



IN THE HEAT
OF THE MOMENT

KIM DARE

SUMMER
SEDUCTIONS

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In the Heat of the Moment

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Warning: This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-melting*.

Summer Seductions



IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT

Kim Dare

Dedication

To everyone who knows there is no one true way.

Chapter One

"I thought you'd like the look of him. Rumour has it he'll do anything you want. Really...*anything*."

Brett Morton stared across the crowded dance floor. His friend was very wrong. The sight of Shawn Tate practically naked and wrapped around another man was not at all to his taste. Knowledge of the rumours already running around the hotel only made it worse.

It was always the bloody same. A beautiful new submissive walked into a place like this and all hell broke loose. Two minutes later, every dominant guy in a twenty-mile radius was boasting that he already knew him and had already screwed him.

Brett left his friend standing by the bar without a word. He strode across the dance floor, straight towards a young man he'd been quietly keeping his eye on for months.

Halfway there, he saw the man dancing with Shawn yell something to a friend standing a few yards away. The second guy grinned and shimmied between dancers to press up against Shawn's back, sandwiching the smaller man between them.

Brett jostled his way past the crowding bodies. Every damned man on the floor seemed determined to prevent him from reaching the three dancers on the opposite edge of the dance floor. He finally arrived at their side, just in time to see Shawn look over his shoulder to smile at the man behind him.

As he turned back, Shawn's eyes flashed towards him and opened very wide.

"Brett! What are you –?" He pushed against the bare chested man in front of him, but the guy just wrapped his arms more firmly around him. His grip on Shawn's arse, where his low slung cut offs barely clung to his body, tightened. Ignoring all of Shawn's efforts to push him away, he glowered at Brett.

"Who the hell are you?" he yelled over the thumping music.

"He's my boss," Shawn said, looking from the man in front of him to the man behind him and then back to Brett again. "I..."

Brett cast a pointed look at the hands still pressing against the first man's chest.

"I believe he's telling you to back off."

"Fuck off, if you want to chase your secretary 'round your desk, do it at work. We saw him first. If you want him – you can bloody well wait until we're done."

Brett didn't miss the stress the man put on the word *we*. He looked from him to the other man, whose arms were also wrapped firmly around Shawn, staking a claim on the younger man's body.

As he saw it, any man who went to a BDSM resort and purported to be a dominant should be able to back up that claim on his own. If he needed his friend to stand up for him, he really should have picked a different sort of lifestyle. Either that, or he should admit he was a submissive and just bloody well get on with it.

Brett reached between them and took hold of Shawn's wrist. Each of the other men tightened his grip on him. Shawn twisted around to look at each of them in turn, obviously not at all in favour of being caught in the middle of a three-way mine's-bigger-than-yours contest.

"Don't be tiresome, children," Brett told the younger men sandwiching Shawn. One let go of his prize to square off against him. The other immediately did the same so he could back up his friend. That was all Brett needed from them. He deftly manoeuvred Shawn from between them and put the smaller man behind him.

"Who the – ?" one of the would be dominants began.

"Yes, yes, very interesting," Brett said, letting boredom seep into every word as the music faded into a quieter but equally thumping rhythm. "Now, you can either have a temper tantrum in the middle of the dance floor – in which case you'll be thrown out. Or you can just accept the fact that whatever you planned to do with Shawn isn't going to happen – and find someone else to play with."

"You'll be chucked out too. Let's see if you're so bloody sure of yourself if we all take it outside." He pushed at Brett's chest. "You won't be the one fu –"

He tried to shove Brett again. Brett only had a certain amount of patience to waste on a man like that. He caught the other guy's wrist and simply twisted until he dropped to his knees with a yelp.

"Brett!" Shawn put his hand on his arm, trying to get his attention. "What are you...?"

Brett turned to the second man who was watching it all happen, wide eyed and apparently completely incapable of believing he really was being caught up in a real

confrontation. "I suggest you take him up to the bar and ask the barman, very politely, for some ice to put on his wrist," Brett told him as he released the first man's arm.

The guy looked from Brett, to his friend and back again. He dragged his friend to his feet and backed away as if he expected Brett to suddenly launch himself after them at any second.

Brett watched them go, shaking his head at the state of men who were calling themselves dominants these days.

When he turned around, Shawn was also staring wide eyed at him—it was a far better look on him than it had been on the other men. Big blue eyes gazed at him through impossibly long lashes, his lips were slightly parted too, as if in invitation. He blinked at Brett as if he was completely out of it.

Brett took him gently by the hand and led him into one of the side rooms off the dance floor. The smaller room didn't benefit from the same degree of air conditioning as the dance floor. Sweltering summer heat surrounded them the moment Brett closed the door, but at least they had the room to themselves and some degree of privacy.

"Are you okay?" he asked Shawn.

Shawn nodded.

Brett guided him to sit on one of the arm chairs on the other side of the room, looking out over the terraces that led down to the hotel's private beach.

"How much have you had to drink?"

Shawn shook his head. "Nothing," he murmured, confusion clinging to each syllable. "It's barely past lunch."

Brett tilted Shawn's head back and studied his eyes. "Drugs?"

He shook his head again, but he didn't try to escape Brett's gentle grip. "I don't."

"Good boy." Brett pushed a lock of blond hair back from the other man's forehead.

"Has anyone bought you a drink—a soft drink or anything?"

"No," Shawn shook his head again. "I was just dancing and then you turned up and..."

"And it's a good thing I did," Brett told him.

"Why?"

As Brett crouched down in front of Shawn, their height difference disappeared. He was able to look the smaller man straight in the eye for the first time since he saw him on the dance floor. "You're twenty-one, darling. You can't be *that* innocent." Could he? He looked so bemused right then, it actually seemed possible.

"We were going to have sex," Shawn said. "Me, and Michael and his friend Derek were going to have sex, but then you turned up and..."

"And made sure you didn't do anything that you would regret when you sober up," Brett finished for him.

"I'm not drunk."

"You obviously don't know what you're doing."

Shawn frowned, wrinkling the skin between delicate blond eyebrows. "Yes, I do."

"No, you don't," Brett said, stroking his cheek to soften the correction.

"Yes, I do," Shawn repeated with a snap, suddenly pushing his hand away.

"This," Brett waved his hand towards the noise bleeding in from the dance floor, and the hotel, and all the people who were no doubt screwing themselves senseless in all the rooms around them. "This is not where you belong."

Shawn belonged in a nice, well thought out, one on one scene — he belonged in the scene Brett had been planning for months.

Shawn's frown deepened. "You're not making any sense, Brett. Are *you* drunk?"

"I don't drink when I come to places like this."

Shawn seemed to search for something to say. "There something I don't know about Michael and Derek — is that it?"

"There's a great deal you don't know about the men who visit this sort of hotel." He studied the younger man and tried not to picture what could have happened to someone as obviously naive as Shawn in a BDSM hotel that catered to the truly hardcore element of the lifestyle. "What in heaven's name ever possessed you to come here?"

Shawn Tate stared at his boss for several long moments. He tried to make mental space for the fact that the man he'd been trying to push out of his fantasies for the last six months was right there in front of him, wearing a skin tight pair of leather trousers and very little else.

"Who brought you here?" Brett demanded.

"A taxi." The moment the words passed his lips, Shawn realised it was a stupid thing to say. Even worse than that, it sounded as submissive as hell – and that couldn't happen.

"Who told you about this place then?"

"I heard about it at a club." Shawn took a deep breath and folded his arms across his chest as he tried to pull himself together. He looked at the door. He had to get out before he said something really stupid – like confess that he had a huge crush on his boss and would happily drop to his knees whenever Brett wanted.

Shawn cleared his throat and pushed that image out of his head. "I'm sorry, Brett, but if there's a reason why you practically dragged me off the dance floor, I'd like to know what it is."

"You were in way over your head. Someone had to make sure you –"

"I didn't need to be rescued."

"Yes, you did," Brett told him – as if he had the right to have the final say in the matter.

As Shawn stared back into the other man's eyes, he realised that Brett really believed it. He really believed that he'd been protecting him. Shawn took a deep breath as he recognised that he was standing on quicksand. He had to get out of there before this all went to hell.

"Brett, I hate to be the guy who has to break this to you, but bottoms like sex too. They like going to hotels like this. They like having sex with the men they meet there." That was good. That sounded strong and in control. A little bit sarcastic too, but that was okay.

Brett looked less than impressed. "You don't know what you're talking about."

"I like to do all that," Shawn rephrased, saying each word very slowly, as if that might help. He dropped a little more sarcasm into his tone, wondering if Brett would back off more quickly if he acted like a brat and pissed him off.

Brett glared at him in blatant disapproval. Shawn knew he shouldn't care about the other man's opinion one way or the other, but he did. And Brett had no right to disapprove of him right then.

