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For Aleka.

Chapter One

Melanie Rose Darling glanced in the rearview mirror at the red and blue flickering in the distant darkness. Her eyes darted to her speedometer.

Eighty-three. Crap!

She slowed down and steered her Volvo to the side of the interstate, coming to an abrupt halt on the shoulder.

“Don’t stop, don’t stop, don’t stop...” she chanted, crossing her fingers.

Unfortunately, the flashing strobes got brighter, then blinding as they pulled up behind her. With a trembling hand, Melanie put her car in park and turned off the ignition. She’d never been pulled over before. What was she supposed to do now?

Okay, just think.

Taking a deep breath, she fisted her hands and willed herself to remain calm. She could handle this. She just needed to approach the situation rationally and not let her nerves get the best of her.

She fetched her purse from the passenger seat. After popping a piece of gum in her mouth, she sprayed perfume on her wrists before removing her wallet. Hopefully, it would be a male cop. She was a woman. She was capable of flirting her way out of a ticket.

Wasn't she?

Melanie removed her license from the leather holder, then reached over and opened the glove compartment. As she gathered her registration and insurance card, a beam of white light pierced through the driver’s window.

She squinted, trying to see through the glare, but couldn’t make out the person behind the source of illumination.

Warning bells went off in her brain. She recalled stories about women being pulled over on lonely highways late at night, only to discover that they were marks for serial killers or rapists.

Tap-tap-tap.

Startled, Melanie sucked in her breath. She looked out to see a single finger pointing for her to roll down the window.

She didn't want to fall prey to some psychopath, but didn't want to get arrested either. Wasn't there some number she could call on her cell phone that would connect her to a dispatcher? Then they could tell her that she'd been pulled over by a real law enforcement official. Damn, she remembered the e-mail, but couldn't remember the number.

What to do, what to do...

Melanie reached for the workbag lying next to her purse. Pulling out a notebook and a Sharpie, she scribbled a hasty message.

May I see your badge and ID please?

She tore out the piece of paper and held it up, wondering if her handwriting was legible.

The light moved away. A few seconds later, it shined on a small wallet and a badge. She leaned close to the window to read the identification card.

"Michael Johnson," she whispered, then stared at the picture.

The beam of light moved again, this time to the badge on his crisp blue shirt, then to his face.

Deciding he was the real-deal, she turned off the ignition and rolled down the window.

Officer Johnson lowered his flashlight.

Her eyes adjusted, and she found herself staring at the most gorgeous man she'd ever seen.

"Good evening, miss."

Her heart rate sped up. His voice was professional, yet smooth, sexy.

"Sorry about that," she offered. "I was just trying to be safe. I mean, you know, a woman alone on an empty highway, and the world filled with crazy people who want to do weird things to your body before—"

He held up his hand. "I get the picture."

She stared at his fingers. No ring.

Melanie giggled in embarrassment. "Oh, yeah, of course."

When he gave her a quizzical glance, she bit her tongue. What the hell was wrong with her? The man probably thought she had lost her mind.

Officer Johnson pulled out his pen and pad. "Miss, you haven't been drinking, have you?"

"No, sir. I just left work. I'm giggling because I'm nervous. It's something I do when I'm nervous. You make me nervous. Well, not you, I mean, your position. No. I mean your authority. Your authority makes me nervous. The power you have over me."

He raised his eyebrows.

“But not in a bad way,” she rushed.

Get a grip, Meli.

She took a deep breath and tried to gather her thoughts. “Sorry. I’ve never been pulled over before. I’m a good girl—usually. I swear.”

Oh, God. She hadn’t just told him she was a ‘good girl’, had she? She wanted to smack some sense back into herself.

He smiled. “I’m glad to hear you’re a good girl... most of the time.”

She nodded vigorously. “When I’m really nervous, I tend to ramble. Not too much, just a bit. And sometimes I say things I shouldn’t. Even now, I’m talking too much. See?” A giggle escaped her lips and she covered her mouth with her hand. “But hopefully not too much, just a little much.”

Heat spread across her cheeks and she remembered why she chose to avoid people at all costs, especially handsome men. She was always a mess in their presence. Before he could ask for license, registration and proof of insurance, she stuck it all out the window.

“Thanks.” Officer Johnson took the documents from her hands and started writing down her information. “Do you know why I pulled you over?”

Melanie lifted her shoulders and smiled. “Speeding?”

He raised his head. “The speed limit is sixty-five. I clocked you at eighty.”

Instinct prompted her make up some crappy excuse as to why she was going that fast, but she suppressed the urge. She wanted to be honest, even if meant he would punish her for it.

“I know,” she replied. “Actually, I was doing eighty-three.”

He laughed. “Wow. You are making this very easy for me, miss.”

The deep sound of his chuckle went straight to her heart, and melted it. “Is that a good thing?”

“Yep. Because I’m going to let you off with a warning.”

And she didn’t even have to flirt. “I really appreciate your kindness, officer.”

“Just slow down.” He handed back her driving papers and shut his pad. “Have a good night.”

He started to walk away.

“Wait.”

The officer turned and came back to the window, “Yes?”

She didn’t want him to leave, but she couldn’t tell him that. “Why are you here?” she

blurted out.

He looked confused. "I'm sorry?"

"I mean, why are you on patrol here? I've never seen a cop on this road so late at night before."

Officer Johnson placed his large hand on the roof of her Volvo. "What you *mean* to say is that you have always sped down this highway and have never been pulled over before, right?"

"I guess so."

"Okay. I'll tell you what." He thinned his lips and leaned a little closer. "Here's a tip. I'm probably going to be here every night for the next month. So, when you get into this area, slow down, or I'll have to ticket you. Understand, Miss Darling?"

The way he said her name sent tingles through her body. And, wow, he smelled so good. She didn't mind the reprimand. She'd take another if he'd just stay a little longer. "I understand."

He gave a curt nod and left.

She watched him in the side view mirror as he strolled back to his patrol car. A man in uniform always turned her on.

Especially this one.

Melanie squeezed her thighs and started the ignition. Even though she had initially dreaded the thought of getting into trouble, she was glad she'd been caught. The event added a little excitement to her very boring life.

She pulled onto the highway and started for home, relishing the intense feelings that surged through her body. On a normal day, she went to work, made bouquets for other women lucky enough to find love, left work, and went home to an empty house. That was it. Not even a goldfish awaited her there.

But tonight was different. Now, she understood why people did naughty things. The rush was liberating.

She'd never been drunk, she didn't smoke, she'd never tried drugs, she didn't party, and she'd never had casual sex. Hell, she'd never even had sex, well, not in the traditional sense. She couldn't really count her toys, could she?

One thing was for sure, she was done being the good girl. She wanted to be wild. She wanted to be bad. She wanted sex that didn't require batteries!

Melanie parked her car and trudged into her house. Undressing on her way to the

bathroom, she stared into the mirror and imagined Officer Johnson behind her, his lips roaming down her neck and caressing her breasts.

You couldn't handle a guy like that.

She stopped fantasizing. How could she get the sexy police officer to want her? Actually, why wouldn't he want her? She might be shy, but she was pretty enough. Perhaps she needed to be more confident, sexier.

Melanie strode into her office, no longer concerned that her window shades were open and half the neighborhood could see her naked.

Let them see!

She logged onto her computer, trying to find some information that'd be of help. She went to the internet search engine and typed in 'A book on how to get a man'. When she hit the enter button, a list popped up on the screen.

One page description caught her eye immediately. *"How To Get The Man YOU Want and Deserve In Ten Easy Steps"* by Aleka Leki.

Clicking on the link, she checked out the author's website. After reading a short excerpt from chapter one 'Choosing Your Target: Is He the Right Man for You?' Meli ordered the book from her local bookstore, happy to find that it was in stock. She could have it by early tomorrow morning.

But how would she meet Officer Johnson again?

A wicked thought came into her mind. Her insurance rates might skyrocket, but hell, who cared anymore? She needed a drastic change in her life, and this night was the catalyst.

Melanie strolled into the kitchen, relishing in the freedom of nakedness and excited by the prospect that someone might just see her through the window. It felt awesome to be naughty.

She grabbed a glass and opened a bottle of Blackberry Merlot. Sipping the fragrant wine, she debated on whether or not she'd wear panties tomorrow night when she sped her way back into Officer Johnson's life.

Chapter Two

Melanie zoomed down the dark highway at eighty-five miles per hour. Less than two minutes later, red and blue lights reflected in her mirrors.

Anxious, she pulled to the side of the road, stopped, and turned off her vehicle. Everything was ready. Her license, registration and insurance card were out, her car was clean and smelled of roses, and she was dressed to impress.

After adjusting her blouse to show more than a hint of cleavage, she stretched her mini skirt toward her knees so the material would smooth out. Then she thought better of it. She hiked it up just enough, so at the right angle, the sexy cop could get a little peek at her Brazilian wax job. Satisfied with the results, she rolled down her window.

Officer Johnson arrived at her door, shook his head and gave a disappointed sigh. "What do you think you're doing, Miss Darling?"

She smiled, hoping it covered the nervous excitement she felt. "I'm—I was on my way home from work. How are you tonight?"

He didn't answer. She noticed he was busy staring at her naked thighs.

"Officer Johnson?"

He looked up. "Miss Darling—"

"Please call me Melanie."

"Miss Melanie," he hesitated. His eyes darted down for a brief moment, then back up. "I warned you last night about speeding. I wasn't kidding when I said I'd ticket you."

Look sad, Meli. Try to make it look authentic.

"I understand," she replied softly.

He turned his head, and for moment, looked regretful. He swore under his breath. "Give me your license, registration and insurance card," he grumbled.

She collected them from the passenger seat.

'Chapter four. Be bold and alluring!'

As she moved to hand him her documents, she 'absently' let her license fall from her fingers. It slid down between her slightly parted thighs.

Melanie gazed at him expectantly.

With wide eyes, he took the registration and insurance card, then stared at her lap.

He licked his lips. "I'll need your license too."

"What?" She glanced down and feigned surprise. "Oh!"

She opened her legs a little more, just enough to allow her hand access to the card, which coincidentally, allowed Officer Michael Johnson a glimpse of her pussy. She maneuvered her fingers gently, slowly, until she withdrew her license.

She held it out him.

He stared at the card for a moment, and then snatched it from her hand. Pulling out his pad, he started writing furiously.

"For someone who only twenty-four hours ago told me that she was a 'good girl most of the time', you sure are being bad."

"Is that a good thing?" she asked, mimicking her question from the night before.

