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What She Wants

Anne Rainey

Summer just got a whole lot hotter...

Summer Chase has already loved and lost once and she has no intention of going through that pain again. But when a hunky Camaro-driving P.I. shows up at her B & B looking for a room for the week, she sees something more than a hard-bodied guest. For the first time since her husband's death, Summer's sexual interest is awakening, and she's not about to hit the snooze button!

Gage Knight is a P.I. in desperate need of a vacation. His impromptu trip to Cape May, New Jersey, seems just what he needs to relax and unwind. But when he knocks on the door of Chase's Bed & Breakfast and comes face to face with sexy owner, Summer Chase, relaxing drops to the bottom of his to-do list. Now all he wants is a tasty Summer treat, and he plans to take his time, savoring the curvaceous beauty one inch at a time.

Question is...can she watch Gage drive off into the sunset when the week comes to an end?

Warning: This story contains a hard-as-nails, ornery, demanding, tattooed PI eager to please, a widow ready to get back to the business of living and loving, and the kind of hot summer sex that you just might want to bookmark for later.

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Dedication

To all the readers who have taken the time to let me know they enjoy my stories. You keep me going. And to my New Jersey cousins. You're the best bunch of family anyone could ever have. Love you all bunches!

Chapter One

Bells over the door chimed as Gage stepped past the threshold of Chase's Bed and Breakfast. *Ahhh...* The house was much cooler than his '71 Camaro. Why hadn't he flown here instead of driving a classic car with no air conditioner in August? Because he was too damned impetuous for his own good.

As he waited for the elusive Summer, Gage recalled his aunt's tale of the young widow. Summer Chase had opened a bed and breakfast after her husband died in a car accident. She'd needed the money. He felt sorry for her. It must have been tough to open her home to outsiders.

He heard shuffling and looked up. A woman stood in the doorway, clad in a turquoise one-piece bathing suit and matching sarong cover-up. He let his gaze travel the length of her. *Luscious*. Possibly the sexiest woman he'd ever seen. Hills and valleys in all the right places. The longest brown hair. He itched to tangle his fingers in it. Gage imagined her walking to him, naked, hair drifting around her bountiful body.

"Hello, can I help you?"

Ah, a lovely voice for a lovely woman. "Summer Chase?"

"Yes, and you are?"

Christ. He hadn't expected her to look so damn edible.

He stood and held out his hand. "Gage Knight. My Aunt Bev is a friend of yours."

She took his hand, and her eyes widened as she caught his words. "Little Gage?"

That damned nickname! His aunt would kill his personal life yet. "Please, just Gage."

She laughed. "Of course, sorry about that. I've just heard so much about you. Heck, I feel like I know you."

He liked her warm and inviting laugh. "All good things, I hope."

She winked at him. "Mostly."

"Well, don't listen to the bad things. My aunt just likes to talk."

"She's a very dear lady."

"About that. Did she happen to call and tell you I was coming?"

"Yep, she called."

He smiled. "I was hoping you might be able to put me up for the week."

"Did your Aunt Bev tell you I could keep you for the entire week?"

Heat filled his cheeks. "Not exactly. Until I got here, I wasn't sure how long I'd be staying."

Driving straight through from Ohio, stopping only for gas and bathroom breaks, had his muscles aching. Only a solid eight hours of sleep would help him feel alive again. Thirty-two years old, and he was feeling it.

“Gage, you’re in luck. A couple had to cancel at the last minute, so I do have a room ready, and it’s available to you for the entire week as well.”

“Thank you! You’re a goddess.”

She laughed. “Follow me. You look like you could use a cold drink.”

She started out of the room, and Gage jumped at her offer. “I’d be forever grateful. The last leg of the trip was hot as blazes.”

She stopped and turned. “Your car doesn’t have air conditioning?”

“I drive a 1971 Camaro. The only air is from the open windows.”

She whistled and kept walking. “Wow. All the way from Ohio?”

“Unfortunately.”

When she entered the kitchen and headed for a cupboard, Gage leaned against the doorframe and scanned his surroundings. The kitchen was spacious and well lit by the many windows. He could see a deck out back. Since the house backed up to the beach, he wondered if she’d been sunning herself when he’d arrived.

Crossing his arms over his chest, Gage watched her precise movements. He could stare at the sway of her hips for hours and not get bored.