"I came here for exactly the same reason as you. Don't look at me as if there's something wrong with that." Shawn stood up. Brett was immediately upright and standing in his way.

Shawn tilted his head back and met the taller man's gaze. "This has nothing to do with my working for you," Shawn reminded them both. "It's none of your business who I have sex with, or where or how I conduct my sex life."

Brett caught hold of his arm.

"No," Shawn pulled his arm away. "You have no right to interfere."

The older man let him go, but he didn't get out of his way. He looked down at Shawn, very serious.

Shawn sighed. "Look, you obviously thought I was in trouble, so..." he looked down for a moment. "Thank you. It's great that you stepped in and tried to help someone who works for you. And if I'd been out of my depth, I'm sure I'd be very grateful. But I'm fine, and this is all just a misunderstanding."

"I haven't misunderstood anything," Brett announced. "You shouldn't be —"

Squaring his shoulders, Shawn tilted his chin up and met Brett gaze. "I'm a grown man. I can look after myself. So, step aside."

Brett stayed right where he was.

Shawn took a deep breath. The subtle scent of Brett's aftershave teased his senses. For a moment he was back in work, he was looking over his shoulder as he pointed out something on the computer monitor and he was desperately trying not to let anyone guess that he was imagining Brett bending him over that table.

"You told them to back off when I tried to push them away. What gives you the right to keep me where I don't want to be?" he demanded. "I don't belong to you."

That was an important point to remember. He didn't belong to Brett. He didn't belong to any man. He might like to be pushed around while he screwed around, but he wasn't Brett's, or anyone else's, submissive.

"I'd have thought the difference between me and them was obvious," Brett growled.

"Let me go," Shawn said, one last time. He had to get away before he forgot everything he'd learnt in these clubs and let Brett think he was something he wasn't. He

didn't belong to Brett, he reminded herself again, even if the other man seemed to think he did.

With obvious reluctance, Brett finally stepped back and let him pass.

Shawn fled. Brett didn't seem to be making any real attempt to catch up with him but his long loping stride still meant he wasn't very far behind when Shawn made it back to the edge of the dance floor.

He looked out over the mass of crowded bodies. The best thing to do was put Brett out of his mind and go back to having a good time. That's what he'd come to the hotel to do. There was no reason to change his plans just because someone else from the same office had the same idea.

He'd dance on his own until a suitable, dominant man came along. They'd have some fun, and he'd go back to remembering that Brett was his employer and nothing more. Shawn cast a glance over his shoulder. Brett still watched him.

Turning away, Shawn wove his way onto the dance floor. Reaching the centre of the gyrating mass of bodies, he closed his eyes and stood very still. As music seeped slowly into his mind, he began to sway. His body absorbed more and more of the beat, until he forgot about the men around him, until he forgot about everything.

He didn't bother to open his eyes, as he pushed his hands through his hair and rocked his hips to the rhythm. A caressing hand ran along his side and pulled him closer, a strong hard body pressed against his. Shawn leaned into the man's touch, letting him lead him into a dance for a few moments.

Other touches, other dancers swirled around him. Bare skin and leather brushed against his body, calling him to come and play with different people. Shawn tried to focus on the music, on the men around him, on the coolness of the air conditioning after the heat of the side room, but all he really felt was Brett watching him.

The moment he opened his eyes, Shawn saw his boss standing on the edge of the dance floor, glaring at him and the men around him. Shawn didn't know whose hand was caressing his back, but right then it was the wrong person—anyone but Brett was the wrong person. Shawn swallowed down the panic that thought brought with it.

If the dance floor was Brett's domain, fine. Shawn would go elsewhere. In the middle of the hottest summer in memory, it was pointless to spend his whole holiday inside anyway.

He hurried out onto the terraces that led from the hotel in steps down to the sea. Standing at the railings along the edge of the highest terrace, he considered his options. The pool on the next level down was full, as were all the loungers lining the sides. But it was another little crowded section on the terrace below that which caught Shawn's attention.

Part of that terrace had been roped off and declared a lotion station, where everyone could help each other apply their sun tan lotion – and take the chance to cop a feel of as many men as possible at the same time. Shawn grinned. Harmless, flirtatious and nothing to do with Brett Morton – just what he needed.

Shawn hurried down the steps leading to that terrace, and slipped into the roped off enclosure. The crowd instantly enveloped him. Hands slid over his body. Some were coated in sun tan lotion. Other men weren't even pretending they wanted to do anything but touch and be touched. Men surrounded him, caressing him, slipping their hands past the waistband on his denim cut offs to palm his arse.

Since his loose, low slung, shorts practically screamed their invitation to do just that, Shawn wasn't about to object. He needed men that weren't Brett touching him right then. Still, he didn't let one person's touch linger on his skin for too long. A vague smile at whichever man's hands wandered over his skin, and he turned away to welcome another stranger's touch to take their place.

Brett's sudden appearance was still too fresh in his mind. That was the problem. Until he could close his eyes and not imagine that one of the men who pulled him close and pressed his erection against his backside wasn't Brett, he couldn't really consider himself ready to have any real fun.

Shawn turned quickly away from the idea of Brett and straight into a strong, confident pair of arms. It wasn't Brett. This guy had to be half a foot shorter than his boss, barely taller than himself. Shawn met an amused pair of deep blue eyes. The simple fact that they were the opposite of Brett's stern, dark gaze appealed right then.

The other man's smile grew when he smiled back. Pulling Shawn closer, he whispered in his ear. "I saw you inside. Do you always dance with your eyes closed?"

"Always," Shawn replied. He closed his eyes again, making the guy chuckle.

"Do you open your eyes when you get laid?" he murmured in his ear, turning Shawn around so he could press up close against his back.

"Sometimes," Shawn said. Rarely, though. Guys who looked into his eyes when they had sex almost inevitably turned into guys who wouldn't believe him when he told them he wasn't a submissive.

"What are you into?" the guy asked, pressing a kiss next to his ear.

"Nothing that you're going to find out about."

Shawn's eyes snapped open.

Brett stood right in front of him, the only person in the area not rubbing himself against another person. Everyone seemed to sense he wouldn't welcome any lotion applied to his skin right then.

"Friend of yours?" the man behind him asked.

"No—he's not important." It wasn't entirely a coincidence that he said the words loudly enough for Brett to hear them. He turned to face his new friend. "Let's go and see if any of the public play areas are free."

Waiting until he was ready to think about someone else obviously wasn't doing him any good. Maybe he wouldn't enjoy himself a great deal, but at least playing with someone else would push Brett out of his mind.

The man looked from him to Brett and back again. "Do you know who he is?"

Shawn frowned.

"He's Brett Morton."

"Yes. So what?"

"So, he's... Brett Morton. And as much as I would really love to check out the play area with you, he's..."

Shawn took a step away from him, guessing where this was going. His boss obviously had a reputation in the hotel.

The guy gave him an apologetic look and pressed a very chaste kiss against his cheek, never taking his eyes off Brett. "Sort out whatever claim he has on you, and we'll have some fun. But I'm not messing around with Brett Morton's property. Sorry, sweetheart."

He walked away.

Shawn spun back to Brett. "How dare you!" he snapped.

Brett looked distinctly unimpressed. Arms crossed and feet shoulder width apart, he looked ready to give one of those lectures that made everyone in the office shiver in their shoes. Well, sod that. Shawn wasn't at work and he wasn't going to put up with it.

Turning away, he stormed into one of the private play areas that filled the other half of the terrace, sure Brett would follow him. He was right. When he stepped into one of the partitioned spaces that looked out over the railings towards the sea, the dominant was right behind him.

Brett closed the makeshift door and stepped forward.

"Oh no, you don't!" Shawn told him. "The only reason we're in here is because I want to know you're paying attention when I make it perfectly clear that you're arrogant and insufferable, and conceited and pig-headed, not to mention – blatantly bloody insane. How dare you!"

Brett stood in the middle of the private little space and listened to everything Shawn had to throw at him. When he finally fell silent, panting to force a little more oxygen into his lungs, Brett raised an eyebrow, as if asking if he was quite finished.

When he didn't immediately find enough breath to speak, Brett seemed to take that as an indication that it was his turn.

"It's not the first time you've come to this sort of hotel, is it?" he asked.

Shawn blinked at him. He hadn't been listening to a damn word. "Well, give the man a prize," he snapped.

"Whose protection are you under?"

"I can look after myself."

"You're a submissive," Brett stated, as if him saying it made it true.

"No, I'm a guy who likes bondage and rough sex – there's a difference."

"You're a submissive," Brett repeated.

"You know – for a man who supposedly hears everything that goes on in the office you're incredibly deaf on holidays. I like sex, okay? I prefer to have sex with dominant men. What is your problem with that?"

Shawn blinked.

Brett really wasn't the only one who needed to recognise the blatantly bloody obvious, was he?