Ripping out the ticket, he presented it along with her driving documents. "No."

"Sorry," she whispered.

She took the paperwork from him, letting her fingers graze against his. Electricity shot up her arm and she wondered if he felt it too. If he did, he showed no sign.

Officer Johnson let out a heavy breath. "Miss... Melanie, you don't have to apologize to me. The thing is, I don't want to give you a ticket. I want you to slow down and drive safely. Speeding is dangerous. I've seen many nice people seriously injured because they treated the posted speed limit as a suggestion rather than a law to protect their safety."

She nodded in agreement. Michael was so sexy when he lectured.

He ran his fingers through his hair as frustration colored his features. "You knew I was going to be around tonight, so why did you speed?"

Melanie looked down at her hands and decided to tell him the truth. But when she opened her mouth, nothing came out.

She stretched the skirt over her knees while she tried harder to push sound from her throat. Unfortunately, it was to no avail. Her shyness had returned full force and she couldn't find her voice.

"Excuse me?" he asked.

She closed her eyes and took a deep breath. "I wanted to see you," she said in an inaudible whisper.

His brow wrinkled and he shook his head. "I didn't catch that." He leaned into the car. "Tell me again."

Melanie could smell his woody cologne over the rose scented interior. She glanced up at him, and meeting his gaze, tried to let her eyes tell him what her voice could not. She tipped her head to the side and lifted her hand slowly. When he didn't move back, she caressed the side of his cheek.

He smiled as if he appreciated the simple touch. She drew closer, let her eyelids flutter shut, and pressed her lips tentatively to his. He deepened the kiss, gently exploring and caressing her mouth with his.

It was everything she'd imagined it would be.

Suddenly, Michael broke off and backed away. "I can't do this. It's not right."

She held out her hand to stop him.

"No, Miss Darling. No more games." He turned toward his vehicle. "Have a nice night."

Melanie watched him get in and speed off into the darkness.

She touched her lips, finding them warm and swollen. She was sure Michael felt something for her. Too bad he didn't want to explore it further.

She started the Volvo and began her journey home. The old Melanie would've taken the rejection to heart, hid in her house for a week, and eaten a bucket of chocolate chunk ice cream. But she was the new Melanie. She was confident, strong, and didn't give up so easily. If she wanted a repeat of that kiss, and something more, she'd have to work for it.

Oh, she'd get him to lavish her with his attention, no matter what it took.

But until then, she'd just have to settle for a night with good old *Bob*.

After taking a long bath, Melanie lit the candles in her bedroom and pulled an engraved box out of her nightstand. She opened it and smiled. Bob lay on his red velvet bed, always ready and waiting for her. She crawled under her covers and let Bob perform his ministrations on her sexually charged, but constantly deprived body. Closing her eyes and losing herself in the humming, she drifted into a fantasy place.

Michael's mouth moved over her sensitive nub, gentle, yet demanding, causing her body to quiver. She opened her legs wider, and entangled her fingers into his hair. Pressing him against her, she said, "Please, more."

He moved further down, probing at the entrance of her pussy with his warm, flickering

tongue, preparing her for greater sensations. Returning his oral attention to her clit, he placed two fingers inside her passage, slowly stroking the fire that rapidly built within. She wanted him. Not only his fingers, but everything.

She fondled her breasts, rolling the nipples between her fingers. A third finger entered, stretching her, and she felt her muscles tighten. She was about to explode.

“Now! Now!” she demanded

She cried out as he plunged his hard cock deep inside her soft, wet core. Thrusting in and out, he brought her to the brink of ecstasy.

“Yes, oh, Michael! Harder! Deeper! More! Make me come!”

She rubbed her clit as he pounded into her dripping hole, riding her until her body trembled violently and...

Nothing.

No orgasm, no fall into the abyss.

Just a numb throbbing.

She desperately needed this release. Why couldn't she come? Angry, she pulled Bob out and flung him from her bed.

Why hadn't she just asked Michael to come home with her when he issued the ticket? Why did she always get so tongue-tied and speechless? Better yet, why didn't she leave the Volvo, physically pull out his dick, and have her wicked way with him right there and then? They could have done it on top of her car's hood, in the backseat of his patrol car, on the grass beside the highway, or even in the middle of the highway for all she cared. Instead, her nerves had gotten the better of her once again.

When she wasn't being shy, she was rambling like an idiot, as if no sensible thought existed in her world. Who in their right mind would want to deal with that?

Damn, at the rate she was going, she'd be a virgin forever.

Melanie got out of bed. Still undressed, she marched through her living room and straight outside into her backyard greenhouse. She walked through the aisles, trying to find comfort in the scents from the many species of flowers gathered there. She felt like Eve in the Garden of Eden. Now all she needed was Adam.

Maybe work would take her mind off her lack of satisfaction. Just because she wasn't getting any didn't mean her flowers couldn't.

Gathering her tools, she set about trying to hand pollinate some of her hybrid creations,

but found her fingers too shaky for the task.

She slammed her workbench with her fist. She was a ball of pent up sexual frustration, wound so tight that her imagination and battery operated toys couldn't fulfill the overwhelming need in her body. Her pussy cried out for something more, something genuine. Her body wanted a flesh and blood, muscle and sinew, and a rock hard cock to finally make her a real woman.

She needed Michael.

Melanie stormed out of the greenhouse, slamming the door with a gratifying bang. She went inside and searched the kitchen counter for her keys. She was determined to go out and speed by Michael once again. But this time, she'd do it naked. Then she'd get him to screw her right and good. She needed his cock to fill her, to send her over the edge, to fucking color her world!

Keys! Where are my keys?

She grabbed her pocketbook and dumped the contents on the table. Nothing. She went into her bedroom and searched her armoire. Where in the hell were her freaking keys?

On her way to tear apart her bed, she stepped on firm vibrating rubber.

Stopping, she glanced down. There was poor Bob.

Hanging her head, she whispered, "Look at the way I treat you, after you've been nothing but good to me." Her anger floated away as she dropped to her knees and scooped him up, holding him to her chest. "Sorry, bubbi. I just lost it for a moment."

She turned him off and walked him into the bathroom, laying him on a towel beside the sink. "Give me a minute, hon. I'll be back to clean you up later."

Calmer now, Melanie brewed some tea and took it into her living room. Plunking down on the couch, she grabbed the book she'd ordered the day before off the coffee table.

Thankfully, Buster, the sixteen year-old that lived a couple of houses down, had been kind enough to pick it up from the bookstore. Actually, Buster was always good like that. He came by once a week to drop off her groceries. He probably ran her errands because of the large tips he received, but she didn't mind. She couldn't stand waiting in those long lines and dealing with the pushy crowds. Besides, it was good for a teenager to earn money and learn responsibility.

She opened the book to the third chapter, *'Creating the Look: What Men Are Seeing When They Look at You'*. It was from reading this chapter that she decided to wear the sexy outfit. However, it was chapter five, *'Catching His Attention: Tips on Getting Him to Notice You Every Time'* that inspired her to the 'Oops, I dropped my license' idea. At least that worked. He had let

her kiss him.

But what about tomorrow?

After scanning the table of contents, she skipped to chapter eight, '*Charming the Prince: You Have Him Interested... How Do You Secure The Catch?*'

Chapter Three

Officer Michael Johnson threw the ticket on Miss Darling's lap, then marched back toward his squad car.

He couldn't do this anymore.

"Not even a *hello*?" Melanie's gentle words floated on the air, conveying her hurt feelings. He didn't respond. He would not—no, could not—play her games any longer.

Throwing himself into the seat, Michael slammed the door shut and shook his head. Though Melanie might think otherwise, he wasn't angry with her. He knew she'd speed past him tonight; he'd expected it. If anything, he was angry with himself. Ashamed, because deep down, he wanted her to speed. He wanted to have a reason to pull her over, just so he could see her again.

And that didn't sit well with him.

He looked at the Volvo in front of him and then at his radar gun. Eighty-seven. If she kept this up, he'd be forced to arrest her.

If she didn't kill herself first.

These were dangerous games they played, and it needed to end. Not only was he putting his career in jeopardy, but her life was in danger. He was a police officer, for God's sake. He was supposed to serve and protect people, not encourage them to break the law.

Blowing out his breath, he rubbed his temples. Miss Melanie R. Darling had consumed his thoughts for three nights now. She had charmed her way into his heart the moment they met, with her nervous giggles and honest admissions.

On the first night, she had looked so panic-stricken, he wanted to pull her out of the car and assure her that he wouldn't hurt her. If anything, he'd take care of her.

Then on the second night... Damn! She was the purest of contradictions, an innocent temptress. When she gave him that sweet smile, and then her fingers roamed over her—

Michael shifted his pants. The mere memory of her search for the misplaced license made his dick as hard as the nightstick jutting from the seat beside him.

No, he'd crossed the line that night. He should have never kissed her. Though she didn't

seem the type, she could report him for it, and he could lose his job. It had happened to others in his profession.

The stories were all the same. An officer pulls over a beautiful woman. The woman hints that she wants to get to know him better. He lets her off with a warning. However, when the officer tries to pursue the relationship, the woman reports him for it.

He looked up at the Volvo again. Could she be playing him?

As if Melanie heard his thoughts and took great offense to them, her car tore forward, the tires spitting dust and gravel as she pulled onto the road.

Suddenly, she slammed on her brakes and came to a screeching halt. Hurling something out her window, she sped off again.

What the hell was that?

Michael tried to make out the object lying in the middle lane of the interstate. If she'd been anyone else, he would've called in the bomb squad.

Getting out of his car, he shined his flashlight on the unidentified object. Even then, he didn't recognize it as anything familiar. Was it an animal? He saw a lot of red. He tried to imagine Melanie throwing some poor creature out her car window, then shook off the thought. She was too nice for that.

He approached the bundle cautiously, noted that it wasn't beeping. That was a good sign.

When he was only a few feet away, the scent filling the air told him what it was. It smelled like her.

Roses?

He leaned over and picked up the bouquet. Why would she throw roses away?

Making his way back to the cruiser, he thought of many reasons why she might have a bouquet of roses, but his mind kept coming back to one. They must have been from a man. He frowned, knowing he had no right to be jealous, but he was.

He got in his vehicle and turned on the interior light eager to examine the arrangement. It was a simple really. Six roses, the stems cut short, tied together by a wide, black velvet ribbon. The roses were unusual in color, the outer side of the petals an indigo blue, the inner sides a deep red. He'd never seen anything like it. Attached to the ribbon was a thin silver chain, and at the end of the chain, a small blue card. He lifted it up to read the message written in silver ink.

