

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

ELLORA'S CAVE  
*Quickies*

SEEING ME

ELYSSA EDWARDS

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



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Seeing Me

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# *SEEING ME*

Elyssa Edwards

### *Dedication/Acknowledgements*

Thank you to my ever diligent critique group, those wonderful ladies known as the Crones. To the froggies, you've made the new kid feel very welcome in the pond. To my wonderful editor, Helen Woodall, who has made this whole experience so easy and best yet, keeps reminding me to have fun. And to my Precious, thank you for making each day of our lives better than any fantasy.

## **Chapter One**

It was all coming together. Everything she had worked for, all the years of secret dreams and fantasies, all the hidden aspirations and ambitions had come to fruition. Little Cara Jo was now C.J. Ellison, published author. The last time she had felt this rush of adrenaline was the moment she held the signed publishing contract in her hands and stared at it in amazement.

Now as she slid into her chair behind the long table, it was all very real. She was part of a writers' panel. Her. Two years ago she had been one of the event's attendees. A hopeful writer and lover of this genre of storytelling. She'd been one of hundreds of would-bes and wannabes in a sea of painted and costumed faces at Atlanta, Georgia's science fiction-fantasy convention that drew people from all over the country. If anyone knew how many old badges she had from this convention tucked in a drawer at home her rating on the geek-ometer would break the gauge. And now she was on a panel with some of the best-known writers in the craft. As her nerves tied her stomach into knots, she wasn't sure whether to bless her agent or curse him.

It was the big room, the grand ballroom of all places. It would be easy to swell with pride and ego except for one sad fact—or maybe it was a fortunate one. Anything she had to say would be superfluous. In fact anything any of the writers on this panel said would be virtually ignored. It was standing room only and the crowd wasn't here to see the panel. They were here to see Him. One of the other writers had said it clearly as they were shepherded into place. When the conference staff had reminded them to speak into the microphones placed before them, he had laughed bitterly and remarked, "It doesn't really matter if they even turn these on. We could sit here, pick our noses and finger paint and no one would notice while the sex god himself was here."

And He was here. There were few women in the world of any generation who didn't thrill to the sound of his voice. Who didn't entertain at least the briefest of fantasies about what was beneath that crisp white shirt, open at the neck, and the jeans into which it tucked. He'd taken the classic, shirt-undone, bare-chest-peeking-through look and made it his own. After he first appeared onscreen in the ensemble, no other man ever looked as good in it. Even one of her lesbian friends had commented on him earlier today. "He's pretty, all right. I don't exactly want to sleep with him but I do like to look at him. And with that voice he could talk to me all night."

Cara sat in her place at the far right, the newest and least-known of the group. He sat in the middle along with the author whose stories he had been translating into action for a few years now. And the show started. She was introduced and received a polite applause as did everyone else. But when the questions began, it was crystal clear the other writer had been right. These people were here to see Him.

She began doodling on the paper before her, drawing pictures and playing a word game she often played when bored. It had started between her and her giggling girlfriends in the back of a boring world history class in college. How many synonyms could she find for... In honor of the man of the hour and the ambitions of most of the women present, she chose the word "fuck". How many ways could she find to say fuck?

Being sure that the older woman sitting next to her couldn't see the legal pad that had been provided for her by the setup committee, she started jotting. *Make love...have his way...ravage...plunder...* The longer the list got, the more crude it got.

*Ride...fill...drive into...do...screw...bang...*

Boredom numbing her brain, she was just about to hit an all-time low when a particularly wheezy voice that was faintly familiar caught her attention. The thin, balding man with glasses who was standing at the microphone asking a question had a familiar face. He'd been a regular at this convention and was a frequent volunteer on the track dedicated to the legendary science fiction television and movie franchise that

was so famous it need not be named. A bad Scottish accent crying out, "I can'na give ya more power Cap'n" was all that was needed for recognition. And that was one of the more obscure lines. He was also an arrogant, know-it-all jerk. *What idiot gave that asshole a microphone?* She brooded moodily. *And since when is he into fantasy?*

And damn but the man just three places down the table from her was one to spark any woman's fantasy. She looked down, half listening as she contemplated her list. She began to sketch absently in one corner.

"In the first installment of the series, the part that took place in space before your character became a stranded rogue mage, we were introduced to the handheld photo-plasma emitter. A friend of mine is an ex-cop and he says you handle your gun so masterfully that you must have gotten a lot of training in handling handheld weapons. Did you do any special training?"

*This is your weapon, this is your gun. One is for shooting, the other for fun.* The line popped up from somewhere in the depths of her pop-culture awareness and she bit down hard on her lip to stop her giggle. Her eyes shifted to Him clandestinely when she thought she heard a faint chuckle in his voice as he answered.

"No," He drew the word out slowly. Cara stared at the yellow paper and listened to the answer he gave. "I can only say that it's important to be very familiar with any prop you're going to be using, especially a gun. You have to practice with it, hold it, let it take over and guide the movements of your hand. If you aren't comfortable with the feel of your own gun, then you won't be able to handle anyone else's well."

A nervous twitter fluttered across the ballroom. She'd love to see him handle his gun. *Staff...rod...lance...penis...length...manhood...cock...*

She grinned quietly to herself. Oh, fantasies could be fun, a lot more fun than this. His hands handling his cock...now that would be a sight. She looked down the table at the hands that rested on the table. The white of the tablecloth blurred in her vision until all she could see was those hands. Long-fingered, strong hands...

\* \* \* \* \*

Sheer white curtains blew inward on the faint morning breeze. The lazy rays of the rising sun cast a soft light across the figure lying on the bed. His bare chest and abs glowed a tawny gold. Her fingertips tingled with anticipation at the thought of touching that skin, tracing the definition of the pectoral muscles. Her palm itched at the promise of the rippling six-pack that rose and fell with each sleepy breath. Adonis, Apollo, not even Eros himself had looked as glorious.

The long muscles of his thighs and calves were faintly dusted with hair that would tickle the inside of a woman's thighs as he moved between them. One knee was bent and the thin white sheet bunched at his waist baring his legs while tauntingly obscuring her view. He wasn't completely hidden, the erotic nature of his dreams was evident in the tenting of the linen as his body prepared itself for a lover who so far existed only in his mind. One arm was up over his head, his hand resting on his forehead, the other lay across his stomach. Slowly, absently it began to move over the tanned flesh. His palm flat, it rose up over his abs and slid across his chest.

The soulful eyes opened slightly, reluctantly, as his body's need pulled him from a sleep that had been filled with carnal pleasures. He arched his neck and closed his eyes again. The hand moved lower now over the planes of muscle and slipped under the edges of the sheet. His fingers curled slightly, a soft stroking of the hair that was now faintly visible. Hidden from view, the bulge created by his hand slid down and wrapped around the base of his erect cock. Slowly he stroked it, his breathing increasing in pace and volume. Deliberate, unhurried caresses moved up the shaft and circled over the head, his wrist twisting, before sliding back down.

His eyes opened and his face turned to her. He caught her eyes with his and smiled wickedly. "You wanna watch, don't you? You want to watch me..." he seemed to censor a coarser thought, "pleasure myself."

She stepped closer to him. She became aware of her own bold and brazen nakedness as she moved until she stood directly over him. He pulled the sheet away



from his body revealing the proof of his manhood that was as perfect and beautiful as the rest of his form. Long and thick, it seemed to almost move toward her as if, on its own, it sought her touch.

She lay down next to him on the bed, stretching out her legs and feeling the desire rise in her body. She shifted her legs, rubbing them together. The pressure compressed the folds of skin around the center of her need, making her shudder. She could feel the wetness already evident as flesh slid smoothly against flesh.

"Watch me," he whispered. "A special performance just for you." His hand enfolded the stiff organ once more and moved up, squeezing gently as he reached the top. "Do you know what I think about when I touch my cock?" His hand moved over the top again, rubbing the sensitive head in a way that made him gasp. "You, Cara. I think about you."

He reached one hand up to touch her face. Bending down she pressed her lips to his. He teased her, licking at her lower lip before sliding his tongue into her mouth. She pressed her hand to his chest and reveled in the feel of the skin and muscle. She moved her hand down over his stomach. Lifting her head from his kiss, she traced circles in the faint hair just below his navel. Such soft, fine hair. She watched his hand moving faster now, his breath becoming labored as his excitement grew.

