



Forbidden Publications

# Dead Ringer

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**Dead Ringer**  
**by**  
**Emery LaRue**

## Prologue

*New York 2005*

Hate filled eyes narrowed, watching as Jaden Calder accepted the shield that would make her a detective. Eyes bright and beaming in her happiness, shaking the hand of that damn captain. What the fuck made her so special?

The anger that had always been just below the surface began to ease, and in its place a cold determination. Soon, Jaden Calder would find herself on the other side of the law. Know what its like to have nothing and no one. The watcher stood and applauded with the crowd.

By this time next year, the super cop would be on the inside looking out. Of course, that would depend on how much restraint it would take not to slit her perfect throat.

## Chapter One

*New York-Present Day*

Jaden signed her name to the report she had been working on and sighed. Domestic violence was hitting some kind of peak in the city. Ordinarily she wouldn't have pulled this case, but when the wife ends up floating in the harbor, well, she was a homicide detective.

Standing, she gathered the papers and knocked on the captain's door. He motioned her inside and she sat, waiting for him to finish his business on the phone. She swallowed a giggle when he rolled his eyes and sighed heavily into the phone.

"Yes Mrs. Littleton, I know Scruffy is your baby. But as I said before, we deal in people, not pets. I can't put out an all points bulletin for your dog."

His flinch told Jaden that Mrs. Littleton was giving him the third degree, and when he was finally able to set the phone down, his eyes dared her to make a comment.

"Not one word, Jaden."

"Wouldn't dream of it, Sir."

"Liar." He rubbed his eyes. "I went to school with her son, and I guess she sees that as a reason to hound me."

"I see." Her eyes held her laughter. "I could take a description, canvas a neighborhood or two."

"Sure. About six pounds of shaggy, drooling, pain in the ass, in need of a bath,

poodle. And, unless you're looking to pull desk duty for the next week, I suggest stopping while you're ahead." His eyes reflected his amusement. "Now, do you have official business, or do you plan to sit there grinning all day?"

"Alright, I quit. Here's my report on the D V. The husband is in custody." Jaden sighed. "He threw her into the harbor before she was even dead. Her lungs were full of water. Had she landed on her back in the water, she would have probably survived."

"Such a pretty gal." Sharp said, glancing at her photo. "It says here she had a daughter. Have any idea what's happening there?"

"A sister from up north is coming to take the daughter back with her."

Sharp nodded and placed the file in the closed box. His eyes then fell to the box beside it, marked open and unsolved. Jaden knew what he was thinking. The closed box never seemed to reach the heights of the opened.

"So, what do you have for me today, Captain?"

Before he could answer the phone rang, and she sat back and waited. Jaden silently noted to herself again just how handsome the captain was. In his early fifties, he was tall and broad, with only a touch of gray at his temples. His dark eyes seemed to take in everything, yet he was a fair man to work with. Sharp could be one mean son of a bitch, but he never failed to be there for the little guy. Her eyes returned to his when he hung up the phone.

"By the look on your face, am I safe to guess this has nothing to do with Scruffy?"

"No, no poodle this time. Got a body in a deserted warehouse." Again, he rubbed his eyes, and pinched the bridge of his nose. "I know you don't like it, but you're gonna have to deal with it. I'm assigning you a partner on this one."

"Why? You know as well as I do that it won't last."

She had a hell of a time keeping a partner. There were not many women detectives in this house, and most of the men drove her nuts with their remarks and lewdness. She had been assigned the smaller cases since she busted one such partner's

nose. She just couldn't deal with men and their single minded ideas.

"For one thing, this one could be dangerous. According to the M E sent to the scene, there isn't a lot left of this guy. Second, it's a previous crime scene."

"Who's the M E?" Jaden didn't ask the location.

"Jorga Miller. Anyway, it's time you get a partner and keep one."

Jaden knew there was no use in arguing. She was a homicide detective, and it was a messy job. So what if her partner was just as lewd as a perp.

"Fine, I can play nice. Who is my poor victim to be?"

"That's partner, Jaden. You're one of my best, and I need you on these cases. You have away of sniffing things out, and doing it safely."

"Alright, no worries."

"Detective Kelso will be reporting in soon. He's a good sort, and I think the two of you will do nicely together."

"Kelso? Didn't he just transfer here?"

"New face, new start." He handed her the address to the crime scene.

"Alright, I'll make sure my kit is ready, and be back in about twenty minutes."

"I'll call Jorga and get more detail. I'll have it ready for you."

"Fine."

Jaden quickly hurried to the supply room and grabbed her crime scene case. Even as she scanned the contents, her mind brought forth a picture of the detective who had been brought aboard a few weeks back. She had only given him a moment's thought then. Kelso had walked in on the scene between her last partner and herself. His first impression of her couldn't have been a good one.

Her mind had registered his presence about the same time her fist connected with a nose. Now, she was going to have to explain to her new partner that she truly wasn't a hot-head. They would get along fine as long as he treated her with the respect an officer was due.

Her case intact, she made her way back to the squad room and stopped dead in

her tracks. If her new partner was the man coming from the captain's office, she had missed a lot. Detective Kelso was tall, fit, dark headed, and positively gorgeous. The woman in her took him in at a leisurely pace, pushing the cop aside.

At five foot seven, Jaden was tiny compared to this man. He had to be at least six four, with shoulders that seemed impossibly wide. His cropped brown hair made her fingers tingle, and just when she was about to shake herself from her trance, chocolate eyes zoned in and she was relieved to see they were not hard, but soft and mellow.

"Detective Calder?"

"Yes." She extended her hand. "Detective Kelso?"

"Guilty. Looks like we'll be working together."

"Looks that way. The captain fill you in?"

"Yes, and he gave me his reports from the officers on scene and the M E."

"Alright, let's roll."

Dorian Kelso followed her out of the room to the elevator that housed the plain units. He couldn't help but admire the view. Jaden Calder was a stunning woman. He had thought so when he had first seen her. Blonde hair braided down her back, the end lying against a firm backside that swayed seductively in the black jeans she wore. Her t-shirt matched the jeans, and her shoulder holster rested on her left side.

When he had first seen her, she had fire in her blue eyes, and when her little fist connected to the other officer's nose, he admired her for her courage. He had witnessed what had happened, and Dorian had wanted to sock the man himself. But when she whirled on the man, he had known she could handle herself. Damn, but she was a pretty little thing.

"Mind if I drive?"

"What?" Dorian looked around himself, surprised. He hadn't even noticed they had arrived at the unit until she spoke. "Sorry, what?"

"Day dreaming already?"

"Do you really wanna know?"



Her cheeks pinked slightly, and he realized his voice held a husky note.

"Mind if I drive?" she repeated.

"Nope."

She quickly sat behind the wheel, tossing her case over the back seat. Dorian made sure his smile was under control before he joined her in the unit.

Jaden couldn't believe what she had been thinking. They were partners, and there was no room or time for idle flirting. More than likely, she misread his eyes. That was not a spark of desire she had seen there.

"Look, Kelso,"

"Please, we're partners. Call me Dorian."

"Okay, Dorian, what you walked in on that day, it can be explained."

"No need to explain."

"Well, you need to know that you can trust me. I'm good at my job, and will always have your back. But I can't abide the lewd comments on my sex and my job."

"I understand. Look, if it makes you feel any better, it was my intension to come to your rescue. But I could see you had it under control."

"My rescue?"

"I walked in the room about the time he made a grab for you. The man got what he had coming. And just so you know, Jaden, you can trust me, too."

"Alright then. Now that we seem to have cleared the air, let's go get us a bad guy."

Dorian watched her from the corner of his eye. The talk around the station was that Jaden Calder had a block of ice in place of desire. He had to disagree. If this woman was as passionate in bed as she was about her job and justice, she would be a wild cat. He knew he shouldn't think such thoughts, but there was something about her. Something he had never seen in a woman before.

"Oh, hell," she cursed, pulling into the warehouse lot. "Look at this mess."

Media was on every corner. The officers had their hands full keeping them at

bay.

"What the hell? Is the victim a celebrity and we didn't know it?"

"My guess is because of the place. This warehouse was at one time a major part in a gang related issue. I worked the case a few months back, and unless I missed something, there should have been no way to get inside. It's still a crime scene."

"Still?"

"It was a massacre. They are still finding little pieces of evidence. This won't help the trial any. They pulled out over a dozen dead, and just as many wounded."

"It was gang related?"

"Sad really. Personally, I think it was one big initiation."

"That's the way of it anymore."

"Unfortunately." She sighed and parked. "Let's get inside."

With the help of the officers, they made it inside. Jaden shivered at the memory of what had happened here. So many young teens had died, and those that didn't, would be in jail soon, more than likely for the rest of their lives. It was just a sad waste.

"Over here, Jaden."

Dorian followed, careful of his steps.

"What's up, Jorga?"

"A mess." She looked to Dorian and extended her hand. "Hey, Kelso. They stuck you with this one?" Jorga indicated Jaden with her thumb, but ignored the snort sent her way.

"Good to see you again, Jorga."

"Alright, he's this way. It's a real mess."

They followed, and Jaden made a mental note to ask Dorian how he knew the local M E. They rounded the corner, and she had to swallow hard, forcing the bile back down.

"Good, lord. Are you sure that's even a man?" Jaden gasped.

The victim was propped against the wall, his suit askew. He looked like a man

just taking a break, until you got to his face. Blood coated him clear to his shoes.

"I have no idea how many blows he took, and frankly I will be surprised if I can tell back at the morgue."

"Any I.D.?"

"In my bag, just a driver's license. A Mr. Bobby Keller."

"What? Who?"

"Bobby Keller."

Jaden cringed, and her stomach rolled.

"Jaden, you alright?" Dorian asked.

"I knew him."

"How?"

"It's been years, but I knew him." She took the ID from Jorga to be sure. "Sure as hell, I went to school with him. He was the high school prom king, and we dated for awhile."

"Maybe you should have Sharp put you on something else." Jorga said, kneeling to place bags over the victim's hands and feet.

"No, no. It was years ago. Just a shock is all." She shook herself. "My main question is who found him? This place has been locked down tight for months."

"Actually, one of my assistant's found him." Jorga stood. "I sent him with a unit to double check for more shell casings. I'm trying to match a slug I had found in one of the gang victims."

"I see. Okay, that helps."

"Something is odd about this one."

"How so?" Dorian asked, examining the wall around the victim.

"Obviously, he was placed here for a reason. Secondly, fingerprints and hair."

"I don't understand." Jaden watched as they lifted poor Bobby onto a backboard.

"Well, I found fingerprints and hair fibers. Whoever did this wasn't too worried about evidence."

"Well, save that thought until we get the results back." Jaden knelt beside the spot where the body had been propped.

"Jaden, you seem to be missing one point."

"What?"

"Step back and look, really look at where he was placed."

Jaden stood beside Jorga and examined the area. Memories of a major gun fight and explosions flooded her mind, screams of pain and fear. Then she paled and her eyes widened. Her hands began to shake. Way too familiar.

"It's just coincidence, Jorga," she snapped. "I'm gonna see if I can't find a witness."

Her feet carried her quickly away from the blood, death, memories, and the questions in Dorian's eyes.

"What was that all about?" Dorian stood, watching her retreat.

"You don't know what all happened here, do you?"

"Jaden said a bunch of kids died, and she had worked the case."

"Did she also tell you she took a bullet to the shoulder, and almost lost her life before a sniper took out the young man with a gun to her head?"

"No, but what's that got to do with this?"

"Bobby Keller was propped in the exact same spot as Jaden, and in the exact same way the perp had her against that exact wall." Jorga picked up her bag. "I think that's a little too much for a coincidence."

Dorian agreed.

## Chapter Two

Jaden paced outside the warehouse, avoiding the media. They would be all over this place for a week. She also knew there would be no witnesses. What she needed was a good stiff drink.

"You okay, Jaden?"

She turned and her eyes took in the concern on Dorian's face. He was nothing like the other men she had partnered with. She could see that she could trust him, but did he trust her? To be able to handle herself and her job?

"Fine, thanks. Just a little creeped."

"Jorga told me about it. Seems a little too coincidental."

"Let's not turn this into something it's not." She started for the unit. "It's just one of those things that happen. A once in a lifetime situation."

"If you say so." He opened the door and sat in the passenger seat.

"I do say so." She smiled, hoping to ease the tension. "Now, have we got all we need?"

"Can't do a lot until Jorga examines the body."

"Okay." She started the car and pulled slowly through the cameras and video equipment. "I was wondering, Dorian, how you know Jorga?"

"I worked on a case in Queens, and she was the M E for the station house. Funny lady, but a hard ass. Tells it like it is, and if you don't like it, she could care less."

"That would be our, Jorga. Just between you and me, I think Sharp and the Doc have a sweet tooth for one another."

"They would make a pair." He checked his watch. "Well, we're set to meet with her. Maybe we can figure some of this out."

"Something tells me it won't be that easy. But, it was really quite brilliant, placing a body there."

"Or something else."

"Not gonna go there, Dorian. Let's just wait and see what develops."

"Fine, but just so you know, as your partner, I expect to be kept in the loop of any and all situations."

"Sure. If it's pertinent to the case, you'll be the first to know."

Dorian lapsed into silence. Jaden was a different sort. He wouldn't push, but if she knew or even suspected something and didn't tell him, she'd find out real quick that his bite was much more than his bark.

The medical examiners office wasn't overly large, but the parking lot was crowded. In the city, bodies seemed to pop up like daisies, and some poor souls went so long without being claimed. But, Jorga was not one to abide by the rules, and she would hold them as long as she could.

Dorian always felt it sad. Some of the victims would never have a proper burial. It's those times he wished he lived in the isolated wilderness. He missed his cabin. He hid a smile, betting Jaden would never suspect he had a log home in the mountains of Montana. You couldn't get any more distance from the city or any closer to the heavens.

"Well, let's see what she has for us." Jaden stepped from the unit and walked quickly to the double doors. "Then, I suppose we better tell his family."

"Do you know them?"

"No. After school, everyone I knew kinda went their own way. But I think Jada kept in touch with him some."

"Jada?"

"My sister and my twin. Didn't you read the file on me?"

"Well, not your personal history." He grinned and her eyes narrowed.

"What is so funny, Kelso?"

"There are two of you?"

"Okay, let's stop there before I take offense."

She walked away, but not before, he caught her smile. His body hardened, and images of her beneath him flooded his mind. Her strong thighs wrapped around him while he took her in every way imaginable. Dorian shook his head, and followed her down the hall. He either needed to get it together or get laid.

"Well, you two wasted no time." Jorga said in greeting. "Put on some scrubs and come on. I don't have all day."

"You're just a ray of sunshine, Jorga."

"Always strive to be." She led the way to the body. "As far as I can tell, Mr. Keller died from blunt force trauma. He took at least a dozen blows with enough strength to make his skull fragment like a jigsaw puzzle."

"You said you had prints?"

"Sent them to the crime lab, as well as the hair samples. You should know in a day or two. I asked them to rush it through, but I would have better luck running for president."

"The head injury was the only signs of trauma?"

"Looks that way. The blood on his body was all from his head. But I'm thinking it was done slowly."

"How so?" Dorian asked, notebook in hand.

"The loss of blood and the damage to the inside tell me one thing. Someone hit him with enough force to knock him out, yet each time he woke, the perp struck him again, only harder. By the time he died, he had suffered greatly." She looked at her notes. "I would say, with body temp and judging the bruises on his face, it may have taken hours."

Jaden wanted to be sick. This was more than a crime. It was a hate crime. The Bobby she remembered had been fun loving and full of life, never one to hurt another.

"Well, as much as I hate to, I guess we better locate his family." Jaden sighed. "I honestly don't know what I will say."

"Jaden, not once have I ever told you how to do your job. I'm known for my harsh nature." Jorga covered the body. "But if you can, ask for photo identification. Even though his prints were in the system, and he had I D, he will have to be identified. I will clean him up as best I can, but damn, I would hate to identify a loved one like this. Even I ain't that hard."

"I'll see what I can do."

Outside, Jaden took in a deep breath of the fresh midday air. She dreaded this part of her job above all else. Telling a family member that they had lost a loved one. Then making the promise to catch the bastard that did it. But, this time it felt more personal.

"Want me to drive?" Dorian asked, sensing her discomfort.

"Yeah. We can radio in for his last known address and go from here."

In the unit, Jaden tried to gather her thoughts. She barely registered Dorian's relay of the address. Did Bobby have kids? A loving wife and a beautiful home? He had been such a nice guy in school. She couldn't see him messed up in anything illegal. Bobby Keller had been her first lover. He had been so sweet and tender with her.

That thought brought on the memories of her first true fight with her sister. Jada had been hot after Bobby for years and had been furious when she had found out about them. But, that happened a lot between sisters, even more with twins. She would have to stop by the club tonight and tell Jada.

When Jaden looked up again, they were in the drive of a comfortable looking home. It was a place she could picture Bobby. Grill on the deck and the laughing eyes she remembered shining with life. A bike lay in the front lawn, and she hated the thought of him having a child that would grow up without him.

"You want to wait here?"

"No, but thanks." She got out of the car.



Before they made it up to the door, it opened, and a blonde woman holding a toddler met them with happy eyes. A boy of about nine stood beside her.

"Can I help you?" Her eyes were kind. "Jada? What brings you here?"

"I'm sorry ma'am but I'm Jaden, her sister." Jaden needed to be professional about this. "Is this the residence of Bobby Keller?"

"I knew she had a sister, but you look identical. Yes, this is Bobby's home." She shifted the baby to her other hip. "He's late but should be in at any moment."

"Are you his wife?"

"Yes." Her eyes lost their gleam. "Bobby junior, take Sarah and go play in the back, please."

In that moment, as she watched the boy leave with his sister, Jaden knew that this woman understood.

"Who are you again?"

"I'm Detective Jaden Calder, and this is my partner, Dorian Kelso." She tried to stiffen her spine. "May we come inside, Mrs. Keller?"

"Of course." They followed her into the living room. "You're here because something bad has happened."

"Yes, ma'am. Please, can we sit and talk?"

"No, you need to just say it, please. I think I know, but I need to hear it."

"Mrs. Keller, I am truly sorry. But we found your husband early this morning. I'm sorry, ma'am, but he is dead."

"You're sure?"

"Yes ma'am. Is there anyone I can call for you?"

Mrs. Keller sat heavily on the couch. Her face lost its color, and she looked to be fighting something inside of her. Jaden could only imagine.

"My brother's number is on the wall, beside the phone. William."

"I got it." Dorian walked into the hall, and located the number. Jaden sat beside her on the couch, wishing she could take away the pain and the fear.

"How? How did he die?"

"Mrs. Keller..."

"Did he suffer? I need to know."

Jaden didn't want to lie to her. She would read it in the paper and be devastated. If it had been her, she would want, and need the truth.

"Your husband suffered from multiple head wounds. We're not certain as of yet why." She decided to give her one small white lie. "But we believe he was unconscious and unaware."

"Can I see him?"

"That, of course is your decision. But, we strongly suggest you either use a photo, or another family member. I am so sorry."

"Tomorrow, then." She spoke as if she heard nothing Jaden said. "Tomorrow or the next day, my brother and I will be there to see him."

"Mrs. Keller..."

"Thank you, Detective Calder."

She had clearly been dismissed. Dorian had phoned the brother, and he was on his way. But Jaden couldn't bring herself to leave the woman until she knew she would have someone with her. When the brother arrived, they gave him what information they could. Jaden fought the anger as she sat in the unit.

"Damn, but I need a drink."

"I'll buy. Where to?" Dorian started the car.

"Do you know where Uptown Lounge is?"

"Sure, never been inside, but I know it."

"My sister runs the place. Let's go there."

"Alright."

Dorian said nothing as they made their way through the city streets. When he pulled into the parking lot of the lounge, she left the car and together they walked inside.

"Hey Sis, what's up?"

He took two double takes, and almost made himself dizzy. They weren't just twins; they were identical in every way.

"I need something tall and strong."

"Well, he's right beside you." Jada winked, and her smile faded at her sister's haunted expression. "What's going on?"

"First, this is my new partner, Dorian Kelso. Second, it's been an awful day. Hook me up with something numbing."

"Sure. Sit down and talk to me."

Dorian sat beside her at the bar, watching Jada pour several shots from several bottles into one tall glass.

"I'll just have a draft," he said to her raised brow. "I'm driving."

Jada nodded and placed their drinks before them, waving off their money.

"Alright, what's up?"

"We found Bobby Keller this morning. Someone all but crushed his skull and left him in the abandoned warehouse."

"Keller? Bobby Keller? The one you dated and my distant but still my friend, Bobby Keller?"

"That's him."

"And that's what has you all upset?"

"He had kids, Jada. Two kids and a beautiful wife. I just had to tell her the father of her children is dead. Yes, I guess it affected me."

"Because you knew him. You deal with people daily, hon, but if he had been a stranger, you wouldn't be taking it so hard." Jada patted her sister's hand. "It is a shame though."

Jaden knew she was right, but it didn't help. Every victim to her was important, but she had never seen someone she knew laying in a pool of blood with half his head gone. She sucked the long island iced tea down, and pushed her glass out for another.

By the time she was ready to go, her head felt higher than the clouds. Dorian helped her to the car, and the next thing she knew she was in a pair of strong arms, being carried up a flight of stairs. Her eyes fluttered, and the feel of soft cotton under her was comforting.

"Where am I?"

"My place. You need to sleep it off a little."

"Dorian?"

"Yeah?"

"Would you mind just laying beside me?"

"I don't think that's such a good idea."

"Why? I'm not asking you for anything. I just don't want to feel alone."

He hesitated for only a second.

"Sure, Jaden, I can lie beside you."

Kicking off his shoes, he stretched out beside her, and without thought, pulled her back to his chest. She needed comfort, and he hoped his body gave nothing away. He wanted nothing more than to make her forget. But she would regret it later. And as much as he wanted her, he would regret it as well. She was upset and tipsy. Not the mixture needed for what was on his mind.

