



MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S STEAM
OVERHEATED

KNOTTY GIRL
MAGGIE CASPER

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Knotty Girl

Maggie Casper

Dedication

To MG for explaining to me exactly what it is a Pro Top does.

Chapter One

“I think I’d better stick with rope.”

Craig Jensen wanted to shake some sense into the petite naked blonde who lay shivering at his feet. Even clouded with confusion after her dead faint, her eyes were the greenest he’d ever seen. And her curves may very well be wearing curves all their own but neither attribute changed the fact that she was reckless on top of being trouble with a capital T.

“I mean, geez, whoda thought plastic wrap could be so dangerous,” she continued as if the scowl plastered across his face made no difference in the world. That was amazing all on its own considering his scowl had the ability to scare grown men.

“Nope, I’ll stick with rope. After all, it doesn’t make me sweat and feels so damn good against my skin that just the thought of it makes me...”

She stopped mid-sentence as if she’d just realized what she was saying. Color returned to her cheeks as her gaze settled on his.

“You little fool.” His words were low and heated as he draped a robe over her prone body.

The rest of the crowd had dispersed, leaving only himself, the blonde and the idiot young dominant she’d been playing with. Grabbing the rather large ball of plastic wrap that had been used to bind her, in effect mummifying her from shoulder to ankle, he stood to his full height of six feet, two inches.

Without taking his gaze from his patient, Craig handed the ball of plastic wrap to the deathly pale man standing beside him. “She’s going to be fine.”

The skinny punk sighed in relief. Feeling a bit of compassion for the young man, Craig said, "Accidents are bound to happen in this lifestyle, especially for a new dom. Take this as a lesson and learn from it, but don't let anything like it happen here again. Ever."

His words were clipped and deadly serious. The young man listening intently evidently knew Craig meant business because his demeanor changed from that of rebellion to keen interest. It wouldn't be long before the new dom was all but begging for lessons.

Craig had already been there, done that as a Pro Top. For years he'd received payment for services rendered. At one time he'd had several dominant-submissive couples who he tutored and many singles who either wanted to learn a particular aspect such as wielding a flogger or experience the receiving end. He had no intention of doing it again.

Other than overseeing Club Jerico, the BDSM club he'd built from the ground up then sold, lock, stock and barrel to his best friend, Craig now had the time he needed to look for his one, the one submissive in a long line of women who would truly be his. Wasn't it ironic that out of all the experienced women he'd played with over the years, the obviously inexperienced blonde still at his feet was the one? Hell, he didn't even know her name.

It was crazy. Craig couldn't explain how he knew she was the one. It was just something he was certain of. Something he felt bone deep. He'd seen and played with hundreds of women over the years but something about the one at his feet was different.

She was everything he normally stayed away from in a play partner. So why in the hell did he feel as though life as he knew it would never be the same if he didn't own her, heart, body and soul?

"Oh, and she's off limits. Make it known."

The young man's head swung from where she now sat on the floor back to him before he nodded and left. Craig couldn't help but smile.

"What the hell is wrong with you, mister?"

Yep, she was a firecracker all right. Craig watched as she struggled to her feet on wobbly legs, all the while trying to keep her nude flesh

covered. The last was something Craig found funny considering not more than a half hour before she'd been completely nude, with nothing more than a thin layer of plastic wrap over her. She was going to be hell to tame but if his gut instinct was correct, she'd be worth every single second of the long journey ahead.

Craig shook his head. He didn't believe in love at first sight—lust maybe. So why then was his heart pounding like he'd just run a marathon? And why in the world did the thought of her helpless and possibly injured make him feel ill?

"You play with an unknown, doing something that leaves you as helpless as mummification without knowing the possible dangers then pass out cold and you want to know what the hell is wrong with me." He couldn't believe the audacity of the little imp. "What's your name, girl?"

"I'm not a girl, I'm a woman, and why do you want to know?" Huffed out all in one breath, her comeback was quick and full of attitude.

Craig moved across the room, smiling secretly when she followed. She needed some water and a place to sit, even if she didn't know it. He reached into one of the ice chests providing drinks for the patrons of the club and extracted a bottle of water for her.

"Either you tell me your name or I'll continue to call you girl. Your decision."

Offering choices was a good thing, especially early on. It always gave some semblance of control to the one doing the choosing. And until the little spitfire shooting daggers at him from her eyes came to the conclusion that she was submissive, more importantly, his submissive, Craig would have to go slow.

If there was one thing he'd learned over the years it was that submission not freely given was not submission at all. And God only knew that every fiber of his being wanted her submission and so much more.

"I must have missed the memo stating I now have a keeper. Sheesh."

Oh hell no, she just didn't. The woman, and Craig used that term loosely considering how young and inexperienced she obviously was, didn't know when to quit. "What was that?"

She wrinkled her nose and muttered, "Nothing."

Of course, there was always the chance he was wrong in thinking she was submissive. It had been known to happen, Craig smirked to himself, thinking back on some of the whack jobs he'd gotten himself involved with. Older, and hopefully wiser, he decided to learn as much as possible about her before coming to any conclusions. Now if only he could get his cock to agree.

With a hand on her arm just above her elbow, Craig led them to a dimly lit quiet corner. Once they were both seated, he handed her the bottle of water and nudged her to drink.

"You're probably just a bit dehydrated. Combine that with sweating in plastic wrap for a prolonged amount of time and an overdose of sexual energy and it will almost always equal disaster."

He waited through a few minutes of silence before repeating his earlier question. "What's your name?"

"Shelby."

Her single-word answer was clipped and accompanied by the most amusing look of irritation he'd ever seen on such a pixie-like face.

"So, Shelby, how did you come to learn about Club Jerico?"

She peered up at him from beneath long lashes. Craig couldn't remember the last time he'd seen a grown woman appear so innocent.

"Word of mouth." Her answer was obviously reluctant. She acted as though being in his presence was the last place she wanted to be.

"Are you new to town?"

Shelby twisted the cap back on her bottle of water before speaking. "I was born and raised here."

That came as a complete shock to Craig. He may not be an outgoing person where the vanilla community was concerned, but she was at a

BDSM club and for the most part, he knew pretty much everyone involved in the lifestyle for miles around. Or so he'd thought.

"New to the lifestyle then or just experimenting? I haven't seen you around."

She huffed out a breath then proceeded to twist a lock of curly blonde hair around her finger in an action Craig wasn't sure whether to consider seductive, childish or nervous, or very possibly a combination of the three.

"My folks own Langley's Launch out on the lake. I've been away at school but came home for summer break to help out."

Now they were getting somewhere. Shelby Langley. Craig had heard about her, knew the name just as anyone who spent any time at all at the lake would. Her parents owned and operated the only docking area, boat fueling station and restaurant to service the large body of water.

The thought of her leaving after summer was over bothered him. Would there be enough time to claim her for his own? And if not, would he be able to let her go? The thought actually made Craig's chest ache, which irritated him to no end. Was he turning into a sap? Hell, he'd barely met her, there was no way he could already be falling for her on more than a purely sexual level. Was there?

Craig shook the thought from his head. Many things needed to happen before he should even worry about her leaving, like getting her to understand she belonged to him and no one else.

The wickedly twisted side of him could hardly wait for the fun to begin.

Shelby looked at the man sitting next to her. He was big, much larger than her own five-foot stature, and the kind of sexy that would have soaked her panties in seconds had she been wearing any.

He was clearly dominant and not in the I-can-be-top-now-and-bottom-later way she preferred in the men she played with. This man would want, no he would *insist* on owning. He would claim and never release.

The truth was evident in the intensity of his brown-eyed gaze, and it affected Shelby in ways that made her uncomfortable in her own skin.

“What’s your name? I mean, you know just about everything there is to know about me but I know next to nothing about you. I don’t even—”

“Craig. Craig Jensen. I run this place.”

The way he cut her off made Shelby wonder if her penchant for talking irritated him. If it did, well that was just too damn bad. As a matter of fact, she’d just have to file that little tidbit away for future use. Could come in handy.

“Well, it was nice to meet you, Craig Jensen.” Shelby stood, her legs finally feeling more normal and less rubber-like. “Thank you for your help. I’m sure I’ll see you around sometime.”

She took a step back and nearly sighed in relief when he didn’t move. The look on his face was granite hard. He didn’t appear too happy for some reason, a reason Shelby was sure she didn’t need to know although her blasted curiosity almost had her blurting out what would surely be a stupid question.

Turning, she moved slowly across the room. It was rather comical to think about, but Shelby felt like prey trying not to garner the attention of a predator.

Her relief was short-lived when, after changing from the borrowed robe to her street clothes, she came out of the ladies room to find Craig waiting for her.

Shelby tried her best to pay him no attention. It was rude, something her mother would be displeased to know, but there was just something about the man following her that made Shelby uneasy in a way she’d never before experienced.

Ignoring a man such as Craig Jensen, with his shaved head and neatly trimmed goatee, was hard enough. Add to that a body so sexy her nipples couldn’t help but stand up and take notice and the fact that he was so close made it nearly impossible.

Irritated not only by the heat pooling between her thighs but his presence, Shelby stopped dead in her tracks and turned to face him.

“Is there any special reason why you’re following me, or do you see everyone to the door?”

She knew she was being a bitch but she did not want this man around her. Something about his closeness, the way he held himself, controlled himself, warned Shelby just how easily he could also control her if she gave him half the chance. And that was simply something she had no desire to do.

Oh, she didn’t have any nasty secrets in her past. No psycho ex-Master or abusive boyfriend. Nope, Shelby was merely having fun by her kinky self and felt no need to change things.

“I’m driving you home.”

His words pulled her back to the present like a splash of cold water to the face.

“That’s not necessary, but thanks anyway.” Shelby tried to keep her smile sweet and yet let him know she felt strongly about her decision to drive herself home. To show weakness to someone like the man standing before her would be a mistake of colossal proportions.

“I insist.”

“You would.” Shelby spoke the words like a challenge. Evidently being nice did not work. If blunt was what it took to get him to back off, then blunt was what he was going to get. “Look. I appreciate your offer but I am perfectly capable of getting myself home.” There, that should get him off her back. She turned on her heel only to be stopped by Craig’s hand on her arm.

“I’m sure you are more than capable, but that doesn’t change anything. I’m driving you home.” He tugged slightly on her arm when she opened her mouth to argue. “You can either give me your keys and get in of your own free will or I’ll carry you to my car and after I paddle your ass, I’ll place you inside and drive you home. The choice is yours.”

“Some choice.” Shelby stalked the rest of the way to her car, equal amounts of anger and arousal coursing through her veins. There was something very twisted about her that she could in any way shape or form be aroused by such blatant highhandedness.

When they reached her car, she thrust the keys into Craig's hand. "How do you plan on getting back here?"

"I'll call a cab once we're on our way. It'll meet me at the lake." His answer made Shelby want to scream. He'd thought of everything.

The ride to the lake, although not long, seemed to take forever. Being quiet was a rare thing for Shelby so giving Craig the silent treatment was rough. In order to not ask questions, rant, rave or speak in pretty much any capacity, she had to close her eyes and concentrate.

Of course, not talking made her feel even antsy. Without thought to what she was doing, Shelby fidgeted with the zipper on her purse, unzipping and re-zipping it over and over until one of Craig's large hands closed over hers.

His touch was warm and solid, stopping her mid-zip. Shelby didn't want to like his touch. She didn't want the heat of his skin to arrow straight to her core and she sure the hell didn't want his closeness to make her wet, but it did all that and more.

It was the more part she was worried about. Something about him made her insides quiver and her heart pound. She'd come home to help out and have some fun, not to fall for the first dominant who seemed to have a clue what he was doing.

She wondered if his touch was planned. Could it have been more than just the need to stop her fidgeting? Did he know how his touch affected her? Just the thought had her narrowing her eyes at him across the dark interior of her car.

What he hadn't considered was that Shelby Langley was not some doormat submissive who he could point and snap his fingers at. She had a mind of her own and more opinions than most. If he thought her weak or easy to manage, he had another think coming.

