



CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

STUPENDOUSLY
YOURS

TONYA RAMAGOS

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Stupendously Yours

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

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Tonya Ramagos

Dedication

My heartfelt thanks to the men and women of the U.S. military who sacrifice so much for the people of America.

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Prada: Prada

Chapter One

Christmas prostitution.

Zoie Qwin knew she had officially seen it all. She stopped in the entrance of Quench, her gaze scanning the hip-hop club as she waited for the line to move. A line, she noted tongue in cheek, consisting solely of women.

"You're sixty-nine." Dalia Kade handed Zoie a bidding paddle, an amused quirk tilting her siren-painted lips. Slim and blonde with an angelic face, she looked stunning in a red satin dress fitted at the bust and waist with a slit in the skirt that stretched up the better part of her shapely thigh. Four-inch heels of matching colour with overzealous elf-shaped shoe pins completed the look. "We're all signed in and ready to spend. Whew, lucky for us I reserved a table. Would you look at the crowd in this place!"

"It's hard not to. I'm swimming in estrogen." Zoie followed Dalia to a table at the edge of the dance floor. Thin cardboard Christmas decorations and colourful streamers dangled from the ceiling. Small pots of poinsettias sat in the centre of every table. Sprigs of mistletoe hung low in strategic places throughout the club. The crowd, dressed in their best holiday attire, was nearly shoulder-to-shoulder and the auction wasn't slated to start for another hour.

"Patience, my friend." Dalia exchanged a couple of bills for two shots of a layered red, green and clear concoction from a passing waitress dressed as a Santa's helper and shoved one into Zoie's hand. "Soon you'll be basking in drool-worthy testosterone."

"I'd rather be dancing," Zoie grumbled and tossed back the shot.

"And you will before the night is finished. The dance floor will open as usual as soon as the auction ends. Bet on the right man and you could be dancing the vertical bump and grind and the horizontal mambo before morning. You look great, by the way. I told you that dress wouldn't clash with your hair. It's perfect!"

Zoie glanced down at the emerald green silk and velvet lined bodice that displayed her moderate breasts quite nicely, if she dared to say so herself. She'd feared she would look like a Christmas tree wearing this shade of green with her head of scarlet hair. "Thanks. Now tell

me why I have to be number sixty-nine?" She eyeballed the bidding paddle she placed on the table as she sat down.

Dalia shrugged and tapped a fingernail on the bold number sixty-eight of her own paddle. "Because that number won't do me any good tonight. I'm here to rescue the bro, not land a hard one in the sack."

"And I'm only here because you dragged me," Zoie pointed out.

"Thank you, by the way, for not kicking and screaming and embarrassing us both."

"And chance scuffing my new Pradas and causing myself a sore throat?" Zoie shook her head. "It's not worth all that."

"Ah, but it's worth every penny you decide to part with. Donating all the proceeds to the soldiers serving in Afghanistan couldn't be a better cause."

Zoie whole-heartedly agreed. She'd been donating everything from non-perishable food and reading material to money to various war funds since the fighting began. One particular lieutenant commander with the U.S. Army had been getting some extra special reading material from her for months. Not that he had a clue the racy letters were from her. For the purpose of her invigorating written relationship with Nash Beagan, she'd assumed the alias of Lady Zest. She loved the idea of Nash thinking of her as zesty. She'd even taken to adding 'stupendously yours' to her signature because she was, in fact, stupendously his even if she'd never get the satisfaction of having him. She'd been living a fabulous secret life with him through the letters they exchanged, though. In writing, she didn't hesitate to share her fantasies, to reveal all the wicked things she'd dreamt of doing to him over the years, and the mental pictures he painted for her in return were nothing short of multiple-orgasm-claiming bliss.

"How much are you prepared to dish to save Travis from this mob of gawking females?" Zoie asked.

Dalia shrugged. "As much as it takes. It's all his money anyway."

"He gave his sister money to bid on him?" Zoie barked a laugh. Leave it to Travis to come up with such a harebrained idea. "Are you sure he's not gay?"

"Step-sister, soon-to-be no sister, and why would that make him gay?"

"Look around, Dalia. There is more pussy in this crowd than most men have a chance to sample in a lifetime. Yet Travis has made sure none of them get him for the night. Why

even bother to be part of the auction?" Zoie sighed and answered her own question simultaneously with Dalia. "Because it's such a good cause. Okay, I got that. I agree, but I'll be donating my cash directly to the fund without a man for a reward."

Dalia angled her head. "Are you sure you're not gay?"

"Of course I'm not gay!"

"Because I can't help but notice how intent you are at not taking advantage of the opportunity given to spend that money on a man who can spin your planet for the night."

Zoie made a raspberry sound at that. "In this town? It's more likely that I'd get a mediocre tilt on my axis. Besides, I've seen tonight's line-up. Look for yourself. It's right here." She tapped the sheet taped in the centre of the table top. The entire list fell under the heading of same ol', same ol'.

Which was why she'd rather spend the evening at home with her box of letters from Nash. Zoie shifted in her seat, her panties growing damp from the thought of his last letter. He'd spoken of wanting to watch her undress for him in front of his living room window, then taking her from behind as his neighbours watched. Dear sweet baby Jesus, her mouth hadn't stopped watering since she'd pulled that letter from the envelope. And the one it inspired her to write in return, holy moly, if it had the same effect on him as it had on her, Afghanistan was in store for one hell of a heat wave.

Much of their correspondence rang with the play of exhibition and Dom/sub play. Nash Beagan was anything but a run-of-the-mill lover. Zoie had known that since middle school. He'd been a sophomore, but the stories of his sexual escapades and hearty appetite had reached her ears easily enough. The man screamed pussy-soaking adventure and G-spot-pleasuring promise. He oozed everything she wanted but had yet to experience outside of their letters. Sex with Nash would be anything but mediocre. It would be adventurous, outrageous, and maybe even a bit dangerous—just like the man. It would be everything she wanted, and it would rip her heart to shreds because, as much as she fantasised about doing him, what she really wanted was a place in his heart.

"I heard there's one name that wasn't put on the list," Dalia cut into Zoie's thoughts. "A last minute addition they decided to keep as a surprise."

Zoie flagged down the waitress, simultaneously pulling bills from her pocket to pay for two more shots. Maybe if she drank enough before Mr. Surprise hit the spotlight, she could fool herself into thinking he resembled her favourite hard-bodied soldier.

* * * *

Nash Beagan refolded the last letter he'd received from his Lady Zest with a smile on his face and a rapidly stiffening cock. It wasn't the most opportune time to become aroused by his Lady Zest, but he'd been unable to resist reading her wicked words, hearing her imagined sultry voice one more time. Her letters had kept him going for damned near eight months now. It still amused him to think how he'd believed the first to be an April fool's prank from a bud because it arrived on April first. Despite the flush of heat that consumed him as he'd read the short but delectably sinful letter, he'd dismissed it for over a week. Then another one came, and another, and he'd starting writing back until they'd exchanged over thirty blazing infernos of highly pornographic, dick-weeping letters.

And still counting, he chuckled to himself, wondering if she'd gotten the one he'd mailed just before leaving his post in Afghanistan.

He wondered about her a lot and figured that was her intention. He knew nothing about her except that she was local. The return address gave nothing else away. It also offered him no hope of finding her now that he was stateside.

Sighing, Nash reached for a Santa hat on the table laden with Christmas accessories in the centre of the storage room the club owner had appropriated for the auction dressing room. He shoved it on his head, smirking when Travis Moby stepped to his side and grabbed a large red ball on a string.

"Welcome home, buddy." Travis gave Nash a hard slap on the back of his shoulder and slid the string over his sandy blond head, adjusting the red ball over his slightly crooked nose in a Rudolph fashion.

"Thanks. I think." He'd been home less than twenty-four hours when Travis snagged him. "Tell me again how you talked me into this shit."

Travis leant in and lowered his voice conspiratorially. "Pussy, my man. Sopping wet, deliciously tight pussy. That club out there is full of slick lips waiting for action and you've

been gone too long not to take advantage of the smorgasbord when it's handed to you on a Christmas buffet."

Nash didn't bother to tell Travis as an Army commander he could get almost any of that pussy without putting himself on display. He'd thought girls had been quick to spread their legs for him as a high school quarterback. Put him in BDUs and call him a lieutenant commander and the women were willing to spread every orifice of their body.

He'd wondered for a while if that was why Lady Zest found him appealing, but quickly decided she was different. He couldn't say how he knew, but he was ninety-nine-point-nine-percent certain of it. Then again, perhaps that certainty came from the fact that somewhere around letter three he'd replaced the 'est' with 'oie'. His unrecognisable image of his Lady Zest had taken on the stark, contrasting beauty of Lady Zoie, AKA Zoie Qwin.

