

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

MARILU MANN

Sweet Buns

ELLORA'S CAVE *Quickies*®

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Sweet Buns

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SWEET BUNS

Marilu Mann

Dedication

This story is lovingly dedicated to the memory of a lovely young lady.

Lara Anne Punches

10/4/1989 to 2/12/2009

You touched the hearts of more people in your short nineteen years on earth than
you could have ever imagined possible.

Author Note

May this tale of passion encourage everyone who has ever faced uncertain change.
Follow your dreams, listen to your heart and take that next step.

Chapter One

Gary woke up flat on his back, buck naked and with a woman's candy-apple red high-heeled shoe dangling from his toes. This had definitely been no ordinary candy conference. Struggling to remember what had happened the night before just caused his head to explode. Okay, not really explode, but the way it felt it might as well have. He vaguely remembered wandering around Times Square, seeing all his favorite places in this part of the city, running into a few of the other *Sweet Days*, *Sugary Nights* conference attendees and going to some bar in the Village with them. Now he couldn't find his clothes, his wallet or his common sense.

Wherever he was, it wasn't the hotel room his company had paid for. For one thing, there were gauzy scarves hanging all over the top of the four-poster bed and the walls were painted a dark purple. He could hear a murmur of voices from the next room and prayed it was a radio or TV and that he hadn't involved himself with something he'd have a hard time explaining to his boss—or his coworkers who'd also come to the convention.

Rolling experimentally to one side, he discovered that his head would definitely stay on his shoulders, and that it wasn't really going to exchange places with his stomach any time soon. Sitting up was a treat—it caused the room to spin wildly until he closed his eyes and leaned forward a bit. He jerked back upright, yanking the sheet over his lap when the door opened. The woman standing there didn't look surprised to see him, so he figured this must be her place. Only problem with that was he had absolutely *no* recollection of *her* at all! And a woman like this, he damn sure thought he would have remembered.

Statuesque, that was what came to mind, with hair the color of good caramel and eyes like licorice. He couldn't help it if he thought in terms of candy. It had been his life

for a very long time. She smiled as she entered the room, holding a glass of water and something in a cup that steamed, teasing his nose with a familiar but not immediately recognizable scents.

"Well, good morning, handsome. I heard you groan and thought you might be stirring. Here, water first then some of my homemade hangover remedy." She handed him the glass and watched as he drank it down, then they exchanged glass for cup. Gary sniffed experimentally at the cup, but all he could really smell was peppermint.

"Just drink it, sweetie. It'll settle your stomach and help with the headache."

"Thanks." He met her eyes again and smiled a bit. "Mind if I ask a dumb question?"

"Go ahead." She sat on the bed beside him, stroking her hand through his hair then rubbing the back of his neck.

"Where am I?"

She laughed softly. "You're at my place."

Her hand felt good on his neck. He leaned toward her a bit as she went on. "In the Village. You insisted on walking me home then collapsed in the hallway. Took me and two of my neighbors to get you in here and in the bed."

"And where are my clothes?" He relaxed with the motion of her hand on his neck and the peppermint concoction she'd given him. The throbbing in his head began to slide away.

"Well, you tossed your tie out my living room window when you first woke up. Told me you weren't going to ever wear it again. As to the rest, when you started stripping down, I just picked up after you and put everything over there in the bathroom. I thought that'd be the first place you went when you woke up."

"Thank you. Again. One more question."

"Ask away."

"Please don't take this the wrong way, but who are you?"

"My name is Felicity Stokes. I own a small bakery and you and your friends

stumbled in around four, right after I opened. You kept insisting on finding ‘that smell’. No one else seemed to know what you were talking about.”

Gary felt his eyes widen. “I remember. The smell. It was like cinnamon and honey and nutmeg. I followed my nose to your bakery. What were you making this morning that smelled like that?”

“My secret recipe sweet buns, and no, I won’t give you the recipe today, either.” Felicity kept her smile as she got to her feet. “Take as long as you need, Gary. I’ll have coffee in the kitchen when you’re ready for it.”

Felicity left the room wearing a pair of dark purple heels that looked a lot like the red one he’d woken up with. How any woman could walk in those things, he’d never know, but they damn sure made Felicity’s legs look fantastic. Of course, she didn’t really need the help—the woman had stolen her body from Venus.

Stumbling to the bathroom, he met his own blood-red eyes in the mirror and groaned. The short haircut he’d gotten right before coming to the conference was a blessing—it was *supposed* to look like a porcupine had given him birth. The stubble on his cheeks and the taste in his mouth would both have to go, though. Looking around, he spotted a razor on the sink right next to a new toothbrush still in its packaging. Felicity definitely deserved goddess status for her hospitality. Not only that, he *really* wanted that recipe. Well, that and maybe to know how many pairs of those amazing shoes she had. Not to mention how she wore them so confidently and carelessly.

Running both hands through his hair, he thought about this trip to Manhattan. For the past four years he’d been working in sales for the Juicy Joyful Candy Company. Though he’d been blessed with the ability to determine the ingredients in almost any dish with just one taste, no chef would hire him because he lacked culinary experience. Being in his mid-thirties he thought it a bit late to start a new career by going to culinary school. Marketing other people’s creations had become his life—though in reality it felt more like his prison. His dream was to create with food the way others put color on canvas. Still, in his current circumstance, this conference was important to his future in

the company.

Brushing his teeth and then taking the time to scrape the razor over his face to remove all traces of stubble, Gary felt almost human again. He stepped into the shower, bathing quickly and rinsing off before steam had time to fill the small bathroom. Pulling on last night's clothes wasn't the best feeling, but it beat heading back to the hotel bare-assed. Gary left the bathroom and made his way through the bedroom into a narrow living room. The furniture looked comfortable with the same variety of color that filled the bedroom resting here. Colorful, charming and inviting—the surroundings reminded him of the scents of Felicity's baked goods. Obviously she gave as much thought to her physical surroundings as she did her cooking. Both were downright tantalizing—like the woman herself.