Chapter Two

The wait was going to kill him. Of that, Craig was sure. Nearly a week had passed without seeing Shelby. She hadn't bothered to show up for the Wednesday night lifestyle group meeting and lecture on safety and BDSM, something that would have been beneficial for her given where her last experience had led her.

Instead, she'd stayed away and it was driving Craig insane. That alone had the ability to put him in a foul mood. He didn't stomp or lose his temper. As a dom and a leader in the local kink community, he was known for his iron control. So why did she have the ability to keep him so far on edge he couldn't wait to tumble over? It was sickening and pissed him off.

When a knock came at his closed door, he barked, "Come in!"

Sierra, one of his best waitresses, popped her head in, a knowing smile on her face. "I believe the little one you've been waiting for has finally showed up, Sir."

Craig chose to ignore the flash of humor in Sierra's eyes. He had more on his mind than sassy waitresses. He had important things to move on to, things that were sure to get very interesting, very soon if Shelby's reaction to him at their first meeting was any indication.

She may have tried her best to appear strong and in control around him but it had been hard to miss the hitch in her breathing at even the simplest touch from his hand.

Would she like it when he kissed her, taking her mouth with his lips, tasting her with his tongue? He could hardly wait to find out. If she enjoyed that she would surely enjoy the other things he had planned for

her. Things like gliding his tongue over every inch of her bare flesh before finally settling on her heated core.

Once there he planned to work Shelby's body slowly, methodically. He would bring her to peak over and over without ever letting her tumble to her fulfillment. Then, just about the time she reached once again for her release, he would do something sinister like land a stinging swat to her inner thigh. Or perhaps he would merely stop his ministrations, leaving Shelby gasping for air and begging for more.

With a wicked smile curving his lips, Craig left his office in search of Shelby before she managed to get herself in trouble.

He made his way through the cavernous main room. It took a minute to spot Shelby in the far corner speaking with one of the regulars, a male submissive who had a foot fetish. He was eyeing her stiletto-heeled boots like they were a T-bone steak and he was a starving man.

That in and of itself was a comical sight, but the conversation he eavesdropped on as he stood just a few feet away was so damn funny he had trouble not laughing out loud.

"But I am sure you would make a wonderful *domme*, Miss Shelby."

She huffed an exasperated sigh. "I've told you before, I am not *dom* or *sub*. I just like to play. Besides..." her voice raised an octave, her agitation apparent, "...either my pits stink or something else I've done has offended because not one person will play with me tonight."

Just then she caught sight of him and visibly stiffened. The man she was talking to turned to see what had stopped their conversation.

Craig leveled the man with a look that spoke volumes. Within seconds, he was off but not before saying to Shelby, "If you're wondering about the no-play thing, you might want to ask him."

Before he made it to her, Shelby had her hands fisted on the curve of her hips, a booted toe tapping with impatience. "You didn't really mean it last time when you said I was off limits, did you?"

"Yes, I did."

Craig made it a habit to never lie and he had no intention of starting now. He also knew better than to pull the caveman routine with someone

who didn't yet realize she belonged to him. Instead, he decided to take a more professional stance on the matter.

"You like to play, that much I can tell, but you are either inexperienced or careless. The latter concerns me, so if you want to play at Club Jerico you'll have to take me as your partner until I'm convinced you can handle the situations you might find yourself in."

Not used to explaining himself or his actions, Craig took a deep, fortifying breath. A storm brewed in Shelby's green eyes. Eyes that were narrowed in anger, causing her cheeks to flush.

It didn't take long for all of Craig's thoughts to travel south of his belt buckle, right along with the blood that had at one time occupied the rest of his body but now sat heavily in the thick length of his engorged cock.

He wanted to see her cheeks flush from the things he was going to do to her, his hands stroking her flesh, parting her folds for the exploration of his fingers.

One thought cascaded into another and before Craig knew what had hit him, he was in an all-out, lust-filled daydream consisting of Shelby with a red-hot, hand-printed ass. Her nipples would be engorged beneath clamps as he artfully wrapped her body in the finest hemp rope he could find.

"You can't be serious?" Shelby whispered the words as if she were afraid someone else might hear and be scandalized by his terms, tearing Craig from his thoughts. He had to concentrate on not laughing. The woman was just too much.

"I never say things I don't mean, Shelby." He looked deep into her wide-eyed gaze, holding her captive for a fraction of a second before punctuating exactly how serious he was. "Those are the terms of your continued play here. Take it or leave it."

Craig was unsure what he'd do if she walked. He'd end up going after her; that much he knew. He just wasn't sure exactly how much time he'd give her before showing up on her doorstep to claim what he already saw as his.

Things would be so much easier if, to begin with, she would agree with his terms and get to know him in a more playful, less permanent way.

She stared at him, mumbling beneath her breath. Craig couldn't quite make out the words rolling through her mind and across her luscious lips.

Then, as if she didn't have a care in the world, Shelby shrugged her bare shoulders. "I'll take it. Let's play."

Her words damn near brought Craig to his knees. Carefree and playful she might sound, but he knew better. Somewhere deep inside she was not only intrigued by what he had to offer but afraid of it as well.

First things first. "During the time you play here, you're mine." He held up a hand to ward off the coming argument. "I'm not finished."

When he was sure he had her complete attention, Craig continued. "I don't bottom. Ever. So plan on getting well acquainted with your submissive side."

The look on Shelby's face was priceless. Her nose wrinkled and her brow furrowed. Her cheeks were so red, Craig thought she might very well explode, but to her credit, she remained quiet.

"You'll have a safe word and every scene we take part in will be negotiated."

He looked her up and down in blatant perusal of her attributes. The denim shorts she wore didn't quite cover all of her ass and the strapless top did more than hint at cleavage, making his mouth water. She looked exactly like what she was, a young woman home from college for summer vacation. And she was all his.

When she opened her mouth, Craig interrupted, "Oh, and I don't share what is mine, even if only for a while, so don't plan on inviting anyone else along for the ride."

Out of every imaginable thing Craig thought Shelby might say in response to his drawn-out plan, the words to leave her mouth were not among them.

"Sounds good. Your rope or mine?"

Shelby couldn't help but smile at the look on Craig's face. His plan to protect her from herself, or whatever it was he was attempting to do, was a crock of shit as far as she was concerned. Like most of the other men she'd come across, dominant or not, he was more than likely just looking for a toy, someone to get him off. Shelby had no problem being that one as long as she got hers in the process.

Although, something about him warned that if she were smart, she'd head out the door and never look back. The way Craig made her feel when they were together warned it would be nearly impossible to keep her heart out of the equation.

But then again, when it came to her kinky side, being smart was the last thing on her mind. Not when standing right in front of her was a man so sexy he could make her wet with no more than the sound of his voice.

Who cares if he just wants a toy to play with, Shelby thought, trying in vain to ignore the tiny little voice in the back of her head insisting she did mind. She couldn't care, wouldn't allow herself to.

You're just here for the kink. Shelby repeated the mantra over and over in her head.

She couldn't wait to feel his lips on hers. Taking with a heat so all-fire consuming everything to follow would pale in comparison. Damn how she hoped that one day she'd find a man who knew how to kiss, really kiss, and loved doing it. Until then she'd bide her time testing her limits and finding out what her likes and dislikes were as far as being a kinkster.

Shelby looked up at Craig. He was so tall and wide-shouldered her mouth watered just thinking about the naughty things he could do to her with little to no effort.

There were walls to be pressed against, her feet dangling high above the floor, as well as desks to be placed over. So many delicious things came to mind she could hardly keep herself from purring out loud.

On the other hand, dropping to her knees, taking him in her mouth and blowing his mind also ranked pretty high on her want-to-do list.

Damn, something about the beast of a man kept Shelby not only irritated as hell but dripping wet and ready for sex.

Like any man used to being in control, Craig recovered very quickly.

“So, you like rope, do you?”

His voice was velvety smooth. It flowed over Shelby, causing her nipples to peak before the heat of her arousal pooled between her thighs. The sensations increased her awareness of how close their bodies were.

“Hell yeah.” Being flippant was about the only way Shelby could think to lessen just how disturbing his proximity to her was.

The look in Craig’s eyes spoke volumes. Only in her lust-induced stupor, Shelby was clueless as to what they were saying.

“Good, because I just happen to be pretty handy with a length of rope.”

Shelby felt the blush rise in her cheeks. Trying to play it off, she allowed her lips to curve in what she was sure was a killer, let’s-play smile.

Evidently playing the seductive vamp didn’t work on someone of Craig’s caliber...or was it maturity? Once again, she was clueless.

“Good. Follow me then.”

“Lead the way.”

This time her flippant remark stopped him dead in his tracks. “Any time we’re together in a lifestyle capacity, you’ll refer to me as Sir.”

He moved to cross the room without ever looking back to see whether she was there or not, which irritated Shelby to no end. Acting on impulse, she did the first thing that came to mind.

With a click of her heels and a mock salute, Shelby spoke in a voice full of attitude. “Aye, aye, Captain, *Sir*.”

Once finished acting like a fool, she followed Craig. Shelby was sure she was going to pay for her behavior and was kicking her own ass because of it. Would she ever learn?

“Probably not in this lifetime,” she mumbled to herself before moving across the threshold of a room outfitted with nothing more than a very large four-poster bed.

Oh yes!

Shelby all but rubbed her hands together in glee. She wasn't really one to jump into bed with just anybody no matter what it seemed like to the outside world, but damn, it had been a long dry spell. At the ripe young age of twenty-five, she was due and would take all she could get.

“First things first.” Craig's voice pulled her gaze from the surface of the overly large bed. “Unless you've got a safe word you prefer to use, we'll do it the easy way and stick with yellow and red.”

It sounded like a good plan to Shelby, who merely nodded her agreement. There was just something about that bed, which sat in a room in a house filled with all types of kinky people, that had her adrenaline pumping in a purely exhibitionist sort of way.

“Do you understand, Shelby?”

Geez, what did he think she was, five? “Yeah, I understand.”

His brow furrowed. “Yeah?”

It took Shelby a minute to get where he was going. She'd always sworn to herself she'd never use a title when referring to a play partner. But as with anything else in life, never was a long time. For some off-the-wall reason, it didn't seem so awful to bestow the title upon Craig. Of course, that bit of information was something she didn't want to think about just yet.

“Yes, Sir. I understand. Red means stop and yellow means I need you to slow down.”

His smile was warm and reached his whiskey brown eyes, crinkling the corners in a way that melted a little section of her heart.

“Good girl.” It was absolutely mind-boggling to Shelby why words that should have raised her ire instead gave her a secret thrill.

They spent a few minutes going over her experiences and what she considered to be her hard limits, or the things she wouldn't consider doing no matter what, before proceeding.

"Okay then, do you have anything on under those?" Craig motioned toward her cut-off shorts.

"Panties."

Shelby wasn't at all sure where he was going with his line of questioning. She might not have the perfect body, but she knew she was sexy as hell and had no trouble flaunting what she did have.

From what she could tell, most men would rather have a real woman—scars, stretch marks and all—who was confident in her own skin, over a Barbie doll who was afraid of a full meal.

"Leave them on, but everything else has to go." Craig turned back to the door, locking it. Evidently he wasn't much for public play. Things were about to get interesting, Shelby thought as she slowly lowered her strapless top below the generous swell of her breasts before shimmying it over her hips.

When the garment was completely free of her body, she folded it and laid it over the back of a close-by chair then began working on the snap of her shorts. Within seconds Shelby was nude except for the barely there triangle of her fire engine red g-string.

"Mmm, very nice."

She was a bit surprised by his praise. The warmth in his voiced compliment shouldn't matter, but it did.

"Thank you, Sir." This time around, adding the title seemed almost natural. She was dumbfounded by the unexplainable need to please him, to see his smile once again.

When he pulled a length of rope from a small bag Shelby hadn't even noticed, her heart rate skyrocketed. He moved toward her at a leisurely pace, slowly pulling the length of rope through his hand. The look in his eyes was intense, full of heat and arousal that called to every fiber of her being.

Craig Jensen was dangerous to her peace of mind and yet, Shelby couldn't seem to care.

