

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS



*Death by
Chocolate*
DEBRA GLASS

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Death by Chocolate

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DEATH BY CHOCOLATE

Debra Glass

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Chapter One

"Listen here." Trip Washington's desk chair groaned as he leaned back and laced his long fingers behind his head. "I don't wanna work with a psychic. I don't wanna hear what any psychic's got to say. I don't believe in that shit."

He held his superior's determined gaze and knew he'd have to give in whether he wanted to or not.

"Look, I gotta get down to the crime scene. I shoulda been there an hour ago," Trip continued, but experience told him he'd lost this argument.

Captain John Blake, as expected, did not back down. "No cop in Atlanta has been able to solve these murders. You're at a standstill with the evidence," he said. "If I say you're gonna work with a psychic, then by God, you're gonna work with a psychic, Trip."

Trip opened his mouth to argue but stopped short when a voluptuous brunette stepped into the precinct office. Large, soulful eyes swept the room. She bit her full bottom lip indecisively. And then her gaze collided with his.

Trip tried to swallow but found it impossible. Slowly, his fingers separated and he brought his arms down and sat straighter in his chair. He was oblivious that every man in the room gaped openly at the alluring beauty. He was oblivious that every woman in the precinct looked at her either with admiration or envy.

He was oblivious to everything — except her.

"You were saying?" Blake said.

Trip's gaze flicked to Blake's and then went immediately back to the woman. "That her?"

"Yep."

Trip swallowed thickly. "You're kiddin' me."

Blake laughed. "I thought you'd change your mind once you saw her."

She started toward them and Trip resisted the urge to straighten his tie and make certain his fly was zipped. Instead, he stood and moved around his desk, blocking the chaotic piles of paper with his big body and gaping like a horny schoolboy.

Her clingy white blouse opened just low enough to expose the enticing and inviting curve of her cleavage. Long, ivory thighs flashed through the slit in her pencil skirt. And lower still—red high heels. Damn, he was sucker for red high heels.

His mouth went dry as his gaze slid back up to her face. Cat eyes. Up close, she had cat eyes. Her dark brown hair was swept back off her face, revealing high cheekbones and full, pouty lips just made for kissing.

"Are you Detective Washington?" she asked. Her tone was much too businesslike for Trip's taste.

He smiled. "Yes, ma'am. And you are?"

"Aries Mackenzie."

"Aries," he said, extending his hand.

She stared at his outstretched hand for a moment before she took it. A studious detective, Trip missed nothing. For the split second that his big mocha-colored hand enclosed around her petite pale one, her breath caught. Her eyes widened as if his touch scorched her. Hastily, she pulled away and rubbed her palm on her skirt.

Trip suppressed a smile. Yes indeed, there was a spark. He knew that look when he saw it. Still, he'd been out of the dating scene since his breakup with his two-year live-in and it was nice to know he still had it.

Her gaze locked with his. "Chocolate," she stammered. She cleared her throat.

"Ma'am?" This time that smile did claim his lips.

"Chocolate," she repeated. "That's what all the murders have in common."

While it would be fun to string her along just to see how she intended to bullshit him, he didn't have time for it. Another victim had been discovered only an hour ago and he needed to get to the crime scene. "Yeah, but you and I both know you could have picked that up from the papers. All the headlines have been readin' 'Death by Chocolate'."

She crossed her arms over her chest. Those kissable lips pursed. "Your murderer is a male."

Trip scratched his neck. "Another tip you could have gotten from the newspaper." Nine out of ten times, serial killers were male. But honestly, he didn't think they'd actually released that bit of information. And yet, he found himself hoping she'd give him something more to go on—something she'd picked up with her ability that he couldn't refute. He rubbed the stubble on his chin, wishing he'd paid more attention when he'd shaved that morning. "What else did the cards reveal?" he asked, unable to resist toying with her.

One of her dark eyebrows arched haughtily. "I don't read cards, Detective Washington."

Oops. He'd crossed the line that time. He glanced at his watch. Sexy as she was, he didn't have time to flirt. "You can sheathe your claws, Miss... You are a *miss*, aren't you?" His detective's eye had not identified a wedding ring but he knew better than to assume.

Her eyes narrowed in such a way that Trip's cock twitched in his khakis. She lifted her chin. "And did the *cards* tell you that I'm unattached or are you merely perceptive, Detective?"

He chuckled. "Touché, Miss Mackenzie." His gaze raked her again. She was mad. Her posture was closed off. But she was about the sexiest damn woman he'd ever laid eyes on and he couldn't resist playing along—just to prove John Blake wrong. "Hey, since John here tells me I gotta work with you, why don't you grab your crystal ball and ride over to the crime scene with me and tell me what else you...pick up on?"

* * * * *

Aries sat stiffly in the beige leather seat of Trip Washington's shiny, black SUV. She tried not to glance at him but she couldn't keep her gaze off those long fingers wrapped around the leather-encased steering wheel.

Although he'd been less than welcoming at the precinct, his demeanor seemed to be his way of flirting more than an attempt at being a jerk. He'd even opened the car door for her and made sure the air conditioning in the vehicle was comfortable as he'd wheeled into the hellacious Atlanta traffic.

Mozart tinkled softly on the radio. Not what she'd expected. Not at all.

She realized Trip must have caught her checking out the radio station because he said, "Classical music—it helps me think." A disarming, perfect smile lit up his face. "What? You thought I put that on just to impress you?"

She chuckled but had to admit, she'd considered it.

Her caution melting, Aries nodded as her gaze slid back to his fingers.

Those hands. What was it about his hands? The minute she'd touched him, she'd been inundated with images. Erotic images that had caused cream to gather and dampen her flimsy panties.

She'd come here to work on this case—the first sex murder case she'd ever worked. She had done her share of finding missing pets and lost items but this was different. Night after night, horrible dreams had plagued her.

Dreams of a man feeding her chocolate while she was naked and tied to a bed...

But in the dreams, she wanted him to fuck her. She hadn't been afraid until his hands closed around her throat.

A chill swept up her spine.

The nightmares...

Aries realized her fists were clenched. She knew this time, her psychic visions were different. This time *she* would be the murderer's victim.

She inhaled sharply. Although she could pick up bits and pieces of information psychically, she knew that in order for her to bring her psychic visions into focus, she would have to put herself in the positions of the victims.

Literally.

But how?

The problem was – she *knew* how.

Pressing her bottom lip between her teeth, she studied the devastatingly handsome detective. “Can you tell me anything about the previous three victims?” she asked.

The mocking look he shot her annoyed her. He obviously didn’t believe she was psychic. But then, he hadn’t seen her in action – yet.

She held his gaze with determination until he was forced to return his attention to the bustling Atlanta traffic.

“They’re all prostitutes – high-dollar call girls. It appears the perp had paid them for services – which, by the way, they willingly performed. No signs of forced entry, if you know what I mean.”

Aries nodded. Her heart felt as if it were beating in her throat. “What positions?”

“What do you mean, ‘what positions’?”

“How does he...do them?”

He glanced her way again and she could tell he was debating whether or not he should tell her any of the case details.

He inhaled. “He does ‘em every which way but loose, Aries. The mouth. Up the c – The...um...vagina, in the ass. All while they’re tied up and blindfolded.”

“And the chocolate?” she asked, never batting an eyelash.

“He feeds it to ‘em while he does it – and then he strangles them.”

