



# Open Sesame

Mia Watts

NOT QUITE WICKED

# *Open Sesame*

*A Not Quite Wicked Tale*

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*To the inventor of beds and things that tie*

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## *Chapter One*

“The Simsim Group? No, I’m glad I got out when I did,” Alister Baban said. “It wasn’t a month later that the company folded, and all the stock crashed.”

Cassimer, Alister’s uncle, lifted a fluted wine glass. The orange-golden glow of sunset winked through the ruby liquid, making it shimmer with the same wealth surrounding them. “I still say you should have stuck around a little longer. If you’d waited just another week, you’d be living in the same luxury I do.”

His uncle gestured with his raised glass, reminding Alister of the opulence around them. As though Alister could have missed the exotic marble floors, gold-plated domed ceilings and original fresco art on every wall.

“It was too easy,” Alister argued. “Nothing that easy comes free.”

“My eyes say otherwise.” Cassimer took a noisy sip of expensive, forty-year-old Port. “Your loss. I’m not sure if I ever thanked you for the investment tip. Are you sure you won’t drink with me?”

Alister shook his head at the proffered wine glass. His uncle’s home resembled an eclectic museum. Museum curators vying to display examples of every ancient culture could have decorated the estate. But it was impressive. For all its gaudiness, Cassimer had indeed proved his wealth to anyone walking through the grand front doors.

“I’m glad you did well, but overhearing those guys talk about the Simsim Group’s new power product felt dirty. That stock could have gone either way. I still don’t know why it crashed. The product seemed reasonable. The timing was good. We’re just lucky we pulled out before things went south.”

“It continued to soar well after you pulled out. I’m telling you, you should have listened

to me,” Cassimer reminded. His visage clouded a moment. “I earned that money through careful planning of my investment. No one has the right to take it from me now.”

Alister’s brows rose in surprise. “Is someone trying to?”

“One of the board members thinks I had inside information.”

“Uh. You did.”

Cassimer flashed a wide, orthodontically enhanced white smile. “So did you.”

“I caught wind of a public conversation.”

“You never win if you don’t take risks.” Cassimer tossed back the last drop of ruby liquid, then started on the glass he’d originally offered Alister. “Fucking great Port. You’re missing out.”

“It won’t kill me.”

Cassimer paled slightly. “Why would you say something like that? Did you get a call?” He looked nervously around the empty room, out the solid wall of windows framing wide green lawns overlooking the valley touched by pinks and purples.

“What are you talking about?”

“Nothing. Nothing at all.” His uncle laughed nervously. “There’s security here. Lots of security. You could stay here. It’s just me in the big old place. Bunch of cameras. Lasers. Security sweepers on the perimeter...”

The nervous chatter tumbled from his uncle’s lips, dotted with quick chuckles and fidgeting sweeps of his hands toward each of the mentioned measures.

“What happened?” Alister stalked toward his uncle. Several inches taller, several years younger, and many more hours in the gym stronger than his father’s younger brother, Alister hoped he intimidated the crap out of his uncle. Perhaps not his crap, exactly, but the truth in whatever form Cassimer delivered it.

“Nothing. I told you.”

His uncle gulped the rest of the Port down and hastily clapped the glass on the ornate bar next to the first. He took a step back. Purples and blues backlit Cassimer, putting him in shadow, but Alister was also keenly aware that though he couldn’t make out the full details of his uncle’s fear in the unlit room, Cassimer could see every tense line on Alister’s face with the dying rays of sunlight.

“So why don’t I believe you?” Cassimer may not have been the ideal relative, but he was

Alistar's only living relative and a thousand times more reckless than anyone he knew. The chatter was exactly typical of his uncle, trying to cover up something important.

"Stay overnight. I'll tell you at breakfast in the morning."

"Why?" Alistar asked.

"Because everything seems better in daylight."

"I don't like the sound of that." Alistar had no intention of humoring him. He turned abruptly and strode to the heavy wooden antique chair where he'd laid his jacket.

"Where are you going?"

"Home." Alistar snatched up his coat, ignoring Uncle Cassimer's protests.

Alistar stood on the reception porch. Spanning the entire front of the mansion and soaring high with huge marble pillars. The view stretched over the circular drive and manicured hedges making him feel as though he'd left a cave.

For all its airiness, Cassimer's mansion felt heavy and muffled. It could have been the way his uncle had gained his wealth that made Alistar think the ceiling would collapse at any moment, because he was fairly certain the structure was sound. And he was just as certain that Cassimer had done something to increase his chances of acquiring wealth.

A cave. It's what Alistar felt at his back as he took the five steps to the circular drive. The scuffle of feet reached his ears seconds before someone seized his arms. He tried to turn, catching a glimpse of jean legs and white running shoes. A dark sedan skidded to a halt at the bottom of the steps. A bag dropped over Alistar's head and he was shoved forward.

"Security!" he yelled. Where was all the fucking security Cassimer had just mentioned?

"Bribed, you sonofabitch. Like you bribed your way into Simsim stock," a voice answered.

Alistar lurched, freefalling. Leather seating slammed into his chest and face, his shins hit something hard and metal. He was being kidnapped? More hands shoved him from behind. Alistar struggled, kicking his feet and connecting with the other man. With satisfaction, Alistar heard him curse. Seconds later, a zip-tie wrenched his wrists tightly together at his lower back.

A gun cocked. Alistar stilled. The sound of metal sliding on metal, the clink of a chamber filling was all he needed to know a gun pointed in his direction.

"Shit, Cain, put that away. What if you miss him? Someone will call the police," one youthful male voice said.



“Miss? What if he hits him? Then how are we getting a ransom?” another said.

“We won’t get anything if you don’t hurry. Baban will be out here any minute with the ruckus you’re making. And don’t fucking use my name, asshole. Take the gun and keep it on him,” whoever must have been Cain answered.

“You said nothing about a ransom,” a fourth said in measured husky tones.

Alister’s body was hauled upright, and shoulder to hip, men slid to either side of him. Four car doors shut.

Someone whispered, “Hurry up, dammit.”

The force of the accelerator hitting the mat pressed Alister to the back seat; his head jerked with the suddenness and tires squealed outside.

“Should have waited until he cleared the property.”

“What do you want with me?” Alister asked sharply.

Conversation continued as though he hadn’t spoken. “Fuck no. On the street? You shittin’ me? Anyone could have seen. Safer on the property.”

“What if the security guy reports it?”

“He won’t. I gave him Baban’s security code and reminded him he couldn’t loot if he got fired.” The speaker chuckled derisively.

“Whatever you want from Baban, let me go and I’ll mediate for you.” Alister tried to lean forward to catch the attention of the speaker who, from the direction of the voice, also had to be the driver.

Cold and hard through his dress shirt, unrelenting metal pressed against his sternum.

“Sit back, shithead. I have no qualms about making you suffer until we’re through with you,” someone said from the front passenger side.

His left shoulder pulled back, forcing him to comply. Alister twisted from the hand, succeeded in bumping the man on his right. Alister’s elbow hit firm muscle. A grunt fluttered quietly against his ear.

The man on the right wrapped long fingers around Alister’s biceps, righted him. “Sit still. Don’t antagonize them.”

Alister blindly turned to the man, would have faced him if a black opaque hood hadn’t covered Alister’s head. “Who are you people?”

The long-fingered hand dropped on Alister’s thigh. “Quiet.”

“He wants to know who we are,” the front passenger mocked. “Better people than you spend your time associating with.”

Using a simple spoken command and the warmth of his palm, the stranger succeeded in shutting Alister up in a way no gun could have. The hand squeezed almost imperceptibly before sliding away.

Alister felt imprinted. His thigh tingled upward to his groin and fluttered invisible feathers beneath his balls. Now he was uncomfortable for an entirely new reason. Whoever sat beside him had managed to bring Alister to full, aching arousal in the worst of circumstances. He fucking hoped the man didn’t notice. He didn’t appreciate his body’s mutiny at the moment.

The driver muttered, “I hope Baban misses this guy.”

“It’s not Baban, is it?” the young voice on Alister’s left asked.

He could hear the smirk in the driver’s words. “Definitely Baban, but not Cassimer.”

The car grew silent as the driver’s words settled in. Road noises filtered over them. Best as Alister could tell, the windows had to be tinted black, since they seemed to have no worry that other drivers would see his bagged head.

“*Alister* Baban,” the husky voice on his right concluded.

The man’s voice slipped along Alister’s abdomen. Alister focused on the way his arms ached from his awkward position, hoping to cool his erection. Plastic chaffed his wrists, and he tried linking his fingers. When that didn’t help, he overlapped his hands and tried sitting on them. It exchanged one discomfort for another.

The alternative, edging to the front of the seat and bearing the weight against his shoulders so that his arms had some room, didn’t even list as a possibility. Elongating his body would only offer up his hard cock for scrutiny.

*No thanks.*

“Alister is Cassimer’s only living relative. A nephew, am I right?” the driver asked.

He didn’t feel like answering.

Lefty swatted Alister on the back of his head. “Answer the man, shithead.”

“I’ll pass,” Alister said instead.

“You’re hardly in a position to argue,” Front Passenger noted.

The hollow echo of tires screeching and bouncing off walls reached Alister. Only one thing sounded like that, a parking garage. The car tipped downward. Inertia nudged him against

Righty twice before tipping downward again and coming to a stop.

“We’ll take him through the service elevator,” the driver said.

Alister was hustled out of the car. Hands at each biceps, he shuffled until the springing dip to the floor and muted strains of Chopin told him they had packed into the elevator box. The doors dinged, his stomach dropped, his ears popped, and Alister yawned to accommodate the change in pressure. Finally, a second ding and clunking hitch of elevator doors heralded their arrival at wherever. Shuffling awkwardly, Alister corrected a trip when his feet went from hard surface to plush. He was dropped in a chair.