Chapter Three

He started by ever so slowly wrapping the rope around Shelby's chest just above her breasts and then again just below. It didn't take long before Shelby relaxed into the hug of rope, her eyes glazed.

She was glorious in her arousal. Absolutely, stunningly beautiful. He was falling hard and fast, something that completely boggled his mind considering he'd yet to ever find himself in the same predicament with any woman, much less one he'd just met.

Craig decided to up the ante a bit. He added to the chest harness of rope in a way that would heighten her arousal by bringing her nipples into play.

This time the length of doubled rope was passed over the peaked tips then separated before being pulled tight and secured, in effect forming a built-in set of clamps.

From their earlier conversation, Craig knew rope play had the ability to make Shelby extremely aroused, possibly even sending her into subspace. Not wanting to interrupt the sensations flowing over her, Craig spoke low and soft.

"On your back on the bed, little one." He put actions to words by helping her get into position.

Once there he used the chest harness with the addition of two other lengths of rope to secure her to the headboard of the bed. Another two lengths of rope cuffed her ankles, securing them to the footboard, in effect leaving her helpless, except for her free hands.

As much as Craig loved physical bondage—the sight of a woman bound and at his whim—the real thrill of power exchange, at least for him, came from the mental aspects.

Anyone could tie a person up, but to bind merely with words added a whole new dimension to the scene, and that was exactly what he had planned for Shelby.

Her pretty green eyes were closed, her breath coming in deep draws that expanded her lungs, inflicting the will of the rope upon her nipples in a way that made his cock rock hard with desire.

“Shelby. I want you to place your arms above your head, palms on the headboard, and leave them there until I tell you otherwise. Do you understand?”

Why he’d insisted she call him sir when he’d never instructed a submissive, not even his own, to bestow a title upon him, Craig had no idea. Not knowing didn’t stop him from doing it. It also didn’t stop him from asking questions just to hear her say that word.

Her breathy *Yes, Sir* stirred something inside of Craig he hadn’t felt for quite some time, if ever. The next part of his plan could very well backfire if he’d pegged Shelby all wrong.

“Look at me.”

He kept his words low yet firm. Shelby responded immediately, her lashes fluttering against her pale cheeks before popping open.

“Good girl.”

Her crooked little smile was nearly enough to melt his heart.

Things were about to get a bit intense though, so concentrating on the task at hand was of the utmost importance. Craig didn’t know Shelby as well as he’d like before playing, but there was no way in hell he was going to let the chance at touching her pass him by.

With steady fingers, he trailed her collarbone until it met shoulder, then continued to ply her silky flesh in circular motions before reaching the rope-entrapped tip of one breast.

Testing her pain tolerance, Craig pinched her rope-clamped nipples, watching for her reaction, loving her deep inhalation of breath as well as the small gasp to leave her plump lips.

“Like that?”

When she took too long to answer, he flicked the peak closest to him with the tip of his finger. Shelby’s gaze flew to his, focusing. “Wh-what?”

“I asked you a question, little one. Do you like that?”

“Oh God! Yes...Sir.”

“Would you like more?” Craig continued to stimulate her engorged nipples in soft, sensuous swirls with the tip of a single finger.

“Yes, Sir.”

“Yes Sir, what?” Craig pushed. He could tell Shelby was uncomfortable with being vocal about her needs. She was obviously out of her element and yet trying so hard to please him. She was so damn hot he was afraid he might come without so much as a touch from her sweet, soft lips.

“I... Ahhhh.”

She closed her eyes when he tugged gently where the rope passed across her nipples. It was his finger applying pressure over Shelby’s clit that gained her attention.

When the beautiful green orbs of her eyes flashed open and she was once again focused intently on him, Craig spoke. “Tell me what you want, Shelby.”

“I want more. I wa-want your touch. All over.”

Craig smiled. Much better. He let up on the rope but kept his finger on her clit, merely lightening the pressure.

“Good girl.”

The scent of her cream-slick cunt permeated the air around them, drawing Craig in, making him crazy with the need to swipe his tongue down the length of her puffy outer lips before rolling the swollen bud of her clit gently between his teeth. He wanted Shelby frantic with the need to come. Then and only then could he teach her a lesson in control.

Putting thought into action, Craig shifted position until his face was at the apex of Shelby's sprawled thighs. His hot breath caused her to squirm in vain in what he assumed was an attempt to get closer to his mouth.

"I'm going to lick every sweet inch of your juicy little pussy, baby. I want you writhing with need, with the need to come, with the need to please me. But you can't come until I give you permission."

Her groan was throaty, coming from deep within, her frustration nearly palpable. "If you disobey me, you will be punished. Do you understand?"

Shelby's breath was bursting from her lungs in shallow pants of air. "Yes, Sir."

Craig settled his mouth over her core, flicking his tongue as deep as he possibly could into her depths. Her taste burst across his tongue, staggering him.

She tasted sweet and hot, a mixture so erotic he felt an inexplicable need to go deeper, get closer, claim her for his own no matter the cost to either of them.

It was Shelby's whispered plea announcing the impending orgasm about to rack her body that finally pulled Craig from the depths of her cream-soaked cunt.

"Not yet, little one. Hold it back."

She thrashed as much as the ties binding her would allow. Craig could only guess at what her frenzied movements were causing the rope still imprisoning her nipples to do.

"I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't..." The chanted words as well as the bunching and tightening of her thigh muscles against his palms told Craig just how close she was to coming.

He continued to work her clit and the pretty pink folds now swollen with desire. Deepening his voice, Craig warned, "Don't you dare come without permission."

His words didn't seem to penetrate the fog of heat and need shrouding her, preparing her for the climax rapidly building in every cell of her body.

Craig slowed his torment of her clit. Once again lifting his mouth from her core, he spoke. "Look at me." His words insisted she listen, demanded it.

Her head rolled back and forth on the pillow. Each languid circle his finger made around her clit caused her to shiver anew.

"Now, Shelby!"

Something in the tone of his voice finally broke through whatever barrier surrounded her, causing Shelby to lift her head slightly, just enough for him to pin her with his gaze.

"You will do as I ask, Shelby, so concentrate."

She was going to kill him. Kill him and gut him and feed his balls to the wild animals. Of course, in order to do that he would have to stop and God only knew that was the last thing she wanted.

His finger passed across the ultra-sensitive swell of her clit, stealing her breath. The single torturous digit slowed for a brief second, just enough that she could catch her breath, before starting over. Around and around it went in ever-narrowing circles until once again moving right over her clit.

No longer could she think, understand or acknowledge what was happening to her. The only thing her body and mind would allow was for her to feel. Every nerve ending was alive.

Sensation so piercingly intense washed over her and for a minute Shelby thought she might faint from the overwhelming need for completion.

When the first peak of her orgasm got so close Shelby knew there was no holding it back, a strangled cry burst from her lips. Without thought to her actions, she shifted her hands from the headboard to the apex of her thighs, an unconscious plan to anchor them on Craig's head, to hold

him where he was so she could ride the wave of her release with the warmth of his breath upon her.

Her impending climax ranked right up there with all things too good to be true. Before the first crest could cause her to tumble over, a sharp sting to her inner thigh pulled her from the warm crashing waves of what would surely have been the most intense release of her life.

To say she was pissed would be putting it mildly. It took a second for Shelby to gather her wits and realize the sting had come from an open-palmed swat delivered by Craig's hand, but when she did, the fight was on.

"What the fuck did you do that for?"

Not planned in the least and yet said all the same, the words tumbled from her mouth. Shelby's hair stuck to her face, uncomfortably irritating her more.

The expression on Craig's face warned Shelby she'd made a terrible mistake.

"Are you using your safe word?" Menacingly low, his voice promised punishment. And yet, there was no inner argument, no worries for her physical well being.

"No."

"You disobeyed by moving your hands. Your punishment was a swat to your thigh. The extent of your outburst will cost you even more."

Craig edged off the bed. It sounded as if he was rustling through his bag but from her bound vantage point, Shelby could not see what he was doing. The not knowing made her nervous, even a bit scared. Not enough to safe-word out or ask Craig what he was doing, but frightened nonetheless.

When he returned, his hands were full. Of what, Shelby had no idea. Without so much as a word, he eased back onto the bed, this time to sit between her widespread thighs.

She lifted her head from the mattress, wanting to know what he was doing. The view to greet her eyes caused a spiral of sensations to cascade one after another across her flesh.

His brown eyes bore into her as he tore open a box, removing a new purple butt plug, one that appeared to be ominously wide. He proceeded to spread lube across its tip.

Shelby wasn't sure whether she was tugging at her bonds in an attempt to gain her freedom or beg him to hurry the hell up. All she managed was a whimper of anguished need when he placed a single finger over the swollen bud of her clit.

"You belong to me right now, Shelby. Unless you safe-word out you will be experiencing a crash course in control. This..." Craig held up the lube-glistening plug for her inspection, "...will remind you with every movement of your body, with every thrust of my finger into your weeping pussy, to obey me."

They'd talked about her experiences, including anal play, but never in a million years had Shelby imagined Craig would venture there so early in the game.

When he lowered the plug between the cheeks of her ass, pressing it slowly into her, Shelby moaned. The feel of him touching her there was more intense, more private, more personal than she could have ever imagined. Anal play and sex were something she had always enjoyed, possibly even loved, but never before had it hit her with the intensity it did now.

A burning desire to please him overcame Shelby with a force unlike anything she'd ever before experienced while bottoming. It was getting very hard to remember she was not a submissive, merely someone who enjoyed kinky play.

Doing the best she could to accommodate the plug slowly invading her most private of places, Shelby gulped a deep breath.

"That's it, little one. Breathe and relax. You can do it, baby."

She would do it, dammit. She'd do it and love it. A streak of fire shot through her as Craig steadily pressed until the widest part of the plug stretched the tight ring of muscle protecting the delicate entrance of her ass.

A low moan, a combination of pain and pleasure, welled up from deep within, spilling across her dry lips. The press of his finger as it relentlessly circled her clit only added to the delicious torment.

It was about that time that Shelby realized she was beyond screwed. Hoping a change in attitude would do the job or that Craig got off on hearing a woman's plea for release, Shelby begged.

"Oh God! Please...please may I come, Sir?"

Shelby's words seemed to have the complete opposite effect of what she had hoped for. No more than a heartbeat of time passed before Craig's answer made her want to scream.

"Not without permission." He followed the clipped response with an increase of not only pressure but speed with which he was torturing her clit.

"Concentrate, baby. Hold on for me, for my pleasure."

His words somehow lowered a veil of calm over her, sending Shelby on a floaty ride inside of her own body. The sensations cascading over every inch of her, coursing through her veins, were still intense, still relentless and yet she no longer had any doubt she could do it, would do it.

For her Master.

Time seemed to stop as did anything resembling a coherent thought. Something was wrong with what her mind had just worked out, but for the life of her, Shelby couldn't quite grasp what it was. There was no time to dwell on it when the intensity of Craig's voice insisted she listen and obey.

"Come for me, Shelby. Come now!"

Her old life burst into a million shattering pieces, releasing something new. Something from deep within her. Something that, due to the encroaching blackness, Shelby would have to wait to come to terms with.

Chapter Four

Shelby was fiery in her submission, fighting it halfway while trying with her other half to accept who and what she was.

To come to terms with and be okay with submission in a politically correct world where women were taught never to submit had to be a daunting task. He shook such thoughts from his mind. Now was not the time. Not when Shelby lay curled in his arms, no longer bound to the bed for his pleasure but instead receiving the best aftercare he could give.

Craig brushed her hair from her face. The flush of Shelby's cheeks was in complete contrast with the near stillness of her breathing.

"You have no idea how much you please me."

Merely snuggling closer to his chest, she said not a word. Her body was limp and pliant, restful in its repose. Craig could only imagine how exhausting it was to submit as thoroughly as she had.

Although he had no doubt she had tried to hold back as long as possible, he was fairly sure they'd connected on a much deeper level than anything Shelby had ever before experienced. Craig planned to make sure it happened over and over and over again. He knew now more than ever exactly how right she was for him.

