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Tantric
FATE

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Tantric Fate

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TANTRIC FATE

Alexis Canto

Chapter One

Lise sat in silent meditation at a small Zen center in the mountains a few miles from her hometown. At least she was supposed to be meditating. She couldn't keep her mind quiet the way she intended. Thoughts of her ex-lover Marcus intruded until finally she gave up on focusing on her breath and let the thoughts have free rein.

In her imagination she felt him taking her hot, erect nipple into his mouth, licking it gently and sucking it hard. She could almost feel his hands on her thighs and the hard, smooth head of his cock slipping over her wet, engorged clit and then pushing its way into her soft, ready slit.

A muffled sneeze from one of the other attendees meditating in the Zen center snapped Lise's attention back to reality. Although she hadn't moved from her cross-legged position on a cushion in the sparsely decorated room, everything about her body had changed. Her pussy was damp. Her nipples were stiff peaks.

And her heart was sore from missing Marcus.

Lise and Marcus had dated for more than a year. He hadn't always been available to her, often going to upstate New York to train. Then one day he'd closed his studio and moved east to teach at the main Shadow Tantra location in New York. She hadn't seen him or heard from him until he showed up unannounced one day ten years after their last meeting. And then he'd disappeared again, sending her a cold email that hadn't explained anything.

She had no idea why she was still thinking about him at all. She deserved better.

She couldn't shake the feeling of darkness that had come over her when he emailed her a couple of weeks after their recent steamy encounter, one that had given her hope that he might be back in her life to stay. *I can't see you again*, the message had read. There was no salutation. Just those chilly words. *Good luck with everything, Lise. Marcus.*

Crisp air blew in through the center's open door. She'd deliberately chosen a cushion near the entrance so she could be closer to the cold, clear brightness of the outdoors. Being chilled would make her feel more alive and make it easier to focus on her meditation practice instead of the man she loved but would never see again. Or so she'd hoped. Obviously, it wasn't working. Her body still felt hot.

Instead of feeling her thoughts holding steady on the concept of inner peace, she saw an unwavering mental image of Marcus' tattoo. It was perfectly clear in her memory. The snake wound up his left arm in dark ink. The skillful likeness of a dangerous snake put the clumsy imagery of most tattoos to shame. And once, in the dark, she'd thought she'd seen the snake move with a life of its own.

When the Zen center's chime sounded to indicate the end of the meditation, she stood up and found she was unsteady on her feet. She was in a state of full-blown arousal from thinking about Marcus. How could she feel so alive and yet so lonely?

She bowed at the doorway as was customary. When she lifted her head and stepped outside, she saw a familiar figure standing on the bright cedar boards of the meditation center's porch. Her breath left her and she felt as winded as if she'd been punched in the stomach. It was Marcus.

He wore a long coat with the collar raised against the late afternoon chill. The dry wind whipped his dark reddish-brown hair around his face but otherwise he stood as still as a pine tree.

Her body reacted instantly and she tingled with desire from head to toe.

He couldn't have come to see her. Not after the note he'd sent. This must be some kind of coincidence.

And she didn't know if she could stand it.

She opened her mouth to speak and left her lips parted. No words came out. Behind him in the distance the mountains stood tall, cold and forbidding. Lise felt like a lost soul wandering their bare, rocky faces instead of standing here in safety. Strange how Marcus' familiarity made her feel so alone.

"I'm not supposed to be here," he said, cracking a small but genuine smile. His voice sounded rougher than she remembered it, as if he'd recently gone hoarse shouting.

Habit took over and Lise stepped forward and grasped his arm. She could feel the thickness of his muscles through his coat, an all-too-obvious hint at how well built he was. As if she needed the reminder.

"How long have you been standing here?" she asked and then gritted her teeth against the memories. In the darkness of her mind she shouted at herself. *Don't think of wrapping your legs around him, Lise. He doesn't want you.*

But she knew better. He wanted her. He always had. The look in his eyes said it. She let go of his arm but imagined she could feel the corded strength of his biceps even though she was no longer touching him.

"A while," he answered, letting out a quick breath of laughter through his nose. "I'm sorry about the email. I thought it was the only way."

Tears stung Lise's eyes without warning. "The only way? Have you heard of using the phone? Letting me hear your voice? Giving some kind of explanation?" She bit her lip, stopping herself. She'd already said too much. She should be acting as if none of it mattered to her. But seeing him disarmed her. She couldn't pretend.

"Explaining," he said in a quiet, earnest voice, "is what I want more than anything. Do you have some time?"

She hesitated, feeling her lower jaw clench of its own accord. "That depends. What kind of explanation are you talking about? Why I'm not worth bothering with? I can't see how that would make anything better." She knew she sounded bitter but she wasn't sure she wanted to change that fact. Why shouldn't she sound bitter, after all? He'd intruded on her life a few months earlier, promising to stay in contact and then vanishing with that curt email. She had no reason to hide the fact that he'd played havoc with her emotions.

"No! Lise, it's not like that." He kept his voice low, as if worried about being overheard. She had no idea why. All the visitors here were peaceful spiritual seekers. Not the sort to pry into Lise and Marcus' personal affairs. Now he was the one to grip her arm. He held her too tightly, almost bruising. But she didn't complain. His hand was warm and the energy radiating from his palm felt soothing despite the force of his touch. God, she'd missed those hands. She'd missed *him*.

"What is it like then?" she asked. She meant to challenge him with that question but his extraordinary eyes held her gaze. His irises were such a pale brown that they looked golden when the light struck them. Here in the clear light under a cloudless sky, they shone. While staring into their depths, her words seemed more like a challenge to undress her as soon as possible rather than to explain the way he'd treated her. *Damn*, she thought. *I'm addicted to this man*.

"Come on," he said, steering her off the porch toward the dirt parking lot. "There's a lot I want to tell you about. But not here."

She walked with him to her car but reminded herself that she would have to get rid of him as fast as possible. And then do her damndest to forget he ever existed.

As soon as both car doors slammed shut, Lise turned to him sharply. "What the hell? Why do you keep showing up? How many times are you planning to suck me back in and then ditch me again?"

Marcus held up his hands as if in defense. "I'm sorry. I understand why you feel that way. But it isn't like that at all. Please let me explain."

Her resolve wavered. He took her hand. The warmth of his fingers sent shivers all through her. *Damn him*. He still had such a strong effect on her.

"Lise," he said, "I'll tell you why I sent that email and why it took me so long to come to you. But first I want to make you a promise. I'm not going to disappear again. Ever. I might go away for a little while but never without keeping in touch. If you'll just let me stick around, then as long as you want me, I'll be in your life. I swear it."

Lise felt her throat tighten and willed herself not to cry. Not trusting her voice, she only nodded and hoped the nod didn't commit her to anything. All she was willing to do at this point was listen to what he had to say before making a decision.

He stared into her eyes as if searching them. She'd never seen him look so vulnerable. "God. I thought I would never see you again," he said. Then somehow they'd moved closer to each other and she could feel his breath on her lips. Her body responded to him instantly, as if they'd never been apart. Her pussy softened and opened, ready for him even though they were in the front seat of a car in the middle of a parking lot. Her nipples tightened even more into hard nubs. She wanted him and was angry at herself for it. She almost—but not quite—believed his promise. The explanation he came up with was going to have to be pretty damn good for her to trust him again.

Looking away, she turned the key in the ignition, trying not to let her gaze move back to him as the engine purred to life. He reached for her anyway.

His hand cupped her neck and he ran his thumb over her chin. "God, you're beautiful," he muttered, his gaze flashing back and forth over her face. There was heat behind his words, the desire she always sensed from him when they were together.

He was as unable to resist her as she was to resist him. There could be no doubt about that. Then what had made him pull away from her in the past? The sound of his voice made her tremble in her seat. Her insides were liquid. All she wanted was to feel him fill her, to let her pussy swallow his cock whole. To smell the musky maleness of his skin and feel his arms holding her as if nothing in the world could harm her.

