



Protective Custody

Paige Tyler

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Chapter One

God, what a crappy day. Paisley McCoy closed the door to her Pacific Heights apartment and leaned back against it with an exhausted sigh. Not only had she overslept and been late for work, but when she finally got there, the place had been crawling with cops. It turned out that some idiot had broken into her office in the middle of the night and gone through everything in it. She had no clue why anyone would do that. She wrote nightclub reviews for *The San Francisco Bay Beat*, not Pulitzer-worthy exposes for the *Chronicle* for heaven's sake. There was certainly nothing in her office worth ransacking it for.

Since the burglar hadn't rifled through anyone's desk but hers, Paisley's editor had insisted she go through every single folder in her filing cabinet, and then check all the files on her computer with the IT guy to make sure nothing had been tampered with or was missing. Though Paisley doubted the burglar had taken anything, she did as her boss asked. That had ended up taking the rest of the afternoon, and by the time she finally left the office, she was beat.

Paisley tossed her keys on the table in the apartment's small entryway and walked into the living room. She hoped her evening would be better. She had been wanting to check out this hot new dance club in the warehouse section near the Bay Bridge for weeks and had finally managed to fit it on her calendar. God knew, after the day she had had, she needed a night out.

Walking over to the couch, she tossed her purse on one of the cushions before sitting down on the arm to pull off her knee-high boots. As she started to take off the right one, she heard the sound of someone fiddling with the lock. Since she lived alone, she probably should have been alarmed by the noise, but she wasn't. It just meant that her sweet, elderly neighbor Mrs. Burton had confused Paisley's apartment for her own. *Again.*

"Wrong apartment, Mrs. Burton!" Paisley called loudly.

She waited for her neighbor to reply with her usual embarrassed laugh and an apology, but instead the woman continued to fiddle with the lock. Paisley sighed. Forgetting about her boots, she got to her feet and started for the door.

"Mrs. Burton, you've got the wrong..."

Her words came to an abrupt halt as something thumped hard against the door. Paisley frowned. Had the poor old woman fallen? Concerned, Paisley hurried toward the door, only to jerk to a stop when she heard the noise again, louder this time. Her eyes went wide as the door shook. *Crap!* It wasn't her sweet, elderly neighbor at all. Someone was trying to break into her apartment!

For a moment, Paisley just stood in the entryway, too petrified to do anything else. But then adrenaline kicked in. Whirling around, she ran into the living room and grabbed her purse off the couch. Digging out her cell phone, she flipped it open and punched in 9-1-1.

Behind her, she could hear the door to her apartment vibrate on its hinges. Heart pounding, she spun around, half expecting to find some thug bearing down on her. To her relief, though, the door was still intact.

"I'm calling the police, you asshole!" Paisley yelled at the door.

Silence met her words. Not that she had really expected a reply.

"9-1-1, what's your emergency?" a woman's voice said in her ear.

Paisley's grip on the phone tightened. "Someone's trying to break into my apartment." Her voice trembled a little as she quickly rattled off her name and address.

"A unit's already on its way, Ma'am," the operator said a moment later. "Just try to stay calm."

Easy for you to say, Paisley thought. She knew the woman was only trying to help. And knowing the cops were on their way did have a calming effect of sorts. Then again, it could have something to do with the fact that whoever had been trying to break into her apartment had apparently given up. Maybe she had scared him off when she had told him she was calling the police.

Paisley was standing there chewing on her lower lip and debating whether to go look through the peephole when a knock suddenly sounded on the door. Her heart jerked in her chest.

"Police!" a man's voice called.

Sagging with relief, Paisley told the 9-1-1 operator that the police had arrived, then hung up and hurried to the door. Caution stopped her from opening it without first checking through the peephole, though. That and having a cop for a father, she thought wryly. Upon seeing the familiar blue uniform of the SFPD, she unlocked the door and pulled it open. Paisley felt the last remnants of fear fade away at seeing the tall, blond-haired officer standing there. Since her father was a police captain, she knew most of the cops, and she was never so glad to see a familiar face.

Evan Moore didn't wait for an invitation, but immediately walked in. "Dispatch said someone tried to break in. Are you all right?" He quickly glanced around the apartment before turning concerned hazel eyes on her.

Paisley sighed. "Yeah. The jerk took off when he heard I was calling the police." She offered him a small smile. "You got here fast."

He shrugged. "I was just around the corner at the deli."

She nodded, but before she could say more, another uniformed officer appeared in the doorway. Dark-haired, he had a more muscular build than the other man, but like Evan, he'd been assigned to her father's bureau for years.

"Are you okay?" he asked Paisley, his voice anxious.

She couldn't help but smile at the concern in his voice. As much as she hated to admit it, sometimes being the daughter of a police captain had its advantages. "I'm fine, Max. Thanks for getting here so fast."

"When I heard the address, I came right over, especially after what happened this morning." His brow furrowed. "First your office, now your apartment. It seems more than a coincidence, Paisley."

Max Kelley had been one of the officers who had investigated the break-in at her office that morning, and she couldn't help but frown at his words. "You don't really think this is related to what happened at my office, do you?" she asked incredulously.

"What happened at your office?" Evan asked.

She waved her hand dismissively. "Someone broke into my office at the magazine last night. But there's no way it could be the same guy."

"Yeah, well we don't know that," Max said. "Look Paisley, I was okay with not

saying anything to your father this morning, figuring your dad would never even hear about it, but there's no way we can keep this quiet. He's going to find out about it and if he doesn't hear about it from one of us, there'll be hell to pay."

Paisley let out a sigh. Sometimes being the daughter of a police captain had its disadvantages, too, she thought. In fact, sometimes it really sucked.

* * * *

Gray Beckham tipped back his head and swallowed the last of the coffee he got at the deli down the street. He should have gotten the jumbo cup. And picked up a sandwich or something. A newspaper, too. He let out a sigh and ran his hand through his dark hair. God, he really hated stakeouts. Particularly when he was pulling a double shift. But the burglary bureau was short handed right now and since he was the lead on the case, that meant he had to take up all the slack.

Their suspect had hit more than a dozen homes in the past four weeks, all of which had been in the wealthiest neighborhoods. All of them had had security systems. The bastard was good, Gray would grant him that. He could bypass any alarm like it wasn't even there and he never took anything that would be hard to move or easy to trace. He even purposely left behind some really huge diamonds at one of the houses he'd hit a few nights ago for just that reason. Gray had never run across a jewel thief with that much discipline. What made it even worse was that they knew exactly who the guy was, and it pissed Gray off to no end that they couldn't prove it.

Deciding that another run to the coffee shop was definitely called for, Gray was just about to ask his partner, Jeff Cartwright, if he wanted anything when his cell phone rang. Taking it out of his pocket, he flipped it open and held it to his ear.

"Beckham," he said.

"Inspector Beckham, this is Officer Parker," the caller said. "The captain wants you back at the station ASAP."

Gray frowned. Even after a year of working for the SFPD, he still couldn't get used to being called *Inspector* instead of Detective. He kept expecting someone to say *Clouseau* after the title. "Doesn't he know I'm on a stakeout?"

"He knows, I just don't think he cares. I kinda get the feeling it's important."

Gray sighed. "I'll be right there."

As he hung up, Jeff glanced at him. "What's up?"

"The captain wants me back at the station," he explained.

The other man frowned. "Something to do with the case?"

"I don't know." Gray reached for the door handle. "I'll give you a call."

As Gray made his way down the street to where he parked his SUV, he found himself wondering what the captain wanted to see him about. Whatever it was, it must be something pretty damn important for the man to drag him down to the station in the middle of a stakeout.

When Gray arrived at the station twenty minutes later, he went directly to the captain's office. The door was closed and he knocked once before opening it to stick his head in.

"You wanted to see me, Captain?" he asked the man seated behind the desk. Gray would have walked right in, but then he noticed that the head of the Burglary Detail, Captain Ted McCoy, wasn't alone. There was a dark-haired woman seated in front of

him, her back to Gray. "Oh, sorry," he said to his boss. "I didn't know you were with someone. I'll come back later."

But when Gray started to close the door, Captain McCoy motioned for him to enter. "That's all right, Inspector. Come in."

Nodding, Gray walked into the office, closing the door behind him. As he did so, he glanced casually at the woman and did a double-take. *Damn*. She was one hell of a knockout! Long, dark hair, cheekbones high enough to make the top models envious, and full lips that looked like they were just made for kissing. Not to mention the most impossibly blue eyes he'd ever seen. Then there was that amazing body. Even though she was sitting down, Gray could tell she was tall and slender with curves in all the right places. It didn't hurt that she was wearing a fitted sweater and short plaid skirt, he thought, his gaze lingering on her shapely legs.

Down, big boy, he told himself when his jeans started to tighten uncomfortably around his cock.

Gray was almost relieved when the captain spoke. "Inspector, I'd like you to meet my daughter, Paisley," he said. "Paisley, this is Inspector Gray Beckham."

Daughter? Gray's eyes went to the beautiful bombshell again. *Ah, hell. I should have known.*

"Have a seat, Gray," McCoy continued, motioning to the chair beside Paisley's.

As Gray sat down, he struggled to wrap his mind around the fact that Paisley was the captain's daughter. Why the hell hadn't he ever seen her around before? Then again, he didn't hang around the station much, he reminded himself. Even when he was there, he was usually buried in paperwork.

"Last night, someone broke into my daughter's office at the magazine where she works and went through her desk," McCoy explained.

"Dad," Paisley interrupted. "You're making it sound much worse than it really was. The guy didn't even..."

The captain paid no attention to his daughter and continued as if she hadn't spoken. "Then tonight, someone tried to break into her apartment while she was there. And though my daughter may think the two incidents are unrelated, I'm not as convinced, so just to be on the safe side, I'd like to have you keep an eye on her."

While Gray wasn't surprised by the request, he was a little taken aback that the captain had dragged him in from a stakeout to talk to him about it when he could just as easily have discussed it over the phone.

"No problem, Captain," he said. "I can check in on Paisley a couple times a day, do a few drive-bys of her apartment in between stakeout shifts."

McCoy frowned. "I don't think you understand, Inspector. Until we find out who's behind this, I want you watching my daughter 24/7."

Gray didn't know who was more shocked at that, him or Paisley. She was staring at her father as if the man had just announced his plan for an arranged marriage between them.

But her surprise was nothing compared to Gray's. How the hell was he going to be able to run a surveillance operation if he was stuck babysitting the captain's daughter? Before Gray could ask that, however, Paisley spoke.

"Dad!" she exclaimed. "You can't be serious!"

"You're damn right I'm serious. For whatever reason, someone's targeted you,

Paisley, and I want you protected.”

“Dad, I have a life. A job to go to. I can’t have some cop following me around!” She glanced at Gray. “No offense.”

Her father scowled. “This isn’t up for debate, Paisley. Until we figure out who tried to break into your apartment and why, Inspector Beckham is going to be protecting you.”

Paisley returned her father’s glower, and for a moment Gray thought she would continue to argue, but instead she let out a sigh. “Fine!” she snapped. “But I’m not changing my whole routine just because you’re paranoid.”

With that, she got to her feet and stormed out of the office, slamming the door behind her. So, not only was the captain’s daughter sexy as hell, but she was a spitfire as well, Gray thought. Damn, that was an intoxicating combination.

Behind his desk, Ted McCoy ran his hand through his graying hair with a sigh. Though Gray hadn’t worked under the man for that long, he’d never seen him look so rattled before.

“You’ll have to forgive my daughter,” he said after a moment. “She’s too damn independent for her own good. Which means you’re going to have your hands full with her, I’m afraid.”

“I can handle her,” Gray said.

The other man gave him an appraising look. “Which is one of the reasons I picked you for the job.”

Gray wondered what the other deciding factors had been, but didn’t ask. “What about the investigation?” he said instead. “This is my case and we’re short handed as it is.”

Ted McCoy nodded. “I know, but it can’t be helped. Hopefully we’ll get the guy who tried to break into Paisley’s apartment within a day or two, and then you can get back to your investigation. In the meantime, I’m sure your partner can cover for you.” He sighed again. “Look, I know this whole thing is against departmental policy, but she’s my daughter. I hope you can understand.”

Gray clenched his jaw. He was pissed off, but he could see where the captain was coming from. “I understand.”

Even if he understood, it didn’t mean he was happy that the captain had yanked him off the investigation. While he couldn’t fault Ted McCoy for being concerned about his daughter, Gray had to wonder if the man weren’t being just a little bit overprotective. He glanced at Paisley standing in the outer office, her arms crossed petulantly over her perfect breasts. He supposed it didn’t matter what he thought. He was going to be guarding the captain’s daughter whether he liked it or not. Well, he *had* said that he hated stakeouts.

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Paisley was so annoyed that she was tempted to ignore her father and walk right out of the police station. The only reason she didn’t was because she knew that if she did, he would have every cop in San Francisco out looking for her. She loved her father, but sometimes he could be so darn controlling! Maybe she should talk to her mother about it. On second thought, maybe not. Her mom would be so freaked out at the thought that someone had tried to break into her apartment that she would insist Paisley move back home immediately. If she had to choose between moving back in with her parents and having a cop follow her around all day, she would take the cop.

“Everything okay?”

Paisley turned to find Evan Moore standing behind her. She gave him a small smile. “Yeah. My father is just being his usual overprotective self, that’s all.”

Glancing in the direction of her father’s office, she saw Inspector Beckham making his way over to where she stood. Now that she had a chance to get a good look at him, she was starting to think maybe this arrangement wasn’t such a bad idea. He was kind of sexy, in a rugged sort of way. Actually, dressed in those tight jeans and leather jacket, he was hotter than any cop had a right to be.

“Ready to go?” he asked when he reached her side.

“Do I have a choice?” she said tartly. He might be hot, but that didn’t mean she had to go along with everything he said.

His mouth quirked. “Not particularly.”

“What’s going on?” Evan asked, eyeing them curiously.

Paisley sighed. “My father thinks I need police protection, so he assigned Inspector Beckham here to look after me.”

That seemed to surprise the other police officer, but then he nodded. “I’m sure your father just wants to keep you safe.”

Did he have to go to such extremes to do it? Paisley wondered. Telling Evan to have a good night, she walked to the elevator with Inspector Beckham. On the way, she stopped off to give an update to Max Kelley and a few of the other cops who knew about the attempted break-in. Like Evan, they all agreed that her dad had done the right thing by giving her a fulltime watchdog. Once in the elevator, however, she leveled her gaze at the inspector.

“I gave in back there just to please my dad, but I meant what I said. I don’t need a babysitter.” Even one who was tall, dark, and sinfully gorgeous, she thought, taking in his chiseled jaw and golden brown eyes. “So, when we get downstairs, you go your way and I’ll go mine. Agreed?”

He snorted. “And spend the rest of my career writing parking tickets? I don’t think so.”

Surely that was a bit of an exaggeration. “My father won’t even know.”

“Until someone tries to break into your apartment again,” Gray pointed out. “Forget it. You’re stuck with me.”

Paisley gritted her teeth. God, he was as stubborn as her father. Maybe it came with the badge or something. She considered arguing some more, but then decided against it. Like he said, she was stuck with him. At least until she thought of some way to ditch him.

She was still trying to figure out how she could give him the slip when the elevator came to a stop a moment later.

“I’m going to need to stop by my place to pick up some clothes,” Gray said as they walked across the lobby. “Where are you parked?”

“I drove over with Evan Moore,” she said, then explained, “He was one of the cops who came when I called 9-1-1 about the break-in at my apartment.”

Thirty minutes later, Paisley was standing in the middle of his living room while he threw some stuff in a bag. She looked around his place. No one would mistake his apartment for something out of *Home and Garden*, but at least it wasn’t a pigsty, like some of the bachelor pads she had been to. She wondered if he had a girlfriend who helped him keep it clean. As she watched Gray’s jeans pull tight over his great ass as he

bent over to pick up something from the floor, she couldn't help but think that whoever the woman was, she was a lucky girl.

"So," she called out as she wandered across the living room. "How's your girlfriend going to feel about you spending the night with me?"

Gray didn't answer and Paisley wondered if he'd heard her. Or whether he was ignoring her. She was just about to repeat the question when he came out of the bedroom, overnight bag in one hand.

"I don't have a girlfriend," he said. "So it's not an issue."

Paisley blinked, not sure if she was more surprised to hear that he didn't have a girlfriend, or at the little surge of pleasure she felt at the announcement.

Feeling suddenly awkward, she reached up to tuck her hair behind her ear. "Are you done?"

"Yeah."

They spoke little on the ride to her apartment. Once they got there, Gray told her to wait in the entryway while he took a look around. It seemed like overkill to her, but she didn't argue. However, she didn't stay where he'd told her to, either. Instead, she went into the kitchen to open her mail. That earned her a dark scowl from Gray when he came out of the bedroom several minutes later. Paisley pretended not to notice.

"I've been on a stakeout for a couple of days," he said after declaring the apartment clear. "Do you mind if I use your shower?"

She glanced up from the *Victoria's Secret* catalog she had been flipping through. "No, go ahead."

"Thanks." He picked up his overnight bag from the floor where he'd left it. "I won't be long. Keep the door locked and don't open it to anyone."

Yeah, yeah. She went back to flipping through the catalog, only to pause when she heard the shower turn on a few minutes later. She had looked for a way to give Gray the slip ever since they'd walked out of the police station, and she decided she wasn't going to get a better opportunity than right then. While she had to admit she really didn't mind having the hunky inspector around, she hated being told what to do, especially by her father. Time to exercise her independence.

Tossing the catalog on the counter, Paisley hurried out of the kitchen and into her bedroom. Knowing she wouldn't have enough time to do more than pack a few things before Gray came out, she decided to forget about the basics and instead just grab a dress and a pair of high heels to wear that night. Everything else she could borrow from whichever friend she stayed with. At least until it was safe to come back to her place. By *safe*, she meant when there wasn't some cop hanging around it.

Shoving the dress into an evening purse, Paisley picked up her shoes in her free hand and darted from the room. She had barely made it past the bathroom when the door opened.

"Where the hell do you think you're going?" Gray demanded from behind her.

Paisley stopped in her tracks at the commanding tone in his voice. *Crap!* She had hoped to slip out before Gray finished taking his shower. It just wasn't fair that guys could clean up so fast.

Squaring her shoulders, she whirled around to face him. And blinked. Though he had put on jeans, he hadn't bothered with a shirt, and all she could do was stare at him in feminine appreciation. She had known he was built, but she hadn't realized just how well.

Broad shoulders, a chiseled chest, and rock-hard abs. *Daaaaammnn!* He had a body that just wouldn't quit.

Gray crossed his arms over his chest. "Well?" he prompted when she said nothing.

Paisley tore her gaze from his perfectly sculpted arms to look up at him. She hadn't realized he was so tall. Even in heels, she was still almost a head shorter than he was. She lifted her chin. "Out."

His golden brown eyes narrowed. "Not without me, you're not."

She let out a sigh. "Look. Like I told you before, this isn't going to work. I'm going to stay with some friends until this whole thing blows over. You can just tell my dad that I gave you the slip. He won't hold it against you."

"I don't think so."

She clenched her jaw. "I wasn't asking for your permission, Inspector. I'm leaving and you can't stop me."

With that, Paisley whirled around and started for the door. She didn't even make it halfway before Gray caught her arm and turned her back around.

"You're not going anywhere."

She glared up at him. "Oh, really?" she countered. "And just how are you going to stop me? Handcuff me to the bed?"

Her words hung in the air between them for a long moment before his mouth finally quirked.

"Though I'll admit that's tempting," he said, "I have something more effective in mind."

Before she could ask what he meant by that, Gray led her over to the couch. What was he going to do, sit her down and lecture her?

To her surprise, Gray didn't sit her down at all, but instead took a seat himself. Totally perplexed, she was just about to ask what he was doing when a tug on her arm sent her sprawling over his knee. She had no choice but to drop the purse and shoes so she could put her hands on the floor to keep herself balanced.

For a moment, Paisley was so stunned she just lay there. She recovered quickly enough though, and when she did, she immediately tried to push herself upright. But a strong hand on her back held her firmly in place. Furious at being manhandled, she glared at him over her shoulder.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?" she demanded.

He returned her glower with one of his own. "Teaching you a lesson."

Paisley opened her mouth to retort, only to let out a startled little gasp when she felt him smack her upturned bottom. He did not just *spank* her!

His hand came down on her ass again, a little harder this time.

"*Owww!*" she yelped. "Damn you! Stop that and let me up right now!"

"Not until we come to an understanding," he said, giving her derriere another hard smack. "Your father wants me to protect you and that's what I'm going to do, whether you like it or not. This spanking is just to let you know how serious I take my job."

Paisley opened her mouth to protest, but all that came out were "*owwww's!*" and "*oh's!*" as Gray delivered a series of rapid-fire smacks to her bottom. *Ouch, did they sting!*

This could not be happening. She was a grown woman and yet the brute was spanking her as if she were a bratty child! The embarrassment of it was almost more

painful than the actual spanking itself. Well, maybe not, she decided, as she felt heat spread across her bottom. Thank God for her skirt. She couldn't imagine what the spanking would feel like on her bare ass cheeks. The image of the handsome police inspector reddening her bare bottom brought a rush of color to her face, not to mention a tingle to her pussy.

Paisley gasped. She had heard of spanking as a form of foreplay, of course, but there was no way she could be getting aroused by what Gray was doing. Yet there was no denying the sudden dampness between her thighs. She squirmed, trying to get away from her own traitorous thoughts as much as from the spans he was administering, when she felt something press against her hip. Her eyes went wide. Was that his cock? *No way!* He couldn't be that well hung! But what else could it be? Oh God, he was getting turned on from her wiggling around all over his lap!

The thought that she was making him hard only seemed to arouse her even more, and she squirmed again as her pussy spasmed. If he didn't stop, she was going to start moaning soon.

Then, just as suddenly as the spanking had begun, it was over, and she was back on her feet. Gray towered over her, all six-foot-four-gorgeous-half-naked inches of him! They were standing so close that Paisley could actually feel the masculinity pouring off him. It was all she could do not to jump him! To give herself something else to do, she reached back to cup her stinging ass cheeks in both hands.

"Now, are you going to behave yourself and let me do my job, or do I need to spank you some more?"

Paisley didn't usually respond well to domineering men, but for some bizarre reason, the authoritative tone in his voice had her pulse quickening with sexual excitement. Caught off guard by her reaction, her self-preservation instinct kicked in and she found herself going on the offensive.

"How dare you spank me!" she spat, her breath coming hard and fast as if she had just run ten miles. "Just who the hell do you think you are?"

Gray didn't reply. Instead, he stood there looking down at her, his gaze locked on her mouth as if transfixed by it. Unconsciously, Paisley wet her lips. Almost against her will, she swayed toward him.

Paisley wasn't quite sure how it happened, but in the next moment, Gray's mouth was on hers and she was kissing him.

Chapter Two

Paisley closed her eyes and melted against him. Gray's mouth was gentle and demanding at the same time, and she let out little sigh of pleasure as his tongue invaded her mouth to claim hers as its own. She had been kissed by a lot of men, but he was definitely in a class all by himself, she decided, as he slid his hand in her hair and began to explore her mouth even more thoroughly. Unable to stop herself, she ran her hands up his bare chest. He was a wall of solid muscle beneath her fingers, and she murmured her approval against his mouth.

She was so caught up in touching him that she barely even realized he slid one of his hands beneath the hem of her sweater until she felt his fingers lightly caressing her bare skin. Her eyes flew open. *What the heck was she doing?* Not five minutes ago, the brute had put her over his knee and spanked her, for heaven's sake! She should be slapping his handsome face, not kissing him!

Bracing her hands on his chest, Paisley shoved him away from her. "How dare you kiss me?!" she demanded, her breasts heaving.

Gray lifted a brow. "How dare I kiss you?" he said incredulously. "Sweetheart, you were the one who kissed me."

She gasped, her face coloring hotly. "In your dreams!"

Though Gray's mouth twitched in obvious amusement, he said nothing. His silence only served to make her blush even more. Oh, how her hand itched to slap that smug look off his face! The only thing that stopped her was the fact that it would probably only earn her another trip over his knee if she did.

That didn't mean she couldn't tell him what a bastard he was, though. She opened her mouth to do just that when Gray's cell phone rang.

"Don't go anywhere," he ordered, giving her a warning look as he pulled the phone from the front pocket of his jeans and flipped it open. "Beckham," he said, holding it to his ear.

Paisley was tempted to disobey, but found herself folding her arms underneath her breasts and glaring at him instead. Maybe it was her father calling to tell Gray that they found the guy who had tried to break into her apartment and that the inspector could go home. God, she hoped so.

"Shit," Gray muttered into the phone. "Okay, I'll be right there. Yeah, I know, but what choice do I have?"

Paisley watched him flip the phone closed and shove it back into his jeans. "It sounds like you have to go. And we were having so much fun, too. Oh well, too bad. Don't let the door hit you on the way out."

Scooping her evening purse and shoes off the floor where she dropped them when she had been tossed so unceremoniously over his knee before, Paisley started for the bedroom, only to stop when Gray caught her arm.

"Not so fast, sweetheart," he told her. "You're coming with me."

She opened her mouth to argue, but at the look on his face, she snapped it shut again. Five minutes later, he was fully dressed and shrugging into his leather jacket.

