



# BEHIND the MASK

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# Behind the Mask

*Tawny Taylor*



## Dedication

To my real life alpha male, David.



## Chapter One

It would be a weekend of uninhibited kink...and Kelly Bennett had been invited.

*The honor of your presence is requested at Rogan Cayne's annual Masquerade Weekend, commencing on the twenty-second day of July, two thousand eight, at eight o'clock in the evening. The courtesy of a response is requested by June fifteenth. Please see enclosed program for details.*

Kelly, a self-confessed costume junkie, was in full costume-geek mode. Three masquerade balls. Three gorgeous costumes. Happy sigh!

Tonight she was a mysterious Venetian courtesan, like Catherine McCormack in *Dangerous Beauty*. Despite her skittery nerves, she felt amazing in the silk and velvet garment. Beautiful and sexy.

The rigid corset flattened her full breasts, creating what she hoped was a tantalizing view of soft, ivory flesh. The gold brocade boned bodice made her look at least ten pounds skinnier than she really was, and her legs, encased in deep scarlet thigh-high stockings, were framed by the open-front skirt.

Her hands trembled as she reached for her purse and mask, scooping them off the passenger seat. She gave the valet a weak smile—God, she couldn't remember ever being so nervous—and stepped out of the car.



She stood at the bottom of the mansion's massive front steps, not sure whether she had the courage to go inside. She pinched open her bag, pulled the invitation out and read it again.

It looked so...innocuous, like a formal invitation to a high-society charity event. But she knew better. She'd heard the rumors.

This was not just any old ball. It was bazillionaire Rogan Cayne's annual three-night Masquerade Weekend. Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, from eight in the evening until three in the morning. And Rogan Cayne wasn't your run-of-the-mill bazillionaire either. He was Detroit's most famous (make that infamous) Dom.

The event would showcase Rogan's enviable collection of erotic art, live entertainment by local bands, a dance in an honest-to-goodness ballroom (imagine, having a ballroom in your house!), as well as tarot readings by local psychics.

On top of that, attendees would enjoy access to both a large and fully furnished bondage dungeon as well as smaller private suites for BDSM play.

*Time's up. I've got to go inside. Now. Before I lose my guts, or dinner.*

She pulled on her mask.

*Oh God. I feel sick. What am I doing here?*

Her purse clutched against her chest, Kelly climbed the stairs and stopped at the front door, to give the doorman her name.

He checked his list and then, satisfied she was who she claimed to be, opened the door.

The sounds of the party inside immediately engulfed her. A split second later, the smell of candles and expensive food filled her nostrils. She halted in the enormous foyer, not sure which way to go. There were people everywhere, in various states of undress. Some were wearing actual costumes and others, well, to say their garb qualified as a costume would be akin to saying her Ford Focus was a luxury car.

She didn't know a single person who'd been invited to the weekend. It wasn't like she regularly mixed with the leather set, a term she used for devotees of BDSM. She still had no idea how she'd ended up with an invitation.



Alone. Nervous as heck. Where to go? What to do?

God, she hated stepping into a room full of strangers. She felt awkward, and she was wearing a lot more clothing than most of the people passing by. Gay and straight. Some sporting little more than straps of leather and g-strings, some wearing painted-on latex bodysuits. No one seemed to notice her or acknowledge her.

It was one of those moments when she felt alone in a crowd. She'd felt that way before. Lots of times.

*I shouldn't have come. Why again did I think this would be a good idea?*

She forced herself to move deeper into the building. It was truly a spectacular place, looking more like a museum than a home. Kelly couldn't imagine actually living here, with the majestic, sweeping staircase, crystal chandeliers and elegant furnishings.

Silent and pensive, feeling like something big was about to happen, she followed the distant thrum of the music. If there was one thing she felt natural doing, it was dancing. Thanks to twelve years of dance instruction.

The ballroom sat on one side of a wide corridor, the twin doors propped wide. The dim interior and familiar music beckoned her inside. Ahhh, safety. Comfort. Who would've thought she'd feel such things from a semidecent rendition of "Lady Marmalade"?

Feeling the thump of the base in her belly, she shuffled through gyrating bodies, working her way toward the front, looking for a little space in which to dance.

There. By the stage. She wriggled between a couple of guys dancing together and, facing the stage, closed her eyes and let the music carry her away.

Oh yes, she felt relaxed now. Much better. She'd forgotten how great it felt to just let the music pound through her body. Her ex-fiancé, Max Faulkner, hadn't been much of a dancer. Despite the many balls and parties they'd attended together, she hadn't danced like this in years. She felt sexy and alive and free...

Somebody caught her hand and pulled. More hands caught her under the armpits, and before she knew it, she was on the stage, standing between the band's two female singers. The crowd cheered, and her face grew so hot she figured it might blister.



For a moment she thought about hopping back down, but one of the singers gave her a little nudge and her many years of dancing kicked in. A handful of awkward seconds later, she was a part of their act, shaking and kicking and spinning with the singers. When the song ended, the room filled with riotous cheering. The singers each grabbed one of her hands, raised them and, as a threesome, they bowed.

What a rush. She knew she'd never forget this moment. Never.

The singers gave her beaming smiles and one of them led her from the stage. She was met at the bottom of the steps by a tall man she recognized instantly, despite the black mask concealing the upper half of his face.

She was standing nose-to-chest with the host of the party, Rogan Cayne.

"Come with me." He took her hand in his. Curious and intrigued, she followed him out of bedlam of the ballroom and down the hall. He stopped in a dark corner, beside a single closed door, and circled around her until she was trapped between the wall and his wide, incredibly impressive bulk. "I'm glad to see you accepted my invitation."

*His* invitation? Did he remember her? Was she understanding him correctly? This gloriously handsome man—with the dark and dangerous features of a predator, and a reputation that put Hollywood's most confirmed bachelors to shame—had personally invited her?

Naw, he didn't remember her. He hadn't actually said her name yet. That was silly.

His overpaid party organizer had made up the guest list, and she'd ended up on it because...well, she didn't know how yet. Maybe because of Max's family. The Masquerade Weekend wasn't only a party, it was also a fundraiser for charity, of course. And the Faulkners were a very generous family.

The fact was, Rogan Cayne was just...playing with her. Toying. It was part of the game, the fantasy.

"Kelly," he said, cupping her chin in his hand.

Her stomach dropped to her toes and her gaze shot to his. Ohmygod, he did know her.



He smiled, eyes flashing. Deep dimples dented his cheeks, making him look sweet and wicked at the same time. She had to admit, she was mesmerized. Just like she had been the first time she'd met the infamous Rogan Cayne, over three years ago.

That initial meeting had been a chance encounter, one of those embarrassing things she'd never forgotten. It had been a charity event (naturally), hosted by Max's family. And she'd met Rogan during an impromptu introduction...after she'd accidentally knocked into his arm, sending a full glass of champagne splashing all over his suit.

She'd been mortified.

But this meeting was very different. There'd been no spilled beverages. (Thank God!) No mortification (yet). And it seemed that Rogan had made sure they'd see each other again, and not by chance.

She was so flattered, thrilled and intimidated she felt dizzy. Somehow, she managed to locate her tongue, which had become wedged in her throat. "It's good to see you again." It wasn't a memorable line. Or sexy. But it was better than incoherent babbling. Or spilled champagne.

He tipped his head, and his tongue skimmed his lower lip. "Why did you come to my masquerade, Kelly?"

"Because I was invited," she answered, not sure what he was expecting to hear. "And um..."

"No. *Why*," he repeated, emphasizing the second word, "did you come?"

Shoot, she'd like to know the same thing. "Well, I've heard about your Masquerade Weekend, and um, I was curious."

"Curious?" He captured one of her corkscrew curls between his finger and thumb, and lifted it to his mouth. The corners of his lips curled up in a sensual smile. "About what, my little Venetian whore?"

Coming from any other man, that term—whore—would've totally turned her off. But the way he said it, with that sultry voice of his and those dark, almost menacing eyes, it was like a sweet endearment. This guy could seriously mess with her mind. And that was so not good.



“I had to see if the rumors were true,” she admitted, searching for the truth. “To see if this weekend was the kinky sex-fest it’s purported to be.”

“Then you’re merely here as a casual observer?” he asked, his expression cooling.

She didn’t know how to answer that question. Was he suggesting she participate with him personally? She was kind of getting that vibe.

Yikes.

Giving this man an open invitation to pursue her held its appeal. Yet she was equally scared. If rumors were to be believed, Rogan Cayne regularly (and without remorse) ate women like her up and spit them out.

She studied him for a minute or so. He really did have the most stunning face she’d ever seen. And he gave off this energy, like an invisible electrical charge. Her body felt tingly all over. And warm. Yes, most definitely warm.

If she allowed herself to face the truth, she’d admit that she’d secretly hoped this would happen. That Rogan would notice her, talk to her, take an interest in her. What did you know, he had, and ironically, she wasn’t sure what to do about it.

Finally, she came up with an answer to his question. “Maybe. Then again, maybe not.”

This weekend was supposed to be about letting loose and having fun. When she’d decided to attend, she’d given herself permission to do whatever she felt comfortable with. No guilt. No regrets. She would take things at her own pace. She might watch. She might decide she was ready for more.

Or she might fling herself into a no-holds-barred weekend affair with the richest Dom in Metro Detroit.