I picked these colors because, together, they remind me of you. I hope to see them flashing in

my mirrors again soon... Meli

He turned the card over. On the back, in small print at the bottom, read *Darling Bouquets by Melanie*.

Fuck! He was a total ass. The flowers were for him.

He wasn't surprised that she owned a flower shop, but something nagged at him. He read the business name again. Where had he heard it before? Maybe Janine had mentioned it to him?

Michael pulled out his cell phone and dialed his little sister's house. He hated calling her so late, but he had to know.

She answered the line with a sleepy, "Hello?"

"Hi, sis. Sorry to wake you, but I have a quick question. Have you ever heard of *Darling Bouquets by Melanie*?"

She yawned. "Duh. I only read you the article last weekend. Remember? Out of one of the bridal magazines?"

"Yeah, sure."

Actually he didn't. His sister had been planning her wedding for the last six months, often forcing him to endure long hours of '*wedding planning fun*' while she bounced around like the neurotic bride she swore she wasn't. Whenever she began reading from one of the twenty bridal magazine subscriptions she had, he tended to zone out.

"Why do you ask?" she mumbled.

He read the bouquet's message again. "I just gave Miss Darling a speeding ticket. Well, two, if you count last night."

"You what?" Janine shrieked.

He pulled the phone away and rubbed his ear. His sister was wide-awake now.

"Michael Aaron Johnson, you tear up those tickets right now," she demanded.

That was a surprise. His sister only used his full name when she was angry. "Do you know Miss Darling?"

"Everyone *knows* Melanie Rose Darling. She's famous for her bouquets. I could only dream of affording one. Hey, maybe if you go to her house and take back the tickets, she will give me a discount on a bridal bouquet."

"You know I can't do that," he replied, smelling his roses.

"I know." His sister sighed dramatically. "I just can't believe you met her."

“Why not?”

“I thought you said you remembered the article.”

Giving in, he rolled his eyes. “Okay, I don’t.”

“She is only like, the Picasso of the bridal flower world. An artistic genius! And she won’t do just anyone’s bouquet. You have to fill out a form, and she will either accept or deny your order. Sort of like an application. Rumor has it that she once rejected the ruler of some foreign country when he tried to place an order—even after he offered to pay twenty-thousand per bouquet for his daughter and her gazillion bridesmaids. But Miss Darling still said ‘no’.”

“Why would she do that?”

He couldn’t imagine anyone turning down that kind of money. Shit, she didn’t act like she had access to that kind of money. She was so down to earth.

“No one knows. She refuses all interviews, never allows her picture to be taken, or anything. Not many people have ever even seen her. She’s a recluse. Oh my God! What did she look like?”

He couldn’t help but smile. “She’s actually quite beautiful.”

“Oh Michael! I can’t believe you gave her a speeding ticket. What’s wrong with you?”

“Hey sis, I was only doing my job. What else do you know about her? And what’s so special about her flowers.”

“Well, I guess she has some special way she grows them. She is like a botanist turned florist. Supposedly, she has a huge greenhouse in her back yard where she grows her own flowers and creates hybrids that were thought to be impossible to combine. Then she takes the flowers and uses them to design her masterpieces. Each bouquet is unique and specially made just for the bride. Or the bride and her wedding party, if one can afford all that. Did you get her address?”

Matter of fact, he did. “Janine, hon, go back to sleep. I’ll call you tomorrow.”

“Wait! What are—?”

Michael disconnected and turned the cell phone off. Melanie, or Meli, as he now liked to think of her, lived only a couple miles away. Perhaps he should drive by her house and make sure she made it home safely.

Meli... what a lovely nickname for a lovely woman.

Michael drove slowly through the picture-perfect neighborhood filled with trees and stunning landscaping. The houses, which complimented the serene environment, were far enough

apart to warrant some privacy, yet close enough not to feel isolated. He could see why Meli would live here.

As he turned onto her street, he was met with a peculiar sight. A group of teenage boys, maybe sixteen or seventeen years-old, sat around a car, scoping out one of the houses.

He pulled up behind the illegally parked vehicle, surprised to find that they happened to be across the street from Meli's property. Even funnier, they were so busy looking through their binoculars, they didn't notice the lights and markings on his patrol car.

One kid, not bothering to remove the eyepiece from his face, waved him on. Michael rolled down his window just in time to hear the kid holler, "Dude. Drive around us."

Putting his vehicle in park, he stepped out of the cruiser and approached the boys. "Good evening, gentlemen. Aside from blocking the normal flow of traffic, aren't you out way past your curfew?"

The kids jumped to their feet. Then the teen who had waved him on, the leader of the group he supposed, nodded. "Um, yes, sir. We were just leaving." They all moved to get in their souped-up Escort.

"Hold on there. What were you doing?"

They froze and looked at each other.

Michael went up to the kid who had spoken and eyed the binoculars. He held out his hand. "Can I borrow those?"

The boy shrugged and handed them over as fear spread across his friends' faces. Michael smiled and placed them to his eyes. He scanned the two-story house.

He spotted Meli quickly. She occupied the only lighted room. With the curtains open on the large kitchen windows, he could see her clearly. She wore a tiny pink apron and held a mixer in her hand, beating something in a bowl. Placing the appliance down on the counter, she turned and carried the bowl to another part of the room.

Michael blinked and focused again, zooming in on her. His mouth dropped. He couldn't believe it!

Melanie's bare bottom, magnified times ten, filled his lenses.

He focused out as she poured the mix into a pan, opened her oven, placed the dish inside, and closed the door. After setting the timer, she removed her apron and hung it on a hook.

Holy shit!

She was butt-ass naked.

Anger, jealousy and desire rushed through him all at once. Michael pulled the binoculars away from his eyes and stared down the teenagers.

“Um, we weren’t looking at her. We were bird watching. A project for biology class,” the outspoken kid stated.

He raised his eyebrows skeptically. “Go straight home. Now,” he ordered.

They didn’t need to be told twice. They jumped in their Escort and sped off. They left in such a hurry the kid forgot his binoculars.

Oh well.

Michael put them back to his eyes.

Why didn’t she draw the curtains? The whole friggin’ world could look in on her. What kind of a recluse was she?

Melanie leaned against the counter, drinking a glass of wine. She picked up a book and began reading it. He zoomed in on the title. *How To Get The Man YOU Want And Deserve In Ten Easy Steps.*

Laughing, he zoomed back out. She was too adorable.

He watched her place the book down and pick up the ticket he’d issued her earlier, rubbing her fingers gently over it as if it were something special to her. She smiled softly. Then her face turned sad. She bit her bottom lip and wiped at her cheeks.

His heart crumbled. Was she crying because of *him*?

Hell, he really was an asshole.

Pulling the binoculars away, he resisted the urge to run to her door and demand entrance. He wanted to gather her in his arms and hold her close, to stroke her hair and tell her that he hadn’t meant to be such a jerk earlier, that it wasn’t her, it was him.

Technically, he could go to her door and say he had received a complaint about her lack of modesty. That would be a valid excuse. But how would he explain his presence in the area?

Melanie lay the book down and left the kitchen, turning off the light on her way.

He decided to visit at her shop tomorrow. Since he didn’t begin his shift until evening, his day was free. He could just stop in for a minute, thank her for the flowers she *dropped*, and check on her.

Yeah, that would work.

Michael got in his vehicle and headed back out to the interstate, his mind lingering on beautiful Meli in the buff. His imagination went into overdrive and added erotic details to his

thoughts, some of which included him. His dick swelled and strained against the fabric of his pants.

Hell, it was going to be a longest shift of his career.

Chapter Four

It was already after dark when Michael strode into *Darling Bouquets*. In addition to his uniform, he held the bundle of roses he'd collected off the interstate the night before.

Having slept most of the day away, he didn't get there as early as he'd planned. But it couldn't be helped, not when he spent most of the morning after his shift tossing and turning, his body unable to rest because of the gorgeous woman with a compulsive speeding disorder who'd managed to consume his every thought.

The corporate office motif of Meli's shoppe was not what he expected for a florist. The reception area was simply decorated, uncluttered, and very modern.

A young man with spiked hair and retro eyeglasses approached him, offering his hand in greeting. "Welcome to Darling Bouquets, officer. My name is Ben."

"I'm Michael," he replied, adding a firm handshake.

Ben smiled and headed for his chair. "Well, Officer, if you'll join me at the table, we'll get started."

He followed reluctantly, sitting across from the young man. "Really, I didn't come to order anything. I'd just like to talk to Miss Darling."

"Unfortunately, Ms. Darling does not receive visitors. However, I'm more than capable to assist you in filling out all the paperwork necessary to request her services. If accepted, I'll be with you through the whole process. The staff at Darling Bouquets is dedicated to serving our customers..."

Michael zoned out once the speech started sounding like a pitch from a used car salesman.

The clerk laid out brochures and paperwork. "Now, we have multiple payment plans available. But before we get to that, I will need you to fill out this form. Flowers are a crucial part of the modern wedding. Steeped in tradition, the bride's bouquet dates back to..."

While Ben went on about the history of bridal flowers and their importance in today's world, Michael scanned the questions on the sheet. The first question was the basic 'Your first, middle and last name, and your fiancé's first, middle and last'. The questions after that were like the quizzes his sister used to make him take from the teen magazines she read when she was in

ninth grade.

What is your favorite color?

What is your fiancé's favorite color?

What is your favorite flower?

When is your birthday?

When is your fiancé's birthday?

How did you meet your true love?

How did you know it was love?

How long have you been together?

What is the color scheme for your wedding ceremony?

Is it a themed ceremony?

If so, what theme?

Ben interrupted his reading. "Are you looking to purchase a bouquet just for the bride? Or bouquets for the entire procession? By the way, I just want to say how wonderful it is to see a groom come in, rather than the bride. So few men take an interest in planning their own wedding.

"I appreciate your help, but I'm not getting married."

For a moment, confusion clouded Ben's features, but he recovered quickly. "Well, if you're looking to get your true love a bouquet for that special occasion, we do provide that service as well. However, that's a whole different form." He retrieved another folder.

"Stop." Michael held out his hand. "I'm just here to see Miss Darling."

With an expression of regret, Ben tsk'd. "I'm sorry. I really wish I could help you with that, but Ms. Darling is adamant about not seeing anyone."

Frustrated, he slammed his bouquet on the table. "Do me a favor. Go back there and tell her to come get the flowers she littered the highway with last night. The ones she threw out her car window."

