

Charity's Christmas Surprise

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Cover Artist: Shara Azod

Editor: Jennifer Puckettt

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Chapter One

How do you seduce someone who refused to realize they were being seduced? Cassian Michael Edward Trevelyan, the twelfth Duke of Ross watched in utter frustration as the full-figured Charity Coleman went in and out of the small countries stores located in Monticello, Florida.

"Do you think she has any idea how damn good she looks in those jeans?"

Cassian was snapped out of his fantasies of Charity by his best friend, Ashton.

"She doesn't have a fucking clue," Cassian growled.

Ashton nodded and turned back to watch the woman in question. Cassian knew all the emotions that ran through him whenever he saw Charity, Ashton was feeling it too. It had always been like that between them since they had met as preteens at Eaton. Ashton Giles Beverley, the sixth Earl of Bedford, had been the other half of Cassian's missing soul. Both had been raised by cruel, vicious men whose name and position in society meant more to them than any child they might have produced. Both were orphaned early in life, forced to make their way, and fortunes, on their own.

The woman in question smiled brightly, stopping to speak to damn near everyone but them, blissfully unaware of the painful hard on Cassian had been sporting for the last six months. Every time he spotted those luscious hips, those lush, plum colored lips, that wide, easy smile, his stomach tightened and all the blood rushed straight to his unruly cock.

Charity owned and operated a small country store literally in the middle of nowhere. Though as far as he knew, he and Ashton were her only regular customers. It was always well stocked with products surprising for such a rural setting. Both men had tried and tried to get to know her, loitering in the tiny store far longer than it took to buy a carton of milk or eggs, which they would just wind up throwing away rather than to explain to the cook why they were buying milk and eggs every other day. Charity was always pleasant, but distant. She refused to be wooed by suave repartee; she didn't flirt. She was oblivious to the fact she had the body of a goddess and all they wanted to do was worship at her alter for the rest of their lives. It was enough to drive a man crazy.

What the hell made him think retiring to a quiet little corner of the Deep South would be good for them? When he received word that an uncle he never knew existed had passed away and left

him a plantation, Cassian had gotten a wild hair up his ass, thinking it would be a perfect place to settle down and find someone for Ashton and himself for keeps.

His first mistake had been that he never questioned the word "plantation". Who the hell had plantations in this day and age? He had thought it would be a pleasant country estate that hung on the name. He had been shocked to find out, it was a real, honest to goodness plantation; though there were no fields in use, now the land was covered in trees and thick, green foliage. Remnants of old slaves quarters still stood, albeit precariously, some ways off from the "main house". Though the spread was actually located in Miccosukee, a few miles away from Monticello, quite a few people were employed there. There was a full stable full of horseflesh, kennels of racing dogs, an extremely large patch of land in which corn, tomatoes, watermelons, strawberries, rhubarb, cucumbers and various other vegetables grew, which the grounds keeper laughing referred to as a garden. There was even a real sprawling garden full of flora both indigenous and transplanted. The place employed a main groundskeeper along with a crew of at least fifteen, not to mention the stable staff, the kennel staff, and the house staff, all under the watchful eye of the butler.

His second mistake had been to assume there would be some sort of major metropolis nearby. The closest real city would be the capital, Tallahassee. While the capital city couldn't really be called backward, or as rural as Monticello, it was a long way off from a London, New York or even Atlanta. The very idea of a woman willing to engage in a true ménage à trois, the kind with real commitment and devotion, not a sexual thrill, did not sit well with the locals. Not that had been stupid enough to inquire. Observation had shown that well enough.

His third mistake had been to assume this far away from European aristocracy, he would be free of matchmaking mamas or women scheming to become the Duchess of Ross. Southern women were notoriously tenacious, especially well-meaning mothers. One woman had even gone so far as to helpfully suggest he send Ashton packing and get down to the business of starting a family with a "nice Southern girl of good family." The woman had even gone so far as to say that she understood coming to the American South to find a wife, given that the English aristocracy was completely inbred. She apparently didn't seem to realize the slight she had had given him. He had been ready to throw up his hands and hightail it home when he first saw her.

Charity Coleman was everything he never knew he wanted. He had never dated a black woman before; he had never really even considered it. Not because of any preconceived notion, the subject had just never come up. Her skin defied description; to say it was chocolate would be trite; it was an intriguing mixture of dark browns and reds with a touch of gold. It looked so smooth and soft; his hands actually itched to caress it. Her dark brown hair gleaming with dark red strands fell thick and luxurious to the middle of her back. And her body...Cassian had heard of women with true Coke bottle figures, but the closest he had ever come to seeing one was watching an old Jayne Mansfield movie. Charity had a figure that could bring a grown man to

tears.

Oh, yes. He had it bad. At least he was not alone. Ashton was in as bad a shape as he was, if not worse.

Ashton could feel Cassian's frustration rolling off him in waves. From their meeting at thirteen, they could always tell what the other was feeling. As they grew older and closer, those feelings had merged, making them two parts of a whole. They shared everything, even women - especially women. Though it wasn't as if they couldn't function without each other, anything, especially sex, was empty with the other to share the experience. Before they had moved here, sex had become empty anyway. The type of woman that was attracted to two titled, filthy rich men who did everything together was not the type they were looking to settle down with. At thirty-five, both men needed more in their life than meaningless sex and temporary affairs.

Ashton had grown up outside of Bedford in a lonely country estate. He had never been allowed to socialize with any of the other children in the area; his father had decreed it not appropriate for his son and heir to socialize with the unwashed masses. He had been tutored until he left for Eaton. His entire existence had been lonely and isolated. No one had ever uttered a kind word to the lost little boy whose mother died in childbirth, and the only time his father paid him any attention was when he was canning him. "To build character," his father had said.

In fact, the late Earl had beaten his son so badly, on such a regular basis; Ashton had been barely human by the time he left home. He felt nothing, cared for nothing. The other boys avoided him. He couldn't be bullied by the older boys; he had nothing to fear from them because he could care less what happened to himself. It had been Cassian, a sullen, brooding boy himself, who had seen something in him and set out to befriend him. Cassian hadn't let him retreat inside himself, as he had learned to do to protect himself from the rest of the world. Cassian had helped him to feel again.

What had been two boys depending on each other to make it through a cold, if over-privileged world and grown into something deeper than a simple friendship. It was almost as if they were one; each man completing the other in a way beyond physical. Ashton loved Cassian as much as he loved himself. Cassian was a natural dominant, whereas Ashton was at home being the playful, carefree one. Together they were formidable; apart they were a wreck. Not many understood, much less accepted, that.

Ashton had done a bit more research than Cassian before moving to an area that wasn't even a town. Miccosukee was a tiny community where you nearest neighbor might be a mile away. In their case, several miles. As with all small communities, the people here may have been the "salt of the earth," but they didn't take to alternative lifestyles too readily. Cassian may be blissfully

unaware, but there were already plenty of whispers about them.

The one good thing about Southern women, as Ashton was discovering, was their amazing ability to ignore things they found unpleasant. Cassian had been inundated by invitations to dinner, cocktail parties, and various other gatherings. Ashton had been ignored. He may be every bit as rich as Cassian, but he had a lesser title. The society mother in America was every bit as aware of the aristocratic social scale as any English matron.

Ashton didn't blame them; Cassian was a catch. Standing a little above six foot four with dark auburn hair and light green eyes, his best friend was a handsome man. He was thickly muscled without bring bulky, with an easy smile and a deceptively laid back demeanor. Everyone loved Cassian; he was a mother's wet dream. Ashton was considered the deviant one, the one who had led the Golden Duke astray. While Ashton found it amusing how everyone assumed he was the mastermind behind all the deviltry the two had managed to get onto, it irritated Cassian to no end.

In reality, Cassian was the household alpha, so to speak. And Cassian had wanted to move here. Living without him had never been an option, so here they were. Ashton had been sure, sooner or later, his friend would give up and they could move somewhere where they would have better chance at actually finding someone who was interested in a real relationship. It was hard enough to ask a woman to not only accept but love two men equally. Ashton had been sure they would never find that here, where the nearest town, Monticello, had two gas stations, one main street, and twenty churches. He had never seen so many churches in his life; everything actually closed down on Sundays. He and Ashton had learned quickly you were either in church on Sunday morning, or you stayed out of sight until a "decent hour."

Then he had seen Charity. It was impossible to be his natural boisterous self when the woman had his tongued permanently tied in knots. Whenever he was around her, he couldn't think straight. She was so beautiful and so completely unaware of that undeniable fact. She was a real woman in a world that glorified plastic people. Ashton never really noticed before how sickly supermodels or society women looked until he saw Charity. She put other women to shame with curves that kept him up at night.

And she thought he and Cassian were gay. He knew just as sure as he knew his own name. She was unfailing polite about it. Ashton seriously doubted Cassian knew, but he had no doubt she had convinced herself the two men were gay. It was the way she always seemed to look toward the condoms wherever they came into the store. Once, when he had been browsing, she had shyly pointed out the K-Y Jelly in front of him. His first inclination had been to laugh, but then he had gotten so pissed off by the insinuation that he had stood staring at her, his mouth hanging open in shock. He bought the K-Y. The only thing worse than the woman of a man's dreams thinking he was gay would be to embarrass her so bad she never wanted to talk to you again. That was something Ashton could not have.

Despite is complete inability to form a coherent sentence around Charity, Ashton was every bit as determined as Cassian to win Charity's heart. He was just going to have get over being flustered around her. He had to find a way to get her attention. He wasn't sure how much more Cassian could take, and a frustrated Cassian would surely lead to mayhem.

Chapter Two

Charity tried her best to go about her business and not look at the two gorgeous foreigners leaning against their shiny Aston Martin. What they were looking at was anyone's guess. There just wasn't that much to see in Monticello. She would have guessed they would be far more comfortable spending more time in Tallahassee, or better yet, Jacksonville.

She had been as shocked as everyone else to see the crazy old Barrett Trevelyan really was related to English aristocracy. The Scotsman had bought the old Foxboro Plantation long before she had been born and had lived in near seclusion for over forty years. When he had died last year no one had really missed him. Then his nephew and his *friend* had shown up and taken residence

To Charity, there could only be one reason why an ultra-handsome duke and a sexy as sin earl would want to live in the middle of nowhere surrounded by backwards hicks. They were obviously gay. It was damned shame. Those were two serious hotties. Not that she would ever have a chance with either of them. Their kind didn't go for the size fourteen black women. Maybe it was for the best that they were gay. That way she could lust from afar.

She would never admit it to a living soul, but every time they came into the store she found herself so damp she would swear they could smell her desire for them. After each and every time they visited her store, she had to use her double headed vibrator to ease the unbelievable aches and urges they inspired. She imagined it was them taking her six ways from Sunday.

It had always been her most secret desire to be taken by two skillful, caring lovers. She was pretty sure could have that at any time, but the problem was she didn't want a simple ménage experience. Maybe it was the romance novels she was addicted to. There, a woman could have two lovers who loved her completely. Not so much in real life. There was only one word for a woman like that in the real world, whore. So Charity lived vicariously through her books, content to watch the gorgeous two men who came into the store three to four times a week, then closing up shop as soon as they left and running to the big brick house behind the store to fantasize while getting herself off.

Too bad that was as far as she was ever going to get.

Damn sorry waste of perfect male flesh, she muttered to herself ducking into another store. There ought to be a law.

Shaking her head again, she got into her car and headed out to the Christmas tree lot on the edge of town. That was really all she came into Monticello for anyway. She was hoping that by bringing back one of her grandfather's Christmas traditions, she could drum up some business for her little store. Every year, there would be a big Douglas fir tree in front of the store for all

the people to place homemade decorations on. She used to love making ornaments with her friends to hand on the big tree when she was a child.

All of those friends had long since moved away. She didn't really have time for friends nowadays; every second was spent trying to come up with ways to make the store profitable. So far, nothing was working. She was at her wits end, willing to try almost anything to save the store that had been in her family for generations.

Her store had once been a staple in this tiny Miccosukee community since Reconstruction; for a time, it was the only store African-Americans could shop and not be harassed or taken advantage of. But that time had long passed. Everyone had a car now, so it was easy to drive into Monticello, Tallahassee, or Thomasville to one of the many discount stores. The price of labor and gas made deliveries impossible. The fact that one very rich Harlon Jefferson Hayes, a member of North Florida's own kind of aristocracy, was trying everything under the sun to buy her out didn't help.

Charity put one foot on the bumper for leverage and gave a vigorous pull. The tree started to slide slowly in her direction, but then gained momentum and came rushing towards her.

"Shit!" There was no way she could stop the damn tree from crushing her. It would do no good to call out to anyone; there wasn't a soul around for miles. She could feel her foot slipping off the bumper of her Tahoe, there would be no way to stop her backward momentum.

Why did she buy such a large freaking tree? It wasn't like many people would see it. When she was a child and her father and grandfather were running the store, people would love to come from miles around to help decorate the Christmas tree in the front yard of the tiny country store. But her father had been gone for two years now, her grandfather for fifteen. Hardly anyone came to the store, let alone brought their kids to decorate the tree.

Now this. It was stupid trying to bring back times long gone. She hadn't put a tree out front for Christmas since her father died. It was a last ditch effort to show the community how precious tradition was, to try and inspire some kind of loyalty. She would likely wind up dead or maimed for her stupid idea. Pushing back against the tree wasn't helping. Her only hope would be to try to roll to the side and hope the tree wouldn't follow her.

Taking a deep breath, she leveraged her shoulder against the tree and pushed back with all her might. It ascended just a merest fraction, just enough for her to twist her body slightly to the left to prepare to jump. Unfortunately, she lost her grip as she tried to maneuver. The tree began to slide again, scraping her hands as it went. Her foot slipped and she felt her body being propelled backward. She closed her eyes as her foot slid completely off the bumper and waited for tree to slam her body into the cold, hard ground.

The impact never came. Suddenly the weight of the Christmas tree was gone, and instead being impaled on the unforgiving red clay ground, she found her body wrapped in incredibly strong arms, her backside cushioned by a firm body.

Chapter Three

Opening her eyes, Charity almost wished she had been impaled by the tree. Ashton was effortlessly pulling the tree the rest of the way down from the roof of the Tahoe, which meant the man holding her now had to be Cassian.

"Thanks," she muttered, trying to push away from the far too handsome man.

Only Cassian wasn't letting her go. Instead, he turned her body around so she was facing him, way too close for comfort. She focused her eyes on his chest, far too embarrassed to look him in the eye.

"What in the hell where you doing, trying to get that down all by yourself? That tree is twice your size! Don't you have anyone here to help you?"

Charity was taken aback by the fierceness of his tone. Where did he get off chastising her like a kid? Who did he think he was? And to make matters worse, the usually understated soft Scottish lilt in his voice was far more pronounced, making his deep voice impossibly sexier than it generally was. Despite the flash of anger at his words, she felt the familiar tingle starting from the pit of her stomach to her very core.

She opened her mouth to give him a piece of her mind, only to snap it closed when he grabbed her wrists to examine her hands.

"Come on, we need to clean these scratches and take out the little splinters."

Charity had no choice but to obey as he led her away from the front of the store to her own house. Taking a glance over her shoulder she saw Ashton staring at the two of them. Was he jealous? Was he upset his lover was going into her home and leaving him alone out front? But then, she saw him moved his hands to adjust his... Was that a hard on? He was looking directly at her jean clad ass and adjusting a bulge she could have sworn wasn't there a minute ago. Did she look that much like a guy? Or maybe... No, it had to be her imagination. Turning her head quickly she was surprised to find they were at her front door.

"Keys?"

Feeling lost and confused, Charity shook her head.

"Still in the car," she managed to croak out. "It's not locked."

Cassian frowned, but didn't say anything. He opened the door ushering her inside as if he owned the place. Charity's mind ran a mile a second without really concentrating on what was happening. She followed him into her home, up the stairs where he stopped and turned to her.

"Your bathroom?"

She nodded in the general direction, and then obediently followed as he marched off in that direction, stopping when they reached the room.

