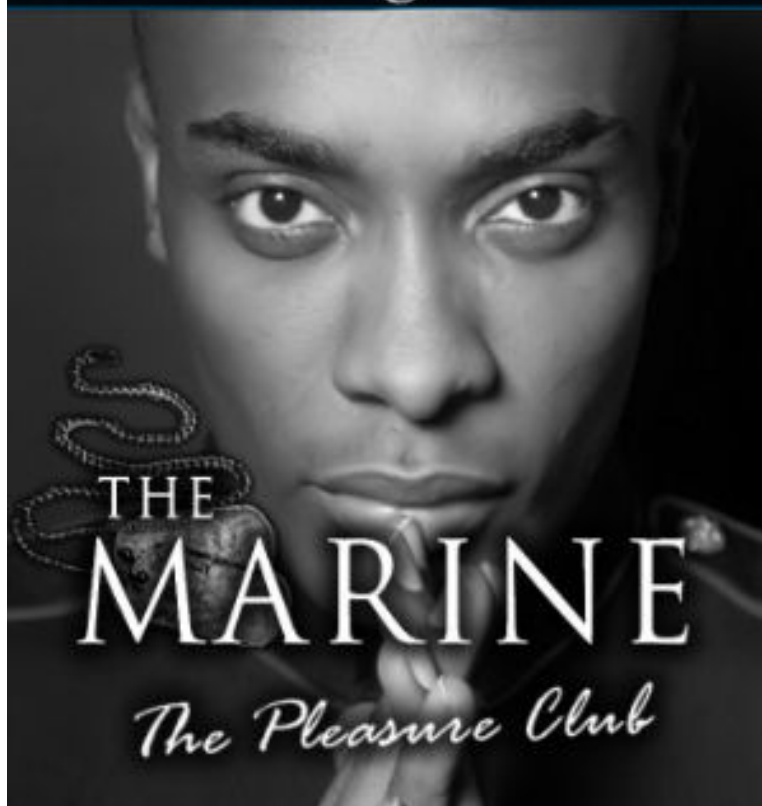


COBBLESTONE PRESS PRESENTS



WICKED

Anna Leigh Keaton



THE
MARINE

The Pleasure Club

The Pleasure Club:

THE MARINE

By

Anna Leigh Keaton

The Marine by Anna Leigh Keaton

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, organizations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

The Marine

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ISBN: 978-1-60088-421-4

Cover Artist: Sable Grey

Editor: Stephanie Parent

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Cobblestone Press, LLC

www.cobblestone-press.com

Dedication

For my nephew and his loving fiancée.
Forever in our hearts.

Cpl. Jason A. Karella, USMC
KIA - Farah Province, Afghanistan Oct. 8, 2008

Welcome to The Pleasure Club

Dear Ms. Jax,

We're pleased to welcome you to The Pleasure Club.

As you have already signed and returned the contract and filled out all the necessary forms to ensure you receive your every wish, we will be in touch with you shortly with the details of your first Pleasure Night. Your Wish List and Pleasure Forms have been turned over to our staff of highly trained Pleasure Guardians, and they are hard at work finding your perfect match.

We will endeavor to meet your personal fantasy.

When you are contacted again, you will be given a location where your Pleasure Night will begin, and you will also be given a safe word to use should you at any time become uncomfortable. There is no shame in changing your mind. We're here for your pleasure, and should your safe word be used, your match for the evening will cease all activity, and the game will be put on hold until a mutual agreement between you and your Pleasure Master can be reached.

Once again, welcome to The Pleasure Club.

Please feel free to contact the office at any time should you have any questions.

Yours truly,

The Pleasure Club Management

The Marine by Anna Leigh Keaton

* * * * *

Ms. Jax,

*Your Pleasure Night will begin Saturday the 14th, 7:00
PM at the Waldport Astoria Hotel in the restaurant.
Your safe word is Blackout.*

*Sincerely,
The Pleasure Guardians*

* * * * *

In the back corner of the Waldport Astoria restaurant, Sherilyn Jax sat at a small, round table. Her nerves were shot as she alternately stared at the door, waiting for her Pleasure Master, and gazed out the window at the dusky evening ocean beyond the floor-to-ceiling windows.