Gauging from the interest glittering in his dark eyes, Rogan was intrigued. And she guessed, being the predator he was, he enjoyed a challenging game of cat and mouse.

Maybe this mouse wanted to play.

He brushed a fingertip across the globes of her breasts and leaned in to whisper in her ear, “You’ll play by my rules, my sweet Venetian whore.” Then he turned and left her, reeling, the wall keeping her from literally falling into a quivering heap on the floor.



Oh yes, there could be no doubt. Rogan Cayne was as sinfully wicked as she'd always thought. A womanizing deviant of the best kind. Kelly couldn't wait to *play* with him again.

No guilt. No regrets.



## Chapter Two

“A very tall and powerful man is pursuing you.” The psychic, who called herself Lilly, gazed at something behind Kelly.

Kelly swallowed a chuckle and leaned forward. “Please tell me he didn’t actually pay you to say that.”

“No, he didn’t have to.” Lilly indicated with a slight bob of the head. “He’s watching you now.”

A funny, warm sensation crept up Kelly’s spine. “Really?”

Shuffling a deck of tarot cards, the psychic smiled and nodded. “It’s been a long time since I’ve seen him act this way.”

“Really?” Kelly wanted to ask the attractive young woman a lot of questions, but she couldn’t quite get herself to spit the words out. Partly because she wasn’t sure she wanted to hear the answers.

Lilly offered Kelly the deck of cards. “You may cut them.”

Kelly lifted the top third, set it on the table, then dropped the rest on top and pushed the whole stack back toward Lilly.

“Now close your eyes and concentrate on a question.”

“Just one?” Kelly said, half-joking.

“It works better that way.”



It was really hard, but Kelly did her best, focusing on the biggest, most pressing question bouncing around inside her head—would she enjoy this weekend as much as she'd hoped?

Lilly laid three cards in front of her and went about the spiel, explaining the position of the cards and the meaning of the three that had been dealt. Sadly, they didn't answer Kelly's question, not that she had truly expected them to. This tarot-slash-psychic reading stuff was just for fun. It didn't really foretell the future or anything. At least, that was what she believed.

When Lilly finished, she folded her hands on the table and stared into Kelly's eyes. "Do you have any questions about my reading?"

Kelly started to make a vague compliment about Lilly's psychic skills but stopped. What the hell? She'd come here, opening herself up to risk. Why not tell this little strawberry redhead what she was really thinking?

"Do you know our host well?" she asked.

Lilly nodded. "Rogan's my husband's best friend."

That was not the answer Kelly had expected to hear, but it was an answer she was extremely happy to have. "And you say he's acting strangely?"

After glancing toward the spot behind Kelly again, Lilly shuffled the cards and this time laid out five cards. "He's still watching, so I'm giving you another reading," she said, smiling coyly.

"Got it." Kelly nodded. Now this was the kind of psychic she could appreciate. Definitely money well spent, not just because it was going to AIDS research.

"First, don't believe the rumors. Rogan Cayne is not the ass people make him out to be. He's a very generous man, loyal and trustworthy. And despite the way things might look, he is extremely committed, relationship-wise."

"Committed? But he's a Dom?" She hadn't expected to hear this.

"You're new to all this, aren't you?" At Kelly's nod, Lilly continued, "First, Rogan isn't a Dom. He's a Master. And second, even if he was, the Doms I know personally don't have sex with their subs. Domination and submission is about power, control,



sensation, exploration. Depending upon the people involved and what they're looking for, it may involve sex or it may not. But it's not always about sex."

"Okayyyy." Kelly took a few minutes to digest those tidbits of information before she stood and turned, expecting to find Rogan lurking by the door.

He was gone.

Now, more than ever, the man intrigued her.

Her mind whirring like a spinning top, she wandered the mansion's main floor, eventually finding herself in the huge bondage dungeon.

The furniture was arranged to allow for several scenes to occur at once. She stopped to watch a woman being tied to a St. Andrew's Cross. The submissive was nude, with the exception of a black thong. The Dom was a smaller man than Rogan but, dressed head to toe in black leather, just as intimidating. The whip in his hand had a lot to do with the elevated intimidation factor.

He lifted his arm and flicked his wrist, and the whip's single thong sailed into the air, snapping. The woman flinched. Kelly flinched too, as a blaze of sympathy pain shot up her back. He struck the woman again, and Kelly winced. That was just too...intense. She couldn't watch any more.

She moved on to the next scene.

This time, it was two men, together, being dominated by a third. She moved closer. The two submissives were very attractive. On the young side. Both with athletic bodies, hard and muscular with abdomens cut into delicious planes. They were wearing leather vest-like garments on top and thongs covering some pretty sizeable bulges. At the direction of the Dom, the two men kissed passionately and Kelly stood there, transfixed. Warming all over. Her heart pounding in her chest.

That was one erotic sight, and they were doing nothing but kissing.

"You had a reading?" a deep rumbling voice whispered behind her. Hot breath tickled her nape, giving birth to a full coat of goose bumps over her upper body. Rogan. "Did you enjoy it?"



Her body stiffened as sensual awareness swept up Kelly's spine. "Yes. Very much. It was...enlightening." *Isn't that the truth!*

"Lilly is a very talented psychic."

"Yes, she is." *Another obvious truth.*

Rogan pressed closer, until her backside was snug against his front side. Even through a layer of thick brocade, she couldn't help feeling his rigid bulge pillowed against her soft buttocks.

Once again, her conversation with Lilly whirled through her head. *Committed. Rumors. Master.* He reached for her, gently closing a hand around her throat in a nonthreatening choke hold. Confused and yet wildly aroused at the same time, she lifted her head, extending her neck and pressing the back of her head against his rock-hard chest.

"You chose the perfect costume for tonight, didn't you, my sweet whore. It fits you perfectly."

What exactly did he mean by that?

His hand slid lower. His fingers splayed over the tops of her breasts. Her nipples hardened to painful peaks, pressing against the rigid corset she wore beneath her gown. Her breathing grew shallow and fast, until she was practically gulping air. And her breasts rose and fell with each little gasp.

Before her, the scene with the two guys had progressed. One was being tied up in intricate rope bondage. His dark and erotically charged gaze met hers and there was this strange connection between them. Both surrendering. Both about to melt under the heat of their own wanting.

Rogan tugged on her hair, easing her head to the side and dragged his tongue down the side of her neck. Her knees practically gave out.

A soft moan slipped between her lips and she closed her eyes, letting the myriad of other sensations cocoon her in a world of intense sounds and sensual touches.



“There’s no penetration in the dungeon. But in the private rooms, there are no rules.” He traced the shell of her ear with his tongue. “Come with me.” He released her, and she nearly stumbled to the floor.

She blinked her eyes open and turning, searched for him. He was standing at the rear of the dungeon, waiting by the door, his mouth quirked into a lopsided smile.

He truly was the most handsome guy she’d ever met. He had this way of looking at her. Like he was hunting her, but not at all in a creepy way. No, quite the opposite, that wicked gleam in his eyes was so very sexy. And when she closed her eyes, that was what she saw. His I’m-going-to-eat-you-up expression.

He watched her as she walked toward him. It felt like every cell in her body was electrified when she brushed past him, through the door. He placed a hand on the small of her back, using subtle pressure to steer her down the hall, through the foyer and up the stairs to the private rooms above. Even with the thick material of her gown and corset between her back and his hand, her skin tingled where he touched her.

He stopped in front of a door. “We must be respectful. Once we’re inside, you cannot speak. If you want to leave, simply squeeze my hand.” He slid his hand into hers.

“Okay.” She gave him a test squeeze and a nervous smile.

He opened the door and pulled her inside, quietly stepping aside to close the door.

Totally aware of his movements—he now stood directly behind her, so close—she felt jittery and uneasy. But she didn’t move. Not a step.

Before her, a scene with two men and a woman was in progress. All three were completely nude. And all three were very attractive. She couldn’t tear her eyes away.

The woman—*perfect face, and that body! I hate her*—was on her knees. One of the two men was standing directly in front of her, the other behind. It didn’t take long to figure out that the man standing in front of the woman was her Master. And in the next minute, Kelly learned he was about to turn his slave over to a new Master.

Kelly couldn’t imagine what it must feel like to be turned over from one lover to another, completely powerless to voice her opinion in the matter. Was the slave sad, to be hearing her Master no longer wanted her? Or was she happy and excited, ready to move



on? Was there some kind of emotional attachment she had for the man who was willingly walking out of her life?

From her vantage, Kelly couldn't see the woman's face. And the woman's body language wasn't giving anything away. Kelly watched, with her breath in her throat.

This was real. It was...shockingly real.

The former Master bid his slave goodbye. He moved aside, and the new Master took his place.

"Present, slave," the new Master demanded.

The woman cupped her hands under her full breasts and lifted them. "Your slave presents these breasts for your inspection and approval."

"Approved," her Master said.

The woman's hands dropped to the vee of her thighs, parting her shaved labia. "Your slave presents this pussy for your inspection and approval."

Her Master glanced down at his slave, then over Kelly's shoulder, nodding at Rogan. "It would be my pleasure to invite our host to inspect my new slave."

What?

This was crazy. Strange and foreign. And yet Kelly felt like she was being drawn into this dark world, where women were traded like possessions, offered to other men. Could she fit in this world? Did she want to?