Somehow, some way, he needed to get his hands on that recipe. With that in his arsenal, he could ensure his standing in the Juicy Joyful hierarchy. If he could spend more time with the gorgeous brunette currently bending over to pull something out of the oven—so much the better. She not only had a generous heart, but the sexiest ass and legs he'd ever encountered. It had to be those shoes—the high spikes forced her feet into an interesting arch and highlighted the muscles in her legs. The skirt she wore drifted around her knees, the hem uneven, the colors vibrant and inviting. He sighed happily.

"There you are." Felicity smiled as she straightened—putting the tray she'd pulled out of the oven on a cooling rack. The same aroma that had enticed him into her bakery reached his nose again and Gary inhaled strongly.

"Oh my god, that smell..." Drawn closer, he didn't even realize he'd wrapped his arm around Felicity until she turned slightly toward him. Her action brought his attention away from the sweet buns and back to the woman in his arms. With the high heels she sported, they were almost the same height, and her licorice eyes sparkled at him. "Felicity, what is it?"

"I told you, sugar, it's a secret." She winked at him, put her hand on his chest and

kissed him.

Sweet buns forgotten, Gary pulled her closer and deepened the kiss. Felicity touched the tip of her tongue to his mouth. He parted his lips and let her sweetness in. Her tongue slipped past his teeth and withdrew and Gary followed it back into her mouth. She sucked softly and Gary felt himself groaning. He pulled her even closer, tugging her hips forward and putting both hands on that delectable ass.

Felicity's hands moved up over his shoulders and her fingers curled into his hair. The kiss was more than he'd anticipated and yet not nearly enough. Gary backed up until he hit the wall then pulled Felicity closer so that she stood between his legs. The scent of the woman blended perfectly with the scintillating aroma of her sweet buns and he was lost. She tasted of coffee and mint toothpaste and smelled like sin and cinnamon.

Running his hands up her back, Gary tangled his fingers in her hair and tugged slightly. Felicity obliged by tilting her head back so he could reach her neck. Her alluring fragrance was stronger here and he could feel her pulse beating against his open mouth. Gary wanted to devour her, one lick at a time.

She wasn't standing idle, either. Felicity ran her hands down his sides to his hips and then around to his ass. She gave him a squeeze as he nibbled on her neck, then she pulled away a bit. "Gary?"

Opening his eyes and trying to clear his lust-filled brain, Gary stared into those nearly black eyes. "Felicity?"

"Just for the sake of clearing the air, I'm not going to let you seduce the secret of my sweet buns out of me."

"Felicity, that hadn't even crossed my mind. Right now I'm much more interested in discovering more about you, learning your sweet ass – not about your sweet buns."

Ignoring her laughter, he slanted his mouth across hers, teasing her mouth open again. He cupped her ass to pull her into him. Her soft sigh as she yielded to the pressure of his lips sent waves of lust through him. His cock hardened as she shifted

against him. The soft push of her breasts tempted his hands away from her hair. She arched into him as his thumb stroked across her nipple.

He leaned back from her, enjoying the slightly dazed look of an aroused woman. "Just for the sake of clearing the air, I'm not going to make love to you just for a taste of your sweet buns."

Her laughter bubbled through him like champagne. "The buns can wait. I can't."

Gary's answer was to scoop her into his arms. "I think I remember where the bedroom is."

"Well, I'm sure I can give you directions if you don't." She continued to laugh as he carried her out of the kitchen.

He made his way back through the narrow living room and toward the decadent bedroom. His goal was on navigating the hallway without slamming Felicity's head into one of the walls, but he couldn't help but focus on the sweet-smelling bundle in his arms. For her part, Felicity seemed intent on making him drop her and take her on the braided rug. Her teeth scraped across his neck while her hands wove wonders into his hair. The feel of her nails raking across his scalp nearly won her the position on the floor but he managed to make it to the bedroom.

Kicking the door open with one foot, Gary growled. "My wallet? Where is it?"

She pointed at the nightstand. "In the drawer."

"Good." He gently laid her on the comforter then grabbed his billfold to retrieve a foil-wrapped package. "I'm going to need this."

"Yes, yes you are." Holding her arms up to him she pulled him down atop her. "And I have more of those in my bathroom. Haven't needed them in a while."

Gary saw it as it happened. "Shhh, now isn't the time to think. If we think, we'll stop. I don't want to stop, do you?"

The shake of her head was all he needed. He pulled his shirt off first then hers so he could taste her skin. Her flesh-toned bra drew his gaze and his fingers, the lace

showcasing rather than hiding her nipples. Her hair glided against him like silk, sending icy shivers up and down his spine. He wanted to wrap that hair around his wrists like handcuffs and watch her suck his cock. He wanted to follow that tantalizing scent to its source and lick her from head to toe.

Felicity wriggled under him and Gary grinned. He slid his mouth down her neck as he helped her rid herself of the multicolored skirt. Their hands met at his waistband and together they pushed his pants and boxer briefs off. Gary rolled with Felicity, pulling her on top of him and running his hands down her back, unhooking her bra before sliding his hands down to her ass. She shrugged out of the bra and he felt soft skin, soft breasts pressing against his chest and...something kept him from feeling that luscious ass. Silky cloth...not a thong then, but not much bigger than one—the material barely covered her.

Putting his hands on her shoulders, Gary gently eased Felicity up so that she straddled his waist. She smiled as she cupped her breasts as though offering them to him. Gary watched as Felicity tugged on her own nipples, pulling them taut, teasing herself even as she rocked slightly on him. His gaze slipped down her body to see black silk covering her pussy. Sliding his hands up her thighs, Gary let his thumbs meet right where the lacy triangle covered her sweet creamy center, pressing in slightly and rubbing until he felt moisture leaking through the black material.

With a wicked grin, he rolled them again, placing himself squarely between her widespread legs. "Felicity, honey, these have got to go."

"Agreed." Without another word, and with an absolutely wicked smile, she lifted her hips slightly and closed her legs as much as she was able. Gary got to his feet, laughing, and pulled them the rest of the way off. He couldn't remember the last time he'd had this much fun in the bedroom. Felicity seemed to be as lighthearted and carefree about sex as he frequently was. He'd had his share of lovers but never really wanted to get too serious with any of them. Unfortunately not many women went for that. They started looking for the picket fence and two-point-five kids on the second or

third date.

