

EXOTIKA

ELLORA'S CAVE

UNCHARTED LANDS

CHRISTINE
MCKAY

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Uncharted Lands

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UNCHARTED LANDS

Christine McKay

Chapter One

Marie was drunk. Yep, no fancy phrase could disguise it. She was staggering, word-slurring, sloppy drunk. In her defense, her designated dinner date had been all wrong for her. How could someone so good-looking and impeccably well-dressed be so flawed? She sighed. Damn those dessert drinks, especially those fishbowl-sized margaritas. The only good part of the evening was when the clock struck twelve and Mr. Narcissist retreated to his cabin, leaving her to salvage her evening alone. As for her pride, it was in tatters.

What did a woman have to do to get laid? She hadn't had sex in such a long time she was beginning to consider herself a virgin. She'd tried personal ads, online dating sites and speed dating. Her friends had set her up on an endless number of disastrous blind dates. And now here she was alone on a singles cruise of all things. How could she have let herself sink this low?

She clung to the cruise ship's railing, trying not to watch the roll and dip of the waves below her. They moved in opposition to her own internal rhythm, one that was going to cause her to vomit shortly. How utterly charming.

Marie glanced at her watch. The ship should pass by the Vantril Islands anytime now. Earlier in the evening the captain had announced they'd be skirting the privately owned islands, believed to be ruled by a shaman of some sort. No cruise ships were allowed. No tourists were taken in. Imports and exports were closely curtailed. How had a society like that survived unscathed into this century?

The islands were the perfect mystery to take her mind off her failed cruise. And about the only thing she had left that would.

There was no one on deck to witness the event but her. Who would deliberately wake at four in the morning to see a group of rocks? Marie, however, had a degree in geology and despite being horribly drunk was quite excited to see the islands.

All right, who was she kidding? She was still awake and she doubted she'd have risen from a drunken stupor especially for the occasion. Hell, she was lucky she still remembered the captain's words.

And as if the gods were really out to screw with her, being drunk made her horribly horny. If the devil himself appeared she'd jump his bones and ask questions later. Sell her soul for good sex? Hell yes. Even mediocre sex was better than nothing. Where was a decent demon when one needed one?

The sea wind snapped the flag above her. She jumped.

Stupid flag.

The devil, like most typical males in her life, was a no-show and so she remained alone on deck, waiting to see a pile of forbidden rocks, the highlight of her cruise.

"Welcome to Marie's pity party." She toasted the sight of the islands, finished off the last of whatever she'd been drinking and tossed the empty cup on a lounge chair.

The islands were still a good distance off, shrouded in the darkness and the mist. She thought she could make out a ribbon of pale sand before the earth rose to cliff height, a broken fragment of sheer onyx. The fine hairs on her arms rose. She rubbed her arms, eyes straining. She should have borrowed a pair of binoculars.

Too late now. There weren't even any crew members around to ask for assistance.

She couldn't tear her eyes from the view. The islands teased her like a burlesque dancer. A hint of rock here. Fog hiding the beach there. She followed the view, walking the length of the ship to keep the islands in sight. Reaching the ship's stern, she found her view blocked by the lifeboats. She climbed the cabled railing, trying to see past the boats and other necessary clutter.

Kicking off her heels, she balanced on the cables, leaning forward to catch one last glimpse. The wind, stirred by the ship's movements, rustled the edges of her dress, ruffled her hair. She smelled the salt of the sea, heard the seagulls in the distance cry. The islands beckoned, a hint of the rising sun highlighting one of the mountain's jagged peaks.

Then she simply lost her balance and tumbled over the side of the ship.

She blamed the alcohol.

Her first gulp was half air, half seawater. She screamed, a gurgling, choked sound. The ship continued to slice through the water, propellers churning, water lapping its sides, abandoning her like the hulking, thoughtless machine it was.

She treaded water almost automatically. Drunk or not, she was still a strong swimmer. Thank her daily gym workouts for that one.

She screamed, "Help!" until her lungs ached.

Her ship faded into the horizon. She glanced ahead of her. There was nothing left to do but swim toward the islands. The distance was hard to judge in the ocean but it was a long swim. Strong swimmer or not, she probably wouldn't make it. Drowning seemed a rather disastrous finale to her cruise.

She didn't remember much more—or rather she remembered but everything was out of sync, like a jumbled-up puzzle. And she was definitely missing some pieces. She treaded water and swam and when she was too tired to do that, she did the dead man's float, body drifting like a corpse in the waves.

The islands never seemed to get any closer. The sun crested the horizon, turning the sky and sea shades of hot pink and rich purple with sweeping strokes of fluffy clouds thrown in for effect.

The scrape of sand abrading her skin eventually woke her up. *I made it!* She couldn't even summon up enough strength to be relieved. She half crawled, half dragged herself up the beach. Then she pressed her cheek to the lukewarm sand and passed out.

It was the lapping of the waves that roused her the second time. The lower half of her body was wet, her dry upper portion crusty with sand and salt. She didn't bother to move. She was just thankful she was alive. Now all she needed to do was find a telephone, call the cruise line and get the ship turned around to pick her up. *Yeah right.*

The water continued to lap at her legs. She pushed herself to her feet, still feeling queasy. Thirst struck her like a sucker punch to the stomach. Her tongue was swollen and her throat felt like she'd been eating sandpaper.

Find water and she'd probably find people. She'd need both to get home.

The sun was high in the sky, evidence she'd slept several hours. She stumbled her way up the shoreline. If she hadn't been dying of thirst, scraped up and sunburned, she might have paused to admire the pristine sand she trudged through. All she saw was the smudge of sheer black cliff that jutted out of the sand like it had been dropped there to spite her. The white sands ended at the black rock's base. She laid her palm against the shiny rock and tipped her head back. The cliff continued upward, uninterrupted, for at least a hundred yards.

There had to be a break in the rock somewhere. She trudged through the sand for what seemed like miles, the rock wall her shadow. Would it never end? Would there never be a break in its barrier? She cursed it and she cursed her dinner date. Had he been even remotely entertaining, she'd have spent her evening with him instead of on the deck alone.

Someone screamed.

Marie froze.

Run toward the scream or run away? Her dulled brain didn't have the answer. Obviously there was at least one person ahead. That person might be able to help her.

Thirst won over caution. Marie shifted into a shuffling run, trotting toward the still-screaming person. The wall of rock crumbled and dipped, curving like a serpent waiting to strike. A boulder marked the path upward, really no more than a series of treacherous handholds and footholds.

Marie launched herself at it before her brain could catch up with her body. Scrabbling on hands and knees, she forced herself to climb, disregarding the cuts and scrapes to her flesh. Her lungs ached for air almost as badly as her throat craved moisture. When she reached the top she collapsed, totally spent. Her cheek rested on something soft and spongy. She opened one eye. There was no grass, just an expanse of brilliant green moss.

A group of perhaps twenty-five people dotted the moss meadow. Gathered in a loose semicircle around a stone altar, their backs were to Marie. She spied a woman, the screamer, bound to the altar. She appeared to be clothed in nothing more than rope.

Someone managed to get a gag into the screaming woman's mouth. The abrupt silence was almost worse than the screams. A man stepped up to the altar, face and bare chest painted with elaborate colored symbols. Marie was too far away to make out the words he spoke but she could hear the rhythmic rise and fall of his voice, as if he were chanting. She had to be hallucinating. She was in the middle of the Caribbean for god's sake, not Africa.