“Was the trip a last minute decision?” Summer asked as she reached into a cabinet to grab a couple of glasses.

“Yeah. I’m sort of burned out from work. I needed the R and R.”

“What do you do for a living?”

“Aunt Bev didn’t tell you?”

“If she did, I don’t remember.” She placed the glasses on the counter before grabbing a pitcher from the refrigerator. “Iced tea okay?”

“Is it sweetened?”

“Is there any other kind?”

He grinned. “Perfect.” She poured a glass, then handed it to him. “I’m a private investigator,” he said.

She poured herself a glass, then leaned against the counter and took a sip. Even watching her swallow the tea was sexy.

“A PI, huh? That sounds pretty exciting.”

He pried his gaze away from the elegant line of her neck, but was snared by the sight of her damp lips. An image of her sucking his cock sprang to mind. Christ, what was wrong with him?

“Uh, not as exciting as you might think,” he said. “I track down cheating spouses most of the time.”

"I'll bet it's more exciting than changing sheets and cleaning all day."

He chuckled. "You do have a point there." Then, after a beat of silence, he asked, "So, Summer, what do you do when you aren't taking care of this place?"

"That pretty much fills my time. Not much room for recreation."

"Ever?"

She shrugged. "I try to get out every once in awhile."

Gage had the crazy urge to lick her, to taste every silky inch of her. From her rosy-cheeked face to her dainty coral-painted toes. He cleared his throat and asked, "Any place in particular?"

She pointed to the window behind her. "Just to the beach. I've lived near the ocean my entire life, but it never gets old for me."

"I can see how it'd be addicting. Since I'm in the middle of farm country, I don't get to see the ocean. I'm hoping to fix that."

"Relaxing in the sun with a cold beer will definitely give you the relaxation you need."

"And maybe a pretty lady to keep me company?"

Her cheeks turned a captivating shade of pink. "I could show you the hot spots around here if you like."

"It's a deal, Summer."

He liked her name. It was evocative of warm, sultry nights and intoxicating fragrances wafting through Spanish moss. He stared out the window and imagined taking her on the beach, under the morning sun. It would be fiery, tumultuous. The kind of sex that left a man's muscles sore. Let him slip between Summer's supple thighs and he'd make sure they both walked away smiling. Then the thought disappeared, replaced by a hefty dose of shame. *The woman's a widow, you ass! Get your head out of your pants.*

"So, do you run this place by yourself?"

She'd just taken a sip of her tea, but his question had her frowning. "No, my friend Tory helps me out. Mostly on weekends because I'm at my busiest then." In a quieter voice she admitted, "I really don't know what I'd do without her."

"No boyfriend around to give you a hand?" Gage asked, his curiosity winning out.

The shy beauty shook her head. "No, I'm not with anyone. Not since my husband passed away."

Summer's low, sexy voice seemed strained. Gage felt like an even bigger jerk now for dredging up distressing memories. He left the doorway and moved beside her. He could smell her scent. Sweet, with just a hint of coconut oil. "I'm sorry, Summer, I didn't mean to pry."

She turned around and stared up at him. Her hazel eyes nearly matched the shade of her hair. If he leaned in an inch, her breasts would brush against his chest. So close.

Damn, he really wanted to lean in.

"It's okay," she murmured. "It's been two years. It doesn't hurt so much anymore." Her face turned tender and a small smile appeared. "It's just a touch sore from time to time."

Gage reached up, aching to touch her cheek, to see if her skin was as smooth and warm as it appeared. Then someone else walked into the room. Shit, story of his life. He forced his hand back to his side.

"Hey there. I'm not interrupting, am I?"

Summer jumped back, smacking her backside against the edge of the counter, her face turning blotchy as if she'd been caught necking. "Not at all. I was just getting our new guest some tea. Want some?"

"Oh, that sounds like heaven right now." The girl groaned as she grabbed a paper towel from beneath the cabinets and swiped at her sweating brow. "I weeded the flower bed. Lordy, it's not getting any cooler out there."

She plopped onto a chair at the long oak table. The petite blonde had on a black tank top that showed off her midriff, and a pair of old, worn cut-off shorts. She was a cute thing. She was also interrupting. Gage had an urge to howl. He wanted her gone. He wanted to be alone with Summer. She'd been *this* close to relaxing.

