

# Candelabra Afton Locke

Tandy travels to Scotland's Loch Enya castle to attend a BDSM convention she hopes will overcome her control-freak tendencies. When Bryne pulls her into his room of fire, she fears she's stepped into the lair of a crazy man. But as he mesmerizes her and sears her with his hot passions, she consents to a BDSM session of hot wax play that turns out to be the most intense journey of her life. Entrusting her body and mind to him might heal her, but the elemental fire fairy has an agenda of his own that threatens to consume them both in flames. An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



Candelabra

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Electronic book publication December 2009

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# **C**ANDELABRA

Afton Locke

# Author Note

Hot wax play can be hazardous. Consult a good guide book and always put safety first.

# Chapter One

Play With Me

"Welcome to Loch Enya Castle," the ruddy-faced bus driver announced. "Are ye ready for the thrills awaitin' ye?"

Thrills? Oh yeah. I'm thrilled enough to throw myself under the tires of this bus.

There should be a law against such cheerful bus drivers, Tandy Davis thought as she tried to rub the dampness out of her long, red hair. She was wet and miserable and her sinuses threatened to explode any minute from a lousy head cold.

"This historic castle is five-hundred years old," the driver went on. "Rumors say it's haunted but if you hear any bumps or screams, it's most likely The Smoky Daggers, the wildest BDSM group in all of Scotland. You might be doing some screamin' of yer own, I daresay," he said, guffawing at his own joke.

Whatever had possessed her to go all the way to Scotland and experience BDSM sex? It had seemed like a great idea when she'd signed up for it. After almost losing her job and driving her family and friends nuts, she'd decided to finally do something about her "control freak" tendencies.

Little did they know the "seminar" she planned to attend was really her first BDSM session. What better way to learn how to hand over the reins than to be a *sub*? The hot sex would be a bonus. It had been *way* too long since she'd had sex...

*I can't do this,* she thought as she got off the bus with the others and entered the gray, stony and very depressing-looking castle. *Submissive sex with a total stranger? No way.* She collected her ancient room key and orientation packet from the front desk.

Tandy squinted at the map as she stumbled up a winding flight of stairs and down a dark hallway to her room. With its stone walls and fireplace it looked just as

foreboding as the outside. Warming her hands over the heater, she peeked through the drawn velvet drapes at the foggy, gray loch outside.

A pigeon cooed from somewhere on the complicated roofline. *Chicken,* it seemed to say. How could she face everyone back home knowing she'd chickened out?

She opened the orientation packet and saw the list of activities she'd signed up for – bondage, the ultimate challenge for a control freak, and wax play because she and an old boyfriend had messed around with a candle once and it had been kind of fun.

She decided to go to the orientation, which was in an hour according to the schedule. Then she'd skip tonight's session and play tomorrow by ear. But first she desperately needed a nap.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hours later, Tandy bolted upright and cursed. It was twilight—gloaming as they called it here. She'd slept for hours, missing the orientation and the evening BDSM session had already started. If she hurried, she could tell her assigned partner she was too sick to participate.

Taking her key, she got all the way down the hall before she realized she'd memorized the room number for her session but had forgotten her castle map. Oh well. How hard could it be to find?

Minutes later, she was hopelessly lost. She'd given up on finding it and was just trying to return to her room. When she found a door that resembled hers, she turned the key and breathed a huge sigh of relief when the door swung open with a squeak.

So why was there a naked man hanging from her ceiling? Another man flicked his whip impatiently with one hand and applied lube to his own cock with another.

"Excuse us," he said. "We're in the middle of something."

Obviously. "I'm terribly sorry," Tandy muttered. "I must have the wrong room."

She closed the door and frowned at her key. How nice. They must use the same lock for multiple rooms here. She kept walking until she found another door like hers.

This time she decided to knock first. A woman with pins and clamps lacing her nipples opened it.

"Top of the evening to you, little chickadee. Care to join us?"

Inside, men and women wearing various chains and clamps eyed her like prime tenderloin.

"Some other time," Tandy said hurriedly before she shut the door.

Enough was enough. If she stumbled into one more scene like that, she wasn't sure she'd make it out of the castle alive. *BDSM? What had she been thinking?* She decided to go downstairs and ask for directions.

On her way, she found a door she was sure was hers. She crossed her fingers and knocked. Her heart sank when it opened. Wrong again and she'd already viewed more than enough kink for one night.

Instead, she found herself face-to-face with the best looking man she'd seen on this entire trip. Dark, wavy hair brushed his shoulders, matching the neat goatee against his pale skin. But his eyes were what snared her. They were the color of brandy and as intense as a hawk's. They blazed as if lit from within by a fire.

She forgot all about finding her room. She even forgot she had a room.

"Good evening," he said, bowing to her. "I've been expecting you." His voice, thick with an almost Shakespearean accent, sounded as historical as he looked.

Since he wore a leather vest with laces over a white peasant shirt, he must be part of the BDSM group and into role-play. Heat flooded Tandy's face when she looked down and noticed an erection straining against his snug, brown breeches.

"N-no," she stuttered. "I'm lost. This isn't—"

But before she could finish her sentence, the man grabbed her wrist. Warmth and energy radiated up her arm from his touch as he pulled her inside his room—which appeared to be on fire—and closed the door. What the hell kind of scene had she stumbled into this time?

Then she was up against the wall, pinned in place by his gaze on her face, hands on her forearms and erection pressing against her pelvis. Everywhere he looked and touched, he scorched her. There was something unusual about him and it wasn't just his historical outfit.

The flames burning behind him and all around them danced before her eyes in white, yellow and orange streaks until she couldn't see anything else. The harder she breathed, the more she noticed the acrid tang of smoke in the air. Stunned, she couldn't have screamed or moved even if he'd released her.

Although her heart thudded so fast one beat blended into the next, everything else elongated into impossible slowness as his noble features slanted toward hers and he planted tiny kisses around her mouth. His moustache and goatee were softer than she expected and his mouth was even hotter than his hands.

She whimpered at the excruciating gentleness of the kiss, which distracted her need to get a grip on the crazy situation. But as flames popped and hissed their evil dragon's breath around them, the man's lips suddenly crushed hers, burning and pressing her like a brand. His tongue was the fieriest of all and she couldn't help moaning aloud when he thrust it into her mouth.

She tried to pull away because it was too good. Too hot. Too intense. Every muscle in her body ached with desire, strongest at her core as blood and heat flooded there.

It was as if the flames consumed her, holding her helpless in their fiery grip. Half out of her mind, she wondered if this was how death felt. Whatever control she'd brought with her on this trip was completely shattered. The man had absolute power over her and she was too weak and confused to even try to get it back.

By the time he'd stopped kissing her, she barely realized he'd eased his grip on her. If she could think clearly, it would be the perfect time to try to make a getaway. But she couldn't think and her body trembled with weakness. Her teeth chattered because after the intense heat of their kiss, she was freezing cold.

What the heck is wrong with me? she wondered. Had this guy injected some kind of drug into her without her realizing it? She hadn't even participated in BDSM and she already felt completely out of control. *This sucks!* 

For the first time, she took a real look at her surroundings. The room was similar to hers with stone walls and long, velvet drapes completely shut against the outside gloom. *Get a grip, Tandy.* 

She realized some of the smoke and flames could be attributed to the fire burning cheerfully in the fireplace, which looked anything but dangerous with its decorative screen and mantel holding a mirror and antique clock.

*That's it, Tandy. See? Everything is under control.* 

The rest of the flames looked smaller now, a mélange of individual points instead of the solid wall of raging flames she'd imagined. Candles... Everywhere. Most were red tapers in elegant, silver candelabras—the kind one might find on a fancy dining room table.

What was this guy? A pyromaniac? Of all the men in Scotland, she had to meet a psychopath. It was too bad he was such a good kisser. Then a scary thought occurred to her. Was this her assigned BDSM partner for the wax play? This room had enough wax to drown in.

"Why do you look so frightened?" he asked as he touched her trembling bottom lip.

She hated how her body clung to the heat from his finger, craving more and more. His rich voice was so hypnotic, part of her wanted to strip off her clothes and do anything he told her.

For some reason, this man had a profound effect on her she couldn't begin to explain. She had to get out of here before it got any worse.

"I'm not frightened of anything," she retorted. "Let me go."

In reply, his eyes left her face and dipped to her snug, white sweater where her nipples, still hard from his passionate kiss, thrust against the thin weave. When he touched one, heat penetrated all the way to her skin, pulling a ragged sigh from her

chest. The kind she exhaled when life got too crazy to deal with and she felt like giving up.

"You may take your leave anytime you wish," he said calmly. He even dropped his hands from her and stepped back. All the coldness of Scotland returned to her body tenfold.