His shoulders screamed at the bounce when he hit, but Alister remained silent. He’d had time to think about the gruffness of the driver’s voice. He had to be Cain, the one who had initially pulled the gun on Alister before handing it off to the other guy.

“Cain,” Alister said abruptly. “If I’m not mistaken, you’re the leader of this little foursome. Mind clarifying exactly how abducting me can help you?”

A hand came down on this head, fisting the hood and yanking it off along with several of Alister’s hairs. Alister winced against the comparatively bright light and the eye-watering hair loss. Four men stood before him, all unspeaking.

The one with the gun, assuming he hadn’t handed it off to another person, had to be Front Passenger. He wore a sneer on his thin face. Lean and disheveled, the man looked like a bully made from his own sense of inadequacy. Alister would be wise not to piss this one off. Front Passenger would react before he thought it through if he believed he’d been personally affronted.

The one slightly in front of the others had the same dark, bushy eyebrows. His crowded together, and piercing intelligence shimmered from cocoa brown eyes. Swarthy and ordered, he was the first man’s physical superior down to his polished shoes. But beneath the surface rumbled fury and barely contained civility.

“You must be Cain,” Alister said, calmly.

Confirmation flared to life in Cain’s eyes with a subtle smile of pride.

“He knows your fucking name,” the third, Lefty, said in astonishment.

Lefty was barely more than a kid. Early twenties tops. The youngest, he was lean muscled but still wore his hair shaggy and his jeans, though cinched on his hips, bagged loosely beneath his belt. Lefty’s eyes darted between the Front Passenger and Cain.

“That’s because you used it, Reed,” the fourth, Righty said.

Reed huffed in annoyance, his identity revealed.

Righty stood off to the side, forcing Alister to completely look away from the first three to see him. Like the others, he had an olive complexion with a head full of dark straight hair. This brother's hair swept off his face to skim the top of his broad shoulders. Trimmed but unrelenting black brows slashed over his mahogany colored eyes with very little arch.

The color reminded Alister of finely polished wood reflecting undertones of reddish tints. Like the sunlit glass of port had been spilled over one of Cassimer's antiques. Chiseled and angular, there was nothing pretty about him. He was beautiful, startling, in the way ancestry had selected the best traits and bestowed them on this man.

Alister couldn't help but stare. The white dress shirt had been rolled up his forearms, tucked neatly into charcoal slacks. He stood an inch taller than Cain, with a silence of conserved energy and motion. As Alister watched, the man folded his arms across his wide chest. Letting his gaze fall, Alister noticed the substantial disturbance in the line of the man's slacks.

"You've recognized Cain. Now you've met Reed. Jeret is the one with the gun," the man smiled knowingly, as though he knew Alister waited to discover his identity.

But he did know it. The brothers had been on the cover of Forbes this time last year as the Who's Who millionaires in the business world. The cover shot hadn't done him justice. Oscar Adamo looked like sex.

"Oscar," Alister said, controlling his features so as not to give away the blatant sexual admiration that the panting, drooling animal in his head demanded he reveal. His other head had no such compunction and aside from the way his bound arms pushed his torso forward, partially obscuring Alister's groin, there was no stopping his obvious physical response. Alister's cock wanted to make like a homing pigeon.

Oscar's smile widened. "Oz."

## *Chapter Two*

Oz didn't miss the slight flush on Alister's throat. Oz had affected the man in some way, whether it was the preferred way had yet to be seen. Literally. The armrest of the stuffed chair blocked his view of Alister's lap and his expression gave away nothing.

The profile article in the local paper had called Alister Baban the most eligible bachelor of rising small businesses. Unlike that picture, Alister wasn't wearing a jovial, teasing smile. Thrust into a chair with his hands secured behind his back, the bondage could have been a tantalizing treat. Instead, the restrained irritation tightening Alister's jaw and whitening his full lips didn't reveal the man who liked windsailing and whose favorite color was green. This man was a businessman set on winning a tough negotiation.

Oz's smile died. Probably hated gays, too. The conflicting messages between Alister's slow perusal of Oz, much slower and purposeful than the way Alister had looked at the brothers, and the flat expression didn't offer encouragement. Nor did the startling, clear blue eyes hint at attraction. Alister Baban could be as straight as they come, but damn if Oz didn't want to nuzzle between his naked thighs.

"Don't get too attached, Oz. We'll get that ransom note over to Cassimer and then this guy is out of here," Cain said.

"But he knows who we are," Jeret argued.

"I said he was out of here. I didn't say *how*," Cain motioned that they should leave. Jeret strutted out of the room, tucking the gun at his spine. Reed followed, shooting glances over his shoulder.

"When I agreed to help you in getting our company back, you never mentioned murder."

Oz faced off with his older brother. “You never mentioned ransom, either.”

“If I had, would you have been on board?” Cain asked.

“No,” Oz said colorlessly.

“Exactly.”

“I’m not letting you kill him to get at his uncle.” Oz slid his hands casually into his pants pockets. He cocked his head to one side.

“We’ll talk about it later,” Cain snapped. A buzzer sounded from somewhere in the apartment. Cain’s name carried to them. He rolled his eyes and sighed sharply. He pulled several more zip-ties from his pocket and tossed them on the coffee table. “Tie him up somewhere and get information out of him.” Cain smirked at Alister. “Have fun.”

The door slammed behind him.

“Have fun?” Alister asked. “What the fuck does that mean?”

He struggled to his feet. Oz dropped a hand on his shoulder and shoved him down. “I may not have a gun or condone murder for greed, but you won’t find succor here.”

Oz was tempted to explore the contours of Alister’s shoulder beneath his fingertips. Strong, warm, and thick with muscle, it was clear Alister cared for his fitness, and Oz truly wanted to care for it, too. The errant thought brought a smile to his lips. So did the four-poster bed in the guest suite they were occupying.

Alister was tall, but stretched out, could Oz bind him to the four corners? He glanced at the man. Oh yes. No problem there. But not zip-ties. Something softer, so that when Alister came, he wouldn’t get cuts on his wrists.

Because if Alister Baban was straight, Oz had every intention of seducing the gay into him.

Alister watched Oz as he strolled around collecting things.

“My brother keeps this room stocked in case we spontaneously have guests.” He held up silk ties. “Considering you are to be kept tied indefinitely, I assume you’d prefer silk to unforgiving plastic?”

Alister nodded. If Oz had any idea how turned on Alister was at the prospect of the other man tying him up and extracting information from him, he didn’t show it. Oz’s classic features hinted at mischief that could have easily been interpreted as taking pleasure in binding Alister for

torture. Right now, libido demanded Oz's hands on him in any method possible. Unfortunately, libido had taken the share majority over rational thought.

*Stupid cock.*

Oz stayed within range of him. Not once had he turned his back so that Alister was out of his sight, yet his movements were fluid and not contrived. And not once had the man given him a clear view of groin to gauge Oz's sexual compass.

Silently, Alister berated himself. Four guys had abducted him at gunpoint, bound him, were sending a ransom note, and if Cain had his way, would dump his body somewhere. Sex-on-a-stick over there had been relegated to obtaining information by whatever means, it seemed. So why couldn't he get past the idea that Oz had something erotic in mind for his methodology, and why didn't Alister's body recognize the overall threat to its well-being?

Because Oz, for all his strength, grace, and dark good looks, didn't threaten him.

Cain looked like a man of action who, once set in a direction, couldn't be swayed. Jeret was an insecure bully who'd do what Cain told him. Reed seemed about as terrified of getting in trouble with the law as getting in trouble with one of his brothers.

But Oz moved in his own circle. He didn't defer to Cain, overlooked Jeret as inconsequential, and smiled fondly at Reed. He was one of them, but separate. Alister thought Oz made his own decisions, and it had been clear Oz had no intention of letting Cain murder Alister.

The abduction? Why had Oz gone along with it if he hadn't wanted to take Alister? What, in Oz's mind, had made it an acceptable risk? Alister continued to watch Oz as he gathered the last of the items and laid them on the large bed.

"I'd let you go to the bathroom alone, but you seem like a resourceful man and you might try to escape," Oz said quietly. He moved to stand behind Alister. "Still, I recommend you go before I secure you to this bed." Sliding his hands under Alister's arms, Oz helped him to his feet.

"How do you propose I do that with my hands behind my back?"

"It won't be a problem in a minute," Oz told him cryptically.

Oz dragged Alister around the chair. His mouth nearly watered. Stripping Alister Baban down to the skin had been on his mind since he'd laid eyes on him. The serious-faced

businessman needed to loosen up, and Oz was the man to do it.

Alister's stockier build with wider bones and shorter stature spoke of a hardy heritage. The top of his head just passed the tip of Oz's nose. Oz worked out and had the physique to prove it. What Alister Baban had was the solid, unrelenting musculature of a laborer. Yet the report from Cain, and the profile piece, indicated Alister spent his time behind a desk, not building them.

Oz reached into his pocket, pulling out a pocketknife. Alister eyed him warily but didn't flinch. Oz suspected the other man would rather bite his tongue off than show fear or lack of composure. It was going to make the conquest so much sweeter.

"Stay still," Oz said when Alister prepared to turn and present his bound wrists.

The frown his captive wore deepened. "From our discussion on going to the bathroom to a knife, I'm not sure where you're taking this."

Oz applied the tip of the two-inch blade beneath Alister's top shirt button. It popped off, easily. "You'll keep your appendages, but your clothes are unnecessary. If you did manage to get free, I want to be certain others will remember which way you went."

"Because a naked man, running, would be remembered," Alister said. Three more buttons followed the first.