Clouds rolled above him, blotting out the sun. The chanter hoisted the woman off the altar and held her above his head. She thrashed in his grip, looking more like a wiggly maggot than a human. A burst of thunder cut off the man's words and the woman's screams. Lightning fractured the sky.

The man ignored both. Some of the people in the crowd cowered. He walked to the edge of the precipice Marie had just scaled and flung the woman off the cliff.

Marie heard a distant splash.

Her mind started screaming, *Omigod. Omigod. Get up. Get up!* But her body was too spent to respond.

They had just flung a woman to her death. What would they do to her, a trespasser? She dug her fingers into the moss.

The crowd began to disperse. Marie whimpered. There was no place to hide. She was like a hundred-and-fifty-pound golf ball sitting in the middle of a putting green.

She started to crab crawl backward, scraping bits of exposed skin against the rock. The leader of the group, the one who'd sent the screamer plummeting to her death, turned toward her. Marie froze. He looked around as if he knew something wasn't quite right. Then he lowered his gaze and stared directly at her, eyes black.

She wasn't the type of woman who fainted. She swore she had never done so before. But her vision splintered and the sound of her heart hammering flooded her hearing. A wave of blackness crashed over her. And then she knew no more.

* * * * *

Her subconscious roused her, chastising her for her drunken stupidity. Little good it did her. She was bound and blindfolded, lying flat on her back atop a cool smooth surface. *Wait a second.* She wriggled around then swallowed a lump in her throat. She was pretty certain she was nude.

But at least she wasn't thirsty. Small comfort that was.

A shudder ran through her. What had she stumbled into? Her arms were folded crosswise over her chest just beneath her breasts, bound to her body by some sort of webbing. She struggled and heard the crinkle of plastic.

"It appears our visitor has finally decided to wake up," a man said. "Good morning."

Marie turned her head toward the sound of his voice. It was deep, well modulated and in another setting would have been incredibly sexy. It poured through her body like a soothing balm.

She gauged her words. "Where am I? Who are you? Why am I tied up?" Her voice trembled.

"You are on the Vantril Islands, the isle of Loki to be exact. I am Master Jacob. And you have been incapacitated because I do not know your motives. You could intend to harm my people." His voice hardened, still cultured and polite, now edged with steel. "Are you a spy? A reporter? You have no identification on you."

Her panic receded just a bit. He had a legitimate reason for tying her up. *Yes, with handcuffs, rope, plasticuffs or anything else, not stripped nude and bound in plastic wrap.* But she *had* cropped up on his shores unannounced and uninvited. "My name is Marie. Marie Carlson. I fell off my cruise ship." There was no response. "I was drunk. It was a mistake." Still silence. She felt her cheeks flame. "Please, if you just call the cruise line, they can confirm I'm a passenger on the Star Banner line." She felt tears welling up and was glad for the blindfold. It sopped up some of the wetness. "Please, my family must be worried."

Someone ruffled her hair. She caught the heady scent of sandalwood and heard the clink of bracelets.

"Pretty women often get away with the most devious crimes." His voice was still hard.

Marie shivered. "Please. "

"Please what?"

"You must believe me." Pleading to a faceless captor was terrifying. She began to shake. Her tears fell more rapidly now. The blindfold could no longer staunch the flow.

"There now. It's all right. No one will hurt you," a woman soothed. "Master Jacob is being unduly harsh."

Someone, Marie assumed it was the woman, started rubbing her shoulders, her touch calming. The scent of sandalwood surrounded her. To Marie's utter shock, instead of feeling relieved she felt herself growing aroused. Her insides clenched unexpectedly, hard enough that she sucked in a breath. This was insane.

"Master Jacob, may I remove her blindfold?" the woman asked.

"You plead so prettily, Selene," Jacob said. "It's a pity I'll have to spank you for undermining my authority in front of our guest."

Selene removed Marie's blindfold in time for Marie to see the woman blush. What the hell was going on here?

Selene was a petite dark beauty with skin like smooth dark chocolate. Her only physical fault, if one could call it that, was the unsymmetrical arch of her eyebrows, one brow naturally curving higher than the other. It gave her a sassy, mischievous look. She stood maybe five feet tall, with a mass of straight black hair that hung loose to her waist. Her skin shone with a light sweat, easy to see since she was nearly nude. A red swath of silk draped across her chest but did little to actually hide her breasts and nipples. Her panties shimmered gold and appeared made of metal. She wore a pair of wide gold wrist cuffs and a narrow leather jewel-encrusted choker.

Marie turned her head toward Selene. "Please help me."

Selene plucked a flower that'd been tucked behind Marie's ear. It was bright pink, like the last burst of the sun before it set, and shaped like a lily. She twirled it between her fingers thoughtfully. "Lovla, Master? Was that necessary?" She turned toward Marie. "Lovla's a very powerful aphrodisiac." She brought the bloom to her nose and inhaled.

Jacob laughed, a low sound that sent tight shivers through Marie's body. "Native to Loki alone. I made sure our guest was never without it." He stared at Selene, defiant. But Selene wasn't afraid of him at all. She gazed back at him through the fringe of her eyelashes. Then she bowed her head. Marie caught the gleam of hunger in her eye.

An aphrodisiac? So she was drugged? That at least explained her reaction to Selene's touch.

"Marie." Jacob's voice was very soft. "Would you like to watch me spank Selene?"

"What? No! What did she do?"

"She disobeyed me. It's you or her, love."

Marie opened her mouth then closed it. She had no idea what to say.

"Marie, are you cold? Uncomfortable in any way?"

Marie shifted focus from Selene to Jacob. Master Jacob—where did he get that ridiculous title—was a striking man. The word *handsome* did him a disservice. His skin

was olive-hued, the muscles of his bared upper body well defined. His hair was jet black with almost purple highlights, and worn a hint too long. She recognized his eyes, the dark demonic eyes that had found her out. In this light, though, they appeared human. Distrusting, a touch angry but definitely human. Billowy pants hid the definition of his legs but not his ass. What a perfect globe of an ass it was. If his chest and smooth abdomen were any indication of what lay beneath that pair of pants, those bare cheeks were something to behold. Marie tried not to look but her fingers itched to touch. He exuded a presence, an aura that her body couldn't help but respond to.

Just great. How sick did she have to be to enjoy ogling her captor? It had to be the lovla. How quickly did that drug wear off?

She tried the politeness tactic. "Sir, I am tired and confused. I'm tied naked in front of two strangers. Please understand when I say I have a hard time appreciating your version of hospitality." At least Selene looked sympathetic.

Jacob was unmoved. "You're aroused by Selene. By the thought of me spanking Selene."

Her mask of politeness crumbled. "What? Listen, you sick bastard..." She found she could raise herself off her platform using her abdominal muscles. Whoever had wrapped her had also cut slits for her nipples to jut out of their bindings. *How thoughtful.* And jut they did. They stood at full attention, areolas contracted, her breasts unnaturally propped up by her arms. She looked like a bondage supermodel.

She was not turned on by the thought of seeing someone spanked. Now if she were the one being spanked... No, no and no. She was not aroused. She was not interested.

"You say you were on a cruise ship, Marie." He made her name sound sinful. "What did you leave behind that you're so eager to return to? A lover? A family?"

He laid a hand on her chest, fingers splayed, and pressed her flat to the table. Against the coolness of his palm, her skin felt hot.