Brett wanted him. Brett, the man Shawn had been fantasising about for months, was warning other guys away from him because he wanted him for himself.

For the first time since he'd seen Brett in the club, Shawn took the time to really appreciate the view. Brett in a business suit was good. Brett in those leather trousers was truly magnificent. Shawn ran his eyes over the other man's bare chest, over each sculpted muscle, down to his boots and back up again until he reached Brett's short, dark hair.

As long as he made it clear what he was offering the other man, as long as Brett could understand that submission wouldn't be part of the deal, then perhaps it might not be a bad way to pass the rest of the day.

Shawn closed his eyes for a moment. He wasn't fooling anyone, least of all himself. If there was a chance he could play with Brett on the right terms, he'd grab it with both hands and hold on to it for as long as he could.

"Enjoying getting screwed by dominant men doesn't make me a submissive, Brett," he said, quite impressed by how level his voice was. Closing the gap between them, he smiled up at him. "It might make me a slut though."

Brett didn't look impressed. Shawn reached out and ran his fingertips over the larger man's chest. "You could call me that if you like," he offered. "Would you like me to be *your* slut for a little while, Brett?" He leaned up and whispered the last words in his ear. "Would you like to chain me to the arch, down there on the next terrace? Would you like to whip me, screw me?"

Brett took him by the wrists and held him away from his body. "No."

"No?" Shawn said, looking down at the line of Brett's cock straining against his leather trousers. If the guy wasn't going to admit he wanted play, Shawn wasn't going to beg. He shrugged and tried not to care. "Then we have nothing else to talk about, because I came here to get laid. If you're not up to the job—I've never had any trouble finding a man who is."

Brett's grip around his wrists tightened.

"You're a submissive," he said a third time. "Whoever told you otherwise is an idiot."

"I make up my own mind," Shawn snapped. "I don't need anyone else to tell me who or what I am, and I'm no submissive."

Brett didn't even bother to answer – he'd laid down his verdict and that was evidently that. "You shouldn't be wandering around a place like this on your own."

"No one's ever complained before."

"You're twenty-one, submissive and stunning. They didn't tell you you're a stupid little fool for putting yourself at risk, because they were too busy hoping you'd play with them. You going to a hotel like this without someone watching over you is –"

"Watching over me?" Shawn cut in, rushing his words out so fast, he wasn't sure they made any sense. The words weren't really important anyway. Stopping Brett before he was tempted to start believing the things he said – that was important. "Voyeurism?" he babbled on. "Is that what rocks your boat? You're welcome to watch if you want to. I don't go into the private rooms so whatever I do, you'll be able to watch every minute of it."

"You don't use the private areas?" Brett asked.

"You never know which guys are psychos until after they lock the door. I play in public," Shawn said firmly. He didn't play in private and he didn't pretend to be a submissive. It wasn't much as standards went, but it was something.

"We're in a private room right now."

Shawn's mouth went dry as he realised he'd made one hell of a tactical error. "I guess I just don't see you as a threat then, do I?" he managed to snap.

Brett spun him around, pulling him back against his chest and pinning Shawn's hands to his own chest with one hand as he covered Shawn's mouth with his other hand. "You really have no idea what you're risking in this place, do you?" he growled into his ear.

Shawn tried to speak. Brett's hand swallowed all his words.

"I know the men in this club better than you ever will. They will use you and hurt you and when they're finished, they'll throw you away. Is that what you want?"

Shawn gave up trying to talk, and nodded enthusiastically.

Brett dropped his hand as if he'd bitten him.

"That's what I came here for," Shawn hissed, trying not to love the strength he felt pouring through Brett's body as he held him painfully tight.

"Really?" Brett goaded.

"Yes!"

"You just offer yourself to every man who takes an interest in you?" Brett demanded.

Shawn laughed. "I don't know if I should be flattered that you think I have that much energy, or insulted that so few dominants want to screw me?"

"You have no idea what a real dominant is."

"I know if they're real when they have they cock buried balls deep in my arse and —"

Brett's hand clamped over his mouth again.

Shawn sucked a deep breath against his palm, not caring if he came across as a brat or a slut. As long as he made damn sure he didn't accidentally give Brett the impression he was a submissive, he was sure everything would be fine.

"A real dominant would never let you go once he'd caught you." His grip tightened around Shawn's wrists.

Shawn shifted a little, testing the other man's hold. He could get out of it if he needed to, or at least force the other man to use both his hands to keep him in place. Knowing that didn't help at all. Maybe Brett hadn't meant the words to sound like a threat, or a promise, or the hottest idea Shawn had ever heard, but they did.

Brett lowered his hand from Shawn's mouth.

"You really think you know what you're doing?" He ran his hand down Shawn's arm, past the point where his forearms covered his chest and down to his abs.

Shawn held his breath as he nodded.

"What are you into?"

"Isn't this the point where someone who has no bloody right to interfere says, 'nothing you're going to find out about'?" Shawn couldn't make the sarcasm work. It came out like a whisper, like a plea for reassurance.

"Answer," Brett ordered.

"I like it rough," Shawn said. "I like bondage and I like pain. Do whatever you want, just don't expect me to jump to do whatever you say. Like I said before, I'm not a submissive."

"Oh?" Brett asked.

"If we need more lube or more condoms—I might just leap at your command to go and get some—but if you want a drink you can damn well get it yourself. And I have no interest in kneeling at your feet unless I happen to have my lips wrapped around your cock. And the chances of me polishing any shoes that don't belong to me are non-existent."

Shawn knew he was babbling, but he couldn't quite stop the words falling from between his lips. He took a deep breath and held it in, just to make sure he fell silent for a few seconds.

Brett trailed his fingers further down his body. He slid a hand straight past the worn denim shorts and found his cock.

The air rushed out of Shawn's lungs.

"It's a wonder these shorts don't slide right off you, the amount of sun cream the guys slicked you with."

Shawn swallowed as Brett wrapped his fist around his cock inside the loose fitting denim. He held him just a fraction too tight to be comfortable. Strong, possessive, like a man staking his claim to his property. Shawn closed his eyes.

Brett began to stroke him, very slowly. On the upstroke he rubbed his thumb across the head, smearing pre-cum down his shaft on the way back down.

"Did you get hard from all those strangers playing with you, Shawn?" Brett asked. "Do you like handing yourself over and letting whatever happens happen? Do you like giving up control?"

"It's not about giving up control. It's about getting groped and jacked off by a whole crowd of guys."

Brett laughed.

"I'm not a submissive," Shawn protested again.

"Yes," Brett drawled. "You've mentioned that quite a few times."

Shawn wriggled in his grip. "Do you want to screw me or not?" he demanded.

"Yes."

Shawn nodded, thrown slightly off balance by the simple answer. "Okay, then..."

"Submit to me and I will."

Shawn shook his head.

"I promise you, you'll enjoy it."

He shook his head again. "Tried it far more than once – didn't like it at all."

"Then you were trying it with the wrong man."

Shawn closed his eyes. "If that's all you want, go and find a sub," he said – wishing his words sounded more certain than they did.

"I already have."

Shawn shoved at Brett's hands, trying to push him away for real now, needing some space. All he succeeded in doing was twisting himself around so he faced Brett, still pressed against him.

"Hush now, I'm not going to hurt you," Brett soothed, as if he could somehow see the panic inside his head. "At least no more than you enjoy."

Shawn pushed against him. "I'm not afraid of a bit of pain," he snapped. "I've taken far more than you are into."

"So what are you afraid of?" Brett asked.

Of you being disappointed in me, Shawn thought. Of jumping through hoops and trying my damndest to please you, only to have you realise I was right all the time—I'm not a submissive. Of trying to be what you want and failing.

Shawn looked down. "I'm not afraid of anything."

"Submit to me."

"You can use me," Shawn offered. "Do whatever you want. Don't ask my permission or my opinion. Don't worry about what I want. Take what you want and walk away. If you want to turn me over your knee and paddle me, fine. You want to whip me, no problem. Put me under that whipping arch and set my back on fire, but I don't submit."

It wasn't in him to do that. If it was, he'd have found that ability when he'd searched for it so desperately in the past, when he'd tried to submit to other men.

Shawn fixed his eyes on a freckle on Brett's collar bone as Brett stared down at him. He wasn't going to make the mistake of meeting the other man's eyes. He wasn't going to look up and risk Brett seeing more than he would ever say out loud.

Chapter Two

Brett looked down at the man he'd been watching so carefully for so many months. At least part of his observations had obviously been correct. The man in his arms was indeed a submissive who didn't have a clue about what submission really meant. Brett just hadn't guessed that some fool had put the *wrong* ideas into his head.

"On your knees."

Shawn only hesitated for a second. As Brett's grip on him slackened, he slid out of his hold and dropped to his knees at his feet.

"Hands behind your back."