"I told you not to do that, Tory," Summer admonished as she grabbed a third glass. "I was going to get to it once the sun started to set. It won't be quite as hot then."

Tory shrugged, looked at Gage, then back at Summer. Her brow arched.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Tory, meet Gage Knight. You remember Bev used to talk about her nephew?"

"Little Gage?"

Christ.

Summer laughed. "Well, little Gage is all grown up and he'll be a guest here for the week."

"Great, you filled that room, then."

"Yep."

Tory grinned. "Didn't I tell you it would all work out?"

"I don't remember you saying that at all. In fact, you cursed that couple for leaving me in the lurch."

She huffed. "Not to their faces."

"It's just as bad to do it behind their backs, and you know it."

"But you were counting on that money and you let them slide on paying you. You're too nice, Summer."

Gage decided to cut in before they started brawling on the kitchen floor. "Good thing I came along. Everyone gets what they want. I get a room. The couple gets out of paying. Summer still gets her money."

"Yes, a happy ending for all. So quit complaining," Summer growled at her friend.

Tory took a long drink from her glass. "I still say you need to crack down on these people when they back out on you at the last minute."

"Fine, but we won't argue about it in front of a guest."

Gage snorted. "You should meet my cousins. They were born to argue."

Summer's eyes widened. "You don't mean Bev's kids? She's so sweet and easygoing."

Gage nearly choked. "You haven't seen her when she's browbeating her two adult sons. The woman's downright tenacious."

"You're pulling my leg. Bev's never even raised her voice around me."

Her words had him curious. "How long have you known my aunt?"

"She and my mom went to high school together, so my entire life really."

"How come we never met?" Sure as hell he'd have remembered her.

She shrugged. "My mom and your aunt stay in touch via the phone and email, but they don't see each other very often."

"Well, I'm glad to finally make your acquaintance, Summer Chase."

Her eyes changed hue to a darker shade of brown with small green flecks barely visible. "Me too, Gage."

Chapter Two

Startled, excited and scared all at once? Was that even possible? Summer hadn't felt a single spark of sexual desire since Seth's death. Suddenly, her libido was leaping with energy. Two years was a long time to be alone. Her many jetting emotions frightened her, and she hadn't a clue what to do about them.

Falling in love with Seth had been as easy as slipping into an old pair of jeans. She'd gone out for drinks with her girlfriends from work, met Seth at the nightclub, and they'd hit it off. Soon, Seth had swept her off her feet. They'd married ten months later and moved into the beautiful old Victorian she still called home.

Three and a half years into her marriage, the awful phone call came. Her world came crashing down. Bills piled up. Something had to be done or she'd lose the house. She couldn't bring herself to sell. She'd shared such wonderful times in the old beauty. The idea of a bed and breakfast was born. With lots of help from some very dear friends, she'd managed to make Chase's Bed and Breakfast her sole source of income.

While watching Tory regale Gage with stories of *weeds gone wild*, adrenaline rushed through her bloodstream. Even Seth hadn't set her system exploding with such awareness. Guilt washed through her at the traitorous thought. The handsome, tanned Gage was more man than she knew what to do with. His whole demeanor screamed dominance. From his smoothly shaved head to his powerful, black T-shirt-encased chest, to those scrumptious sculpted arms she'd been eyeballing.

She'd been the innocent virgin when she'd met Seth, but she couldn't help feeling that their relationship had been too easy. She knew innately that Gage would be anything but easy.

"Summer, have you considered hiring a high school kid to help out?"

The way he said her name, as if tasting it on his tongue. A zing of pleasure raced up her spine. "I've thought about it. To be honest, I haven't taken the time to put an ad out. Besides, Tory helps quite a bit. Without her, I'd be lost at sea by now."

Tory quickly shook her messy blonde head. "Don't let her fool you. She's handled this old girl on her own and done a fine job too. All I do is help out with those things that require more than two hands."

Summer smiled warmly at her dearest friend. "Well, anyway, it's become my pride and joy."

Gage licked his lips, and her knees went weak. The act seemed so sensual; she could sink right into a puddle at his feet. "I can see how much you treasure this house. It's been well loved."