She saw the small pearl of fluid rise from the head of his penis and reached down to touch it. "No," his voice was thick and low. He put his hand over hers and guided it away from him. He lifted up on his elbow and kissed her, the velvet invader laying claim to the soft wetness of her mouth with an astonishing mix of tenderness and aggression. He moved away from her lips and trailed a kiss down her neck. He still held her hand in his as he nipped gently at her shoulder.

"Show me, Cara. Show me." He whispered the words into her ear a second before his tongue flicked her earlobe. His hand pushed hers down, sliding it between legs that opened willingly for him. His fingers over hers, he led her touch inside the warm folds of her labia. He rubbed one long tantalizing stroke that slipped down to find the

flooding wetness at her opening. He pressed slightly, adding to her torment as he moved down so that he could capture her nipple in his mouth. Guiding her hand back up he used the moistened pads of her own fingers to tease her clit. She moaned softly as tongue and fingers caused a series of shockwaves that spread out over her body.

She wasn't sure just when he removed his hand but her fingers kept up the wonderful rhythm he'd begun. Opening her eyes she looked down at him. His mouth still sucked at her breast, his tongue and teeth teasing the rock-hard nipple. But his hand was once again stroking his cock. She could see the moisture he'd carried with him from her pussy as it helped lubricate his movements. Her fingers moved to her opening. One finger, then two slid inside. She was momentarily amazed she was so damned wet. She could feel her juices dripping down, running down the cleft between her buttocks. The sight of him fucking himself with his broad, long-fingered hand, the sounds of his low-throated moans were causing her own excitement to reach fever pitch. She slid her fingers in and out with increasing speed and pressure.

Lying back, she used her other hand to manipulate her clit, rubbing the hard nub. He moved up and cradled her head on one arm while he matched her pace, his eyes fixed on her hands as they played inside her.

\* \* \* \* \*

"And then you come..." Cara jerked her head up at the sound of the words. He gave a short harsh cough, took a sip of water and continued. "Sorry and then you come to the pivotal moment in the story and if you aren't focused you can ruin what needs to be the payoff for the viewer." He cleared his throat again, "That's why it's important to me to be able to commit myself to one project at a time. It makes having a personal life of any kind hard but there are often sacrifices you have to make."

Looking down she realized she'd actually sketched the body of the nude male, no face but his hands were definitely...

She felt the heat wash over her cheeks and lowered her head, letting her hair fall across her face. She flipped the page over on the table and continued her list. She should choose a safer topic but right now she doubted her mind could focus on anything else.

The questions continued from the audience and she thought she noticed Him grow a bit uncomfortable. True, ninety-nine percent of the questions were for him but that was something she was actually grateful for. God help her if someone asked her a question right now.

She was up to twenty on her new list, having just added the delightfully archaic “deflowering,” when she heard the voice of the angry writer from earlier denounce the idea of film representation of his books as a bastardization of the art, as selling out for the money. “No screenwriter, no director, no actor can do justice to a well-written story or character without cheapening it, without robbing it of some essential element that a given reader holds dear,” he’d practically sneered. “So there’s no chance I’d ever sell one of my stories to the commercial Hollywood machine.”

“Are you crazy?” The words were out of her mouth before she realized she had spoken them. “You’d sell your left testicle if someone wanted to make a movie from one of your books with that kind of budget.” She waved her hand at the actor and author who were being criticized.

There was an undercurrent of laughter and she suddenly realized everyone in the room was looking at her. He was looking at her and wearing that wickedly seductive smile that had put him in the pages of many a magazine. Her face flushed hotly and she looked down at her hands. *I can’t believe I said that*, she moaned silently. The moderator quickly swung the conversation back on track. A quick glance down the table saw that indeed, the offended writer was glaring at her in disgust. *Great, just great*, she thought. *He’s got twenty times my sales, we share the same agent and I go and piss him off. Well, it was nice while it lasted. My agent is going to kill me.*

As the panel concluded and the audience lined up for autographs and book signings, she started to stand. Because she was a new author, no one would want to

hear from her and no one would want her to sign anything. Especially not now that she had insulted one of the most respected writers in the field. As she stood, a faintly wrinkled hand reached over and patted hers. The white-haired woman who had authored one of her favorite series of books leaned over from her motorized scooter and whispered. "Well done for a first panel." Her eyes twinkled wickedly. "I've been wanting to tell off that egotistical pain in the ass for years."

She smiled weakly, "I don't know what happened. One minute I'm sitting here—the next minute my mouth is moving."

"Well, either way you certainly have a knack for words, my dear and old I-Think-I'm-Isaac-Assimov-Jr. deserved it. But now, you better sit down and get to signing or that line will get awfully long." Cara turned and saw that in fact there was a line forming before her space at the table.

She sat down and took the first book offered to her. "If you could sign it to Brian." The young man grinned shyly. She looked down and again felt the feeling of surprise as she saw her name on the cover. Pulling back to reality, she signed the book and passed it back. The next person in line handed her their copy. She signed each one and spent a moment talking to each person. After what seemed like such a short time, though her watch told her different, she heard a murmur and shifting in the crowd. At the same moment she felt someone stop behind her chair, she saw the face of the young woman whose book she held light up.

A hand reached around and picked up the paper she had been doodling on earlier. She followed that hand up to the white cuff, rolled halfway up the defined forearm dusted with dark hairs, up to the broad shoulder, to the smiling face. "I wondered what you were writing so intently down here." She looked back down at the page and realized he was looking at her list of euphemisms for sexual intercourse. She could feel the warmth emanating from his body as he leaned over her, the dizzying scents of sandalwood and musk dancing around her nose. He then flipped it over and seemed to

freeze as his eyes examined the drawing. The smile widened and twisted with amusement. "Amazing how a writer's mind works."

"God, could this day get any worse?" she moaned.

"Probably." His voice held a definite laugh as he turned the list over and placed it back on the table, his hand brushing hers as he did. She drew a deep, shuddering breath as he moved away. She was suddenly very aware of the fabric of her bra rubbing against the flesh that had tightened and hardened so suddenly. *Good God, what is it about this man*, she thought as she shifted in her chair trying to relieve the sudden tingling that was developing somewhere that damned well shouldn't be responding to something so simple as a casual touch.

She finished signing the last of the books before being hustled out of the room. They needed to set up for the next panel—would everyone please excuse them but the writers had a reception and other commitments. It was a lie. She didn't have any other commitments and wasn't planning on attending the reception but she allowed them to lead her away.

In the corridor she leaned against a wall and rubbed her eyes. The man she had embarrassed stormed past her and stopped. He turned around and glared at her. "Don't ever pull a stunt like that again, ya hear? You may be willing to whore yourself for a pretty face and some money but the rest of us aren't. Just 'cause you wanna jump the guy —"

"Shut up," she snapped. "Look, if I did want to have carnal knowledge of that body I'd be right up there with ninety percent of the women in this world and ten percent of the men, including you. Don't think we didn't all see you check out the goods just like the rest of us."

A cough made them both jump and the next second brought the agonizing realization that not only had He been right about things getting worse but that at that moment a massive earthquake that crushed her beneath the weight of this hotel sounded like a swell idea. Bright eyes were laughing and the full-lipped mouth was

hidden behind a fist to quell the sound of a chuckle rising in the throat. A young man stood beside him trying to press back a smile. "Ah, if you two don't mind, the reception is being held in the Roosevelt Room." The coordinator gestured for them to follow and led the way.

Thinking she could just slow her pace, fall behind and bolt for the nearest exit, she succeeded only in drawing abreast of Him. They were several paces behind the event coordinator and the other writer. "Is this a long-running animosity with you two or is it new?" The low voice brought an involuntary shiver up her spine.

"Very new. I met him thirty seconds before the panel started," she confided.

"Ah," was all He said. Just outside the reception room He stopped walking. A woman talking rapidly, either to herself or an invisible headset for a cell phone, was waving Him over. He nodded, said "Have fun," and moved away at a slow and easy pace.