"I want to leave now, you freak."

So why wasn't she running toward the door instead of leaning, still paralyzed, against the wall? This guy's obsession with candles couldn't be healthy. More importantly, why wasn't he ripping her clothes off and throwing her on the antique bed? And why was part of her disappointed he wasn't?

When he held out his hand to her, she grabbed it without thinking. Every one of her fingers consumed his warmth. Now that she'd felt his touch it seemed she couldn't live without it.

"I'm Bryne," he said, looking amused as he tried to shake her eagerly grasping hand. Her face burned with embarrassment when she realized a polite handshake was all it was.

"Tandy," she replied.

No wonder she was confused. First he'd forced her up against a wall and now he'd decided to act civilized. "Shouldn't we have done that before the kiss?" she asked.

He grinned, revealing a flash of white teeth. "Perhaps."

"I need to go. I'm sick and I need rest." She rubbed the back of her neck as she talked, trying to force strength and free will back into her body. She wasn't ready for this or him. After the flaring passion of that incredible kiss, she felt as weak as a down feather.

"You probably caught my cold, by the way," she continued. "If you'd given me a chance, I could've warned you."

While she spoke, he appraised her with warm, glittering eyes. She felt them everywhere, circling her breasts and sliding up her thighs. His erection still strained the fabric of his breeches. Now that her apprehension had somewhat subsided, her cunt moistened, wanting to taste his hardness just once.

"We'll fix that," he said as he pressed his hands firmly against her cheekbones. Her head flooded with heat so strong it nearly burned her. How was this possible? When he slid one hand to her forehead, her sinuses sighed in contentment while soreness left her throat.

At last he stood back. "How do you feel now?"

Horny, she felt like saying. After the heat from his hands poured into her head, it drifted to the rest of her body, warming every nerve ending. Then she realized how much better she felt.

"My cold," she said, touching her face in wonder. "It's gone. How did you do that?" The feeling he was not quite human nagged at her. "And why is your touch so hot?"

He shrugged, sending a lock of dark hair spilling across his forehead. "It must be the candles."

She couldn't say anything because he gripped her shoulders, turning the logic she'd just mustered back into mush.

"Let us be certain your cold is gone," he said then kissed her again.

Hot drops of moisture dripped into her panties as his searing tongue mated with hers. Her hands clung to the wide collar of his shirt as she struggled against the powerful mouth that threatened to swallow her right out of her mind.

Her sweater and boots suddenly felt too hot and confining. She wanted to feel that thrilling, hot mouth all over her body—starting at her breasts and ending between her legs where the clothed bulge of his cock all but burned a hole through her jeans.

As if reading her mind, he undid the top buttons of her sweater and exposed one breast. She knew she should have worn a bra... Glossy, dark hair tickled her collarbone as he bent to lick the turgid peak. His tongue was the hottest by far as it seared her nipple, puckering the flesh around it into aching tightness while the rest of her skin exploded in an eruption of goose bumps. On second thought, she was glad she *hadn't* worn a bra.

She moaned as the hairs of his moustache, damp with saliva, brushed across her swelling bud. Each swipe of his tongue made her want him even more. By now, she was writhing against the wall like an animal in heat, a split second away from unzipping her jeans and spreading her legs wide so he could lick there too.

*Yes! Yes!* This was exactly what she needed to loosen up. Mindless sex. As long as he didn't try anything too weird, she was hot enough to let him do whatever he wanted.

By the time he pulled away, she was breathing so fast she was nearly hyperventilating. She pulled her sweater back into place, the fabric almost painful on her sensitized nipple.

"Stay." Even though he was breathing just as hard as she was, his voice hypnotized her into wanting to obey his every command without thinking.

"Stay and play with me, Tandy."

She knew "play" didn't refer to children's games. He was clearly a *Dom* in the BDSM group. Agreeing to play with him would mean offering herself as his submissive. With her consent, he could do anything he wanted to her and make her do anything he wanted to him.

The thought made her shiver. Reading and having wild fantasies about dominantsubmissive play was one thing but actually doing it was something else altogether.

"Are you my assigned BDSM partner for tonight?" she asked, gazing at all the candles. "I uh signed up for wax play."

He nodded, fixing her with his brandy-colored gaze. "That's right, Tandy. I told you I was expecting you."

"So I am in the right place," she replied. "I came to tell you I can't play tonight because I have a cold."

"I cured it, remember?" One dark eyebrow lifted, pirate style, as he grinned.

"Right but I've never *played* before." She was still stuck somewhere between "yes" and "no" with no idea which to choose.

Reaching out, he caressed her chin with one stroke. "I promise not to hurt you. You can trust me."

He mesmerized her so much it was impossible to think clearly. The stupid candle flames hypnotized her too. She couldn't take her eyes off them or him. It was almost as if they gave him power or were part of him.

If he made her lose this much control *before* the session, what would happen to her *during* the session? It was too scary to contemplate. Then again, maybe he was exactly what she needed. At least the trip wouldn't be a loss and she wouldn't hate herself later for chickening out.

"All right," she finally said. "I'll do it."

"Excellent," he replied as he touched her shoulders, skimming open the sweater.

"Aren't we supposed to negotiate the rules?" she asked. "Do you have a copy of my form?"

He looked blank for a moment. Maybe he'd missed the orientation meeting too.

"I must have misplaced it... Rules," he exclaimed as he snapped his fingers. "Oh yes, of course. Your safe words shall be 'halt' for a complete stop and 'easy' for slowing down."

"Works for me," Tandy said, fighting the urge to take notes as she did with everything in her life. "What about safe sex?"

He took a deep breath. "I'm impervious to illness and am unable to have children. At least for now. Nevertheless, I have plenty of condoms on hand."

Tandy frowned. "Everyone's vulnerable to illness. Are you a vampire or something?" He was kind of pale. As if BDSM wasn't risky enough with a human. She couldn't believe she was about to get kinky with the undead.

"No, Tandy."

"Good. I also want to know exactly what you're going to do to me."

He answered by holding her wrists out in front of her and encircling them with each of his hands.

"I'm going to shackle your wrists to the bed so I can lick every inch of your body."

*Shackled? To a bed?* Her idea of bondage was some nice soft rope with loose knots hobbling her legs a little so she could still escape if she started to freak. But that probably wouldn't be challenging enough to overcome her control issues. *Okay, shackles it is.* 

Her breath caught when he suddenly pulled her forward, sweeping his bearded face across hers so he could flick her neck with the wet heat of his tongue. Part of her expected to feel the piercing sting of vampire fangs but nothing happened.

"And I do mean every inch," he breathed into her hair. "I can't wait to feel your cunny under my mouth."

*Cunny*? His historical words must be part of his act. She practically felt it there already. Just the thought of this mysterious man shackling her to the wrought iron headboard while his hot, wet mouth tortured her cunt made her legs tremble so hard she could barely stand up.

He let go of her wrists and stood behind her, putting his hand over her eyes. "Next, I'm going to blindfold you," he crooned. "Because I want you to feel my heat with every bit of concentration."

"Blindfold? I didn't sign up for that. Isn't that too much for a first session?"

"It'll only be briefly," he said as he closed her eyelids and stroked them with excruciating delicacy, making her eyes moisten in tune to her pussy. Her eyes were her life. She couldn't even believe she was letting him touch her there. Clearly, she'd lost her mind.

"You need it, Tandy. You need to surrender your sight so you can feel."

To emphasize his point, he grabbed her hand and rubbed it across his tented breeches. His thick cock twitched under her touch, a restless animal that had been pent up way too long.

"Okay." She'd agree to anything to get that hardness inside her.

"And you're going to make love to my cock with your mouth and pussy."

"Oh yes. I mean, I think I can handle that," she said after finding her voice.

Although her throat was no longer sore, it was dry with uneasiness and anticipation. What he described sounded pretty routine. He wasn't planning to hang her from the ceiling or even whip her. *Yes, I can do this!* 

"There's just one more thing, Tandy."

He plucked a white candle from the nearest candelabra and stared into the flame. A tiny chill danced through her on ice skates when she saw the reflection of fire dancing in his eyes.

"Are you willing to play with fire?" he asked, stepping closer. He gripped the candle so tight his pale knuckles were white as the flame hovered between them.

Tandy held up a hand. "Isn't that going too far for a first session?" Or any session, for that matter.

*Damn.* There went a night of awesome sex right down the drain, she thought. Her cunt had practically soaked through her jeans, anticipating that bulge between his legs. Why did this guy have to look so sexy but be so weird?

"I promised not to hurt you," he reminded her.

Backing away, she put several feet of distance between them.

"I don't care. This is getting way too weird for me."