"Have a seat on the bed," he instructed as he continued on into her bathroom, returning with a wet wash cloth, some cotton balls, rubbing alcohol, and antiseptic. Kneeling at her feet, he pushed his way between her legs and proceeded to clean and dress the little cuts on her hands.

Charity closed her eyes and gave herself up to his ministrations. He was gentle, picking out the tiny wood splinters, bathing her hand with the warm wash cloth, cleansing the area with the alcohol, and then tenderly rubbing the antiseptic on the abrasions. Relaxing, she let his clean woodsy scent bathe her senses. What would it be like to have a man like this in her life? Or better yet, what would it be like to have both him and his lover as her very own? Wishful thinking, but who could blame her?

"How does it feel?"

"Heavenly," Charity breathed before thinking.

Snapping her eyes open she was shocked to see lime green eyes staring at her with an intensity that took her breath away. His face was so close she could feel his body heat. She wanted to turn away, but she just couldn't. His eyes held her captive. Running her tongue over her lips she wondered what it would be like to kiss him, to feel those elegantly shaped lips against her own. She had to move before she made a fool of herself, but she was paralyzed.

She couldn't afford to do something so stupid as to kiss him. He and Ashton were her only real regular customers, though it was a bit bizarre how much eggs and milk they bought.

"I think I got all the splinters out," he went on. She expecting him to move, but he didn't. In fact, she could have sworn he moved in a little closer. "Do you live here by yourself?"

Charity nodded, afraid that if she spoke it would break the spell and he would move away. It was rather pathetic, but she loved the feel of him being so close. He made her feel all womanly and desirable. It was an illusion, she knew, but it felt so damn good.

"Does your boyfriend live nearby?"

"I don't have one." She hated how breathless her voice sounded, but damn it, she couldn't help it.

"Good."

She didn't have time to interpret what he meant. In one fluid movement, his lips descended on hers, forcing her head back and her lips open so that his tongue slid into her mouth. There was nothing gentle about his kiss; it was demanding and potent, meant to steal every bit of sagacity from her brain-and it did.

Charity couldn't remember falling back on to the bed, or the removal of her sweater and bra. One moment she was perched on the edge of her mattress, the next she was laying underneath a mountain of Grade-A Prime male, whose masterful mouth traveled from her mouth to encase a bare puckered nipple. She gasped as his teeth bit down, holding the nipple in place as his tongue bathed it back and forth. When she thought she would surely go insane from the sensation, he switched breasts, giving the other peak equal attention. She arched her back in offering, her panties dampening by the second. It felt so good; she could feel her womb contracting as a tiny orgasm washed over her body, leaving her trembling in desperate need for more.

"Damn, that was beautiful!"

The whispered declaration had not come from the man feasting on her breasts. Turning her head slightly she was shocked to see Ashton's bright blue eyes watching her avidly. She hadn't heard him come into the room, let alone he house. She definitely hadn't felt or heard him slip into the bed next to her. Her eyes traveled down to his chest, slightly shocked to see the jacket and polo shirt he had been wearing was long gone. His chiseled, light golden hued chest was bare, his jeans unfastened. There was no disguising the massive bulge between his legs. Her pussy dampened even more as she watched it twitch a little under her perusal.

"I want you to do it again, Beautiful. Come for me again."

The soft command mixed with Cassian's unrelenting assault on her breasts pushed her over the edge once more, slightly more intense than the last time.

"Fuck, Ash! I told you she was perfect for us," Cassian growled, moving down her body in a hot trail of kisses covering her exposed skin.

Charity didn't have time to think. As Cassian moved down, Ashton moved over, staking his own claim on her mouth. His hands caressed and kneaded her sensitized breasts as Cassian removed her shoes and jeans. She should have been horrified two men she barely knew was taking complete possession of her body, but all she felt was desperate desire. In the back of her mind she knew this was madness. What kind of woman was she to lie passively while two men she barely knew explored every inch of her?

Any second thoughts she might have had flew out the window when she felt a hot tongue glide in a leisurely stroke against the crotch of her panties.

"Delicious," Cassian groaned as he worked her underwear off her hips and down her legs.

Charity was damn near boneless as Ashton angled her body upwards and slid his now nude hard body behind her. Her back rested against his chest, her breasts rested in his large hands while Cassian buried his face between her legs. Her head fell back against Ashton's shoulders as she gasped in pure ecstasy. Cassian's tongue was relentless, probing and stroking every inch of needy little pussy. She was so wet, she was afraid she would drown him, but he drank every drop of her essence and commanded more.

"How does it feel, Charity?" Ashton whispered in her ear, pinching and pulling on her nipples. "Tell me, do you like it?"

"Yes, oh Lord, yes," Charity moaned, her hips riding the movement of Cassian's tongue.

It was beyond wonderful, more intense than any of her wildest fantasies. She gave over her body and mind to the two men, reveling in the myriad of sensations they were eliciting from her. When Cassian took her clit in his mouth and suckled as if it were a tiny penis, she flew apart, coming harder than she had ever done in her entire life.

"That's it, love," Ashton encouraged, kissing her cheek as she panted through the unbelievable orgasm. "Let go. Let us love you."

How could she do anything less?

Chapter Four

Cassian was in heaven. Charity was so delightfully responsive; she had come twice just his playing with her breasts. She hadn't bolted when she saw Ashton beside her. If anything, she had become more excited and even more responsive, coming on Ashton's command. And her taste! She was so sweet and spicy, when her unique flavor burst on his tongue he never wanted to come up from between her luxurious thighs. Sensing that Ashton was aching every bit as much as he was, he reluctantly lifted his head. She was stunning, her cheeks flushed and chest heaving from her latest orgasm. She looked so perfect lying against Ashton. His chest tightened thinking how right this felt. She had accepted them both without murmur of protest, proving that she belonged with them like this forever.

It took no time at all to rid himself of his clothing. He was so hard he could probably drive nails with his cock. He was already leaking pre-cum like crazy just looking at her, her legs propped open, Ashton's hands keeping her nice and ready. Cassian couldn't remember ever wanting a woman as badly as he wanted her right now.

It had been sheer providence that today was the day he decided to pursue the stubborn woman in earnest, so they had been driving up to the store just as she was wrestling a Christmas tree twice her size. His heart almost leaped out of his chest when he saw she was about to lose her battle with the massive Douglas fir. He had never moved so fast in his life, determined to get to her before she was buried under about twelve feet of Christmas tree.

He hadn't planned on this happening, but he was glad it did. There would be no awkward explanations of the way things were between Ashton and himself. She would know right up front what she was getting and Cassian was bound and determined to see that she loved every second of it.

"Do you have any condoms?" Cassian asked her as Ashton's fingers worked her clit. He didn't want her to think too long or too hard about what was happening. Despite her passionate responses, Charity was the quintessential "good girl." Good girls did not sleep with two men she barely knew. Cassian would just have to make sure she got to know them very well. Hopefully, she would begin to care for them enough not to be able to walk away from the type of relationship they were offering her. He knew she had no idea that this was the beginning of what he and Ashton hoped would be an enduring relationship, but she would after today.

Charity pointed toward the nightstand but otherwise ignored him. As soon as he opened the small nightstand drawer, his heart stopped. Right next to the package of condoms lay a double headed vibrator and a tube of K-Y Jelly. He felt light headed as visions of Charity spread out on her bed pleasuring herself flashed through his mind. He couldn't stifle the groan that rose from his gut. Oh, hell yes, she was perfect.

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Taking out the condoms and the lubricant he returned to the bed where Ashton had his head buried between Charity's legs. Standing back for a second, Cassian watched as her back arched beautifully off the mattress. Her hands were buried in the jet black locks of Ashton's hair, pulling him closer. The sight was exquisite. It took all the patience he had to wait as Ashton brought her over the edge before he rejoined them. Opening the condom with his teeth, he quickly sheathed himself and moved between her spread thighs as soon as Ashton rolled over.

Without a pausing, Cassian buried himself to the hilt in one smooth thrust, forcing himself to still as the walls of her pussy convulsed unmercifully around him. She was so implausibly tight around him, he wasn't sure he would last very long.

"Oh, my God, you're huge!" Charity gasped her eyes wide with wonder as she stared up at him.

Never had sweeter words ever been uttered to a man buried deep inside a woman. He felt like some kind of primitive warrior who had just single-handedly won a battle. His hips moved of their own volition. He couldn't have stopped himself even if wanted to.

"Easy, Cass," Ashton warned him, stroking the side of Charity's face. "Don't hurt her."

As if he would. It was just that she was so tight, so wet. She felt so damn good wrapped around his dick. When she turned her head toward where Ashton knelt beside her, opening her mouth to take his best friend deep within, Cassian lost control. Placing her legs around his waist and grabbing her hips, he pistoned in and out, unable to tear his eyes away from the sight of her moving her head in time with his strokes. Ashton's head was thrown back, his eyes tightly closed. Cassian could only imagine how it felt; but it couldn't be better than being inside her. Nothing could be better than this.

"Oh, shit!" Ashton cried out as his hips thrust forward.

Cassian watched in awe as Charity's cheeks hallowed, her throat moving as if...oh, merciful heavens, Ashton had come, and she was taking in all in. Her quim clamped down, squeezing the very life out of him. He tried to hold on, but it was too much. He exploded deep inside her, her pussy sucking every drop from his straining body. It was magnificent, perfection. He knew then and there, this was it for him. No other woman would ever do. This was where he wanted to be for the rest of his life, buried deep inside of Charity Coleman; soon to be Charity Trevelyan, the Duchess of Ross

Chapter Five

Charity cracked open one eye, praying it was all a dream. She had to bite her lip to keep from groaning out loud when she saw the black haired figure sleeping peacefully beside her. She didn't have to turn to look to her other side to know there would be a dark auburn haired man there; she could feel him pressed against her backside. It was beyond astonishing that his mammoth shaft was still hard. He and Ashton had spent the entire afternoon making love to every inch of her. She couldn't be sure, but she was pretty certain she had passed out the last time they had driven her over the edge.

The fact that she had actually passed out on two of the sexiest men she had ever seen in her life wasn't bad enough, but how could she ever face either one of them after what all the things she had let them do to her? Or worse, after all the things she had done in return. Her face flamed as she thought about how readily she had taken first Ashton, then Cassian in her mouth, sucking and licking as if their penises where her favorite flavored lollypop. She had even allowed them to take her at the same time. She had readily climbed on top of Ashton as Cassian moved behind her, working his massive weapon into her nether-regions.

Nothing she had ever experienced in her twenty-eight years had prepared her for the indescribable feeling of being taking by two hard, hot throbbing cocks at once. Sure, she had experimented with her double vibrator, which she had purchased online right after she had met the duo for the first time. But her toy paled in comparison with the real thing. Nothing had ever hurt so good or fulfilled her wildest desires so well. It had only taken a few minutes before she was going off like a rocket, and the orgasm didn't stop. It was then that she had finally passed out, unable to take a second longer of the unreal pleasure they gave her.

She was such a slut! Surely that's what they thought.

What really blew her mind was that not once had the two men touched one another, at least not in a sexual way. They worked in concert, this one licking and sucking while the other kneaded and prodded. But not once had they been into each other. All they did was for her pleasure, to make her feel unbelievably sexy and wanton. They had been so absolutely masterful, how could she have ever thought they were gay?

"I'll draw you a bath, then we'll take you out to dinner."

Charity jumped at the sound of the deep voice so near her ear. She shivered when a tongue followed the announcement, tracing the shell of her ear. She almost cried out when Cassian slipped out of the bed and disappeared into the bathroom. The cool air against her back seemed wrong while her front was all warm and toasty.

The sound of running water woke Ashton, and Charity found herself drowning in his deep blue

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eyes as they opened and stared directly at her.

"Hello, Beautiful," he murmured, leaning forward to place a sweet, lingering kiss on her lips.

Feeling unaccountable shy, especially after the afternoon they had spent together, Charity murmured a hello, ducking her head so he wouldn't see how nervous and unsure she was. They were men of the world, all suave and smooth. She, on the other hand, was a veritable country bumpkin. She had no idea how one was supposed to act after an afternoon ménage.

"Do you feel all right?" Ashton asked her, moving her hair out of her face.

Oh, goodness her hair! It must look like a rat's nest!

"I'm fine," she declared running her hand through her hair. It didn't feel too bad, but who knew? If ever there was a man, or men rather, that could make a girl sweat out her perm, these were the men. She could honestly say she had never sweated during sex before. But then, she had never come so much either.

"All right, the bath is ready."

Charity was saved from having to make polite conversation by Cassian's arrival. Sliding out of the bed was the hardest thing she ever had to do. She wasn't what anyone would call svelte, and even though neither man seemed to mind, or even notice earlier, it was different now. Men didn't notice a lot of things pre-sex. Post-sex was something different altogether.

Twins moans caused her to stop midstride and turn around. Twin erections pointing straight in her direction greeted her.

"Must be some kind of weird English thing," she muttered to herself, turning and disappearing into the bathroom.

Cassian waited until she closed the door before turning to Ashton.

"I'll run home and take a shower and bring back some clothes, don't let her out of your sight," he told his friend.

Ashton frowned. Although he appreciated to no end Cassian leaving him here for a little alone time with Charity, it was very unlike his friend. Usually, he would be the one running home for the clothes, and Cassian would be in the bath tub with Charity.

"You want to tell me why?" Cassian would know exactly what he was talking about, so he didn't waste his breath getting into any further detail.

"I want her so bad, I might scare her off," Cassian answered honestly. "But if we leave her alone

this soon, she will start thinking about what happened between all of us. You have far more charm than I do. You can distract her for a little while anyway. As long as we keep her occupied, she doesn't have a chance to think too long or too hard about getting into a relationship with us. I plan to spend the rest of this weekend making sure she doesn't want to leave us."

Chapter Six

"Girl, what are you doing?" Charity asked herself as she opened the store on Monday morning.

This weekend had been a whirlwind. Every second had been spent with Ashton or Cassian, but generally both of them. Just when she started to feel overwhelmed by the pure testosterone surrounding her, one or the other would back off and disappear, leaving her with just one. At first, it was Ashton, who had slipped into her bath with her, scrubbed her back, dried her off and rubbed her lotion into her skin with firm gentle strokes. It reminded her of how he made love, firm but gentle. It was enough to bring tears to her eyes. He hadn't tried to sleep with her again, which she really appreciated. Cassian had returned with clean clothes for Ashton, and then they had taken her into Tallahassee for dinner. Thank goodness they hadn't decided to go into Monticello. Tongues would wag for days if they had. Business was bad enough, she couldn't afford for vicious rumors about her and the two newcomers to swirl around. She would be ostracized by everyone within a ten mile radius, maybe more.

She had truly expected it to end there. Instead of bringing her home afterwards, they had taken her to Foxboro Plantation. Thankfully, all of the staff had been long gone for the weekend. She didn't think she could handle trying to explain her presence to people she had known all her life. What would she say? I decided to see how the other half lived, and have some seriously hot reverse Oreo sex along the way. Yeah, that would go over real well. But then, Cassian and Ashton had a way of making her forget all about social morals and her standing in the community.

The two of them were masters at making her feel relaxed and carefree, like nothing else mattered but the three of them. It was really hard to figure out what they were after. She kept telling herself that they were just having a little fun with someone who wouldn't be carrying tales. Her heart told her there was something more. At twenty-eight, Charity had never really had a serious relationship. She wasn't exactly a virgin, but the things she had done with Cassian and Ashton this weekend...

She shivered as she thought back to just this morning. She had been in a panic to leave Foxboro before anyone arrived for work. She thought she would be able to sneak out, but she found herself on her knees in front of the immense fireplace in the master bedroom while Cassian was behind her, surging in and out in a maddeningly slow pace while Ashton suckled her clit.

Charity had read about things like this, but never could have believed how earth shattering it could feel. She actually saw dancing white lights in front of her eyes as she came with a keening wail. Instead of stopping to allow her to gain her bearings, they had simply switched places and started all over again.