"Watch me," Rogan whispered into her ear, before brushing past her. As he walked, his fingertips slid along the length of her fingers.

To her surprise, the simple touch did some not-so-simple things to her body.

He circled the slave, stooped in front of her and, his intense gaze focused on Kelly's face, reached between the woman's legs. Kelly's pussy thrummed as she watched him slide his fingers into the woman's pussy. So hot.

The way Rogan was looking at her, it was as if he was either touching her, instead of the slave, or touching the slave for her. The corners of his lips curled into a ghost of a smile, and quivering, Kelly pressed her fingertips to her mouth.



A bizarre current zapped between them, and she didn't want the moment to end, as awkward and nerve-wracking and thrilling as it was. But much too soon, he broke the connection, stood and crossed his arms over his chest.

"I approve," Rogan said.

"Thank you," the Master said, nodding. "Can I offer my slave to you?"

Rogan glanced at Kelly and smiled wider. "Maybe later. Thank you."

"It would be my pleasure."

Rogan swept his arm toward the slave. "Please, continue." He returned to Kelly and once again took her hand in his. She knew by doing so he was asking her if she wanted to leave, but the scene between the Master and his new slave intrigued her. She could almost imagine herself in the woman's place, on her knees, her heart banging madly against her breastbone, her body aflame as she waited for her new Master's next command.

The Master ordered his slave to a low bench against the wall. He secured the woman's wrists in cuffs chained to the wooden supports affixed to the wall. The entire time the Master worked, Kelly's focus was on the slave, her face, her eyes.

From the moment they'd stepped into this room, Kelly's heart hadn't stopped thumping heavily in her chest. And her face and chest felt hot, like she'd been standing too close to a tanning lamp. Adding to the whole thing, she was all too aware of Rogan behind her. He released her hand, instead sliding his hands around her sides and pulling her snug against him.

Her head was sort of spinny, her body tingly and twitchy and hot. She was very grateful for Rogan's support—both the very literal one and the figurative one—especially when the Master dug into a large bag on the floor, produced a huge dildo and thrust it into his slave's open pussy.

At exactly the same moment, Rogan reached between Kelly's legs and dragged his hand along her wet slit, covered by a thin layer of sodden satin.

"Oh God," Kelly murmured, quivering.



“Silence,” Rogan whispered. His fingers traced the top of Kelly’s thigh-high stockings. “Stay silent and still. Watch. Learn. Enjoy.”

How could she possibly stay silent when she was burning up inside? When the world around her didn’t make any sense, and she was alternating between cold shock and desperate desire?

Was this real? Any of it?

God help her, she hoped it was. She watched the Master before her repeatedly thrust that dildo into the trembling slave until she quaked and pled for mercy. At the same time, Rogan’s fingers danced over Kelly’s panties, teasing her pussy through the material. He hooked his fingers in the crotch and pulled sharply. The drenched material gave easily, tearing away. Kelly flinched and swallowed a yelp of surprise.

As he slid his fingers inside her, she leaned into him and sighed.

This was not happening. She was not letting a virtual stranger finger-fuck her while she watched a man “train” his bondage slave by driving an enormous dildo into her pussy. No, siree. Wasn’t happening.

Oh God, it was. And she liked it. She did. So much, so, in fact that she was going to come.

“Touch your pussy. Stroke your clit, my little whore,” Rogan murmured.

Desperate for release, she reached between her legs, and her fingers brushed over Rogan’s knuckles as she dragged some of her juices up to her supersensitive clit. She barely touched her pearl before it was all over.

Her knees buckled and a burst of heat blazed through her body. Her vagina tightened around Rogan’s invading fingers for a split second, until her orgasm swept through her. The pleasure. So intense. Her pussy convulsed rhythmically as the rest of her body quaked.

Rogan completely supported her weight with one arm while he used his other hand to prolong her pleasure, plunging in and out, stroking her intimately, his fingertips grazing that one special spot inside. She dropped her head back and rocked it from side to side. So hot. So, so hot. And desperate. And...more. She wanted more.



“Until tomorrow, my sweet whore,” Rogan said, slipping his hand out from between her legs. He pressed her fingertips to his lips, smiled.

And then he left her, and she was breathless and trembling. Confused and exhilarated.

What a night.

She couldn't wait until tomorrow.



## Chapter Three

Last night, she'd been a Venetian courtesan. Even she had to admit she had looked unusually sexy. Tonight, she looked even better. More mysterious and dangerous.

She was a Victorian vampire, a creature of the night. Instead of gold brocade and deep burgundy velvet, she was wearing black lace and gray satin. A black brocade corset cinched in her waist and bound her breasts. A full-length gray satin trumpet skirt accentuated her hips and round fanny.

Once again, she curled her long hair into perfect ringlets and carefully applied her makeup, emphasizing her full lips with dark lipstick. Around her neck she wore an intricate choker, dripping with black crystals.

She was so nervous and excited her hands trembled like crazy the whole drive to the mansion. And her insides were tied into an uncomfortable knot. She was careful not to eat much, knowing her nerves would be stretched to near their snapping point. She didn't want tonight to be ruined by an irritable stomach.

Last night had been beyond her wildest dreams. In fact, she'd been so overwhelmed it had taken her hours to fall asleep. The minute she closed her eyes, she saw Rogan, that wicked smile curling his lips and glint sparkling in his eyes. Just like the masquerade itself, the man created a strange mix of reactions in her. She was both slightly intimidated by him and unquestionably drawn to him. He bothered her and he fascinated her.



Her jittery nerves only got worse as she pulled into the long U-shaped driveway and put the car into park.

After last night, there was no saying what might happen or how she'd feel by the end of the night.

She thanked the valet, pulled on her mask, and carefully exited her car. The costume restricted her range of motion, making it especially hard to spread her legs or bend her knees. The building's front stairs proved to be an unexpected challenge.

Trying not to look like a dork, she resorted to taking them sideways, her face nearly blistering when she caught the doorman watching her from above.

"Guess I should've test driven it first," she joked, tugging at the clingy material when she finally reached the top.

The doorman simply nodded, motioning her inside before she'd given him her name. The man must have the world's best memory.

Inside, tonight's festivities were as loud, if not louder, than last night's, and once again the foyer smelled like expensive perfume and candles and food. It was a unique, extremely pleasant combination of scents that she was quickly coming to associate with Rogan's home.

Where to go first?

She wasn't sure whether she was mentally prepared for the dungeon yet. Maybe she should shake off some of her jangly nerves like she had last night. If her costume hadn't been such a pain-in-the-ass to get into, she might have found the massage room and gotten a massage.

A pretty bench offered a handy seat while she checked her program.

Tonight, the band was alternative/punk. Once again, there were psychics available for readings, masseurs and masseuses giving massages, and tattoo artists offering services. Nothing really struck her. Mostly because all she could think about was trying to find Rogan.

She wanted to see him again, to feel that nervous, pitter-pattery sensation when he looked at her. To let him guide her into the dark world of her fantasies.



“You have kept me waiting too long.”

Her heart literally stopped. For at least a second or two. The program forgotten, she glanced up and smiled. “It wouldn’t be much of a game if I rushed here every night and surrendered at your feet, now would it?”

“No, it wouldn’t.” He sat beside her, pulled her hand into his. He stroked the back with his thumb. Such a simple touch, and yet so erotic. Especially when accompanied by the hungry expression on his face.

Wow, he looked amazing. Could she have forgotten how incredibly good looking he was in so few hours? His face was like a work of art, perfectly proportioned with dark eyes fringed with long black lashes, hard slashes of cheekbones and a strong jaw. And his mouth, that mouth.

He traced over her choker with an index finger. “Interesting choice for a costume tonight. A vampire? I admit, this one is stunning on you. But I liked last night’s courtesan. For more than one reason.”

Her face must have turned the shade of a stop sign. Of course he’d liked last night’s. The open-front skirt had given him convenient access to her more sensitive parts. The trumpet skirt did not. He’d have to work harder.

That thought made her smile. “Thank you. I’ll take that as a compliment.”

“As you should.”

Tonight, he gave Gerard Butler a run for his money, dressed as the Phantom of the Opera. He stood, taking her hand with him. “The time we have will go quickly. I don’t want to waste a minute.”

Neither did she, although she was a little hesitant. Last night had been her introduction to his world. And what an introduction it had been. Shocking and exciting, intimidating and intriguing. What would he do this time? Would he push her beyond her limits? What were her limits?

He didn’t bother with the dungeon, just led her up the stairs (she had to lift her skirt to avoid killing herself) and down the hall to the private bondage rooms. He entered the last one at the very end of the hall.



It was empty.

“Tonight, I want to play a different game. No chase. Or hide and seek. I’m tired of those already.” He untied his cloak and unfastened the top buttons of his crisp white shirt.

“I crave a more challenging game. Will you play with me?”

“What game do you want to play, Phantom?”

“Truth or dare.”

Now, that could be one treacherous game. She’d learned that back in high school, when she’d ended up dared into stripping nude and streaking down her best friend’s suburban street at midnight. It was particularly dangerous if one was playing with someone as devious as Julie Cox.

No doubt, her Phantom would put Julie to shame in the devious department. But she couldn’t resist the temptation to play with fire.

After two years spent playing the role of good girl, committed and loyal fiancée, only to have her heart broken, she was ready to be a little bad, take risks. She wanted to find out exactly what her fiancé had been missing, that he’d felt he needed to walk out of her life, rather than work for their love.