He moved his hand lower, stretching the neckline of her shirt. Goose bumps rose on her flesh as his broad fingers caressed the tender skin above her breasts. Her pussy leaked juices. But she didn't move, afraid to show him how much she wanted him and how much she cared.

His hand dipped lower, cupping her breast. She shuddered with pleasure but at the same time she glanced through the windshield, hoping none of the people who'd been in the Zen center with her were watching them make out through the car windows.

He placed his other hand behind her neck and gently but firmly drew her toward him. When his lips met hers, she couldn't bring herself to pull away. His mouth was so warm. And the way he kissed was so familiar. They had a perfect rhythm together, one neither of them had ever forgotten. Involuntarily she scooted closer to him. She brought both hands to her lap and clenched her fists, willing herself not to reach out and touch him. The effort and the warring emotions only excited her more.

He broke the kiss but kept his lips only half an inch from hers. "Don't fight it, Lise," he said in a low voice. "You're so turned-on. I can smell your cream."

And then his mouth was on hers again. She no longer cared whether any of her fellow meditation center patrons saw her through the windshield. She was feeling decidedly un-Zen-like.

As far as she was concerned, the biggest problem was the fact that the gearshift was smack in between them, keeping her from pulling him closer.

He moved away from her suddenly and gave her a light push. She plopped into her seat, winded and disoriented. "Drive," he ordered. "Get us home so I can fuck you."

She didn't bother saying anything about the fact that he'd just called her house "home" as if he had a right to be there too. He didn't have a right to be anywhere near her. But that didn't stop her from wanting him.

The drive to her house was a blur, as confusing as a fevered dream. Despite all her uncertainty about why he was here again, she couldn't help feeling incredibly happy to see him. Joy and fear warred in her heart.

She lived in town only a few minutes' drive away from the Zen center but the trip felt too long. As they neared her house, the light of the setting sun gave a warm glow to her street. Marcus put a hand on top of her thigh and then let his fingers creep inward.

She sighed deeply and almost ran a red light. "You're going to get us both killed," she murmured, her voice coming out low and intense.

He withdrew his hand.

"I didn't say stop," she told him.

He put his hand on her leg again, maddeningly close to the cleft between her legs that pulsed and ached, longing for his touch. His fingers were so close to her throbbing pussy but not quite there. She gritted her teeth, concentrated all her attention on the road and vowed to pay him back for making this drive so damn difficult. It wasn't that he was really doing anything—it was more what he wasn't doing that frustrated her. He was definitely going to have to answer for the things his hand was not doing while she drove.

When she parked in her driveway, they could hardly stop touching long enough to step out of their respective car doors. They stumbled up the walkway while tangled together. As soon as she let them in through the front door, he turned her to face him and enfolded her in his arms so strongly that she felt she would never be able to get away—and that was okay because she was sure she would never want to. He locked his hands together behind the small of her back.

She cupped his buttocks in her hands the way she had the first time they'd ever kissed. Her labia were so swollen and slick that the slightest movement of her thighs pressed her hot folds together and sent tremors of pleasure through them. She opened her lips and let his tongue probe her mouth. Every nerve ending in her lips and tongue felt alive. The kiss was ecstasy in itself but it made her want so much more. She didn't know how long she could wait to have him inside her.

She wanted to believe he was telling the truth about having a good explanation for his disappearance. Her rational mind couldn't come up with one but that didn't matter right now. For the moment she would let herself trust that everything was going to be okay.

Standing in the living room just inside the front door, he crushed her close to him. He pressed his hips into her body and held them there. His thick cock was as hard as stone against her lower belly. He had on jeans and since she was used to seeing him in loose yoga pants, the heavy blue denim was incredibly sexy on him. Especially with the way his cock strained to be released from the tight fabric.

The way his arms were locked around her and the way he thrust his tongue deeply into her mouth made her think that against all odds he'd missed her as much as or more than she'd missed him.

This was the most desperate she'd ever seen him. No matter how turned-on he was, Marcus had always been the one in control, calling the shots every time they were together in bed—or out of it. Now he moved with pure lust, not holding back. That was fine with her. Her fantasy at the Zen center, followed by the car ride, had teased her more than enough already. She didn't want to wait.

He pushed her to the floor as roughly as was possible without hurting her. She pushed down on the waistband of her pants, fumbling with it. He took hold of it and in one long, clean motion stripped the tight-fitting garment from her body, flinging it to the floor behind him.

He pressed the heel of his hand to her mound. She rotated her hips, trying to push her clit against the firmness of his palm. He met her gaze. His eyelids were heavy, his eyes smoky. He must have read the need in her eyes because he turned his hand and dipped his middle finger deeply into her opening, sliding the tip of his finger against the front wall of her vagina as it made its way in.

"Ahhh!" The sound escaped her lips without warning, half sigh and half scream. He kept his eyes locked with hers, swirling his finger over her G-spot.

Her pussy seemed to melt around his finger. She felt as if something inside her was as soft as chocolate that would turn to liquid in the heat and run over his hand.

Somewhere in the back of her equally melted brain, she remembered he was still fully clothed. She ran a hand over his jacket sleeve, gripping the thick arm beneath it. But she couldn't come up with the words to tell him to strip for her.

He looked down at her hand and seemed to get the message. "I like it this way," he said, his voice hoarse. "I'm still dressed and you're soft and naked. It gives me all the power."

She could tell by his tone though that his need was as great as her own.

She could feel his personal energy like a buzz of electricity crackling in the air between him. A Shadow Tantra master's special talent was to steal a small fraction of the energy of any sexual partner and use that energy to heal others. Because of his mystical abilities, Marcus' spiritual energy was so strong it was almost tangible.

He withdrew his finger and she let out a soft sound of protest. He flashed her a brief grin, though sweat now dampened his hairline. He wasn't going to be in those clothes for long. Not if Lise had anything to do with it. And not if the growing arousal she could see in the tense lines of his body was any indication.

Two fingers now plunged inside her. He used them to stretch her opening just enough to increase the ache deep inside her. She wanted him so much it hurt. As he worked his fingers in her channel, his knuckles lightly touched the edges of her labia. She circled herself against his hand, wanting more of him. She wanted him to fuck her. To fill her.

A short, broken laugh came from somewhere above her. "Do you need me, Lise?" he rasped.

She reached up, twisted her fist in the fabric of his jacket front and tried to tug him toward her. Predictably, he remained as immobile as a statue. He was so much stronger than she was. "You know the answer to that," she growled.

He pulled his fingers out of her and she couldn't help moaning in disappointment. She stopped herself just short of saying "please" aloud. She didn't want to give him that much satisfaction.

Grinning, he sat back on his heels. He pushed his hair back from his forehead with one hand but it fell over his eyes again right away. "Yep, I guess I do."

He pulled off his jacket and she admired the breadth of his shoulders as they emerged from its bulk.

She struggled to her knees, pulled off her shirt and tossed it aside. It landed on the back of the couch.

Marcus let out his breath in a long sigh that sounded full of awe. Lise couldn't help smiling. He hadn't seen her breasts in months. It was nice to know they still had the same effect on him. She wasn't a large woman but she happened to know she had firm, shapely breasts. She could hardly fail to be aware of it since Marcus had been telling her since the first time he'd seen her naked.

He cupped her breasts in both hands, feeling their roundness in a way that made her aware of their allure too. Maybe this was part of one of Marcus' gifts as a Shadow Tantra master. He could make her feel what he felt so that her emotions and sensations meshed with his. At the memory of the way he'd shared all his pleasure with her the last time they were together, her legs went weak. She swayed even though she was already on her knees.

He steadied her. "Whoa. Maybe we should move to the bedroom."

Instead of answering his suggestion, she fumbled with his long-sleeved T-shirt, pushing the hem up over the deep ridges of his abs. He took his shirt off the rest of the way and pressed her down to the floor again, thrusting her thighs apart with one jeans-clad knee. He supported himself by planting one hand on the floor and squeezed her right nipple with his other hand.

The nub throbbed under the pressure of his fingers. Her cunt ached, softening, growing even wetter and more open. Her other nipple swelled in anticipation, longing for him to touch it too. To make it hurt.