Even when angry at her unwillingness to believe in herself and her newfound submissiveness, it was obvious that Shelby was more than the players who insisted they were slave material, needing ownership.

What Shelby was came naturally and from deep within. It was in every inch of her flesh, each drop of blood, whether she wanted to believe it or not.

Craig sighed in relief that things had gone so well. She'd submitted completely to him, her eyes telling a deep and emotional story, locking with his just as she'd climaxed.

It was more than Craig had hoped for. He would take everything she gave, pushing her limits and binding her with the touch of his hand. Shelby would grow to crave his touch as much as he already craved her. Hopefully love would follow.

"Come on, little one." Craig caressed her a bit more insistently, his plan to wake her in a gentle manner.

As much as he hated the thought, she needed more than just the thin blanket he'd wrapped her in at the end of their scene. She needed clothes, food and water and then they would talk.

Spreading kisses across her forehead before moving down to her mouth, Craig enjoyed the taste of her pale flesh. He wanted to take her home and devour her, to show her the private playroom his house boasted. The special place where he took few to play and so far none who mattered as Shelby already did.

When she didn't budge, Craig sat up, jostling her in his arms. The fun was over and aftercare begun. He would kick his own ass if anything negative were to happen to her after an experience with him. No passing out on his watch.

Craig stood Shelby in front of him. With his hands clasped around her waist, he made sure her legs were steady enough for her to hold her own weight. Her green eyes flashed open. She appeared a bit disoriented before a look of awareness crossed her features.

"You need a snack and something to drink, baby." Craig removed his hands from Shelby's waist, hating the loss of her heat against his palms.

With a hand at her elbow, he guided her out of the private room they had been occupying and into the main dungeon area of the club. When she stopped dead in her tracks, Craig turned to see what had caused the sudden change of pace.

She was staring at him while clutching the thin blanket around her arms in a way Craig could only describe as defensive. Her wide eyes were

shuttered, closing him off from her thoughts, her feelings, just as she'd tried to do early on in their session.

No fucking way in hell was he going to let her get away with shutting him out. Just the thought of Shelby's attempt to do so made Craig's hand tingle with the need to spank her ass.

"Let's go." His words were clipped, curt to the extreme as he led her through the main room and into a side room where she could change in private.

Shelby eyed the front door as she took her clothes from him.

"Don't even think about it, little one."

Craig had to respect the fact that she didn't try to pretend to misunderstand what he was saying. Instead, the fiery minx edged her chin up at a defiant angle and looked him dead in the eye before pushing past him and into the room.

The door closing echoed through his mind. The snick of the lock against its mooring made him want to break through the physical barrier, take her in his arms and once again show Shelby who she really was.

Curling his hands into tight fists, Craig did his best to ignore the urge. To do so would only prove how out of control he felt and that was not an option for a man like himself, one who made a living out of being in complete control.

It was disturbing just how much a tiny little slip of a woman could damn near bring him to his knees. A few years back, Craig would have refused to play with her. The hold she had over him was too strong and way too unsettling, especially given she was clueless about her importance in his future.

His patience was running thin, with both himself and Shelby. "Either you come out or I'm coming in."

Mere seconds passed before the door swung open. Her rounded chin was still inched high, adding to the mutinous look on her dimpled cheeks. Had he not noticed the red rimming her eyes, Craig very well may have spanked her ass then and there.

For now, she was off the hook. She would get her punishment and take it as any wayward submissive should, of that there was no doubt. But right now was not the time.

“Let’s grab you a drink and snack, little one.”

Craig did his best to keep the anger and impatience out of his voice. Her luminescent eyes and the nearly unnoticeable quiver of her bottom lip warned him to keep things calm.

First off, he knew she was more than likely having a bit of trouble coping with all that had happened in such a short time. What really sent him staggering though was how much the sight of her teary eyes turned him on.

Once again Craig was hard as a rock. Just thinking about protecting Shelby, caring for her and bringing her to tears of frustrated pleasure as he bound her tightly with rope, sent blood rushing to his cock.

He snatched half a sandwich off a platter and a bottle of water out of an ice chest with Shelby in mind. He handed her both without a word.

She took them from his hand, trying her best not to touch him. When she had the food held within her grasp, Shelby turned to him. “I’m ready to go home now.”

It took every ounce of willpower Craig had to escort her to the door without first finding an empty room where he could spank her ass until it was beet red before sliding his cock deep within its tight, forbidden depths. He wanted to brand her as his, lord his dominance over her. Insist she accept everything he offered then beg for more.

Instead he walked her to her car. When she was seated inside, he reached across to buckle her seat belt. Once done, Craig leaned in close.

“This is not over, Shelby. Not even close to being over. As a matter of fact, it’s just beginning.”

With a hand anchored in the curls of her hair, he angled her head sharply for his kiss, increasing the intensity with which he held her, causing her to gasp, opening her mouth.

Her taste only hammered home just how willing he was to pursue her until she understood her submissive nature. After that if she decided she

wanted nothing to do with him, then so be it, but for now she owed it to herself to at least face the truth.

Before closing the door, Craig warned, “Don’t make me come for you, little one.”

* * *

Even after two days Shelby’s body still ached deliciously. Every twinge reminded her of exactly what had happened, how Craig had played her body, controlling everything from her words and thoughts to her orgasms.

Coming out of the haze of lust and submission that had overcome her mind, body and soul two days ago had left her shaken and confused.

Shelby had played before. She’d experienced wonderfully intense orgasms at the hands of men who were sought after for their ability to wield a single tail whip. Being tied by some of the most talented in the art of Japanese rope bondage, also known as Shibari, rated extremely high on her list, especially given her love for rope.

And yet, not one of those experiences could have prepared her for being bound and at Craig’s mercy. There was no way she could have prepared for the emotions that had run through her body. And there was definitely no way she could have prepared for the rollercoaster of feelings that the last two days had thrust upon her.

Craig had taken care of her, held her until her body stopped trembling.

He had been patient, waiting for what, Shelby still wasn’t sure, but something in his gaze, as she left, warned just how serious he was. If she did not go to him, he would surely come for her.

And then what?

Shelby didn’t want to find out that way. Confronting an angry Craig was not something she relished the idea of. No, she would call the club and speak with him in order to get his address and let him know she’d be by to see him first thing in the morning.

Too bad she hadn't come to the conclusion a bit sooner, before Craig's shiny black truck pulled up to the front door of the lakeside cottage she was using for the summer.

"Damn, damn, damn."

Shelby muttered the words beneath her breath as Craig made his way up the walkway and to the door. Not wanting to be inside alone with him, she opened the door before he had the chance to knock. Making her way out, she closed it securely behind her.

His movements were swift, soundless as he stepped onto the porch to stand directly in front of her. Taking her in his arms, Craig buried a hand deep within her hair and slanted his mouth over hers.

The kiss was mind numbing. Passion and power dueled with heat so intense Shelby felt it in every atom of her being. His tongue fought its way into her mouth, stroking against her, tasting and teasing until she thought she might die from the sheer pleasure.

Tingles of delight walked their way up and down her spine, radiating out to her nipples, peaking them with desire. The full length of his body was plastered against her, showing Shelby just how much she affected him.

The thought made her happy for some off-the-wall reason. She was leery about admitting her submissiveness, about the idea of belonging wholly to only one man, but the thought of pleasing Craig both sexually and in other aspects of his life gave her great joy.

He separated their mouths, breaking the kiss, all without releasing the hold he had on her hair. His brown eyes bore into her, asking questions Shelby wasn't sure she had answers to.

Although she'd already made up her mind to belong to Craig if that was truly what he wanted, Shelby still had a few things to work out in her head, to search her soul for.

If he wanted her, all of her, Craig would have to understand and allow her one more night.

"I wanted to come see you." Shelby did her best to keep her voice even. It was a hard thing to accomplish considering all the emotions

roiling around inside of her. It would be so easy to second-guess her decision. Shelby worried what others might think when she agreed with everything in her to belong to a man widely known in the community for his activities in and with a club like Club Jerico.

She could very well use it as an excuse. The problem was the only thing she would accomplish by doing so would be to shortchange herself on what would surely be a life-altering experience.

Having met Craig, it was something Shelby was not willing to chance.

“Then why didn’t you?” Before she could answer, he added, “I warned you not to make me come after you and yet, here I am.”

An ominous tone laced his voice. Something in it told Shelby she would be paying in some way.

“I didn’t want to go back to the club just yet. I wanted to go to your place. But I don’t know where you live. Tomorrow morning I was going to find you.” Her voice was starting to tremble just slightly. Shelby hated the telltale sign of her nervousness.

A perplexed look in Craig’s gaze said he wasn’t quite sure he believed her. His next question proved that beyond a shadow of a doubt. “And you didn’t think to call?” There was a dangerous edge to his voice. It wasn’t anger, more like skepticism, as if he thought she might be lying to him.

“I wasn’t sure if I was ready.”

Shelby wasn’t sure she could say the words yet, to admit she was his, that she belonged to him. Then the uncertainty of the situation got the best of her and Shelby could no longer hold her tears at bay.

Could it be that he merely felt slighted by how quickly she’d left? Maybe he only wanted a play partner. God how she hated the not knowing and the emotional turmoil it brought with it.

Shelby felt as though she were fluttering in the breeze. Would Craig be her anchor or would a strong wind carry her away? She sniffled then gave a little hiccup. What a mess she was making of things.

Craig gathered her close to his body. The heat of him warmed her from the inside out. “So you don’t know if you’re ready to admit you’re mine?”

He asked the question so sincerely, so quietly, Shelby had to struggle to hear the words. She shook her head against his chest, hiding her face from his possible reaction. In her mind Shelby already knew she was his. Admitting it openly was where she was having trouble. Craig seemed to understand.

“I won’t push right now. It sounds as though you’ve got a bit more thinking to do.” He kept her close, one hand in her hair, the other rubbing sensuous circles along her back.

After a moment, Craig held her at arm’s length. This time when he spoke, his voice poured over her, spreading warmth through Shelby, body and soul.

“You might not be ready to admit the truth to me, and I’m okay with that for right now, but are you ready to learn I mean what I say? That when I give a warning it should be heeded?”

Hearing him speak of her punishment for making him come for her had Shelby so freaking hot she thought she might spontaneously combust.

“Yes, Sir.”

She knew her eyes were wide as saucers, more than likely giving her a deer in the headlights look, but just thinking about the possibilities had her dripping wet and nervous as hell.

“Then invite me in, little one.”

Chapter Five

Craig watched as Shelby reached for the doorknob, her fingers trembling. He hoped her nervousness came from a multitude of emotions, including a good amount of arousal.

Once through the door, Shelby stepped aside. The look on her face told him she was waiting, unsure of what his next move would be. He wanted to keep her waiting for a little bit longer.

Keeping her off kilter would only add to the intensity of the erotic spanking he planned to use as punishment. Of course, punishment was far from what was truly about to happen.

Craig eyed her drawstring pants and T-shirt with contempt. He wanted her out of them, now, ready for his touch, his pleasure.

“Stand over there.” He motioned to the center of the room.

With her hands clasped in front of her, she moved in the direction he’d instructed. Once there, she stopped and slowly turned to face him.

“Take your shirt off, little one.”

Craig kept his voice low, commanding. It was hard considering what he really wanted to do was stalk his way across the room, rip her clothes from her body and plunge the length of his rock-hard cock deep into the tight confines of her pretty pink pussy.

Doing so would only mess things up and he knew it. Shelby craved the control he promised, insisted upon. She would thrive as his slave, loved and cherished beyond all else. Soon. Very soon, Craig reminded himself.

She inched her shirt up, showing first her midriff then her breasts, which were gloriously unencumbered. They bobbed free of the cotton T-shirt as if glad to be uncovered.

“Now your pants.”

Once again, she did as asked. He could only find fault in the fact that Shelby did not give him the benefit of an answer, including the title he so loved to hear slip from her lips.

She was so damned giving, so beautiful in her submissiveness that Craig wanted to gather her up in his arms and whisk her away to his personal playroom where he could do all sorts of kinky things with her gorgeously curvy body.