Would tonight be all she expected? All she needed? Dear God, she hoped so. After five years, it was time to move on. To say goodbye. She just didn't know if this was the way to achieve her objective.

She sipped her pale ale then examined the dark plum smudge of lipstick on the glass. The last five years hadn't been good to her. Her gaze slid from the glass to her hand. The fine lines of age on the back of her knuckles, deep on her pale skin.

A tear slipped from one eye, but she quickly swiped it away. For the first time in half a decade, her left hand was naked. Her ring finger too light without the thick, diamond-encrusted band.

"Sherilyn."

The deep voice snapped her out of her thoughts, and she jerked her head back to look up at the man from which her name had come. Her breath caught in her throat, and more tears threatened to spill.

Oh, God. "William," she said on a soft sigh. This man looked so much like him that from just a glance, she could honestly mistake her Pleasure Master for her long-lost lover.

A smile tilted up the man's lips before he leaned down and

brushed a breezy kiss over her lips, and then he sat down across from her. "Sorry I'm late. I was in meetings all day."

She couldn't breathe. Couldn't think. Déjà vu. Surreal. He even smelled right. Drakkar Noir. His olive green T-shirt hugged every sensual bulge of his muscles, and his matching tactical pants looked just like...

"Have you ordered?"

Dumbly, she nodded.

He grinned, and his hazel eyes sparkled, just like William's always had. His teeth were perfectly straight and white, his skin as dark as hot, melted milk chocolate.

Sherilyn's mouth watered.

The waitress approached the table. "May I get you something to drink, sir?"

"Same as she's having." He nodded toward Sherilyn as he folded his hands together on the table. Big, strong hands. Her tummy fluttered, remembering what hands like those once felt like on her body.

"Your dinner will be up in just a moment." The waitress shamelessly flirted with him, but he smiled pleasantly, just the way William always did.

"How was your day?" William asked after the waitress walked off.

Sherilyn swallowed hard and let out a slow breath. She forced a smile, trying to recreate that night so long ago. It had been a sad night to some extent, but mostly it had been a joyous occasion. "Good," she answered and met those hazel eyes. God, this man looked just like William. It was easy to imagine... "Rumor has it they're going to offer a partnership to one of the associates, and I'm on the short list."

"Oh, babe! That's great." He grinned.

Though she hadn't been offered the partnership then, she'd made it two years ago.

The waitress returned with William's drink and their food. "Anything else I can get you?" she asked.

William shook his head as he spread his napkin across his lap.

"No, thank you," Sherilyn said, her voice a little rough.

"Just holler if you need something."

They ate in silence. Sherilyn picked at her steak and downed her beer. She caught the waitress and ordered a second. Though she hadn't had more than one drink the last time she was here with a man, she needed the liquid courage tonight. Because she knew what was to come, and as the time drew near, her nerves jangled so hard, her hands shook.

"It'll be okay," William said as he set his knife and fork down.

She looked up and met his eyes. "Could we just go, please?"

He nodded. "Sure, babe." He stood and extended his hand, those long fingers looking so beautiful.

Slowly, she slid her hand into his and stood. This man, this William, was taller than he should be. She had to tip her head back to look into his face. He cupped her cheek, and she closed her eyes as warmth seeped into her. It had been so very long since she'd been touched. And when she breathed in and his spicy cologne tickled her senses, she could fall into the fantasy. Needed to, in fact, for this to work.

"I know this is hard on you, Sheri girl."

Tears sprang to her eyes at the use of Will's nickname for her.

"Saying goodbye is always hard, baby. But you knew what you were getting into when we started seeing each other."

Her stomach tightened, and she nodded, his palm lightly caressing her cheek. Master Sergeant William Mastersen USMC. When the troops started heading to Iraq, she'd known he would go. He loved her, but he had a duty to his country. It was one of the many things that made her love him even more.

"Come on," he whispered and let go of her face, but tightened his grip on her hand. She opened her eyes and let him lead her out of the restaurant toward the bank of elevators across the hotel lobby.

As they stepped into the elevator, she pulled the room's key card from her purse. William wrapped his arm around her and held her snug against his side. His body was so hard, so warm. Turning into him, she wrapped her arms around his waist and held him tight, buried her face against his throat. His hand coasted up and down her back, and she closed her eyes. This... Touching, holding, comfort. Five long years. Oh, God, how was she going to survive this night?