“He fears women.”

Trip chuckled. “Any psych student could tell you that.”

"No, this guy wants to love them but he can't," Aries told him. Tingles began at her scalp and skittered downward as she told him the details from her dream. Still, it wasn't enough to get a firm hit on the killer. "I think he's the type who gets rejected a lot," she said.

"And where do you think the chocolate fits in?"

"I don't know," she said.

Trip sighed. "You're psychic. You're supposed to know. Unless you've got something else up your sleeve, I don't know that I can use your help."

"I do," she said quickly. "I mean, I will."

She gnawed her bottom lip.

Sex.

Chocolate.

And Trip...

He was the one who could help her activate her ability to catch the killer. She'd known it from the first time they'd touched.

She cut her gaze once more to him. The sleeves of his light blue shirt were rolled up twice, revealing strong bones and coffee-colored skin. The first time she'd seen him, she'd been stunned by his broad shoulders and thick torso. He looked strong without being overly muscular. Framed by closely clipped black hair, his face was that of a god, with keen eyes so brown they looked black and full, sexy lips. He shifted to apply the brake and Aries' gaze dropped to where his trousers strained against his thick thighs.

She squeezed her own legs together to assuage the throbbing between them.

Sex...

Sex with the handsome detective would put her in the position of the victim and open her psychic senses to give her the answers she needed – the answers *he* needed.

He couldn't refuse her – she hoped.

“So,” Trip said, his velvety voice luring her out of her reverie. “You wanna tell me what you expect to *get* on these murders?”

Aries swallowed. If only he would take her seriously. It would be easier to approach him—to ask him to fuck her. “He sees the chocolate as something the women will respond to. He’s using it like some sort of sexual aid.”

“Score one for the psychic,” he teased. His tone, however, was not playful.

“It’s not just any chocolate though,” she said.

“Nope, it’s not.” He veered onto the exit ramp. “You getting anything on what the difference is?”

Aires knew he was withholding some information from her—something important about the chocolate. Her pulse raced as she attempted to tune in. The answer was on the tip of her tongue but she couldn’t drag it out.

A shudder swept through her. She would need to be in the position of the victim to get more details. Her insides tightened because she knew she would need to be tied and blindfolded, fed chocolate—and fucked in all the places the perp violated his victims.

Her mind drifted and she could suddenly see Trip Washington’s naked, dark-skinned body moving over and into hers—

But then another image slammed her with sickening force. Bile rose in Aries’ throat at the shocking sight.

A girl. Restraints. A black leather bustier.

She shook her head to dispel the horrible vision. “Miranda,” she said. “The latest victim’s name is Miranda.”

Trip gaped. The latest vic’s name hadn’t been released yet. Aries had no way of knowing the victim’s name was Miranda Watkins, a call girl who’d been found dead in a ritzy Atlanta hotel room.

And she'd been pretty close about the chocolate being used as a sexual aid. In fact, it was laced with a powerful date-rape drug. Maybe there was more to Aries Mackenzie than he'd first thought.

Trip pulled up to the downtown Atlanta hotel where the murder had taken place and shut off the engine.

"I don't want to go in," Aries said.

"Why not?"

She shivered. "You'll find her tied to the bed, still dressed in black leather—except for her panties, which he took as a trophy—blindfolded...and dead."

Trip stared. He hated to leave Aires alone but she sat unmoving, her posture completely closed off, her eyes shut tightly, the seat belt still fastened. Reluctantly, he left the keys dangling from the ignition. "Okay. But are you sure you're gonna be all right out here?"

Her forehead furrowed but she nodded.

"I may be in there awhile," he said softly.

She opened her eyes and looked at him. Trip felt as if her green gaze penetrated straight to his soul.

"It's okay," she said with a little more confidence. "I'll be all right."

Why did he feel like such a jerk for leaving her here? He yanked a card out of his wallet and handed it to her. "Here," he said, his fingers brushing the softness of her palm. Jesus, she was clammy. But then he recalled seeing *his* first victim. He'd puked. "My cell number is on this card. You call me if you need me. Don't hesitate."

After he got out of the SUV, he looked back as he walked through the revolving door of the hotel. Aries stared, wide-eyed. She suddenly looked so uncertain. All her hardboiled exterior had melted away and she seemed...vulnerable.

All Trip could think about was taking her in his arms and promising her everything was going to be all right. But it was not to be.

Right now, he had work to do.

Already, police units were swarming the posh hotel. A team pored over copies of the surveillance tapes. Other Atlanta officers interrogated hotel employees.

Trip stepped onto the vacant brass-and-mirror elevator and punched the button for the twelfth floor.

"Aries Mackenzie," he said aloud as the elevator rose. "Aries Mackenzie." He caught the sight of his own reflection in the mirror. He looked smitten.

He pointed at his image. "You know better." His thoughts should be on the task at hand—not consumed with the bewitching cat-eyed psychic sitting in his vehicle.

The elevator doors opened. "Ain't no such thing as psychics," he mumbled to himself as he stepped off and strode down the hallway toward the room already cordoned off by yellow police tape. The fact that she'd gotten the victim's name right could have been a coincidence—couldn't it?

He ducked under the tape to enter the crime scene.

There, lying tied to the bed, was Miranda Watkins, blindfolded and wearing nothing but a black leather bustier—just as Aries said.

* * * * *

Over an hour later, when Trip pushed through the revolving door again, Aries Mackenzie was nowhere to be seen.

Neither was his SUV.

A detective's sense of unease rippled through his veins. He reached for his cell phone.

"Excuse me, sir," a bellhop called. "Are you Detective Washington?"

His gaze flicked habitually to the boy's nametag. *Gary*. "Yes, Trip Washington."

Gary handed him a magnetic key card. "I was told to give you this."

Trip turned it over in his hand, not understanding.

"Room 506," the bellhop said with a smile.

One look in the freckle-faced employee's mischievous eyes told Trip all he needed to know.

Aries had gotten a room in the hotel.

Why?

What was she up to?

Uncertainly, he walked back into the well-appointed hotel lobby and took the same elevator up to the fifth floor. He followed the brass signs tacked to the walls in the direction of room 506 and slipped the keycard in the door. At once, he heard the lock tumble and the green entry light came on.

Slowly, he turned the handle and opened the door. "Aries? You in here?"

She stepped into the entry hall dressed in nothing but a lacy bra and panties the same delectable, creamy color of her skin. "Did you bring your handcuffs?" she asked urgently.

His gaze dropped to the bottle of lubricant she held in one hand and the box of condoms she had in the other. *What the...*

His thoughts skidded to an abrupt halt. "Whoa!" he exclaimed. "Wait a minute. Are you one of those types who get off on murders?"

He tried to look her in the eye but he couldn't tear his gaze away from the plumpness of her pale breasts bubbling over the lace of her bra cups. And her waist... It was so small he could just about wrap his hands around it. His mouth went dry. The thin fabric of her panties creasing at her cleft left no doubt, this girl was *au naturel*.

Shaved.

Bare.

Mercy!

"I need you to tie me up," she said, adopting that businesslike tone again. "And to blindfold me."

Still holding the door open with one foot, Trip tossed the keycard on the shelf next to the coffee maker. He rubbed his eyes and blinked before he took a deep breath. Every fiber of his being urged him to throw the sexy psychic on the bed and fuck her brains out but he knew he shouldn't. He rubbed his temples, knowing good and well he was going to hate himself for denying her but he said it anyway. "No."