Ben looked appalled. "Littered?" The young man picked up the bouquet and gently straightened the arrangement, then stared Michael down as if he just abused a child. "I'll have you know that Ms. Darling's work could never be considered *litter*. The bouquet you just so carelessly flung down is probably worth at least a thousand dollars."

Frustration swiftly turned to anger. "I don't care how much its worth. I want to speak to—"

"Sir, you might not be unable to see the craftsmanship and painstaking detail Ms. Darling

put into this remarkable work of art, but I do. This is one of Ms. Darling's Signature Love Bouquets."

"A 'love' what?"

"A Love Bouquet. Can't you see the six roses?"

"Six? What the hell does that have to do with love?"

Ben shook his head in disappointment. "Six has a history of being the *lovers'* number. In numerology, six is the number of love, marriage and family. The number six itself is ruled by the planet Venus, named after the Roman Goddess of Love. In astrology, Virgo, the Virgin, is the sixth astrological sign and associated with fertility. In Tarot, the sixth trump card is 'the Lovers'. I could go on and on with that, but you might also note that these roses aren't just *roses*.

Michael rolled his eyes, his anger simmering down into annoyance. "If they're not roses, what are they?"

"These are *Fire and Ice Roses*, the ultimate rose used to express romantic love. The strong scent, the bi-color petals, yes, all common with the Fire and Ice rose. However, on this bouquet, Ms. Darling hand-painted the white portion of the petals blue, including the inner petals."

He leaned in close to examine the bouquet. "They don't look painted to me."

Ben pulled off one of the rose petals and handed it to him. "True blue roses do not exist in nature, as roses cannot produce Delphinidin."

Michael was going cross-eyed trying to follow the lecture. "Dela-what?"

The clerk cleared his throat to hide his smile. "Delphinidin. The plant pigment that gives flowers a blue color. Fire and Ice rose petals are red and white. To make this look natural, Ms. Darling used her skills as an artist to ensure that only the white portion of the petal was colored, and did so without straying into the red portions. Nor did her blue seep through and make the roses look purple. This bouquet must have taken her a day or more of work."

A day or more?

Michael was speechless. Melanie would do all that for him? He rubbed the painted petal between his fingertips.

Ben continued. "Ms. Darling only uses the best materials to decorate the bouquets. The chain that attaches the card is fine silver, handcrafted in Florence. The ribbon is real velvet made from silk, imported from Genoa, and is purchased from a private supplier whose family still practices the craft of hand-weaving textiles on a loom. Now the card..."

Before Michael could stop him, Ben read the message. His expression turned from

informative sales clerk to shock.

“Did she make these for you?”

He didn’t give an answer to that. “Might I see Miss Darling now? Or can you at least tell her I’m here?”

Ben handed him back the bouquet. “I would, but she’s not in the building. Ms. Darling makes her own work hours and they tend to vary day to day. Usually, she likes to come to the studio in the evenings, but she’s probably at the nursery gathering flowers for her next project.

Shit. He’d have to wait to catch her on the drive home. “Thanks for your help,” he offered as he stood to leave.

Ben politely rose from his own seat. “Thank you for visiting Darling Bouquets.”

Michael went to his cruiser, disheartened at not being able to see Melanie. After the way he’d treated her, he doubted she would speed past him tonight, or ever again. However, that was a good thing; she shouldn’t be speeding. He wanted her to be safe. Tomorrow was his day off. He’d come back to Darling Bouquets and try again.

He started his vehicle. With another hour or so before he had to report for duty, perhaps a trip to the bakery for some coffee would be in order. He’d need the caffeine and sugar to make it through the night.

The sound of squealing tires filled the air.

He turned to see a Melanie’s Volvo speeding down the road as if she were in a Formula One race. She swerved into the near empty parking lot, never touching the brakes. But the moment she spotted his cruiser, she did. Actually, touch was a mild word. Slammed would be more accurate.

She almost took out the rear side of his patrol car.

Panicked, Michael jumped out and ran to the Volvo. She had scared the shit out of him. Was something wrong with her brakes?

He opened Melanie’s door, only to be assaulted by the vapors of alcohol that spilled out.

“Hello, Officer Johnson,” she whispered.

His blood boiled at her irresponsibility. There was no way in hell he’d let drinking and driving slide.

“Out. Now.”

She paled. “Did I—Did I do something wrong?”

He reached in and turned the engine off, then unbuckled her seat belt. Grabbing a hold of

her upper arm, he yanked her out.

Was this his fault? Had he driven his 'usually good girl' to drink and get behind the wheel? It didn't matter. He had to do his job. She could have killed herself.

"Have you recently had an opened container of liquor in your vehicle that spilled?"

When she shook her head 'no', he dragged her towards his squad car, not caring that she was stumbling to keep up. Perhaps if she'd been sober, it wouldn't have been a problem.

"Have you recently had an intoxicated person in your vehicle? Perhaps one who vomited?"

She shook her head a second time.

When he got to the cruiser, he retrieved his handcuffs from his belt and bent her over the trunk. Her short schoolgirl skirt lifted up enough for him to see the tops of her thigh-high stockings and some kind of garter straps—

Damn! It looked like she wasn't wearing any underwear! Again!

Concentrate.

"Miss Darling, you are under arrest for driving under the influence of alcohol. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you."

"Um, Michael?" She turned her head and looked back at him with innocent curiosity. "Don't you need to give me sobriety test first?"

Hell, why did she have to say his name like that? Her sweet voice enchanted him and made him want to hold her rather than arrest her.

You'd think she was damn siren.

"No, I don't," he answered curtly, snapping the handcuffs into place. He pulled her off the trunk and led her to the back door.

He didn't explain it to her, but he was doing her a favor. The judge would more likely dismiss her case if he didn't perform a field sobriety test or a Breathalyzer. It'd be his word against hers. He'd take some heat for that decision from his superiors, but he'd deal with that when the time came.

As he reached for the door handle, Melanie gave a nervous giggle. "Aren't you going to search me?"

He stopped abruptly. "Should I?"

"Um... please, before you take me to the police station."

Michael tried to imagine where she could possibly hide weapons or drugs in her cute little outfit. Heels, stockings, garter belt, a short plaid skirt, no underwear. The only area he hadn't seen was underneath her white button blouse.

He spun her around. "What do you have on you?"

She cheeks flamed crimson. She bent her head and looked down at her skirt.

Keeping one hand on her arm, he used the other to pat around her hips. To his surprise, his fingers slid over something hard. He reached into her waistband and pulled out a small remote control connected to a thin cord. He tugged on it, but it was firmly attached to something.

"What the hell is it?" he asked.

She bit her bottom lip.

The remote control had a dial. Curious, he turned the knob as far as it would go. In that moment of uncomfortable silence, he noticed a sound that had gone unheard by his ears before.

Buzzing?

Suddenly, Melanie crumbled.

He caught her in his arms before she hit the ground. She leaned into his chest, her breath ragged.

"Melanie, what's wrong?"

Her only response was a soft moan.

Michael gathered her to him, drawing her shaking body close. "Please, talk to me," he whispered into her rose scented hair.

Roses? Why didn't he smell alcohol?

He glanced at the remote in his hand. This time it was his turn to blush.

Shit. It was some kind of sex toy.

He quickly turned it off.

"Can I have my sobriety test now?" she mumbled into his shirt.

"Okay, honey. Let me get rid of the cuffs first."

Opening his car door, he guided her back until she collapsed on the seat. He reached around her and removed the handcuffs, noting how empty his arms felt without her.

Meli kept her head bowed and her face hidden behind her hair. Whether she was being shy or just really embarrassed, he didn't know.

He squatted down and gently lifted her chin up. "Why didn't you tell me you weren't drinking?"

She kept her gaze averted. "You didn't ask."

True. But usually one would volunteer such information. "Then why did you lie about spilling alcohol in your car?"

Melanie shook her head. "I didn't lie. I'd never lie to you."

For some reason, he believed her statement. She seemed to be one of those people incapable of true deceit. He moved a stray tendril of hair from her eyes. "I know you wouldn't. What's in your car that has alcohol in it?"

This time she smiled. "A rum cake. I baked it for you last night. It's my grandmother's secret recipe."

His heart swelled. She had to be the sweetest person he ever met. He wondered if baking the cake naked was the secret.

At least she hadn't been drinking.

"Do you always drive so recklessly?"

"Except when there are cops around." She nodded, and then added. "Unless it's you."

"Did you wear the sexy outfit for me?"

"Yes."

He picked up the remote control. "And this?"

"A clit massager." She lifted her shoulders. "I guess I was being naughty."

"I'd say so." He tucked the remote back into her skirt's waistband and rose to his feet. "You didn't break the law, but it's probably dangerous to use one of these when you're operating your vehicle. Especially after seeing what it does to you."

Michael got in the front seat and called the station. Telling the dispatcher there was a private emergency he needed to take care of, he requested a personal day. After he received approval to skip his shift, he got out and held out his hand to Melanie.

"I'm going to follow you home. I want to make sure you make it there safely."

Her eyes brightened as she slid her hand into his. "Are you going to come in? I mean... uh, for coffee?"

Helping her up, he led her to her car. "That depends. Do you want me to?"

"Yes."

He could fall in love with this woman. He opened her car door. "I'd love some coffee. And make sure you bring in the rum cake."

When she nodded, he closed the door. As he walked away, he heard her window roll

down.

“Are you going to give me my ticket?”

Shaking his head, he went back to her car. “You want me to punish you?”

She bit her lip again and looked down, an action he noticed she did when she was nervous and didn't want to answer his question. It must be 'yes'.

Oh, hell, he didn't mind the personality quirk. It was kind of hot.

Pulling out his pad, he wrote her a ticket for making a wide turn and failing to use her signal. “This is for the way you pulled into the parking lot.”

She took it from his hand and read it. “I'll remember to use my signals in the future.”

“And no more speeding. Ever. Promise?”

“Promise.”

Smiling, he headed back to his car. His Meli was something else.

Chapter Five

Melanie was sure she was dreaming. There was no way that such a gorgeous male specimen was actually pulling into her driveway.

Using the mirrors, she watched Michael turn off his car.

Oh, my God! It's real! It's real!

She was bringing home her first man. And she was going to seduce him and lose her virginity. Finally.

Her stomach did somersaults and her heart pounded so hard, she thought it might pop out her chest. She was too excited. She was too happy. She was so giddy she was seeing spots!