"We're here, babe." He nudged her chin with his finger, and she had to pull back in order to walk down the hallway to their room. The same room as that night years ago. Her hand shook so hard she couldn't get the damn card into the slot. William deftly slipped it from her fingers and slid it through. The green light flashed, and he turned the knob.

She walked into the room. It wasn't the same. They'd renovated the hotel in the last few years, and the colors were all wrong. Pale peach walls instead of the beige they had been. The comforter on the king-sized bed was forest green, not maroon. A slight sense of panic took root, and she spun around to face William.

He didn't give her a chance to worry, though, because he wrapped those big hands around her waist and pulled her body against his as his mouth descended on hers.

Heat infused her body while those full lips of his sealed with hers and his tongue swept into her mouth. She gripped his shoulders, his shirt, in her fists as she clung to him. Oh, yes. At long last. Those thickly muscled arms wrapped around her, sheltering her, holding her steady as he kissed her so deep she could forget, for just a moment, that this man was a stranger. For right now, this one night, she was back in William's arms, his big, warm body pressed so intimately against hers.

His mouth left hers to trail hot little kisses along her jaw up to her ear, where his warm breath tantalized. "God, babe," he whispered a second before he took her earlobe between his teeth to nibble. "I'm going to miss you."

Those blasted tears stung her eyes, but she forced them back. She'd missed him for five years, since the last time they were in this room, the last time he held her, loved her.

He spun her and pinned her against the cool solid wood of the door, the low back on her dress little coverage against the unforgiving hardness. But it didn't matter. Nothing mattered but his breath on her skin, his teeth nibbling that spot just below her ear.

Tugging his T-shirt from his tactical pants, she ran her hands up his back, so smooth. When she dragged her nails down his flesh, he shivered and groaned, the sound vibrating from his chest to hers. It was her turn to

taste him, and she nuzzled his neck with her lips, licked his skin, and sighed at the slightly salty flavor of...man. She sucked his skin between her lips, nibbled, nipped as she went lower, until his shirt got in the way.

"Let me," he said, his voice husky and raw with lust. Her nipples hardened against the lace of her bra as he stepped back just far enough to rip his T-shirt over his head and send it sailing across the room.

"So gorgeous," she whispered as she reached out and ran her hands over his bulging pecs, down over his rippled abdomen. *So damn perfect.* And then she was back in his arms, her hands pinned against his chest as he pressed her against the door once again and attacked her mouth, sinking his tongue between her teeth. A soft moan escaped her, and she melted. Heat flared inside her, and the telltale throbbing of the pulse in her pussy let her know that she was still a woman. A desirable woman who'd been asleep for far too long.

His body, every hard inch of it, pushed her into the unyielding door, his hard-on thick and long against her belly. When he ripped his mouth from hers and buried his face against her shoulder, they both gasped for air. She ran her hands over his clean-shaved head, reveling in the smooth texture. Kissing his temple, she trailed her hands over his broad shoulders, his muscled back, down to the waistband of his pants. They had to go. She needed to taste him.

Nudging him slightly away from her, she brought her hands around to his stomach, her knuckles brushing his toned flesh as she fought with his belt and finally got it open. The metal clanked as she pushed it aside and ripped open the button. He sucked in a harsh breath and tensed as she carefully lowered his zipper over the hard ridge of his cock. Then his breath came out in a soft sigh against her neck as she reached inside and cupped his length in her palm, only the thin layer of his briefs separating her from the hard heat.

"More, babe," he muttered as he went back to nibbling on her neck, his teeth nipping tender flesh and making her tingle from the tip of her head to her core, where she throbbed and grew damp, needy.

She shoved his briefs down over his hips, and his pants fell to his ankles. All that smooth, chocolate skin revealed, she took a moment just to

admire. Then she wrapped her fingers around his cock and reveled in the difference between her pale flesh and his dark.

"Oh, yeah," he muttered against her ear. "Stroke me, babe."

She did, closing her eyes and dropping her head back against the door, giving him access to her neck and the tiny buttons running down the front of her dress. Smoothing her hand up and down his shaft, she sighed as his knuckles brushed the side of her breast as he worked the seed buttons.