Marie moistened her lips. His gaze riveted to her tongue. "It was a singles cruise," she whispered.

"And did you meet many men on your trip, Marie? Did you take them back to your cabin, pin them beneath your body and reap your own pleasure?"

She was trapped by his gaze, by his hand still resting on her chest. She made a helpless noise low in her throat. Why all the questions? What did it matter? What was he doing to her? She squirmed under his touch.

"Please, please let me go," she begged. Her aroused body screamed, *Take me now!*

"You'll have to earn your freedom."

"Whatever it takes." And in whatever position, just as long as he didn't stop touching her.

He pulled away. She lay on the table panting as hard as if she'd just run a marathon.

"Selene." Jacob snapped his fingers. "Up." He patted Marie's stomach.

Her mind abruptly parted ways with her body, a complete coup. Marie arched into his touch. She craved him, this magnetic and mysterious man who was both her captor and her key to freedom. He traced a path along her collarbones, resting a fingertip in the hollow of her throat.

Selene draped herself over Marie's waist so their bodies formed a T. The woman weighed barely anything, or perhaps she was balancing herself on her toes. Her metal panties pressed against Marie's pubic area. The coolness of the metal seeped into Marie's bare skin, an odd sensation.

Marie shot up again. "Did you shave me?"

"Quiet," Jacob ordered. "One more outburst and you'll be gagged as well."

Marie lay flat, trembling. She told herself sternly that it was from fear alone, not anticipation. They had shaved her privates while she'd been passed out. What else had they done to her? She could feel Selene's breaths, quick short gasps really, like the fluttering of a captive bird's wings. The backside of Selene's panties were just a T of gold chain, the gold shimmering as it nestled in the valley of her round ass.

Jacob cupped each of Selene's butt cheeks in his hands. The combination of colors, the swirl of Selene's dark chocolate skin peeking out between the splayed fingers of his olive-colored hands had Marie squirming. Then, while he still cupped one cheek, he raised his other hand and slapped Selene's ass. Marie gasped as the crack of flesh against flesh echoed in the space. He struck Selene at least three more times before Marie changed focus from Selene's blushing ass to her face. Selene's eyes were rolled back in her head, her lips parted slightly. The tip of a pierced tongue peeked out between those brightly colored lips. She didn't appear to be in pain at all.

Closing her eyes, Marie sucked in a breath of air. The metal panties pressed into Marie's pubic bones, grinding against her. Marie shuddered and it had nothing to do with her being cold. She made small movements against the metal panties, trying to ease the need inside her. A nice quick orgasm was all she needed to restore her sanity and clear the lovla-induced haze from her mind.

Finally the spanking was complete. Selene lay still, purring to herself. Marie remained trapped beneath her, unsatisfied and frustrated. Selene stretched like a cat, rubbing her belly and breasts across Marie's stomach as she arched back and stood. The skin-on-skin contact made Marie's vagina involuntarily clench. Marie gasped.

"You forfeited your choice. It's your turn, Marie," Jacob said.

"Wait a minute! I never agreed to abuse."

Rolling Marie over, he pressed himself against her back while one hand strolled up and down her thigh, a lazy caress that had her wishing he was stroking other body parts. Her breasts ached with the need to be touched and worse, her clit was throbbing.

A tongue began to work its way up her opposite leg. She gasped and turned her head. Selene was on her knees beside her, dark lips pressed against her pale flesh. Selene winked and continued washing up her leg.

Marie felt the bonds on her arms ease. Jacob pressed his cheek against hers. He smelled spicy, like an exotic perfume, and underlying it was the undeniable scent of sex. *Odeur de alpha male*. "You're free, Marie. What do you wish to do? Really do?" His

breath tickled her ear. Before she could respond, he sucked her earlobe into his mouth. She exhaled a hiss of air.

A hand cupped her ass. She wriggled deeper into that hand, letting it knead her muscles. She felt herself start to slip into a fog, her muscles relaxing, anxiety slipping away.

He pressed his lips to the back of her neck then laid a series of kisses down her spine. She stilled.

"You should be punished for trespassing," he murmured between kisses.

"Yes." She didn't know whether she spoke it or only thought it.

"Such a disobedient woman." He pinched her butt cheek hard enough to cause her to gasp. The pain traveled straight to her brain but instead of causing her to wince, it made her push against him, tacitly asking for more.

Her breath came in short little wheezes.

"A wanton, wicked trespasser." His voice was still low and rippled through her, clouding her mind. Conscious thought fled. She needed him, needed to orgasm. He spanked her bare ass lightly, once on each side.

She struggled to form words, "Yes, oh god, yes." She meant to say no.

Her arms slipped from beneath her body, hands groping for the platform's legs. She wrapped her fingers around two of the legs, securing herself to the table.

Jacob chuckled.

The first hard slap against her skin had her whimpering. The second and third strikes came in quick succession. The short bursts of pain flared and vanished to be replaced by a warm floaty haze. Her focus narrowed to that single strike, to the sound of flesh slapping flesh, to the feel of her body arching into that smack, his hand branding her ass cheek. She lost count, then simply lost herself.

When she hovered two strokes away from the best orgasm of her life, Jacob abruptly left.

She lacked the strength to even raise her head. Otherwise she'd have begged him to stay.

Her body ached for more, needed more. Her fingers released their death grip on the table legs and slid down the top's smooth length, then crept beneath her body and began to finger her clitoris. She was drenched in her own juices. When she arched her fingertip and very carefully raked a nail against her throbbing clit, her muscles went rigid. She scratched again. As the pain exploded in her head, so did her body.

She clenched and clenched again, shivering in a delicious uncontrollable orgasm. Then she lay spent on the table, naked, in a strange man's lair on a forbidden island and not completely sure what the hell she had just done.

Chapter Two

It was Selene who roused her, pretty little Selene smelling of sandalwood and sex—wait a second, she herself smelled like sex. Selene's sleek black hair was wet, like she'd just bathed.

"You'll be wanting a bath, I suppose." Selene's voice was soft and melodic. Did everyone on the island pitch their voice to seduce or had Marie simply lost her mind and her scruples?

"What is this place?" she muttered.

"A playland for the Master, a sanctuary for most of the rest of us." Selene took Marie's arm and helped her to her feet. Selene had traded her gold metal panties for a sheer turquoise skirt that skimmed her bare legs. A black triangle of silk was visible through the skirt's filmy fabric.

"He was serious about me having to work for my freedom?"

"He rarely jests about such matters. This way." She inclined her head toward the left. A clever layout of overlapping bamboo panels served as walls and hid the actual doorway. Selene led the way. "I am certain he is validating your story right now. Master Jacob is a powerful man."

"The captain of my ship said the islands were ruled by a shaman."

"Sorcerer," Selene corrected.

"You've got to be kidding."

Selene eyed her, face impassive. "Wizard. Conjuror."

"I don't believe in magic."

Selene shrugged. "You will."

"Have you never left this island? Magic doesn't exist in the real world."

"Neither would I," she replied enigmatically.

"Does your Master, the sorcerer, allow torture?"

Selene eyed her. "Consensual, yes." She sounded cautious.

"When I got here, I saw a woman thrown over a cliff. What had she done to warrant that kind of punishment?"

Selene's eyes sparkled. "You saw that? How scary to see and not know the details. The woman, Tanya, has a particularly vicious streak. The combination of bondage and the threat of suffocation is very stimulating to her."