“I’ll play with you, Phantom. But only if you go first.”

“Very well.” He unbuttoned his vest and slipped it off his shoulders. “I will start with a truth.”

She was so glad to hear that, because she had no idea what kind of dare to challenge him with. If rumors were to be believed, there wasn’t much the man hadn’t done...or wouldn’t do.

She thought long and hard about what question to ask him, finally settling on one that seemed appropriate, given his costume. “In the Phantom of the Opera, the Phantom loves Christine but she doesn’t love him back, at least not as much. Have you ever been in the Phantom’s shoes, loved someone so much you were desperate for their love to be returned?”

He chuckled. “Wow. That’s quite a question. Here, I figured you’d start off easy, with something like, ‘What’s your favorite movie?’”



“As you said, time’s short. Besides, I know you’re not going to take it easy on me.”

The grin he gave her nearly melted her bones. “Seems like you’re getting to know me already.” He unbuttoned his shirt as he thought through his answer. Kelly watched, transfixed, as inch after inch of glorious sculpted male torso was exposed. The man clearly spent some time in the gym, with a body like that. His pecs were tight and hard, his abdomen sliced into rigid planes.

He pulled his shirt out of the waist of his trousers and sprawled all casual and sexy on a nearby chair. One arm draped over the back of the chair. The other rested on his stomach, fingertips slowly tracing the line cutting it vertically. Down. Lower still. A dark fire danced in his gaze as they reached the waistband of his pants. “The answer is yes. Once.”

That was it? He’d thought that long and hard to come up with a five-word response? That would teach her to give him yes-or-no questions in the future. “Care to elaborate?”

He shook his head. “Not right now. I’m much more interested in our game at the moment.” He leaned forward, propping his elbows on his knees. “Your turn. Truth or dare?”

Oh God. Why again had she agreed to this? “Um...truth.” She wasn’t ready for the kind of dare a man this wicked would deal out.

He leaned back in his chair, and shifting his arms to the armrests, drummed his fingers as he thought.

Her knees were knocking, and she felt more than a little lightheaded from nerves. She was swaying, literally.

To avoid looking like she was either a total lush, or simply clumsy, she sat on the low table in the center of the room. It was a bondage table. The image of herself, lying spread eagle, arms and legs bound, flashed through her mind. A little rush of hot shivers quaked up her spine.

“What did you expect to find here this weekend?” he asked.

That wasn’t the simple question it seemed, and she knew he was aware of that.



“What did I expect to find? Um, I guess, answers to questions I didn’t know I had been asking myself.”

“Such as?”

“Such as...am I really as intrigued by bondage as I think I am? Or are pictures on the net as close as I want to get to a St. Andrew’s Cross? And what is BDSM truly all about? And why do I fantasize about scenarios involving certain acts? Those kinds of questions.”

“Have you found your answers yet?”

She almost answered him, but she stopped herself. “Uh-uh. I already gave you more than you did. It’s your turn.”

His eyes sparkled as he chuckled again. She enjoyed the way his laughter bubbled through her body, like little vibrations. But even more, she appreciated the way those sparkles warmed her insides. “I’ll go with a dare this time.”

Evil man. What the heck kind of dare could she give him, that he hadn’t probably done a million times before?

She wanted it to be something revealing, that would not necessarily be daring in the traditional sense of the word. But daring on a deeper level.

“I dare you to reveal your biggest weakness to me.”

He stood, walked toward her, cupped the back of her head and looked deep in her eyes. “I already have. My weakness is you, the fact that I couldn’t wait to see you tonight. The fact that I waited so long to finally have you.” He tightened his fingers in her hair. “You see, I am the Phantom. I have been watching. Waiting. I knew when you broke your engagement, and I gave you time to heal. But I won’t wait any longer. I want you now.” He bent, claiming her mouth in a kiss that took her breath away and made her heart race so fast her head spun.



## Chapter Four

Kelly hadn't come here for this—to find out one of the most notorious Doms (or Masters, whatever) in Metro Detroit has been obsessed with her for over three years.

She'd come to have some fun, explore, get answers to questions. Find herself. But oh God, she wasn't complaining.

Rogan Cayne wanted her. Desperately. This weekend was like her own version of Phantom, and it was as darkly erotic as the play she'd watched in Toronto.

Kissing Rogan back, she slid her hands up his bare torso, satiny skin skimming over skin. As her tongue mated with his, her fingers mapped every inch of his beautiful body, each line and swell. Over an alligator stomach and hard pecs. Up to broad shoulders that seemed wide enough to bear the weight of the world.

With his hands and body, he forced her onto her back then climbed overtop of her, his knees straddling her hips. He quickly unhooked the front of her corset and when it fell away, he gathered her full breasts into his hands. His kiss became more possessive, more demanding.

She felt like she'd just been overcome by a raging typhoon, a swirling vortex of blinding, overwhelming need. Powerless to do anything but close her eyes and ride the storm out, she moaned into their joined mouths and swept his shirt off his shoulders.

Tight. Burning. Pounding. More.



She clawed at his smooth skin and arched her back, lifting her breasts, pushing them into his hands. He broke the kiss and she whimpered, desperate to taste him again. To feel like he was claiming her, dominating her, forcing her to submit.

Oh yes, how thrilling it was to feel powerless beneath this man. She could tell already.

He moved, to allow himself access to her legs. Standing next to the table, he slid his hands under her skirt, forcing it up higher and higher as his fingers trailed up her shins, over her knees, to the tops of her thighs. She couldn't wait for his touch to find her hot, tight center. She couldn't wait to feel him filling her.

*Please, please don't tease me tonight.*

Having been hopeful, Kelly had worn the thinnest, most unsubstantial g-string she owned. It was a tiny triangle of black lace with a narrow band that went up her ass and around her waist. She was oh so happy she'd chosen those panties tonight when his finger traced the looping line of the lace pattern.

Her thighs inched apart, a silent plea for him to touch her lower, to pull that little bit of fabric away and slide a finger into her pussy. He obliged her a few stuttering heartbeats later, and she sighed in gratitude.

"Open your legs, you wicked little vixen. Open to your Phantom and let him reward you."

A shudder swept up her body.

He forced her knees to bend and eased them apart.

She felt vulnerable and open. Tight and breathless.

"So hot and wet for your Phantom." He ripped the crotch of her panties, just like he had last night, and teased her slit with a finger. "Do you want your Phantom to tie you up?" His hand closed around one of her ankles so tightly it almost felt like a steel shackle.

"Do you want to know what it feels like to submit to a monster?"

She did, oh God, more than her next breath. "Y-yes. Please."

"If anything hurts or pinches, say 'music'."

"Okay."



He left her, and she was ready to cry out. But she knew it would be for only a few minutes. She opened her eyes, watched him gather some things from a large armoire. Her heart was thumping so hard she could hear it in her head. And her mouth was so dry her tongue felt like parchment. But she didn't move and she didn't second-guess what she was about to do.

This was right.

"I want to see all of you," he said, returning to the center of the room. He set a basket of things on the floor beside the table, out of the line of her sight. "Undress, little vixen. But leave on the mask." He helped her sit up and then watched, his eyes glittering with lust as she peeled away the remaining layers of clothes and handed each garment to him.

She felt more beautiful than she had ever felt in her life as she watched him hungrily look her over, from the tips of her painted toes to the top of her spiral-curled head. A blush burned her cheeks and chest, and yet, she couldn't look away. She sat on that table and waited for him to strip off his clothes.

He moved with restrained power and fluid grace. Off came the shoes and socks. His pants slid down thick, corded thighs, over his knees to the floor. And finally, he removed the snug black boxer-briefs he wore underneath, to reveal a fully erect cock. Like Kelly, he left his mask in place.

His skin was tanned, smooth and hairless, everywhere, which made him look like a sculpture. She'd never seen a more perfect male body. She had to touch him. It was agonizing, denying herself the pleasure.

Leaning forward, she reached for him, but he shook his head. "You want to know what it's like to submit to your Phantom. Then you must do what he says, and only what he says." At her nod, he continued, "Do you remember watching the slave present herself to her Master last night?"

She did. In fact, she hadn't been able to stop thinking about that scene. As she'd lain in bed, visualizing the woman parting her pussy for Rogan, Kelly's body had burned for his touch. "I do."

"Present, vixen."



“On the floor? Or here?” She suddenly felt a little out of her element and nervous once again. Was it any big deal that he was asking her to play the role of a slave? And he was stepping into the role of her Master. Did that mean something?

“Here. On the table.”

She tried to position herself as she remembered the slave had been. On her knees, her bottom off her feet. Her back arched so her breasts stood out. Her hands resting on the tops of her thighs. “Like this?”

“Yes. Very nice. You’re a quick learner and pay attention.” Rogan walked around the table, adjusting her slightly, encouraging her to arch her back more, to move her knees farther apart. “Now, do you remember what to say?”

“I think so.” She felt a little self-conscious as she cupped her hands under her breasts and lifted them, but she did it anyway, avoiding eye contact with Rogan to hide her embarrassment. “I present these breasts to my Master for his inspection and approval.”

“Approved.”

Now the scary part.