She'd never thought of herself as a masochist but she longed to hurt now. Pleasure wouldn't be enough to take care of this deep want. She needed him to make her feel as much and as quickly as possible.

She reached for the button of his jeans. Her fingers felt weak with the desire that flooded her entire body but somehow she managed to undo the button and get a firm grip on the zipper between thumb and forefinger.

Still rolling and squeezing her nipple with one hand and holding himself securely in place with the other, he leaned down and kissed her. Somewhere in the back of her mind she was aware that he was doing a one-armed pushup and holding himself halfway down—an impressive feat of strength for anyone, even a Shadow Tantra master. But most of her attention was focused on his lips working in harmony with hers and his tongue exploring her mouth deeply.

When she pulled his zipper down and freed his cock, he moaned into her mouth, leaning lower over her but keeping his balance.

Despite all her confusion, she wanted to give him pleasure. She wanted to see him come. But she didn't want to make it easy for him.

Her hand moved up and down his cock and the skin slid over the rock-hard shaft beneath. Her thigh muscles tensed with longing and her insides burned.

He lifted his head. "Do you have condoms?"

She couldn't help giggling. "You mean you didn't bring any?"

"I didn't want to assume," he answered. "Not this time."

That really got her attention. Marcus had always assumed. From their first encounter, he'd always been sure about seducing her. The fact that he wanted to leave the decision up to her this time made her think he was serious about asking her to be open to a long-term commitment with him. For the first time ever, he wanted her to call the shots.

“Come with me,” she said, wriggling out from underneath him. He stood up and went with her to the bedroom. She pulled a box of condoms from her dresser drawer, tore one square of foil free and left the remaining condoms on top of the dresser. Despite her body’s urgent arousal, she managed to take the time to light two candles that stood on the dresser. They filled the room with a warm, subtle glow.

When she looked at Marcus again, he’d shed his jeans and stood in his impressive naked glory. He seemed to get more defined every time she saw him and his body was a work of art.

He stepped toward her, brushing a lock of his dark, reddish-brown hair away from his eyes. “Okay, now I’d say it’s safe to assume,” he said and ran his hands slowly over her shoulders and down her arms. Her whole body tingled.

She put the condom on him, teasing his balls with one hand as she slowly unrolled the condom with the other. His testicles were tight, already drawn up low at the base of his cock. Just like the first time they’d ever had sex, he was more than ready for her. And she was ready for him. Moisture slipped between her thighs when she moved. Her whole being was focused on a single thing—finding satisfaction. All she wanted was Marcus.

He backed her up a few steps until she sat on the side of the bed. With gentle but firm pressure from his hands, he spread her knees and knelt between her legs. Without a word, he wrapped one arm around her waist and pressed the thumb of his other hand against her clit.

She let her head fall forward and wrapped her hands behind his neck. He braced the top of his head against her chest, steadying himself as he worked on her.

His thumb slipped back and forth over her clit’s hood with ease. So much of her natural wetness soaked the area that there was almost no friction between her skin and his.

“I’m going to make you come now,” he said in a low voice, “because I can guarantee I’m not going to last long the first time. I’ve missed you too much.”

His confidence, combined with the conviction in his voice when he said he'd missed her, sent a new rush of blood to her pussy. Her clit swelled against the pressure of his thumb. God, yes. She was so ready. She'd been thinking about him all afternoon. And now here he was in the flesh, ready to please her. He only needed to stay there for a few more seconds, caressing her hot, aching bundle of nerves, to give her release.

But without explanation he took his thumb away and lightly stroked his fingers over her outer labia instead. She groaned in frustration.

She dropped a hand lower, reaching down his chest toward his stomach. She needed to tease him too. There was no way she wanted to let him get away with being the only one to play games. But it was no use. In this position, with him partly bent over in front of her, she couldn't reach lower than his ribs. She satisfied herself with brushing her hand over one of his nipples. He rewarded her by letting out a short gasp.

Then he straightened up, wrapping his arm more closely around her waist and sliding two fingers of the other hand into her opening. His hand moved with certainty. He'd obviously never forgotten exactly how to touch her to drive her out of her mind. Those two strong fingers pressed upward, circling over her G-spot.

Every muscle in her body felt limp. Her clit felt like it had turned to searing liquid heat. She fell back against his supporting arm and he held her steady.

"That's it," he encouraged. "Go ahead and come. I need to see your pleasure."

She wanted to be strong enough to hold back. But the pressure building inside her was so great she couldn't fight it. Her whole body flushed with heat. Her pussy swelled even more, tightening around his fingers.

Her channel erupted into long slow squeezes that grasped and released his fingers over and over. Through it all, he kept stroking her inner walls, coaxing more and more pleasure from her.

Just when she thought she couldn't stand it any longer, he withdrew his hand, lifted her in his arms and gently placed her on the bed on her side. Her body still trembled,

her orgasm not yet spent. She felt as if her whole body was glowing with warm golden light.

He lay down next to her, hooked one leg over her thighs and pulled her in snugly against him. His cock slid easily into her soft, ready cunt.

As soon as he was inside her, his demeanor transformed. The last vestiges of control vanished and he fucked her with desperate need.

As his thick cock stretched her channel more trembling orgasmic waves caught her off guard and she screamed out loud. He buried his face against the side of her neck, growling out his pleasure.

His mystical Shadow Tantra master energy rose around their entwined bodies like a cloud. She could feel it pulling at her, asking her to give away a little of her life force energy. But she turned it away easily. She'd been able to resist his pull before and keep him from stealing her energy. Doing so again was no problem.

What she couldn't resist was the force of his physical onslaught. As if impatient with the restriction of lying on their sides, he flung her onto her back and fucked her as deeply and as hard as he ever had before.

When he came, he pressed himself all the way into her as his semen spurted into the condom. Her vagina was so sensitized by now that she could feel the pulsations of his climax along the shaft of his penis.

When his orgasm subsided, he kissed her shoulder. She brushed back that same lock of hair that kept falling into his eyes. He propped himself on one elbow and she followed suit so they could look into each other's faces.

She knew they were far from finished for the evening. Desire still burned through every cell in her body. But what they'd done so far had taken the edge off enough that they could talk and she could get some answers from him.

"I guess when two people are this attracted to each other, they can't stay apart," she said, speaking tenderly and running her fingertips over the super-short stubble on his cheek.

To her surprise, a hurt look momentarily flashed through his eyes.

"What is it?" she asked, knowing he wouldn't be surprised that she could read him so easily.

"I think there's a lot more between us than just sex," he said.

She wanted to tell him she agreed that of course there was. But she still didn't know why he'd disappeared on her – again – after their last encounter months ago. Maybe sex *was* the only thing between them. Maybe he only came back to her when the pickings were slim. "Is there?" she asked.

He put a hand over her heart. She felt the clear energy from his palm pulsing with the warm green energy of her heart until the two synchronized and began to resonate with each other so well that Lise and Marcus were like one person. He held her gaze and his golden eyes seemed as alive as a hearth fire. "Yes, there is," he said, speaking the words slowly and with conviction.

Lise took a slow, deep breath. "I want to believe you." She grasped his wrist and firmly removed his hand from her chest. He didn't resist. "You owe me an explanation, remember?"

"Okay," Marcus said. As he began to explain, Lise's doubts about his caring for her melted away. In their place, she felt fear for the man she loved.

Marcus placed his hand over hers as he told her the story. All he could do was hope she understood. As he talked, explaining the situation to Lise, he found himself immersed in a memory. Craig, the current leader of the Shadow Tantra masters, had spoken with Marcus as soon as he had returned home after his last encounter with Lise.

Chapter Two

Craig paced in front of Marcus, arms folded over his broad chest. In the dim room, Marcus felt disoriented, an effect Craig no doubt intended.

"Never go back to the same woman more than once," Craig told him in his deep, steely voice. Its sound was harsh and grating yet somehow sensual at the same time. "That's the rule. No exceptions."