Shawn put his hands behind his back. "Are you going to do the honours, or are you one of those guys who likes to watch someone work a zipper with his teeth?" he asked – still trying to infuse his tone with some combination of boredom and sarcasm and not succeeding.

As tempting as the image was, Brett forced himself to step back before he made any rash decisions. He might not know exactly what was going on with Shawn, but whichever way their evening went, he was not some stranger in a club and he couldn't act like he was.

Shawn frowned. Then he looked up and met his eyes in blatant challenge – in the way someone had obviously told him wasn't submissive.

Brett returned his inspection, having no problem with his new submissive looking him straight in the eye whenever he wanted.

"Did he hurt you?" he asked after a while.

Shawn hesitated. "Who?"

"The man who put you off submission so thoroughly."

"I was never into it to be put off it!"

It really sounded as if he believed the world would stop turning if he admitted he was a submissive. However, Brett had more important things to worry about than Shawn's dislike of the word right then. "Answer the question. Did the man who told you that you weren't a submissive hurt you?"

Shawn looked away. "If you don't want me to suck you off there are plenty of men back at the hotel who do."

"Answer," Brett repeated, trying to keep his anger out of his voice while all the things someone could have done to make Shawn so determined to repress that side of his personality spun around inside his head.

"No," Shawn snapped. "He didn't hurt me any more than I liked, now do you want a blow job or not?" He pulled his hands from behind his back.

Brett closed the gap between them and put his hand on Shawn's shoulder, just in time to keep the smaller man on his knees. Shawn continued to stare up at him in blatant challenge.

Looking down at Shawn, it was all too easy for Brett to see the tent in his own leather trousers. If Shawn was going to fight against any attempt to help him recognise his submissive side, then it would be far easier to be patient with him if his brain wasn't clouded with arousal.

Now that he knew that he hadn't been hurt by some jerk in the way he'd first assumed, he would be a fool to say no to Shawn's offer right then.

"Yes."

For a moment, Shawn seemed to be thrown off balance by the simplicity of his answer. Then he nodded, more to himself than anyone else, if Brett was any judge. He reached out and undid Brett's fly with apparent confidence. If he was hiding nerves, he hid them very well.

He had Brett's zip down and his cock out within moments, and he didn't waste any time before leaning in and wrapping his lips around the tip. Brett left his hand resting on Shawn's shoulder as the younger man set to work, taking him further into his mouth and bobbing his head a little deeper with each movement.

He might not understand a great deal about submission but fellatio was obviously a subject he had studied and perfected in great detail. He lapped and sucked at the tip every time he pulled back, before pushing forward and taking the full length into his mouth so the glans pushed against the back of his throat and slid into the tight little cocoon.

Shawn's eyes slowly dropped closed. The panic he seemed to feel at being confronted with his submission began to dissipate. He slowed his actions, steadying Brett's cock with

one hand. He pulled back and pressed a kiss to the head, swirling his tongue around the glans and then flicking the very tip of his tongue against the most sensitive part of Brett's cock.

The longer he stayed on his knees, the more unconsciously submissive his actions and his mannerisms became. The quickie blow job Brett was sure Shawn intended to provide morphed into a long, slow, almost worshipful act as the minutes passed. Shawn opened his eyes, but he kept his gaze on Brett's cock, and he didn't look up.

He sucked deeply as he took Brett back into his throat again, murmuring his own pleasure around the shaft. His other hand came up to gently cup Brett's sacs, holding them delicately in the palm of his hand.

Brett looked down and watched genuine submissive pleasure bring a flush to Shawn's cheeks. Shawn sucked harder as his tongue traced the vein on the underside of his cock. His grip on Shawn's shoulder tightened.

The younger man glanced up to him for a moment, and then he seemed to snap back into reality. He instantly reverted to a technique all about showing the man he was going down on that he could give good, quick head when he wanted to. In moments, he had Brett on the edge of coming.

Squeezing his shoulder again, Brett made it obvious that this time his action was a warning that he was about to come. Shawn seemed to register his meaning, but he stayed where he was. He caught every drop of semen as it spilled into his mouth and he continued to suck gently on Brett's shaft until he'd drained every drop of pleasure from his body.

As he pulled away and let Brett's cock slip delicately from between his lips Shawn failed to look up. He tucked Brett's cock away and did up his fly instead, giving his entire concentration to the simple task. Brett left his hand resting on Shawn's shoulder, sure it would be needed any second.

The moment he was done, Shawn tried to pull away from him and rise – tried to distance himself from any pleasure he'd found in submitting rather than just sucking.

Brett's hand stopped him.

"Unless you've got the fastest recovery time on record, I'm not staying on my knees until you get it up again."

Brett didn't let up the pressure on his lover's shoulder.

Shawn glared up at him. "Needing to keep the other guy on his knees just so you can feel like a bigger man is pathetic."

The goading didn't mean much to Brett, except that he would never get Shawn to listen to a word he said while he kept him on his knees. "I'm a foot taller than you, do you really think that's why I'm keeping you there?"

"No, I think you believe keeping me on my knees it will somehow convince me I'm some sort of latent submissive. Well, I'm not."

"Get up."

The moment he took his hand off his shoulder, Shawn jerked to his feet.

Brett caught him and pulled him close, trapping Shawn's hands behind him. Shawn instinctively tried to push him away, right up until the moment Brett brought his lips down over his and took complete control of his mouth in a deep, scorching kiss.

As easily as that, Shawn melted back into the submissive who'd knelt so comfortably at his feet just a few moments earlier.

Brett moulded their mouths together and Shawn parted his lips, offering his mouth to the other man as naturally and as submissively as anyone ever could. He leaned into Brett's body, pressing against him in supplication and offering.

Holding the other man close, letting his hands slide over a perfect expanse of bare skin. Shawn clung to him in return, giving up control of the kiss and his body as easily as Brett demanded it.

Letting his brain fire into action as the kiss gentled and trailed off into another and then another, Brett couldn't work out what the hell his new submissive was so scared of.

"You're a fantastic submissive," he whispered into Shawn's ear as he trailed the kiss back along his jaw, guessing lack of confidence might be at the root of it all.

"No, I'm not." Shawn pushed away from him, all signs of the wonderful submissive who'd hung in his arms disappearing as if someone had flicked a switch inside him.

"It's the truth," Brett said simply.

"It's false advertising is what it is," Shawn snapped as he turned and looked out over the sea.

That response sounded promising—it was honest for one thing. Brett let him go and stayed where he was, waiting to see what would happen next.

"I don't..." Shawn closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He sat down on the edge of the terrace, looking out over the waves. He pulled his knees up to his chest, closing in on himself as he spoke. "I know. Okay. I know that I sometimes act in a way that some guys mistake for submission. But I don't mean to—I'm not trying to cheat anyone out of what they thought they were going to get from me."

Brett walked across and put his hand on his shoulder. The way the words tumbled out made it obvious that they had been building up inside him for far too long. They were pouring out now, whether Shawn wanted them to or not.

"I don't want that," Shawn whispered. "I don't want to spend my life fetching and carrying for someone else just because I like rough sex. And I don't want to be treated like dirt just because I like feeling the kiss of a whip on my back now and again."

"And you think that's what submission is all about?"

"Isn't it?" Shawn asked bitterly. "Try it some time, and see what happens."

"Some submissives like to serve," Brett said gently. "But that's not the only way to submit to a man. Any dominant who knows what he's doing knows that," he added, more than capable of imagining the kind of temper tantrum a bad dominant could throw if a submissive like Shawn wouldn't let him have everything his own way.

Shawn just kept staring out over the waves.

Brett crouched down next to him. "Submitting is about offering yourself to another person. It's about opening yourself up to them. And that doesn't have to involve service. There is no right way or wrong way to submit. Whoever told you otherwise was wrong."

Shawn bit his lip. "I thought it would be different," he whispered. Then he stopped abruptly, as he realised he was saying something he wasn't sure if he wanted anyone else to know.

"It's okay," Brett coaxed. "Go on."

Shawn was silent for so long, Brett was half sure he wasn't going to answer. And then words came.

"When I started going to the clubs I wanted... I thought I wanted that. I thought it would be so easy. I see the other guys like me kneeling at men's feet. They jump up so eager to please all the dominants, and I see how happy it makes them. And I wanted that so badly I could taste it. But it just doesn't... it just makes me feel dirty and pathetic and I hate it."

Brett sat down next to him and put his arm around the smaller man's shoulders. Against all his expectations, Shawn didn't push him away. Brett let silence reign while he thought things through. "It really pisses me off when a complete stranger calls me sir," he offered.

Shawn frowned, but didn't turn to look at him.

"They don't know me, they don't respect me. Deferring to someone you've never met just because they like to boss someone around during sex is an entirely bizarre concept."

"You're a dominant," Shawn said. "You want a submissive."