He came after her and grabbed her arm. His candle was so close to her face, she felt the hot draft of air from the flame and smelled the molten wax.

"We must have the fire, Tandy."

Finally she headed for the door, something she should've done at least fifteen minutes ago.

"I'm out of here."

Better to be a cowardly chicken than a *fried* chicken.

# **Chapter Two**

Too Hot to Stop

"Tandy, please reconsider," Bryne said.

"No way am I going to let anyone set me on fire," she retorted.

"Just let me show you something first." He held out his wrist and tipped the candle, leaving a drop of wax, which hardened to a milky crust. "That's all I want to do to you," he said earnestly. "I have no intention of burning you."

"That's it?" Then she laughed. "You had me going there for a minute."

"Then you accept my dropping hot wax on your naked flesh?"

She shrugged. "Well, sure. I signed up for it, didn't I?"

Nevertheless, her insides fluttered because she had a feeling he had a lot more in mind than some casual drips interspersed with tequila shots as she'd done years ago.

"Let us make sure, shall we?" he asked as he slid up her sweater sleeve with agonizing slowness.

She squeezed her eyes shut when the candle tipped. The drop of wax pelted her sensitive skin. It was definitely hot but didn't hurt.

"How was that?" he asked.

"Interesting," she managed to say as he brushed off the hardened bump with his finger, leaving a patch of pink skin.

A seductive smile lurked on his lips. "You've done this before?"

"A little."

"You will get more than a little tonight. I daresay it'll feel like your first time. Are you ready, Tandy?"

Was she? The uneasiness that had been battling lust in her body all evening finally gave way because suddenly she was imagining that wax in other places. Could she really surrender all her control without freaking out? She had to at least try.

"Yes," she said, her voice barely a whisper as she wiped her sweaty palms on her jeans.

Bryne put the candle back in the candelabra and faced her. "You will do everything I tell you to. What are your safe words?"

Tandy barely remembered her own name. "Halt and easy."

"Excellent. We begin now."

She nodded as anticipation coursed through her limbs. What would he have her do first? she wondered.

"Take off your clothes, fold them and place them on the chair."

With her back to him, she pulled off her boots, socks, jeans and sweater and put them on the corner armchair, which was covered in red leather with metal rivets. *If the people at work could see me now*...

"Panties too," he ordered. "And avert your gaze from me."

When it was done she faced him with eyes lowered, wondering if he was going to take his clothes off too. She desperately wanted to see his cock but *subs* couldn't make demands. His being fully dressed while she was naked and vulnerable was just another form of power over her.

The stone floor was so cold it soon numbed the bottom of her feet. *Hello? I'm getting hypothermia here, you sadistic jerk.* Icy chills flooded every vein in her body, making her shiver. This room had a small, wool rug in a red and white Celtic knot design near the bed like hers did.

She jerked her hand in the air. "May I stand on the rug?"

"Not yet," he replied. "You cannot appreciate heat until you are starved for it."

His scalding gaze roved over her naked flesh, bathing it with the faintest heat. Her nipples hardened under his scrutiny, feeling as if a taut wire connected each one to her swelling pussy.

"You're perfect," he declared as he brushed a long lock of hair from the side of her face. "I love your hair. It's the color of flame."

What now? The suspense coaxed out more cream between her legs but she knew making her wait and wonder was all part of the role. All part of the power he held over her.

He placed a thick white covering over the bed—to protect it from wax, she presumed—and retrieved a set of metal shackles from a small wooden chest sitting on the bureau. They had a long chain between them.

"Lie down. I'm going to shackle your wrists to the bed now."

"Yes, sir," she answered, her voice hoarse with excitement and trepidation at the same time.

"Call me Milord."

"Yes, Milord."

Just saying the words filled her limbs with giddy bubbles of excitement. Her pussy was so wet it made slippery sounds as she mounted the high bed and slid her back across the cover. The scent of her cream enveloped her. Surely, he noticed it too.

"Good girl," Bryne said with approval as she put her wrists up into position against the headboard, one on each side of her head. Her movements made the candles closest to her sputter and flicker.

*Good girl?* If anyone said that to her in real life, she'd have read him the riot act. So why did it make her cunt ache? Maybe she should've signed up for a gag too because it was really hard to keep her mouth shut.

With deft precision, he draped the chain behind the headboard, slid the cuffs through the openings and shackled her wrists inside the cold, metal circles. It was such

a relief to stop standing on the freezing floor she almost didn't care what he did to her now. Her limbs felt like cold stumps but life and heat tingled in each wrist where he touched her.

Her heart skipped a beat with each cuff he snapped shut. It was too late to back out now. She was bound and under his complete control. What if he was a huge freak and planned to torture her to death? She'd be trapped and unable to escape. She couldn't even handle being trapped in rush-hour traffic. The shackles clanged against the metal headboard as her wrists flailed.

Get me out of here! I can't do this.

Bryne sat on the bed, leaning over her with concern hovering in the depths of his eyes. "Do you remember your safe words?" he asked.

Logic battled with alarm. He was checking in with her to make sure she was okay. Good *Doms* took safety very seriously. She had nothing to fear.

She swallowed hard and nodded. "Yes, Milord."

It was a hell of a time to wonder if she should've gone to a real seminar for her control issues. At least she wouldn't be naked and shackled to a bed at the mercy of a total stranger in a foreign country but if this worked, it would be well worth it.

Being Bryne's prisoner for the next couple of hours might free her from the prison of her problems for the rest of her life. He'd asked her to trust him and for some reason she wanted to. *Deep breaths, Tandy. In... Out...* 

As if to reassure her, he trailed his fingers down her chest, pausing to skim her breast and flick her nipple into a hard peak. He did the same with the other, following his finger with his lips.

Tandy's hips bucked off the bed when his hot mouth seared her nipple, sucking hard and nipping it with his teeth until she moaned. The sudden warmth raced through her heat-starved body.

While he did the same with the other nipple, the shackles rattled while her legs thrashed and her pussy wept onto the cover. Couldn't he see how badly she wanted to be touched there?

"Touch me," she whispered, unable to take it anymore. "Please...Milord," she remembered to add.

"If and when I want to, I will," he said firmly. "You cannot speak without permission. Besides, I have something else for you to do first."

She watched, fascinated, as he pulled off his vest followed by his breeches, revealing his bare cock. She was glad he hadn't blindfolded her yet. His erection was deep pink with a wide-flanged head, which was as sculpted and rounded as a perfect handmade candle. Pearly white cream pooled at the opening.

Her breath caught as he straddled her on the bed, bringing his thick cock to her face where he nudged it across her chin, leaving behind his scent and sticky moisture.

"Would you like me to suck it, Milord?" she asked.

He pushed it toward her mouth. "Yes, Tandy. Do it until I tell you to stop. Since you might not be able to speak, raise your left index finger if you need me to stop and your right one to slow down. Do you understand?"

She nodded. The hem of his shirt brushed her face, releasing the dark and spicy scent of his musk. Wet, popping sounds competed with the hiss of the hearth as his sculpted cock slid between her lips.

It was just as hot as the rest of him, warming every recess of her mouth and thawing out the rest of her body. While her feet and legs tingled from the return of feeling and warmth, she struggled to accommodate him as he inserted himself deeper into her mouth. Ever so slowly.

Her right finger trembled against the metal headboard, poised to fly up at any moment because she couldn't possibly handle all that cock in her mouth.

"You're doing very well," Bryne whispered. "I want you to take all of me. Don't use your safe word unless you really need to. Trust me."

With each gentle word, his hard flesh slid deeper and deeper, entering her throat. *Stop!* What if he choked her before she could stop him? Her right finger shot up, signaling him to slow down. He eased back until the shapely head of his penis rested comfortably on her tongue. Until her breathing returned to normal.

Tandy's body shivered with emotions she couldn't even name when he gently stroked the hair back from her forehead. She really was in control, she reminded herself. Thank goodness for safe words. How could this be so intimidating, sexy and sweet all at the same time? Never in her life had she been so confused. The only thing she was sure of was that she'd never forget this experience. Or Bryne.

"It's all right, Tandy," he crooned. "You must learn to trust me. That's very important. Shall we try this once more?"

Without even thinking, she nodded. She needed this. Needed to trust. This time he nudged forward a little faster. The familiar feel of his rigid shaft took the edge off the fear.

She willed all the remaining anxiety out of her body when he slid into her throat and stayed there for what seemed like hours but was probably just a few minutes. During that time, everything was silent except her throbbing heart matching the clock ticking on the mantel.

Finally he withdrew, pausing halfway out of her mouth so she could swirl her tongue around the head of his cock and lap up the milky cream that oozed from the tip. By now, her pussy was so swollen and tight it was almost painful. Maybe he would forget all about his fire tricks and just fuck her.