Her deep, even breathing told him the minute she fell asleep. His mind wandered to the case, and to the poor mother who had the task of telling her kids their father wasn't coming home. It had to be the most awful feeling.

Slowly his eyes drifted closed, and he fell asleep with the scent of her hair tickling his nose. It was a most comforting feeling.

## Chapter Three

Jaden woke to the feel of a very warm body pressed very close to her backside. The arm around her middle held her close. She moved slightly, and the arm tightened.

Dorian. The man who had held her all night, chasing the demons away, and invading her dreams was well within her reach. But to act on that would be bad, real bad. They were partners, worked together, and depended on one another. To get involved could be disaster.

But he felt so good, so warm and safe. She snuggled closer, deciding to enjoy the moment while it lasted. His warm breath caressed her ear, causing her to shiver from something more than the cold. Her body melted against his chest.

For just a moment, she wanted to pretend. It had been so long since she had a sexual experience. Too long, by the way her body was sparking to life. His warm breath against her ear and her neck, combined with the heat of his body and his hand resting on her middle, was almost enough to send her into a climax.

A strong arm inched its way under her head, and pulled her even tighter against him. Lips started to pull at the skin just behind her ear. His heart beat faster against her back, and the evidence of his desire was unmistakable. He was awake.

"Dorian?"

"Yeah?"

"What are we doing?" Her hand reached behind to rub his hip. "If we keep this up, we'll both be beyond turning back."

"I don't want to think about that. I want you, and I have a feeling you want me

too.”

“Yes.” Her voice was a mere whisper. “I do.”

“Then, I say we roll with this feeling.”

“What if it’s a mistake?”

“Does this feel wrong?” His tongue dipped into her ear. “Or this?” Dorian cupped her through her jeans.

“No.” Jaden arched into his palm.

“Then don’t think, just feel.”

No, she wouldn’t fight it, nor could she. The feel of his fingers unsnapping her jeans, the sound of the zipper lowering, was just as erotic as his mouth on her skin. Dorian slipped his hand inside, and slowly stroked her.

Never had he felt anything hotter than the woman in his arms. The need was so strong within him, and her pleasure was in the front of his mind. He wanted to watch her come apart, and be there to bring her back up again. She was warm and wet, and his fingers searched for and found her swollen bud. Her hips rocked, and he gritted his teeth against the need to take her fast and hard, with little play.

Jaden turned her head and found his lips with hers. The kiss was explosive. Tongues dancing together as their bodies longed too. When Dorian placed a finger to her opening, she arched even more, begging for him to fill her in some way. She gasped into his mouth when he gave her what she wanted.

“Am I hurting you?”

“No, Dorian. Please, just don’t stop.”

She attempted to roll to her back, but he held her to him. His arm under her head folded across her chest, cupping a breast. The hand in her pants, the finger inside her, applying more pressure, caused her to cry out. She coated his hand in her slick heat, and he knew she was close to falling over the edge.

“Let it go, Jaden. Let your body take what it needs,” he whispered in her ear. He could feel her body jerk at his words, and knew they added to her pleasure, so he gave

her more. "I will catch you, Jaden. You feel so hot and tight. If I close my eyes, I can feel you wrapped around my cock. You'll fit me like a glove." He pushed another finger into her, and she shattered in his arms.

He stroked her through her climax, petting her until she opened her eyes, but he wouldn't let her come all the way down. No. This woman had passions buried deep, and he planned to search out each and every one. He removed his hand.

Dorian rolled her to her back, pulled her shirt from her body and cupped her breasts in his palms. The latch of her bra was in the front, and it was easily unhooked. Jaden's breasts were just the right size. Perfect, pale round globes topped with pert little nipples that begged for his mouth. He didn't disappoint.

Jaden buried her hands in his hair, holding him closer to her. With one hand, he freed his cock from the tight constrain of his jeans, somehow removing them without leaving the bounty of her breasts. Her jeans followed, and he rose long enough to remove his shirt. Finally, they were skin to skin, and it was enough to almost burn.

Ignoring her hands in his hair, he kissed his way back down her body. Dorian needed to taste her. His hands spread her thighs wide, and he settled between them. His breath was hot against her sensitive flesh. Her stomach tightened at the first, light touch of his tongue. Over and over he gave her light, feather licks, until her hands left his hair and bunched into the sheet under her. Her body trembled in anticipation. When he finally fully claimed her, he had to pin her to the bed.

He loved her with his mouth like a man starved. Jaden's taste was addictive, and he couldn't get enough of her. Again, he brought her to the peak and caught her as she fell. He needed her, and couldn't wait a moment longer to fully claim her.

Dorian rose above her on his knees. The sight of her spread for him, her bra the only thing draping her body as it lay open, caused the blood to pump painfully through him. Reaching over her, he pulled a condom from the bedside drawer and quickly covered himself. His mouth took hers hard, teeth touching as his body drove deep into her.

Her cry wasn't lost to him, and he told himself to slow down. She was impossibly small and tight. He didn't want to cause her any pain. So, he gentled the kiss and his body.

"No." She gasped and pulled his hips tighter to hers. "Don't slow down."

"I don't want to hurt you, Jaden."

"You won't." She brought her mouth to his nipple and nipped gently. "I won't break, Dorian."

His control nearly shattered, he pulled one thigh high over his hip and drove into her. Long, deep strokes that touched her like no other. Her nails dug into his back, her teeth and lips playing on his chest. With every stroke, his pace quickened, until he was gasping with her. He could feel her inner walls clamping around him, and he wanted her to go over with him. He kissed her lips, stroking her mouth with his tongue the way his body stroked her. Deep and lingering, with enough force neither would soon forget the others feel or taste.

She collapsed back on the bed, offering him anything he wanted from her. His hands gripped her hips as he rose to his knees. One hand supported her under her back, while his other moved across her stomach, his thumb settling on her sensitive clit.

The sweat rolling from her toned body was one of the sexiest things he had ever thought he'd see. His thighs slapped against her ass as he drove into her harder, stroking her with his thumb and causing her to tighten on him almost painfully.

"Dorian..."

"Let go, Jaden."

"Now. Oh, please now."

Her body arched as her mouth opened on a silent cry. He could feel her release, and he threw himself over her, moving wildly, strongly. Her arms wrapped around him, accepting his pounding rhythm into her body. Just when he felt he would explode, her tongue licked his ear, and her voice whispered to him just how good he was making her feel, how full of him she felt.



Dorian took her mouth as he came hard, buried inside her welcoming body. Her little tremors milked him of everything he had. His sweat soaked body lay over hers, and her hands caressed him. Her thighs held him to her.

He didn't mind. For the first time in his life, he didn't mind a woman's caress or gentle touch after the act. Hell, he would even be willing to talk, if she wanted to. Whatever it was about Jaden Calder, he wanted to know more.

Lifting his head, he kissed her gently. He hummed his approval when she returned the kiss.

"Thank you," she whispered against his lips.

"For what?"

"Making me feel alive and like a woman again."

"You, Jaden, are all woman." He licked her neck, and she sighed. "A fact I'm tempted to prove to you again."

"Again? You couldn't possibly want to do that again. Besides, I'm all sweaty and sticky."

"You can bet I wanna do that again, and I can take care of sweaty and sticky."

He pulled from her and sat on the side of the bed, removed the condom and tossed it in the trash beside the bed. Dorian pulled another from the drawer, stood and turned to her, his hand extended.

"What?"

"First, we take care of sweaty and sticky." He pulled her to her feet. "Then, we do it all over again. In the shower."

Her eyes twinkled, and she licked his chest, giving him the look that said she was more than interested in this game. Jaden turned and rubbed her ass against his cock, her hands pulling his hips to her. Dorian growled and leaned in to nip her neck, causing her to gasp. Then he guided her into the bathroom, still pressed against her back.

Dorian pulled away and turned on the spray, laying the condom on the side of the tub. Jaden watched him as he moved. His hard body rippled with his strength, and

when her eyes landed on that part of him that had given her so much pleasure, she licked her lips. It was her turn for a taste.

He took her hand and stood with her under the spray. The shower was spacious, and her mind whirled at the possibilities. Her hands explored him, touching him, learning his body. He had tremendous strength, yet he had been so gentle with her. Even as caring as he had been, he was still afraid he would hurt her.

She leaned back, letting the water wet her hair. Dorian reached for the shampoo and washed her hair, working what was left of her braid loose, and then rinsed her, washing her body from head to toe. When he turned her and washed away the evidence of their desire, she bit her lip to stay in control. It was her turn.

"Here," she said, bringing his eyes to hers. "Let me wash you now."

He said nothing, just closed his eyes as she stepped behind him, lathering his back and arms. She applied pressure to the muscles in his lower back, and he moaned at the sensation. Her hands made circular motions around his buttocks, and when her fingers lightly ran between, he gritted his teeth, his body tightening. So, she did it again.

Dorian was on the verge of turning and taking her against the wall, when her wicked little fingers moved around his waist, down, and took his hard cock into her palms. Slowly she soaped him, from base to tip. Her lips moved across his back, as one hand dipped lower, cupping his tight sac, rolling it gently. She continued, until the water had washed away the soap.

"Turn around," she said against his back. "I need to make sure I got every spot."

"Trust me, you did." His voice was harsh and rough, but he turned to face her.

"Let me be the judge of that."

Jaden gave him a brief kiss, and then lowered her mouth again to his chest. Her tongue tested every inch. She lowered to his belly, and when his hands touched her head, she pulled them away.

"Keep them to yourself."

He growled but said nothing. Just reached up and braced them against the wall.

His body was tight, anticipating her next move. His body blocked the spray, and his eyes were able to watch her every move.

On her knees before him, Jaden teasingly licked his impressive length. His growl spurred her on, and she repeated the move.

"Don't tease, Jaden."

"It's my turn, Dorian."

That was his only warning before her mouth began to take him in. It was all he could do not to fall. His knees felt as if they would buckle. Her sweet mouth moved slowly, but she took almost all of him inside. He tipped his head back, hoping the water would cool him even a little. But the feel of her hot mouth wrapped around him was torture on his control.

His hips moved; he couldn't help it. Her hands held his ass, pulling him into her even deeper. Dorian knew she couldn't take all of him, but he couldn't say from lack of trying.

Again, Jaden caressed the place between his cheeks, and his body lurched. She had been ready for that. Her mouth tightened, holding him in place. Again, those fingers teased, and he couldn't stop the gasp from escaping. He never thought he could be touched like that and feel pleasure.

"What in the hell are you doing to me, woman?"

Her answer was another caress and a hum deep in her throat. The sensation sent a tidal wave of lust through him, and he fought not to come. She used her hands to encourage him to thrust into her mouth, and he could feel it building in his spine.

"Enough." He gasped, fighting his release. "Stop now or I won't be able to."

Slowly she released him, and he pulled her to her feet. His mouth took hers in a kiss that set her on fire. He reached between them, touched her, and felt her moisture gather.

"You're just as hot as I am," he said against her lips, and then he turned her, pressing his chest to her back. "Let's see how hot I can make you burn."

Dorian took her hands and placed them on the shower wall, bending her at the waist. Lifting one of her legs, he set her foot on the side of the tub. He teased her, rubbing the head of his cock through her folds, causing her to gasp. He was so hard, he thought he might split.

Jaden lowered one hand, and his eyes flared as she rubbed her clit, sending him a look over her shoulder that screamed what she wanted. He snatched the condom from the side of the tub, rolled it over himself and drove into her, hard and deep. His one hand rested beside hers on the wall, the other lowered to join hers in its play. Her juices coated him, and he moved within her in time to their hands.

"You have more passion inside you than anyone I have ever known."

"You seem to bring it out in me, Dorian." Her voice was raspy, and she gasped as he touched a sensitive place inside of her.

"Before we are through, I will have you screaming my name."

He straightened, and placed one hand on her hip, moving steadily into her. The finger he had touched her with, traced and teased over her anus. She gasped and her body tightened.

"You like that, Jaden?" He traced her again. "You like being touched here? Have you ever been touched here?"

"I like it so far." She arched into his touch. "No, I've never been touched like this."

He increased his thrusts, loving the fact that he would be the one to introduce her to this form of pleasure. Gently, he pushed his finger into her ass, but only to the first knuckle. Her small cry was one of pleasure, and she pushed back against him.

"More?"

"Yes."

So, he moved his finger deeper, feeling her inner walls ripple around his cock. It was torture, feeling her move, begging for more. She wasn't ready for his cock in her ass, but he could play until she was.

His hips moved harder, and he buried his finger inside her. Moving out as his cock drove deep into her heat. Moving in as his cock moved out. She trembled as she used the wall to push back even harder.

Dorian knew she wanted more, so he gently added a second finger. Jaden came apart, screaming his name and begging for his release. The sweet sounds she made pushed him over, and he came the moment she clamped around him.

They stood, locked together for long moments. He had eased himself from her body, and now they cooled one another beneath the rapidly chilling water. Dorian knew they would have to pull themselves together; they had a case to work. But right now, all he wanted was to absorb the woman in his arms. Would she have regrets? He sure as hell hoped not. He himself had none, and would have none. Unless she decided, they could never be together again.

"Jaden?"

"Yeah?"

"No regrets?"

"None."

He hugged her to his chest and kissed her hair. The water soothed their heated bodies.

"I don't want to say this will never happen again." Dorian whispered against her hair. "I don't want to ponder it. I just want us to act on what we feel."

"I know this shouldn't have happened. I always say it's not a good idea to get involved with your partner." She lifted her face, kissed him gently. "But, I don't think I could live with myself if I never felt this again."

"We take it as it comes, then?"

"Agreed."

"Fine, let's get out of here. I'm starting to freeze."

She laughed and accepted the towel, wrapping it around her body. It wasn't too late in the morning, she noticed. Amazing what two could do before eight in the

morning.

"We can stop by your place for a change of clothes."

"Good idea."

"For now, put these on."

She took the sweat-pants and t-shirt, dressed and ran his comb through her long hair. How it had managed to stay tangle free she didn't know.

"Now that is a picture."

She turned and noticed the look in his eyes, then glanced at her body.

Her breasts were clearly visible through his over large t-shirt, and the sweat-pants barely rested on her hips. It would be a challenge to keep them from dropping to the floor.

"Don't even think about it, Dorian. We have work to do."

"Fine, but we better hurry. Or I won't be responsible for my actions."

The laughter remained in the air, and once she had her clothes changed and her hair in order, they drove to the station house. Jaden didn't think anything could bring her down today. She had no idea just how wrong she was.

## Chapter Four

"Calder, Kelso, my office, now."

Both Jaden and Dorian watched Captain Sharp enter his office and sit at his desk. His face a mask of worry and almost anger.

"He always that snappy?"

"No," Jaden glanced to Dorian. "Something must really be wrong."

"Think he suspects we went beyond the partner thresh-hold?"

"I doubt it, and if he did, it wouldn't matter." She winked at him. "Let's go see what bee is in his bonnet."

They sat before him, watching and waiting. Sharp looked to Dorian once, and then his eyes stayed on Jaden. He looked like he was trying to decide if she stole the cookie from the cookie jar. Jaden felt her heart speed up.

"Jaden, I need to ask you this and I will only do it once."

"Alright."

"Where were you night before last," He glanced at his notes. "Between midnight and three."

"Well, I was home, sir."

"Can anyone verify that?"

"Verify?" She started to question, but stopped as his eyes bore into her. "Jada called me about eleven I guess. Other than that, I guess you only have my word."

Captain Sharp stood and crossed the room, closed the door and drew the shades facing the outer room. He paced, rubbed his neck and pinched the bridge of his nose.

He looked like he was about to deliver bad news.

"Captain?"

"Ordinarily, I would have this conversation in private. But as Kelso is your partner, he may be able to help figure this out."

"Figure out what?"

"First let me say, I in no way believe for a moment you had anything to do with this."

"Sir, please." She was anxious now. "What the hell is going on?"

"Lab returned the report on the prints recovered from Bobby Keller's wallet and a bloody print on the wall."

"And?"

"They're yours."

If Jaden hadn't been sitting, she would have fallen. She could feel the blood leave her face. Her heart pounded loudly, and for a second she wondered if the two men in the room could hear it. She heard Dorian speaking, but could make out little through the fog in her brain. She shook her head, hoping to clear it.

"Hers? How the hell is that possible?"

"I have no idea, Kelso. But we have got to figure this out." His eyes looked again to Jaden. "I hate to do this, Jaden, but I need a hair sample from you."

She just nodded and plucked one from her head, still numb with disbelief. She handed it to Sharp, who tagged and marked it in a small pouch.

"What happens now?"

"I will have to temporarily suspend her." Sharp talked to Dorian, but watched her. "I have to ask for your shield and your firearm."

She went through the motions, seeing herself hand over the one thing she had worked so hard for.

"This is unbelievable. Her record speaks for itself."

"I agree, that's why your job is to stay with her." He looked at Dorian then. "I



think it may have to do with that gang bust. Jaden gathered every piece of evidence, and was meticulous enough that every charge will stick. There are members of that ring still out there, not to mention family.”

“How can I help, other than to make sure she is protected?”

“If things go the way I suspect, this is far from over.” He looked to her again. “Jaden, you can’t tell anyone or let anyone know of Kelso’s involvement in this. My hope is, if and when they strike again, you will have an air tight alibi.”

She found her voice then, and her eyes were hard and unrelenting as they looked at Sharp.

“Basically, we sit around and wait for someone to die, in hopes to clear my name.”

“Of course not!” Sharp snapped. “I have Logan and Benson on this.”

“So, I sit around and hope I don’t end up dead or in prison.”

“It won’t come to that, but as of right now, you are a suspect in a murder case, of a man you knew and dated in high school.” Sharp ran his fingers through his hair. “Your record is your saving grace. I don’t believe any of this myself, but we have to figure it out, or you will end up in jail.”

“Fine. I guess I better just go home.” She stood and walked to the door. “I expect to be briefed of any further leads.”

Sharp nodded and watched her leave his office. She stopped by her desk long enough to gather a few files.

“Stay with her, Kelso. I know this is a set-up. But we need to prove it.”

Dorian nodded and followed her from the station house. Since he was technically still on duty, he drove the unit from the garage, and kept silent. She had shut herself up, and until she opened up, there was nothing he could do.

“Rita Logan is a good cop. I trust her,” she suddenly said, drawing his attention to her. “She is fair and honest.”

“That’s good then.” He made a right, checking the mirrors. For some reason, he

felt they were being watched.

"James Benson is alright, just a horny bastard." She looked at him and gave a half smile. "He is dating Jada, and she says that's all he thinks about. Not too in my favor there."

He remained silent, watching the mirrors and waiting for her to break the silence. This was one big mess. How in the hell had someone been able to get her prints? It would be easy enough to manage, if someone had gotten their hands on her police record. It was a simple matter of matching the prints to a mold, and making synthetic skin prints. He thought of her sister, but that was insane. Her sister was nice enough and outspoken, but a killer he didn't see.

Someone was out to get Jaden, and he was stumped. He would pull the file on the gang shooting and see if he could sniff anything out.

Pulling into the drive, he parked in her garage, deciding best to keep the unit out of site. She was quiet as she walked into the house, and went through the motions of making a pot of coffee.

"Not how I expected today would go."

"I hear you."

"You want some coffee?"

"Sure." Dorian put his shoulder holster on the counter.

He hated that she seemed unaffected, knowing it was her way of hiding. She just needed time, and then she would be out for blood.

She set his coffee on the table, and he watched as she gathered cream and sugar. When she sat, her back was ramrod straight, but her eyes told another story. She wasn't just fighting her emotions; she was mad, and scared as hell.

He sat beside her, and sipped his coffee, waiting. It didn't take long. Her back slumped and her eyes became misty.

"Who? Why? I have always been fair and decent to both suspect and victim."

"We'll figure this out, Jaden."

"What if we don't?"

"You can't think that way."

"Easy for you to say. You still have your shield," she snapped. "You don't have someone out there determined to ruin your life. I could go to prison."

"You won't," he said forcefully. "And if you keep thinking that way, then the son of a bitch doing this is winning."

At that, tears rolled from her eyes, and she silently cried. He wished she would scream or yell, even pound on him. But she just sat there looking beat.

"All my life I wanted to be a cop." Her eyes took on a faraway look.

"Tell me about your life before you were a cop. Tell me about what led you to become a cop."

"When we we're younger, Jada always seemed to be in trouble, and I was the one who avoided it." She smiled at the memory. "I can't tell you how many times I tried to keep her in line, but she was the rebel and went her own way."

"Drove your parent's nuts?"

"Well, it was considered cute until high school. She seemed to just be angry a lot, and for awhile, she blamed me, calling me the favorite. All the guys wanted to date me, but she couldn't understand it. We looked alike, but they treated her different. She had a bad attitude. I think my parents worried more for her, because she attracted trouble like a magnet. She was sent away to school, and we grew apart for awhile." Her eyes narrowed. "I was just out of school, deciding on what I would do, when we got a call from Jada. The guy she had been dating beat her badly, and we rushed to Queens, finding her battered and in the hospital."

"And then?"

"The officer in the room basically said she asked for it, but I knew better. Jada may have been troubled growing up, but this woman was a victim, and the officer treated her like trash." She smiled. "I knew then and there I wanted to be a cop. I wanted to fight for the little guy, the one others turned their backs on."

"Jada seems to have recovered nicely. Dating a cop herself."

"Yes, she is strong. And even though she never got close to mom and dad again, after they died she returned to the city and we started fresh." Jaden sighed. "She will never have children, but she says she is okay with that."

"How did your parents die?"

"Car accident, about a year before I received my detective's shield."

"Sorry to hear that."

"It was awhile ago."

Dorian took it all in, and still the thought of anyone wanting to harm her seemed so far fetched. Her record was spotless. Perfect actually. Every piece of evidence logged, every arrest was done with respect and non-judgmental. As a beat cop, she made it a point to help out the kids on the street, and talked to kids in the school about drugs and the issues of strangers. As a detective, she was responsible for much of the war on drugs and street violence.

