in an hour, and she'd be on a plane again, winging her way back to Africa in thirty-six hours.

Not a lot of time to do anything but work and see Jay.

Jay. Her heart accelerated to warp speed just thinking his name. It had been eleven weeks since he'd shown up at her house and made her crazy world a little bit crazier with his confession of love and a promise to wait for her. She hadn't seen or talked to him since. But she'd thought about him. Constantly. Endlessly. Desperately.

If Jay's plan had been to ruin her for other men, it had worked. No one else compared. Living in Africa for three months should have been an excuse to have fun, let loose and get down with hot and beautiful men with intriguing accents to curl a girl's toes.

But this girl's toes didn't curl for anyone but Jay.

Today's reshoots had been a blessing in disguise. Yeah, traveling halfway around the world for one day of work was a pain in the ass—literally—but to see Jay again was worth every crappy bite of airline food, kink in her neck, jetlag and minimal blood circulation she'd suffered.

Although after eleven weeks apart, would he be interested in seeing her?

And wasn't that the twist-your-tummy-into-knots kicker. Blaina was ready to drive into forever with Jay, and she didn't know if there was a road closed sign waiting right around the corner.

"Hey, world traveler," Sam squeaked, throwing her arms around Blaina and squeezing tight. The small swell of Sam's pregnant belly bumped against Blaina, drawing a smile. "You don't call, you don't write..."

Blaina laughed. "It's hard to get cell reception while hang gliding over Cape Town."

Sam pushed away from Blaina, eyes wide. "Are you serious?"

“Absolutely.” Blaina winked. “Reception sucks at that high an altitude.”

Sam playfully smacked Blaina on the arm. “Not about the cell phone coverage, you doof. About hang gliding.”

“Hang gliding, sky diving, ditching a motorcycle off a cliff and free falling halfway before using my chute...” Blaina ticked them off on her fingers. “Y’know, the usual.”

Gaping, Sam slowly shook her head. “My best friend is crazy,” she mumbled.

“Next week we’re filming a scene where I hang upside down over the side of a cliff and then—”

Sam held her hands out pleadingly. “I don’t think I want to know anymore. How many weeks of this craziness do you have left?”

“Six. And I’m hoping to start another round of craziness right after.”

“Lord have mercy.” Sam gestured to the single bag over Blaina’s shoulder. “Is that all you have?”

“Yup. I’m spending more time in the air this trip than on the ground. I’m taking the red-eye out tomorrow night.” Blaina turned her back on Sam. “Does my ass resemble a seat in coach? ’Cause after twenty-five hours in that tiny seat, I figured there had to be some type of damage.”

Sam snorted. “Your ass looks fine. Your hair on the other hand...”

“Oh damn, I have plane hair, don’t I?”

“Gravity defying.”

Blaina ran a hand through her rumpled ’do. “Better?”

Sam wrinkled her nose. “Don’t worry about it. With your coach-seat-shaped ass, no one will notice your hair.”

“Wait a sec. I thought you said my ass was fine?”

Smacking Blaina on the debated body part, Sam grinned. “Missed you.”

“You, too, babe.” Blaina tucked her arm around Sam as they walked out of the airport. “So how’s the family?”

“The kids are great. Keeping me busy. You know, the usual. Connor’s between movies. And can I tell you how great it’s been to have him home with me. All the time. At my disposal.”

“Does he ever leave your bed?” Blaina teased.

“Only when he’s making me breakfast, lunch and dinner,” Sam teased right back.

“You should hire someone to do that.”

“Good point.”

While they negotiated the overstuffed Los Angeles freeways, conversation traveled to Blaina’s Africa exploits, Connor’s next movie project, the kids, and everything else under the sun that they hadn’t shared in the last nine weeks. But as they got closer to the studio where today’s reshoots were being filmed, Blaina got quiet. Fidgety. And the butterflies in her stomach began a bloodthirsty battle, making Blaina glad that she hadn’t had a bite to eat since sometime over the Atlantic.

Blaina flipped down the visor and studied herself in the tiny mirror. Dark circles ringed her bloodshot eyes and her hair was doing a good impression of post-apocalyptic disarray, with strands shooting out at every possible angle.

“There’s lipstick and a hairbrush in my purse if you want to borrow them,” Sam offered.

“You don’t happen to have a team of makeover artists hidden in the trunk, do you?”

“You. Look. Fine.” Sam shot her a knowing look as she took the freeway off-ramp. “If Jay doesn’t jump you right away, he’s not worth your time.”

Blaina sank back into the seat and sighed. “This is crazy.”

“What is?”

“Me and Jay. I mean, me not knowing if there *is* a ‘me and Jay’.”

“Honey, I know I only got the recap of what Jay said to you, but if what you told me was true, the man sounds completely besotted and in love with you.”

“I know,” Blaina said miserably.

“Then what’s the problem, sweets?”

“I love him, too,” Blaina mumbled.

“Oh, the horrors.” Sam rolled her eyes and patted Blaina on the knee. “Look, I realize Jay wins the award for ‘biggest pain in the ass during the filming of a movie’, but that’s in the past. And if you still want him and he still wants you, then you two need to want each other together in lots of big, bad, dirty, sweaty ways, okay?”

“It’s been almost three months—”

“And absence makes the loins get hotter.”

Blaina pursed her lips to keep from laughing. “You’re horrible.”

“I’m right.”

“I hope so.”

Sam rolled down her window and spoke with the security guard stationed at the entrance to the studio, and was waved on through. After she pulled into a reserved space next to a soundstage, she turned to Blaina. “Have fun today. Be yourself. Don’t worry about anything else, all right? Now, if you need a ride tonight or a place to crash, give me a call. But if something else comes up, something long and hard and wonderfully arousing, take him up on the ride, okay?”

Blaina leaned over the center console and squeezed her best friend. “You’re the greatest, you know that, right?”

“But of course. Now go explode or spin or crash or whatever you’re supposed to do today.”

Bag in hand, Blaina hopped out of the SUV and waved goodbye to Sam.

Between the soundstages, Blaina hunted for Adam to let him know she had arrived in one piece. He was talking with Daniel near the catering truck. The smell of breakfast re-energized her butterflies, making her stomach roil. Damn, her nerves were more agitated than the first time she’d ever walked onto a set. Breakfast was going to have to wait, or she’d be revisiting it within the hour. That was not the impression she wanted to make on anyone today.

She took a deep breath, forced a smile and called out, “Hey, Adam. I’m here. Where’s the honey wagon?”

“Oh, hey, Blaina.” Adam picked up his coffee from the side of the catering truck. “They’re around the corner. Between Stage Seven and Eight. We’re shooting your stuff on Eight.”

“Thanks.” Before she could ask about Jay, she walked away. Today was about the stunt. Getting her job done. Her relationship with Jay—if they still had one—had to take a backseat.

But Jay was in the stunt. She should talk to him about it. Get back in the groove with him.

Kiss him. Love him. Wrap her arms around him and never let go.

Doing a quick about face, she returned to Adam. “Is Jay around?”

Daniel spoke up first this time. “I saw him a few stages over. He was talking to Smitty and Cash. They’re working on *Blow it Out*.”

“Cool. Thanks.”

Blaina glanced down the long row of stages. So close. After being thousands of miles away, Jay was now within touching distance.

And what was she going to say if she saw him right now? “Ummm, hi?” wasn’t the most stimulating of conversation starters. “Remember me?” was just plain lame. “I haven’t stopped thinking about you and I still love you and please tell me you haven’t changed your mind about me because I was a stupid idiot and traveled thousands of miles away from you before we worked things out,” sounded a little too crazy-stalkerish.

Oh, to hell with it. She headed to the honey wagon and her miniscule dressing room. Maybe somehow, someway putting on her leathers would stimulate her brain waves.

Grabbing the handrail, she launched up the metal steps and pulled open the door with “Blaina (Credence Stunts)” scribbled on a length of white gaffer’s tape. Inside, she dropped her bag on the small bench and then dropped her body onto it.

“You can do this, Blaina. You are not the pathetic, lame-brained dork you’re currently portraying. You are a strong, capable woman who just happens to be in love with a gorgeous, stud of a man who you haven’t seen or talked to in three months. No big deal.”

Yeah, right...

Before she collapsed onto the floor in a big ball of ridiculous misery, she got to her feet and shimmied into the leather jumpsuit. But rather than fit her body like a second skin, it bulged awkwardly at the waist. Had someone given her the wrong suit?

“Knock, knock!” Laura’s voice chimed through the door. “Adam said you might be in here. Are you?”