"You may stop now," he ordered, pulling out of her mouth.

To her utter relief, he moved away from her head and toward her feet. She spread her legs wantonly so he could see what he'd done to her and hopefully put her out of her misery.

"I see what you want," he said, chuckling as he lightly caressed the springy, red curls on her mound. Tandy's breath hitched as he came closer with each stroke to her wet, erect clit. When he finally dragged his finger across it, she moaned loud enough for the entire castle to hear.

"You're beautiful here. It's the color of flames, just like your hair. And your skin is red too. I'm going to taste those sweet juices now," he told her.

"Yes, Milord. Yes. Yes." And to think she'd worried about his attacking her. If she was going to die, it was going to be from sexual deprivation.

He positioned himself in front of her outspread thighs, his erect cock hovering between his legs and pushing up the hem of his shirt. She wished she could see his chest but knew she didn't have permission to ask.

"You must use your safe word if my tongue gets too hot."

Tandy smiled. He was taking this role-play a little too far. "The hotter the better, Milord."

But the serious look in his eyes got her attention. "I mean it, Tandy. My tongue will get hot enough to burn you and cause pain. You *must* stop me before that happens."

"Huh?" The man made no sense. How could someone's tongue cause burns?

"This is the next step in building your trust. It's very important." While he spoke, he stared at a tall, white pillar candle on the nightstand between the bed and window.

Finally he stopped talking. Why was he so obsessed about building her trust? She didn't care if his tongue was as hot as Mt. Vesuvius. She just wanted it on her cunt. Now.

With gentle but firm, warm hands he gripped her thighs, spreading them wider. His tongue was definitely hot. She moaned and writhed under his firm grip as he dragged it with agonizing slowness across her opening.

He teased her with the point of his tongue, boring hot points between her inner and outer labia and between her pussy and anus. The juices seeping out of her felt as hot as

he did. As the burning liquid trickled across her skin, shattering every sensitized nerve, he licked her clean.

While he concentrated on one inch of her cunt at a time, heat flooded her body, making her dizzy and beads of sweat popped out on her forehead. *So good. So, so good.* By the time he concentrated that poker-hot, wicked tongue on her clit, she was almost delirious with fever. She didn't know if this was some kind of weird *sub* headspace from the BDSM session or if he'd put her under a spell that was making her lose her mind.

The points of candle flames around her looked as if they burned to a wall of fire again but she couldn't have cared less. Nothing mattered but Bryne's wonderful tongue.

Her limbs trembled, vibrating the shackles against the headboard, metal on metal. They hadn't discussed whether he had to give her permission to climax but if he kept this up, she was going to come fast and hard whether it was allowed or not.

When he slid his tongue all the way into her swollen depths, she grew lightheaded enough to faint. He felt wet, hot and huge. To her amazement, his tongue got hotter and hotter as it wriggled inside her. The trembling in her legs intensified, shooting into jerky spasms. Only the shackles and his firm grip on her thighs kept her from flying off the bed.

The whimpers and moans she'd voiced so far deepened into a steady, deep groan she barely recognized as her own voice. Everyone in the castle could probably hear her but she couldn't stop. His torturous tongue held her prisoner.

And it grew even hotter. How could this be? How could he increase his body temperature as if turning up the dial on an oven? The thing on her clit no longer resembled a tongue. It was a red-hot poker.

Candlelight reflections glowed against the wetness of her sweat-covered body. Her cunt was wettest of all. The hotter Bryne's tongue became, the more juices flooded out of her. The headboard groaned as her shackles clanked against it.

When he withdrew his tongue, she panted hard, adjusting to the temperature change. The air now felt icy cold on her soaked cunt.

"Do you remember your safe words, Tandy?"

She nodded furiously, unable to talk.

"Use them."

He inserted his tongue inside her again, fucking her with it now instead of holding it still. Visions of infernos and volcanoes filled her mind as the heat went even higher. It started to burn. To hurt. She could do this. She didn't want to use her safe word and surrender like a weakling. She needed to prove how strong she was.

*Hot. Hot.* The old, control-freak Tandy was gone now. *Oh God. Too hot.* No more ordering everyone around... *Stop. Stop, now.* No more schedules... *Wh-what's that safe word again?* No more tension headaches when things didn't go as planned...

With the next thrust, his tongue seared her flesh. The pain was no longer a sweet edge, barely noticeable around the borders of her pleasure, but a force that finally blocked out everything else. What the hell was he doing? This wasn't wax play. This wasn't even an option on the form she'd filled out.

Her torso arched high off the bed. "Stop!" she yelled. "I mean halt, damn it. Halt!"

Bryne immediately obeyed and walked to the side of the bed, showering her flushed face with gentle kisses. A sob she had no warning of and no control over tore out of her throat. What was going on? She never cried. Especially not in front of other people. Why didn't she have any power over her emotions?

"You waited too long to use your safe word," he said, his eyes flashing with anger. "Why?"

She shrugged and sniffed. "I thought I could handle it."

He caressed her cheek with gentle, cool and soothing strokes. "You must learn to obey my instructions and trust me," he said again.

She turned her head away from his hand. "Why do you keep saying that?" she asked. "And how could your tongue be that hot? You can't be human. What *are* you?"

He looked at her for a few long moments without speaking. The last thing she expected to see in his brandy-colored eyes was fear.

"You'll understand everything soon enough," he said hoarsely. "Tonight is very important. You're very important. Promise to obey me from now on."

"Yes, Milord," she agreed. "I will." At least while her sanity held out...

Now that her cunt was free of his scalding tongue, it ached and burned but not with pain. Raw need erased even the memory of pain there.

"I need to come, Milord," she said. "Will you allow it?"

He smiled and tweaked her nipple. "Yes, of course. I'll tell you when."

When his tongue touched her cunt again, it was sinfully hot but not enough to burn. This time he laved her clit then swirled around it, making it swell even more. When he sucked it into his hot mouth, she almost came, barely remembering she needed to wait for permission.

"Come for me, Tandy. Come now," he demanded before he sucked her into his mouth again, which was a little hotter than before.

She screamed her climax as her body contracted against the searing ecstasy. The force of it clanged the headboard and made the candle flames closest to her gutter so low they almost blew out completely.

Afterward, her wrists hung limply in their shackles and she panted as if she'd just run a race, wondering if her breathing would ever return to normal.

She expected him to come kiss her face tenderly again. After all the pleasure and fear, she needed that. *Don't get attached*, a little voice in her head warned her. This was just a BDSM session. When it was over, she'd fly home and they'd probably never see each other again.

The empty feeling intensified when Bryne left the room to go into the adjacent bathroom. It was just the BSDM headspace of being a *sub*, she told herself. After the sink ran, he emerged with a wet towel, which he used to bathe the sweat from her body. His beard looked damp so he must have washed up too. It was nice to let someone else be in charge for a change.

This headspace thing was much stronger than she'd ever imagined it would be. If she got too bossy in a board meeting, she was sure all Bryne had to do was walk into the room to make her feel like this again.

When he put the towel on the chair and removed the shackles, she wriggled her fingers, which had gone partially numb. How could she not have realized that earlier? The sensations from her burning pussy must have blocked everything else out.

"That was a great session," she said.

He glared at her. "I did not give you permission to speak and it's not over. It's just beginning."

We must have the fire, Tandy, she remembered. Was that next? From the books she'd read, she knew the first BDSM session with a new partner should be brief and they were doing far too much too soon. Part of her wanted to demand they stop. A bigger part of her—a dark, hidden part she'd never known existed—didn't. Besides, tonight was probably all they had.

"Get on your hands and knees," he ordered. "Position yourself near the end of the bed so I can fuck you from behind."

While she obeyed, he plucked a white, paraffin candle from the nearest candelabra.

"What are you going to do with that, Milord?" she asked.

"I'm going to drop hot wax on your back and beautiful, upturned ass, Tandy." She shivered when he traced a finger around the curve of one hip and cheek. "We'll start slowly so you can get used to it. Then I'm going to do it while I'm fucking your sweet, little cunny with my hot staff."

"Milord, won't wax ruin the bed?"

He chuckled. "That's what this cover is for. When I finish with you, it'll be covered with wax and the juices of our pleasure."

So much for that stall tactic, she thought as a flare of heat shot to her groin. Lust and trepidation declared war inside her body. She wanted to ask if they really had to use the wax but she already knew the answer. It would probably feel better if he did it while fucking her.

But alarm accelerated her heart when he lifted a black hood from the chest and slipped it over her head. It was made of velvet and smelled as if it had been packed away in the fragrant wooden chest for many years. The base was lined with fringe, which brushed sensuously across her shoulders.