They were in one of the studios at the Shadow Tantra's main headquarters, a massive yoga studio and healing arts center in rural upstate New York. The studio was closed for the night, its doors locked and its air filled with the heavy scent of incense the masters imported from India. Marcus usually liked the heady, mystical feel the incense lent the atmosphere. Tonight, he found it too smoky and cloying.

"I've only seen Lise once so far since I took my vows as a master. And I didn't take her energy," Marcus argued. "I couldn't. She was too strong."

"We've been over this before," Craig replied. Though his words sounded calm, he exuded strength and seemed as immovable as a brick wall. In fact, Marcus thought, Craig was built like he was made out of bricks. His muscles bulged. And it wasn't just for show. In addition to being a high-ranking Shadow Tantra master, Craig was an expert in several martial arts. Though Marcus knew Craig would never use his strength against anyone without good cause, God help the poor bastard who was ever stupid enough to attack him.

"And you know the rules," Craig continued. "When you took your vows as a Shadow Tantra master, you knew the consequences. You know your touch will become addictive to any woman who sleeps with you more than once. Our aim is to help and heal. Not harm our lovers by stealing more energy than one person can spare. And not

foster addictions to the pleasures of our bodies.” Craig grinned and his teeth gleamed whitely in the candlelight. “As intense as those may be.”

Marcus chuckled and leaned back in his chair. He stretched his arms above his head, pleasantly sore from an earlier workout. “You might say we’d be doing them a favor if we kept coming back.”

“Stop joking about it,” Craig said, although his own smile had not left his face. “This is no laughing matter.” He stopped pacing. Despite his size, he looked as light as a cat as he sat down in the chair next to Marcus’. He leaned forward and spoke in a lower, gentler voice. “I’m saying you can’t see Lise again, Marcus. Ever.” He paused. “I’m sorry, man.” Marcus didn’t move but he felt his expression harden. “The Order hasn’t had to strip a master of his status since ancient times. Everything we know about the results comes from myths and rumors. I don’t know what would happen to you. Hell, I don’t even know if it’s possible to survive losing your powers as a master. And we don’t want to lose you.”

“You’re telling me that in thousands of years, not a single Shadow Tantra master has gone back to the same woman twice?” Marcus asked. The only woman he could ever care about going back to twice would be Lise. He pictured her wavy hair tangled, dampened with his sweat. Her tight, hot cunt squeezing him. The way she dragged her teeth along the skin of his neck.

He gripped the edge of his chair and hoped his friend didn’t notice his distraction.

Reflections from the candle’s orange flame flickered in Craig’s eyes. Fortunately, if he sensed the nature of what was going on inside Marcus’ head, he chose not to mention it. Instead, he only answered the question. “None that we know of.” He sat up straighter. “But that’s all moot, because you know the situation. Even though you didn’t steal her energy last time, it might be different next time. We can’t make an exception. You’re not going to see her. You’re not even going to think about her again.”

If he only knew. Right at this moment, Marcus was thinking about her. About her round, firm ass. The soft curve of her cheek and the determined set of her jaw. Craig

was right about one thing though. Marcus had known the score when he took his vows and became part of the Shadow Tantra Order. But he'd let himself obsess about Lise until he managed to conveniently forget the rule about welcoming the same woman into his bed twice. Although, to be fair, the only time he'd seen her since taking his Tantra vows, he hadn't invited her into his bed. He'd seen to it that she invited him into hers. The thought made him grin even though he wasn't sure whether he'd muscled or charmed his way between those starched hotel room sheets.

"What are you grinning about?" Craig asked, sounding uncertain for the first time during this conversation.

"Nothing," Marcus answered, sobering. Craig was right. This wasn't funny. For him, it sucked. He couldn't be with the woman he loved. And he would have to do what he'd always done, which was to think about her when he was alone at night or when he was with other women. He would erase her name from his address book. Maybe in time he would be able to forget her.

No he wouldn't. He couldn't kid himself about that.

* * * * *

As Marcus finished telling her his story, Lise squeezed his hand. "I'm sorry I doubted you."

He shook his head. "You were right to doubt me. I should have told you all this as soon as I understood it myself. But I needed time to think. Now I've had that time. And I know I'm one hundred percent willing to risk the consequences and accept whatever happens if I'm caught. I want you to be a part of my life always. No matter what."

He leaned toward her. His eyes looked bright. "I slipped away without telling Craig where I was going. I've been waiting for this chance for weeks. Lise, I want you to be part of my life. Forever. But I can't let Craig know. If he does—if any member of the Shadow Tantra finds out—I'll be cast out of the Order. But Craig's the only person

who's on the lookout, the only one who might guess there's a chance I would come to see you."

"I'm not sure why Craig would make such a big deal over it," Lise said, wondering whether she should feel miffed that Marcus didn't even seem to be considering the possibility of voluntarily giving up his status as a Shadow Tantra master for the sake of being with her instead of sneaking around to spend time with her. She knew it was selfish of her to think of asking him to give up his life path for her sake. But they were so good together. He was right—being together was worth facing whatever challenges life put in their way. "What exactly happens if they catch you?"

Marcus' eyebrows scrunched together. "They would put me through a ceremony that strips me of my energetic and spiritual abilities as a master. That in itself isn't a big deal, Lise. To be with you, I'd do it in a second. But no one has ever been cast out of the Order, at least not within recorded history. Craig thinks—and I think—it could be deadly. Once a person becomes a Shadow Tantra master, it's part of him. Being a Master is in my bones now. If it's stripped away, there might be nothing left of me, spiritually speaking. A former Master stripped of his Shadow Tantra abilities might end up as nothing but an empty shell. Which might mean he would die."

"Then wouldn't this ceremony they're talking about be murder?"

"Not exactly. It's just that it's never been done before. No one knows what would happen."

Lise felt a strange sense of detachment, as if the bed was tilting underneath her but she remained level. Marcus' words gave her a dark feeling but a part of her remained separate, as if watching from a safe distance. "I don't like this," she said.

Marcus tapped his fingers against the bedspread while looking her in the eye. "Neither do I. It feels wrong. That's why I'm here. With you. Defying my sworn oaths."

A loud knocking made Lise jump. Someone was pounding on the front door. She stood up and threw on a loose, flowing shirt and supple yoga pants so she could answer the door.

As she padded barefoot through the living room, the knocking came again, louder. “Coming!” she called out, letting her annoyance come through in her voice. The person on the other side of the door had better have a good reason for being so impatient. She didn’t know who would be dropping by unannounced. She was glad Marcus was here with her.

She turned on the porch light, opened the door a small crack and peeked through. From what she could see, the man on the other side of the door was tall and broad-shouldered, dressed in a dark jacket and jeans. She didn’t know him. “Yes?” she said.

“I’m looking for Marcus Blair,” the man said. His voice was a deep rumble. “Has he been here?”

Slow footsteps came up behind her. Marcus put his hands on Lise’s shoulders. Glancing back, she saw that he was dressed in those jeans that molded to his body and nothing else. “I’m here, Craig,” he said. “Looks like you caught me. I didn’t really think you would fly all the way out here but I guess I was wrong.” Speaking to Lise, he added, “It’s okay. You can open the door.”

Lise’s heart sped up. If this was Craig, didn’t that mean Marcus’ future was about to go down the drain? The door’s hinges squeaked as she let it swing all the way inward. Getting a full view of Craig was like facing a brick wall. Or a tank. And she’d thought Marcus was muscular. Wow.

Craig’s square, tough-looking face softened as a smile crossed his features. “Looks like I showed up at an awkward moment. Sorry. Can I come in?”

“Sure,” Lise answered automatically, trying to tell herself not to gape at him. After Marcus’ explanation, she’d started to think of Craig as the enemy. But he sure as hell didn’t look like someone who planned to destroy Marcus’ entire future—and maybe cost him his life—because of one little indiscretion. Instead, he looked friendly and good-natured.

Craig crossed the threshold and Lise closed the door.

"You know that once you invite a vampire in," Marcus said to Craig, "he can enter whenever he pleases."

Craig shook his head, grinning. "We're *not* vampires. Will you drop that dumb joke, Marcus? It's not just getting old – it's been old for a decade."