He pushed her dress off her shoulders, and it fell to her elbows. She released him just long enough for it to slip down her body.

"Damn," he whispered. His big, slightly callused palms cupped her breasts. She looked down to see his hands, so dark against the jade colored bra and her milky skin. Then she raised her gaze to his. Snared. His eyes sparkled with lust, with...tenderness. He leaned into her, kissed the tip of her nose, her cheek, then whispered in her ear, "I need your mouth on me, babe. Let me feel you."

As if sucked into a time warp, she was five years younger, in a hotel room with the man she loved. She grinned and leaned into him, biting his shoulder just the way he liked.

"Ahhh, yeah," he said on a groan as his hands flexed around her breasts.

She bit him again, a little harder, and he pinched her nipples, bringing them to hard, aching points. Trailing her mouth over his flesh, she made her way down his chest to his flat, dark brown nipple. She licked it, toyed it with the tip of her tongue, sucked it between her lips and bit lightly.

William speared his hands through her hair and held her there, tight against him, so she repeated the nip/lick again and again until he shuddered and his cock jumped in her hand. Then she moved to the other nipple and loved it the same way. He fisted her hair, lightly tugging at her scalp, and the slight pain sent the lust a notch higher within her. When he thrust his hips forward in silent demand for more attention, she dropped to her knees and drew the tip of his cock into her mouth.

"Fuck, yeah," he said on a sigh as he slowly pushed her head

closer, her hair unmercifully tangled around his fingers. She wrapped her fingers around the base of his cock, gripping him tight. Then she cupped his balls and carefully, gently, rolled them in her other palm. The head of his cock was so soft. She licked it, suckled it, rolled her tongue around it. She tasted the tangy pre-cum, savored it. Breathed in his musky, manly scent. Then took him deep, relaxing her throat to take him all the way. She swallowed around that thick tip.

"Argh." He pulled her off of him. Gripping her hair in tight fists, he held her still, away from his cock, but she still gripped the base with one hand and his balls with the other.

A tiny giggle slipped out of her as she tilted her head back and looked into his face. His jaw ticked as he tried to control his need for release. That swallowing bit usually made him come. He'd surprised her that he withstood it this time.

"Dirty trick, Sheri girl. You're going to pay for that. I'm not coming until I'm buried in that sweet cunt of yours."

A dare. She grinned. She stroked his cock and squeezed his balls.

So fast she didn't even have time to yelp in surprise, he scooped her off the floor and tossed her on the bed. She landed with a bounce that made her gasp and laugh, and then he was over her, pinning her to the bed. One hand pinned her wrists above her head, and with the other, he ripped her bra, the straps snapping as they broke.

Sherilyn groaned and bucked against him, spreading her legs and rubbing her pussy against the hard length of his cock. Her lacy thong suffered the same fate as her bra when he grabbed the thin strap at her hip and jerked with a growl as he ground his hips against hers. Using her feet, she shoved his pants and briefs the rest of the way down his legs, but they snagged on his boots, which made her laugh.

"Fuck," he muttered as he rolled off of her. He sat up to loosen his laces, and she went up on her knees to help, tugging at one boot while he did the same with the other. In a matter of seconds, he was gloriously naked. She went for his cock once again, sucking him deep before he had a chance to keep her at bay.

"Babe..." he said on a groan as he flopped onto his back.

She took him deep, but not all the way this time. God, he tasted of heaven. She could gladly suck him all night and be happy.

“Get your sweet ass over here,” he muttered as he lifted her and turned her body so she straddled his face.

His strength never ceased to amaze her. She wasn’t exactly a petite little thing, but he moved her as if she weighed nothing. Then all thought fled as his fingers spread her pussy and his tongue found her clit. She squealed around his cock and ground down on his face, riding him.

His hands splayed over her ass cheeks, holding her still as he ate her, licked and nibbled all her tender flesh. She had to let go of his cock so she could breathe, pant, try to stave off the orgasm riding in to take over. She wanted this to last longer, wanted the buildup to string out more, but she couldn’t. And when he pressed one thick thumb against her anus, she came with a cry and jerked as lights and color exploded behind her eyes.