She grabbed her purse. After throwing a breath mint in her mouth, she swiped flavored gloss across her lips. Okay, she needed to calm down. She could do this. She waited her whole life for this moment.

Tap-tap-tap.

Michael was standing beside her car. *What to do... What to do... Shit.* What was she suppose to do now?

He pointed towards the ground, signaling for her to roll down her window. Willing herself to move, she pressed the button. The glass slowly slid away, allowing the smell of his woody cologne to drift to her nostrils.

He looked at her.

She looked at him.

He smiled, so she smiled.

After a moment of awkward silence, Michael let out a heavy sigh. "Did you change your mind?"

She said 'no', but it came out as an exhaled breath. She lost her voice again.

"Was that a 'no'?" he asked.

She nodded.

"So you still want me to come in?"

Her heartbeat pounded in her ears as she nodded again.

Amusement sparkled in his eyes. "Are you going to leave your car?"

Please speak, Meli.

"Yes," she mouthed.

Damn it!

Michael squatted down and rested his arms on her door. He smelled so wonderful; she couldn't wait to tangle herself around his body.

"Um, Melanie, have you ever had visitors before?"

She gave a quick affirmative nod, then regretted her response. She'd never really had visitors per se. Buster came to collect the grocery list each week. And then there was the mail guy who came to deliver her packages. Oh, she had cleaner and a handyman that came once a month to help out with things around the house.

She tried to talk, then remembered her current speech impediment. She snapped her mouth shut and shook her head, hoping he recognized her answer change. Friggin' shyness. It always happened at the most inconvenient times. It would be better if she could ramble incoherently.

He looked a little confused. "You've *never* had a man over for coffee before?"

She nodded vigorously, so glad that he understood. He grinned and her world turned cock-eyed. His smile had the most profound affect on her.

"Do you want me to help you out of the car?"

"Yes," she whispered, then tipped her head to the side, hoping she conveyed how sorry she was for her strange behavior.

It was so frustrating. Why couldn't she just be normal? There was so much she wanted to say, so much she wanted to do, but nothing. She stared at the folded hands in her lap and bit her bottom lip. Tears brimmed behind her lashes.

Michael reached in and unlocked the door. He opened it and found the button that rolled up the window. "Melanie, it's okay. I like you just the way you are, including your bouts of shyness. I just want to get to know you, and we'll take things slow."

But I don't want to take things slow! I want to get laid!

Michael switched off her lights and her ignition, then leaned over and unbuckled her seat belt. He placed his hands over hers, halting her nervous fidgeting. He tuned them over, softly caressing her palms with his thumbs.

Her blood surged at the small intimacy. His touch was everything. Warm, gentle, electric.

Moisture gathered between her legs.

She signaled to leave the car.

“Sure,” he said, the relief evident in his voice. He helped her helped out, then closed the car door.

Melanie was unsteady on her feet. Her senses were in overload. Her vision was still spotted and skewed; her heart continued rapidly beating, her blood roared like a raging river, and her stomach acted as if she was on a rollercoaster. In all honesty, she didn’t remember the last time she’d taken a breath.

He tilted her head up. “I think you’re an amazing woman and I feel honored to be here with you tonight. No matter what you do, or how you act, my feelings won’t change. Meli, you’re kind, you’re beautiful, and you’re sexy. *You’re* everything a man could ever want in a woman.”

Those black spots in her distorted vision grew bigger. Weightless, she fell down a dark hole and landed on a cluster of warm fluffy clouds.

Melanie opened her eyes, and recognized the ceiling in her living room. She felt like she’d missed something important. Disoriented, she sat up. Hadn’t she been outside a second ago?

Dropping her feet to the floor, she got off her couch and walked slowly toward the kitchen, lured by the smell of coffee. Who was with here with her? Michael? Or did she dream all that?

He was standing beside the coffee pot, too engrossed in a book to notice her. In his hand was the ticket he had thrown at her the night prior. She realized he was reading ‘*How to Get the Man YOU Want and Deserve in Ten Easy Steps*’.

The ticket reminded her how she had come home crushed, ready to run to the freezer and drown in a gallon of chocolate chunk ice cream. Then she had read chapter six ‘*Confidence in You: Rejection and Your Reaction*’, it had motivated her to give him one more chance. She had used the ticket to bookmark the page.

“Hi,” she said softly, not knowing what else to say to gain his attention.

Michael laid the ticket back in the book as he closed it, then rushed to her side. “You’re awake. Do you feel okay? Do you want me to take you to the hospital?” He put the back of his hand against her forehead.

She smiled at concern. “What happened?”

“You fainted on me.”

Her cheeks heated as she recalled the words he said to her before she passed out. If she wasn't careful, it would happen again.

She pulled away from his hand, wanting to change the conversation to something other than her. "Do you like the book?"

He stared at the book in his hand thoughtfully.

Oh, God, what must he think about her? That she is so naïve, she needed a book to help her pick up a man?

"Melanie, I didn't mean to hurt you. I wasn't rejecting you and I don't want you to think I ever would. You're perfect. The way I acted last night had nothing to do with you and everything to do with my own stupidity. I'm just glad that you didn't give up on me so quickly."

She tried to hide her smile.

Michael met her gaze. "Matter of fact, I'm going to write Ms. Aleka Leki a fan letter, thanking her for giving such wonderful advice."

When he winked at her, she giggled.

"You must be feeling better. You're laughing."

She didn't know what prompted her, but she threw herself at him, wrapping her arms tightly around his body. He returned the embrace, caressing her back and stroking her hair. She lost herself in his scent and sturdy strength. For once, everything felt right in the big, bad world.

Will you make love to me?

He nudged her back and smoothed the hair from her face. "Wow. I love your candor."

EEK!!! Had she actually said that aloud!?!

"I-I-I didn't just say that. I mean, I did, and I do, but I didn't mean to say it aloud. Ah, I'm so embarrassed. I mean... I've never... I don't have much experience with this kind of stuff and I don't want you to think any less of me. I've never been with a man, I've never had... well only with Bob, but I can't count him. He's just a BOB."

Oh, shit! Shut up! Shut up! Meli, shut up!

He had the confused look again. "A Bob?"

"Oh, God."

Melanie did what she did best. She high-tailed her ass out of there and ran to her bedroom. Unfortunately, Michael would do what he did best, which was to chase her down. So she fled to her bathroom. Shit! Now she was trapped. She turned on the light and looked at the window. She might just be able to fit out of it if she—

Michael grabbed a hold of her arm and swung her around. "Meli, stop."

His tone suggested she follow his instruction. For some reason, this made her heart flutter. "Yes?"

"I don't care who you've been with or not been with. That doesn't matter to me. What matters is here and now."

"I have never been with anyone," she muttered.

"Then who's Bob?"

She felt her cheeks flush. Pulling out of his grasp, she turned around, giving him her back. How could she ever bring herself to explain that? She glanced down at her washbasin and choked.

As if some great cosmic force was plotting against her, its purpose bent solely on her total humiliation, there was Bob, lying happily on a hand towel next to her sink.

"Meli? What's wrong?"

She glanced longingly at the bathroom window again. How she wished she could flee this embarrassing farce, but she was sure Officer Johnson would thwart her escape. She rubbed the bridge of her nose. Fuck it. The whole situation could not possibly get any worse.

Frustrated, she grabbed Bob up and shook him in the air. "Michael, meet Bob, my *Battery Operated Boyfriend*." She turned back to Michael and looked at her pleasure toy. "Bob, meet Michael."

Trying hard to suppress his laughter, he drew her into his arms. "Can I kiss you now?"

Before she could answer, his lips were on hers. Discarding her toy, she placed her hands around his neck and pulled him closer, thrusting her tongue in his mouth. She wanted more from him than some chaste peck.

Responding to her enthusiasm with a searing kiss that melted her insides, he grabbed her ass and lifted her onto the sink, and wedged himself in-between her legs. His hands roamed over her knees, then higher, pushing the skirt up and over the top of her thigh-high stockings.

Thank you! Thank You, Lord!

As he feverishly placed kisses across her neck, she forced her hands between their bodies and unclasped his duty belt. The heavy black leather fell off and landed on her bathroom rug with a loud thud.

She went for his shirt next, unbuttoning the blue material. She pulled it over his broad shoulders, exposing his vest and white undershirt.

She pushed him back. "Off! Off! Get it all off!"

He wrenched the vest apart and discarded it, then pulled his t-shirt over his head as she unhooked his trouser belt and unzipped his pants.

Michael's hands were on her blouse, quickly but carefully undoing the buttons. It wasn't fast enough for her.

"Rip the damn thing," she demanded. "Now!"

Little buttons scattered everywhere as he tore the fabric from her body. He was on her again, his lips leaving a blazing trail down her shoulders as his arms reached around her unclasped her bra.

Suddenly, he lifted her off the sink. She wrapped her legs around him while he carried her into the bedroom, her hands grasping his muscular shoulders as she nibbled at his neck. He captured her mouth as he laid her on the bed, his body descending on top of hers. The friction of his movement turned on her clit massager.

Melanie moved to turn off the vibrator, but strong fingers seized her wrists and placed them above her head.

"Leave it," Michael murmured between kisses.

Using one hand to keep her arms pinned above her head, he took the other and removed the remote from her skirt's waistband. He put the toy on its highest setting, then pushed her bra up and sucked on her nipple. Instantly, her body reacted to the many stimulants. She moved against him, about to come.

"Don't," he rasped. "I'm not done tasting you yet."

She clenched and held her orgasm.

He pulled her bra over her head and up her arms, wrapping the material loosely around her wrists. "Your hands stay put. Do you hear me?"

"Okay" she breathed. "I'll be good."

He let go and went back to fondling her breasts, offering them to his mouth until she was dizzy and gasping for air. She twined her fingers in the comforter, desperately fighting the urge to release the built up energy between her legs.

Michael licked and stroked his way down over her stomach and further still. He lifted the hem of her skirt up to her waist and kissed his way around her inner thighs, his hair brushing against her sensitized skin.

As the toy vibrated on her swollen clit, his mouth retreated in favor of fingers, which

moved inward and played with the folds of her pussy. She couldn't handle it anymore. She would die if he kept going. He had to stop or let her come.

She squeezed her legs together. "I can't," she cried.

"No, no, no, Meli. Keep them open for me," he admonished gently and parted her knees again, resuming his torture.

She thrashed her head back and forth. It all felt too good. It was too much for her. She arched her back. "No, I can't, Michael.

"You will," he insisted, using one hand to push her abdomen back down on the bed. With his other, he continued rubbing and caressing her pussy, but now added his tongue, mimicking the actions of his fingers.