"Aw, come on," Marcus argued. "We do suck energy. And women think vampires are sexy, right?"

Before Craig could answer, Lise decided to stop the silly vampire conversation before it could go any further. She gestured toward her couch and chairs.

"Would you like to – um – have a seat?" she offered in a quiet voice, struggling to center herself. They'd been caught and Marcus didn't seem ruffled in the slightest. What was going on?

"Thanks." Craig stepped over the pants Lise had been wearing earlier, which still lay in a pile on the living room floor. He settled himself on her sofa and when he threw his arm across the back cushions, his hand brushed the shirt she'd cast aside when she and Marcus first came in. He neither moved it nor reacted to it, as if he found women's shirts on couches everywhere he went. Come to think of it, maybe he did. "I apologize for interrupting your evening," he said, the picture of relaxation. "But I knew I would find Marcus here." He looked over at Marcus. "I suspected you were coming to see her. So I called the conference center where you said you would be. And I was right – you weren't there."

Marcus sat in a chair opposite Craig. Lise stood over them, unable to bring herself to relax enough to sit. This was too weird.

"I know you've got me busted, Craig," Marcus said. "But I have a plan."

Craig leaned back and crossed his arms. "If your plan is to tell me you only came here to explain the situation and you haven't touched her, I'm prepared to believe you." He looked amused. "Or maybe it would be more accurate to say I'm prepared to suspend my disbelief."

Marcus grinned. "It's better than that. I'm going to prove to you that I can be with Lise as many times as I want without hurting her or anyone."

"That much is true," Lise said. "There's no doubt about it. But—Marcus, how exactly are you planning to prove it to him?"

The two men stared into each other's eyes, smiling broadly. Something had passed between them without her knowledge. She waved a hand in the air between them. "Hello! Would someone tell me what's going on here?"

Craig raised his eyebrows at Marcus. "You mean—"

Marcus nodded.

Craig rose and faced Lise. God, he was huge. He towered over her. "Let's just say I might be able to clear up any doubts surrounding this situation. With your permission, of course."

"I don't know what you're talking about," she said. But as she took note of the way he was looking at her, she felt desire tightening her stomach like a fist. "No. That's—" She trailed off and licked her lips. They felt swollen from Marcus' kissing, plump and ready to be kissed again.

Craig ducked his head lower so he could look her in the eye more easily. "Too good to pass up?"

"Um—" Lise looked from one man to the other. She felt like she was on display for their joint inspection. And she could tell by the looks on their faces that they both liked what they saw. A shiver ran through her whole body. Something about knowing that two men wanted her at the same time turned her on—fast. When she spoke again, she struggled to keep her voice even to avoid betraying how much she was already sold on the idea. "Craig, are you saying that if we—uh—go ahead with this, you'll let Marcus off the hook? You'll let him see me as often as he wants and still keep his status as a Shadow Tantra master?"

"If I'm absolutely and completely unable to steal one iota of your energy," Craig replied in his rumbling voice, "I *might* consider letting him off the hook. Is that good

enough?" He said all of it as if this was some kind of friendly game. She had a hard time believing he could ever do anything bad to Marcus. She wanted more than anything to trust that feeling. But she didn't know for sure whether she could.

"I'm willing," she answered, her mouth dry even though her pussy was wet, anticipating a threesome. "But if you can't steal my energy and you still decide to hold Marcus to the rules, you'll have to answer to me."

The men looked at each other and burst into laughter. "Sorry," Marcus said, composing himself first. "It's just that —"

"What could I possibly do to Craig?" Lise finished for him. "Trust me, I would think of something."

Craig took another look at Marcus, his expression more serious this time. "You're sure you're okay with this, man?"

"Hell yeah," Marcus replied. "Anything would be better than losing her for good. But even if the stakes were lower — yeah. I would still be okay with it."

Craig turned to Lise again, the smile beginning to play at the corners of his mouth again. "And you're willing."

She crossed her arms. "I said I was, didn't I?"

Craig took her by the shoulders and steered her toward the hallway. "Just tell me where your bedroom is," he instructed, "and leave the rest to me."

Lise felt herself being swept along by forces beyond her control as she quickly ended up in the bedroom, fully undressed once more with two naked, handsome men at her sides.

Marcus stretched her out on her back and told her to close her eyes. She did so and heard a drawer open and close.

"Ah. You still have these," Marcus said, sounding pleased. Moments later she felt something soft tracing over her stomach. Her pussy leaked its juices and they dampened her buttocks and the bedspread beneath her.

Marcus pulled her hands up over her head. The same soft material he'd used to stroke her belly now entwined itself around her wrists. He'd found the black silken cord she used for bondage play. They'd used it together a few times way back when. But the bonds had never before put her at the mercy of two men at once.

Marcus tied the silken rope so it was snug around her wrists and then secured it to the head of the bed.

Craig stood at the foot of the bed, a tall, broad figure and a force to be reckoned with. He seemed so likable and yet he was so physically imposing—and had so much power over Marcus' future at the moment—that Lise felt intimidated.

And now that she was tied to the bed, there was nothing she could do about it.

Her body reacted to that thought with an electric jolt of arousal.

"Close your eyes," Craig said as he sheathed himself in a condom. "I want to watch you."

Lise obeyed by closing her eyes. She was about to ask what he was going to watch when she felt Marcus' familiar touch on her breasts. He kneaded and caressed them and then he placed his mouth firmly over one of her nipples and sucked.

She moaned and squirmed. Her pussy begged to be touched.

Marcus continued caressing her upper body.

A few moments later, she felt another, unfamiliar pair of hands exploring the lengths of her thighs. Craig. His hands were extraordinarily warm, which she guessed was because of the extra energy he possessed as the leader of the Shadow Tantra masters.

She felt the mattress shift and guessed he was bending toward her. She tensed in anticipation. He lightly stroked his cheek over her lower belly above her mound. The prickly feel of his cheek was a sharp sensation that fell just short of pain. She circled her hips, hoping for him to move his hands—or his mouth—lower. Her swollen folds begged for more touching.

But instead he withdrew entirely. She opened her eyes.

Craig stood over her. His cock jutted sharply upward and he brought one of his huge hands to its shaft, stroking it lightly. Although she thought Marcus was better-looking, she couldn't deny that Craig was impressive. Every muscle bulged. She watched the fantastic musculature of his arm as he gently worked his palm over his erect penis.

"I'm going to test her now, Marcus," Craig said. His breathing had changed, becoming more rapid. "Sure you can handle it?"

"Absolutely," Marcus replied without hesitation.

Seconds later, Craig knelt between Lise's thighs. With one hand, he spread her labia. She lifted her head suddenly at the feel of cold air on the damp folds of flesh. With his other hand, he guided his cock into her opening. She jumped at the sudden, delicious invasion. Marcus, standing beside the bed, stroked her arm.

With a low groan, Craig stretched himself over her and thrust into her with the skill of a man who knew how to find the angles that would make her come alive with sensation.

She wrapped her legs around him, urging him to go deeper. And she felt his energy begin to pull at hers.

Craig's attempt to steal her energy felt different from Marcus'. Craig seemed more determined. His energy was like a mist all around her, taking on a life of its own and searching for a way in through her defenses. But it didn't seem to find any chinks in her armor.

She concentrated, focusing all her attention on the mist of Craig's energy. It felt strong and sure. But she was stronger. She imagined her own energy like a bright bubble of light wrapping itself around Craig. On an invisible level, she was in charge even as he physically dominated her.

Her bubble of light sucked his mist and she pulled his energy into herself.

Instantly she felt more alive. His pleasure rushed through her, meshing with her own. The feeling of being buried inside her soft pussy, her muscles squeezing his cock with almost painful pleasure. That was what she was doing to him. And she could feel it now, adding to her sensation of being stretched. He wasn't as big as Marcus but he was big enough and he knew how to move to reach her G-spot.

More and more of his energy rushed into her. She felt drunk on it. It made her giddy with power.