"So, where are we going?" she asked as he started the engine and put the Jeep in

gear.

Gray glanced at her as he pulled onto the street. "My partner has to take care of a situation at home, so he needed me to cover for him on a stakeout until the next shift gets there."

She frowned. "And when is that?"

He shrugged. "Not for an hour or two."

Great. Now, she was going to be stuck on some stupid stakeout with him. "Well, can we at least stop to get something to eat on the way?" she asked. "I'm starving."

Paisley thought Gray would argue, but to her surprise, he nodded. "Yeah, I could use something to eat myself."

Since they had to drive past Chinatown on the way, it made sense to stop and get food there, especially since Paisley knew a great little restaurant that served the best stir-fried chicken and vegetables. Ten minutes later, they were on their way again, the bag of take-out on the back seat. It smelled so good that Paisley was tempted to open up her carton and eat right then, but she forced herself to wait. Fortunately, the neighborhood they were going to was a short drive, so she didn't have to wait long. As soon as Gray put the SUV in park, she reached into the back seat for the bag.

"So," she asked as she used her chopsticks to dig out a piece of chicken a little while later. "Who are we watching?"

Gray gave her a sidelong glance. "A scumbag who's been breaking into homes in the Snob Hill area," he said, digging into his own dinner. "We don't have anything to link him to the crimes, though, which is why we set up the stakeout."

Paisley couldn't help but smile at the slang term for the affluent Nob Hill neighborhood. As for the reason they were on the stakeout, she had heard her father talk about doing the same thing often enough, so she understood what Gray was after. They were both silent for a while as they ate dinner before Gray spoke again.

"Your father didn't go into detail about what happened at your office. Did the guy take anything?"

She shook her head. "No. Which is what makes the whole thing kind of weird. All he did was go through my desk and the file cabinet."

Gray frowned. "Yeah, that is odd," he agreed. "What do you do for a living?"

"I write reviews of the local nightclubs for the *San Francisco Bay Beat*."

"Piss anybody off lately? Maybe give someone a bad review?"

"Not really. I usually go pretty easy on the clubs. Besides, if I had, wouldn't they have done something more threatening than break into my office and rifle through my desk?"

He shrugged. "Okay, so maybe they were looking for a review you wrote that hasn't come out yet. Though that doesn't really explain why they tried to break into your apartment."

She fished out another piece of chicken. "No, it doesn't. That's why I honestly don't think the two are related. Like I said before, my father is just being overprotective."

The corner of his mouth edged up. "I think it's in a father's job description."

"Yeah, well it's annoying as hell," she grumbled.

Gray chuckled, the sound deep and sexy in the half-darkness.

"Are you as overprotective of your kids then?" While it was obvious he lived alone in the apartment they'd been to, that didn't mean he didn't have an ex-wife and kids

somewhere.

He shook his head. "I don't have any kids."

"Ever been married?"

"No." He glanced at her. "You?"

"No."

As Paisley turned her attention back to her food, it suddenly occurred to her that she and Gray were having a completely normal conversation, which was odd considering she had been draped over his knee getting a spanking just thirty minutes ago. How could she be so comfortable with a man who had just spanked her? Maybe because she liked getting her bottom reddened a lot more than she wanted to admit. Even now, just thinking about his hand smacking her ass was producing a gentle pulsing between her legs. She shifted on the seat and poked at her stir-fried vegetables with her chopsticks. She wouldn't have thought she was the type who liked being dominated by a guy, and she couldn't help but wonder what that said about a modern, independent girl like her. She decided she didn't even want to go there.

"How come I've never seen you around the station before?"

He closed the flaps on the empty cardboard take-out container. "I just transferred down from Seattle a little while ago."

"Oh," she said, and then asked, "Why'd you transfer?"

He didn't answer right away, but then gave her a shrug. "Needed a change of scenery, I guess."

Paisley suspected there was more to it than that, but she didn't pry. Finishing her dinner, she put the empty take-out box back in the bag and pulled out two cellophane-wrapped fortune cookies. She picked one for herself, and then handed the other to Gray.

"Here."

He arched a brow. "You don't really read the fortunes in these things, do you?"

She gave him an affronted look. "All the time! It's part of the fun."

Tearing open the plastic wrapper, Paisley took out her cookie and broke it in half, then pulled the tiny piece of paper free and held it up to the light coming from the streetlamp.

"Love is like a wildflower...it often blooms in the most unlikely places," she read aloud.

Beside her, Gray snorted. Paisley glared at him.

"What does yours say?" she asked, breaking off a piece of cookie and nibbling on it.

Sighing, he tore open the wrapper and broke the cookie in half, then read the fortune to himself. "Oh, you've got to be kidding me!"

"What does it say?" she asked, leaning over the center console so that she could read the slip of paper in his hand. Being so close to the hunky police inspector that she could smell his masculine scent had an odd effect of her pulse, and she had to force herself to focus on the strip of paper in his hand.

"True love is closer than you think," she read aloud, and then looked at him. "What's wrong, Inspector? Don't you believe in true love?"

The corner of his mouth curved. "I didn't say that," he corrected. "I just don't think I'm going to find it in some fortune cookie."

Paisley said nothing. Not because she didn't have a comeback, but because she was simply too mesmerized by those soulful brown eyes of his. He had looked at her that

same way earlier. Right before he kissed her. She almost moaned as she thought about how delicious his mouth had felt on hers.

She should sit back in her seat and finish her cookie before she did something stupid. Like kiss him again. But instead, she found herself parting her lips and leaning in even closer.

Once again, it wasn't clear who kissed whom first, but right then Paisley didn't much care. They could argue about that later, she thought as he slid his hand in her hair. Much later.

Gray's lips were hot on hers, his tongue insistent as it swept into her mouth to find hers. She kissed him back just as urgently, her tongue tangling with his. Damn, she had never been with a guy who could take her breath away with just a single kiss!

"God, you taste good," he breathed, drawing her lower lip into his mouth and gently suckling on it.

Paisley could only moan in reply.

Closing his mouth over hers again, Gray slid his hand along her hip, urging her closer so that she was lying half on top of the console. Damn thing, she thought.

Dragging her mouth from his, Paisley hiked up her short skirt and climbed over the console separating them to straddle his lap.

"That's better," she said.

Gray ran his hands up her bare thighs. "Much," he agreed, leaning close to nuzzle her neck.

As the trace of stubble on his face scraped her tender skin, Paisley let out a husky laugh and tilted her head back, giving him better access to her neck. God, she absolutely loved it when a guy kissed her there.

Gray's mouth was heavenly on her skin and Paisley grabbed the back of his head, silently urging him to continue even as he kissed his way up her neck. His big hands moved up her thighs, pushing her skirt higher so that he could cup her ass. She moaned as the bulge in his jeans pressed against her panty-covered pussy. The mild tingling she felt between her legs earlier was now an intense, throbbing need, and she rotated her hips to ease the ache there.

Abruptly, the ringing of a cell phone echoed in the SUV's interior. Paisley ignored it, hoping Gray would do the same. To her dismay, he stopped kissing her to dig the ringing phone out of his pocket. Swearing under his breath, he flipped it open and held it to his ear.

"Beckham," he growled.

For a moment, Paisley sat there listening to Gray's conversation. From the sounds of it, he was talking to another police inspector about the stakeout they were on. Or were supposed to be on, she thought wryly. Talk about *coitus interruptus*, she groaned. Since it was obvious things weren't going to go any further between them right then, she eased herself off his lap and climbed over the console back into her own seat. Actually, it was probably a good thing his cell phone had rung when it did, she told herself. It would be a really bad idea to get sexually involved with a cop, especially one that had been assigned to protect her.

She ran her hand through her long hair with a sigh. What the heck was the matter with her? She had kissed Gray twice in as many hours now. And this time, it had been some serious mouth-to-mouth! In another minute, she probably would have been having

sex with him. He wasn't even her type, for heaven's sake! She usually went for musicians or artists, even the occasional computer geek. Guys who were sensitive and introspective.

Gray definitely didn't fall into either of those categories. He was the standard issue cop. Aggressive, opinionated, and sure he was always right. In short, the complete opposite of the kind of man she was usually interested in.

So, why did he make her so dang hot? It was as if she lost her mind every time she got close to him!

Beside her, Gray flipped his phone closed and shoved it back into the pocket of his jeans. "My relief just got here, so we can split."

"Good," she said lightly. "That means we can go check out this new club I want to write a review for." Maybe if she focused on work, she would forget about the effect Gray had on her.

He paused in the act of sticking the key in the ignition to look at her in disbelief. "No, that means we can go back to your place and I can get some sleep."

She was a little surprised to realize she felt a little hurt by the fact that Gray hadn't even mentioned the kiss they'd just shared. It was as if it hadn't even happened. Going into automatic self-protection mode, she shrugged and reached for the door handle. "Suit yourself. I'll just get a cab to the club then," she said, the words came out sharper than she intended.

Gray swore under his breath. "I didn't spank you hard enough before, did I?" he muttered. "Okay, we'll go to the club. But we're only staying long enough for you to get a look at the place, and then we're out of there."

"Fine!"

Grabbing her purse, she turned around to climb over the console into the back seat.

"What are you doing?" Gray asked.

Paisley paused in mid-climb to look over her shoulder at him. "I'm going to change into the dress I brought with me. You didn't think I was going to wear this, did you?"

Without waiting for a reply, she crawled the rest of the way into the back seat. As Gray started the Jeep, she pulled off her knee-high boots, and then lifted her sweater over her head. In the front seat, the police inspector's eyes flicked to the rearview mirror, and then back to the road again. Paisley's pulse quickened. He probably couldn't see very much since it was dark, but the thought that he might catch a glimpse of her half naked made her pussy tingle even more than it already was. Squeezing her thighs together and resisting the impulse to touch herself, she wiggled out of her skirt and reached for the dress she brought with her. As the silky material glided over her skin to hug her curves, she imagined it was Gray's hands instead. *Stop that*, she told herself. Grabbing her strappy sandals from the floor, she slipped them on her feet before climbing back into the front seat.

Gray glanced at her, his gaze lingering on her legs. "So, where is this place?"

"Not far," she said, giving him the address.

His brow furrowed. "That's the warehouse district. I didn't know there was a nightclub there."

She couldn't help but smile. "You don't get out much, do you?" she said, then added, "Well, then you're in for a treat, Inspector. From what I've heard, this place rocks."

And from the line of people waiting to get inside the club when they arrived twenty minutes later, everyone else in San Francisco must have heard the same thing.

“Try not to look so much like a cop,” Paisley told Gray as they walked up to the club a few minutes later.

He scowled at her. “It’s going to take an hour just to get in the place.”

She grinned. “Leave that to me.”

Walking past the line of people, she went directly up to the bouncer at the front door. The man was big enough to play defensive end in the NFL, not to mention mean looking enough. Upon seeing Paisley, however, the stern look on his face disappeared, and was replaced by a huge grin.

“I was wondering when you were going to show us some love,” he said, pulling her in for a hug. “How you been, girl?”

Paisley smiled. “Good, thanks, Tiny. And you?”

“Can’t complain.” He stepped away from the door. “Go on in. And don’t forget to mention in your review that the club has the most charming and attractive bouncers.”

She just laughed.

“I make sure I get to know all the bouncers. It really comes in handy,” she explained to Gray as they walked into the club. “They all tend to move from one place to another.”

A renovated warehouse, the club was huge inside. The first level was taken up mostly by a gigantic, revolving dance floor. A long bar ran the length of one wall, while the remaining space was filled with tables and chairs. There were three other floors as well, each of them open in the center so they could look down on the main dance floor. From what she could see, it looked like there were smaller dance floors up there, as well as other bars. Paisley decided she would check out the other floors later, but right then she was more interested in grabbing a table and checking out that revolving dance floor. She had never seen anything that cool in a club before.

Paisley spotted an empty table near the dance floor. “Follow me,” she told Gray.

No sooner had they claimed the table than a waitress approached. “What can I get you?” she asked.

Gray glanced at Paisley. “A chocolate martini, please,” she said to the waitress.

The woman looked at Gray, who ordered a beer, much to Paisley’s surprise. Since he was technically on duty, she had expected him to order something non-alcoholic, like a Coke. Not that it mattered what he ordered, she realized a few minutes later, because he didn’t drink it anyway. She sipped her own drink as she looked around.

The rumors were right; this place did rock. The long bars on every floor made it easy to get drinks. Hypnotic lights flashing along the ceiling, along with the club’s amazing sound system, created the perfect atmosphere for partying. And the DJ was fantastic. She had to come back and do some dancing.

“Paisley?”

At the sound of her name, Paisley automatically turned to see who had spoken and groaned inwardly when she saw her ex-boyfriend standing behind her. Tall, with a wiry build, he looked every inch the surfer type he was.

“Todd,” she said, not bothering to introduce him to Gray.

“Hey, it’s good to see you, baby,” he said, giving her what he probably thought was a charming smile. “I was starting to think that something had happened to you when you never returned any of my calls.”

Todd left the words hanging, as though he expected her to jump in and rescue him. When she didn’t say anything, he continued. “I know we decided to spend a little time

seeing other people,” he said, eyeing Gray speculatively, “but I’m more than ready to get back in the groove. If you know what I mean.”

Paisley sighed. “Yeah, I know what you mean, Todd. And no, we won’t be getting back in any groove.”

Todd glanced at Gray again before turning his attention back to her. “Um, what do you mean, baby? You said...”

She *so* did not want to have this conversation with him again. Especially in front of Gray. But Todd obviously wasn’t going to go away until they did. “I said that I didn’t want to go out with you anymore, Todd. Not that I wanted space, or that we should see other people.”

Todd frowned, clearly taken aback. “There’s no need to get hostile about it, baby. Look, why don’t you come dance with me and we can talk about it?”

Sheesh, he just didn’t give up, did he? “Todd, I don’t...” she began, but he cut her off.

“One dance, baby,” he coaxed. “Come on. What do you say?”

Okay, she was done being polite, Paisley decided. Before she could say anything, however, Gray spoke up.

“Look,” he told Todd. “She doesn’t want to dance with you, okay?”

Todd’s eyes narrowed. “Just stay out of this, buddy,” he snarled. “Who the hell are you, anyway?”

Paisley opened her mouth to answer, but Gray beat her to it.

“I’m her fiancé,” he told Todd.

She blinked. *Fiancé?*

Todd looked just as stunned as she did by the announcement. “Her fiancé?”

Gray leveled his gaze at the other man. “Yeah,” he said, with a smile that got nowhere near his eyes. “Is that a problem?”

Beneath his surfer-boy tan, Todd flushed. *Oh no*. This was going to get ugly, Paisley thought. Not that her ex was a violent guy or anything, but right now, he and Gray looked like two dogs about to fight over a bone. And while she normally didn’t like it when a guy got all protective around her, for some reason, she found Gray’s actions kind of sexy. Even so, it was time to nip this conversation in the bud before Todd did something stupid and Gray ended up kicking the crap out of him. And then arresting him. That was all she needed. She was supposed to be reviewing the scene, not making one.

Paisley moved closer to Gray. “No, there’s no problem, because Todd and I are over,” she said, giving her ex-boyfriend a pointed look before turning a smile on the police inspector. “Come on. Let’s dance.”

Taking Gray’s hand, she pulled him onto the crowded dance floor before he could resist. “Fiancé?” she hissed, turning to face him.

“Would you rather I’d told him that I’m a cop?” Gray said dryly.

She sighed. “No, I guess not.”

“Besides,” Gray said as he took her in his arms, “if he thinks you’re engaged, he’s more likely to leave you alone.”

Paisley thought it was more likely that Todd wouldn’t be coming back because Gray looked like he could kick his ass any time he wanted to, but she didn’t feel the need to correct him. Instead, she began to sway to the sexy dance beat.

“So, how long has the guy been hounding you like that?” Gray asked.

She shrugged. "Since we broke up a couple of weeks ago. And he hasn't exactly been hounding me. He's just called a few times and has shown up at some of the clubs I've been to."

"Sounds like hounding to me. Has he ever gotten violent with you?"

Her brow furrowed. "Todd? No. Why do you ask?"

"Because it's possible that he's the one who tried to break into your apartment earlier tonight," Gray explained.

Paisley glanced over her shoulder to where her ex-boyfriend was still standing with a petulant look on his face. Her frown deepened. "Do you really think so?" she said as she turned back to Gray.

"Maybe. I'll have someone check him out."

Paisley fell silent at that. While she really didn't think Todd was the guy who had tried to break into her apartment, she supposed it couldn't hurt to check it out anyway.

Now that she wasn't being distracted by talk of her ex-boyfriend, she was becoming increasingly aware of how Gray's body moved against hers. Dancing with him had just been an impulse, a good way to defuse a sticky situation. But now, as she felt his thigh repeatedly rub against hers, she was starting to notice other, more hedonistic benefits to what they were doing. Almost immediately, her body began to respond to the very sexy man in front of her. Her pulse began to pound to the beat of the music as they danced. She should stop and go back to the table, she told herself, before she completely lost control the way she had back on the stakeout.

But she didn't go back to the table. Why the heck should she? If she had seen Gray at the club without knowing who he was, she would definitely have hit on him. Besides, she hadn't danced with a guy this hot in a long time, so why not just go with it and have some fun?

Gray's hands were firm on her hips as they guided her to the music's sexy rhythm. As he moved, the muscles of his shoulders flexed and moved beneath her hands, reminding her of how strong and powerful he was.

As one song blended seamlessly into the next, and then the next, she and Gray continued to move with them. She had to remember to mention in her review how good the DJ was, she thought absently. On second thought, screw the review. At that particular moment, all she wanted to do was focus on the hot guy she was dancing with.

She and Gray were moving together so closely now that Paisley could feel the heat coming off his body. Suddenly, she was overwhelmed by an incredible desire to lean forward and kiss him right there on the dance floor. Of course, she also had this crazy urge to tear open his shirt and kiss her way down his muscular chest and six-pack abs to his...

Paisley jerked back as she unconsciously found herself leaning forward to do exactly what she had been imagining. Dear God, she thought. She had better get out of there before she lost it completely. Being around this guy was dangerous. He'd have her ripping off his clothes soon. She could just imagine that showing up on *YouTube*!

"Maybe we should..." she began, but just then the beat of the music slowed, and her voice trailed off as the flashing lights dimmed.

Without a word, Gray pulled her closer, his strong hands sliding around both hips to pull her tightly against him.

The moment she felt his hard cock pressing firmly against her tummy, Paisley knew

she was a goner. She couldn't have pulled away from him now even if she wanted to. And since resistance was clearly futile, she gave in and put her arms around his neck. Damn, he really was built, she thought as she rested her head against the solid wall of his chest.

She and Gray were so in sync with each other that it was as if they'd been dancing together for years. Then again, what they were doing probably wouldn't be considered dancing to most people. She and Gray were having sex with their clothes on, she thought as she adjusted her position so that he could slip one of his muscular thighs between her legs. Stifling a moan, she ground her pussy against his leg, riding him in time to the beat of the music. Paisley couldn't remember ever being so turned on.

As she writhed on Gray's thigh, she felt the familiar tingle in her pussy that always came before an orgasm. Her breathing quickened and she clutched at his shoulders. She was going to come, she realized. Right there on the dance floor, with a hundred people watching. And she didn't even care that they were. Her pussy was absolutely throbbing with its need for release.

But right then, the music changed, becoming faster and faster. Paisley clung to Gray, teetering on the edge of the orgasm and desperately wanting to make herself come, but as the other people around them began to gyrate to the new rhythm, the moment was lost. Paisley let out a little moan and reluctantly took a step back.

"Maybe we should go," Gray said hoarsely.

All Paisley could do was nod. Taking the hand he held out, she followed him through the crowd and out of the club, all the while wishing they were still back on the dance floor.

As the chilly night air hit her perspiration-covered skin, however, Paisley's ardor began to cool along with it and she slowly regained control of her raging sex drive. What the *hell* had she been thinking? Granted, Gray was hotter than any man had a right to be, but all of the reasons she had for not getting involved with him didn't disappear just because he was a complete hunk. She might have lost sight of those issues in the darkness of the club, but now that she and Gray were outside, they came rushing right back. Thank God the DJ had changed tracks when he had, or she would be back on the dance floor making one of the biggest mistakes of her life right now.

Paisley didn't so much as glance at Gray as they drove back to her place, afraid that if she did, he would bring up what had happened between them back at the club. But to her relief, Gray didn't mention it. In fact, he didn't say anything at all. Which made her wonder if he was waiting to broach the subject until they got back to her apartment. He might even assume they were going to pick up where they'd left off back at the club. Her traitorous pulse fluttered wildly at the thought.

Ignoring her body's reaction, Paisley decided that the best way to avoid the whole thing would be to go directly to her bedroom when they got to her place. Once inside the apartment's small entryway, though, she realized that she couldn't just disappear into the bedroom without at least saying good night to Gray. He might think it was her subtle way of inviting him to join her.

"There's just one bedroom, so I'll get you a pillow and some blankets so that you can..." She turned to face him, but the words trailed off as she realized just how close she was to the handsome inspector.

They were standing only inches apart and suddenly all of the sexual desire she had

felt at the club came bubbling to the surface. Before she could even think, the tiny distance between them evaporated and she found her mouth on his once more. This was getting to be a really bad habit.

Gray slid both hands in her hair and tilted her head back, his tongue tangling with hers in an age-old erotic dance that left her breathless and weak in the knees when he finally lifted his head a moment later.

“I want you, Paisley.” His words were a husky growl in her ear.

“Yes,” she breathed. She would regret this in the morning. But right now, she wanted him.

Paisley expected Gray to lead her to the bedroom, but instead he urged her backward until she was against the wall. Taking her by the wrists, he pinned her arms easily above her head in one of his hands while the other cupped a breast. She felt a little thrill of excitement run through her at the potent display of testosterone. There was definitely something to be said for a man who liked to take charge.

Then Gray was kissing her again, making any and all thought utterly impossible as his mouth took possession of hers.

Paisley sighed with pleasure, only to let out a little gasp as he found her nipple through the thin material of her dress and gently squeezed it between his thumb and forefinger.

“Do you like that?” Gray asked softly as he trailed a path of hot, wet kisses along the curve of her jaw.

Paisley could only moan in reply, but Gray must have taken that for a yes, because he continued to tease the hard, little peak with the pad of his thumb. She arched into his hand, gasping again as he gave her nipple another little squeeze.

Chuckling softly, he ran his hand down the front of her dress to cup her hot sex through the silky material. Beneath his palm, her pussy throbbed with need, and she writhed against him, silently begging for more. As if reading her mind, Gray began to make lazy, little circles on her clit with his finger. Paisley caught her breath. He was driving her crazy!

Suddenly, the urge to touch him like he was touching her was too much. She tried to pull her wrists free of his grasp, but he only held her more firmly. Lifting his head, he gazed down at her with undisguised hunger in his dark eyes.

“I could make you come like this, couldn’t I?” he asked, his fingers moving round and round her clit through the material of her dress.

Paisley caught her lower lip between her teeth and let out a soft, little moan, wondering if he knew just how close she was to orgasm. A little bit more of what he was already doing and she was going over the edge for sure.

To her dismay, Gray took his hand away. “Not yet,” he said softly.

Paisley opened her mouth to protest, but then closed it again as he released her wrists to reach around and undo the zipper on her dress. It fell away easily to pool at her feet, leaving her naked, except for a tiny pair of black bikini panties.

Gray regarded her in silence, his dark eyes taking in her bare breasts, slender waist, and curvy hips before caressing her long legs.

“God, you’re perfect,” he breathed.

Not the type to blush in front of a man, Paisley was surprised when heat suffused her cheeks.

“And you are wearing way too many clothes,” she pointed out.

Reaching out, Paisley impatiently started to push his leather off his shoulders, but he caught her wrists. She looked at him in confusion.

“I hate to be asking this now, but do you have any protection?” he asked. “Because I don’t.”

She smiled. “Don’t worry about it. I have one in my purse.”

“Thank God,” he groaned, bending his head to kiss her again.

She continued pushing his leather jacket off his shoulders. As it fell to the floor, she automatically started for the buttons on his shirt, then frowned when she remembered that he was wearing a shoulder holster. She hesitated, wondering if she should just push it off his shoulders the way she had done with his jacket. Gray solved the dilemma for her, shrugging out of the holster and tossing it on the couch with one hand while he undid the buttons of his shirt with the other.

Paisley’s breathing quickened in anticipation as the material parted to reveal the muscles of his bare chest. Why Gray was wasting his time in law enforcement was beyond her. He should be on the cover of *Muscle and Fitness* or something. On second thought, make that *Playgirl*, she corrected, as her gaze dipped to the bulge in his jeans. She could already see the centerfold. Though she had to admit, she much preferred this private striptease of his.

Eager to get her hands on all that muscle, Paisley hooked her fingers in his belt and yanked him close. As she ran her hands up his smooth chest, a little sigh of appreciation escaped her lips. She always had had a thing for guys who were well built.

Resting one hand on the wall beside her head, Gray slid the other down her taut tummy to the tiny triangle of material covering her pussy. Paisley caught her breath. But rather than push her panties down as she expected, Gray teased her through them, and she let out a soft moan as his fingers made lazy, little circles round and around her clit once again.