With long shapely legs, slim waist, perfect breasts, and a face that clashed in so many ways it made her gorgeous beyond measure, Zoie Qwin had been his secret obsession for years. He'd let her image override the mysteriously anonymous Lady Zest and spent the last eight months falling deeper in love with a woman who would never have him.

"There's enough buffet out there to go around," Nash pointed out, pushing Zoie Qwin from his mind. The sweet, innocent doll would never be privy to the things the true Lady Zest revealed in her letters. "Why aren't you planning to dine?"

Travis shook his head. "If I told you, I would be putting my manhood at risk."

"Try me."

"I haven't been much for the one-night-stand scene lately. Maybe I'm losing it." Travis winced. "I'm here to raise money for the cause."

"But it's your own money. Why not save yourself the trouble and send a check?"

"I didn't know how much to make the check out for. I've got to see how much those women out there are willing to pay for me first."

Nash laughed. He didn't say as much, but he had a sneaking suspicion Travis's real goal tonight was to get under a certain soon-to-no-longer-be-his-step-sister's skin.

"It'll be interesting to see how much money you rake in too, being the surprise attraction and all."

Nash rolled his eyes. The money was the only reason he'd agreed to this thing. If even a portion of what was raised helped his fellow brothers-in-arms to make it through this blasted

war, putting himself out there for a club of females was worth every second. And if by some miracle Zoie Qwin was out there...

His cock flexed and his heart skipped a beat. Best to save those fantasies for his letters to his Lady Zo – Lady Zest.

Chapter Two

Zoie curled her fingers around the glass of Merlot she'd ordered and watched in amused fascination as the women around the club went ga-ga over the men parading in Christmas hats, masks, or bows and little else on the dance floor to the beat of well-known Christmas carols. She'd expected the list of names to create a problem, figuring the women would settle their minds on the man they wanted and hold onto their dough until he came out. She'd been wrong. Some of the guys auctioned had received more bids than others and some of the amounts finalised had made her eyes bug out while others went for much smaller sums. Still, no man had been left standing and they were only a little over halfway down the list.

"Mmm, he is too fine," Dalia gushed as one of the names Zoie hadn't recognised stepped onto the floor. Tall and lanky, he put a good start to the bidding with a waggle of ebony brows and a come-hither grin. She elbowed Zoie. "Bid on him."

"You bid on him. No one said you can't spend your own money on a guy you want and empty Travis's bank account on saving him."

Dalia shrugged and shut up.

Zoie bit back a smile. No one said it, but even if they had, Dalia wouldn't have done it. It was Zoie's guess Dalia would've emptied her own bank account to keep another woman from 'purchasing' Travis tonight.

The ebony babe sauntered off the dance floor to stand with the other 'bought' men with a gleaming smile on his face. No doubt because his lady was one of the most beautiful women in the club.

Beauty loves company. Zoie sipped her wine.

"All right, ladies," the announcer for the auction bellowed over the mic. "How about a surprise to really get this fundraiser pumping? They say we should save the best for last, but I just don't believe in that garbage."

Cheers and whoops of agreement momentarily drowned out the auctioneer.

"We all know why we're here tonight," the announcer stated when the noise died. He laughed at a shout about creating a beefcake sleigh from a woman in the back of the club. "I suppose you could do that. Who better to drive that sleigh than a real hero? That's right, ladies, we're here tonight to raise money for our soldiers overseas risking their lives to fight for our country. One of those soldiers has generously donated his first night on leave for you."

Zoie froze with her glass halfway to her lips. Dear God, could it be?

"Let's get those crisp bills crackling and those credit cards humming for the soldier of our town we all know and love." The announcer drew it out, building the suspense and nearly causing Zoie to go into cardiac arrest. She felt faint with the possibility. Was the room really beginning to spin?

"Lieutenant Commander Nash Beagan."

"Ohmigod." Zoie put down her wine glass, certain she'd had enough alcohol. She'd kidded herself into three shots and was working on her second glass of wine, all with the stupid notion she'd drink enough to fool herself into thinking Mr. Surprise was Nash Beagan. Except, the combat boots, BDUs, shirtless torso, and smug smile walking onto the dance floor *was* Nash Beagan.

Everything inside Zoie ignited in sensory overload of desire. Her nipples beaded as her gaze moved over the deeply tanned ridges of Nash's chest. Her hands tingled to glide over the wide expanse of his shoulders. Her teeth ached to nibble on his strong jaw. Her tongue pulsed to lick his full, arrogantly tilted lips. But when her gaze reached his danceable bedroom-blues beneath the fuzzy white rim of the Santa hat, her pussy released a surf of moisture that drenched her panties.

"You're looking for a change from the ordinary, sister, there you go." Dalia had to yell for Zoie to hear her over the cacophony of ruckus Nash's presence exuded from the club of women.

Dalia didn't know about the letters Zoie had written to Nash. Rather than share that piece of personal information with her best friend, Zoie decided to embrace it as her own pleasure-filled, erotic secret. Dalia was right about one thing, Nash Beagan was definitely a change from the ordinary. Precisely the change Zoie had been craving, and sanity had abandoned her just enough the minute he'd stepped onto that dance floor for her to feed.

"Time to boogie," she muttered and held her sixty-nine bidding paddle high in the air. Perhaps the number had been an omen after all. Her rapidly aching channel convulsed at the thought.

The auctioneer bellowed an amount she didn't hear and Nash's bedroom-blues collided with hers. Zoie drew her bottom lip between her teeth to hold back the whimpering purr that rose in her throat. Not that the sound would've been heard over the outrageous noise Nash's presence on the dance floor had elicited from the crowd of horny women.

They can stay horny too because he's mine, Zoie thought determinedly and held the paddle higher still. Nash's brow did an erogenous-inspiring climb. Did his lips twitch too? She couldn't quite tell. Something flashed through his expression, a quick race of emotion she couldn't define. Was it hope that she'd be out bid? Surprise that she'd be a part of this goggling, randy, club crowd? Intrigue that she'd have the nerve to try for him after all these years? She couldn't be sure. Maybe he wondered if she knew what she might be getting herself into.

Whatever the flicker of reaction, all sound, thought and breath left her as their gazes locked and held. Dimly she noted the rising of the bid and the screaming of her bank account. Only when the auctioneer shouted his, "Sold," and pointed at her did she blink and the slow, seemingly satisfied smile that curved Nash's lips nearly made her orgasm on the spot.

"I can't believe you bought him!" Dalia bubbled more than the glasses of champagne being served a half an hour later as they stood once again in line, this time working their way to the payment table to settle their 'purchases'. "Question is, now that you've got him, what are you going to do with him?"

Zoie ran her tongue over her teeth and let the grin spread her lips. "Enjoy him."

"Great answer!" Dalia hooted with laughter. "For the price you're paying, he better give you a hell of a ride."

Zoie slid her Visa card through the fingers of one hand and drank from the champagne she held in the other. She had to force herself to sip the cool bubbly rather than gulp because, despite her show of confidence, her insides were reaching a quivering boil. Had she lost her mind? She'd maxed out her credit card on Nash Beagan!

For a good cause, she reminded herself as she stepped up to the table and handed Santa's helper her Visa. She winced at the total on the printed slip as she signed on the dotted line. She'd definitely broken the bank tonight.

Lady Zest broke the bank.

Zoie handed over the slip, took her copy and card and shoved both in her tiny handbag. She saw Dalia and Travis first as she moved away from the table and took a step in their direction. Her steps faltered when her gaze slammed into Nash's as he walked up behind Travis.

What have I done?

The first slivers of panic leaked from her shuddering stomach to poison her veins. *I can't do this. I can't be alone with this man in the flesh. What in the name of Christmas was I thinking?*

Exchanging months of provocative letters with this man she hungered for more than chocolate was one thing. He didn't know she'd written all those heated fantasies. But she couldn't hide her identity when she was face-to-face with him. Well, not quite face-to-face given their height difference. Eye-to-collarbone would be more like it, breasts-to-rigid abdomen, belly-to-groin...

I'm so screwed.

She forced herself to take another step and wondered that she didn't teeter on her heels. Or run, she thought frantically. Running would be smart right about now, safe. It would preserve both her dignity and her secret.

That same slow smile that melted her panties from the dance floor unfolded on Nash's lips as he neared and a trickle of wetness slid down her inner thigh. Dignity was entirely way over rated. As for her secret, perhaps she should reveal all about Lady Zest. What was the worst Nash could do, laugh at her? He'd always been too much of a boy scout for that. It was one of the many things about this amazing man now less than two feet from her that had stolen her heart. He could be almost unbearably kind.

But even kindness skirts on the edge of adventure sometimes.

Yes, and it was that adventure she'd just paid a pretty penny for tonight. She wouldn't acknowledge the tightness behind her breastbone telling her she'd paid for more than a little

fun. She'd paid for hope, for more. What she got was this moment and any memories she could manage to store before morning.

She had to get a handle on this nervousness because she didn't have a moment to waste.