Somewhere in the back of her mind, she remembered what Marcus had said about the Shadow Tantra practice of taking a lover's energy. He said the extra life force was only used for good. For healing. That meant what she was doing right now wasn't a bad thing. It couldn't be, could it?

Craig let out a low grunt with each thrust, as if he was trying to be stoic and hold back from crying out but couldn't help letting the noise escape. Sweat broke out over his chest and shoulders. A droplet fell between her breasts. As it trickled down her chest and over her stomach, her heightened awareness turned even that small sensation into an enhancement of pleasure.

Her vaginal walls tensed. There was so much tightness inside her. She was so ready to let go, for an orgasm to crash over her in waves. But if she came, would the flow of his energy into her cease? God, she didn't want it to stop. But she had to come soon.

Craig had his eyes squeezed tightly shut. His thrusts were deeper and sharper now. He needed her. Even as she stole his energy, he couldn't get enough of her. She could see that in the set of his jaw and feel it from the inside as she picked up on all his sensations.

Suddenly, to her surprise, he pulled out and collapsed on the bed beside her, panting. She strained against her bonds. Though they felt soft against her skin, they held her securely.

Marcus stepped out of the shadows. The candlelight threw his well-defined muscles into relief. He was gorgeous. He had his cock in one hand, slowly stroking it up and

down. Even in his large hand, his penis looked impressively thick. He was one well-endowed guy. She hated the thought of giving Marcus up if Craig forced him to comply with the Shadow Tantra Order's ancient rule. And Craig would force him to do so. She could tell. Craig might have a good sense of humor but he was obviously sure of himself.

While Craig lay on his side next to her, eyes closed as if he was recovering from his encounter with her, Marcus reached for the silken rope that bound her wrists. He gave it a hard tug.

"Oh!" she said as she felt the bonds become even more snug around the delicate bones of her wrists. The ropes were designed for this kind of play and wouldn't leave marks on her. But all the same the tightness made a thrill of fear go through her. There was no way she could get free without one of the men's help now, no matter how hard she tried.

Marcus ran his fingers up and down her torso. She shuddered as he paused at her breast and circled the nipple with his thumb, pressing down on the soft flesh.

"You have no idea how difficult it was," rumbled Marcus' low voice above her, "not to knock you off her and take over myself."

Lise glanced up at Marcus. He was like a statue, every muscle developed to perfection. Her pussy clenched and more dampness flowed from her opening. She looked over at Craig, who now had one eye open. A faint smile flickered across his face. "Possessive, are we?"

Marcus slid his hand down to her mound, pressing against the mons and then dipping a finger between her labia. She gasped. "Maybe. Or maybe I just think you can't handle her. Her energy is powerful and it's a challenge to hang on when the tables are turned like that."

Something about hearing the two men argue over her made her even hotter. Her pussy ached, needing release. Marcus rubbed one finger over the hood of her clit with painful slowness. She groaned. Just when she was approaching orgasm again, he

moved his hand higher, running his fingers lightly over her stomach. She panted in frustration.

“Why did you stop?” she asked in a whisper, not sure whether she was asking Marcus why he’d stopped what he was just doing or asking Craig why he’d stopped fucking her a few moments earlier.

They both answered her.

“To regroup,” Craig answered with a short laugh.

“Because I need to make you wait,” Marcus said a heartbeat later. “We can’t let you have all the power.”

No longer filled with Craig’s cock, desperate to come and lying flat on her back with her hands tied above her head, Lise didn’t feel like she had any power at all. She was at the mercy of two hugely muscled men who both had years of training in the art of manipulating their partners’ emotions and energy during sex—for everyone’s maximum benefit.

Not a bad position to be in at all.

After a few more moments, both men lifted their heads, eerily in sync with each other. She watched as Craig and Marcus locked gazes, one man on either side of her. They were doing that silent masculine communication thing again without letting her in on the secret.

“What are you two staring at each other about?” she panted.

“I know how we can get her,” Craig said.

“I do too,” Marcus said.

They both looked way too gleeful about the whole thing.

“Marcus,” Lise said, “I thought you were on my side. I thought we were trying to convince Craig that you can’t steal my energy no matter what you do to me.”

Marcus kissed her damp forehead with warm lips. “That’s exactly what I’m doing, sweetheart. If—no, when—this doesn’t work, Craig will have to believe me.”

She tugged again at her bonds. Of course, she only succeeded in tightening the knots even more than before.

All her exasperation with the two men faded when Marcus leaned down and she felt new sensations in two different places.

One of those places was her inner thigh a scant inch away from her cleft, where Marcus was pressing his mouth. He licked the sensitive, vulnerable flesh he found there, warming the skin. An uncontrollable shudder ran through her and she heard Marcus let out a low chuckle of appreciation for her arousal.

The other sensation was equally warm and wet but it came in a very unexpected place—her toes. Craig was slowly, deliciously running his tongue into the gap between the big toe and second toe of her right foot. Then he took her entire big toe into the heat of his mouth, letting his lips slip over its surface. The feeling reminded her of what she'd experienced when she felt sex with each of the men from their points of view. When they'd psychically shared their physical feelings with her, she'd known what it was like for them when her tight opening slid down the length of a hard, aching cock. It had been amazing. With the toe kisses as a reminder, she felt pure white heat building in her core.

God, she could almost come just from their mouths working on her.

But she managed to raise her head and speak anyway. "Is this the big secret plan?" she asked, surprised at how breathless her voice sounded. "Licking my toes?" Somehow she didn't want to let them know how much of an effect they were having on her. She wanted to be stronger than the two of them put together. She was going to come again tonight—oh yes—but she would do it when she was ready. And they were *not* going to steal her energy.

Marcus nipped at the spot on her inner thigh where he'd been licking, not hard enough to bruise, just hard enough for her to feel it. The hot skin stung.

"Ow!" she said, mainly because she didn't want to let on just how much she'd liked the nip. Her belly coiled into a tight knot of pure desire. All she wanted now was for him to move up an inch and take her swollen clit into his mouth.

"The toes are not the plan," Marcus said, using his fingers to spread her labia apart. "Do you think we would let you off that easily?"

Craig paused in his work long enough to say, "The feet are just for getting you primed." As if she wasn't primed enough already. "I've always loved feet. And you have especially clean, pretty ones." He went back to encompassing her toes in the soft warmth of his mouth. Her arms and legs prickled with arousal. She wanted to move and touch both Marcus and Craig. But she was tied too tightly. The frustration only heightened her excitement.

Marcus released his gentle stretching of her labia and ran a fingertip along the edges of her folds. Her whole lower body trembled. Then he did what she'd been longing for. He took her engorged, pulsing clit between his lips and sucked. Hard enough that the sweet, sharp pleasure made her cry out.

His tongue made pass after pass over the sensitive nub. Her nerves on fire, she hardly noticed that Craig had left her feet and moved to the head of the bed until he deftly untied the knots that bound her wrists. With a long sigh, she tangled her freed hands in Marcus' thick hair. Lightning bolts of excitement shot through her belly and thighs. Each time his tongue passed over her clit, she thought she could hardly stand more pleasure. But each time she survived and longed for the next slow, hot, slick stroke.

"Time to turn her over," Craig said, his voice infused with an air of authority.

Much to Lise's frustration, Marcus raised his head. She let her hands fall away from his hair and ran her palms over the front of her body instead. The silkiness of her own flesh excited her further. "Aw, I was just getting started," Marcus said.

"Tough," Craig replied. "For this to work, I need you underneath her."

Lise's heart rate increased as she wondered what they had in store for her. Moments later, she found herself kneeling next to a reclining Marcus, who smiled and looked as if he couldn't be happier to be underneath her. Whatever the two of them were going to do to her, he was definitely looking forward to it. His erect cock was sheathed in a fresh condom and the thickness of his penis looked as impressive as it always did.

"I'm yours, Lise," Marcus said. "Do with me what you will."

She wanted nothing more than to feel him filling her pussy right away but she forced herself to wait. She kissed his lower stomach, feeling the short, stiff hairs below his navel tickling her lips. She gently cupped his balls in one hand, pressing her fingertips against his perineum and then running her thumb lightly over his scrotum. He gave a short grunt, as if he was trying not to make too much noise—as if he didn't want to let her know just how much she was affecting him.