## Chapter Two

"This way, ma'am," the event coordinator took Cara's arm and ushered her into the room. She'd have walked in one door and out the other if it hadn't been for the coordinator. Almost as if he felt sorry for her, he began shuffling her from one group to the other for introductions including an embarrassing encounter with the "safe sex faerie". At least those she'd been standing near had tried to be polite about their giggles when she stood puzzled, looking at the lollipop she'd been handed by the goth sprite whose spiked black hair was tipped in red that matched the trim on the black leather bustier and wings.

"Safe sex without the latex," chimed the faerie.

The burn in Cara's cheeks when she realized she actually held a bright red condom on a stick was just the perfect topper to the last hour of nonstop humiliations. She stuffed it into the pocket of her skirt and again wished for the earth to open up and swallow her.

Thirty minutes later the same woman with the wireless earpiece growing from the side of her head approached her. "If you'll excuse us a minute." Her tone was brisk and no one, least of all Cara, thought to argue. The woman's hand was under her elbow and she was escorting her out of the room. Once in the hall the woman stopped. "You've been invited to attend a small private signing. The party's host specifically asked that I invite you. I believe he'd like you to sign some of your work."

*Sign what they put in front of you as long as it has your picture or your name on it, kiddo,* had been the advice of her agent. That and the suggestion that she always carry a fine-tip permanent marker in her bag. She let the woman lead her to one of the large suites. "Just in here, Ms. Ellison. Someone will be with you in a moment."

She walked through the door and it shut behind her with the woman on the outside. Her heart was pounding. These suites, she had been told, were reserved for the power players, the major publishing companies whose executives sometimes did and sometimes didn't attend these events and the movie studios whose executives behaved likewise. Someone important liked her work and wanted to meet her, wanted her to sign her book.

The large room had a bank of windows to one side that opened out onto a small balcony. She crossed to look out. The setting sun shone off the windowed exterior of the high-rises on all sides. The French doors had been opened along with the windows and translucent, narrow white curtains were fluttering in the autumn breeze. It was unusually cool and comfortable for this time of year.

Cara caught the fabric of the drapes and smiled at the memory of the fantasy that had distracted her earlier. She felt a soft tickling sensation as the cloth brushed the inside of her wrist. She looked out and watched the sunset. Its colors had mutated the sky to an odd mauve color. It reminded her of the vivid, unreal colors given to the skies over alien planets in the movies. Okay, in one series of movies in particular.

The sheer white fabric reminded her of something else. It reminded her of the dress of the priestess. The one in her book. She still regretted that scene. The dungeon scene where her heroine was captured by the king. She'd not had the nerve to write the scene the way she'd truly wanted to. She'd not exactly imagined a traditional torture scene. She'd imagined something more tempting, coercive but not exactly painful. And she'd not imagined the king stopping the interrogation. No, she'd imagined him orchestrating it.

The scene started to play out in her mind the way she wished she'd had the courage to write it. And there was no question who she'd cast in the roles.

\* \* \* \* \*



She pulled at the thick, braided silk ropes that held her arms outstretched. The ends were tied to iron rings on either side of the small cell. The more she pulled, the tighter the bonds cut into her skin.

"Careful, Priestess." The soft, low voice of the man who stood before her ran tormentingly over her senses. "We wouldn't want you damaging that pure white skin." He moved toward her. "Sacrifices have to be perfect, without blemish."

"I'm not a sacrifice." She glared at him.

His hand came up to touch her cheek. She flinched expecting him to strike her. The caress of his fingers shocked her with its tenderness. "This would be so much simpler if you'd just tell me where the amulet is."

"I've told you I don't know." Her heart was pounding loudly in her chest. His cruelty was legendary. At least it was in the stories she'd heard recounted again and again in the protective cloister of the temple. The high priest had hated the king and had taught all who served there to fear him. His cruelty she had expected from the moment he'd thrown her over his horse and carried her away. But she hadn't expected tenderness.

He leaned in, his warm breath against her cheek. "I want to believe you." He hovered there, his eyes not looking into hers but watching her lips with an intensity that created the undeniable urge to pass her tongue over them, wet them. When she did he pulled back, his eyes dark. "But I'm afraid I simply can't."

He circled behind her. "Do you know how my magic works, Priestess?" Her heart began to beat so fiercely it ached. She pulled at the ropes again, trying in vain to free herself. "I can see you do," a throaty chuckle rose with the words.

His hands came to rest on her shoulders. "Nothing I want can be denied me when my powers are at their fullest. No lie can deceive me, no enemy defeat me."

She knew what was coming. The magic he wielded was at its core sexual. Sex charged his powers. Those he claimed with the force of his magic were consumed by it

and could deny him nothing. It was said he would carry the strength of the magic from the liaison for days.

“You will bring me a strength like no other lover, little Priestess. I can feel it in you.” His hands pulled loose the clasps that held her simple white gown closed at the shoulders. The fabric fell away and the cool air of the cell touched her breasts making her nipples harden. The golden belt that wrapped around her waist stopped the dress from falling completely from her.

She felt the cold metal of his chest plate press to the warm skin of her back. The chill that swept through her turned her aching nipples into stiff points capping her exposed breasts. A warm, calloused hand moved across her ribcage and was joined by its mate. The king moved slowly, bringing his hands up to cup her breasts. His breath was hot in her ear, heating her skin in a way that swept down her neck, across her body, to pool between her thighs.

“Beautiful,” he whispered before his lips scorched the skin beneath her earlobe, moving down her neck. He nipped the bare skin of her shoulder before retracing a line back up to her ear. The large hands squeezed her breasts until she moaned. She felt him smile against her temple. He moved his rough palms up over her flesh. The skin that was worn and hardened from battle and the weight of his sword dragged across her nipples. She gasped at the explosion of sensation.

His fingers stroked, pinched and tugged at her nipples. She struggled against her ropes, desperate to bring her hands down, to protect her breasts from the torment of his hands. She felt her traitorous body respond to his touch. Wetness and heat were building in her and making her twist helplessly. Needing it to stop. Needing it to continue.

His hands withdrew abruptly leaving her breath rushing through her lips. She clamped down hard on her lower lip with her teeth to stop herself from moaning in protest. Never had she felt a touch like this. Never had her body reacted so quickly, so ferociously.

The king now stood before her, his eyes raking up and down her form. The seductive smile on his face made her blood roar in her ears. His tongue slipped out between his full lips and he licked them like a lion anticipating a particularly tasty morsel. His hand lifted and he laid his palm against the steel breast plate of his armor. A soft flash of light flared and his armor was gone. His golden skin was perfect except for a single scar that ran down the center of his chest, bisecting that delectable body. She'd heard the story of how they'd tried to kill him and failed. The scar disappeared beneath the only garment he still wore. A pair of soft leather pants.

"Look your fill, my Priestess," he said, his grin devilish. "I intend to." Stepping forward he untied the belt that held her robe in place. Beneath it she was bare. He loosened it until it fell—along with the soft white fabric of her dress—to the floor, pooling at her feet. His eyes slid down her. She felt them examine every inch of her as if it were a tangible touch. A throbbing grew between the soft, wet folds he gazed at with undisguised hunger.

The king lowered his head and she knew what was coming. Dreaded it, longed for it. When his lips pressed to the nipple of her left breast she gasped. His hands moved to encircle her, pulling her closer as he opened his mouth and sucked deeply at the hard tip. Pleasure roared through her. His tongue, his lips, his teeth teased her nipple before turning to take the other. She reached up to grasp the ropes. Her knees grew weak as his hands moved down her body, the rough skin of his palms brushing the soft curves of her buttocks before he closed his hand around them, kneading her flesh with a force that was brutal yet thrilling.

When he pulled his head away, the cool air tickled her wet skin. She closed her eyes and swallowed air into her lungs. "Look at me." His command was accompanied by the feel of his fingers fisting gently in her hair. His face was inches from hers and he tugged on her hair to force her eyes to him. "Where is the amulet?"

"I don't know." She shook her head pitifully.

"Would you tell me if you knew?" His voice was hard.

"No." She told the truth. She couldn't do anything else with those eyes staring into hers.