Blaina pushed open the door. “Just the lady I wanted to see. Do you read minds or something?”

Laura smiled. “No. I just wanted to see if our new Costume Assistant put the right suit in here. Now that we got Sarah trained, she of course went on to another show and couldn’t come back for reshoots.” Stepping up into the dressing room, she cocked her head to one side and pinched the extra leather around Blaina’s waistline. “Did you lose weight?”

"I guess I did." Blaina shrugged. "Crafty wasn't as good in Africa. And hotdogs weren't as easy to come by as they are here in the States."

"You and your hotdogs." Laura chuckled as she bent down. "I need to unzip you in order to make this fit right, okay?"

"Do what you gotta do."

"So, are you glad to be back for reshoots?" Laura worked with safety pins and toupee tape as she smoothed the extra leather down. Since this was the last time the suit was going to be used, it apparently didn't matter that the pins would leave permanent holes. "I saw Jay yesterday and he was sounding anxious about seeing you again."

Now that was an encouraging bit of information. "Jay mentioned me?" she squeaked out in a high falsetto. Oh God, could she sound more pathetic? Trying to cover, she said, "Umm, I mean, so why'd you see Jay yesterday? Was he doing other reshoots?"

Either Laura was too polite to mention that Blaina sounded like a moron, or she hadn't noticed. "I had to do a little adjustment on his camo pants for a scene he was reshooting yesterday."

"Adjusting his pants, huh? Did something...um...shrink in the last few months?"

Laura laughed. "No. I doubt that man has ever had a problem with shrinkage. He's just as big"—she gave a fake cough—"and beautiful as he ever was. The pants were a replacement. Someone took the ones he wore earlier." Laura zipped Blaina back up. "Good as new... Or at least good enough to get you through the shot."

"Thanks."

"You're welcome. See you on set."

With Laura gone, there was no one to keep Blaina from keeling over. She splashed cold water on her face and spent a few seconds manipulating her hair into what roughly passed for sexy, bed head, rather than electrocuted frizzy.

Laura had said Jay was anxious. Now was that "anxious, I want to see Blaina again, rip off her clothes and love her 'til the end of time, anxious" or "anxious, I'm seeing someone else now, Blaina, sorry, you took too long, anxious"? Why couldn't Laura have used a more definitive word? Excited. Happy. Even horny would've been a clearer description.

Bounding down the stairs, Blaina headed away from the trucks with *Dangerous Intentions* parking permits on their dashboard and toward ones with *Blow it Out*. She had to talk to Jay now, had to have an answer, good or bad, about him and her and their—hopefully—love-and-lust-filled future.

But the red light was spinning and only a lonely PA waited outside. “Jay Williams in there?”

“Who?” The guy appeared bored and uninterested. Maybe she hadn’t accomplished the sexy, bed-head look after all.

“Never mind.” Blaina scanned the area. A few scattered individuals walked between stages. But none of them were tall, blond, built and—hopefully—hers.

Maybe Jay had gone to Hair and Makeup.

Peeking through the door, Blaina found Christie filing her nails. No Jay.

Setting down the emery board, Christie grinned. “Hey, stranger. You ready?”

Blaina tossed one last searching glance over her shoulder. Still no Jay. Hiding her disappointment, she hopped into the trailer. “I’m always ready.”

Christie waved toward her chair. “Then sit. Let’s chat. Tell me about Africa. Especially about the men.” She grinned as she studied Blaina’s face. “Someone hasn’t been sleeping much. Is it because of the aforementioned gorgeous African men?”

Blaina chuckled. Leave it to Christie to get down to sexual nitty-gritty in less than ten seconds. “You are much too fascinated with my sex life, Christie.”

“Honey, I am a woman in my sexual prime. If I’m not getting any, I want to be talking about it.” Christie rubbed what felt like ten tons of concealer under Blaina’s eyes.

“What happened to you and Casey and all the, um, special effects you two were making?”

“The effects weren’t all that spectacular.” Christie shrugged. “It ended when the movie did. You know how it goes.”

Blaina’s heart cramped and she nodded. “It sucks.”

“It’s the curse of the short attention span. We’re on a job three, four months tops before we move on to the next project. It takes something really special to last beyond that.”

Shooting Christie a glare in the mirror, Blaina said, “You trying to depress me?”

“Depress you? I thought you were flavor-of-the-month gal?”

“Not anymore. My taste buds shriveled up. Variety is no longer the spice of my life.”

“So no hot African men to tell me about?” Christie pouted.

“Not a one.”

“Then lie to me, baby, and make it good,” Christie said saucily.

“All right, all right,” Blaina chuckled, “but at least buy me breakfast when I’m finished.”

“You’re on.”

“Too late,” a deep, sexy, rumbling voice joined in. “I brought breakfast, and a man to feed it to you.”

Slack-jawed and mute, Blaina stared at Jay’s reflection in the mirror as he stepped up into the trailer. Had he gotten more beautiful in the last three months? Gorgeous didn’t begin to describe him. He was perfect. Stunning. Her heart didn’t stand a chance.

Neither did the rest of her body. Sweat broke out on her brow, palms and between her breasts. The air seemed to get thicker, hard to breathe, and the room grew smaller as his presence filled up all the lonely places inside her. And her pussy, which had withered and died sometime in the last couple of dry, desolate months, stirred to achy, needy life.

Jay crossed the trailer and wedged himself between the mirror and Blaina. His knee nudged hers and that one touch lit the fuse of long-denied desire. He was wigged and made-up, a purplish bruise shadowing one cheek, and wearing the costume of the day, jeans, black T-shirt and a tattered leather jacket. Blaina wanted to take it off, piece by piece, and slowly, carefully reacquaint herself with every inch of him.

“G’morning, Jay,” Christie said and lightly smacked Blaina on the back of the head, reminding her of where she was and that she and Jay were very much not alone.

Damn.

“Hi,” Blaina said, although it came out as an exhale of sound that could be mistaken for a sigh.

Jay’s smile widened and Blaina curled her fingers into her palms to keep from reaching out and stroking him. “Hey, yourself,” he rumbled. “I’ve got bacon and hash browns. Are they still your favorite?”

“Uh-huh.” So caught up in visually reacquainting herself with Jay, she hadn’t even noticed the steaming plate of food balanced on one hand.

“Open wide.” Jay held a piece of bacon pinched between his fingers and he leaned over and placed the bite in her mouth. He brushed her lips before retreating, then lifted his fingers to his mouth and licked them clean. “Tastes good, huh?”

Blaina squirmed. As much as she loved bacon, it wasn’t what she was interested in consuming. She wanted to make a meal of her man. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and dessert. Brunch, too. And supper. Throw in endless midnight snacks and she’d be set for life.

The strong greasy, salty flavor exploded over her taste buds as Blaina chewed and swallowed. “Better than ever,” she said thickly, her eyes never leaving her man.

“I think so, too.” His eyes never left her as well, and his lazy smile warmed her to her toes. He took a bite of hash browns, then offered her a bite using the same fork. Blaina wanted to ditch the fork and go straight for his mouth. But she stayed good. Barely.

Christie busied herself in her makeup box, but Blaina knew she was watching and mentally recording the feeding session.

At least Blaina had a witness, because otherwise she’d never believe that Jay was doing whatever this was he was doing. Was it simply breakfast between friends? A seduction? Did it matter? It was Jay. And her. With fingers and tongues involved.

The door swung open and Adam stuck his head inside. “Flip, they need you on stage.”

“Yeah, okay.” Jay put the plate down and pushed away from the vanity. His hands curled around the arms of the makeup chair and he leaned over her, his mouth mere inches from hers. “It’s good to have you home, sweetheart. We’ll finish this later, all right?”

She licked the taste of his breath off her lips and nodded.

Jay watched the path of her tongue and his hands clenched so hard around the plastic armrests Blaina swore she heard them crack.

“You better go,” she whispered throatily.

“Later?”

“Yes.”

He shot to his feet and pounded out the door.

Blaina watched him go, regretting that their reunion had come to an end so soon. And without either of them getting naked.

Although at least she'd gotten the answer to her question. Jay had waited for her. He still wanted her—loved her. And Lord knew she loved him—everything about him. His determination, his arrogance, his smile, the way he filled out a pair of jeans...

As the door swung shut, Christie smacked Blaina on the back of the head, a little harder this time.

"Ow! What was that for?"

"I thought you weren't getting any?" Christie huffed.

"I haven't. Not for awhile."

Christie shot Blaina an accusing stare, then her eyes lit up excitedly. "Wait a sec. *Oh my God.*" Forgetting she still held a blush brush in one hand, Christie clapped enthusiastically, causing a puff of pink powder to explode around them. "Jay was your flick fling, wasn't he?"