When the full globes of her ass peeked above the waistband of her pants, Craig had trouble holding back a groan of frustration. As she reached for the waistband of her g-string panties, Craig stopped her.

“Leave those on.”

She gave him a strange look for the briefest of seconds before dropping her hands.

“You are so hot, baby. You have no idea how much I want to fuck you right now.” It was an admission, one that added a bit of spunk to her movements.

Craig couldn't help but chuckle. “Of course, that isn't going to happen just yet.” He shook his head sadly. “Nope, first we've got a lesson to learn.”

Looking around, Craig found exactly what he was searching for, a low-backed kitchen chair. After pulling several fairly short lengths of rope from his coat pocket, he removed the coat.

He laid it neatly across the back of one chair, his movements achingly slow in hopes of adding to the arousal, the amount of emotion whirling around inside of Shelby.

Once done, he moved back to where Shelby still stood motionless, watching, chair in hand. “Bend over the back of this, little one.”

Her green-eyed gaze swung to the chair, then back to him, but her feet stayed rooted in place. Instead of helping her with a stinging swat to the ass, something she was setting herself up for extra of anyway, he decided a bit of coaxing might work better.

“Come on, Shelby. The sooner we get this part over with, the sooner we can move on to the good stuff.”

His words must have spoken volumes because without wasting any more time, she did as he asked. Arching herself over the back of the chair, she braced her hands against the armrests.

With methodical motions, Craig slowly and carefully secured each wrist with a length of rope. He checked the tightness, then sensually slid his fingers along Shelby’s.

Craig knelt behind her, making sure the warmth of his breath could be felt along her thighs as he tied ankles to opposite chair legs. The position she was in left her open and vulnerable to his every whim.

“Comfortable?” He asked the question already knowing the answer so was not at all surprised by her answer.

“No.”

Craig swatted her ass. “No what?”

“No, S-Sir.”

The feel of her ass beneath his palm was so damned erotic he wasn’t at all sure he was going to last very long. Denying himself the pleasure of touching her more intimately, of kneeling behind her to taste of her sweetness, Craig instead continued peppering her ass.

The first swats were designed to warm up flesh unused to such treatment. Those that followed were intended to sting, to burn, to remind.

“Oh! P-please. Please touch me.”

Craig landed a blow just a bit harder than the rest, then rubbed the offended flesh, which was now red hot.

“But I am touching you, little one.”

Her whimper of frustration was like music to his ears.

“I need more. Please, please, please.”

Shelby’s words made his pulse race. Perspiration dotted his forehead and for a moment Craig thought about calling a halt to it all. He wanted to take her and make her his, to brand her body with his come, to mark her with more than just his handprints.

Shelby worried she might have gone too far in asking for more. Hell, she couldn’t even remember to call him Sir, what in the world made her think she deserved anything other than what he was already offering?

Her bound wrists chafed, shoulders ached and her ass was on fire and yet, she felt free and relaxed. It was simply amazing.

She was just starting to feel a bit smug about the whole idea of punishment and what she could handle when Craig moved in behind her. The heat of his jean-clad pelvis against her ass was like adding flame to an already-burning fire.

The whimper of pain and pleasure that escaped her closed lips was so animalistic it took Shelby a minute to realize it came from her.

When Craig reached around her upper body to play with her nipples, squeezing them tight between his thumb and forefinger, her head began to swim.

“Oh. Oh yes. *Yessss!*” The words were released on a hissed breath. Her core ached to be filled, touched, licked. Anything.

Oh God but she wanted him to finish her. The only problem was she would not ask nor beg. She was bound and determined to play by Craig’s rules. It was the only way she could think of to prove just how much she wanted to serve him, needed to be with him.

Had she not been bound to the chair, Shelby very well may have fallen to the floor in a boneless twitching heap when he finally snaked a hand down her back, fingering the crack of her ass as he continued to move down to her sex.

It seemed as if he were moving in slow motion. His talented fingers plunged into her pussy only to back out dripping with her juice before stroking her clit to attention. Several times she got so close to coming

she was sure nothing would stop the ensuing climax, only to be pulled short by a sharp swat to her inner thigh.

“Don’t you dare come without my permission, Shelby. This is not about your pleasure. It’s about your punishment. You’ll take what I give you and not a bit more. Do you understand?”

Part of her wanted to call him every name in the book. That was the smart-assed part she’d always used to hold at bay those who were getting too close. It was the other part she was going to listen to today though, the one that wanted nothing more than to please the man behind her. To see a wide smile on his lips and hear his words of praise when all was said and done.

Coming to a quick decision on the matter, Shelby answered, “Yes, Sir. I understand.”

“Good, baby. Real good.”

His words of praise caused a smile to curve her lips, but only briefly. When Craig began untying her, Shelby felt an unexplainable urge to cry. She blinked rapidly, fighting the need with all her might.

Once she was free, Craig helped her to stand. She was so hot and horny it took everything in her not to pounce on him. Her body, unused to the position she’d been bound in, protested every movement.

Shelby wasn’t sure if it was her groan of discomfort or the grimace plastered across her face that caught Craig’s attention but without a word, he began massaging her shoulders and arms with vigorous sweeps of his hands.

“Better, little one?” He stared at her as if he could see straight into her heart and decipher the secrets of her soul.

“Much better. Thank you, Sir.”

His smile was magnificent, the pleasure in his eyes a sight to behold. Tomorrow she would belong to this man mind, body and soul. Tonight was wonderful, even if done in the need for discipline, but tomorrow, tomorrow Shelby would start anew, a rebirth of sorts. A time when she would no longer deny her nature or withhold her love or emotions.

A very scary thought to say the least, one she wouldn't dwell on any more tonight.

Craig's hand in her hair brought Shelby's mind back to what was happening. "Are you wet for me, baby?"

Shelby nodded the best she could with her head anchored so tightly in his grasp. Was he finally going to fuck her? *Oh please let that be the case*, she thought, afraid to voice the words.

"Show me."

His orders confused her. She wasn't at all sure how he meant. "How?"

"Touch yourself and show me, little one. I want to see your fingers glisten with your cream. I want proof of just how much you want my touch."

The wicked words rolled around in her head. This one was easy. Touching herself was something Shelby had no trouble with. She knew exactly what she liked, so masturbating was something she did often.

She looked Craig in the eye as she slid a hand down her abdomen to the apex of her thighs, where she dipped two fingers into the heat of her body. She was so wet she could smell her scent in the air. It surrounded them as did the slick sounds of her fingers moving over her flesh.

Unable to help the heat invading her cheeks, Shelby felt the blush that was more than likely as red as her ass cross her face. She lifted her finger coated in the proof of her desire as an offering to Craig.

"Good girl. Now taste yourself."

This time his instructions made her decidedly uncomfortable. When she balked, Craig arched an eyebrow but remained silent. It took Shelby a minute to work up the nerve to take on such an intimate task but figured at this point in the game, refusing would likely just end with her back over the chair.

"Mmmmm. You are so damned hot."

Using his hand in her hair to guide, Craig motioned Shelby to her knees. His pants were open, the thick length of his cock free.

“I want you to play with your pussy while you suck me, little one. Keep it wet and hot, baby, but no coming.”

Excited beyond belief, Shelby did as asked. The minute her mouth closed around the head of Craig’s cock, exquisite taste burst on her tongue. His scent filled her nostrils as she struggled to take him deeper while playing with the slick folds of her pussy.

She was unsure if it was her excitement and the need to come or wanting so desperately to please Craig, but the sounds emanating from him told her she was doing a great job.

“Fuck yeah.”

His hold on her hair tightened, pulling as his hips bucked, sinking his length so deep she gagged. Tears rolled down her cheeks but there was nothing she could do about them, nothing she wanted to do, at least not until he came.

“Just like that, Shelby. Suck me deep. Take me. Take all of me.”

The last was said on a grunt, a sound of sheer pleasure as his cock swelled in her mouth before filling it with his essence.

Shelby continued to play with herself as she swallowed every last drop Craig’s body offered. She was so hot and so freaking ready to come she thought she might faint from the agony of holding back.

Craig, on the other hand, seemed completely content. He backed away, pulling his now flaccid shaft from her lips, then proceeded to fasten his pants.

“Stop.”

It seemed as if he were speaking a foreign language. “Wh-what?”

“I said stop.” He lowered his gaze to where her fingers still busily stroked the folds of her greedy sex. “Don’t make me ask you a second time, little one.”

He had to be kidding.

Oh please let him be kidding!

When Craig helped Shelby to her feet, she knew it wasn't to be. Holding back tears of frustration was a very hard thing to do. So was not coldcocking him then kicking his cruel ass out of her house.

"You have things to think about, if I remember right, so I'll be leaving now. I never want it to be said that I influenced your decisions one way or the other." He took the time to write his home address on a piece of paper. His calmness irritated Shelby beyond belief.

"You're going to just leave me like this?" Shelby was extremely frustrated. Her body ached for more, wept with need, a need it seemed was not going to be met.

"I am. And the next time you think to disobey me, you'll remember today."

Craig stepped forward and gathered Shelby in his arms, kissing her slow and deep. After pulling his mouth from hers, he raised her hand to his lips and, one by one, suckled the fingers she'd used to pleasure herself.

"Remember, you don't come without my permission. I'll know if you do." With those words he turned and headed to the door, calling over his shoulder as he stepped across the threshold, "See you tomorrow, little one."

Chapter Six

The sight of her flushed cheeks wouldn't leave Craig's mind. He hadn't slept a wink, hating having left Shelby in such a state of arousal. In his need to teach the little minx a bit of control, Craig was losing most of his.

Life was known for throwing curves, but this time around, it seemed like he was getting nothing but hairpin turns.

Would she show up? He thought so, was almost sure. Of course, leaving the way he had last night had very obviously pissed Shelby off. The mutinous expression to cross her pixie-like features nearly made him chuckle. It was clear she'd wanted to do some physical harm to his person.

The humor quickly died when Craig realized it was already going on noon and Shelby had yet to make an appearance. What would he do if she didn't show?

Nothing.

The thought almost buckled his knees but there was little he could do about it. If she didn't show it was for a reason. Perhaps she wasn't quite ready for the level of relationship he expected and if that was the case, things between them would go downhill very fast.

It was a slippery slope Craig didn't even want to consider.

If she decided not to show he was left no alternative but to let her go. His mind screamed at the injustice of the offending thought, but trust was the key to any relationship, especially a BDSM relationship. If he pursued when she clearly didn't want what he offered, then he would jeopardize the trust they had already established.

One thing he wasn't willing to overlook were the rules of Safe, Sane and Consensual. Take away one and the cycle would be broken. It was something Craig wouldn't do. It would go against everything in him. No, he would just wait and pace like the caged animal he felt inside.

Nearly another hour passed before he heard it, a very light, very tentative knock at his front door. Shelby.

He stalked across the living room to the front door, a bit angry because he'd been made to wait. The thought of possibly being played crossed his mind, making Craig realize how much he cared. More than likely too much and too soon.

The minute Craig saw Shelby's face, her pale cheeks and teary green eyes, his anger drained away.

"Come here, little one."

There was nothing more important than holding her, letting her know just how safe she was with him, even when he wanted to claim her in every way a man could possibly claim a woman.

She clung to him, burrowing her face into his chest as if trying to climb inside. "You're safe here, Shelby. You know that, right?" With a finger beneath her chin, Craig tipped her face up for his perusal.

"Yes, Sir. I do." Shelby spoke quietly, solemnly, but with an underlying strength that made Craig proud.

"Good girl."

This time a bright smile curved her pillow-soft lips. When she backed out of his grasp, Craig had to fight the urge to anchor her to him, to hold her tight and never allow her out of his reach. That, of course, was impossible and he knew it so made no move to stop her when she backed away from him.

Shelby's next actions moved Craig, awed him in a way so unexpected he felt lightheaded. Without a word of instruction from him, she lifted the knee-length dress she was wearing over her head, leaving her completely bare, gloriously naked to his gaze.

When she knelt before him, her ass in the air, cheek to the floor and arms stretched high above her head, Craig nearly swallowed his tongue.

The position was extremely submissive. Done voluntarily as she had, without his coaxing or insistence, made it such a wonderful gift.