Nash couldn't tear his gaze from her any more than he could believe it was Zoie Qwin staring back at him. She looked positively arresting even with the whole deer-in-the-headlights thing she had going on when she first spotted him coming towards her. Her eyes had returned to their normal slightly larger than average size now, the brown depths melting like chocolate fondue as her gaze moved over his face. She drew her bottom lip between her teeth, the same way she'd done when he'd stared at her from the dance floor, and his cock flexed painfully the same way it had done then, too.

She was even more striking than he remembered, more amazing than the image he'd painted of her over his Lady Zest fantasies. She shouldn't have been so...*hot*. With a face shaped somewhere between a square and an oval comprised of clashing features—too large eyes, pencil-thin brows, narrow nose with a noticeable bump in the ridge, high cheekbones—she should've been ugly. But put that face beneath a tumble of fiery waves so silky looking his hands burnt to tangle and the woman was nothing short of a sex kitten he'd been dying to pet for years.

"We pissed off a lot of women here tonight, bro," Dalia was saying to Travis as Nash stopped beside them.

Nash shot them a glance, noting the way Travis's arm slipped seemingly brotherly around Dalia's waist.

Travis shrugged. "They'll get over it. When they consider I'm the one out of that four figure donation rather than themselves, they'll forgive me." He grinned, obviously pleased. "Four figures—hell, go me!"

Dalia barked a laugh. "You're so conceited."

"Naw, just convinced," Travis countered.

"Confused is more like it." Nash got a punch in the shoulder for his comment.

"We're out of here," Travis said. "Unless you want us to stick around?"

"Can't say as I do." Nash brushed a kiss to Dalia's cheek and whispered in her ear. "Don't worry about your friend. I promise to take care of her."

"Make it memorable, soldier." Dalia giggled softly.

Nash straightened and turned his focus to Zoie as Travis and Dalia bid her a quick goodbye and disappeared into the crowd. Over the cacophony of conversation, the announcement came that the floor was now open for dancing. The last word was hardly out of the DJ's mouth before a hip hop beat blasted through the club.

Nash closed the distance between himself and Zoie, his hand automatically finding her waist as he leant in to speak in her ear. At least he'd intended to talk to her. That had been before his hand closed around the dip of her side, before his senses became assimilated by her intoxicating scent of herbs and fruits and pure sexual temptation. He closed his eyes, breathing deep, noting her quick intake of breath as his forehead came to rest just above her ear.

"Did you want to dance?"

Despite the tantalising softness of her waist, she'd gone stiff as a board the moment he'd touched her. He might have dropped his hand, backed off if he'd been able to move. He felt her shake her head then she turned to look at him, very nearly kissing him, their faces were so close.

"I'd rather go if it's all right with you."

Nash swallowed, barely able to contain the party exploding to life inside him. Hell yeah, leaving was all right with him. He nodded and, sliding his hand over her tummy to her other side, gestured with his free hand towards the door. He guided her through the crowd and out of the club. The quiet that greeted them in the parking lot was welcomed.

"I think I'm getting too old for the club scene," he commented as he used his hold on her waist to steer her towards his truck.

"Yeah, thirty-four is pretty over the hill for all that hip hop dancing." She winked up at him.

Nash laughed. "Just you wait, gorgeous. If memory serves, you're only three years behind me."

"I don't know your mother well, but I'm certain she taught you better than to make reference to a woman's age, Nash Beagan."

"That she did." His mother also taught him better than to tangle with a woman he knew he'd hurt, and despite his feelings for Zoie Qwin, he had no doubt he'd cause her pain. It was the single most reason he'd never pursued her. Zoie Qwin needed a straight-laced man. She needed a nine-to-fiver who brought her flowers every evening and honoured her with missionary sex behind the sanctity of the closed bedroom door at night.

While Nash could certainly bring her flowers every evening—when he was stateside, anyway—there wasn't a career in the Army that offered nine-to-five hours—not a job he'd consider taking, at least—missionary sex had proven to be his least favourite position since he lost his virginity at fifteen.

"Is your car here?"

"I rode with Dalia." She drew that bottom lip between her teeth again and Nash very nearly whimpered at the electricity that bolted through his shaft this time. "I hope it's okay if I ride with you."

Honey, you can ride me until I board that plane back to Afghanistan next week. "I hoped you would." Nash led her to the passenger side of his truck, thumbed the keyless entry in his pocket, and opened the door for her. She hesitated and he could've sworn he felt a quick tremble move through her. She was nervous. He knew that despite her valiant attempt to hide it. Hell, he was too. He'd never dreamt in a million years he'd end up in her company tonight. "Where would you like to go?"

Zoie shrugged in answer.

Damn it, he didn't want her uneasy, or worse, afraid of him. He chuckled, trying to relieve the sudden tension blanketing the air between them. "You donated a small fortune in there. The least I can do is show mine and my fellow soldiers' appreciation and see you enjoy yourself."

"I paid for one soldier in there." Zoie finally looked at him and the heat in her gaze nearly knocked him on his ass. "I thought I would consider it, consider *you*," she corrected herself, her gaze dropping to his mouth for a heart-thudding moment, "an early Christmas present to myself."

Every ounce of blood in Nash's body headed south, straight to his dick. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, what was she telling him? How did he respond to that? She hopped in the truck before he could unscramble the pieces of his suddenly shattered sanity.

"Zoie," he managed, but stopped and attempted to regroup when she didn't look at him. She sat ram-rod straight in the bench seat and stared out the windshield. Her cheeks were tinged a lovely shade of pink. She'd embarrassed herself. The realisation touched him in a visceral way. "Are you hungry?" Dinner, a feeble response to what she'd just revealed, perhaps, but the only thing he could come up with at the moment. Christ, when was the last time a woman left him speechless?

Zoie slowly nodded.

"How about dinner at Rosetties?" Elegant, off the beaten path, romantic, he'd secretly always wanted to take her there. Dopy as it sounded, even to himself, he'd often thought she'd look amazing in candlelight.

Zoie heaved an audible sigh and when she turned her head the desire in her expression told him the sigh had been more for courage than out of irritation. "I didn't mean I'm hungry for food. I-I meant I'm hungry for you."

Dear Penthouse, I'm sorry but I must cancel my subscription to your publication because I've died and gone to heaven.

Zoie reached for him, trailing one finger lightly along his collarbone. "I'm hungry, Nash," she said in a sultry whisper, "for you. I'm starving for what you can give me, what you can do to me, what you can show me." The vulnerable innocence he'd always seen in her swam into her eyes, blowing everything she'd said clean out of the water. Then she blinked and all bashfulness was replaced by a pleading desire he'd never thought to see in her outside his dreams. "A girl deserves a little adventure, doesn't she, soldier?"

An image of black ink on white lined paper flashed through Nash's mind. Was it merely coincidence she'd used almost word for word a question his Lady Zest once asked him?

Of course, it was happenstance. They weren't even the same, not when he thought further on it. Lady Zest had asked, *Is it wrong of a girl to crave a little adventure, soldier?* Similar, sure, but not exact.

Nash gave his head a little shake, effectively dislodging Lady Zest from the forefront of his mind. The woman sending his hormones on a sleigh ride through Happyville was Zoie. The real Zoie. Not his superimposed image of her in his Lady Zest fantasies and, *damn*, what

was she telling him? He still couldn't piece together enough of his scruples to figure it out, but he had a feeling he needed to get it together fast.

"Yeah, a girl deserves all the adventure she can handle."

She smiled, a slow curve of her lips that put him in mind of a wicked vixen ready to take a bite of his soul. But did she really understand the soul she was offering to taste? Nash knew she'd heard the stories of him through the years. Hell, his sexual preferences weren't a secret through town. They'd even talked about it once when he'd given her a ride home from school on an afternoon when he'd had football practice and she'd stayed to work with the colour guard.

And hadn't that been a conversation to keep his dick solid for weeks?

Nash liked sex on the wild side. He didn't fit the profile of a Dom, but he liked to dabble in the sexual art form. Experimentation flat did it for him. He let his gaze glide over her face, down to the rapidly beating pulse in her neck, farther to the slightly ragged rise and fall of her breasts. Apparently tonight, Zoie wanted to see if his preferences did it for her, too.

Nash shot a glance over his shoulder, his adventurous mind already kicking up an idea to test exactly what Zoie wanted. There were a few people in the parking lot but none close enough to see them. He'd backed into the parking spot, and with the door of the truck open, Zoie would be further shielded from view.

"Turn towards me." He moved back a half-step so her shapely legs could dangle out of the doorway between his body and the truck. "Scoot forward, to the edge of the seat. That's it. Now, lift that sexy skirt."

Zoie's gaze was transfixed on his and he didn't miss the spark in them at his order. He half expected her to refuse and nearly choked on his own tongue when she did as he bid to reveal a thin strip of candy cane striped satin.