"Please! Please! Just fuck me!" she pleaded.

"Not yet, my sweet. Now be a good girl."

He inserted a finger into her hole, slowly teasing her as his thumb pressed against the toy, creating more vibrating pressure on her clit. She moaned and he put another finger inside her.

"You're so wet and tight," he murmured. "You're a naughty, naughty girl. You can barely hold your cum."

That was it. His voice, his words, his touch, his tongue, her toy... she was losing her freaking mind.

"Fuck me, Michael! Fuck me now or I'll never forgive you!"

He lifted her up, pulling her skirt off. His fingers returned to her pussy, working magic and creating havoc on her body. As he licked his way back up her torso, his hot skin rubbed against hers. Somehow, he'd manage to lose his clothing as well. He went back suckling her breasts. She was going to kill him if he didn't give it to her soon.

"Please, Michael. I'm begging you."

"Oh, Meli," he whispered. "Your words, the way your body responds, you almost make me forget that you're technically still a virgin. We need to go slow, or I might hurt you.

Untangling her hands from her bra, she grabbed a hold of his head and tugged him up. She kissed him deeply, tasting her essence on his lips. Further down, she could feel his hard cock so close, but still so far. She wanted him closer. She wanted him inside.

Melanie tried to move onto his rod herself, but was unsuccessful. With a frustrated squeal, she broke the kiss. "You will not go 'slow'," she growled. "You will fuck me right now."

He captured her lips again and plunged into her, all in one smooth glide. She moaned into

his mouth as her hole stretched to accommodate his large size.

Bob had never prepared her for *this*. Michael was so damn filling, it was painful, but she loved it and wanted more. It actually added to the pleasure she was receiving from her toy and his ministrations.

“Yes, Michael!”

With that prompting, he thrust his hard cock into her again. She arched up and put her legs higher, wanting to take more of him. He lifted and grabbed her legs, delving deeper, over and over again, into her wet core.

Her body shuddered. Her breath labored. She screamed.

“Come for me, baby,” he demanded.

Melanie exploded, the mind-blowing pleasure overwhelming her unlike anything she’d ever experienced. He didn’t stop either. He kept on, creating wave after wave of shattering climaxes.

“Oh, please, I can’t take it! It feels too good! It’s too much!” she shrieked.

“Stay with me, Meli. Come for me again.”

His words set off another explosive orgasm. She didn’t know if she was going to cry or faint. He pounded into her, unrelenting, compelling her to give him more until she was she no longer capable of conscious thought. Somewhere in the recesses of her pleasure drunk mind, she felt him tense up and bellow her name. Her body responded by giving one last climax so intense, her vision went black.

When she awoke, Michael was holding her against him, nuzzling her ear.

“You’re the best I’ve ever had,” she murmured.

“I’m the only one you’ve ever had,” he responded with a soft chuckle. “I’ve never known a woman quite like you, Melanie.”

“Is that a good thing?”

He placed a soft kiss on her head. “Yes,” he whispered.

She yawned and snuggled closer to him, then fell back into a deep, sated slumber.

Chapter Six

Michael woke to the muffled ringing of his cell phone. He opened his eyes and squinted, trying to adjust to the light peeking behind the bedroom's curtains. It was morning.

Who could be calling him this early?

Ignoring the cell phone's incessant beckoning, he stroked Melanie's hair as he regarded her sleeping form, sure that he was the luckiest guy in the world. She looked peaceful as she slept, with her delicious mouth curved up in a soft smile. He liked to think that he had something to do with that.

He had never been with a woman who gave so much of herself. She was intoxicating, addictive, and he couldn't get enough of her. They'd made love three times throughout the night.

After their first time, like her, he had fallen asleep. He was awakened by Meli's warm mouth wrapped around his cock, licking and sucking him into another round of bedroom play. He had never imagined that she'd initiate another session so soon, especially having just lost her virginity. But hell, that wasn't the end to the surprises she'd given him. Meli was damn near insatiable. She soon demanded *another* encore, climbing up and straddling him, then riding him like an old-west outlaw making a run for the border.

He wasn't the fanciful type, but somehow, Melanie had snuck into his heart, and now he couldn't imagine his life without her in it. He wondered if she felt the same.

Reluctantly, Michael untangled himself from Meli's body, taking great care not to wake her. He left the warm bed and went to the bathroom to search for his cell phone, hidden somewhere under the piles of clothing scattered across the floor. When he found it, he checked the missed call log and saw that his phone had been busy.

Shit. He'd heard ringing during the night's events, but he thought it was his body's response to Melanie's exquisite talents that had caused the phenomena.

He had over ten missed calls from the station, and three missed calls from his psycho ex-girlfriend, Erica. He also happened to have eleven voice messages. Great. He shut his phone and rubbed his eyes in exasperation, not bothering to access his voicemail. His ex must have done something illegal and it involved him in some form or fashion.

Erica always came in and out of his life like a gust of hurricane force wind, creating chaos on her arrival, then leaving, unconcerned with the disruption she'd caused. The frustrating part was that his ex wasn't being malicious, it was just her selfish, spoiled, 'rich daddy's girl' nature. She saw nothing wrong with her actions.

And it wasn't as if Erica didn't know that their relationship was over. It was more like she felt that the two-weeks they dated, well over a year ago, entitled her to some form of privilege in his life. Especially since they parted as *friends*.

After taking a quick shower, Michael put on his trousers and undershirt before going to the kitchen to make a pot of coffee. He thought it best to enjoy some of the morning before he had to face the turmoil of whatever had occurred during the night.

Walking outside, he drank his coffee on the backyard patio and read more of Ms. Leki's book, enjoying the peace and solitude of Meli's private paradise. She had an amazing garden, which included a small tranquil waterfall that led to a tiny pond full of lily pads. Butterflies floated among the flowers and bird song emerged from the trees. Melanie's little world here was like the woman in so many ways: beautiful, simple, and enchanting.

"Good morning," a soft lyrical voice said behind him.

Michael turned to see a glorious goddess standing at the door, a sheet wrapped under her arms. She was holding a cup of coffee, smiling. The sight of her took his breath away.

"Good morning, beautiful," he replied.

Melanie settled next to him on the padded loveseat, bringing her legs up underneath her. They sat in silence for a while, just enjoying the nature around them. He wished he could do this everyday with her.

"May I sit on your lap?"

He was taken off guard by the unusual request. Most women wouldn't have asked, they would have just done it. He smiled. "Of course you can."

Of course, he didn't think she meant naked. Melanie slid into his arms, minus the sheet. Her skin was soft and smelled wonderful, rivaling the roses in her garden.

She moved around and changed position. She did it again. She squirmed, she wriggled, and she tried to get comfortable, but to no avail. His dick got hard and near broke through his trousers.

A coy smile formed on her lips. Could it be that his little forest nymph was plying for attention?

She shifted again into a sidesaddle position. Her ass was now on his bulge and her breasts were practically in his face, like forbidden fruit tempting him to taste.

He put one arm behind Meli's back and reclined her slightly, then captured a nipple, licking and sucking it until it was like a jellybean on his tongue. Meli arched her back, offering more to his greedy mouth. He doubled his assault, lavishing his attention on her other breast. She threaded her fingers in his hair and pulled his head closer while grinding her body against his restrained cock.

Michael slid his hand down her abdomen. She pulled her knees up and spread her legs open wide for him. He cupped her pussy, letting his thumb rub gently on her clit while his fingers teased at the entrance of her moist center. Her breath grew heavy as he caressed her.

"Michael... Oh, God. I love your fingers inside me."

Technically, his fingers weren't inside her yet, but he understood the hint. However, he wasn't going to give in to her that easily. He pulled away from her breast and kissed her mouth deeply, all the while stroking her pussy, his hand gliding up and down the smooth wet folds. He trailed kisses up her neck.

"What do you want me to do, Melanie? I want to hear you ask for it," he whispered in her ear.

"Please, put your fingers inside me."

He slid two fingers into her warm, wet hole, but he didn't move them around. He just let them sit there, filling her.

"More," she breathed.

"What else do you want me to do?"

She bit her lip and tried to slide her ass forward in an attempt to move her body into his stationary hand.

Her muscles tightened around his fingers. "No, no, honey. You can't take what you want. You have to ask for it."

"Please, I want you to make me come," she begged.

"How?" he asked, increasing the pressure of his thumb on her swollen clit.

"Fuck me with your fingers."

"Good girl." Michael withdrew slightly and plunged back in. He did it again, and again, building a rhythm that rocked her body with his wrist's movement. She threw her head back, moaning, her breath unsteady. His lips wrapped around her nipple and flicked it with his tongue.

Her body shuddered.

“Oh, God, yes, yes!”

Melanie’s pussy clenched, then doused his hand.

Increasing his speed, he sucked harder on her breast, coaxing more orgasms from her dripping cunt. She grabbed on to his shoulder and dug her nails in, as her shrieks of pleasure filled the air—loud enough to wake the neighbors.

He lifted his head, but continued his hand’s onslaught of her pussy. “You’re a naughty girl, Meli. Good girls don’t let men finger-fuck them outside, then yell to the world how much they like it.”

His playful reprimand set off another round of powerful climaxes and she shouted his name. Her juices trickled down his wrist. Was it possible for her to get any wetter?

“More!” she demanded.

Oh, he’d give her more, but in turn, she’d give him more.

He inserted a third finger into her tight pussy and pumped her harder, milking her. “Give it to me, Meli. You give me all your cum.”

He clamped his mouth down on her nipple, his teeth grazing the taunt bud. Her body shuddered and she cried out. Warm cream spilled forth and flowed over his fingers

“Again. Now!” he muttered against her breast.

“I can’t”

His pinky finger grazed lower, against the soft hole of her ass. She let out a piercing scream and bucked up, then cum gushed over his hand.

“Good girl.”

Melanie’s body went slack in his arms, her breath ragged and tears streaming from her eyes.

Panic engulfed him. “Did I hurt you?”

She shook her head. He pulled her close and began rocking her.

“Melanie, tell me what’s wrong.”

“I’ve-I’ve-I’ve just never come so much,” she sobbed into his neck.

“You didn’t like it?” he asked as he stroked her hair.

She sniffled and pulled back, wiping her eyes. “No, I loved it. It was amazing. You’re amazing.”

Michael couldn’t help but smile. “Then why are you crying.”

She hesitated, then shook her head as if she answered her own internal question. "I don't know," she hiccupped, then put her head back on his shoulder and started sobbing more.