He had seen her scar last night, just on her right shoulder. She had taken a bullet in the fight of street crime, and nearly lost her life. He had ignored the scar, feeling it was a badge of honor. Knowing she would not want him to see it as less. Now, the thought of her taking a bullet scared the hell out of him. He barely knew her, but she already meant a lot. Not for what they had shared, but just for the person she was, though he had no complaints in either direction.

"What are you thinking?" she asked, sipping from her mug. "You're looking at me like I'm a puzzle."

"No, not a puzzle. I just can't imagine anyone wanting to hurt you."

"I have pissed a lot of people off, though it was for the greater good."

"I was thinking that maybe we should look through the file on that gang bust." He stood and poured them each more coffee, then sat again. "Maybe there will be something that will stand out and give us an idea."

"It's worth a shot. I brought the file home with me."

"Great minds think alike I guess."

She smiled, but it didn't quite reach her eyes. She was afraid, and she was also mad as hell. He couldn't blame her. Dorian watched as she stood, retrieved the file, and placed it before him. Then she took her seat and waited.

Dorian flipped through the file, taking in key points of information. Photos lined the pages and he could see it had been a fight. She was lucky she survived. Evidence photos showed her picture and the wound she took. That's when a thought hit him.

"Who all knew about you being shot, and the wall you leaned against?"

"Everyone at the crime scene."

"Well, that says something."

"You think it's someone on the inside?" Her eyes widened. "You think a cop is setting me up?"

"Maybe not as far as that, but feeding information and not knowing it."

"Well, we kept most details private. The paper only heard that I had been shot." She sighed. "But I can't think of anyone who would do such a thing. It's especially important since the trial has yet to get underway."

"But what if they don't realize who they are talking to?"

"I see what you mean." Jaden stood and started to pace. "But even so, that says nothing about the perp unless it's a gang member or a family member. Some are angry with the outcome, and I was lead on the case. That was public knowledge."

"So maybe we start within the department."

"It's a start."

"I'll call Sharp, and then we can go over the file again."

Jaden watched him walk into the living room, and she had to admire the way he thought. What he'd suggested was possible. But something told her it wouldn't be that easy. Someone was out to get her, and for now, she had to wait it out. She hated that. Her nerves felt raw and the anger inside was boiling. How dare someone try to make a killer out of her?

She had always been fair, always respectful to the lowest of criminals. It wasn't easy to sit with someone who had hurt or taken the life of an innocent, and act as if it mattered little to you. But she did it, everyday, because she wanted to make a difference. Wanted to take one more bad guy off the street.

People trusted her. Even the local prostitutes would talk to her about things they wouldn't to most, because she didn't judge them. To her, they did what they had to do to survive. She had refused more than one partner for the way they treated those they considered beneath them. It was just her way. So why would someone want to frame her for murder?

Her fist balled up, and before she realized what she had done, they slammed on the table. Hot tears raced down her cheeks, and she let the anger flow through her. Dorian hurried into the room at the sound of the table rattling.

"You okay?"

"Hell, no," her voice shook. "I am so far from okay, it's out of site."

"That's good, you're angry. Let it out."

"I'm beyond even anger, Dorian. I'm fully pissed off and hoping the stupid fucker responsible will show himself."

"Fine, be pissed off. At least you'll fight back now."

Jaden took deep breaths, hoping to relax. Okay, she got it out, and now it was time to do what she did best. Track it down, follow the leads, and take back her life.

"What did Sharp have to say?"

"He thinks we may be on to something."

"I say we order a pizza, and pour through that file until we come up with other possibilities."

"Sounds good to me."

"I need to call Jada first." She walked into the living room, Dorian behind her. "She will wonder why I'm not at my desk."

"Remember though, Jaden. You can't tell her I'm with you."

"What? She's my sister, Dorian."

"Not a soul needs to know, Jaden. It's for the best. She could let it slip, and not realize." He touched her cheek. "For no other reason than if it gets out, we may never catch this guy."

"Alright," she agreed. "But I don't like it."

"I know, and I'm sorry, but it's for the best."

She sighed, but made the call to her sister, explaining she had to take some leave over a case. Her explanations brief, she hung up the phone.

"I hated that."

"I know."

"Okay, pizza and then work."

He said nothing more and situated the file while she ordered dinner. There was a lot of ground to cover, and he was determined to get to the bottom of it.

## Chapter Five

"Okay, my eyes hurt. We need to stop." Jaden stood and walked to the couch, sitting heavily with a sigh.

Dorian agreed. It had been hours, and they had made it half way through the file. He made sure they went through every photo, note, and statement. It was close to midnight.

"We can pick up in the morning."

"Or just spend all night going through it. It's not like we have to get up early."

He sat beside her, and pulled her feet into his lap, gently massaging the soles.

"That feels heavenly." She snuggled into the couch.

"Well, it's nice to know I can bring a smile to your face."

"That you can, Dorian." She smiled at him. "You're pretty good at rubbing feet too."

"Oh, in that mood are you?"

"Hey, I take it as it comes."

"I'm not sure, but I think you meant that as a pun."

She wiggled her brows and blew him a kiss. She was definitely being a witch. But with the events of the day, all she wanted was to get him naked.

She pulled her feet from his lap, stood, and slowly started to undress. He followed her lead, but was naked before she got to her jeans. Jaden didn't mind. Looking at his naked body, resting on her couch was a turn on in itself. When she stood before him, her clothes piled on the floor; she began to work her braid loose.



It fell in soft waves around her, and she shook her head. For the first time she realized how erotic it was brushing against her body. Dorian was fighting with the condom he had pulled from his jeans. Taking pity, she reached for it, straddled him, and rolled it on easily.

Her mouth claimed his, and she felt the power of being in control. When his hands caressed her back, she shivered. He lowered one hand slowly down her back, over her ass, and cupped her from behind. Her hips rotated, rubbing her wet and wanting sex against his palm.

Jaden rose on her knees and slowly lowered herself onto his cock, moaning into his mouth at the feel of him stretching her, filling her completely. Her hips rocked gently back and forth, her mouth leaving his as her head fell back. Dorian's wet mouth took a breast, and he laved the nipple until it looked raw and wanting. He then moved to the other, worshiping it the same way.

She gasped and moved harder against him, wanting to erase everything but this moment. Nothing mattered but the man under her, and the way he made her feel so alive. His hands worked like magic over her, giving her every sensation imaginable. When his finger circled her anus, she cried out, knowing what he could make her feel.

"You like it when I touch you here." It was a statement of fact, not a question. "I can feel your walls tighten and your belly tense."

"You know I do." She began to grind against him.

"Do you have any idea what I really wanna do to this sweet ass?" He slid his finger deep into her, driving his cock further into her.

"Please."

"You wanna hear it, as much as you wanna feel it, Jaden." Again, he lifted his hips, dragging a cry from her, as he eased another finger into her ass, stretching her. "Maybe, when you're ready, I will bend you over this couch, and slowly take your ass the way it's begging me to."

"Dorian, please."

Using his free hand to pull her tight against him, he pumped his hips harder, driving deeper into her. His fingers worked against his strokes, and soon her hips moved faster against him.

"You want that too, don't you, baby?"

"Yes, now, please now."

"Soon, you will be ready, and I will show you a whole new pleasure." He took a nipple into his mouth, gently rolling it in his teeth. "But first, I wanna feel you come for me."

She moved with him, taking all he was giving her. The bite of pain in her ass heightening her pleasure beyond any she had ever felt before.

Jaden could hear a ringing in her ears, and her heart was about to pound from her chest. She was surely about to die. Then she was flying, and the man beneath her moved harder and deeper than before. She could have sworn he shouted her name, before she collapsed against him in complete exhaustion. Her body tingled in places she never knew she had.

Slowly she raised her head, flinching when he pulled his fingers from her body.

"Wow."

"It will only get better, baby." He kissed her gently.

"Promise?"

"Bet on it."

He lifted her with him as he stood, his cock still semi-hard even after such a climax, and kept them locked together. In the bedroom, he lowered her gently, pulling from her, and smiling when her eyes closed.

He removed the condom, tossed it in the trash and lay beside her, pulling a throw over them both.

Dorian would let her sleep for a little while, and then he intended to really play with her. His Jaden liked how he touched her. Soon, he would show her more of what he could make her feel. But for now, he needed sleep.

Just as he began to doze, a sound, unfamiliar, pulled him to his senses. He frowned, and gently rose from the bed. He cursed silently, remembering his gun was on the kitchen counter. He moved silently, but swiftly to the kitchen, pulled it from the holster and clicked the safety off.

Standing in the dark shadows of the living room, he listened, watched, and waited.

Again, he heard the clicking sound, and a silhouette outside the front door window began to take form. Slowly, he made his way to the door, and watched as the lock clicked to open, and the knob twisted.

Without hesitating, hoping to catch the intruder off guard, he yanked the door open wide and drew his weapon on a very frightened and very identical form of the woman he had just made love to.

"Jada?"

"Hey, Dorian."

"What the fuck? I could have shot you!" He shouted, turning to see Jaden in her robe hurry into the room. "You have company. She's damn lucky I didn't pull the trigger. Who the fuck comes visiting after one in the morning?"

"Calm down, Dorian. She has a key and was just worried." Jaden tried not to laugh at her sister, who was openly eyeing the naked goods. "You might wanna put some clothes on."

Dorian looked down at himself, and groaned at the sight. All he had to grace his body was a blush and a pistol.

"Son of a bitch!"

Jada giggled as he stomped from the room, and sent her sister an evil little grin.

"Guess you didn't need me tonight after all."

"What in the hell are you doing here so late, Jada?"

"I was worried about you." She shrugged and walked into the kitchen. "Besides, I have a key. I wasn't breaking in."

"I know that, but you could have been shot." Jaden sat at the table. "We have to be very careful right now."

"You, dear sister, are hiding something. What's really going on?"

"We can talk later, Jada."

Dorian came in the room then, boxers in place and nothing else. Jaden noticed her sister size him up, and by the look on her face she liked what she was looking at.

"Down, Jada."

"Well, hell, Jaden. He is one fine looking man."

Dorian scowled at the grin on Jaden's lips. She couldn't help it. The man had no qualms about being so open in bed, but now he was blushing.

"Are you always so blunt?" he asked Jada, sitting in the chair beside Jaden.

"It saves time."

"I almost shot you."

"But you didn't, and yet that brings up the question again." She looked at her sister. "What in the hell is going on?"

After all they had been through, Jaden couldn't lie to her. It had taken years to get her back into her life, and she wouldn't blow it now.

"Someone is trying to set me up." She ignored Dorian's warning look. "Someone made it look like I killed Bobby Keller."

"First of all, that's just ridiculous. Secondly," she eyed Dorian. "Why does he look like he's about to strangle you?"

"Because, we we're supposed to keep it all quiet." Chancing a glance his way, Jaden swallowed hard. He looked pissed. "Him being here and all. In case someone is watching."

"Why not tell me?"

"Because you may accidentally let something slip. We think it could be someone on the inside feeding information to the perp."

"But I'm not on the inside."

"But you're dating a cop." Dorian said, ending his silence.

"Wait a minute. You think I am involved?" Jada's eyes narrowed.

"Of course not, But you could say something very innocent, and it could mean a lot to the person behind this," he explained, trying to ease the tension.

"Oh that's just perfect." Jada stood and grabbed her purse. "Well, since she's fucking you, I guess you're a suspect for leaking information too."

"Jada, wait. It's not like that." Jaden tried to ease her sister. "He's just watching out for me."

"Yeah, well, I gotta go." She hugged Jaden, and scowled at Dorian. "Nice seeing you again. But in case I don't see you later, go fuck yourself."

The door closed, and Jaden sighed, leaning against the wall.

"I guess that went rather well."

"Sorry."

Jaden hid a smile. He looked like a boy in trouble.

"Don't be, sorry. She will get over it by tomorrow." She reached for his hand. "Come on, lover. I need some sleep."

After locking up the house, they lay together, each in their own thoughts. Jaden wondered about the person determined to ruin her life. Dorian pondered just how he could have handled the situation with Jada any better.

\* \* \* \*

After a quick breakfast the next morning, Jaden was once again going through the file. Just looking at the crime scene photos made her cringe, unaware she even did so, she rubbed her shoulder. She could remember feeling helpless and closing her eyes, waiting for the young man to pull the trigger and end her life. Then he fell, a shocked look on his face, as his own life ended.

The phone rang and Dorian moved to answer it. It seemed natural, him in her

home. She could get used to the man. The way he made her feel, inside and out, was something new and exciting.

She could lose all that. If she didn't figure this mess out, she could lose everything she had ever dreamed of.

"That was Sharp."

"And?"

"They found another body."

"What? Where?"

"You will never believe this." He sat down and looked at his notebook. "This morning, the coach of the local football team in Queens called in. His assistant coach was found dead under the bleachers. He was in the same condition as Bobby Keller."

"Who was he?"

"A Mr. Wayne Harper."

"Oh, shit." Jaden lowered her head into her hands. "I knew him, too."

"High school?"

"Yes. I dated him for about six months. He was the first boy to steal a kiss." Her head snapped up. "And he kissed me under the bleachers."

"The coroner found prints and hair fibers." He watched her face. "But I'm betting we know who they will come back to."

"Well, I have an alibi this time."

"That's the tricky part, baby."

"What is?" Her eyes were wide and alarmed.

"Mr. Harper was dead before Bobby Keller." He sighed. "The poor man's been there for at least five days."

Jaden stood and paced, her arms wrapped around her middle. Dorian wished he could comfort her.

"Do you think I did this?" Her back was to him. "Do you think I killed these men?"

"Excuse me? I don't believe I heard you right."

"All leads are pointing to me."

"I can't believe you asked such a thing." His voice was low and angry. "As much as I want you, do you think I could sleep with you if I believed it?"

When she didn't answer, he turned and left the room.

Jaden wished she could have taken it back. He was a good, honest man and she had just questioned his loyalty. Not to her, but to his job. She would have been furious had anyone asked her such a thing.

She found him in the living room, looking out the window into the morning light. Stepping behind him, she wrapped her arms around his waist and kissed his back.

"I'm sorry, Dorian." She felt him stiffen slightly, and then his body relaxed. "I truly didn't mean that. I just need to hear you believe in me."

"Maybe it's you that needs to believe in you, Jaden."

"Maybe you're right."

He turned and hugged her to him.

"Things will work out. But you need never to wonder if I believe in you."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be sorry. Just don't be silly."

He lightly kissed her, and held her for a long while. Jaden felt safe and secure in the circle of his arms. She wished she could stay there forever.

"This all seems so unreal."

"I know, baby."

## Chapter Six

"Jaden, what the hell are you doing here?" Captain Sharp hurried toward her as she walked under the bleachers. "You shouldn't be here. Where is Kelso?"

"He's checking around the site, and I'm here because this involves me." She eyed the captain. "How is it that you're investigating? This is out of our house jurisdiction."

"I called in a favor. Seeing as how the first victim was found in our neighborhood, the district attorney was more than willing to hand it over to us." He sighed. "Poor bastard. Am I correct in suspecting you knew this man?"

"Yeah, I knew him years ago." She glanced around and shivered. "He stole a kiss in high school, and if I'm right, he stole the kiss in the spot he was discovered."

"What the fuck is going on around here?"

"Sir, I wish I could say. The fact he was the first killed and the second found is disturbing."

"Jaden, everything about this mess is disturbing. I don't suppose you can recall where you were five days ago?"

"Time?"

"Late evening."

"Home. The only other I talked to was my nightly call from my sister."

"You have to go, Jaden. The less of you here, the better."

Jaden gritted her teeth in an effort to control herself. Someone was fucking with her life, and she was powerless.

"I want to see him."



"What good will it do? The man is dead and it looks like the last. Go home, Jaden, and think about your years of high school. What if these two are only the start?"

"What am I supposed to think about, Sir? Want me to make a list of every guy I kissed, fucked, and fondled?"

Sharp stared at her hard, and she forced herself not to flinch at his cold glare. She knew it was her anger and frustration speaking, and she was on the defensive. When she heard someone clearing their throat, Jaden snapped her head around, and met another pair of disapproving eyes.

"There's nothing you can do here, Jaden. Let's go."

Jaden didn't respond, just straightened her spine and stalked past Dorian, heading for the parking lot. She would wear her anger like a cloak; it was her only excuse for her behavior. The only one she could make sense out of anyway.

Dorian was speaking to the captain, but she blocked it from her hearing. She didn't care, she told herself. Let them talk; let them discuss her and their plan of action. She didn't need them to believe in her. Jaden wiped an angry tear from her cheek, knowing she was lying to herself. She knew they believed in her, she was just pissed at the world right now. She stopped and leaned against the unit Dorian had signed out for use while they worked the case.

Her brows lowered in thought as her mind registered the loud pop that signaled gunfire, though her body didn't react the way it was trained to. A burning, tearing sensation in her right arm caused her to gasp, and then her knees buckled. Jaden sat heavily on her backside, clutching at her arm, wishing she had a weapon.

The glass shattered on the car above her head, and she realized she was still in the line of the shooters fire. Her only protection was the squad car next to the unit. As the glass rained down, she crawled under the car to the other side, crouching behind a wheel.

The sound of radios and return fire echoed through her head. Then it was silent. She could hear Dorian shouting her name, but for a moment, she seemed paralyzed,

mute with shock and not a little fear.

"Where the hell is she? There's blood all over the ground here."

Dorian was panicked, and she tried to call to him. Her arm ached, the blood now running down her fingers.

"Jaden? Answer me damn you."

"Here," she found her voice. "I'm on the other side."

He was beside her in a second, Sharp on his heels. Dorian immediately tore her shirt to the shoulder.

"How bad is it?" She winced, not wanting to look.

"Just a gash, but it looks deep. You're losing a shit load of blood." He turned to the captain. "She's gonna need this sewed up."

Jaden watched as the captain hurried to a squad car and radioed for an ambulance. Pointless really. Dorian could just drive her. But it hurt too much to argue.

"Looks to me like someone wanted to open up an old wound."

"You mean on my shoulder?"

"Little more inward and it would be."

"Just get me out of here."

Dorian looked at her face, and couldn't hide what he was feeling. She saw it all in his eyes. Fear, anger, and a great deal of concern. Jaden couldn't bring herself to comfort him, not just yet.

"Ambulance is on its way, Jaden," Sharp said as he knelt by her other side. "Did you see anything?"

"Nothing. I was just standing there, feeling sorry for myself, and then my arm was on fire."

"I don't like this."

"Me either, sir. Being shot hurts like a bitch."

She smiled, trying to ease them both. Why she felt it was needed, she didn't know. After all, she was the one bleeding.

"I hear the sirens. That was quick." She broke the silence. "I'm fine, sir. Nothing a piece of thread and lots of morphine won't fix."

Dorian and the captain stepped back to let the paramedics get to Jaden. Already the press was thick, and Sharp was determined to keep Jaden's name out of the paper.

"When you boys are ready, we can provide a shield." He nodded to the news crews. "They haven't seen her, and I don't want them to."

Jaden sighed in relief. No press. She was fine with that. She flinched at the prick of the IV in her good hand, and then closed her eyes in sweet relief. The pain reliever shot into the tube was taking her to another world. A world where she was free from the fear and the burning of a bullet.

"I'm riding with her." Dorian waited while Sharp directed a crime scene van to block them from the reporters. "I'll meet you at the hospital."

"I cleared it with command. The ambulance will take you to the hospital in our jurisdiction."

Dorian nodded and climbed in after they had loaded, Jaden. He didn't dare do more than rest his hand on her brow for a moment. Her eyes fluttered briefly, and she moaned slightly. The EMT across from him saw his frown.

"No worries, Detective. I can guarantee she feels nothing at the moment."

"She still looks in pain."

"It's the effects of the drug. Her brain is basically trying to function on the narcotic. Odd's are, she won't need anymore, even while she gets stitched up."

"You didn't give her too much?"

"Of course not." The man looked offended. "But if she's not used to the drugs, it will hit her like a hammer. At least she's not in pain."

"Sorry." Dorian conceded. "I didn't mean to offend, but she's my partner."

"I know that look, detective. Don't worry. Your partner, as you call it, will be fine."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Hey, no offense big guy. But when a man looks at a woman like you're looking at her, well, I would bet a month's wages that she means more to you than you let on."

"Just hit the lights and get us there."

"Sure," the man grinned and hammered on the roof of the ambulance.

Just like that, the sirens wailed and they were off. Dorian silently thanked the man riding with them as he stood with his back to the windows on the doors. Though they tried, Jaden's picture wasn't caught.

Dorian continued to watch her, but his mind was whirling. He admitted to caring for Jaden. Until he saw her bleeding and hurt, he hadn't realized how much. It wasn't just sex with her. He truly cared for her, on a level much deeper than that of a partner. He loved her body, loved bringing it to life with his own. In a matter of a few days, perhaps hours, she had crawled inside of him. His feelings for her ran deeper than he had thought possible. Dorian had heard of people just knowing when the right one was in front of them. As of this moment, he would never scoff at that notion again.

Her hair was peppered with glass, and he gently began picking the tiny shards from the slightly tangled mess. Damn, but she was beautiful. The thought of her being hunted not only scared him, it pissed him off. One way or another, he'd find the son of a bitch.

Dorian glanced up at the curse of the driver. He said a few words himself when he spotted all the press.

"Those guys waste no time at all."

"We'll go to the back entrance. Cover her head with the sheet, and be ready to move fast."

Dorian nodded and did as he was instructed.

"I figure we have about ten seconds." The man in back hopped out before the vehicle even stopped rolling. "So let's make the best of it."

He had been close on his guess. Just as the emergency doors closed, the media fought for entry. Punching in a code, the doors locked down. The EMT smiled at the

curses hurled his way.

Security met them with the ER doctor, and Dorian explained this had to stay very quiet. Then things moved quickly. The next thing Dorian knew, he was in a recovery room, waiting on the sleeping Jaden to wake up. A knock on the door drew him, and he stood, opening it only part way. A nurse stood before him.