As exquisite as what he was doing felt, Paisley wanted her panties out of the way so she could feel his fingers directly on her clit. She lifted her eyes to his.

“Take off my panties,” she implored in a husky voice. “Please.”

Gray gazed down at her for a long moment before he stopped what he was doing and slowly slid her panties down. Then he was touching her again, his fingers making those same exquisite circular motions as before, but this time directly on her clit.

Paisley clutched at his shoulders, her breath coming faster and faster as her orgasm approached.

“Don’t stop,” she begged him. “Please don’t stop.”

“I won’t,” Gray assured her. “Come for me, babe. Come for me.”

She obeyed, crying out in pleasure as her body trembled and shuddered beneath his hand. The ecstasy went on and on as she reached one climax after another. Dear God, she had never felt anything so amazing! It was as if she couldn’t stop coming.

When she finally did come back down to earth, Paisley opened her eyes to find Gray gazing down at her with a mix of pride and awe in his dark eyes. Sliding her hand up to cup his cheek, she gave him a long, hard kiss.

“I need you inside me,” she murmured against his mouth.

Gray made no reply, but stepped back and took off the rest of his clothes. Paisley leaned back against the wall, watching from beneath lowered lashes as he undid the

buttons on his jeans and pushed them over his hips. As his thick, hard cock sprang free, all she could do was stare. Suddenly remembering the condom, she pulled her gaze away long enough to reach down and grab the little foil packet out of her purse.

Handing it to Gray, Paisley reached out to wrap her hand around his gorgeous cock, smiling at his sharp intake of breath as she ran her thumb lightly over the bead of pre-cum on the head. "Has anyone ever told you that you have a perfect body, Inspector?" she asked softly.

"No, but I'm glad you think so." Gray's chuckle was low and sexy in her ear as he bent his head to kiss her. Making quick work of the condom, he positioned himself in front of her, sliding his hand over the curve of her hip and lifting one of her legs so that she was at the perfect angle for him to slide inside her pussy.

Paisley gasped as he entered her. His cock filled her wholly and completely, touching her in places she had never been touched before. It felt so incredible that for a moment she couldn't breathe. Cupping her ass with both hands, Gray lifted her up in one smooth motion and she automatically wrapped her legs around him. Once she was in position, he began to pump in and out very slowly.

With every thrust of his cock, he went deeper and deeper, pressing her back against the wall, and yet she wanted even more. She clutched at his muscular shoulders, her nails digging into his skin.

"Harder," she demanded huskily. "Fuck me harder!"

Gray obeyed, tightening his grip on her ass cheeks and thrusting into her fiercely. As he repeatedly plundered her pussy, she could feel the muscles of his thighs and abs flexing and tightening against her. Never had she been with a man this strong! All that power, combined with what his cock was already doing to her, had her ready to explode. Then, just when she thought it couldn't possibly get any better, he began to pump into her even harder.

She squeezed with her legs, whispering in a breathy moan, "Oh yeah, just like that. Harder!"

At her command, Gray began to thrust into her even more forcefully. God, this guy was a stud!

Her orgasm built like a tidal wave, a rush of ecstasy so intense it made her dizzy, and Paisley clung to Gray as she screamed out in pleasure. All at once, Gray buried his face in the curve of her neck and groaned out his own release. At the sound, her own climax climbed to such a height that she thought she really might pass out from the pleasure of it. She had never experienced anything that extraordinary with any other man before.

They stayed like that for a long time afterward, Gray holding onto her, his still hard cock nestled deep inside her, Paisley draped over him, her head on his shoulder, grasping for breath.

"That was absolutely incredible," she said softly. It was true, she thought. What she had just done with Gray had truly been the most amazing sex she had ever had in her life.

Gray shifted their positions so that he could kiss her long and lingeringly on the mouth. Then he pulled back to give her a sexy grin. "If you thought that was incredible, then you're *really* going to like what I do for an encore."

Paisley felt her pussy spasm at the suggestive promise in his voice. "I can't wait," she whispered.

* * * *

As he stared up at Paisley's apartment, he unwrapped a stick of gum, put it in his mouth, and slowly began to chew. He liked that her bedroom faced the street, because even though it wasn't on the first floor, he could still catch a glimpse of her whenever she walked by the window. And though he dreaded when she would close the drapes for the night, he also relished it, because she usually stood there for a moment and gazed out at the bay. But tonight she hadn't walked by the window or closed the drapes. Something had changed her bedtime routine. Or should he say someone.

He clenched his jaw. Dammit, he wished he knew what she and that cop were doing in there! He had hated seeing them together in that nightclub. Had hated seeing the bastard put his hands on Paisley. Had hated seeing them dance so close.

The fact that it was his own fault she was with the cop in the first place pissed him off even more. If he hadn't broken into her office, she wouldn't have been assigned a bodyguard. But he had just wanted to know more about her work. He'd been so careful, too. Or at least he thought he had.

He drummed his fingers on the steering wheel, thinking for a moment. No, breaking into her office wasn't the reason she had a cop sleeping on her couch. It was that stupid crap he'd tried to pull at her apartment. Damn, what the hell had he been thinking? That had been a really dumbass idea. He had gone into her apartment dozens of times before and just sat watching her TV or lay on her bed. But he had always done it when she wasn't home. He should have realized she would be home early after they discovered the break-in at her office. He hadn't been thinking clearly, though. He had just wanted to be close to her. He had started to pick the lock like he usually did when her voice had spooked him. He wasn't really what sure what had made him bang on the door then. Frustration, maybe. Regardless, when he'd realized that he was frightening her, he had immediately backed off. But the damage had been done, and now his Paisley was stuck with a six-foot-four inch bodyguard. He really didn't like that.

He sighed and reached into his pocket for another stick of gum. He didn't like Paisley being distracted by another man. He wanted her attention focused completely on him. What he needed to do was make Paisley notice him. But how, he wondered. Then, all at once, it came to him, and a slow smile spread across his face. This would be so easy.

Chapter Three

It took a moment for Gray to remember where he was when he woke up the next morning, but at the feel of the soft female body curled up against his own, the events of the previous evening came rushing back. *Shit*. What the hell had he been thinking?

He hadn't been thinking. That was his problem. From the moment he'd met Paisley McCoy, it was like he'd forgotten how to think. What the hell was it about her that had him acting like he'd lost his mind?

First, he put her over his knee and spanked her like some damn caveman on spring break. Of course, she deserved it, but she was his captain's daughter, for heaven's sake. And while he couldn't deny that having her over his knee had been hot as hell, it had definitely been one of the dumbest things he'd ever done. His decision-making hadn't improved any as the night had gone on, either. Not only had he taken her on a stakeout with him, but he'd almost had sex with her in the car. Talk about career suicide. And then at the nightclub, he'd been damn close to ripping off her clothes and banging her right there on the dance floor. Thank God the DJ had changed tracks when he did, or Gray would really have been in trouble. Not that it mattered anyway. Given all the sexual sparks flying between them, it had been silly to think he and Paisley were going to do anything other than end up in bed when they got back to her apartment. But they hadn't even made it that far. The two of them had barely gotten in the door before they were all over each other again. His cock went hard at the thought of how wet and ready she had been for him out there in the tiny entryway of her apartment.

Turns out, that had just been the warm-up. They ended up going at it most of the night. In fact, he wasn't sure what time they'd finally gotten to sleep, though he vaguely remembered that the sun had just been starting to come up as he'd drifted off. After spending the past two days sitting in a car on some stakeout, he should be dead on his feet right now, but he wasn't. In fact, he was wide awake. As was another part of his anatomy, he thought wryly.

Oh yeah, last night had been a series of one bad decision after another. Gray wished he could attribute it to alcohol, but he hadn't even touched the beer he'd ordered. He supposed he could blame it on the fact that he hadn't had a relationship with a woman since he'd ended it with his last girlfriend over a year ago. Going that long without sex would be enough to make any guy go stupid. Add to it the fact that Paisley was just so damn hot and he supposed he shouldn't be too hard on himself.

What was done was done. Now, the question was, what the hell was he going to do about it? Paisley wasn't some one-night stand that he could just walk away from. She was the captain's daughter. If he didn't handle this right, there could be some serious repercussions for him.

As if sensing he was awake, Paisley stirred in his arms and lifted her head from his chest. Pushing her long, midnight hair back from her face, she blinked up at him from beneath her long bangs.

God, she looked beautiful in the morning. Like a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, sex kitten. And despite knowing all the reasons why he shouldn't, he wanted her again.

"What time is it?" she asked in a husky voice.

Time for him to get the hell out of her bed before he did something he was going to regret. "Um, around eight, I think." His voice sounded rough to his own ears, and he cleared his throat. "Paisley, about last night..." he began, but then hesitated. Oh man, he was so not good at this crap.

Gray cleared his throat a second time, and then opened his mouth to start again, only to be saved by the doorbell. His brow furrowed.

"Are you expecting someone?" he asked Paisley.

She shook her head and pushed herself up on an elbow, her gaze going to the bedroom door. The movement caused the blanket to slide down a little, revealing the tops of her creamy breasts, and Gray had to stifle a groan.

He dragged his gaze away. "I'll go check it out."

Without waiting for a reply, Gray slipped from beneath the covers and headed for the door. There was no way he was going to be able to get his jeans on with the erection he was sporting. But since he couldn't exactly answer the door naked, he'd have to make do.

Finding his clothes in the entryway where he left them the night before, he grabbed his jeans off the floor and pulled them on, then shrugged into his shirt. As he did up the buttons, he glanced out the peephole and swore under his breath when he saw Paisley's father standing on the other side of the door. *Shit.*

Raking his hand through his hair a few times to get rid of the bedhead look, Gray blew out a breath and reached for the doorknob, only to freeze when he caught sight of Paisley's little black dress and tiny scrap of panties on the floor. Swearing under his breath again, he grabbed both pieces of clothing and not knowing where else to hide the damn things, hurriedly shoved them behind one of the couch's plump throw pillows.

Doing a quick glance around the living room to make sure he and Paisley hadn't left any other damning evidence around, Gray opened the door.

"Captain."

"Beckham," Ted McCoy said, walking into the apartment. "Everything go okay last night?"

Gray nodded. "Fine," he said as closed the door.

The other man nodded, and then glanced around the apartment. "Is my daughter up yet?"

Gray started to say that she was, but before he could answer, Paisley walked into the living room. She had slipped on a short terrycloth robe that came to mid-thigh, and Gray automatically found his gaze going to her long, shapely legs. He quickly averted his eyes, feeling guilty for lusting after her when her father was standing right there.

"Hey," she said to her father. "Were you able to find out who tried to break into my apartment yet?"

Gray was interested to know the answer to that, too. God, he hoped so. Then he could go back to his stakeout and forget all about Paisley. *Right. Like it was going to be that easy.*

"Not yet, unfortunately," Ted McCoy told his daughter. "How well do you know a guy named Todd Hannigan?"

Paisley shrugged. "I used to go out with him." She glanced at Gray before turning her attention back to her father. "Why? Do you think he's the one who tried to break in here?"

McCoy sighed. "He was found dead in his apartment this morning. Someone

murdered him last night.”

So much for my theory that Paisley’s ex-boyfriend was the one who had tried to break into her apartment, Gray thought.

Paisley’s eyes went wide. “*What?!* But we just saw him last night.”

Her father’s eyes narrowed. “Hannigan was here?”

She shook her head. “No. We ran into him at a club.”

Ted McCoy recoiled as if she had slapped him. “You went out to a club?” he demanded. Then without giving her a chance to answer, he turned on Gray. “You *let* her go to a club?”

Gray clenched his jaw, but met his superior’s gaze levelly. Before he could say anything, though, Paisley spoke.

“It wasn’t Gray’s fault, Dad, so don’t blame him. I didn’t exactly give him a choice. Besides, he never left my side the whole time.” She folded her arms and glared at her father. “When you assigned me police protection, I told you that I wasn’t going to change my routine and I meant it. I went to that club to do a review, not to fool around.”

Gray watched the battle of wills between father and daughter, thinking it was probably going to erupt out into a screaming match in a minute. But to his surprise, Ted McCoy’s voice was even when he spoke.

“I hope you start to take this more seriously when you hear what else I have to say,” he told his daughter.

Paisley lifted her chin. “What?”

“Hannigan was murdered by the same guy who’s been stalking you.”

Gray frowned, unconsciously taking a step closer to Paisley. “How do you know?”

His mouth tightening, her father reached inside his suit jacket and pulled out a photo. Holding it out to both of them, he said, “This was written on the wall in Hannigan’s apartment.”

Her brow furrowing, Paisley reached out to take the picture. Grey leaned in for a closer look and felt his gut clench at what he saw. Scrawled on the wall in what looked like blood were the words, *Paisley McCoy is mine! No one else can have her.*

There was no doubting the connection, that was for sure, Gray thought. And this guy had just made a huge leap from simple breaking-and-entering to murder. Paisley was in even more danger than they had originally thought.

“Is that written in what I think it is?” Paisley asked quietly.

Her father gave her a grim nod.

Paisley’s hand began to shake. “Oh God,” she moaned.

“Which is why I’m so concerned about you,” Ted McCoy said. “This guy is psychotic and he’s fixated on you.”

She shook her head. “But why go after Todd? I wasn’t even going out with him anymore.”

“He could have seen you talking to your ex at the club last night,” Gray said. “And decided killing him would be a good way to get a message to you.”

Though Paisley didn’t say anything to that, Gray saw the fear in her blue eyes, and he had to resist the urge to pull her into his arms.

She stared down at the photo for a moment longer, and then shook her head. “I need a cup of coffee.”

Thrusting the photo into Gray’s hand, she walked into the adjoining kitchen. Ted

McCoy followed.

"I think it's best if you and Inspector Beckham stay at a safe house until we find this guy," he said. "The creep obviously knows where you live."

She stopped scooping coffee into the filter to give him a frown. "Is that really necessary? Gray's here. Isn't that enough?"

"Paisley, this lunatic has already killed once because he thinks you belong to him," her father pointed out. "Gray's the best cop I've got, but he can't stay awake twenty-four hours a day."

Her frown deepened. "But..."

Though Paisley's words trailed off like she was giving in, Gray recognized that stubborn look of hers. "Your father's right, Paisley," he said, walking into the kitchen. "It only makes sense to move you to a different location. Why take the chance that he might come after you? You'll be a lot safer somewhere else."

Paisley looked like she wanted to argue, but must have realized she was outnumbered because she let out a sigh of resignation.

"Okay. But what about work?"

Her father shrugged. "You can take your laptop and work from the safe house."

She made a face at that, but didn't say anything as she poured water into the coffeemaker.

"I'm going to need you to make a list of all the guys you've dated in the past year. Plus, a list of the men you've turned down for a date," Ted McCoy told his daughter. "And I need to know which clubs you've been to recently, as well."

Paisley set three mugs out on the counter. "Are you serious? You think I might actually know this jerk?"

"Most likely," her father said.

Gray nodded in agreement. "Most women know their stalkers or have at least met them."

She ran a hand through her silky wave of midnight hair. "This is crazy! Why would anyone want to stalk me?"

"There are a lot of psychopaths out there, honey. Who the hell knows why they do what they do? But we'll get him, don't worry," her father said. "Have you noticed anyone odd hanging around lately? Have you gotten any strange phone calls? Anything like that?"

Paisley shook her head as she picked up the coffee pot and poured some of the steaming liquid into each mug. "No, not really," she said. Then, "Wait! Someone sent me flowers at the office about a week ago. I get flowers all the time from the clubs I review, but I remember these in particular because there wasn't a card with them."

Gray frowned. "Do you remember the florist?"

She set the coffeepot down as she shook her head. "No, but the delivery guy had a green shirt with a red watering can on the pocket."

Ted McCoy nodded. "That's a start."

While the captain got someone checking out the local florists, Paisley took out a notepad and started on the list her father had asked her to make. The list of clubs she had been to over the past six months took up an entire page, and while the list of guys she dated wasn't anywhere near that long, it was still a lot longer than Gray would have liked. A sudden, irrational jealousy surged through him at the thought of Paisley dating those

other men. His possessiveness toward her shocked the hell out of him. Sure, they'd slept together, and yeah, it had been some of the best sex of his life, but he barely knew her. Hell, he hadn't even felt this possessive about his ex-girlfriend and they'd dated for over two years.

Gray swore under his breath and gulped his coffee. Damn, there was something about Paisley that was making him act like a lovesick puppy. It was clouding his judgment. If he wasn't careful, he was going to end up getting her killed. And he couldn't allow that. From this point on, Paisley McCoy was off limits. She had to be.

Finishing up, Paisley handed her father the notepad, and then went into her bedroom to go pack.

The man grimaced at the number of names on the lists. "This is going to take a while," he muttered, and then looked at Gray. "If you're going to be watching over my daughter, there's something you need to know." He lowered his voice. "Don't treat this bastard like a normal stalker. He's a complete psycho. He stabbed Hannigan more than a dozen times, and then let him lie there in agony for at least an hour before he finally finished him off. The freak probably sat on the couch and watched the guy bleed the whole time. I don't want this nut-job getting anywhere near my daughter. You understand what I'm saying?"

"I understand," Gray assured him. "I'll keep her safe."

On the off-chance Paisley's stalker was watching her apartment, they decided to go out the back way. Gray pulled his SUV around the building to find Kelley and Moore already waiting for him. The two officers kept guard while Gray opened the back door of her apartment complex. A moment later, Paisley and her father came out, dragging two large suitcases. Though Gray lifted a brow at the size of the two bags, he made no comment as he put them in the SUV. After giving her father a hug, Paisley climbed in as well and a few minutes later, they were pulling onto the main road.

"I need to stop by my office on the way to the safe house," Paisley said as they drove.

Gray gave her a sidelong glance. "For what?"

"I have to pick up my laptop." Then, as if sensing that he was about to say no, she added, "It'll just take me a minute. You can even come in with me."

That was not up for discussion, Gray thought wryly. He was sticking to her like a second skin. That thought conjured up all sorts of sexy images, and he swore under his breath as he felt his jeans tighten.

"Okay," he growled. "But make it quick."

Paisley's office building was actually only a couple of blocks from the police station, which put it right in the middle of downtown San Francisco. Fortunately, traffic was relatively light, so it didn't take long to get there.

Once inside, Paisley led the way up the stairs and down the hallway to the magazine's offices. The hair on the back of Gray's neck stood up when she pushed open the office door without unlocking it. Wouldn't it be locked? He was just reaching for his Sig Sauer when he noticed a man in the middle of the room holding a trashcan. Gray immediately caught Paisley's arm when she started to step inside.

"What...?" she began.

From the expression on his face, the man holding the metal trashcan was clearly startled by their entrance.

Gray leaned in to put his mouth close to Paisley's ear. "Do you know him?"

She glanced at him over her shoulder. "It's just the janitor," she whispered, then smiled at the man. "Hey, Tom."

Slipping free of his grasp, she headed for the office in the corner of the room, giving Gray no choice but to follow. As he weaved in and out of the maze of desks, he kept one eye on the burly janitor, whose gaze was glued to Paisley.

"Didn't expect to see you in here on a Saturday, Ms. McCoy," the janitor said.

She gave him another smile as she reached for her computer. "I just had to grab my laptop."

Tom stuck his hands in his pockets. "It's way too nice a day to be stuck inside working," he said. "You know, there's this free outdoor concert at Golden Gate Park tonight. I thought you might want to check it out." He glanced nervously at Gray, then back at Paisley. "For your column, I mean."

Paisley's brow furrowed. "Um, yeah," she said. "Maybe."

Gray gave her a questioning look. "You ready to go, babe?" he asked, the endearment rolling easily off his tongue. Too damn easily, he thought.

Paisley, however, didn't seem to notice. Instead, she just gave the janitor another smile as she walked over to Gray.

"Thanks for the tip," she said to Tom. "Have a nice day."

"Is he always that friendly?" Gray asked as the two of them made their way back downstairs a few minutes later.

Paisley glanced at him. "Tom? He's always been nice, just a little awkward socially. He occasionally propositions the women at the office, but I don't think anyone's ever taken him up on it." She gave Gray a frown as he held open the door for her. "Oh, God. Do you think he could be the stalker?"

"Right now, everyone's a suspect," Gray told her. "Come on. Let's get you out of here."

Though Paisley didn't say anything as she drove to the safe house, Gray could see she was rattled by the thought that her stalker could be any of a dozen different people she came into contact with every day. Gray couldn't blame her. He would be just as freaked.

The safe house was on the outside of town. A small two-story house painted pale blue, it was sandwiched between a green and a red one just like it. Scanning the street for potential threats as he got out of the SUV, Gray walked around the front of it to open Paisley's door. Not eager to be out in the open for any longer than was necessary, he hurried her up the worn front steps and into the house.

Telling Paisley to wait in the entryway, Gray did a quick sweep of the house to make sure it was secure before going out to the SUV to grab their bags. When he walked back inside, Paisley had already set up her laptop on the kitchen table and was taking off her suede jacket. Ignoring the way the T-shirt she was wearing underneath hugged her breasts, he mumbled something about bringing her suitcases upstairs and made a beeline for the steps.

Gray swore under his breath. He had to get himself under control, or it was going to be a long couple of days.

Actually, he decided when he went back downstairs a few minutes later, being stuck in the safe house with Paisley McCoy was going to be pure torture. She was bent over,

her jean-clad ass up in the air as she searched for something in the bottom cabinet. Standing in the doorway of the kitchen, Gray stifled a groan and closed his eyes. When he opened them again, Paisley was emptying a can of soup into a microwave-safe bowl.

As if sensing him behind her, she glanced over her shoulder. "I'm starving. I figured you must be, too. Soup okay?"

He nodded. "That's fine," he said. "I'm going to call your father and let him know we got here okay."

Taking out his cell phone, Gray scrolled through his list of contacts until he came to Ted McCoy's number, and then pushed speed-dial. Paisley's father must have been waiting for Gray's call because he answered on the first ring.

"No problems?" the other man asked when Gray told him that they had arrived at the safe house.

"No. Though you might want to add the janitor who works in Paisley's office to your list of suspects." Gray then went on to tell the captain about their conversation with the man.

"I'll have someone check him out," McCoy said. "Keep me updated."

Telling the other man he would, Gray flipped his phone closed and walked back into the kitchen. Paisley was just setting the soup on the table, and she looked up at his entrance.

"Did my father say if they had any leads yet?"

Gray almost smiled as he shrugged out of his leather coat and hung it on the back of the chair. "It's only been an hour since we left," he said as he sat down. "It's going to take a little longer than that."

She toyed with her spoon, absently stirring her soup while she chewed on her lower lip. On impulse, he reached out and covered her free hand with his. "You're safe here, Paisley," he told her. "I won't let anything happen to you."

She lifted her gaze to look at him with those impossibly blue eyes of hers. "I know," she said softly.

Once again, Gray felt his protective instincts kick in. What was it about her that had him acting like this? Confused and totally off balance by the strange effect Paisley seemed to have on him, Gray was relieved when she announced she needed to work on her review of the club they'd gone to the night before.

Thinking the TV might bother her while she wrote her column, Gray grabbed one of the books off the shelf and settled himself on the couch. Dog-eared and worn, the spy novel was obviously a favorite with the cops who pulled duty at the safe house, but for some reason, it couldn't hold Gray's attention for more than a couple of minutes at a time. Of course, none of those other cops had had Paisley sitting just a few feet away. He swore he could smell her sexy scent, even from across the room. She smelled like ... fresh strawberries and cream. As he breathed it in, he felt his cock harden beneath his jeans. He mentally slapped himself and went back to his book.

Around four, Gray was granted a reprieve from the torture when Paisley closed her laptop and announced she was going upstairs to take a shower. Not that picturing her running her soapy hands over her naked body was any easier on him, but it was better than sitting there pretending to read when what he really wanted to do was strip off her clothes and make love to her right there on the kitchen floor.

Telling his cock to give it a rest, Gray tossed the book on the couch and got to his

feet. "I was going to order pizza. Anything in particular you like on it?"

Paisley paused on the bottom step to glance over her shoulder at him. "Whatever you want."

What he wanted wasn't on the menu, she could be damn sure of that, Gray thought. He let his gaze follow Paisley up the steps until she disappeared from view, and then walked into the kitchen to dig through the pile of take-out menus in the drawer by the phone.

* * * *

Paisley closed her eyes and let out a sigh as the warm water ran down her body. God, it felt good to relax. Though it would have been even better if Gray were in the shower with her. The image of him running his strong, soapy hands up and down her naked body had her pussy purring like a cat in heat. Perhaps not exactly the comparison she usually read in romance books, but that was how the gorgeous police inspector made her feel. All hot and bothered, and desperate for sex.

As she poured some of the coconut-scented body wash into her hand, Paisley wondered how she could even be thinking about sex when there was a psycho somewhere out there stalking her. But the fact of the matter was that thinking about something else was the only thing keeping her from freaking out right now. And she had to admit, Gray Beckham was a damn delicious distraction.

Of course, she hadn't felt that way when she had woken up next to him in bed that morning. After Gray had gone to answer the door, she had lain there berating herself for giving in to her baser instincts the night before. What the hell had she been doing sleeping with the cop her dad had assigned to protect her? Where did she think this was going to go?