Blaina hesitated. It had become second nature to lie about her and Jay's relationship. But now... Jay hadn't seemed overly worried about discretion a few minutes ago. "Uh-huh," she said tentatively.

"And you haven't seen him since the end of filming, right?"

"Yeah."

Christie clapped again. "I think someone's getting lucky tonight."

"You think?" Blaina tipped her head back and gave Christie a cheeky grin.

Pursing her lips, Christie brushed some blush on Blaina's upturned cheeks. "I think I hate you."

Blaina laughed, full of joy at having her man back. "Make me beautiful, Christie. I have a scene to shoot and my man to seduce. It's going to be a good day."

Jay couldn't remember the last time he'd been this happy. Probably when he'd last held Blaina in his arms, and that had been way too damn long ago. Grinning like a loon, he headed toward Stage Eight. The weight of more than one hundred lonely days and nights had been lifted. His woman was back.

Hell couldn't possibly be as abysmal as the place he'd resided in for the last three months. Without Blaina, life had taken on depressing shades of gray. It had been all he could do to keep from climbing the walls. Or booking a flight to Africa. He'd started and finished filming *Chasing Reality*, and spent every bit of time off set either sleeping or working on his cars, all the while thinking about how once Blaina returned from her shoot, he'd win her back, keep her from ever leaving his side again.

He'd refused to entertain the possibility of failure. Life without Blaina was not an option he was willing to consider.

Fortunately, if the last few minutes were anything to go by, she'd missed him as much as he'd missed her. But he wasn't taking anything for granted. Not with so much at stake.

So how fast could they get through today's reshoots? Jay knew they were on borrowed time, that Blaina had to be back in Africa in less than two days. He didn't want to waste a moment with her. If he had anything to say about it, today was the start of the new Jay and Blaina. Together. At work. At play. Always.

Lachlan burst through the outer stage door and did a double take when he saw Jay. "Damn, you on some happy drugs or something, Flip?"

"Or something." Jay's grin widened and Lachlan shook his head.

"I need to get me some of whatever you're on."

"Sorry, I don't share." Jay started whistling as he pushed past a chuckling Lachlan, then through the second set of doors onto the stage.

A cutaway of the mansion loomed in front of him. The grand staircase wound upward to three doorways with partial rooms beyond. It was an exact replica of the mansion set they'd filmed on months earlier. It had to be. Today they were reshooting the fall through the banister. The studio wanted an angle that hadn't been filmed the first time. A-Camera was set to catch his and Blaina's fall from below.

A few other partial sets, being used for additional *Dangerous Intentions* reshoots, were built on the same stage. Thankfully none of them required his or Blaina's expertise. Once they got the banister shot in the can, they were done for the day. No, scratch that, they were done *working* for the day. God willing there'd be plenty of *playing* happening afterward.

Jay perused the set, wondering why he'd been called back there. He'd done his rounds earlier and everything had looked fine. Electricians moved around lights and ballasts. Grips readied flags and bounces. The Camera Crew was prepping the dolly. Carpenters and Effects guys tweaked the banister and doorjamb upstairs. The thick foam Port-a-Pit was already in place, ready for Jay and Blaina's landing.

Damn, he was going to enjoy getting his arms around his woman again.

"Casey said he was looking for you, Flip. Did he find you?" Adam whizzed past, walking backward to face Jay while they spoke.

"No. Any idea why I'm needed?"

"Not a clue. I'm just the go-get-'em guy. Sorry."

"No problem. I'll find Casey. Thanks."

"Cool." Adam continued on toward video village.

For the next fifteen minutes, Jay walked all over the damn stage, feeling like he was on a godforsaken scavenger hunt. No one knew where Casey was or why Jay had been called to the stage. He mourned the time he could've been with Blaina, feeding her breakfast, touching her lips, grinding against her in the chair and exploding with the unparalleled rush he only received when he was with her.

As Jay approached the cutaway mansion set for the umpteenth time, Casey suddenly appeared upstairs, walking through the doorframe. "Flip, can you come up here for a second? I gotta show you something."

"Where have you been? I've been looking all over this place for you."

"Really? Shit, I'm sorry. I went to grab a bite to eat."

"Why the hell'd you do that?" Jay took the stairs two at a time, doing a cursory inspection of the railing and doorjamb on the way up, but nothing looked wrong or even different from when he'd last checked them.

"Um, 'cause I was hungry?" Casey made it a question, shooting Jay an "are you out of your mind" look.

"Then why'd you call me over here? If there's something wrong, we gotta fix this now, Casey. Time's a wastin' and I have bigger and better things to do today."

Casey motioned Jay to go into the open-sided, empty upstairs room.

Jay rubbed the bridge of his nose. His one day with Blaina and it was already heading for disaster. “What the hell could possibly be screwed up in there? We’re not shooting in the room. This sequence only uses squibs in the door and frame.” He stepped through the door, his gaze immediately catching the “problems”—Smitty and Cash, both down on one knee in mirroring mock-arrow-shooting-Cupid poses, blissful happy faces toward the sky.

Murder instantly came to mind.

“What the fuck are you guys doing here? And you—” Jay smirked and turned to Casey, “—when did you get involved with these two numbnuts?”

“Don’t blame me, Flip.” Casey laughed. “All I did was ask Adam if he’d seen you. The rest was all them.”

“Get outta here then, man,” Jay jokingly ordered. “I don’t want a witness when I kill these dorks.”

Still laughing, Casey backed out of the room.

“Sooooooooo, how’d it go, Flip?” Cash approached and slapped Jay on the back. “You and your girl all hooked up now?”

Smitty added, “You fuck her already?”

“If I hadn’t been rudely interrupted by some goddamn nitwits calling me to the set...” He glared at the nitwit duo. “Dammit, don’t you belong on the other stage?”

“Shit.” Cash turned to Smitty. “I told you we should’ve waited.”

“Shut up, fucknut. I thought Flip was gonna get right in there.” He gestured a crude slide with his hands.

“Get in where?” a female voice entered the discussion, and all three men jumped to attention.

“*Blaina*,” Cash and Smitty yelled simultaneously, promptly forgetting about Jay as they dove for his woman.

“Hey, aren’t you guys supposed to be on another stage?” Blaina laughed as Jay’s soon-to-be-dead friends took turns hugging her, touching her, spinning her around until her blonde wig flew out in every direction, and doing all the things that Jay hadn’t been able to do to Blaina yet.

Smitty and Cash were so dead.

“Three months without Blaina-love was more than we could handle, babe,” Cash said.

“Baby, when we found out you were back in town, we quit our jobs and came here to worship you.” Smitty wiggled his eyebrows. Jay imagined ripping them out.

“Well, worship from afar then, boys, ’cause I’m still not interested in either of you.”

As Cash and Smitty whined over her rejection, Blaina’s gaze moved to Jay and she smiled.

White-hot lightning surged through his blood, kicking him in the ass and moving him in Blaina’s direction. Her smile widened as he bodily shoved Cash and Smitty out of the way and came to a stop directly in front of her.

She must have enjoyed his show of over-crazed need because the naughty vixen he’d fallen in love with came out to play. Hands on her hips, she raised an eyebrow and purred, “You ready to do this?”

“Babe, I am geared up, equipped and at your disposal.”

Her tongue peeked out between her lips as she looked him up and down. Jay’s dick hardened so fast he was surprised it didn’t burst through his jeans. “Then let’s do this,” she replied, and before Jay could grab her and do anything and everything to her, she spun around and traipsed out the door, mesmerizing him with the sway of her hips.

“You are the luckiest motherfucker on the goddamn planet,” Smitty said.

His smile growing bigger by the minute, Jay walked out the door, willing to follow his woman anywhere.

“Blaina.” Lukas met her with a hug at the base of the stairs. “Are you going to show me magic today?”

“Do I ever show you otherwise?”

Lukas dropped a kiss on her hand. “That’s what I like to hear.”

Lachlan ran up and handed her the fake gun.

“Feel free to shoot the rehearsal.” She looked over her shoulder at Jay. “Mr. Safety has already checked everything. We’ve done this before. We know what to do and promise not to land on the camera.”

“Great!” Lukas pumped a fist through the air. “Let’s get this together.”

“Picture’s up, everyone!” Daniel hollered.

“Let’s do this.” Jay nodded at Blaina.

“Yes...let’s...” She winked and Jay welcomed every suggestion those two little words implied.

Timmy strutted between Blaina and Jay. “One last fix, Blaina, and then you can do your thang.”