"I am sorry, Detective Kelso, I hate to disturb you." Her voice was whisper thin. "But a young lady at the front desk is demanding to see Detective Calder."

"Who?"

"She says she is her sister, and is threatening me with bodily harm."

"Jada?" How the hell had she known?

"That's her, sir. I will refrain from telling you what she said she would do to me." The nurse folded her arms. "But I will say that it's no place for a clipboard to be inserted."

"I can just imagine. It's alright. Send her in. Just be sure all visitors are cleared through me. You did the right thing by coming to me. Thank you."

"Well, what she said she would do is nothing compared to what the doctor would do." She smiled. "I know this is a sensitive situation, sir. I will send her in right away."

Dorian waited, and then held his breath at the sight of Jada hurrying down the hall. It amazed him how much she looked like Jaden. Slight differences could be seen, if one really looked.

"How is she?" Jada snapped, trying to step around him. "Let me in, Kelso."

"Nice to see you too, Jada. She is fine, sleeping."

"I want to see my sister."

"How did you know about this?"

"Well, certainly not from you, jackass. I should have been phoned right away."

"Answer me, and then I can explain."

"James told me."

"Detective Benson?"

"Yes," she tried to step past again. "I swear, Kelso, get the fuck out of my way or you will sing high and walk funny for the next few hours."

"First of all, let me get a few things clear with you, Jada." He stepped out and closed the door. "Until this fucker is caught, she won't be alone with anyone, including you."

"I'm her sister. You can't keep me from her."

"I don't want to. But I will be watching her like a damn hawk."

"Where were you today, oh mighty protector?"

"Second," he went on, ignoring her barb. "James Benson and I will talk. This case is sensitive, and not even your boyfriend will be allowed to talk."

"Who the hell do you think you are?"

"I'm the one who will be looking over her shoulder every minute of everyday."

"Fine, but I want to know why I wasn't informed right away."

"Because, by the captain's orders, until we get to the bottom of this, everyone is a suspect." He watched her eyes flare. "Someone tried to kill her today. It won't happen again."

"Fine, watch dog. Can I go in now?"

Dorian opened the door and followed her inside. He sat in his chair, giving them privacy, but close nonetheless. Jada loved her sister; he could see it in the way she looked at her, and the way she gently sat on the side of the bed.

"Jaden?" Jada whispered. "Can you hear me?"

Jaden slowly began to stir, and Dorian breathed a silent sigh of relief.

"Jada?" Her voice was sluggish. "Where's Dorian?"

"Your lapdog is here, Jaden. How do you feel?"

"Hung over." Her eyes slowly opened. "Be nice to him, sis."

"He got you shot." Jada glared at him, ignoring the glare he sent her. "He is supposed to protect you."

"Dorian didn't get me shot." She shifted. "Some crazy fucker took a coward's pop at me, that's all."

"Jaden,"

"No. I don't want to hear it. Dorian has been nothing but helpful." She smiled, raising her bed. "So, what's on your mind?"

"You mean other than my sister was shot and I was not informed until much later?"

"Jada, there are reason's." She yawned. "I can go home later this evening."

"Fine, but I don't like him."

"Well, you don't have to." Jaden looked to Dorian. "Screw this evening. I want to get out of here, Dorian."

"Just another hour or two, and I can take you home." He stood and walked to her free side. His hand reached out and touched her cheek. "They want to make sure you have enough in you to fight any infection."

"Anything from Sharp?"

"He was here earlier. Got a report from the doctor and said you can write up your statement and fax it to him."

"Good. I just want to get home and take a hot bath and watch TV."

"I think that can be managed."

Jada stood then, glaring at them both.

"Fine, act like there isn't some psycho out there plucking off your ex-boyfriends and taking shots at you."

"Jada,"

"No, Jaden. This is serious. If you don't have the brain to be scared I have enough for us both."

"It's being handled." Jaden tried to comfort her. "Everything will work out."

"Look at you two. Acting like love starved teenagers when people are dying!" she snapped and picked up her purse. "People you knew. Seems to me you have more

to worry about than hot baths and hard cocks."

Dorian was silent until he heard Jaden's gasp. Her face was flushed and a blush reached her chest. Sister or not, she was out of line.

"That's enough, Jada." Dorian said as he stood. "She's damn lucky to be alive. You would do well to remember that. Jaden has no control over what's happening."

"Yeah, you're right, watch dog. Why don't you two just act like nothing has happened, run home and fuck like bunnies?" She looked hard at Dorian. "But know this, Kelso. If anything happens to her, you will never fuck again."

"Jada!" Jaden shouted, gaining her attention. "That's enough, and you are out of line. I appreciate your worry, but go home and cool off. Just leave."

"Fine." Jada stormed to the door, turning once again. "I meant what I said, Kelso."

She left the room, leaving Jaden gaping after her. Jada had never looked more serious or more dangerous. It was shocking to see that side of her sister. Jaden loved her dearly, and they were close. She knew it was fear and anger talking. She had done the same just before she became a target for a freak.

"I'm sorry, Dorian."

"For what?"

"Jada. She's just upset."

"Yeah, I know." The door opened and Dorian stood quickly, a hand on his pistol.

"Whoa, detective." The ER doctor said, holding up his hands. "Thought I'd check her over and see if she could go."

"Sorry."

"Relax, son. I'm on the good side." He smiled. "Alright, Ms. Calder. Sit up and let me take a look."

"I feel so much better. Just a slight headache."

"Side effect of the pain killer. The evil side to that heavenly bliss." He unwrapped her arm, and then moved to look at her eyes. "I think you can go on home. I



have a script filled for you, didn't think you would want to chance the media."

"Thanks."

"These are strong, so take them only if you need. But don't wait until the pain is bad." He handed her the bottle. "The stitches will dissolve in about ten days. No need to return unless you feel there's a problem. You might experience some itching."

"I'm all too familiar."

"Yes, I know you are." He smiled. "So, go out the office exit. No camera's waiting there. Your captain sent another unit and its right outside the door. Just call if you need anything and if I have to, I can come to you."

"You're being very accommodating."

"I'm being safe, Jaden." He nodded to the nurse who would discharge her. "Take it easy, and call me with any problems."

"Thanks."

Dorian helped her dress, and they were led to the office exit. Jaden sighed when she was finally in the car. Home, she wanted to go home.

"Ready?" Dorian asked, climbing behind the wheel.

"Very."

Jaden waited until he started the car, and then reached over, thankful her good arm was right beside him. Her fingers threaded in his hair. He looked at her, and she pulled him closer, kissing him deeply.

"What was that for?" he panted, catching his breath.

"Just because."

"When you're better, do it again."

She smiled, relaxing into the seat. Jaden was glad this day was about over. It had been hell. Getting shot was not her idea of a picnic.

Who the hell was doing this? Why were they doing it? She had to believe things would work out.

The sun was just setting when they arrived at the house, and as she watched it

disappear behind a group of trees, she found herself wishing her problems could do so as well. Like the sun, just go away, and start fresh on the next rise.

Jaden knew it wouldn't be that easy.

## Chapter Seven

It had been four days, and Jaden felt she was healing well. She hadn't needed her pain medication, but her arm did itch like a bitch. A sure sign the wound was making its recovery. Sharp had checked in with her, and sure enough, it was her prints and hair fibers on the body of poor Wayne Harper. If something didn't break soon, she would be arrested and charged. But she wasn't afraid like she was before. Something would come up. It had to.

Dorian had been a saint. Washing her back and waiting on her hand and foot. But the man was driving her nuts. He lay beside her every night, holding her gently. She had tried to engage in play last night but he had stopped her. Damn, she was on fire for the man.

He was worried about hurting her, but today, she would show no mercy. She had showered, and it was early afternoon. Her hip length nightshirt was unbuttoned to nearly her navel as she reclined. Her long hair held by several bands almost touched the floor. She would seduce him if she had to. He wanted her she knew he did. But he had a tight grip on that damn control and she was going to break it.

He walked into the living room, handing her a glass of iced tea, and sat at her feet on the couch. The condensation on the glass felt wonderful, she was so hot, but not from the heat outside. This heat was caused by Dorian, an inner heat only he could relieve.

She took a sip of the tea, humming her approval and then trailing the icy glass down her throat. Jaden sucked in a breath as the action caused wetness to spread across

her shirt.

"This tastes wonderful, Dorian."

"Does it?"

He turned to look at her and froze, watching the wet material cling to her breasts. Her nipples stood out, tempting him. Jaden ran the glass between the folds of her shirt, separating the folds and teasing him with a glimpse of her belly and navel.

"Oh, yes, it's so good."

She took another long drink, watching him, the flare in his eyes as he watched every move of the glass. Feeling bold, she snagged an ice cube from the glass then placed the glass on the table behind the couch. Jaden ran the cube across her still covered breasts, then down her bare chest, swirling it around her navel.

"What are you playing at, minx?"

"I'm hot, Dorian." She trailed the cube down, spreading her legs. His eyes locked on her, taking in the fact she wore no panties. "I need to cool off."

She made lazy circles on her inner thighs, gasping as cold droplets from the ice made a trail from her pussy to her ass.

"Looks to me like you're heating up." He licked his lips.

"Thirsty?"

"Very."

She widened her legs more; he turned to face her fully on the couch. Jaden placed the heel of her right leg on his shoulder. Still, she trailed the ice across her heated flesh, running it over her clit and between her folds.

Dorian took her hand and brought the ice to his lips, sucking it into his mouth. She tensed as he slowly lowered his head and began to blow his cool breath across her heated core. When his tongue slid lightly into her, she bucked against his mouth. When she thought she could take no more, he held her still while he plundered her.

Jaden cried out when his tongue thrust into her deeply, feeling the hot and cold combination inside her. She had been primed and ready, but this was more than she

had expected. Dorian was relentless, and her body was racked with sensation after sensation. When she came, he continued his assault, bringing her release after release.

"Please, Dorian, I need you."

"What do you need, Jaden?"

"I need you inside me."

"I can do that from right here, baby."

She screamed as he pushed two fingers deep inside her. Jaden was so sensitive, so hot and in need, that all she could do was toss her head and beg for mercy. But Dorian had none. She had pushed him past his control, and now she would reap the sweet rewards.

"Dorian,"

"You taste so sweet, baby. Come for me again."

"Please, I need more." She gasped, her hips rolling. "I need more of you."

Dorian removed his fingers and again pushed his tongue into her, dragging the ruff pad against her inner walls. His wet fingers found their mark, and he pushed them into her ass deeply, loving the way she accepted his fingers into her tight channel. In and out, he worked his tongue and fingers until she again bucked against his mouth, giving him what he wanted. More of her sweet nectar.

He slowed his movements, and then gently added a third finger, stretching her, preparing her. Dorian wanted her in every way, and this was the day he would have her. Jaden pushed her hips against his fingers, crying out for more. By the time he was satisfied, she was dripping wet for him. He removed his fingers.

"Roll over," He helped her to move to her knees before him, tearing her shirt from her body, pushing her forward. "Brace yourself on the arm of the couch."

"Dorian," her voice was raw with need.

"Do you trust me?" He leaned over her, whispering in her ear, "Do you?"

"Yes."

Jaden looked over her shoulder when he stood, and she watched as he

undressed. His cock stood from his body, large and ready for the game she had started. She shivered in anticipation.

Kneeling behind her, Dorian rubbed the head of his cock between her folds, teasing and tormenting. He could feel her heat, and it only drove him higher. When she lowered her head, he plunged into her tight pussy, slamming against her, taking her hard and deep. Her cry of pleasure had his hands tightening on her hips, pulling her onto him as he thrust into her. She tightened around him, and he gritted his teeth, refusing to come with her. He wasn't done with her yet.

Her release flowed around him, and he gathered it on his fingers, slowing his thrusts, rubbing her juices around her anus. He slowly pulled from her body, and then positioned his cock at her tiny opening. She tensed slightly.

"Relax, baby," he ran his thumbs up her spine and down again. "I only want to show you a new pleasure."

"I trust you."

Slowly he pushed against her, groaning as he gained entrance past the tight ring of muscle. His cock throbbed, and he fought for control. He called upon all his patience and slowly worked himself a little deeper. Her body's instinct to fight his entrance was lessening, and he was half inside her when she gasped.

"More."

"Slowly, Jaden. This is new, and it could cause you pain."

He gripped her hips, slowly pulling half his length in and out. Jaden placed one foot on the floor, and began to push back against him, gasping and taking more and more of him. Then he was there, buried to the hilt inside her hot, tight channel. He leaned over her, cupping one breast, pulling and pinching the nipple, rolling it between his fingers. His hips flexed, and she reached between her thighs, rubbing her clit.

"How do you feel, baby?"

"Full, so full of you. Please, Dorian. Move."

He pulled half out and thrust back inside, testing her. She pushed back against

him.

"How do you want it, Jaden?"

"Dorian,"

"Do you want me to make love to you?" He gently pulled out and slowly thrust back inside. "Or do you want to fuck?" He thrust harder.

"Oh, damn, Dorian."

"Your ass feels so good, baby." He rotated against her. "How do you want it, Jaden? Hard and fast, or slow and easy?"

Jaden rolled her hips as well, loving what he was doing to her. Never had she thought she would like anal sex. Now she wanted it badly.

"Slow and easy we can do anytime." She looked over her shoulder, then took his hand from her breast and placed it on her clit. "Fuck me, Dorian. Hard and fast. Make me scream."

He kissed her deeply, stroking her clit, taking her moan into him. He pulled back, continued to stroke her clit, and began slamming his hips against her. Jaden paused for only a second, and then she was pushing herself back on him, meeting his thrusts. The sound of flesh meeting flesh was drowned by her cries for more.

Dorian left her clit and grasped her hips, driving into her as hard as he could. She was so accepting, and she felt so damn good. His balls tightened.

"Damn, Jaden, I'm going to come."

"I'm so close, Dorian. It feels so good having you inside me like this."

Not knowing why the urge came over him, Dorian lifted one hand and lightly smacked her ass. He had never spanked a woman, but her moan was enough to know she liked it, so he did it again, with a little more force.

"Like that, baby?"

"Yes."

"More?"

"Yes."

He thrust in and out of her tight ass, giving her everything she asked for. He moved against her hard, spanking her until she was warm and rosy. Then she was shuddering beneath him, and Dorian could feel her release as she tightened her ass around him. Then he was coming, shouting as he thrust with every pulsing wave. It seemed to go on forever, until finally, he held himself tight against her.

Gently he pulled from her body and fell back, laying on the couch and catching his breath. Jaden slowly turned and lay on top of him, welcoming his comforting arms around her.

"You okay?"

"Perfect, Dorian. That was wonderful."

"Your arm?"

"It's fine." She kissed his chest. "I can't believe how much pleasure you bring me."

"Glad to hear it." He smiled, kissing her head. "As long as I didn't hurt you."

"I will feel you for days, Dorian."

That one simple comment had his cock twitching, and she giggled. Dorian sat her up and stood, lifting her into his arms.

"No more tonight, woman. We need to rest and eat. A shower wouldn't hurt either."

"Works for me."

He carried her into the bathroom, filled the tub, and together they relaxed in the hot water.

They didn't come out until the water had cooled, and with a robe draping their bodies, they made a tray of crackers, meats, cheese, a selection of other foods and two bottles of juice. Each content in the others presence, they fed one another as they watched TV., trying to forget all that was wrong in their world when everything at the moment felt just right.

As with every other night, at eleven, Jada called. For thirty minutes, he was



shooting Jaden warning glares that she ignored. When she finally hung up, he spoke his mind.

"You tell her too much, Jaden."

"Dorian, she's my sister and she's worried." She sat beside him. "I know you said keep it quiet, but I can't ignore her fears."

"I know. I just don't want anymore surprises."

"Well,"

A knock at the door cut her off, and she frowned at him.

"You expecting company?"

"No. You?"

"Stay here, Jaden." He pulled his pistol from its holster. "Stay here and stay down."

"I know the drill." She sighed, moving to the floor.

Dorian slowly walked to the door, throwing it open. No crazy man stood before him. In fact, there was no one there. He opened the screen, looked one way then the other. Nothing. Stepping out, he walked the deck, keeping the front door in his sights.

Glancing to the front stairs, he frowned. A brightly wrapped box rested on the bottom step. Dorian walked down the stairs and gently picked up the package, placing his ear to it. Nothing ticking. Standing under the porch light, he read the card. Addressed to Jaden, and a heart drawn on the card. Dorian took the box inside.

"What is it?"

"I have no idea." He stopped and locked the door. "I doubt it's a bomb. But I can call the squad and have someone out here."

"If it's from the perp, I doubt he would blow me up." She eyed the box as he set it on the table. "He seems set on me suffering and paying for false crimes."

She sat in a chair, and winced.

"You okay?"

"Just tender. I feel great." She smiled. "Shall we see what's inside?"

Dorian stood close, ready to throw himself over the box if it turned out to be a threat. But the wrapping was removed and the top opened without any incident. Jaden looked inside, and pulled out an envelope.

"What the devil?" she said, opening the flap. "Pictures?"

"Pictures?"

"Yes. High school pictures. Here's one of Bobby and me at prom. Wayne Harper and me at a football game." She frowned. "Here's one of me and Zack Porter."

"Who's that?"

"A high school friend. He wanted to date me, but I didn't like him that way."

"This is odd."

Jaden stared at the picture, and then it clicked. Her hand covered her mouth and she held back a sob.

"What is it?"

"I think this is the perp's way of telling me who is next."

"Damn." Dorian stood and ran from the room.

Jaden stared for a long while at the picture. Zack Porter was such a sweet boy. Chased after her for years, but she never felt the way he did. He was the boy who helped the cheerleaders with their homework, kept the jocks on the team, and basically took a lot of shit. She had always been friendly to him. Until one day, he had decided to spread a rumor that they had slept together while he helped her in biology. She had been hurt, and had never spoken to him again.

Still, why would anyone hurt such a kind hearted person? He had made his mistake in the tenth grade and suffered for it all through high school.

"Sharp is sending out a unit to his last known address."

Jaden glanced up when she heard Dorian's voice.

"Something tells me it will be way too late." She sighed. "I guess he wants these too."

"Yeah. Hopefully, they can find other prints on them. I didn't think of gloves."

"Me either." She pushed the box aside. "Now what?"

"We wait, Jaden."

Nodding, she stood and made some coffee. She wouldn't sleep until she knew if Zack was okay. But her gut told her she was hoping for something that just wasn't going to happen. Deep inside, she knew what they would find.

The phone rang about thirty minutes later, and Jaden sat, tense and waiting for Dorian to fill her in on the details. When he finally hung up the phone, and she looked into his eyes, she knew the truth.

"He's dead?"

"Yes."

"How long?"

"At least ten days."

She nodded, sipped her coffee, and promptly burst into tears.

## Chapter Eight

When Dorian opened his eyes the next morning, it was with effort. Jaden slept beside him, her eyes still puffy from crying herself to sleep. He hated what was happening to her. He felt helpless and frustrated.

He showered quickly, dressed in jeans and walked into the kitchen, intending to make breakfast. A knock at the door pulled him from his task. It was after ten in the morning, so he wasn't surprised at a visitor. He expected Sharp, but paused when he was face to face with Bobby Keller's widow.

"Mrs. Keller, what can I do for you?"

"Where is she?"

"Jaden?"

"Of course, Jaden. Where is she?"

Dorian didn't like the look of total calm on the woman's face. She barely looked at him, just straight ahead. Her hands fidgeted in her jacket pockets, and he took note that it was very warm outside already. Why the jacket? A sick feeling entered his gut.

"She's sleeping. She had a long night."

"I bet she did." Her voice hardened and her eyes narrowed. "Wake her ass up. I need to see her."

"In regards to what?"

"You can't be serious. The woman killed my husband." She looked at him then, and he knew, just knew what was about to happen. "An eye for an eye, I always say."

Before he could react, the woman pushed passed him, drawing a small firearm

from her coat as she hurried into the living room. Without thought, he tackled her from behind. The discharge was deafening, and he easily rolled her, pinning her to the floor with his upper body. The gun still in her grip fired again.

"Get off of me, you son of a bitch!"

"Mrs. Keller, are you injured?" Dorian thought to ask.

He heard Jaden running down the hall, and quickly tightened his grip on the woman's wrist. The gun fell to the carpet, resting beside them.

"Dorian?"

"Jaden, call Sharp. I think we have our sniper."

"Mrs. Keller?"

At the sound of her name, the woman fought harder. Her eyes held Jaden in their sights as she tried to throw Dorian from her.

"I will fucking kill you!" she shouted. "You took my Bobby from me."

"No, Mrs. Keller. I swear to you, I never hurt Bobby."

"It's all over town about you and your secret affair. He wouldn't leave me and you killed him for it."

Suddenly, she collapsed and her struggles stopped. Her cries were heart rendering as she rolled into a ball and screamed her anguish.

Slowly, Dorian stood, placing the gun out of reach. Jaden knelt beside her; her own tears making her feel just as helpless.

"I swear, on all I believe, I never hurt Bobby. Someone is going through a lot of trouble to set me up."

"What are you talking about?" Mrs. Keller sat up, wiping her eyes and staring at Jaden with distrusting eyes.

"Since Bobby, we have found two more dead men. All the evidence points to me, but I swear, I would never do such a thing." She indicated her arm. "Four days ago, someone took a shot at me."

"Well, it wasn't me. I was so angry, but hadn't heard the story until yesterday

evening." She sighed and stood. "I don't know what came over me. I don't think I truly believed it."

"You're going through a tough time, Mrs. Keller. I can understand that." She sighed. "I will have to turn in your gun, but I won't press any charges."

"God, this is like a nightmare. I know Bobby never cheated on me." She wiped her eyes. "It was just too much and I snapped."

"I swear to you, we will get to the bottom of this." She helped the woman to her feet. "Please, go home and be with your children. I will let you know the minute we discover who is behind this."