Craig did the first thing that came to mind. He dropped to his knees beside Shelby. Stroking the length of her back, he ended at the base of her skull where he buried a hand in her hair.

“Thank you, little one.”

Lifting her head, he stared deeply into her eyes. The kiss to follow was awkward due to the strange position Shelby was in, but it mattered very little. The taste of her submission on his tongue was like heaven and hell all rolled into one.

“Get up, baby.”

Craig helped Shelby to her feet. She had a dazed look about her. Not like she was having second thoughts, more like she couldn’t believe she had actually worked up the nerve to do what she was doing.

“You okay?”

He asked the question out of genuine concern. Her whispered, “Yes, *Sir*” went straight to his cock, causing it to swell and lengthen even further.

Craig laced his fingers with hers, then pulled her up the hall after him. There were a couple of things he had to be sure of, a few things he wanted to do before he took her to his bed—a place no other woman had been invited—and make her his for all time.

When they reached the door to his private playroom, Craig removed a key from his pocket. After unlocking the door, he pushed it wide. Shelby’s eyes appeared huge in her round face. This time Craig couldn’t help but chuckle.

Her reaction pleased him greatly. If there was one thing Craig enjoyed it was this room, a room he’d designed and lovingly built with every possible means of erotically torturing the woman who would be his.

“Go on in and have a seat.” He motioned for her to sit on the rather large table dominating the center of the room. “I’ll be right back.”

Craig didn't wait around to see if Shelby did as told, he just assumed she would. It was a test of sorts, albeit a simple one.

The sound of his shoes padding up the carpeted hallway echoed throughout the room like a gunshot. Where was he going and what was he going to do when he got there?

Trying her best to ignore the million and one thoughts whirling around in her head, she moved across the room to the table where she was expected to sit.

The surface was smooth metal that gleamed even in the dim light of the room. There were straps on all four corners and wide leather belts placed strategically along the sides. It resembled a physician's table with no stirrups. For that, Shelby was grateful.

When Craig made his way back to her he was wearing nothing more than a robe and holding a bottle of water.

"Tell me why you're here."

His question was blunt and to the point but Shelby was prepared, ready to answer.

"Because I trust you with my life. I want to belong to you. In my mind, I am already yours..." She took a deep, fortifying breath, then finished, "...Master."

His reaction was swift. Instead of pouncing on her, strapping her to the table and having his way as she half expected, he moved in quick strides across the room to the armoire she hadn't yet noticed.

The room was a bit dark so Shelby could not see everything in it, but her mind had no trouble imagining the things hiding in there. When he came back to her it was with what could only be considered a cane in hand.

"And if I wanted to use this on you now?"

Shelby couldn't help the nervousness coursing through her system. She swallowed deeply and tried to remember to breathe. She had often read that any tool of the trade, even the mildest, could turn vicious in the

wrong hands. That meant the same had to be true on the flip side, even the most vicious of tools, such as a cane, could bring pleasure when in the right hands.

“I would trust your judgment and do my best to please you.”

Before she'd even completed her sentence, Craig dropped the cane. Gathering her in his arms, he stormed from the room. Shelby wondered where he was headed but with her face snuggled into his neck, his manly scent filling her lungs, she figured it didn't much matter.

When he carried her into his room and set her gently on the chocolate brown comforter covering the oversized four-poster, she was shocked.

Not only had she heard whispers of his wickedly stocked playroom but Shelby had also heard through the grapevine at Club Jerico how Craig never took a woman to his bed. Many had vied for the position but none had ever made it. And yet, here she sat.

“Look at me, little one.”

Shelby didn't need any more prompting. Swinging her gaze his way, she waited, listened.

“This is new to me too.” The admission seemed a bit hard for him but he continued. “I knew you were mine the minute I saw you on the floor wrapped in plastic. I'll never voluntarily release you so you have to be sure.”

“I am sure, Master. More sure than I have ever been about anything in my life.”

Craig climbed onto the bed beside her, several lengths of black rope clutched in his hand. He stroked the lengths almost lovingly with his free hand while watching her intently.

Leaning forward, he bestowed her with a kiss so deep and soul shattering Shelby wasn't sure she'd ever recover. The words he whispered in her ear were so much more than a declaration of love. They were an understanding, a new beginning. The completion of a circle.

The ropes fell to the wayside as he gathered her hands in his. With their fingers entwined, he pinned Shelby's arms beside her head. The feel of his body full on hers, nude and hot, was glorious.

"Open for me, little one."

His voice was a rough whisper. He released her hands just long enough to sheathe the burgeoning length of his cock, protecting them, before once again pinning her arms to the mattress.

Shelby needed to feel him in her, craved his dominance more than she needed her next breath. She did as he asked, spreading her thighs wide. When she felt the head of his cock at her entrance, she couldn't help but arch her back, offering all she was to the man who had somehow managed to steal her heart.

Craig's face was a mask in concentration. Sweat dotted his forehead and his arms shook.

"I'm sorry, baby. I wanted to make this nice for you."

The words had no more left his lips then he plunged his entire length into her, stealing her breath, tearing a scream of unadulterated need from her lungs.

"If I wanted nice I would have stayed vanilla."

Their movements became frenzied, their scent filled the room and added to the sensations coursing through every cell of her body.

"Can I come? Please. Pleasepleaseplease."

Shelby's chanted words echoed off the walls. For a minute she wasn't sure she would be able to hold off. Craig's words of praise came just in time. "Good girl. Come for me now."

Needing nothing more than to hear Craig's voice speak the words giving her permission, Shelby's inner muscles tightened around his cock, milking its length. The sound of his voiced shout of completion echoing through the room was like music to her ears.

She didn't have time to come down from the first orgasm before the feel of Craig's length swelling inside her set off another. Once again, wave

after wave of pleasure racked Shelby's body, claiming her senses until it felt as if there was nothing left in the world but the two of them.

Later that night, as they lay entwined together, rope completely forgotten, Craig spoke, his voice raspy with sleep.

"The answer to the question is...mine. Always mine, little one."

Shelby laughed in sheer delight. No longer would she wonder, *Your rope or mine?*

About the Author

Maggie Casper's life could be called many things but boring isn't one of them. If asked, Maggie would tell you that blessed would more aptly describe her everyday existence.

Being loved by four gorgeous daughters should be enough to make anybody feel blessed. Add to that a bit of challenge, a lot of fun and an undeniably close circle of friends and family and you'd be walking in her shoes.

A love of reading was passed on by Maggie's mother at a very early age, and so began her addiction to romance novels. Maggie admits to writing some in high school but when life got in the way, she put her pen and paper up. Seems that things changed over the years because when she finally decided it was time to put her story ideas on paper, the pen was out and the computer was in. Took her a while to catch up but she finally made it.

When not writing, Maggie can usually be found reading, doing genealogy research or watching NASCAR.

To learn more about Maggie, please visit www.maggiecasper.com. Send an email to Maggie Casper at maggie@maggiecasper.com or join her Yahoo! group to join in the fun with other readers as well as Maggie Casper <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sultrysiren>.

Look for these titles by Maggie Casper

Now Available:

Something Old, Something New

Teaching Elena

Every Beat of Her Heart

For the Love of Callie

California Cowboy

Knotty Girl

Coming Soon:

Chance of a Lifetime

Hot summer nights make people do crazy things.

Spontaneous

© 2007 Karen Erickson

Available now at Samhain Publishing

Sophie Kincaid doesn't want to be attracted to her boss but she is. Sick and tired of being used by men, she's sworn them off. But her hot and now slightly drunk boss just became too hard to resist.

His girlfriend dumped him and now Ian Grey is drowning his sorrows in alcohol, something he never does. Flirting with Sophie the sexy bartender inspires him to do even more things he'd never consider. Like have hot sex with her in the storage room.

They can't deny their attraction for each other but Sophie's afraid she doesn't measure up. And what does Ian want from her anyway? She'll have a naked good time figuring it out...

Warning this title contains the following: Hot, steamy, explicit sex and graphic language.

Enjoy the following excerpt for *Spontaneous*:

Ian watched her approach, appreciating the shift of her hips in her tight black miniskirt, the swell of her breasts beneath the fitted sleeveless shirt. He could see her bra through the thin white fabric of the shirt. He could make out the white lace cups that hugged her rounded curves too. God help him but the idea of unbuttoning her shirt, revealing her lace-covered breasts to his gaze turned him on, made his dick hard.

Hell, everything about the sexy bartender made his dick hard. He hadn't been this hard since...

He didn't know when. Certainly not in the last few years with Nadia. Their sex life had gotten so stale he could count on a roll in the sheets once a week, usually on a Saturday, at approximately ten o'clock. His life

had turned boring in a blink of an eye. And he desperately wanted to do something about it.

“Can I ask you a personal question?”

He glanced up, found Sophie watching him with an amused gleam in her blue-green eyes, her full lips pursed.

He shrugged. “Depends on how personal you want to get.” Shit, did that come out sounding sexual? Because he didn’t mean for it to sound sexual.

Okay, maybe he did mean it to just a little bit.

“It’s not too personal, don’t worry. I just wanted to know something.” She leaned across the bar, resting her arms on it. A daring look shone in her eyes. “Have you ever done anything spontaneous?”

Ian sat up straighter. What kind of question was that? Of course he’d never done anything spontaneous. He planned his life down to the letter. He’d worked hard his entire life to get what he had, and barely had time to even think about being spontaneous, let alone actually *do* anything spontaneous.

Yet another thing to add to the list of what made him feel really, really boring.

“I can be spontaneous.” He knew he sounded defensive, but he didn’t care. “I just never have time.”

She shook her head, a tiny smile curving her sexy lips. “That last sentence says it all. No one makes time to be spontaneous—you just are.” She shifted, her forearms still resting on the counter. He swore she did it on purpose, to give him a better view of her delectable cleavage. He couldn’t help himself, he tipped his head and looked down her shirt and actually saw the white lacy cups of her bra. *Fuck*.

Her breasts looked plump and full, and he imagined them filling his hands. Pink nipples hard and begging to be touched and sucked. He could almost hear her little gasps and sighs when he put his mouth on her...

“Haven’t you ever done something crazy? Without any thought? Like buy five-hundred-dollar sheets even though you’re broke, or go on an

unplanned vacation without any luggage? Or maybe have a hot one-night stand with someone you're attracted to but know you'll never see again?" Sophie paused, her eyes meeting his. "Have you ever done anything like that, Ian?"

This was not the kind of conversation he should be having with an employee, even though she wasn't under him directly. Still, it was completely inappropriate. And he was all about appropriate. "Have *you* done any of those things?"

She smirked. The sight of it made him want to kiss it right off her face. "Guess which ones. I've done two out of the three."

He needed to walk out of the bar right now. Really. Things were happening that he hadn't planned. First of all, there was the drinking. He was so unused to consuming alcohol he could feel the buzz coming on. Hell, it was already on. Second, the flirtatious conversation with a woman he'd secretly lusted for since she walked onto the hotel premises and applied for a job. Third, the fact that he was now a single man and contemplating making a play for his lusty sex object. All of this equaled...spontaneous actions. Well, hell.

"Okay." He sighed, dragging his index finger through the water ring his sweating glass left on the counter. "I'm pretty sure you've paid five hundred dollars for sheets when you were broke."

"Yep." Sophie nodded, a giant grin on her face. "They are the softest sheets I've ever slept on. Well worth the money."

His head was suddenly filled with images of soft cotton sheets sliding against naked bodies, long legs tangling with his. Blonde hair spilled across a plump pillow, blue-green eyes cloudy with passion staring into his...

Then he remembered the last time he had sex with Nadia, and how crappy it had been. How disconnected she had seemed. He didn't know what was worse, remembering how bad his last sexual encounter was or torturing himself with an overactive imagination about a sexual encounter he was never going to experience. At least, that's what he told himself.

Her expression was naughty, as if she knew what he was thinking and he swore she pressed her breasts together with her arms to make deeper cleavage. “So tell me, what’s your other guess?”