She wished she could say it was just great sex that was making her so confused right now, but it

wasn't. In between the mind blowing orgasms, Cassian and Ashton were easy to talk to. She found herself pouring out all her problems with the store and with Harlon Hayes trying to buy out not only the store, but her house and the land on which it stood. That was perhaps not as surprising as her pouring out how her two best friends had moved away after high school and never returned, and how lonely she had been after her father had died.

Charity had always considered herself a self-contained person, not really needing anyone else in her life as long as she had her books and her store to occupy her mind. Now she realized how very lonely she was. Was her vulnerability the reason she had fallen so easily into their arms? Had they sensed she was weak and needy? She wanted so badly to believe their whispered declarations that she was beautiful, that she was perfect-perfect for them. She just had a hard time believing things like that this really happened. That the lonely girl with a strange fetish for two men found her princes charming. It was a complete fairy tale, and Charity never believed in fairy tales.

"Was it a good idea to let her go to the store by herself?" Ashton asked Cassian as he stared moodily out of the big bay window in the study.

It was a dark room, very reminiscent of the studies found all over the oldest manors in Great Britain. It was easy to believe a Briton had lived here in near seclusion for over forty years. There was a stale old musty feel about the place, but an undeniable elegance that spoke of breeding and privilege. Strange how Cassian's father had never mentioned a brother.

"I think you should go help out at the store today," Cassian mused behind the giant cherry wood desk. "But not yet. Let's give our Charity a little time to herself. We wouldn't want to overwhelm her, right?"

Our Charity. The phrase sent a bolt of lightning through Ashton's entire body. Charity was an intriguing mixture of independent modern woman, a soft fragility that challenged a man to want to keep her safe and protected. She had single-handedly tried to keep her family business afloat while the world marched on. The need for the little country store had long passed, but there was no money for her to transform the store into something that would turn a profit. Her ties to this place went deep. Ashton could understand why she wanted to save her store; it was her heritage.

Ashton knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Cassian was already coming up with solutions. The connection between the three of them had been immediate and intense. Cassian would never allow anything bad to happen to Charity, or her store. Ashton just hoped that Charity would be willing to accept their help. While she might accept a certain amount of mastery in the bedroom, she was definitely not the damsel in distress type of woman. Despite a healthy dose of realism and common sense that seemed to be bred into her bones, she was used to depending only on

herself. It would be hard for her to lean on either of them, especially when it came to something as close to her heart as her store.

"What are you going to do?" Ashton asked his best friend.

"I think I should have a little talk with Harlon Hayes. I suspect something other than merely wanting the land for himself is behind his suddenly overgenerous offers to buy Charity out. I found out this area is protected, you can't bring in industry, you cannot build a shack without express permission, and from what I can gather, other than building a private home, you have a better shot of selling ice water in hell than you do building anything of substance. Somehow Harlon must have gotten around that. I am counting on his greed to find out what that is."

Ashton had to agree with Cassian's strategy. There was no doubt there was something greedy and grasping about Harlon Hayes. He had been one of the very first people they had met when they moved here. There was something unwholesome, almost smarmy about the man. After spending far too much time lamenting he didn't have a daughter for the men to meet (who said that kind of thing out loud?), he proceeded to offer to take Foxboro off Cassian's hands. He had assumed no titled gentleman could possible want to be burdened with some backwater estate in the middle of nowhere.

Cassian had tactfully pointed out that his uncle had been a titled gentleman, albeit only a viscount and he had been content here for over forty years. Harlon had turned several unusual shades of red, blue and purple before going off on another tactic. The entire thing had seemed more than a bit bizarre to Ashton.

"Well, I will leave you to it then," Ashton said turning to leave. "I believe I will go change for work. I hear tell there is a Christmas tree in need of decorating."

"Hang on a sec," Cassian called. "I have an idea to make Charity's holiday a little brighter. And hopefully, it will bring in business. I think that it will be the perfect gift for our future duchess."

Chapter Seven

Cassian watched Harlon squirm in his seat without any outward sign of the fury brewing deep within his core. He had suspected Harlon was after Charity's land for other than altruistic reasons, and he had been correct. The bastard was up to something. Harlon had tried to coyly suggest there was something in it for him should he care to assist the man in his quest to buy up land from people who were struggling to hold on. Cassian was not in mood for coy. This man was threatening to take away something that meant everything to his future bride, and that would not stand.

Although Charity had told Ashton and him about the problems with the store, she had not mentioned the loan her father had taken out on the land months before his death; a loan Charity was having great difficulty paying off. Apparently Harlon was on the board of the bank from which Mr. Coleman had taken out the loan, and he was pushing hard to foreclose.

Apparently that also meant he couldn't buy the land once it was in foreclosure. It would look bad for the bank. The pompous ass was actually trying to get Cassian to do it for him, and then sell it back. Cassian had deliberately allowed the proposition to stand in the air a few minutes. He loved to see the fat bastard sweat. He would buy the note alright, but it wouldn't be from a foreclosure sale.

"As you can see my business associate is not here," Cassian answered finally. "I couldn't possibly give you a definitive answer without consulting him first."

Harlon mopped his brow which seemed to be permanently bathed in a film of sweat regardless of the cool temperatures outside. Northern Florida couldn't really be considered cold to someone born and bred in the Highlands of Scotland, even in the heart of winter, but for locals, it was a bit chilly.

"I know I can depend on you for, er, discretion," Harlon stuttered nervously. "It is a sensitive matter, as I am sure you can understand."

"But of course, my dear man."

Cassian was pouring on the lord of the manor routine a bit thick, but the idiot didn't seem to notice. Charity would have caught on to it quickly and probably would have told him a thing or two about his high and mighty ways. It was one of the many things that delighted him about her. She was nothing if not quick on the uptake. She had even caught on the slight Scottish burr in his voice long before this past weekend.

"You can be sure to hear from me shortly," Cassian assured the older man as he rose to see him out.

"And you can be certain I am at your disposal should you need help with any of your uncle's half-breeds trying to get their greedy little hands on your rightful inheritance. There are big things in store for Miccosukee. We can't have the wrong types holding on to things that should never have been theirs when these changes start happening."

Shell shock. Cassian had heard of it happening, but he had never experienced it before. Not only had he had an uncle he never knew about, but the man had children. If one of those children was a boy, then the title of Viscount Everly belonged to that child, not him. Harlon may have thought he was a crass as hole to take was not rightfully his, but the old man couldn't be any more wrong. He had to find out where these children were, and why had his uncle left Foxboro to him rather than his rightful heirs? By all accounts this place belonged to them.

What that meant for his plans to marry Charity he could only guess, but he and Ashton would come up with something. After finding the perfect woman, he was not about to give her up. If she refused to move to Scotland, which Cassian suspected she would, than they would have to find somewhere here all three could live happily ever after. Anything less was unthinkable.

Snapping out of his paralysis, Cassian returned the desk and called his London solicitors. If Barrett Trevelyan had a son, that son would be the next Viscount Everly, legitimate or not. The issue of the son's race shouldn't be an issue, but just in case, Cassian just wouldn't bring it up. The solicitors could secure the title without the child, or young man as the case may be, ever setting foot in England. Any nobleman's solicitor worth his salt knew how to go about it, as such things had been done since Englishman learned the delights of the mysterious foreign woman.

His second call was to some fine arts and crafts merchandizing manufacturers. While the locals of Miccosukee might not have any need for a tiny country store, people from Tallahassee would love to buy needful little things imported from Europe. Add organic foods and produce and perhaps all natural skin care products, and you had yourself a high end boutique. There were two weeks before Christmas; he could have the first delivery in three days. He could have appropriate advertising running on all the local media within four days. All he had to do was inform Charity.

His next and final call was to a private investigator he and Ashton had used upon occasion and kept on retainer, just in case. He needed to know who these children were, and more importantly, who was their mother. No one at Foxboro had even hinted there might be children from the late owner. Maybe they didn't know which was highly unlikely. But for whatever reason they were content to keep their silence. He wouldn't force anyone to talk, they probably had their reasons. None of them knew him from Adam. Why would they trust him with such knowledge, especially if the mother was a local?

It was a tangled web, but then, he was finding things in such as small community often was. He would get to the bottom of it. He was a master at solving riddles.

Chapter Eight

Charity stared out of the store window as Ashton set up the giant Christmas tree in the front. She should go out and stop him, but she was strangely content to let him do it. It wasn't like her. She detested the type of woman who acted like they couldn't do a thing for themselves. She had been self reliant for as long as she could remember. Her parents had raised her that way. Being their only child born when her mother was in her late forties, her parents had been all too aware they wouldn't be there always, and since she had no brothers, sisters or close cousins, she would be alone one day. She had lived a somewhat solitary life. Aside from the emails and cards she exchanged from time to time with her two best friends from high school, there wasn't anyone she could really talk to.

For some reason, it had been really easy to open up to Cassian and Ashton - to a point. She had no idea why she trusted the two, but she did. As much as she tried to tell herself it was a harmless little fling, she knew her heart was already engaged, no matter how she wished it wasn't.

"Hello, Beautiful," Ashton purred coming in from the cold.

Charity was a little surprised when he came right up and kissed her, tongue and all, without pausing. He hadn't looked around to see if anyone was around. Of course, there wasn't. She hadn't seen a customer since opened three hours ago. But he didn't know that.

Stepping back quickly, Charity tried to compose herself. She couldn't allow herself to be overwhelmed.

"Why do you call me that?"

She wasn't beautiful. She was okay, she wasn't exactly plain. But she was far from beautiful. Passably pretty would be more appropriate. It unnerved her a little the way Ashton insisted on showering her with nonsensical compliments. Besides "beautiful" he also called her "gorgeous" or "devilishly sexy." Charity was under no illusions she was anywhere near being sexy. She was full figured; although she was content with her curves, they weren't exactly the world's vision of sexy.

"Call you what?" Ashton asked, closing the gap she put between them. "Beautiful? Because you are."

She didn't bother trying to move away again. He would have kept the slight distance between them if he had felt so inclined. Funny, how she knew that about him after three days. Ashton was tenacious when he wanted something. He could be something of a brat, but a lovable one. Cassian was a silent brooder. He was always thinking. While Ashton was insistent, Cassian was overwhelming.

"Can I help you with something?" Charity asked. "Milk or eggs perhaps?"

She realized now the endless trips for both items were excuses to get to know her. The idea boggled her mind. There were plenty of better looking women in the area. If black women were what they were into, Tallahassee had a variable bevy of dark beauties to choose from. But Charity had the distinct impression that it wasn't a black/white thing with them. They were looking for something, and for some reason they had decided she was it.

"Why are you running away?" Ashton asked, his piercing sapphire eyes pinning her in place. "What are you afraid of?"

"I don't know you, or Cassian," she admitted softly. "I don't understand what you want."

"We want you."

Ashton lifted her chin and caressed her face. It was so hard not to rub her face into his warm hand, but she had to stand her ground. She wanted to believe, she really did. But how could she afford to?

"Why?" She had to know. They were beyond good-looking, they were rich, they were freaking titled. Why a simple, slightly overweight, country black woman? What the hell did she have to offer either of them?

"Have you looked at yourself? I mean really looked at yourself?" Ashton demanded incredulously. "You have the body of a goddess. Woman, I can't look at you without getting hard as stone! You're intelligent, loyal, and witty; you're smile lights up a room. But most of all, you accept both of us, Cassian and me, without batting an eyelash. You feel the connection just like we do. You were born for us, Charity, and you know it."

Charity was stunned. Ashton was honestly upset that she didn't see herself the way he did. That spoke volumes, even if she wanted to deny it, she couldn't. There may not be a happily ever after, but there was something there.

"How do you know those things about me?" Charity fought back tears. No one had ever said those things to her before. If felt damn good, soothing her where she never realized she was hurting.

"Ah, Beautiful, don't you know?" Ashton enclosed her in his strong, ready arms. "I have always known you. It just took a while to find you."

Chapter Nine

Cassian couldn't recall ever being so nervous. Ashton had been working at the store alone all week, keeping Charity busy during the day while he worked on the restructuring of the store. They both kept her busy at night. Although she had been reluctant at first, both men managed to cajole her into spending her nights at Foxboro. It was the first time since they had moved in that the master bedroom was used on a regular basis. Both men had agreed to sleep in other ten bedrooms until they found someone they wanted to install in the master bedroom permanently.

The process of reworking the Coleman's Food and Sundry was easy. The orders had come in, the new design finished, the advertising ready to go. By the beginning of the new year, Coleman's would open a new chapter in its existence. He had even paid off the loan on the land, anonymously of course. It was one of the Christmas presents they had in store for Charity. The only one Cassian was sure she would like. The other would be the most difficult.

Checking his watch once more, Cassian began to pace. Any number of things could go horribly wrong. She could bolt. She could refuse to see them again. Cassian felt a sharp pain at the thought. They couldn't lose her, but this couldn't wait. With the amount of time she was spending at Foxboro, word was bound to get out. Cassian would not tolerate any backlash against her. She was too special.

"We're home!"

Ashton's voice sent Cassian's heart racing. It was time.

"What's wrong?" Charity demanded as soon as she entered the room.

Cassian had to smile. She probably didn't realize it, but she could read Ashton and him easier than they read each other, and Cassian and Ashton had been best mates for twenty-five years. It felt so damn good, so damn right.

"Nothing, love," Cassian answered, giving her a long hard kiss.

How could he not love this woman?

"Come; sit by the Christmas tree with me."

Cassian had put up the tree three days ago, for Charity. She had mentioned it had been a long time she even celebrated the holiday. He and Ashton were determined to make this one special. Ashton excused himself as he was wont to do after returning home from the store. He understood Cassian needed time alone with Charity, and he'd had all day. It had become an unspoken routine between the three.

Charity snuggled naturally beside him, as she had come to do every night. Cassian choked up a little. Strange how the right woman could wrap herself around a man's heart so quickly. He couldn't imagine one day without seeing her smile or hearing the dulcet tones of her voice.

"Sweetheart, do you have a passport?" Cassian asked, praying she would. If she didn't, he would just have to pull some major strings.

"Actually, I do," she answered shyly. "I just have never used it."

"Why don't you use it now?" Cassian asked, slipping the little box out of his pocket. She still couldn't see it, but he wanted to have it ready. "I want you to come to Scotland with me...with me and Ashton, for Christmas."

Charity gasped, raising her head to look at him. For second, cassia was terrified she'd say no.

"Really? I mean, seriously? Scotland? Hell, yes!"

When she threw herself in his arms he almost cried in relief. The first part was over, but then that was the easiest part.

"Um, how about Paris for New Year's?" he added after she sat up again.

"What woman would say no to that?"

"Even if the trip was a honeymoon?" he hedged. Taking her chin in his hand, he forced her to look into his eyes. He wanted to be sure she understood what he was saying. "Our honeymoon."

"What about Ashton?"

The simple question meant more than she would ever know. Cassian didn't trust himself to talk; he was a man after all. Men didn't cry over emotional things like this. Luckily he didn't have to.

"Ashton will be right by your side the entire time, Beautiful," Ashton assured her from the doorway. "Where else would I be? Humpf!"

Charity had launched herself into Ashton's arms in a blink of an eye. Cassian would have been jealous, but the sight of her lusciously rounded ass in Ashton's hands caught his attention and wouldn't let it go. She was wearing a knee length plaid skirt that was currently around her waist as Ashton's hands explored the mouth watering globes at his leisure.

Cassian knew Ashton teased Charity throughout the day. She was usually primed and ready to go by the time they arrived home. But Ashton was always careful to wait for Cassian's lead. Tonight, it seemed Charity was taking the lead. He watched, fascinated when her hips began to move in slow little circles. Ashton had shifted her down a bit, placing her panty clad center

directly over his no doubt hard cock.

Ashton held on for about two minutes before he had Charity sprawled on the floor, her panties long gone. Cassian made no move to join them, enjoying the erotic show as Ashton's head disappeared between her raised thighs. He could hear the gentle lapping of Ashton's tongue underneath the soft gasps and moans coming from Charity. She was beautiful in her pleasure, perfectly wanton but still a lady. It was undeniably sexy.