Jaden sat on the couch for long minutes after she had gone. Two bullet holes neatly through her walls, and they had been meant for her. It was time to quit crying and start fighting.

"Dorian, call Sharp and explain what happened. But I insist she suffer no punishment."

"Jaden, what if she lied? What if she was the one who tried to kill you?"

"I just know it wasn't her." Her brows drew in thought. "She is a woman grieving. Her kids need her, she was just angry. And I don't think I was meant to be killed the other day. It was just the perp toying with me."

"Fine, but from this moment on, and I don't care if it's Jada, everyone is searched before they come near you."

She just nodded and watched him walk away. Sharp would be pissed, Jada would be mad as hell, but he was right.

When he came back into the room, she noticed the lines over his eyes. They always came out when he was deep in thought.

"What is it?"

"In all the excitement, I didn't stop to think. How the hell has this information gotten out?" He paced in front of her. "This was all to be kept quiet. I have a feeling James Benson has been spilling his guts."

"Why would he? If he talks to anyone its Jada."

"But is he aware of who else is around?" His hands rested on his hips. "The man has loose lips and needs to be gagged."

"So much for keeping the media out of this," she said, turning up the volume on the local news. "What a fucking mess."

Dorian sat beside her, watching the reporter.

*"Just yesterday, police responded to a tip and rushed to the address of Zack Porter. What they found was a bludgeoned and deceased victim, with the same wounds and injuries as two previous homicides. Less than a week before, the body of Wayne Harper was discovered, and informants tell this reporter, a local detective was shot at the crime scene by an unknown assailant."* The background switched to the football field. *"Detective Jaden Calder was rushed to the emergency room where she was treated for a wound sustained. However, it is unclear as to why the detective was present. Information has been received that Detective Calder has been on suspension since recent evidence points to her involvement in three homicides in the last ten days. You may remember Calder from her war on drugs and as lead detective in the warehouse massacre, were she had also been injured. Stay tuned to the six o'clock news for updates."*

Dorian turned off the TV. just as the phone rang. He was mad as hell, but it was nothing to the venom in Jaden's eyes. She was beyond anything but pissed, and he hoped she could settle herself before she said anything that would make it worse.

Jaden was ready to kill, and for real. Whoever was leaking information was making it even harder to clear this mess up. If she got her hands on the jackass she would really do some damage. She stood and walked into the kitchen, noticing Dorian leaning on the counter with his hands in his hair.

"Who was on the phone?"

"Sharp," he said, looking up at her. "This just gets better and better."

"What?"

"The district attorney crawled up his ass this morning. Insisting you be arrested to save face." He sighed. "He argued, but went unheard. To show the department

shows no favoritism, Sharp was forced to follow orders."

"I'm going to jail?"

"Detective Logan is on her way here now to arrest you." He pulled her to him.

"We can post bail, and then you and I are going to leave town."

"Dorian, I don't want to run away." She hugged him close. "It would make me look guilty."

"I hate this, baby."

"Me too. I just hope I can still have my job when it's all over."

"We will find this guy."

She pulled back and stiffened her spine. If she had to endure this, she would do it with her pride intact.

"Well, I better get dressed. Wouldn't do to go in my robe."

Dorian watched her as they dressed, hating what she was about to go through. She was a decorated officer and deserved better. She deserved the faith of her community. Someone would pay dearly for this.

"Dorian, I need to say something."

"What?"

She stood at the foot of the bed, dressed in her jeans and t-shirt, looking like a teenager about to reveal a dark secret.

"Maybe you should avoid me."

"Excuse me?"

"What if this guy tries to hurt you because of me? I couldn't live with myself if you got hurt." She fidgeted. "Believe me, I am so scared I hurt, and not having you with me would make it worse. But your life means more to me than my selfish reasons."

He walked to her and pulled her to him, kissing her gently. He could feel the slight tremble in her body, and again cursed the man responsible.

"No way in hell am I walking away now."

"But..."



"No. I won't hear it anymore, Jaden." He stroked her back. "There's more between us than this case. When it's all over, I plan to make you see that."

Before she could answer, the knock at the door alerted them to a visitor. Jaden knew who it was, and hugged him quickly, nodded and walked from the room. He followed, his gut burning.

"Hi Rita." Jaden said, opening the door. "You know Dorian Kelso?"

"In passing," she shook his hand, and then sighed. "I hate this, Jaden. But I insisted I be the one."

"Hey, if I have to be arrested, may as well be by someone I respect." Jaden extended her hands. "By the book, Rita. We have to."

"Damn, Jaden, we don't need cuffs."

"The media, Rita. Play it by the book." Jaden turned to Dorian. "Meet me downtown?"

"I'll be there. I plan to follow you."

"Okay, Detective Logan, read me my rights and let's go."

"Damn this sucks." Rita said, cuffing Jaden's hands to her front. "You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you.."

The words faded in Dorian's ears as he watched Jaden be placed in the unit that would take her to booking and jail. She would have to spend the night, and then he could have her out in the morning. His only comfort was she would be in a separate cell, away from the criminals she had help put in them. He followed the unit, hurrying to help Rita get her past the sea of cameras surrounding the car as it pulled into the jail's parking lot.

"Detective Calder, why turn to murder after all you've done for this city?" One reporter asked, shoving her way to the front. "Did the strain finally get to you? Did you have an affair with these men?"

Jaden stopped at the front door and turned to the reporters. She held her head high and waited for them to quiet down before she spoke.

"As you all know, I have dedicated myself to the safety and security of the citizens in this city. That has not now nor will it ever change." She added strength to her voice. "I did not kill these men, and I am confident the matter will be solved quickly."

"That's it, no more questions. A statement will be delivered later today by the D.A." Rita all but shoved Jaden inside. "What a mess."

Jaden stood for her photo, hating that her fellow uniform family had to process her. She was printed again, and then guided to a cell in the back of the jail. Inmates called out to her, making comments and laughing, but she kept her head high. When the iron bars slammed shut, the finality of it sank in, and she sat on her lonely bed and waited.

It would be morning before her appearance before the court, and Dorian was on the phone now locating an attorney. It would all work out; she was innocent and believed in the system.

"I have an attorney lined up." Dorian said from the other side of the bars. She jumped at his voice. "Mark Delarosa will be here early in the morning to talk through it with you."

"Thank you, Dorian." She walked to the bars and gripped them tightly. "I'll admit, I am scared to death."

"It will work out, baby." He placed his hands on hers, sending her his strength. "I won't have it any other way."

"They're going to make you leave soon," she said. "Stay at my house so I can call you if I have to."

"Kiss me quick, and I will be here in the morning."

Through the bars, they shared a brief kiss, filled with promise. When he left her, she had never felt so alone in her life. For hours, she paced, until finally, she lay down and slipped into exhausted slumber.

Dorian tossed and turned through the night, thoughts of Jaden and the situation keeping him on edge. He paced, made calls and lay down. Sleep seemed so out of reach.

He held her image in his mind and willed his body to relax. Naked, he stretched out in her bed.

It would work out, it had to. With that thought in mind, he drifted until a deep exhaustion finally took over. But his mind still played with him. She was with him in his dream, loving his body and caressing him.

He could feel her hot little mouth cover his cock and he moaned, arching his back and begging her for more of the sweet torture. He started to protest when she pulled away, but caught his breath as her teeth nipped his belly, making its way to his chest.

Dorian kept his eyes closed tightly, not wanting this to end. She would be with him tomorrow, but for now, he had this.

"Don't stop, Jaden. Suck my cock. I love your mouth."

A chuckle and her mouth made its way back down his body. He cried out when she covered him again, surrounding him with her heat, taking him deep. Her throat opened, and he bucked against her, pushing into her mouth, tensing with his pending climax.

"God, baby. So good. Don't stop."

She hummed, and he could feel her hand cup his tight sac, massaging him in time with her mouth. Her nails raked him slightly.

Dorian frowned, feeling that something wasn't right. But her taking all his length into her mouth and down her throat distracted him, but for only a moment. His mind started to work, though barely.

Jaden had never been able to take all of him in her mouth, and her nails were always clipped short.

Suddenly he knew he wasn't dreaming, and this was not Jaden. His eyes flew open, and he pushed the woman to the end of the bed, setting up quickly.

"Jada? What the fuck are you doing?"

"Comforting you."

"Get the hell out of here."

"You loved it." She smiled, licking her lips. "What's the big deal? She's my sister. We share everything. I needed company and you were alone. She won't mind."

"I mind, Jada." He snapped. "I was also asleep, and thought you were, Jaden."

"You enjoyed it, Dorian. You all but came for me."

"Leave now, and don't come back."

"Fine. But she won't care." She stood and pulled her clothes on. "We've shared before."

"I'm not one to share."

He watched her leave, and then stood under a hot spray of water, washing away the woman who had made him violate his trust. Not only to Jaden, but to himself. He wouldn't sleep now. He would be up all morning wondering just what he would say to the woman who had won his heart, and hope she wouldn't hold it against him.

"Fuck," he muttered. "Things just get better and better. Damn that, Jada."

He turned off the water and dressed, made coffee and waited out the rest of the morning.

## Chapter Nine

Jaden smiled at Dorian as she entered the courtroom, hoping to ease any worries he might have. Though he returned her smile, it didn't reach his eyes. She frowned, wondering what else had happened.

After her attorney worked his magic, Jaden was released. She sighed, thankful the judge took in to consideration her years on the job and her record. It would be determined later how they would proceed, since the case was still under investigation.

"Dorian, would you mind driving real fast and getting me home? I had no idea one night in jail could be so awful." She grinned. "You would think criminals would learn the first time."

"Sure, let's get you home."

She was about to ask him what was up when her sister threw herself into her arms, hugging her tight.

"Hey, jailbird."

"Not funny, Jada. Kinda early for you isn't it?"

"I was heading home." She glanced at Dorian. "I had a late night."

"Well, let's hope this all comes together before to long. I hated it in there."

"I have to go, sis, but wanted to see you quick." She hugged her again. "I'll call you later."

She was gone as quick as she had come, and Jaden hadn't missed her look at Dorian, or his eyes when he returned her glance. What had Jada done now? He looked really pissed.

"Something going on, Dorian?"

"We can talk at the house." He guided her out the door, and was ready for the media circus. One reporter pushed his way forward. "No comments or questions. Move, asshole."

By the time they entered the car, Jaden rubbed her scalp where some ass had pulled her hair. Her eyes blurred from all the photos taken.

He was so quiet, she was starting to get nervous, but held silent. He said they would talk at home, and she would wait.

He parked in the garage and walked around, opening her door. Inside she shucked her shoes and went straight for the coffee pot.

"Coffee?"

"Sure."

"So, you gonna tell me what has you so tense?"

"Jaden, I need to ask you something."

"Sure hope I have an answer."

"There is no easy way so I'm just gonna ask." He sat at the table. "Have you and Jada ever shared a man?"

The water almost missed the pot. She caught herself and poured it slowly, wondering at his question. Clicking the pot on, she walked to the table and sat before him.

"Why?"

"Please, Jaden. I won't judge you but I need to know."

"Once, when we were teens, we shared a boyfriend, thinking it a funny joke." She frowned. "What has she been telling you?"

He sighed, ran his hands through his hair and watched her as he spoke.

"Last night, while I was asleep, she came into the bedroom."

"And?"

"I was in the middle of a very wonderful dream, of you I might add, and then it

turned so real."

"Please tell me you didn't fuck my sister."

"No, I didn't fuck her, but she tricked me into almost doing so." He took her hand. "She went down on me, and by the time I registered it wasn't you, it was almost too late."

Jaden sat, watching him. He hated not knowing what she was thinking. It sounded bad, but it wasn't his fault.

"So, Jada crawled into my bed with you, and proceeded to blow you?"

"I swear I stopped her the minute I was fully awake."

"Did you come?"

"What?"

"When she was blowing you, did you come?"

"No. I pulled away and demanded she leave." He tightened his grip on her hand. "That's when she said you wouldn't mind. That you two shared everything."

"Was she drunk?"

"I didn't get that close, Jaden."

She pulled her hand away and stood, her mind whirling. Why would Jada do such a thing? She damn well intended to find out.

"I need a shower."

He caught her before she could walk away. He pulled her back against him, holding her in an embrace that clearly said he desired her.

"Please, Jaden. Don't let this separate us. I didn't know."

"Why did you even tell me?"

"Because I want honesty between us."

"Let me shower, Dorian. I need to think."

He released her with a sigh and sat back at the table. Jaden hurried into the bathroom before he could see her tears. Damn, why this of all things? Everything else was falling around her, so why this now?

As the water beat down on her, she released her braid and worked a good lather into her hair. She believed Dorian. His eyes told the truth, even as he voiced it. Maybe her sister had been drunk. Who knew, but she wasn't going to lose him now. Her choice made, she rinsed and shut off the shower, wrapping her large towel around herself. With one look into the mirror, she walked out and back to Dorian, who turned in the kitchen chair when she walked in.

His eyes raked over her, and she shivered, her nipples puckering under his gaze. She slowly approached him, and knelt before him. Her hands rested on his thighs.

"What did you do when she left?"

"I took a hot shower and scrubbed from head to toe."

"Good," her hands went to his snaps and zipper.

"What are you doing?" he asked, though he lifted his hips, letting her pull his jeans down until his cock sprang free. "Jaden?"

"I want you to forget her mouth on you, and remember only mine."

He cupped her face in his hands, and kissed her so tenderly, tears threatened to spill. His thumbs stroked her cheeks.

"I thought she was you, baby. You don't have to prove anything."

"Yes, I do. To myself." She pulled his hands from her face and placed them on her shoulders. "Don't hold anything back, Dorian."

He didn't have time to respond. Her hot mouth closed over him and he was lost. This was what he wanted, her hesitant licks and attempts to take more than she could. He wanted it just like this, because it was Jaden's way. The way he loved it.

Slowly, gently, she pulled him into her mouth, tugging on his hips until he scooted closer on the chair. She removed his shoes while she tormented him, then his jeans followed. Dorian removed his shirt and threw it across the room. He then reached for her towel, and sent it sailing. Her hair covered most of her, and he pushed it to the side.

Jaden added more suction and dipped her tongue into the slit of his cock head,



gathering the pre come that the action brought forth. She cupped his balls with one hand, and the other applied pressure to the spot between his tight sac and his anus, rubbing it softly, driving him closer.

His hips jerked, and he rested a hand on her head, urging her on. Her mouth stroked him faster and he gasped, her hum racing through him like fire in his veins.

“God, baby. You know just what to do.”

She relaxed her throat and took him a little deeper, loving the salty taste of him against her tongue.

“Again, Jaden. Do that again.”

She did as he wanted, taking him into her throat as much as she could, holding him there while her tongue rolled against him.

“Jaden, stop.” He was so close. “If you don’t, I won’t be able to. I’m gonna come.”

She didn’t stop, only doubled her efforts. She felt him swell, and then he shouted her name as jet after jet poured from him into her. She took each drop, savored it and swallowed what he had given her.

She leaned back, looked into his eyes and felt herself flush at the desire on his face. Before she could breath, he had her on the table. Dorian remained in his chair, and spread her wide like a man ready for his dinner. He wasted no time burying his face between her legs, and she screamed at the heat that flooded her.

His tongue licked and his teeth nipped, bringing her higher and higher until all she could do was moan, gasp, and collapse onto the table. Her body rocked with the climax that he drew from her.

Then he stood over her, pulled her closer to the edge, and thrust himself deeply into her. Dorian brought his mouth to hers, and she could taste herself on his lips. When he pulled away, she licked her lips and watched his eyes flare. He draped her legs over his shoulders and let himself go, pounding into her in a way that had her seeing stars. She closed her eyes. She loved it when he lost control.

"No, Jaden. Open your eyes and look at me."

She did as he instructed, and what she saw made her heart beat wildly in her chest. He continued to thrust hard into her, but his eyes never left hers.

"Dorian,"

"Only you, Jaden. You're the only woman I want to make love to." He slowed his thrusts. "The only woman I want wrapped around me."

His thrusts were becoming harder again, like he was determined to prove something to her, and himself.

"Do you believe in that, Jaden?"

"Yes."

His thumb found her clit, and she shattered, coming harder than ever before. She cried out, his name on her lips, and then she felt it. He swelled, and then filled her with his seed, coating her insides as if branding her.

When he collapsed into her arms, she held him, stroking his back and kissing his forehead. It had been so much more this time. She had felt him on a deeper level.

Dorian raised his head, and they shared a kiss that spoke volumes. When he pulled back, she noticed a shocked look on his face.

"What is it?"

"I didn't use a condom. All I could feel was the need to be inside you."

"Its okay, Dorian."

"But..."

"No, we won't worry about it unless we have to." She kissed him again. "You're the only man I have ever allowed inside me without one."

"You're the only woman I have ever taken without one."

"I loved it, Dorian. Nothing between us, just you and your heat."

"I..."

The phone stopped what he would have said and they both sighed. He stood and helped her from the table, handing her the towel he had discarded. She answered the

phone and her back stiffened.

"You and I need to talk, Jada." She twisted the cord around her finger. "Yes, I am referring to that."

Dorian went to the living room and flicked the TV. on. He didn't want to hear it. He told Jaden the truth, and he almost told her something more before the phone rang.

He was in love with her. He knew that now. But did she feel the same? Was he being fanciful?

He hadn't bothered to dress, his body too sated. Just the thought of how it felt coming in her mouth almost had him hard again. He had taken her roughly, he knew that, but the woman drove him to the point of madness. He swore that one day he would make love to her slowly, at a pace that would have them locked together for hours.

"That was, Jada. She says to tell you sorry and it won't happen again."

"Damn right it won't."

She sat beside him, naked, and laid her head on his shoulder.

"I told her she needed to stay away for awhile."

"I didn't mean to cause a rift."

"You didn't." She sighed, lowering herself to lay her head in his lap. "She is over bold sometimes, and her ears will be ringing for awhile."

He stroked her hair as they watched the TV. Here they sat, naked as the day they were born, yet comfortable. It was nice being this close.

"Jaden?"

"Yeah?"

"Thank you."

"For what?" She sat up and looked into his eyes.

"Just for being you."

Leaning in, she kissed him, and he pulled her into his lap. Her ass rested against his cock, and he growled when she wiggled.

"Easy woman. You wore me out."

"I don't believe that for a minute." She wiggled again.

"Would you stop? I need to say this."

"Okay." She sat patiently, watching his face.

Dorian hoped he wasn't making a big mistake. He would either make her happy, or she would run scared. No better time than the present to find out.

"I can't explain how this happened. I desired you the moment I watched you deck that pervert. Each time I touch you, this feeling grows." He cupped her cheek in his hand. "I have fallen in love with you, Jaden. I wanted you to know."

She was shocked, silent, and just stared. He was beginning to feel uncomfortable, until she smiled and threw her arms around his neck.

"God, Dorian. I fell for you the first time you touched me."

"Thank you, God." He held her close. "I was afraid you would think I was crazy."

"Then I lost my mind when you did." She pulled back. "I love you, Dorian."

"Say that again."

"I love..." She was cut off when his mouth took hers.

"I wanted to taste it when you said it."

For the rest of the day and well into the night, they forgot the world around them. Dorian made love to her the way he had wanted to, slow and gentle, making it last as long as possible. She in turn had explored his body, learned what he liked, and repeated each touch over and over.

Just for tonight, they only had one another to worry over. Tomorrow was a new day, and they could deal with it all then.

## Chapter Ten

*Enjoy him now, you little slut. Soon you will lose it all. Your man, your life, and what family you have left.*

The hate filled eyes watched from a distance as an officer delivered a box to Jaden's door. Kelso thought he was so smart. The only thing the watcher saw going for Kelso was he spent his time between her thighs.

An evil smile spread to match the evil in the watchers eyes. Soon, Kelso would be dealt with, and Jaden Calder would be all alone.

\* \* \* \*

"What's all this?" Jaden said, walking into the kitchen and eyeing the files stacked on the table.

"Case files."

"I can see that, Honey." She poured some coffee and sat at the table, noticing his grin. "What are you smiling at?"

"I like the way you call me honey."

She smiled and wiggled her brows, leaning in for a brief kiss. His wink warmed her heart, and she was thankful she had him in her life at this moment. If nothing else, if she lost it all, she would have this inside her.

"So, what are we doing?"

"Well, here we have the case files of the last three homicides." He placed a hand on a stack of files. "Here are the files from the gang bust you were lead on, and here is

the stack from your cases up to a year before the warehouse bust."

"And we are doing what with these?"

"I want to go through each, minus the three homicides, and look for anything that seems repetitive."

"You're thinking that maybe it was an old witness or suspect?" She pulled a file in front of her. "Maybe even a family member?"

"It's a theory and I want to explore every avenue."

"How did you get these?"

"Sharp was more than willing to let us push the papers." He looked at her. "He knows you're innocent, Jaden. He's risking his job by sending these out. He is telling no one, and if we find anything, he gets the credit."

"I understand. Mum's the word." She smiled at his look. "Yes, that includes my sister."

He shook his head and began reading the files. Jaden had done a lot in the city. Her only smudge was when she struck the officer who had grabbed her. Her work on the streets was both honorable and brave, not to mention risky at times. He had to give her credit. She had a way of cleaning up the crime. She also made a lot of enemies on a few of these. Some of these families were known gang members, and suspects in many unsolved cases.

The phone rang and Jaden walked into the hall, picking up the cordless. May as well have it close.

"Hello?" Her smile faded. "Who is this?"

She disconnected the call and placed the phone on the table.

"Who was it?"

"I have no idea."

"What did they say?"

"Someone wants to gut me."

"Say again?"

"I believe the words, "Gut you like a fish, bitch," were the exact words."

Dorian picked up the phone and dialed the station number. After talking with the captain, he hung up and frowned.

"A tap will be in place by this evening." He stood and took her hand, walking into the living room. "Sharp says to watch the news."

Jaden groaned and sat on the couch beside Dorian, wondering what would happen next. Damn the leak and damn the media.