Michael reached for the sheet and wrapped it around her, then started rocking again. He had a suspicion that his little nymph just told him her first fib.

"Are you sure?" he asked lightly.

When she didn't say anything, he thought he might have offended her. Then she let out a heavy breath.

"I don't think any man will ever make me feel what you make me feel. I don't think I'd be able to let another man try."

Michael's chest swelled. No other woman had ever made him feel so appreciated. He lifted her in his arms and carried her inside, wondering if he could ever find the courage to tell her how much she really meant to him.

After they shared a hot shower, Meli lay on the bed and watched him put on his uniform.

When he was done, Michael sat down next to her and caressed her cheek. "Why don't you get some rest?"

"Are you sure you have to leave?"

"I'm sorry, honey," he replied. "I have some things to take care of at work. But I'd love to see you this evening? I'm off tonight. How about dinner?"

Melanie scrunched her cute nose. "I have to go to the shoppe."

"That's okay, I'll stop by later. Maybe you can show me your creations in process."

Her face brightened. "I'd love to."

He leaned in and gave her a searing kiss. "Get some rest. I'll see you soon."

She nodded with glazed eyes.

He smiled and rose from the bed, fighting the urge to stay. He'd like nothing more than to crawl under the covers with Meli and waste the day away holding her in his arms. But sadly, he had to face whatever absurd situation his ex had probably got herself into instead.

Just as he was about to show himself out, a knock sounded.

"That's just Buster from down the street. Tell him I haven't made the grocery list yet and to come back later," Melanie hollered from the bedroom.

He opened the front door to find a teenage boy. He watched recognition dawn on the kid's face. He stepped out on the porch and shut the door behind him.

"I'm—uh..." Buster stuttered.

"Just here to collect your binoculars?"

The kid's face turned beet red. "Uh, no... um... grocery list."

Michael suppressed his smile at Buster's embarrassment. Instead, he folded his arms and leaned against the doorframe, leveling the youth with a hard stare.

"Really. Are you sure?"

The boy squirmed under the intense scrutiny. He didn't feel bad for intimidating the kid. Hey, better to deal with this now than later when the kid was older, and getting arrested for being some kind of peeping pervert.

"Yes?" Buster squeaked.

"Miss Darling says to come back later."

Buster didn't even say good bye. He practically stumbled over his own feet to rush back to his car. Jumping in, he sped off, then slammed on his brakes to slow down. He must have remembered who was watching him from the porch.

When the Escort was out of sight, Michael shook his head and got into his cruiser, wondering if he and Melanie ever had kids, would they do stupid teenage things, too?

Michael drove home, contemplating whether or not he should call his ex. His day had been wonderful so far, so why should he ruin it? What could she have possibly done to warrant his immediate attention?

Unfortunately, his answer stared him in the face the moment he turned onto his street and saw the charred remains of what was once the top level of his two-story house.

Chapter Seven

It was late night when Michael drove his truck toward Meli's shop. On the way there, he replayed Erica's voice message for the billionth time, hoping to find some clue to her location, or least find some peace of mind in her fateful words. Of the eleven messages left on his phone, ten being from his department, her one had the most impact on him.

The voicemail recorder came on, announcing that the call was from yesterday, 11:23pm.

The message started with a 'shhhh-shhhh' sound.

"Hi, Mike. Um, I'm at your house. I was looking for my pair of black crotch-less panties for my date tonight. Since you weren't home and you didn't answer your cell the two times I called, I kind of just broke in. I didn't want the neighbors to know, so I used a—oh, shit, hold on."

There was more whooshing noise and mutterings. Then there was a definite "Ouch, friggin' hot, shit, my nails are melting," before she continued.

"Yeah, I didn't want the neighbors to know, so I used a candle to look around. About that... well, I accidentally caught your bedroom on fire. Don't worry though, I've called 911 for you. Look, I can't stay much longer, I didn't find the panties and I still have to get ready for my date. I'll do the best I can, but the damn fire putter-outer guys had better get here soon. Okay, hugs and kisses, talk to you later. *Ciao!*"

Michael slammed his phone shut. He'd spent most of the day trying to get what was left of his house in order. Then spent most of the evening trying to track down Erica, who had vanished from the scene the moment the fire trucks had arrived. One of the firefighters saw her running away, a small fire extinguisher in her hand. She'd been missing ever since.

Thankfully, the damage to his home looked worse than it was. His bedroom, the attic and the roof were gone, but the rest of the house was okay, just wet. He sniffed his clothes, which had been in the laundry room, and made sure they didn't smell of too badly of smoke.

He called his ex's cell, but she didn't pick up. He had tried all day to reach her. He'd driven to all her hangouts, even paid a visit to her father's house to look for her. She wasn't there. However, the rich bastard offered to pay for all repairs and then some, as long as Michael didn't press charges on his 'wayward' daughter.

Michael wouldn't press charges for breaking and entering, or sue for damages. He wouldn't turn in the claim to the insurance if her father would pay to fix everything, but that still didn't guarantee Erica's freedom. She had an arrest warrant out for unpaid tickets.

Pulling into the parking lot of Darling Bouquets, he parked next to a red Porsche 911 Turbo that looked very familiar.

It couldn't be. There was no way.

He jogged to the entrance of the shoppe and looked inside. So much for Meli not coming out to greet her customers, because there she stood, next to Ben, listening to his ex's animated speech.

Fuck! If it wasn't for bad luck, he wouldn't have any luck at all.

Michael opened the door and walked in.

Erica never turned around. "So needless to say, I have to fly all the way to Paris to get another pair of those panties. And look! Look at my nails." She held out her hand to Meli and Ben. "The acrylic actually melted. No worries though, I'm getting them fixed first thing tomorrow."

"Please tell Ms. Darling why you want to get Officer Johnson flowers after setting his house on fire," Ben requested, then fixed a pointed glare in Michael's direction.

At least Ben bothered. Meli wouldn't even acknowledge him.

"I'm just here because Daddy said that Mike was super angry at me about it. So, I thought I'd be nice and get him some flowers. Unique ones, something he couldn't get himself. I'd buy him a car or something, but Mike was never one you could pay off. I just don't know what else to get him so he'll love me still."

"He loves you?" Melanie asked quietly.

Meli turned her gaze to him. Though she appeared calm and composed, he could read the pain in her eyes. She was devastated.

"Oh, totally. Please, Ms. Darling, you have to take my order. I've already filled out all the paper work, spent hours doing so. I'm sorry I couldn't answer all your questions about his favorite color and such. Just make a quick romantic bouquet, put 'Officer Johnson' on the card, and drop it off at the police station. I'll pay anything you want."

"That's enough Erica. I don't want your damn flowers," he growled.

"Mikey!" she screeched, then ran to his side and threw her arms around his neck. "Do you forgive me then?"

He uncoiled Erica's limbs and nudged her away. "I don't love you Erica. I never have. We dated for two weeks over a year ago. During that time, you slept with three different men. We broke up. That's that."

She pushed out her bottom lip in a pout. "I only cheated on you once."

"No, I came home and found you in my bed doing three men. I don't care if you were fucking all three of them at the same time. To me, that's still three infidelities."

"But—"

He held up his hand. "That they were brothers means little to me. We've had this discussion. They don't count as one person because they're related. If anything, it makes the whole thing that much more twisted."

Erica stomped her foot. "I only went to your house because all the hired help at mine are spies for my father. I'd never been with three men before. I was just experimenting. I knew you'd never agree to such—"

"Damn right I wouldn't have." He pointed toward the door. "Now, take your ass to the police station and turn yourself in."

"But I thought you weren't pressing charges?" she whined.

"I'm not. Fortunately, this little stunt didn't kill anyone and my house is insured. But you haven't paid your traffic tickets and that's against the law. There's a warrant out for your arrest. So go to the station, have your *daddy* meet you there, and pray he can clean up this mess, because I'm not doing it this time."

Erica touched his arm. "Please go with me?"

He jerked away. "I've played the nice guy ex long enough. When you broke into my truck, shattering my window for a damn lipstick you thought you lost, I let it go. When you went all Zsa Zsa Gabor and slapped the officer that stopped you for speeding, I talked my friend into dropping the assault charges. I could go on, but I'd be here all night."

"I thought we were friends," she said, raising her nose and flinging her hair over her shoulder.

"We're not friends. You only call when you're in trouble, and I'm not going to rescue you anymore. I have better things to do, such as spend time with the wonderful woman I'm in love with."

He turned back to the table. Ben sat there, an expression of astonishment on his face, but Meli was nowhere to be found.

“Where did she go?” he demanded.

The clerk shrugged. “She left when your ex jumped into your arms. She said something about cleaning up the studio and heading home.”

As if on cue, Michael heard tires squealing out of the parking lot.

He took off out the front door.

Michael pulled his truck up along side her Volvo speeding down the interstate at eighty-eight miles per hour. He flicked his headlights and gestured for her to slow down. Meli ignored him and actually sped up. He changed lanes and moved his truck behind her car, then pressed his foot further down on the accelerator. He glanced at his speedometer. He was doing ninety-five now.

The distance between their vehicles increased. Shit. She had to be hitting at least a hundred. He never thought a Volvo could go that fast.

Fear for her safety mingled with his fury. It was foolish to drive at such high speeds. Thankfully, this portion of the highway was straight and fairly empty, and the weather was perfect. But what if she had a blow-out and lost control of her car? What if an animal ran out in front of her?

Meli stayed in the left lane, even slowed down to eighty-five and signaled when she had to change lanes to get around some other cars. However, once she was clear of traffic and the road was wide open, she tried to lose him again.

“It ain’t happening, honey. I’ve been in enough car chases to know how to play this game.”

The Volvo’s interior lit up. Keeping one hand on the wheel, she dug in the passenger seat, brought something to her ear, cocked her head to hold it to her shoulder, then turned off the light.

Damn it. She was talking on the phone while hauling ass down the interstate. He was going to beat her, if he could ever catch her.

His own cell rang. For a moment, he thought Melanie was calling him. Then he remembered, even after all they’ve done together, the never exchanged cell numbers.

He picked up the phone. “Yeah?”

“Hey, it’s Erica.”

“What?”

“Look, I’m sorry. You’re right. I haven’t been a good friend. So to make it up to you, I’ve

convinced Ben to call Ms. Darling to tell her the truth about us.”

“There is no *us*,” he bit out.

“I know. That’s what Ben’s telling her right now. Then afterwards, he’s going with me to the police station. If I don’t go to jail tonight, we’re going to go out for drinks.”