Since he and Felicity weren't dating, neither of them had massive expectations—he hoped. Gary shook his head. There he went, doing exactly what he'd told her not to do—thinking too much. Forcing his attention back to the lovely feast spread before him, Gary lifted one of Felicity's legs. The purple high-heeled shoe drew his gaze and his hands. Stroking across the arch of her foot with just his fingertips, Gary grinned then leaned forward to kiss Felicity's ankle. She gave that chuckle again—inciting him to trail his lips up her leg.

Reaching her thigh, he tugged her leg around and jerked a little when her heel scraped across his naked ass. Turning his body slightly, he lifted her other leg so he could kiss his way up that one as well. Again, when he reached her thigh, she wrapped her leg around him. This time, however, Gary didn't stop. Using his thumbs, he parted her pussy lips, blowing gently on the neatly trimmed hair there. Thankful she didn't shave or wax it all away like some women did, Gary trailed his tongue over her cunt, tasting and delving inside before coming back out to lift her clit slightly with the edge of his tongue. Felicity moaned under him, lifting her pussy up to his mouth. Her heels dug into his ass again.

Gary let go of her with one hand to reach down and stroke his cock. Pre-cum leaked out and he smoothed it into the head of his dick. Still using one hand to hold her pussy open, he timed his licks with his strokes, dipping his tongue inside her sweetness, drawing her moisture out and getting her good and wet. Felicity writhed under him, her hands firmly buried in his hair and her heels digging into his ass.

Letting go of his cock, but not taking his mouth off her, Gary fumbled around on the bed, reaching for the condom he'd dropped there. Felicity helped, grabbing it before he did. He raised his gaze to meet hers and she smiled as she ripped the packet open. Gary held his hand out for the condom, but Felicity shook her head.

"Come up here, sweetie."

"You taste so fucking good, I don't want to stop." To prove his point, Gary licked

her again. Felicity laughed and rubbed her fingers against his scalp.

“Come on, Gary, I want you inside me. I want you to fuck me.”

He didn’t need any more incentive. Sliding up her body, kissing as he went, Gary took the condom away from her, rising up just enough to slide it on. Felicity reached between them to guide him inside. “Fuck, now!”

With his gaze firmly glued to hers, Gary thrust hard and fast into Felicity. She arched beneath him, digging into his ass again with her shoes. Dragging his cock almost all the way out, he eased back in, earning himself a wrenching pull of his hair.

“Harder.” Felicity held tightly to his biceps with one hand, keeping the other wrapped in his hair. She lifted her hips under him and Gary lost it. Plunging deep, high and hard, he reached between them to stroke her clit with his thumb as he fucked her for all he was worth.

Felicity bucked under him, dislodging him from her body completely and then sat up. Pushing on his chest, she forced him backward until she could get her legs under her. She turned in the bed, presenting him with her gorgeous backside. Putting her hands on the bed, she looked at him over her shoulder. “Well, what are you waiting for?”

Gary took the invitation. Plunging his rod deep into her body, grabbing her hips as she leaned forward on her elbows. His thrusts pushed her up in the bed. Felicity let her shoulders drop to the bed, reaching back between her own legs and stroking her clit. Sliding her hand back even farther, she pressed against the underside of his cock with his every slide out of her body.

Releasing one hip, Gary sucked on his forefinger, getting it good and wet before opening Felicity’s ass cheeks and rimming her rosebud. He had to alter his own thrusts, but was rewarded when she groaned and moved her hand back to her clit. He felt her strokes increase as he slowly slipped his finger into her ass, rotating it slightly. Felicity went still for several heartbeats then she pushed herself back hard. Taking that as a good sign, Gary started moving again. She met him eagerly, shoving her body back

toward him, meeting each of his thrusts with one of her own. Feeling his balls starting to draw up, Gary pushed his finger deeper even as he increased his strokes into her body, wanting, needing her to come before him, with him, anything, but needing her to come so he could. Felicity shoved back hard, stilled again and cried out. He felt her squeezing his cock, her contractions fueling his own and he let go. Pushing deep inside her warmth, Gary felt his cock twitching, felt his cum spurting into the condom and shivered from his heels all the way up to the base of his neck.

Aftershocks held him immobile for a bit, then he slowly pulled both his finger and his cock out of her body. Felicity fell forward so that she lay flat on the bed, then as he reached for tissues to dispose of the condom, she rolled onto her side to watch him. Gary leaned forward for a kiss then got off the bed, his legs weak. Stumbling into the bathroom, he tossed the spent condom in the garbage and grabbed the washcloth he'd used earlier. Turning on the warm water, he used the cloth to clean up, then grabbed another one off the shelf and brought it back to Felicity.

She lay just where he'd left her, a beautiful smile on her face and her hair slightly tangled. Gary gently ran the warm wet cloth between her legs and around her ass, then leaned forward and placed a soft kiss at the top of her mound. Her hand in his hair tugged him up so she could wrap her arm around him and snuggle up against his chest. Their breath mingled as they lay there, gazing at one another. Gary tilted Felicity's head up slightly for a kiss. She met him eagerly, then trailed her fingers over his face.

"I wanted that when you first started stripping last night. Every piece of clothing you took off made me anxious to see the rest of your body and when I finally saw it all, I wanted you." She touched his mouth as she smiled into his astounded face. He wasn't exactly *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, but he also didn't have women throwing themselves at him because of his looks. To have someone as gorgeous as Felicity anxious to have him caused his chest to swell—and her hand trailing down his body caused the rest of him to try to rise to the occasion as well.

She laughed as she felt him trying to harden again. "Well, well. Looks like

somebody is getting up and with a little attention might be raring to go again soon."

"Where are those condoms?"

"Bathroom, under the sink. Don't worry. My girlfriends bought them for me last month as a joke."

"Don't move, I'll be right back." Gary backed toward the bathroom. "You're so amazingly sexy. I've never seen anything so gorgeous in my life as you right now."

Felicity laughed and a gorgeous blush covered her neck and chest. She truly seemed to be glowing from the inside out. Gary made it into the bathroom without taking his eyes off her, then focused on the task at hand. Grabbing the box of condoms from the cabinet under the sink, he returned to the bedroom. Felicity lay there, one hand on her abdomen, the other up by her face and those gorgeous legs in those sexy shoes slightly spread, one knee bent.