Marie stopped. "You mean she *asked* for that?"

"It was as safe as it could be. There were divers you couldn't see. She did not drown." Selene tugged on her arm. Marie reluctantly continued down the trail.

"The risk—"

"The *perceived* risk," Selene corrected, "is most alluring. Here we are."

Marie halted, her mouth forming an O. The shower area was a grotto of stone nestled beneath a fringe of leaves. Each leaf was nearly the size of her torso. Water cascaded over a series of rock steps above her head, the miniature waterfall cascading into a pool beside her.

Marie had a sudden thought. "Will I be able to bathe alone or will others be watching me?"

Selene looked momentarily flustered then smoothly recovered herself. "You are our prisoner."

"Where would I go? I'm on an island."

"You have a point."

"Thank you."

"That doesn't mean you won't be watched."

Marie ground her teeth. "Do you people think of nothing but sex?"

Selene blinked. "No. We all have mundane duties to perform which keep the islands functioning. You just have not been privy to them."

Maybe she could work her way to her freedom using her hands rather than her body. "Could I be put to work?"

"Master Jacob prefers you to be a sex toy. You're..." she searched for the word. "Untainted."

"I'm not a virgin," Marie retorted, indignant. Nor was she supermodel material. Why did Jacob find her so damn charming?

Selene smiled and patted her cheek. "Master Jacob wants you thoroughly cleaned for the evening's festivities."

Out of the corner of her eye Marie saw another two women emerge from foliage. One was a buxom redhead with wide hips and pale creamy skin. The other appeared Asian in origin with short, spiky black hair and a ballerina-like grace. So Master Jacob collected all shapes and sizes. Was that one of the reasons she appealed to him? Another toy to add to his collection? The women laid down fluffy white towels and toiletries, and to Marie's delight food and a pitcher of water.

There was also a pile of straps and sparkling bits of clothing. Her delight gave way to trepidation. "What does Master Jacob have in mind?" Marie asked.

"I don't question him," Selene replied.

Marie raised an eyebrow. She found that hard to swallow. Selene seemed like a fair match for Jacob.

"Bathe, eat and you shall find the answer yourself." Selene started to walk away. "Unless... Unless you do not wish to bathe alone?" Her voice was hesitant, almost shy.

Marie blushed. "I'm not interested in women." She tried to keep her tone gentle.

"Ah, pity." Her lips curved slightly. "I'll be back for you. Take care with your hygiene."

Marie found herself watching Selene walk away. Her stride was flawless. The slight swing of her hips sent her skirt's edges caressing her legs. All her curves moved in one perfect rhythm, a mesmerizing ebb and flow of dark chocolate flesh. Marie shook her head. The island had cast a spell on her. Selene was a beautiful woman, but a woman nonetheless.

Testing the temperature of the pool with her toe, she found it to be warm. Since she was already nude, there was little stopping her from jumping right in. Besides, the water hid her from probing eyes...if there was anyone watching.

She took her time bathing. Her bare bottom felt raw. Just touching it made her hot with need. She had never been spanked before. It made her feel wicked. How could she ever explain this to her friends back home? Turned on by having her ass paddled? Orgasming when her clit was scraped with a fingernail? She shook her head. This was a fantasy island.

Drifting to the edge of the pool, she picked at the food. It wasn't that she wasn't hungry, more that she was too turned on, edgy and just about every other variant of aroused to really focus on food. She ate some fruit, drank water and finally decided to give up the ruse and hop out. The pile of lace and ribbon lying beside the towels drew her.

The first piece of clothing was a corset made of see-through lace panels and emerald green bra cups with green lace crisscrossing up its backside. She wouldn't be caught dead in that, not in a million years. Of course, with the choice between running around nude and running around in the corset, she'd choose the corset. The second tiny article was a deep green silk thong with crystals that ran along the waistband. The triangle of material would barely cover her pubic area. But since she had been shaved nude in that region, the triangle would be more than enough covering. At least it wasn't metal like Selene's uncomfortable-looking panties. She sighed.

Just when she was ready to take the plunge and try to squeeze her breasts and body into the corset, Selene appeared.

"Are you sure these are necessary?" Marie asked.

Selene tipped her head. "Master Jacob has instructed me to provide less and less clothing the more you protest."

Marie held the corset to her chest. "Never mind. This is just fine."

"Allow me to assist you into it." Selene caught the edges of the corset and began to lace its back. "Inhale."

"I want to be able to breathe."

"Master Jacob loves the hourglass shape. Yours, with those lush breasts, is particularly appealing." She said it in such a nonchalant voice. Marie almost choked. Selene took advantage and cinched the corset tighter.

"Just a moment." Marie looked down at her breasts. They threatened to spill out of the silk, the chasm between her breasts bottomless, her skin impossibly pale against the jewel tones. Beneath that her bare pussy gleamed pearly white, skin even more fair than her breasts. She snatched the thong from Selene's outstretched hand. "Does nothing embarrass you?"

"A woman's body is a beautiful thing." Selene turned Marie so that they faced one another. She extended her hands toward Marie's breasts, fingers splayed, not quite touching. Marie fancied she could feel the heat of those hands right through the silky fabric. But Selene didn't quite touch her. "These are exquisite."

Marie stared at her. All she had to do was lean forward and let her breasts spill into those delicate hands. She couldn't move.

Selene dropped her hands, breaking the spell. "Sit down and I'll apply your makeup."

"Are there no mirrors here?" She wasn't sure she wanted Selene to touch her just yet.

"Master Jacob uses them quite often as props, but they are not a necessity."

"What does he have planned?"

"I do not pretend to know his will."

"Will he let me go soon? What will it take to earn my freedom?"

"These are questions you need to ask him. I cannot answer for him."

Frustrated, Marie batted Selene's hand away. "What good are you if you don't know what he wants?"

Instead of the angry reply she expected, Selene looked at her with hurt.

Instantly contrite, Marie said, "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have yelled at you. I don't understand this island or why you choose to live this way."

"I was once part of your world, many years ago. I remember the poverty, the wars and the death." Selene wrinkled her nose. "And the stench of tainted air, the taste of polluted water. There is none of that here."

"But the sex..."

Selene laughed and waved her hand. "The sex, the sex," she mimicked. "It is all you think of when you see us. It is a life, a loving, a sharing, an intimate exchange of power." She rose.

"Come." She offered Marie her hand. Marie hesitated only a moment before taking it.

Selene led her through the foliage. Mosaic-filled stepping stones dotted the ground. Beyond the fringe of trees lay a terraced palace, a stepped pyramid of stone that looked like it had been ripped from the jungles of Guatemala. Barely clad people hustled through the sprawling courtyard that lay before it, each on his or her own mission.

Jacob was holding court outside. A group of open-sided tents fanned around the center tent he sprawled beneath.

Keeping her hand in Marie's, Selene dropped to both knees in front of Jacob, pulling Marie down with her. Selene bowed her head. When Marie did not, Selene hissed a soft warning, "Follow my lead or be punished."

Marie reluctantly bowed her head as well. The ground was covered with wide, flat leaves. Her blonde hair tumbled loosely around her face like a veil. She heard the rustling of fabric. A man's hand came into her line of sight. A single finger traced the curved line of the corset along her breasts. It was a light touch, carefully placed. She sighed.

"Marie?" Jacob made her name sound so naughty, all the emphasis on the M, a bit of an odd accent twisting it. She felt her insides clench, her nipples tighten.