"Then we are not done." A small voice inside her cried with delight. She didn't want him to be finished with her. She hated the realization as it crept into her brain but knew it was true. His mouth drove all other thoughts from her as it covered hers. His kiss wasn't gentle—it was harsh and demanding. He pulled back on her hair making her gasp. His tongue took the opportunity to thrust into her open mouth. The hand not forcing her to hyperextend her neck to meet his kiss moved back down to her hips and pulled her against him. Her eyes flew open in astonishment as she felt the length and girth of his erection pressing into her flesh through the leather that constrained it.

His tongue continued to assault her mouth and the air around her crackled with static electricity for a brief moment. It vanished and she found that his tongue was no longer the only part of him eager to thrust into her. His pants were now gone and she could feel the hardness of his cock pressed against her. She moaned at the feel of him as his hand pulled her tighter still and his shaft pressed against her damp cleft.

The king withdrew his tongue and his kiss. His hand released her hair and he looked into her eyes. "Where is it, little one? Tell me and I'll show you the true pleasures you've been missing in your temple."

"I don't know." She closed her eyes in frustration. "I don't know."

He said nothing. The touch of his hands on her thighs opened her eyes and she was stunned to watch him kneel before her. He ran his hands over the skin of her legs. "Hold tight to your ropes, Priestess." A wicked smile stretched his lips. She grabbed tighter to the bonds that held her as he lifted her leg up. He leaned in and rested it on his shoulder.

She watched him as he examined her in a place where no man had touched her. "No," she whispered softly. There was little left in her that truly wanted to protest. But her pride would not say the words that would welcome his touch. "Don't do this."

“You have no say in this my dear.” His long fingers gently separated the lips of her pussy and he blew a scorching breath across the swollen skin. “I am the king. I’m your captor. Your robes and vows do not protect you here.” His tongue slipped out to taste her and a cry burst from her. He licked her from clit to the opening that prepared itself for his intrusion. Which longed for him to slide inside.

His hand moved to lift her other leg. She felt her arms stretch tight in their imprisonment as he draped this second leg over his shoulder. His face now firmly between her spread thighs, her hands unable to reach him, she was exposed and helpless before the onslaught of his tongue. His fingers curled around her ass and pulled her against his mouth. Catching her clit with his lips he sucked her gently and she moaned loudly, her hips thrusting toward him of their own volition. His soft, triumphant chuckle vibrated through her. His tongue swept out and swirled around the hard nub.

She closed her thighs around his head, her heels pressing into his back as if she could draw that incredible tongue deeper, make him lick her harder. But she couldn’t. He was in control. And when he lifted his head from her pussy, his mouth wet with her juices, she saw it in his eyes. He knew it. Knew that he had won. “I’m going to fill you. I’m going to drive my cock into you while you beg for it. But first, Priestess, I’m going to give you a taste of what you’ll be begging for. You’re going to come against my mouth and it will only be the beginning.”

## Chapter Three

A door shut behind her and she jumped, just barely suppressing a cry of surprise. *Get a hold of yourself, Cara.* She pressed her hands to her face feeling her cheeks burn. Slowly she turned toward whoever it was who had sent for her. Her breath stopped and her mouth dropped open. She stared at Him. His smile fitted easily on his full lips. She opened her mouth to speak but found to her horror no words would come out. Him? He had invited her up to his suite? Why? Why would He invite her? She closed her mouth. Then opened it again to speak. Still no words came out.

His smile slipped and curved downward at one corner. "I'm sorry. This is my fault. I told her not to tell you who you were coming to see unless she had to. I had a feeling you might cut and run if you knew."

She shook her head. "It's an honor to be asked to meet you. It was an honor to be on the panel with you. But..." Her words fled her again. *You're a writer for Chrissakes, get a hold of yourself. You are supposed to be a wordsmith – you make your living with words.*

"But?" When she didn't continue, his smile broadened encouragingly. "Come on over and sit down. Let me take your bag." He moved toward her quickly, then stopped and reached hesitantly for the large canvas bag she carried. She pulled it from her shoulder and he took it from her hands. He smiled down at her almost shyly and moved away to place it on a nearby chair. "Please, won't you sit?" He backed away and sat down on the edge of the large overstuffed white sofa. "Is it Ms. Ellison, or may I call you C.J.?"

"Cara actually." She had no idea where the answer came from as it sounded in her own voice. "My agent suggested my initials so it wasn't mistaken for a girlie book."

She saw him roll his eyes, "Agents, can't live with them, can't do business without them." His gaze shifted quickly back to her and he suddenly seemed to be examining

her face intently. "Cara." He rolled the word off his tongue as if he were tasting it. "It's Italian but you don't look Italian."

"I'm not."

"It means expensive." He grinned at her. "Did you know?"

"No." She looked up at him, puzzled. "I thought it meant darling or something like that."

"No. It's often used that way." His eyes seemed to almost sparkle with mischief. "But it can also mean expensive, like a fine bottle of wine. Something to be treated gently, reverently." He paused and she felt his gaze move over her, "Something to be savored." He patted the seat next to him. "I promise I don't bite." The wicked grin on his face spoke the words his lips didn't. *Unless you want me to.*

As she walked toward him, she tried not to notice him. Well not so much not notice him as not notice how he looked. The white shirt had been traded for a black one and the heat rising in her face betrayed the fact that she noticed he hadn't buttoned it. It was tucked in and only the first button or two above his waistband was closed. A healthy expanse of golden skin, nicely detailed pectoral muscles and a hint of the washboard abs he was famous for were visible. He must have followed her eyes because he began to apologize.

"I'm sorry—it was hot in the ballroom earlier and so I changed shirts and..." She watched the side of his face as he bent his head forward and started fastening a few more of the buttons. *He's blushing!* She realized in amazement. His face was filling with color. She further realized he was stammering a bit. She had embarrassed him. *Great, just great. He caught you looking at his chest now he thinks you're as big a freak as some of those women out there holding signs offering to have his baby.* Yet again he had proven himself right—things could get worse.

His hands stilled and he turned his head to look at her. It was still bent and his dark hair was falling in his face. He smiled as if testing to see if she would smile back. She did. The smile widened and his head rose. "Speaking of hot, it suddenly seems a bit

warm in here too. Can I get you something cool?" He stood and moved toward the wet bar at one end of the room. "I did a stint as a bartender, believe it or not. I can make you anything you like." The mischievous grin swept up over his face lighting up his eyes.

"Really," she drew the word out to show her mock skepticism. She was quite certain almost anything he wanted to make her she was definitely going to like and like a lot. "Anything I'd like?"

"Yes ma'am, anything you like." His voice had dropped slightly and his eyes were no longer smiling. The temperature in the room seemed to shoot up several degrees. Or was it just the heat he seemed to be very adept in stirring inside her?

"White wine is fine." She turned her head away from him. *Breathe. For God's sake don't forget to breathe.* One thing was certain—she still had no idea why she was here. The look and the innuendo. No, those were just games he played, tools of the trade, she told herself. He was an actor. His life was about convincing you to like him, to feel comfortable and intimate with him. That he could do it so easily was what made him so good. That he was so damned good at it was what had him infiltrating the dreams of a good number of hetero and bisexual women in this world.

He returned to where she sat. She took the glass by its thin stem without looking up at him. Instead she looked at the long fingers that held the bowl of the glass, cupping it. Fingers that slid along its surface as she took hold, fingertips dragging through the already building condensation as if they didn't want to surrender it to her. Her heart rate had jumped and he had said nothing to her, done nothing to her. Again she began to regret her choice of undergarments. The thin lacy bra she'd chosen that morning was definitely making things a lot worse. She didn't dare look down. Knowing her own body was betraying her growing arousal was bad enough. She didn't want to know just how obvious certain things were at the moment.

He didn't sit immediately but set his own glass—scotch of some sort she guessed—down on the end table. Maybe she should have opted for something harder than white wine. Perhaps the burn of whiskey would have settled her nerves. *Or come right back up,*



she thought ruefully. That was one indignity she definitely didn't need. He excused himself and went through a side door. He returned before she even had a moment to register his absence. He carried something in his hand. It was a book. It was her book.

He sat down next to her and lifted his glass. He took a swallow of the contents then leaned back. "I asked you up here because I wanted to ask you to sign your book for me."

"You've really read my book?" The words and the accompanying incredulity landed between them with an almost audible thud.