"You understand." Oz pushed Alister's shirt off his shoulders to his bound wrists. He'd take care of the scraps later. Now he had a snug white undershirt to slice through on his quest for the two intriguing, tight buds pushing at the fabric.

He took more time than he needed slicing through the thin cotton. The revelation of firmly packed chest with black curls generously sprinkled across the pecks and tapering to a "v" above his bellybutton became even more fascinating when the knife continued to descend. Alister sucked in sharply, hollowing his gut when the tip slid past.

Alister's belt sagged, revealing the gray waistband of underwear. "Think you could keep that knife away from my dick?"

Oz's head jerked up to meet Alister's strained, steady gaze. "Is that what you believe I'd do?"

"I don't know you. What the hell else am I going to think when you have a knife an inch from my cock head?"

He'd been keeping his eyes off Alister's cock to prolong the suspense, but he nearly lost



his resolve. He pushed the undershirt from Alister's shoulders, appreciating the honeyed cast to his natural color and the healthy glow of polished male skin.

"You're enjoying this," Alister said, his cool blue eyes assessing Oz.

A smile lifted Oz's lips, unchecked. No use denying it. If Alister looked down, he'd see more than substantial proof of Oz's enjoyment. Oz leaned in, pleased when Alister's eyes widened slightly, when his pupils expanded to darken the pale blue irises, and still Alister didn't step away.

Even if Alister didn't bat for his team, Oz was pretty sure he could make the stolid man beg like a gay slut to be allowed to come. He was counting on it.

Oz stroked the dull top *fuller* of the blade against Alister's bottom lip, a lip Oz hoped to taste soon. "I'm enjoying this a great deal," he agreed.

## *Chapter Three*

Alister suppressed the urge to swallow. Or weep with joy. Or close the distance and kiss the man whose primary method of information retrieval seemed to be seduction. All definite displays of weakness on Alister's part. Knowing what technique Oz would use to get information meant Alister knew which ways to counteract them.

Fuck if he *wanted* to counteract them, but abduction wasn't misdemeanor stuff, and Oz had participated. Which meant Oz and the other Adamos would break the law to get whatever they thought Alister had.

"Can you move the knife?" Alister asked calmly.

It wasn't common knowledge that Alister was gay. Either the Adamos had amazing investigative measures, or Oz was also gay—and interested. Alister listened for any clue that would give the man away. Did Oz's breath catch? Did his eyes linger on Alister's mouth?

Cool metal slipped from his lip. A guarded curiosity entered the mahogany depths of Oz's eyes. Good, Oz didn't know what to make of him. Keep him guessing. The knife flipped closed and must have been returned to its owner's pocket.

His abduction irritated Alister's stubbornness like a burr. He was fairly certain Oz wouldn't kill him or let him be killed. Call it gut instinct. His safety secured, Alister could see just how far Oscar Adamo would go.

Hopefully, down. On Alister. Several times.

*Fuck.* Alister was shit for brains with the man standing this close. All he could think about was hot sex. Why wouldn't Oz look away? Play for dominance?

The sudden tug and release on Alister's pants dragged his attention reluctantly from his abductor's expression and dropped it on the immediate reality of the hard-on Oz wasn't likely to

miss. Alister's pants hit the ground.

Oz's gaze flicked to Alister's neck. He felt the heat of his own blush. The elastic band of his underwear stretched outward, and Oz smoothed his long fingers and warm palms over Alister's hips beneath the cotton.

Alister nearly groaned.

Oz changed his grip and the short quick tug following should have caused Alister's drawers to drop like his pants had. Except they didn't, because they were hung up on his straining cock. Oz tugged again. Sudden understanding dawned like sunrise over his handsome features as a chuckle-become-laugh parted his lips and filled the room.

"Alister Baban, is there anything you would care to disclose?" Oz asked, still chuckling.

"Knives turn me on," he said, hearing the roughness in his own voice.

Oz jerked the underwear off and had Alister step out of the fallen clothing and his shoes. "You're a man of control. I would think nakedness and bondage makes you cringe. Yet here you are."

"How about that pee you promised?"

Alister didn't wait for an escort, he trudged his way to the open door of the bathroom, trying to think of anything that would make his dick soften so he could take a leak. By the time he reached the toilet, he had a new problem. The lid was down. No way in hell he was going to ask Oz for help.

Irritation softened him further. Noting the bidet, Alister changed positions to straddle the bowl. Shaking off wasn't an option and jigging in front of Oz didn't appeal to him either. So Alister stood stock still for another minute before turning to walk back to the suite. He brushed past Oz waiting beside the bathroom exit.

And fuck if Alister wasn't thickening from the negligible contact. He swore under his breath.

"On the bed," Oz commanded.

"The Great and Powerful Oz has spoken," Alister muttered, kneeling up onto the mattress. He already had an idea what was in store, so he sat in the center of the bed. He stared straight ahead, unsmiling.

This isn't how Oz wanted him. Sullen, angry, silent were exact opposites of energetic,

eager, and loud. He wanted Alister Baban to beg. Instead, the stony expression and curt movements made Oz feel like a spoiled child demanding his way.

He climbed up behind Alister with the first tie and bound his wrist before cutting the plastic zip. Alister stiffened, his muscles bunched, and Oz reached around the man's lean waist to point the tip of his blade to Alister's balls. "Don't." An empty threat, but Baban didn't know that.

Alister stilled, reluctantly allowing his arm to be tied to the first post. Once all his limbs were secured, Oz put away the blade again.

"Now what?" Alister challenged.

Alister stared at the ceiling, his beautiful erection gone almost completely flaccid. Oz's chest tightened as he looked over the feast laid out before him. Alister's sculpted body, stretched, hard and lean, had to be enjoyed.

He circled the bed to stand at the foot where he discovered that despite the crisp, dark hairs Alister wore on his chest, so different from Oz's cleanly waxed body, Alister's balls and ass were clean of hair. Oz's gaze found the contrasting groomed thatch around the base of Alister's cock that much more enticing.

"You groom. How considerate for your lover."

Alister snorted, but his cock twitched from the praise.

What did Alister think of his circumstances? Tied to a bed, naked with another man, discussing his genitalia? From this angle, he could see the tucked rosette flex. Arousal or anger?

When Cain had first brought the plan to coerce Cassimer into confessing, Oz had agreed to help. Anything that would force the thief to return his spoils so the stolen funds could be returned. The pension plans would be restored to all those who lost their jobs when the company went under due to insider trading.

Cassimer paying back the pension from his thieving had carried a purity of justice. Oz still wanted that. Unfortunately, it seemed he also wanted Alister. He'd been against the abduction until the moment Cain had passed around a photograph and put Jeret out to tail him. Then Oz not only wanted the abduction, he wanted Alister to want it, too.

Would Alister succumb to a man?

Oz walked back around to the side of the bed, dropping his fingertips on the other man's ankle and dragging upward as he moved. Alister's leg rolled outward, his thigh hardened, as

though steeling for the anticipated tickle. But Oz stopped at the knee crevice, dragged his thumb back and forth on the sensitive spot.

Alister's inhale stuttered sharply, catching twice before he exhaled again.

"One of my favorite places to taste. Sadly, it often gets overlooked."

The tie-binds creaked as Alister unconsciously pulled on them. "I thought you were supposed to be getting information from me, not tickling me like a foolish schoolgirl," he said, speaking to the ceiling.

Oz frowned. He would have been completely disheartened at his own lack of appeal if Alister's cock were not currently striving for the same ceiling with which Alister shared his conversation.

It filled, rising with jerky determination. Girth and length swelled to impressive proportions while the dusky head deepened to plum. Recessed veins now stood out in relief, making Alister's cock a thing of ribbed, thickened beauty.

Oz slid his fingertips to mid-thigh, scoring the skin with his nails. He mouth watered to feel the man's shaft on his tongue.

Alister rewarded him with a groan stripped from the depths of his throat.

"I concede that you have every right to know what I'm planning. So I'll tell you," Oz said, pretending he made no notice of Alister's heightened sexual state. But he did notice. He noticed the nipples that had shrunk and lifted to points, the rapid rise and fall of Alister's belly, the way he fought his own body with squeezed eyes and flared nostrils.

And Oz's own cock moistened with victorious pre-cum when he saw that his prize lay within reach. Alister fought it, but his body wanted Oz's with matched need.

"I'm going to suck your cock," Oz said. His quiet voice and warm tone dangled the husky promise like a carrot. "I'm going to swallow it, but I'm not going to let you come."

"Fuck," Alister panted. The word too garbled and quiet to be heard.

Alister's control slipped another notch when Oz's blunted fingertips inched from upper thigh to the crease where Alister's ass met the back of his leg. Every nerve had been lit. Every fiber of thought knew where his negligent fingers had and had not gone while preparing for the next caress.

"I'll lick your balls and twist your pretty nipples."

He should be telling Oz to remove his hands, but he was afraid if he opened his mouth, it would be to ask Oz to *move* his hands to his shaft or cup his gathered balls, which had already begun to ache. He rolled his lips inward to keep from speaking.

“If you ask nicely, I may kneel over you and let you see my cock. And if I find myself so inclined, I’ll fuck my fist for you. But you may not come until you ask me to take your very fine ass and use it.”

“Fuck,” Alister growled.

“Is that a request?”

“No, dammit. Aren’t you forgetting something?” Speech had become difficult as lust clouded Alister’s brain. He wanted all those things, and from the tone of voice Oz used, he knew it.

“I’m listening.”

“You’re supposed to be getting information from me. So unless your goal is knowing how tight my hole is or how spunky my cum, maybe you should try asking first,” Alister said.

He glared at Oz, but it was a mistake. Mahogany eyes watched him with hunger, spilled desire like the hand of a lover as they roamed his body. Alister’s thighs tingled. Pre-cum trickled off his tip to drip in the hairs at his root.