She lifted her head. "Yes?"

Jacob watched her with his dark eyes. He raised an eyebrow. "Yes, what?"

"Yes, Master?" His eyes darkened even more. She wet her lips with her tongue. Her palms felt sweaty.

He tweaked a single nipple through the satin and lace. "Are you ready to earn your freedom?"

She wasn't certain she could find her voice. Instead she nodded. His gaze burned into her like a brand, possessive and demanding. With each breath he took, his chest rose and fell, abdominal muscles rhythmically flexing. Those were the finest set of six-pack ab muscles she had ever seen. Her fingers itched to touch and explore.

Jacob pointed to a small bench sharing the dais with him. "Drape those glorious breasts over the bench." When Marie moved to stand he shook his head. "Crawl."

"Beg pardon?"

"Crawl there. On your hands and knees."

She swallowed a lump in her throat. When she didn't immediately move, Selene gave her a swat on her bare buttocks. Marie lurched forward. *So much for being graceful and seductive.*

"Slowly," Jacob instructed.

She slowed down, feeling idiotic. Her breasts were all but ready to spill out of their confines and her ass wiggled from side to side. The feel of Jacob's eyes on her, though,

and his appreciative “Hmm” had her trying harder. She shifted into a sliding crawl as if she were big cat stalking its prey. The wide, flat leaves laid on the floor brushed softly against her skin. As she approached the narrow bench, she felt herself getting wetter. Crawling was damn humiliating but the anticipation, the not knowing, was dangerously appealing. She crept to the bench and draped herself over it. It supported her stomach, tipped her ass into the air and provided an excellent view of her endless cleavage.

“Anchor her,” Jacob commanded.

Two women appeared and dropped to their knees, one on either side of her. They were nude, their nipples dipped in gold, a series of elaborate swirling black tattoos curling up their sun-drenched arms. Marie tried not to stare but their breasts were only inches from her face. It was impossible not to look, nor did they seem to care. They each took one of her arms, and spread them apart.

It was then she noticed the cuffs. They were anchored into the tent’s bamboo floor, thick, wide gold bands with sturdy-looking latches. Marie began to hyperventilate. The women placed her wrists into the cuffs and secured them. She wanted to run, to hide, but there was no escape now. She twisted her wrists in their restraints—they held her fast. The women moved out of her line of sight. She felt their hands on her legs, fingers wrapping around her ankles. Then they spread her legs apart. Cuffs settled around her ankles.

She was trapped over the bench, her legs and arms splayed, her butt on display to everyone. Was Jacob going to spank her again? She felt a set of hands on her ass. They kneaded her tense muscles but did not spank. She began to tremble. She preferred the spanking to the not knowing what was to come.

Jacob leaned over her. He smelled musky and raw and all male. “Are you scared, Marie?”

“Yes.”

“Are you excited?”

She swallowed hard. "Yes."

"You're a slow learner, Marie." He pinched her buttocks.

"Yes, Master."

"Good girl." Her body clenched at the praise. She felt her nipples sharpen into little daggers.

He nudged aside her silky thong and stroked her labia. She flinched. The cuffs held her rigid. She twisted her wrists in the cuffs, feeling their fur lining tickle her skin. Jacob's fingers played with her wetness, rolling her lips between his fingers, deliberately edging his way around her throbbing clitoris. He pressed his chest against her back. "You will need to ask for what you want."

Her clitoris ached. His fingers circled her inner sanctum, the tips of two fingers edging her vagina.

"Please touch me...Master." She whispered the last word.

He leaned over her, pressing her stomach into the padded bench. His hands closed over her breasts, tightening until she whimpered. "Here?" he asked.

She shook her head no.

His hands slid up her bare arms. "Here?"

"Please," she begged. Her hands closed into fists. She pulled against the wrist cuffs. Tears began to stream down her face. She didn't understand why she was crying. He bumped against her ass, his penis and balls gently slapping her buttocks.

Then he pulled away from her and slapped her ass, hard. "Tell me what you want." Each word was bitten off, harsh and demanding.

"I want to orgasm," she whispered.

He chuckled. He smacked her other ass cheek. The blow made her flesh throb.

"Master." The word was half moan, half plea.

His hands returned to her labia, rolling them between his fingers. Then they crept to her clitoris and began to stroke her. She gasped. Two fingers slid into her vagina. His thumb rubbed her clitoris.

"I'm going to fuck you, Marie. Do you have anything to say?"

She trembled with need and almost came in his hand. Her feminine juices slipped down her inner thigh. "No, no, Master." And she didn't. What he was doing was not what she would call making love. But neither was it rape. It was languishing torture. It was a blurring of the pleasure-pain line, an act that encompassed all her nerve endings not just the fickle pleasure ones. Her muscles were strung tighter than they'd ever been. She couldn't remember when she'd been so wet, so ready to be invaded.

He pressed his cock against her wet vagina, his shaft head teasing the sensitive nerves at the rim of her entrance. "Ask me for it."

She whimpered.

The tip of his penis dipped within her vagina. She clenched.

She gave up whatever shred of dignity she had left. "Fuck me, Master. Fuck—" She gasped as he drove himself into her.

She clenched around him, her hips bucking. The restraints held her firm. She jerked against them, feeling their edges cut into her wrists. She had never been the type to lie still and let the man do all the work. But she had no choice now but to do just that. His balls slapped against her buttocks, tickling the very edges of her labia.

He was the perfect fit, wide and long, stretching her to her limits. In her position he bumped against her cervix, sending her into involuntary shivers. He leaned over her, the heat of his body warming her back.

"Marie, I need to feel your engorged breasts pour into my hands."

She quivered as he increased his pace. His hands fumbled with the laces on her corset, then she felt the cords snap. Her breasts spilled over the edge. He gripped them, one in each hand.

"Large breasts, Marie, are the key to a man's libido."

Then he was sure to be disappointed as she was no more than a C-cup.

"Let me give you a gift, Marie." He thrust hard into her, causing more tears to form at the edges of her eyes. He nuzzled her neck, holding his hands just inches from her breasts now. "Do you feel that?" She did feel a tingle in her breasts. "Fill my hands."

She glanced down. She could have sworn her breasts had just doubled in size. How could that be?

He tweaked her nipples, her areolas dark and swollen.

"What have you done?" she whispered.

He nipped her neck. "Magic."

"Impossible."

"A favorite word of yours, isn't it?" One of his hands slipped down to finger her clitoris. He slapped her ass, hard. "Master should be your favorite word." He struck her again. She yelped.

His hands moved in unison then, one spiraling around and around her breast, the other tracing tiny circles on her clitoris.

She twisted her wrists within her restraints. "I want to touch you, Master. To feel you. Let me go."

"Patience."

Her patience was worn out. She yanked on the restraints, trying to back herself into him, desperate to relieve herself.

He slapped her ass again. "I will tell you when it's time to come."

"Please." Her eyes squeezed shut, tears leaking out of their corners.

"Your begging wears on my nerves." He snapped his fingers. "Michael, plug up that noisome hole," Jacob ordered.

Hands touched her cheeks, lifted her head very gently. Someone's thumbs stroked away the remainder of her tears. She opened her eyes. She and a pale pink cock exchanged looks. A carefully groomed set of balls hung just beneath the polite penis.