He frowned. "Yes. Didn't my assistant tell you that you were being asked up to sign your book?"

"Yes but..."

"But you didn't figure someone like *me* had read it."

"No. I never dreamed someone like you would have read it," she admitted. She was pulling a large sip from her own glass when he stood up and walked away toward the windows.

"I see. You're surprised that someone like me would even attempt to read such a work. I might muddle through a script all right but real books are something else."

She stared at him in shock. "I didn't say that. That's not what I meant."

"Right." He turned to face her, the orange rays of the sun backlighting him, a golden corona forming about him. His face was blank, a calm practiced look of boredom but his eyes seemed to be alight with something more. His voice, when he spoke again, betrayed the bitter edge of anger. "It's fine. I've heard it before. Actors are just parrots, right? They look pretty and showy and repeat whatever lines they are taught but understanding those lines is beyond them. We're just a bunch of ridiculous boys and plasticized bimbos who drink too much, party too much and make way too much money for standing around playing pretend like a bunch of preschoolers. Look, I'm sorry I got you out of your reception."

"Wait a minute," she stood up. "That isn't what I meant and I certainly never said those things. It seems to me that if anyone is jumping to stereotypes here, it's you. I'm a writer so I must be self-important and egotistical? I must be absolutely certain that every word that falls from my pen is pure genius? Someone's ego is involved here but I don't think it's mine."

He just looked at her, his brow creasing, slight confusion etched on his face. The hurt was still in those dark eyes and it was as if he wasn't entirely sure he was really hearing the words she was saying.

"Look, when I said I didn't expect someone like you to have read my book I meant I didn't expect it would even be noticed by someone like you. It's an obscure piece of drivel by an unknown author who only got invited today because she's a local girl. Hell, if I hadn't been a volunteer for this convention for the last few years, no one here would have given me the time of day." She wanted him to believe her. Wanted it badly. For some reason it mattered a great deal that he believe she hadn't been demeaning his intelligence. "I can't believe any of those people today actually took time out of their lives to read my book, let alone someone like you who has people pulling him in a hundred directions every minute of the day."

He pursed his lips and his head dropped. Silence filled the room for a long moment as he stared down at the floor. "I'm sorry," he whispered. "I'm a bit raw from that confrontation downstairs. You might be surprised how often I get that. Not just what that guy said but the whole thing. I was a marketing tool today. A new and improved product. Bright and shiny, tell your friends. I was being used to sell this conference, to sell the books of every person on that panel. When you first start out it's sort of cool. 'Look at me and the power my face has.' But after a while it gets old." He lifted wary eyes to hers. "I'm sorry. I made assumptions that were incorrect."

She simply nodded. The truth in what he was saying was overwhelming. He was right. Every person there today had treated him like the leggy, breasty bimbo who points to the new model of car and says, "Pretty." Her included. All she had seen was

Him. Her first thoughts, if she were honest with herself, had been about the exposure and the attendance this panel was likely to get. Okay, not really. That was her second thought. Her first thought had been that of a giggling fourteen-year-old who was just told she was going to meet her idol. The great movie star whose presence seemed to turn something inside her to jelly. No, not jelly, lava. Red-hot, cascading, chocolate-flavored, lava. Sudden thoughts of the possible uses for warm liquid chocolate filled her mind along with the image of herself lapping up said chocolate. Her face, and everything else, grew even warmer.

He stepped toward her. "The truth is I asked you up here for two reasons. One, because I did read your book and I liked it. I was thrilled when I learned today that you'd be on the panel. I hoped at some point during this conference you might sign it and maybe we could talk about it. I decided to ask you up here to do just that because of what you said down there. Not that you took my side but that you called the guy out for his hypocrisy." He let a slow grin slide over his lips, "That and the fact that those were some of the most original metaphors for sex I'd ever seen. Not to mention the accompanying illustration."

She hadn't believed it possible but she flushed even more and he lowered his head. He looked down and then lifted his eyes to hers. The move gave his face a sweet, naughty-little-boy expression that stirred something inside her. "What do you say? Now that we've already had our first fight, do you think we could sit down and talk about your book?"

She sat next to him and answered the rapid fire questions he shot at her about the book. Why did she decide to choose that ending for her character when there had been a happier one available? Were the "bad guys" a metaphor for the corrupt political systems of the world's major powers? Were the children a metaphor for the third world—the ignored, the hungry who were kept ignorant so they couldn't know they had the numbers to rise against those in power? He had a sharp mind and a keen eye

for literature. The references and comparisons that slid off his tongue revealed him as a long-standing fan of the genre.

Time flew past. She wasn't sure when it happened but at some point she forgot she was talking to Him and started talking to him. He seemed relaxed and yet animated. One foot was up on the coffee table and his forearm rested on the raised knee. They had exhausted her book for conversation. They had talked about his upcoming projects and the signing she had two days from now in L.A. Professional chatter gone, he was telling her about life in the neighborhood he grew up in. Outside the windows the sun had surrendered its last ray of orange and the stars were starting to blink brightly.

His head rested on the back of the couch. He was turned, sitting up on one hip so that he faced her. Her shoes were lying under the table and she had turned and was sitting with both legs tucked under her, thankful for the long skirt she had chosen to wear. The conversation lulled momentarily and amazingly it was a comfortable silence. Something about being with him was at the same time exciting and peaceful. He looked up at the ceiling. "It's been a long time since I've had a conversation with someone who didn't want something from me."

"I don't want anything from you," she reassured him.

He gave her a smile that radiated a boyish gentleness. "I know you don't. You'll learn what it's like—you'll see. You're too good not to." He paused and looked out at the windows before turning his head back to meet her eyes. His were suddenly dark and guarded. He reached out and picked up her hand where it lay between them. He smoothed his fingers over the back of her hand and turned it over and examined the lines.

"Are you a palmist too?" Her lips curled sweetly.

"No." His voice was soft, low and soft. "But I'm just coming to realize that I can't say the same."

She shook her head. "I don't understand. The same as what?" Her heart had started to flutter like a frightened butterfly. Her mind was trying to wrap itself around the message her body was sending her. The message his body was sending her.

He took a long time to answer her question. His fingers traced the lines in her hand, trailed over her wrist and up the soft white skin of her inner arm sending a shudder through her she couldn't have concealed if she'd had the forethought to try. "That I don't want anything from you." Again his head stayed tilted down but his eyes moved up to look at her through the curtain of dark hair that hung down over his brow. "I can't say that."

Her breath caught in her throat. The long, graceful fingers were moving over the skin of her hand and arm. "I didn't..." he broke off and lifted her hand to his face, pressing it against the tantalizing roughness of his cheek. "I swear I didn't intend this when I invited you. I didn't plan this."

"I know," the words fell from her lips even as her mind formed them. And she did know. He had not orchestrated some seduction scene and for some reason that made the entire situation that much more enticing. A rueful smile crossed her lips. "I can't believe you would entertain such a thought. Then or now."

His head snapped up sharply and he searched her face. "You really don't see it, do you?"

"See what?"

"You really don't see it?" his voice was filled with wonder and he sat up, turning fully to look at her while keeping her hand folded in his. The hand that held hers was square-palmed with long tapering fingers, fingers that despite their manicured state were not in the least feminine. "What you said about your book, what you're saying now, you really don't see that you are quite amazing."

She shook her head and laughed nervously. "I think those drinks went to your head. That or you're thinking of someone else." *Please don't let him be thinking about someone else*, her mind begged. The hunger she was reading in his eyes wasn't one she

was used to seeing but even with her limited experience there wasn't much chance of mistaking it.

He reached up his free hand and pressed it to her cheek. "You're a brilliant writer. The world is taking notice of you and will continue to take notice. The day will come when you won't have time for conferences like this, won't have time to indulge fans like me with long conversations." She tried to shake her head but he pressed his hand more firmly to her face. "You're beautiful. One day you will have to see how beautiful you are." His fingers stroked down her cheek. Her skin tingled where his touch went.

He leaned in and kissed her softly. Her body seemed to freeze. An errant thought flitted through her head, screaming at her that *He* was kissing her. But just as quickly it was batted away by the realization that it was he who was kissing her. Just him. His lips moved over hers gently, sweetly, almost chastely. His hand cupped her jaw and his thumb stroked her face.