Nash felt his stomach growl and wondered she didn't hear the animal suddenly chewing its way through his insides looking to feast. He put his hands on her thighs and eased her legs apart. Smooth, toned flesh made itself visible to his hungry eyes. He couldn't stop his fingers from dancing along that skin, his mouth watering even as his cock released a drop of pre-cum in his boxer-briefs.

"You're full of surprises tonight. This dress, do you have any idea how incredible you look in it? The colour is perfect for you, an amazing contrast to your hair." He pushed a hand

into the hair hanging over her shoulder. It felt as silky soft as he'd always figured it would. He couldn't wait to feel it brushing his thighs as she took his stiff cock in her mouth. Said cock gave another ball-tightening flex and he pushed the idea aside. Perhaps they would get to that later, but for now...

"And these..." He covered the strip of satin with his palm, delighting in the moisture that soaked the material. "You're soaking wet, baby. Is this your way of telling me you're a candy cane ready to be sucked and tongued?"

"I—"

"Did I ever tell you how much I love candy canes?" He closed his hand over her mound, revelling in the responsiveness of this secret part of her as he put the slightest pressure on her cunt.

She rocked into his touch, her lips parting on a breathy, "No."

"I should have, but that's okay, because now you've given me the chance to show you."

Chapter Three

“Lay back on the seat.”

Zoie’s heart tripped at the husky authority in Nash’s voice. Her gaze darted over his shoulder, almost frantically searching the parking lot. They weren’t alone. What if someone saw them? She shifted slightly on the bench seat, the leather sticking to the bare flesh of her butt cheeks. “Now? Here?”

Nash lifted a sexy brow, his face unreadable but for the lightning bolts of desire shooting through his eyes. “You said you want adventure, Zoie. I can’t give you that unless you obey me.”

His use of the word obey wasn’t lost on her. She knew he liked to dabble in the Dom/sub game. Some of the fantasies he’d written to her—to Lady Zest—had utilised a variety of sex toys and public places in truly creative ways. She knew from both the stories she’d heard and the letters they had exchanged that the possibility of getting caught in the act really got him off.

A lightning bolt of sizzling heat that mirrored the ones flashing in his eyes sparked through her core. Trepidation twisted in her belly even as excitement sent a heady mix of adrenaline and arousal pumping into her channel. Wetness leaked from her centre as she eased herself back. She rested her upper body on her elbows as not to break the eye contact she held with him.

His hand covering her mound dipped beneath her panties, his fingers gliding over her sensitised lips and he exhaled an audible breath. “Sweet Christ, this is a hell of a Christmas present you’re giving me, Zoie.” The sincerity in his eyes nearly stopped her heart. She’d longed for him to look at her that way for years. In her mind’s eye, he had. In her dreams, his bedroom blues had haunted her. In his letters, he’d brought her to orgasm again and again describing the things he wanted to do to her.

Not to you. Lady Zest.

But it wasn't Lady Zest's pussy lips he was lightly caressing now. She wouldn't allow herself to think Lady Zest might be the woman on his mind at this moment. He had to know it was Zoie. It wasn't Lady Zest he was about to, *oh, sweet stars above*, suck and tongue like a candy cane in the front seat of his truck with the door open and her legs spread for anyone in the parking lot to see. It was her. All her. He didn't know she was the mysterious woman behind the Lady Zest letters, and in that moment, she couldn't have been more thankful that she hadn't told him.

"Allow me to return the gift." His head dipped between her legs, his fingers spreading her sodden folds, and his tongue found her hardened bud with a quick flick that had her wobbling on her elbows, her head falling back. He strummed her like a violin, his tongue circling and tapping her burning clit until she writhed and pushed against his face.

She'd wanted to watch, to snap mental pictures of his handsome face going down on her so she could reminisce on this moment for the rest of her life. She wouldn't kid herself into thinking this would happen more than once. After tonight, he'd finish his leave however he'd planned, and she'd be left with memories to savour and a small part of him Lady Zest had managed to claim in her letters.

"So sweet. So hot. God, you taste better than any candy cane I've ever eaten."

He delved a finger into her aching channel, his tongue continuing his torment of her clit and she gave up on watching. She could see nothing beyond the darkness behind her lids and the sporadic explosions of colour that signalled the heightening of her arousal.

"A liquid, sugary treat," he said as he added a second finger to her opening. He spread them, wiggled them, and manipulated a spot deep inside her she hadn't known was there. His breathy chuckle as her body jerked against his face sent a draft of heated air over her already scalding flesh that charred her very soul. "That's it, baby. Ride my fingers, release more of that sticky-sweet juice. I'm so thirsty, Zoie. I need a drink."

Zoie's head lolled from side to side as his words penetrated the sexual fog clouding her mind. His erotic words, explicit and sanity-blowing, were so like the man who'd written countless letters to her—to Lady Zest. Those words had driven her wild on paper. They pushed her past the brink of living in reality.

"Oh, shit." His sudden whispered curse had her head coming up only to fall back to the seat again on a loud moan as he drove three fingers into her channel at the same time lifting her hips off the seat to get a better angle.

"W-what is it?" Zoie could barely speak, she could hardly breathe with the truly delectable things he was doing to her sensitive flesh. His mouth was no longer on her pussy, but she felt the warmth of his words fan her lips.

"Nothing, just a couple of old high school friends. I think we gave them an eye full, sweetheart."

Mortified, Zoie started to shriek and jerk upright, but the sound turned to a scream of pleasure-laced-pain as his lips closed over her clit and clamped down, a pressured bite that had her body jerking, but not as she'd intended.

Nash chuckled, the demon, as the orgasm tore through her then his tongue took the place of his fingers, lapping at her come as it gushed from her channel. There was no controlling her body's movement. Her hips quivered, her heels dug into the running board of the truck, and her toes curled in her shoes. Slurping sounds permeated the cab of the truck as Nash drank every drop.

"Well, now, I think at least one of us found that immensely exciting." There was a smile in his husky voice that Zoie didn't want to miss seeing on his face. She forced her eyes to open, purposely narrowing them in a look that probably came off as more spent than evil.

"Did someone really see that?"

His pleased smile bloomed into a full-blown grin as he straightened and took her hands. "Nope, but it got you going to think they did. You're surprising me tonight, Zoie. I wouldn't have expected you to get off on kink."

"You never tried me." She surprised herself by the challenge in her tone as she let him help her sit up on the seat.

He nodded as their gazes met. "You're right. I didn't." He slipped a hand beneath her hair, cupping her nape and pulling her face closer. "Something else I never tried was this." His lips brushed hers in a kiss so light she thought she might have imagined it, but then he licked his way inside her mouth and she parted her lips fully on a sigh. He tasted sweet, of her juices and his unabated arousal. Perfect. Absolutely perfect. Zoie felt herself melt for the

second time in as many minutes against the man she'd wanted for so very long but never thought to have.

Nash was the one to pull away first. If it had been up to Zoie, she would've sat right here in this truck until the sun came up kissing him. Well, okay, eventually she would've been ripping off his BDUs and begging him to put that impressive package inside her, but she would've managed to kiss him for at least another five or ten seconds before she gave in.

He rested his forehead to hers and looked her in the eyes. She saw the apology swirling in their blue depths even before he said it. "I'm sorry. I should've done that first." He kissed the tip of her nose and let her go. He made sure she was covered by her soaked panties and wrinkled skirt before he stepped back, waited for her to turn in the seat, and closed the door.

Heart hammering, mind spinning in an intoxication of pure carnal lust and elated satisfaction, Zoie folded her hands in her lap and waited for him to slip behind the wheel. He cranked the truck, put it in gear, then reached for her. Wordlessly, she curled into his arm, loving the feel of his hard body against hers as he drove them out of the parking lot and hit the streets of town.

Nash didn't speak again until he pulled into the driveway of his house. He left the truck running and turned his head, brushing his lips over her forehead. "Wait here?"

Unsure if his words were question or command, Zoie nodded. She watched as he disappeared into the small single-story house only to reappear less than a minute later. He'd tossed on a plain black t-shirt with the BDUs that hugged his chest and biceps like a second skin. Her gaze travelled down one of his muscular arms and saw his hand was fisted around something.

He climbed back into the truck, his arm immediately winding around her shoulders and pulling her closer for a kiss. Zoie didn't know what to make of this different side of Nash. It was the side she'd yearned for him to show her, but never thought to experience firsthand. Interminably nice, sinfully handsome, and oozing sex from every pore, Nash Beagan had seemed to take all she'd said to him at face value and tossed caution to the wind. A kiss in the parking lot of Quench after he ate her pussy two ways from Sunday, and he was acting like they were...a couple.

For the night, you are. It's when the sun comes up that everything will change.

"Are you still up for a little adventure?" he asked against her lips.

Zoie mentally grabbed hold of Lady Zest, because without the eroticism of her alter ego, she could feel her heart slipping into command, telling her to run before she ended up broken. "What did you have in mind?"