“Admit it, Timmy. You just want to put your hands on me.”

“You know it, Blaina. Anything for you.”

As Timmy ran his hands over Blaina’s wig, she spoke to Jay, “Make sure Smitty and Cash are out of the upstairs room, would ya? I don’t want them distracting me.”

“Anything for you, Blaina,” Jay teasingly repeated.

She laughed huskily. “Mmm, I love it when men are so agreeable.”

Flying up the stairs, he peeked into the empty room, but Cash and Smitty had already taken the escape stairs. When Jay turned around, Blaina was hot on his heels and he almost smacked into her.

Rather than back away, she stepped closer. Jay braced his hands on the doorframe to keep from yanking her into the empty room and giving her a proper welcome home. He’d adjust his focus before doing the stunt, but right now it wasn’t as important as the woman standing in front of him.

“Okay,” Blaina said, her coffee eyes sparking with the vivacity he loved so much. “Just like last time I’ll take three steps into you and then we’ll go over together.”

Forcing his brain into stunt mode, Jay nodded. “You got it. If I see you balk, everything’s off.”

His temptress slowly shook her head. “Oh no, Jay. Everything’s on. I have no plans on balking this time...or ever again. Do you?”

Before Jay could answer Blaina’s question with a loud and emphatic no, Daniel called out, “Everyone clear frame! Let’s go, folks!”

“It’s show time.” Blaina ducked beneath his arm and went to her starting point. “Let’s do it in one take.”

Jay spun to face her. “No.”

“No?” Blaina looked at him like he’d grown a second head. “You want to do multiple takes?”

This time he shook his head. “No. I have no plans on balking this time...or ever again. I found the person I want to cross the finish line with.”

Blaina positively beamed at him. Then the impudence slipped back into her expression. “Well then get your ass down the hall so we can cross this finish line together.”

Jay couldn’t argue with that. He moved to his starting point and mentally ran through the stunt one last time. Dash down the hall, catch Blaina as she exited the room with squibs exploding around her, then fall through the railing and land on the pit together.

“Roll sound!”

It was the way they belonged.

“Sound speed!”

Explosions, falls, whatever came their way...

“A-Camera mark!”

They’d do it together.

“Action!”

He sprinted toward the banister. The squibs exploded as Blaina blasted out of the room directly into his path. Catching her, he shot through the railing, pulling her close as they tumbled onto the pit.

“Cut! Magnificent!” Lukas shouted. “Print it! Check the gate! That was beautiful! You two still have your magic.”

Jay’s pulse raced from the adrenaline, the fall, and having his woman back in his arms. He’d waited eleven long weeks to hold her again, to feel her soft curves rubbing up against him, her panted breath warming his flesh. The reality was so much better than the memories he’d fostered during her absence.

“Gate’s good,” said one of the camera guys.

“Blaina and Jay are wrapped,” Adam announced.

“Oh yeah.” Blaina’s face glowed with excitement. “We did it in one. We’re done.”

She moved to untangle their bodies, but Jay tightened his grip and ran a hand down her back, following the curve of her spine. Touching her was electrifying his heart. This was his woman. *His*. And he wanted the whole damn world to know it.

“Not yet,” he ordered. And then he kissed her.

Chapter Fifteen

Admittedly, Blaina was an adrenaline junkie. Cliff jumping, falling off buildings, rolling out of cars before they crash, not things a normal person considered part of the daily routine. Yet Blaina craved the thrill of a perfectly executed stunt, loved the natural high that came from mastering a dangerous maneuver for the camera.

None of those things, however, satisfied her as much as spine-tingling, mouth-to-mouth action with the man she loved. This kiss had it all. Explosions, pyrotechnics, the hot rush of adrenaline that made her heart race, skin buzz and body yearn for more of Jay.

The past few months of heartache disappeared beneath the blistering warmth of his lips, his tongue tangling with hers. She sighed and pulled him closer, relishing the full body contact. This was how she wanted to spend her life. Living dangerously and loving deeply—both with Jay.

Somewhere in the distance she heard a roaring. A roaring that became individual cheers, applause, cat calls, laughter.

Blaina joined in the laughter, so damn happy she couldn't keep it contained inside. Jay chuckled and rested his forehead against hers. "Apparently everyone approves," he rumbled and the deep vibration of his tenor voice washed over her like an intimate caress.

"Of course they do. We make magic together, remember?"

He stroked a hand down her face, then traced along her jaw with the tip of his index finger. "I remember."

Suddenly impatient to ditch the crowd and get some one-on-one time with her man, she said, "Adam said we're wrapped, right?"

"That he did."

"How fast can you get changed and signed out?"

"Is this a race?"

Blaina brushed her lips over his and using her best seductress voice said, "One you're guaranteed to win."

"I already have." Jay kissed her again, hard, melting her lips, stealing her breath until heat curled in her belly, and her pussy lips swelled and pulsed with need. When he pulled away, Blaina realized she was fiercely gripping his leather jacket, ready to rip the material from his body. Somehow, she didn't think Laura would mind too much.

Jay smiled and swung them both over to the edge of the mat. "I'll be ready in fifteen," he said as he got to his feet.

Faced with the very real possibility of having Jay to herself, and making up for every lonely moment they'd spent apart, Blaina tossed her prop gun to Lachlan and hurried to stand next to Jay. "Make it ten," she countered, squeezing his hand.

He returned the squeeze and winked before taking off like a rocket through the crew. But his escape was cut short by Lukas, Adam and Daniel offering lots of back slapping and other forms of male congratulation.

Blaina laughed. She was so going to win this race and get Jay as her trophy.

Or maybe not. She hadn't even made it two feet before she was surrounded by Laura, Christie and Timmy, looking like a pack of hyenas ready to pounce. Holding up her hands to ward off the attack, Blaina slowly backed away. "Yes, I know, I'm a horrible person for not telling you about me and Jay. But no one knew. I swear. Scratch that. Sam knew. And Connor. But that's it. No one else."

The trio stalked after her. "That soooo doesn't let you off the hook," Laura chastised, although her lips tilted upward, negating the reprimand.

Timmy nodded in agreement. "How many hours did you spend in my chair, listening to me complain about being single, when you could have been regaling me with tales of lust?"

Blaina grinned shamelessly. "And they would've been really steamy tales, too. Lonnng, haaardd stories. Sagas even."

Christie reached around and smacked Blaina on the ass. "You are an evil woman, Blaina."

"So when are we getting details, huh?" Laura pried.

"I'm supposed to meet Jay in less than ten minutes and that is a date I am *not* going to be late for. So if you want to follow me to my honey wagon, I'll give you the Cliff notes version. I promise, it's the only thing abbreviated about Jay," she finished cheekily.

With her friends' help, Blaina managed to get de-wigged, de-costumed and re-dressed in street clothes in ten minutes flat. Nearly out of breath, she burst from the dressing room, her bag slung over one shoulder. The remaining air in her lungs left in a swift whoosh at the sexy sight before her.

Dressed in denim and cotton, casually leaning against the truck across from the honey wagon, Jay was her fantasy man come to life. Blaina didn't even try to hide her longing. He looked good enough to lick, eat and swallow—and she planned on doing all three to him the moment they were alone.

“Looks like I won the race. Better luck next time, sweetheart.”

Feigning dismay, she sighed dramatically. “Guess that means I have to be your sex slave. Oh, darn.”

“Damn straight.” He pulled her against his chest in a tight embrace, rubbing his hands possessively up and down her spine. Nuzzling close, she listened to the steady, reassuring beat of his heart. Inhaled the familiar scents of soap and hot, spicy male.

“Awww,” a trio of voices chimed from behind her.

“They're so cute together.”

“Perfect couple.”

“I love a happy ending.”

Blaina looked back over her shoulder at Timmy, Laura and Christie, standing with their arms wrapped around each other, matching looks of angelic wonder on their faces. It was enough to make Blaina laugh out loud. “Okay, okay. You've had your fun. Now it's time for Jay and me to have ours. Alone.”

“And next time your ass is in my chair, you'll tell me all about it, right?” Christie demanded.

“Of course.” Blaina winked. “Every last detail.”

“Well then,” Jay mused. “I better make ‘every last detail’ unforgettable.” He swooped Blaina up and over his shoulder. “Starting now.”

Laughing, hanging upside down, Blaina waved goodbye to her friends. “You can put me down now, stud,” she teased. “You made your point.”

“I don't know. I kind of like having you at my mercy. It doesn't happen very often.”

“Don’t get used to it,” she flirted, then swiftly sucked in a lungful of air as Jay ran two fingers down the crease of her ass and rubbed her pussy through her jeans.