“The one-night stand?” Just saying it made his forehead break out in a faint sweat. His imagination filled with thoughts of having a one-night stand with her. Doing whatever he wanted with her, to her. Letting her do whatever she wanted with him, to him.

Sophie laughed triumphantly and slapped her hands down on the counter directly in front of him. “Wrong! Wish I would’ve made a bet with you, I could’ve made some easy money.”

“So you’ve gone on vacation without any luggage?” That surprised him. Who the hell went on vacation and didn’t take anything with them?

She stood a little straighter, his cleavage view now gone. He didn’t know whether to sigh in relief or cry with disappointment. He had a distinct feeling he was drunker than he realized.

When a man who isn't human is accidentally enslaved by a woman who has no idea what he is, the result is magical.

Sealed with a Kiss

© 2007 Lila Dubois

Available now at Samhain Publishing

Signing up for a one-week adventure vacation, Helena expects to be kayaking in the Pacific, not having every sexual fantasy fulfilled in her guide's bed.

Ocean is more than he seems, his kayaking business a cover for his deepest secret.

When Helena accidentally enacts old magic, enslaving Ocean, he doesn't know if she is the luckiest girl on earth, or an enemy of his kind, bent on imprisoning him forever. Ocean's strange behavior worries Helena but she's distracted by the mind-blowing sex.

After the truth is revealed, will their budding love be Sealed with a Kiss?

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, voyeurism, and fantasy fulfillment.

Enjoy the following excerpt for *Sealed with a Kiss*:

On deck, Ocean spread out a beach towel for her. The strange sexual confidence of a few hours ago returned and Helena shot Ocean a seductive smile as she made her way to the blanket. There she stretched out on her back, arms above her head, one knee bent, coyly hiding her sex.

Ocean lay face down beside her, and for several moments they simply basked in the sun like the sated beasts they were.

"Oh no, I forgot sunscreen." Helena sat up, peering at Ocean through the dark glasses he provided. "Do you have any?"

He opened one eye and gave her a slow once-over. "I'll get some."

Helena lay back and waited. When Ocean returned, there was a thickness to the air around him, and the tense set to his shoulders told her their play was about to begin again.

Ocean straddled her hips, forcing her bent knee flat. "Give me your right arm."

Helena lifted and extended her arm as Ocean poured sunscreen into his palm. Helena shivered as he placed hands coated in cool sunscreen on her wrist. From wrist to shoulder, he worked the lotion into her skin, the scent of coconut strong in the heated air.

When he finished, Ocean carefully replaced her arm in its position above her head and started in on the other, giving it the same treatment.

He left no part of her body unattended, swiping fingers over her cheeks, nose and forehead, kneading her upper chest, causing her to squirm as he massaged her ticklish belly.

When every inch of skin above her waist was covered, save her breasts, Ocean leaned down and blew on her nipples. His breath, like the air around them, was hot and so had no effect. With a disapproving noise, Ocean grabbed the bottle of sunscreen. Holding it upside down, he squeezed and a large dollop of the still-cold cream landed right on her nipple.

Helena yelped. The sound cut off as he gave the other peak the same treatment.

One large palm covered each breast, pressing the cold into her skin. Her nipples beaded up hard and Ocean rumbled with pleasure. His fingers slid through the creamy pools melting down her breasts and plucked on the hard buds.

"Oh yes, yes, yes. Do that again."

Ocean obeyed, pinching the flesh between his fingers and lifting. Coated as they were, the pebbled tips slid through his fingers, forced between the viselike pressure of his fingertips. When first the right and then the left peak finally slid from his grip with a pinch, Helena moaned

in pleasure, her fingers wrapped around his forearms, nails digging into him.

Slowly he worked the sunscreen into her breasts, kneading the soft mounds, molding and shaping them with hands rough from his work. When the lotion was gone, he repeated the nipple pinch, the hold now lasting longer as her body had absorbed much of the sunscreen. As he squeezed hard and lifted her breasts away from her body by their tender peaks, Helena's hips moved helplessly beneath Ocean.

“Ah, ah, ah, gorgeous, stay still, I'll be down there soon.”

Beyond words, Helena nodded, her hips stilling as her nipples slipped free of his pinching grip.

Ocean flipped around, still straddling her belly, presenting her with a view of his wide golden back. Hands once more filled with sunscreen lifted each leg, working the lotion into her skin, not missing one inch, from the soles of her feet to the outside of her hips. As he lowered her legs he bent them at the knee, so when he was done they fell open, mercilessly exposing her sex.

Please, touch me, she thought, touch me and please me and make me whole. Make it dirty and sweet and lovely.

Ocean finished smoothing lotion up the inside of her thighs. His hands inched closer and closer to her sex.

Finally he placed four fingertips along each lip of her sex and carefully separated them, exposing her soft pink core.

This summer, it's going to be Steamy...

Samhain Publishing Presents
Midsummer Night's Steam
24 Sizzling ebooks
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Duty wars with affection when Racor's greatest spy must decide who to trust, the evidence against her sexy suspects, or her heart?

A Scorching Seduction

© 2007 Marie Harte

Lt. Col. Trace N'Tre and Assassin Vaan C'Vail are hiding out in the only place the military can't touch them—on a pleasure planet in an island resort owned by Vaan's cousin. Gathering evidence on the outside, they know it's only a matter of time before they'll have to face their accuser, a high official in the Racor government.

Unbeknownst to them, Myst, Racor's greatest spy, has had her eyes on them for some time. The puzzle of these two alleged traitors doesn't fit, and Myst has made it her mission to find out why. But when the tables are turned and she's caught spying under the planet's hot summer suns, pleasure and affection confuse the issue, making her wonder who to trust—her heart, or the evidence against her lovers.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, frank language, ménage, m/m action, and hot sweaty adventure.

A young minister's celibacy is challenged by an earthy, Appalachian woman.

Blackberry Pie

© 2007 Bonnie Dee

On a blistering summer afternoon, Reverend Nathan Andrews climbs a mountain to meet backwoods members of his congregation. Fresh from seminary, the young man isn't prepared for the onslaught of lust that hits him when he encounters a sensuous girl picking blackberries.

Determined to implement his outreach plan, he helps her harvest the fruit. But their potent sexual chemistry is too intense to deny and they engage in passionate sex surrounded by the beauty of nature.

Grace is earthy and primal, the opposite of the proper young lady he expects to take as a wife some day. Can there possibly be a future for a college-educated minister and a primitive mountain girl?

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language.

Can a straight-laced business student and an indie boy with a thing for extremely personal electronics turn one night's wild ride into a trip to last forever?

Catching a Buzz

© 2007 Ally Blue

Adam Holderman isn't your typical twenty-something college boy. He prefers jazz to Goth, shuns body piercings and street-waif clothing, and despises the lack of vocabulary among his peers. Some call him uptight, but Adam doesn't see it that way. Just because he prefers his men articulate and well-groomed doesn't make him a stick-in-the-mud. He simply has standards, unlike most guys his age.

The new employee at Wild Waters Park, where Adam works, single-handedly throws a monkey wrench into Adam's orderly world view. Buzz Stiles wears eyeliner and black clothes, listens to emo bands, and talks like a teenage skate punk. He's the polar opposite of Adam's avowed "type". So why can't Adam get him out of his head?

When Adam finally agrees to go out with Buzz, he finds there's much more to Buzz than a hot body, a sharp wit, and a Goth fashion sense. Buzz is someone Adam can see himself being with for the long haul. But you need more than mind-melting sex to make a relationship last. Can

they keep their hands off each other long enough to find out if they have what it takes?

Warning, this title contains the following: graphic language, explicit male/male sex, inappropriate use of personal electronic devices, and gratuitous disco dancing.

Her boyfriend is back...and that's a major problem. Antonia isn't ready to face the one man who shakes up her world...

Full Disclosure

© 2007 Mary Wine

Antonia doesn't need to look at forbidden fruit. The taste still clings to her lips, haunting her with just how good she and Danton had been together...

...Right up until he informed her that he had to get married because he was going to be a father. That just made it worse. Inside him was a man worth dreaming about, even if she knew it was in vain.

Danton always double-checked his facts. It was a habit that kept him alive during missions that should have killed him. His impromptu wedding was no exception. There wasn't going to be any consummation of the vows until he had a paternity test. But doing the right thing had cost him the one woman he loved.

Until the test came back negative. Now there is nothing that will stop him from coming back with the prize he'd been forced to abandon three months ago. Toni was going to be his, right after she got the full disclosure on his hasty wedding and the blunt fact that he loved her.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language and bondage bedroom games with toys.

Does a full moon really cause naughty behavior?

Bad Moon Rising

© 2007 Leeanne Kenedy

Hailey Burke has heard that full moons cause people to behave in strange ways, but she never thought it would apply to her until the night she winds up in bed with a man she doesn't even like. So she'd had a temporary loss of sanity when she slept with Zack Creighton, the womanizing photographer. Big deal. Doesn't mean she's going to do it again, right?

Wrong.

Unfortunately, Zack has something else in store for Hailey. He's liked the sassy redhead from the moment he met her, but he can't get the stubborn woman to let go of the misconceptions she's formed about him. Sure, he's played the field, but Zack is no womanizer, and he has no intention of leaving things at one night. Once he's had a taste of Hailey, he wants another. And he's determined to convince her that he's not the bad boy she's always thought.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language.

How can masturbating in a hotel Jacuzzi lead to love? Cassidy Yates is about to find out.

Beyond the Tears

© 2007 Michelle Cary

A year after her husband died while serving in Iraq, Cassidy Yates still nurses a broken heart. Thinking a vacation will help, she agrees to a week in Key West with her best friend, April. Upon arrival, April suggests a way for Cassidy to ease her pain—sleep with the sexiest stud she can find.

Not the type to bed hop, Cassidy refuses April's idea and ends up alone. Abandoned by her friend, Cassidy decides to take a nighttime swim. In the Jacuzzi, she masturbates to the memories of making love to her husband. Mortified by her own behavior, Cassidy retreats to her hotel room, hoping no one witnessed her exhibition.

Chase Dempsey is a man with rugged good looks and a killer smile. He isn't looking to fall in love and only wants few days of relaxation before returning to his Texas ranch. Still, he's curious after watching Cassidy's erotic display and wonders what makes the gorgeous redhead tick. When he finds her dropped sarong, he realizes she's just given him the opportunity to find out...

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex and graphic language.

Is their passion real, or only a mirage?

La Mirage

© 2007 Jennifer Colgan

On a lonely stretch of I-95 in the middle of the Nevada desert, journalist Savanna Blaine and photographer Ben Lantano find themselves stranded by engine trouble on their way back from an assignment. Their quest for a gas station leads them to La Mirage, a beautiful resort nestled in a secluded canyon where they are the only guests.

Invited to spend the night in lush accommodations, passion flares between Savanna and Ben who have suppressed their hidden desires long enough. A single touch ignites an unforgettable night in each other's arms, but the next day, when La Mirage mysteriously disappears, they're left to wonder, is their newfound intimacy real or nothing more than a trick of the summer heat?

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, oral sex.

One tempting heiress. Two sexy cowboys. Three means fun beyond her wildest dreams—until her Cord starts to unravel.

Take Me

© 2007 Mackenzie McKade

Thoroughbred rancher's daughter Caitlyn Culver has always wanted playboy Cord Daily, even after her daddy threatened to bankrupt him. But winning a racehorse in a poker game means Cord is no longer just a cattle rancher. He's come back wealthier and more wicked than ever.

Snaring this cowboy won't be easy for Cait, and keeping him will be even harder. Still, his sexual antics and taste for ménages won't scare her off. She knows the best way to snag a man like Cord is to pretend indifference. So when he comes onto her in the barn, she plays along—only to leave him tied to a ladder, aroused and unfulfilled.

It's payback time.

Cord seeks out Cait and brings along his playboy cousin, Dolan Crane. The two cowboys are enough to set her body afire. She's bound and determined to resist their sexual allure, but ends up experiencing a night beyond her wildest fantasies. Now Dolan wants Cait for himself. Cait's father wants Cord's racehorse. And Cord wants Caitlyn to choose—her father's money or her cowboy's love.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, ménage a trois, and BDSM.