Grinning as he rejoined her, Gary came down on the bed for a kiss. Felicity smiled back at him, he felt it against his mouth.

"Hi."

"Hi yourself."

"Miss me?"

"Of course." Felicity laughed out loud as he bounced on the bed. She rolled onto her side to stroke one hand over his chest and down to trail her fingertips over his cock. "Why were you gone so long?"

He stared hard at her for just a second before realizing that she was still teasing him. "It's the size of this place. I got lost."

"I'll draw you a map." With that, she lowered her head and started kissing his chest. Gary let his head fall back as he curled his fingers into that gorgeous caramel-colored hair. Felicity nuzzled and suckled at his chest until she reached one of his nipples.

"Let's call this one," she gave his left nipple a slow roll of her tongue, "the front

door. If you come straight in, you will find the living room. Here.”

Gary groaned as her teeth bit at his other nipple, causing his fingers to tighten in her hair, then suckled him again. His cock screamed for attention but she didn’t stray from her cartography of his body.

“Now then, if you slide down this hall, what do you think you find?”

Lifting her head she smiled at him then trailed her tongue down his chest to his navel. His ears were ringing as he gasped under her torturous journey. “What? What do you find?”

“I love bellybuttons like yours. It’s not really an ‘innie’ or an ‘outie’, but somewhere in between. But you know what the best part about it is?” Felicity trailed one finger over his navel, teasing and continuing to arouse as he shook his head slowly. “Oh, and for my purposes? It’s the kitchen where you put things in and out.”

She tantalized his stomach by pressing against him with her mouth while blowing softly.

“The best part is that it’s the start of the happy trail. And you know where that leads, right?” With that, she tickled her way down the path of hair leading from his navel to his cock. Gary held his breath until she sucked the head of his cock into her mouth, then he arched slightly under her as he put his head back and closed his eyes.

Groaning, he forced words out. “Felicity, you’re killing me here. Where, baby? Where?”

Felicity licked her way down his shaft then nuzzled under his balls. She nibbled her way over to his thigh, then sucked hard enough to leave a mark. Gary wrapped her hair around his wrists, much as he’d fantasized earlier. Felicity took him deep in her throat, then slowly slid him out.

“My favorite place other than the kitchen, handsome. The bedroom.” Caramel hair swung forward as she nibbled her way around his cock. Her lips felt like velvet suckling at his balls as she stroked her way up and down his cock, rubbing the pre-cum into the head then licking her way around his shaft. She sucked on him until he thought

his head would explode for the second time in one day. When she moved off his cock, he tried to fist his hands in her hair. He lay back at her laughing, "No, Gary. I need something else."

As she ripped the foil packet open with her teeth, he sent up a prayer of thanks to whatever had sent him stumbling into her bakery. She sheathed him in the condom and impaled herself on his cock.

He arched under her as Felicity started riding him. She braced herself on his chest as she rocked back and forth, up and down. She varied her motions just enough to keep him off guard. Because he couldn't anticipate her next action, Gary became mesmerized just watching her move. The feel of her body encompassing his was nearly more than he could stand. The look on her face, the expression and the pleasure drew him in totally.

Felicity leaned back and her hair brushed his thighs. He stroked his thumb over her center, finding her clit and pinching it gently. She jerked upright, gasping out a laugh. Shaking her finger at him, she leaned forward, trapping his hand between their bodies. Gary could feel her pulse in her clit. Felicity leaned even farther forward, holding her breast with one hand, offering him a taste of heaven. He wasn't going to resist that. Lifting his head, Gary latched on to her nipple, suckling hard then swirling his tongue around the nubby point. Felicity pushed forward, and he took her up on that invitation too. Drawing as much of her breast into his mouth as he could, then letting her pull back so that just her nipple remained in his mouth. Gently nipping her breast, then closing his teeth on her until she yanked on his hair. Felicity pulled her breast out of his mouth with an audible pop, then leaned to the other side so her neglected breast could get the same treatment.

Her hot channel gripped his cock with pulsing muscle movements. As he pulled more of her soft tit into his mouth, she rewarded him with a harder flex of those interior walls. He groaned as his cock responded with an answering jerk. But she didn't move. Instead she raked nails down his chest, making his nipples tingle. He flicked the peak in

his mouth with his tongue then used one hand to roll the other one between two fingers.

With both her nipples now hard points and, from the way she gasped when he lightly pinched her, very sensitive, Felicity sat up again. Bracing herself on his chest again, Felicity rode him hard and fast, bouncing up and down on his body, pleasing herself. Gary slid one hand down and held his cock at the base, his other hand on her hip, helping rock her forward on every downward thrust. She found the perfect rhythm and moaned softly, her hands moving from his chest to her own breasts then up and through her hair.

Gary let go of his cock then lightly pinched her clit again. His other hand did the same to one of her jutting nipples. Felicity gasped and he actually felt her go over. She shuddered as she arched impossibly farther back. Gary caught her as she slumped forward. Her head nestled under his chin as though they'd done this a thousand times, her breath panting over his chest. Sliding his hands down her back to cup her gorgeous ass, he held her still as he pumped his hips, shoving his cock hard and fast into her. Felicity's response was to dig her nails into his chest where her hands were trapped between them, and to bite his shoulder.

The sting of her teeth spurred him on, and he moved harder and faster into her, digging his heels into the mattress. His own release caught him almost by surprise, rushing practically from his feet to his cock and then sending tingles all the way up to the back of his skull. She shuddered on top of him and he realized she'd come again. He went completely boneless underneath her, but still held tightly to her ass, and Felicity lifted her head to stare at him.

"Wow."

"Wow?"

"I can't find more words." She kissed him then, a sweet kiss that caused his breath to catch. Gary opened his mouth to speak, but stopped when a familiar sound reached him. He finally catalogued the sound as his cell phone ringtone. Felicity's eyes widened

as the oldies song *Sugar, Sugar* filled the room.

Laughing, he rolled to his side, keeping her tucked against him as he fumbled around in the drawer where she'd left his wallet and where he'd seen his phone earlier.

The laughter faded when he heard the voice. His coworker and nemesis, Susan, demanding to know where he was and shrieking at him to get his lazy ass back to the hotel pronto because she wasn't going to do the presentation alone.