With words and no more than the stroke of three fingers up his leg, Alister was on the verge of shooting his wad. How the hell would he hold out when Oz actually *applied* his threats?

A wicked smile flashed along Oz’s lips. He brought his gaze back to Alister’s. “Oh that’s definitely part of my goal, but if I ask you for answers and you give them before I mete out your punishment, the fun would be over. I couldn’t take advantage of you if you gave me what I asked of you. It would be unethical.”

“You’re all about ethics. Abduction, forcible restraint, rape...”

Oz suddenly leaned over him to within six inches of his face. His eyes blazed with hunger and tenderness Alister hadn’t noticed before.

“Never rape,” Oz whispered. “You’ll ask me to take you before we’re done here. You’ll ask because you want my cock buried inside your ass as badly as I want to give it to you.”

“I don’t fuck on a first date, asshole. I’m not that kind of guy.” The words left him unconvincingly, breathlessly.

Eyes still holding Oz’s, he felt rather than saw his captor’s hand tangle in his chest hair.

His fingers played, edging toward the sensitive bud begging to be touched. Against Alister's will, a groan filled with capitulation spilled from his lips.

Oz's devouring eyes could not have missed every nuance of lust Alister was positive showed on his face. The boardroom control he prided himself on clung stubbornly, but rips in the façade had exposed his need to the sexy predator who found and tweaked his nipple. It wrenched a gasp from him.

"Do you want to reconsider?" Oz asked, eyes serious.

"Why? You giving in?" Alister taunted ridiculously.

His captor's fingers left the nub to trail over Alister's ribcage then across the ridges on his muscled abdomen. They threaded in the hair below his umbilicus to sink lower.

Oz teased Alister's lips with his own. Alister rose to meet him, but Oz pulled out of reach, only to return and tease some more. Oz's flattened palm pressed above his pubis, seeming to know Alister craved the weight of another body on him. Blunt fingertips stretched low to torment the root of Alister's straining cock.

"Oh, God." Tendons in Alister's neck stretched as he pressed his head into the mattress. He hung on to the last shred of reserve as need branded him from inside.

Oz's breath raggedly fluttered on Alister's mouth. The tip of Oz's tongue flicked between Alister's parted lips. He lurched upward to take him, yet Oz continued to dodge.

"Ask and I'll give you relief," Oz said, his voice taking on an urgent edginess. "Ask soon. Watching you writhe for me makes me want to rush things along." He rubbed the side of one finger against Alister's root.

Alister lifted his head quickly, capturing a kiss from Oz, tried to delve inside the supple lips for a taste of the man. Oz retreated, stared down at him. Alister panted, waited for him to make the next move. It wasn't like *he* could do anything.

"Nice," Oz praised, looking a bit dazed. "I didn't see that coming." Alister wondered if, tied down and vulnerable, he could command his captor. Isn't capitulation what Oz wanted? An excuse to take the play into more serious fucking territory? Alister wanted it, too. It seemed to be the most driving common factor they had.

Get past the fucking. Get it off the table so it wasn't a bargaining chip anymore. Find out what the Adamos wanted, then burn their asses for thinking he'd give it to them. Cassimer had some shitty qualities, but family was family.

*Right. That's why you want him to fuck your ass like a man possessed. You just want to remove sex as a power play. Sure. Has nothing to do with the wanting to see Oz's face when he takes you and empties his balls into you.*

Seeing this man fall apart, lose his composure while inside Alister, would be an ego trip unlike any other.

"How did you and Cassimer come by your information?" Oz asked, trailing his hand around Alister's erection to coast down his hip and delve low on his inner thigh. He raked his nails toward Alister's puckered, hairless sack.

"What information?" Alister rasped.

"Simsim. You must know where this discussion is going. The Adamo brothers would eventually locate the flaw that had crippled the Simsim Group." He flicked his index finger, just nudging the underside of Alister's balls.

Alister shifted his hips...toward...away...he wasn't sure. "Cassimer told me to add them to my investment portfolio immediately."

"And you obeyed a man who has the discipline of a child?" Oz asked.

"I researched Simsim. I liked what it looked like on the global market, the innovative practices and the security of its relationships. Until I told him about your company, he didn't know you existed."

"I thought you weren't going to share information," Oz reminded with a lift of his lips.

"You haven't asked anything you couldn't figure out for yourselves. I've done nothing wrong."

Oz sighed. "I believe you. But we aren't really here because of your interest in Simsim, are we? We're here because of Cassimer."

"I told you. He invested because of what I found out." Most schemes Uncle Cassimer was involved in backfired.

"That's not the whole story is it? My brothers act first and think later. Cain is smart, but he lets his anger rule him. I did some research of my own after the fall of our family company. Someone traded fifty-five percent of his invested stock the day before Simsim crashed. The massive trade created panic."

"From what I heard, it had to do with Simsim on the verge of declaring bankruptcy," Alister lied. "I thought Simsim had potential. I shared the information with Cassimer who did his



own research and insisted I buy. I did. Then I sold and so did he.”

“You sold well before he did. You sold a normal parcel of stock. Cassimer held fifty-five percent of all company stock. How? My brothers and I have equal shares with a majority portion going to the board. That’s fifteen percent per brother and another forty distributed among the board and shareholders. How did he obtain twenty-five percent of the holdings?”

Alister felt his throat tighten uncomfortably. “He held a board majority,” he whispered, understanding dawned.

“And now you understand our concern. Insider trading or theft,” Oz said, coolly.

“Can you prove it?”

A slow smile curved Oz’s lush lips. A dark sparkle lit his eyes as his hand slid around Alister’s shaft and took a suggestive pump. Alister tried not to groan, but the warm wide palm and dry friction to the underside of his cock won the battle for him, and Oz chuckled, satisfied in his position of power.

“Why do you think you’re here?” Oz asked. His voice dipped huskily lower.

The question seemed almost unrelated to their previous discussion. It could have been the slow stroke of palm creases on Alister’s straining cock that disjointed thoughts. Insider trading accusations seemed completely unrelated to the rising urgency tightening his balls.

Alister’s gaze locked on the sultry lips of his tormentor, silently wishing them to wrap around his dick and suck with unholy ardor. God, he wanted to fuck that mouth, stare into those mahogany eyes when they glazed over.

The stroking stopped. “I asked you a question, Baban.”

He had? Alister thought for a moment, mentally brushing past the fog of Eros and dipping into the vague well of understanding. Insider trading. Cassimer. *Oh, yeah.* “You think I’ll give you something to hang Cassimer,” Alister said, or rather, panted.

Cool sweat broke across his brow. Orgasm thwarted, his balls protested and his cock felt insanely sensitive to the heat of Oz’s stilled palm.

“That’s right.” Oz resumed a painfully languid stroke. His thumb came up and swirled over Alister’s engorged tip before rubbing sharply over the weeping slit. Alister shuddered, his hips and buttocks flexed on the fine edge of anticipation. Tingles warmed like ticklish waves at his upper thighs to crash together on the sensitive skin beneath his balls.

Oblivious to the desperation of Alister’s body, Oz stroked, swirled, stopped without

pattern. Alister's chest tightened and he thought his heart would explode as every almost-touch nearly sent him to blessed climax only to withdraw it from him at the critical point of pleasure. He hung there on a thread at Oz's whim. Alister wanted it. Whatever Oz needed from him couldn't be as important as shooting cum at the encouragement of seductive eyes and baritone voice.

"Who did Cassimer buy shares from?" Oz asked. His words were barely a counterpoint to the throbbing in Alister's body, a mere side-note in orgasmic demand.

"Buy? I—I don't know."

Alister's body went hot and cold at the same time. Oz lowered his face and blew on Alister's tip. He strained at the ties holding his wrists and ankles. He tried to buck toward the teasing stream of air, but his hips couldn't lift high enough to reach.

"Just ask. You're begging me for it in every other way. Just say the words, Alister. Surely, your pride won't mind a short lapse," Oz taunted.

"Fuck you," he bit out half-heartedly.

Oz released Alister's penis and placed his hands flat on either side of the desperate cock. Heat seeped to Alister's hipbones, making the sudden indifference to his hard-on all the more obvious. Oz pushed him to the bed. His thumbs slipped down into the thigh crevice and parted Alister's ass.

Alister's balls jostled as the peritoneal flesh stretched. Cool air touched Alister and awakened new needs. "Cassimer doesn't tell me his business, and I don't ask," he said, feeling frantic for release.

Oz dipped out of sight. Hot, wet, flickering pleasure lapped from Alister's fluttering hole, up the short sensitive strip to his balls, along the center seam and the length of Alister's cock. He watched in fascination as Oz's tongue darted into the slit before disappearing again behind luscious smiling lips.

"You can do better than that, Alister."

## *Chapter Four*

Alister's cock gleamed with pre-cum at the tip, and Oz fought the urge to take another lick. The underside of his captive's penis had been blazing hot and thick with full ropey extension. The man was aroused. His balls were going to turn blue if he didn't provide answers soon. So were Oz's.

Oz rubbed his hips on the edge of the mattress, trying to relieve some of the pressure. It felt good, and he did it again, wishing it was the rigid dick inches from Oz's face he rubbed on and not a cushioned surface. He wanted to feel muscles, sweat, and the agony of pleasure moving underneath him. He fucking wanted Alister.

"Where did you get your information?" Maybe Alister didn't even know he had the information Oz needed. He certainly seemed unaware he had the *body* Oz needed. Maybe Oz would steal another lick.

The tip of his tongue teased the soft 'v' at the top underside of where Alister's shaft met crown. That was his favorite spot, and it appeared Alister appreciated the wet nudge as well. Oz had to press the man's hips down again.