Plug up that noisome hole. She was not going to give a complete stranger a blowjob. She raised her gaze. *Oh my.* There wasn't an ounce of fat on Michael's sun-bronzed abdomen. She licked her lips. Those abs merged into a wide, flat chest. When she finally managed to tear her eyes away from that delicious body, she met a pair of dancing blue eyes, a wide white smile and a curly mop of blond hair.

He wagged his penis at her. "Open up."

Okay, a living gag might not be so bad. She obediently opened her mouth, gaze locked on his.

Michael carefully slid his shaft into her mouth. What a trusting critter. If he was willing to submit his most prized possession to a stranger's teeth, she was willing to not deliberately hurt him. He tangled his fingers in her hair, effectively immobilizing her head.

Jacob kneaded her breasts, reminding her of his presence. They felt tight and swollen, her nipples still as erect as they'd ever been. He began a slow, rhythmic thrusting, his balls slapping her ass, his penis gliding almost completely out before it plunged back in her slick vagina. The muscles in her legs twitched, wound tight for far too long. She tensed, her toes curling as her orgasm built and lazily began to flood her nerves. Michael hissed. She eased up on his penis.

She wriggled against Jacob. He spanked her and slowed down even more. She clamped down again on Michael's penis, relented almost immediately. Michael fisted her hair in his hands and pulled her head back. Marie tried to apologize but he kept the tip of his penis in her mouth, making conversation difficult at best.

Tentatively swirling her tongue around his shaft, she worked her way up and over its head. He tasted like peanut brittle, salty but also sweet. Michael groaned softly. Well at least someone was getting his needs met. She began to suck his penis, matching her

pace to Jacob's. Michael tipped his head back, his thumbs tracing the line of her jaw in short frantic strokes. The inner muscles of her thighs spasmed.

Her lazy orgasm turned into a tidal wave, striking with a ferocity that left her gasping. Little twinkling lights actually sparked before her eyes. She couldn't catch her breath, couldn't do anything but let the throes consume her. Michael pulled his penis out of her mouth. She gasped, struck by another orgasmic wave. She thought her twitching muscles were going to tear her legs apart.

Someone slid the bench out from beneath her. Her cuffs were unlocked. She lay flat, panting. Air wouldn't enter her lungs.

Jacob rolled her to her side and laid a damp cloth on her forehead. "Deep breaths, now." Placing the palm of his hand on her stomach, he pressed her abdomen, forcing her to exhale. "You're hyperventilating."

Marie began to shake.

Jacob pulled her into his arms, stood and carried her inside the palace. She buried her head against his sweat-slicked chest. "Perhaps a little too much stimulation for the first time," he murmured.

"Long time, no sex," she murmured into his chest, then hastily added, "Master."

He laid her down on a plain cotton-draped bed in a room drenched with sunlight. Filmy curtains billowed in the island breeze. The use of her muscles gradually returned to her. Her breathing slowed.

"I would not deny you that pleasure here, even if you misbehaved." He arranged the pillows behind her back, propping her up. "Rest now."

"Master?"

He paused by the door.

"Have I earned my freedom?"

"Eager to leave us then? Even after the best orgasm of your life?"

She blushed but remained silent.

"You're a quick learner." He nodded. "Very few have ever willingly left my islands." He eyed her thoughtfully. "Your life, as you call it, will not suffer any lasting effects if you are gone from it for a few more days."

She bit her lip to keep from protesting. What did he know about her life? How dare he presume her life was worth so little?

Selene appeared in the doorway. Dropping to one knee, she bowed low before Jacob. "Master, I do not wish to intrude but Virginia seeks an audience with you."

His face darkened then cleared. "But she sends you in her stead."

"Better for me to bear your wrath, Master."

"I see." He offered his hand to her. She took it and he pulled her to her feet then pressed her knuckles to his lips. "My precious, what would I do without you?"

She touched his cheek with her free hand. Marie felt like an intruder. Then Jacob cleared his throat and the mood was broken. He glanced at Marie. "Rest. I'll return later this evening to check on you."

He took Selene by the hand and left Marie alone.

Chapter Three

Marie napped and, when she felt sufficiently refreshed, decided to explore her prison. No one stopped her from roaming through the structure, though she thought of it more as a temple than a palace. Activity throughout the building was much like a normal residence, just in a larger scale. Meals were being prepared, laundry taken care of. She even spotted fully equipped offices complete with computers, flat-screen panels showing everything from the weather to the latest stock report.

She drifted through the massive kitchen when she was hungry, was offered a plateful of food, a bit of lamb with a sprig of mint and a fresh fruit salad. She even helped with the supper dishes. No one questioned her presence. Gradually it did not seem so odd to see barely clad men and women, especially when she wore nothing more than a bikini herself.

When she returned to her chamber, she found Selene waiting for her. It was dark and the palace was lit with flickering torches, lending it an aura of mystery. Selene was dressed in gold bikini top and matching bottoms. A bright red wisp of fabric was tied at her waist, draped asymmetrically. Her hair was plaited into several dozen braids which spilled over one shoulder.

How often did that woman change her outfit in one day?

"Are you well? Have all your needs been met?" Selene asked.

"Your people are very kind."

She grimaced. "It is cruel for Master Jacob to keep you so."

Marie sighed and leaned against the doorframe. "I worry that my family thinks I'm dead."

Selene glanced around even though it was clear that they were the only two in the room. "He has already contacted your ship. The authorities know you are safe. They just don't know where you are."

That was a huge relief. She sighed and raked her fingers through her hair. Jacob couldn't keep her forever. A tiny part of her felt disappointed.

"Master Jacob asked that I bring you to one of his chambers."

Her heart thudded in her throat. "Why?"

Selene smiled, a flash of bright white.

"Can I say no?"

"Do you wish to?"

Marie licked her lips. "Me, alone with Master Jacob?"

Selene nodded, her lips quirked.

"You aren't jealous?"

"His appetite is unmatched among men, but he always returns to me." Selene brushed back Marie's hair, tucking it and a lovla bloom behind her ear. "For luck."

* * * * *

Marie lay beneath the sheets, too excited and nervous to sleep. Jacob's room faced the sea, with a floor-to-ceiling door that welcomed the ocean scents and sounds. His canopied bed was hung with wispy curtains. She jumped to her knees and grabbed one of the bedposts. It was solid wood and plenty sturdy. She grinned. Lying back down, she pulled the covers around her. She couldn't wait.

So she was completely surprised when she found herself pinned beneath the sheets, Jacob's hands and knees trapping her.

He kissed her forehead. "You're a poor handmaiden, asleep before the Master even arrives."

She blinked. "I wasn't asleep." She stifled a yawn. "Master."

"Forever slow on showing the proper respect as well." He shushed her protest with a finger pressed to her lips. "Bad girls get punished."

"It's all about the punishment, isn't it?" She wriggled an arm free and reached for him.

"My will be done." He caught her wrist and held it above her head.

"Discipline me, Master," she whispered.

He traced the edge of the lacy royal blue bra she wore. "Very nice."

"It'd look better on the floor," Marie hinted.

His lips curved. He grabbed her other wrist, twisting it above her head and pinning both with one hand. Then he bent over her and seized her lower lip between his teeth. She stuck her tongue out and caught the tip of his nose. His composure dissolved, his dark eyes flashing. He tried to disguise the snicker by sucking in his breath.

"Why you impudent little beast." He pulled them both off the bed and to their feet. "Assume the position," he ordered.

She raised her eyebrow.