“I’ll enjoy it while it lasts,” he promised.

“Me, too.” She mewled as he increased the pressure. It felt soooo good. Every jiggle and bounce as he walked added to the pleasure.

As retaliation for the lovely sexual games, Blaina smacked a hand on his butt. But she couldn’t only do it once. Hell no. She did it again, then again, and again, enjoying every scrumptious inch of firm posterior.

They passed several parked cars before Jay flipped her back over his shoulder and set her down on her feet. “M’lady, your carriage awaits.”

Slightly dizzy from the blood rushing through her head—and buzzing from his erotic handling—Blaina nearly fell over when she saw his Barracuda. It was almost unrecognizable.

With a fresh coat of metallic plum paint and shiny chrome badges on the shaker hood, her “carriage” sparkled in the afternoon sun. A thin matte black hockey-stick stripe adorned the rear quarter panel and the vinyl convertible top was as sleek as the black coat of a panther. There wasn’t an inch of metal or vinyl that didn’t make Blaina want to touch it, rub up against it or better yet have Jay sandwich her between his muscular self and this sexy speed machine.

“I love to hear you pant, Blaina.” Jay chuckled. “But I’d rather you were looking at me, not my car.”

“Are you kidding? I don’t know what turns me on more, the car or thinking of you all sweaty and coated in grease, flexing your muscles as you cranked a wrench, slid around on a crawler or bent over a fender, teaching that beast who is its master.” Blaina tore her gaze away from Jay’s reflection in the plum fender and up to the real man himself. “Wow. If this is my carriage, I can’t wait to see what else my fairy godmother has in store for me.”

“I can’t say I’d call myself a fairy anything,” Jay smirked, “but I’ll do everything possible to make your dreams come true.”

“Really? *Everything*?” Blaina gave him a wide-eyed innocent look. “Then maybe I should tell you about this recurring dream I’ve had of you and me in your garage. It’s hot, you’re naked, I’m on my knees...”

“Oh, I can definitely make that one come true,” Jay said hoarsely. “Let’s go.”

Oh yeah, she still knew how to fuel her man’s ardor. Blaina suppressed her giggle as he dragged her to the passenger side and with a perfectly tuned click of the handle swung the door open on well-oiled hinges. He tossed her bag onto the fresh, no-longer-cracked vinyl backseat, ushered her inside, then closed the door, practically vaulting over the car in his hurry to get them both home.

This time Blaina did giggle. God it felt good to be back in his car, in his life. As she reached over to unlock the driver side door, she noticed he’d installed a shiny new set of gauges—the ones she’d bought for him on their weekend getaway. Maybe it was silly, but seeing those gauges and how great they looked in his car, made this moment even more perfect.

Jay flopped down in the driver seat, grabbed his sunglasses off the flawless dashboard and slid them into place. The simple action, one she’d seen him do a thousand times before, warmed her all over, the same comfort as the well-worn blanket she kept in her trunk. Everything was familiar, yet shiny and new—a polished-up, perfected version of what had existed before. The Barracuda had come a long way. And so had Blaina and Jay.



“You are the best boyfriend ever.” Blaina stuck her nose in the opening of the white paper bag on her lap and inhaled the greasy, salty, meaty cuisine. Relaxing back in the seat, she sighed happily. “Hotdogs, French fries and my man. I don’t know what to devour first.”

Jay pulled into his garage. The Barracuda’s well-tuned rumbling came to a halt as he turned off the ignition. “Eat up, babe. I know better than to get between you and your addiction.”

“You’re right.” Dropping the bag on the console, she climbed into her addiction’s lap, straddling him. “Nothing should come between me and my addiction.”

“Then open your mouth, sweetheart.” His lips grazed over hers, teasing for an invitation before darting his tongue out to lick her slightly parted flesh.

Thank God. She didn’t need food—even really yummy food. Jay was at her disposal and she was beyond ready to be properly and heatedly kissed into submission. Closing her eyes, Blaina set her mouth to form a perfect “O”.

A single fry breached her lips. Salt tingled against her tongue as she crunched down on the delicious morsel. She would have rather supped on something a little hotter and a whole lot tastier known as *her* man, but she knew he was just getting warmed up. Feeling helpful, Blaina swallowed and licked her lips before giving Jay a contented, lazy grin. “Just as good as I remembered. You wanna taste?”

“More than you know.” Jay’s mouth landed on hers, his tongue pushing inside for the offered appetizer. Blaina moaned, locking her arms around his shoulders, one hand cradling the back of his neck while her tongue persuaded him that his was the flavor she craved above all others.

Unfortunately, her stomach had other ideas, loudly growling out a request for more sustenance. Chuckling, Jay broke the kiss and offered Blaina another fry.

Sullenly, she accepted it. “Damn betraying tummy,” she muttered between bites.

Jay swung the car door open and lifted Blaina to her feet. “Let’s get you fed.”

God, he was a beautiful man. She couldn’t stop staring, soaking in every detail of the one who almost got away.

Damn, what the hell had she been thinking?

His eyes were absolutely mesmerizing, showing how much he wanted to feed her stomach as well as the rest of her body. Her stomach growled again. Dammit. How the hell had food become priority over Jay? Oh yeah, when he was going to feed it to her. So shouldn’t she be in a hurry to give him room to get out of the car so they could get on with getting it on?

Blaina floated to the fridge for something to drink. The garage hadn’t changed much in the last few months. All four cars were still parked in their usual spots. The workbench was still covered in tools. The room still smelled of Jay and motor oil.

This place was still her private paradise.

“Welcome home, sweetheart.” From behind, Jay wrapped his arms around her waist, the food bag hanging from one hand.

Blaina snuggled against him, enjoying the hard evidence of his arousal bumping against her ass. Oh yeah, the garage was most definitely her private paradise. “You know,” she remembered, tilting her face upward to see Jay, “I never did get a tour of the panel truck...”

His brow furrowed. “Well, damn, you’re right.” He dropped a kiss on her forehead and walked away, creating that familiar void whenever he was more than two inches from her body. “Luckily, that’s easily remedied.”

“I wouldn’t have mentioned it if I’d known you’d walk away from me,” she teased while watching Jay move around the garage, kicking aside a shop rag as he went to the Barracuda. He was so damn cute when putting a plan in motion. She wasn’t sure which she wanted to bite into more, food or sexy manflesh.

And that thought had her belly growling all over again. She frowned, palming the skin over her offending organ in the hopes of stifling the roar. Jay...she really did want Jay more than food. She wasn’t going to let her stupid stomach convince him otherwise.

“Just making things right, sweetheart,” he replied from the bowels of the Barracuda’s trunk. The lid fell shut and Jay, arms laden with several blankets, stalked over to the panel truck. “I made you wait so long for your tour, I better make it memorable.” Juggling the blankets and the bag of food, he popped open the back doors and climbed inside. “I’ll be ready in one minute.”

“Hmmm, one minute and memorable? Those are three words I never thought I’d hear used together.”

Jay barked out a laugh. “And this from the woman who likes to race to the finish line.” The truck rocked back and forth as he moved around inside.

“Yeah, well I’m ravenous and there’s plenty I wanna eat.” Blaina listened to him thump around inside the truck, preparing it for the long-delayed tour. But he had forgotten one thing. Privacy. Reaching into the Barracuda, she pushed the remote button, closing the garage door. Much better. Even though the whole world knew about her and Jay now, everyone didn’t need to know all the juicy details.

It seemed appropriately fitting to be back here now, continuing what they’d started so long ago, flirty car talk followed by amazing car sex. She never would have guessed that her one-night stand would turn into her “one”. A grin perked the corners of her lips as she replied, “But then again, you taught me to appreciate looong, sloooow drives same as hard racing.”

“Well, my panel truck can do both, so why don’t you climb inside?”

He didn't have to invite her twice. Blaina rounded the back of the truck, then drew to a halt between the two open rear doors, frozen at the sight before her.

She was excited about being back with Jay, tired from a day of round-the-world travel, too hungry to think straight, and perhaps she'd turned into a sap during the last few months because the scene in the back of the panel truck made her heart double in size before moving north and taking up permanent residence in her throat.

A feast of hotdogs, French fries and her man were laid out on a red-checkerboard blanket for her delectation. Holding a flickering lighter in one hand, her amazing picnic planner grinned. "Sorry. I didn't have a candle."

Unable to talk or breathe past the beating organ lodged in her gullet, Blaina stared at Jay. Love. This was what it looked like. Jay, knowing what she needed and giving it to her freely. Jay, a smile on his face and love in his eyes.