Nash answered her with action rather than words. His fisted hand dipped beneath her skirt, moving on a decided course straight to her pussy. He pushed the thin strip of material aside and spread her pussy lips with something cool and solid. "You're wet again." His face had fallen to nuzzle at the side of her neck and she felt his lips dance over her sensitised flesh. "I wondered if I would need to prepare you first."

Prepare her for what? What was that he was slowing moving up and down over her pulsing entrance? "I'm always wet around you." The admission left her lips before she could stop it. She closed her eyes as she felt him lift his head to look at her. Damn it, with those five little words she'd given far too much away. Would he stop this now, fearful she might be expecting more from tonight than the fun she'd told him she wanted?

When he said nothing, she dared to open her eyes. He stared at her intently, his hand between her legs continuing to graze the now warming object between her pussy lips. Try as she might, she couldn't read his expression. "Nash, I—" she began, but he cut her off by capturing her mouth with his in a stunning kiss that took her breath away.

"Don't ruin it by saying anything more," he told her as he pulled away. "You can't know what that statement just did to me."

Needing to lighten the fear rocketing through her, Zoie covered his groin with her hand. "This gives me a pretty *big* idea," she said, tongue in cheek, to hold back the nervous laugh bubbling in her throat. Big was putting it mildly. Jesus, God, she'd known by the size of the bulge his pants displayed that he wasn't a small man. The deliciously hard, fantastically wide cock she covered with her hand shot that visual observation out of the sky. She thought about having that thick rod of meat impaling her tight wet channel and felt positively light headed with the sudden need to beg.

A knowing smile titled his lips, almost as if he read her mind. "I want you ready when I put that inside you." His voice was tight with arousal. "I want you hot." He nipped her earlobe. "I want you wet." He grazed his teeth over her jaw. "I want you begging, Zoie." Between her legs, he slid the object inside her slick opening.

Zoie gasped, her hips involuntarily thrusting forward to meet the toy he pushed deeper in her channel. It wasn't too large, but stretched her walls enough to offer an exotically full feeling. "What is that?"

"An egg."

Zoie's head had fallen to rest on the back of the seat and she left it there as his fingers slowly withdrew, leaving the egg inside her. She turned her head to meet his gaze and he laughed at the expression she knew must be on her face tangling somewhere with the pleasure she didn't attempt to mask.

"Not a real egg, sweetheart. I take it you've never played with this particular toy."

Zoie shook her head, not wanting to admit the only sex toy she'd ever played with was her dildo she'd lovingly named Nash Jr. After feeling Nash Sr. through the crotch of his BDUs, she made a mental note to start shopping for Nash Jr.'s bigger brother if she wanted to get anything that resembled daddy.

"It has two distinct advantages. One, it seems to fill that delicious pussy quite nicely." Her sopping lips convulsed as his fingers traced delicate lines over their outer rims. Her channel had closed around the egg, holding it in place and making her feel...wickedly dirty. "Two, it can pleasure you while I'm otherwise occupied."

Before Zoie could ask what he meant by that, the toy began to vibrate. "Ohmigod," she cooed as the low trimmer in her channel spread the arousal to every erogenous zone in her body.

"Do you like that, Zoie?" Nash's question sounded of a devilishly heated amusement.

"Y-yes. Oh, wow."

"Good." He pulled his hand from between her legs and brought it up to cup her breast. His fingers closed around the orb, gently massaging as he spoke, adding another level to the torment the vibrating had started in her core. "It's going to stay there until I'm ready to take it out. Do you understand?"

Zoie nodded and moaned as his hand pushed inside the bodice of her dress to pull her breast free. He sucked her breast into his mouth, then drew back to give her throbbing nipple a pressured bite. The pain-laced pleasure shot straight to her pussy and she very nearly came, probably would have if the vibration hadn't stopped at that exact moment.

“What?” If she’d thought the smile on his lips before had been knowing before, the one he wore now broadcast an IQ off the charts.

“It’s remote controlled. You didn’t think I was going to let you come again so soon, did you?”

“That’s not fair!” Zoie protested, but secretly the level of excitement mingling with the heat flaming her insides had just rocketed beyond measure.

“Adventure, my sweet Zoie.” He pushed the button, flicked the switch, or did whatever he had to do to the unseen remote and the vibrations began again, this time slightly faster. Zoie let her head fall back as her entire body surged with rapture. “I suggest you get used to the feeling of it vibrating that tight pussy. Unless, of course, you want everyone to know you have a vibrator shoved in your cunt and I have the control.”

Zoie felt her eyes grow wide. “Everyone? We’re going somewhere?” The vibrations stopped again and she took several deep, calming breaths.

“I thought we would catch a movie.” Nash put the truck in reverse and started to back out of the drive. “I hear *Scrooged* is the late-night matinee at the Centroplex. It’s not all that romantic, but Bill Murray’s always good for a laugh.”

Chapter Four

Nash held off until they were settled into the back row of the theatre before he brushed his thumb over the button on the remote to start the vibrator in Zoie's pussy again. He bit back a smile, delighting in the quick intake of breath she made beside him.

Her hand closed over his forearm and she leant close, her whisper so soft he barely heard her. "Can't you hear that?"

This time he stifled a chuckle, meeting her horrified expression with a straight face. "Yes." And damned if hearing it, knowing the pleasure she was getting from it, imagining how her slick pussy looked rocking from the pulsations of the egg wasn't having the same effect as hooking electrically charged clamps to his balls.

Her gaze darted around the darkened theatre. They weren't alone, though the theatre was nearly deserted. A few rows down sat an elderly couple and a few rows down from them a crowd of what appeared to be teenagers took up several seats. He watched her take all that in before covering her hand with his.

"The only reason I can hear it is because I'm sitting so close to you." She visibly relaxed. He waited a beat and added, "But if you really want them to know, I can take you down there and make you spread your legs so they can see firsthand."

Zoie's eyes grew to the size of saucers, but it was the spark of the challenge, the flare of desire in them that Nash latched onto. Who would've thought little Zoie Qwin would get off on the threat of exhibitionism? God, if he'd only known years ago. No wonder he'd secretly been in love with her for so long. Somewhere deep down a part of him must have sensed her to be exactly the woman he wanted.

"You wouldn't." Her gaze didn't waver from his even when he increased the speed of the egg's vibrations.

Nash lifted a brow. Was she testing him? *Not a good idea, sweetheart.* If there was one thing he'd wanted in a woman that he hadn't yet found in anyone but his Lady Zest, it was the willingness to do anything he wanted, even if that meant his fucking her in front of a

stadium full of football fans. Not that he would ever expose Zoie that way. The sweet treasures he was slowly finding in her body tonight were his and his alone.

For tonight, a little voice in his head reminded him.

For as long as I want, he silently countered.

"Is that a challenge, Zoie?" The flames in her eyes licked his cock, burning his rock-hard shaft. Damn, had his dick ever throbbed this painfully to be inside a woman?

Zoie gulped and relented. "No." She settled back in her seat as the movie started, but her hand remained on his forearm just above his wrist, her hold on him somehow both possessive and tender.

Nash turned off the vibrator and felt her relax once more. The opening credits flashed and it wasn't long before he was lost in laughter at Bill Murray and the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future. Zoie's laughter was like music beyond any he'd ever heard. He knew he'd never be able to watch *Scrooged* again without hearing that sexy, melodic sound. Or the delightful little moans she made each time he flicked on the egg. He'd let her get to the point of losing it, knew she had to be but a hair's breadth from release, and he'd turn the vibrator off. He waited until the movie was about three quarters of the way through before he leant over to whisper in her ear.

"Are you enjoying the movie?"

A wide smile lit her face and he felt his heart flip. Beautiful, sexy, and, he was learning, daring Zoie Qwin. What more could a guy want in life?

"It's great."

"Too great you don't want to miss a few minutes of it while you suck me off?"

Zoie blinked, gulped and the smile faded. She licked her lips as if testing their answer and the effect felt like a whip had been laid to his balls. "Here? Now?"

Nash nodded and started unfastening his BDUs. "Here. Now." He hadn't done anything like this since high school, although right about now, he felt as randy as a school boy. It hadn't been his intention to make her give him a blow job when he brought her here. He'd really just wanted to spend some time with her, enjoy the movie and the knowledge that even as they laughed he was pleasuring her with the egg he'd shoved in her pussy. Sitting next to her and listening to the sultry laugh roll from her tantalising lips, however, had given him a hard-on of a different dimension and planted the idea in his head for

another escapade for her. He wondered fleetingly how much trouble he'd get in with his superiors if they got caught. Damn, if the possibility didn't milk a drop of pre-cum from the head of his cock.

"Okay." Zoie turned in her seat.

Her eagerness surprised him as much as it delighted him. There was no question in his mind she was ranking second on his list of everything he ever wanted in a woman.