Even though she wasn't shackled anymore, the hood thrust her even deeper under Bryne's power. She couldn't see a damn thing.

Her rapid breaths drew the cedar scent deeper into her lungs as she struggled to sharpen her other senses to make up for the loss of sight. A pop in the fireplace sounded as loud as a shot. She focused on the sounds of Bryne's breathing and movements, noting he went to the foot of the bed. Wondering when and where he would touch her...

She gasped when something touched her ass but he only caressed her with a slick layer of what smelled like mineral oil.

"This will make it easier," he said as he rubbed it onto the other cheek. "So will this."

A strangled groan escaped her when he dragged his nails across her skin, etching stimulating circles through the oil.

The safe words hovered on her tongue. *Halt. Easy. Halt. Easy.* But she clamped her lips shut. She'd come too far to back out now. Tandy's belly tightened in both apprehension and anticipation as she waited for the first drop of hot wax to fall.

# **Chapter Three**

Maiden of Fire

"Are you ready, Tandy?" Bryne asked.

"Yes, Milord" she replied in a small, hesitant voice unlike her own. "I think so."

"I will test you first to make sure you can handle the wax the entire time I fuck you."

The first drop of wax, a molten raindrop, landed on her lower back. Her breath hissed as her skin adjusted to the heat. After he smeared the hot puddle with his finger, a long pause followed.

The smell of hot wax filled the room. She felt so helpless with the hood on. She needed to see the tipped candle and falling wax. Every muscle in her body tensed with expectation of the next hot drop since she had no idea where it would hit next.

Another drop fell several inches to the right of the first. Since it was hotter, he must have held the candle closer. Without vision, her skin became her primary sensory organ and it was completely at Bryne's mercy.

"You handled the test drops very well," he told her. "Are you ready to proceed?"

*Let's get this show on the road. "Yes, Milord. It feels good and I want more." Wax me. Wax me and fuck me already.* 

This time, several drops fell in succession from her back to her ass cheeks, making her gasp. The multiple drops were hotter than just one. While her skin smarted, she breathed through it. It almost hurt but not quite. Heat built in her abdomen, swelling her pussy even more than before. A rivulet of fresh, hot cream inched down her thigh.

"Your skin is so beautiful and pink," he said, fondling the curve of her ass.

Her hips jerked when a large, hot drop landed just above the crease between her cheeks. She wanted more. She wanted to feel that hot wax drip down the groove all the

way to her pussy to mingle with the hot juices there. Tiny spasms of pleasure kept her hips continually dancing as more hot wax dripped on her ass.

"You like that, don't you?" he asked.

The sound of a condom packet being torn open tightened her pussy. Just when she expected another drop, the wet, heated head of Bryne's cock nudged against her cunt. She sighed as she opened for him, feeling every detail in the sculpted head against her tight walls.

He gripped her left hip, sliding in deep and flooding her with heat. She assumed he held the candle with his other hand. His cock felt even better than his tongue had. More moisture seeped out of her as he withdrew slowly, molten hot.

When he was almost all the way out, more drops of hot wax pelted her ass and back. He smeared it across her sensitized flesh as he entered her again deeply and slowly, filling her with heat from inside and outside at the same time.

"I'm going to fuck your tight little cunt harder now. Can you handle more wax?"

Barely. But she wanted everything he could give her. "Yes...M-Milord..."

"This white paraffin covering your ass is beautiful next to your pink, wet pussy but I want to paint you with a few red drops from a taper. It'll be hotter so I'll hold it farther away."

When she agreed, he sped up, his wet, hard shaft growing hotter with each stroke. The drops of wax came faster too until she lost track of them, one blending into the other. A couple even dripped down the sides of her hips as melted icing would on a cake. She moaned as his cock pounded into her with harder, quicker thrusts.

It was almost too fast and hard just as the wax fell too fast but neither was enough to make her resort to her safe word. Bryne was driving her to the edge, leaving her poised on a thin line of intense pleasure while pain and fear awaited below if she happened to fall.

Each time he slammed into her hips, the wax that had accumulated and dried on her back and ass felt like a hardened skin, pulling sensuously at the tender flesh underneath and tugging the tiny, down hairs covering her body.

She could tell when he occasionally used the taper because the heat from the drops penetrated the buffer of the existing wax. He scraped off some of the plaques, revealing stinging, sensitized skin that only intensified the luscious, wet pleasure circling the heated walls of her pussy.

His hot shaft plunged into her again and again, the slick sounds of rubber against tight, lubricated flesh growing faster and louder. By now, her thighs were so weak she was close to collapsing onto the bed in a heap. She might have been close to coming for a long time but she wasn't sure because she'd lost all track of time. It was as if he'd been fucking her with his scalding-hot cock and pouring wax on her for centuries.

Without warning, he angled his penis more toward her clit and pummeled her with faster, deeper strokes.

"Come for me now, Tandy. Come." While he shouted the words, he poured the longest drop of wax on her. Waves of heat flashed through her while the searing wax on her ass competed with and intensified the deep spasms clenching her pussy. She swore she could almost see flashes of light under the black void of the hood.

"Bryne," she cried out. "Oh God. Bryne!"

The hot semen raining down on her ass cheeks didn't feel much different than the wax. She hadn't expected that either. He must have taken off the condom. The drops came fast at first, then slower as he groaned, milking out the last of his seed while her pussy still quivered. After the spasms stopped, she remembered she was supposed to call him Milord instead of his name.

"I'm sorry, Milord. I-" Her thick, incoherent voice sounded like someone else's.

But he didn't look the least bit upset when he pulled off her hood and laid it on the nightstand. Beside it, he placed the two extinguished candles he must have used on her

body – a short, white one and a long, red taper. She noticed he had a bucket of water handy. At least he believed in safety.

Everything looked fuzzy at first but became clear as her eyes focused and adjusted to seeing again. But it wasn't just her eyes. She felt as if she were reinhabiting her entire body and mind again after a long absence. As if he had taken her somewhere far away... Exhaustion filled her so quickly she didn't think she'd even be able to get off this bed. She had no idea BDSM could be this tiring.

"Do not be sorry. You were magnificent," he said as he walked toward the mantel and grabbed the mirror. "I want you to see how beautiful your body looks after our lovemaking. Look in the mirror, Tandy." His voice, though soft, left no room for argument.

He held it behind her and she gasped when she saw her backside in the reflection. The sleepy, insulated feeling vanished as her heart accelerated and her mouth went dry. It looked as if the Battle of Culloden had been fought on her ass.

White wax dotted with drops red as blood covered her pale flesh. Pink skin bordered each hit and mixed in the middle of it all was the glistening pool of Bryne's cum. She looked at the bed cover too. True to his word, they had stained it with wax and fluids from their passions.

That couldn't be her body. She must be looking at someone else. The flesh she couldn't stop staring at looked as if it had gone through horrible pain yet she hadn't experienced any. She didn't feel any now either. Just sweet soreness.

She groped for her voice and barely found it. "Wh-what did you do to me?"

He put the mirror back on the mantel and squeezed her hand. "I made you mine."

Tandy refused to belong to anyone but didn't have the strength to argue.

Then he grabbed the wet towel from the chair and scrubbed the dried wax from her body. The vigorous cleansing of her skin helped her climb out of the spell he'd put her under and get back into reality.

Beneath her skin, blood circulated everywhere he rubbed, replacing the soreness with tingling life and healing. Better than a spa treatment, it was almost as if she'd died and been reborn. Afterward, he threw the wax fragments in the waste bin, stripped off the bed cover and lay beside her on the sheets, holding her in his arms.

"You're clean now, my love," he whispered.

His endearment made her shiver with delight even more than the wax had. Now that she could see again she gazed around the room in wonder. The candles didn't look overwhelming anymore. They looked romantic, especially when the flames reflected in his warm, brandy eyes.

"That was an amazing session, Milord," she said.

"The most important part is yet to come but we need to rest. I've put you through a lot already."

Her body felt as if it had been through a storm. She was sore and sated in all the right ways. Lying next to Bryne was the best part of all. A nagging voice told her this was more than enough for a first session but she didn't want the night to end yet.

"I can't believe how intense it was," she added, horrified when her voice broke in the middle of the sentence. "I'm sorry, I-"

"Don't talk," he whispered as he squeezed her in a hug as intense and fierce as the entire night had been. That tender gesture blew her last shred of control. Unable to stop herself, she cried. For what, she didn't know. Primitive emotion ripped through her, shutting off all rational thought.

"What's wrong, Tandy?" he asked as he stroked her long hair from scalp to tip.

She stopped crying as abruptly as she'd begun. "I guess I just needed to let go."