She stopped and stared with those cat eyes. So green. In this light, they were jewel green. "I need you, Trip."

His cock rebelled and stiffened so that he had to switch his weight from one leg to the other in hopes she wouldn't see the telltale tent in his trousers. "Listen, Aries, I can't just...I mean, we hardly know each other... Damn, you're a beautiful woman. But I—"

She took a step closer and he felt his heart begin to race. Footsteps approached in the hallway outside and he stepped in and let the door close behind him.

"I need you to tie me exactly like you found the girl." Her eyes searched his.

His resistance wavered. "Why?"

"So I can get a feel for her." She tossed the lube and the condoms on the bed, turned and walked toward the dresser. The way her panties rode the cleft of her tight ass made him want to take her up on her offer. It made him want to do a helluva lot more than that. He groaned.

She opened a bag of Hershey's Kisses. "I got this chocolate in the gift shop. It's not the kind the killer uses, but hopefully it'll work." Bringing the bag of candy with her, she climbed onto the bed.

"Whoa, hold your horses now!" Trip rushed forward, intent on stopping her, but when his fingers encircled her arm electricity shot through him, racing up his arm, into his body and down both legs. His cock surged with blood.

Her gaze drifted to his dark fingers encircling her arm and then lifted once more so that her eyes steadily held his. "I need you to tie me to the bed just like the victim. Blindfold me. Feed me the chocolate. Take off my panties. Do to me what the killer did."

"Uh...how 'bout *no*?" He could hear himself speaking but his body was screaming at him to do whatever she wanted.

"Do you want my help or not?" she asked pointedly.

"Aries, that woman was...well, I told you what the perp did to her. And where. I don't know about this."

"I know," she said, her gaze locked with his. "I know, Trip."

The sound of his name on her pouty lips made him want to do it. Good common sense, however, railed against it.

"Do you want other women to die?" she asked.

"Of course not."

"Then do this. It's the only way I can get a read on the killer."

"You've lost your mind."

"If it works—and it always has in the past, I'll be able to tell you his name," she said.

"'Has in the past'?" he asked. "You mean you've asked other cops to tie you up and screw you so you could —"

She cut him off. "No! Never like this. But I've done missing persons cases where I've reenacted the details of a crime and the clues I got led police to the victim—every time. I've never worked a...a sex crime." An irresistibly beautiful blush infused her cheeks at the words.

"This is crazy. I can't just tie you up and feed you chocolate and...and fuck you." But God in heaven, he wanted to.

Holding his gaze defiantly, she hooked her thumbs in the top of her panties and began pushing them down.

Quickly, he took the one step that closed the distance between them and caught her wrists in his hands so that the panties stayed put. Once he saw that hot little box, he knew he'd do anything she asked.

"Please, Trip," she said. "I know it sounds crazy but I have to put myself in the position of the victim to pick up incontrovertible evidence. Please do this."

"Aires, you're just about the sexiest damn woman I've ever laid on but I'm not just some casual...fling. I don't do this kind of thing."

"It's not about that." She searched his eyes. There was a desperation about her now that he hadn't recognized before. "I'm going to be his next victim, Trip. I've dreamed it. I've seen it. I *know* it!"

Chills swept up his spine.

"I need you to help me find out who he is so he can be stopped," she implored. "Please."

"How do you know this?"

"I've been having nightmares. I dream that I'm tied up and he's..." Her voice trailed off and the beseeching look in her eyes melted every last ounce of resistance.

His mind drifted back to the dead girl whose murder he had just investigated.

And the thought of Aries ending up just like her made him sick inside.

"Shit," he muttered and began removing his pistol holster. He placed it on the table beside the bed, along with his badge.

Triumphant, Aries snatched up the bag of chocolates and stretched out on the bed. As she watched him loosen his necktie, her heart thundered against her rib cage. He was going to do it. Her insides thrilled at the thought. Desire unfurled inside her but, she reminded herself, what was important was tuning in to her powerful extrasensory perception—not the idea of this man pleasuring her in ways she could only imagine.

Trip followed her onto the bed. He flashed an apologetic look as he held up his necktie to blindfold her.

Since she'd never before had sex with a black man, disappointment surged. She wanted to look her fill at this handsome man, to see the striking contrast of his milk-chocolate skin against her pale flesh. She wanted to touch him but she knew that would

be impossible. She would be tied – and he would be doing all the things to her the killer had done to his victim.

The mouth, the vagina...

The ass...

Her pussy clenched and her pulse pounded in her clit.

Willingly but reluctantly, she submitted to the blindfold. At once, she was swept into darkness. Reaching behind her head, he gently tied the knot so as not to pull her hair.

Heat radiated from his arms, warming her cheeks. She could even hear the quick beating of his heart in his chest.

Focus.

Instantly, her mind flooded with images from her nightmares.

Terror reared but then she heard Trip's calming drawl. "It's okay, Aries. I'm not gonna hurt you. Just let me know when you want me to stop."

She nodded. The trouble was, she didn't have to be psychic to know that once Trip Washington was inside her – in all those places – she'd never want him to stop.

I charge extra for this.

Her world tilted. It was happening. Her consciousness slid as she tuned into the victim's energy.

She heard the jangle of handcuffs and when Trip took her hand and drew it toward the headboard, she whimpered.

"You want me to stop?" he asked softly.

"No." She knew her voice betrayed her uncertainty.

The cold steel of the handcuff snapped around her wrist and then she felt resistance as he fastened the other end to the headboard.

Her pulse rioted.

She heard the slither of leather against fabric and then she felt his belt tightening around her other wrist. A firm tug told her that hand was secured as well.

Panic raced through her veins. She'd never worked the kind of case where she had to do *this*. She had also never before been tied and blindfolded and forced to submit.

But then again, Aries reminded herself, she was hardly being forced.

Willing her mind and body to calm, she attempted to attune her energy to the victim's. What had Miranda seen before she was blindfolded? What had she heard? What had she experienced?

And then, all coherent thought fled as she felt the warm silk of Trip's fingers grazing her sides, her hips and lower to her thighs. He was between her legs. She could feel the heat of his thick thighs through the soft fabric of his khakis.

Immediately, Aries grew still. Blindfolded and bound, she'd never felt so alive, so eager for physical pleasure.

She was no stranger to sex. She'd had her share of relationships both casual and serious—but no man had ever affected her like *this*.

Trip was astute. She'd caught the unmistakable look of a man who missed nothing in his espresso-colored eyes. He was intuitive.

And whether he realized it or not, he was like *her*.

Perhaps that was the spark that had ignited between them the first time she put her hand in his. Physical and spiritual attraction gone wild.

Although she'd felt the energy of attraction before, it had never been so strong, so stunning. She knew there was no use fighting it.

She could only imagine the unadulterated bliss it would be to have him connected with her, body and soul.

Her heart thundered in anticipation. "Take off my panties."

Chapter Two

Trip's gaze traveled down Aries' body. Her breasts rose and fell with quick breaths. Her pounding heart vibrated visibly against her chest. In fact, he could hear his own heartbeat racing in his ears.

Take off my panties, she'd said.

He knew better. He knew he ought to untie her and order her to put her damn clothes back on. This was crazy but for some reason, despite the fact he'd never set any store in psychics, he trusted Aries' instincts. She had given him a couple bits of information he knew she had no way of knowing.