"Here, let me help."

She reached over the arm rail between them and pushed her slender hand inside his pants. Her fingers curled around his shaft and she pulled his cock free.

Nash sucked a breath through clenched teeth. With that single, bold move she'd blown Lady Zest out of the top spot for Woman Most Wanted. She stroked him, her delicate touch gliding up and down his shaft in a way that demonstrated skill and practice. He didn't want to know where she'd developed such talent. When she sank to her knees on the filthy theatre floor and closed her sinful lips over the head of his cock, he no longer cared.

"Ah, God." The words left him on a gasp as his eyes closed, his head falling back, the picture on screen and the scatter of movie watchers forgotten. Her lips were like bands of silk tightening on the mushroomed head of his dick. She dipped her tongue through the slit in the tip, moaning low as she tasted his pre-cum treat, then tongued the head to the roof of her mouth as she explored the sensitised vein that ran along the underside of his cock.

Nash knew he'd been blessed with a larger than average cock. Few sex partners had ever been able to take the whole of him. Zoie did it, though. She swallowed his length with such slow finesse that he was gripping the arms of the seat hard enough to snap the wood by the time her lips met with the flesh of his body.

His balls quaked from the shock, his anus puckering as a riot of rapturous sensations sizzled through his body at the realisation that she'd taken him completely. She worked his cock with her lips, her throat, her teeth, until it was all he could do to hold back the begging pants that collected on his tongue. He gripped the arm rests of his seat so hard his knuckles ached, somehow only adding another level of delicious discomfort to the eroticism of the moment. God, she would drive him mad with her mouth!

Zoie slipped a hand between his legs and found his sac. She rolled his nuts in her palm like a set of Chinese stress balls. All the while her mouth continued to torment his cock in the most body-shattering ways.

He didn't try to stop himself from coming, though for an agonising flash, he thought she might sense he was nearing release and stop when he teetered on the brink as he'd done to her all night with the egg. The egg. Christ, he'd meant to show her pleasure while she sucked him off. She moaned again, her head bobbing faster, her tongue swiping along the underside of his cock in a more desperate act of feeding, and he realised she was getting as much pleasure on the giving end as he was receiving.

Unable to stop himself, he latched onto the silky waves of hair brushing his thigh. He'd wanted to feel that hair on his flesh, but his BDUs prevented that. He felt it in his hand instead, fisting his fingers around the strands and twisting until he gained some minuscule control over her head movement. Or perhaps it was simply an illusion of control that she allowed him because her mouth again picked up pace until she was sucking him with such vigour and abandon that the hot evidence of his release spewed from the tip of his cock.

Nash jerked with the force of the orgasm, his hand falling from her hair to the arm of the chair as his thighs tensed and quivered and his breaths came so fast he feared hyperventilation. Jesus, when was the last time he'd had a blowjob like that?

Never. The answer flittered through his mind as Zoie gently put his now sated cock back inside his boxer-briefs and refastened his BDUs before returning to her seat. She hooked a finger under his chin, turning his head so he looked at her and then licked her lips. His spent cock actually gave an exhausted bump in his pants at the sight. "Thank you for that. You taste stupendous."

Nash stared at her as she turned her focus to what was left of the movie. She'd thanked him for her giving him a blowjob. Hell, he should've been thanking her for the absolute most fantabulous blowjob he'd ever had! But it was what she'd said after that started the alarm bells. *You taste stupendous.*

I know we would be stupendous together... I can only imagine how stupendous it would feel to have your big cock shoved inside my aching body... Stupendously yours...

Lady Zest. Nash's gaze moved over Zoie, the memories of his Lady Zest's frequent use of the word tangling with the image he'd taken to placing on her head, the image he was

now staring at. Lady Zest or Lady Zoie? Could it be? A part of him was starting to believe the possibility. An even larger part of him, the one currently recovering in his pants coupled with the one aching in his chest, already decided either way the woman beside him was officially, stupendously his whether she knew it yet or not.

* * * *

Zoie didn't know what to expect out of Nash next or where he might take her. After the blowjob she'd given him—had she really gone down on him in the middle of a public theatre?—he seemed to have forgotten about the egg still inside her pussy. Strangely enough, the eroticism of simply having an object shoved in her feminine opening kept her on the pentacle of arousal even without the vibrations. Or maybe it was merely sitting next to Nash Beagan, sharing the night with the one man she'd always longed for, that kept her in a constant state of near-orgasm.

Nash pulled into his driveway again, this time immediately turning off the engine and turning to rest his elbow on the seat behind her head. His thumb grazed her cheek, his expression full of such tenderness her heart somersaulted in her chest. "Come inside?" His tone made it more question than order as if he actually thought she might refuse.

"Of course." Zoie gave him her hand and he helped her out of the truck. His arm slid around her waist, drawing her close to his side as he led her up the sidewalk to the front door. There were mere steps from the door when the vibrations in her pussy started with such a vigorous force her knees went weak and a cry of pleased surprised escaped her lips. If he hadn't had such a tight hold on her, she would've melted to the concrete.

His low chuckle sounded breathy and pleased. "Thought I'd forgotten about it, didn't you?"

Zoie took several deep breaths, calming her reactions to the insurmountable onslaught of pleasure before she shot him a playful glare. "You're so bad."

"Yeah, but you're enjoying it."

To that, she couldn't argue. Instead, she lost herself in the sensations trembling her inner core while he unlocked the front door and motioned for her to proceed inside. He moved in after her, closing the door but not moving away from it, she noted as she stopped

and took a cursory look around. She'd stepped directly into his living room. Sparsely furnished with a brown leather sofa, recliner and oak tables, the room screamed male. The Christmas tree standing in the far corner decorated in enough colour to make the ornaments stand out even in the semi darkness yelled something else entirely.

"You've put up your Christmas tree already?"

"My mother's work. She wanted it to be up when I got here."

"Then you knew you were coming home for the holiday. You never mentioned the possibility in any of your letters." Zoie stilled. *Shit, shit, triple shit!* She hadn't meant to say that. She slowly turned, fighting not to give herself away further, pretending she didn't see the way Nash's eyes narrowed suspiciously. "You know, the letters you've sent to Travis and Debby." *And Lady Zest*. Damn it, had she blow it? The night was going too perfectly to bring Lady Zest into this. Would he believe she'd talked to Travis and Debby? Travis, sure because he was Dalia's step-brother, but she couldn't remember the last time she'd exchanged a hello with Nash's sister-in-law.

"It was a spur of the moment thing. Sort of a Christmas present to several of the men in my squad." Nash angled his head, one corner of his lips tilting up. "You asked Travis and Debby about me?"

Zoie nodded. She had, however indirectly and discreetly, questioned Travis about Nash the last time she'd caught Travis away from Dalia. She hadn't wanted her best friend to rag her about her crush on Nash and, though Travis hadn't seen through her calm demeanour, Dalia would've guessed the score in a heartbeat.

"I like knowing that." Nash's grin came quick and hormone-stumbling. "Take off your clothes for me, Zoie. I want to watch you strip."

Zoie locked her gaze with his, took a deep breath that shook her insides to her toes, and reached behind her to unzip the bodice of her dress. His eyes grew heavy-lidded, the look in them headier, hungrier as she slipped her arms free of the sleeves and peeled the dress down to her waist. Her body flamed under the intense heat of his scrutiny. Her nipples beaded, throbbing lightly to be fondled, flicked, and pinched. Wetness pooled in her panties. They hadn't had the chance to dry all night! Still, the visible gulp he made as she pushed the material over her hips and let the dress fall in a pool at her feet almost made her laugh even as it gave her the courage to tease a little.

She hooked her thumbs in the strings of her panties at her hips and urged them down an inch, revelling in the quiet rumble that started low in his throat. She released one string to flatten her hand on the cool satin and glided her palm over her pelvis, letting her fingers dip between her legs to cover her mound through the thong. Inside her fiery channel, the egg continued to vibrate with a reckless abandon more fiercely than it had all night. He must have turned it to full pulsating power this time. If she didn't touch carefully, didn't take heed to avoid her throbbing clit at all costs, she'd send herself sailing into orgasmic bliss. That wasn't how she wanted to come.

"Take them off, Zoie." His tone left no room for question this time. The gruffness coupled with intense darkening of his bedroom-blues thrilled her as much as the order.

Zoie stopped teasing and pushed her thong to the floor with her dress. She straightened before him, completely naked and heated to the core. Her pussy shuddered with the egg's manipulations and her nipples had turned to taut peaks jutting out from her breasts as if trying to reach the man they wanted even from several steps away. When Nash reached in his pocket and thumbed off the egg, she nearly whimpered from the loss of stimulation. Then his gaze met hers, his lids fully open, and his next order had all the heat in her body pooling in her cheeks.

"Remove the egg."

Zoie swallowed, her belly giving a decidedly mortified lurch. "You want me to take it out?"