Life had never been this right before. Blaina had watched her best friend succumb to the silly affliction called love, but she hadn't understood the true meaning of the word until now. How it changed your perception of life. How when you finally found it, you realized nothing else could ever take its place.

Blaina was warm all over. She felt like she could fly...or jump off a building...and she'd always land in Jay's arms whether he was hanging from a helicopter, riding a motorcycle or sitting in the back of a truck, waiting for her. This man would be there to catch her. Her body sang and it wasn't just her stomach growling a new tune—it was more like a whole symphony singing from her heart.

This was what love was. Picnics in the back of a car. Hotdogs and French fries. Her man in tight cotton T-shirts and frayed jeans. Simple, everyday things that were so much bigger, so much better, when celebrated with the man she loved.

And God how she loved him. She ached to be near him, wanted to be by his side for the rest of her existence. Didn't want to imagine a time that he wouldn't be right there, within her reach, looking at her with that cocky, arrogant smile and blue eyes full of love for her.

As she hopped in, Jay patted the blanket between his spread legs. "Got a place for you right here."

Not one to argue such a comfortable resting spot, Blaina launched herself at Jay. He let out a deep laugh as she plastered herself against his chest, wrapped her arms around him and hugged him tight. If she'd had the power to climb inside of him, she would have. Being with him, surrounded by him, in love with and being loved by him, was where she always wanted to be. "I love you, Jay. I love you. I love you. I love you." She needed to say that more often. It was ridiculously strange how good it felt to say those three little words. "I love you."

"I love you, too, Blaina." Jay kissed her forehead, then her nose and Blaina blinked back warm tears, surprised at their presence. Even though they were happy tears, now was not the time to get all sobby and sniffly, red-eyed and runny-nosed.

"You okay, sweetheart?" Jay started to pull back, but Blaina didn't let him escape, curling a hand into his hair and holding him still.

"I am now." She smiled and kissed him, opening her mouth and exploring Jay.

Stealing control, he pushed his lips tight to hers, smoothly dancing his tongue over her teeth and teasing the roof of her mouth before returning to sweetly tangle with hers.

Her tummy grumbled and no amount of moaning could stifle the noise. Jay retreated and said, "You need to eat."

"Food can wait," she assured, rubbing the rather appealing erection currently burrowing into her stomach. Pushing to her knees, she whipped her shirt over her head. "I *can't* wait for you."

Rather than return to the job of blissfully taking control of her body, Jay's gaze dropped to her waist and his lips quirked up in a surprised smile. "You're wearing it." He skimmed his hand over the flesh beneath the silver chain, coming to rest below her bellybutton where the secondary chain disappeared into her jeans.

"I always do." She shivered as he palmed her stomach. Unless she was working and couldn't wear it, the chain with the dangling key charm never left her body. In Africa, the belly chain had been her only connection to Jay, and she'd clung to it and the memories it evoked.

"Such a thing of beauty," Jay said hoarsely, rough fingers moving up her flesh. It only took a fraction of a second for her to realize he wasn't talking about her jewelry. He placed an open-mouthed kiss along the curve of a breast. "I missed the silky feel of your skin, Blaina. Missed the

little half-purring, half-panting sounds you make in the back of your throat when I'm touching you. Missed the way your body moves against mine when I'm inside of you."

She felt his words deep within her body, in the places only Jay touched. Liquid fire coated her pussy and she restlessly, desperately rocked against him. The friction of denim against denim, cock against cunt, stoked the flame, and between panted breaths, she purred, "God, I want you inside of me. Now, Jay. It's been too long."

With a haste borne of too much time apart, they stripped off each other's clothing until both of them lay naked on the blankets, bodies flushed with the heat of their combined arousal, skin pressed to skin. The only thing remaining was the silver chain, which they both agreed should stay on.

Reclining next to him, Blaina stroked a hand over Jay's cock, relishing the velvet steel contradiction. His breath shot out between gritted teeth. "Blaina..." he warned, or perhaps it was a plea.

Wondering exactly how long he could maintain control, she lightly tugged on his penis. "Is this for me?"

"What do you think?" Letting out a growl that made her shiver, he pulled her beneath him, pinning her between the warmth of the flannel blankets and the heat of aroused male body.

"I think—" she hooked a leg over his hip and brought his shaft against her moist and swollen opening, "—I like it when you give me naked tours of your cars."

"And what would you like to see next?" asked Jay. Slightly tilting his hips forward, the head of his cock entered her vagina.

Blaina saw stars. Starbursts, shooting stars, pretty white sparkling dots—a celestial cornucopia that only got bigger and brighter as Jay urged his shaft deeper.

"This works," she managed to choke out. "Just keep doing this." She would've loved to continue the flirty exchange, but she couldn't think beyond the need to have him completely immersed within her, so it was impossible to tell where one of them ended and the other began.

He stroked her hair, her face, rubbed his thumb over her lips as he slowly pressed his large cock inside her sex. No one fucked her like Jay did. Owning her, becoming such an integral part of her body and soul. Her cunt stretched to accommodate him, her vaginal walls slick with need,

easing his way until he was completely sheathed within her. It had been so long, she felt like a virgin again. Thankfully, a virgin without the pain. Only pleasure. Lots and lots of pleasure.

Their lips met, and he whispered strongly into her mouth, “I love you, Blaina. Only you. Now. Forever. Always. You.”

Unable to hold the tears at bay any longer, a few slid through, coating her eyelashes and running down her cheeks. She replied in the only way she could. Simply and honestly. “I love you, too, Jay.”

They rocked together, the sweet friction magnifying even the simplest movements. Within moments, Blaina’s orgasm hit her and she cried out, her pussy contracting in sharp spasms around Jay’s thickness.

With a low groan, Jay joined her, his come shooting hard against her womb.

Joined at the mouths, breathing in and of each other, their hearts thumped in rhythmic harmony. Nothing in the world compared to this feeling. Becoming one with her soul mate.

“So this is the panel truck,” Blaina said several minutes later, finally taking a moment to look around the truck. During their lovemaking, the fries had spilled from the container, and now liberally covered one of the blankets. The entire back of the enclosed van had received custom attention. Right down to the chocolate leather walls, carpeted floor and tiny chrome accent lights.

Comfortable and sated and not planning on moving for at least a day or two, she lazily ran a hand over Jay’s head, where it rested on her chest. She liked the way his hair felt beneath her palms. Soft and silky, a strange contradiction in such a strong, virile man. “Does it always come with a gorgeous naked man in the back, or am I just lucky?”

“Funny, I was just thinking *I* was the lucky one.” His warm chuckle washed over her abdomen, tickling her, bringing a smile. He played with the chain still fastened around her waist, rubbing the small key between his fingertips. “And I was also thinking you might need some more keys.”

“More? I don’t think the chain is strong enough to hold anything else.”

“No problem. The keys I was thinking of already have a chain.” Sitting up, he reached for his discarded pants and patted the pockets until he found what he was looking for. A set of five

keys hung from a miniature tire key chain. With a cocky grin that lit up the interior of the truck, he handed her the keys.

Curiously, she stared at the dangling Ford, Chevy and Dodge shapes, then looked past them to study the man who'd given her the keys to his world. Before she could open her mouth to ask the five essential questions—"what, where, how, why and are you serious?"—Jay offered up, "When you come back from Africa, how about you come here instead?"

Reality hit her like a shot between the eyes and Blaina sighed miserably. She had to leave Jay tomorrow and another month and a half would pass before she'd be with him again. Darn movie. Looking at her lover, she forced a smile. "Of course I'll come here first. In fact, I was kinda hoping that after six weeks apart you'd pick me up at the airport and we could break some public decency laws before even getting to your place."

Wiggling his eyebrows, he said, "Babe, I will always pick you up." Following his statement, he leaned over and hefted her into his arms, settling her on his lap, before kissing away the tension lines the mention of Africa had put in her forehead. "But what I meant was, when you get back, why don't you come here. And stay. With me. Forever."

Blaina tilted her head back, looked into his eyes and said the only thing that came to mind. "Huh?"

"Is my Blaina speechless?" Jay kissed her nose. "I better get this out before you remember how to talk." He readjusted her in his lap so she was facing him, her legs wrapped around his waist. "This is it for me, Blaina. There is no one else. There never will be. For the rest of my life, you are the only woman for me. Wherever life takes us, I want you by my side. At work. At play. Everywhere. So when you get back, I want you to come home. To my home. Our home. Move in with me. Live with me."