Michael was surprised to find Meli slowing down to the speed limit. He was still pissed. No matter how angry she was at him, she should never have put her life in danger like that.

“I have to go. Good luck on your date,” he said, hanging up on Erica as she offered her thanks.

He followed Melanie the rest of the way to her house, pulling up behind her in the driveway. Parking and turning off the ignition, he jumped out of the truck and went directly to her driver’s side window.

Melanie took her time turning her off vehicle. He waited for her to open the door, but she didn’t move. She continued looking straight ahead with a smile on her face.

Michael tried the handle, but the door was locked. He gave three short raps on the glass. She moved the key and rolled down the window.

“Get out of the car. We need to talk,” he said.

“Hello, Officer Johnson,” she said softly.

Shit. How could he yell at her about speeding when she had that sweet innocent look and such an enchanting voice? Fine, he’d go for guilt then. “You broke your promise to me, Melanie.”

Her eyes fell on her lap. “I’m sorry. I won’t do it again.”

“Oh, I know you won’t. I’ll make sure of that...somehow.”

“Are you going to ticket me?”

He snorted. “I think we’re beyond that. Anyway, what you did back there on the highway endangered your life. At that speed, you could’ve lost control and killed yourself. It’s called reckless driving.”

She glanced up at him, her eyes twinkling. “So, you want to arrest me again?”

“I don’t have my handcuffs.”

Damn, she actually looked disappointed.

“Then how are you going to punish me?”

“Oh, I have something in mind,” he remarked as he reached in the car and opened the door.

He removed her keys from the ignition and un-clicked her seat belt. Taking a hold of her

upper arm, he guided her out of the vehicle, slammed the door and locked it from the keychain. He dragged her to the porch.

Once through the front door, he led her straight into the bedroom.

“Take off your pants,” he ordered, releasing her arm and depositing her keys on the dresser.

Melanie bit her bottom lip as she bowed her head, and slid her shoes off. Her hands then went to the button below her navel. Tortuously slow and seductive, she unfastened, unzipped, and slipped the material over her hips and down her legs, stepping out the pool of fabric.

“Your underwear, too,” he muttered hoarsely.

He watched her fingers wrap around the delicate lace band. His mouth watered as she slid the panties down, revealing a little triangle of hair. He bit his tongue to stop the groan in his throat from escaping. It took all his will power not grab a hold of her and dive in.

Michael pointed to the mattress. “Get on the bed.”

She sat down and laid back.

He shook his head. “No. I want you on your elbows and knees.”

Melanie slowly rolled over, crawling until only her feet dangled off. Her shoulders went down and her ass went up.

“Spread your legs wider.”

As she scooted her knees further apart, her back dipped and her ass tilted higher, giving him an unobstructed view of her naked pussy. His cock leapt in his pants. Hell, she was already wet from anticipation.

With a heavy sigh, he sat next to her on the bed. “Do you know why you’re being punished?” he asked, pushing her shirt up.

“Yes,” she whispered.

He unclasped her bra and caught one of her breasts in his palm, letting his thumb graze over the nipple. “Do you think you deserve it?”

She nodded.

Twirling her nipple in his fingertips, he placed his other hand on the curve of her ass. “So, you know you were a naughty girl for breaking your promise not to speed?”

“Yes,” she responded breathlessly.

He tweaked her nipple as he delivered a sharp smack to her rear end. Melanie gasped. He massaged the red print on her cheek, and resumed caressing her breast.

When she relaxed, he delivered another stinging slap, simultaneously tugging on her nipple. She moaned.

“Do you promise never to speed again?”

“Yes, I promise,” she responded.

He smacked her ass again. “I don’t believe you.”

Michael removed himself from the bed and stood behind her, noticing a slick wet sheen on her thighs. He shook his head. Meli was enjoying her punishment too much.

Placing his finger on her clit, he moved in circles, making the bud swell. She moaned and tried to move against his hand.

“No, Melanie,” he admonished, spanking her again.

She stopped moving. Using his free hand to caress the parts of her ass hot from his slap, he continued playing with her pussy, teasing and plucking, but never wandering beyond the entrance of her sweet cunt. He pulled her lips apart and leaned in to taste her cream, his tongue lapping at the inner folds.

“Please, please,” she pleaded in between pants.

He shoved two fingers in her hole. “Do you promise never to speed again?”

“Yes. Thank you.”

“That’s what I want to hear,” he murmured, and began finger fucking her slowly. He enjoyed watching her body’s response to his attention. She was so wet.

Though shy by nature, Melanie didn’t hold back when it came to her sexuality. He loved that about her. She knew exactly what she wanted, and wasn’t embarrassed to ask for it. And she wasn’t ashamed to show you her pleasure either. That alone deserved some kind of reward.

“You can move now,” he said.

Rocking into his hand, she took over task of penetration. She steadily increased her speed, and just when she was about to come, he withdrew. “Do you promise never to speed again?”

She groaned. “Yes. Please...”

“Please what?” When she didn’t answer, he gave her three quick swats. “Are you begging me to fuck you?”

“Yes!” she cried out.

“Do you promise never to speed again?”

“Oh, for heaven’s sake! Yes! Yes! I’ll never speed again. Just let me come!”

Michael unfastened his pants and plunged his stiff cock into her tight hole, pumping her

hard and fast. She came instantly, her screams of pleasure echoing through of the room. He kept on, drawing one orgasm after another until she couldn't hold herself up.

"No more! It's too much!"

He didn't stop pounding into her. Instead, he dispensed another slap to her ass cheek.

"You will never speed again, do you hear me?"

Her pussy clenched around his dick in another climax. "Yes! Fuck, yes!" she screamed.

Smack. "If the thought of speeding even enters your mind, you'll contact me immediately and I'll arrange for your punishment. You understand?"

"Yes! Yes! Oh God, yes!"

"Promise? You'll tell me?"

"Yes! Michael, yes! Please!"

"Okay, then. Be a good girl and come for me once more."

She let out a piercing cry as her muscles contracted around his cock a final time and milked him dry.

Epilogue

Melanie smiled as the bride and groom standing beneath a white gazebo recited their vows before the preacher. For a ceremony that Michael said took almost a year to plan, it was a relatively simple affair.

No wedding party. No sit down dinner or reception. Just small buffet with a cornucopia of finger foods such as breads, cheeses, and little fruit pies surrounding two heated table fountains of hot chocolate and apple cider.

The bride was very lucky. It was a beautiful autumn day for an outside service and since it was late afternoon, the sun shone down in just the right way to make the whole park seem magical. The trees, bejeweled in red, orange and gold leaves, glittered, and a soft breeze carried a subtle spicy scent, one that could only be experienced in this particular season.

She watched the groom pull out a gold band from his pocket and slip it on Janine's finger.

"I now pronounce you, man and wife."

All the guests rose from their seats and clapped as the newly married couple shared their first kiss as husband and wife. Melanie felt tears form in her eyes. Weddings were such beautiful things. She realized, once again, why she loved her job and chose to only make bouquets for those truly in love.

As she watched the couple posed for pictures, Michael's hand slipped into hers. She looked at the man who had entered her life only four months ago. It was because of him that she had enough courage to venture out to a place with so many people. He gave her the confidence to overcome her shyness.

He put his lips to her ear. "I know I've danced around it, hinting at the sentiment here and there, but I've never directly told you how much I love you. I do, Melanie. I love you. And I think I have since the moment I met you."

She smiled. "I know."

Chuckling, he pulled back. "Really? How?"

"Ben told me."

"What?" he exclaimed skeptically. "How would he know?"

Taking her hand from his, she turned toward him and laid it on his chest. "That night when your ex showed up at my studio, you mentioned it then. I just wasn't there to hear it."

"You never said anything. When did Ben tell you?"

"He called me on my cell phone while as I was doing a hundred down the interstate. Remember? You were following me. Do you think I slowed down for no reason?"

Just then, the crowd cheered as the bride and groom came out of the gazebo hand in hand.

Janine pulled away from her new husband and threw herself into Melanie's arms, hugging her tightly. "Thank you, thank you, *thank you* for your gift. The bouquet is gorgeous," she gushed.

Melanie felt her cheeks flame at the overwhelming gratitude. "It was my pleasure. Congratulations," she whispered.

Janine let go of her, then gave her brother a quick embrace before the groom recaptured her hand and tugged her away, pointing to the limo that waited in the distance.

Turning her attention back to Michael, she took a deep breath. "I know I haven't said it either, but I lov—"

"Ms. Darling!" she heard Janine call out. Melanie spun around just in time to catch the bouquet of fall colored roses flying toward her. "You're next!"

She waved to the departing couple, then glanced at the bouquet in her hand. Was it really a sign?

Behind her, she heard Michael laugh softly. "You were saying?"

"I love you, too."

"God, how I've wanted to hear those words from your mouth." His hands splayed across her hips as he drew her back toward him. Suddenly, he tensed.

Damn. He felt it.

"Why can't you be a good girl?" he mumbled into her hair.

"It's not on," she giggled.

Once all the other guests had moved past them and gathered around the buffet tables, Michael slid his fingers across the remote, turning the dial up. Vibration rippled on her clit. Within a matter of moments, wetness gathered between her legs.

"Let me have your keys," she demanded quietly.

He removed the keys from his pocket and placed them in her hand. "Why?"

Pulling out of his embrace, she looked over her shoulder as she walked toward the truck.

“I’m overwhelmed by this need to speed home. It’s all I can think of. Speeding down the highway with the windows down, the accelerator pushed to the floor... God, speeding for me is almost like having an orga—”

“Come back here, Melanie,” he warned.

She stopped and turned, giving him her most innocent smile. “Or what?”

His eyes sparkled as he tapped his fingers against his thigh. “I think you know.”

That’s all she needed to hear. She bolted toward his vehicle.

“Oh, hell no,” he exclaimed and took off in pursuit.

Between the clit massager and anticipation of things to come, she could barely run. She made it to the driver door, but Michael was there a second later, prying open her hands and retrieving the keys.

“What if I promise not to speed a lot?” she asked, laughing as he grasped her upper arm and led her around to the other side of the truck.

He opened the passenger door for her to get in. “Naughty girls don’t get to drive, Melanie. Do you know what happens to naughty girls who want to speed?”

Playing the part, she shrugged. “They get a ticket?”

He gave her a swat on the backside. “No. Try again.”

Warm liquid gushed between her legs. She so loved this game.

Biting her bottom lip, she bowed her head. “Naughty girls who want to speed get punished.”

The End