"I do, and I want to watch you do it. I don't want to have to contend with it when I get ready to fuck you."

Zoie winced at his choice of words. She couldn't say exactly why his using the word 'fuck' made her feel cheap, dirty, but it did. Still, whatever he called it, it was exactly what she wanted. She tamped down the embarrassment that wanted to cause her hand to shake and reached between her legs, slipping her fingers inside her sopping channel to grasp the egg and pull it free. Almost immediately, she felt empty and needier than ever.

Nash moved to her, one hand reaching for the egg while he cupped her chin with the other. "Look at me, Zoie."

Zoie met his gaze and the compassion in his expression made her throat tighten with emotion.

"Know this, my love, when I say I want to fuck you, I don't mean that in any crude form. It's a man's way of describing a need that doesn't sound as girly as the other terms. Okay?"

Zoie blinked away the tears that welled and gave a watery laugh. "Okay." Even as the smile on his face turned to one of utter sweetness, her mind raced. *My love*. He'd called her 'my love'. He hadn't used a masculine clichéd endearment like sweetheart, baby, or darlin'. He'd called her his love? But did he really mean it? Did she dare hope?

As she stood there naked, her body humming from his nearness, her gaze searching his benevolent expression, she knew the answer was yes. She did dare hope with every fibre of her being.

"Are you cold?" His hand glided down her arm and up again to her shoulder, to dip beneath her hair.

"No." How could she be when he radiated such heat, when his simple proximity proved scorching enough to her system to liquefy her bones?

"Good, because I want you to stay naked for me." His hands moved over her body, framing her sides, cupping her breasts, skimming her abdomen and belly, but stopping just short of where she needed to feel them most. "You're so perfect, Zoie, so beautiful."

His whispered compliment affected her as viscerally as his touch. He thought her beautiful, perfect? The wonder of that shocked her very soul.

"Why don't you plug in the lights on the Christmas tree for us and wait for me beside it? I'll be right back."

Chapter Five

Nash didn't intend to take so long in the kitchen gathering something for them to munch on. Putting together anything fit for the remainder of the evening he had in mind with Zoie, however, proved to be an impossible task given the emptiness of his cabinets and refrigerator. He settled on a bag of chips, several bite-sized Snickers bars, and a couple of beers. His selections were enough to elicit a throaty laugh from Zoie as he joined her in the living room.

"Chips, chocolate, and beer." She grinned at him as she took the offered bottle of brew he held out for her. "You do know a way to a woman's heart, soldier."

God, he hoped so. Was he winning her heart tonight? Nash couldn't believe how important that goal had suddenly become. Sure, he'd loved her for close to forever, but he'd always worried of spoiling her, and not in a good way, of destroying her innocence and transforming her into someone she wasn't. Tonight, she'd proven him wrong on every count he'd ever calculated. She wasn't the woman he'd thought he'd loved for so long. She was better, more, and he loved her all the deeper for it. But how did she feel about him?

"I haven't had the chance to hit the grocery store for more than the bare essentials. Mom was more concerned with putting up my Christmas tree than seeing I had food in the fridge." He wrinkled his forehead. "Pretty strange, that, don't you think?"

Zoie chuckled and gestured to the tree with her beer. "It's a beautiful tree."

"That it is," Nash nodded in agreement. "And even more beautiful with you standing beside it." The flicker of surprise in her eyes baffled him. Did she not realise how unbelievably incredible she was? Sure, each of her contrasting features would've made unflattering alterations to anyone else's appearance, but on her, they were absolutely perfect. He let his attention fall down her delectably naked, cock-teasingly wicked body, and the sight reaffirmed his belief.

"Bare essentials such as chips, chocolate and beer." She slanted him a look. "Do those essentials include coffee and cream as well?"

Nash set both his beer and the food tray aside and reached for her, hooking an arm around her waist and pulling her close. He kissed the tip of her nose. "It includes coffee. Promise you'll stay the night with me, and I'll make sure you have cream by sunrise."

Zoie's gaze danced over his face, an undisguised happiness lighting her expression. "I'll drink it black as long as you don't leave me."

Never. The word was on the tip of his tongue but Nash swallowed it, knowing he couldn't make such a promise. He would have to leave her New Year's Day. He had one week and two days before his leave ended and he'd be boarding a plane for... Hell, he didn't even know where he'd be sent to next, though he expected it would be back to Afghanistan.

Instead of making a promise he knew he couldn't keep, he cupped her cheek and stayed in the moment. The lights from the Christmas tree blinked a steady rhythm, the multicoloured lights cascading over her scarlet hair and bare milky flesh like coloured diamonds.

"I've always dreamt of how you would look in the flickering glow of candlelight," he confessed. She leant into his touch, her eyes slowly closing, her lips parting ever so slightly.

"You dreamt of me?" There was surprise in the question even through the breathiness of her arousal.

"More often than you'll ever know," he admitted and, because he wanted all the cards between them on the table, didn't want any more secrets or hidden desires, he went for broke. "Undress me. I can't wait another minute to have your hands on me, Lady Zoie."

She froze, her eyes flying open and her jaw dropping on an 'O' of shock. He would've laughed, she looked so freaking cute, if his heart hadn't been securely lodged in his throat. He was right. She was his Lady Zest. His Lady Zoie. His Lady everything! When she continued to stare up at him, disbelief and astonishment warring for paramount emotion on her lovely face, he continued to spell out a fantasy she'd once written to him.

"Peel my shirt up slowly, let your tongue explore with your hands if you want, but don't stop with the shirt over my eyes. I want to watch you as you sink to your knees and take off my pants."

"Dear God, you know," she whispered.

Nash nodded, loving the way her body trembled against him in nervous excitement.

"H-how long have you known?"

“Officially? Tonight. Though, almost from the start, when I pictured Lady Zest, it was you who played her part.”

“Me? Really?”

Nash smiled. “Really. It’s always been you, Zoie. Now, are you going to do what Lady Zest promised me, or do I have to spank you for lying?”

The trickle of wetness that slid down Zoie’s inner thigh made her shiver. Or maybe it was the look that took over Nash’s expression, one of challenge and pure authority. Likely, it was a combination of both. A faint sting began in her rear, anticipation and presumption at how wickedly delightful it would feel to have his large hand slapping her heated flesh. Her body’s reaction to his threat must have shown on her face because he chuckled, his hands dropping to cup her ass and squeeze.

“Damn, who would’ve thought? You can’t know how happy you’re making me tonight.”

Oh, but she could. She felt it in his embrace, in the hardness of his erection against her belly, saw it in the warmly contented expression on his face. “I told you I wanted more than anything to make you happy.” She had, more than once, if memory served. Oh, she’d written it in a variety of spicy, erotic ways, but her meaning and intent had been clear to them both. Whatever she needed to do, whatever he asked of her, she would do to make him happy.

“Lady Zest told me that,” Nash countered and dipped his head to drag his tongue along the outline of her jaw. “But you never have.”

Zoie’s head lolled back on a moan. “I am Lady Zest.”

“Are you now?” He eased back, releasing her completely and letting his hands drop to his sides. His eyes as well as his tone rang with triumph and challenge as he said, “Prove it.”

She didn’t need to ask how. He’d already told her what he wanted her to do, just as she’d told him in one of her many letters. She didn’t even need to remind her limbs of the motions needed to accomplish the act. Her hands moved of their own volition, reaching for the hem of his t-shirt and slowly dragging it up. She bent her knees enough to put her mouth in line with the flat plane of his stomach and extended her tongue, starting inside the narrow patch of dark curls just above the waistline of his BDUs and licking her way up. She paused

at his navel, circling the outline with the tip of her tongue and daring to dip inside before moving on.

He tasted divine, a heady mix of solid male and sweet arousal, and she refused to leave an inch of his torso un-sampled. Her hands remained a breath ahead of her mouth as she devoured his abdomen, his ribs, his pecs and collarbone. When she reached his jaw, she felt his body tense and knew he waited to see if she would continue her fantasy or do as he'd ordered. In her letter, she'd confessed her desire to turn his t-shirt into a makeshift blindfold. He'd specifically told her tonight his wants didn't mirror hers in that one aspect. As erotic as she knew she'd find it having this man blindfolded and hostage to her bidding, she gave him his way this time. Surely another chance for her to assume control would present itself before morning. There were, after all, still many hours until dawn.

Nash relaxed once more, his eyes flittering open, his gaze landing intoxicatingly intense on hers when she pulled the shirt off his head and tossed it to the floor. He smiled, a slow curve of his lips that spoke of both approval and desire. "Good girl. Will you continue now?"

The fact that he asked, that he even felt the need to ask, surprised her. She answered him by dropping to her knees before him for the second time that night, this time her fingers working the buttons free and tugging his pants down with steady precision and speed. Enough of this playing around. She wanted him naked and she wanted it now!