Knowing she was gaping, but unable to regain control of her facial muscles, Blaina managed to blink. He was... This was... Wow... Her heart skittered about, doing the happy dance in her chest. But before she could give the simple three-letter reply, he continued, "Blaina, babe, promise me you'll think about it. I'll add on to the garage so there's room for your car. You can redecorate my house. You can even keep your place if—"

"Yes," she finally managed to say, sealing the deal with a kiss.

“Yes?” he mumbled against her lips.

“Yes!” She laughed. “You just gave me the opportunity to dwell in paradise with my personal fantasy man. We can build a bedroom in the garage, right?”

“Whatever you want.”

He pulled her to him in a tight embrace, and leaning against his chest she listened to his heartbeat. It sounded like it was doing the happy dance right along with hers. But there was one sad element to the moment. “I’ve never been so tempted to break a contract before. I don’t want to go another six weeks without you.”

“I’ve always wanted to visit Africa.”

“Huh?”

“Speechless again?” Jay chuckled when Blaina nipped his chest.

“Don’t tease me, Jay.”

“I’d say something about how you normally enjoy it when I tease you, except this time I’m not teasing.”

Afraid to hope that what she thought he was saying was really what he was saying, she started throwing out questions. “Don’t you have a job? *Chasing Reality*? And what about Bo?”

“Whenever I go out of town for a movie, Cash watches Bo. And *Chasing Reality* wrapped a couple weeks ago. The reshoots we wrapped up so well today are the last thing on my schedule for a couple months.”

“You’ll come to Africa to be with me? Really?”

“Is it that hard to believe? I love you, Blaina. Watching you at work and at play is a turn-on I don’t plan on missing a moment of ever again.” He punctuated his statement by shifting his erection, nestling it in her cleft.

“Sounds like you’re mixing work with pleasure, Mr. Safety,” Blaina said, grinding against his cock.

Jay plunged inside her, filling her in one sweet stroke. “Sweetheart, with you in the picture, mixing work with pleasure is a rule I plan on breaking for the rest of my life.”

About the Author

Ashleigh Raine is a multi-published, award-winning writing team made up of lifelong friends, Jennifer and Lisa. Living in the Los Angeles area, they have both worked various jobs in the Entertainment industry including stagehand, script reader, feature film production assistant, precision driver, theatrical lighting designer, seat filler, stunt driving school student and background actor. These experiences are a wealth of inspiration for their Hollywood Heat series. They are members of RWA and attend conventions regularly. Their first novel, *Lover's Talisman*, won second place honors in the Reviewers International Organization (RIO) Award of Excellence for Best Debut Book 2003. Their second novel, *Forsaken Talisman*, was a RIO Recommended Read for August 2004.

To learn more about Ashleigh Raine, please visit www.ashleighbaine.com. Send an email to the two authors who make up Ashleigh Raine (Lisa and Jen) at ashleigh@ashleighbaine.com or join their Yahoo! group to join in the fun with other readers as well as Ashleigh/Lisa and Jen. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fakereality/>

Look for these titles by Ashleigh Raine

Now Available:

Driven to Distraction

Coming Soon:

Lover's Talisman
Forsaken Talisman
Eternal Talisman

*To stop a blackmailer and achieve her dreams,
she only had to do one thing: seduce the enemy.*

Sneak Peek: Watch Me

© 2007 Shelley Bradley

Shanna York was set to achieve her glittering ballroom dreams and become a dance champion—until her dance partner gets tangled up in scandal and blackmail. With the clock ticking and all her ambitions at stake, the last thing she needs is the gorgeous owner of a sex club tempting her with the forbidden.

Or maybe that's the very thing she needs...

Alejandro Diaz has sizzled for Shanna since he set eyes on her months ago. Her repeated rebuffs will make her surrender that much sweeter. She's ambitious and driven...but so is he. When she asks for his assistance to ensnare a voyeuristic blackmailer with a video fetish, he doesn't hesitate to help her stage a bedroom trap. But neither is prepared to face scorching, endless passion, the blackmailer's real identity—or the undeniable love that grows between them.

See Show Me by Jaci Burton for the second story in the Sneak Peek Duet.

Enjoy the following excerpt for Watch Me:

“Men are watching you, wanting you.”

He grabbed her thigh, spun her around to face him, then placed that thigh over his hip. They rested nearly hip to hip again. As he leaned back slightly, he forced her chest against his. Still, she could not break his stare.

“You like it,” he whispered.

She opened her mouth to deny it, but Alejandro's gaze stopped her, warning her before she could do anything foolish, like lie.

“I know you do.”

The intensity of his stare, the way in which he'd dug past her icy defenses, seemed to

see the real her, and guessed her dirty secret... He was a walking wet dream.

He was her worst nightmare.

He swayed with the music in the opposite direction, bringing her body with him. With a gentle caress of her cheek, he directed her gaze back to his—all while making it look like a part of the dance.

“You know you do,” he murmured. “You love knowing that most every man in the room right now would kill to have your body against his and have a front-row seat of that smoldering sensuality you keep wrapped in ice suddenly melting in a pool at his feet.”

His words made her shake. *Oh, no. No!* “Stop.”

He performed an open step, then brought her back for a box. “Their eyes cling to you as you lure them in with the sway of your hips to the music and your femininity. Their gazes caress your breasts as your chest lifts with every move and breath. They watch the sleek movements of those gorgeous thighs and wish they were between them.”

A glance around proved he was totally right. Easily a dozen men were openly watching her and Alejandro dance, their gazes ranging from more than mildly interested to sizzling with heat. Desire vibrated deep inside her, pulsing under her clit. How wet could she get before it stained the front of her thin costume?

And how had Alejandro known what turned her on?

Most people had only seen the driven dancer who yearned to win and find some way to make her family proud. No one else had seen the woman inside who used dance to express the sexuality she otherwise repressed. No one.

This man had seen her hidden sensuality in the blink of an eye. He’d all but mocked her icy reserve. He looked at her as if he could see past it, all the way to the fear and emptiness that fed her ambition.

Thankfully, the music ended.

“Thank you for an interesting evening, Mr. Diaz. Perhaps our paths will cross again.” Not if she could help it.

Still, he didn’t let go, continued to stare at her with that sultry hint of a smile as the music began again. “The evening is not over. I bought all of your dances tonight, for the whole night.”

Shanna stared at him, wide eyed and stunned. Panicked. He'd bought *all* of her dances? She swallowed. That was bad. Very bad. Just being in his arms and hearing his words made her feel vulnerable in a way she didn't like and would not accept.

And she was stuck with him for the next three hours? Lord, she was in so much trouble.

"Why?"

"I enjoy watching you being watched and the way it arouses you. I love knowing that so many men in the room are fantasizing about slaking their lust with you—"

"You can't know what other men are thinking," she protested.

"But I can. It is exactly what I'm thinking. It is even more delicious because I alone am holding you in my arms."

Oh, God. Oh, God. "This conversation is inappropriate."

"Honesty disturbs you?"

"I'm not...I—I don't get aroused knowing that men are watching me."

"Really?"

He urged her into a cross again. No sooner than she turned to step into the next box, he pushed against her hand, sending her spinning to face the wall. Then he was behind her, hands on her swaying hips, his mouth hovering just over her sensitive neck in a darkened corner of the ballroom.

Shanna shivered as he exhaled, quivered as he gripped her hips.

Then he reached around to place his hand flat on her stomach again...but he aimed high, flattening his palm on the upper swells of her chest and smoothing his way down.

"Hard nipples," he commented. "Little edible, want-to-suck-them-in-my-mouth nipples."

She hissed in a breath, and opened her mouth to stop him, tell him to get lost...but he kept tantalizing her as he caressed his way south, down her ribs, over her stomach, until his fingers brushed the front of her costume right over her sex. He lingered. Shame and arousal crashed inside her. She closed her eyes. Her thong was about to overflow.

"You're always wet when you dance in public...like now, aren't you?"

At his touch, his words, pleasure spiked, hitting her full force, like a blast from a

raging fire. She sucked in a breath. Damn it, why did he have to be right?

If he could figure that much out after just a few minutes with her, Shanna knew he'd dig deeper, quickly, into her soul, unless she put distance between them now.

"Stop," she demanded in her best ice-queen voice.

"Answer me, *querida*."

"No."

He danced her to face him again as one song segued into the next, this one a waltz.

"Do not be embarrassed. Your arousal turns me on. It's one of the reasons I chose not to give up when you rebuffed me at the Bartolino event. I want that arousal," he whispered in her ear, making her shiver. "I want it in my hands, my mouth, all around my cock when I fuck you and you wonder exactly who is watching us."