Her legs quivered at the way he spoke. The intimate tone seemed intended for her ears alone. “Thank you. I have four couples right now. You’ll be my fifth guest.” A full house meant this month’s bills were paid.

“I’m glad.” He took his empty glass to the sink, rinsed it and set it inside, then turned and smiled at her. “If you’d like to show me to my room, I can get out of your hair. I’m sure you’ve got more interesting things to do on your Sunday than entertaining the likes of me.”

“Oh, of course. Sorry for rattling on. You’re probably exhausted from your trip.”

He stretched his back. “Making the trip in that Camaro wasn’t the brightest thing to do.”

Summer’s feet were caught in quicksand. She stared, mesmerized by the motion of his muscles moving beneath the tight T-shirt. God, the man was fun to watch.

“I love that sweet baby, but she leaves a little to be desired on road trips.” He flexed his neck from side to side, then glanced back at her and caught her staring at his delicious body. He winked. In a low voice, Gage said, “If I didn’t need a shower and a bed, I’d be perfectly content to sit and talk with you. What I heard about you from my aunt wasn’t nearly enough to satisfy my curiosity.”

She didn’t know what to say. Thankfully, Tory did. “While you show him to his room, Summer, I’m going to head down to the beach for a quick dip.”

“Okay.” The single word was all she could manage. Her throat suddenly seemed horribly dry. Gage held her immobile with the intensity of his gaze. Once Tory went out the back door, Gage moved toward Summer. She held her breath, very aware that serious chemistry was at work between them. As he drew near, she tilted her head back to see into his eyes. So tall, over six feet, and so big she felt dwarfed—a rare feeling considering her five-foot-eight, full-figured frame.

Gage reached out and touched her on the cheek with the back of his hand. His caressing, barely-there stroke electrified her.

“So, you aren’t seeing anyone right now, huh?”

“I haven’t dated since Seth died. You?”

“Nope. Would you consider spending some time with me while I’m here?”

His low, deep voice made shivers run up and down her spine.

“Yeah, I’d like that.” God, how lame. Where had her brain gone? She sounded like an idiot.

His brow quirked up, and his eyes took on a predatory gleam. “Have dinner with me,” he murmured.

Summer had to remind herself to breathe.

When she started to speak, he blurted out, “Tonight.”

Too soon, her mind warned. “I really shouldn’t. I need to pay bills or there won’t even be a Chase B & B.”

He folded his arms over his chest. “I’d like to get to know you better. Pretty please, have dinner with me?” As if sensing her indecision, he moved in for the kill. “You know I’m new in town. Take pity on an

outsider. I don't know the good from the bad around here. Do you want me to end up with food poisoning?"

A tense silence followed. She really wanted to say yes. How long had it been since she'd wanted to spend time with a man? "I suppose I could always deal with the bills tomorrow."

"Good," he whispered, "Now, about that room..."

Summer snapped back to reality. "Right this way." Rooms she could handle. It was the devastatingly handsome Gage Knight she wasn't so sure about.

Chapter Three

Gage plugged in his computer and booted it up, then stripped out of his clothes and stepped into the shower. As his muscles relaxed under the pounding jets, his thoughts unerringly went back to Summer.

He soaped himself up and let his mind stray into forbidden territory. Summer had a body made for long hours of loving. Instinctively, he knew they'd fit together perfectly. The flare of her hips and that ass. Gage could only guess at the shape, but he was real good at filling in the gaps. He ached to knead and stroke the ample globes.

Then he remembered her husband.

Christ, two years was a long drought. He couldn't conceive of it. His mind screamed at him to stay away. She wasn't the type to play around. That knowledge should've made his desire dry up. Knowing a woman was the type to get serious usually had him steering a wide path. If he were a gentleman, he wouldn't consider touching her. But Summer wasn't just any woman. His cock hardened when Gage thought of all the possibilities, all the things he wanted to do to her, the pleasures he could give her.

Gage reached down and took his cock in his fist, the need to take the edge off paramount in his mind. As he stroked the hard flesh, he imagined her naked, her large breasts so gloriously bared for him, her smoothly rounded hips cushioning him. He'd fit himself between her silky thighs and delve right into paradise. He could almost hear her shout his name. The thought of bringing her to climax sent him careening out of control.