"Ass toward me. Hands on the bedposts."

She obediently followed his directions. He was silent so long she glanced over her shoulder. Jacob was just coming through the bedroom doorway, a cat o' nine tails in his hands. She shivered. He uncoiled the leather whip, letting the tails puddle on the floor. Her body felt all twitchy, anticipating the first strike. What had she let her libido lead her into?

Jacob flicked his wrist. She heard the crack of the whip and instinctively winced. The very tips of the tails brushed against her ass, a ghostly kiss of leather. Her body broke out in goose bumps.

Two sets of candelabra, one on either side of the bed, blazed into life. The flames roared up three inches high in a spray of flashy blues, greens and finally red, then settled down to a normal guttering flicker. Marie yelped and jumped back.

The whip tails cracked her ass just enough to send her leaping back toward the bed. "What the hell?" She spun around, hand covering the whipped butt cheek. He flicked the whip, cracking the tail ends inches from her face.

She surprised both of them by seizing the tails. They wrapped around her wrist. She strode toward him then, tugging the whip and jerking him forward. They stood, her breasts pressed to his chest, the whip between them. She slid the tails between her legs. The leather rubbed noisily against her silk panties.

"What are you?"

"Magic," he whispered.

She stood on her tiptoes and pressed her lips against his exposed throat. The heat of his skin seared her lips. She kissed her way down his chest, leaving a trail of soft, wet marks. Jacob remained impassive but she felt the quick rise and fall of his chest against her lips and saw the frantic throb of the pulse at his throat.

He put one hand at the small of her back, placed the palm of the other between her breasts and bent her backward like a flamenco dancer. Her back bowed, a lush curve of skin, breasts bared front and center. He ran the whip tails between her legs, up across her breasts. The leather was warm, damp in spots where her feminine juices saturated the skin. She sighed softly. He settled the whip's braided grip against the base of her neck.

Her breath came in short bursts. He lowered her to the floor. "Do you believe in magic?" he whispered.

She shook her head from side to side.

"Why not?"

"I need to see to believe."

He bent his head over her stomach, licking a path from side to side until her entire stomach was wet. "Watch." He blew across her stomach. A swath of fire flared to life,

igniting his saliva and rushing across her skin. The flames rippled like a harem of crimson-clad belly dancers, the pale skin of her stomach their marble floor.

With a screech she bolted upright.

He pressed her flat again, hands on her chest.

The flame vanished.

She patted her stomach with both hands. Other than feeling a bit warm, the skin flush with color, she appeared unharmed. "Oh lord." If she'd been on her feet, she would have dropped to her knees before him. No wonder Selene deferred to him.

"Master," he corrected. Grasping both her wrists in one hand, he pulled them impatiently above her head. He tugged her panties down with the other. The whip remained draped across her chest, the black leather strands stark against her pale flesh.

His penis strained against its prison of black silk. He slid down his pajama bottoms. She felt herself go rigid. Her pussy clenched and unclenched, begging for the sweet release that stiff shaft of muscle and tendon could provide. A bead of semen dotted its head. She wondered what he tasted like.

"Is there something you wish to have?" he asked her solicitously.

"Yes, Master Jacob. Your penis inside me, your finger on my clit." She felt no shame in begging. She was soaking wet, eager to watch his reaction as he fucked her.

"Anything else?"

She eyed the bead of semen. "A taste, Master, of you."

He smiled and the darkness temporarily fled from his eyes. "Of course." He touched his fingertip to his penis head and offered it to her.

She rose up and snapped at the proffered finger, sucking it into her mouth. He tasted like the sea. She swallowed as much of his finger as she could until she gagged, then scraped his skin with her teeth as he gently pulled it out.

He took the whip in his hand, gripping the tails and the handle together. Drawing a line between her breasts, he slid it to her other set of eager, wet lips. He stroked the whip handle against her clitoris, rubbing her until she arched her back and cried out.

The darkness returned, filling his eyes until they seemed entirely consumed by pupil. She was lost in their black depths. He pushed her to the edge, rubbing hard against her clit. And when her body went rigid, muscles tensed, he plunged the handle into her pussy. She screamed, arching against the hand trapping her wrists above her head. Her body convulsed around the leather shaft, consuming his first two fingers and thumb as well.

He held himself there, imprisoned by the clenching of her inner muscles. When she managed to get her first real breath of air instead of the short little pants she had been accomplishing, he stroked her into another orgasm.

She seemed locked in a shrouded haze of sensation. Her world narrowed until she was nothing more than contracting muscle and endorphins. She felt him withdraw then replace the whip handle with his cock. Her shaved pussy was supersensitive—the brush of his pubic hairs against her skin excited her. He brought the whip handle to her mouth and she obediently accepted it, clenching it between her teeth.

She looked up at him, her body in a euphoric haze. At that moment, he could have asked for just about anything and she would have obeyed. The leather was saturated with her juices. She'd never tasted herself. It was sweet. No, she was sweet, like clover-spun honey. She breathed in her own scent mingled with leather. Her eyelids felt heavy, her body sated, but he wasn't done with her yet.

One of his hands cupped her breast, teasing her nipple through the bra's lacy fabric until the areola was puckered and the nipple diamond hard. He pinched the nipple and she cried out, teeth clenched around the whip handle. He thrust hard into her until she screamed again, the pleasure-pain line fading into a single stream of heat. The warmth started at her curling toes, crept up her knees and inner thighs and engulfed her clitoris. She closed her eyes and swore she died.

Distantly she heard him praise her. He moaned her name as he orgasmed, his hand convulsing around her wrists. Then he collapsed on top her, his ragged breathing loud in her ears. She let her consciousness slip away then, superbly pleased with herself.

When she woke she was lying on her side curled against Jacob, her head pressed to his chest. Jacob was running light fingertips up and down her exposed arm. She must have made some small movement or sound for he paused.

"Marie?" His voice held an odd note to it.

"Yes?"

"Will you stay here, with me, on Loki?"

She stiffened. He wrapped his arms around her.

"Will you accept my collar? Not today, not tomorrow. Stay and see what the islands have to offer."

"I have a life in the real world."

His hand clenched around her arm. "The real world," he spat. "What does that have to offer? Its clocks and cell phones. They're a poor substitute, Marie, and an excuse to hide behind."

"I have a job," she added lamely.

"You can have a job you are passionate about here."

"And when I grow old, when I'm fat and no longer desirable? Then what? You have Selene. I'm sure you have other women as well."

"Aging and death do not trouble us."

She pulled back then, to stare at him. "You mean to tell me you don't age? Don't die?"

"The islands are magic," he whispered.

"I don't believe that."

"You must. I am your Master," he reminded her.

Her lips curved despite her disbelief. "Master, I believe you embellish the truth."

"If I traveled off my islands, I'd die. Selene as well. The Reaper waits for us beyond the sands. But here," he cupped her face between both hands. "Here there is no pain, no death, just this." He kissed her.

She parted her lips and felt his tongue steal between them. One of his hands slid to her breast, gripped it tight enough she gasped.

"Stay," he whispered into her mouth.

She pulled back, shaking her head from side to side.

"Then let us indulge one more time." His cock was hard against her leg.

There was no foreplay this time, no power exchange, just pure sex. He turned her toward him. She hooked her leg over his and he slid into her. Her arms wrapped around his neck. They seemed to be of one mind, their bodies melding into an erotic dance of thrusts and parries.