His words hit her like lava, sizzling her skin, charring her resistance and sanity. No one had ever talked to her like that. Between her brothers and the bitchiness she wore like armor, no one had dared.

God, even without uttering a word, Alejandro was stunning. When he talked like that, he didn't just turn her on; he turned her inside out.

Alejandro was dangerous to her career and her focus. She could see getting lost in such a man and the smoldering promise of spectacular sex—which she'd never experienced—in his hazel eyes.

"That's enough," she forced herself to say.

"We haven't started. I think about undressing you under soft lights, your back to my front and letting my hand smooth your dress from your lush curves. I ache to let your perfect hard nipples brush the inside of my palms before I roll them between my fingers. I fantasize about feeling my way lower, down to that soft, wet pussy, and grazing your hard clit. And stroking it until you come. I obsess about bending you over and filling you with my cock—all while you know hot eyes, strangers' eyes, touch you."

Desire pulsed, flared with every mental image he created. She could *see* herself naked, flushed, writhing under his hands or as he impaled her. She could feel herself dissolving at the thought of orgasming for him—and a roomful of aroused men.

One lucky woman...three sexy cowboys...she's in for the ride of her life!

Long Hard Ride

© 2007 Lorelei James

Channing Kinkaid itches for a change; a wild western adventure with an untamed man. Determined to shed her inhibitions and embrace the steamier, seamier side of life, she sets her sights on hooking up with a real chaps-and-spurs-wearing cowboy.

Enter Colby McKay—bull rider, saddle bronc buster and calf roper. From the moment he sets lust-filled eyes on the sweet and fiery Channing, he knows he's found the woman who's up to the challenge of cutting loose. What rough and rowdy cowboy could resist a no-holds-barred sexual romp with a sassy young thing starring as his personal buckle bunny?

Intrigued by Channing's bold proposition of horsing around on the road, Colby impulsively sweetens the deal; sexual escapades not only in his bed, but in the bedrolls of his rodeo traveling partners, Trevor and Edgard.

Although Channing's secretly longed to be the sole focus of more than one man's passions, Colby's demand for complete submission behind closed doors will test her willful nature.

Can Channing give up total control? Especially when not all is as it seems with the sexy trio? Or will the cowboys have to break out the bullropes and piggin' string to break in this headstrong filly?

Warning: This title contains the following: lots of explicit sex, going strong long after the cows come home, graphic language that'd make your mama blush, light bondage with bullropes, ménage a trois, and—yee-haw!—hot nekkid cowboy man-love.

Enjoy the following excerpt for *Long Hard Ride*:

Trevor and Edgard returned to the arena to practice roping and Colby tagged along, needing to run his horse.

Channing stayed in the room and indulged in a shower. After she'd shaved and coated her body with lotion, she wondered what would happen when her cowboys returned. Was she supposed to stay naked? Would they prefer another strip tease?

Did she really know what she'd gotten herself into?

The sound of a lock in the door sent her pulse tripping. She shoved the books in her satchel and flipped the page on her notebook.

Colby entered the room first, followed by Trevor. Edgard brought up the rear and he immediately went into the bathroom and the shower kicked on.

Trevor flopped on the queen bed against the wall. "I'm tired."

"I'm not," Colby said. His gaze traveled from Channing's bare toes all the way up her legs to linger on her face. "I'm feelin' *very* energetic tonight."

Yowza.

"Who's sleeping in the trailer?" she asked.

"Edgard," Trevor said.

Did that mean he wouldn't be joining them again? Channing was almost afraid to ask. She was secretly worried Edgard regretted having her along, or worse, that he didn't find her attractive.

As soon as Edgard finished his shower, he bid them goodnight. After Colby cleaned up, he left the room for a time while Trevor took his turn in the bathroom. With every minute that clicked by, Channing became more and more nervous.

Especially when Colby returned to the room with a length of rope in one hand, a bandana in the other, and a wicked gleam in his eye. He said, "Strip. I wanna see you bare-assed naked right now."

Channing nodded, doffed her clothes and stood before him, feeling shy and exposed.

"You're mighty fine, Chan. Come here and turn around."

She crossed the room. The folded red bandana flashed in front of her eyes before everything went dark. A quick pinch on the back of her head and she was blindfolded.

Colby made no move to touch her besides guiding her back to the bed. "Sit here and wait for further instructions. You'll do as you're told. No questions. We clear on that, shug?"

“Yes.”

He placed a soft kiss on the corners of her lips and whispered, “Good girl. Don’t be scared. We ain’t gonna hurt you—” his teeth sank into her earlobe, “—much.”

Channing shivered.

The door to the bathroom clicked open and shut. She heard Colby’s and Trevor’s voices, but she couldn’t hear what they were saying. That was probably a good thing.

She swallowed to moisten her dry mouth. Her heart rate kicked up again when humid, soapy-scented air drifted out of the bathroom and she sensed Trevor and Colby standing in front of her.

“Here’s the deal, darlin’. We’re gonna play a little game of blind man’s bluff. You’re gonna try to figure out who’s touchin’ you. If you guess right, you get a reward. If you guess wrong, well, let’s just hope you don’t have to find out.”

Channing went absolutely motionless.

“Lay back on the bed and press your arms together above your head. That’s a girl.” Scratchy twine wrapped around her wrists several times. Colby whispered, “It ain’t too tight, mostly it’s to keep your hands out of our way. If you cooperate, we’ll leave them loose. The second you try to touch either of us or those hands move? We’ll fasten you to the bed frame. We clear on that?”

“Yes.”

Trevor said, “Spread your legs wide. I wanna see those heels hangin’ off the side of the bed.”

She complied.

“You’re beautiful, Chan. No matter what we do to you, leave ‘em like that until we say otherwise.”

Channing had a flash of insight. If they talked, she’d easily be able to figure out which one was doing what. Colby loved to talk dirty, so chances were good he wouldn’t be able to keep his mouth shut. She withheld a grin.

Until the music turned on.

Before she could contemplate how she’d differentiate one man from the other in the dark, a hot mouth closed over her left nipple and suckled strongly. Rough fingertips

dragged up and down the center of her body. Smoothing over her ribcage and the sensitive bend in her waist. A light stroking over the pulse pounding in the column of her neck.

A work-roughened palm traced her contours, from the arms displayed above her head, down her tensed shoulders. Over the soft curve of her belly, across her, hips and the roundness of her thighs. Past her quaking knees, down her calves to her ankles, ending at her ticklish feet. Those maddeningly thorough hands reversed the process with just as much sensual deliberation.

Channing began to shake with pure unadulterated need.

Then those eager hands palmed her breasts, bringing both nipples together to suck and lick and taste. Teeth nipped the tender tips, causing a pain-filled sound to escape from her throat.

The sting was soothed by pursed lips blowing a stream of cool air, followed by a warm, wet tongue lapping and curling around the abused flesh.

“Who?” a gruff male commanded.

Well, shoot. Her chances of guessing correctly were 50-50. “Trevor?”

“Wrong. Turn her over,” Colby said.

A hard slap burned across her left butt cheek.

When she protested—“Hey! That stings”—two more smacks landed in rapid succession.

“Keep talkin’ and I’ll take great pleasure in turnin’ this heart-shaped ass rosy red, shug.”

Crap.

“Got any other protests?” Trevor asked.

She shook her head.

“Good. Turn her the other way so I can get my licks in, too,” Trevor said.

She was rolled to her left side and four solid smacks landed on her right buttock.

“Now we’re even. Don’t make us get out the bullrope, Chan.”

The humiliation she thought she’d feel never came. What did that say about her?

Nothing, besides she’d never been wetter or more turned on in her life.

Strong hands gripped her ankles and jerked her body down until her stinging ass nearly hung off the end of the bed. Then a cool, wet tongue licked straight up the center of her pussy.

Her hips shot off the bed.

A warning growl sounded next to her ear.

Then the mouth on her sex began a full-out assault. That clever tongue wiggled deep inside her dripping cunt, licking her from the inside out. Then it zigzagged up to flick little whips of hot velvet across her distended clit. Her blood pulsed and gathered in that little nub, the orgasm danced close to the surface and then the possibility vanished as the teasing mouth trailed away.

Damn. She wanted to demand it return, but she wisely kept her lips pressed together.

Soft kisses circled her mound from the line of her pubic hair, to the crease of her thighs, back down to her vaginal opening. The circle of kisses became progressively smaller. Tighter. Wetter.

Channing tried not to writhe, or to grind her sex into that fleeting tongue. But when that hot, hungry mouth closed over her clit and her swollen pussy lips and began to suck them together, she flat out screamed.

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