*"In other news, one of the cities finest was arrested in the homicide of three local men. Detective Jaden Calder sustained a bullet wound, only to be arrested for the crime she had investigated. Resources say that Calder had a connection to each victim in the case, as far back as high school. Calder was released from jail yesterday morning, but had this to say before she was taken inside the previous day." The statement she had made to the press on the day she was arrested began to roll, then switched back to the news team. "Some say she's guilty, more say innocent. Calder is well known for her war on crime, and most are shocked by this turn of events."*

Dorian turned off the news and leaned back into the couch. He looked so haggard and tired. A part of her felt guilty for being relieved he was with her. But she couldn't bring herself to push him away. The time they had now may very well be all they would have. She wanted to believe everything would work out, but damn, it didn't look good.

"Well, I guess I will go back to the files." She stood, sighing when he followed her.

"We will go back to the files, Jaden. I will be with you every step of the way."

She smiled her thanks and sat, once again looking over every piece of evidence.

All through the day, the phone would ring and there would be yet another threat to her life. She had a feeling that those on her side would soon start drifting to the other.

The day had been hot, so when the evening fell and brought a cool breeze, she was desperate to enjoy it.

"Let's sit outside, Dorian. Just for a little while."

"I hate to take any chances."

"The sun is setting, and I just want to enjoy the cool breeze."

He sat the file aside and looked at her. She was pale and tired, and he knew he couldn't deny her this one small pleasure.

"Alright." He stood and took her hand, walking out onto the porch, scanning the area. "I don't see anything, but we stay close."

Close was no problem for Jaden. When they sat on the porch swing, she snuggled to his side, laying her head on his shoulder. The sky was turning a brilliant red, and she was in awe at the beauty.

"Amazing," she sighed.

"Yes, it is that."

For the better part of half an hour, they sat in silence. Then the sound of an engine drew their eyes to the drive. By the time Dorian stood and had Jaden behind him, using his body as a shield, the car had parked in the drive.

He groaned when Jada and James stepped from the vehicle. He felt Jaden stiffen behind him, and he reached around, taking her hand and squeezing it gently.

"Hi Dorian," Jada slurred, walking up the stairs. "I see my little mouse hiding behind you."

Dorian smelled the alcohol on her breath and inwardly cringed. Her make-up was smeared, her perfume over whelming. The mini skirt she wore rode high, her sweater falling off her shoulders.

"Jada."

"You know James?"

"I've seen him around the station house." He nodded to the other man, noticing how he swayed. "You both are pissing drunk."

His voice held disgust and he let them hear it. It was bad enough she was here after what she pulled, but an officer driving drunk was above and beyond.

"Maybe you should try it, Dorian." Jada winked. "Maybe loosen you up a bit."



"I'll pass."

"Suit yourself, big guy." She tried to peer around him. "Come on out, Jaden. You can't stay mad forever."

"Sure I can." Jaden remained behind Dorian.

"What's the deal? It's me, your sister. I ain't gonna hurt you."

Jaden stepped up beside Dorian, crossed her arms and eyed the two before her. Her disappointment in them both was clear on her face.

"I can't believe you of all people would drive in your condition." She eyed James. He only shrugged. "What are you doing here anyway?"

"I came to see you, sis." Jada tried to kiss Jaden's cheek, but she pulled back. "Still angry over something so unimportant."

"Unimportant? Does James know about your little stunt?"

"I told him, and like me, he had a good laugh."

"Oh, I see." Jaden looked to James. "You have no problem when she has another man's dick in her mouth?"

James flushed but said nothing.

"So crude, Jaden." Jada giggled. "Look, I said I was sorry."

"Fine, you're sorry."

"If I didn't know better, I would think I was just insulted."

Dorian pulled Jaden closer and whispered in her ear, and when she nodded, he again looked to Jada and James.

"You both can sleep it off here tonight," he said, holding up his hand when they started to protest. "It's either that, or you'll be arrested. I won't have you leaving here and kill someone because of your foolishness."

"I take offense to that." James finally spoke. "I know damn well what I'm doing."

"You ready to bet your badge on it?"

"Full of yourself, ain't you."

"It's your choice, but when we walk inside, and you're not with us," He turned

and opened the door. "I can promise you a black and white will have you before you get into the city."

They didn't like it, but they followed. Jaden made sure the guest room was ready and said her goodnights, leaving Dorian with the two.

"In the morning, Benson, we will have a talk."

"Playing the parent now?"

"Goodnight."

Dorian retreated with Jaden into her bedroom.

"So much for a relaxing evening. I can't believe she showed up here."

"Let's get some sleep." He pulled his shirt off. "The sooner we do the sooner they will be gone."

"Sleep in your boxers, Dorian. I don't need her getting a glimpse of the goods again."

"Same goes for you, baby. Get something on and cover that ass."

Opening the window a little, they lay together, spooned against one another and enjoyed the breeze. Just as they started to doze, a noise intruded. She stiffened for a moment, until she realized what it was.

"Oh, dear lord, please tell me I don't wail like that." Jaden said as she could clearly hear her sister begging for more. She sat up, and Dorian rose beside her. A grin plastered on his handsome face.

"Well, I take pride in all your sexy little moans." He fought the laughter. "I don't know how I would handle being called 'Big Daddy' though."

"It's so not funny, you ass." But she laughed, punching him in the arm. The pictures rattled on the wall. "They're really going at it."

She tried not to laugh out right, but the comments and names coming from the other room were too much, and she rolled into a ball, trying to smother her laughter.

"Did he just say, 'Ride me like a stallion'?"

"Stop Dorian," Tears rolled down her cheeks. "Oh this is too much."

"Maybe it was, 'Ride me, I'm your stallion'?"

"Oh my god." She rolled in laughter. "I will never let her live this one down."

"Big Daddy Stallion. Now there's a name for you." He let his laughter join hers.

"What do you say, Jaden? Wanna give each other pet names?"

"I think, when I call out a name, I would rather it be Dorian."

"So, the next time we make love, I should refrain from the whole, 'Who's Your Daddy?' routine?"

They lay and chuckled at the two in the other room, laughing at the choice of words and the porno movie cries of delight Jada was striving for. Finally, they drifted off, both with humourous smiles plastered to their faces.

The following morning, Dorian and Jaden opened their eyes at the same time, and the minute they shook off the sleep, the laughter spilled over yet again. By the time they made it to the kitchen, sides aching, they thought they had it under control. Jaden had just turned on the coffee when Jada and James walked into the room.

Bleary eyed and looking like several miles of bad road, they ignored the chuckles sent their way.

"Sleep well?" Jaden did her best to keep a straight face, but her devious side took over. "How about you, Big Daddy?"

Dorian choked on his laughter, feeling the hot glares thrown his way. Damn, but his Jaden didn't know when to quit.

"We slept fine." Jada grumbled. "And you?"

"Oh, we slept fine. Just fine."

"So what's with the shit eating grins?"

"No reason. I'm always this happy in the morning."

Jaden and Dorian exchanged looks, and they let the matter die. Besides, he had more important things to talk about.

"I wanted to talk to you two." Dorian thanked Jaden when she brought him a cup of the fresh coffee. "Seems someone is leaking important facts."

"I'm not going into this." Jada snapped. "Come on James. Let's get the hell out of here."

"Sooner or later you'll have to answer the question."

"I don't have to answer shit." She ran her hands through her hair. "You both are just pissy about the other night. Call me when you come to your senses, Jaden. Maybe we can talk then."

Jaden watched them leave, waited until the car started, and then burst into laughter. She had to hold her sides; it rolled from her so strong.

"Big Daddy answers to Big Momma I guess." Dorian chuckled. "What do you think, baby?"

"Oh, Dorian," she sobered. "I'm trying not to think. I can't look at them without laughing."

"I know."

Jaden made breakfast, and finally the chuckles left her. She had never heard such a commotion, and coming from her sister made it all the more funny. Jada had also managed to make the situation of them not speaking look like Jaden's fault.

They sat, ate, and discussed the day. More files to look through. As she stood to remove the plates, the kitchen window shattered, and she hit the floor, searching for the source. Dorian crouched beside her, breathing heavily.

"What the fuck was that?" All the humor gone now. "Dorian?"

"Call Sharp. Our sniper is back." His breath was harsh and his face pale. "Tell him to send the paramedics."

"What?"

"I'm hit."

She noticed the blood then. His hand supported his side as his shirt turned crimson. The sniper had missed her, but maybe that was his intension.

She hurried to the phone, her heart in her throat. She had known this would happen, and she felt not only fear, but also guilt.

## Chapter Eleven

After Dorian was resting comfortably in his hospital bed, sleeping off the painkillers, Jaden took the back exit from the hospital and met with a unit who took her to the M.E.'s office. Sharp would no doubt blow a fuse, and Dorian would wake up madder than hell, but she had to do this. She had to do something.

"Jaden?" Jorga stood from her desk and removed her glasses. "What are you doing here?"

"I need your help, Jorga."

"If I can, you know I will." She pushed Jaden into an office chair. "What's on your mind?"

"This has got to stop."

"What?"

"Someone is killing innocent people, and I look guiltier everyday."

"We all know you better than that, Jaden."

"But that won't help me later. It's all pointing to me, and I need to hide out for awhile, gather my thoughts."

"You want me to help you hide?" Jorga paced for a minute. "Jaden, that could mean more than my job. Let Sharp do his job."

Jaden stood and walked to the window, looking out over the evening lights. It was amazing how fast the time flew by. It seemed only a few hours since she waited, holding her breath that Dorian would be alright. The bullet had bounced off a rib and took out a nasty chunk of flesh, but he would survive. Thank god for that. Had it gone the other way, he would have died instantly.

"I can't just sit around anymore, Jorga. This guy is after the people I care about now. What if he goes for Jada? Dorian almost died because of this."

"But,"

"Jorga, all I'm asking is for is a little time." Jaden sighed. "Maybe I can think long enough to figure this out?"

"What about Sharp and Dorian? What about your sister?"

"You don't know where I am. I came to you because I knew you would understand."

"You came to me because I have my own secret hideout."

Jaden smiled at her friend. Jorga knew her better than most. Their relationship was more professional than anything, but they respected and understood each other on a much deeper level.

"Will you help me?"

Jorga chewed her lower lip while Jaden waited. When she reached into her desk and withdrew a key ring, Jaden knew she had won. Jorga removed a key.

"Here, take it." She tossed Jaden the key and told her the location. "It's my summer retreat, and it had better be standing when this is all over."

"Thank you, Jorga."

"Don't thank me yet. If Sharp finds out I know where you are he will have my ass." Her lips twitched. "In a non-pleasurable way."

"I knew you two had something going."

"I'll do my best to keep your secret, so you had better keep mine." Jorga hugged Jaden. "Get out of here, figure it all out. But stay in touch with me. I will keep you updated. When you get to the place, charge the phone in the kitchen. It's a private line and I can call you."

"I will."

"You have a car?"

"I can rent one."

"Here," she tossed her another set of keys. "Take the county truck in the back. Its new and you won't be traced so easily."

"Thank you."

"Go; get out of here before I come to my senses."

Jaden couldn't chance going home, so she stopped at the mall and picked up a few items for her seclusion. Only the bare essentials. A few clothes and bath products. She told herself to just go, but she ended up at the hospital, saying a silent goodbye to the man who had come to mean so much.

"When this is all over," she whispered in his ear. "I hope you can forgive me. But I can't risk another life, much less yours."

She kissed him lightly, holding her breath when he sighed at the contact. Her "I love you" echoed in her head as she pulled out of the lot and headed for the highway.

She drove for a good thirty minutes before she spotted the barely there road that would take her into the woodsy area that sat east of the city. It was dark, but she found the little house easily enough.

Once she parked and opened the door, she located the kitchen lights and first thing was to charge the phone. She then searched every room, her second revolver in her hands. It was paranoia, she knew, but she was playing it safe.

\* \* \* \*

"What do you mean, she's gone?" Dorian demanded as he sat up. "Where the hell did she go?"

"I'm checking into it, Dorian but I'm telling you she just vanished," Sharp snapped, his worry evident.

"He's got her." Dorian threw the cover off and climbed from the bed. "The fucker has her and we have to find her."

"You're gonna rip your stitches."

"Fuck the stitches, Sharp. I'm gonna find her, and kill this bastard."

The hospital room door opened when the monitor connected to Dorian started blaring. The doctor stood there, a frown on his face.

"What are you doing, Detective?"

"I'm leaving."

"You can't leave, son. You are lucky to be alive." A nurse walked in and the doctor spoke quietly. She turned and rushed from the room. "Now let's get you back into bed."

"No, I'm leaving. Jaden is out there and she needs me."

"Your partner will be fine." he said, taking a syringe from the nurse who had rushed back inside. "This will help you relax. So just lie down and let me check your wound."

Dorian eyed the doctor and the needle. He couldn't let them sedate him. Jaden could be dying even now. His eyes narrowed.

"Touch me with that needle, and I swear you will regret it."

"Dorian," Sharp stepped in, but was cut off.

"No. Jaden needs me. I'll leave you all with more damage than you can handle if you so much as try it." He pulled his jeans on, wincing. "Sign a waiver, whatever you want, but I'm leaving." Dressed, he faced the doctor and his boss.

"It's your call captain, but I have to say the hospital will hold no responsibility if he causes himself more harm." The doctor capped the needle.

"I wouldn't expect you to." Sharp looked to Dorian and nodded. "The minute you find her, you call for back up. Your gun and shield are in the unit out front. Be careful."

Dorian wasted no time with words, but hurried as fast as his sore body would allow. He hated it, but he needed to see Jada. The woman was a bitch, but he would face the devil himself to find Jaden.

"Damn it, Jaden," he cursed, climbing into the car. "Where are you?"



It was early morning, and by accounts from the hospital staff, she had been with him sometime last night. So, it had only been a few hours. He would find her. God help the bastard that took her.

Then he stopped as his mind took on another thought. What if she left, and was hiding? She had tried to push him away once and him getting shot would only drive her to protect him.

He sighed at all the possibilities. He had to find her, either way. His heart and nerves couldn't take this.

The Uptown Lounge was just opening when he pulled into the lot. It never failed to surprise him the amount of early morning drinkers. By two, the officers will have filled a quota.

Jada was behind the bar, and again he couldn't believe just how identical she and her sister were. She looked up and frowned.

"What do you want?"

"I need to talk to you."

She shut the register and poured some coffee for herself, and then turned back, pouring one for Dorian as well.

"I take it you're not here for a second chance." She pushed the cup his way. "Or have you decided to try the twin?"

"Jada, just this once, we need to set aside our differences."

At that, she came around the bar and sat on the stool next to him. Her eyes wide and searching, she knew something was wrong.

"It's Jaden?" He nodded and she grabbed his shirtsleeve. "What is it? What's happened?"

"She's gone. We have no idea if she was taken, or just ran away."

"Why would she run?"

"To protect those around her." He told her about the shooting. "I came around this morning, and the captain told me she was gone."

"That's not like, Jaden. She's a fighter." Jada bit her lip. "How in the hell is this happening? How can they set her up so damn easy?"

"It can be done. But that's beside the point. I have to find her." He put his face in his hands. "What if this lunatic has her?"

"You love her, don't you?"

"Yes," he sighed and looked to Jada. "I do love her. I will find her. God help the man who has her if that's the case."

"Well, you search the spots you know of," Jada stood and picked up the phone. "And I will search mine. I'll have a replacement here in ten minutes. Leave your cell number and I will call if I find anything."

"This could be dangerous, Jada. I don't need you getting hurt."

"Hell, Dorian. Didn't she tell you? I'm dangerous."

As he wrote his number down and walked out of the lounge, he didn't doubt it for a minute. There were two women in the world he didn't wanna cross. He just left one, and prayed to god he could find the other one.

The first place on his list was to check out the warehouse. It was a long shot, and he knew if she was there, she was more than likely a body waiting to be found. But the knot in his gut lessened when he found no signs there.

He visited each crime scene, looking for clues or anything that might lead him in the right direction. Nothing, not a sign.

Jada called once, saying she was having no luck either. He bit his tongue when she said she had called her boyfriend. Dorian didn't know why, but he didn't trust the man.

Dorian pulled into the M.E. parking lot. His gut told him that if Jaden had a plan, then she would have **gone** to the most tight lipped woman in town, not to mention a hard ass. Jorga Miller was all that and more. She also had a lot of respect for Jaden.

Jorga was in the middle of an autopsy, so he scrubbed up and put on the gowns he detested. His fear growing with every minute he didn't hear from Jaden.

"Dorian, if you don't mind, I am in the middle of something."

"Jaden's gone missing, Jorga. I was hoping you could help me."

He noticed the way her hands stilled, her breath caught. The tension in her body caused her shoulders to tighten. She knew something.

"What makes you think I can help you?"

"Because Jaden's no fool. She either left town with help, or someone has her."

"Has her?"

"The man setting her up." Dorian knew something was up. Jorga was too calm, cool and collected. "If he has her, she could be dying even now."

"I doubt he has her, Dorian." She placed an organ in a bowl. "Jaden's too smart for that."

"What makes you so sure?"

"I have work to do, Dorian."

She turned her back on him, but not before he saw her eyes. A hard ass she may be, but a liar she wasn't. He remembered the case he carried in the unit. A surveillance case, complete with a wiretap.

"I need to call, Sharp and Jada. Can I use your phone? My cell is about dead."

"Sure."

"I'll just grab the number, and then get out of your hair."

She hummed a response, and Dorian all but ran to the car. Jorga should have known better than to try hiding from him. He quickly grabbed the tap, hurried into the office and set up the device in the receiver. If she got a call, it would also ring to his cell. So easy to program. He hoped she didn't catch on. He left the office, closing the door.

"Jorga?"

"What?" She all but shouted. "I told you I am busy."

"I just want you to call me if you hear from her."

"Well, of course I will. Now get out of here and stop worrying. She probably needed a break."

It wasn't what she said, but how she said it. Jorga just told him she was safe. It was subtle, but he caught it in her eyes. He nodded, leaving the building.

Anger rolled through him in hot waves. Jaden had run away. He wasn't sure if he was mad at her or the suspect. His side ached, but he wouldn't rest until he knew she was in a safe place.

Now that the fear was leaving, understanding sank in. He would have done the same. Jaden was doing what she did best, the only way she could. She was protecting those she loved. But his love for her wouldn't let her face it alone.

For what seemed like hours, he sat in the alley he had parked in, just to the side of the M.E. building. With each ring of the phone, he hoped to hear her voice. He was about to give it up when again the phone rang.

Jaden's voice, well and alive spoke to Jorga, asking about him. When Jorga told her he had been there, Jaden almost panicked.

"He can't find me, Jorga. He was almost killed once. If nothing else comes from all of this, his death would kill me."

Dorian closed his eyes, letting her love for him soothe his nerves. She had left to protect him. His eyes snapped open when she started talking about her hideaway.

"Who all knows of this place?" she asked, only to panic again. "But Sharp may think to look here and that will bring Dorian."

Jorga, assuring her that Sharp only went to the hidden area with her, soothed her.

Dorian disconnected and phoned the captain.

"Dorian? Find anything?"

"Where is the little hideaway you and Jorga are so fond of?"

"East of the city. Why?"

Dorian told him about the call and had Sharp's word he would say nothing to Jorga. Fifteen minutes later, he was east bound into the seclusion of the deep woods and Jaden.

## Chapter Twelve

Jaden sat before the fireplace in the quant little home that Jorga called the love nest. She still couldn't believe Sharp had said he was going fishing each time he took a weekend. Why hide the fact they were lovers? They were good together from what Jorga said. But the city would frown on it, she supposed. It would be easy to claim the chief and the local M.E. doctored up evidence or something.

She sipped the cocoa she had made, wishing she could pick up the phone and call Dorian. But he would demand to be with her, and she loved him too much to risk it. Her heart clinched, remembering their last night together. She could only hope that one day soon, they could be together every day of their lives.

A sound drew her eyes to the window, and she stood, carefully pulling back the drapes. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary. She had spent much of the day checking out the area. Trees, trees, and after that, trees. She laughed at herself.

"Get a grip, Jaden." She walked back to the chair. "All you have to fear here is a chipmunk or two."

Before she sat, she heard another sound. Her heart stopped.

"Unless said chipmunk is big and wears boots, I think I have company." Her voice low and her steps light, she pulled her revolver from the holster on the coffee table.

A silhouette stood outside the door, and she could see it was a man. A fist raised, and she leveled her gun through the glass, dead center. The fist banged twice. She flinched.

"Jaden Calder, I know you're in there and I am about two seconds from breaking this door."

"Dorian?" she gasped, lowering her gun."

"Open this door, woman." He banged again.

She shook her head and walked to the door, her mind acknowledging that he sounded pissed. She was actually nervous, and that was just ridiculous. She opened the door, ready to battle.

"What are you doing here, Dorian?"

"That's all you have to say to me?" He stepped inside, shutting the door with a bang. He reached back and locked it. "I lay recovering, and when I wake the woman who vows to love me had me scared to death."

"Dorian," she backed slowly away, he slowly advanced.

"Do you know I threatened to beat the captain, the doctor, and even his poor nurse? They were gonna sedate my ass, but I was too worried about you."

"Your wound," she started, but stopped as he continued to advance.

"My wound is fine." He stopped in the middle of the room. "What the hell were you thinking?"

"I was thinking about you."

"Me? You think leaving and making me believe that nut job had you was doing me any good?"

She frowned, that thought never crossed her mind.

"Well, I just wanted you safe and have time to think."

"Think? You wanna know all the thoughts that ran through my head?" He advanced again and Jaden retreated. The wall stopped her, and she wished she could sink into it. "I have never been so afraid in my life."

"I'm so sorry, Dorian. I didn't think."

"Damn it, Jaden. Together, remember? We do this together."

"I couldn't face it if you were killed. That was the purpose yesterday you know."

To get you out of the way."

"Would you let me worry about that?" His voice rose.