Can a jaded lawyer and a reformed criminal really find true love in the tropics?

Fijian Fling

© 2007 Sami Lee

Dumped by her boyfriend and on thin ice in her law career, Sophie Edison badly needs to re-evaluate her life. She escapes to her favorite hideaway on the tropical island of Fiji, where the attentions of the resort owner – the enigmatic and lethally sexy Dominick ‘Nick’ Dufour – prove a temptation too great to resist. Nick’s obvious desire to take her to bed is just the salve her battered confidence needs, and she embarks on an affair that leads her to uncharted waters. Before long she starts to wonder if she can ever go back to her old life.

Nick has lusted after Sophie for years. When she turns up at his secluded resort alone for the first time he wastes no time in making her his lover. Sophie is his perfect match in bed, and in the ocean and the shower...but although he might long for something more, Nick knows theirs is just a holiday fling. For he is keeping the secret of his checkered past from Sophie and it could prove the ultimate deal breaker...

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language.

Newlywed Catalina Robinson thinks it's not possible to be more satisfied...but then she learns what it's like to love two men.

Honeymoon Castaways

© 2007 Dawn Halliday

Cat has just married Dave Robinson, the man of her dreams. Their Best Man, Andreas Bailey, is flying them to their honeymoon resort in Barbados. But over the middle of the ocean, something goes horribly wrong...

Cat, Dave and Andreas find themselves stranded on an uninhabited Caribbean island. Though she's never thought of him as more than a friend, Cat finds herself connecting to Andreas in a way she never expected and is shocked and aroused to learn that her husband feels the same way. Together, the three of them discover a heat and passion uninhibited by the conventions of society. But will they ever be rescued? And what will happen to their unusual relationship once they return home?

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, ménage a trois, voyeurism and skinny dipping.

Two men and a bottle of nut cream...

Nut Cream

© 2007 Jade Buchanan

Nut [nuht] noun, verb.

1. A dry fruit consisting of an edible kernel or meat enclosed in a woody or leathery shell.

2. Slang, Vulgar – a testis.

Cream [kreem] noun.

1. A soft solid or thick liquid containing medicaments or other specific ingredients, applied externally for a therapeutic, or cosmetic purpose.

2. Slang, Vulgar – to have an orgasm.

Toby Madison is coming into his mating phase, and is leaking pheromones all over the place. He is about to find out what happens to bad little wolves, in the best possible way. Cliff Bullen is more than ready to place his mark on the man he has always wanted as his mate – with a little help from a bottle of nut cream.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit male/male sex and graphic language.

Welcome to Fantasm Island! Leave your inhibitions at the door and let your fantasies soar.

Fantasmagorical

© 2007 Annmarie McKenna

That's what the brochure said anyway. A week long fling with a stranger. Where's the harm in that? Take a compatibility quiz and a slew of other health tests, sign a strict privacy agreement and give license to any sexual fantasy you've ever had. Evan Knight couldn't wait.

Gabe and Lance have been searching for their perfect third for what seems like forever. One look at the woman he and his best friend and lover Lance have chosen to claim during her time on the island, and Gabe thinks they may have finally found her.

But what if Evan isn't interested in more than the fling she signed up for? Or worse, what if she can't handle two men who are into each other too? Gabe and Lance have one week to convince Evan that the three of them belong together...and they'll use every bit of seduction in their

arsenal to make sure when the fantasy ends, their reality together will only just be beginning.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit fantasmagorical sex, graphic language, ménage a trois, and hot nekkid man-love.

Falling in lust with a sexy Elvis impersonator gets complicated when Vanessa discovers the real Elvis Presley may have hoaxed his death.

Hunk of Burnin' Love

© 2007 Veronica Wilde

Summer should mean hot men and toe-curling sex—at least that's what Vanessa believes, but a bad break-up has left her spending her summer nights alone. Then her sex life erupts into flames when she meets two very different Elvis impersonators on the same night. One is a sexy young musician who gets her all shook up in a steamy midnight swim. The other is a graying older man who looks just a little too much like Elvis Presley for comfort.

Vanessa can't help falling in love with her new summer hottie. But their burning love gets complicated when the mysterious older impersonator begins dropping disturbing hints about his true identity—hints that suggest Elvis Presley never died at all.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex and graphic language.

Chastity Cuthbert is determined to bring love and romance to the Last Frontier.

Ladies! Meet Red Hot Alaskan Men

© 2007 Nancy Lindquist

Chastity Cuthbert is in love with love. Its too bad that she's so busy working on everyone else's happily ever after that there's no time left to work on hers. Her company, The Alaskan Connection, matches single women with sexy Alaskan hunks. Business is booming. Until Dave Wellington drags his personal vendetta against outsiders right to her doorstep.

Dave Wellington, Mayor of Smithfield, Alaska won't allow Chastity's cadre of red-lipped floozies to take over his town. A she-bitch from the lower forty-eight broke his brother's heart and no one else is gonna go through that. Not if he can help it. Besides, Smithfield is welcoming tourists for the first time. The male residents need to keep their minds on business. Not sex.

Determined to change Chastity's mind, he travels to Chicago to talk her out of her plan. Chas is so pissed off at the sexy mayor that she forgets her "no one-night stands" motto. Right into Dave's bed.

Now she has to travel to Smithfield and face him. She's strong. She can face Dave again. Just because she snuck out of his hotel room in the middle of the night doesn't mean she's a big ole chicken. Right?

Warning: This book contains hot naked Alaskan guys, all looking for love. Read it at your own risk. I am not responsible for any sudden urges to go to the Last Frontier, nor travel costs incurred. Oh, and there's explicit sex too.

One hot summer night and a scorching balcony interlude light the fuse of hidden attraction between neighbors Jill Reed and Cole Adams.

One Night on a Balcony

© 2007 *Samantha Lucas*

Jill Reed has spent her entire life denying her sexuality, but living next door to Cole Adams the past few months has made it near impossible.

Cole is fresh off his third divorce and considers himself a one-man relationship train wreck. He purposefully keeps his lust for Jill in check because, after all, she's the kind of woman a man keeps.

Jill and Cole have been denying their bone-deep attraction for months, but one night on a balcony, passions ignite, an adventure starts and everything is about to change—forever.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, sex in a public place, graphic language.

Sometimes the truth is the greatest aphrodisiac.

Liaisons in Jubilee

© 2007 *Jamie Craig*

Katie Mayes is the Executive Manager for a large, east coast beach resort. Unfortunately, her boss has discovered her one secret – her seasonal flings with Caleb Beckett, the Entertainment Director for the resort. Company policy dictates no internal fraternization, especially between managers and their subordinates, so her boss gives Katie a choice. Caleb or her job.

She avoids personal encounters with Caleb, until one fateful night a week before the resort's big summer launch. Then, she runs into him at a local nightclub. When Caleb approaches her, she tries to give him the cold shoulder, but he follows her onto the dance floor where the music, her desire, and his persistence break her will. She claims it's only one

more night before they break it off completely, but Caleb insists on more. Far from an ending, he views the summer as their true beginning.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, spanking, light bondage.

*A bad marriage is like a fierce thunderstorm on a fragile field of wheat.
Will a proud Texas cowboy and a stubborn Boston-bred lawyer find
shelter from a real summer storm long enough to rebuild their love?*

Second Wind

© 2007 Dee S. Knight

Cocky cowboy Rafe Walker doesn't plan to meet a beautiful woman in designer jeans and ostrich boots at the rodeo, but the beauty catches his gaze just before the gate opens for his bull ride. Talk about losing focus! With one glance, his thoughts are of sex-scented sheets, not hard, sawdust-covered dirt.

A city girl like her would never fit in on his ranch, but a weekend in Dallas? Yes, Ma'am, she'll do just fine. Little does he expect a ride wilder than with any bull. She grabs hold of his heart and his hottest fantasies and holds on tight.

Cathy Fitzgerald, raised in a wealthy eastern family, half falls in love with the rakish cowboy after one impulsive weekend of wild sex. She returns to Boston, breaks off her near engagement and waits to hear from Rafe. After months of silence, he surprises Cathy with a proposal. It's a shock to both of them when she accepts, and moves to his ranch in nowhere, Texas.

They soon find that passion alone can't sustain a marriage. Rafe's pride and Cathy's long hours at work breed distrust and broken hearts. Giving their marriage its second wind will take an act of nature.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex and graphic language.

Life's not always about the journey, but who takes you on the ride.

Custom Ride

© 2007 K.A. Mitchell

A stint in the Air Force left Ryan MacRae with a bitter memory of life in the closet. Jeff Allstein is a mechanic who has too much to lose if his private life becomes public. The heat of their attraction boils over on a stormy summer night, but satisfying that need only makes them both crave more.

Their searing connection makes it hard for Ryan to understand the road blocks Jeff continually puts down. Ryan will have to buckle up if he's going to find love at the end of his custom ride.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit male/male sex, graphic language.

What Leilani wants, Leilani gets...and she always gets her man.

Skin to Skin

© 2007 Dionne Galace

What Leilani wants, Leilani gets. That is, until she meets the enigmatic Oliver Clayton, her new neighbor. For some reason, Oliver seems to be intent on avoiding her even though he's obviously interested.

Leilani has tried to everything to get his attention, from wearing skimpy little outfits to walking a neighbor's dog six times in front of his yard. Leilani wants Oliver...and she always gets her man.

In the heat of the summer, the temperature's not only thing rising. Luckily, Oliver has that pool in his backyard and Leilani knows just how to cool off...

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, light bondage.

Hot summer nights make people do crazy things.

Spontaneous

© 2007 Karen Erickson

Sophie Kincaid doesn't want to be attracted to her boss but she is. Sick and tired of being used by men, she's sworn them off. But her hot and now slightly drunk boss just became too hard to resist.

His girlfriend dumped him and now Ian Grey is drowning his sorrows in alcohol, something he never does. Flirting with Sophie the sexy bartender inspires him to do even more things he'd never consider. Like have hot sex with her in the storage room.

They can't deny their attraction for each other but Sophie's afraid she doesn't measure up. And what does Ian want from her anyway? She'll have a naked good time figuring it out...

Warning this title contains the following: Hot, steamy, explicit sex and graphic language.

*When a school teacher with a backbone of steel meets a hard-nosed
lawman, more than the desert will heat up.*

Marielle's Marshal

© 2007 Beth Williamson

Marielle Bloom never expected to be the victim of a stagecoach robbery stranded in the desert in the middle of summer with a sexy marshal who sets her body on fire with one look from his steely eyes.

Marshal Ramsey Whitfield doesn't know what to make of the outspoken teacher, but he does know she feels perfect in his arms. As they trek together across the barren landscape, searching for civilization, they discover that their desire for each other is hotter than the desert sand.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, violence.

*When a man who isn't human is accidentally enslaved by a woman who
has no idea what he is, the result is magical.*

Sealed With a Kiss

© 2007 Lila Dubois

Signing up for a one-week adventure vacation, Helena expects to be kayaking in the Pacific, not having every sexual fantasy fulfilled in her guide's bed.

Ocean is more than he seems, his kayaking business a cover for his deepest secret.

When Helena accidentally enacts old magic, enslaving Ocean, he doesn't know if she is the luckiest girl on earth, or an enemy of his kind,

bent on imprisoning him forever. Ocean's strange behavior worries Helena but she's distracted by the mind-blowing sex.

After the truth is revealed, will their budding love be Sealed with a Kiss?

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, voyeurism, and fantasy fulfillment.

When his girlfriend demands he settle down and start a family, Cole Winchester has some hard decisions to make. Marry his girlfriend, or finally own up to his taboo attraction to other men.

Taboo Desires

© 2007 Amanda Young

Cole Winchester feels like a rat, boxed into a corner. Faced with the prospect of being trapped in a passionless marriage, he makes the hard choice to end his relationship.

A run in with an old friend on the beach, propels Cole's fantasies out into the open and forces him to confront his taboo desires. Before him, lies the choice of a lifetime—embrace his desire for another man and all the pitfalls that come along with it, or return to his girlfriend and live out the safe half-life he carved for himself.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, and hot nekkid man-love.

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