He broke the kiss and pulled back slightly. "I won't play any games with you," he almost whispered the words. "I don't know what this is or where it will lead but, Cara, I won't lie or tell you what you want to hear unless it's the truth." She nodded and lifted her hand to touch his face.

"I know," she whispered.

"I don't want this to be just one night. I don't want this to be a matter of bragging rights for either of us," he said quietly and she could hear the bitterness in his voice. "I hope you don't either but I know that things can be unpredictable. Next week I could end up being just that actor you met." His hand covered hers where it caressed the line of his jaw. He brought her fingertips up to his lips and kissed them. "But right now, the possibility of disappointment pales in comparison with the chance to be with you, to hold you."

She frowned at him for a moment. Did he really think she was here for "bragging rights"? Then she remembered the vulnerability she'd seen earlier when he spoke about people's attitudes toward him. No doubt he had plenty of experience with people who

wanted to be with Him and not with the man he was. "Do you really think I'm still sitting here because of what you do for a living?"

He shook his head slowly. "Why is it that when you look at me I know you are seeing me?" He smiled wryly at her. "Just me."

"Because I am. Because you chose to show yourself to me." She leaned in and pressed her lips to his. He kissed her back, again gently, again softly.

He slid his kiss to her cheek and then up to her temple. He pushed her hair aside and brushed his lips against her skin. He followed her jaw down and reaching the curve at the base of her ear flicked out his tongue to stroke her earlobe. Her breath rushed into her lungs in a sudden gasp. His soft lips moved to her neck and he kissed her, nipping gently at the tight flesh. If her body hadn't been shouting out its readiness for him before that, the tender feel of his lips on her skin would have set it screaming.

He rose up on one knee and tilted her head back. He kissed her again, his tongue moving teasingly over her parted lips. As he pulled away from her mouth, she lifted her head trying to maintain contact. Slowly he eased her back until she was resting against the arm of the sofa. He moved over her, urging her knees apart to rest against her. Slowly, looking deeply into her eyes as he lowered his head, he began to kiss her again. She had never known anyone who could produce such an intense response from just a simple kiss. The kiss did not stay simple. He parted his lips and pulled her lower one into his mouth. He traced its outline with his tongue and sucked it lightly. His sharp teeth closed around it and pressed into its softness, teasing and taunting her.

He lifted his head and whispered her name. "Ah, Cara, so beautiful. Your mouth, your eyes, your skin. So beautiful, sweetheart."

She never would have believed that someone calling her that would have sounded so wonderful. But when it came from his lips it was laced with a sense of awe as if he spoke tenderly the name of a revered deity. It made the part of her that had been holding back, afraid and judging, melt completely. Her arms were wrapped around his chest, smoothing over his shoulders and feeling the muscles move beneath her touch as

he lifted his hand to rest at her waist. His mouth claimed hers again and his tongue brushed hers as she flicked teasingly at his lower lip. She opened to him immediately. The velvety warmth brushed over her teeth and boldly challenged her tongue. He moved his hand up and cupped the curve of her breast. Her nipples contracted tightly and caused a mirror flutter deep inside her. The aching between her thighs was reaching the point of being almost unbearable. His palm stroked against the hardening tip of her breast through the silk of her shirt and bra. Feeling her press against his hand and brazenly meet his probing tongue, he pressed his mouth to hers harder. His kiss became increasing urgent and demanding. After plundering the inside of her mouth, he urged her flickering tongue to follow his retreat and explore the taste of his mouth.

She moved over his lips, tasting his drink on them. Her tongue explored the smooth sharp teeth that lay inside the softness. Her hands were pulling his shirt loose from his waistband. At the same moment her tongue stroked the soft, wet skin inside his lower lip, her hands felt the warm heat of his skin against her palms. Pushing up the cloth even as she pushed her tongue into his mouth, she explored him. His moan was lost in their kiss but the tremor that passed through him when she drew her nails up his spine was undeniable and caused him to press himself tighter to her. His need was growing and the feel of it pressed into her through the layers of fabric made her push her hips up against him. His hand moved down her leg, pulled at her skirt, pushing it up until his hand rested on the skin of her thigh.

His breathing was rapid and uneven when he lifted his head to look down at her. "Not here. Not like this," he whispered. "Not like this, sweet girl."

He lifted his weight from her, and her body and mind both wanted to scream in protest. He stood over her and held out his hand. She sat up, then rose to follow as he led her through the door into the bedroom. The room was fairly impersonal and the only mark of him upon the place was the presence of two large leather bags sitting just off to the side. He let go of her hand to close the door behind them.



## **Chapter Four**

When he turned to look at her, she expected him to move to her quickly and resume the contact that they had shared. He didn't.

"Nothing has to happen here that you don't want," he said softly. He was looking up at her through those thick, dark lashes as he had done off and on through the evening. The look was shy and hesitant, uncertain. How he could be uncertain about what she wanted she didn't know. "Nothing you don't want," he repeated.

"I know," she said softly. He moved away from the door and toward the bed.

"Would you believe I'm nervous?" He tried to smile but it faltered.

"Yes," she whispered and moved to stand before him. He lifted his hand to her face and lowered his head to kiss her. She accepted the kiss but did not deepen it. He pulled back and seemed to search her eyes. "Are you in doubt about what I want?" she asked softly, taking his hand in hers.

He managed to both shake and nod his head at the same time. She smiled. "Perhaps I should clear this up for you then." She reached into her pocket and pulled out the "lollipop" she'd hidden there earlier. His eyes widened for moment before his smile broadened. She kept hold of his hand as she reached over and laid the condom on the nightstand beside the bed.

She moved in close, her body not quite touching his. She lifted her head and pressed her lips to his neck. He wrapped his arms around her waist and tried to turn his head into the kiss. She backed away. Reaching around behind her she took his hands and pulled them from her. "Patience," she murmured against the skin at the base of his throat.

Her lips brushed the skin of his neck as she ran her fingers down the line of buttons on his shirt. She opened her lips and pressed her mouth to his throat. Carefully she

unbuttoned each button, sucking, licking and nipping at his flesh as she moved down the center of his chest. The last button unfastened, her lips were toying with the soft skin just above his waistband. She straightened and pressed her palms to his abdomen. He was no young boy but the camera hadn't lied. His body was a perfectly sculpted specimen. Age had brought a certain softening to his face but his body was glorious under her hands. It made sense. His body was his business.

She moved her hands up over his abs and over the center of his chest. Reaching his shoulders she slipped her hands under the shirt and slid it from him, tugging at first one open cuff then the other until the black cloth fell to the floor at his feet. Her hands smoothed over his chest, feeling the muscles that lay under the skin. Palms brushed his nipples and he twitched. His eyes closed and his chin lifted as her fingers toyed with the hard flesh. His breathing and the repeatedly stifled movements as if he would wrap her in his embrace told her he was fighting hard to comply with her game. Her lips began to explore the outline of his pectorals, her tongue flickering over the skin. Her fingertips brushed tormentingly down his sides to trace the circumference of his waistband. His mouth parted in a gasp as her lips passed over his hard male nipples and her tongue flickered out, tasting them.

He couldn't hold back and reached to pull her to him but she slipped away and stood behind him. She pressed herself against his back and began to trail her fingers down over the skin. Her tongue and lips teased their way down his spine. She knelt behind him and helped him remove each shoe and sock. She rose and moved to stand before him. Smiling softly she unbuttoned her own blouse carefully. He seemed to understand the game but his own desire was telling on him as he stood there, hands clenching into fists, eyes blazing with hunger as she removed her shirt.

A wave of self consciousness swept over her. Her body was far from the ideal. What would he think when he saw her uncovered, exposed? She heard his silky voice whisper her name. She looked up at him and he was smiling tenderly at her. "Beautiful, sweet girl. You are so beautiful." She straightened her shoulders and reached behind

her. She slipped the hooks free and the straps of the bra over her shoulders. It dropped softly to the ground. He drew in a sharp breath and his tongue passed over his lips as he looked at her. She untied the waist of the skirt and let it fall to the floor. She started to move toward him when he held up his hand. "Everything, sweetheart, everything."