"Yes."

Shawn nodded. He looked down at his tightly clasped hands. "You should go and find a real one."

Brett watched his profile. So submissive, so confused and scared about what that meant. And there was no way to heal that by just talking about it.

"Has a man ever given you a collar?"

Shawn shrugged. He sat in silence for a long time before he finally said, "He wanted me to wear one all the time. I know that they're hot, but you can't hide a damn thick piece of leather under a shirt collar at work."

"It's not a realistic expectation," Brett said, smiling at the simple fact Shawn was talking rather than snapping now.

"Exactly," Shawn muttered.

"That's why I've always preferred collars to be about play time rather than possession."

"What?"

"I don't want twenty-four-seven submission from anyone, Shawn. Sometimes a collar just means that one person is offering another their submission while they wear it. That they're agreeing to play by certain rules for a little while, because that's what they find pleasure in."

He took a collar out of his pocket and rested it on his leg.

Shawn glanced at it and looked quickly back out to sea. "You want me to wear it?" he asked.

"Yes."

Shawn shook his head.

Brett touched his cheek and stopped the action.

"I know you better than you think, Shawn. If you'd really given up on finding a form of submission that worked for you, you wouldn't be staying in a hotel that's all about this lifestyle."

Shawn looked from him to the collar again. "Even if I wanted to submit to someone — which I don't — the whole point of a holiday fling is that you don't have to face them Monday morning. I have to work for you and when it all goes wrong..."

"Do you really think I would take this into work?" Brett asked seriously.

Shawn wasn't certain about anything right then. He had no idea what Brett wanted from him. All he knew was that against all logic something inside him actually wanted to try to submit to the other man. In spite of the way everything had gone to hell every time he tried it in the past, some stupid part of him wanted to submit, to belong, to obey — just for a little while. Just...

He looked back to the collar.

"I'm a terrible submissive," he said, wishing his voice sounded stronger than it did. "I get bored really quickly, and I answer back, and I'm sarcastic and I hate doing what I'm told. And as soon as I come, I lose any even flitting interest in even pretending to be submissive at all and I hate it when guys treat me as if my brain fell out of my head the moment I try to submit to them, and I don't like calling anyone sir. And I really don't think someone being dominant makes someone better than me, and..."

Brett let him babble on until he finally ran out of words. Then he picked up the collar and held it out to him as if none of the things he'd listed made any difference to him.

"You should go and find a real submissive," Shawn said.

Brett continued to hold the collar out for him, to offer him the one thing that scared the hell out of him right then.

Shawn shook his head at himself, calling himself all sorts of a fool for what he was about to do. "Do you want to give me a safe word or something?" he asked.

"I've never been interested in an unwilling man. There's no need for a safe word when no still means no."

Shawn nodded. "Just for the rest of the day?" he asked.

"Yes," Brett allowed. "That will be a start."

As simple as that, Brett put the play collar around Shawn's neck. Doing up the buckle and checking the fit, he ran his fingers over the leather.

Shawn tried to take a deep breath. The leather wasn't tight, but it still seemed to stop the air going into his lungs. Brett stood up. Holding out a hand, he helped Shawn to his feet too. A second later, Shawn stood before him, not at all sure what the other man expected of him now.

"We're going to go into the hotel. We're going to have dinner. After that we'll have some fun, okay?"

The moment they stepped out of the private space, it felt like every man in the hotel was staring at him, at Brett's mark hanging around his neck. One bit of leather and he had no doubt that every man there saw him differently, saw him as less than what he was when he walked into the room. Shawn could practically feel the respect he'd demanded and gained from those men he'd already met drain away.

If Brett was aware of the change in the atmosphere, he didn't show it. If he spoke differently to him because of the collar, Shawn couldn't identify it. His new dominant made no objection to him ordering for himself or sitting at the table next to him as his equal. He asked his opinion and listened to the answers as if he actually gave a damn about what a man wearing a collar said.

Shawn clenched his hand into a fist under the table, desperately trying to resist the urge to lift his hand and rub at his neck. When their desserts were finally finished, Brett took him by the hand and led him out onto the terraces.

"Come on." He guided him across to the steps that led down to the next terrace.

"Where are we going?" Shawn asked.

"To fulfil a promise, and if I'm not very much mistaken, to fulfil a fantasy too. You made me an offer this afternoon. I'm calling you in on it."

Shawn frowned, sure that he'd actually spent several hours insulting him rather than offering him anything.

Brett kept his hand in his, leading him down the terraces until they reached a metal archway looking out over the sea. Shawn stopped.

"Strip you down. Chain you to that arch. Whip you. Screw you. Use you. Wasn't that what you asked me for earlier?"

Shawn ran his eyes over the metal work. The night had closed in around it, and it gleamed in the light of the torches that lit the steps from one terrace to the other. The arch seemed to flicker in and out of existence in time with the dancing flames. Brett's grip on his fingers tightened. Shawn looked from him to the metal work and back again.

Brett had seemed pretty bloody certain he was a submissive from the start. But for some reason, he'd still listened. He'd remembered. Given the chance to do anything at all with a man who belonged to him for the night, he'd picked the one thing Shawn had said he'd like to do. What sort of dominant did that?

It was exactly what he'd asked for a few hours earlier. But then it would have just been a bit of pain, a lot of sex and see you in work next Monday. Now it was something else. Shawn's fingers reached up to touch his collar.

He'd never felt more vulnerable in his life. His cock had never been harder either. Shawn turned to look over his shoulder.

Brett touched his cheek and stopped him before he could see anything behind him. "Yes, there are men watching us. A lot of men."

For the first time, it didn't feel like the men watching him were keeping him safe from the man he was about to have sex with. It was the exact opposite. Brett wouldn't let anything bad happen.

"That's right," Brett soothed, as if he could read his mind.

"I don't want to think of you like that," Shawn blurted out. He looked after himself. He couldn't forget that.

"If I was the one tied up, I'd want to know the person with the keys to my cuffs was looking out for me. That's not weakness, Shawn – it's sanity."

Shawn looked across to the arch. It was just a bit of kit, something similar to the dungeon furniture he could have played on in any club, but there was still something about it that made his skin prickle and his throat go dry.

"Stand under the arch."

Brett stepped aside to let him walk the final few feet on his own. Shawn couldn't make his feet move. Everyone was watching him, waiting for any sign of weakness, and he couldn't move.

"Do this because you want it," Brett told him. "Do it because you see the strength in submission—in doing what you want and in being yourself. If you do it for any other reason, you're a fool."

Was it what he wanted? He wanted the arch. He wanted the whip. He knew that much.

His fingers caressed the collar around his neck and closed his eyes for a second. Maybe he wanted Brett too. Maybe he even wanted the bit where he could feel Brett watching over him and possessing him.

And maybe there was no maybe about it. He didn't need to do it for any other reason—he wanted it. He wanted everything Brett seemed to be offering. It scared him far more than an arch or a whip. But he still wanted it.

Shawn slowly stepped forward and stood under the arch. Everything he had seen in the clubs told him that he should kneel. He should present himself in some way. He should scream his submission. He should lower his eyes and feel ashamed or afraid of what he was about to do.

He just stood where Brett ordered, and stared out over the sea. The moonlight gave the swells and breaking waves a glint of light. There was something numb, something otherworldly about standing under the arch and waiting for Brett to do as he pleased with him. When Brett came around to face him, Shawn dropped his gaze and he couldn't even bring himself to hate himself for that weakness right then.

Brett tucked a knuckle under his chin and made him look up. "That's better," he said. "Why look down when you've got nothing to be ashamed of? Keep your head up. Look straight ahead."

Shawn nodded. Brett walked around him several times, examining him from every angle until he finally stepped up close behind him. He slid his hand around his body and down past the waist of Shawn's shorts. Wrapping one hand around his erection, he used the other to undo the buttons and let the denim slide down to the floor.

His hand stayed around his shaft, slowly stroking him as Brett moved back around in front of him. He looked down Shawn's body and then back up his eyes. Shawn met his gaze.

"Good," Brett praised.

For once, it didn't feel patronising for someone to say something like that. He felt a certain sort of calm settle inside him. Yes, right then he was doing far better than he'd ever have believed possible.

Brett lowered his head kissed him, slow and deep, while he held his cock in his hand like he owned him. "I'm going to whip you now," he said as he broke the kiss.

"Yes," Shawn said, his voice slow and almost sleepy. "I'd like that."

Chapter Three

"Step out of your shorts. Feet shoulder width apart. Hands on the back of your head. Present yourself to be bound."

Shawn looked down and watched as if from outside his body as one foot stepped out of the small tangle of denim, and then the next. Lifting his face, he looked over the sea and put his hands on the back of his head. Brett hooked the cuffs attached to the base of the arch around his ankles and adjusted the chains.