She had no idea why she was so intrigued by Gray in the first place. As the rational side of her had pointed out several times before, he wasn't even remotely her type. Maybe not, she thought as she ran her soapy hands over her breasts, but just because he wasn't the introspective type she usually went for, didn't mean he wasn't attractive to her for other reasons. He was hot, she was damn sure of that. Hell, he practically exuded pure masculine energy. And he definitely didn't disappoint in the bedroom, either. Just the memory of the things he'd done to her with his tongue was enough to make her have to reach out with one hand and hold onto the tiled wall to steady herself.

Almost of its own accord, her other hand slid down her stomach to the neatly-trimmed curls between her legs. Finding her already throbbing clit with her fingers, she began to make slow, little circles on top of the sensitive nub. She closed her eyes with a moan, imagining it was Gray touching her.

Remembering the feel of his rock-hard body pressing her up against the wall as he fucked her, she nearly cried out with the need to have him inside her again. She could almost feel him there now.

With thoughts like that running through her head, it didn't take long to make herself come. Her breathing quickened, and then all at once, her legs started to tremble as a powerful orgasm swept through her. She had to reach up and grasp the showerhead to keep from sliding down to the floor of the tub. As it was, she was left gasping for breath from the strength of her climax.

Sighing, she reluctantly pulled her hand away. It was probably best if she kept her

fantasies about Gray confined to the privacy of her room, because she definitely couldn't sleep with him again. While the sex with Grey had been beyond incredible, last night's little romp in bed with him was in the past, a one-time deal. For one thing, he was a cop, and she didn't date cops. There wasn't going to be anything between them, so there was no reason to give Gray the wrong idea. For another, her father would have a conniption if he ever found out. Not because Gray was a cop, but because one of his inspectors had been sleeping with his daughter when he'd been assigned to protect her. Their inability to keep their hands off each other could seriously ruin Gray's career. She might not want to have a relationship with him, but she didn't want him to get into hot water, either.

Rinsing off, Paisley climbed out of the shower and wrapped herself in a towel. As she dried off, she caught the faint whiff of pizza coming from downstairs and her stomach growled in appreciation. She hadn't realized she was so hungry, but considering that they'd skipped breakfast and just had a bowl of soup for lunch, she supposed she shouldn't be surprised.

Hanging the towel on the rack, she walked into the adjoining bedroom and over to her suitcases, taking the clip out of her hair and shaking it around her shoulders as she went. Pulling out a clean pair of bikini panties, she slipped them on, and then put on a matching bra. At home, she would normally have worn a cami-top over them and nothing else, but since she thought it might send Gray the wrong message if she walked around the safe house half naked, she had packed a T-shirt and shorts instead. As she rummaged in her bag a moment later, however, she realized that while she had packed the T-shirt, she had somehow forgotten to throw a pair of shorts in with it.

"Dammit," she muttered. She hated packing in a rush. She always forgot stuff.

Hands on her hips, she eyed her jeans. She really didn't feel like putting them on, but what else could she do? She couldn't go downstairs wearing only a T-shirt.

Then again, why couldn't she? The shirt almost came to mid-thigh, so she was decent. If she didn't make a big deal out of it, then Gray wasn't likely to even notice. Besides, they were both adults, so what was the big deal? They could control themselves if they put their minds to it.

Paisley found out just how wrong she had been about that when she went downstairs a few minutes later. While she was in the shower, Gray had turned on the television, and when he glanced up from the baseball game he'd been watching to look at her, he did a double-take. The hunger in his eyes was obvious. But she tucked her hair behind her ear and pretended not to notice the way his dark eyes caressed her bare legs as she walked over to sit on the couch beside him. Or the way her pulse leapt in response. Maybe this was going to be more difficult than she thought. What she needed was a distraction. Food, she thought. That would work.

"The pizza smells great," she said, reaching out to open the box. "I'm starving."

Taking out a slice, she placed it a plate and handed it to Gray before getting one for herself. As she ate, she found her gaze drifting to the handsome police inspector. Deciding she couldn't sleep with him again had made total sense when she had been upstairs, but now that she was in such close proximity to him, she couldn't seem to remember why it she thought it was such a good idea. Instead, all she could think about was what those big hands of his had felt like caressing her bare skin.

Stifling a moan, Paisley took another bite of pizza and forced her attention back to the baseball game. "So, who's winning?"

Gray didn't look at her. "Padres are up by two."

Paisley nodded. Personally, she didn't really care which team was winning. In fact, she didn't even know who was playing. She had really only asked to distract herself from thinking about other things. Like Gray's mouth on hers.

Stop that! she told herself.

Setting her empty plate down on the coffee table a little while later, Paisley sat back on the couch, curled her legs under her, and tried to concentrate on the baseball game. But it didn't hold her interest for long, not with Gray sitting so close to her. God, she could smell his masculine scent all the way her side of the couch! Against her will, she found her thoughts drifting again and before she realized it, she was replaying the sex they'd had last night over in her head again. She felt her pulse quicken at the memory of Gray pushing her back against the wall and holding her hands above her head while he had his way with her. That show of male dominance had turned her on more than she would have thought possible. Even now, just the thought of it made her whole body hum. Damn, this was hopeless! There was no way she was going to be able to sit in the same room with him for more than a couple hours without wanting to tear his clothes off. Maybe she should go to bed, she told herself. But instead, she stayed where she was.

"Are you really into this game?" she asked, finally deciding that fighting the urge was useless.

Gray gave her a sidelong glance. "Not really. Why?"

She shrugged, trying to appear casual. "I thought that maybe we could do something else."

He eyed her speculatively for a moment, and then said, "Such as?"

Paisley scooted closer to him on the couch, the hem of her T-shirt riding up her bare legs. "Oh, I don't know." She reached out to slowly run a hand up his jean-clad leg. "We could go upstairs."

Gray inhaled sharply at her touch. "I don't think that's a good idea."

Her brow furrowed. That wasn't the response she expected. "Why not?" she asked, moving her hand a little higher.

The muscle in his jaw flexed, as if he were trying to stay in control. "Because I'm supposed to be protecting you, that's why. And because it's not exactly police procedure."

So that was it, she thought with a smile. Now, he was the one trying to keep things all professional. It seemed a little late for that, especially after what had happened between them last night. "I understand. Police procedure is very important. So, which part of the handbook covered taking me on a stakeout with you?" she asked. "And how about that spanking you gave me? Was that in there, too?"

The muscle in his jaw flexed again. And even though she could see the bulge in his jeans, it looked like Gray was really going to try and stick to the rules from now on.

Paisley took her hand away from his leg with a dramatic sigh. "Okay," she said. "If you'd rather watch a boring, old baseball game, that's fine by me."

Making sure to show a whole lot of leg, she got to her feet and started for the stairs. But she didn't get more than a few steps before she felt Gray's hand on her arm. Wondering if that meant he'd changed his mind, she turned back around to face him and caught her breath at the smoldering look she saw in his dark eyes. Oh yeah, he'd definitely changed his mind.

“Screw the rules,” he growled, covering her mouth with his.

Paisley let out a moan as his tongue found hers. Strong arms wrapped around her, pulling her tight to his body, the hard wall of his chest muscles pressing against her breasts. He ravished her mouth so thoroughly and completely that by the time he lifted his head to gaze down at her lustily a moment later, she was practically dizzy with desire. She wanted him so badly that she almost asked him to take her right there on the floor. But then the memory of those hands holding her own prisoner came unbidden to her mind once more. She yearned for him to do that again, for him to hold her captive. But this time maybe he could use more than just his hands.

Giving Gray a sexy look, she reached into her purse on the coffee table and pulled out a condom, then took his hand and led him up the stairs and into the bedroom. Once inside, she turned to look up at him from beneath lowered lashes.

“So,” she said, reaching out to toy with one of the buttons on his shirt. “Do you have your handcuffs with you?”

His golden brown eyes glinted in the darkened bedroom. “As a matter of fact, I do.”

She smiled. “Then how ’bout we play a game of good cop/bad girl,” she suggested in a husky voice. “What do you think?”

Gray chuckled, the sound a deep, sexy rumble that made her tummy flutter. “I think that if we’re going to play that game, then I’m going to have to frisk you first.”

Oooh, she liked the sound of that!

His hands slid underneath her T-shirt to glide over her curves. “Nope. Nothing here,” he announced.

Paisley caught her breath as his thumbs brushed across her satin-covered nipples. “You sure about that?” she said. “I could be carrying a concealed weapon.”

Gray’s mouth twitched. “Good point.”

In one smooth motion, Gray lifted her shirt over her head and sent it sailing across the room. A moment later, his hands were gliding up her midriff to cup her breasts. He teased her nipples through the silky fabric of her bra, making them harden to stiff peaks, and she arched her back with a soft moan. Gray must have taken that as an invitation because he reached around to undo the clasp of her bra. The material fell away easily, leaving her breasts bare, and he palmed them gently in his big hands. Once again, his fingers found her nipples and she gasped as he gave them a little squeeze.

He chuckled. “I think this is going to require a more complete and thorough search of your person,” he told her. “Which means it’s time for those handcuffs.”

A little shiver of excitement rippled through her, and Paisley felt her pulse quicken as Gray urged her onto the big bed. Lying back on the pillows, she placed her arms submissively over her head and watched breathlessly as he reached for his handcuffs. Though she liked to think she was adventurous when it came to sex, she had never tried bondage with a guy before. For some reason, though, there was just something so incredibly hot about the thought of being totally and completely under the handsome police inspector’s control.

He bent over her, the handcuffs dangling from one hand. Paisley gazed at them as if mesmerized, her breathing quickening. Above her, Gray paused, and she dragged herself away from the cuffs to find him gazing down at her. Could he see the excitement on her face? Was he as turned on by the thought of what they were about to do as she was? That notion only served to arouse her even more, and she squirmed on the bed, squeezing her

thighs together. If Gray didn't cuff her soon, she was going to reach her hand down and start touching herself!

As if reading her mind, Gray gently took one of her wrists and carefully snapped the cuff around it. Her pussy spasmed at the clicking sound it made as it locked in place, and she bit her lip to stifle a moan. *Mmm*. She should have given this bondage thing a try a long time ago.

Looping the other cuff through the headboard, Gray quickly secured her free wrist above her head. Unable to help herself, Paisley gave them an experimental tug and discovered that while she could move her hands around a little, she couldn't get them more than an inch or so away from the headboard.

Looking up at Gray, she gave him a sexy smile. "So, what now, Inspector?"

He returned her smile with a wicked grin of his own. "Now, I do that complete and very thorough search of your person I mentioned before."

As he spoke, Gray lowered his head and began to slowly kiss his way along the curve of her arm. While what he was doing with his mouth felt wonderful, it also tickled at the same time, and Paisley couldn't help but squirm. Handcuffed to the bed as she was, she couldn't go far, which only made the sensations that much more intense.

"Is this proper procedure, Inspector?" she asked in a breathy voice.

At the inside of her elbow, he stopped for a moment to lick and nibble at the sensitive skin there before answering. "Oh definitely," he said, his voice husky. "By the book, that's me."

She laughed as he continuing kissing his way down her arm. When he reached her shoulder, Paisley turned her head on the pillow, hoping he would lavish the same kind of attention on her neck. To her delight, Gray took the hint, pressing his lips to the sensitive skin there.

Paisley arched against him, tilting her head back even more as he began to trail light, little kisses along her jaw. She parted her lips in open invitation, but instead of covering her mouth with his the way she wanted him to, Gray teased her with feather-light kisses that made her tingle all over. She moaned and pulled at the cuffs, wanting to grab the back of his head and pull him down for a real kiss. Yet at the same time, part of her loved the teasing and wanted it to go on and on. Only after he had driven her completely wild did he finally capture her mouth for a thoroughly ravishing kiss. His tongue explored every part of her mouth and she couldn't get enough of him.

Then all at once, Gray broke the kiss to begin nibbling his way along the curve of her jaw and down her neck to her breasts. Cupping them in his hands, he closed his mouth over one of her nipples. He suckled on it gently, swirling his tongue round and around the peak with a methodical slowness. Paisley was sure that she would go mad from such exquisite torture, and yet when he finally lifted his head, she let out a little moan of protest. She sighed as she realized the only reason he had stopped lavishing such glorious attention on that nipple was so that he could do the same to its counterpart.

Releasing her breasts, he continued his exquisite exploration of her body, slowly kissing his way down her stomach to her belly button. Once there, he stopped to make teasing, little circles around the indentation with his tongue before dipping it inside. Paisley caught her breath at the sensation. Never had a man paid so much attention to that part of her anatomy before, but she had no idea it could be so erotic.

"Nope, no weapons concealed there," Gray announced as he moved lower.

Paisley forgot all about her belly button as he got closer and closer to the juncture of her thighs. She caught her bottom lip between her teeth, stifling a moan as he kissed her though the thin material of her panties. He really knew how to drive her wild!

And he didn't stop there. Hooking his fingers in her panties, he slowly slid them down her legs. Instead of licking her pussy right away like she thought he would, he kissed his way down her leg. His hair tickled her soft skin, making her shiver, and she caught her breath. What he was doing, while totally delicious, was also complete and utter torture, and she had to stifle another moan.

When Gray got to her feet, he slipped off her panties, then backed off the bed and stood, gazing down at her. Though not at all shy in front of him, Paisley felt herself blush nevertheless. Maybe it was the blatant desire in his dark eyes that made her face suffuse with color, she thought. Or maybe it was the fact that she was submissively lying there, handcuffed to the bed, completely exposed to his hungry gaze. The image of what she must look like suddenly made her tremble. She had no idea being submissive could be such a turn-on!

But while being naked and on display for such a hot guy was totally arousing, Paisley was impatient for Gray to join her in bed again. And from the bulge straining at the front of his jeans, he was just as excited.

Still gazing down at her, Gray shrugged out of his shoulder holster, and then made quick work of his clothes. Paisley watched breathlessly as his naked body came into view. She had never seen a guy so unbelievably hot. She could just lie there and look at him all night. On second thought, she decided, as he freed his hard cock from the confines of his jeans, making love was a much better idea.

Once he was naked, Gray crawled back onto the bed and starting at her ankle, slowly began kissing his way up the inside of her leg. Paisley almost groaned. He was bound and determined to tease her until she went completely mad, wasn't he? But as he got closer and closer to the juncture of her thighs, she realized that what he was doing only served to arouse her even more. In fact, she was so excited that she was sure she was going to scream in frustration if he didn't put his mouth where she so urgently needed it!

Gray must have read her mind, because after placing one more gentle kiss on the inside of her thigh, he cupped her ass in his hands and ran his tongue up the slick folds of her pussy. Paisley moaned and pulled at the cuffs holding her captive. The urge to grab his head and put his tongue exactly where she wanted it was almost too much to take. And yet the fact that she couldn't made what he was doing even that much better.

Once again, Gray must have known what she wanted because a moment later, she felt him place his warm mouth right over her clit. He flicked the sensitive nub with quick, light caresses before making lazy, little circles round and around it.

"Mmm, you taste so good, do you know that?" he asked, swiping her pussy with his tongue before focusing his attention on her clit again.

She arched against him with a moan, clutching at the wooden slat she was handcuffed to.

"Oh God, just like that," she breathed. "Don't stop!"

He slowed his movements, and for one wild moment, she was afraid he would go back to teasing her again, but then his grip on her ass cheeks tightened and he began to do that delicious, little circle-thing with his tongue again, only more firmly this time. The sensation was so incredibly intense that she wanted to scream, but her cries were trapped

in her throat as her orgasm began to build. It started right at her clit, and then gradually spread through her entire body until she was trembling all over.

She writhed beneath him, moving her head from side to side on the pillow and yanking at the cuffs that held her captive as she finally cried out in ecstasy. Gray only tightened his hold on her and continued to lap at her pussy. Then all at once, the pleasure became too much, too intense, and she wanted her hands free so that she could thread her fingers in his hair and pull his mouth away. But prisoner that she was, she could do nothing but ride the waves of her climax as one orgasm after another coursed through her body. Only when he had wrung every ounce of pleasure from her did Gray stop.

Afterward, all Paisley could do was lie there and try to catch her breath as he pressed a gentle kiss to the inside of her thigh. She had never been with a guy who was so talented with his tongue. After what Gray had done last night, she wasn't sure he could possibly top it, but the lick he'd just given her had to be absolutely the best oral sex she'd ever had in her life!

Pressing his lips to her inner thigh again, Gray kissed his way up her body and settled himself between her legs. His hard cock poised at the opening of her pussy, he braced himself on his forearms and gazed down at her for a moment before capturing her mouth in a searing kiss.

She could taste her pussy juices on him, a reminder of the orgasm he had just given her, and she murmured her approval against his mouth. As his tongue tangled with hers, he rubbed the head of his cock up and down her slit.

"Stop teasing me, Gray," Paisley begged him. "Please!"

At her words, Gray immediately stopped what he was doing and reached for the condom. A moment later, he slowly slid his cock into her wetness.

Paisley gasped against his mouth as she her pussy took him in. He was so big that he filled her completely, and she automatically wrapped her legs around him to pull him in even deeper. She would have wrapped her arms around him too, but the handcuffs made that impossible. That didn't mean she had to be completely submissive, she thought as she lifted her hips to meet his thrusts.

Gray made love to her slowly, sliding his cock all the way out of her pussy, and then back in again. With each thrust, she got closer and closer to another climax. Gray was right there with her, she was sure, but when she tried to urge him on with her hips, he continued his slow, easy rhythm.

She dragged her mouth away from his. "Harder," she demanded.

He obeyed her command, burying his face in the side of her neck as he began to pump harder. She swore she could feel his cock touching the very core of her being, and she almost wept with pleasure when his hoarse groans signaled that he was coming with her.

Afterward, he lay there on top of her, his breathing ragged. Yet, despite how obviously exhausted he was from their lovemaking, she could tell he was careful not to put all of his weight on her.

When he lifted his head a little while later, it was to kiss her tenderly on the mouth. "You're incredible, do you know that?" he said softly.

Paisley smiled up at him. "You're pretty incredible yourself. Now, wasn't this a lot more fun than that silly old baseball game?"

Gray chuckled and bent his head to kiss her again.

Chapter Four

Paisley blinked sleepily at the early morning sunlight streaming into the bedroom and snuggled closer to Gray. To her surprise, there was none of the regret she had felt yesterday morning when she awakened beside him. No matter how complicated sleeping with the handsome police inspector might make her life when they left the confines of the safe house, right now she was right where she wanted to be.

She smiled at the memory of last night's lovemaking. It was everything a *Cosmo* girl like her could want. Hot, spicy, and completely satisfying. Not to mention just a little bit kinky, she thought as she suppressed a giggle. Heck, if she had known how much fun a pair of handcuffs could be, she would have bought her own pair years ago!

Not wanting to disturb Gray if he were still sleeping, Paisley carefully lifted her head from his shoulder to look down at him. His eyes were closed and his head was turned toward her slightly. With his dark hair tousled and his rugged features free of the hard lines that were sometimes etched there, he looked younger and more carefree. He was definitely the kind of man she could get used to waking up next to.

Knowing she should let him sleep, but unable to help herself, she lifted her hand and gently brushed his hair back. Gray stirred at her touch, mumbling something unintelligible, and she leaned down to lightly touch her mouth to his. She had only intended to give him a little peck on the lips, but apparently he was more awake than she thought because he slid his hand in her hair, holding her head in place as he deepened the kiss. Letting out a little moan, she shifted on the bed so that she was laying half on top of him. She absolutely loved the feel of his body against hers. He must have liked the feel of her body just as much because he immediately began to press his morning hard-on against her thigh.

"Mmm, good morning to you, too," he murmured a moment later. "You can wake me up like that any time."

She laughed as she slid her hand up the inside of his thigh to caress his hard cock. "Looks like another part of you just woke up, too."

He groaned. "Your kisses tend to do that to me. Though I must admit, what you're doing with your hand right now is having quite the effect on me, too."

She smiled. "Well, if you like that, then you're going to love what I'm going to do next."

He chuckled. "Oh, really? And what exactly are you going to do next?"

Paisley didn't answer but instead gave him a sexy smile as she bent to trail a path of feather-light kisses along his square jaw and down the thick column of his neck. Though she was more than a little eager to get to where she was going, she forced herself to take her time and explore his body as thoroughly as he had explored hers the night before.

Shifting on the bed so that she was on her knees, she sat back on her heels and leaned forward to slowly kiss her way down his smooth chest. As she did so, her long hair fell over her shoulder to caress the muscles there and she looked up at him from beneath her long bangs as she flicked his nipple with her tongue. Gray followed the movement, his dark eyes intent. Wondering if his nipples were one of his erogenous zones, she took the little nub between her lips, suckling on it and was rewarded by a sharp intake of breath.

Smiling, she moved to his other nipple and ran her tongue over it once before drawing it into her mouth just like she had the first. As Gray sucked in another breath, she played with the idea of subjecting him to the same torture he had inflicted on her the night before, but then decided against it. Right now she had other things in mind.

Giving his nipple another teasing flick with her tongue, Paisley slowly kissed her way down his six-pack. His abs were a wall of solid muscle beneath her lips, and she let out a little sigh of appreciation as she ran her tongue over his skin. He must live at the gym when he was off duty. The image of him all hot and sweaty from one of his workouts was enough to make her moan. Eagerly pushing the blanket down with one hand, she followed the line of dark hair that ran from his belly button all the way down to the juncture of his thighs where his hard cock was waiting for her. Rising up, she sat back on her heels to admire his length. There wasn't a part of him that wasn't perfect.

"Well, don't stop now," Gray said.

She looked up to give him a sultry smile. "Don't worry. I'm just getting started."

Turning her attention back to his nether region, Paisley reached out to wrap her hand around the base of his thick cock, and then swooped down to take him all the way in her mouth in one smooth motion. As the head touched the very back of her throat, Gray let out a groan of approval. Despite the fact that her mouth was filled, she couldn't help but smile a little. She kind of figured he would like that.

Firmly holding his cock with one hand, she gently cupped his balls in the other as she slowly slid her mouth back up his rigid length. The temptation to take him all the way in her mouth again was almost too great to resist, but she decided she wanted to tease him a little more first. With that thought in mind, she ran the tongue over the head. As she did so, a glistening bead of pre-cum appeared at the tip, and she swiped her tongue over it with a moan. *Mmm*, he tasted delicious!

Suddenly impatient for more, Paisley closed her lips around the head of his cock and swirled her tongue over it.

"God, you're good at that," Gray breathed.

Paisley felt a surge of pride at his words. Holding onto him firmly, she began to slowly move her mouth up and down on his cock. She fell into an easy rhythm, careful to keep her movements slow and deliberate. She didn't want him coming too quickly, she told herself, as she ran her tongue along his shaft again. Every so often, she would take him deep in her mouth, which would elicit a deep groan from Gray. But she always went right back to the slow, gentle technique she had been doing with her tongue.

Her teasing must have been too much for him, though, because after several moments, he slid his hand into her hair so that he could control her movements. Perhaps she should have cuffed him to the bed before she started, Paisley thought with amusement. On second thought, she was glad she hadn't. She liked what he was doing way too much. The feel of his strong fingers firmly threaded in her hair really turned her on like crazy.

Paisley let him set the pace, obediently moving her mouth up and down a little faster than before.

"Oh yeah, baby, that's it," he said hoarsely. "I'm so damn close."

Gray was right on the edge, Paisley realized. She knew exactly what to do to send him over it.

She began to gently massage his balls in one hand, sliding the other up and down the

length of his cock in time with her mouth. Tightening her grasp on his shaft, repeating the up and down motion over and over. With each bob of her head, she took him deeper and deeper until his cock slid all the way down her throat. When her lips finally reached the very base of his shaft, Gray began to come. She moaned, reveling in the feel of his hot cum shooting into her mouth and down her throat. His hoarse groans echoed in her ears, evidence of how powerful his orgasm was.

Paisley would have continued to move her mouth up and down long after his climax was done, but Gray tightened his hand in her hair, holding her still. After a moment, he loosened his grip and she slowly slid her mouth off him. Running her tongue over her lips, she crawled back up the bed to snuggle up beside him.

“So,” she said, giving him a smile. “Did that make a good morning even better?”

Gray chuckled and turned his head on the pillow to look at her. “That’s a rhetorical question, right?”

Paisley laughed and leaned forward to kiss him. A moment later, she propped her head up on her hand and gazed down at him. “I know you’re going to think this is a perfect example of a woman jumping from one topic to another out of the blue, but a thought just occurred to me,” she said, running the forefinger of her other hand up and down his chest. “Other than the fact that you’re absolutely fantastic in bed, I just realized I don’t really know that much about you. Considering that we’re sleeping together, don’t you think I should know a few more personal details?”

His mouth twitched. “You’re right. That *is* a jump in topic that only a woman could come up with, but I see your point. There’s not that much to tell, though. You already know I’m a cop and that I moved down here from Seattle. What else do you want to know?”

She shrugged. “I don’t know. Just everyday boring things like what your favorite color is and what flavor ice cream you like best,” she said. “That kind of stuff.”

They were silly things, really, and Paisley suddenly felt embarrassed to even be asking. But even if her head knew they weren’t in a “relationship,” her heart still demanded that they go through all of the normal, if a little cheesy, romance routines. They *were* sleeping together, after all.