"What? You can get all pissed at me, but I can't worry for you?" She stomped her foot and felt childish. "How is that fair?"

"Don't try to turn this around." He gripped her shoulders, wanting to shake her, kiss her, and take her against the wall. "You should have told me what you were doing."

"Let me go, Dorian."

"No, I won't let you go, you should have..," he was cut off with a whoosh as the air left him. Her fist in his middle all but floored him.

"Oh shit," She rushed to him, having forgotten about his wound. "I forgot, Dorian. I was only trying to get you to listen. Oh baby, I'm sorry. Are you okay?"

He stood slowly; the anger on his face was replaced by one of disbelief. At himself or her punch, he wasn't certain.

"I'm fine, Jaden. I was just worried, and I lost it when I saw you."

"Are you bleeding?"

"I said I'm fine." He took a deep breath. "Come here, Jaden."

"Dorian,"

"Just come to me and let me hold you. I need to know you are truly okay."

She walked into his arms and sighed when they closed around her. It was his fear, and her stubborn sense of honor that had brought this on. She could feel the tremble in his body, and she held him gently, her arms around his waist.

"I am so sorry, Dorian. I only wanted to protect you."

"It's okay. I have you now." His hands caressed her back. "All I could think was that he had you. He was hurting you. Don't ever do this to me again, Jaden."

"I won't." She looked up into his face. "If it's any conciliation, I have been miserable without you."

"That makes it a little better."

She smiled and took his hand, leading him into the living room. The fire still crackled, and the soft glow from the flames was the only light to see by. She stood before him, gently removing his shirt, and inspecting his wound.

"Does it hurt?"

"It's not so bad now. Hurt like hell this morning."

She leaned forward, bending enough to kiss around the stitching. It didn't look red or infected, and she sighed in relief. She knelt and removed his shoes, socks, then stood slowly, her fingers on his fly.

"What are you doing, woman?"

"Showing you how much I missed you." Her eyes twinkled in the fires light.  
"Showing you how glad I am that you're here."

Slowly she released the button, and then the sound of the zipper echoed through the room. She pushed his jeans from his hips, her brow arching at the site of him. No underwear and hard as a rock.

"I was in a hurry this morning." He grinned. "And your hands are at fault for my condition."

She said nothing, just gently pushed him into the chair. With his eyes on her, she slowly began to undress. The loose sweats and t-shirt she wore fell quickly to the floor. She turned her back and removed her bra, teasing him with brief glimpses. When her panties fell, she heard him groan.

Jaden left her braid, not wanting her long locks to get in her way. She slowly turned to face him, and she loved the look of raw, naked desire on his face. His body looked delicious in the fire light, and she licked her lips.

On her knees before him, her hands stroked his thighs. He tensed the closer she got to his cock, and for a little more, she continued to tease and torment. When she finally wrapped one hand around the base of his cock, the heat was almost enough to burn.

"You're killing me."



"No, Dorian. Not killing you. I do plan to love you though."

His hand cupped her face, and he pulled her up enough to lean forward, placing his lips to hers. His kiss was gentle, it lingered even when he pulled back, only to come back for another taste. Jaden placed a hand to his chest, and he leaned back.

"All you need to do is feel, Dorian." She kissed his neck, then his chest. "Just relax and let me love you."

"I want to touch you, Jaden."

"Not yet."

Her lips traveled every inch of his chest, then lower, kissing around his wound, nipping his belly and lower still. Her hand tightened on his slightly, and his belly tensed. She teased him, tormented him, her hot breath a caress that left him wanting for more. When her tongue traced his length, he gripped the chair.

He was breathless when her warm lips surrounded him. Dorian watched her mouth work to take more of his length into her. He could catch glimpses of her pink tongue when she swirled it around him, and he thought it sexy as hell.

Jaden pulled his cock from her mouth, licking from tip to base. He nearly shouted when her tongue went further, gently lapping at his balls. He was going to lose it if she didn't stop soon. That wicked tongue of hers was hell on his control.

Again, she took him into her mouth, her hands touching and rubbing him until he felt he would explode. He wanted to be deep inside her body when the time came for his release. Her lips held him tighter with every pull of her mouth, and he hoped he survived long enough to watch her come apart in his arms. He could easily die happy in her arms.

"Stop, baby," he said, gently pushing her back. "Come to me."

"But, your side,"

"Trust me, lover. Come up here."

She stood before him, and with his help, she draped her legs over the arms of the chair. In this position, she not only faced him and straddled his lap, but she was open to

his hands. He took full advantage.

Dorian ran his fingers threw her drenched curls, spreading her juices. When he pushed two into her, she gasped, tossing her head back and rocked on his fingers. When he pulled them from her body, she looked into his eyes, watching as he licked her cream from his fingers. She could feel her juices flow freely at the sight.

"Lift up," he said, holding her hips. "Guide me into you."

Bracing herself with the arms of the chair, she lifted and positioned herself over his cock. Slowly, she lowered herself, until he was deep inside. She cried out, feeling him stretch her, filling her completely.

"It's up to you, baby. Move how you want, take what you want."

For a moment, she didn't move, just savored the feel of him so hard and deep inside her. Then she reached for his hands, placing them on her breasts.

"What do you want me to do, Jaden?"

"Touch them, stroke them." She again braced herself on the chair arms. "Make love to them, while I make love to you."

She leaned forward, teasing his lips with her own. Dipping her tongue into his mouth, pulling out before he could return the kiss. Her hips rocked gently, moving him inside her at a slow pace. She swallowed his moan, and sent him a gasp as he pinched her nipples, rolling them with his rough fingers.

"More," she whimpered, grinding her hips into him. "Do that again."

He did as she wanted, pulling and gently pinching until she rose above him, raising herself up and coming down on him harder and harder with each tease he gave her. He watched her as she rode him, chasing her release. Jaden was beautiful. Her lips wet from his, her breasts swollen from his play. He could feel the urgency in her movements, and reached down, placing his thumb on her swollen clit.

Then she was slamming against him, crying out as she came. He could feel her release on his thighs, and he had to fight to hold himself back. He stroked her, until she lay against his chest. He still throbbed inside her and each tremor that flowed through

her body, he shared.

Jaden lifted her head and looked into his eyes, smiling, she kissed him.

"I'm not finished with you yet, Jaden." He licked her lips. "Stand up, and turn around."

Slowly, she pulled herself away, and stood on shaky legs. She turned, and he held her hips, easing her down onto his lap. Again, he draped her legs over the arms of the chair.

"Use your arms again, baby. Raise yourself over me." When she lifted, he positioned his cock to her sensitive opening. "Now, lower yourself on me again."

Dorian gritted his teeth. She felt so hot and tight, even after their earlier play. Slowly, she rocked on him, her back pressed to his chest. His hands were free to roam, and he caressed every inch he could reach. He knew he would have to take over soon, but for a few minutes more, he enjoyed her body controlling his desire. But he knew he would need to thrust himself into her to find his release.

Suddenly, his desire slammed into him, and Jaden only had time to gasp before she was on her hands and knees before the fire, Dorian behind her, thrusting hard and deep. His hands gripped her hips so tight, she was sure she would be bruised. Damned if she cared.

Briefly, she was thankful for the soft rug under her. Then her mind lost all thought except for the man bringing her so much pleasure, she wanted to weep. She clawed at the rug, screaming as her body rocked with the climax that tore through her. Still he thrust into her, giving her no time to calm, just bringing her up again.

He pulled from her, rolled her to her back and placed her ankles on his shoulders. He looked into her eyes, his cock ready for more.

"Say it, Jaden." His voice rough and harsh with his passion. "Say it again for me."

"I love you, Dorian."

He was inside her again, deeper than before, and she loved it. With his body over

hers this way, she couldn't move, just take. That thought, knowing she was at his mercy, had her begging for more.

A wet sensation dripped onto her belly, and she looked down, gasping at the trail of blood that ran from his body to hers. She wanted to tell him to stop, but she was on fire. Dorian had seen it, and watched as she reached down, dipped her fingers in the blood, and placed it over her heart. As if she had branded herself as he watched, he swelled inside her. Jaden cried out, and then he was branding her again from the inside. His release was all she needed, and she followed him over the edge.

When he collapsed onto her, she held him close. Heart to heart, she soothed him with her hands and lips. Her words softly spoken, told him how much he meant to her. She smiled at the ache in her thighs. No soul on earth could ever love her like, Dorian.

\* \* \* \*

The watcher looked around the home, knowing she had fled. How dare she leave the game! She didn't make the rules here.

"Afraid to see it to the end, Jaden? You stupid bitch."

A foot destroyed the television. A large knife sliced through the furniture. It was childish, but the rage needed to be directed at something.

"I have yet to play my final hand, Jaden."

Eyes landed on the table where the bitch had fucked the detective. Standing over the exact spot she had been laid out like a dish, the knife fell, imbedding itself deep in the wood.

"This is not over yet, Jaden. You wanna play hide and seek? Let's see if I can draw you out. I happen to know the perfect bait."

The watcher left, making sure anything within reach was destroyed.

## Chapter Thirteen

Jaden opened her eyes and stretched like a contented cat. Dorian had loved her most thoroughly last night. Though she never wanted to provoke his anger again, there were some benefits. Maybe they could fight once in awhile, just to make up.

They had fallen asleep on the rug before the fire, and she sat up, looking down at the man who she had lost her heart to. He was so handsome. Those arms could crush her, but they held her gently. Even in his anger, he never hurt her. She frowned at the red stain on his side. The strip of cloth could hardly be called a bandage.

Ignoring her nakedness, she stood and went into the bathroom, gathering what she would need to clean his wound, and another bandage to replace the other. When she returned, his eyes were smiling. Then his face fell and he frowned.

"What? Am I that bad naked?" she teased.

"You know better than that. I love your body."

"Then what's the frown all about?" she asked, kneeling beside him. "You look like you ate a lemon."

"I hurt you."

"What?"

"You're bruised, Jaden. I hurt you."

"Where?"

He sat up and traced the light bruises on her hips from his hands. He had really gripped her.

"These are from my hands." He leaned in and kissed each one. "I never wanna

hurt you, baby."

"Dorian, you didn't hurt me. I loved everything you did to me, including these." She pushed him to his back. "It was a moment of passion. You didn't hit me, you loved me. Now, shut up with the nonsense and let me doctor you."

"Bossy wench in the morning, aren't you?"

"Keep it up, and I can grab the rubbing alcohol instead of the peroxide."

"I'll spank your ass if you try."

"Dorian, if you're going to threaten me, you really shouldn't threaten me with a good time."

At his look, she burst out laughing.

"Not only bossy, you're cocky." But he was smiling.

"Well, I'm not cocky," she sobered. "But if you're a good boy, you can give me some later."

"I've created a monster."

"Now, let's get this cleaned up."

Gently she removed the old bandage and cleaned the area with a cotton ball and the peroxide. She sighed in relief when she saw no signs of infection. It did look tender as hell, and she frowned, hating that he had hurt himself while making love to her.

"Wipe that look off your face, love. It's fine, and I feel fine."

"Just be careful, Dorian." Her eyes fell.

"Hey," he sat up, "What is it?"

"I died inside when you were shot. All I could think was getting away so you would be safe."

He leaned back, and she placed the new bandage over the stitches.

"Don't think about it, baby. I know what you're feeling. I felt the same way. I wanted to kill the bastard when he shot you." He tipped her face to his. "But we are stronger together, and we will beat this."

Jaden jumped when a banging on the door pulled them apart. Before Dorian

could even move, she was up and had her gun drawn. When the door flew open, she fired.

"Son of a bitch, Jaden!" Sharp stood there, looking pale, but pissed. "You almost shot me!"

"Oh, my," Jorga said from behind him. "Another hair to the left and you'd be missing an ear, love."

Sharp ignored her, his eyes falling to Dorian before he stomped into the kitchen, returning looking madder than before.

"Charge the damn phone. I've been trying to call you since last night."

"Well, hell, I didn't think about it."

"That much is obvious." When Jaden only stared, he sighed. "Would you please, for the love of Pete, and my eyes, put some damn clothes on?"

Jaden gasped, turned a bright red, and fled the room. Dorian was hard pressed not to lose control of his laughter.

"If you're lovely, Jorga, will turn around, I will spare your eyes."

Sharp did one better and pushed her out the door, shutting it in her face. He winced at her words, and once Dorian was dressed in jeans, he let her back in.

"You'll pay for that one, Sharpy." She went into the kitchen, saying something about men and their attitudes and coffee.

"Sharpy?"

"Not another damn word, Kelso."

Dorian wisely kept his thoughts to himself. Jaden walked into the room, her head high and dressed in shorts and a tank top that made his mouth water. She was the sexiest woman alive. Well, to Dorian she was. The men followed her into the kitchen.

"Well, the secrets out, and I tried to hide it, Jaden." Jorga said, glancing at Sharp. "But he has a way of drawing things out of me."

"It's fine, Jorga. I should never have run off."

"You may wanna call, Jada. That girl is a pain in the ass." Jorga clicked the coffee

to brew. "Do you have any idea the many ways she has contrived to geld Dorian for not keeping her in the loop?"

"I can well imagine."

They all sat at the table, and Sharp had the look about him that said he had information she wouldn't like. Jaden braced herself for the news.

"Before Jorga told me where you were, I went by your place hoping to find you." He looked down for a second. "Your place has been torn apart."

"What?"

"Ransacked would be the better word for it."

"How bad?"

"It's bad, Jaden."

She stood and wrapped her arms around herself, looking out the kitchen window. Dorian rose and stood behind her, offering his strength. She leaned into him, fighting her anger. That was an emotion best left alone. It would get her nothing.

"There was also a note left on the door." Sharp pulled it from his pocket. "I was hoping you could help me decide what it means."

Jaden returned to the table, took the note and read it, passing it to Dorian, who read it aloud.

*Would you risk another? The game is not over until I say it's over. Tell me, Jaden, what is the difference between a high school boy and a college man? Is the older man's touch more determined in your eyes, maybe more tender? You thought you loved the one in college. Maybe I will have to really inspect this one's hands. You seemed to love the way they touched you under the fountain.*

"What the hell does this mean?" Dorian asked, not sure why he felt a little jealous. It was the words of a crazy man.

"I'm not sure, but I would bet we have our first clue at the next victim." Sharp said, watching Jaden. "The others were found out of sequence. Whoever this is, he is raising the stakes and sees it as a game."

"Jaden, any ideas?" Dorian watched her, waiting.



Her mind was back in college. She had refused to date, wanting nothing more than to concentrate on her studies. Determined to be the best she could be in her chosen field. Then, one day, along came a wonderful man, just as driven as she. He studied architecture, hoping to build amazing buildings and he was really very good.

They had been study partners, each quizzing the other, pushing one another to the limits. Keeping each other from the parties and the rougher crowd. He wasn't one she would call gorgeous, but she was attracted to his drive and his desire to be the best he could be.

One evening, while taking a walk after a long night of study, he kissed her under the campus fountain, and she knew if she had wanted to, she could have loved him. But a few kisses and touches later, they felt more like friends than before, and had laughed it off later.

"Jaden?"

Dorian's voice pulled her back, and she blinked a few times, hoping that Sharp was wrong.

"I had a study partner in school, a very good friend. He had kissed me once, tried to touch me in the ways of a lover." She leaned back in her chair. "But it was all very innocent. We both laughed at the idea and never brought it up again."

"What was his name?"

"Trevor Jordon, and I hope you're wrong."

"Any others you may have dated and we should check on?"

"I was too into my studies. I didn't want to date. Trevor and I kept one another company, and out of trouble. He was more like a brother."

Sharp pulled out his phone, called the station house and sent a unit to locate Trevor Jordon.

"I think I need to just get back to the city and deal with this joker." Jaden said, standing, walking back into the bedroom.

Dorian excused himself and followed, watching her as she gathered her

belongings. The laughter that was in her eyes was dimmed by the worry now holding her in its grip. He wanted to take it all away, shelter her and keep her safe.

"He will be okay, baby."

"You don't know that, and from what I've seen, I won't hold out any hope."

"Sometimes, hope is all you have."

"At least this should take the heat off me. The note and all. My house being torn apart by a mad man."

"Stay strong, baby." He pulled her to him. "I'm here, and will be here."

"Let's just get back to the city, and see if we can't catch this man." She kissed him lightly. "I just want my life back."

The drive to the city was a quiet one. He watched for suspicious vehicles and she sat quietly, waiting for the next move in this sick game.

Sharp had officers waiting at Jaden's house, and once she saw the destruction, she screamed, ranted and raved. Every photo had been damaged, every piece of china destroyed. When she saw the knife on the table, she left the house. Dorian followed, but gave her space. She didn't go far.

When she felt she was well away from the others, she screamed until she was hoarse. Dorian opened his arms for her, and she fell into them, grateful he was there with her.

"He watched us, Dorian. What was so wonderful, he made seem vile."

"No, what we have will never be that." He tipped her face to his. "If you let him make you feel that way, he is winning."

By the time they returned to the house, she had made up her mind to leave and return later. There was no possible way she could find it in her to clean the mess up right now. No sooner had she gathered her bags, than Jada was at the foot of the porch steps, giving the officers hell.

"You deaf and dumb ingrate. I want to see, Jaden."

"No need to take it out on him, Jada." Jaden walked out onto the porch. "I'm

here, but in no mood to deal with theatrics."

"Thank god, you're okay." She hugged Jaden. "I was so worried."

"Everything will be okay."

"You asshole," Jada shouted at Dorian. "You were supposed to let me know when you found her."

"Leave him out of this, Jada. I've had a hell of a day, and it's just the icing on the cake. So if all you can do is shout, then go home."

"Is it so bad I wanna know you're safe? I'm your sister, Jaden. We are supposed to stick together."

"Jada, I have a mad man out to not only destroy me, but he tried to kill Dorian too." She took a deep breath. "When this is all over, we will have more time. But for now, I have to go."

"Just like that?"

"Jada,"

"Forget it, Jaden. I can't believe you treat my worry like its nothing." She looked to Dorian. "She comes up missing again; you're on your fucking own."

"Go home, Jada." Jaden's voice was as tired as her mind. "Just go home, and when it's all said and done, we can talk."

A cloud of dust was all that was left of her sister's tirade. Dorian loaded her bag in the car, and paused when he heard Sharp shouting for him.

"I just heard from the station house."

"And?"

"I'm sorry, Jaden, but Trevor Jordon and his wife were both found dead this morning."

"Damn." was Dorian's only response.

Jaden frowned, fighting the emotions running through her. Such a nice guy, and his wife too?

"He's stepping up in the game. The wife is his first female victim."

"Her name was Sharon. Did you know her?"

"No."

"Well, it's against my better judgment," Sharp sighed. "But we need you both at the crime scene."

"Why?"

"Because it looks like the knives used, may have been your missing kitchen knives."

Jaden looked to Dorian, and he saw the determination in her eyes. It was going to be a long day.

## Chapter Fourteen

"Did you notice how he seemed to know everything about the house?" Jaden asked as they drove to the crime scene. "Every photo in every room, except those of me alone in the picture, was destroyed."

"I have a suspicion you may know this man."

"I can't think of one person who hates me that much."

"It looks more like obsession to me." Dorian commented, turning into the drive of Trevor Jordon's house. "This guy is fixated on you."

Other than the entire police department keeping the press at bay, the house looked almost undisturbed. It took forever to get Jaden to the door. The press was on her like flies on honey.

"Detective Calder, how does it feel to be off the hook, now that another man is dead?"

She stopped dead in her tracks at that question. Dorian cringed, knowing what was about to happen, but believed the reporter deserved it. Jaden's fist connected with bone, and the man crumbled, screaming about suing.

"How dare you. I knew this man and he was all that was decent. I can't say the same for you." She looked out over the silent crowd. "All of you are vultures. One more word and those that missed a picture of me socking him will get another chance."

Some had the decency to look ashamed.

Jaden walked into the house and followed the voices. She ignored the looks and stares of her fellow workers, and went straight for the voice of Sharp.

Entering the living room, she gasped and covered her mouth as the bile rose.

Blood coated every wall. Poor Sharon Jordon lay on her side, wounds to her arms and hands said she tried to defend herself. But the wound to her chest was the death blow.

Trevor was leaned against the wall, and as Sharp said, her kitchen knives, the whole set, protruded from his lifeless body. True to the letter, his hands were gone.

Above his head, written in blood was the words, "This one's for you, Jaden", and tears sprang to her eyes.

Why? Her mind screamed. They had checked the Jordon's background. They were as clean as you could get. No children, thank god, but donated to many charities. Trevor had designed two shelters for the city, and his wife had worked in the kitchens, trying to feed the lost souls. They were good, decent people.

She could feel the heat leaving her body, and in its place, a block of ice settled. Her body began to shake, and the bile rose higher. She hurried to the back door through the kitchen, telling the others she needed air and a minute alone.

Outside she breathed deep, pacing the back yard. It took her a moment, and she started to calm. This was her job; she dealt with it all the time. But it was personal now, more so than ever before. She had to pull it together, for the sake of her profession, and for the two poor souls who lost their lives for nothing more than a game.

Turning, she surveyed the area. Mrs. Jordon must have loved flowers. Petals of every color decorated the yard. Ivy climbed the fences, and it looked like someone with a gentle touch and a green thumb guided them on their journey.

It was a shame that these wonderful people had their lives snuffed for something as vile as a game of life and death. Trevor's only fault was that he knew Jaden.

Something was out of place here, however. She narrowed her eyes, slowly scanning until she zoned in on just what was out of place.

Deep within the vines of the ivy, the fence had been cut away. Had she not been admiring the vines, she never would have seen it.

Without thought, she walked to the vines and pulled them away, wincing when many snapped off and lay lifeless on the ground. Not even a plant was safe around her.

The hole was large enough for her to step through, and she did so, finding herself surrounded by more shrubbery. It was like an alleyway with leaves instead of walls.