He traced his finger along her bottom lip. "I understand. When my intended bride perished in a fire, it took me a long time to let go. Control was all I had left."

She touched his face. "I'm so sorry. What are the chances of two control freaks meeting like this?" Her own past had been filled with things she'd had no control over.

"It's not chance, Tandy," he said as he pulled her closer. "We were meant to meet tonight."

More questions filled her head about this mysterious man who'd brought her unprecedented pleasure and release. She hoped he'd answer at least some of them.

"You were right when you suspected I'm not human," he went on. "I'm not."

While he held his hand in front of her face, she watched with horror and fascination as a flame appeared at the end of each fingertip. His fingers were like...candles!

"My God!" she exclaimed, trying to scramble from the embrace of his other arm.

"Don't be afraid," he told her as held her against him. "I'm a fire elemental."

She stopped fighting him and grabbed his hand. The flames at his fingertips were gone as if they'd never appeared. The skin looked as normal as hers.

"What in the world is a fire elemental?" she asked. "Are you undead?" She'd almost prefer him to be a vampire. At least she was somewhat familiar with vampire lore.

"We're a type of fairy representing a single element," he told her. "There are also earth, air and water elementals. Some of us are mortal but since I'm from the purest strain, I'm immortal. I'm four-hundred-and-twenty-six years old, in fact."

Tandy couldn't believe what she was hearing. He looked more like twenty-six. "In some ways you seem very historical," she remarked, "yet so modern in others."

"All the guests that have come and gone through this castle over the years have helped me stay current." He looked away as he leaned up on one elbow.

"I lost Elspeth, my betrothed, through a fire I accidentally created. Up until then, I'd spent my entire life fighting my powers so the fairies punished me by letting her die. Just when I needed my power most to walk through fire and save her, I couldn't. My powers returned, of course, immediately after her death."

"Oh Bryne," she whispered. "That must have been awful for you."

"For the last four hundred years, I've remained at this castle and its grounds. Mostly, I live in this room where she died, cursing the powers I have."

A chill went down Tandy's back at the thought of his lover dying here. Had they made love here too? In this very bed? Hopefully her ghost hadn't watched their sexual antics. She rubbed the back of her neck as she tried to sort out all her questions.

"Obviously you're not part of the BDSM group staying here as I assumed you were," she said.

"No, that was just a cover." He grinned, smoothing back a lock of her hair. "This was my first BDSM experience too," he admitted. "Until tonight, I'd only read about it."

She realized since this wasn't part of the BDSM program, no one knew where she was. She'd just let a complete stranger shackle her to a bed and fuck her.

She raised her eyebrows. "I can't believe it. You were such a good Dom."

"And you," he said, kissing her on the nose, "were an excellent *sub*."

"Then you must know we've done more than enough for one session," she said.

He exhaled a heavy sigh. "I know but it's not that simple. Tonight is very special, Tandy. It's the four-hundredth anniversary of Elspeth's death and also the first night of the waning moon this month. I petitioned the Fairy Court to give up my cursed powers and be a normal, mortal man."

Hearing about the anniversary made her shiver. Surely, Elspeth's ghost was hovering somewhere nearby and wanted her man back.

"What does that have to do with me?" she asked.

"Everything," he said, his gaze burning with extra intensity. He reached over her and grabbed the white pillar candle she'd noticed earlier. "This represents my flame," he said, running his finger over it. "If I present the Fire Maiden tonight at midnight and this candle remains extinguished for twenty-four hours, I can give up my elemental powers. I can be a mortal. I can be free."

She pulled away from the weird candle and him. "Let me guess. You want *me* to be your Fire Maiden."

"Yes," he replied, his eyes full of hope and desperation.

"So that's what this entire night has been about? You're using me for some sort of satanic ritual? What do you plan to do, set me on fire?"

When she saw the answer in his eyes, she leaped off the bed. "That is so not going to happen."

She was so incensed she barely noticed the stone-cold floor this time. To think she'd opened up her body and emotions to this depraved freak.

"This is why you kept insisting I trust you," she said, narrowing her eyes. "You want me to trust you enough to let you barbecue me in your sacrifice ritual."

Feeling naked for the first time all evening, Tandy crossed her arms over her breasts as she gazed around the room for her clothes. She had no desire to run around the halls of this dank castle naked but it would be better than being roasted to death.

Bryne sat on the edge of the bed. He probably knew better than to touch her right now. "Who said anything about killing?" he asked.

"Fire kills," she spat. "You probably want to trade my life for Elspeth's so you can have her back."

When he held out his hand, she was surprised to see it tremble. "No, I would never do that. I've had four-hundred years to mourn her. Tonight something new has been born. With us."

"How can you possibly set me on fire without injuring or killing me?" she asked.

He stood, hope lighting his brandy-brown eyes. "By encasing the central line of your body in a ceremonial waxen shroud first. You won't feel any pain and nothing would mar your beautiful skin. I promised I would never hurt you, remember?"

"How is a stripe of wax supposed to protect me?"

"Because it's not going to be that kind of fire," he replied as he held both hands out to her wreathed in flames. "Touch my left hand very carefully."

"Ouch," she yelled as it burned her.

"Now touch my right."

"No way."

"Tandy...please."

To her surprise, it didn't burn. She even held his hand.

"That's the magical fire I'll use in the ceremony," he said. "It won't hurt you."

"How can I be sure of that?"

"You can't. It will be the final test of your trust."

*Trust.* Why was that one little action so hard to do?

His gaze still had that hypnotic power that made her want to obey but what made her stay was the intense experience they'd shared. Since he'd already helped her so much and looked so desperate, maybe she should at least consider it. If she really could trust him not to kill her, this final act might be a thrilling conclusion to their BDSM session.

He stepped closer, tracing his now-cool fingertips lightly across her collarbone. "Think of it, Tandy. If I were a mortal man, we could share our lives as a normal couple. Spend each day together. Grow old together. Die together."

What did he have in mind? Marriage? They'd only just met.

She stared at the candles, giving herself a break from the pull of his powerful gaze. "I don't know."

He dropped his hand and then his head in defeat. "I won't force you but decide soon. It's a half hour to midnight and it will take time to apply the ceremonial waxen shroud."

She must be out of her mind to even consider this. But if it cured her control issues once and for all, it might be worth it. She still had a ways to go. By helping him, she might help herself even more.

"How long will it last?" she asked.

"Not long," he replied. He held up a finger. "Be aware I may grow very weak."

"All right," she finally said, her neck feeling stiff and shaky as she nodded. "You've helped me tonight so I'm going to help you. Now do it before I change my mind."

"Oh Tandy," he said, hugging her fiercely to him. "You have no idea what this means to me." He cradled her face in his hands and caressed her cheeks with his thumbs. "I've been waiting for you for four-hundred years."

The tenderness in his eyes constrained her even more powerfully than the physical shackles had. But the moment ended with the abruptness of blowing out a candle as Bryne made preparations for the ceremony. Tandy stood with her hands at her sides, waiting for instructions. She couldn't believe being a *sub* almost felt automatic now.

"Go to the bathroom and empty your bladder," he told her. "Then wipe your body down with the facecloth to make sure your skin is clean. Dry off and lie on the bed on your back with your legs spread so I can shave your pussy."

After she finished in the bathroom, he went in.

The protective covering, with all the old wax shaken out of it, was back on the bed. As she arranged herself on it, she wondered why he planned to shave her. When he returned from the bathroom with a bowl of soapy water and a razor, he must have noticed the questioning look in her eyes.

"Wax and hair do not mix. The ceremony requires I seal all the openings of your body. Except your nostrils, of course, so you can breathe and your ears so you can hear my instructions."

*Seal all my openings*? She lifted her head and glared at him. "You could have told me this before."

He glanced at the clock on the mantel again. "Please. There is no time to argue. You agreed to trust me."

"Fine," she said, laying her head back down.

He wrapped the wet towel around her head, tucking in every bit of her hair.

"This is to keep your beautiful tresses out of the way." Though swift and efficient, his movements were so caring and gentle she nearly forgot all about being scared or angry.

She tensed as the razor slid across her cunt. When cool air brushed the wet, sensitive skin, she realized her pubic hair was coming off. He must be using a very sharp razor. She clenched her teeth, hoping he wouldn't slip and send her into the abyss of pain that lurked, waiting for her.

Yet his careful ministrations between her legs sent intense heat and moisture there. When he was finished, she moaned in pleasure as his fingers slid across her swelling labia, checking his handiwork.

"I'm tempted," he told her. "Your slick, naked flesh begs me to fuck it but the ceremony must go on."