“Well,” Gray said, “to answer your first question, I’m not really sure I have a favorite color, but I like blue. At least, most of my clothes are that color. And I’m pretty sure that I have quite a few leftovers in my fridge that have turned that color.”

Paisley laughed. “Blue works for clothes, but I’m not sure about the food,” she agreed. “And your favorite flavor of ice cream?”

He grinned. “That’s easy. Chocolate.”

She laughed again. “Just plain chocolate? Nothing in it? No cookie dough? Or brownie chunks? Not even chocolate chips? Nothing at all?”

He shrugged. “Nope, just plain chocolate. I’m a simple guy. I always figure, why screw up a good thing.”

Paisley shook her head. “Now, if that’s not a typical man, I don’t know what is.” She thought for a minute. “How about brothers and sisters? Do you have any?”

Gray folded an arm beneath his head. “A sister.”

She nodded. “Does she live up in Seattle?”

“On Bainbridge Island, which is just across the Sound. My parents live out there, too.”

Paisley remembered hearing college her roommate mentioning that she had been to a wedding up there once, and that it was gorgeous. "I've heard the Pacific Northwest is beautiful."

His mouth edged up. "It is," he agreed. "Everything is so green and the mountains are just amazing. You can't look in any direction and not see them."

Her brow furrowed at the wistfulness in his tone. "So, why did you move then?"

He was silent for a moment. "Like I said before, I needed a change of scenery."

She stopped doodling on his chest to consider that. "Did it have to do with your job?"

He shook his head. "No. I loved working for the Seattle PD."

"If it wasn't your job, then what was it?" she prompted when he didn't offer any more details.

Gray hesitated again, as if he seemed to be contemplating just how much he wanted to divulge. "I was in a relationship that went to crap," he finally said. "It was just easier to get away than to deal with all the drama."

Paisley waited for him to say more, but he didn't. While a suddenly curious part of her longed for details, there was another part of her that was relieved he didn't offer any. For some reason she couldn't explain, the thought of the handsome police inspector with another woman made her claws come out.

"So," she said lightly, "is your father a cop, too?"

Beside her, she felt Gray's body relax at the change in subject. Apparently, he didn't want to talk about his ex-girlfriend any more than she did.

"He used to be, but he's retired now," Gray said. "Thirty years as a beat cop and proud of it."

She thought as much. Coming from a family of cops herself, at least on her father's side, she knew from experience that the call to duty was almost an inherited trait. She was just grateful her dad hadn't expected her to want to go into law enforcement. She so wasn't cop material.

"What about you?" Gray asked. "Did you grow up in San Francisco?"

"In Sausalito, actually," she laughed. "But my friends and I spent so much time down here that I might as well have. We practically lived at the Embarcadero Center when we were teens."

He chuckled at that. "So, how did you start writing for the *Bay Beat*?"

She shrugged. "I was a communications major in college, when I discovered halfway through my junior year that reporting the news was depressing. I didn't want to change majors, though, so I did some research and realized that just because I had a degree in communications didn't mean I had to spend my life making a living off other people's misery. I still had to work my way up, even at the *Bay Beat*, of course, but when I heard they were looking for someone to take over the feature on the clubs in the area, I jumped at the chance. Fortunately, the editor liked me, so she gave me a shot."

Gray toyed with a lock of her hair that was resting on his chest. "You sound like you enjoy what you do."

She nodded. "I do," she said, then smiled. "I mean, I'd go to the clubs anyway, so why not get paid for it, right?"

He returned her grin and probably would have commented on what she had said, but just then her stomach gave a very embarrassing growl.

Paisley gave him a sheepish look, her face coloring. "I guess we should get up and have breakfast."

"Probably," Gray agreed. "But first," he added, pushing himself up on an elbow to kiss her gently on the mouth. "I think I should thank you for that wonderful blowjob you gave me."

Without giving her a chance to reply, Gray pushed back the blanket and began to slowly kiss his way down her body. As his dark head settled between her legs, Paisley could only let out a little sigh. *Oh yeah, breakfast can definitely wait.*

* * * *

As it turned out, they didn't actually get downstairs for another two hours. It seemed that licking her pussy got Gray all hard again, not to mention got Paisley all hot and bothered all over again too, which resulted in another round of mind-blowing sex for both of them. Then, after that, she and Gray decided to take a shower together. One thing had led to another and before she knew it, Gray had her bent forward with her hands on the tiled wall and was taking her from behind. She couldn't remember wanting a man so much. It was as if she couldn't seem to get enough of Gray. Even now, as she leaned with her hip against the counter watching him make pancakes at the stove, all she could think about was having him inside her again.

Feeling her pussy moisten at the thought, Paisley sipped her coffee and forced herself to focus on something else. Like the pancakes Gray was making.

Not much of a cook herself, she had balked at the idea when he suggested having them for breakfast. At the look on her face, however, he had merely chuckled, given her a wink, and told her he would make them. That announcement had surprised her, but after watching him mix the batter, then ladle perfectly round pancakes on the skillet, she had to admit he certainly knew his way around the kitchen.

"You're pretty good at that cooking thing," she said as he flipped one of the pancakes. Damn, every time she ever tried doing that, the pancake had stuck to the pan and made a big gooey mess. Gray didn't seem to have that problem.

He gave her a grin as he removed the cooked pancakes from the skillet and set them on a plate. "I worked in a diner when I was in college. Pancakes were one of my specialties."

Paisley reached out to tear off a small piece from the topmost one and popped it into her mouth. "I can see why. These are delicious." She tore off another piece, this one a little bigger. "You don't even need syrup. Well, maybe just a little," she added, picking up the bottle and pouring some onto the plate.

Not bothering with a fork, Paisley simply dipped the piece of pancake into the syrup and brought it to her mouth. As she did, some of the syrup ran down her fingers, but the pancake tasted so good that she barely even noticed.

"*Mmm*," she moaned.

Gray glanced at her as he finished transferring the remaining pancakes onto the plate. Turning off the stove, he set the spatula down on the counter to grin at her. Taking her hand in his, he brought her fingers to his mouth. Then, gazing hotly into her eyes, he slowly and methodically began to lick every trace of syrup from them.

Paisley's pulse quickened as she watched him run his tongue along the length of her finger, and then gently draw it into his mouth. As he suckled on it, her pussy spasmed in

pleasure, and she let out a moan as he slowly slid that finger out to do the same to the one beside it. She had no idea her fingers were so sensitive!

Once he had licked her fingers completely clean of syrup, Gray lowered her hand and took a step closer. "Looks like I missed a spot," he said softly.

Before she could even wonder where else she had managed to dribble syrup, Gray bent his head and ran his tongue along her bottom lip. The pancakes forgotten, Paisley put her arms around his neck and parted her lips beneath his. He tasted of coffee and the syrup he'd just licked off her fingers, and something else she couldn't quite put a name to, but the combination was like a drug to her senses.

With a groan, Gray slid his hands underneath her T-shirt. His fingers were warm against her skin, and Paisley sighed against his mouth. She was well on her way to another trip to happy-land when an annoying sound in the background distracted her. It took her a moment to realize it was a cell phone ringing, and though she was all set to ignore it, Gray was already lifting his head.

"Is that yours?" she asked.

"Yours, I think," he let out a sigh. "You'd better get it. It could be your father. We don't want him freaking out if you don't answer."

Paisley echoed his sigh with one of her own. As much as she wanted to ignore the caller, Gray was right. If it were her father and he got no answer, he'd have every cop in San Francisco at the safe house in ten minutes.

Reluctantly pulling out of Gray's arms, she padded into the living room and over to the overstuffed chair. Picking up her purse, she took out her cell and flipped it open.

"Hello?"

"Did you really think I wouldn't be able to find you, Paisley?"

The man's deep voice was unfamiliar and Paisley's hand tightened around the phone. "Who is this?" she asked, her own voice trembling.

"You *know* who this is," he said. "You should also know you can't get away from me that easily. I always know where you are and right now it's in that light blue house on Seaward Street. It was foolish of you to even try and hide from me. There's no way you'll ever get away from me."

The words made Paisley go cold. She swallowed hard and nervously glanced over at the windows, relieved to see that the curtains were drawn. She took one step back, and then another, edging closer to the kitchen.

"Why are you doing this?"

"Because I love you, Paisley," the caller said. "And because we belong together."

Still holding onto the phone, Paisley whirled around and hurried into the kitchen. Gray was just getting out knives and forks from the drawer beside the dishwasher, but at the look on her face, he went still.

"It's him," she said, mouthing the words as she covered the phone with her hand.

"It's the stalker."

Gray's eyes narrowed. Dropping the utensils back in the drawer, he held out his hand for the phone and Paisley immediately handed it over to him.

"Listen to me, you sick bastard," Gray said into the phone. "We're going to find out who the hell you are, and when we catch you, you're going to be sorry you were ever born."

Paisley chewed on her lower lip, waiting anxiously to see what the stalker was going

to say to that. But to her consternation, Gray swore under his breath and snapped the phone closed.

“Bastard hung up,” he muttered. “What did he say to you? Did you recognize his voice?”

She ran a hand through her hair, trying to remember the stalker’s exact words as she answered Gray’s second question first. “I definitely didn’t recognize his voice. It sounded strange, like it was filtered or something.”

Gray nodded. “Okay. So, what did he say to you?”

She wrapped her arms around herself. “He knows the address of this house and that I’m here,” she said softly. “The crazy psycho also said he loved me and that I’ll never get away from him.”

“Shit,” Gray said. “Go pack your things. I’m getting you out of here.”

Paisley hesitated, wanting to know where they were going to go, but Gray had already pulled out his cell phone and begun dialing. Abruptly, she realized that she didn’t care where they were going. She just knew that Gray would keep her safe.

Chapter Five

As he waited for the call to connect, Gray walked into the living room to stand at the bottom of the steps. From his position, he not only had a clear view of the entire downstairs, but was also close enough to get to Paisley if she needed him. How the hell had that asshole found them?

"McCoy," said a man's voice on the other end of the line.

"It's Beckham," Gray said. "The stalker found us."

The captain swore. "How the fuck is that possible? Is Paisley okay?"

Gray nodded. "She's fine."

"How do you know he found you?" the captain asked, sounding calmer now.

"The bastard just called Paisley on her cell phone and gave her the address to the safe house," Gray answered. "We need to move her."

There was silence on the other end of the line for a moment. "It'll take me a while to get another safe house set up. In the meantime, I'll send a couple of uniforms over to back you up."

"Actually, I have another idea," Gray said, glancing up the stairs to see Paisley coming down. "My family has a cabin up in the mountains. It's hardly ever used and no one knows about it."

More silence as Ted McCoy considered the suggestion. "I don't know," he said. "I'm not sure I like the idea of you two being in the middle of nowhere. A safe house in the city would work better."

"I don't know about that," Gray said. "The only way this psycho could have known where we are is if there's a leak in the department."

"I find that hard to believe," Captain McCoy argued.

"I know you don't want to believe it, but there's no other explanation." Gray had known that theory wasn't going to go over real well with his boss, but it was the only way he could think to explain how Paisley's stalker could have found them. "It's possible someone could have leaked the information accidentally, Captain," Gray told the man. "But if it happened once, it could happen again."

On the other end of the line, McCoy's sigh was heavy. "Maybe you're right," he said. "Let me talk to Paisley."

Gray held out his cell to Paisley. "Your father wants to talk to you."

Wordlessly, she put the phone to her ear. "Hey, Dad," she said. "No, I'm fine. No, I didn't recognize it." She was silent for a moment as she listened to her father. Then her gaze went to Gray. "I trust Gray, Dad. If he thinks this cabin of his is the safest place to go, then I'm okay with going up there."

Her words warmed Gray. The fact that Paisley obviously trusted him to keep her safe made him feel good inside. He wouldn't let her down.

Paisley held out the phone. "He wants to talk to you again."

Gray put the phone to his ear. "Captain."

"I want you to call me when you two get up to the cabin," the other man said. "And I want you checking in with me twice a day."

"Will do," Gray said.

They spoke for several more minutes before Gray hung up. "Are you all packed?" he asked Paisley.

She nodded. "But the suitcases were too heavy to carry down." She chewed on her lower lip. "Do you really think we'll be safe at your family's cabin?"

Gray reached out to gently brush her hair back from her face. "Safer than we are in the city, that's for sure," he said. "There's no way he can find us up there." He brushed his mouth with hers. "Come on. Let's go get those suitcases."

When they came back down, Paisley eyed the front door nervously. "What if he's out there?" she said.

"I'll go first," Gray told her. "You stay right behind me."

She still looked nervous at the idea of going outside, but nodded. She stayed beside him while they made their way out to the curb. As he loaded their luggage into the Jeep, he scanned the street for anyone suspicious, but nothing looked out of place. Even so, he made sure to keep his hand on his Sig as he quickly ushered Paisley into the passenger seat.

While he hadn't seen anyone watching the house, that didn't mean the stalker wasn't nearby, so instead of taking a direct route out of the city, Gray drove around downtown for a while to make sure no one was following them before heading north via the Golden Gate Bridge. Every once in a while, his gaze flicked to the rearview, but he didn't see anything to make him think they were being followed.

"How far is the cabin?" Paisley asked abruptly. It was the first time she had spoken since they'd left the safe house.

Gray gave her a sidelong glance. She had her hands clasped tightly in her lap. "A couple of hours," he told her.

She nodded. "Do you really think this psycho won't be able to find us there?"

"Not unless he manages to follow us," he assured her as he glanced at the mirror again.

"How can you be sure he won't?" she asked. "We don't know what he looks like or what kind of car he drives."

Gray reached across the console to take her hand in his. "It doesn't matter what he looks like or what kind of car he drives. Once we get out of the city, we'll be able to see if anyone's following us."

"Oh," was all she said.

He thought a moment. "Paisley, if you'd feel better going to another safe house instead of the cabin, we can still do that if you want. Your father can park some squad cars outside; maybe even bring in another inspector."

Her brow furrowed. "But you think the cabin would be better, right?"

He nodded. "Yeah, but I want you to feel safe, so if you'd rather not go to the cabin, we'll stay at another safe house instead."

Paisley shook her head. "It's not where we stay that makes me feel safe, it's you, Gray. If you think we should go to the cabin, then that's where we should go."

Her words made Gray's protective instinct kick in even harder, and he squeezed her hand tightly. "I won't let anything happen to you, Paisley. I promise."

She gave him a small smile. "I know."

Paisley looked so small and vulnerable sitting there that it was all Gray could do not to pull over to the side of the road right then and take her in his arms. He couldn't bear

the thought of that bastard getting his hands on her, couldn't bear the thought of her being hurt. How was it possible to come to care for someone so much in so short a time? He'd only known Paisley for two days and yet it seemed like she had become the most important thing in the world to him. She wasn't just a woman he'd been assigned to protect. It had gone way beyond that now.

They drove in silence for the next hour or so, Paisley gazing out the window while Gray alternated between checking the rearview to make sure they weren't being tailed and trying to figure out exactly what it was he felt for his captain's daughter. No matter what kind of spin he tried to put on it, there was no denying his feelings for her. Could he have really fallen in love with her in just two short days? Just the idea of it seemed crazy, and though he tried to tell himself it was just the situation they found themselves in, his gut told him differently.

Wondering when he had gotten so introspective, Gray stopped exploring his feelings and concentrated on driving. About an hour out from the cabin, he suddenly remembered there was no food up at the cabin. They couldn't call for pizza out there in the middle of nowhere, so he decided to stop at the next town they came to.

When he pulled into the parking lot of the small grocery store, Paisley looked at him curiously, but then laughed when he told her it was either they pick up some groceries or go fishing in the nearby lake every morning. Pleased he'd been able to make her laugh and take her mind off the stalker, Gray slipped his arm around her waist as they walked into the store.

While Gray would have been content to live on red meat and junk food the whole time they were at the cabin, Paisley seemed obsessed with this whole idea of a balanced diet. So while he pushed the cart through the aisles, she loaded it with various fruits, vegetables, and some really healthy-looking whole grain stuff.

"And what food group are those in?" he teased when she tossed a bag of M and M's into the shopping cart.

She grinned. "The chocolate group. The FDA just added it recently. You really need to keep up on your health news."

He chuckled. "I'll remember that when we go down the chip n' dip aisle."

As they were heading to the check-out counter, Gray made a quick detour to the pharmacy section and grabbed a box of condoms. He threw it in the cart and was about to start walking again when he decided to pick up a second box. Could never have too much protection, he thought.

An hour and a half later, they were carrying the groceries they bought into the cabin. Paisley set one of the bags down on the kitchen counter to look around in amazement. He could tell she was impressed by the light, airy, modern feel of the place. While it was technically a cabin, it definitely wasn't the typical exposed-logs-and-wooden-furniture dwelling that usually came to mind. The living room filled the whole front of the house with floor-to-ceiling windows and had a graceful arching ceiling. The kitchen was modern and the bedrooms were built to be spacious and relaxing.

"When you said we were going to be staying at a cabin, I pictured something a little more rustic," she said.

Gray chuckled as he set the grocery bags down on the counter. "If my father had had his way, it probably would be," he told her. "My father likes to go camping, but my mother hates everything that goes along with it, so they compromised. This way, he can

hang in the great outdoors while she has all the comforts of home.”

Paisley laughed. “She sounds like my kind of woman!”

While she put the groceries away, Gray brought in their suitcases. As he set them in the bedroom, he couldn’t help but wonder again why Paisley had packed so many clothes. If he had his way, she would spend the whole time in bed naked. An image of her lying beneath him, her perfect breasts pressed against his chest, her long legs wrapped around him while he pumped into her sweet pussy flashed into his head, and he let out a groan.

Gray went back out into the living room to find Paisley standing on the back deck gazing out at the lake. Crossing the room, he walked outside to stand beside her.

“It’s beautiful up here,” she said.

He reached out to tuck her long, dark hair behind her ear. “Yeah, it is,” he agreed.

She laughed and ducked her head. “I was talking about the view.”

“So was I,” he told her, bending his head to kiss her on the mouth.

Paisley parted her lips beneath his, her arms going around his neck to pull him close. She tasted so sweet that he would have picked her up in his arms and carried her into the bedroom right then if she hadn’t pulled away with an embarrassed giggle. Confused, Gray frowned, but then let out a chuckle of his own when her stomach growled again, even more loudly this time.

“Grocery shopping always makes me hungry,” she said.

He grinned. “I’m pretty hungry myself. How ’bout I grill some steaks?”

“Sounds good,” she smiled. “I’ll make a salad.”

As they worked together in the kitchen a few minutes later, Gray realized it had been a long time since he had done something as simple as make dinner with a woman, and he had to admit it felt good. The reality was that he hadn’t gotten involved with anyone since splitting up with his ex-girlfriend because he hadn’t wanted to go down that road again. To say things had gotten ugly with Lisa was putting it mildly. In the beginning, she thought his job was sexy, had even gotten a little turned on by the fact that he was a cop. Then reality had intruded in the form of stakeouts, hostage standoffs, and late nights, and suddenly, being a cop wasn’t sexy anymore.

Gray had understood Lisa’s fears and spent hours on end trying to reassure her that he took every precaution when he was on duty. That hadn’t been enough for her and eventually she had finally come out and told him she wanted him to quit the force. As cliché as it sounded, being a cop was in his blood, and he wasn’t about to give it up. That had only resulted in an argument, with him once again reassuring his ex, and Lisa telling him she could handle being a cop’s girlfriend, only to freak out the next time he had to pull a double-shift on a stakeout. Things had gotten so bad he started pulling double-shifts just so that he wouldn’t have to go back to the apartment he shared with her. That hadn’t helped the situation and finally, after a knock-down, drag-out fight, he and Lisa had called it quits. By that time, though, the drama had just gotten to be too much and Gray had wanted a change of scenery. Hence the transfer to the SFPD.

Glancing over at Paisley as he put the steaks on the grill, Gray couldn’t help but wonder if things would be different with someone like her. Having a father on the force, she could probably understand what it meant to go out with a cop. Which hopefully meant she could handle his job and everything that went along with it.

That thought brought him to a screeching halt. Since when had he started thinking

about Paisley McCoy in the future tense? *Since you first saw her sitting in the captain's office.* And the more time he spent with her, the stronger the feeling got.

"Those steaks almost ready?" Paisley asked, walking across the deck to stand beside him.

Gray nodded. "Just about."

She smiled. "Good, because I'm starving."

As Paisley leaned against the wooden railing, Gray thought again about how easy it would be to get used to having her around.

"So," Paisley said, as she poured dressing on her salad ten minutes later. "Did you and your family come here a lot on vacation?"

"Every summer. I haven't been here since high school, though. My parents still come down occasionally, and my sister and her family have been here a couple of times, I think." He speared a piece of steak with his fork. "What about you? Where did you go on vacation as a kid?"

She shrugged. "Usually down to San Diego to see my grandparents. A couple of times, we went to Aspen to go skiing. That was really fun." Her lips curved into a smile. "I remember one time I met this really cute boy on the slopes. I was like fifteen or sixteen, I think, and he asked me to go to a party at one of the ski lodges. It took some begging on my part and a lot of help from my mom to get my dad to agree. Even then, I thought he was going to frisk the poor kid when he came to pick me up."

Gray chuckled. He could just imagine Ted McCoy doing that.

"It didn't turn out to be anything more than a fun first date, but as you can see, my father hasn't changed much," Paisley continued. "I'm twenty-eight now and he still thinks I'm fifteen. Even before this whole thing started with the stalker, he had a patrol car driving by my apartment all hours of the day and night."

"Like I said before, it's in a father's job description to worry."

She made a face. "I know. And I know he means well. It's just that I wish I had a sister or two so he could divide his over-protectiveness between us or something."

Gray laughed again. From there, the conversation went from what kind of movies they both liked to other ordinary mundane things. As they talked, he was amazed at how much they had in common. She even knew who had directed his favorite movie, *Night of the Living Dead*. Not only that, but she actually enjoyed it, too. That was almost enough to make him want to ask her to marry him right then and there!

While the cabin might have all the comforts of home, it didn't have a dishwasher, so after dinner, he washed while Paisley dried. Even doing that with her was fun.

"I just noticed," she said when they'd finished up, "there's no television, is there?"

Gray gave her a sexy grin as he tossed the dishtowel down on the counter. "Nope. But I'm sure we can find some way to amuse ourselves," he said, bending to nuzzle her neck.

She laughed. "I'm sure. Like play cards."

He pulled back to look at her in confusion. "Cards?"

She nodded. "I think I saw some in one of the drawers when I was looking for the matches earlier."

Before Gray could stop her, Paisley slipped out of his arms and walked over to the other side of the kitchen. Pulling open the topmost drawer, she reached inside and came out with a deck of playing cards.

“I’m warning you, I’m a mean poker player.” She gave him a grin as she walked over to the kitchen table and sat down.

She was up to something, Gray thought. But he’d play along. “I think I can hold my own,” he told her.

Paisley took the cards out of the pack and began to shuffle them. “Do you?” she said, and then added, “Oh, grab the M and M’s, would you? We need something to bet with.”

To Gray’s surprise, Paisley was actually a pretty good poker player, and after about thirty minutes, they were about even.

“This is fun,” Paisley said, as she popped one of her winnings into her mouth. “But you know what would be even more fun?”

Gray’s mouth twitched. He could think of several things and all of them involved her getting naked. “What’s that?” He glanced at her as he shuffled the cards.

She leaned forward to give him a sultry look. “Strip poker.”

He paused in the act of shuffling to look across the table at her. Inside his jeans, his cock was already getting hard. He gave her a slow, sexy grin. “I like the sound of that.”

She sat back in her chair and reached for another M and M. “I thought you might.”

While they had been evenly matched when they were playing for candy, the cards now seemed to favor Gray. Something he didn’t mind at all. Going by the sultry look Paisley was giving him as she stood up to unbutton her jeans, she didn’t mind, either. In fact, he was beginning to think she was enjoying the slow striptease she was putting on.

Gray felt his breath catch as she slowly wiggled her jeans over her hips and down her long, shapely legs. God, she had a gorgeous body. He was tempted to say to hell with the rest of the game and take her right there on the kitchen table, but then decided that the anticipation was half the fun. Besides, she only had on a few pieces of clothing left. If he kept winning, she would be naked in no time.

As luck would have it, Paisley won the next several hands. While taking off his clothes wasn’t nearly as much fun as watching her strip, he had to admit that he liked the way her eyes settled on his bare chest when he shrugged out of his shirt.

“A couple more hands and I win the game,” Paisley said as he shuffled the cards.

“Feeling a little bit cocky, are we?” Gray’s mouth edged up as he flicked a card across the table to her.

She grinned. “I prefer to think of it as confident.”

Gray only chuckled as he dealt the rest of the cards. While his hand wasn’t great, his pair of jacks was better than what Paisley had, and he got to sit back and watch as she slowly took off her T-shirt. The snug-fitting top hadn’t left much to the imagination to begin with, but as her satin-covered breasts came into view, he couldn’t stifle a groan.

Having Paisley sitting there in nothing but a sexy bra and a pair of skimpy bikini panties wreaked as much havoc on his concentration as his cock, and Gray was glad it was her turn to deal. As it was, he was so distracted that he almost completely missed the full house she gave him.