Standing up, he took each of Shawn's hands and repeated the process, attaching cuffs to Shawn's wrists, pulling them above his head and out slightly to the sides. He checked the fit and altered the chains so Shawn was presented perfectly for him.

Shawn licked his lips as his throat went dry.

"Do you like the whip, Shawn?" Brett asked.

Shawn nodded. The tiny movement made the chains holding him in place rattle.

"Good." Brett walked around him and ran his hand down his back. Shawn shuddered at his touch, pulling at the cuffs holding him in place.

Brett traced a line across his back. Tensing every muscle in his body, Shawn tried to hold still and let the other man touch him however he pleased.

Slow lines trailed back and forth across his back. "Is this where you want the whip?" Brett asked.

Shawn nodded.

"Stay with me, Shawn," Brett ordered. "Keep talking."

"Yes, that's where I want you to whip me," he said softly.

Brett's finger tip drew another line across his back following the line the whip would make against his skin and making him even more desperate for it. Each moment made him more and more afraid of the possibility that it was all a tease, that Brett was only out to teach him some sort of lesson for acting like a brat. It wouldn't be the first time a dominant had done that.

"Are you going to whip me or not?" Shawn demanded.

"Yes. When it pleases me to do so." Brett's fingers stroked another line across his back.

"So what I want doesn't matter?" Shawn challenged.

"It matters. But I also respect your right to decide you'll submit to what I want for a while." Brett trailed his fingers along the line of the collar, bringing his mind back to his promise of submission. "And I respect that you have enough sense to know the difference between a man who is using you with no thought to your pleasure and a man who's enjoying watching you squirm for a little while before he gives you exactly what you want."

Shawn stared out over the sea as Brett trailed another line across his back. "Fair point," he admitted softly.

"Good boy. Do you like to be whipped here too?" He traced a line across his buttocks.

Shawn pushed back against his fingertips. "Not just whipped," he said as Brett let his finger dip between his cheeks on the way past.

Brett chuckled and turned away. Shawn twisted, trying to look over his shoulder.

"I'm not going far," Brett said, already walking back to his side.

He trailed a length of leather down his back, making Shawn tremble in anticipation.

"How much have you done?" Brett asked as he teased him with the prospect of the leather.

"Just let me have it. I can take it."

Brett walked around him and looked down his body, tracing a line across his chest to tease his nipples with the whip.

Shawn bit his lip. The leather dropped to caress his cock. Shawn looked into Brett's eyes. A quirk of his eyebrow told him that there was no chance that Brett was going to give him anything at all until he provided him with a proper answer.

"I've been whipped," Shawn said. "By someone who knew what he was doing – by someone who didn't hold back."

He looked at the whip in Brett's hand and followed the line of his arm back up to his shoulder. That man hadn't had half of Brett's muscle, half of his strength.

"Shawn," Brett warned.

"I'm a masochist, not a fool. I'll tell you when I can't take any more."

Brett chuckled and stroked his cheek with the edge of the whip. "I'll bet that the moment you feel the leather touch your skin you forget about everything else, don't you?"

Shawn stared into his eyes, trying to work out what the older man wanted from him.

Brett lowered his head for a kiss, only to stop a fraction away from bringing their lips together. Shawn stretched up to gain a real kiss, the chains rattled, but Brett stayed just out of reach.

"I won't beg," Shawn snapped.

Brett smiled and brushed his lips against his, so quick and so fleetingly that it couldn't even be called a real kiss. "I don't want you to beg. I just want to know that you want this as much as I do. And now for another kind of kiss," Brett said, touching the whip briefly to Shawn's lips before he walked away.

Shawn closed his eyes. For a long time it felt like he was the only man on the earth. The water crashed past the edge of the terrace as the breeze caressed him. Right there, right then, it felt like the rest of humanity had faded from existence, leaving him to nature's fate.

The first crack of the whip set a line of fire across his shoulders and snapped him back into reality. Shawn threw his head back as his reflexes pulled at the chains. He forced air into his lungs. One breath. Another breath. The whip caressed and flicked away again, taking a little bit of his soul with it. A third strike and Brett seemed to realise that he meant it when he said he knew what he was doing. The dominant stopped babying him with teasing touches.

The lashes began to fall steady and strong against his skin, leaving marks and lingering flames in their wake. Shawn fought back against the calm trying to seep into his mind and pushed himself to keep his mind clear and his consciousness intact. Desperate to respond to a sensation that only he had control of, Shawn pulled at the cuffs, chaffing them against his wrists.

Brett obviously noticed the little ploy and he evidently wasn't impressed. The next lash of the whip came down hard, shattering any attempt at self-control. Shawn heard something like a scream and wondered if someone else was playing nearby. The thought faded away, losing coherence as Shawn closed his eyes and gave himself completely to the whip.

It hurt. Of course it did. It hurt like hell. Lines of scorching flames seared into his skin until his whole body contracted around the whip, until the skin that hadn't felt the whip ceased to exist.

Across his shoulders and down his back, the skin swarmed with a perfect mix of pleasure and pain, with pain that became pleasure and pleasure so great that it could only be felt as pain.

Endorphins, adrenaline and pure lust coursed through Shawn's body. He writhed in his cuffs, pulling at the metal and the leather, no longer attempting to control the situation but entirely unable to control himself. In spite of all his big words, he wanted to beg. If he'd had any idea what to plead for, he would have.

Then, suddenly, nothing.

His body hung limply from the cuffs. Shawn bowed his head and panted for breath. Sweat streamed down his body, tracing little rivulets. The moment he fell still, the cool evening breeze caressed his skin. A shiver ran through him, even as his back burned.

A touch to his cheek coaxed him to lift his face but the energy simply wasn't there. Brett's hands cupped his face and tilted his head back. Shawn blinked at him, unable to raise the energy to look away or hide anything from the other man. Brett rubbed his thumb across his bottom lip. Shawn's mouth dropped open, sleepily accepting.

The thumb slipped between his lips and Shawn wrapped his lips around the digit. Sucking gently with no thought as to what technique he should be employing, he rubbed his tongue against Brett's skin, tasting the salt that lingered there.

Brett took his thumb away. Shawn didn't expect the kiss that followed. He parted his lips, just as he had when Brett offered him his thumb but he didn't take advantage of the offer.

If mouths met during a whipping, it should be heated and passionate – it should be a reminder that the man holding the whip could do as he wished with his submissive. It shouldn't have been a sweet chaste little touch of lips, but Brett kept the kiss sweet as he leaned in closer to Shawn's body, letting his clothes rub against his skin and tease his flourishing erection.

Shawn gasped and Brett smiled as he looked down between their bodies. "Ready for round two, love?"

Shawn nodded.

Brett made him look him in the eye and nod again before he accepted the answer and disappeared.

A gentle caress across his back made Shawn whimper and the chains rattle. Brett's hands ran from his shoulders and down his back, making his skin flare wherever the whip had landed.

Down further, his hands passed over the pristine skin at the small of his back. Down again and Brett's fingers splayed across his buttocks. Shawn arched his back, pushing his backside out, offering it to Brett. One hand disappeared. Shawn closed his eyes and took a slow, dreamy breath, picturing Brett in his mind's eye, reaching in his back pocket and extracting a condom and a lube.

Brett's hand connected hard with his left buttock. Shawn swayed forward as far as the chains would allow, then immediately pushed back, offering himself as eagerly for the spanking as he had for the penetration he expected.

Brett kissed the back of his neck and his hand came down again, harsh and strong against the exact same spot.

"You can have my hand or the whip, Shawn. One or the other – not both. Make your choice."

The whip. He *always* chose the whip, or the paddle, or the crop.

Hand spankings were for people who couldn't really play the game – asking for one when you were offered something more intense was like waving a flag saying you couldn't keep up. In spite of all that, Shawn squirmed against Brett's hand at the very thought of a hand spanking from him – at nothing coming between his skin and the dominant's hand. Seconds passed by. His heart raced. His eyes dropped closed.

"Hand," Shawn whispered. The slightest breeze stole the words, but Brett was right there by his lips and he caught them.

"Good boy." Brett ran his hand over the skin he'd struck. He stepped back.

It was only a hand spanking, it should have been so predictable. One hand. Left cheek, right cheek. Simple. But this was unlike any spanking Shawn had received. It was impossible to know where Brett's hand would land next. He'd concentrate on one buttock for smack after smack and then switch to the other one with no warning. The top swell of muscle one moment, and then down to the sensitive spot where his skin creased and his buttock merged into his thigh.

Shawn tried to mentally brush the spanking away as nothing, but it was so much more intimate than the whipping, more personal. It wasn't a whip. It wasn't even a hand. It was *Brett's* hand. And right at that moment, it was his master's hand.

Swallowing, trying to untangle the pain on his backside from the pleasure that surged through his body and the rush of emotions swirling inside his head, he blinked his eyes open and looked out over the sea.