She smoothed her hands down her torso, over her freshly shaven mound. She used her fingers to part her labia. “I present this pussy to my Master for his inspection and approval.” Slick, hot juices pulsed from her vagina, coating her fingertips, and her inner muscles clamped tight as heat pulsed in her womb.

This was scary and wildly erotic. She’d had no idea how thrilling submitting to a Master would be.

*Touch me, like you did the slave last night. Please.*

“You shaved. Very nice.” He moved closer and she raised her eyes to his face. His expression was intense, his jaw tight, his eyelids heavy. He reached for her, and she was ready to come before he touched her. When his fingers slipped between her nether lips, she dropped her head back and shook all over.

In they slid, two of them. They filled her, stretched her, tormented her. But too soon he withdrew them. “Approved. Now present your ass the same way.”

*Oh God.*



She lifted her arms and reached behind her back, parting her full ass cheeks. “I present this ass to my Master for his inspection and approval.”

The muscles in her back clenched painfully as she waited. Would Rogan test her anus the same way he’d tested her pussy? He walked around her, stopping directly behind her. He touched her pussy first and she jerked slightly at his touch. He dipped his fingers into her slick canal, not all the way in. Just enough to tease her. Unmerciful bastard. A heartbeat later, he dragged those two fingers back, along her perineum, to her anus.

Gently, he caressed the tight ring of muscles. “Open, vixen. Let your Master inside.”

She squeezed her eyes shut and concentrated on relaxing. His finger slipped inside then withdrew. She heard the slightly obscene sound of lubricant being squeezed from a bottle. A second later, his finger was back, wet, slick and cool. Again, it slipped inside, easier this time. Deeper. He twisted it then drew slow circles inside, stretching her anus.

She was going to combust. Or come. One or the other.

Her legs were trembling so badly she could hardly remain upright. But she did the best she could and within seconds the wonderful torment was done and his finger was gone.

Her body screamed its dissatisfaction.

Desperate to keep from crying out, she bit her lower lip until it stung and her mouth was filled with the sweet taste of her blood.

He was taking things so slow it was killing her. Each word, each small touch, each breath was like foreplay, and her body was responding like never before. But now she ached inside. She needed a cock, stroking her intimately. She needed it desperately.

Was this what BDSM was all about? Delicious, frustrating teasing torment? If so, she knew for a fact that she’d been searching for this, missing it all these years. She hadn’t even realized this kind of desperate longing existed before now. And yet she’d known she was seeking *something*.

There was no denying it. This kind of heat, desperation, agony had been missing from her relationship with her former fiancé. Was that why he’d left her? Had Max been looking for the same thing?



“Your ass is very tight. You’ll need to train yourself to relax. But I can help you.” He massaged her buttocks, swept her hair to the side and kissed her nape. Instantly, a coat of goose bumps covered her entire upper body. “You are so responsive to my every touch. That pleases me. Now lay down.” He helped her lay on her back. “Have you ever been restrained?”

“No, never.”

“Then I will go slowly.”

Slowly? That would only be more agonizing. Did this man do anything quickly?

She wanted to beg him for mercy, plea with him to fuck her hard and fast like her body was demanding. But she didn’t speak. Not a word.

Not when he lifted her arms over her head and bound her wrists to the upper corners of the table.

Nor when he forced her legs wide apart and strapped a metal bar to one of her thighs.

As he worked, he gave her directions in a low, sexy voice. And she was nearly in tears by the time he wrapped the second strap around her thigh.

She’d had no idea how she’d feel once she was bound, helpless and open and vulnerable...and no less, vulnerable to a virtual stranger. She sure hadn’t expected it to be like this. An erotic thrill. Both sexy and exciting and a little scary.

Adding to the overwhelming mix of emotions flooding her was the man himself. The way he talked to her, looked at her, touched her. It was no wonder Rogan was such a sought-after Master. He didn’t have to pound his cock into her pussy to make her hot and wet and desperate. He could strike a fire in her body with just a few words, a look, the softest touch.

Never again would she be content with what she and Max had had—mechanical sex. And an empty, loveless relationship. They’d had sex every night because that was what they thought they should do. Not because it made either one of them feel like this—vulnerable and alive and full of energy.

When Rogan finished binding her, he unwrapped a new dildo from its package and teased her pussy with the tip, sliding it up over her clit then down to her vagina.



Instinctively, her inner muscles tightened as he gently pressed it inside. A quiver of pleasure vibrated through her body.

It wasn't a cock, but she was full and...ohhhh...it felt so good. She clamped her eyelids closed.

Kelly's every sense was at its most intense, as sensual sounds and scents flooded her system. She totally withdrew into herself, and the world outside faded away. She was almost disembodied, floating in a world of swirling colors and pounding heat.

This experience was one she would never forget. And even though it wasn't over, she knew deep inside that she'd been changed forever.

Her Phantom had given her a great gift.



## Chapter Five

“After learning to present, one of the first and most important things a slave learns is orgasm control. A slave may not come until her Master gives her permission.”

That dildo was gliding in and out of Kelly’s pussy, filling her then retreating, and her bound body was soaring toward completion.

A flare of heat blazed up her chest. Her legs tightened so hard they trembled.

“Don’t come, vixen.”

She tried to yank herself out of the moment. It was impossible. She was tied up, her legs spread wide, and a beautiful, dark and powerful man was playing her body like a musical instrument. He had total control, which meant it would be up to him to stop her. She simply couldn’t.

“I-I can’t. I’m going to come.” Hot tears streamed from the corners of her eyes. She wrapped her fingers around the chains securing her wrists to the table and arched her back, trying desperately to keep from soaring over the edge. She opened her eyes, found Rogan’s face, and said, “Please, please let me come.”

He withdrew the dildo less than a second before it was too late.

Her body twitched and jerked. Her pussy clamped around tingly, aching emptiness. She dragged in the first deep breath in who knew how long and relaxed. She felt heavy. Twitchy, elated and frustrated too.



“Very good. You’re a natural submissive.” He removed the straps from her thighs and wrists, and helped her sit up. Her head sloshed a bit as she got vertical, no doubt the result of all that panting. Or maybe it was from the thrill she felt at his compliment.

“Goodbye, vixen. Our game is over for tonight. We’ll have one more game. One more night, tomorrow.”

That was it? Just like that, he was done with her? But she wasn’t ready to leave. She wanted more. More time to talk. To play. To experiment and explore.

She swore she was going to cry.

He pulled her against him. She fit perfectly, her softness a compliment to his hardness. He smelled good, and she adored the way he stroked her head as he held her.

She pressed her ear against his chest, closed her eyes, and listened to the steady *thump-wump* of his heartbeat. She’d had no idea she could want someone this badly after such a short time. She was so desperate to be touched by this man, to hear his voice and see him, when she was alone all she could do was count the minutes until she’d get that chance again.

He released her about a zillion hours too soon. “I have to go now.” He cupped her cheek, thumbed her lower lip. “My vixen. Think about what you’ve learned tonight. And what answers you’ve found. Tomorrow is another night, and we’ll play again.”

She did exactly as he said. She went home and spent hours just sitting, her thoughts her only companion.

What answers had she found so far this weekend?

She’d learned she hadn’t been as happy in her relationship with Max as she’d tried to convince herself she was.

She’d learned she did crave submission, at least to a certain degree. And she needed a man who was powerful and knew how to help her explore that side of herself.

Finally, she knew she would never again talk herself into staying in a just-okay relationship. Life was too short for that, and it wasn’t fair to anyone. Things hadn’t been right with Max for months before he’d broken their engagement. In fact, they’d gone sour shortly after he’d proposed.



To think they might be married now, living like drones, going through the actions but not truly feeling anything. It would have been a tragedy.

The next day, before she got ready for the final costume party, she did some reading on the internet about Master and slave relationships, and bondage and submission. There were lots of sites on the subject, some more helpful than others. In particular, a site about the Essence of Gor illuminated her. It seemed some people were basing their real lives and relationships on a series of fantasy books, the *Chronicles of Gor*. In the books, men were dominant and women submissive, by nature. A Master was always in control of his slave. He owned the slave and made all the decisions. A Dom was not. He only played a role, but in all reality the submissive still had the control and power in the relationship. And a Master had a great responsibility to his slave, to meet her every need, emotional and spiritual, as well as physical.

Rogan had called himself her Master, and clearly he was training her to be his slave. A Master-slave relationship wasn't a weekend thing. It was far more intense and lasting than that.

Based on what he'd said and done last night, it was clear to Kelly that Rogan ascribed to Gorean principles of domination and submission. He wasn't satisfying a sexual itch this weekend. Not hers. And most definitely not his. He was laying the foundation for a relationship.

The last evening, Kelly decided to forgo the costume she'd planned on wearing, a beautiful gown fashioned after the ones in the movie *Dangerous Liaisons*. Rococo panniers and all. There was too much of it. Too much material. Too much boning.

Instead, she slipped on a white sheer negligee, cinched her corset on over it, pulled on some white thigh-high stockings with sexy little pink bows at the top, a pair of crotchless white lace panties she'd picked up earlier today, and a pair of white shoes. On went her mask, this one white and gold, adorned with ribbons and lace and feathers, and finally she wrapped herself in her Renaissance festival cloak and headed for the car.

She couldn't wait to see Rogan, not only because of how she felt when she was with him, but also to tell him what she'd learned.