That was more than enough to beat Paisley’s measly pair of queens and she was once again forced to take off another piece of clothing. Very slowly, she reached behind with both hands to undo the clasp of her bra, and as her perfect, pink-tipped breasts spilled free of their satin cups, all he could do was stare. She was absolutely flawless.

Reaching for the deck of cards, Gray shuffled them slowly. One hand and she would be totally and completely naked, he told himself.

As Paisley picked up her cards, a little smile curved her lips, making Gray think he had given her a really good hand. *Great*. All he had were a pair of fours. Discarding the rest, he glanced at Paisley to see her place one card down on the table. That meant she was either looking for a flush or a straight. Giving her a card, he took three for himself that when added to the cards already in his hand still only gave him a pair of fours.

"So, let's see what you have," Paisley said, smiling at him.

Gray placed his cards face-up on the table. "A pair of fours."

She gazed at the cards thoughtfully for a minute before laying down her own cards. Gray stared at the mismatched hand. I'll be damned, he thought. She had absolutely nothing.

Paisley lifted her eyes to his. "I guess that means you win," she said softly.

He grinned. "Guess so."

Getting to her feet, she stepped away from the table and slipping her thumbs in the waistband of her skimpy panties, slowly pushed them over her hips and down her legs.

Gray let out a groan of appreciation. He'd never seen a more perfect woman.

Tossing her tiny scrap of panties onto the pile with the rest of her clothes, Paisley slowly walked over to him, her hips swaying provocatively as she did so.

"Actually," she cooed as she eyed the bulge in his jeans. "I think we both win."

Giving him a sexy smile, Paisley knelt down on the floor between his legs. As she tugged at his belt, her fingers brushed his abs and Gray sucked in a breath. Damn, he was so worked up, he was about to explode already. And she hadn't even touched him yet!

From the smile playing on the corners of Paisley's delectable mouth, she knew it, too. It was as though she enjoyed torturing him, he thought as he watched her slowly undo the buttons on his 501 jeans. Though he didn't know how he did it, he forced himself to wait patiently as she slipped one button after another through its hole. When she got to the bottom, however, his control slipped and he eagerly shoved down his jeans and pushed them out of the way.

Paisley only smiled at his eagerness as she ran her fingers up his well-muscle thighs and wrapped a hand around the base of his hard cock. Looking at him from beneath lowered lashes, she leaned forward and slowly ran her tongue up the entire length of his shaft before taking the head in her mouth.

As her long hair fell over her shoulder to brush his legs, Gray leaned back in his chair with a groan. Her mouth was so warm. And soft. But firm at the same time, he thought, as she moved up and down on him. *Damn, she was talented at doing this*. He let out another groan as she gently cupped his balls in her other hand.

"Oh yeah, baby," he breathed. "Just like that."

Paisley moaned and ran her tongue over the tip of his cock before moving her mouth up and down again. She fell into an easy rhythm, taking him a little deeper each time until he could feel the head of his shaft press against the back of her throat.

Gray sucked in a breath. *Daaaaaaaammnn!*

Afraid he would shoot his load right then, he instinctively slid his hand into her long hair, thinking to slow her down. Paisley must have sensed how close he was to coming because she was already moving her mouth back up his cock. He kept his hand buried in her hair, gently guiding her up and down.

As disciplined as he liked to think he was, her mouth felt too incredible for Gray to hold back much longer. With a groan, he tightened his grip in her hair.

“I’m close,” he said hoarsely. “And I want to be inside you when I come.”

Paisley didn’t need any more encouragement. Running her tongue over her lips in a move that made him groan all over again, she got to her feet and dashed over to the coffee table for a condom.

Coming back over, she tore open the packet and slowly rolled the condom over his rock-hard shaft. Then, holding onto his shoulders, she straddled his lap so that she was poised above his cock. Gray put his hands on her slender waist, guiding her into position as she slowly sat down on him. Her pussy was hot and tight, and Gray let out another groan.

Sliding a hand in his hair, Paisley tilted his head back, her mouth coming down possessively on his. As their tongues met, she began to ride up and down on him. Gray reached around to cup her ass firmly in both hands, automatically taking charge of her movements. Something Paisley didn’t seem to mind, if the moan she let out was any indication. Or maybe she just liked having her ass cheeks squeezed. That thought suddenly conjured up images of her being over his knee while he had spanked her the other night, and he groaned against her mouth.

Paisley began to move faster, her pussy squeezing his cock each time she came down on his lap. Gray had the fleeting thought that he should slow her down, telling himself that he was going to come right then if he didn’t. It was hopeless. He’d been teetering on the edge for what seemed like hours already and when she dragged her mouth away from his to cry out with pleasure, he knew there was no holding back anymore. Gripping her hips, he lifted his own to meet them in one hard thrust that had him emptying himself inside of her with a hoarse groan. Paisley was right there with him, throwing her head back and letting out a scream of pleasure as she came.

Afterward, Gray wrapped his arms around her and pulled her close as she collapsed against his chest. They stayed that way for a long time, his cock pleasantly inside of her. He would have been just fine spending the rest of the night like that, but his little buddy between his legs decided that if he was going to stay sheathed in her wetness, then they might as well go for round two.

As she felt him harden inside of her, Paisley moaned. A moment later, she lifted her head to give him a smile. “Time to try out one of those bedrooms, you big stud.”

Gray scooped her up in his arms with a chuckle. He couldn’t agree more.

Chapter Six

Calling Paisley that morning had been a really stupid idea, he told himself as he stared up at the ceiling. But he had needed to hear her voice, needed to know if she was okay, needed to let her know that he was close by. But he should have known better than to try to talk to her with that asshole inspector around. When he had realized who she was talking to, Beckham had probably grabbed the phone out of her hand. It had taken all of his willpower not to reply when the other man had started acting tough. But it would have done no good. As it was, the bastard had taken his precious Paisley from the safe house and moved her to God only knew where. All because he had called to talk to her.

He picked up the pillow beside the one he was lying on and held it to his nose, inhaling deeply. It smelled like Paisley and he closed his eyes as he felt his cock stiffen in his pants. Being in her apartment was stupid, he knew. Even more stupid than calling her had been. Not to mention damn risky. But he needed to be close to her. Besides, being in her bed helped him think.

Where the hell had Beckham taken Paisley? Another safe house was the most logical place, but a gut feeling told him that they had gone somewhere else. If that were true, then how was he ever going to find them? He could spend weeks searching for them in a city the size of San Francisco, and they weren't likely to come out of hiding until any perceived threat was neutralized.

Of course! Why hadn't he thought of it before?

Holding Paisley's pillow in the crook of his arm, he took a stick of gum from his pocket with his other hand. Unwrapping it, he stuck it into his mouth and began to chew slowly, his mind formulating a plan. If he handled things just right, his beloved Paisley would be back in her own bed by the end of the week.

* * * *

Paisley let out a sigh of contentment as she gazed out at the lake the next morning. *It was so beautiful up here in the mountains.* She had never considered herself the outdoor type, but she couldn't imagine a more perfect getaway. Or a more perfect guy to get away with.

Her lips curved into a smile as she thought of Gray. She had never known a man quite like him. Not only was he totally gorgeous and great in bed, but he was kind and smart and funny, too. Simply put, he was everything she wanted in a man. If there weren't some psycho stalker after her, she probably would never have given Gray the time of day because of that silly rule she had about not dating cops.

Behind her, Paisley heard the sliding door open, and then close. A moment later, she felt Gray's strong arms slip around her waist, and she leaned back against him with a sigh. He was only wearing a pair of pajama bottoms and she could feel every outline of hard muscle through the short robe she had on.

"Did my dad say if they had any leads yet?"

Gray rested his cheek against her hair. "Not yet. The call to your cell came from a

pay phone, so nothing there. And CSI hasn't found anything at Hannigan's apartment, either. But we'll get him, sweetheart. I promise you."

Paisley snuggled her arms around his, encouraging him to pull her even closer. "I know," she said.

They stood like that for a moment, neither one of them saying anything as they gazed out at the lake, but then Paisley spoke again.

"It's so peaceful here," she said softly. "I feel like nothing and no one can hurt me."

Gray's arms tightened around her. "They can't. You're safe here." He pressed a kiss to her hair.

She turned in his arms to gaze up at him. "I'm sorry I was such a pain that first night at my apartment. I know you were only trying to do your job."

His mouth quirked as he reached up to brush her hair back from her face. "Don't worry about it. But since you're apologizing, I suppose I should, too. I shouldn't have spanked you like that."

Paisley felt her face color at the mention of the spanking he'd given her. Dammit, why did she blush so much around him?

"Probably not," she agreed. Since he'd brought it up, it was the perfect opportunity to tell him exactly what she thought about it. She looked up at him from beneath her long bangs. "Though it was kind of a turn-on."

Gray lifted a brow, clearly surprised by her words. "Really?"

She ran her hands up his bare chest to loop her arms around his neck. Beneath the pajama bottoms he wore, he was already hard. "In fact, I was thinking that maybe we could do it again sometime," she said, and then added, "Well, without all the drama, I mean."

His arms went around her as he studied her face. "So you like having that cute little bottom of yours reddened, huh?"

She felt her pulse quicken at the suggestion. "I didn't actually know I did until you spanked me the other night. I've never had a guy do that before."

At her admission, something flickered in his golden brown eyes for a moment, but it disappeared too quickly for her to figure out what it was. Before she could wonder about it further, however, Gray bent his head and covered her mouth with his. The kiss was tender and yet possessive at the same time, his mouth exploring hers with a thoroughness that left her dizzy. She kissed him back with the same passion, her tongue eagerly tangling with his.

When Gray lifted his head a moment later, Paisley expected him to scoop her up in his strong arms and carry her inside, or to at least take her hand and pull her in that direction, but he surprised her by tugging the tie on her belt free.

Her eyes went wide. "*Here?*"

He chuckled softly. "I don't think the squirrels and the deer will mind."

Paisley couldn't help but laugh. She supposed he was right. The idea of making love with him out there on the deck was incredibly exciting, she decided, as Gray pushed the robe off her shoulders. It slid down her arms to pool at her bare feet, leaving her naked except for a pair of black bikini panties.

Gray reached out to tenderly cup a breast in each hand. Her nipples immediately went taut with anticipation, and she let out a little sigh of pleasure when she felt him begin to gently roll them back and forth between his fingers and thumbs. She ran her

hands up his arms to grab onto his biceps, loving the way the muscles there bunched beneath her fingers as he played with her breasts.

"Do you like that?" he asked.

"Yes," she breathed.

"What about this?" He bent to take one of her nipples in his mouth.

Paisley could only gasp as he suckled gently on the aching peak. She slid her hand up his arm and over his shoulder to thread her fingers into his dark hair, holding him in place. Gray complied, drawing the taut little nub even further into his mouth before swirling his tongue round and around the sensitive tip.

Just when Paisley thought she couldn't take any more, he released that nipple to show some love to its twin, taking the stiff peak into his mouth and lavishing it with the same glorious attention. God, that felt amazing!

But all too soon, Gray lifted his head from her breasts. Paisley gazed up at him, torn between begging him to go back to what he was doing and wanting to see what pleasure he was about to treat her to next.

"So," he said softly. "Are you ready for that spanking?"

The word 'spanking' made Paisley's already wildly racing pulse skip a beat, and she could only nod her head.

She expected Gray to sit down on one of the outdoor chairs and guide her over his knee like he'd done the other night at her apartment, but again he surprised her. Kissing her on the mouth, he gently spun her around so that her back was to him. Slipping an arm around her waist, he pulled her back against him and bent his head to press his lips to the curve of her neck. His other hand glided over the curve of her hip to cup her panty-covered bottom, and she let out a little moan as he gave her ass a firm squeeze.

Paisley waited breathlessly for the spanking to begin, but instead, Gray just lightly caressed her ass as he nuzzled her neck. *This man should have a PhD in getting women hot and bothered*, she thought, as he gave her bottom another squeeze.

But then without warning, Gray lifted his hand and brought it down on her ass with a smack. While it didn't really sting, it did startle her a little and she gasped in surprise.

Behind her, Gray's chuckle was soft and sexy in her ear as he caressed her bottom again. "Too hard?"

She shook her head. "No," she said. "You just surprised me."

He laughed again, his breath hot as it stirred her hair. "And I'm just getting started, sweetheart."

Paisley shivered in anticipation.

Gray didn't keep her waiting long, but instead lifted his hand and smacked her panty-clad ass again. Not only was the material too thin to provide much protection, but the tiny triangle barely covered her cheeks as it was, leaving her bottom exposed to his big, strong hand, and she bit her lip to stifle a moan as she felt heat spread over her skin. But then Gray was rubbing the sting away as he kissed her neck again. The combination of the two was so erotic that Paisley barely even realized it when he stopped rubbing her bottom to slide her panties down slowly. As he cupped her bare ass and gave it a gentle squeeze, Paisley closed her eyes and let her head fall back on his shoulder with a moan.

Abruptly, Gray lifted his hand and gave her ass another slap. Unable to stifle her moan this time, Paisley let out a little, "Mmm," of appreciation. Who would have thought that getting spanked could be such a turn-on?

She bit her lip, waiting for Gray to smack her ass some more, but instead he went back to caressing her cheeks. That was nice, too, she decided. Actually, that was very nice. And it only got better when he slid his other hand down her tummy to the neatly trimmed curls at the juncture of her thighs.

Paisley caught her breath as his finger found her throbbing clit and began to make small circles round and around the sensitive little nub. She moaned and reached back to grab onto his thigh, bunching the soft material of his pajama bottoms in her hand. Beneath his fingers, her clit began to tingle even more and she ground against his hand, her hips undulating in time with the little circular motions he was making.

Abruptly, she felt a sharp smack on her ass. It was a little harder than the previous spanks he had given her, and she moaned with pleasure at the delicious sting it produced.

“Does that feel good?” Gray asked, his voice soft in her ear.

“Yes!” she breathed. “Don’t stop!”

“I won’t, sweetheart,” he promised. “I’m going to keep spanking you and keep touching you until I make you come.”

As he spoke, he slapped her bottom again, and Paisley let out another moan. If he was going to keep that up, it definitely wasn’t going to take her long to orgasm at all! In fact, she could already feel the first ripples of pleasure beginning to course through her. More than ready to give herself over to it, she held onto Gray more tightly and let herself go.

“Faster,” she breathed. “Spank me faster.”

Gray seemed to know instinctively what she needed and the rhythm of his spanking began to coincide with the movement of his finger on her clit. God, she couldn’t tell which part of her body was tingling more—her ass or her pussy. In the end it didn’t matter, the sensations seemed to merge together into one long, drawn-out climax that left her crying out her pleasure for all the world to hear.

Afterward, her knees were so weak that all she could do was lean back against Gray and catch her breath. She quickly roused herself when she felt his hands roaming over her again.

“You’re very wet, do you know that?” he said, slipping his hand between her legs to dip his finger into her pussy.

Paisley could only sigh in agreement as his finger went deeper. She caught her lower lip between her teeth, waiting breathlessly for him to move his finger in and out, but to her dismay, he slid out completely. Her lips forming into a pout, she glanced over her shoulder at Gray to see him shoving down his pajama bottoms. She wet her lips as his erection sprang free. *Oooh, she liked that idea even better!*

Placing her hands on the railing of the deck, she arched her back and thrust her bottom out in invitation, then looked over her shoulder at Gray again to see him rolling on a condom. *Where the heck had he hidden that?* Stepping up behind her, he rested one hip on her hand while he used the other to position his hard cock at the opening of her pussy. But rather than enter her right away, he slowly rubbed the head up and down her slit.

She let out a little moan. What he was doing felt so good that for a moment she couldn’t decide whether to stay where she was or push back against him. Before she could make a decision, however, Gray grasped her hips with both hands and thrust his entire length into her in one smooth motion.

Paisley closed her eyes, savoring the feel of his cock as he slowly began to move in and out of her pussy. She didn't know how such a thing could be possible, but every time she and Gray made love, it was better than the time before.

Gray kept his thrusts slow and deliberate, sliding almost all the way out before gliding back into her wetness again, and Paisley heard herself moaning over and over with the pleasure of it. Then suddenly, she felt a sharp smack on her bottom. That one was quickly followed by another, and then another until he was spanking her ass in time with his thrusts.

The combination was unbelievably erotic and Paisley found herself pushing her bottom back to meet his hand.

"Harder!" she begged, though whether she meant for him to spank her harder or to thrust into harder, she wasn't quite sure.

Gray didn't ask for clarification, but delivered a firm smack to first one ass cheek, and then the other, as he pumped into her faster and faster. That was enough to send her spiraling into ecstasy again and a moment later, Paisley tossed back her head and screamed so loud it echoed off the far mountains. Her orgasm was so intense that she was only vaguely aware that Gray had stopped spanking her to grip her hips tightly with both hands as he achieved his own climax.

Completely and utterly spent, afterward they both leaned against the deck's wooden railing for a time before Paisley slowly turned in his arms to gaze up at him. For a moment, they just stood like that, neither of them saying anything. Then, gently cupping her face, Gray bent his head and kissed her tenderly on the mouth.

When he lifted his head, Paisley had the most incredible urge to tell him that she loved him. She blinked, surprised by the strength of the emotion. Surely, she couldn't have fallen for him so fast. That was impossible, wasn't it?

* * * *

The next several days flew by, mainly because they were absolutely wonderful. In fact, Paisley couldn't remember ever having as much fun as she did with Gray. When they weren't making love, they were playing one of the many board games his family kept at the cabin. Paisley hadn't played Monopoly, Scrabble, or Checkers since she was a teen, and she was amazed to discover how much fun it still was. Of course, that probably had to do more with who she was playing with. She decided that Gray could probably make even the most boring event fun.

Sometimes, just to change things up, they would go walking in the woods. Even though she didn't think of herself as a nature-girl, Paisley found herself looking forward to strolling hand-in-hand with Gray through the tall redwoods.

One of the most enjoyable afternoons they spent together had nothing to do with board games or walking in the woods, or even making love. It was cuddling together on the couch looking through an old photo album his family kept there. When she unearthed it from the bottom of a drawer, Gray had tried to dissuade her from looking at it, of course, telling her it was full of goofy family photos and that she would be bored. Paisley, though, wouldn't be deterred and a moment later they were sitting on the couch laughing together at the family photos Gray had insisted would bore her.

"God, these bring back memories," he said, chuckling at a photo of himself wearing a yellow, rubber duck around his waist.

It wouldn't have been nearly as funny if it weren't for the fact that he was fourteen in the picture instead of four. Paisley laughed hysterically as he described how he had managed to squeeze the thing around his torso, and then chased his sister around the cabin quacking like a demented duck.

"Why the heck would you let her take a picture of you like that?" Paisley asked with a laugh.

He chuckled. "I didn't care. Back then I was sort of a class clown. I'd do anything to get a laugh."

Paisley found that hard to believe. Gray seemed so serious now.

"You do realize that this means you have to show me all those embarrassing pictures of you when we get back to San Francisco," he said he turned the page.

Though Paisley laughed, as they moved on to the next picture, she found herself secretly hoping that was Gray's subtle way of saying he wanted to continue seeing her when they got back home. Her pulse fluttered wildly at the thought.

"How about a picnic down by the lake?" Gray suggested when they had finished looking through the photo album more than an hour later.

She smiled. "I'd love it!"

Twenty minutes later, they were heading down to the lake with a picnic basket full of chicken-salad sandwiches, chocolate chip cookies, and iced tea. As they lay side by side on the blanket enjoying their meal, Paisley thought the afternoon couldn't be more perfect. First, the trip down memory lane together over the photo album, now a romantic picnic by the lake.

"Wanna go for a swim?" Gray asked after they finished eating.

Paisley eyed him over the rim of her plastic cup. "I didn't bring a swimsuit."

He chuckled. "Neither did I."

She chewed on her lower lip. While her pulse was already fluttering at the idea of skinny-dipping with Gray, she couldn't resist teasing him. "I thought you weren't supposed to go swimming for at least an hour after eating."

Gray chuckled again. "Everyone knows that's an old wives' tale," he told her. "Come on."

Without waiting for a reply, he got to his feet and pulled his shirt over his head. When she just continued to lie there and gaze up at him, he paused in the act of unbuckling his belt to look at her with a raised brow. "Last one in has to cook dinner tonight," he said, his mouth quirking.

That got Paisley moving. Laughing, she got to her feet and stripped off her shorts and tank top before Gray had even finished unbuttoning his jeans. Tossing her bra on the pile of clothes, she wiggled out of her panties, and then blowing him a kiss, she ran onto the dock and dived into the crystal clear water. When she surfaced several moments later it was to find Gray beside her. Grinning, he pulled her into his arms for a wet kiss.

Paisley looped her arms his neck, her slippery body pressing up against his as their tongues met. He tasted of iced tea and chocolate chip cookies, and she didn't think she had ever experienced anything sweeter or more intoxicating.

Beneath the water, Gray's hands slid up her ribcage to cup her breasts, and she moaned as he gave her nipples a firm squeeze. He chuckled at the sound, his mouth finding its way along the curve of her jaw and down her neck. Paisley arched against him, allowing him easy access to that and any other area of her body he wanted to explore.

And explore he did!

After lavishing attention on her neck, he kissed and nibbled his way over to her shoulder, and then back again, finding the sensitive little hollow behind her ear as he fondled her breasts. She couldn't decide which she liked more—his mouth on her neck, or his hands on her breasts. Then again, she didn't have to choose, she decided, as she threw back her head and enjoyed his exploration.

Of course, Paisley did some exploring over her own, too. She let her hands glide up and down his broad back before moving lower to cup his tight ass. Keeping one hand there, she moved the other around to wrap it around his hard cock. Obviously, the cool lake water wasn't a problem for him.

The groan Gray let out was a low growl in her ear. The next thing she knew, he was pulling her to shore. When they reached the shallow water, he swung her up in his strong arms and carried her to shore. Once beside the blanket, he gently set her down beside the picnic basket they brought with them. Even though the breeze was warm, Paisley couldn't help but shiver a little as it caressed her wet skin. Then Gray stretched out beside her, pulling her into his arms, and she forgot all about being chilly. In fact, she couldn't focus on anything but what Gray was doing.

His hands seemed to be everywhere at once. Cupping her breasts, gliding over her the curve of her hip, squeezing her bottom, caressing her leg. All the while he kissed her, his mouth hot and hungry on hers. With a groan, Gray rolled over onto his back, taking Paisley with him. She leaned over him, her long wet hair falling over her shoulder and onto his chest. Without the need for any more foreplay, he rolled on a condom, then cupped her bottom in his hands and carefully positioned her over his hard shaft before sliding inside her very slowly.

Paisley moaned as his cock filled her. She had never been with a man who was a more perfect fit. As cliché as it sounded, it was like she and Gray were made for each other. Making love with him on a picnic blanket in the late afternoon sun was like something right out of a romance book.

"Ride me," Gray softly commanded from beneath her.

Resting her hands on his muscular chest, she obediently began to slowly move up and down on him. With each little bounce, her clit came into contact with his groin, adding to her pleasure, and before she realized what she was doing, she slid her hand between their bodies to massage the sensitive little nub with her fingers.

Lying back on the blanket, his hands loosely holding onto her hips, Gray followed her movements from beneath half-closed lids. "I like watching you touch yourself," he said in a husky voice.

For some reason, his words aroused her even more and she felt her breathing quicken. Good heavens! She had barely started touching herself and she was already close to orgasm! She was tempted to hold back and make it last a little longer, but then quickly changed her mind. That train had already left the station. Biting her lower lip, she began to make faster and faster circles on her clit.

"Oh yeah," Gray breathed. "That's it, baby. Make yourself come."

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than she felt a delicious little tingle start right beneath her fingers. A cry escaping her lips, Paisley squeezed her eyes shut and tossed her head back, letting herself ride the waves of pleasure until they completely carried her off.

Paisley was so caught up in her own pleasure that she didn't even realize she had stopped riding Gray's cock until she opened her eyes to find him gazing up at her with a teasing grin. He was still hard and throbbing inside of her.

"You seemed to have enjoyed yourself."

She gave him a lazy smile. "I did. And I'm not done yet."

As she spoke, Paisley leaned forward and, placing her hands on his chest, she began to slowly ride up and down on his cock again. Gray let out a sound that was somewhere between a sigh and a groan, his hands tightening on her ass as he lifted his hips to meet hers. Though his thrusts started out slow and deliberate, within moments he was pumping into her hard and fast.

Paisley followed his lead, bouncing up and down on him wildly. This time, her climax didn't sneak up on her as it had when she was been touching herself. Instead, it rolled over her all at once, like a tidal wave. She heard herself scream as her orgasm went on and on. Her cries were so loud that she barely heard Gray's own hoarse groans of pleasure as he emptied himself inside of her. Even through the condom, she could feel the warmth of his cum inside of her. It only made her climax that much better and she almost wept at how good it felt to be joined with him.

Totally and completely spent, Paisley collapsed forward on his chest, her breathing ragged. Gray's arms went around her, holding her close. As they slowly regained their breath, she realized that their hearts were beating in time with each other. She had never noticed that with anyone else. A smile curved her lips. Maybe it wasn't so crazy to think they were made for each other after all.