Charity turned toward him, her eyes beseeching. "Cassian, please, I need you, too."

He couldn't remember moving, or divesting himself of his clothes. In no time at all he was by her side, carefully removing her shirt and bra to free the most glorious pair of breasts it had ever been his pleasure to behold.

As soon as his lips wrapped around one engorged nipple, she exploded, her body shaking in her release. There was nothing Cassian loved more than to watch her come. It made him feel like the master of the universe, even if it was Ashton who sent her over.

"Ashton! Cassian, please!"

Cassian watched in a state of awe as Ashton rubbed the head of his weeping cock along her slit. As much as she squirmed and arched, Ash wouldn't enter her. It took Cassian a minute to recognize he was waiting for him, for his permission. With a curt nod to the desperate man waiting, Cassian watched as he entered her slowly, opening her pretty pink flesh like a flower.

He was so engrossed in the show; he didn't realize his own cock had wondered close to Charity's mouth. When he felt the first curious brush of her hot little tongue against him he almost howled out loud. He was about to pull away, wanting to watch her take as Ashton loved her with a finesse he always seemed to lose when he was inside her. But when her sultry mouth encased him, stroking him to perfection he was a goner.

He only lasted a few minutes before he lost it completely. He could never seem to last more than a few minutes in her mouth. It just felt too good. The only thing better was being buried inside her core.

"Cass?"

Cassian tore his eyes from the woman on his dreams to see his best friend, still hard, slipping out of her and moving to the side. As soon as his slide in his place, Charity exploded again. It was heaven. All he could think of was this would be the woman to carry his children. This was forever

Epilogue

Charity stood in the middle of Coleman's Food and Sundry in complete awe. She knew Cassian had paid off her father's loan, but she hadn't expected the massive remodeling that had taken place while they had been in Europe. It was unbelievable how much work had been done in the two short weeks they had been away.

"Well, Duchess? What do you think?" Ashton whispered in her ears.

Tears of happiness flowed freely. The small country store had been completely transformed into a kind of boutique/gourmet food store. It was something she had dreamed of doing but she had never had the money.

"I love it! It's perfect!"

"The television ads started January first. The grand opening is scheduled for this weekend" Cassian told her coming up beside her. "We have a lot of work to do. You up for it?"

Charity nodded vigorously. "Of course, I am! We have to hire extra staff; I will probably turn the house into an office of sorts. I will need to go through the inventory. Well? What are you to waiting for? We have a lot of work to do and not a lot of time!"

Ashton watched Charity hustling and order Cassian around. Because he hadn't spent much time at the store before their trip to Europe, Cassian had no idea what a tyrant his new wife could be. Ashton knew, but he had refrained from informing Cass. It was just too much fun to watch him figure it out.

After a very formal wedding attended by people they could care less about, Cassian and Ashton had married Charity in a private ceremony at Cassian's family estate. Afterward, they left for France, celebrating their unusual wedding in style. It had given Ashton intense joy to pamper Charity. He knew Cassian felt the same.

There were going to be things they had to work out, but Ashton felt secure that they could do it. They could do damn near anything as long as they had each other.

Cassian never realized what a bossy woman his wife was. Strange thing was, her ordering him about kind of gave him a woody. She was magnificent, but then, he always knew that. Thankfully, Harlon had accepted defeat gracefully, going out of his way to ensure Cassian he would not be bothering the new Duchess regarding her land, or anything else. He had to smile

when he thought about the surprised look that had crossed the older man's face when Cassian had informed him of his upcoming marriage before they had left. His private investigator had informed him Harlon had gone on to harass other people about selling out, staying far away from Charity's property while they had been away. Something seemed off about that man; Cassian made a mental note to keep eyes on the wily old bastard.

The only worry he had was that he still hadn't located his Uncle Barrett's children. The solicitors had secured the title for the cousin that was definitely out there somewhere. Apparently Barrett had married and produced six children; five girls and one boy. All he knew about his uncle's wife was her name- Augusta Trevelyan née Jackson. She was definitely African American, and definitely from Monticello, though where she was now was anyone's guess. Although Barrett had not left his children Foxboro, he had left them various estates he owned all over the southern United States and the Caribbean.

Cassian had no idea why Barrett had left Foxboro to him, but he had, and for that he would forever be grateful. If he hadn't they would have never met Charity.

He would find his cousins; they were the only family he had. Despite whatever kind of man their father might have been, there was no reason to continue to be estranged. Family was family after all.

Looking back to where Charity was laughing at something Ashton had said he felt his heart swell. Yes, family was family, and he had finally found his. Despite the obstacles might come from their somewhat unusual marriage, Cassian had every confidence tomorrow promised to bright with his loved ones by his side. It had been the best Christmas present ever.

Presents for Sue Ellen

By

Shara Azod

Dedication

This is for you. Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

May you be blessed in life and in love. Thank you for making
this a wonderful year for me.

Love, Shara

Chapter 1

A man cannot be comfortable without his own approval. ~ Mark Twain

"I think I should come home, Charity." Sue Ellen bit her bottom lip as she absently twirled a perfectly permed lock around her finger.

New York City was just no place for a size fourteen country girl. The job she used to love had turned bad in a serious way; her apartment was little more than a closet, and she hadn't had a date in two years. What was the point?

"You are always welcome here, Ellie."

Sue Ellen attempted to hold in her snort and failed miserably. She loved her cousin Charity, truly and deeply, but she just couldn't handle being around the very pregnant woman and two -- not one but *two* -- rich, aristocratic husbands. How was it that Charity had met the men of her dreams in Miccosukee of all places, while she couldn't even get a date in the biggest city in the country? She really didn't need to be hanging out at Charity's house, scratch that, Charity's freaking plantation watching two very fine, very prime pieces of male perfection catering to her cousin's every whim.

Life was really unfair sometimes. The way things were going, Sue Ellen was going to have to move in with her Aunt Waynetta, also known as her arch nemesis. It wasn't even Waynetta's place, but her grandparents', but Waynetta had moved back home when Mama

Coleman had had a stroke and never left. She didn't own the large country house by any stretch of the imagination, but she ruled the roost and would not be moved. Seeing as she was the only one of her brothers and sisters still living in Miccosukee, Sue Ellen's aunts and uncles let Waynetta be.

There was simply no place else Sue Ellen could go. Things here just weren't working out, and Sue Ellen had no desire to return to school to earn a graduate degree than might or might not land her a higher paying job. Not that were a higher paying jobs in North Florida, but at least she could live like a human being and maybe even get her groove on every once and a while. This city just didn't appreciate big boned sisters at all. It may be a mixing mecca, but only the beautiful get to mix.

She sighed heavily and shook her head morosely, as if Charity could actually see the gesture over the phone. "No, I wouldn't feel right busting in on you and your family like that. I will stay with Waynetta."

She heard Charity's sharply drawn in breath and awaited the explosion she knew would come. "Are you out of your fucking mind?! That woman is pure evil and you know it. It isn't like we don't have the room. Unless you would be ashamed to live with me because I am married to two men?"

"Charity, you know that's not true!"

"Then is it because Cassian and Ashton are white?"

"Hell no! I would take a white man, purple man, blue man...any man just about now! I just don't want to cramp your style. Plus," Sue Ellen squeezed her eyes shut as if could protect her from the confession she was about to make. "It...It would be really hard to see you with your two men and I don't have anybody. At least I know Waynetta is every bit as miserable as I am."

There, she said it. Now that it was out there, she couldn't take it back. How humiliating to actually say out loud. She just didn't want Charity getting the wrong idea. This had nothing to do with her cousin and everything to do with her own self esteem issues. She didn't want to be the poor, lonely relation. She didn't need anyone's pity. Okay, maybe she needed it, but she didn't want it.

"Sue Ellen Coleman, if you are coming home you will be staying with me until you get your own place...and not some hole in the wall in Tallahassee either! You will call me the second you get home so we can set up the movers and such. *I* will be providing the tickets home. Or better yet, I will have Cassian send you a private jet so you can live a little."

A huge mountain of guilt settled uncomfortably on her shoulders. She felt like an ungrateful cretin by trying to push Charity's help a way. Just the thought of Waynetta's cackling "I told you so" was more than enough to readily agree with her cousin, but

damn she felt like one of those greedy relatives with the hands constantly out for a hook up. She hated that.

"I have to give notice," Sue Ellen sighed in defeat. There was no hope for it. She really needed to get out of New York and back to a place she understood, and maybe could be appreciated. New York was not a place to be alone and friendless. "It will be two weeks at least."

"Huh!" Now it was Charity's turn to snort. "Did those fuckers give you notice when they laid off half their support staff leaving you with extra work and no compensation? Did they give you notice before they made a crap load of bad investments?"

They hadn't, but really that was hardly fair. The markets were tanking, everyone on Wall Street had been hit pretty hard, and her firm was no exception. Of course, the fact that the former CEO and lead stock holder was old and far too trusting of the hot shot dumbasses with great degrees didn't help. But the kindly old man was gone now, leaving the reigns to his two sons who had set about to clean house and turn the firm around.

Sue Ellen couldn't imagine why they even bothered. Things were beyond bad, which also played to her decision to hang it up and turn tail back home. However, the Hamilton clan need not worry about the investment firm of Hamilton & Associates. They had business interests worldwide and would not be hurting for cash

anytime soon. H.A. was actually their oldest company, started by the original Archibald Hamilton, III back before there was a United States. They probably didn't even know the extent of all their businesses. Old money was like that.

After old man Hamilton had screwed the pooch so badly, his sons Blaine and Royce, or the Gruesome Twosome as she liked to call them, had swept in to save the business. She supposed it was a matter of pride, first American business and all that. The two were complete assholes, barking out orders and loading everyone with a mountain of work, especially her. They had "promoted" her to the position of their shared executive assistant, without the raise of course, and often kept her good and busy from seven thirty until well after seven. Their only saving grace was sending her home in the company car. That and the early morning pick up in said company car. Sue Ellen figured it was the least they could do, seeing as how they kept her at all hours. She would never in a million years say it out loud, but there it was.

"Still, it is only right," Sue Ellen insisted.

Yeah, her job sucked, her bosses were domineering assholes, but she just didn't have it in her to be anything but polite.

"Ever the gentile little southern girl," Charity's laughter rang clear and true over the phone lines.

At least she could find amusement in this messed up situation. Sue Ellen was feeling far from jovial. Her one big push to be independent and on her own far away from the red clay roads, Spanish moss, and pecan trees had failed miserably. Now she was going to have to return in disgrace, unable to cut it in the big city.

"I should have moved to Atlanta," she muttered dejectedly.

"Yeah, well, you didn't. No sense crying over spilt milk."

That did make her laugh. Charity had left Miccosukee on the first thing smoking right after high school, eschewing any and everything having to do with her southern roots. It was the death of her father and their family store that brought her back. She may live back home now, but you couldn't tell it by the way she talked.

"Why Charity, you sound positively... Southern!" Sue Ellen made sure to pour on her own dense southern drawl extra thick to make her point. Unlike her cousin, she could never seem to lose her accent.

"Girl, hush and bring your big behind home."

"I am coming home. Two weeks. Talk to you tonight."

"Two weeks, or I am coming to get you." Charity's voice brooked no doubt as to her seriousness.

"I will put in my letter of resignation today, I promise. Gotta go, okay?" Sue Ellen really needed to get back to work. Just because she planned to quit didn't mean she could slack off. It just wasn't her style.

"You better. Call me as soon as you get home."

"I will. Promise. Bye."

Sue Ellen hung the phone up quickly before Charity could say another word. She felt bad enough already. Although Charity was only trying to help, it made Sue Ellen feel worse for depending on her so much.

Staring at her computer and wondering if she had the balls to actually type, print, and turn in a letter of resignation, she never noticed Blaine Hamilton standing right behind her.

"If you are quite done with your little phone call, Ms. Coleman, I would like to see you in my office."

Chapter 2

And the trouble is, if you don't risk anything, you risk even more. ~ Erica Jong

Sue Ellen almost jumped clean out of her skin at the oh so cultured growl right next to her ear. Damn, the man moved like a cat! He always seemed to be hovering somewhere around her and

hearing things he really had no business hearing. Her heart accelerated at that thought. Had he heard her talking to her cousin? If so, how much had he heard?

This was so unfair! But then, such was her life. She could never seem to catch a break!

"Yes, Mr. Hamilton," she muttered, dragging herself to her feet.

Although his office was a mere five steps from her desk, it felt like the longest walk of her life. Especially with Blaine Hamilton shadowing her steps. Most men in his position would have issued an order then turned to go, but not Blaine. He liked to make sure you followed his orders to the letter. Sue Ellen couldn't count the number of times she found the man's ice blues eyes watching her with some inscrutable expression. What was worse, it didn't creep her out as much as it turned her on. As did his short, curt orders.

That was another reason she really had to get out of here. It was bad enough her two new bosses were sexy as sin, it seemed she couldn't make it through the day with dry panties. If it wasn't Blaine's deep, commanding orders getting her all twisted, it was Royce's silences. Although they were brothers, they looked nothing alike. Both were exceeding tall, broad shouldered and built like Greek gods, but that was where the similarity ended.

Blaine was all dark and mysterious looking. His hair was dark as pitch, wavy and a little long. Long enough to grab it and put it right where you needed his face. His light blue eyes sent chills down her spine, framed by sooty long curling lashes. He this way of raising his left eyebrow that just made a girl want to strip and lay herself out for him. He put Sue Ellen in mind of some dark lord from medieval times. Sometimes she found herself panting, pressing her legs tightly together to relief the throbbing ache in her clit when he was talking. It was a minor miracle he hadn't noticed by now, given his penchant for barking commands. That deep, rich voice was so hot when he barked.

By contrast Royce was nothing less than pure sin. His windblown curls had every shade from light brown to white, constantly falling in those clear evergreen eyes of his. Sue Ellen had never in her life seen eyes that honest to goodness pure emerald. He was no less autocratic than Blaine, he was just quieter about it. Because he and Blaine shared an office, he usually relied on Blaine to order her about. He just silently watched, pursing those pussy eating lips of his. Seriously, men should just not be allowed to walk around with lips like that. She didn't know whether she wanted to kiss him or climb on his face and ride the hell out those bad boys.

Sue Ellen had rarely heard him speak, and the few times she had, she could have sworn he had some kind of accent, like a Scottish burr. Odd, that. Maybe he was sent to a boarding school overseas.

She had no idea why their parents would split them up like that, but who knew with rich people. They were a weird lot.

"You want to tell me what the hell that was?" Blaine demanded as soon as he closed the door.

Sue Ellen gulped. The shades on the windows overlooking the large outer office was closed tight, Royce was leaning negligently against Blaine's desk, watching her with some weird hooded gaze. Did he know too? That did not bode well for her. Business big wigs were a weird bunch. They expected company loyalty, yet offered little loyalty to their workers.

Forget this! She was a fully grown woman. She owed H.A. nothing. Why the hell was she so scared to quit her job? It wasn't as if they wouldn't have people beating down the door to replace her. Half of the assistants here would jump at the chance to "serve" the young Hamiltons.

"Look, I have given you all I can, but I am tired of city life, barely scraping by and no future prospects. I am not just leaving Hamilton & Associates, I am leaving New York. Hell, I'm leaving the entire Northeast. I just can't...It's not what I want. I can't take another Christmas alone."

Now why the hell had she gone and said that? How pitiful! How pathetic! She just announced she was the biggest loser in New York to two of the hottest, most eligible bachelors in town? *Please, please, please someone kill me now!*

"You want to leave us?"

Holy crap! Royce's seldom used voice did have a burr. A deep, delicious Scottish accent made for talking any and everyone out their panties. Her knees felt a little weak, her head a little light. This man was lethal!

"Uh, I..I.."

"You want to leave." Sue Ellen gulped down pure air as Royce straightened, stalking toward her.

At first, she stood her ground, thinking he would stop directly in front of her. That didn't happen. He kept right on coming in slow, measured steps. She started backing away just as slowly, suddenly worried about the gleam in his eyes.