This time, she wasn't as nervous as she drove to his mansion. Not that she was exactly relaxed and carefree either. Her heart was humming along at a steady clip as she shuffled up the front steps and smiled at the doorman. She hurried inside, searching the foyer for Rogan's familiar form. She headed into the ballroom, as usual packed to capacity, with people gyrating to the music of J-Lo.

This noisy scene wasn't Rogan's thing. She wouldn't find him here.

She headed to the dungeon, where there were three scenes in progress. One looked like an instructional scene on rope bondage. The Dom was showing an example of a particular knot to the onlookers. The second, at the St. Andrew's Cross, was an S&M scene with a Domme whipping a male submissive with a flogger. The sub's bare back was covered in red stripes. Kelly stopped to watch for a few minutes, but still struggled to understand why a submissive would seek such pain. That brand of submission wasn't for her. She knew it in her gut.

The third scene was a humiliation scene, from the looks of it. The submissive, a cute woman, young and attractive, was on all fours in front of her Domme. And the latex-clad woman was making her bark and roll around on the floor, like a dog.

Again, she couldn't relate to that form of submission either. How would being humiliated, forced to lick a woman's spike-heeled boots, make her feel good?

She sensed someone was watching her. She turned.

There, in the back of the room. Rogan.

Tonight, he was dressed like a vampire. White shirt, black vest and cape.

Beaming like a bride on her wedding day, she pushed past leather-clad attendees toward him, one side of her cape flapping over her shoulder. She halted a couple feet away.

So giddy. So full of nervous energy. She felt like a schoolgirl talking to the football hero. "Hi."

His gaze swept up and down her body. One corner of his mouth quirked up in a lopsided smile. "My vixen is growing bolder."

"This wasn't the costume I'd originally planned to wear tonight. I hope you like it."



“It’s perfect.” He offered his hand, which she gladly accepted. “This way.”

This time, he led her through a set of French doors and out into a beautiful garden. It was warm outside, humid. The cicadas filled the stuffy heat with a loud buzz, and faint stars sprinkled the clear night sky. He stopped in front of a stone bench, positioned next to a pond. She stood before him, knees trembling, hands clasped together, heart in her throat. The moment was so special, so incredibly romantic. And so scary.

He untied her cape and let it fall off her shoulders. It landed on the stone path, in a puddle at her feet. “Did you do as I asked, Kelly? Did you think about the questions you had, the answers you’ve found?”

“I did.”

“Very good. Sit here.” He motioned to the bench. “We didn’t finish our game last night. Neither of us won. Or lost.”

She’d forgotten all about that. “Oh, yeah.” Whose turn had they ended on?

He eased to one knee and slid his hands up her leg. His fingers splayed over her upper thigh, and little sparks of electricity zapped along her skin. “It was your turn. Truth or dare?”

Last night she’d been too afraid to try a dare. But tonight she was ready. “Dare.”

His smile broadened. He inched his hand higher, higher, until his fingers grazed her bare pussy. “I dare you to submit to me here, outside, where anyone might walk by and see you.”

“Submit to you how?”

“Spread your legs, vixen. Let me see that pretty pussy. Let me taste you.”

She was ready to do that, and more. She spun on her fanny and lay on her back on the bench, lengthwise. The stone cooled her sizzling skin, even through the thick corset.

Her bottom rested on the very edge of the seat, her feet on the ground, legs bent at the knees and spread. No doubt, there was a real thrill in having Rogan caress her inner thighs, part her nether lips and tease her clit with his tongue for the first time. And that thrill was amplified a million times by the fact that they were in a garden with other



people milling about. At any moment someone might walk past, see her rocking her head side-to-side as waves of sensual heat pulsed through her body.

Every time she heard sounds of movement, her legs tightened. She glanced around, checking to see if anyone was watching. But as mild, simmering need slowly turned to wild, thrashing heat, she tuned out the distractions around her. Her entire being centered on the point between her legs, where Rogan's tongue was dancing over her clit and his fingers were gliding in and out of her wet pussy.

She wanted to come, oh God did she ever. Tense. Hot. Desperate. She gripped the edges of the bench and lifted her legs, opening them wider. Her hips rocked back and forth, in time to the pounding of her heartbeat in her ears.

"Please, Master," she begged as her body soared toward the completion he'd denied her last night. "I want to come. I need to come." She braced herself, sure he'd deny her again.

"Yes, my sweet vixen. Come for me. Come now. I want to taste you." His tongue still swirling and flicking over her clit, he added a finger in her anus, and Kelly was done.

A rush of tingly warmth flooded her face and neck, and the soles of her feet cramped. *So good. No, better than good.* Her vagina and anus contracted around Rogan's fingers, and she cried out into the still night, "Yes! Thank you, Master." She bucked, grinding her pelvis against his hand, taking his fingers as deep as they'd go. "Thank you," she repeated, over and over until the heat subsided and the glorious convulsing eased to pleasant twitches.

She opened her eyes.

One, two, three, four, five...six. Six people had just watched her come, not including Rogan. What should she do? Say? She hiked herself up and lowered her legs. Her pussy was still tingling, warm juices seeping between her labia. Spinning on her butt, she crossed her legs, swinging a foot. Rogan grinned at her, like the evil beast he was, and stood.



She met one woman's gaze. The woman was a short brunette, pretty, dressed in a black corset and snug pants. The woman smiled, and despite being totally embarrassed, Kelly smiled back. A little rush of excitement swept through her.

Adding to the list, evidently she had a little touch of exhibitionist in her as well. What other mysteries would she uncover about herself this weekend?

She glared at Rogan. "Truth or dare?"



## Chapter Six

Rogan leveled his gaze to hers. “Dare.”

This time, Kelly knew exactly what she’d dare him to do. She hadn’t thought about it ahead of time, but it was the perfect dare. Because it was what Rogan had been searching for.

This journey wouldn’t be hers alone.

“I dare you to take off your mask, to bear your scars, *Phantom*.”

Rogan’s response didn’t come immediately. At first, he looked a little confused. A moment later, wary. Finally, he spoke. His voice was chilly, his tone clipped. “Come with me.” He turned and headed back toward the house.

She hesitated. Had she just ended their game? Pushed too hard? Things were going fast. Like lightning quick. But Rogan had been the one to set the pace. A chill swept through her body, despite the muggy heat. *No. Please. Tell me it isn’t over.* She hurried after him.

Rogan didn’t slow down when he entered the house. He pushed through the French doors, down the main corridor and up the curling main staircase. At the top, he turned to the right, instead of the left, stopping at the closed door at the very end of a long hallway.

Turning, he pushed it open. “Are you sure you’re ready for this?”

She wasn’t sure, and yet she was. She ached to see this man for who he truly was, but at the same time she was petrified. She expected he’d strip her bare as well, reveal her



every weakness and fear. Was she ready to remove her mask too, to bear her scars to him?

She stepped through the door and into a room that was as dark and complex and disturbing as the man who owned it. The walls were painted matte black. Most of the furniture was black. And the only other color in the room was stark white—the bedding, the shades on the lamps, the drapes and carpet.

The walls and ceiling felt heavy, like they were crowding her, oppressive. But at the same time, she felt safe, cocooned in silent darkness.

He closed the door and turned to her, stepping into her personal space. “I think you and I have both been hiding for too long. We don’t know our true reflection when we see it.” He palmed her face and she tipped her head into his hand. “Am I right?”

“Yes.”

He bent over, until his mouth was nearly touching hers. “I’m ready. Take off my mask, Kelly.”

With uncoordinated fingers, she reached around the back of his head, into silky curls. She tugged the bow loose from the ribbon holding up his mask and slowly lowered it from his face.

Next, he did the same to her.

“No more hiding.” Gently, he stripped her of her clothes, until she stood aching and trembling in front of him, wishing he’d kiss her, touch her, make love to her. “Undress me.”

She felt like she might crumble to a heap on the floor at any moment, but she focused on Rogan as she removed his cape, vest, shirt, shoes, socks, trousers.

“These are my scars,” he said, lifting his arms out from his sides. “They mark my heart, not my skin. But I bear them to you now just like the Phantom did when he removed his mask.” His eyes reddened and his lower lip quivered as he spoke. “I’ve hidden. Behind my reputation. Afraid to trust, to bear my soul to a woman. To allow myself to be vulnerable. It’s so easy to play a role. The contented Master who kept



everyone at arm's length. I'd convinced myself that I was happy with the way things were."

"I know what you mean," she admitted for the first time, seeing herself as she truly was. Scarred as deeply as her Phantom.

She continued, unable to stop the flow of words. "I spent two years playing a role too, pretending to be someone I wasn't. And I didn't realize what I was doing until this weekend. I see it now. The truth. How I'd come to hate not only the role I was playing, but myself for not refusing to play any longer." He lunged forward and dragged her against him, and she closed her eyes, sinking into his crushing embrace. "It was me. I see that now. I ended our engagement, long before Max walked out of my life. I needed to be myself again, to find out who I was."

"Look in my eyes." Rogan lifted her chin, coaxing her to open her eyes and meet his gaze. "I think you'll find yourself in them. But if not, I want to see you. Let me. Please." He kissed her then, sweetly at first. His mouth slid back and forth over hers. Softly. Like the teasing stroke of a feather. Then the kiss deepened, grew harder and more urgent. His tongue pushed into her mouth, caressing hers. Their breath mingled. And huge bolts of electricity charged through her body, igniting fiery infernos all over.