"Yeah, I'll be there as soon as I can." Ending the call, Gary sighed loudly.

Felicity cast a curious glance his way but asked no questions seeming to prefer snuggling against him. He answered her anyway. "My coworker apparently can't handle a simple presentation alone. She's in the trees right now so I have to get back to the hotel. Did I mention that I'm here for a candy conference?"

"I don't remember you saying that, but I'm glad." She wriggled her ass against his cock. "You can come back later, you know."

Gary grinned as he kissed her shoulder. "I'm planning on it. Now can you help me find the rest of my clothes? I guess I'll have to buy a tie on the way back."

The sound of her burbling giggles infected him too. They both lay in the bed for a few more moments, indulging in nothing more than good old-fashioned hilarity. It made him feel better than he'd felt in a long time. Then Felicity helped him get dressed. He refused her offer to drive him back to the hotel though.

"It's okay. I can catch a cab. I know what parking is like in the city." They walked down to the street, holding hands like long-time lovers.

She caressed his cheek. "You need to shave again. How do you know about parking?"

"I'm from Queens. My company is based in Jamaica Plains but we always take rooms when the convention is in town. Taxi!"

He grabbed her for one more kiss before handing her his business card. "Call me? Leave a voicemail and I'll call you as soon as I get done for the day." Opening the door

to the taxi, he paused to look at her. "Dinner?"

Her enthusiastic "you bet your sweet ass and dessert's on me" even made the cabbie chuckle as they pulled into traffic.

Chapter Two

Looking like a navy blue crow, Susan seemed to be trying to wear a track in the hotel's ceramic tile. She whirled on him the moment he came through the revolving door. Her bleached blonde hair looked more like poorly dyed cotton candy than ever and the square black-framed glasses just made her eyes look colder.

"Where the hell have you been, St. Thomas? This isn't a vacation. We're here to work. Have you even shaved?"

The pitch of her voice had always grated on his last nerve, but as anger drove her up the octave range, Gary feared glass might shatter. "Calm down. I'm here and a little stubble never hurt anyone. Do you have the presentation?"

He didn't wait for her to say anything. He just headed for the designated meeting room. Everything went smoothly but Gary yawned in his head. This kind of thing he could do in his sleep. Why wasn't he working where he could show his creative side with food? If these suits only knew the delicacy he'd found last night. He had to fight to keep the satisfied grin off his face when his pocket buzzed.

Felicity. She'd called him.

Even Susan had to admit that he'd been a powerhouse in the three presentations that day. "Well, St. Thomas, I guess catting around did you some good. So did you get some or what?"

Gary frowned at the woman. Crude to a fault, she seemed to think she had to be one of the boys in order to succeed. He didn't mind strong, forceful women but she took it to extremes. Unlike his Felicity who knew how to be strong and take what she wanted in bed without coming across like some corporate harpy.

His Felicity?

Gary tuned Susan and the other reps out. Where had that come from? Sure, he'd

had an amazing morning but why would he call Felicity *his*? Gary reached in his pocket for his phone. "Excuse me. I need to make a phone call. I'm having dinner with a beautiful woman."

Ignoring the catcalls, he walked to the lobby as he hit the button to retrieve his voicemail. With another grin, he dialed Felicity's number. Her voice melted in his ear just the way he remembered it. "Hey, gorgeous. Where do you want me to take you to dinner?"

Gary laughed his way through the remainder of the day. He felt great, better than he'd felt in a very long time. He strolled out of the hotel and grinned as the doorman opened the door to a waiting taxi for him. Giving the driver Felicity's address, he sat back to think about what the night ahead might bring. If the morning was anything to go by, he wouldn't be getting much sleep tonight.

Felicity stood outside her shop and smiled as the cab pulled up. Gary got out, pulling her close for a quick kiss before they both got back in and gave the driver directions to the restaurant. Talking wasn't on the agenda, they simply gazed at one another as they sat in the cab holding hands and smiling at one another. They exchanged a few modest kisses but nothing as scorching as the morning had brought about.

Reaching the quaint restaurant in Little Italy, Gary paid the driver and they got out of the car. They didn't bother to check the menu in the window—they just strolled in and were greeted by an effusive older man in an open-necked shirt and black jacket. He led them to a table and gave them a wine list. Before they could even look at it, he excused himself and they saw him enter the kitchen. Seconds later they heard a very loud conversation in Italian.

Laughing again, Gary and Felicity looked at the menu. He put his aside after a few minutes to just smile at the woman sitting next to him. He loved the way she studied the menu so carefully. As he reached for her hand, a familiar scent reached his nose. Shaking his head in disbelief, Gary turned to see Susan standing by the table. Her

perfume was unmistakable – an overpowering blend of ylang-ylang and musk.

“Well, well. I knew you were up to no good when you blew everyone off for a ‘dinner date’ today. Who knew you’d take it on yourself to court a new client. Or is she the competition? Which is it, St. Thomas?”

“Quite frankly, Susan, that’s none of your business. What are you doing here?”

“I told you, finding out what you’re up to. Everyone knows the next promotion will be either you or me. I’m determined to have it be me. If that means I get there over your desiccated body, so much the better.”

Before he could speak, he felt Felicity’s hand cover his. He turned to the woman at his side, watching her gaze go from Susan’s head to the square toes of her ugly black pumps. “If you’re his competition, I can see why you’re worried about losing. Oh, and by the way, just because you have to wear that god-awful ill-fitting suit, it doesn’t mean you have to commit a fashion felony with those hideous shoes. You can’t even pass them off as comfortable.”

Turning her attention back to the menu, Felicity patently ignored the sputtering woman. Gary did his best to fight off a laugh as an observant waiter hustled Susan off. Gary pinched the bridge of his nose. “Sorry. Like I said, I’m here for a convention. It’s the *Sweet Days, Sugary Nights* conference sponsored by the Confectioners International Association.”

Felicity stared at him for a moment then snorted with laughter. The unexpected sound caused people three tables away to turn and look.

“I’m sorry? Did you say the CIA?”

Gary deadpanned, “We like to call it the Company.”

His shoulders loosened and he felt the worry line between his eyes fading. Felicity leaned over to kiss his cheek then said, “Want to tell me what that was all about?”