This was how Selina Kyle died and became Cat Woman. Her bosses killed her. But nothing illegal was going on here, was it? Oh, hell what had she gotten herself into? She took one final step backward, preparing to turn tail and run when her back encountered a very solid, very warm wall of flesh.

What the hell that poking her in her back? It wasn't hard enough to be a gun, but it was definitely hard. What the hell...?

"You wouldn't just walk away from us, would you Sue Ellen?"
Royce traced a single finger down the contours of her jaw line, down

her throat, stopping right at the first closed button on her shirt. Good thing she kept her shirts buttoned pretty high. She had to, her cleavage was obscene.

"Um, what?" How the heck was she supposed to concentrate on whatever he was saying when he was touching her? With that wicked voice with the equally wicked accent? With his and Blaine's scent all wrapped around her, with their bodies touching her? Oh, damn she was in deep do-do now.

"You don't really want to go, do you, Sue Ellen?"

Her name sounded so sexy when Royce said it. She had spent about twenty of her twenty five years being pissed off at the 80s nighttime soap opera from whence her mother got her name, but when he said it, it seemed one of the best names in the world. And since when did either of them use her first name? She was always *Ms*. Coleman.

"Yes," she managed to croak out.

"And you think you have no, how did you say this, *prospects?*" His finger lifted her chin. Her eyes flew to his on autopilot, afraid to look yet afraid to look away.

She really could drown in those green pools. A helpless little whisper escaped her throat as her juices started flowing in earnest. Surely they could smell her desire, she damn sure could. If she had had the ability to, she would have been embarrassed. As it was, all

she felt was need. Sweltering, achy desperation that if something scandalous didn't happen soon, she was going to attack. That so would not turn out well.

"And you thought we would actually let you go?" That growl came from behind.

Blaine. Blaine and that thick, incredibly hard thing he had digging in her back. As he spoke, his hands reached up and gripped her waist none too gently. The last thing Sue Ellen wanted to do was rub her backside against it; that would be sexual harassment wouldn't it? But he did place it on her person, so surely that gave her some rights, right?

To her shock, he didn't move away. In fact, he dipped, placing that weapon right on the crack of her ass and pressing forward. She must be hearing things because that couldn't have been a gasp she heard coming from behind her. And how the hell was her skirt creeping up her legs like that?

She was just about to put an end to this craziness, she really, really was, but then Royce had to go and open his mouth again.

"We cannae allaw ye tae lae us, love."

Now what was a girl supposed to say to that? Not she could say anything at all, not with the way Royce took one more step, pressing his body against her own, effectively wedging her between the two of them nice and tight, or the way those lips descended in one languid dip, and definitely not after their lips touched for the briefest of moments, and then Royce plundering her mouth like he was searching for treasure with his tongue.

Chapter 3

He who hesitates is a damned fool. ~ Mae West

Blaine had wanted Sue Ellen from the second he first saw her. His father's last day was his first day, and Sue Ellen had been the executive assistant for one of the dumbasses fresh out of Wharton with more balls than sense. He knew there had to be major cuts in the company. The family could not allow the firm to go under. It wasn't that they needed it; it was a matter of principle. The majority of the junior executives had to go, which meant their assistants had to go. There was no way in hell he was letting Sue Ellen go anywhere.

The woman was built for loving. She had a true hourglass figure that had him hard every second of every day. Her dark skin

was all smooth and creamy, inviting a man's touch, not to mention the face of an angel. But the thing that drove Blaine out of his mind was just *her*. Open, honest, and sweeter than raw sugar, she was the perfect woman. She crawled inside his skin, haunted his dreams. He did the only thing he could do, pension his father's executive assistant and promote Sue Ellen. He had been biding his time, waiting for the right moment, but now, he realized he might have waited too long.

If it had not been for Royce, Blaine probably would have made his move a long time ago. Maybe. Most people believed they were brothers because of the last name. The truth was, Royce and Blaine had met and quickly become inseparable from their first year at the University of St. Andrews. They shared everything, meaning everything. They had the same tastes, thought drastically different styles. Where one was, so was the other. There was never really any question of whether or not Royce felt the same white hot attraction to Sue Ellen that he had. They were of one mind about the matter.

Sue Ellen wasn't a physical thing. She was not someone to conquer and move on. She was The One. Sweet and amendable without being a complete pushover. She had a quick wit, though often muttered under her breath, and a kind, generous heart. A far cry from the gold digging bimbos that they used to date, or the uptight women he grew up with, Sue Ellen was real. Intelligent and

unpretentious, she wouldn't dream making snap judgments or trying to play them against one another. Best of all, that woman was just gagging for a collar; she just didn't know it yet. She was perfect for their dominate natures -- the kind of woman you kept.

When Blaine had heard Sue Ellen talking to her cousin about leaving New York, leaving them, it had scared the shit out of him. How could she not know how badly they wanted her? She was rarely out of their sight, they had come up with multitudes of ways to keep her at work with them just a little longer. She couldn't have honestly thought they really needed her to stay late to organize receipts, but obviously she had. Subtly be damned now, it was time to make it perfectly clear to Ms. Sue Ellen her days as a sad, single assistant were over. She was about to be claimed, permanently.

Watching Royce kiss her was a heady sight. The way she melted against him, soft and trusting had his cock knocking on his zipper to be set free. Blaine's fingers trailed a slow path up her thighs as he lifted her skirt, coming to a complete stop when he encountered the tops of her thigh high nylons. There was no way he could swallow the moan spilling from his lips just imaging the way they looked. The elastic lace hugged her upper thigh snuggly, damn near blending into the smooth soft flesh.

"Royce." Blaine's voice was little more than a gravelly grunt, proof positive his control was about to snap. "Look."

Sue Ellen uttered a little whimper when Royce's lips left hers. Poor baby. They would take care of her needs sooner than she thought.

Royce glanced at him in question a split second before his eye dropped to where Blaine had his hands. The widening of Royce's eyes as the other man sank to his knees before her told Blaine all he suspected was true; but he never suspected the next words that came out of Royce's mouth.

"Blaine, she's bare," Royce whispered softly, leaning in to inhale her center. "Not a strand of hair. So beautifully smooth."

His friend's words caused a low moan in both Blaine and Sue Ellen. Blaine wished like hell it was him on his knees in front of her, but he didn't want to stop holding her long enough to make that move. She might catch a case of nerves and run away, and he just couldn't allow that.

"Tell me," Blaine ordered. He wasn't sure he wanted to hear what Royce would say, but he knew he would possibly die if he didn't hear every minute detail.

"Her nether lips are smooth and puffy," Royce breathed. He must have reached out to touch her, to pull her lips apart because she started whimpering in earnest, her hips bucking slightly. "Ah hae died an' gain tae heaven!"

Whatever Royce had found, Blaine knew it was serious because his burr came on thick and pure. Leaving the skirt to Royce, he reached underneath her shirt to cup her beautiful breasts. He didn't bother trying to remove her bra; he didn't think he could take that. Her breasts were heavy, filling his hands to overflowing. His hands kneaded them automatically, luxuriating in the feel of them. His finger pinched and rolled her nipples, loving every gasp, every tortured moan he induced.

"What did he find, baby?" Blaine whispered in her ear, nipping on her lope before licking away the tiny hurt. "Have you been a bad girl?"

"Yes."

It wasn't really more than a breath of air, but it was more than he expected. Her answer had come immediately, without obfuscation. Oh, hell yeah, he liked that.

"She has a piercin', reit thaur oan 'er bonnie min' bean."

Blaine's heart stopped at Royce's pronouncement. His hands froze, his breathing became labored. A pierced clit? Oh, the hidden depths of their little assistant.

"Is that true honey? Did you have your clit pierced?"

She nodded, gulping in air. Looking down Blaine saw Royce's head buried in her pussy, one of her legs wrapped around his shoulder. The sounds of vigorous lapping battled with the heavy

panting of all three. Blaine watched, completely entranced at Royce's bobbing head. The smell of arousal assaulted his senses with a fury. Soon he would be where Royce was now. He just had to wait a little while longer.

Never in his life had Royce tasted anything sweeter. Her honey flowed on his tongue in abundance, and he was anxious to catch every drop. He was addicted, but then, he had known he would be. His tongue couldn't decide which was more enticing, her hot, syrupy channel or the delightful little clit decorated with a small gold hoop with a golden ball in the center. As much as he loved wrapping his tongue around the tiny piece of jewelry and tugging, torturing her with pleasure, he had to return to core.

He couldn't seem to stop, loving the way she tasted, the way she came apart due to the ministrations of his tongue. He could sense Blaine doing his best to quiet her increasingly louder cries of joy. They had to take this home, but he couldn't pull himself way. Opening the lips of the prettiest chocolate covered pink pussy he had ever seen in his life he suckled her clit in his mouth like he was going down on a tiny dick, inserting two fingers inside her with deliberate slowness.

"Do you like that, baby? Do you like the way Royce licks you? Is he making you feel good?"

Blaine's whispered growls fueled Royce's passion. Even hotter was her soft breathless answers.

"Yes, yes, oh yes!" This is the way he wanted to hear his woman, their woman. All panting with passion, pliable and willing. Hell, if he could keep her naked in bed every second of every day he would.

"Are you coming again, baby? Are you going to drown him with that sweet, tangy honey?"

"Yes, please. I want to come!"

Did she really just ask for permission to come? Royce damn near came on himself. He had to bury himself inside her, like yesterday. He had to hear her scream, begging for release. He needed to take her to the highest peak; sandwiched between him and Blaine, so wild with blind, raw need she couldn't remember her own name. He doubled his sucking vigorously in her clit as his finger increased in speed pistoning in and out of her slick center. Twisting his fingers, curling them upward until he found the spongy little spot he was looking for.

Her hips gyrated against his face in response, pounding against him. She had a death grip on his hair, smashing him closer to exactly where he wanted to be. He welcomed the pain, he kept him from throwing her down and pounding into her like an animal.

Shite, he wanted this woman! He wanted her physically, emotionally, any damn way he would get her.

"That's it, baby. Come for us. Show us how beautiful you are when you come."

She came on Blaine's command. Feckin' perfect.

"We need to take her home, Blaine."

Blaine had managed to muffle her shrieks, but just barely. Royce didn't want anything standing between them and their woman. They needed to go where they could be completely free.

Thankfully, Blaine agreed. There were times when Royce despaired Blaine would never agree they needed to make a move to bind Sue Ellen to them. If they hadn't been walking behind her during that phone call, he shuddered to think that they might have lost her.

Well, come to think of it, they would have just followed her to wherever the hell she was from. No matter where she went, they would have found her.

Smoothing down her skirt, he rose and slowly buttoned her shirt. He was so damn hard he hurt. His cock was stretched so tightly, it felt it might burst its skin.

"Ellie, sweatheart, we ur gonnae gang haem an' finish whit we started, okay? Ur ye okay wi' 'at?" Sue Ellen just blinked, her big brown eyes staring uncomprehending, looking a thousand kinds of adorable. And he was way too wound up. She probably couldn't understand a word he said. Luckily Blaine was there to translate.

"He said we are taking you home, baby. Are you ready to go?"

"I...I...um, there is so much work I need to get done..." Her head swung between him and Blaine as if she had never seen them before. Her hair was slightly mussed, her face flushed, her lips kiss swollen, and she had never looked as hot to Royce as she did right now. "Why are you doing this? What kind of game are you two playing?"

He was afraid of this, he had warned Blaine she would think they were up to something. Nothing could be further from the truth, but that was something she was going to have to learn. Just like she was going to learn to trust them.

"Wood ye loch tae play a gam, loove? Ah ken lots ay games."

Damn, he really needed to watch the accent, but the woman drove him crazy.

"I have no idea what you're saying, but you can't possibly want me."

Royce went completely still. "And why is that, loove?" His temple began to throb, knowing in his gut what she would say but not wanting to hear it. Blaine had bet him they would have to

discipline her, but Royce had known better. She was naturally submissive, but in no possible way a push over.

"Well, look at you," Sue Ellen swung her hand pointing from his head to his feet. "Both of you!" She swung around and pointed and Blaine.

"And?" She was going to say it, and then he was going to spank her. He was going to bend her over the desk and make that luscious ass all nice and warm, and he was going to enjoy every second of it.

"Be careful what you say, sweetheart," Blaine muttered, stepping back and looking vastly amused.

The ass was smirking, waiting for it. Royce's hand started to itch in anticipation. Thank the fates it was Friday, because once they got her home Sue Ellen wouldn't be leaving the bedroom for a good little while.

"And look at me. I mean, I am passably pretty I guess. I am not saying I am a dog or anything."

Maybe he would go easy on her for that.

"But I'm not exactly a size six, you know," she unfortunately went on. "I'm chubby, I don't wear fashionable clothes, I don't like to mingle with high society types and I'm black!"

"Are you done?" Blaine asked for him. Royce was currently biting his tongue, waiting for the full force of her tirade.

"No, I'm not done!" Sue Ellen puffed up her chest, visible pulling herself together. "If this is some kind of sick ploy to get me from quitting, it won't work. I'm not stupid you know! I'm not your type, and I'm damn sure not some cheap slut you can just use and keep on a string! You don't need me, so why are you doing this? To teach me a lesson? Does it amuse you to play with the mind of the fat little black girl? Are you going to make me pay for daring to --"

"Enough!" Royce winced at the sound of his own roar. There was no doubt the entire office heard that one. "Blaine, woods ye please collect Ellie's things frae 'er desk an' hae th' motur brooght around? We will be doon in a minute."

"Will you be able to contain yourself if you do this here?" Blaine asked, collecting his coat off of the coat rack near the door.

"Nae a chance."

Chapter 4

Sex is not the answer. Sex is the question. "Yes" *is the answer.* ~ *Swami X*

Sue Ellen had no idea what was in store for her, but some innate sense of self preservation told her she was in deep trouble.

"Wait, Mr...er, Blaine!" She really didn't feel right calling him Mr. Hamilton. Not anymore, after he had his cock grinding against her ass and his hands all over her breasts. "You can't leave me in here with him."

"You wouldn't fare any better with me," Blaine gave her a kind of half smile that would have been really very endearing, if only she wasn't scared shitless.

"I wouldn't?" *And why the hell not*? She had only stated the facts. She had no idea what got Royce's panties all in a twist like that, but she had been completely upfront.

Blaine kissed her; a soft, slow meeting of lips without the tongue that had recently explored every inch of her mouth. It was the sweetest kiss she had ever experienced.

"I'll see you in the car, sweetheart."

Before she could think of anything to call him back, he was gone, the door clicking softly behind him. Royce was there, turning the lock as soon as the door closed. His eyes never left her as she stood there fidgeting, not sure what to do. She knew he was pissed, but about what she really couldn't say. Did he think she was rejecting him? Yeah, right. Like any woman would reject a man like Royce Hamilton.

"Look, I wasn't saying I'm not interested," Sue Ellen began as he moved from the door to his desk, his gaze never wavering from where she stood. "I just, um, don't want either of y'all to think that this seduction or whatever is going to keep me here. I am going home."

"Seduction or whatever," he whispered her words right back at her, pulling something that looked suspiciously like a paddle out the desk drawer.

Her eyes widened as he caressed the object and damned if it didn't send a shiver down her spine. What the hell was thinking of doing with that?

"Come haur loove."

Strange how her feet moved without her permission. Stranger how she was starting to clearly understand his thick Scottish burr. The madder he got, the thicker it got, and the sexier. Before she knew it, she was standing right beside him.

"Bend ower th' desk, hans flat oan th' surface an' dornt move."

She couldn't have heard him right. Her mouth opened, but not a sound emerged. He kept a paddle in his desk? And he was going to spank her with it? It was sick -- depraved, and she got wetter just thinking about it. It wasn't her who moved to comply with his instructions. She wasn't the woman who shivered with delicious anticipation. That wasn't her gasp as the twill of her skirt whispered

over her thighs, then her hips. It was her evil doppelganger, a bad twin she hadn't known existed.