She hooked her fingers in the elastic band of his boxer-briefs and yanked them down. His cock, rock-hard and enormous, sprang free. No way could she let such a magnificent specimen of her man go unnoticed. She opened her mouth, already preparing her throat to accommodate his length before she swallowed his cock to the base of his body. It had been a struggle at first back at the theatre. There was so much of him! Thick and hard, the girth proved to be as much a challenge as the length. She was delighted to discover taking him down her throat a second time wasn't quite as uncomfortable or difficult.

"Ah, God, my sweet Lady Zoie," he ground through gritted teeth, his hand gripping the back of her hair almost painfully. His cock jumped in her mouth as a spasm moved through it. Then, to her surprise and disappointment, he used his grip on her hair to pull her dick free of her mouth. "Stand up."

Zoie came up sulking. She extended her bottom lip and gave him her best pouty puppy glare. He laughed, the devil, and kissed her. "I was having fun," she protested when he finally allowed her to break the kiss.

"Yeah, so was I. You enjoy doing that, don't you? I mean, to the point where it really gets you off."

She did. The feel of having a man's most vulnerable part hard in her mouth, under her control as she milked and sucked it soft was an indescribable gift beyond measure. "Is that a problem for you?"

Nash barked a laugh. "Hell no, though I had a different pleasure in mind next."

Zoie lifted a brow. "Oh? And that would be?"

"Turn around." The hard-edged commander tone was back in his voice. The sound of it skittered over Zoie's flesh as she turned her back to him. His hands found her waist and he pushed her gently forward towards the window by the Christmas tree. She said nothing as he reached around her and opened the drapes covering the window. The street outside his house appeared deserted at this wee hour of the morning, until a car drove passed at a slow but steady speed. Zoie gasped and started to turn her head when Nash nuzzled the side of her face with his cheek.

"There isn't a lot of traffic on this road at this time of night, but there is some. Are you afraid they might see you, Zoie?"

"Yes," Zoie breathed even as the idea thrilled her.

"Does it get you hot, wet?" He slipped a hand between her legs from behind and pushed a finger between her drenched lips. Zoie's head fell back to rest on his chest as her pussy lips flexed and attempted to clamp closed on his finger. "I guess that's my answer. Damn, baby, you're soaked." He withdrew his finger, bringing it up and around her body and held it in front of her lips. "Lick your juices for me, for anyone out there who might be watching. Let us see how good you taste."

Zoie's lips parted on a sigh of half protest and half excitement. He didn't take the opportunity to push his finger into her mouth, but continued to hold it there waiting for her to do as he'd told her, waiting for her to lick her juices from his digit. The sweet remnants of her essence were thickly coated on his finger. Licking at it proved quickly not to be sufficient enough to clean it so she sucked it between her lips and feasted on it as she would his cock.

"Damn, that's amazing," Nash breathed. "I can feel your mouth doing the same thing to my cock."

"I tried to do the same thing to your cock," Zoie reminded him. "You wouldn't let me."

He withdrew his finger from her mouth, his hands moving to her arms to glide down their length until his fingers closed around her wrists. He brought her arms up, guiding her hands to the windowsill. "I want your hands right here. Don't move them unless I tell you too." He released her hands, but hesitated above them as if to be sure she followed his order before moving to her shoulders. His palms splayed over her flesh, grazing down to the small of her back. "Bend forward, Zoie."

Zoie did, keeping her head up, her eyes focused on the street out front. Her attention shifted to the house across the street, to a window directly in the front where she could've sworn she'd seen a silhouetted figure peering back at her. The possibility only heightened her arousal, beading her nipples and slicking her pussy until her core flamed almost painfully. She even found herself imagining someone was watching as Nash stroked a hand over her bare ass, as her breasts dangled in full view of anyone who could be out there.

"Say hello to the neighbour across the street." Nash's tone was part pungent desire and part amusement. Was there really someone peering through that window? Had Nash seen that silhouette too? Or was he simply leading her to believe someone watched them to get her off? "Let them see how much you enjoy what I do to you." And with those words, his hand left her flesh only to connect a half second later as he brought it down in a hard slap to her sensitive skin.

Zoie cried out, wiggling her ass as the stinging sensational pain ripped through her bottom and straight to her pussy. Nash spanked her again, this time a hard blow to her other cheek and her body jerked, writhing from the delicious pain-filled pleasure. He alternated the slaps, hard for gentle, one ass cheek to the other, until she was teetering on the brink of orgasm and begging for release. "Nash, please."

"You're mine, Zoie." He claimed her with his body as much as his words. He pushed a hand between her quivering legs and thrust his fingers inside her pussy. She couldn't tell how many fingers he put inside her. She knew only that his thick digits stretched her opening and she rocked back against them, needing them deep, wanting more than fingers to fill her aching channel. "Say it. Say you're mine."

"I'm yours." She gasped the words, obediently and honestly, whimpering when he removed his fingers and used both hands to spread her legs wider.

"Forever?"

The word sounded of more question than prompt for her to repeat. Did he know what he was saying? She couldn't help but wonder. Still, she repeated the word because she knew exactly what she was saying and she'd always been his, always would be. "Forever."

Nash positioned the head of his cock at her entrance but stopped short of pushing inside. He gave her hips a quick squeeze as if making sure he had her attention and said the words that sealed her fate. "I love you, Zoie Qwin."

Zoie's eyes closed as tears of joy welled. She opened her mouth to tell him she loved him too, but he didn't give her the chance to say the words. He thrust inside her, a single, vicious ramming that shoved her cheek and breasts against the window and drove his cock impossibly deep inside her channel. Then he fucked her. She hadn't cared for the word when he'd used it, winced because it had sounded so impersonal and crude, but she could think of no other description for the furious way he nailed her to the window. His cock slamming her pussy until they were both screaming with pleasure. It was fucking, it was wild, and it was purely magnificent!

Nash reached around her, finding her hardened clit with his thumb and stroked it as he pounded into her from behind. And she came. Just like that. Without rhyme, warning, or finesse, her orgasm exploded around his cock, her inner muscles convulsing until they milked him of his cum. Sated and spent, he folded himself over her as their heartbeats drummed a frantic rhythm and their breaths mingled in a cacophony of airy sounds.

"You're mine, Zoie," he said again, his breath fanning an icy trail over her spine that he licked away with a tantalising swipe of his tongue.

"I'm yours," Zoie affirmed, her eyes closed and cheek still pressed to the window. Between her legs, his hand retreated from her clit, his cock easing out of her channel. Then his hands were gripping her hips again and he urged her to straighten, to turn and face him.

In that moment, sweat dripping from his brows, his face flushed from the exertion of their love making, his lips curved into a slightly wicked and incredibly sexy smile, he was the most gorgeous creature Zoie had ever seen in her life. She couldn't stop herself from lifting a

shaking hand to cup his cheek and revelled in the way he leant into her touch, his eyes drifting closed.

"I *am* yours," she told him again, in case he hadn't heard her the first time.

His eyes opened and his gaze captured hers. "Enough to be mine forever?"

Heart in her throat, Zoie could only nod.

"Because that's what I want, Zoie. I want forever. I want you to marry me." He drew her closer still until he held her so tightly against his body even oxygen had trouble slipping between them. "It won't be easy being my wife. I know that, but I promise to do everything within my power to make you as happy as possible for the rest of our lives. I'll give you all I can, Zoie, and then some. I'll love you with everything inside me and probably more I don't know I possess." He kissed the tip of her nose and continued. "I'm gone for months at a time. What I do is as much a part of me as my undying love for you. Can you handle that, my love? Can you deal with our months apart and love me the same? Will you let me have both the woman I crave and the career that drives me?"

"That's really what you want?" Zoie asked, disbelief tangling with the elation coursing through her veins.

"It would be the greatest Christmas present you could ever give me."

Zoie gave him a watery smile and brushed her lips to his nose. "Then my answer is yes. To everything. I'm yours." She laughed and grazed her lips over first one of his cheeks and then the other. "Stupendously yours. And I *will* marry you Lieutenant Commander Nash Beagan. I'll even make sure Lady Zest writes you on a daily basis when you're gone so you'll know we're both stupendously yours." Her lips found his in a long, lingering kiss that had her hormones rocking and her pussy hungering for more fucking. "Always."

About the Author

Tonya Ramagos is a bestselling author of contemporary, fantasy, paranormal and cowboy novels. She spends most of her time in a fictional world, dreaming up hot hungs and headstrong heroines. When she's not writing, she's reading. Anything from legal and military nonfiction to any genre of romance can be found on her bookshelves and flash drives. Her music tastes are just as varied, with artists ranging from country to rock to heaving metal loading her MP3 player. Her idea of relaxing is curled up on the sofa or on her back deck with a book and cup of coffee, glass of wine, or an MGD 64. A wife and mother of two fantastic boys, she enjoys playing games, dancing, and walking the nature trails around her home in Harrison, Tennessee.

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