Too late, she heard the snap of the twig. She lifted her radio, hoping to reach an officer close by. A blur was all she caught, before her skull felt like it was busted open. She collapsed, escaping into darkness.

\* \* \* \*

"Sharp, where the hell is she?"

"How does she keep doing that? The woman can just vanish." He tried reaching her again on the radio. "Maybe she turned it off?"

Dorian paused, listening. What was that noise? Static, it was static. He grabbed the radio from Sharp, and hit the key button again. Again, static.

"Follow that sound." Dorian said, holding the key to on, following the static. "It's close, I can hear it."

"All I see is shrub." Sharp said, before he stepped through a hole. "Dorian, get over here."

Rushing forward, his heart stopped. Jaden's radio was on the ground, and blood not far from it.

"Fuck," he said, panic setting in. "She didn't run this time, Sharp. He has her now."

"There's more blood over here."

"Get some units together and search the area." Dorian yelled, running down the alley created by leaves and shrubbery. "I'm following this blood trail."

He didn't wait to see if anyone did as he said, he followed the only path he had, hoping to find her. When he reached the road, the trail ended on the pavement. Dorian cursed, trying to calm himself. He needed to think.

Where could she be? Where would this psycho take her? The man fixated on Jaden had made all of this into one sick game. Where would he take her?

Hurrying back to the others, he helped process the scene, hoping for a clue. When nothing came to him, he felt impotent with fear.

Facts, he needed to concentrate on the facts.

All the victims knew Jaden. Pictures left on the porch invaded her home.

His head snapped up, and he raced for a unit. If he was right, he hoped he wasn't too late. He had spent several hours searching for clues. Dorian hit the lights and tore down the drive.

"Please, God, please help her hold on."

\* \* \* \*

Jaden woke, wincing at the pain in her head. What the hell happened? Where the hell was she? Why was it so dark?

Her arms ached, and she tried lifting them. The ropes chaffed her skin, and she realized she was tied down. Hoping her feet were free, she pulled at her legs. They were also tied down.

Fear was beginning to settle in her gut. Slowly, she blinked, adjusting her eyes to the darkness around her. It was musty, and the table she was on had to be wood. It was hard, but not cold like concrete would be. As her eyes adjusted, she took in her surroundings.

She was in a basement, shelves with boxes lined one wall. Turning her head, she spotted a washer and dryer close by. Her eyes narrowed, again taking it all in. The boxes, the washer and dryer, even canned goods and old exercise equipment.

"It's my basement." She gasped, and then winced at the pain in her head. "I've been abducted to my own home."

Footsteps above her head had her heart beating painfully in her chest. Muffled



voices followed. She knew it wasn't Dorian or the other officers. Why would they be here? But the idea of two perpetrators instead of one caused her to shiver with the fear of it all.

The door at the top of the stairs opened, and heavy steps fell, coming toward her. Jaden closed her eyes, hoping to fool whoever was in the room with her. It was easy enough; she didn't want to see his face. Afraid Dorian had been right and she knew the man. But her heart beat out of control.

"I know you're awake."

At the sound of his voice, Jaden's eyes flew open. She knew him alright, and was shocked into mute silence.

"Don't open your mouth, Jaden. Not one sound." He stood over her. "I can make this painful, if you defy me."

A sharp knife held in his hand caused her to bite her cheek. She fought the urge to whimper. She tasted her blood, and the pain made her focus, think.

"I know you're shocked, Jaden. I was too at my willingness to please a woman who will never truly love me." The knife sliced her shirt open, and she flinched at the sting of a nick. "I hope to show you a few things, before I have to kill you. Things I have fantasized about."

Her mind raced, there had to be away out of this mess. She opened her mouth to speak, and then flinched when he slapped her.

"I have better uses for your mouth and sharp tongue." He sliced through her bra. "Before we're done, baby, I will have loved you in every place imaginable."

He leaned forward and licked her nipple. Jaden fought the urge to vomit. Her mind registered that he was being tender, but that could change at any moment. When her body didn't respond, he tried again. Failing twice, he pulled the nub deep into his mouth, and then blew cold air across it. It puckered, and he smiled.

Jaden had one thought enter her mind. She would rather die than be taken by this mad man, this murderer. Praying that god forgive her, she used the only weapon

she had. Her own mouth.

"You disgust me. Rape me, kill me, do what you will. But for god's sake, don't bore me or torture me with your pathetic attempts at lust."

"Shut up."

"Fuck you, you sick prick." She spat blood in his face. "You're not a man, and I'd rather die than have your needle dick in my body."

"Needle dick?" He spat, pulling his cock from his pants. "Does this look like a needle dick?"

Her eyes widened at his size. Long, thick, and so heavy it pointed almost to the floor. He would rip her apart with that.

"Not so cocky now, huh, bitch."

Just before the handle of the knife came down on her temple, she found the irony in the whole mess. Jada was right after all. Big Daddy really did fit him.

With a blow that jarred her, she welcomed the darkness, and prayed Dorian would find her in time.

\* \* \* \*

Dorian pulled into the drive of Jaden's house and ran inside. He stopped short at who greeted him in the kitchen.

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm cleaning up."

"Jada, where is Jaden?"

"Did you lose her again, Dorian?"

"She's here, I know it." He slowly circled the woman scrubbing the table. "I'm going to double check upstairs."

"Fine, but you won't find her there."

Dorian rushed through the house. Something wasn't right here. Jaden had to be

somewhere in this damn house.

Back in the kitchen, he watched as Jada sat on the counter. She lifted her feet to the edge, bending the knees, and let the skirt she wore ride up her thighs. She was bare underneath.

Her fingers unlaced the top she wore, and her full breasts spilled out. Jada rubbed her nipples, licked her lips and watched him. One of her fingers slid between her legs and she stroked herself, all the while watching Dorian.

"What is it that attracts you to her so much? Is it her looks? I have the same. Is it her body? Mine is a dead ringer for hers." Her finger dipped inside. "Come and tell me if we taste the same, Dorian."

"Where is she, Jada?"

"I want an answer."

"This is ridiculous." He rounded the table. "She's your sister and she's in trouble."

"Oh, Dorian. I can promise you she is singing her appreciation for the cock she is taking now."

"What are you talking about?"

"What will you do for me? You can't get something for nothing."

He watched her, eyes glazed over in obscene arousal, stroking herself, hoping to tempt him. He had to know where Jaden was. Jada was clearly sick, and he had to use her lust against her in order to get information.

"What do you want?"

"You make me come, and I will tell you where she is."

Dorian swallowed the nasty retort. He'd get what he needed from her, then break her fucking neck.

Walking up to her, he spread her legs wider, placed his fingers to her opening, and thrust inside. She moaned and thrust herself against his fingers.

"Where is she, Jada? Tell me and I will let you come."

"I want your cock."

"Tell me," he stroked her clit, and she tensed.

"Make me come."

He brought her to the peak, and backed off, causing her to scream in frustration, trying to bite him.

"Tell me, and I will make you scream."

"She's in the basement with James. Now make me scream."

Dorian pulled away and wiped his hand on his jeans. He turned and headed for the basement door. He just turned the handle when her scream warned him. Turning, he caught the cast iron skillet before it could cause him damage. He shoved her in the pantry and closed the door, putting the broom against the handle.

"You wanted to scream you sick witch, now scream in there."

Slowly, he opened the door, knowing that the racket Jada was making would warn James. His gun in hand, he crept down the stairs. Once his feet touched the floor, he searched until he found the light switch.

He ~~seen-saw~~ Jaden then. Pale, ~~half-naked~~~~half-naked~~, and blood in her hair. Her pants were still intact, thank god. But where was James?

He eased his way closer, then stopped, his breath lost to him. James popped up on the other side of Jaden, a knife to her throat.

"Drop it, Kelso. I can slit her throat before I ever hit the ground."

"Not if I put the bullet between your eyes."

"Are you willing to bet her life on that?"

Dorian looked again at Jaden. He could see her pulse beat, and thanked god she was still alive. Her eyes fluttered, and she looked into his own.

"Shoot him, Dorian." Her voice sounded so frail, his heart ached.

"Shut up, bitch. I'll knock you cold again." James tapped her cheek.

"I'd rather die than suffer what he has planned for me."

Dorian was torn, until that knife brought forth more blood that she couldn't

afford to lose. He lowered his gun, and it dropped to the floor.

“Wise choice, Kelso. Now,” James rubbed his hand over one naked breast.  
“Should I let you watch while I fuck her to death?”

## Chapter Fifteen

A crash sounded up the stairs, and then she was there, Jada, looking smug and confident. She knew James had him at a disadvantage. The cunning bitch picked up his gun as she came into the room.

"You should have been nicer to me, Dorian. It would have made things so much easier."

"Jada?"

The shock and disbelief in Jaden's voice had Dorian searching for anything that he could use for a weapon. He couldn't use Jada, he doubted James would care. But Jada may offer him a distraction.

"Ah, poor perfect Jaden, all laid out like a buffet." Jada laughed. Her voice sounded like nails on a chalkboard. "But, then again, you like it like that, don't you?"

"What are you doing? Why are you doing this?"

"You really are dense, aren't you?" Jada leaned against the table, looking down at her sister. "You never would put it together. I was very good at hiding my actions."

"You killed them, didn't you?"

"Well, James here helped me. You would be surprised what a man will do for a regular piece of ass."

"Why?"

Dorian tried not to focus on the tears in her voice. He needed to focus, slowly making his way to the shelves beside him.

"Why? You have the nerve to ask me why? God, you were always such a prissy

bitch." Jada trailed a finger between Jaden's breast. "You were always the favorite, you know. Even though we are identical, it was as if you had a certain charm. I offered myself to every boy in high school who lusted after you. Of course, they thought it was you at first. I didn't much like being called a whore after the fact. It was Wayne Harper who started it all."

"How? Because he wanted me? I didn't ask for that." Jaden felt her anger rise. "You had plenty of boyfriends, Jada."

"Now that's a laugh. Even Bobby Keller had a problem with me."

"Jada, you brought their remarks on yourself. I didn't, and besides, they were just boys. I stood beside you through everything."

"You were the loved one, Jaden." Jada spat. "I was treated like the outcast. The bad seed. Friends and even our parents chose you over me."

"That is not true."

"I felt a little sorry for poor Zack Porter. He really did believe it was you he fucked." Jada chuckled. "It wasn't until you shunned him that he put two and two together. Poor, Zack, only wanted your love and attention."

"So, he hadn't truly lied after all." Jaden closed her eyes, guilt riding her. "So, why Trevor? Why his wife?"

"He was a pussy, and you liked him. You were so damn happy in your fancy classes and he made your eyes sparkle." She shrugged. "You didn't deserve happy, Jaden. The wife was an added bonus."

"What in the fuck are you talking about?" Jaden's voice rose, but she had seen Dorian making his way to the side. She wanted to buy him some time. "You're twisted, Jada. You need help."

The punch caused her teeth to rattle, and her eyes sought Dorian. She shook her head slightly. He needed to surprise them, or they were dead. She could take her sister's fist.

"I need help?" Another slap and Jaden's eyes watered. "Even father denied me."

"You had problems, and he only thought to protect you from yourself." Jaden spit the blood from her mouth. "Why harp on that, Jada? Our parents are dead over a year now."

"I know that better than most, sister of mine."

"What?"

Dorian saw the change in her, the disbelief and anger at Jada's insinuation. He prayed she could hold on a little longer. She needed her head about her.

"You didn't think that our dad would have failed to stop at a red light without a little help, did you?" Jada smirked. "Mister-by-the-book, himself?"

"Y-you killed them?" Jaden tried to focus past the haze of hate and betrayal. Her heart just shattered all over again. "H-how did y-you do it?"

"Well, I couldn't very well cut the brake lines. But you would be amazed what a loss of brake fluid will do. Added with a little air to the lines and a little play in the wheel, and bang boom, you're dead. If you're not dead you should be." Again, she shrugged and traced the finger down her sister's chest. "It was all I could do not to laugh at the funeral."

"My god, Jada, why? They loved you." Jaden couldn't stop the tears. "They bailed you out so many times, until you were way to out of control."

"Don't play dumb, Jaden. You know about the trust fund."

"Trust fund? What the hell are you talking about?"

"Time is running out, and I need to take your place before our thirty-fifth birthday. That was the terms. You live to thirty five, and you get all of dad's stocks, bonds, cash and property."

"I didn't know."

"Well, it doesn't matter. He wrote me out of course, but that's the beauty of being an identical twin. Who will guess that I am not Jaden Calder?"

"Anyone who knows me," Jaden snapped, the fight returning. "I can't believe I ever defended you. Had you not been a hot-headed, unstable, uncaring, unpredictable



and all out hateful person, dad would have given you the world."

"Shut up."

"Oh no, Jada. Since you have your little plan all worked out, let me clue you in on a few things." Jaden narrowed her eyes at her sister. "We are nothing alike, so you will never get away with it. I may be blind to certain facts, but I'm no coward. What you have done, in your greedy quest for something you're not entitled to, was show me just how much of a cowardly bitch you are."

"Shut up!"

Dorian silently begged Jaden to hold her tongue, but he knew it would never happen. She was pissed, and by the way she was losing control, things were about to get nasty.

"Dorian knew the difference between us. What makes you think others won't?"

"I'll cross that bridge when I come to it." Jada hit her again, but the anger inside her had numbed her to the pain. "But he liked my mouth on him, I can guarantee that."

"I'm willing to believe he knew the difference between myself and a practiced whore with hate inside her."

"You think so? Why don't we see how he likes watching James give you a little practice?" Again, Jada smacked her. "Maybe with a mouth full of cock you won't be so mouthy."

Jaden turned to James and her eyes narrowed as he pulled himself free once again from his jeans.

"I can promise you, James. You put that anywhere near my mouth and I'll bite it off."

The man paled, looking to Jada. His eyes widened, and before he could sound a warning, the shelf fell forward and landed against Jada, knocking her body across Jaden's.

Dorian had his own knife ready, quickly cut away the ropes on one wrist, and then dropped the knife on Jaden's chest as he was in a fight for his life when James

attacked.

Jaden worked her hand loose, picked up the knife and sat up, pushing Jada to the floor. The tears burned her cheek as she swayed, trying to focus. Her head was aching badly, and the room was spinning. She cut away the last rope, and rolled to the floor, catching herself on her hands and knees. The bile she had been swallowing made its way up, and she lost what was in her stomach on the basement floor. Oddly, she felt better, and her head started to clear.

She stood slowly and gasped. James had Dorian down on his back. A knee in his side had opened the wound, and James was grinding into it and the blood was flowing. Dorian was struggling to keep the knife in James hands from impaling him in the throat.

Jaden started to rush forward and was pulled off her feet. Her head smacked the floor as she turned her face away, but she blocked it. Dorian needed her, and Jada had come around. With a gun in her face, Jaden rose slowly, knowing she was out of time.

“You better pull that trigger now, Jada.”

“Looks to me as if James will win the battle. Then I can deal with you.”

Jaden glanced to the men behind her, and knew she had to act fast. Dorian was losing blood, and his face was pale. His arms shook as his strength began to leave him.

She didn’t think, just acted. Jaden dropped to the floor in a crouch, rolled, and planted her foot neatly in the side of James’s head. Her kick was forceful, and he fell to the side, the knife falling from his hands. Dorian looked up, and pulled Jaden to him, covering her with his body. Closing his eyes, he waited for the pain of the bullet.

Jaden and Dorian both jumped at the blast, but neither had been hit. Confused, they looked around the room. James was still out cold, and Jada lay on her side, moaning at the wound in her stomach.

“I never did trust that bitch sister of yours, Jaden.”

Jorga stood there, gun in hand, and Jaden had never been happier to see a soul.

“Damn, Jorga. I am so glad to see you.” Jaden stood, helping Dorian to his feet.

"But, how did you know?"

"I have eyes and ears, Jaden. I can put things together from time to time." She sighed. "Damn sorry I had to shoot your sister. She will live, though."

"Good," Jaden knelt beside her sister. "Death would have been too easy. Life behind bars will do her some good."

"Jaden?"

"Yeah?" She looked to Jorga.

"Put something on, would you? Sharp will be here any minute and I don't need his eyes going buggy again."

Jaden laughed and took the shirt Dorian offered her. She was fine with that. It gave Jorga something to do, like examining his wound.

"Your stitches are torn. Sorry big guy, but they need to be replaced."

"Later."

"I hear the sirens. I'll go let Sharp know where we are."

Taking no chances, they bound James's hands and feet with the rope that they had used to tie Jaden to the table. Jada wasn't going anywhere. She moaned a lot, but she wouldn't move far.

"You okay, baby?" Dorian asked, slowly moving toward her. "I'm sorry I couldn't stop this sooner."

His hands touched her cheeks, wiping away the blood and cringing at the bruises. His lips kissed her gently.

"I'm fine, Dorian. My hearts broken, but I will be okay." She tried to smile for him. "My heart will heal."

"I'll make sure of that."

They held one another until Sharp entered the room, a squad behind him. He was as shocked as Jaden had been to see Jada had been at the heart of the problem.

"Jaden, you know she will be arrested and convicted of murder." Sharp tried to gentle his words. "There is no getting around that. Also kidnapping, and a slew of

other charges.”

“I know, sir. You can add two more murders to the list.”

“More bodies?”

“No, but she confessed to killing our parents.” A tear escaped. “It’s a long story, and I will add it to my report. But for now, Dorian needs new stitches and I need something for my damn head.”

“Of course,” he said, watching the paramedics tend to Jada. “Make sure she survives, boys. That one and her boyfriend have a long time to ponder their actions.”

“Come on, Dorian. Let’s catch a ride to the hospital.”

“I’ll take you in my car.” Sharp led the way outside. “Nights falling, so let’s get you two fixed up. The department will pay for a room for a few nights if you need.”

“No. But thank you, sir.” Dorian said, climbing into the car. “I think Jaden needs some time, I know I do. I think we will head to my cabin in Montana for a few weeks. Clean air and no crime.”

“Now that, sounds like a plan.”

Jaden nodded, she would gladly go. She not only needed to mend her body, but her heart. Her sister had tried to kill her. It didn’t get any worse than that.

## Epilogue

*Montana*

*Two Weeks Later*

Jaden collapsed on the spacious bed in Dorian's hideaway cabin. He hadn't lied. It was rustic. They bathed in a spring, and heaven forbid, used an outhouse. That was an experience to a city girl. But the place had been just what she needed. No phones, other than the cell they carried for emergency and no television.

Every other day they had hiked down the mountain to get into signal range, and that was only to check up on the case.

James had pled guilty on all charges. He hadn't done all the killing, but the judge threw the book at him. The deal he cut with the prosecutor kept the needle out of his arm. James was being sent to a maximum security prison somewhere on the coast. Jaden didn't know where for sure, and she didn't want to know.

Jada, however, was screaming insanity, and unfortunately Jaden had to return for the trial along with Dorian. Even though they had rushed it through the courts, it was still going to take time. The prosecutor was going for the death penalty on Jada. With Jaden's testimony, plus Dorian's, and the deal with James, Jaden knew her sister would be put to death. She still didn't understand what drove her to this. Times had been tough, but there was no excuse for what she did.

Now, as she lay basking in the after glow of Dorian's wonderful loving, his hands stroking her back, the guilt finally left her. It wasn't her fault; she had done all

she could do. She just never imagined her sister capable of such hate.

"You okay, baby?"

"Perfect, Dorian. I really am fine."

"I know this has to be hard on you."

"I can't deny it. The only family I have left is going to die, eventually." She sighed. "But she took that chance the moment she took a life. I can't justify her actions and won't try to."

"You know," he turned her to her back, looking down at her. "You can have a family again, baby."

"I have you, Dorian. That is all I need."

"What if said I wanted more than just sharing your bed and body?"

"What are you talking about?"

"I love you, Jaden. I want it all with you." He kissed her. "Home, marriage, even kids running around raising hell."

"Really?"

"Really." He smiled. "So, what do you say? Wanna get married and raise a pack of hellions?"

"That has to be the worst proposal I have ever heard." She chuckled when he tickled her side. "But it's also music to my ears. I would love to spend my life with you, as your wife, and even raise your hellions."

He rolled with her, kissing her and bringing her body back to life with the fire only he could produce.

"You have made me one happy man, Jaden Calder."

"I want to wait till after the trial, and then we can marry. Start fresh."

"Works for me." He stroked her hair. "I do love you."

"I love you, too." She smiled into his eyes.

"We have one more day, and I plan to exhaust you with a good loving." He lay over her, gently entering her body. "I could spend forever right here."

"I would have no objections." Her grin was sly.

"What are you thinking?" His hips rotated, moving slowly, stroking her deep. "I know that look, baby."

"I just love the way you love me, Big Daddy."

Dorian paused for only a second, and then laughed. His body still connected with hers, he rolled until she was over him, riding him.

"Who's your daddy, baby?" His eyes sparkled with humor. "Careful of your answer, or I may have to spank you."

"Again, Dorian, threats are made to frighten, not please."

Leaning over, she kissed him. All thought of play left their minds as their bodies took over. Together they rose, and when they came together, it was explosive. Each falling asleep wrapped in the other's arms, joined still, as they would forever be.

## AUTHOR INFORMATION

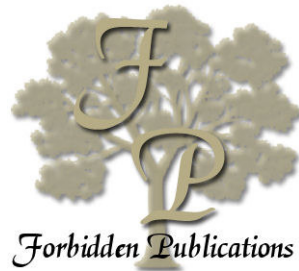
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Growing up with a very talented grandfather, I knew I wanted to write. I love stories with strong and passionate characters, and the promise of true love. With two wonderful kids and my love for them, I stay busy with soccer and football. But I always find time to visit my new friends between the pages. Welcome to my world, I look forward to sharing it with you.

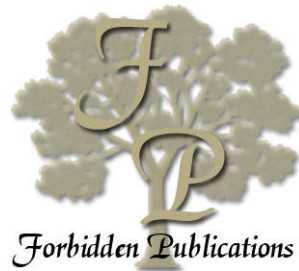
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