The first swat stole her breath, burning at first, then melting into a shimmering kind of red hot pleasure. She could have sworn she heard him moan, just a little, but it was quickly drowned out by another swat, and then another.

"Ye will ne'er refer tae yerself as fat, e'en in yer thoughts. Dae ye kin me?"

"Yes." Was that her voice all breathless and sultry?

"Ye wulnae compaur yerself tae anither hen, onie hen. Kin?"

Another what? "Uh..."

SMACK!

An orgasm snuck up and knocked Sue Ellen over from out of nowhere. Her body shook as she fell forward, unable to stop it and unable to care.

"Aw, heel.."

She didn't have any time to process what he could have possible meant by the harsh groan. There was something incredibly thick pushing against her soaking pussy lips. It took a minute and at least an inch before she realized it was the bulbous head of his cock demanding entrance. She just didn't have the willpower to deny him, even if she wanted to. Truth was, she didn't want to. Her body was

on fire, satisfied yet needy all at once. She wanted it, she needed it now!

Her thighs spread, allowing him full and complete access.

"Och, aye loove. Jist like 'at!"

Yes, just like that. He was impossibly big, stretching out her inner walls, filling every millimeter. Her back arched, her hips rocking back on his massive pole. Nothing had ever crammed so full! Nothing more than incoherent whimpers passed her lips as he slid inside with inexorably slow deliberation. Damn, it was sweet!

"Please," "she managed to sob once he fully seated, unmoving.

His large hands caressed her burning behind, soothing as well as inflaming the areas so recently spanked so well. Who knew you could come from a spanking? And the rewards! Maybe she should have pissed him off sooner.

"Sae feckin' beautiful!"

Royce sounded so sincere, she almost believed him. Sue Ellen was not given to flights of fancy. No matter how she might dream or fantasize, she knew she was not beautiful. Besides, what woman wasn't beautiful to a man bent over his desk with his cock stuffed inside her? And when the hell was he going to move?

Taking matters into her own hands, she rocked backward, grinding into his crotch. His answering hiss only spurred her on, sliding forward until only the tip of his penis remained inside, and

then slamming back once more. She had worked both of their bodies into a nice little rhythm when the smacks started again, this time from his bare hand.

"Oh, dear heaven, yes!" she gasped, only incited to move faster. She pitched back and forth, banging that big, beautiful cock for all it's worth.

Finally, he joined her, grasping her hips and pounding her like a man possessed. Every smack against her rump sent tremors straight to her pussy, keeping her poised right there on the edge.

"Royce! Please, I need to...I need..."

Damn it all, what did she need?

It seemed he knew. Maneuvering ever so slightly, he changed angles so that he was hitting her spot on every down stroke. Her world literally began to spin. And all this time she thought the words written in romance novels pure bullshit. Nothing had prepared her for the shattering orgasm, washing over her entire body, making her gasp, then scream, then gasp again.

"Och och aye loove come aw ower me!" His rasping growl sounded in her ears right before he bit down on her arching neck. "Buck och aye, jist like 'at!"

She had no idea what that last part meant, but it sounded fantastic. Being crushed backward into his arms felt even better than he sounded, sending her over the edge all over again.

"Fuck!" Royce yelled right before she felt his body quake and his own release rush into her.

Even then he didn't allow her to melt into the desk, but held her close, whispering in a language that was far beyond her. Whereas before he spoke English with a thick burr, this was something altogether different, unlike anything she had ever heard. It was beautiful.

"We better get downstairs before Blaine comes back up looking for us."

The burr was gone, leaving a light lilt in its place.

Unfortunately, so was the sensual haze she had been under.

Sweet hell, what had she done? Her cheeks flamed as the reality of the situation slapped her in the face. She had just fucked one of her bosses on the desk, and loved every minute of it. There was no way the entire office hadn't heard what just went on in here. There was no way in the world she could face her coworkers! Her face flamed as she tried to scoot off his still hard cock. How the hell was it possible the man was still hard?

Just to be ornery, she was sure, he thrust into her again a few times before slipping out of her grasping passage.

"Stay there, I will get something to clean you up."

The order was really unnecessary. She wasn't so sure she could move. He disappeared into the private bathroom as she slumped, sprawled against her desk. Well this sealed it. She couldn't come back here now. Looked like she was moving sooner than she thought. She would just walk out and call in tomorrow. As soon as she got to her apartment she would call Charity and get her to send a ticket or a plane or whatever. She needed to get the hell out of New York and fast!

Royce returned in the middle of plotting, spreading her legs without so much of a by-your-leave and pressing a warm cloth against her sensitive flesh. She wasn't surprised he cleaned her so diligently, but the tongue that snaked out to give her one last lingering kiss on her nether lips shocked the hell out of her.

"Come on, baby. Blaine is waiting."

There was little point in arguing right now, not with everyone probably still listening in. She wouldn't be surprised if a couple of the nosier secretaries weren't right outside the office door. No, she would wait until they were downstairs, then just explain that she really had to go. She just had to think up a really good excuse.

Just as she suspected, no less than three people jumped back when Royce opened the door. One of them being Lianna, the bitter fifty-something office manager. The woman was a bitter old spinster with never a kind word for anyone. Before the day was through everyone in the building would know Sue Ellen was boffing the boss.

Shit! To make matters worse, Royce was right there, arm around her refusing to let her slide away.

"Sue Ellen I need to see you in my office," Lianna's nasally voice grated on her ears. She looked like she had just sucked a lemon; nonetheless there was a wicked gleam in her eyes.

Well the old bitch wasn't going to get a chance to fire her, she was going to quit. That is, she was, until Royce opened his big mouth.

"Sue Ellen is busy," he cut the old battle ax off at the pass.

"As the office manager, I must insist," Lianna pressed, her mouth all twisted like she smelled something bad.

Sue Ellen had to stifle a giggle that welled up at the pitiful sight she made. The smell of sex must be rolling off them in waves. She wondered if Lianna had ever experienced the smell on herself.

Royce didn't say a word, just stared at her in that silent, deadly way of his. As expected, Lianna backed off.

"Well, Sue Ellen I need to see as soon as you are...unbusy!" she huffed. "And make sure it's before the end of the day!"

"Sue Ellen will be out of the office for the rest of the day," Royce's tone was deadly in its tone. Lianna blinked rapidly before huffing away. Sue Ellen could have sworn she heard him mutter, "Bitter bitch," under his breath before turning to her. "Get your coat, love."

The other two secretaries gaped openly, but he ignored them. The blasted man actually took her overcoat from her and held it out for her to slip on before tucking her against his side and kissing her forehead. Just like that, in front of God and everybody. There was no way she could ever live this down. Even though she'd be long gone, this would be fodder for the rumor mill for weeks to come, an early Christmas gift to the easily scandalized.

She was going to kill him. Him *and* Blaine. Just as soon as she got outside, she was going to gut them using nothing more than her tongue. Maybe after they took her home, and they *would* be taking her home, right now.

Striding out of the office with too many curious eyes glued to the odd couple they must have made, Sue Ellen couldn't help but melt just a little against his tall, hard body. He felt so good! She would pull away in the elevator, maybe. But she was still going to kill him. Eventually.

Chapter 5

"Love is a matter of chemistry, but sex is a matter of physics." ~Author Unknown

Blaine almost went back upstairs to bring Royce and Sue Ellen down, but then thought the better of it. Seeing Royce giving the lovely Ms. Coleman the spanking she so richly deserved would be too much for him. There would be no way he could have kept his hands off of her, not after wanting her, craving her for so long. Hell, he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt Royce hadn't been able to keep it at a simple spanking. He would bet his last dollar Royce had sank his cock so deep inside Sue Ellen, she would feel it in her throat.

With a smothered groan, Blaine adjusted his hard on straining against his tailored slacks. He hoped like hell Royce had been able to keep it down to a dull roar for her sake. Had he been there, there wouldn't be a doubt as to what was going on behind the locked office door. The very same thing that would be going on in the back seat of the limo. It was a four hour drive to the country estate, far enough away from curious prying eyes, plus incredibly difficult to get away should she get cold feet and tried to flee.

Of course, Blaine intended on making damned sure there wasn't cold spot left anywhere on her body. The conversation they had overheard shook him as much as it reinforced his absolute certainty, Sue Ellen Coleman was the perfect woman for him and Royce, and he would do everything in his power and beyond to make sure she knew that.

Blaine had almost reached the edge of his patience when the two emerged from the Wall Street office building. Blowing out a pent up breath, he slid over to make room, his hands sweating in anticipation.

Damn, he wanted her! His mouth watered at the thought of her taste. Would she be sweet or spicy, or perhaps a little bit of both? He chomping at the bit to find out. Tasting her would not only whet his growing appetite, it would also allow them to distract her until they made it out of the city. Blaine didn't want to kidnap an unwilling woman. He had no stomach for force. He only needed enough time to get Sue Ellen to let loose that passion he had seen burning in her eyes when she thought no one was looking. Instead of her tongue wetting those delectable full lips of hers when she stared at either himself or Royce covertly, he wanted those lips wrapped around his cock, that tongue swirling the sensitive head.

Perhaps thinking too hard about the ride ahead had been a bad idea because he damn near came on himself as soon as Sue Ellen slipped into the waiting vehicle. There was a faint flush on her dark cheeks, her eyes sparkled with some new inner fire. And she didn't have a clue how fucking alluring she was.

"Well, glad to see you two could make it," he commented dryly, lifting a brow at Royce as he followed Sue Ellen into the car.

"Can you really blame me?" Royce's quick reply with was completely without sarcasm, which was unusual for his Scottish friend.

As Royce leaned back in the seat across from where he sat, Blaine felt a twinge of envy. *Lucky bastard*. His large frame was free from the tension riding high on Blaine just now. He almost looked...stated. Almost.

"Enjoy your spanking sweetheart?" Blaine teased as Sue Ellen blushed a dark plum.

What a wet dream come to life; shy innocence with an innate sensuality that begged to be released. His cock jumped in agreement. She was all crammed in the corner, as if the paltry distance would keep him away from her.

"Tell me sweetheart, did Royce explain to you why you had to be disciplined like that?" Blaine knew good and damned well Royce was too far gone to explain much of anything completely, which meant she would have to be disciplined again. This time, he would make sure she understood why she was being punished, while punishing her once again of course.

"Something about calling myself fat?" Sue Ellen squeaked, trying like hell to become one with the leather seat.

Blaine gave her a wolfish grin, fingering the heavy coat she clutched together. Like that would keep him out.

"Is that all?" he pushed.

Just as he thought. Even if Royce had managed to explain much, chances were she hadn't been able to understand his friend's thick Scottish burr. It tended to get thicker the more excited Royce got. Sue Ellen would learn to understand it time. As for now, Blaine intended to use her confusion for all it was worth.

"I..uh, couldn't really understand...I mean, I think that's it. Oh! And comparing myself to hens?"

She was so adorable when she was all bewildered like that. A man with less purpose would have qualms about what he was about to do, unlike Blaine who felt completely justified. This game was for keeps.

"Hens? Did you compare yourself to a chicken sweetheart?"

"What? No, I don't think so. I mean," a fierce frown marred her otherwise smooth face as the Sue Ellen Blaine knew and fell in love with resurfaced, replacing the scared, confused woman that had found herself splayed over a desk. "How the hell am I supposed to know? It isn't like I speak...whatever the hell Mr. Hamilton was speaking!"

"Mr. Hamilton?" Blaine quirked a brow, a sardonic smile playing at his lips. "Surely you two have gotten a little more, shall we say intimate? His name is Royce, sweetheart. And I am Blaine."

Sue Ellen's reaction was exactly what he had planned. Releasing the death grip she had on her coat, she narrowed her eyes getting right up in his face.

"What. Ever." She poked her finger right in his chest as she said it. "I couldn't understand a damn word he was saying, so how the hell am I supposed to know what 'lesson'," using finger quotes to enunciate her meaning she leaned forward, her eyes spitting fire, "I am supposed to freakin' learn! And now that I think about it, where the hell does either of you get off trying to teach me a damn thing? I am a grown ass woman!"

"Yeah, baby you are at that," Blaine let his eyes sweep over the parts of her conservative outfit he could see poking out of the now gaping coat with purpose. He delighted in the hardening of her nipples as his tongue swept over his lips. He watched her pulse jump in base of her throat. Her reaction to him had him wanting to bay at the moon.

"Take me home, now!" Sue Ellen raged without raising her voice. Her chest heaved with every indignant breath. "And if you think I am going back to that office, after...after..." waving her hand in Royce's general direction, but refusing to look at him, Blaine could tell some of her embarrassment was back, but it didn't get in the way of her righteous indignation. "After that man accosted me, you are

sadly mistaken. Find yourself a new executive assistant, mister. I refused to be toyed with!"

Blaine gasped in mock surprise. Oh, this was more fun than he could ever remember having. Thankfully, Royce stayed silent. He didn't think her anger would last in the face of his friend's deep burr. Especially considering whatever the hell had went on up in the office.

"Not even a little?" Blaine purred. "And we don't want a new assistant."

"I don't give a damn what you want!" she exploded.

"Are you sure about that, baby?"

He was close enough to feel her body heat. In her anger, waves of warmth radiated from her body. She hadn't noticed he was that close, yet. Too bad it was too late for retreat. Keeping his hands low so as not to startle her, he gently tugged the deplorably old fashioned shirt from her skirt with infinite slowness. His hands were working on the buttons before she was any the wiser.

"Hell, yes, I'm sure...Oh!"

Sweet success. Her shirt was fully open, his hands full of those luscious breasts. Either she was too shocked to try to pull away, or she decided she liked the way he rolled her nipples between his thumb and forefinger.

"I just don't think we can manage without you, Sue Ellen," Blaine purred, sliding his body flush with hers. Her head fell back, exposing her lovely neck for exploration with his teeth and tongue. Tiny moans escaped her as he continued his gentle assault on her breasts, alternatively cupping their wonderfully heavy weight and manipulating her nipples. When he pinched down a little harder, she gasped, arching her back, pressing the mountains of joy more fully into his hands.

Shit, she was magnificent! So perfectly responsive. His mouth moved down to suckle her breast through her bra as his other hand moved between her thighs, gently opening her legs for him. Her smooth mound made him groan in time with hers. Feeling the ring against her clit had his mind reeling. He had to taste the sweetness for himself!

"You weren't wearing panties today, were you sweetheart?" he growled, remembering no barrier when he and Royce first touched her.

"No."

Heaven have mercy, that breathless little sigh of answer stroked a man right to his balls and back!

"Why was that, sweetheart?"

He heard Royce lean forward in the opposite seat, every bit as anxious to hear her reply as he was. He pulled gently at her piercing as he waited for her answer, wanting to hear her arousal in her voice, needing to hear that she wanted him as badly as he wanted her.

"I...Oh, shit!" She gasped, gulping in air as she struggled to come up with the words. So fucking sexy! "Sometimes, I like to...to...masturbate in...in your office when you step away."

"Shit!" Royce gasped, the sound of his zipper being ripped down echoing in the car.

Blaine felt like he was going to die. Surely his heart couldn't take much more of this. Determined, he clinched his jaw and forged ahead.

"Why would you do that, baby? Who are thinking about when you touch yourself?"

It took a nothing short than a minor miracle to get his zipper down and free his openly weeping cock. So much for leisurely foreplay. There was no way he was going to make it without being buried inside her heat. He knew the answer, but needed to hear her say it.

"You," she opened her clear, deep brown eyes and stared right down to his very soul. "And Royce."

With quickness and dexterity Blaine never knew he possessed, he lifted her and seated her on his cock before she finished her answer. Thankfully she was wet and ready, sliding down his full length with minimum difficulty.

She was so fantastically tight, Blaine had to stay completely still for fear of coming far, far too soon. Once he had her fully seated facing Royce, he busied himself divesting her of her coat and shirt. To take off her skirt would mean leaving her blazing snugness, and there was no way in hell that was happening.

"Please, Blaine," Sue Ellen pleaded, squirming on his cock looking for relief.