Her legs gave out, and she threw her arms around his neck, clinging to him. Their mouths still joined, he swept an arm beneath her, cradling her to him, and carried her to the enormous bed. He set her down and climbed on top of her.

It was ironic, the thought that passed through her mind then. Something that made her feel both sad and somewhat guilty. She'd spent so little time with Rogan Cayne. A couple of nights. And yet, it felt like she was closer to him, understood him—and he understood her—better than she had after two years with Max.

Was it possible to almost marry a man, after two years of dating, and still be strangers?

Rogan knelt between her spread legs and rolled a condom on his thick cock. Then, without saying a word, not tormenting her with hours of foreplay, or tying her up and whipping her, he entered her.



She wrapped her legs around his waist and hooked her feet together, taking him as deep as she could. She stared into his beautiful eyes, losing herself in the joy and wonder she saw in them. He fucked her slowly, his rod withdrawing before surging deep again, over and over. They twined their fingers together, their hands joined, their gazes locked, their hearts seeming to beat as one.

She never would have expected to have found these answers this weekend. To discover she had been masquerading for years. Hiding her true self. Nor had she expected to find herself through a childhood game. Or in the arms of a man like Rogan.

But she was grateful he'd given her a chance. That he'd taken the risk and invited her to the masquerade. Whatever happened from here, she knew she'd never be wearing a mask again to please a man.

She was Kelly Bennett. Costume geek. Exhibitionist. Slave.



## About the Author

Nothing exciting happens in Tawny Taylor's life, unless you count giving the cat a flea dip—a cat can make some fascinating sounds when immersed chin-deep in insecticide—or chasing after a houseful of upchucking kids during flu season. She doesn't travel the world or employ a staff of personal servants. She's not even built like a runway model. She's just your run-of-the-mill Detroit suburban mom and wife.

She writes for the sheer joy of it. She doesn't need to escape, mind you. Despite being run-of-the-mill, her life is wonderful. She just likes to add some...zip.

Her heroines might resemble herself, or her next-door neighbor (sorry Sue), but they are sure to be memorable. (She hopes!) And her heroes—inspired by movie stars, her favorite television actors, or her husband—are fully capable of delivering one hot happily-ever-after after another. Combined, the characters and plots she weaves bring countless hours of enjoyment to Tawny...and she hopes to readers too!

In the end, that's all the matters to Tawny, bringing a little bit of zip to someone else's life.

To learn more about Tawny Taylor, please visit [www.tawnytaylor.com](http://www.tawnytaylor.com). Or check out her blog at [tawnytaylor.blogspot.com](http://tawnytaylor.blogspot.com).



Look for these titles by Tawny Taylor

*Now Available:*

Dirty Little Lies

*Coming Soon:*

Prince of Fire



*It was just a little innocent research...*

## Erotic Research

© 2008 Mari Carr

Romance writer Julia Martin is fine with her life, just the way it is. Her simple apartment, successful career and Thursday-night pizza dates with her too-hot-for-words editor Ross are more than enough for her. At least, that's what she thinks until her cat dies.

Ross Philips has spent years lusting after his shy best friend, but fears his rather strong sexual desires will be too much for Julia. When she falls into a depression over the death of her cat and stops writing, Ross decides she needs a change.

His suggestion? Try a new genre—erotica. And, of course, being such a good friend and editor, he even plans to help her do a little research.

*Warning: this title contains the following: explicit sex, spanking, anal sex, bondage, toys, graphic language and all sorts of fun stuff.*

*Enjoy the following excerpt for Erotic Research:*

Ross rose and grabbed her hand. "Come on. Let's go sit by the fire."

Before dinner, he'd thrown on a pair of gray sweatpants and a faded navy blue T-shirt. Julia admired the way the pants hung low on his hips, yet she couldn't erase the image of him earlier—shirtless as she knelt in front of his enormous erection. She'd never seen him in anything other than his jeans and a T-shirt on Thursdays, or the Hugo Boss designer suits he wore to the office. Seeing his muscular, bare chest with honest-to-God washboard abs still had her libido doing somersaults. How they were going to coexist in this cabin for who knew how long was beyond her. She hoped for her sake he would keep his clothes on and limit his dressing to the bathroom, lest she make a fool of herself by drooling. She was also fairly certain the size of his penis was something she would see in her dreams for the rest of her life. My God. How could any woman accept something that size inside her? Just the thought of it sent shivers down her spine and she felt an unusual dampness seeping between her legs. So much for ignorance is bliss. Julia



suspected this new knowledge of Ross's generous bounty was only going to cause her even more sleepless nights fantasizing about something that could never be.

Julia started for one of the soft chairs in front of the fireplace, but Ross intercepted and pulled her down with him to sit on the soft bearskin rug. As night fell, the cabin suddenly seemed very romantic. Attempting to distance herself from the fact she was sitting so closely to her hunky best friend, Julia forced her mind to other subjects. Perhaps a cabin like this could be the setting for her new book. An isolated cottage deep in the mountains during a terrible blizzard. It definitely had potential. Even now, as she and Ross were enveloped in cozy warmth with only the fire to light the room, Julia could easily envision the characters from her erotic novel in just such a place.

"So," Ross said, lying on his side with his head propped on his elbow. Even in such an unassuming pose, Julia couldn't help but feel overwhelmed by his presence beside her.

"How's the book coming?" he asked, as if reading her mind.

"I've only been here a day, Ross. I've barely had time to unpack, let alone start writing."

"Even so," he continued, "I know you, Jules. You've probably been obsessing over the plotline for days. What's it going to be about?"

Julia blushed as she considered his words. Truth be told, she had been imagining the story every night in bed since she'd read the erotica books he'd loaned her—with him cast in the role of the leading man and her as the heroine. She'd even gone so far as to order a vibrator online, although she hadn't worked up the nerve to actually use it yet.

"Well?" he persisted.

"Ross, you know I hate it when you pressure me about a story line. Truthfully, I haven't decided what to write about yet. I'm tossing around a couple of angles."

"Really," Ross said, not the least bit put off. "What angles? Maybe I can help you decide."

"Well," she began, startled by his persistence. Ross never pushed for story lines. He always trusted her to script a plot completely before she asked him to help her tweak it. "I...was thinking about trying one of those...you know." She waved her hand in midair, too mortified to tell him where her fantasy world had taken her.



“No,” he said, imitating her vague hand gesture with a grin, “I don’t know.”

Biting her lower lip, Julia scowled at him. “Ross,” she began to protest.

“Domination?” he asked. “Or maybe a kidnapping story where the woman is sold as a sex slave into a harem?”

Afraid Ross might discover how close to the truth he was coming, Julia turned her head to hide the damned blush burning her cheeks. In her fantasy, she was his sex slave. She belonged totally to him, doing anything and everything he asked of her. Thanks to the erotica books he’d loaned her, she now had a wide array of sexual fantasies about him, far beyond the usual missionary-position one she’d indulged in for years. Her favorite one involved him tying her up and forcing her to have multiple orgasms. A purely ridiculous fantasy considering the fact she’d never had a single orgasm and didn’t know the first thing about how to have one, let alone several.

“Hmm.” He took her chin in his fingers and drew her face back to his. “What are you plotting in that delicious little mind of yours, Brown Eyes?”

“I— I—” she stuttered again. “Domination.” She blurted out the word quickly, hoping perhaps he wouldn’t hear or understand what she’d said.

“Domination. And what do you know about domination?” He sat up and slowly moved closer to her.

“Only what I’ve read,” she whispered, her gaze dropping to his lips as he moved even closer.

“Jules.” His breath was hot against her cheek. “I’m going to kiss you.”

“You are?” she asked breathlessly, her tongue sliding along her lower lip.

“Mm-hmm,” he murmured, his lips pressed softly against hers, “and then I’m going to help you do a little research for your novel.”

With those words, his lips opened against hers and his initial soft butterfly kiss took on a life of its own. His lips bruised hers in his intense efforts to possess her mouth. Julia had never been kissed with such reckless passion. All of her previous lovers had been almost timid in the way they approached her. As if they were afraid she would break. Ross seemed to suffer from no such fear. He used his kiss and his body to push her to her back on the soft rug, coming over her, covering her completely and leaving her feeling



helpless and desired all at the same time. Julia could feel his enormous erection pressing against her hot center through her soft lounge pants as he pulled her legs apart and settled between them. Overwhelmed, she tried to draw away, if only to catch her breath, but Ross's large hands captured her head, holding her still for his assault.

"Don't fight me," he said gruffly as he continued to use his tongue, lips and teeth on her mouth. "Don't fight this."

*Domination.* The word flitted through her mind as his words came back to her. *He's going to help me research. Research domination.*



*Is it love? Or sabotage?*

## Between a Ridge and a Hard Place

© 2008 Annmarie McKenna

After a year of being ignored as a woman by her boss, Morgan steps up her game—and strips down. What better way than a miniskirt to capture her hardheaded boss's attention? The butt floss she can do without, but hey, if the ploy works...and it does, with spectacular results. Now if only she can keep him interested permanently.

Ridge can't believe it when the woman he's quietly lusted after for a year shows up dressed...or rather, undressed...to drop any man to his knees. Instead of worrying about winning a bid after losing the last two under strange circumstances, he whisks her to his place to demolish any notion she might have of changing her mind.