He focused on her. Nodding, he let out a gusty breath. “Let’s order dinner and I’ll fill you in on the terrible dark secrets of a marketing guy from Jamaica Plains.”

As they ate, Gary told her about his job. He began with what he did but ended with what he wanted to do. As he colored in the shadows and corners of a life mostly unlived, he could see that she understood. He didn't see any judgment in her face, just understanding and empathy. Her soft eyes led him to keep talking. He even told her about the possible promotion he and Susan were angling for. Shaking his head, he mused aloud about how successful he could be doing something he really never intended to do.

"Gary, do you know why I own a bakery?"

The question came out of nowhere, but he hoped he handled it like a champ. "No. Why do you own a bakery? With your skills you could be a pastry chef in any five-star restaurant in the world."

"I used to be." Felicity reached out for his hand. He willingly gave it to her.

She started. "You know who Jack Jackson is, right? Chef for *La Bohème*?"

Gary nodded. There wasn't anyone in the industry who didn't know the terrible genius of Jack Jackson. Some of his ex-kitchen staff called him the Ripper for his well-known temper tantrums. Felicity had worked for him?

"It was more than a job, Gary. Jack and I were lovers but he wanted to keep me under him in more ways than one. I wasn't willing to be boxed in. I had to be myself."

Gary's jaw clenched at the thought of this free spirit being forced to fit within someone else's boundaries. Not to mention the flare of jealousy he felt at the thought of Felicity being with someone as volatile as Jack Jackson. The man reputedly had a mean streak both in and out of the kitchen. It had to be hard to be involved with him, much less work for him.

"What did you do?"

"I walked out." Felicity squeezed his hand. "I didn't cause a scene. I didn't go to some reporter. I just left. I decided it was time for me to follow my own intuition and not let anyone tell me what I could and couldn't do with food."

"You walked out on Chef Jackson? The biggest name in the industry? Felicity, how on earth did you do that?" He knew his amazement came through in his voice, he hoped his pride in her actions did too. He looked down at their hands threaded together. Light from the candle guttering low in the holder bounced shadows across their fingers.

She shrugged. "Took my savings and my dad mortgaged his hardware store to help me open up my place in the Village. He told me he believed in me. That's all it took, Gary—just one person to tell me that they believed in me."

"I think your dad was right. And I know you're right. Faith in yourself isn't enough. There has to be someone else believing in you as well so that you can accomplish what you really want to do. How many people go through life wanting something, dreaming about it but never take that first step? Never tell anyone else what they want to do with their life and never make that dream come true? You're an amazing woman, Felicity."

Though they'd only known one another for such a short time, he truly was proud of her. Taking the chance to follow her dream, starting her own business. That took real courage and awe-inspiring confidence. Gary saw the glow come back into her eyes, almost as though an inner fire burned there. He recognized desire in that gaze, desire and that he'd somehow said exactly the right thing, that he'd touched her somewhere deep inside, much as she had him.

"Come home with me, Gary." Her words sparked an image of the two of them back in that decadent bed. That only intensified as she leaned forward to whisper, "I want you to suckle at my breasts like they're your favorite candy. I want to drizzle chocolate on your cock and lick it off."

Her breath caught as her nails grazed up the back of his neck. "I want you to fuck me, Gary."

He hardened immediately—his cock just as eager to be back inside this woman as he was to be back in her apartment. He checked the bill then put cash down on the

table. He over-tipped and didn't really care. Standing up, he held out his hand. "I'm at your disposal, sugar. Let's see how fast we can grab a cab."

Luck was with them that night. A cab pulled up as they walked out. Sliding onto the ragged seats, they fell into each other as soon as the cabbie had the address. No modest kisses for the ride home, they barely kept their clothes on. As it was, when they paid the driver, Gary had her shoes looped over his fingers.

"You do have a thing for my shoes, don't you?" She laughed over her shoulder as she unlocked her door and took the shoes out of his hand.

"Oh darlin', you'd better believe it." He rested his hands on her hips, pulling her back so he could rub his erection in the cleft of her ass. One of his hands slid down toward her sweet pussy, the other started a roaming foray up toward her breasts.

Turning in his arms with another throaty laugh, Felicity lifted herself just enough so that his cock now pressed into her cunt through her clothes.

"Remember the map?" She traced one hand over his chest, ending at the waistband of his pants. Gary nodded, hoping he wasn't drooling. "I'll meet you in my favorite place. I left dessert in the kitchen. Grab it and meet me there. Hurry up, handsome, don't keep me waiting too long. I might melt."

With another scorching kiss, she slid down his body, sauntered down the hallway shedding clothing as she went. Gary yanked his tie off, tossing it toward a chair in the living room and shrugging out of his shoes and jacket as he went. He reached the kitchen as he unbuttoned his shirt. A note on the fridge caught his eye.

Just so you know, I'm hoping I've invited you home after dinner so I can have you and what is on the top shelf in the glass dish for dessert.

He opened the door to find a gorgeous chocolate mousse resting on the shelf. Beside it was a small covered plastic container. He grabbed both and headed for the bedroom.

Felicity stood in the center of the room. She was naked except for another pair of those amazing shoes. The candy-apple red shoes made him smile even as the gorgeous

woman wearing them spiked his blood pressure. They were the same shoes he'd awakened wearing that morning. She smiled at him then turned her back on him. Bending slightly forward, she pulled pins out of her hair then stood up quickly, tossing it over her shoulder and smiling at him. The caramel strands reached almost to her ass, showcasing just where he'd like his hands.

He tightened his grip on the glass bowl and squeezed the plastic one so tightly the top popped off. Felicity laughed as she slinked toward him. Reaching between them, she grabbed something from the plastic bowl then held her hand up to his mouth. "Open."

He did, and a very familiar taste reached his brain. "Cinnamon hots?"

"My favorite candy." She leaned over, grabbing a spoon from a cup on her dresser. "Now try this." Scooping up a spoonful of the chocolate dessert, she held it up to him.

Gary opened his mouth again, never taking his eyes off hers. The combination of chocolate and cinnamon exploded across his tongue. The melting dark chocolate pudding and the spicy cinnamon candy caused his taste buds to come to immediate attention.