Gage tossed back his head and closed his eyes, the water cascading down, his mind wrapped up in thoughts of Summer. He squeezed his hard length, imagining the warm clutch of her cunt. He pumped faster, harder. When his mind pulled up an image of Summer in the turquoise bathing suit, tits all but bursting out of the scooped neckline, he exploded. His hot come shot all over his fist, but in his mind he saw his milky seed coating those magnificent swells of flesh.

A few minutes later, Gage realized the water was beginning to cool. He sighed and wished like hell he was inside Summer's sweet, voluptuous body. He rinsed and turned off the shower, his thoughts swirling with ideas. He'd only just met her, but he'd not be letting her squirm away anytime soon. One way or another, he'd have to show her that her grieving period was over. It was time to start living again.

Suddenly his stomach rumbled, reminding him he hadn't eaten anything since he'd grabbed coffee and a danish at the gas station hours ago. He quickly dressed, snatched up the room key and went in search of the delectable Summer Chase.

As the hostess led the way through the crowded restaurant, Summer turned back to Gage and whispered, “I really can’t think of a better beach restaurant. Their crab cakes are fantastic.”

When they reached their table, Gage held her chair for her and murmured, “I trust your expert judgment, sweetheart.”

They were seated in the covered rear garden terrace. Summer’s heart beat erratically, nearly drowning out the simple romantic beauty of the moment. It’d been so long since she’d enjoyed a meal with a member of the opposite sex in any kind of romantic way.

Though Summer had guy friends, friendship couldn’t replace her need for intimacy. Tender touches and warm kisses—she hadn’t realized how much she missed those things until Gage had shown up at her door. Sparks had flown. Being with him, even in such an innocent way as having dinner, caused Summer’s juices to stir.

“So, Summer, do you come to this restaurant often?”

“I wish, but no, I’m usually too busy.”

He leaned across the table. “You should never be too busy for fun.”

Man, he was sexy. Summer’s mind blanked as she gazed at him. In the muted light, his smooth, tan head shone. She’d never known how sexy a bald man could be until Gage. She had the urge to run her fingers over his scalp. His five o’clock shadow only added to his dark, masculine appeal. If she were bold like Tory, she’d reach out and stroke his firm jaw. Too bad she wasn’t. He was so damn good-looking, and she really wanted to touch him. All over. For hours.

“Summer?”

“Oh, yes, I think you’re exactly right,” she breathed out. Lordy, even when she’d married Seth she hadn’t been this excited. That thought gave her a momentary pang of guilt. Thinking of Seth and looking at Gage, she knew it was way past time for her to move on with her life. She’d been stagnant too long.

Seth would have never wanted her to pine away for him forever, living in the past and shoving the future further and further beyond her reach. He’d want her to move on, get through the grieving and get to the living.

With just a hint of an ornery smile playing at the corners of Gage’s lips, Summer had a feeling he was the sort of man who lived life to its fullest. Even his profession was exciting. A private eye. Scandal and intrigue. Action and danger. Yep, definitely more exciting than running a B&B. What would it be like to make love to the roguish man? He was like a juicy steak sitting on the edge of the table, and she was the puppy dying to sink her teeth into the scrumptious feast. So close. All she had to do was reach out and she’d have him in her voracious mouth.

“Hey, Summer, care to share?”

“Share?”

“You looked pretty far off there for a second.”

She waved his words away. “It doesn’t matter. Tell me, what made you choose Cape May for your vacation?”

He picked up his fork and started back on his pan-seared cod. “My aunt made it sound pretty appealing.” The fork stopped halfway to his mouth. His lips curved upward as he said, “So far, she was right on the money.”

She took a sip of her diet cola. “You talk a lot about her. Are you close to her?” When she realized he’d stopped eating, she knew she’d said something wrong. “What did I say?”

“You don’t know what happened to my parents?”

Her heart clenched at the obvious pain in his voice. “No, I’m sorry.”

“They were killed at a carryout. Some guy high on acid came in and demanded money from the clerk. The clerk gave him what he wanted, but the asshole was so far gone he started shooting. Later he told the police he’d been trying to kill the *snakes*. Hallucinations. Mom was shot in the chest. She died instantly. Dad was shot three times. He died on the way to the hospital. The clerk took a bullet in the arm. He survived.”

“Gage...I’m so sorry.”