Climbing between Alister's splayed legs, Oz settled himself in to appreciate the view. Taut nipples stabbed at the air. Alister's golden skin rolled over delineated ribs and back with quickly drawing lungs. Oz traced the flare on either side of his favorite 'v' and watched with pleasure as Alister's muscled abdomen caved at the abruptly expanded chest.

Oz circled a forefinger on Alister's wet tip, watched the man's eyes close as he hung on to pride, then Oz used his moistened finger to stroke the puckered hole as it contracted and

released in needy shivers. Alister groaned long and ragged.

“Ask,” Oz commanded. “Or tell. I’m really not particular at this point. Either answer will suffice until I need the next one.” God, he hoped the man would break soon. Otherwise, Alister’s restraint might bring Oz to his knees in whimpering sobs.

“At a café. Heard some guys talking,” Alister panted.

About fucking time, Oz thought. He grabbed Alister’s thick shaft in his fist and brought it to his lips. Darting out his tongue to taste him first, Oz sank his mouth over the head of Alister’s cock.

Alister cried out like a man tormented. He pushed his hips against the still restraining hand flattening him to the mattress.

The head was so hot. So wide and firm. Oz moaned, the sound coming from deep in his chest, the relief of pent-up longing and self-denial.

“More. Please,” Alister begged, the words dragged from his throat as though they’d been taken from him reluctantly.

Oz smiled. Information and a slip in pride. That *did* deserve a reward.

Alister couldn’t look away from the plush lips engulfing his cock. “Fuck,” he whispered as he watched himself disappear into the depths of Oz’s mouth, felt himself tap and slide past the back of his throat. Black hair trailed over Oz’s wide shoulders to tumble against Alister’s thighs and balls when his aquiline nose finally buried into Alister’s trimmed curls.

The man swallowed, and Alister’s vision dimmed around the edges. Warm waves of tingling pressure broke into a tidal wave of molten lust that flowed relentlessly toward the epicenter of sensation. Alister tried to pump upward. Oz held him in place, having moved his hand across Alister’s body to pin him between well-muscled forearm and mattress.

Alister shouted. Oz moved, sliding his mouth up the shaft and almost off before sinking and swallowing Alister whole. The pressure in his balls built, drew on them tightly and painfully. Unseen fingers stroked his sack, nudged them, rolled the hidden orbs in time to Oz’s pliant sucking mouth and squeezing throat.

The tip of something—a finger—invaded his hole and Alister’s whole existence fell aside to the orgasmic drive. Nothing else mattered.

Their gazes met. Oz’s rich brown eyes smoldered, showing he enjoyed watching Alister

get-off as much as Alister enjoyed receiving. Pleasure streaked through Alister's balls, clouding his perceptions, but he thought he saw fierce pride and desire in Oz's look.

Alister's attention fled as synapses fired and blood roared in his ears, sweeping him into the lava embrace of soul-melting orgasm. Cum exploded up his shaft into Oz's mouth, which hummed in pleasure, sucking and swallowing until the last spurt wrenched from Alister's body.

"Impressive," Oz murmured. Between soft tonguing pets to Alister's obedient balls and a flick against his asshole, Oz continued to praise him. "Musky, rich, better than fine wine."

Alister was speechless. Still breathing heavily, he wasn't sure he could form thoughts into words yet, anyway. Except, possibly, to plead for the pleasure of tasting Oz's cock in return.

Oz nuzzled Alister's sack and, impossibly, his sated cock twitched. Oz chuckled, flashing his white teeth behind Alister's already filling dick.

"Want more, do you?" Oz asked, not seeming the least bit disappointed.

"You're still dressed," Alister said hoarsely. If he'd had a hand free, he'd have smacked himself. *Idiot, way to play coy.*

Oz lifted a brow. "You want me naked?"

Hell, yeah. But how did he say that without sounding like a whining virgin? He wanted the chance to put screaming ecstasy on Oz's face so Oz couldn't deny he wanted Alister just as badly.

Oz rose up on his knees between Alister's thighs. He began unbuttoning his dress shirt, but stopped halfway down with a shrug. "Well, if it isn't important to you—"

"Strip," Alister interrupted.

"I'm glad you aren't pretending you like women. That can be so bothersome, and interferes with a perfectly executed thrust."

"I don't publicize it."

"But you're gay," Oz finished for him. "As am I."

"Yeah, I didn't overlook the proof."

Oz eyed Alister's partial erection. "I didn't either. Before we brought you here, I had feared you might be straight. I reviewed your career in old articles. There aren't many, but never heard about a boyfriend."

"Or a girlfriend. What did you think you'd accomplish if I had turned out to be straight?" Alister asked.

“I had hoped to persuade you into what just happened. If you hadn’t seemed interested, the stripping of your clothes would have been more useful for Jeret’s talents, though much less pleasurable.”

“Fuck me, or fuck me up. I get it.”

Oz’s expression soured slightly, but he motioned to his shirtfront. Alister nodded and Oz resumed where he’d left off. Each button exposed another inch of tanned, hairless flesh. Lean and sculpted abs followed pecks. A tight, dark bellybutton made Alister think of other tight holes, and his flagging erection flagged no more.

Oz straddled Alister’s thigh, then moved to his side. Alister lifted his head to look over at him. He didn’t want to miss a moment of revelation. Shirt opened, Oz pulled the tails from his trousers, removed it, wadded it up, and threw it toward the chair Alister had first occupied. Then he loosened the belt. Alister didn’t need to see the missing underwear band to know Oz went commando. The beautifully outlined cock-head and bowed shaft told him all he needed to know through the sturdy woven cotton of tailored pants.

“Who was at the café?” Oz asked. He took the zipper between his thumb and forefinger, flipping it back and forth at his bulging, hidden cock.

“I don’t know.”

“I don’t believe you,” Oz said darkly. He dropped a hand between Alister’s raised arm and head, coming down to look Alister in the eyes. “Only a fool would run off and buy up stock based on the word of an untried stranger.”

Beneath drawn brows, brown eyes searched his. Oz’s full lips, so recently employed with Alister’s cock, twitched downward in thought. Alister could smell himself on his breath, mixed with the faint trace of toothpaste and warm breath. What did Oz’s mouth taste like now?

He’d barely had an inkling when Oz pulled away last time and Alister wanted more. He’d hoped he could control his captor despite his own restraints, but Oz controlled him. Alister wasn’t sure that was bad.

“Who?” Oz asked, his voice dropping seductively as his gaze traveled appreciatively over Alister’s face.

“What’s my reward?” Alister countered, cocking an eyebrow.

Amusement lit his captor’s eyes and he thought he saw the beginnings of a smile.

“Reward?”

The way his lips rounded over the word sidetracked Alister into thinking about kissing again. Damn it. He tried to drag his mind back into the sensual but serious game they played.

“I let you suck my cock, and now you want information. I think I deserve a reward.”

Oz’s bark of laughter surprised them both. Alister struggled to keep his expression flat.

“And what reward would you ask?”

Alister wanted those lips. On his. Now. Those laughing, teasing, maddening, seducing lips locked on his and opened for him to delve inside and taste the man who’s gentle mockery made Alister want to tell Oz everything he knew.

The lips stretched into an indolent smile.

Alister’s breath caught. Not quietly like he would have preferred, but in a sharp inhalation cut notably short. *Fuck. No hiding that bit of telling attraction.* “A kiss at my leisure. No pulling back this time.”

“No.”

The rasp of a zipper reached Alister’s ears. Moisture touched his bare abdomen. His abdomen flexed, prepared when the heated weight of Oz’s drooping cock-head followed. Alister clamped his jaw to keep from groaning. He wanted to *see* it. Feeling it, knowing he was aroused, tormented Alister.

Yet he caught the flare of lust in Oz’s eyes, too. His lips had parted slightly, and Oz seemed to give in to the urge to thrust. His body tensed, and Alister felt the damp slide of rigid cock across his abdomen accompanied by zipper teeth and rough cotton. They both groaned.

Oz’s voice was gravelly when he spoke. “Tell me who you heard and why you trusted the source. In return, I’ll reward us both with a slow fuck to your pretty pink hole.”

“Deal. Guys in suits. With briefcases. Paperwork on the table.”

Oz stared down at Alister. In his lust-fogged brain, the answer sounded good enough for now. It wasn’t. He eventually wanted names, but he sensed his mood would be broken if he had the full story before he buried his cock into Alister’s hole. Oz thought perhaps he wanted the fuck more than the information. He was all right with that. For now.

Reaching into his pocket, he withdrew a condom. Then kicking off his pants, he toed his shoes and socks away. He watched Alister’s eyes widen with interest when Oz brought the foil packed to his teeth and tore it. Oz reached down between them.

“Wait,” Alister said.

Oz stopped moving, wondering what game Alister played with him.

“I want to see you.”

Taking a moment to consider it, Oz then shook his head. “You’ll take it. You’ll feel it burn. You’ll beg me to move faster inside you. You’ll come and you’ll do it all without an introduction to the instrument fucking you. Your punishment for not disclosing all the information I requested. No matter. You will tell me their names once I’m sated.”

He could see his words turned Alister on. Oz dragged off his shirt. Fully nude and ready, he reached for the lube, realizing too late that he’d forgotten it in his own room. Leaving to get it would dissipate some of the tension. He wouldn’t do that. Oz turned his head to the door.

“Reed!” Oz called.

The door fumbled open and Reed stepped through. His jaw dropped. “Holy fuck, man. I don’t need to see this! I totally don’t need to see this shit. You’re my brother, man! I mean I’m okay with the whole gay thing, but you can’t make me watch this sh—”

“Enough. I left my lube in my room. By the bed. Get it now.”

“Or he’ll have to tell Cain that walking in on two naked guys made you stack wood,” Alister added.