But he couldn't hide it. She saw his cock twitch with increased desire. She grasped its shaft and stroked it as slowly as she could, hoping to tease him, to make him want her so much it hurt.

Judging by the way he looked, she was succeeding. He crumpled the sheets in his fists and his knuckles went white.

When she decided the tension was high enough, she straddled him and guided the head of his cock to meet her opening. Inch by inch, she lowered herself onto him, feeling the pressure of his massive erection against her inner walls. Her cunt was so slick taking him all the way in was easy.

Once he was buried deep inside her, she paused for a moment, throwing her head back and savoring the experience of being so full of him and feeling him stretch her from the inside. Then she started to move as slowly as she could.

Marcus squeezed his eyes shut in pleasure and concentration. Watching his face, she felt even more turned-on. He was amazing to see when he was completely overcome by lust.

His torso trembled under her hands and he seemed to hold back as long as he could before beginning to pump his hips up and down. She gasped, leaning forward and holding onto his shoulders. He kept a slow, steady rhythm, as if he was still trying to hold himself back from going at full speed.

She felt the coldness of lube being spread over her buttocks. She'd hardly noticed Craig moving in to kneel directly behind her but there he was. And he was lubing her ass. She wanted to ask him what the heck he was doing but she didn't have enough breath to speak.

His fingers found the opening of her anus, sliding freely over its puckered surface. To her surprise, the sensation added even more pleasure to what she was already feeling. But it was a different kind of pleasure from that of being fucked by Marcus.

Craig pushed the merest tip of one of his fingers into the opening. It felt as though he wasn't even half an inch in but even so she could feel a lot of sensation surrounding the penetration. She gripped Marcus even more tightly, feeling her cunt soften and mold to his cock. Her inner muscles moved in slow waves, gripping and releasing his shaft. She wasn't quite coming—not yet. But the sensation was almost as good as an orgasm.

Craig gently worked his finger another half inch into her anus.

No one had ever gone there before. In all the time she and Marcus had spent together in the past, he'd never asked to experiment with the "back door". And she'd never thought it was something she would like. Even having Craig lightly finger the opening made her feel incredibly vulnerable. Almost powerless.

She had no doubt the guys had wordlessly decided between them that Craig, the man she knew less well and trusted less, would do the exploration. That way it would be more likely to throw her off balance. From Craig's point of view, she would be more likely to prove him right that a Shadow Tantra master could never safely return to the same woman without draining her too much. From Marcus' perspective, if Lise could

sail through this experience without letting either master steal her energy, her imperviousness to being drained would be proven for certain.

A feeling of joy raced through her veins. She'd never been the sort of person to think up elaborate sexual fantasies. Years ago, when she'd been seeing Marcus regularly, she'd had no reason to spend time fantasizing. He was everything she could have dreamed up and more. She was one to do it rather than daydream about it.

But this situation? If she'd had a fantasy, this would have been it. Two men totally devoted to her pleasure, sandwiching her between them. Their competition with each other threw a strong taste of spice into the mix. Though there was nothing but friendship between the men, they were deadly serious about tonight's outcome. Craig was devoted to making sure the Shadow Tantra Order remained uncorrupted. And Marcus was devoted to—her. To Lise. She knew that now.

For tonight, both men belonged to her.

That thrilling thought added to her excitement.

Marcus continued to move inside her in the perfect rhythm. His strokes kept pace with the slow rippling of her muscles as her vagina gripped him and released him.

The shivers of pleasure from making love with Marcus relaxed her so she easily accepted the change in sensations when Craig gently slid one entire finger deeply into her anus. Her muscles tightened around him briefly and then released, accepting the increased pressure as she realized that it only added to how much pleasure she was feeling. The fact that she was doing something she'd never done before sent a delicious chill through her from head to toe.

Actually, she was doing two things she'd never done before. She'd never let anyone do what Craig was doing and this was also the first time she'd been with two men at once. *The first time but not the last*, she thought to herself with determination. This was too much fun to do just once.

Marcus reached up and kneaded her breasts with both hands. The look on his face was pure, relaxed bliss. It dawned on her that he had no fear. He was utterly confident that Craig would come around and let him off the hook at the end of the night.

If he was making any effort to steal her energy tonight, she couldn't detect it. He was just loving her. It was sweet and wonderful, with no hint of the mystical, alluring pull he'd exerted over her the last time they were together.

On the other hand, she began to feel the tantalizing, arousing pull of Craig's energy surrounding her. Tugging at her. Whispering to her soul how delicious it would be to let a little of her life force flow outward and be sucked into his energy field, his aura.

Just as she made up her mind to resist Craig's invisible pull and block him from stealing her energy, Marcus pulled her lower, bringing her chest down toward his.

Her breasts pushed against the hardness of his pecs. The angle of his strokes inside her changed with her shift in position and she felt her pussy soften, opening to him, pulsing in response to the pressure of the head of his cock against the back wall of her vagina. She'd always loved that almost as much as having her G-spot caressed. She moaned softly and held him tightly. All conscious thoughts of resisting Craig's energetic efforts left her. All she wanted was to be close to Marcus and to go on feeling all the amazing sensations as he moved inside her. Her channel was so sensitive that his slightest movement sent pleasure and heightened arousal throughout her entire body.

"Stay relaxed, sweetheart," Marcus said in a low, affectionate voice. The sound of it melted her insides. Just as she could sense Craig's efforts to pull her energy from her, she could also feel the love she and Marcus shared. It was like a rosy light that glowed between their chests and surrounded both their hearts.

Craig withdrew his finger. She instantly missed the fullness of it. He spread more lube over and around her opening. The coldness brought her back to her senses enough to gather her energy inward so he couldn't get to her as easily. It also aroused her further and her whole body trembled with pre-orgasmic tension.

"Tip her forward more," Craig said to Marcus.

Marcus hugged Lise even more closely to him.

"More," Craig said. His deep voice sounded commanding again. But, as if with some sixth sense, Lise could tell that underneath the outward assurance he was barely holding it together. Of the three of them, he was the only one who hadn't come yet tonight. As aroused as Lise was, Craig must be even more desperate.

Marcus responded to Craig's request by grabbing a thick pillow from the head of the bed and tucking it under his buttocks, lifting both himself and Lise a few inches off the bed.

"Better," Craig said and this time Lise heard the need in the single word. As he continued, his voice was raspy. He chuckled hoarsely. "I never thought I'd be this close to you, Marcus."

"Got a problem with it?" Marcus answered, managing to sound playful despite his own breathlessness.

"Not as long as there's a woman between us," Craig replied. "Lise, if I hurt you, just say so any time. Your body is yours and you have the final say. Understand?"

He rubbed the head of his penis, still sheathed in the condom, against the tight pucker of her anus. Oh, God. He was really going to do it. Could she take it? How badly would it hurt? In response to his question, she could only moan.

Craig chuckled. "I'll take that as a yes."

Marcus continued to rock her gently with his thrusts. She guessed he was moving just enough to maintain his erection. "Shh," he said in her ear. "Everything's going to be okay."

Only after he said those words did she realize she was shaking. What he didn't know was that she was shaking more from arousal and anticipation than nervousness.

Craig pressed the tip of his cock against her firmly. "Take a deep breath," he said. She obeyed and at just the right point in her breath, he pushed inside her.

She let out a soft sound that was both pain and pleasure, both protest and acceptance. There was a little pain but it took a back seat to the overwhelming sensation of fullness. Marcus wrapped his arms more tightly around her, pushing himself deeply into her, stretching her channel to its greatest length. His breathing changed and she felt his cock stiffen and swell even more.

There could only be so much room inside her. The pressure from Craig's cock must be narrowing her passage, squeezing Marcus more firmly. She pressed her cheek against his chest, which grew sweatier and warmer by the second.