But could this—tying her up and fucking her—really help her get in tune with the killer and his victim?

Trip couldn't say. There was one thing, though, he knew for certain. They'd been cut from the same mold. She was like him—this edgy, vulnerable, perceptive, passionate woman.

She was like him so much it scared him.

Aries shifted, rattling the handcuffs and straining the belt. "Do it, Trip. Pull my panties down."

His gaze moved lower to her navel, lower still to the delicate waistband of her panties. He could practically smell her desire mingled with the spicy fragrance of the perfume emanating from her body. After a split second of hesitation, he gripped the flimsy fabric in his hands and slid her panties down her silky legs.

She readily wriggled out of them, kicking them to the foot of the bed.

Fuck me runnin'!

Her pussy was absolutely beautiful. Bare. Just like he'd imagined. He swallowed hungrily at the sight of it. Pink. So pink. The clit peeped through the folds of her labia and all he could think about was trailing his tongue along that eager little ridge, downward to where her sweet cream gathered.

"Did he...taste her?" Aries asked and Trip was startled, wondering if she could read his mind.

"Yes." His voice cracked. "They...uh...the crime lab found saliva on her...on her...pussy."

Her hips gave the slightest jolt when he said the word.

"Then eat me, Trip," she purred. "Eat my pussy."

Warmth infused his limbs as he stretched out between her legs. He brushed his dark thumb over her peaches-and-cream slit. This close, he could really smell her feminine sweetness and as he leaned in closer, he realized he was trembling.

Aries sighed when he touched the tip of his tongue to the plump little lips. She fought her restraints and opened her legs.

She wanted this. And he was going to give it to her.

With a growl, he buried his face in her softness, breathing her in, laving her with his tongue. She mewled as he worked the tip into her hole, tickling, tasting, drawing his tongue back out to run it between the lips and over the clit.

What did she feel like inside? He was dying to know.

Working his index finger into her opening, he watched her response. Her lips parted and she drew in a sharp breath. Inside, her muscles spasmed around his finger.

"You good with this?" he asked. But he knew she was. The response from her body was all the affirmation he needed.

"Yessssss!"

His cock throbbed and he rocked his hips against the bed. As tight as she was around his finger, he could only imagine how damn good it was going to feel when he plunged his cock inside her. But it wasn't time for that. Not yet.

It was time for chocolate.

With his free hand, he withdrew one of the Kisses from the bag and peeled off the foil before popping it in his mouth.

He felt Aries grow rigid as he withdrew his finger and inserted his tongue into her hole, rolling the candy Kiss against her opening, coating it with her cream. Her breathing quickened as he moved up her body, sliding over her breasts, pushing his finger back up her cunt as he slowly touched his mouth to hers, parting her lips with his tongue, to transfer the cream-coated candy.

Her lips were every bit as soft and kissable as he'd imagined. The melting chocolate rolled between their tongues and finally, he withdrew so she could eat the softened candy. Her pussy flooded around his finger.

"You getting anything?" he whispered in her ear.

"Take off your clothes," was her only reply.

Sitting back on his knees and reluctant to remove his finger from her pussy, he unbuttoned his shirt with one hand.

A moan of protest escaped her lips when he finally did have to withdraw his finger to pull his sleeve off. He tossed the shirt on the floor and then quickly unfastened his trousers, shucking them and his socks simultaneously.

His gaze moved over the beautiful, wanton woman sprawled before him. Her dark hair spilled erotically over and under his necktie. Her hands gripped the bonds that held them and her legs were splayed open like butterfly wings, exposing her denuded pussy, inviting him to do anything he wanted to her.

Damn, he was hard.

Hard and ready.

He knew he ought to tongue her slit until she came but he just had to feel what it was to be inside her. Just a little.

He gripped her thighs and moved in between them.

Aries gnawed her bottom lip.

"Are you sure you want this?" he asked and then ripped a condom packet open with his teeth.

"God, yes," she moaned.

That was all the impetus he needed.

Heart beating in his throat, he rolled the condom on and then raked the head of his cock between her pussy lips. "Damn," he muttered and then slipped inside. A shudder swept through him. Even through the condom, she felt so fucking good he thought he'd come immediately.

Straining against her bonds, she moaned silkily.

He wanted her untied.

He wanted her for real.

He wanted to feel her arms around him, her nails raking his back, her hands holding his head close while she whispered in his ear just what pleasure he was bringing her.

More than anything, he wanted to look into those sexy green cat eyes and watch her respond to this...

He slid his cock all the way up inside her.

She inhaled sharply.

And this...

He withdrew slowly, pulling all the way out before thrusting all the way back in again.

She arched beneath him and he lowered his head to kiss her lips once more. She tasted of sweet, smooth chocolate and he took his time, teasing her pillow-soft bottom

lip with his tongue, waiting for her to respond, to open. Moaning against his mouth, she parted her lips, admitting him. He groaned and slid one hand under her head, cradling it in his palm as he took his fill of her luscious mouth.

“Goddamn, Aries,” he whispered against her lips.

She lifted her head, wanting more. He gave it to her, kissing her so hard their teeth clashed. Crazy lust surged as their tongues sparred. When he came up for air, the sight of her swollen lips, glistening and pouting, caused a spiral of desire to shoot straight to his cock.

He wanted to fuck her hard. He wanted to pound her wet pussy.

And that’s what he did.

Aries mewled, intermittently holding him with her legs and then trying to roll her hips up so that his body raked her clit. His palm traveled under her ass to achieve the curve she desired and she moaned in response.

“Is that what you like?” he asked. “You want me to rub against your clit while my cock’s up your cunt?”

“Yes!” Her head thrashed from side to side.

For a lightning-fast moment he wondered if she was picking up anything psychically, but when her legs hooked around his waist, all rational thought fled from his brain.

There was only this.

There was only this feeling of wet suction caressing and pulling at his hardness. Bracing himself on his knees, he rhythmically thrust into her, slapping her cleft with his balls, squeezing the softness of her ass with his hand.

His chest brushed her breasts through the shiny fabric of her bra and he wished again that she was naked – naked and untied.

Visions of her riding his cock swirled in his head. Images of throwing her up against the wall in that mirrored elevator, yanking up that sexy pencil skirt and banging her fast and hard filled his mind.

Erotic.

Fucking Aries Mackenzie was the most erotic thing he'd ever done – and yet he had the feeling they hadn't even begun to explore one another.

Her mouth brushed his ear. "I want to suck your cock."

Trip stiffened. Just the words "suck your cock" made his balls tighten in preparation to explode inside her. Somehow he managed to resist and slow his thrusts inside her.

Her pink tongue darted to wet her lips and Trip suddenly wanted to kiss her again.

His mouth fused with hers and she rose beneath him, kissing him with an intensity that matched his own. Her lips were so soft and so sweet, just the thought of slipping his cock between them made pre-cum ooze from the slit in the head.

When he finally dragged his mouth from hers, he unwrapped another piece of chocolate and held it with his fingertips, tracing her bottom lip with the point of the Kiss.

Again, her tongue flicked out to taste it. She writhed against the bonds and then opened her mouth like a hungry baby bird.

"You like that, don't you?" he asked. "You like the taste of that sweet chocolate."

"Yes," she breathed – and then her lips parted with sudden insight. "A date-rape drug! He injects the chocolate with a date-rape drug."