She was as greedy as he was. Her hands slid down his back, cupping that perfect ass her fingers had itched to touch since she'd first set eyes on it. She rolled him to his back, rising up and straddling him. Her motions were rougher than his, her pussy demanding all of him and more. She slapped her pelvis against him, burying his penis so deep inside her she cried out.

Closing her eyes, she rode him hard.

Someone wrapped their arms around her, holding her breasts. She was so close to orgasming that she didn't bother to even look. The wave built to a head and came crashing down around her. The sound of her frenzied heartbeat filled her ears. She couldn't move. She was speared by Jacob's still-erect penis, held upright in another person's arms. She opened one eye. Jacob appeared unperturbed. She turned her head far enough to see Michael's towheaded curls.

"Spoilsport," she whispered and congratulated herself that she could say anything at all. Two men in bed? Her libido was already leaping to the possibilities. Her sensibilities fled.

Michael grinned. Nudging her bra strap aside, he kissed her bare shoulder. "Good evening, pretty lady." He kissed his way down her shoulder and upper arm.

Her arms broke out in gooseflesh.

Michael lifted his head. "Chilled?" He ran his hands up and down both her arms.

Inside her, Jacob wiggled his cock. She turned her attention to him, a shy smile on her lips. He grinned. It transformed his face from dark demon to mischievous child. "You planned this?"

He nodded.

"Thank you, Master."

"I'm told it's every woman's fantasy." In response she turned her back to him, settling herself back on his erect shaft. He slid a finger down her spine. "Don't forget me now."

"You're unforgettable," she murmured. A tiny part of her whispered, *Why leave?*

Michael winked. "How about me?"

"You?" She reached out and ruffled his curly mass of hair. "You're a dream. You can't be real."

Cupping a breast, he bent forward and kissed her erect nipple. "Feel real?"

"Hmm, not really."

He seized the nipple between his teeth, sucking it and the areola into his mouth. His body stretched out on the bed, one long line of curve and muscle. She felt Jacob's hands at her hips. Jacob began to rock her back and forth, a slow rhythm that Michael immediately adapted to.

Michael licked a path between her breasts down to her navel. Marie fisted her hands in his hair, his curls twirling around her fingers. Jacob's gentle rocking had her

sighing. She leaned forward slightly, enabling him to pull almost completely out of her vagina before sliding back in. She loved the prolonged feeling of his shaft, the way the head of his penis teased her opening.

She moaned softly.

Michael glanced up at her through baby-fine blond eyelashes, his blue eyes as bright as the sky on a cloudless day. He seemed magical, like a twisted fairy. Then he parted her labia with his fingers, pressed his lips to her clitoris and began to lick. All thoughts fled.

She lasted exactly three moans, two sighs and a high-pitched whimper. Then she came, the quickest she'd ever done so without use of something battery powered.

She leaned back and Jacob enfolded her in his arms, rolling them to their sides. She felt just a smidgen guilty for ignoring Michael, but he didn't appear to be the cuddling type. In fact, he vanished as quickly as he had appeared.

Pity. She was just getting comfortable with the idea of having two men at her disposal. Although with the orgasm she'd just had she didn't feel cheated. *Okay, maybe a little.* The island sex was making her greedy. She felt Jacob hard against her leg. She turned in his embrace. "Ready?"

He grinned. "Always."

Chapter Four

A hand covered Marie's mouth. "Wake up." Someone shook her shoulder.

Marie opened one eye. It was Selene. "Go away," Marie muttered. She'd been dreaming. And it had involved both Michael and Jacob. Her subconscious was a kinky minx.

"A boat is here for you. Your way out."

Marie bolted upright. "Here? Where is it?" She pulled a sheet around her as she stood. She glanced at the indentation in the bed beside her. "Where's Jacob?"

"Showering. You have little time."

Marie hesitated, glancing toward the bathroom. She fancied she could still feel the touch of Jacob's hand against her body, like a brand.

"Will you stay then?" Selene whispered.

"No, no, of course not." She headed for the door.

Selene snickered. "You'll need clothing to return to your world." She handed Marie a bikini and sheer skirt.

Marie dropped the sheet and dressed as she headed out the door. How quickly she'd abandoned modesty. She hurried down the palace steps, Selene trailing behind her. Outside, the sun was just beginning to rise. The air was cool against her skin.

Stay or go? She bit her lip. *Go, of course.* But her body was sluggish to respond.

Selene pressed a key into Marie's hand. "Quickly now."

"But nobody leaves unless he explicitly permits it."

The hint of smile brushed Selene's lips. "That is true, in part. We'll be punished for weeks for letting his new toy escape." She did not sound worried.

Marie held up the key. It was oddly shaped, with its head forming two circles that looked suspiciously like handcuffs and a shaft that was thick and ridged like a miniature penis. "What is this?"

"Your way back if you choose it."

Marie could only stare. "What?"

"Make note of where you dock. If you present the key to the owner of the shipping company he will know how to bring you back."

"Back? Here?" She'd never come back. She held the key up, turning it slowly. Would she ever find someone like Jacob in the real world? Could she submit to his rule, present herself on both knees to him and accept his collar? She felt wet just thinking about it. *No. I have a home, a life.* She closed her hand around the key but looked longingly at the mist-shrouded cliffs behind her.

Selene put her finger to Marie's lips. "Speak no words you'll regret later." She stood on tiptoe and placed a kiss on each of Marie's cheeks. Their eyes met. Selene's were deep brown, a hint lighter than Jacob's. Marie wet her lips with the tip of her tongue. She could stay just a few more days. Selene broke eye contact first. "The boat is waiting. Hurry now." Selene turned her toward the water then tucked a bloom behind Marie's ear. "For luck," she whispered.

Yes, she could see the boat now. She took off at a run, the sand sucking at her bare feet, trying to slow her progress. The filmy skirt she wore over her bikini tangled in her legs. Yet she still ran. The water slapped at her ankles, then her knees. She felt tears sting her eyes.

She refused to look back.

"Here now, Miss." Strong hands gripped her arms and wrists, pulling her into the boat. It was little more than a rowboat with a motor, big enough for maybe eight men, plenty of room for the two men who watched her with curious eyes and herself. She dimly heard the engine rev and then the boat began to cut through the waves.

She looked back and thought she saw Selene on the shoreline. Selene raised her hand. Marie copied the gesture. The island mists quickly swallowed the sands. She strained her eyes, shading them from the early morning sun with the flat of her hand.

If she looked closely she could almost see Jacob waiting there for her on the edges of Loki's cliff. She dropped her gaze to the key she held clenched in her fist.

Pulling the bloom from behind her ear, she held the stem between her thumb and forefinger, twirling it. It was lovla, of course. She brought the bloom to her face, inhaled deeply then threw it into the sea. It bobbed on the waves, a splash of color against the rolling gray seas.

Her heart thudded in her throat. And she knew she had her answer. She'd be back.

The End

About the Author

Christine McKay was born and raised in northeastern Wisconsin, graduated in a class of less than 54 students, and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science at a local college taught mostly by nuns. She is the oldest in her family, with two brothers and one sister.

Christine lives on a farm with her husband and an assortment of four-legged creatures including goats, mules, dogs, rabbits, cats, chickens, a donkey, and a llama. Her favorite authors include Robin McKinley, Patricia McKillip, Anne McCaffrey, Ayn Rand, Andre Norton, and Nora Roberts.

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

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