Smiling shyly she slid the last piece of satin and lace from her body and moved toward him. His hands rose to touch her shoulders and skimmed over her arms softly. She unfastened the button on his pants and eased them down. He stepped out of the jeans and kicked them away. Her heart was fluttering in her chest like a caged bird. He was beautiful. The body before her was the perfect fantasy that surely filled the dreams of his fans but its reality was more beautiful than that. The scent of him, the knowledge that the passion in his face was for her made him more attractive than she had ever imagined a man could be. This was no fantasy. It was better.

Her hands traced the edge of the last piece of cloth he wore. He was fully aroused and straining at the fabric. She lifted the elastic out and freed him from the confines of the briefs. Hooking his fingers in the sides impatiently, he slipped them down his hips and discarded them. She pressed herself against him and tilted her head back to accept his kiss. When it claimed her mouth it was profound and passionate. His tongue dueled with hers and his hands moved over the skin of her back to cup her curves. His fingers squeezed and kneaded the flesh making her moan as the need for him began to burn so hot she was certain she must be giving off steam.

Her hand was playing with the dark hair, brushing softly, as if by accident, against the head of his penis. He sucked in a sharp breath. She teased him, loving the soft eager moan low in his throat as she curled her fingers in the soft dark curls, letting her wrist brush the base of his hard cock. She reached lower and cupped the soft sac in her palm. Rubbing the sensitive flesh with the flat of her hand before gently squeezing it, she felt his head lower to rest against the top of hers and his breathing felt like short, labored blasts against the side of her face.

“My God, you feel good,” he whispered against her hair. His hand moved up her body to curve around her breast. He lifted it gently, feeling its weight. His thumb brushed against the nipple and she moaned, turning her face into his shoulder. He toyed with the tip, his fingers tracing circles around the areola. Thumb and forefinger came together gently squeezing the hard flesh, pinching it slightly.

His hand moved lower, brushing lightly against her stomach. The tickling didn’t make her want to squirm and pull away as such sensations usually did. Instead it made her press herself up on her toes, urging him to move lower with his touch. When his fingers brushed the nest of dark blonde curls, the moisture there spoke a truth she couldn’t have denied if she had wanted to.

She wanted him and he wanted her. She could feel the throbbing hardness and the answering wetness that stripped away all pretenses. His fingers pushed into the warm, wet folds and began to draw a lazy circle around her clit that made her cry out softly. She turned her face into his neck and began to tease the taut flesh as it stretched over the corded muscles there. Pushing deeper into her he found her opening and pressed his fingers inside. She gasped and clung to his shoulders, her knees feeling as if they would give out beneath her. The feel of his flesh against hers was almost as sexy as what his hand was doing to her. She couldn’t stop herself and actually didn’t care that she had suddenly become a complete wanton in his arms. She rubbed her breasts against his chest feeling the skin tease and stroke her nipples. She couldn’t remember ever being this turned on by a man. Especially not one she’d only just met.

His thumb tormented the hardened flesh, making her squirm with delight. He rubbed in a wickedly delicious rhythm that had her hands digging into his shoulders to remain upright. His free arm abandoned playing with her ass and wrapped around her, holding her up against him. The long, thick fingers felt like his promise to her of the length and girth that would soon stretch her wide and fill her as she’d never been before.

Unable to believe it was happening, she felt the pleasure build inside her. He was going to make her come. She was going to orgasm right there, clinging to him, rubbing her body against him like a cat in heat. Not that she really cared about anything except finding the release he was offering at that moment. Her breath seemed to abandon her—she wasn't sure her lungs were even working any longer. All she knew was the frantic pounding of her heart and the incredible pleasure that was coming from his movements. He lowered his head and pressed his lips to her neck. "That's it, sweet girl. Let it come."

And it did. She buried her cry in his neck as her body seemed to turn to liquid and flood out around her. The release of the tension at the center of her body exploded outward and she felt as if she herself had disintegrated into a million pieces. Pieces that slowly floated back together. Her arms hung limply over his shoulders as he held her against that glorious body, whispering to her—telling her how beautiful she was and how sexy he found her.

When she could again stand, he stepped back slightly and pulled her after him to the bed. He sat down but before he could slide back and pull her with him, she dropped to her knees before him. His breath came out as a shudder. "You don't have to..." He was stopped in whatever he would have said when her hand closed firmly over the shaft of his cock. She lowered her cheek to rest against the rounded head and brushed it with her lips. Men were beautiful. She'd always found them to be astonishing works of art. But this man before her—the very sight of his erection made her mouth water. Her tongue darted out and tasted the moisture that rose from the tip. With her tongue and with her lips she teased him. He leaned back on his elbows and his breathing grew even more audible.

His hips thrust up toward her involuntarily—he wanted to be inside her mouth. She smiled against his skin and drank in the musky scent of him. She let her tongue stroke the inside of his thigh, tasting the sweet salty skin. His moan was soft and it sent a shiver through her. Instead of giving him what he obviously wanted she drew out the

torment. Her hands cupped him and she kissed the base of his cock. Her tongue began to draw lazy shapes over the tender sac of flesh. Sucking softly, licking him relentlessly, she continued her teasing until the soft moans became pleas for mercy.

She lifted her head and brushed her tongue up the length of him. Her tongue swept up the underside of his cock. He'd leaned back now and his eyes were closed. She loved the look of pure pleasure that filled his face. Returning her attention to the throbbing member she held cradled in her hands, she smoothed her lips over the head, letting her tongue flicker out and caress him until he groaned loudly. Had she ever enjoyed the taste of a man as much as she loved the taste of him? Wanting him to feel him in her mouth, she let her lips slide over him, pulling him into her as her fingers closing tightly at the base of his penis to help prolong the teasing. She built a rhythm with her movements, her hand mimicking her lips, trailing along in their wake. He whispered her name with an agonized voice, thick and filled with his need. She continued to tease him, loving the feel of his velvety flesh against her tongue and sliding him into her as far as she could take him. Never once did he try to push her farther. Never once did the hands that were twisted in her hair try to force her to go deeper.

Suddenly he placed his hands on either side of her face. "Stop," his voice was hoarse and harsh, "stop or both of us are going to be disappointed." He leaned down to kiss her. "You are fucking unbelievable, woman."

She smiled up at him and rose to her feet. He held her hand for a moment looking up at her while he tried to control his breathing. Sliding back on the bed he pulled her with him. She slid up beside him and lowered her mouth to his. She kissed him even as he had kissed her earlier. Softly and gently, lips slightly parted but closed. His hand moved from where it had framed her face to her shoulder and pressed her back on the bed.

He was beyond the point of play, "I'm going to please you, darling. I'm going to please us both."

He lowered his mouth to her breast and his tongue traced circles around her nipple. He pulled it into his mouth and sucked at her hungrily. A moan came from her as his touch sent a flame of need coursing through her body. His tongue flickered across the hard skin rapidly, the movement tempting her with what would come when he moved his mouth lower. He reached across her to touch the other breast. His fingers toyed with the tip, rubbing his palm and then the rough skin of his knuckles against it. As he sucked he pulled at her. As he licked, he flicked his finger across the nipple. As he nipped at her he pinched. When he nipped at her, sucking then biting at first one breast then the other, she cried out his name, her head twisting from side to side, her knees pulling up, lifting her hips off the bed.

"That's it," she groaned deep in her throat. "Don't be gentle. Bite them." In answer he pressed his teeth harder into her flesh, her moans of pleasure growing. The tender nipples now reacted to his tongue in ways that had her crying out for him to lick her. Her hands clutched at his back and her fingers wrapped themselves in the silk of his hair.

When her hips arched again, he slipped his fingers into the wetness, as she felt her warmth enfold him, cling to him. He pressed his hand to her and rubbed against her, his tongue continuing to tease her. His lips trailed down her stomach and he moved his fingers aside to replace them with his mouth. She gasped out his name in a strangled cry as his tongue danced over her skin, tasting her. "I'm going to make you scream for me, sweet girl," he whispered. His breath was hot against her tender, moist skin. He toyed with her, licking and sucking at her, his fingers moving inside her until she was whimpering.