Shocked by her revelation, Trip withdrew from Aries and discarded the condom. A chill raced up as his spine as he looked down at her, still tied and blindfolded. Damn. He was having trouble focusing on anything except how erotically gorgeous she looked but he had to remind himself why he was here – why he was doing this.

Somehow, she'd figured out the killer was using a date-rape drug...

And if she could get those kinds of details from what they had done together thus far, what else was she capable of knowing?

Her body shivered when he trailed his dark-skinned fingers down her creamy body, down her thigh and then back up again.

"Trip?" she asked softly. "Y-you *did* find semen in their mouths, right?"

He inhaled. The thought of her sucking his cock made him rigid. "That's right," he replied, brushing his thumb across her bottom lip.

She pressed a kiss to his hand and then said, "I want to taste your cock."

Giving a little laugh that stemmed from feeling either insanely lucky or just damn glad to be alive, he unwrapped another Kiss, set the candy between her teeth and then straddled her face. As soon as she'd swallowed the chocolate, he braced one hand on the headboard and with the other, rubbed the head of his cock along her lips.

She nipped at the head, teasing him with the tip of her tongue.

He and his live-in had not been much into role-playing, and having a tied-up, blindfolded beauty parting her lips to admit his cock just about made him come undone.

Trembling, he dropped two inches so she could take him in her mouth. "Damn, baby."

Heaven.

Two more inches lower.

Now she had about half of it inside her hot, wet mouth.

Trip's insides grew taut. He gripped the headboard with both hands now and gazed down at the beautiful, erotic sight between his legs. Those soft pink lips wrapped around his slick, thick black cock...

"Goddamn," he muttered as he began to rock his hips gently.

She arched for more so he widened his thighs. Just a little bit more. *Oh God, that's good.*

Again she lifted her head, wanting more of him. He'd thought it impossible but he fed it to her, right down to the base.

She rolled her head from side to side and inside her mouth, her tongue lapped over and around him. Occasionally her teeth grazed him but only hard enough to make him very aware of the power she held.

He'd never felt anything so good and had never seen anything so beautiful as this sexy psychic with his shaft in her mouth.

He swallowed hard. "I ain't gonna be able to do this much longer without coming down your throat, Aries," he drawled.

At his declaration, she sucked with desire-inspired vigor.

Trip's eyes fluttered shut and his hands tightened around the headboard. Everything in his body felt as if it were being drawn down, down, into her.

Her chin moved sensuously against his sac and then he felt that tongue sweep up the underside of his cock, all the way to the head to where she began to suck and tongue over and over until...

Trip's breath froze. He could feel the orgasm building from a mile away. Hard. He was going to come hard.

"Aries..." he tried to warn but his voice came out as a garbled, hoarse whisper.

His knees went weak and it took all the strength he possessed not to collapse on top of her as he spurted into her mouth. She sucked. Oh God, she sucked.

He melted.

After she'd drained him dry, he staggered off her and collapsed onto his back beside her.

His mind was numb. Blank. But somehow, he recalled she was trying to help him find a killer.

"Aries?"

"Hmm?"

"Did...um...did you get any hits?" he asked.

"Just that the killer is young. It angers him that the women respond to him, despite the fact he drugs the chocolate to make them do so."

Trip drew in a breath and blew it out slowly. It wasn't much to go on.

He swallowed. He didn't want to know the answer to this next question because he didn't want this to end. "Is...is that all you got?"

For a heart-stopping second, she was silent.

And then she said, "That's all I got—this time."

He grinned and grabbed his cell phone to call in what he'd learned.

* * * * *

Aries blinked against the bright light as she sat. She rubbed her wrists, which were already deliciously sore from where she'd tugged against her restraints.

Trip bent over and perused the contents of the mini bar. "All kinds of soft drinks, water..." He glanced back over his shoulder at her. "Shots."

She tried in vain to suppress a demure smile as she hugged her knees to her chest. "Water's fine. Thanks."

He stood and stared so long Aries felt her tummy turn a somersault.

"How come I feel like I'm the one who ought to be thanking you?" he asked.

This time, the smile did claim her lips. She had enjoyed every minute of having him inside her. His fingers. His penis. His spicy cum.

She licked her lips.

He stooped, retrieved a bottle of water and twisted off the plastic cap. As he walked back toward the bed, Aries drank in the sight of him. Tall and broad, he moved with the grace of a jaguar. The smooth, dark skin of his chest shone with a mist of perspiration that only accentuated the muscles rippling down his body.

He was beautifully handsome and Aries felt drawn to him in an inexplicable and carnal way.

Her mouth was dry as cotton when he finally handed her the bottle, letting his fingers linger on hers as their gazes connected. Warmth unfurled through her body. "Thank you," she said but as she turned the bottle up and allowed the cool water to flow down her parched throat, she kept her gaze on Trip.

His penis was still semi-hard and hung long and thick from a nest of sparse black curls. The purplish swollen head rested against his muscled thigh and Aries couldn't help but wonder how on earth she had taken that massive thing inside her.

Her pussy clenched at the memory of how he'd filled her—and how, *and where*, he would fill her again.

Trip's words played in her thoughts. *He does 'em every which way but loose, Aries. The mouth. Up the c – The...um...vagina, in the ass. All while they're tied up and blindfolded.*

If she continued to submit to him, she would be tied again and once more at his mercy.

And he'd have to do those things to her in order for her to get more information about the killer.

All those things.

She resisted the urge to reach between her legs to massage her aching clit. The thought of his big cock up her ass while he was fully in control caused a wave of heat to rush up her spine and settle in her cheeks.

He sank onto the edge of the bed and tenderly brushed a lock of hair off her cheek. "How does this psychic thing work?"

Aries felt a sense of panic welling at this sudden, new intimacy between them. Did she want it? Could she see them in the future together instead of reenacting a crime to catch a criminal? Could she see them *making love* because they cared for each other?

"I've always been psychic," she said. "I don't know how it works. It just does."

“So, you like, know what I’m gonna say before I say it?” he asked.

A smile tugged at her lips and she shook her head. “It’s not like that.”

His brown eyes darkened seductively. “Do you know what I’m gonna do before I do it?” He leaned toward her and Aries suddenly knew he was going to kiss her. “Like this?” he murmured before his lips brushed hers, softly, eliciting a response from her.

His fingers traced the line of her jaw as he deepened his kiss and those images of a future together began to flood Aries’ thoughts. She breathed him in, wanting this future to become a reality, wanting him—wishing he’d tie her again and make her come undone.

When he ended their kiss, he brushed his thumb across her bottom lip. His gaze caressed her face and then followed his hand down her neck, over the rise of her collarbone to the hollow between her breasts, and then inside the cup of her lacy bra where he squeezed, pinching her nipple between his fingers.

Aries sighed and pushed more fully into his hand.

“After this is over,” he said, his gaze finding hers once more. “I’d like to do this again—for real.”

Aries nodded. “Me too.”

Two dimples deepened at the corners of his mouth when he smiled.

“I’d like that very much,” she added and then, flashing him a seductive look, she reached across the bed and retrieved his necktie, holding it up for him to blindfold her once more.

Chapter Three

Aries' breath came out in a ragged rush when Trip pushed his finger up her channel. She lifted her knees, squeezing her legs together and twisting and turning against his fist.