“I’m not!” But they all looked, and he was, which seemed to add speed to Reed’s provided task.

“He’s in denial,” Oz said.

Alister hadn’t smiled, but something changed to soften the lines on his face.

“What is it?” Oz asked.

“You were all bad-ass there a second ago. ‘You’ll take my cock and come and you won’t even know what’s pounding your ass,’ ” Alister teased.

“I’m still bad-assed,” he said, trying the words, which seemed so foreign to his normal dialogue.

“You so fucking aren’t. You were, and then your little brother walked in on your naked ass, and you were just an older brother being pissed. And now, you’re a horny older brother with a date strapped to his bed.”

Oz rested his lower body against Alister’s. Their cocks flexed between the pressure of two well-muscled bodies. “My date?” he asked Alister smoothly.



The change of perspective from captive to bound lover had been shimmering on the edges of his mind since they'd taken Alister off his uncle's front steps. Oz had thought it, but Alister had said it. Taken, bound, questioned, seduced, and the man, who oozed confidence and control, tied to the large bed had gone from demanding an explanation to awaiting Oz's cock. Alister teased him casually and challenged Oz to continue the seduction with only superficial protest.

Alister *enjoyed* being beneath Oz. At his mercy. The realization sent a shiver of anticipation down Oz's spine.

"C'mon. You said you'd read up on me, looked to see if I had a boyfriend. We both know my coming into the Simsim investment picture only happened recently. How much information did you glean since the company crash and how much prior to it?" Alister asked. His knowing gaze striped Oz.

"It's good business to watch the growth of emerging competition," Oz said.

Alister gave him a wicked smile, one Oz felt to his toes. "My interest in you began far sooner than my interest in Simsim. Shame I never did anything about it."

Oz felt his eyes narrow. Alister meant to confuse him, surely. That the bound man then canted his hips to rub Oz's with sweet friction nearly scattered his thoughts. Not a chore easily done.

"You don't know what to believe," Alister said simply.

"Your confession has no gain that I can detect, except to disarm me." Alister had been surprisingly giving of information, with a token resistance. He didn't seem concerned with providing the names of the group in the café either.

"I want you." Alister appeared surprised by his own confession.

A cold bottle thumped Oz's side.

"Here's the lube. I'm out of here," Reed said, yet he didn't hurry for the door. He backed slowly toward it, his eyes locked on Alister's naked hip.

"Stay, kid," Alister invited. "Watch me get fucked."

"Leave Reed," Oz countered.

Reed didn't wait for another command from his brother. He left.

"I didn't know what you wanted from me, at first. But what you're asking me isn't compromising my uncle. I'll tell you what you want to know," Alister said.

Oz didn't know why he did it, but he reached up and loosened one of Alister's wrists. He told himself it was a show of trust. Alister could reveal all the information and believe Oz had granted him some freedom for his obedience. In the silence of Oz's mind though, he didn't think he could stand not having Alister touch him.

Alister's hand on Oz's shoulder, then to his hair where it fisted and dragged Oz down with stinging demand. Oz couldn't allow a kiss earlier. Too personal. Too telling. But a taken kiss claimed by a desperate man could be discounted later as a simple step in the path to an orgasm.

The minute his lips touched Alister's, Oz was no longer so certain. His captive had made the demand, but his kiss was soft and questing. Firm, smooth lips molded his. Their noses pressed harshly as Alister pulled him closer still, taking his mouth with determined force and plying Oz's lips until he parted them for air and need.

It was the need that controlled Oz. The zinging thrill of Alister taking his fill, holding Oz in place with one hand, even the light stinging of pulled hair added to an already painful arousal. Body to body, mouth to mouth, lips battling, and finally Alister's tongue sweeping to taste him left Oz aching with emptiness.

He wanted more. He wanted Alister grabbing hold because he chose to, not because he was restrained and seduction seemed the only feasible escape. And Oz wouldn't know, this way. It would always ring of force even though Alister seemed willing.

Cain had handled the situation wrong. They all had. Oz doubted Alister could account for Cassimer any better than Oz could account for one of his brother's actions. Oz could admit he wanted the kidnapping only after he knew Alister was the target because the man was sexy as hell, and he'd jumped at the chance, any chance, of getting near Alister. It had just been a poorly made chance.

This kiss was no step toward mindless orgasm. This kiss invaded Oz in a very personal manner. Alister tasted Oz, savored him, lost control under him and regained it when Oz could no longer pretend they weren't sharing something amazing and gave in to the desire he had tried to keep at bay.

Reaching up, Oz found the second tie and released it. It could be a mistake. He could be the biggest fool for being duped in business then in bed by the same man. Alister could have freedom, and Oz would have been the one to provide it. Then they would have nothing to coerce

Cassimer to confess.

Or fortune could smile upon Oz and shore his heart up with another kind of wealth. Alister cradled Oz's head in both hands. Immobile to the man's desires, Oz simply gave in. Cain would say Oz was a romantic. He looked for hope, even now.

Immeasurable and priceless, Alister could be worth far more than a company lost in the same manner Oz's father had gained it. A thief stealing from the Adamos, the sons of a thief. Whether or not Alister had active participation in the fall of Simsim, he had definitely stolen something that would never leave Oz the same.

Oz reached between them, fisting their cocks in his hand. Pumping them together, Oz reveled in their mingled groans, the sound fueling his urgency. Perhaps more. It rumbled past Oz's tongue and over his throat, exchanging a kiss of souls that the men breathed in and expelled in panting acceptance.

"I want you," Alister whispered.

"I thought you wanted to be freed."

"That can wait. Can't make a captive leave if he doesn't want to," Alister remarked.

Oz kissed Alister's cheek, jaw, then ear, taking the lobe between his lips and drawing on it before releasing it.

"Just tell me about the café, and I'll get you out of here."

## Chapter Five

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Oz's words stung. Well, what had Alister expected? An undying confession of lo—uh—lust? *God, yes.*

His cock held snugly in Oz's hand, rubbing against Oz's cock, might as well have been a tether on Alister's nuts. He wasn't going anywhere. If Oz wanted information, he'd get it so long as Alister got to have sex with him first. If that's all the man wanted, fine.

"Ah fuck, it's *not* fine," Alister moaned, bucking his hips in time with Oz's pumping fist.

"What's not fine?"

The pumping stopped. Alister dragged his nails down Oz's lean, taut back by way of complaint. Oz hissed, shuddered.

"It's not fine. *This* is not fine. Using sex as a weapon isn't *fine*. Using me isn't fine," Alister snarled.

Oz leaned down and captured Alister's nipple, biting lightly. Alister writhed under the exquisite pain until Oz finally pulled off. "I did just say I'd let you go. Fucking isn't a requirement."

The two men stared at each other. Oz released their cocks and shifted to straddle Alister's hips.

Alister's dark-haired lover leaned back. He felt the tugging at first one ankle, then the other. Freedom. He propped up on his elbows and took a good long look at the man who drove him to sexual distraction. Wide shoulders, lean body with no hair to speak of on his torso, or lower, and muscular thighs of a runner. Oz's purple condom-covered cock bobbed sullenly as the man moved off him.

"What are you doing?" Alister asked.

Amusement and confusion touched Oz's lips and gave him a fond, saddened look.

"Letting you go."

"I thought you needed answers."

Oz dragged both his hands through his hair with a beleaguered eye roll. "What is it you want? Freedom or fucking?" He crawled over Alister, shoulders blocking the rest of the room from his sight. "I'll give you either, but one will leave you sore and sated."

Those lips again. His words. Alister wanted to taste them when he said them. "Repeat that for me. Please? I want to make sure I heard you right."

Oz's lips parted to comply and Alister caught him behind the neck, drawing him down.

"Say that to me again. Right here," Alister explained, lip to lip.

"What is it you want, Alister? Freedom? Or a fucking?" Oz's voice dropped off to a rough whisper.

Alister's chest constricted as the soft flutter of the final word tickled his sensitive flesh. He captured that mouth in a kiss, traced the bottom seam with his tongue. "Keep going, Oz. I want you to say all of it. I want to know if it's a threat or a promise."

"Can't," Oz muttered. His mahogany eyes were nearly swallowed by his pupils.

"C'mon, tough guy. You can do it."

Something cold touched Alister's ass, probed the hole, and anticipation expanded Alister's lungs. His balls ached. His dick wanted shelter in Oz's fist. Cool gel lubed Alister's ass and the tip of the nozzle nudged in leaving more of the cool sensation inside.

Oz moved a hand low on his own body told Alister the man had greased his cock too.

All Oz wanted was information, Alister tried to remind himself. The guy was damn dedicated to his brothers. Well, Alister wanted a fuck. Specifically, he wanted Oz's cock buried balls deep, and he wanted to shoot his cum all over Oz's chest. If it was all he had of Oz, a man he suspected could mean a helluva lot more than a one-nighter, he'd take it.

Oz scooted closer. "Open sesame," he teased, probing Alister's tight opening with the head of Oz's wide cock.

Alister threw his leg over the other man and flipped him on his back. Oz levered himself up with his hands behind him, giving Alister time to hold Oz's cock. Alister sank on him, swallowing his own cry of painful protest.

Oz's hips lifted into him instinctively as his head fell back on a harsh grunt.

“I’m taking the plea bargain,” Alister murmured around his continued wince. It burned like fire as he held still, waiting for his body to adjust. He’d remember this moment the next time he rushed anal play.

“Baban, are you schizophrenic? Go. Stay. Fuck. Run.”

The burn of pain gave way to pleasure. “Fucking is my choice. You want to use me, but you can’t take what I freely give you.”

“I won’t complain once you begin moving,” Oz argued.