He didn’t stop there, though. He kept up the sweet torture, sucking her hardened, pulsing clit and applying just the right amount of pressure with his lips to send another tsunami of sensation pouring over her. She gripped his thighs to keep herself grounded, but it didn’t work. She came and came, one sweet orgasm after another he dragged from her, until she went limp against him, her belly pressing against his, her cheek resting against the rock-solid length of his cock.

“Sweet Jesus,” William muttered, his hot breath teasing her pussy, his fingers still toying with her. One finger was in her ass, while another two, or possibly three were buried deep in her cunt.

Sherilyn felt a little dizzy, the world slowly spinning around her, as she tried to catch her breath.

“I can feel your heartbeat,” he said as he wiggled his fingers inside her, pressing on that spot that made her tremble.

A gusty laugh came out of her. She could feel it, too, pounding through her so hard she thought she might have a heart attack. No, she wasn’t that old. Thirty-five was much too young for orgasm-induced heart failure.

As her breathing returned to normal, she nuzzled her cheek against the velvety flesh of his cock. It jumped beneath her touch, and she sighed.

She so loved the male body, always had. So different from hers. So sensitive to every touch. She rose up on her elbows and ran one fingernail from base to tip, watching it jerk, loving how his balls drew up, seemed to move of their own accord. Leaning down, she nuzzled his testicles with her nose and lips, then sucked them into her mouth.

“Ahhh, babe....”

She teased him for a bit, her touch too light to make him come. Until he went back to tormenting her with fingers and mouth. The jerk, she thought with a silent laugh as she grazed her teeth along his shaft. He pulled his fingers from her pussy and replaced them with soft strokes of his tongue. It felt good, but he knew she was beyond being able to come with those light caresses. She needed him inside of her for that. Buried deep, stroking her as only this long, thick dick could do.

A sharp slap on her right ass cheek had her jumping. Her cunt clenched, and she thought maybe she'd been wrong. “Again,” she whispered.

This time the strike was a little stronger, the sting a bit more intense. She ground her pussy against his face, and she heard him lapping up her juices.

“Oh, God...”

His other hand slipped beneath her, and as the next slap landed, he pinched her clit. She went off like a bottle rocket, coming with a scream. He flipped her around and pulled her up over him, his cock nestled into her cleft, teasing but not entering. She pressed against his shoulders, levering herself up, and looked down into his face. A sheen of perspiration made his skin glow.

He pulled her hair from behind her shoulders until it fell into a curtain around them, seeming to lock them into the tiny space, just the two of them cloaked from the outside world.

“So fucking beautiful,” he muttered as he used the end of her hair to tease her nipple. He cupped her other breast in his hand, molding it, shaping it, abrading her nipple with his callused palm.

He was the beautiful one. So strong. So... Rocking her hips, slicking his cock with her cream, she leaned down and pressed her lips to his. His

arms banded around her, pinning her to him as he took the kiss deep, let her swipe her tongue into his mouth and taste him, feel him, experience the texture of his soft tongue, his perfect teeth, the ridges of his palate.

With just a slight shift of his hips, he slid into her, hard.

She gasped and jerked from his mouth, sat up, and rocked her hips. He was so deep within her.

“Ride me, babe. Ride me hard.”

And so she did. Using his shoulders for leverage, she rose up and slammed back down on him, his balls against her ass as she ground in a hard, circular motion. Their moans of pleasure mingled, and he reached up to tweak her nipples, which made her pussy clench around him. She repeated the action again, rising up, slamming down, grinding so his cock hit all those special spots deep inside her. Heat infused her face, her fingers tingled, her toes went a little numb. His hands closed over her sides, and he lifted her, then thrust up into her. She threw her head back and cried out at the pleasure-pain of being impaled by him. He did it again, and again, and again, each time harder, deeper than the last. She thought she’d split in half from the assault. She wanted to. Needed to.

Staring into his face, she saw how hard he fought his own release. His jaw was tense, his eyes like darkened steel with flecks of green and brown. He stared her in the eye without blinking. She drowned in his gaze. She so loved this man. Loved him with all her heart. Had missed him so.

“Harder,” she whispered. “Please.” He made her hurt so good.