He nodded. “It was years ago. I’d just graduated from college when it happened. Aunt Bev sort of stepped in and took over where mom left off. She’s been pretty great.”

“I’m glad you had her.”

“Me too. Anyway, that’s the reason I became a private investigator. I wanted to help people.”

Summer understood loss all too well. She also knew words were useless. She reached across the table and placed her hand over his. When he turned his palm up and twined his fingers with hers, the air around them changed, heated. Her comforting gesture had quickly morphed into something much more, much deeper.

Trying to act nonchalant, Summer slipped her hand from his and inquired, “So, how long have you been a PI?”

“I hung out my shingle five years ago. It was tough going at first, but now I can be choosy.”

“Do you enjoy the work?”

“I can set my own hours. I don’t have a boss breathing down my neck. The money is good. All in all, not too bad. Every job has its drawbacks, though.”

Just then the waiter came over and asked if they wanted dessert. She was about to refuse, but Gage spoke up before she could get the words out.

“What do you have in the way of chocolate?”

“Our chocolate pie is pretty popular.”

“Send us a big slice.”

“Us?”

He pushed his plate away. “I’m not eating it all by myself. You’re helping.”

Her stomach loved the idea, but her hips not so much. “Uh-uh, I can’t afford the calories.”

His gaze traveled to her chest and back up again. “A few bites of pie won’t hurt. Trust me.”

She laughed and caved. “Who am I to refuse chocolate?”

He winked. “That’s the spirit.”

As they drove home, Gage had to grip the steering wheel to keep his hands from reaching toward Summer. Damn, it’d been hell watching her eat the chocolate pie. The little sounds of satisfaction she made after each bite had his mind going straight to the gutter.

He took his eyes off the road long enough to see her stroking the smooth leather seat with a fingertip. Hell, Gage wanted that finger on the head of his dick. She wiggled as if attempting to get more comfortable. The movement caused her pretty breasts to jiggle beneath her beige tank top. To keep from drooling, Gage focused on the road again. When he spotted her house, he pulled into the driveway and killed the engine, then turned toward her. “We’re home.”

“Yes, we are,” she whispered.

His gaze roamed over her possessively before he leaned in and brushed his lips over hers. “Like satin. I bet you’re like that all over, aren’t you, sweetheart?”

“M-maybe you should find out for yourself.”

Could he be hearing her right? “Summer?”

“I should be playing hard to get, I know, but I want you, Gage.”

“I want you too.”

She eyed his crotch and smiled. “I sort of gathered.”

He stroked her hair, enjoying the soft strands beneath his fingers. “You go to a man’s head, sweetheart.”

“I’m glad.”

He cupped her cheek and murmured, “You’re sure?”

“Very.”

Hell, yeah.

Chapter Four

Gage leaned toward her, and Summer's heart sped up. When his lips were mere inches from hers, he murmured, "I want you. I've been telling myself all evening to give you a sweet kiss at your door, to leave you alone. All I can think about right now is getting inside you."

It was now or never, Summer decided. "Kiss me, Gage, then we'll see what happens."

"Mmm, your wish is my command." His lips covered hers, and Summer melted.

He was so tender and warm as he coasted his tongue over her lips. She sighed and parted for him. Taking his time, Gage slipped inside and tasted her as if he had forever. She wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him in deeper, suddenly edgy for everything. A groan rumbled from deep inside his chest. She became aware of his warm palm against her bare flesh beneath her tank, inching upward until the caress of his thumb over her silk-covered breast had her body vibrating with need. Summer whimpered, and Gage lifted his head, his gaze zeroing in on the center console.

As they both caught their breath, Gage recovered first. "I think we've gone as far as we can in this car."

Embarrassed over her hedonistic reaction to a simple kiss, Summer straightened away and smoothed down her tank with shaky fingers. "I think you're right."

His strong hand cupped her chin and coaxed her gaze back to his. "Second thoughts?"

Summer wanted to feel alive, to feel like a woman again. Experiencing something besides fear over her future and sadness over lost dreams wasn't something she would pass up. "No second thoughts."

Gage leaned over and branded her lips with his possessive heat. Just as quickly, he was out of the car and coming around to her side. Summer's nerves vibrated. Energy pulsed through her veins. Within minutes, they were cocooned in the privacy of his suite. Her anxiety over not having had sex for the past two years welled up and threatened to consume her.