"Now that proves you were right to do your own thing. That was heaven!" He kissed her flicking his tongue past her lips to taste her along with the cinnamon and chocolate. "But this is even better."

Taking the larger bowl from him, Felicity dipped her finger into the bowl, scooping up some of the chocolate then moved over to the bed. She sat down, scooting back with the bowl in her hands, then beckoned him over with her head.

Setting the small bowl down on the dresser, Gary shed the rest of his clothes, picked up the bowl again and joined her in the bed. She made good on her offer from dinner by drizzling chocolate on her breasts. He licked them clean, making sure he didn't stop until her hands fisted in his hair.

She returned the favor happily. His balls tightened to the point of explosion but Felicity staved off his orgasm.

“Not yet, Gary. I want this to last.”

He nodded his agreement because his brain couldn't form any coherent words. With a final lick, she sat back against the headboard.

“Feed me?” The question came soft and low.

Gary fed her a spoonful of mousse then dropped cinnamon candies into her mouth. They traded kisses and caresses until he felt like every inch of his skin was on fire. Finally, Felicity put the bowls aside and pulled Gary down on the bed beside her. She drew his head toward hers to kiss him.

She tasted of chocolate—of cinnamon. He knew this must be the flavor of heaven on fire. Gary eased over Felicity kissing his way down her neck toward her breasts. Plumping her breasts together, he licked the crease between them then nuzzled his way over to one erect nipple. Sucking and nibbling, he lavished attention on each of her breasts, never staying in one place for very long. Felicity's fingers wove through his hair, tensing and relaxing, teasing him as he continued his sensual quest.

Her soft belly drew him next. Kissing his way around her stomach, he then dipped his tongue into her bellybutton. Felicity laughed then drew in her breath as he slid farther down in the bed to lick his way around her pretty cunt. Separating her folds with his fingers, he slicked his tongue over her before settling in. Felicity lifted her hips slightly, opening her legs wider to give him better access.

Licking and suckling her core, Gary avoided her sweet clit until she was lifting her hips and practically yanking his head right where she wanted him. Then, sliding two fingers inside her channel, he lifted her clit with his tongue and sucked it. Felicity gasped, stilling under him then lifting her hips with the motion of his fingers into her body.

He curled two fingers inside her, enjoying the heat and slippery silky feel of her. She gasped when he slid his thumb up to rub her sensitive button along with his tongue. Sliding one more finger deep within her, he curved the three into one unit for her pleasure. He finger-fucked her slowly at first.

Her soft groans of “Faster, Gary, faster” made him wild. He dragged her clit into his mouth as hard as he could, flicking it with his tongue then scraping the pulsing nub with his teeth. Felicity’s fingers wrapped deeper into his hair as he began to pound her in earnest. He felt her body arch up to him until he thought only her heels and head could be on the bed still. Her total enjoyment of all things sexual caused him to grin inwardly. Suckling at her clit, he used his teeth to gently scrape across her pulsing nubbin.

Felicity raised her hips, again tightening on his fingers and yanking his hair as she climaxed. He kept sucking as he drove his fingers into her body until she went limp beneath him. Sliding his fingers out of her body, he licked her pussy again then slid his fingers down to her anus. Using her own moisture to ease his path, Gary slowly eased his finger into her ass then gently licked and sucked at her pussy. Felicity raised her legs, grasping her knees to give him better access, meeting his gaze as he looked up from between her legs.

Taking her rapt expression for permission, Gary eased another finger inside her ass, slowly moving in and out, scissoring his fingers inside her, opening her for his pleasure. He let the thought of taking her here cross his mind, knew she saw it on his face and saw the brief hesitation in her gaze. Seemed that though Felicity enjoyed sex, she might have some limits, some he’d be willing to push another time. For now, he used his other hand to slowly slide two fingers back into her pussy, alternating his motions into her pussy and her ass and teasing her clit with his tongue and teeth. Felicity cursed low under her breath, tossing her head back as he increased his motions into her body.

He kept moving until he felt her tighten both pussy and ass and until he felt her inner walls squeezing his fingers. Kissing her inner lips and licking at the juice that slipped from her body, Gary brought her back to earth as he eased his fingers out of her. Lifting his head, he met her sated gaze. “Don’t move, I’ll be right back.”

A quick trip to the bathroom netted him a handful of condoms as well as clean hands and he hurried back to the bedroom. Felicity reached for him as he sheathed

himself and he lost himself in her body. He'd managed to give her multiple orgasms, teased himself with the idea of fucking her ass and given himself one hell of a hard-on. Slamming his cock fast and deep into her dripping pussy, Gary didn't even try to hold back. Satisfaction hit him hard, bowing his spine and causing his balls to draw up tight. He plunged frantically in and out of her body, wanting her to join him again, wanting them to reach the end together. Felicity held tightly to him, scraping her short nails over his shoulders and back, arching under him and matching his frantic rhythm. His climax hit him hard and let his head fall back, groaning as he emptied himself into the condom. Felicity bit his shoulder and he felt her tighten on him as she came — again!

Collapsing on top of her, Gary rolled to the side, pulling Felicity with him as they both panted their way back to calmness. He left her just long enough to deal with the condom, then crawled back into the rumpled bed. Pulling Felicity closer, they both sighed as she snuggled against his side burrowing into him.

Watching Felicity fall asleep, Gary thought about the amazing morning and the even more amazing night they'd just spent together. Felicity had the courage to follow her dreams, walking away from a lucrative career in a world-famous restaurant with a world-famous chef. He needed some of that courage.

Gary matched his breathing with hers, trying to doze, but couldn't get his mind off what faced him. He knew his boss was going to offer the marketing department director position to Susan or to him. It would be a career coup if he got it. One of those things that would make the corporate world sit up and take notice. Did he really want that to be the only thing he was ever noticed for?

Dreams versus reality. He could go on dreaming about changing his career, trying out new recipes and becoming a famous chef or he could concentrate on the corporate world and continue up the ladder of so-called success. He'd never thought his life would be spent in the corporate sector making other people's dreams of selling *their* favorite candies come true.