"Oh!" she cried and grew still as the tip of his finger found the little pleasure spot just inside her pussy and stroked until she was moaning encouragements.

Perspiration beaded between her breasts as he began a slow, deliberate assault on her eager hole. It felt so good. No man had ever slow-fucked her this way. In and out. Over and over. So slow and so deep.

Instinctively, she knew the killer hadn't done anything like this to his victims but Aries didn't want to tell Trip to stop or to change what he was doing. She rocked her hips in rhythm with his hand, trembling when he drove all the way up inside her and his fist pushed hard against her hole and that oh-so-sensitive stretch of flesh between her vagina and anus.

While he continued to pleasure her pussy, she breathed in the tantalizing scent of milk chocolate.

"Open your mouth," he told her.

Instantly she complied, parting her lips. One of his fingers pushed between them, mimicking the motions of the finger pleasing her below. She sucked at the finger, lightly biting him, tasting the heady flavor of his skin. A moan escaped her when he withdrew the digit from her lips but when he replaced his finger with the chocolate, she reeled, overwhelmed by the erotic sensations of both taste and pleasure.

Her legs flew open and she savored the candy, sucking the Kiss instead of chewing it as Trip's finger continued to bore into her pussy.

A second finger found its way inside her channel, stretching her, but she quickly realized Trip had other intentions for that digit. Once he'd sufficiently coated it with her cream, he drew it out and then rimmed her anus.

Aries jolted. She'd never imagined that part of her would be so sensitive to touch—to invasion. And although she fantasized about it when she played with her vibrator, she'd never actually let anyone do it to her.

This time, she didn't have a choice—and the idea that she was bound and blindfolded and in no position to refuse, liberated her in a way she'd never imagined possible.

She heard the telltale *pop* of the lubricant top and her pulse accelerated.

Spreading her legs impossibly wider, she rolled to meet Trip's freshly lubed finger. He wriggled the tip inside and the tight little hole gave way, readily accepting him. At first she thought it might hurt, but as he worked the finger farther and farther in, she discovered it felt good. Really good.

"You like that, don't you?" Trip drawled.

"Yes," she whispered. But this was not enough to penetrate her psychic senses. An image of the perpetrator pummeling his victims wavered in her thoughts. "Harder, Trip," she said.

"I don't want to hurt you."

"Harder!" she said with more authority. "Faster."

The fingers of his other hand found her clit and she moaned. As he began driving one finger up her pussy and one up her ass simultaneously, the muscles in her legs tightened. Hard. Fast.

She grunted as the force of his hand propelled her up the bed. His other hand massaged her clit in a circular motion and Aries felt her consciousness sliding. Suddenly, she was spinning into a wild mix of sexual sensation and psychic images.

Come for me. The killer's voice echoed in her head and Aries grasped at it, trying to define the sound. Instead, her ability had drawn her to the victim, who seemed hypnotically enthralled with what was being done to her.

"Yes, oh yes, that's good, that's it, right there," she heard herself saying. "Don't stop, don't stop."

An uproar of sensation built and then, suddenly, lights flashed behind Aries' closed eyelids. An animalistic moan tore from her throat as every muscle in her body grew taut and she rode the wave of the most intense orgasm she'd ever experienced.

When her consciousness finally floated back into her body, Trip was lying half across her and had her bra pulled to the side. His mouth was locked on her exposed flesh and she could feel a malleable, half-melted Hershey's Kiss in his mouth, swirling smoothly around her nipple.

Frustration welled that her hands were not free to pull him the rest of the way on top of her, to guide his thick shaft up her hole while the last spasms of her orgasm still throbbed inside her. She wanted to feel the muscles rippling in his back as he rutted her. She wanted so much more in so many different positions.

"Fuck me, Trip," she murmured.

His chest slid up and over hers. She breathed in the masculine scent of his perspiration mingled with the subtle fragrance of his cologne.

Her breath caught as he reached between their bodies and guided his already-sheathed erection toward the mouth of her pussy. His sigh warmed her ear as he slid inside her. For a moment he was still, and then he began to move, slow and purposeful, pushing hard against her clit with his body and grinding his hips to stimulate her before withdrawing.

Trip could not believe how good she felt. He couldn't get enough of her—even if it was just to activate her psychic ability. He buried his face in her fragrant hair and inhaled her sexy scent.

A thrill trickled through his body. When he'd told her he'd like to see her again – for real – she'd been interested.

He was looking forward to getting to know this woman because he felt more than the initial spark he'd felt the first time they'd touched. He felt...hope.

He felt joy in knowing they shared a mutual attraction and he felt wonder in discovering who this enigmatic woman was both inside and out – the right way.

Silky legs moved up and down his thighs and around his hips. Breathy moans filled his ears.

He could get lost in this.

But he had to remind himself why they were here – why they were doing *this*.

Her life could be in danger. Other women's lives were in danger – as long as *he* was out there.

"What are you getting, Aries?" he whispered in her ear.

Her breathing quickened.

Instinctively, he knew it was time to change the pace and course.

He drove his cock up her hard.

"He feeds them the chocolate so they'll let him do anything. So they'll beg him. He thinks they won't like it if they're not drugged. He's not sure of himself." Her voice sounded far away. Ethereal.

Trip inhaled. There was still one more thing the killer did to his victims before he took their lives but he wasn't certain how Aries would react. If she responded as she had when he'd put his finger up her ass, then he felt reasonably certain she'd love his cock in there.

Still...

Trip withdrew his pole, generously coated it with the slippery lube and rubbed the head around the taut opening of her anus.

Aries tensed.

"Tell me you want my cock up your ass."

She panted.

"Tell me," he said. "Beg me. Beg me to fuck you up the ass."

Her lips pursed as she swallowed thickly.

"Beg me, Aries." He nudged her anus with his thick dick head.

"Put it in me." She sounded exasperated. Uncertain.

"Mean it. Beg me."

"Put your cock in my ass!"

He worked the head in and she cried out. He knew it must be hurting her but she spread her legs and lifted her hips.

"Fuck me in the ass! I want to come with your cock in my ass," she said.

He slid it inside her tight, slick hole and fought the urge to come. "Jesus, that's tight," he muttered. "Damn."

"Fuck me," she said again, this time through gritted teeth.

Her whole body was like a fishing line stretched to the breaking point underneath him but he began to rock into her, pushing his pubis hard up against her body to kindle her clit.

Aries' legs flew around his waist. She moaned and pressed into him.

The thought that he was inside her ass, in her most private recess, made it impossible for him to hold back.

"What's his name?" Trip asked, fighting the irresistible desire to come.

Aries whimpered.

He backed out and plunged up hard inside her. "What's his name?"

She struggled against the bonds. "I don't know..."

"Yes you do," he said and began to fire his cock into her tight ass like a piston.

"I can't make it out!"

"Do it, Aries. Tell me!"

Bracing his hands on the bed, he held himself up and plowed into her until her head was wedged against the pillows lining the headboard. The bed creaked under his force and she mewled, fighting him with her legs but opening, lifting, taking it all right up her slick, snug little asshole.

"Fucking tell me, Aries! What's his name?"

"Please..."

He seized another Hershey's Kiss, peeled it one-handed and shoved it between her lips. Her head arched back as she consumed the candy.

There was one other tactic he hadn't yet tried—one that might put Aries over the edge.