But Gage had no reservations, not if the need in his eyes and the upward tilt of his lips were any indication. He locked the door and moved toward her. As he came to stand only inches away, he murmured, "Don't be afraid, baby."

Hearing his deep, masculine voice, so calm and relaxed, caused her own daring confidence to surface. "I'm not afraid. Well, maybe I'm a little afraid," Summer confirmed as she stared up at him.

He closed the space between them and took her into the warm, solid comfort of his arms. “I thought as much, but you don’t have to be. Not with me. I’m going to make you feel so damn hot.” He brushed his lips over the top of her head. The gentleness of his bare touch stirred her clear to her toes.

Summer pushed out of his arms, gripped the hem of her tank and yanked it over her head. She dropped it to the floor. Her bra went next. She left her shorts on and stood perfectly still, resisting the urge to cringe and cover herself while his dark gaze roamed greedily over her torso.

“Damn.” Gage couldn’t move, couldn’t breathe. She was perfect. She was his dream woman and then some. Her breasts were large, firm, round pillows of creamy flesh. Christ Almighty, he could get lost for a decade playing with Summer’s bountiful swells. He ached to taste her rosy-tipped nipples. Lick and bite and suck until his heart’s content.

His hand reached out of its own volition and stroked over one turgid peak. She shivered, and he was lost. He stepped forward and wrapped an arm around her lower back and drew her up against his chest, pressing and flattening her pretty tits against his T-shirt, driving himself crazy with the feel of her. As he took possession of her mouth, Gage lost all sense of calm at the sweet flavor of her lips.

He drank in her moan of excitement and licked at her full lower lip. He’d thought about tasting her everywhere. Imagined it from the moment he’d laid eyes on the tempting beauty. Now she was here, in his arms, clutching at him with eager abandonment.

Slow the fuck down. She was trusting him with something special. Something she hadn’t given another man in two long years. The thought gave him a possessive kind of pleasure. He wouldn’t disappoint her. He would stroke and play, satisfy her every which way he could think to satisfy a woman. Knowing just how snug she’d be when he entered her the first time made his cock swell painfully.

“Open for me, baby,” Gage groaned against her mouth. She did as he commanded. He took advantage, slipping into the wet warmth, tasting and swirling his tongue over and around hers, sipping at her with a kind of crazy fever that went beyond anything he’d ever felt. When she whimpered and drew her arms around his neck Gage felt the last thread on his control snap.

Keeping his lips firmly against hers, Gage bent and hooked his arm behind her knees. Lifting her into his arms, he cradled her nude upper body close. He wanted her completely bare. He wanted to see all of her, from head to toe, so he could work his tongue over her, inch by slow delectable inch.

As Gage laid her out on the quilt and broke the kiss, he snagged her gaze. The warm whiskey shade had changed once again. Now they were dark, almost the shade of milk chocolate, and he could easily drown in their unruly depths. His jaw locked against the need to rip her shorts and panties down her legs and take her. Hard. Fast. To hell with being gentle.

He smoothed his palm over his shaven head and made one last attempt to take it slow, to make it good for Summer. As he watched, she licked her lips and shifted restlessly on the bed. The taut peaks of her

nipples begged to be nibbled on. Her long, dark hair, the stuff of fantasies, spread out all around her, tucked beneath and partially covering at the same time. Gage loved looking at her, but he was going to enjoy touching her even more.

He grasped at the edges of his shirt and pulled it off. Then he moved to the waistband of his jeans, thrilled at the eager way Summer stared in wide-eyed readiness at his fly.

Before he gave in to her silent pleas, he softly demanded, "Take off your shorts. Real slow. Make me beg for it."

Summer slipped a single finger beneath either side of her beige drawstring shorts and tugged. She wiggled, and the shorts slithered downward, baring a pair of yellow cotton bikini panties with black polka dots all over them. Yum. When she had the shorts down around her ankles, she kicked her foot outward and they fell to the floor.

Gage's muscles tightened as he stood frozen, staring. "Christ, Summer, you're so fucking sexy. I'm dying just looking at you."

"Now you, Gage." Her words feathered over him, bringing him out of his hypnotic stupor. "Let me see you."

He shook his head, denying her request. "Those panties are cute as hell, but I want them gone. Let me see that pretty pussy, baby."