He tried to hold her still, knowing that if he didn't manage to calm down somewhat, it would be a quick, hard ride. Royce dropping to his knees in front of her splayed legs wasn't helping matters any. He saw Royce's tongue snake out. He saw that same tongue snagging the clit ring, but nothing on earth could have prepared him for the way her pussy jumped, clamping down on his cock and chocking the crap out of it.

"Aw, hell!"

Blaine's hips slammed upward despite his every effort to stay as still as possible until he could regain some semblance of control. When she moved, accepting all of him, he was lost. Seizing her hips and hanging on for dear life, he surged inside her welcoming vise over and over, watching in absolute fascination as Royce tortured her little nubbin, feeding off her increasing cries. Even with the privacy window up, there was no doubt the driver could hear them.

All thoughts of punishment flew out the window as Blaine lost himself inside her. She was intoxicating, the way her hips rode his pounding cock was beyond any pleasure he had ever known. Knowing he was with the woman he and Royce would spend the rest of their lives pleasuring only added to the painful ecstasy. He had no idea what Royce was doing to her with his tongue, but suddenly the walls of her pussy clamped down on his cock in a death grip. Blaine could feel every spasm as her body seize, her lips open in a wordless scream. It was so fucking beautiful he damn near wanted to cry. He erupted with a force he had never known before, helpless against the insistent suckling of her demanding channel. His and Royce's days as bachelors were over; he knew it in this second more than ever. He was addicted; he knew it -- felt it in his bones. This was it for him forever.

Chapter 6

Love takes off masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within.

~lames A. Baldwin

Sue Ellen didn't want to open her eyes. She had been pretending to be a sleep for some time, when Blaine kissed her brow before leaving the large bed in which she now cowered in, afraid to open her eyes. Royce was still on the other side of her. He wasn't asleep either, though he wasn't pretending. Something told her he knew she wasn't sleeping, but for now he was content to let her keep up the pretense.

It was incredibly hard to lie completely still while Royce smoothed his large hands over her back and hips. He seemed fascinated with all of her many hills and valleys. He and his partner in crime definitely had a thing for big girls. The little episode last night in the office and in the limousine was only the beginning. She supposed the office was to shock her into compliance, while the limo ride was to keep her from noticing they were headed out of the city. Both worked like a charm. By the time they pulled up to the vast country estate wherever the hell they were, her body was one

pulsating nerve ending, and it only got worse once they brought her to the bedroom.

They made love to her so thoroughly, she was more than a little sore this morning. First, they drew her a bath, even providing a shower cap for her hair. Figures these two would know about black women and getting their hair wet. After bathing every conceivable inch of her person, she was lotioned and placed in the center of the biggest bed she had ever seen in her life. That was when the real fun began.

Sue Ellen shivered remembering the way Blaine feasted on her poor little pussy for what seemed like hours, actually growling when Royce finally managed to pry his mouth away. She had been licked, sucked, kissed and even lightly bitten from head to toe. Then the real fun began. Tying her hands above her head firmly to the headboard, they took turns tormenting her; spanking her right on the pussy! And damned if she hadn't loved every minute of it. They made her beg, plead, they drove her to the brink of insanity. She actually began to threaten them bodily harm if they didn't take her. And boy did they take her. There wasn't an orifice left on her body that hadn't been possessed by the dynamic duo with her whole hearted and enthusiastic approval. There was no way she could face them in the harsh light of day.

Blaine and Royce were beyond strange. Here were two of the most gorgeous men she had ever laid eyes on, and they not only wanted her, they seemed to be possessed by some fierce desire Sue Ellen had never even heard of before. She wondered if Charity's life was like this, being married to two men and all. How did her cousin survive it? They had lain bare her every insecurity and busted that baby wide open, not allowing her to hide anything about herself or her desires. She had never felt so raw, so exposed before in her life.

She had never even had sex with the lights on before. That wasn't really saying a whole hell of a lot; she had only had sex three times before yesterday. Man, oh man, had she made up for lost time.

"Are you going to pretend to be asleep all day?" Royce's voice whispered seductively in her ear.

The man's voice should be illegal. When he was all excited, his burr got so thick she could barely understand it. This morning, it was light, but none the less deadly.

"No," her reply was muffled by the pillow which made a perfect place to hide her flaming face.

"Ellie, baby, aren't you even going to kiss me good morning? I am felling awfully neglected here."

Yeah, right. As if!

"Can I go home now?" Sue Ellen screwed up the courage to face him and wished like hell she hadn't.

The man's green eyes twinkled with some secret joke to which only he had the punch line. His smile was just plain devilish. Her heart thumped loudly against her ribs as she just gaped at him. How could anyone look that damn delicious when they first woke up? It just wasn't right.

"And where is it you are calling home now, Ellie?" Suddenly the laughter left his eyes as he searched her face.

She couldn't meet his eyes. Guilt assailed her as considered the question. Where was home indeed? It wasn't here in New York, if they were still in New York that was. It hadn't been Miccosukee for quite some time. So where was it she belonged?

Wherever that was, it wasn't with these two men. Despite driving her body to heights she hadn't even known existed, they were way outside her league. Plus, men didn't marry women they shared with their buddies, well accept for Charity's husbands that is.

"Why do you let people think you and Blaine are brothers?" she asked changing the subject.

That threw him, allowing her to move back a little, away from temptation. She needed to get her bearings and find a line of attack. She needed to get back to her apartment to call Charity so she could get the hell out of here. But how? She didn't even know where the hell *here* was!

"It's easier," Royce admitted, reaching out to play with her hair. He let his fingers trail from toying with a lock to her cheek.

She couldn't allow him to stroke her like that. It got her all discombobulated. She needed to keep her wits about her.

"Are you gay? Or bisexual or something? Is that why you share women?"

He didn't fall for the bait. Instead of getting angry, he guffawed. A full throated belly laugh.

"No little one, neither Blaine nor I are bisexual...Or gay. We share because," suddenly becoming thoughtful he plopped down the pillow, pulling her the crook of his arms. Damn him! "Well, I can't really explain it. It is kind of like we are two parts of a whole. We complete each other. I guess we are brothers really. Something like spiritual twins born to completely different parents."

Like Cassian and Ashton, at least the way Charity described her husbands. She would love to say she didn't get it, but she did. Having witnessed her cousin's husbands first hand, she could totally see how they complemented one another. It was kind of like a symbiotic relationship without being so obviously needed. She supposed weirder crap has happened.

"I am not little in any way," she snapped, unable to say anything else.

"I know you aren't talking down about yourself again," Blaine suddenly appeared carrying a tray laden with things that smelled absolutely delectable.

Sue Ellen's stomach growled despite her best efforts to squash her hunger pains.

"Looks like I got here just in time," he smiled setting the tray on the table by the bed and kissing her. "Morning, Beautiful."

That's it, she had had enough!

"Would you two stop doing that? It is really starting to piss me off!" she thundered, jumping out of the bed and actually stomping her foot.

"Doing what?" Blaine semed genuinely confused, pissing her off even more. As if they didn't freaking know!

"Calling me beautiful! I am not beautiful, damn it! Don't you think I know that? I am average, overweight and average. You don't have to bring me here and fuck me just to get me to stay, you could have asked, or better yet, given me a raise with the rise in position. But don't call me beautiful when we all know I am not!" She stomped her foot again foe emphasis, just because.

She really didn't mean to that. It made her look childish. And oh crap! She was naked a jaybird! How the hell had she managed to forget that little detail? Crossing her arms over her front she looked futilely around to try to find something, anything to cover her many, many extra curves.

"What are you doing?" Blaine asked, his light mood gone.

Royce didn't say a word; he just fixed her with one of those damned stares of his, all dark and intense. Damn, it was sexy.

No, no, no! She wasn't going to allow herself to get all hot and bothered by them again. Too bad it was too late.

"I need a shirt or robe or something," she muttered, trying her damnedest not to anticipate what her punishment might be for that little outburst.

Wait, when the hell had she started thinking in terms of punishment when it came to her bosses? And they were her bosses, last night aside.

"Pit yer hans doon, Ellie."

All hell, Royce's accent was out in full force. She had wanted to piss him off hadn't she? Wasn't that her plan? So why was her heart speeding double time and her pussy suddenly sodden?

"Get on the bed, Sue Ellen," Blaine instructed in a voice brooking no argument. "Lay flat on your back with your arms above your head."

It was a ridiculous command. It was equally ridiculous that she moved to obey without thinking about it. Only when Royce's hands

gripped hers, keeping them firmly in place did she want to kick herself.

Stupid, stupid, stupid.

She so totally should have used their anger to get them to send her home. Instead she was stuck awaiting some sexual torment, and she would love every minute of it damn their hides! Now, here she lay, her legs spread wide open...When had she opened her thighs?

Blaine was looking at her *down there* with such intensity she was fascinated by the display of emotions that marched across his face. There was longing, determination, and something deeper she couldn't name. She saw his hands move, saw it swinging, but it didn't connect in her brain that he would hit her there until she felt the sting against her clit, spreading a sizzling burn radiating from her very core, melting her inside and sparking a dark need that only allowed a desperate moan to slip past her lips. Her hips lifted as if begging for another. She could feel her juices flowing freely as Blaine delivered three more sharp, short smacks before plunging two fingers deep inside, stroking her g-spot just right.

"Och aye, ellie. Come fur us. Shaw us hoo bonnie ye ur when ye come," Royce whispered harshly in her ear, biting her lope before his wicked mouth traveled downward to her begging nipples. "I loove th' way ye come."

Well Royce was definitely excited given how thick his accent had become. All rough and low like that; it was just served to stroke her as surely as Blaine's fingers were now doing. Sue Ellen was helpless to hold on, coming not once, but twice as they played her body like a finely tuned instrument.

"Do you know why you were punished, Sue Ellen?" Blaine rasped, kissing her inner thigh.

Oh, damn but she needed more! She needed either man to take her hard and fast right now! She might have just come, but she needed a real completion. She needed a thick, hard cock possessing her in the most elemental way. She ached for it, burned for it.

"Because I said I wasn't beautiful?" She really didn't have the time or patience to play games. She knew exactly what set them off, even if she didn't understand it. Chubby chasers, they had to be.

"That's a guid lassie. come haur love."

She hadn't noticed Royce had let go of the hold on her hands until she moved to climb on top of him. She had probably kept her arms "in position" since the beginning of her punishment. She couldn't bring herself to care just now. She was in desperate need. She wanted to cry in relief when finally she had Royce's hard, throbbing tool right where she needed him. She sank down on him slowly, relishing every inch that stretched her unbelievably full.

When she tried to move, however, Royce's large hands help her tightly.

"Dornt move, nae yit!" Beads of sweat formed on Royce's brow, his jaw clinched tight.

Good. It was gratifying to know he was suffering as much as she was. Damn it all, she needed to move!

Then she felt it, something cold and wet against the puckered rosette of her bottom. There had been some anal play last night, but just a finger or two. Blaine and Royce both had promised they would take her there, but she hadn't really believed them. Or maybe she had wanted it? She knew this wouldn't be just a couple of fingers as she rode Royce to glory. She also knew also she had to do was object to stop it. Still, she said nothing.

She wanted this, even if she was terrified they would split her apart. It didn't really make sense, seeing as Sue Ellen still believed this was some kind of manipulation instead of genuine attraction, at least a small part of her did. It was just too wild to think otherwise. Yet, she wanted to experience this wildly forbidden act with the two of them just once.

"Relax, sweetheart," Blaine grunted. She could feel the bulbous head of his cock seeking entrance, her body seizing on instinct.

Royce assisted without a word, pulling her forward to kiss her so senseless, she didn't have the presence of mind to worry about what Blaine was doing behind her.

"Aw, fuck! So tight!"

Sue Ellen felt the stinging burn as Blaine finally made his way inside her inner ring. The scald receded slowly as he slid with infinite care deeper inside. She was beyond packed. She didn't think her body could take anymore, until they began to move.

Three harsh cries melded together as Royce and Blaine began their dance, perfectly coordinated, exquisitely timed. Any discomfort she had felt before was long gone. Her body was one mass of sensations, one after another blending together to drive her higher and higher. Royce thrust deep inside her womb, hitting her g-spot on every stroke, while Blaine stoked a forbidden fire, making her hotter than she had ever been. Combined they were forcing her to feel ecstasy so pleasurably intense, it bordered on pain. She was panting, straining to reach that ultimate goal. Her clit mashed against Royce's groin every time Blaine bottomed out, adding fuel to her already out of control fire.

"Oh, shit, I can't...I can't..." She didn't know.

"Yes you can, baby," Blaine growled, grasping her hips to force her down more fully on Royce's rock hard cock before pulling her back onto his own. "Come for us, baby. Come now!" Sue Ellen exploded from within, her body flying apart at the seams. She heard her voice scream, but it sounded far, far away. She heard Royce and Blaine's combined cried, felt the rush of their own releases, but she couldn't stop! One explosion built up to another, her hips jerked on their own, milking both men for all they were worth before her world faded to black.

Chapter 7

The woman who runs will never lack followers. ~ Ashley Dukes

Sue Ellen was up to something. Over the weekend, another desk had been added to the executive office, one for Sue Ellen. Blaine would be marrying her, just because they would spend most of their

time here in the U.S. Royce was okay with that, though he would need an heir eventually. He would have to adopt his own child he supposed, for the sake of his hereditary title.

Would Sue Ellen be pissed to learn he was actually an Earl? Most women would love it. Sue Ellen was so unlike other women though. She wouldn't be turned on by a title or by wealth. That was one of the many things he loved about her.

"Stop staring at me," the woman in question growled as she pretended to go over spreadsheets.

Royce knew she was pretending because she had yet to turn the page of the massive report in her desk.

Sighing she threw down the pen she had a death grip on and glared at him.

"And why this so-called promotion when I am only doing the same things I was doing as your executive assistant?"

"Have you ever considered that we never intended for you to be just an executive assistant?" Blaine challenged.

The fact that with her promotion to be the assistant to the CEO and the CFO of Hamilton & Associates did not come with the raise they had specifically instructed pissed both men off to no end. There was no doubt the bitter Lianna was behind it. She was the one to submit Sue Ellen's paperwork to Human Resources. She would have typed up the job description as well as the salary and benefit

requirements. He and Blaine had set up a meeting this morning with Human Resources and Lianna, determined to get to the bottom of this and other issues. It seemed whoever Lianna didn't like was getting the shaft on the compensation department. No wonder they kept losing all their best workers. Blaine's father had obviously ran a very lax operation. That would end now, with Sue Ellen as their new Director of Operations.

Not that she would readily accept the position. Despite their best efforts this weekend, Sue Ellen still had it in her head they were seducing her to stay on the job. It was a ridiculous idea, but one the idea had taken root in that fertile brain of hers, she refused to let it go. As if they couldn't find a qualified executive assistant *and* a willing mistress anywhere! Nothing they said or did seemed to get through to her that she was much more to both of them than a convenient piece of ass.

For some reason, when Sue Ellen looked in the mirror, she didn't see the vibrant, intelligent, sexy woman she was. It burned Royce to no end that she had no clue how desirable she really was. She spurned compliments, denigrated her own charms and seemed content to watch life pass her by. That would never do.

As soon as he and Blaine left this office for their meeting, Sue Ellen would run. Both men knew it, and both were prepared for it. What she didn't seem to realize was wherever she ran, they would

follow until they convinced their little vixen she was the only woman for them.

Sue Ellen waited a full ten minutes after Blaine and Royce left for their meeting before she bolted.

It had been hard enough to walk in this morning, her face literally on fire by all the speculating covert looks from her coworkers as the Dynamic Dastardly Duo escorted her between them to their office. She couldn't even say she was surprised to find all her things moved to a desk inside their office. The damn room was certainly large enough, and since her stupid phone call to Charity last Friday, they hadn't let her out of their sight.

This was her one and only chance, she had to take it. There was no way she could work here now, even she wanted to. Everyone knew what had happened between her and Royce, and many probably suspected what happened over the weekend. It wasn't like either of the two men had done a thing to disabuse anyone of the notion she was sleeping with them. It was humiliating!