Then it becomes clear why his company is losing bids—there's a mole planted in their midst. Ridge suddenly has to question Morgan's sudden transformation from faithful P.A. to office vixen.

Is she the woman he's been waiting for? Or a corporate saboteur sent to take him down?

*Warning: Contains several graphic love scenes. You know, on the bed, on the couch...whichever is closest at the time.*

*Enjoy the following excerpt for Between a Ridge and a Hard Place:*

Ridge came to a dead stop at the door to his office, those fantastic navy blue eyes facing away from her, his hand resting on the knob.

*Don't turn around. Don't turn around.*

He cleared his throat. "Morgan?" His voice cracked despite how he'd tried to avoid it, but he didn't turn.

His broad shoulders were rigid beneath the starched white shirt that tapered down to lean hips. His ass clenched under his slacks. Morgan did a double take. *His ass clenched?* Had to be her imagination. She openly gawked—he *was* facing away from her, after all.



There! He did it again. This time she didn't miss the action. No doubt his jaw was making the same movement. The man had a tic in his jaw whenever he was angry.

"Morgan," he said with more force, snapping her out of her perusal of his very fine backside.

"Yes, sir?"

His shoulders relaxed, as did his butt. Damn. He nodded once. "Just making sure it was you." Why did he sound so strangled?

*Oh that's just great.* She'd worn the dang clothes for nothing. Ridge opened the door to his inner office and stepped through, having yet to meet her gaze. Stare. She'd been staring, no question. He paused again and she thought this time he would face her, but after a slight hesitation and a shake of his head, he continued on. Perhaps her boss had been more affected by her virtual state of undress than he was prepared to be.

The corners of her mouth lifted. Maybe today would be her day after all.

*Holy shit.*

What the hell had happened to his PA? Taking a seat behind the huge mahogany desk that had been his grandfather's, he leaned a few inches to the left until he could see out the door to make sure he hadn't been dreaming.

*Holy shit.*

Nope. He'd seen right. His tomboy PA wasn't a tomboy anymore. She was all woman, and his cock agreed, coming to life to tent his slacks. Thank God he didn't have any clients this morning. In fact, if he could make it to the front door and turn the OPEN sign to CLOSED, he could make fine use of his massive erection. Too bad shutting out the public wouldn't keep the rest of the employees at bay. Hell, he needn't go any further than his own door to do that. All he had to do was bring her in his office, lock the door and—

*Stop. Stop right there. This is your PA, for God's sake.* He didn't date employees. Or fuck them on his desk with that glorious chestnut hair spread out across his memos, her legs wrapped around his waist while he plunged in and out of her sopping...

*Holy shit.*



Ridge shook his head to clear it. He didn't need this. It was hard enough to keep his mind from wandering to the woman just outside his door. The one he spent more time with and knew more about than any other woman in the world besides his sister and mother. The only one he really *wanted* to know more about.

Maybe she had a twin. Had to. Maybe Morgan was sick and she'd sent the identical twin she'd only met last night to take her place so she wouldn't have to take a sick day. No way would his sensible, blend-into-the-crowd Morgan ever show up at work dressed the way she was. It was inappropriate. It was scandalous.

He had to see the whole thing.

"Morgan, get in here," he barked. He should not be thinking about this right now. Their recent bid was what he should be focused on. The bid they should win hands down. But given the way their last two bids—which should have also been won hands down—had gone, he wouldn't take an easy breath until he saw a winning result.

"Yes, sir."

The shy, nervous reply made him lower his brows. She'd never been afraid of him. They had an easy companionship. He was her boss, she was his assistant, even though he wanted more and she'd never shown any interest. Hell, Morgan knew more about him than he did.

*Holy shit.*

Long, long legs—hell, those fucking pants she always wore had to go so he could see those beautiful legs of hers more often—balanced somewhat precariously on high heels. Not stiletto, but high enough, which made her legs look even longer.

A miniskirt covered the tops of her thighs. Barely. Just barely. Ridge swallowed and continued his open study of the transformed woman before him. A strip of tanned belly was visible between the fabric someone had deemed a skirt and the hem of her...tank top? Her small breasts strained the top, making his mouth water. He could even see her beaded nipples poking out, begging for him to take them in his mouth.

*Holy—*

"Goddammit." How many times had he mentally repeated that phrase in the last few minutes?



Morgan jumped with a squeak and looked ready to bolt. Her gorgeous green eyes—now those he had noticed *many* times before—were wide disks on her petite face. Big enough to drown a man in. His erection jumped and he cursed under his breath when she took a step back.

“Stop.”

She pushed a lock of hair behind her ear and looked anywhere but at him. Better get to the bottom of this now before he did ravish her on his grandfather’s desk, OPEN sign and unlocked door, or not.

“Morgan, what’s going on, sweetheart?”



*The destruction of a historical landmark sparks a treacherous chain of events...and Reed Harris's life isn't all that's in jeopardy.*

## Dirty Little Lies

© 2007 Tawny Taylor

Tall, dark and sinfully seductive, Bain Kavanagh won't stop until he gets his ex-fiancée, Reed Harris, back in his life and his bed. Danger and unbridled desire keep her there, for now. But with gun-toting treasure hunters thwarting their search for answers, Bain's resolve, his strength and his love will be tested.

A sweet little old lady drags freelance writer Reed Harris into a world of dark intrigue. Not only does Reed have merciless killers chasing her heels, but one ruthless male pursuing her heart. Spurred on by a lifelong dream of becoming an investigative reporter, Reed casts aside caution to help Bain solve a deadly mystery. Unfortunately, she has no idea what she's in for. It'll take more than her sharp wits and a nail file to get her out of it.

*Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, mild violence...and a man with a killer body.*

*Enjoy the following excerpt for Dirty Little Lies:*

Bain had always been a very dominant lover. That had been one of the reasons why she'd never been able to move on. It was as if he knew her mind as well as her body. His allure wasn't so much about what he did physically to her body as what he said, how he looked at her, how he made her feel inside.

She could see already that he hadn't lost that gift. His hooded eyes spoke to her very soul, both promising her most secret desires, and demanding her full surrender. Submission.

"Undress for me, baby."

A quiver of delight shook her entire body. His gaze was like a literal touch. Hot. Scorching. A brand. She peeled off her shirt first, enjoying the dangerous glimmer in



Bain's eyes. The warmth of her mounting desire churned in her belly and gathered between her legs.

Next came her bra. She kept her eyes focused on his as she unclipped the clasp and let the straps slide down her arms. The garment fell away, and she cupped her hands over her tight nipples, thrilling in the sweet friction.

"Oh, yes. Play with them." Perched on the edge of the mattress, Bain shifted, running his flattened hand over the visible bulge in his pants. "Look what you do to me."

There could be no doubt what she was doing to him. Just like there could be no doubt what his I'm-going-to-eat-you-alive expression was doing to her. It was sheer agony, this game they played. They toyed with each other, delaying release until they were both clutching each other in trembling arms, their bodies slick with sweat.

It was only the beginning. Her body anticipated the delights sure to come.

After driving herself nearly crazy by pinching her nipples and rolling them between her fingers, she was finally granted permission to remove the rest of her clothing. Within moments, she stood before Bain's hungry eyes, nude, vulnerable.

Bain motioned for her to come closer. Still seated, he gripped her hips between his hands and dragged his tongue down her torso, from the center of her breastbone to her belly button.

Reed's knees were quaking. She was going to fall to the floor any minute now. She just knew it. She grabbed his shoulders and widened her stance.

Of course, the change in position opened up new opportunities to Bain, ones he didn't hesitate to take advantage of. He slid a hand between her legs and teased her slick labia with a fingertip.

Quickly losing herself in the urgent need pounding through her body, Reed let her head fall back and moaned. Bain's mouth devoured her nipples. His hand possessed her pussy, stroking, taking, claiming. She was his. She had always been his.

With hands, mouth and body, he turned her around until she was lying on the bed, legs dangling over the edge of the mattress. Through blurry eyes, she watched him undress.



That glorious body. Muscle and sinew. Fully masculine. Powerful. Her pussy clenched around aching emptiness.

“Please, I can’t wait much longer.”

“I won’t make you suffer too long. This time. I promise.” Bain lowered to his knees and lifted her legs, setting one on each shoulder. Then, being cruel beyond words, he used his tongue, lips and fingers to torture her, driving her to the brink of ecstasy once, twice, three times, but stopping no more than a second before she’d found release.

“How I love the way you taste. How your body responds to my touch.” He climbed up onto the bed, easing her into position farther up the mattress with gentle hands. “We’re perfect for each other, don’t you agree?”

Did she ever.

He wedged his hips between her parted thighs and teased her nether lips with the head of his cock, spreading slick juices down over her perineum and up over her clit. “We fit together in every way. Body. Mind. Soul.”

His body was hard and hot over top of her. Rigid, with a latent strength she craved to experience more fully. She ran her hands up his chest, over his shoulders, down his back. His muscles rippled beneath satiny skin as he levered himself lower to kiss her.

She could taste herself on his lips, tongue. The smooth, sweet flavor added yet another sensation to an already overwhelming mix. She wanted release. No, she needed release. Whimpering, she begged into their joined mouths, “Bain, please.”

He broke the kiss. “Soon, baby. You’re not ready yet.”

She was about to combust. Not ready? Could a girl get any readier?

He set about proving that indeed, a girl could.



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