With a grunt of effort, he grabbed a cauldron of melted wax from near the fireplace and placed it beside the bed. Next, he removed a large, old-fashioned paintbrush with horsehair bristles from the wooden chest and dipped it into the wax. He stood beside the bed as he worked on her.

"And now I shall coat the central line of your body with the ceremonial waxen shroud of paraffin."

He rubbed mineral oil over her face, down her chest—detouring to each breast and down her stomach, branching to the inside of each leg. Then he lightly scratched the slick areas, bringing every nerve of her body to full attention.

She tensed when the brush touched her thigh but then relaxed as the warmth caressed her skin. It felt different from the drops of hot wax – gentler and less shocking

but covering more area. Now she was glad she had the wet towel around her head to cool her, offsetting the flood of heat as Bryne applied more wax. The brush stroked up the inside of her calf as he painted a swathe of white wax.

"Do you remember your safe words?" he asked.

"Yes, Milord."

"Good," he replied as he painted her flesh faster and faster, striping the insides of both legs and traveling from her belly to her collarbone. Her nipples hardened and tingled as he encased them in wax.

The sensations penetrating her body from so many areas shoved her mind into a rapidly moving tunnel. She could no longer think as her nerve endings prickled with shock and then sighed, melting into pleasure. Her mind became an overloaded switchboard as she traveled into the most powerful headspace she'd experienced all evening.

She wasn't sure she could ever climb out of it again. She wasn't sure she wanted to. She obeyed without thinking as he instructed her to roll over so he could paint a narrow line down the groove of her spine.

When she was on her back again, he brought the brush between her legs. "I'm going to seal your cunny shut now."

"Won't it burn, M-Milord?" she muttered, still feeling groggy from the headspace.

"I will apply it with my hand as well so I can allow the air to cool it first," he assured her.

He rubbed mineral oil on her. His warm, waxy fingers brushing across her slit made her groan and arch her back. She whimpered nonstop as he applied more and more wax. After the first layer, he used the brush to apply another. Heat penetrated the first layer as if from afar. The seductive burning made her clit throb under its waxy covering. She groaned with unexpected pleasure when he sealed her anus.

To hell with the ceremony, she thought. She just wanted him to fuck her, again and again. Until dawn. Until the end of time...

"There," he said, straightening as drops of wax dripped from his brush. "Your womanhood is completely sealed."

By now she was giddy from all the heat and pleasure.

"Do not move unless I instruct you," he warned. "We must not break the seal. I'm going to do your face now."

He used his hand on her face too so the wax wouldn't burn the delicate skin. It was as if he were a sculptor and she was his unfinished statue, bonded through art.

"Keep your mouth closed," he said as he applied wax with his fingers.

Tandy sucked in a hard breath through her nose. She'd fallen off the narrow edge of pleasure into fear again. Having her mouth sealed shut was harder than having her cunt closed. This way she couldn't talk...or scream.

She wasn't even sure she could breathe but sweet air poured into her nostrils while her heart hammered away, under the wax.

Concern creased Bryne's forehead. "Stay with me, Tandy. Please. We've come so far. Blink once slowly if you're all right and twice quickly if you're not."

Part of her wanted to blink twice and jump off the bed, flinging this confining wax coffin off her body. Her belly looked so stiff and milky white, as if she were dead...or undead. This wasn't BDSM anymore. It was insane. How had he ever talked her into this? There were no such things as fairies. The flame sprouting from his fingertips earlier was probably just a clever magic trick.

If she was this freaked out by the wax alone, how would she be able to handle being set on fire? If he changed his mind and used real fire instead of the magical kind, she'd be toast. No, after going to all this trouble, she wasn't going to wimp out at the last minute. If she didn't subdue her control issues now, she knew they'd hold her prisoner for the rest of her life. She blinked once, signaling her consent.

He smiled. "Thank you, my love. I knew you wouldn't let me down. Now do not move or you'll break the seal."

He stroked her wax-covered breast with his finger. "The wax is just the right consistency. Flexible and smooth. We must start the fire now before it grows brittle." He looked at the clock. "We're right on time. It's one minute to midnight."

It felt strange to listen to his one-way conversation. She could only talk with her eyes. When he finally took off his shirt and flung it onto the chair, it gave her a longawaited view of his chest. Firelight bathed his sculpted muscles with an amber glow and reflected off the waves of his dark hair.

A smattering of dark chest hair echoed his goatee above and the curls around his semi-tumescent cock below. She longed to feel his skin covering hers instead of this layer of wax.

He grabbed his special white candle and held it above her body, tracing each limb from a foot high in the air. Then he put the candle back on the nightstand and picked her up off the bed, cradling her in his arms while he faced the candle. Closing his eyes, he threw his head back as he said an incantation.

All the powers that fill the universe, hear my plea. Before you is my Maiden of Fire. I offer her body and her trust In exchange for my truest desire. Release my powers. Extinguish my flame. Free my path from tragedy and blame. Make me a mortal man. So be it. And so it is.

To Tandy's horror, his entire body erupted into flames, the features of his face barely visible behind the fiery, orange veil. His shoulders sprouted fin-like flames at least a foot high. They reflected against the stone wall, turning the dark gray to almost white. This was no magic trick. It was real. Because he held her, the flames soon engulfed her too.

*Shit!* She was on fire. Too terrified to die. Too terrified not to. Why had she trusted this freak? she wondered as she tried to escape his tight grasp. But he wouldn't budge and it was too late to back out now. She belonged to Bryne. His sacrifice. Realizing it would be futile to fight, she surrendered herself to the flames.

## **Chapter Four**

The Promise

Tandy came to with a start, memories of the entire evening flooding her mind as she got her bearings. She must have fallen asleep or passed out. Bryne still held her. They were both on fire but it must be a nightmare because it didn't hurt.

It was no hotter than a summer day but how could that be? Surely, the fire would have melted off her wax and burned her by now. She didn't even smell smoke. He'd been right after all. This was fairy fire, not real.

When she tried to open her sealed mouth, she remembered the wax. She blinked as the flames licked the swathe of it down her belly. Bryne's eyes were closed but his lashes fluttered as if he were in a deep trance. Her own racing heart had slowed to long, thready beats.

To her amazement, she was calm. In Bryne's arms, she felt safe and in control. The flames even went out—as quickly as they'd ignited. But her peace turned back to panic when Bryne sank slowly to the floor, still holding her. Having the *Dom* go unconscious or die was every *sub's* nightmare but her safety wasn't the only issue. She didn't want to lose him.

After scrambling out of his arms and breaking the wax seal over her mouth, she shook his shoulders. "Bryne! Wake up." *Please wake up*.

Eventually he opened his eyes and smiled at her, sending relief racing through her blood. He looked completely unscathed from the flames even though he'd worn no wax at all. Slowly he stood on wobbling legs, picking her up again at the same time. Then he turned toward the white candle. Its flame was out too.

"It worked," he exclaimed. "My candle is out." Then he concentrated on her, laying her gently on the bed. "Precious angel. You've broken the curse. In twenty-four hours I can be mortal again."

He got on his hands and knees above her and scraped off more of the wax covering her mouth.

"Bryne!" Now that she could finally talk again, all she could do was cry his name.

In answer, his mouth covered hers, kissing, licking and soothing. Strangely, her lips felt bare from the exposure. It was as if the wax had become part of her, a second skin. The waxen shroud on her chest cracked when she struggled to put her arms around his neck.

"Are you all right?" she asked.

"Better than ever."

"What happens next, Milord?" Her voice was hoarse from nonuse and everything she'd just experienced.

"The best part, Tandy," he said as he stroked a wax-encased breast. "I make love to you."

She didn't have time to wonder how or when he planned to remove the wax as he forced her thighs apart. The hardened wax cracked inside her thigh, pulling seductively at her tender skin.

So relieved the fire was over, she didn't care what he did to her now. As long as she felt his cock inside her again. Her cunt was hot enough to melt a hole through the wax.

Instead, Bryne chipped away at it with his fingers, finally exposing her pussy to the cool air. She moaned as he pulled a piece of wax off her clit. The more he fiddled with the wax and slid his fingers across her wet cleft the closer she got to coming. And it wasn't just physical. After the intense life-or-death ceremony, she needed to climax emotionally too.

"Now, Milord," she said, thrashing her waxy body across the bed. "Fuck me now!"

Instead, he leaned over her again and plucked at the wax encasing her breasts. As soon as one sensitive nipple was free, he sucked it into his warm mouth while he freed the other one. She whimpered as he sucked the second nipple.

The ceremony hadn't changed his ability to turn her on but something was different. Then she realized his hands and mouth were a normal human temperature instead of scalding hot. She went silent when she realized she missed it. Had Bryne lost his powers already?

"Are you all right?" he asked as he absentmindedly pulled more wax off her chest.