He sat up, sucked a nipple into his mouth, and bit down. Grabbing his head and pressing him against her chest, she cried out as her body clenched.

“More.” She bounced up and down, keeping the hard press and draw going since he couldn’t in his position.

He switched to the other breast, bit the soft flesh on the side, then nipped her nipple.

“Oh, God. Yes.” No one ever made her feel so good. The slight pain sent her higher.

William pulled back. “On your knees, babe. You want it hard?”

She nodded and pulled off of him, nearly crying out at the loss of the pressure inside of her. She turned on the bed, onto her hands and knees.

The sharp sting of another slap warmed her ass a second before he crashed into her body so hard she fell forward, her face pressed into the mattress. He grabbed her hips and pounded into her. Exquisite agony. Pleasure bordering on pain. She gripped the bedspread in her fists to keep him from pushing her off the bed with his punishing thrusts.

His fingers bit into her flesh, his balls slapped against her clit. She spread her legs wider, wanting him even deeper. She cried out each time his cock found its mark. The sound of his grunts, mixed with the *slap, slap, slap* of flesh, made her so fucking hot she wasn't sure she could stand it. "*Please!*" she cried, needing to come. Needing to feel him come inside of her, the pulse and heat of his climax.

He reached around her with one hand and pinched her clit on the next stroke. She screamed. He tugged her clit, rolled it between his fingers. She collapsed onto her stomach as her legs gave out with the force of her orgasm, her entire body going taut as every muscle she possessed tightened and hardened, and she screamed until she had no breath left.

William's shout of "*Fu-u-uk,*" seemed to echo off the walls as he collapsed over her, his big, hard body against her back, his cock pulsing within her, his arms surrounding her and grounding her. His hot breath teased the hair at the nape of her neck, and she closed her eyes, savoring the moment, wishing it could last forever.

* * * * *

It took long minutes for the two of them to bring their breathing back to normal. Sweat slickened their bodies, binding them in more ways than just William's softening cock buried inside her. Slowly, he slipped from her body and rolled to his side, wrapping his arms around her, dragging her into the shelter of his arms.

"You are one fucking hot lady, Sheri girl."

She smiled against his chest and nuzzled her nose into his resilient

flesh. "You're not so bad yourself, Sergeant."

He chuckled and ran his hand over her back, her side, her hip. "I love you," he whispered.

Her heart seized for a millisecond before it resumed its normal beat. "I love you, too, Will." Tears stung her eyes. It was time.

He let go of her for an instant as he rolled to lean over the edge of the bed. Sherilyn closed her eyes to keep the tears from falling. *Not yet. Not yet.* She had to get through this.

He came back to her, took her in his arms again, and tucked her in close to his body. "They changed my orders today," he said, his voice vibrating through her as she rested her head against his shoulder.

She slowly nodded.

"I ship out tomorrow morning."

Again, she nodded.

"They say it could be up to an eighteen-month tour. They're preparing us for the worst-case scenario. There's no more illusions that this war will be over quickly."

She swallowed the lump in her throat. "I know, you've told me that before."

He nudged her chin with the edge of his hand, and she tilted her head so she could look into his face. "You are everything to me, babe. Everything I ever dreamed of finding in a woman. Gentle, warm, loving..." His lips twisted into a grin. "And wicked as hell in the sack."

She tried to smile, but couldn't. Her heart hurt. Her soul.

"I'm going to miss you like crazy."

"I'll miss you, too..."

He brought one arm between them, and in it sat a small black velvet box.

"It'll help if I know I have you to come home to." He thumbed open the lid of the box. "Say you'll wait for me. Tell me that when I come home, you'll marry me. We'll start the family we've talked about."

Sherilyn closed her eyes, but she couldn't stop the tears. This was where the change in her past needed to take place. Her answer had to be different than it had been five years ago. Slowly, she opened her eyes.

Tears spilled down her cheeks. She opened her mouth, but no sound came out.

“It’s okay,” William whispered. “Say what you need to say.”

She opened her mouth again, and this time a hoarse, “I can’t,” came out.

This William nodded. “Okay, babe. Can you tell me why?”

“You might not come back,” she said, her throat so tight it hurt to speak. “You might die over there, and I can’t...” She bit her bottom lip and fought valiantly against the pain. “I can’t promise forever if I...”