Way past thinking properly when Brett lined his body up behind him, Shawn let his body do as it wished. It pushed him back against his master's body. His clothes rubbed against his raw skin and Shawn whimpered.

One moment his master disappeared, then he was back again with his cock covered in slicked latex. Shawn murmured his approval and pushed back against him.

"Hush. Enough pain. Just pleasure now." His fingers probed between Shawn's cheeks and one finger worked its way inside him. Brett had to know that Shawn wasn't fragile, that he wouldn't object to being ridden roughly, but he began to prepare him very slowly, with obvious consideration for his comfort.

Brett's finger slid back and forth, thrusting into him ever so gently, until Shawn thought he might go mad with longing for more before Brett yielded to his whimpering pleas and murmurs and added a second finger. He couldn't keep back the noises that escaped from the back of his throat, but he managed not to say any words.

He'd given control to the other man, and Brett had given him no reason to regret that choice so far. He was sure that Brett wouldn't throw a temper tantrum if his impatience got the better of him, and he demanded that his master replace that one finger with his cock right now. Shawn wasn't afraid to speak. But right then, some part of him accepted that he didn't need to speak up about what he wanted. He didn't need to demand the other man's respect or attention to his needs. He already had both those things.

"That's right – just let your master look after you," Brett whispered in his ear. The finger slid away to be replaced with two.

Shawn gasped his pleasure as they flexed inside him and rubbed against his prostate. He squirmed in his bondage, needing them to do that again but not sure how to move in a way that would make it happen.

"Shawn," Brett said. And then again, a bit louder to get his attention. "Shawn!"

Dragging a ragged breath into his lungs, Shawn stilled, his master's fingers still buried deep inside him.

"Hush," Brett whispered in his ear. "I'll take care of you. But I'm not going to let you come until I'm inside you. Understand?"

Shawn nodded.

"Use words for your master."

"I... I understand."

"Good boy."

Brett continued to move his fingers slowly, carefully, inside him. He added a third, stretching him wide open, every movement geared to his comfort and his pleasure. But not too much pleasure. It wasn't a trap — there was nothing that could make him come — nothing that prevented him from obeying his master's order not to come yet.

Finally the fingers left him. Shawn whimpered at the loss of contact with his master — but it didn't last long. Brett's body lined up behind his. His bare chest moved against Shawn's whipped back and pushed another jolt of adrenaline into his bloodstream as his cock pressed against his hole.

Shawn forced himself to stay very still and wait until it pleased his master to thrust into him. Very slowly, Brett pushed forward, filling him, stretching him. Reaching up, Brett put his hands around Shawn's wrists — just below the cuffs. As he stayed still within Shawn's body he gradually slid his palms down his arms and his torso making him aware of every inch of his body — even those parts that hadn't felt his master's whip or his body.

Brett's hands settled on his waist, steadying him, and he began to rock his hips — so slowly, so impossibly controlled. Shawn groaned but stayed still and just let his master do as he pleased with him. Each time he lodged himself in Shawn to the hilt, Shawn felt his spread fly rub against his sore backside, sending fresh sparks of pleasure through him.

Finally, Brett seemed willing to move in earnest. He began to thrust deep inside Shawn, adjusting his angle to make sure Shawn's prostate received the full pleasure of each movement of his cock inside him.

A moment later, Brett reached around and wrapped his hand around his cock. Shawn rocked with the motion as far as the cuffs would allow, into his master's hand, back against

Brett's cock, forward and back again and again. Without making any attempt to alter what his master offered him, he couldn't feel his master move and not try to echo his movement.

He couldn't just stand there and not try to give his master whatever he could in return. He clenched and relaxed around his master's shaft as much as he was capable of, thinking of nothing but the possibility he could give his master a little bit of extra pleasure.

"Come for your master, Shawn."

No submission was required to obey that order. His body took over. He came quickly, clenching even tighter around Brett's cock and pulling the other man over the edge with him.

Submission hadn't been required. But knowing that he had permission, that he was doing what Brett ordered and what would please his master, added an extra swirl of pleasure to the adrenaline and endorphins that raced through his body as his semen spilled on the rough ground in front of them.

Brett held onto him as they both fought for breath. He seemed to stay frozen behind him, softening inside him for a long time before Shawn felt him step away. Instinct made him pull at the cuffs as if that he could reach out and hold his master there forever.

The cuffs stopped him short and Brett left him there as he moved about the area behind him, no doubt dispensing with the condom and neatly tucking away his cock before he turned his attention back to his submissive.

Shawn looked up as Brett came back to face him, fighting for the energy to lift his head but needing to see his master, to find reassurance in the other man's presence.

Brett smiled gently down at him. "That's right, love."

Shawn licked his lips and tried to swallow. Even that was too much effort right then. There was just nothing left. Not to think, not to move, not to give. Nothing.

"I'm going to undo the cuffs," Brett told him.

Shawn managed a slight nod – not in permission, but in acknowledgement that he had heard and understood.

Brett undid the leather wrapped around his ankles and guided his feet together. Shawn sucked a gasping breath into his body and let it out very slowly as his muscles protested.

"I'm going to undo your wrists now."

Shawn nodded.

"Once I undo one of your hands, you're going to put it on my shoulder, understand?"

Shawn nodded again, glad to have his moves mapped out for him right then.

Brett stood close in front of him as he reached up and undid the cuff. He guided Shawn's right hand down to his shoulder and steadied him as the sudden pain of free movement made him sway. A moment later his other hand was freed.

Weakness rushed through Shawn's body. It was all he could do to find the coordination to lower his hand to Brett's shoulder. Brett wrapped his arms around the uninjured skin across the small of his back and pulled him in close, his body supporting more of Shawn's weight than he was able to support himself right then.

One of Brett's hands moved to Shawn's hair and stroked through the blond strands. "That's right, just take a moment. Good boy." Shawn dropped his head onto Brett's shoulder and let the other man hold him. "Good boy," Brett said again.

Shawn took a deep breath.

"We're going back into the hotel now."

Shawn had no idea how he was going to do that, he nodded anyway. He watched the other man's feet move across the ground as he stepped forward to stand at his side. Brett touched his cheek. "No, love."

Shawn blinked at him.

"We both know you have nothing to feel ashamed of. Look up and make sure everyone else knows that too."

"Everyone's still watching us?"

"Yes," Brett said.

Shawn nodded. He'd worry about that later. "I had shorts."

"I've got them," Brett said. "You'll be more comfortable without them for a little while."

Shawn managed another nod.

Brett put his arm around his waist, along the strip of fresh skin. Shawn shook his head. "I'm fine. I can walk on my own," Shawn protested—automatic statements reappearing in his head, even though the thought process to create new statements wasn't quite on line yet.

"When you wear my collar, you'll accept your master's help whenever you need it—no arguments."

Shawn frowned.

Brett stroked his cheek. "There's no weakness in that, Shawn."

Shawn swallowed down another instinctive protest.

"Come on, love. And remember, head up."

As they turned, he saw all the men in the hotel watching them and he tilted his chin up, just as Brett ordered him to.

"Good boy."

Shawn took a shaky step forward. His muscles didn't seem to be quite under his control. In spite of his protest, Shawn knew that he needed Brett's arm right then. The men parted to let them through as they approached the semi-circle around them. Shawn kept staring straight ahead, letting Brett worry about them and everything else.

In the hotel, Brett led them across to the elevators. "Your room or mine?"

"Mine," Shawn said. All he wanted to do now was lay down on his stomach and sleep for at least a month.

"Number?"

"Two-thirteen."

Brett led the way without needing directions. At the door, Brett dug the key card out of Shawn's shorts and opened the door.

"Thanks."

Brett helped him into the room. After letting the man practically carry him back to the room, it seemed like it would be petty to refuse him entry. The older man closed the door behind him.

Shawn hesitated. "I'm practically asleep on my feet," he said, not quite able to look Brett in the eye when he said it. He was of no use to Brett right then—he knew that. Wanting him to stay when that was the case was both childish and unrealistic.

Brett stroked his cheek. "I noticed."

Shawn waited for him to say something else, but he just stood there, looking down at him. "I could give you a blow job or something before you go, if you like," he blurted out,

not able to fail to offer the other man something right then, not wanting Brett to leave disappointed when he'd just enjoyed the best scene of his life.

"I'm not going anywhere."

Shawn frowned, trying to make his mind work so he could process something that didn't make sense.

"I'm going to wash you down, put some cream on your back and your behind and put you to bed. Then I'm going to get into bed next to you and we're both going to sleep."

Shawn shook his head. Brett steadied him as he swayed. "I can look after myself."

"Yes, you can. But right now, you're going to let me look after you anyway."