Craig's large, calloused hands gripped both sides of her waist. He moved slowly. Very slowly, as if making sure not to hurt her. And maybe, she thought with satisfaction, also to keep from coming too soon. His hands were tense and she could guess how tightly coiled his whole body must feel, ready to release and spurt his semen into her.

Her own body trembled even more. The ecstasy of being fucked by both men spread to fill her from the crown of her head to the tips of her toes.

When the mist of Craig's energy surrounded her again, it caught her off guard. She'd been so lost in the moment that she'd almost forgotten the darker purpose behind this encounter.

His energy surrounded her, pulling at her from every angle. It felt deceptively good, bringing her pleasure from all around her on an energetic level that matched the physical pleasure she felt from within.

Craig began moving faster and more steadily. Marcus thrust into her from below. She heard herself scream. She was feeling too much. From all sides. From both passages. Too much sensation. The fullness was exhilarating but it was more than she could take.

"Hang on Lise," Marcus breathed. "Don't let him take from you."

Craig's trembling became more apparent as he moved steadily and firmly inside her. "Marcus," he rumbled in his deep voice, "you have to try to pull from her too. It only counts if she can withstand us both."

Lise lifted her head enough to see Marcus shut his eyes and grit his teeth. His face was tense with passion. His energy seemed to rise up around her like a cloud, greedily sucking at her energy field.

Both of them pulled at her as both of them filled her. So much searing pleasure went through every inch of her body and soul. She couldn't hold it all.

Her climax was sudden, hitting her with violent force. It was like an explosion that started with deep, powerful surges moving through her pussy. The strong muscles of her channels squeezed both men's cocks. The force of her orgasm traveled out from her center like seismic waves, encompassing all three lovers. Craig's hands held her so tightly she thought he was going to leave bruises. He buried himself deeply inside her but there was no pain. Only wave after wave of bliss. She felt strong and she knew that even though they appeared to have her at their mercy, she was the real center of this situation. She held the power.

Marcus quickened his strokes and groaned loudly. She knew somewhere in the back of her mind that her orgasm was pushing both of them over the edge.

She could also feel her energy surrounding all three of them, stronger than both men's energy combined. Their attempts to pull her energy from her now seemed feeble. Her aura reversed the pull and she took from them instead, drinking in beautiful life force from both Marcus and Craig. Being fed with their energy added to her pleasure and she came for a long time, longer than she ever had before.

As she continued to climax, both men stiffened inside her. Marcus' groans grew louder and she felt the throbbing of his cock as he came. Craig ground his hips into her buttocks, growling as if he was clamping his teeth together, willing himself to remain silent but failing.

Craig moved away first and lay limply on the bed next to Lise and Marcus.

As the pulsations of Lise's orgasm slowed, she disentangled herself from Marcus and looked around the room. Everything seemed brighter and more alive.

Marcus lay with his arms flung over his head, his eyes closed and his breathing shallow.

Lise stretched herself out on the bed between them. "Are you guys okay?" she asked, half afraid of the answer.

Marcus grunted something incoherent in response.

"Mostly," Craig mumbled.

Lise decided she would have to take that as a yes from both of them. She sat up, euphoric but dizzy. The two men lay exhausted, one on either side of her. Taking a deliciously deep breath, she ran a hand through her hair, which was damp with sweat. Her whole body buzzed with energy. She felt more alive than she ever had before.

"She's a natural," Craig said to Marcus, his voice quiet yet deep and resonant. He looked up at Lise. "It's like you're a Shadow Tantra master by birth. I've never heard of it happening before."

Marcus stretched and folded his hands behind his head. "There's no reason it couldn't happen though. Who's to say there aren't hundreds of naturals out there in the world who've just never been discovered?"

Lise looked up and down the pale length of her arms in the candlelight. She could almost see her skin glowing. "Wow," she said.

"You have our energy," Marcus said. "Now the question is what are you going to do with it?"

"You use it to heal," Craig said. "Give it back to everyone you meet. Let it radiate from you whenever you teach your yoga classes. Your students will receive it. They won't understand what's happening but they'll leave your classes feeling better. Happier. And moving closer to their lives' true purposes and hearts' desires."

"Can I really do all that?" Lise asked. "Just by paying the energy forward?"

"Yep," Marcus said. He grinned. "Everything is energy. You know that. All most people need to heal and come closer to their true potential is to receive enough energy to make them whole."

"We've devoted our lives to helping people this way," Craig added. "Given your talent, you ought to consider doing the same thing." He sighed and sat up. "I should get going and leave you two to continue enjoy your reunion in private. But before I go, could I use your shower?"

"Be my guest," Lise replied. "Wait—does this mean you're not going to punish Marcus for seeing me again?"

Craig smiled and his eyes looked mischievous. "Hell no. It was never a punishment—it was intended as a safeguard. To make sure we super-powerful Shadow Tantra masters don't harm ordinary people." He said "super-powerful" with a hint of sarcasm, so that it was obvious he was making fun of himself as he spoke. "And if you ever come across someone who can steal *your* energy, let me know because I'd like to meet him. But I don't think you'll ever find anyone who can."

Lise laughed. "You've got it. If I ever meet my match I'll let you know."

Marcus nudged her gently in the thigh with his fist. "Modest, aren't you?"

"I have to admit," she answered with a grin, "I'm not exactly feeling humble right now."

Craig got up and closed himself into the master bathroom. When the shower began to run, Marcus sat up and wrapped his arms around Lise, snuggling her against his chest. "So what do you think?" he murmured into her ear.

"Well," she answered, "for my first threesome, I'd say it was pretty damn good."

He laughed. "Not that, silly. What Craig suggested. What would you think of becoming a Shadow Tantra master yourself? You have so much natural healing ability. You could do a lot of good, you know."

A serious mood settled over her like a cloud. She wasn't completely opposed to the idea. But it would take some getting used to. "I don't know," she said. "What about the whole business of never being with the same person twice?"

"Lise," he said, "we'll be the first two Shadow Tantra masters in history who can stay with the same partner. We'll have to see other people occasionally of course, so we can keep our vow to gather healing energy through consensual, respectful sex with other partners. But we'll always come back to each other. You can learn to hold back from stealing too much energy from me. And we already know you're strong enough to withstand my efforts."

She wanted to say yes but she needed to get used to the idea. "Just give me some time," she said. "The idea is so new."

"Okay," he answered. "But at least you have to consider it, Lise," Marcus told her. "I think you're meant to be part of the Shadow Tantra. There's no way this is chance. When we met all those years ago, it was fate. I'm sure of it."

"I don't know if I believe in that kind of fate," she said.

"Why not? You're not trying to tell me that even though you're a yoga teacher and a spiritual person, your mind is closed to anything you can't trip over?"

"It's not that," she answered, trying to think of a way to put her feelings into words. "It's just that—well, if you and I were meant to be, why was it so hard along the way? It doesn't make sense."

"Trust me, I've had that argument with myself a hundred times," he said.

"How could it have been hard for you?" she asked. "You're the one who's always done the leaving." She said it without resentment. She had no more reason to be angry because she understood now that he was here to stay and that he'd only ever left because he'd believed he had to.

He pressed his lips to her shoulder, making her shiver all over again. "Sometimes the person who does the leaving hurts too," he said in a low voice. And she believed

him. He put his lips close to her ear. "Think we have time for a quickie before Craig gets out of the shower?"

She laughed. "You're kidding, right?"

He pressed his erection firmly against her thigh. She wrapped her arms around his neck and grinned. "Oh. You're not kidding." She snuggled closer, feeling her body warming up against his. "We can try. But we might get caught."

Marcus planted a kiss on her neck that made her skin tingle. Then he raised his head so he could look into her eyes. "That's a risk I'm willing to take."

About the Author

Alexis Canto has taken over her family's dining room. She lives there and reigns as queen of a laptop keyboard at all hours of the night. She plays guitar occasionally, sings in the car a lot and once cooked up her own batch of homemade deodorant.

Alexis no longer gets to compete in board games that involve wordplay because she always wins and it's no fun for anyone else. As a child she played Satan in a middle school stage production, but as a thirty-something author her only evil is a hardcore addiction to writing.

Alexis welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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