“Say it, babe,” he urged. “Tell me the truth in your heart.”

“I love you so much, but how can I promise forever when there might not be a forever?”

He wrapped his arms around her, and she heard the ring box snap shut. She let the tears go then and sobbed against his chest. He held her tight, rocking her, soothing her with the warm stroke of his hand over her hair, her shoulder.

“I understand,” he whispered in her ear. “It’s okay. I love you. I always will. If something happens to me, you have to move on. Live again. Love again. There’s no telling what will happen in the next eighteen months. I understand. Keep me in your heart, but love again. Please. For me.”

She held onto him and cried as she hadn’t done since she got word he’d been killed. Deep, wrenching sobs torn from the deepest recesses of her soul.

He kissed her cheek, her temple, nuzzled her with tender lips. “Let go, babe. Let me go. Open your heart and free yourself from the guilt.”

“It hurts!” she cried against his shoulder.

“I know, babe. I know... Let it out. Let it all out and let it go.”

The sobs eased to hiccups, which lessened into sniffles. Exhaustion slammed into her, and she couldn’t open her eyes. William’s hand was so gentle as he glided it over her bare skin. Comforting, warm, tender. Not William. Another man. William was gone. Gone forever. In her heart, but not part of her future. Only her past. A good part of her past, one she’d cherish. She couldn’t cling to it anymore. Had to let go. Love him, forever

love, but in a different way. Release him from her soul, but keep him in her heart. Just a little piece. A sweet little reminder of the man she'd once loved to distraction. Move on... Fall in love again... Have a family...

"I want a family," she murmured, half asleep.

"I know, Sherilyn. And you'll have one." It wasn't William's voice. William was gone. She'd never hear him again.

"Thank you," she said on a soft sigh as sleep overcame her.

* * * * *

Sherilyn stretched and yawned as she came out of a deep, dreamless sleep. She felt more relaxed than she had in...forever. Muted sunlight came in through the sheer curtains covering the window over the small table. A covered chafing dish sat upon the table, and she inhaled the strong aroma of fresh coffee and bacon.

Last night came back to her in a rush, and for a moment, she held her breath, waiting for the pain to return. But it didn't. For the first time in five years, she felt as if she could draw a deep, cleansing breath. A sense of freedom settled over her. A thought that everything would finally be all right.

Swinging her legs over the edge of the bed, she pushed the covers away and looked down at her body. She had love bites on her breasts. Her nipples were a bit tender when she touched them. She was a little stiff between the legs.

A smile curled her lips as she dropped her head back and sighed. She felt...good.

She stood up, went to the table beneath the window, and poured herself a cup of steaming coffee from the insulated carafe. As she lifted it to take a sip, she pushed aside the curtain and stared down on the beach below, the sparkling blue ocean, the foamy white waves.

Today, she'd go to the beach, lounge on the warm sand, read a book. *Relax*. Something she hadn't done in longer than she could remember.

She sat down in one of the two chairs by the table and lifted the lid

The Marine by Anna Leigh Keaton

of the chafing dish. Eggs, bacon, hash browns. Still steaming hot. She wondered how long it had been since Will—her Pleasure Master—had left.

She set aside her coffee mug and picked up the glass of orange juice. A business card fluttered into her lap from the bottom of the glass.

Lifting it, she examined it. One side was blank. She turned it over. Something was scratched out with a black pen, then handwritten, it said:

*He was a very lucky man.
Be happy. He'd want that for you.*

*Semper Fi
The Pleasure Club*

So, her Pleasure Master had been a real Marine. Somehow, that made it even more touching that he'd been so wonderful. He truly understood what she dealt with.

Sherilyn laid the card next to her plate and picked up her fork from the tray. *Thank you, Pleasure Club. Thank you for helping set me free and find my way.* With a smile on her lips, she dug into her breakfast. Her future didn't seem so dark now. She could move on. She *would* move on.

The End

Author Bio

Anna Leigh has been reading and penning romances for as long as she can remember. After she met and married her very own real-life hero, romance took on a whole new meaning. She now knows married life can sizzle and romance can be erotic—even in her own home.

You can reach her at www.annaleighkeaton.com or check out her mainstream romance titles at www.leannekarella.com.