Once she made it outside the building, Sue Ellen paused and considered her options. She couldn't go back to her place. That would be the first place they looked for her. She couldn't afford a plane

ticket right now, payday was this coming Friday. That left one option, the bus.

She detested taking long bus trips. The people were often rude, smelly, and sometimes unsavory. There was no help for it. It was bad enough she was showing up on her cousins door a week before Christmas hat in hand with nothing but the clothes in her back, she couldn't ask Charity to pay for her escape.

Would they follow her? Although the thought sent a thrill racing down her spine, her logical side doubted it. It was stupid to even contemplate it really. They were two virile, scrumptious, and sinfully rich men. The thing with her had probably been a lark; something to amuse them. Why the hell would either of them want their overweight secretary beyond anything more than an amusing conquest?

Sue Ellen had seen the looks not only from women in the office, but clients and wives of clients. Most of the women she had seen come on to her bosses -- former bosses -- were simply stunning, with tall willowy bodies and innate confidence, not to mention large bank accounts that allowed them to move in the same circles. Sue Ellen had nothing to offer them.

She had no idea why they had chosen to play with her like they had. It was cruel, and she had never before seen cruelty in their actions. Maybe they had been hiding it from her all this time. Maybe

they were dark, evil men who got off on other peoples pain. Besides seducing her to stay on at the firm; that was the only thing she could think of to explain the past weekend.

Or maybe they had wanted to build her confidence enough to get her to want to stick it out in New York. That would make more sense in a way, right?

Or maybe you are a silly, scared fool.

Tears she had been holding back traced down her cheeks as she stared out at the bleak winter scenery. Luckily, there weren't many passengers on the bus she had finally talked herself into getting on. She had the back seat all to herself, a perfect time and place to let the pain she had been ruthlessly suppressing spill out and wash through her.

Why? Why had they done this to her? She just didn't understand it. There had never been any indication either Royce or Blaine was into her before now.

Yes, there had. The time you were sick and Blaine called four times a day demanding to know what you were taking and if you had anyone to care for you. She had lied then, deeply ashamed she didn't have so much of a close girlfriend to come over to ask how she was. She had thought it nice her boss had taken an interest in her welfare, but at the same time, convinced he was more concerned about when she would be back to work.

And the time Royce stared down Lianna when she tried to push of others' work on you? At the time, she had thought Royce was merely being selfish, unwilling to share his dedicated little busy bee worker. He hadn't said much, but then Royce never did, but he had stared the old bat down, refusing to allow her to place more of the workload on Sue Ellen.

Now that she thought about it, there had been countless little things they had done, things she had brushed off or explained away. Like the way they held out her chair for her, or the way they took her coat when she first got to the office, or the time they had presented her with a brand new state of the art Blackberry but had never once called her after hours with demands or instructions. She had received a massive bouquet of flowers on her birthday, her only present. They always sent a car for her so she wouldn't have to take the subway.

Thoughts ran through her mind in a jumble, increasing her confusion. Did they really like her? Desire her? Was it a game? And if they did really want her, why? What did she have to offer either of them? And what was it with the women in her family and the two guy thing anyway? Did her family suffer from some weird psychological disorder that made them crave two men at the same time? And what the hell was up with the men? Was there something in the water in Europe?

By the time the bus pulled into the Tallahassee station, Sue Ellen was left with more questions than answers. She had either left a really bad situation before it became disastrous, or she had made the worse mistake of her life. Her body ached with longing. It seemed her newly awakened libido decided she was making a mistake, but what about her heart? It had taken a Herculean feat not to let Royce and Blaine's smooth words convince her to let down her guard. So why did she feel as though her heart had been pierced whenever she told herself she had done the right thing to run? They couldn't care for her; it was just too outlandish to be true. She had to crush the urge to run back to New York, back to her too-sexy-for-their-own-good bosses. Thoroughly confused and feeling defeated, Sue Ellen called her cousin to pick her up.

Chapter 8

A kiss is a lovely trick designed by nature to stop speech when words become superfluous. ~ Ingrid Bergman

"Royce Hamilton is what?!" Charity cast surreptitious glances into the family den where her cousin stared listless out of the window.

The closer it got to Christmas, the more despondent Sue Ellen became, sometimes spending all day in bed without eating or drinking a thing. It had taken Charity no less than an hour to coax her cousin out of bed today, claiming she needed her help for last minute Christmas preparations. On the Christmas Eve, there wasn't a hell of a lot to be done; Cassian and Ashton had hired a cook when she announced her pregnancy. All the presents where wrapped and under the tree. Other than Sue Ellen, there wouldn't be anyone else over. Yet, Sue Ellen had fallen for it, crawling out of her bed and showering for Charity's sake.

The truth was, Royce and Blaine Hamilton would be here at some point today to collect their woman. Apparently, Royce knew Cassian and Ashton from Eton and had vouched for him. Still, Charity had demanded to talk to them herself as to their intentions toward her cousin. While what they had told her boiled her blood, it didn't really surprise her.

Sue Ellen really *did* had a hard time believing in herself, so it would only make sense she had an equally hard time believing someone would be into her just for her. Sue Ellen had been a chubby child, and all too often their aunts and uncles would make derogatory comments about her weight or her looks in general. Sue Ellen didn't realize all the baby fat that had been the bane of her existence as a child had developed into the kind of voluptuousness women paid good money to achieve. While she was sweet and kind,

Sue Ellen was no push over. She was smart a whip and was quick to stand up for anyone. Anyone except herself, that was.

By the end of the conversation, Charity had become a more than willing accomplice to help the Hamilton men win her cousin's heart. It was more than apparent Sue Ellen had fallen for them; she just needed a little push in the right direction.

"He's an Earl," Cassian whispered back. "You know, like Ashton?"

"I know what an Earl is nerd," Charity punched her husband playfully. "I just don't understand how he could be and his brother is an American."

"They're not brothers, not even related. They simply share the same last name. It amuses them to let people think they're brothers, and Blaine's father, more or less, follows his son's lead."

"Incompetent old fool," Charity muttered. From what Sue Ellen had told her, the elder Hamilton had run his company in the ground. If it hadn't been for his inherited billions, he would have lost his shirt long ago. It was a damn good thing Blaine had gotten his business acumen from his grandfather. His father was an idiot.

"Precisely," Cassian agreed. "Can you imagine what it must have been like for Blaine to have been raised by a man with the intelligence of a five year old? He and Royce have been inseparable since college, having come from similar backgrounds. Royce's father was equally, er, challenged in the mental department."

"Is that why they share, like you and Ashton?" her husbands had explained their need to share, but Charity hadn't really understood. It didn't really matter much, as long as their love flourished.

"I haven't the foggiest," Cassian responded drily. "I wouldn't dream to ask. What matters is that your cousin is happy and well loved, right? It will be up to her to understand what drives them." Cassian know his and Ashton's own wife didn't really understand the bond between her two heterosexual husbands, but accepted it full heartedly. "Or not," he added with a smile.

"Well, they better take care of her," Charity declared firmly. "Or they will have me to deal with!"

Blaine felt as if his stomach was tied in knots. He had wanted to come down here as soon as Sue Ellen had disappeared, but Royce's argument that she needed this had swayed him. They had come on rather strong, but damn it, he had been desperate! For Sue Ellen to leave never know how they felt about her was unacceptable. Maybe now that she had time to run things over in her mind she would give them a chance.

"Do you think she will give us a chance this time?" he asked Royce for what had to be the hundredth time since they left New York

"All we can do is try," Royce's reply didn't sound encouraging.

"Maybe we should have called."

Why the hell was the drive from the airport to wherever the heck this Miccosukee place was taking so long? Maybe they should have rented a car and asked for directions. Surely they could have gotten there faster.

"Fretting won't get us there any sooner," Royce commented drily, raising an aristocratic brow at Blaine's obvious agitation. "Nor will it persuade Ellie to marry us."

"Marry you," Blaine muttered.

Royce sighed heavily. Blaine knew he was being an ass, but he couldn't help himself. It had been his idea after all to have Sue Ellen official marry Royce. Originally, the plan had been for Blaine to marry her, but if the vicious gossip surrounding her disappearance from the office was any indication, the she would need the power Royce's title afforded her. Becoming a Countess would give her cache in New York society circles. Blaine was the first to admit, his fellow countrymen were funny like that. Give a person a title and suddenly they could do no wrong, perhaps because it was such a foreign concept.

It didn't stop him from being a little bitter. He didn't begrudge Sue Ellen the extra security, nor his friend the joy of being legally married to her, but he had always thought he would be the one to slip the ring on her finger. It didn't matter as much as having her love, of course, but he would be lying to himself if he didn't admit he was sad that it wouldn't be his name beside hers on the marriage certificate.

"I know how you feel," Royce's deep voice broke through Blaine's meandering thoughts. "I felt the same way once upon a time."

"Yeah, I guess you did," Blaine had never considered how their original plans might have made Royce feel.

They both loved Sue Ellen, of course Royce had felt just a little jealous that it had been Blaine who they had originally believed would marry her.

Of course, all of their planning would come to naught if she wouldn't have them. Thank the Fates Sue Ellen's cousin just happened to be married to not one but two men they knew well. It was nothing short of miraculous that Sue Ellen had already been exposed to a successful ménage relationship. It wouldn't seem so incredibly unbelievable to her now. Hopefully anyway.

"I just hope we don't fuck this up," Blaine relaxed as best he could against the leather seats of the limousine.

Royce couldn't agree more. "We just have to make sure we don't.

What was she going to do with the rest of her life? Sue Ellen knew she couldn't stay here at Charity's very long. Not that Cassian and Ashton weren't nice enough guys. The problem was they were just *too* perfect. Watching the way they acted with her very pregnant cousin made Sue Ellen's heart yearn for things that could never be hers. They reminded her way too much of Blaine and Royce.

Not that Blaine and Royce was anything like Charity's husbands. Where Cassian and Ashton were sweet and deferential to their wife, Royce and Blaine had been far more forceful. Kind of raw alpha types. Sue Ellen might have envied Charity's happiness, but she preferred to be excited by the Dynamic Disastrous Duo's dominant sensuality than completely pampered and romanced. Not that her one passion filled weekend hadn't had a little pampering and romancing. It had, but it had only enhanced the raw, feverish passion that was Royce and Blaine Hamilton.

You have completely lost your mind, Sue Ellen Coleman.

She had been here for a week and half and heard nothing from her weekend lovers. She guessed they weren't that interested after all. A little piece of her died every day that she heard nothing. Not that she had made it easy. Her Blackberry had remained off since leaving the city. She would have to ship it back, but just having it made her feel a little bit closer to both men. Stupid as it may be, she had lost a little of herself to each man.

Sometimes at night she could swear she heard the deep burr of Royce's accent when he was all hot and bothered; either from passion or from anger, his burr was sonorous and alluring, sluicing over her body with its deep, dark heat. It would be followed by Blaine's sardonic wit, only his intonation was always irreverent, a perfect complement to Royce's seriousness. When she opened her eyes and realized she was alone, she cried.

When it came right down to the bones of the matter, Sue Ellen still had no idea why Blaine and Royce seduced her. It confused her as much as it scared her. Now she was lonely and throbbing, needing what she had too brief a taste of, terrified she would never feel so fulfilled again. How could she?

No, being here with the happy threesome was not helping. It reminded her of what she lost, if she ever really had it.

She should have stayed in New York. She should have given it time to see if they had been serious or not, to see if it would have lead to anything. Instead she ran like a frightened child. Now she would never know.

"Ellie!" Charity bellowed from somewhere in the mausoleum she called a house. "You have visitors!"

Oh, that was just great. At her lowest point, the last thing she needed where nosy family members demanding to know why she had come home from New York. They would never let her live it down that she couldn't cut it in the big city.

"I, uh, I am not feeling well!" she shouted back, jumping up from the sofa she was comfortably pouting on and looking for an escape route.

The back door! She could go around to the side of the house and sneak through Cassian's study, tip toe up the stairs and hide out in her room for a year or so.

As soon as her hand touched the doorknob a familiar voice stopped her cold.

"Yer nae gonnae try tae sneak it oan us ur ye, Ellie?"

Don't turn around! her heart screamed. Royce is not really there.

"And after we came all this way to find you."

Oh, Lord, that couldn't be Blaine!

Tears welled, burning her vision as she tried to suck in air. Her hand trembled on the knob. She should turn it and run before she made a complete fool out of herself. She had wished herself into hallucinating!

But what if she wasn't? What if this time, when she turned around Royce and Blaine would really be here? Did she want to piss that chance away?

No, no she didn't. She wanted to be with them, she wanted to see them. Turning slowly, she nearly choked on her tears to see both men standing by the doorway. They had come for her! They wouldn't have tracked her down just to bring her back to her job. They must care somewhat or they wouldn't be here on Christmas Eve instead of with their family.

Unless they felt guilty or where scared you file sexual harassment charges and sue them.

Oh, fuck that! She was through with doubt.

"Come haur loove an' gie us a kiss awrite."

She had no idea what Royce just said, but when she flew into his arms, he held her tight, kissing her all over her face.

"Hey, don't forget about me!" Blaine pouted, pulling her from Royce into his arms.

"You came," the tears just wouldn't stop flowing. They were really here! "You came for me!"

"Of course we did, baby," Blaine murmured against her hair as he held her tight. "What would Christmas be without our woman with us?

Chapter 9

Life contains but two tragedies.

One is not to get your heart's desire; the other is to get it. ~ Socrates

Sue Ellen couldn't quite believe it. She had to pinch herself a couple of times this morning, and the vision before her had yet to clear or fade. That was her in the full length mirror wearing a fantasy of a pure white wedding gown with a sash of Royce's family tartan across her chest.

"You look gorgeous, Ellie," Charity whispered in awe.

"How did y'all manage to get all this done without me knowing?" Sue Ellen asked her cousin.

It was still so hard to believe, but tonight on Christmas night she was going to become Mrs. Sue Ellen Hamilton. There would be two ceremonies; one with the preacher between Royce and herself, and as soon as they got rid of the preacher another with her, Royce and Blaine. Charity had planned it all with detailed instructions from Royce and Blaine.

When they had asked her last night to marry them like this, she had thought she was dreaming, or this was a really bad joke. But then, where had doubt gotten her so far? The only time she really found happiness was when she took a giant leap, and she was going to take that leap right now.

"It wasn't like you were paying attention," Charity scoffed.

"The easy part was getting your sizes and measurements, the hard

part was getting a seamstress to make all the alterations to this damn dress in three days!"

Blaine and Royce had sent the dress to Charity telling her to make sure it was perfect. Sue Ellen had been leery of the way the silk and satin material hugged her every curve, but she had to admit she looked damned good.

"Now," Charity lectured turning Sue Ellen to face her. "I don't want you to worry about whether or not you are doing the right thing. I made sure I interrogated your young men, and they are very much in love with you."

"You did what?"

"Don't cut me off. It's rude," Charity waved away her cousin's shocked objection. "I want you to know if either of them every hurt, you can depend on me to kick their collective asses, you hear me? And make sure no matter where you are, you let me know you're okay and happy. Oh! And don't let them boss you around. Men have a terrible habit of doing that, Can't let them get away with it."

Damn, and she had told herself she wasn't going to cry. Charity was much more than merely her cousin, she had turned out to be a damned good friend.

"Thank you, Charity!" Sue Ellen cried, drawing her cousin in to a bear hug. "I love you, girl."

"You will stop that this instant, Sue Ellen Coleman!" Charity fumed without any real heat, trying without success to keep her own tear at bay. "You will NOT mess your dress, your hair or your make up until *after* the ceremony, you got that?"

Sniffing back her tears, Sue Ellen nodded solemnly. She would never forget what her cousin had done for her. Who knows what would have happened had Charity not been there for her, or if she hadn't made marrying two men seem normal.

"Be happy, Sue Ellen" Charity whispered, kissing her cheek.

"You deserve it."

"I will," Sue Ellen promised, and she meant it. "And I do."

The End