He moved up her body and pressed his lips to hers. She wrapped her arms around his neck and her legs around his hips pulling the kiss deeper and urging him down. Her tongue entered his mouth and he moaned. That she was tasting herself in his mouth, created a physical response in him so strong she could feel the shudder that passed

through him and the throbbing in his cock grow. She turned her head away, freeing her mouth and murmured urgently into his ear, "Inside me. I want you inside me."

He lifted himself up on his hands and met her eyes. Grinning he picked up the "lollipop" and pulled the wrapper open. Sitting back on his heels he grasped his fully erect cock and she watched as a portion of her earlier fantasy came to life. She had to bite her lip to keep from moaning out loud as his hand slid down over his erection.

Leaning back over her, he slid one hand down between them. He grasped the thick shaft and eased the head down to make contact with the warm, wet folds she offered up to him. Slowly, his jaw clenching in his effort at control, he rubbed the head against the center of her pleasure pulling forth a moan from both of them. "Please." She reached down between them and stroked him. "Please."

He guided himself to the opening of her warmth and pushed inside her. She felt herself stretch almost painfully to accommodate his size. He slid into her fully with one long slow thrust. He reached so deeply she swore she could feel him pressing behind her navel. As he moved—a tormentingly slow withdrawal followed by a deliberate unhurried push back into the slick warmth that gripped him—she twisted beneath him, tightening the wet velvet embrace with which she clung to him. As he pushed into her again and again her cries rose. Holding his weight on one hand, he slipped one hand between them and began to tease circles around the sensitive nub of flesh. "I'm going to make you come for me, sweet girl," he groaned through clenched teeth.

"Yes, please yes, let me. Tell me I can. Tell me I can," she moaned. She needed to hear him say it. Needed to hear him tell her she could. Needed to hear him command it from her. Her body clenched at him from within, releasing and clenching mindlessly with each thrust. The simple act of asking permission seemed to break his control. He pressed into her hard, pounding into her willing flesh beneath him as she cried out and lifted her hips to meet him stroke for stroke. There was no more control, no more thought, nothing more between them but the need that would be satisfied.



“Now, sweet girl,” he cried out, “do it now. Come for me now.” She responded almost instantly and the ecstasy poured over her in waves of pure release. Both lovers cried out, cries that grew as their climaxes crescendoed into full-throated screams.

## **Chapter Five**

She looked down at him in the early morning light. His face was peaceful as he slept, head resting the rumpled white pillow. She finished the last button on her shirt and borrowed the hairbrush he had left sitting on the bathroom counter. Leaning down she kissed his cheek. His eyes fluttered open and she looked down at him. "Beautiful," he muttered sleepily, "so beautiful." She pressed a kiss to his lips. He slipped one hand up to cradle the back of her head. "Is it morning already?"

"Yes," she whispered softly.

His eyes filled with regret she knew was mirrored in her own. "You have to go." It was a statement, not a question.

"Yes." She traced the line of his nose down to his chin. "I have a breakfast panel to do and then I'm catching my flight out."

"And mine doesn't leave 'til tonight."

Her hand brushed his cheek. "Go back to sleep. It's okay."

She kissed him again. He muttered something she didn't understand. She watched as he shifted and drifted back to sleep, feeling a sadness creep in. He'd said nothing of seeing her again. Still, she couldn't blame him or feel angry. What they'd shared—yes she wanted more—but for the first time someone had truly made her feel beautiful. For the first time someone had made her feel comfortable enough in her own skin to let her strip away the inhibitions and just experience something she never thought she would. She certainly couldn't be upset at him for that. He'd made sure she wrote down her number for him last night before they ended up naked, saying he didn't want to lose touch with her. If he called while she was in LA, then wonderful. If he didn't, she'd hate it but she wouldn't hate herself for the choices she'd made.

Stepping out of the bedroom she located her bag and lifted it to her shoulder. Turning she caught sight of the empty glasses and the book on the coffee table. She never had gotten around to signing it. She pulled the pen from her bag and opened the book.

*Thank you for seeing me.*

\* \* \* \* \*

The breakfast had been fun, or would have been if she had been able to stop thinking about him long enough to enjoy it. Her own room in the hotel had seemed rather luxurious when she first checked in but now seemed remarkably shabby after spending the evening in his suite. *Maybe someday*, she thought. Maybe someday she could command something like that. She smiled as she fit the last of her things into her carryon.

*Writers don't get rich*, her agent had warned. *It takes a long time and a lot of hard work for most to even be able to give up their day jobs.*

So maybe not.

The knock on the door announced one of the young men who worked for the convention committee. Just a couple of years ago, this could have been her. "I'm here to help with your bags ma'am," his voice almost squeaked.

She gave him the larger bag and shouldered her purse and the black leather bag that held her laptop. The convention was still in full swing and would be for another day. She did regret missing some of the fun that came with the event. The ride down in the elevator marked an increase in the sinking disappointment in her chest. He would be up by now and bustling through his day. She absently patted her pocket and felt the hardness that was her cell phone. Despite what she had promised herself, she couldn't lie about longing for her phone to ring and to hear his voice on the other end.

The young man led her to the entrance and walked up to a long black limousine that was parked, waiting. She tried to stop him when he handed her bag off to the

uniformed driver. "Wait," she called to the chauffeur's retreating back. "There's been a mistake." The man ignored her and placed her bag in the trunk of the car. He moved back around to the door. She frowned at him and repeated, "I said there's been a mistake. This isn't my car. I'm taking a taxi."

The driver looked at her puzzled and then turned to the young man who was standing there with a worried expression. "I told you this car was waiting for Ms. Ellison. Ms. C.J. Ellison."

"This is Ms. Ellison," the volunteer insisted.

Cara sighed. "I'm C.J. Ellison but I didn't send for a limo."

The driver shrugged. "Ma'am, all I can say is that I was told I was supposed to pick up the writer C.J. Ellison and transport her to the airport." He reached down and opened the door. Between the shade of the canopied entrance and the darkly tinted windows, Cara could see nothing in the interior of the vehicle.

"As long as we're clear I'm not paying for this," she surrendered.

"No ma'am," the driver grinned. "It's all been taken care of."

She wondered for a moment. Would he have done this for her? A sort of parting gift. She wasn't sure if she liked the idea or not but shook it off. Handing the driver her remaining bag she stepped into the limousine and halted when she noticed two very long legs stretched out between the seats. Following the black-clad legs up to two powerful thighs, a trim waist and a broad chest covered in a black t-shirt, she arrived at a familiar smiling face. His eyes were lit with a now familiar mischief. "You gonna stand there all day half in and half out? I thought we had a plane to catch."

As if the clouds had parted and allowed the sun through, she felt a warm, happy glow flood her. Scrambling in, she sat next to him. The driver placed her bag on the opposite seat and closed the door. The dark windows enclosed them, separating them from the world. For a moment they sat in silence.

"Cara." His voice sounded tight, as if he were a bit uncertain. "Did I presume too much?"

She looked down at her hands and smiled. By way of an answer she swung around in the seat and straddled his lap. His eyes widened in surprised and his smile burst out broadly across his face. "I guess not," he chuckled.

"Nope." She kissed him, pouring into her kiss all the passion that was heating up inside her body again. She shifted over his lap, centering the growing bulge in his black jeans beneath the part of her that wanted to feel that hardness deep inside her again. "You know," she said breathlessly as she pulled back from the kiss, "I've always wondered something."

"What's that?" his voice was husky and low. The scent of him, the sandalwood, the musk, the unique masculine smell that was him was rolling into her head with each breath deepening the reactions of her body.

"Can they see through those windows?" she gestured back to the dark window that separated them from the driver.

"No," his lips tickled the skin on her neck as he pressed his kiss to the pulse point behind her ear, his tongue following to probe and stroke the sensitive flesh. "No one can see in."

"Good." She smiled wickedly as she reached down between them and unbuttoned his pants. Her hand slid inside and caressed the heavy hardness that was growing steadily against her palm. "You know," she said, freeing him from the confines of the denim and lifting up to allow him pull her skirt from under her, "with traffic in this town, we have quite a long ride ahead of us."

He growled low in his throat, "God, woman, I hope so."

## **About the Author**

Elyssa Edwards' life has sometimes felt more like fiction than reality. She is currently living her own happily-ever-after with her darling one, whom she calls Precious, mostly because it causes a good deal of gnashing of teeth.

Elyssa welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

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