Alister steadied himself on his knees with the half-reclined Oz between his thighs and Oz’s cock still buried deep. Alister lifted and dropped suddenly. His prostate sang with the pressure. His cock throbbed, needing the other man’s touch.

As though reading his mind, Oz sat up and wrapped his arms tightly around him. Alister’s cock bumped between two muscled planes as he rode. Both a little dry and irregular as a stimulator, it nonetheless amped his excitement.

Oz’s hands sculpted Alister’s back, encouraging him, then reaching between them to pump his shaft and massage his balls. Alister got lost in the rhythm, taking, giving, satisfying. Oz’s inquisitive mouth locked on to Alister’s nipple and probed the bud with the tip of his tongue.

The simple touch dragged him nearly to the edge of orgasm, and anxiety woke him to the reality that Oz remained in control. Alister had topped him, but Oz decimated his power to resist a connection deeper than physical release.

Rebelling, Alister planted his hands on Oz’s shoulders, plying the gorgeous silken flesh backward. “I’m *giving* here, buddy. Don’t make this anything more.” The words were more for himself than Oz.

“I’m going to come,” Oz rasped. “Slow down.”

Alister sank down on his shaft and held. With a grim sense of power and satisfaction, he gripped Oz’s wrists and held them over Oz’s head against the mattress. “Good. Let’s see what you’ve got.”

Unfortunately, it also brought their chests together and Oz’s face within kissing distance. And he wanted to. Badly.

“Not yet,” Oz said, eyes flashing. “Come with me.”

Oz didn't know why he'd said the words. It wasn't as though Alister listened, but more that he was intent upon not feeling. Oz had seen the brief moment of tender indecision just before the hard mask had slid into place.

Oz wanted the tenderness. He had no other resource than his words. He had plenty to say about the appeal of the man on him. But Alister's gaze had clouded, and his supple lips had firmed into a pressed line as he resumed the rapid mounting. Distancing himself to ignore the chemistry between them, as though their bodies and minds weren't connected, didn't sit well with Oz.

It was the romantic in him. Well, it made up the core of him, and integrity dictated he make love with his whole being. Oz wanted the same from Alister. But, God, Oz was so close to coming. The relentless pace was going to empty his balls unless Oz could distract himself.

"Do you know how hot you are?" Oz asked.

Alister's rhythm missed a beat and he frowned, but carried on. The scowl did quite a bit to temper Oz's climax. Oz nearly smiled. He'd get Alister yet.

"Riding me like you can't quit. Your muscular thighs are glistening with sweat on either side of my hips. I can feel them rubbing over my hipbones," Oz continued.

Alister's eyes settled on his, heated and definitely present, but he didn't speak. Oz hissed softly and flexed his shaft on a downward stroke. Oz tried to lift, but he held Alister's gaze as he hoped he communicated longing.

"I feel your balls stroking the base of my cock, Alister. Your whole body comes alive when you make love. So expressive, sensual."

"Shut the fuck up." But the words sounded like those of a desperate man.

"I could come by watching the muscles move under your flesh. The sheen of sweat makes it all visible." Oz struggled to hold back the building tide in his groin. He licked his lips, which had dried from labored breathing.

Alister groaned. His pace slowed as he rocked his hips into more deliberate strokes, nudging a sweet spot with Oz's turgid shaft. He mirrored Oz's action and licked his own lips.

"I love the way you kiss," Oz said softly. The slower movements of Alister's rocking hips lit a pool of fire in his belly that the faster pumps hadn't.

Alister parted his lips. Oz had the distinct impression that Alister was listening. Despite his own fraying attention, Oz found words and kept going.

“You kiss like you’re committed to exploring me. God, I love the way you kiss.”

“I said, shut up.” The words were Alister’s, but they were weak, and Oz had taken more of Alister’s body weight as he sank on Oz instead of kneeling over him as much.

For a moment, with Alister ducking, his breath falling on Oz’s neck and shoulder, Oz was lost in the sensual undulation of flexing hips and clenching thighs. Looking over Alister’s shoulder at the slicked curve of his lower back and minute shifts of muscle along his spine, lingering on the play of similar fine muscles rounding his shoulders, Alister saw the power of love in motion.

Oz raised his head and closed his mouth on Alister shoulder. The faint taste of sweat and man teased his tongue. Immediately, Alister nuzzled Oz’s ear, his breath falling heavy and undeniably shaken as Oz applied himself with tongue and teeth to the spot where neck sinews joined shoulder.

“I’ve wanted to be inside you since I first saw you,” Oz whispered against his neck.

Alister shivered.

Oz continued. “I’ve wanted you inside me. Your mouth on my cock. Your tongue licking my balls, feasting.” Words were becoming more difficult. “I’d let you have me any way you wanted.”

Alister’s cock wept between them. He moaned so softly against Oz’s hair.

“Please stop talking,” Alister breathed. “I can do this easier if you just stop talking.”

“You feel great *with* the talking, too. So good,” Oz confessed.

Alister’s hole squeezed the base of Oz’s shaft. Oz thought he’d lose the battle of wills in another minute. He wanted Alister to come while his defenses were down, and his heart was susceptible.

“I want to see you come. Paint me,” Oz panted as he grazed his teeth on Alister’s neck.

Alister shivered.

“Paint me. Show me what I do to you.”

“Fuck!” Not a command, Alister seemed to curse his own lack of willpower. He rolled, taking Oz with him, until Oz lay on top.

The new position afforded greater ease and deeper penetration. It also put Oz back in control and told him better than words, Alister trusted Oz enough to allow it.

“Now will you shut up?” Alister snapped helplessly, and the emotion in his eyes pleaded



with Oz to not make him feel more than he already did.

“No, baby. I want you too bad to let you clam up,” Oz said. “Let me in.”

“You are *in*.” Alister didn’t think Oz’s wide cock could get any more *in*.

Oz’s chest was damp with exertion. Alister had slowed the momentum, finding the need to experience every inch of Oz’s cock as it nudged over his prostate. Oz continued the lifting thrust, driving Alister’s excitement higher.

The image of shooting all over Oz’s chest, pearl against tan skin, wouldn’t leave him. Alister took his cock in his hand and fucked his fist in time with Oz’s thrusts. Mahogany eyes glowed lustfully as Oz watched himself slam into Alister’s hole then fastened on the appearing and disappearing head inside Alister’s fist.

“Tasted so good,” Oz said, seeming to think back on the blowjob he’d given.

Alister could imagine those gorgeous lips down on him many more times, long black hair cascading around his balls with each throaty swallow from Oz’s glorious mouth. Could imagine his long fingers pumping inside as he did.

Oz’s words made Alister crazy with lust. His dusky voice rolled over the syllables formed by full, defined lips. Oz talking made intoxicating foreplay. Oz talking during a fuck, words and cock penetrating simultaneously, brought Alister to pounding, driving need.

The pace quickened. Oz’s breath came in sharp short bursts as arousal rode him, and Alister watched it play out on his chiseled features. Words forgotten, it was only the dance of bodies in time with their gasps and slapping flesh which filled Alister’s head. That and the vision of the man doing his best to bring Alister off first without coming too soon.

He could see it on Oz. Oz wanted to please him, and something inside Alister cracked the stubbornness enough to want to give in.

Heat wound like a coil. Each slap of Oz’s balls thrummed it tighter. Alister was close. Oz’s face contorted with effort.

“I want you. Alister,” Oz pleaded. “Show me you want me.”

The coil sprung. Alister bellowed. Searing cum shot in forceful spurts across Oz’s gleaming chest. Still pumping his cock as he spurted, Oz cried out. Alister’s ass tingled in the renewed vigor of his lover’s bucking hips.

Oz came in slamming thrusts. Tender bliss radiated from Oz’s gaze with the fearlessness

of raw emotion. It touched a quiet part of Alister's soul. A gift.

He needed to give Oz something in return.

"You're amazing," Oz said with a soft smile.

He dropped down on top of Alister. Their sweaty chests and pounding hearts brought a smile to him. Oz smiled back, touched a finger to Alister's lips.

"Reed and Jeret were at the café with two other businessmen. They were talking about a new product that sounded promising. I told my uncle." Alister's words spilled out in a rush. Oz wanted the information. Right now, Alister would give him anything.

Oz's expression tightened marginally.

The confession wouldn't incriminate anybody, but the Adamo brothers had worked hard to get it. Oz in particular, he thought with a warm glow. Alister could give him the café.

"I tell you I think you're amazing, and you say *that*?" Oz replied slowly.

"You wanted to know who was in the café." Alister tried to make out what he was seeing in Oz's expression. It didn't look like pleasure. "What's wrong?"

"You think this was all for a confession?"

Alister didn't understand the cool tone. "That was the deal."

"I didn't realize you were a gigolo," Oz said.

"If I'm a gigolo, you sold me," Alister snapped.

Calmly Oz extracted himself, being careful to hold the base of the condom. He turned his face away, reaching back across the bed for a towel and one of the tissues he'd placed there when he'd been readying the room. Oz wrapped up the condom, swiped his chest with the towel, then tossed it to Alister.

The bedroom door opened and Cain stood there for a minute. Alister didn't care. His attention was devoted to Oz. He vaguely registered that Oz nodded at his brother and Cain left.

"You're free to go," Oz said, roughly.

Confused, Alister watched him leave the bed and go into the bathroom. He thought he should leave, maybe, but leaving was the last thing he wanted to do at the moment. He wanted to make Oz smile.

Which was stupid.

Alister had been kidnapped, tied up, tied down, seduced, questioned, then tossed aside. He should be itching to get the hell out of there. Yet the pain in Oz's voice with the casually

tossed freedom scraped at Alister's conscience.