He wanted to develop his own special recipes. He wanted to do something special,

something that fulfilled him. Like Felicity had done with those cinnamon buns. She'd turned her back on a huge career opportunity and followed her own dreams. Sighing, he looked over at Felicity. She seemed to have no cares as she dreamt in his arms.

He pressed a gentle kiss to her hair. She rewarded him with a soft sound, turning into him even more to press one hand against his chest. Gary couldn't remember a more peaceful moment as he let his mind wander down all the possibilities of his life.

He was still awake, still thinking when her alarm went off. Felicity rolled over, slapping a hand on the offending noise. She smiled at him, gifting him with a sweet kiss. "I have to get to the bakery. Are you going back to the convention?"

"Yeah, I have a meeting with my boss." He saw her brows draw together. Already he knew her well enough to know that she wanted to say something. He admired her fortitude, but she just smiled and kissed him again.

"Will I see you later?"

He answered the question without hesitation, "Absolutely."

Felicity smiled then took a deep breath. "Gary? The secret to my sweet buns? I melt the..."

Gary held up a finger to her succulent lips to interrupt her. "No, it's okay. You don't have to tell me."

She kissed his finger and pulled his hand away from her mouth. "I want to. I want you to have this part of me. I melt the cinnamon candies and mix them with the brown sugar for the filling. The heat from the candies gives them that extra kick. There, now you have a bargaining chip—a way to find your own freedom. Use it however you feel you need to."

Watching her get out of bed, Gary thought about the gift she'd given him. Not just her body, but a piece of her own heart. He knew instinctively what sharing that secret meant. A chef didn't just give away their best tricks. In that moment, he knew what he needed to do next.

He bounded out of the bed to catch her around the waist and pick her up. Felicity laughed out loud as he carried her into the tiny bathroom where he set her down in the tub. They showered together, laughing and splashing like a couple of children, but he didn't make love to her again. He wanted nothing more than to enjoy the moments of laughing with this woman who had given him so much so soon.

They parted on the street in front of her bakery. Gary watched as she went inside, using precise movements to turn on the lights and reach for an apron as she prepared for her day. It still amazed him how gracefully she moved in those damn heels. He headed back to the hotel where he hurried to shower and change. Thoughts swirling and heart pounding, he entered the meeting room at the hotel. The conference would end this afternoon and they'd all be going back to Queens in the morning. His boss smiled as they shook hands and then sat down at the head of the conference table.

"Well, Gary, you're no fool. You know why you're here. Hit me with your best shot."

Gary took a deep breath. "Can we get Susan and Fred in here as well?"

Looking surprised, his boss acquiesced. His presentation to his boss was short because of the subject. He saw Susan smirking as he tendered his resignation, but her smile disappeared when he looked directly at her and gave her his best "kiss my ass" grin.

The expression on her face as he recommended their coworker Fred for the position of marketing director would remain with him throughout the rest of the day and quite possibly the rest of the week, as a shining moment. Praising Fred as a more loyal "company man" than Susan would ever be, and touting his contributions to the joint projects the three of them had been working on right before the conference, Gary handed over his office keys and wished his boss well. Fred's thanks and Susan's panicked defense of herself were the last things he heard as the door to the conference room clicked shut behind him. With a much lighter heart and an incredibly optimistic outlook for someone who'd just ditched a ten-year career, he strolled toward the

elevators.

Feeling freer than he'd felt in years, Gary checked out of the hotel and went back to his apartment in Queens. Unpacking the small bag he'd taken into Manhattan, he looked around at his tiny place. Though his apartment wasn't nearly as comfortable or inviting as Felicity's home in the Village, he'd lived there the same amount of time as she'd been in her apartment. Changing out of his corporate clothes and into a favorite pair of faded jeans and a t-shirt and tennis shoes, he headed back to the Village. He was tired of wearing the required corporate uniform of suit and tie, and he wanted to present himself now as he truly was.

As the subway stations flashed past, he thought about the woman he hoped would be part of his future. Would she accept his offer? Did she expect his offer? Did he know what he was doing? Gary laughed then leaned his head against the glass. He let the rumble of the moving train remind him that he was speeding toward an unknown future. And that was a good thing. It had to be because he'd never felt better.

Felicity was just closing up when he got out of the cab in front of the bakery. She turned, giving him a smile. "Well, hello, handsome. Find what you were looking for?"

Her question caused him to stop for a second. His brain engaged even though he didn't really want it to. Had he found what he was looking for? He'd come to Manhattan looking for something to get his career on a faster track and instead he'd found himself derailed by the sexiest woman he'd ever met and her secret recipe for sweet buns. Both intrigued and enthralled him more than anything else in his life thus far. "Yeah, I think I found exactly what I was looking for. Not what I expected, but just what I was looking for."

She looked a little confused, and that was fine, because that's just how he felt. "I thought about what you said, how you took a chance. How could I do any less? So..." drawing the word out, he took a step toward her. "I quit my job this morning. I'm wondering if you have any job openings for an experienced marketing guru who really wants to learn to bake?"

She smiled as she stepped forward, taking his hand. "I think I have just what you're looking for. However, let's take it slowly. After all, a good working relationship is just like baking. You have to put things together and then let them rise. They have to go through some time and some heat before you know if they're going to be what you wanted. I think we have the right combination. Now let's take some time and make some heat. Then we'll know if we have what we really want."

Gary pulled Felicity further into his arms, kissing her in broad daylight in the middle of the sidewalk and feeling his heart soar. The convention had been the best thing that could have happened to him. He'd quit a job he truly deep-down hated, gotten the job of his dreams and quite possibly the woman of his dreams as well. Though his trip to Manhattan had taken a totally unexpected turn, things were definitely looking up.

About the Author

Marilu Mann brings the steaminess of the Louisiana bayous to her books and she doesn't stop there. Marilu's willing to travel to the frozen tundra of Wisconsin to heat up those northern nights and melt a little snow. She'll also circle the world to Wales, Ireland, Scotland and back just to bring you books that make you sweat.

Currently residing in Texas, Marilu is an avid armchair traveler. Her sexy shifters will set your blood to boiling in no time. Owned by one Diva Teen and various animals, Marilu keeps busy writing the novels her readers beg for.

Marilu is thrilled to be a part of the Ellora's Cave family and loves to hear from readers.

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The author welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and e-mail address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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