The sun had almost disappeared behind the trees by the time she and Gray roused themselves. As reluctant as she was to move out of his arms, Paisley had to admit that without the sun, it was starting to get a little chilly. Quickly putting their clothes back on, they grabbed the picnic basket and the blanket, and then headed back to the cabin.

They had barely gotten in the door when Gray's cell phone rang. Figuring it was just her father doing his nightly check-in, she didn't pay much attention to the conversation as she started to unpack the picnic basket.

"When?" Gray said. "You're sure?"

Paisley stopped what she was doing to look at him, her pulse quickening. Had they caught the guy who'd been stalking her?

Gray nodded at something her father had said. "Yes, Sir. We'll leave first thing in the morning." A moment later, he flipped his phone closed and looked at her. "It's over. They got him."

Chapter Seven

Paisley had been waiting to hear those words since the whole thing with her psycho stalker had started, and though she knew she should have been happy that she could finally go back to her life in San Francisco, she couldn't get past the fact that once they were back home, she and Gray would have no reason to see each other anymore.

On the other side of the kitchen, he was regarding her with a frown. "Paisley, it's okay. They got the guy who's been stalking you."

She swallowed hard, not quite trusting herself to speak. But when Gray's frown only deepened at her silence, she forced herself to nod.

"Who is he?" she finally asked. "Do I know him?"

"Yeah," Gray said. "It's the janitor from your office. Tom O'Donnell."

She blinked, surprised despite herself. "Tom? Is my dad sure he's the one?"

Gray nodded. "They found evidence at his apartment."

Paisley didn't ask what kind of evidence; she wasn't sure she really wanted to know. When she said nothing, Gray reached out to gently pull her into his arms. She pressed her cheek to the soft material of his shirt, her own arms automatically going around him.

"You're safe, sweetheart," Gray told her softly. "He can't hurt you now. He's going to go away for a long time."

Paisley didn't answer. Gray thought she was acting weird because she was worried about Tom getting out of prison and coming after her again, she realized. It was on the tip of her tongue to tell him he was wrong, that the reason she wasn't jumping for joy like she should be was because she didn't want things to be over between them. But she couldn't seem to make herself get the words out.

She swallowed hard and took a step back. "I think I'll go take a shower."

Gray regarded her in silence for a moment, his expression unreadable, and Paisley found herself half hoping he would suggest that he join her. But to her disappointment, he merely nodded.

"I'll get dinner started," he said.

He was already pulling away from her, Paisley thought. Which was the smart thing to do, of course. After tonight, they would both go their separate ways. She just had to hold it together until they did.

Taking a shower helped a little. Standing under the warm spray, she somehow managed to convince herself that having a relationship with Gray would be all wrong anyway. It would never have worked. He was a cop, and she didn't date cops. Plain and simple.

However, when she went back out into the living room to find a fire going in the hearth and the table set with two glasses of wine, she wasn't so sure it was that simple after all. Determined to make the most of their last night at the cabin, Paisley pasted a smile on her face and asked Gray if he needed help with dinner.

As they worked side by side in the kitchen a few minutes later, it felt like all the other nights they had been there and Paisley let herself forget they would be leaving to go back to San Francisco the next day. She even managed to have fun as they ate dinner. As they were cleaning up afterward, the melancholy feeling returned and she couldn't ignore

it, no matter how hard she tried. It only intensified when she went into the living room a little while later to find Gray spreading a blanket out on the floor in front of the fireplace. Stretching out on the floor in front of the fire had become part of their nightly routine. They would usually play some silly board game, and then make love until the early hours of the morning before Gray would pick her up in his arms and carry her into the bedroom. Tears suddenly pricked her eyes and she blinked them back, afraid that Gray would see.

To her relief, he didn't seem to notice. Instead, he took her in his arms and kissed her tenderly on the mouth. The kiss was slow and sensual, his lips gentle as they moved over hers, and Paisley felt her melancholy mood gradually disappear. She wasn't quite sure how he did it, but Gray had the ability to make her forget all her troubles with just the slightest touch. It didn't matter that by tomorrow this night would all be a memory. Right now, all she wanted to do was make love to Gray. Not have sex with him, but make love.

Her eyes fluttering closed, Paisley melted against him with a sigh, her hands moving up the front of his shirt to settle on his strong shoulders. Gray deepened the kiss, his tongue finding hers as he slid his hand into her long hair. She grasped his shoulders, returning his kiss with a passion that equaled his.

Gray's other hand went to the sash of her robe, untying it deftly. A moment later, Paisley felt him cup her bare breast, and she moaned against his mouth as he took her taut nipple between his thumb and forefinger and gave it a gentle squeeze. She arched against his hand, silently begging him for more, and more was exactly what he gave her.

Still kissing her, he slipped his other hand inside her robe to slowly push it off her shoulders. It fell away easily, leaving her completely naked before him, and he lifted his head to gaze down at her with soulful dark eyes. The look she saw there made her breath hitch, but before she could begin to even wonder about it, Gray bent to cover her mouth with his again.

Then he was trailing kisses along the curve of her jaw and down her neck to her breasts. Cupping them in his hands, he took one of her nipples in his mouth and suckled on it gently. Paisley gasped, her hands going to his shoulders again as he swirled his tongue round and around the sensitive peak.

Releasing that nipple, he turned his attention to its twin, giving it the same tender loving care. She sighed with pleasure, arching her back to offer even more of herself to him. He took all that she had to give, suckling on her nipples so urgently that she thought she might come just from that. But he obviously had other things in mind.

Dropping to his knees in front of her a moment later, Gray kissed and nibbled his way down her stomach to the juncture of her thighs. Reaching around with both hands, he cupped her ass and pressed his face into the neatly trimmed curls. Paisley caught her breath, grabbing onto his shoulders to steady herself. She was just in time, too, because at that moment, he began making slow circles on her clit with his tongue. She had never been licked while standing up before, but the sensation was so incredible that she thought she might actually melt into a puddle of goo right there. She only hoped she could stay on her feet long enough to have an orgasm!

Holding on tightly to Gray's shoulder with one hand, Paisley slid the other into his dark hair. He groaned and they stayed like that, gazing deeply into each other's eyes while she slowly undulated her hips. In the firelight, his eyes looked almost gold, giving her ass cheeks a squeeze as he continued to lap at her pussy with slow, methodical licks that kept her on the edge for so long she thought she would surely go wild.

Almost as if he knew that she needed it, Gray began to move his tongue faster and faster on her clit. Her breathing quickened, and then, all at once, her body started to tremble. Paisley tightened her hold on his hair and threw her head back, her cries of ecstasy echoing off the cabin's walls.

It was then that her wobbly legs finally gave out. If it weren't for Gray holding her up, she would have dropped to the floor. He caught her in his strong arms and slowly eased her down onto the blanket. For a moment, all she could do was lie there while she caught her breath. Once she did, though, she reached for him, pulling him down for a slow, sexy kiss that left her knees weak all over again.

Abruptly realizing that he was still dressed, she made quick work of the buttons on his shirt. Shoving it off his shoulders, she ran her hands over his muscular chest before tugging impatiently at his belt. When she fumbled with the buttons on his jeans, Gray let out a chuckle and pushed her hands away so that he could take over. A moment later, he was shoving down his jeans down. His boxer briefs quickly followed, leaving him naked to her appreciative gaze. In the glow of the firelight, he was all sculpted planes and hard muscle, and for a moment all she could do was stare at him.

Simply gazing at him was no longer enough for her. Pushing herself onto her knees, Paisley gracefully swung her leg over his so that she straddled his lap. With him sitting upright, the position put her in complete control, but if Gray minded that, he gave no indication. Instead, he put his hands on her waist and gently guided her as she sank down onto his hard cock.

As she sank down on him, Gray's arms went around her, holding her close, and Paisley automatically draped hers around his neck.

Unable to help herself, she bent her head and pressed her lips to his. The kiss was as sensual as the rest of their lovemaking, their mouths teasing, their tongues slow-dancing together.

She rode him slowly, desperate to make the night last forever. She tightened her pussy around his cock, wanting it to be as amazing for him as it was for her.

As much as she wanted their lovemaking to last, there was no way that it could. The sensations were just too intense, and soon, they were both moaning against each other's mouths as their orgasms slowly washed over them. Unlike the other climaxes she had with Gray, this one wasn't shattering and intense. Instead, it was gentle and sustained like a lazy river of pleasure flowing through her. She decided it was best feeling she had ever had.

Afterward, Paisley rested her head on his shoulder, just content to hold him for as long as possible. As she gazed into the firelight, her eyes suddenly misted with tears and though she blinked them back, one still managed to roll down her cheek. Not wanting Gray to see, she reached up with one hand to wipe it away. She mustn't have been quick enough, though, because he pulled back to look at her.

"Hey, what's wrong?" he asked, his brow furrowing. "I'm not that bad of a lover, am I?"

Despite her tears, she couldn't help but give a little laugh at his joke. "No, of course not."

He reached out to brush her hair back from her face. "Then what is it, sweetheart?"

Paisley shook her head. Swallowed hard. "N-nothing," she stammered, then looked away. "I just wish we could stay here like this."

Gentle fingers under her chin tilted her face up. "Just because you don't need a bodyguard, that doesn't mean we can't still see each other, you know," Gray said softly. She blinked, not sure she'd heard him right. "You'd want that?"

He smoothed her hair, his mouth curving into a smile. "Yeah, of course. I just naturally thought we would. I suppose I probably should have let you know that's what I want, but I thought it was obvious. I definitely want to keep seeing you, if that's what you want."

Paisley laughed through her tears. She was such a fool. She had been worried for nothing! "Of course that's what I want!" she said, leaning in to kiss him fiercely on the mouth. She realized she might have been a little bit too passionate when he fell back onto the floor a moment later.

"Oh!" she laughed. "Sorry."

Gray chuckled. "Don't be." He slid his fingers in her hair to kiss her again.

Paisley moaned as she felt him begin to harden inside of her. She lifted her head to smile at him. "Ready for round two, are we?"

"Definitely," he said, pulling her down for another kiss.

* * * *

The next day, Paisley and Gray left the cabin much later than they originally planned. But Gray woke her up with a kiss, which led to another, and another, and before either of them knew it, it was almost noon and they were still in bed. Packing quickly, they hurriedly ate breakfast, then piled their suitcases in the Jeep and headed back to San Francisco.

Her father was in his office when they arrived at the police station and as she and Gray walked in, a thought suddenly occurred to her. How exactly was she going to tell her dad that she and Gray were dating? She had never gone out with a cop before, so she wasn't sure what he would think.

Would he do his usual "overprotective father" thing and freak, or would he actually approve? Not that she would stop seeing Gray regardless, of course. But it would make things a heck of a lot easier if her dad was okay with them.

She would have liked to give it a little more thought, but just then her dad was stepping around the desk to embrace her in a hug. She returned the gesture, then watched as he reached out and shook Gray's hand.

"I can never tell you how much I appreciate you keeping my daughter safe, Inspector," he said to Gray. "Thanks to you, the rest of the department was able to focus on finding this psychopath."

Gray glanced at Paisley, his gaze softening. "I'm just glad I was able to protect her," he said. "And that you were able to get the guy."

If her father saw the look that passed between her and Gray, he didn't mention it. "It was Officer Moore who broke the case," Ted McCoy said. "His gut told him there was something wrong with the janitor when he interviewed him the other day. So on his own time, he went over to O'Donnell's apartment to take a look around and ended up finding enough to put the bastard away for a long time."

"So, what did he find?" Gray asked.

Her father's mouth tightened. "Moore looked in a side window and saw photos of Paisley plastered all over the place. That gave him all the probable cause he needed to go

in and arrest O'Donnell. Then he called us in. Forensics found more than enough evidence to not only tie him to the stalking charge, but to Hannigan's murder, too." He shook his head. "The idiot didn't even try to hide the stuff."

Paisley shivered, creeped out by the whole thing. "I still can't believe it was Tom," she said. "He always seemed a little strange, but he never seemed like the stalker type. Or worse, a killer."

"It's always the ones you least suspect," her father said.

That was certainly true, she thought.

They talked for a little while longer before her dad was interrupted by a phone call. Since she and Gray had been up at his cabin for a week, Paisley thought he might have to get right back to the robbery investigation he'd been working on, but her father told him to see Paisley home, and then take the rest of the day off. That was okay with her, and from the look Gray gave her, he liked the idea, too.

She and Gray were just making their way out of the police station when they ran into Evan. He was on his way inside and stopped when he saw them.

"Paisley!" he said. "You're back."

"Thanks to you," she smiled. "My dad told us you were the one who figured out Tom O'Donnell was the stalker."

Evan glanced at Gray then flushed, clearly a little uncomfortable. "It was nothing, really," he said. "Any one of the other guys could have figured it out."

She laughed. "I think you're just being modest," she said, then added, "I really am grateful."

On impulse, Paisley took a step forward and gave him a hug. When she pulled back, she noticed that though Evan seemed surprised by the gesture, he also looked pleased by the show of gratitude.

"Ready to go?" Gray asked her.

Paisley nodded, and then glanced at Evan. "I'll see you around," she said, giving him another smile.

Gray nodded at Evan. "Good work with O'Donnell."

As they walked across the parking lot to Gray's SUV, Paisley had to resist the urge to slip her hand in his. She wasn't sure if PDA would be appropriate at his place of work. She could behave until they got to her apartment. Or at least until they got into his Jeep!

* * * *

Now that Paisley was back where she belonged, everything was right in the world, he thought as he leaned back in his seat. It had been too long since he had parked outside of her apartment building in his normal spot, and it felt good to get back to his routine. Of course, the only reason she was even back at all was because he had come up with the idea of framing that loser janitor. It had almost been too easy, he thought as he unwrapped a stick of gum and put it in his mouth.

Up in Paisley's apartment, the bedroom light went on. A little early for bed, he thought as she appeared in the window to gaze out at the bay.

He sighed as he let his gaze run over her slender form. The silk robe she was wearing hugged her perfect body, and he grew hard in his pants as he imagined what she looked like beneath it. All it would take was a little tug on the robe's sash and...

His thoughts came to an abrupt, screeching halt as a man suddenly appeared behind

Paisley. He almost swallowed his gum. What the fuck?

Beckham.

Dazed, he watched the other man put his arms around Paisley's waist and press a kiss to the curve of her neck. His eyes had to be playing tricks on him, he was sure of it. There was no way she would let another man touch her! But as Paisley turned in Beckham's arms and the man bent his head to kiss her, he knew that he wasn't imagining things. His Paisley had betrayed him.

He clenched his hands into fists as he watched Paisley take her lover's hands and lead the man away from the window and out of his line of sight. He pictured Beckham untying her robe, imagined the man running his filthy hands over her silken skin, cupping her breasts. He started to shake at the thought.

Part of him wanted to go up there right now and put a bullet in both of them. But the other, more rational part of him knew that he could never hurt Paisley. The same couldn't be said for that bastard Beckham. He would have no problem killing him. In fact, he was going to enjoy it. And as much as he hated what was going on in Paisley's apartment right now, he would have to wait to take care of Beckham. When the other man was out of the way, he and Paisley would finally be together again.

Unwrapping another stick of gum, he put it in his mouth and chewed as he planned his next move.

Chapter Eight

Paisley leaned back against the door with a sigh. She couldn't remember ever being this happy.

It had been so perfect at the cabin she was a little afraid that things would be different between her and Gray when they got back to the real world, but she couldn't have been more wrong. After leaving the police station yesterday, she and Gray had come back to her apartment and headed straight for the bedroom, where they'd made love in every way imaginable. Gray had quite an imagination, she thought with a smile.

While the sex with him was out of this world, it was more than that. Though she wasn't quite ready to put a name to what she was feeling, she knew it was something she had never felt for another man.

Good heavens, she really did have it bad. Gray had just left for work and she was already counting the hours until she saw him again!

In between now and then, she had a job to go to, she reminded herself. Shaking her head, she pushed away from the door and was just making her way to the bedroom to change out of her robe when she heard a knock.

Hoping it was Gray coming back for a quickie, or at least another kiss before he headed to the station, Paisley practically ran to the door. When she yanked it open, it wasn't Gray who stood there, however, but Evan Moore.

She blinked in surprise. "Evan! What brings you here this early?"

He glanced over her shoulder in the room. "Can I come in?"

She smiled. "Sorry. Yeah, of course," she said, taking a step back so that he could enter.

Closing the door behind him, Paisley turned to find Evan surveying her apartment. Did cops ever let down their guard? Then again, he was on duty, she reminded herself as she took in his blue uniform. Her apartment, however, was quite safe, she was sure of it.

"Can I get you some coffee?"

"No, thanks." He looked around the apartment again. "Your father wants to see you and asked me to come pick you up."

Paisley's brow furrowed at that. "Did he say what he wants to see me about? I was just about to get ready for work."

Evan shrugged. "He didn't say, but I get the feeling it's important."

She sighed. With her dad, it was always important. He could have just called and asked her to come down to the police station instead of sending Evan to escort her.

"Okay. Let me go put some clothes on," she said, then gave him a smile. "It could take me a while, though, so you might want to take me up on that offer."

He looked at her in confusion. "Offer?"

"Coffee," she explained.

"Oh," he said, then grinned as he took out a stick of gum and held it up. "I'm good, thanks."

She smiled. "Well, if you change your mind, just help yourself."

He popped the gum in his mouth. "Will do."

Not wanting to make Evan wait any longer than necessary, Paisley took a quick

shower, then quickly did her makeup before pulling on jeans and a graphic-print tee. One of the many advantages of working at the *Bay Beat*. Everyday was casual Friday.

Evan was sitting on the couch reading a magazine and he looked up when she walked into the living room. "Ready?" he asked, tossing the magazine on the coffee table as he got to his feet.

"Just need to grab my purse," she told him.

As they made their way down the steps a few minutes later, Paisley thought about taking her own car, but then decided against it. Evan had already waited for her; might as well let him drive her. Besides, she was sure Gray wouldn't mind dropping her off at work after she talked with her father.

"You look nice," Evan said as he opened the door of his patrol car for her.

She smiled at the compliment. "Thanks."

As he walked around the car to climb in beside her, Paisley couldn't help but think what a nice guy he was. Though she didn't usually play matchmaker, she found herself thinking about setting him up with her friend, Malinda. The two of them would be perfect for each other. Malinda totally had a thing for guys in uniform.

Paisley was still considering the idea when she realized they weren't heading in the direction of the police station, but toward the Bay Bridge. Her brow furrowing in confusion, she looked at Evan.

"This isn't the way to the police station," she said.

He glanced at her. "We're not going to the police station. We're going to Oakland."

Her frown deepened. "Oakland? What for?"

Evan shrugged. "Your father didn't say. All he said was to pick you up and meet him at a warehouse at the port. I think it has something to do with the guy who was stalking you."

Paisley groaned inwardly. She really just wanted to put that whole thing behind her. But if her father wanted her to meet him, then it must be important. Though when Evan parked in front of a dilapidated warehouse a little while later, she couldn't imagine why her dad wanted to meet there. She hoped it wasn't the stalker's hangout or something. She so didn't need to see that!

Getting out of the car, Paisley looked around for her father's car, but didn't see it. "So, where's my dad?"

"He's probably already inside," Evan said as he fell into step beside her.

For some reason she couldn't explain, the hair on the back of her neck stood up as they walked toward the building. Her trepidation only increased when she stepped inside to find the place empty. Suppressing a shiver, she turned to Evan.

"Where's my father?"

Evan closed the door behind him, the sound echoing in the abandoned building. "He's not coming."

Paisley stared at Evan in confusion for a moment. "What do you mean, he's not coming?"

Evan took a step toward her. "I mean he's not coming. It's just you and me, Paisley. Just like it should be."

"Evan, what...?" she began, but the words trailed off as a horrible realization came to her. Tom O'Donnell wasn't her stalker; Evan was. But that was crazy! *Wasn't it?*

A grin spread across Evan's face. "I see you just figured it out."

She took a step back, her hand tightening reflexively on the strap of her shoulder bag even as her eyes darted to the door behind Evan. There was no way she would ever get past him. But that didn't necessarily mean she was trapped. There had to be another way out. All she had to do was outrun him long enough to find it.

"Nothing to say to me, Paisley?" Evan asked, taking another step toward her.

Paisley took another step back. "I'm just s-surprised, I guess."

His brow furrowed. "Why are you surprised? You must have known how I felt about you."

Her stomach clenched, fear making her tremble all over. "N-not really. I mean, I've always thought of you as a friend, but..."

His eyes narrowed at her words and she let her voice trail off. That definitely hadn't been the right thing to say.

"Friends don't feel the way about each other that I feel about you, Paisley," he said coldly.

Paisley tried to think of something to say that would placate him, but before she could, Evan started toward her. Heart pounding in her chest, she turned and ran.

She didn't get more than ten feet before he caught up with her. Grabbing her arm, he spun her around to face him.

Paisley screamed, fighting him wildly, but Evan ignored it as he dragged her across the warehouse and shoved her down into a straight back chair that was there. She automatically tensed, ready to get to her feet and make another attempt at escape, only to freeze when he pulled out his gun.

She held her breath, waiting for him to shoot her. Instead, he grabbed her by the hair and viciously yanked her head back.

"Do friends do this?" he snarled, his mouth coming down hard on hers.

She jerked her head away, ignoring the pain as his hand tightened in her hair. She expected him to hit her, but he only stepped back with an amused laugh.

Paisley wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. That only made him chuckle again.

"Why did you murder Todd?" she asked in a trembling voice.

Evan smirked. "To get your attention."

The cold, detached way he talked about killing another human being made her shiver. He was completely insane.

"Well, you did," she said.

"Obviously. But I didn't expect your father to move you to a safe house," he continued. "I didn't think your father would give you round-the-clock police protection, either."

Though Paisley said nothing, her heart leapt at the thought of Gray. Maybe if she could keep Evan talking long enough, then Gray would somehow be able to find her. Her heart sank as she realized Gray probably wouldn't even know she was missing until that night when he was supposed to come by her apartment. That would mean she would have to keep Evan occupied for hours.

"Where did Beckham take you when you left the safe house?" Evan asked abruptly.

Paisley dropped her gaze to stare at the gun in her captor's hand. While he still held it down at his side, his hand had tightened around the grip. "Gray has a cabin up in the mountains," she said. "We went there."

“How quaint,” Evan sneered. “And did you sleep with him while you were at this cabin of his?”

Her eyes flew to Evan’s face for a moment before she looked away. “That’s none of your damn business,” she muttered.

“Everything you do is my business!” he spat. “And the faster you realize that, the better it will be for you.” He grabbed her hair again and jerked her head back, forcing her to look at him. “Now, answer me! Did you sleep with Beckham up at his cabin?”

As he spoke, Evan’s hand tightened in her hair and Paisley felt tears sting her eyes. “Yes,” she whispered.

Evan swore, releasing her. “I thought you didn’t date cops,” he said snidely. “Or maybe you just think you’re too good for a patrolman, is that it?”

She blinked, confused. “N-no, that’s not it at all.”

His lip curled. “Then I guess you just thought you were too good for me. Maybe if I had an inspector’s badge, like that bastard Beckham, you would have been all over me.” He shook his head. “You know what? It doesn’t matter. We’re together now. That’s what’s important.”

The words, spoken so matter-of-factly, chilled Paisley to the core. “Are you insane? There’s no way I’m going to stay with you.”

He gave her a hard look. “I wasn’t giving you a choice.”

She lifted her chin, her eyes flashing. “What are you going to do, keep me prisoner in this warehouse for the rest of my life?”

Evan snorted. “Give me a little more credit than that, Paisley. I have a nice place all set up for us. We’re just going to be here long enough for Beckham to join us.”

Paisley stiffened. “Gray? Why?”

Evan gave her a superior smile. “So that I can kill him, of course.”

Her heart squeezed in her chest until it hurt. She couldn’t have heard right. “Kill him?” she whispered.

Evan shrugged. “I can’t have you pining for him when you’re with me, now can I? And I sure as hell don’t want him coming after us.”

She shook her head, tears welling in her eyes. “I’ll go anywhere with you, do anything you want, just please say you won’t hurt Gray.”

His mouth tightened. “Do you have any idea how much it sickens me to hear you say that bastard’s name?”

Paisley felt a tear run down her cheek. “Evan, please. If you care about me as much as you say, then please do this for me.”

Evan was silent for so long that she thought he might actually be considering her request, but then he let out a snort.

“You know, I almost fell for that,” he said. “But even if you did come with me willingly and do exactly what I said, that wouldn’t keep Beckham from coming after us. Which means he has to die.”

Paisley opened her mouth to beg for Gray’s life, only to jump when Evan grabbed her purse out of her hand. Her brow furrowed as she watched him dig around inside it. A moment later, he came out with her cell phone. Flipping it open, he pushed a couple of buttons.

“Well, will you look at that? The inspector’s already on speed-dial,” he sneered, putting the phone to his ear.

Paisley opened her mouth, only to close it again at the baleful look Evan sent her way.

“Not a word,” he warned.

Then, as if to make sure she obeyed the command, he lifted his gun and aimed it at her.

* * * *

Considering there was bound to be a pile of paperwork on his desk, Gray probably should have gone directly to the station after leaving Paisley’s apartment that morning, but he found himself heading over to county lock-up to see the janitor Tom O’Donnell instead. For some reason, Gray wanted the sick bastard to look him in the eye and tell him why he had terrorized Paisley. And Gray wasn’t leaving until he did.