Adrenaline pounded through Trip's veins as he caught her chin in his hand. Holding her head to the side, he lowered himself, grazing his lips against the curve of her ear. "Tell me. Tell me *my* name," he whispered.

"Gary!" she shouted.

The muscles in her anus clamped down around him.

And then she screamed, "Oh fuck, I'm coming!"

Trip was lost. His orgasm was uncontrollable. He cried out, pumping into her as spasm after delicious spasm racked his body.

* * * * *

Aries leaned her head back and let the hot water rain down on her. Trip's soapy hands roamed over her body, stopping to pay close attention to all her erogenous zones. He rolled both nipples between his thumbs and fingers. Sliding down over her belly, his fingers slipped through her folds, caressing and cleaning at the same time.

"I think I could get used to this," he murmured and drew her into a hug.

Aries melted against his wet body and splayed her hands across his broad back. It felt exactly as she had imagined it would. Strong. Muscular. He was solid from head to toe and standing in the shower with him, she realized just how big a man he was.

She pressed a kiss to his sculpted chest. "What did Captain Blake say?"

"He said they'd run the DNA evidence against any current offenders named Gary," Trip told her as he turned her in his arms and began massaging her back with soapy hands. "But I think you're going to need police protection until we apprehend the son of a bitch. Personal, *private* police protection," he said, enunciating the words carefully as he ran his fingers down the cleft of her ass.

Bracing her hands on the marbled-tiled shower wall, Aries relaxed completely. She felt safe with Trip. Instinctively, she knew there'd be no more nightmares.

"They're also running a trace on hotel employees with that name," Trip added as if it were an afterthought.

"Good idea," she said, looking back at him over her shoulder. "But I feel as if I've let you down."

His hands went still. "Let me down?" He spun her around in his arms. "Let me down? Come on, Aries. You've given me more to go on than I've had up until now and even if the lead doesn't pan out...I can't say this was a wasted afternoon."

She stared up into his dark eyes.

"Can you?" he asked, arching an eyebrow.

A smile claimed her lips. "Not at all, Detective Washington."

He chuckled. "I have a feeling 506 is gonna be our lucky number."

He reached around her and switched off the water before wrapping her in a thirsty white towel. Aries relished this tender side of him. His eyes were soft and his touch warmed her, seeping through her very skin to permeate her heart.

She gazed at his handsome face as he gently brushed a wet strand of hair off her cheek.

His eyes held hers and then he dragged her against him and pressed his lips to hers. Aries yielded completely to him, melting into his arms as his kiss deepened. She moaned into his mouth as his tongue teased her lips and then slipped inside.

Aries clung.

Fresh desire unfurled and she let her towel fall away. His cock stiffened and prodded her abdomen.

"You're wearin' me out," he murmured against her mouth and then he slid a hand behind her thigh to heave her up into his arms.

Aries gasped and then giggled as he carried her to the bed.

"This time, it's you and me," he said as he set her on the mattress.

His gaze left hers only long enough to find the condoms. After tearing off the wrapper, he rolled on the protection and joined her on the bed.

Aries' heart raced as he moved over her and between her legs. She swallowed thickly. Before, there hadn't been this intimacy. Before, they'd had sex to find a killer.

This was different.

Oh-so-wonderfully different.

The way his forehead furrowed when he penetrated her made Aries clench around him. She couldn't resist the urge to reach up and caress the strong line of his jaw as he began to sensuously move inside her.

His gaze remained locked with hers and Aries felt as if he were peering into her very soul. The sensation was overwhelming—delectably poignant, with such promise it caused chills to skitter down her body.

Only when Aries could hold his gaze no longer did he dip his head, and she felt the warmth of his mouth on the sensitive curve of her neck. A big palm closed over her breast and she arched toward his touch, toward his body, toward his insistently thrusting cock.

Muted moans filled the room. Hers. His.

And this time, Aries wound her arms around his rock-hard torso, dragging her nails lightly down to where the steel muscles in his backside contracted and released.

The weight of his body was sublime as he wound one hand under her head and used the other to brace the small of her back, tilting her for the deepest penetration possible.

Aries whimpered and held on with her arms and legs. All her conscious thought spiraled downward and then shattered. Her cries filled the room.

Trip's pace quickened in time with his breathing and he growled as he too found release.

Afterward, he lay perfectly still inside her and Aries listened to his heart thumping in time with her own. When he finally moved, it was to kiss his way down to her breasts. Aries sighed as he sucked one eager nipple into his mouth and rolled the other between the pads of his thumb and index finger.

What was happening? She hardly knew this man yet he played her body as if he were well acquainted with her hidden desires, as if he knew her deepest unspoken secrets.

But there was more.

He touched her as if...as if he could easily grow to *love* her.

His kisses glided to her abdomen and lower, her thighs, and then he rolled her over so he could give the same attention to her back and the soft flesh of her buttocks.

"Spread your legs, Aries," he whispered as his fingers trailed along her cleft.

She inhaled and inched her legs just far enough apart to admit his fingers anywhere they wanted to go.

Her clit pulsed as he explored her moist folds.

Excitement ran like electricity through her veins when she heard the cap of the lubricant pop open.

And when his hand returned, one long finger worked its way into her pussy and another slid up her well-prodded anus...

Aries bit into the pillow to keep from crying out when she came again.

* * * * *

Trip lifted the bottle of water Aries had not finished earlier and wiped the condensation off on the corner of the sheet. "This has gotten warm," he told the sensuous woman in bed beside him. "I'll get some ice."

Aries let out a lazy laugh as she moved sensuously under the sheet. "We could probably think of a couple other things to do with an ice cube or two."

A dimple-deepening smile tugged at Trip's lips. "I like the way you think."

He climbed out of bed and pulled on his clothes. "Be right back," he said, taking up the ice bucket.

He started out the door and then remembered there might be some guys from the precinct still in the hotel. It wouldn't do if they saw him with his shirt tail out and his shoes off. "Hold up," he said aloud and began straightening his clothes. "I know I was assigned to work with you, and nobody said anything about *how*, but I seriously don't think either one of us want to try to explain it."

His gaze lingered on her as he slipped on his holster and tucked his badge into his pocket. She was beautiful. Absolutely drop-dead gorgeous with her dark hair contrasting on the white pillowcase. For the first time since he and his girlfriend had parted ways, he felt the thrill of promise.

After checking his appearance in the mirror, he flashed another smile and then left the room in search of the ice machine.

His mind wandered back over the past few hours he'd spent with her. The sex—the reenactment sex—had been hot and erotic. But when he'd actually made love to her—without the blindfold, without the handcuffs and without the pretense—he knew his world had been forever altered.

He'd admittedly worried his confusing emotions weren't real at all and that they were only having sex to solve a crime.

Gary.

She'd gotten the name "Gary".

There was something familiar about it. He'd heard the name somewhere very recently and it nagged him like a mosquito on a hot Georgia night.

"Where'd I hear that?" he muttered aloud—and then everything skidded to an abrupt halt.

Gary.

He'd seen that name on the bellhop's nametag!

Dropping the ice bucket to the floor, he sprinted to the elevator and punched the button. Adrenaline coursed through his veins. His heart pounded. Pacing, he impatiently watched the numbers above the doors flash, signifying a slow race between the two hotel elevators heading toward the fifth floor.

A bell rang and then one of the elevator doors opened. He lunged inside and hit the button for the lobby.