She loved how he was always so tuned in to her feelings. It was hard to imagine now how wary she'd been of him in the beginning.

"You don't feel as hot," she blurted out.

"That's right," he replied, smiling. "I'm losing my powers. Isn't it wonderful?"

She writhed under him as he pulled off random pieces of wax, sending every nerve under her skin into a dance of ecstasy.

"We'll finish removing the wax later," he said as he brushed the fallen fragments away, grabbed a condom packet from the nightstand and unrolled it onto his hardness. Then he spread her legs and nudged the tip of his cock to her exposed pussy.

Like a hole in an icy lake, her slit was surrounded by wax, leaving just enough open to accommodate him. He filled her slowly. Shards of wax rained from her body while she moved in tune to their pleasure.

The sensations stoked the embers of her emotions, still so raw from the frightening ceremony, as he entered her to the hilt and rested there for a moment. His cock didn't feel quite like a molten sword this time but its warmth filled her. Their hearts pulsed against flesh and wax as he filled her with his body and his caring.

She realized then that his lust had resembled the drops of candle wax—hot and intense. But his affection was the best of all. Like the shroud, it heated her slowly and encased her with its warmth.

He removed the wax from her face just as gently as he stroked into her body and kissed her, communicating myriad emotions with his mouth. One moment his lips were gentle and sweet. The next they punished and demanded.

His cock built up speed until she was breathless from the pleasure building in her pussy. Their movements knocked off more wax and they thrashed across the bed with such abandon she hardly noticed the pieces of it crunching underneath her.

Then he got up on one knee and lifted her close, one hand supporting her back while the other pulled her hips back and forth. Until his tightly thrusting cock stoked a fire in her loins so deep and powerful she didn't think it could ever be extinguished.

He threw his head back as he had during the incantation. Sweat bathed the tendons standing out in his neck. As he climaxed, his cock grew poker hot, just as it had before the ceremony. The heat shattered her like the brittle wax, clenching her in deep spasms that left her gasping for air as his hot semen pulsed against the sheath inside her.

Afterward, he discarded the condom and put his shirt back on. Her belly – exhausted now as the rest of her – feebly tightened in anticipation as he walked to the wooden chest and pulled out a dagger. *What now*?

"Relax, my love," he told her as he put the handle in her hand. "This dirk is the easiest way to remove the wax when slid sideways across your skin. If you touch the blade, you'll see it's not at all sharp."

It resembled a miniature sword with its leather-wrapped handle, broad guard and tapered, silver blade. When she touched the dull blade, she realized it wouldn't hurt her used this way. Just as she had trusted him all night, she handed it back to him and lay back to expose her wax-covered flesh.

He worked as deftly as a master sculptor. First he'd painted her with wax and now he carved her. The blade was a caress of cool silk as it furrowed the channel between live skin and lifeless wax. When he was finished, she felt as if she'd emerged from a cocoon, very different from the person who'd begun this journey. Someone better.

Next, he cleaned the residual bits of wax clinging to her skin with the damp towel from the chair and stripped off the bed cover again.

"I believe that's the last of it," he said.

With the wax gone, it was as if their session had never happened. Part of her wanted to wear the wax forever—or at least a piece of it—to always remind her of this wonderful night and her bravery.

She'd never forget how protected she'd felt when she'd worn it or the anticipation of making love to Bryne when he'd peeled just enough off her pussy to wedge his hard, scrumptious cock inside her.

But despite all they'd just been through, he stood beside the bed and just looked at her instead of holding her. He looked as if he felt just as awkward as she did.

She sat up and broke the silence herself. "I guess our evening is over."

Although part of her was relieved there were no more challenges to face tonight, sadness filled her.

"It's not over between us, Tandy, but I do need to be alone for a while."

His hair looked rumpled and his skin was paler than usual. Even his eyes didn't burn with as much intensity.

"My plane leaves the day after tomorrow," she hinted, feeling suddenly cold.

"I wish you a safe journey home."

She couldn't believe he didn't even want so much as a second date. She'd just wanted a one-time BDSM session at first but they'd bonded so deeply in such a short time and had such great sex she wanted more.

Tandy rubbed her arms, her skin as sensitive as a newborn's from all their love play. Where the hell were her clothes?

"If you can just help me find my clothes," she said, trying to hide her disappointment as she got off the bed and stood up, "I'll go back to my room."

"They're on the chair," he reminded her.

*Of course.* The intense session made her forget all about putting them there earlier. The floor felt even colder than it had at the beginning.

He touched her shoulders and looked into her eyes. "I'll be very weak while I complete the metamorphosis to a mortal. I must do this alone. I promise I will come for you."

"Sure you will," she retorted. "Why can't you admit you never intend to see me again? That this was just a cheap, one-night stand?"

His fingers squeezed her shoulders. To her amazement, they were cold.

"Have you learned nothing from me tonight? Remember the trust? Have I lied to you tonight? Even once?" he demanded.

"No...Milord," she said by habit.

He traced her cheek with his thumb. "Then trust my promise to you. There is much about being a fire elemental you don't understand. It would take years to explain."

"Then when will you come?" she asked. She liked the idea of his visiting her lonely apartment – eating her cooking, sleeping with his arms around her and making her feel safe.

"I cannot say right now," he replied.

Her heart sped up as her hands clenched and unclenched at her sides. "Are we talking weeks? Months? Years?"

"I'm sorry I can't be more specific."

"That's because you're never coming," she said as she turned away and put on her clothes and boots. "You're not even asking for my address or phone number in the U.S."

"I don't need them to find you."

She finished buttoning her sweater. Now she felt less naked and vulnerable. This was just wild, experimental sex, she told herself. She'd gotten greedy. Because he'd

helped her give up control, she'd bonded too strongly. All that mattered was she'd go home an improved person.

"Well, don't expect me to be there waiting for you if you ever decide to show up," she said as she finger combed the worst tangles out of her hair.

He grabbed her upraised arm and glared at her with a glimmer of his old intensity.

"Oh but I do expect it," he said. "You're mine, Tandy. From now to eternity. I will come."

Still gazing at her, he pulled the curtain of hair away from the side of her neck and pressed the tip of his tongue behind her ear. Heat filled her, followed by a jolt of burning pain. Maybe he was really a vampire after all.

"Ouch." She tried to move away but he held her fast. "What the hell did you do?"

"I branded you." To prove it, he moved her toward the mirror and held her hair away, revealing a red mark the size of a dime on her neck. While it burned and tingled, sending currents of desire through her tired body, his arms tightened around her and his lips descended on hers. His kiss was almost as hot as his tongue. It made her want him to brand her everywhere – on her breasts, inside each thigh...

"Do you believe me now?" he whispered fiercely.

"Yes," she whispered back.

"Then go, my maiden of fire," he whispered again as he pressed a gentle kiss to her lips. A kiss of promise. "Farewell."

As she walked out of the room, she remembered how uptight she'd been when he'd first pulled her inside.

As soon as the door closed behind her, she realized she'd forgotten to ask him directions to her room. She decided to just walk back in and ask but the knob was locked tight.

"Bryne?" she called out as she knocked.

No answer. How could the man be so contradictory, professing his love and promises one minute while giving her the boot the next? He'd locked her out as soon as she'd left. The sharp jab of disappointment was the only real pain she'd experienced all night.

Way too tired to wander around the castle for the rest of the night, she pulled her room key out of her back pocket and put it into the lock. In this place, it just might fit.

To her relief, the door swung open. "Bryne, I was hoping you could tell me—"

Tandy gasped as she stood in the doorway to Bryne's room. Only it wasn't his room anymore. There was no man. No candles. The bed was neatly made up and on the middle of it lay her...suitcase.

She put her hand to her mouth. This was her room but how could that be? She'd just spent two hours of ecstasy with the most incredible man she'd ever met.

Hadn't she?

Rushing to the mirror above the mantel, she pulled back her hair. Relief tumbled out of her chest in a huge sigh. It was there. Bryne's brand was there.

And at that moment she knew he would come for her. Just as he'd promised.

You must learn to trust me, his words replayed in her mind.

"I do," she whispered.

## About the Author

By day, Afton Locke is a logical programmer, but by night she swims in the mystical world of dreams. Intrigued by all things unexplained, like ghosts and karma, she delights in spinning dark, sensual stories that pull readers below the surface of everyday (and sometimes boring) life to the depths of forbidden fantasy.

What else would you expect from someone with her moon in the 12th house/Pisces and Neptune in the 8th house/Scorpio? She lives in the mountains with her husband, dog and spooky black cat.

Unlock your darkest fantasies with Afton Locke.

Afton welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her <u>author bio page</u> at <u>www.ellorascave.com</u>.

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