"The scene's over," Shawn said, pulling away from him, knowing that he didn't need to give Brett any more reasons not to want to repeat the experience with him. He might not be a perfect submissive, but he wasn't a submissive who needed need to be babied and coddled after the dominant was finished with him. That had to count for something.

"The scene doesn't end when someone puts down a whip. Do you even know what aftercare means?" he asked.

Shawn shrugged. "Don't need it."

"Well that's too bad, because you're going to get it."

Shawn opened his mouth.

Brett raised an eyebrow. "You agreed to try submitting to me, this is a big part of that."

Shawn shrugged again. He didn't have it in him to argue with the other man right then, not when something inside him wanted to know what would happen next.

Brett led him into the bathroom and washed his back down more gently than Shawn would ever have believed possible.

The cool water brought a few of Shawn's brain cells together. "You don't need to do all this."

"Yes, I do. Aftercare isn't just about making sure you're patched up, love. It's about..." he seemed to look for the right word for a long time. "It's about respect."

Shawn stared into the bathroom mirror as Brett stood behind him, completely focused on the task at hand.

"It's a sign that the man you're with doesn't think that anyone who offers his submission so beautifully, is there to be used and tossed aside. No dominant worthy of the word should treat someone like that. I hurt you. We both know you loved every minute of it, and I'm sure there's part of you that will like the way the soreness lingers in your skin for the next few days, but right now, it's important to acknowledge that I hurt you and that I help you begin to heal. That's just basic respect."

Shawn swallowed and let his eyes drop closed.

"Offering your submission to someone is more than just letting someone hurt you, Shawn. You hand yourself over to them. They are responsible for returning you to yourself in good condition."

He squeezed the water out of a flannel and let the soothing liquid wind its way down Shawn's back. Shawn kept his eyes closed as Brett washed his back and then used another flannel and wiped his face and then the rest of his body, washing the sweat and the soreness from his skin.

"Do you have anything to put on your back?"

Shawn dug a tube of ointment out of his wash bag. "You've done more than enough, I can..." He caught Brett's eye.

The older man ran a finger tip over the edge of the collar. Shawn handed the ointment over.

Brett took him by the hand and led him to the bed. He left Shawn standing there while he turned back the blankets and then he guided him to lie down on the sheet and rest his head on the pillow. Sitting on the edge of the bed he began to slowly smooth the ointment into his skin in a neat, even coating.

"Are you always like this with the men you screw?" Shawn asked softly, knowing he hadn't done anything to warrant special attention, but needing to hear that confirmed for his own sanity right then.

"I like to think that I always treat the men who submit to me with respect. But, yes, I do feel differently about you."

Shawn closed his eyes as Brett's touch dropped down to apply the cream to his buttocks.

"I've been watching you for a long time," Brett said.

"I know," Shawn whispered. He'd felt it every day he worked for the other man, he hadn't wanted to acknowledge it, but he had known he was being watched.

Brett stroked his skin in silence for a long time.

"After tonight..." Shawn began, as the not knowing became too much for him to hold inside.

"Do I intend to let you walk away?" Brett asked. He chuckled softly. "No, love, I don't. I want you to belong to me for far longer than one night – forever if I'm any judge."

Shawn swallowed. "Really bad idea."

"Is it? Tell me why."

Shawn hesitated, thrown off balance by a man who wanted to both own him and listen to him. "Because this isn't real submission."

Brett's hand connected sharply with the back of his thigh, below the point with the original spanking stopped.

Shawn jerked.

"Respect is something you should show for yourself as well as demand from others. What you offer a man is as real as anything I've ever seen. Dismissing yourself like that is unacceptable."

"I'm sorry," Shawn said. Dropping his gaze, and then hating himself for the weakness in his response. He took a slow, deep breath. "This, my sort of... what I offer a dominant is what he likes for an hour or a night. It's not the sort of submission a dominant man keeps around. I know what will happen. Sooner or later you'll start to hate me for not being a real submissive. And as sore as my arse is right now, a spanking won't convince me otherwise."

Brett stroked the skin he'd struck a moment before, soothing it. "Good boy."

Shawn frowned. "A test?"

"Yes."

"Did I fail?"

"No."

"I apologised," Shawn whispered.

"Only because deep down you know damn well that you'd give any other man who spoke about you that way a tap too."

Shawn shrugged. Pulling the pillow further under his head, he sighed his confusion into the cotton.

Brett continued to smooth cream into his skin.

"What exactly do you want from me?" Shawn asked eventually.

"To begin with, I want you to stop screwing or playing with other people."

"While you?"

"Do the same," Brett said easily.

Shawn nodded his possible acceptance of that sort of equality.

"I'd like to explore what this could mean for us." Brett turned his attention to the collar and stroked the skin that ran alongside it.

"Meaning?"

"I'd like to you continue to offer me your submission."

"All the time?"

"No, just when you wear the collar. And before you ask, you don't put it on and take it off by yourself. That's my decision. But you can certainly expect me to respect any request to remove it if you want a scene to end."

Shawn closed his eyes. "At work?"

"I wouldn't expect you to submit to me there."

"So, no one would have to know?"

"That you submit to me or that we're together?" Brett asked.

"Both."

"Submission is something I am happy to keep private—it's no one's business but ours. But if we are together, everyone will know we're together. Don't expect me to hide our relationship as if I'm ashamed of it."

Shawn frowned. "I can't work you out."

"I know, love. Give it time. We have the rest of the holiday to come to an understanding about how things will work when we go home. For now, you just need to rest. Everything else can wait until tomorrow."

Standing up, Brett stripped off his clothes and switched off the light to lie down on the bed next to Shawn, trying not to jostle the mattress too much while he found a comfortable

position. Turning his attention back to his lover in the half darkness, Brett wondered how far they would be able to go in the days left of their holidays.

The man he'd been falling steadily in love with for months, looked so fragile then, so unsure of everything. But even as he lay there in the shadows, exhausted from the scene and the emotional impact of confronting his fears about submission, there was an undeniable strength to him. If Brett could just convince him to trust – to try. That sort of strength added to his own – they'd be unstoppable.

"Part of me wishes you were a different type of man," Shawn whispered into the darkness.

"Oh?"

Brett tried to make out his expression in the shadows and read his emotions from his eyes, but Shawn's eyes stayed closed. His voice was so sleepy with submission and fatigue, Brett had to duck his head closer to him to hear the next words he said.

"I wish I wasn't so damn scared that you are the type of man I could fall in love with."

Brett stroked a lock of Shawn's hair back from his face. "If I didn't feel the same way, don't you think I would have made a move on you a long time ago?"

Shawn opened his eyes, and in the faint light that made its way into the room, he met Brett's gaze.

"This isn't just a holiday fling, love."

Shawn slowly nodded his understanding against the pillow, although Brett was pretty sure he didn't really understand – that was something that would have to come with time.

"Do you want me to take the collar off before you go to sleep?" he asked.

Shawn thought about it for several long minutes.

"I don't want anything that involves me needing to move," he said slowly, as if testing out the idea as he said the words. "It's loose enough that I can probably sleep in it quite comfortably."

Brett saw what he couldn't bring himself to say reflected in Shawn's eyes. He didn't want to give up the collar right then. He needed the leather permission to be submissive for a little while longer – to feel the reassurance of his master's loving dominance for a little while longer – at least until he felt safe enough to think about the future they might have together without panicking.

Brett pressed a kiss to Shawn's forehead, content to give him time and quiet to think things through.

"Sleep well, love."

Shawn nodded and closed his eyes.

Brett lay on the bed, leaving a little bit of mattress between them, letting them have a bit of room in the heat of the night, giving Shawn's whip marks space to heal. Right then he didn't need to reach out and touch Shawn. Not while he knew the collar was keeping the other man bound so closely to him — not when he had the reassurance of knowing Shawn had chosen to keep the collar on until morning.

In the darkness, he felt something brush against his shoulder. The back of Shawn's fingers rested against his skin, not moving, just lying there. Just reaching out in the darkness to make sure his master was still there, still watching over him.

Brett shifted his arm. His fingers brushed against Shawn's side, reassuring the younger man. Shawn let out the breath he'd been holding. A few brief moments later, Brett heard his breathing take on a sleeping rhythm.

Closing his eyes, Brett smiled up at the ceiling and stroked his fingers against Shawn's side, relishing the tiny bit of contact he'd tried to convince himself he didn't need.

"Sleep well, love," he whispered into the darkness. "Your master's got you safe."

About the Author

Kim is 25 years old, from a small town in South Wales.

After writing for years, Kim is finally editing some of the stories to share with the rest of the world. Kim writes both male/male and male/female stories that range from the dark and paranormal right through to the lighter, funnier side of life.

The only thing every story contains is a happy ever after for the two (or more!) characters that deserve it most. Oh, and kinky sex – there's always plenty of that too – but Kim takes no responsibility for any of that. It's all the characters' fault. Honest...

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