The elevator could not descend quickly enough for Trip's tastes. He had a bad feeling.

A really bad feeling.

As soon as the elevator doors opened on the lobby, he darted out, his gaze scanning through the revolving door for a trace of the auburn-haired bellhop who'd given him the keycard to Aries' room.

An older black man was attending hotel patrons now.

Shit.

Trip readied his badge as he burst through the revolving door. "Where's Gary?"

The bellhop's gaze dropped to the badge. "His shift ended a half hour ago."

"I need to know where he lives. What he drives." Trip's sense of urgency set him on edge.

"He don't drive," the old man said as he began fumbling through papers behind his podium. "Rides the MARTA."

"How long has he worked here?"

"Just a couple of days," the man said as he scanned a wrinkled pack of yellow papers. "Here it is."

Trip snatched the file from the man's hand and quickly looked it over before whipping out his cell phone. He punched the number for the precinct. "John, I need to get an APB out on a Gary Donaldson. He may be our killer."

Trip could hear the computer keys clicking on John's end as he recited Gary's address, phone number and social security number.

"You pretty sure about this, Trip?" John asked.

Trip hesitated but only for a split second. "I'm certain of it."

The realization that he trusted Aries' instincts—even when there was no proof—shook him to the core. There was something to this psychic mumbo jumbo after all.

"Is the boy in trouble?" the other bellhop asked after Trip ended his call.

"That's for the courts to determine," Trip said as his mind ferreted out the details of his short encounter with Gary.

I was told to give you this.

Room 506.

"506," Trip said aloud.

Terror flooded his being. Aries' voice echoed in his head. *I'm going to be his next victim.*

Gary knew where Aries was.

Aries was in danger!

Guilt surged. He should have remembered what Aries had told him. He should have gone straight back to the room.

If anything happens to her...

Trip's mouth went dry as he fished in his pocket for his cell phone. As he fled back into the hotel lobby, he flipped it open and hit the speed dial for John. "I know where the killer is! I'm still at the hotel. Get your guys to room 506. Pronto!"

Ignoring John's surprised questions, he closed the phone and punched the elevator button several times but both cars hovered near the top floors.

He didn't have time to wait.

Running as fast as his feet would carry him, he rushed into the stairwell and sprinted up the steps, two at a time.

His heart was pounding by the time he reached the fifth floor.

The keycard.

He patted his pockets.

The keycard. Where had he put it?

Panic struck as his mind's eye riveted to the shelf by the coffee maker. He'd put it down and hadn't picked it back up on his way out.

His gaze locked on the brass numbers on the hotel door. 506.

He tried the handle. The red light flashed. The door was locked.

"Aries!" he called, pounding on the door.

From inside, he heard a scream.

Terror seized his heart. The killer had her! *He has Aries!*

He drew his pistol, flicked off the safety and pointed it toward the ceiling as he prepared to shoulder the door.

He threw all his weight into it and when he made contact, it didn't budge. He tried again to no avail. Pain radiated through his shoulder.

All he could think was that Aries was in danger and he had to save her. He aimed his pistol at the lock and fired a shot.

The sound reverberated through the hallway. Trip gave the door a sound kick and crashed into the room.

Instantly, he took in a sight that made his knees go weak.

Gary.

Straddling Aries.

In his hands was Trip's own necktie, which was wound around Aries' neck. His own handcuffs held her hands secured to the headboard.

Aries was naked and her eyes were wide with fright. She gasped for breath.

Already a purplish bruise was darkening her cheekbone.

Trip noticed Gary had not escaped unscathed. His nose and lips were dripping blood and the lamp that had been on the nightstand was in shattered pieces on the floor.

"I'll kill her!" Gary threatened. "Don't come any closer!"

Trip steadied the pistol, aiming directly at Gary's chest. "I think you oughta reconsider, Gary."

Trip swallowed thickly. The last thing he wanted to do was shoot with Gary so close to Aries. He didn't doubt he could hit him but still...

Gary jerked the necktie tighter with both hands. Aries tried to inhale a rasping breath. Her tear-filled gaze was pleading and apologetic.

Anger welled in Trip that this punk would do this to her—to any woman.

Aries made a choking sound as Gary tightened the tie again, squeezing her windpipe.

Trip didn't hesitate.

He fired a single shot straight into Gary's chest.

The force of the bullet knocked Gary to the other side of the bed. Instinctively, Trip knew he'd hit his mark.

Gary was dead.

Trip had Aries uncuffed, wrapped in an oversized towel and securely in his arms just before a barrage of police officers flooded into the room.

"How'd you know he was in here?" Aries asked.

Trip snuggled her close. "Instinct."

Epilogue

“What you got?” Trip asked from the shadows of his bed.

“You’ll see,” Aries said as she popped a Hershey’s Kiss between her lips. She turned and crossed the darkened room to the bed where Trip lay. His beautiful body sensuously contrasted against the white sheet.

One side of her mouth tugged into a smile as she crawled onto the bed and over Trip.

“What are you up to?” His eyes narrowed playfully.

Aries’ lashes fluttered shut as she leaned toward him and softly touched her lips to his.

“Mmm.” He voiced his pleasure.

She giggled and tickled his lips with the tip of her tongue, teasing them to part as she rolled the Kiss into his mouth.

He moaned and his hands slid up her arms to her shoulders as he returned the kiss.

Aries’ heart soared.

It had been six months since they’d solved the Death by Chocolate murders.

Mentally unstable, Gary had been injecting common hotel courtesy chocolates with an aphrodisiac similar to a date-rape drug, which he fed to prostitutes to force a sexual response. Searching his home computer, authorities had turned up an extensive journal detailing Gary’s first encounter with a prostitute. When she became frustrated with his inexperienced fumbings, she had taunted him—and had become his first kill.

Aries had stopped Trip when he’d tried to give her more details from the case, preferring to focus her energies on their future together.

Her nightmares had ended and she and Trip were engaged to be married. Every time she looked at him, her pulse accelerated. Joy mingled with desire swelled in her body.

And even though they'd had sex twice already tonight, she wanted him again.

"Now look what you've done," Trip said as he caught her hand in his and guided it to his massive erection.

Aries smiled and straddled him. She guided his cock into the mouth of her pussy and slid down his bone-hard pole, sighing at the exquisite way he filled her.

His hands found her hips and he lifted her slowly up and down.

Her gaze swept his body, the bulging muscles in his arms, the ripples on his torso. She'd never let him blindfold her again since that time in room 506. She wanted to see him.

She hadn't asked him to restrain her either. Touching him was far more pleasurable.

She did, however, continue to enjoy all the other things they'd done that day.

In fact...

Aries slid off his cock and then coated it with sensation-inducing lube.

"Wait a minute!" Trip pursed his full lips into a pout.

Arching an eyebrow, Aries pushed the head of his cock back to her anus.

He let out a sexy little laugh and then pushed inside her. "Your sixth sense must be rubbing off on me—I had a feeling you were gonna do that."

About the Author

Debra Glass' previous experience as a medium inspired her interest in writing Alabama ghost stories, although she's also got a passion for spine-tingling paranormal romance. Since 2002, Debra has written several books on regional folklore and has had numerous articles published in Fate Magazine and various Civil War magazines.

Now she's writing steamy erotic romance and dabbling in the paranormal with her Phantom Lovers series which features passionate and sexy ghosts who are guaranteed to keep you up at night!

The author welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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