He was halfway to the bathroom door before he realized it. He rapped on the door. "Hey. Can we talk about this?" *Lame. Totally lame. Can we talk about this? Like they were dating and had a misunderstanding.*

That's when he realized the water had been running in the bathroom because it stopped abruptly. Two beats later, the door opened and Oz leaned against the frame with his arms folded over his chest. The darkly attractive man raised his eyebrows.

"And say what?" he prompted.

Alister felt like a fool. Out of sorts and like a complete ass who'd hurt someone's feelings. Hadn't *he* been the one called a man-whore? So instead of saying anything and confirming that he didn't have a clue as to the problem, he shrugged. "I don't know. Stuff."

*Oh, fuck! Really? Stuff?*

"It was never about the information," Oz said.

"Of course not. That's why you four abducted me, tied me up, and tried to seduce information from me. They used their best man." Alister waved a hand in Oz's direction. "The one they knew would get to me."

Oz's eyes sharpened on him. "I got to you then. Good."

"What? No," he denied suddenly. "I mean the one who could get information you wanted. Well, you got it. I even gave it to you."

"As payment," Oz reminded.

Alister felt distinctly uncomfortable. "A *gift*."

Oz's arms unfolded. "You didn't tell me about the café as repayment for my fucking skills?"

*Was this a test? Next he's going to ask if his being naked makes his butt look big.* But he knew what Oz meant. "No."

He needed to touch Oz. He lifted his hand and rested his palm on Oz's chest. The skin was damp. He'd washed up, which made Alister want to shoot all over him again to put things back the way they were just minutes ago.

Oz covered Alister's hand with his own. "I knew Jeret and Reed were involved with something. I didn't know what, but during our talk, I figured this might be it. If you had information to give, we wanted it. If you didn't, you were a temporarily waylaid guest."

“Cassimer?” Alister asked, hoping he’d explain further.

“Took advantage of a ripe situation. That’s all. I’m sorry, but my information doesn’t show Cassimer is clever enough to have worked it out alone. Others had to be involved and I needed confirmation.”

“And what, Cain is an ass for sheer enjoyment?” Alister asked, feeling surly.

“Cain knows, too. I told him to let me have a chance at you first, before involving you any more than necessary. Cain got what he needed from my brothers and your uncle, though. That’s why he looked in earlier to give me a thumbs-up.”

“I was tied,” Alister said, feeling played.

The first full smile parted Oz’s lips. Gorgeous, cock-sucking, kissable lips.

“Indeed.” Oz’s heavy lidded gaze swept over Alister, and his dick stirred. “Fantasy of mine, actually.”

“Shit, Oz. You could make a guy come with a smile like that.” Alister stepped into him, rose up the half inch to reach, and took Oz’s smiling mouth.

“Only one guy I’m interested in making come. I’m expecting it to be deep inside my ass.”

“Why the kidnapping?” Alister asked, tucking his head under Oz’s jaw to drop a kiss there too.

“Mostly to trick my little brothers and scare your uncle into giving Cain the account details. The added benefit was getting your attention in a way you couldn’t ignore,” Oz murmured. He pointed to his collarbone. “Right there.”

Alister obliged, placing a kiss where Oz pointed. Oz touched to his right nipple next. Alister kissed that too, taking time to savor it.

“I should be really mad,” Alister said around the tasty bud.

Oz cupped the back of his head, pressing him firmly to the puckered tip. Alister chuckled.

“You’re not mad. You’re hard. I feel your cock sexually harassing mine.”

Alister let go of the nipple. “And I thought you were in the bathroom sulking.”

A wicked grin widened Oz’s smile and gave it a cheeky edge. He took the hand he’d been covering and drew it around Oz’s side and low. Then lower. Alister’s fingers traced Oz’s crack and slid inside. He expected to find a tight, velvety rosette. Instead, his fingertips bumped hard plastic.

“A butt-plug?” Alister asked, intrigued.

Oz laughed. "I was preparing to come back out here and show you how wrong you were about what I wanted from you, if you stayed." He'd hoped Alister would stay, but Oz wanted him of his own free will.

He wanted a future with the man, and that meant Oz had to test the bond that had surpassed physical climax to reveal a connection Oz had hoped they shared. He had to give Alister his unobstructed freedom. If he wanted it.

"I'm not going anywhere now."

Oz's heart swelled at the promised words. Had he been right? Had Alister felt it too? "For how long?" Oz asked, suddenly serious, anxious.

Alister dropped down on his knees. He nuzzled Oz's hairless sack before licking the underside length of his cock. Placing a kiss on the damp tip, he looked up at Oz. "You stole my heart, thief. I'm not going anywhere until you free it, too."

Alister moved to take Oz's cock in his mouth, seemingly eager as the plump tip touched his lips. Oz lowered a hand to his shoulder, needing Alister to be sure. "A thief keeps his treasures close to his greedy heart."

Oz's plum-colored tip disappeared into exquisite, sucking warmth. He stared into the eyes of his lover, who looked back at him unabashed. Love stole Oz's breath through the simple, quiet openness of Alister's acceptance. His lover pulled away and rose to his feet.

"Were you expecting me to protest?" Alister kissed him again. Teasing, expert lips dragged a moan from Oz. "C'mon. This treasure wants to show you how much he likes the idea of being yours."

"How are you going to show me?" Oz teased.

"What was it you said to me? Oh yeah." Alister pulled him over to the bed and flipped Oz to his back. Alister hooked him behind the knee and lifted, exposing the plug Oz had inserted. Alister covered Oz's body with his. Gazes locked, Oz could only feel the gentle tap of fingers to the plastic plug and see the mischievous glint in his lover's eyes. "Open sesame."

## *About the Author*

Mia makes her home in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she divides her time between a job and spying on people. Mia enjoys long walks in Como Park, daisies, dancing in the snow...(Delete prior sentence, meant for personal ad)...

Mr. Perfect may apply in person for a thorough evaluation and trial. All others will be towed.

Mia loves to talk to her readers and can be found at [www.MiaWatts.com](http://www.MiaWatts.com).

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Eddie Harrington has never lacked for partners in his pleasure games. But for some reason, Eleanor is the one woman he can't get out of his head. She is definitely not the type he usually pursues. Then he sees her at a bar, looking like his wildest fantasy. And one night with her is not going to be enough. The man who never commits just might have met his match—until a mistake from his past forces her to choose between trusting him and walking away.

***Sex Ed* by Mia Watts**

Mina Lasky has a pesky crush on Biology professor, Derek Link. They've worked in tandem in the same University facility long enough that even the sound of his voice makes her hot. It's time to put the fantasy to an end. Mina signs up to be his guinea pig in a female sexuality lab for those on the doctorate track. She hopes to work Derek out of her system while enjoying some much-needed sexual stimulation.

Dr. Derek Link has been itching to get his hands on the quiet, sexy Chemistry professor. He can't believe his luck when she signs up to be his lab. But one night isn't enough and Mina won't admit they can have something a lot more long term.

And when one of the students recognizes Mina, her heart isn't the only thing on the line. With her career in the hands of a blackmailer, and her heart begging to trust Derek, she's beginning to think the lab was a very bad idea.

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Though Chris reluctantly gets in touch with his feminine side, he quickly finds ways of making his sexy partner squirm. And Vin is definitely squirming, but will he run away from his faux wife, or right into “her” arms?

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Dr. Wesley Carpenter cannot believe that the younger Sean Harris would want anything to do with him. After half-heartedly turning down the advances of his patient, he realizes that resistance is futile.

The men find themselves falling for each other quickly, but ghosts from their pasts and outside influences try to get in the way of their happiness. Sean and Wesley may be on the island forever, but neither is sure if that guarantees they'll be able to continue their *Tropical Hedonism*.

***Saving Noah* by Carol Lynne and Cash Cole**

Dexter Krispin arrived in the small Kansas town of Schicksal with one thing on his mind: finishing his doctoral thesis. He hoped getting away from his hectic life in Pittsburgh would allow him to concentrate on the long overdue paper and to forget about his last lover.

Life-long Schicksal resident, Noah Stoffel, has managed to keep his sexuality a secret. Yet, after one look at the dark-haired newcomer, he knows his life in the sleepy town will never be the same.

But more than Noah's desire for privacy stands between him and Dexter. For years, the residents of Schicksal have been hiding a horrific secret, one that takes Dexter mere days to uncover and expose...a secret that could destroy—or heal—they all.

### ***In For a Penny by Carol Lynne***

What's the old saying...you can never go home again? Raven Black resigned himself to never returning after being ordered from the only real home he'd ever known. Now, seven years later, Raven is back to face the man who sent him away.

Zane Conner is not only Raven's foster brother but the only man Raven ever loved. Despite his mixed feelings about the situation, Raven can't deny Zane when the older man asks for his help in saving the Lazy C Bar Ranch. A boy found dead on the ranch clinches Raven's decision.

Why did the young boy look so much like he had at that age—the same age he'd been when his own father had beaten him and left him for dead?

### ***Mind F\*cked by Mia Watts***

Sage has the ability to read minds, but only in high passion moments when thoughts transmit at a higher frequency. But the gift is double-edged. Sage is inordinately handsome. Some might even say he's a walking orgasm. So what's a half-breed to do when every person he meets seems intent on seducing him, and how will he know if the man he chooses will love him for more than his looks?

Joe has never been the object of anyone's lust before. Now Sage, the hottest guy he's ever laid eyes on, has Joe starring in his sexual fantasies. It would be perfect if only Sage could shut up for one minute, and quit talking about his own hotness—or about how he can read minds.

Meanwhile, Joe and Sage must secure the last three Zodiac Stones and prevent their theft while they wait for exhibition. Can they put their sexual tension aside long enough to stop a clever thief? And even if they do, will Joe's heart be a casualty of their inevitable fling, or could Sage really be looking for more than a one-night stand?

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