According to Paisley’s father, O’Donnell had a pretty colorful rap sheet. His priors had included assault, petty theft, and robbery, so Gray supposed stalking wasn’t that big of a jump. Murder seemed like a big leap, though. Obsessing about Paisley must have pushed him over the edge.

O’Donnell looked the same as he did the last time Gray had seen him, right down to the surprise in his hazel eyes.

“I thought you were Paisley’s boyfriend,” he said as he sat down opposite Gray.

“I am,” Gray told him. “I also happen to be a cop.”

O’Donnell fidgeted in his chair. “So, what do you want with me? I already said I ain’t talking.”

Gray regarded him in silence for a moment. “Even if I told you that whatever you said wouldn’t leave this room?”

The other man let out a snort. “Right. I’ve heard that before.”

Gray leaned forward in his seat. “Look, I’m not asking for particulars. I just want to know why you fixated on Paisley, that’s all.”

O’Donnell’s mouth tightened. “I didn’t.”

“Then what would you call it?” Gray asked.

“Paisley and I are friends. Nothin’ else,” O’Donnell insisted.

Gray lifted a brow. “Really? And do you try to break into all your friend’s apartments? Murder all their ex-boyfriends? Terrorize all of them?”

O’Donnell shook his head. “I didn’t do any of that stuff.”

“The evidence says you did.”

“Well, it’s wrong!” he said. “Anyway, it don’t matter what you have, because I got an alibi.”

Gray’s eyes narrowed. “Yeah, right. What kind of alibi do you think you have?”

“A rock-solid one, according to my lawyer,” O’Donnell muttered. “I’ve been at the university hospital every night for the past couple weeks. I got insomnia real bad, can only sleep during the day, and they were doin’ some kind of sleep study. They got me on video the whole time. My lawyer says that proves I couldn’t have done any of the things you guys are sayin’ I did.”

Gray considered that for a moment. “Why didn’t you tell that to the inspectors who questioned you?”

O’Donnell let out a harsh laugh. “I tried, but they weren’t interested in anythin’ I had to say.”

Gray imagined they wouldn't be. The bastard had terrorized the captain's daughter. "So, if you didn't do it, how do you explain the pictures of Paisley that they found in your apartment? And all the other evidence they found, too."

"I don't know how the hell that stuff got there," O'Donnell said. "I was on the couch watchin' the game when out of nowhere, this cop busts in. Next thing I know, the asshole tasers me."

"That's what happens when you resist arrest," Gray drawled. "You're lucky he didn't shoot you."

O'Donnell's brows drew together. "I wasn't resistin' arrest. Hell, he didn't even say anything, just hit me with his taser. When I came to, I was cuffed up and there were pictures of Paisley all over my apartment. I don't even have a camera. How the hell could I take those pictures?"

A cold kind of dread seeped into Gray at the man's words. His gut told him that O'Donnell wasn't lying. Then how the hell had all that evidence shown up at his place? There was only one answer. Moore had put it there. But why the hell would the cop frame him?

Then an even colder wave of terror swept through Gray. Moore wouldn't have framed him. Not unless he was Paisley's stalker.

Gray thought a moment, trying to remember if he'd ever seen Evan More act odd around Paisley. Granted, Gray hadn't seen them together that often, but when he had, the other cop hadn't done anything to make anyone think he was obsessed with her. But if O'Donnell was being straight with him and he didn't check it out, then Paisley could be still be in danger. The thought made his gut clench.

Pushing his chair back, Gray got to his feet and headed for the door.

"Hey!" O'Donnell called as the guard opened the door for Gray. "What about me?"

Ignoring him, Gray pulled out his cell phone and dialed Paisley's number. It went to voicemail after four rings. "Dammit," he muttered as he listened to her soft, sexy voice ask the caller to leave a message. "Paisley, it's Gray. Call me as soon as you get this. It's important."

Thumbing the disconnect button with his thumb, Gray signed the log book the officer at the desk slid his way.

"You got a phone book around?" Gray asked the other cop as he shoved his gun back into its holster.

"San Fran or Oakland?" the man asked.

"San Fran."

Opening the bottom drawer of the desk, the other cop took out a thick phone book and thumped it on the desk. Holding his cell phone in one hand, Gray flipped through the pages with the other until he came to the listing for the university hospital. He had considered going over there and talking to whoever was in charge of the sleep study in person, but decided a phone call would be faster. It wasn't, or at least not by much. By the time he finally did get through to the right person, it was only to have her tell him that she didn't give out confidential information like that.

Gray ground his jaw as he opened the door to his SUV. "Look, a woman's life is in danger here," he said. "If something happens to her because you made me go get a warrant, then I'm charging you as an accessory to murder. It probably won't stick, but I'll sure as hell make a mess out of your life for a long time. You want that?"

Silence on the other end of the phone, as if the woman were wondering if she wanted to risk it. To his relief, she didn't.

"Yes, Tom O'Donnell was part of the sleep study," she said. "He's been here every night for the past two weeks, just like he told you."

Shit. Thanking the woman, Gray hung up and quickly dialed Captain McCoy as he pulled out of the parking lot and headed to the station. When Paisley's father answered, Gray wasted no time filling him in.

"Are you sure about this?" Ted McCoy asked. "It doesn't even make sense."

"Tell me about it," Gray muttered. "But O'Donnell's story checks out, which means that someone had to frame him. I'd feel a lot better if I could get Paisley on the phone."

McCoy swore under his breath. "I'll send a squad car over to her apartment and one to her office. In the meantime, we need to track down Moore. I want some answers."

So did Gray. Which was why he was let out a foul expletive when McCoy came back on the line a few minutes later to tell him that no one knew where Moore was and that they couldn't get the other cop on the radio.

Gray's grip tightened on the steering wheel. His first instinct was to immediately turn the SUV around and head to Paisley's apartment, but he stopped himself. He already knew what he would find there. Nothing.

"The bastard has her," he growled. "I know it."

"We can't be sure of that," the other man insisted, but Gray could tell by the way her father said the words that he didn't quite believe them himself.

Even though Gray knew Moore probably wouldn't be stupid enough to take Paisley to his apartment, someone had to check the place out, so after getting the address from the captain, he headed directly there. He only hoped to God that he found some clue to where the other cop had taken her.

Gray ground his jaw. While every stalker might be different, they all had one thing in common—they all turned on the object of their obsession when things went sour. Moore had already murdered one person. What was to say he wouldn't do the same to Paisley? Gray felt his gut clench at the thought. If anything happened to her...

Swearing under his breath, Gray pulled out his cell phone and tried Paisley again, only to get her voice mail. *Shit!* If he'd just driven her to work that morning, he told himself, then Moore wouldn't have had the chance to grab her. But with the guy they all thought was her stalker safely behind bars, there had been no reason to think she would even be in any danger.

Gray swallowed hard. God, he didn't know what he would do if something happened to Paisley. It was right then that he realized just how much he cared for her. Somewhere in between putting her over his knee for being such a brat that first night at her apartment and making love in front of the fireplace up at the cabin, he had fallen in love with Paisley McCoy.

Gray tightened his grip on the wheel and pressed down on the accelerator. Why the hell did Moore have to live all the way out in Oakland, he thought irritably. Even with the lights on the dash flashing, it seemed like it took forever to get across the bay.

Convincing the landlord to let him into Moore's apartment was surprisingly simple. All Gray had to do was show the man his badge, tell him that they were on the force together and that he needed to pick up something from the apartment. Gray was a little concerned that the man would want to hang around once he let him in, but after

unlocking the door, he went on his way.

As Gray closed the door behind him, he surveyed the small apartment. The first thing he noticed was that the place was neat. Too neat, actually. Hell, if there hadn't been a couple of dishes in the rack beside the sink, he wouldn't even know anyone lived there.

Since neither the living room nor the kitchen looked like they'd be worth searching, Gray decided to check out the bedroom instead. Hand going inside his jacket to rest on the butt of his Sig, he cautiously pushed open the door, only to stop and stare in disbelief.

"Oh, fuck!" he said.

There were pictures of Paisley everywhere. Not only did they cover every wall from floor to ceiling, but there were framed photos of her on each of the bedside tables as well as the dresser. There was even a huge poster of her hanging over the headboard.

Transfixed, Gray moved into the room, his gaze going from one picture to the next. All of the photos were candid shots, most of them taken while Paisley was out and about in the city, though some had been taken outside her apartment and office building. There were even a couple of her outside the police station. *Arrogant bastard*, Gray thought.

Just then his cell phone rang, interrupting his thoughts. Pulling it out of his pocket, he glanced at the display and was surprised to see Paisley's name. Heart suddenly hammering in his chest, he flipped open the phone and put it to his ear.

"Paisley?" he said anxiously.

"Not quite," a man's voice answered. "But she's here with me."

Moore. Gray's hand tightened on the phone. "Let me talk to her, you bastard."

"Since you didn't have to ask who this is, I guess that means you finally figured it out. I always thought you were a little slow."

Gray clenched his jaw. "When it turned out that poor sap you framed had an alibi for both the night you tried to break into Paisley's apartment *and* the night you murdered Hannigan, it wasn't that difficult to put two and two together and come up with you, you sick son of a bitch," he ground out. "Now, let me talk to her."

A chuckle on the other end of the line. "I don't think so. I will let you see her, though. The deal is, you don't tell anyone where you're going and you don't bring any back-up with you. Got it?"

Gray said nothing. There was only one reason Moore would want him to come alone, and that wasn't because he intended to let Paisley go. He wanted Gray out of the picture. Permanently.

But it wasn't as if Gray had a choice really.

"Yeah, I got it," Gray said tightly. "Where and when?"

Moore gave him the address of a warehouse down on the docks at the Oakland port. "And remember, no back-up," he added. "Or I might have to hurt Paisley, and you don't want that."

Gray opened his mouth to say something threatening in return, but the bastard hung up before he could get the words out.

Going to that warehouse without back-up went against every police procedure in the book, but Gray would be damned if he was going to put Paisley in danger.

* * * *

Paisley tried to escape twice. The first time, Evan backhanded her across the face so hard he split her lip; the second time, he told her that if she tried it again he would shoot

her in the leg. She hadn't tried a third time.

"So, what is it about Beckham?" Evan asked.

Her brow furrowed. "What do you mean?"

Evan had been pacing back and forth in front of her, gun in hand, and as he spoke, he stopped to focus all of his attention on her.

"You said your attraction to him had nothing to do with him having an inspector's badge. So, what else is it then? What makes him so different from me?"

He's not psychotic, for one thing, Paisley thought to herself. But she didn't dare say that to Evan. He was already dangerously close to the edge; one little push would send him over, for sure.

"Gray and I just sort of happened," she said quietly.

"*You sort of just happened*," Evan said mockingly, making little air quotes with his fingers as he repeated the words. "Man, I'm really going to enjoy killing that bastard."

She swallowed hard. "Evan, please..."

"If you start begging me not to kill him again, so help me, I'm going to do something you're not going like," he warned.

Paisley immediately fell silent. Blinking back fresh tears, she lowered her gaze to the hands she had clasped tightly in her lap. As frightened as she was for herself, she was even more terrified for Gray. Surely he wouldn't be foolish enough to come here without back-up, she thought. Oh God, she would never forgive herself if something happened to him because of her. She would rather give up her own life than let him be hurt.

Something dawned on her then, something so amazing that it hardly seemed possible. But it was. She truly loved Gray. As impossible as it seemed, she was in love with him.

A noise echoed in the warehouse and she gave a start as she realized it was the sound of a door opening, and then closing. Gray, she thought.

Paisley's first instinct was to jump up from the chair and run to him, but knowing that Evan would catch her before she got more than two feet, she decided to shout out a warning instead. Evan must have been anticipating such a move on her part, however, because he grabbed her arm and jerked her to her feet, then put the barrel of the gun to her head.

"Not a word," he hissed in her ear. "Or I'll shoot Beckham before you have a chance to say goodbye to him."

Paisley bit her lip to stifle a cry. She wanted to tell Evan to go to hell, but she knew that if she did, he would make good on his threat, and so she forced herself to stay silent as Gray's tall form materialized out of the shadows.

"That's close enough," Evan ordered.

Gray stopped where he was, which was about a dozen feet or so from where she and Evan stood. As their eyes met, the urge to throw herself into Gray's arms was almost too much to resist and it was all Paisley could do not to break free of Evan's hold.

"Did you come alone like I told you to?" Evan asked.

Gray inclined his head. "That was the deal."

Evan tightened his grip on her arm. "Take out your weapon and put it down on the floor," he told Gray. "Slowly."

Gray hesitated for a moment, but then did as Evan had instructed, slowly taking his gun from his chest holster and placing it on the floor in front of him.

“Now get your hands where I can see them,” Evan said.

Gray obeyed, keeping his hands up as he got to his feet. “Look, Evan, it’s not too late to make this right, you know.”

Evan’s laugh was harsh. “That’s bullshit and we both know it,” he said. “I’m a cop, too, remember? I know the drill.”

Gray’s mouth tightened. “Do the right thing here, Evan. Let Paisley go and we all walk out of this warehouse.”

Beside her, Paisley felt Evan stiffen. “The only one of us not walking out of this warehouse is you,” he said to Gray.

Taking the gun from her head, Evan aimed it at Gray and squeezed the trigger. The bullet hit Gray square in the chest and Paisley watched in horror as he stumbled backward.

“*Noooooooooo!*” she screamed.

But even as she spoke, Gray fell back to lay unmoving on the floor. Paisley tried to jerk her arm free of Evan’s grasp, but he held her fast. Tears stung her eyes. Dammit, she had to get to Gray!

“Let go of me, you bastard!” she demanded.

“You’re coming with me,” he snarled.

She rounded on him with a hateful glare. “You just shot the man I love! I’m not going anywhere with you!”

For a moment, Paisley thought she saw hurt in Evan’s eyes, but then they narrowed coldly. “Fine,” he said. “Then you can die here with your lover.”

Releasing her arm, Evan took a step back and leveled the gun at her. Paisley froze, bracing herself. But when the shot rang out a split-second later, there was none of the pain she had expected to go along with a bullet wound.

Paisley realized why a moment later as something dark and wet spread across the front of Evan’s shirt. Confused, she watched as he slumped to the floor.

Too concerned about Gray at the moment to even think about who had saved her life, Paisley turned to hurry over to him when she came to an abrupt halt. There, sitting on the floor where he’d been lying unmoving only minutes before was Gray, a gun in his hand.

Tears streaming down her cheeks, Paisley ran over to Gray and threw her arms around him, burying her face in the curve of his neck. “Oh God, I thought you were dead,” she sobbed.

Gray’s arms went around her, holding her tightly. “*Shh*, sweetheart,” he soothed. “It’s all right. I’m fine.”

She pulled back to look at him through tear-filled eyes. “B-but how? I saw him shoot you.”

He reached out to gently wipe a tear from her cheek. “Bulletproof vest,” he said, the corner of his mouth edging up. “Moore forgot to take into account that I’m a cop, too, I guess.”

Still unable to believe that Gray was actually alive and unharmed, Paisley could do no more than stare down at the front of his shirt. Underneath the ragged hole in the material, she could just make out the dark colored bulletproof vest he was wearing.

Gray glanced over at where Evan lay unmoving on the floor. “I need to go check on him,” he said softly. “Wait here.”

Kneeling there on the floor, Paisley watched as Gray cautiously crouched down

beside Evan and checked for a pulse.

"Is he...?" she began, the words trailing off.

Straightening, Gray put his gun back in its holster before turning to look at her.

"Yeah. It's over. Unlike me, he wasn't smart enough to wear a vest."

Relief coursed through Paisley at his words. Taking the hand Gray held out, she let him pull her to her feet.

"Come on," he said gently. "Let's get you out of here."

Keeping his arm around her waist, Gray led her through the warehouse and outside. Paisley would have preferred to leave the area altogether, but she knew they had to wait for her father and the rest of the crime scene investigators to arrive. Since it turned out that a cop had not only been her stalker, but had been shot and killed by a fellow police officer, she knew things were going to get crazy.

Luckily, it didn't take long for her father or the Oakland cops to arrive after Gray called them. Nobody was thrilled that Gray had decided to go in alone and rescue her, but in the end, her father was just relieved Paisley was okay, and Oakland PD was relieved at having to deal with only one body.

After the paramedics checked her and Gray out, and assured Paisley's father that she was okay, and Oakland PD had interviewed them both and gotten statements, her dad wanted to hustle her into a squad car and get her out of there. As much as Paisley would have liked to have taken him up on the offer, there was no way she was leaving until Gray did, and she told her father as much.

Ted McCoy hadn't been on the force for thirty years just because he was good at dealing with department politics. He took one look at the determined expression on his daughter's face and the way Gray was standing protectively beside her, and understanding immediately dawned on his face. He had obviously just figured out that she and Gray were involved. Paisley firmed her resolve, bracing herself for an argument right then, but to her surprise, her father's expression softened and he simply nodded.

"Fine," he said. "Gray, I think we and the Oakland PD have enough to start with for now. You'll need to file a complete report first thing in the morning and IA will probably want to talk to you as well. But you two can go ahead and take off as soon as Oakland lets you go."

Relieved that her dad hadn't made an issue of her relationship with Gray, Paisley stepped forward to give her father a hug. Maybe he was finally ready to admit that she wasn't a little girl anymore, but an adult who could live her own life and make her own decisions, she thought.

"Thank you for what you did in there," he said to Gray. "My daughter means everything to me, so you'd better take care of her."

Paisley bristled at the tone in her father's voice, expecting him to say something nasty next, but to her surprise, he simply extended his hand instead.

Gray reached out to clasp it. "She means everything to me, too," he said, glancing at Paisley.

As she and Gray walked over to his SUV a few minutes later, she saw the paramedics bringing out Evan's body. She swallowed hard and turned away. *That could have easily been Gray*, Paisley thought as she climbed into the seat. *Or even me*. She shuddered.

"Your place or mine?" Gray asked as he got in beside her.

"Yours," she said. "I can't go back to my apartment quite yet."

She would have to eventually, of course, and though Evan had never said he had been in her apartment, just the idea that he might have been was enough to make her not want to go back there. Gray didn't ask her about it, though, but simply started the engine and headed for the bridge.

* * * *

The first thing Paisley did when she and Gray got to his apartment was strip off her clothes and take a shower. While she might not be able to so easily forget the way Evan Moore had terrorized her, standing beneath the warm spray made her feel better at least. So did putting on the button-up shirt Gray had given her to wear. The material felt soft and warm against her naked skin, and though it had obviously been laundered, the shirt still smelled faintly of Gray's masculine scent. She lifted it to her nose and breathed in deeply. She would never get tired of that smell.

Walking into the kitchen a few minutes later, Paisley found Gray standing at the counter pouring hot water into two mugs. He had changed, too, she noticed. Instead of jeans, he was now wearing a pair of pajama bottoms and a T-shirt. He glanced up at her as she entered the room, his gaze lingering on her bare legs.

"Well, you certainly look a lot better in that shirt than I do," he said with a grin.

Paisley felt herself blush. Leaning back against the counter, she watched Gray add sugar and milk to the tea. Suddenly, an image of him lying motionless on the floor in that warehouse came to her mind unbidden. Tears welled in her eyes and she blinked them back, but not before Gray saw them.

His brow furrowing, he stopped stirring to come over to her. "Hey," he said, gently wiping a tear from her cheek with the pad of his thumb. "You okay?"

She nodded, giving him an embarrassed smile. "Yeah, I'm fine."

Gray didn't seem convinced. "You're safe, sweetheart," he said gently. "Moore's gone. He can't hurt you anymore."

She shook her head. "It's not that. It's just that I..."

He put his hand on her shoulders, his frown deepening. "What is it, sweetheart?"

Paisley blinked back fresh tears as she looked up at him. "I...I can't stop thinking about you getting shot. If you hadn't been wearing a vest..."

He cupped her cheek. "But I was and we're both safe."

She chewed on her lower lip. "I know, but I..." she looked away, unable to continue.

Gray said nothing for a moment, but then he cleared his throat. "You don't have to say it, Paisley," he said quietly. "I know where you're going with this and it's all right. I understand."

Confused by his words, she lifted her head to look at him. "What are you talking about?"

His dark eyes were sad as he reached up to gently tuck her hair behind her ear. "Going out with a cop, living with the fact that I'm constantly in danger because of what I do, is hard, and I know that. It's more than I have a right to ask of you, Paisley."

She blinked. "You think I don't want to be with you anymore because of what happened at that warehouse today?"

His brows drew together. "Isn't that what you've been trying to tell me?"

"Good heavens, no!" she exclaimed, hastening to reassure him. "I'm the daughter of

a police captain, Gray. If anyone knows what it means to be involved with a cop, it's me. I know you only risked yourself without backup like that because it was *me* in that warehouse. And even then, you were smart enough to wear a vest. So I *know* you're not the type to take unnecessary risks."

He caressed her cheek with the backs of his fingers. "Never. I have way too much waiting for me at home to do anything stupid when I'm out there."

His words warmed her all the way to the tips of her toes, and she smiled. "I know," she said softly.

Resting her hands against his chest, Paisley went up on tiptoe to kiss him. Gray let out a groan, one hand sliding into her hair to cup the back of her head as his lips moved over hers. She sighed against his mouth, forcing herself to push everything that had happened in the warehouse to the back of her mind.

"What do you say we move this into the bedroom?" Gray asked in between kisses.

Paisley could only murmur her approval against this mouth. Apparently, that was good enough for Gray because he swung her up in his strong arms and carried her into the bedroom. Setting her down on the bed, he immediately went to work on the buttons of her shirt, pushing it off her shoulders. Then he stood gazing down at her.

"God, you're so beautiful," he breathed, his voice hoarse with emotion. "I don't think I'm *ever* going to be able to get enough of you."

She pushed herself up onto her knees to wrap her arms around his neck. "*Mmm*, I like the sound of that," she said, kissing him again. "And if you haven't already guessed, the feeling's mutual."

He chuckled, the sound deep and sexy against her ear as he kissed his way along the curve of her jaw and down her neck. She arched against him as he cupped her breasts, only to gasp as he squeezed her nipples between his fingers. Then all at once his mouth was there and he was soothing them with his warm tongue. He teased first one stiff, little peak, and then the other until she was moaning.

Lifting his head from her breasts, Gray gently urged her back onto the bed. Paisley lay back on the pillows, watching as he pulled his shirt over his head, and then stripped off his pajama bottoms. When his hard cock sprang free, she was tempted to push herself up and take him in her mouth, but Gray was already climbing into bed.

The moment their lips met, they became an erotic tangle of legs and arms. Though their naked game of Twister was extremely pleasurable, Paisley was more than happy when Gray rolled her onto her back and settled himself between her legs. She wrapped her legs tightly around him as his cock slid deep inside of her in one smooth motion.

With a moan, Paisley lifted her hips to meet his slow thrusts, her fingers tightening in his hair as he buried his face in the curve of her neck. Just when she was sure he couldn't possibly go any deeper, Gray began pumping into her with hard, rhythmic motions.

She loved the feel of his weight on top of her, pressing her into the bed as he drove his cock deeper and deeper into her pussy. Unable to control herself any longer, she threw back her head and screamed as her climax coursed through her. A moment later, she heard Gray let out a hoarse groan as he found his own release. Even after their bodies had stopped quivering from orgasm, she kept her legs tight around him, never wanting to let him go.

Of course she had to, but only so he could lie back on the bed and pull her into his arms. It was a long time before either of them spoke.

“So,” Gray said softly as he ran his fingers lightly up and down her arm. “What do you think about going back to the cabin for our honeymoon?”

Paisley lifted her head from his shoulder to look at him. “Honeymoon?” she breathed.

The corner of his mouth edged up. “I know it’s kind of early to be talking about it, but I know you really liked it up there and...”

“Wait a minute,” she said before he could get the rest out. “Are you asking me to marry you?”

He nodded. “I know we just met and that you’ll need to think about it, but...”

She shook her head. “I don’t need to think about it. I love you, Gray. I can’t wait to marry you!”

He blinked in surprise. “Really?”

She nodded, her head bobbing up and down wildly as she bent to kiss him. “Really!”

He grinned. “Now I don’t want you to think that I can’t be romantic. I plan on doing this right. You know, buying you a ring, getting down on one knee, the whole nine yards.”

She smacked him on the arm. “You don’t have to do that! I think the proposal you just gave me was very romantic.”

“You do?” he said, and then gave her a teasing look. “So you don’t want me to get you a ring?”

That made her stop and think for a moment. “I didn’t say that,” she protested, and then added, “Maybe you’re right. I think I would like you like you to get down on one knee and propose with a ring.”

Gray chuckled. “I thought that might be the case,” he said, pulling her close for a kiss.

As she kissed him back, she realized he had a point. Their relationship had moved a bit fast. But it felt absolutely, positively right!

The End

About the Author:

Paige Tyler is a full-time writer of erotic romance. She and her research assistant (otherwise known as her husband) live on the beautiful Florida coast with their easy-going dog and their lazy, I-refuse-to-get-off-the-couch-for-anything-but-food cat. When not working on her latest book, Paige enjoys reading, jogging, doing Pilates, going to the beach, and vacationing with her husband at Disney.

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