Her chest rose and fell with her rapid breaths. The telltale sign proved to him that Summer liked his game. She was nervous, but turned on. Watching her capitulate to his orders drove his desire up another notch.

She pushed her slender fingers beneath the elastic of her panties and inched them down and off her long, shapely legs. His first glimpse of Summer's thatch of dark brown curls, glistening with her arousal, would be etched in his soul forever. "Tasty," he whispered. "A pretty treat."

Within a heartbeat, Gage was on the bed beside her. As he lay propped on his elbow, mere inches from paradise, he stayed silent as Summer's gaze wandered over him, her hungry eyes feasting. He could grab her, slam her down on his heavy erection and pump her full. But she needed time to get used to him first.

"Your warm brown eyes are eating me up right now. Do you like what you see?" Gage asked, his voice a hoarse whisper of sound in the quiet room.

"I'd like it better if you got rid of the jeans."

"Uh-uh," Gage murmured. "Not quite yet. First, I want you to talk to me. You waited a long time to be with a man. What do you want from me tonight, baby?"

He watched her throat work, as if she was mustering the courage. In a barely there whisper she said, "I waited because I haven't felt this excited about a man, not for a very long time. I want to feel you inside of me. I want you filling me, warming me."

Gage's body vibrated with need. "I want that too, real bad." He lowered his head toward her breasts, took one nipple into his mouth and suckled. His tongue swirled the areola with greedy delight. She gasped and arched against him. He wrapped his arm around her back and lifted her, pressing her heavy breasts against his face while he toyed with the hard raspberry tip. She cried out his name, and Gage pulled away long enough to tease her other breast with the same avid attention. Her fingers slid over his head and her lower body squirmed, as if close to coming. She moaned his name.

Gage released her nipple. He gently kissed the delicate bud before lifting his head. "Sweet as honey."

"Gage, please," she begged.

He smiled down at her. "You want more, huh?"

"Yes," she shouted.

"More licking?"

She covered her eyes with the palm of her hand. "I-I can't think straight."

Gage pulled her hand away and waited until her pretty eyes were looking at him before saying, "You're so sexy like this. Squirming and restless. Your pussy is drenched for me, isn't it?"

"Yes," she admitted, her voice husky.

"My cock is going to fill that hot little cunt, and it's going to feel so fucking good." The image pushed him to the edge of reason. The intense blaze that had begun heating his blood turned into a wildfire.

"Oh, God," Summer groaned.

"First things first." Gage touched her nipple, plucking and flicking the sensitive flesh. He turned his attention to the other, stroking lightly, eliciting another moan from her. He let his fingers travel a scorching path down her belly to her dark ringlets.

Summer grabbed his hand and clutched it against her wet mound. "More. Please, I need so much more, Gage."

He slipped his index finger between her swollen pussy lips. "I need some of this sweet cream, pretty baby."

He moved down the bed, leaving tiny kisses along the sides of her breasts, her ribcage, then her bellybutton got extra attention. She had the cutest bellybutton he'd ever seen. He groaned as he came to the notch between her legs. Gage inhaled, taking her tangy scent inside his body for all time.

"Damn, woman, you take my breath away." It was the last thing Gage uttered before he spread her legs wide and laved her with his greedy tongue.

He placed his lips against her clit and kissed the swollen and sensitive bit of flesh. A primitive growl reverberated inside his chest at the way her body started to move against his face. When he parted her with his fingers and sank his tongue deep into her slick opening, Summer practically thrust him right off the bed.

Christ, she was so fucking responsive. The sudden, burning thought of another man doing this to her had him nearly snarling. Gage had never felt such a powerful mix of tenderness and possessiveness over a woman.

Feeling the need to claim and mark her in some elemental way, Gage began sliding his tongue in and out of her, slowly, building her pleasure by small degrees, then he used his thumb to stroke over her soft clitoris. He licked and nibbled, plying her flesh until all too quickly she screamed and clutched his scalp, anchoring him to her as she rode out a wild climax.

When she came back down to earth, Gage lifted himself off the bed and moved to grab a condom. He needed to bury himself in her balls-deep. When he unzipped his suitcase, Summer roused herself enough to look at him. Her drowsy gaze tracked his every move. Gage grabbed a handful of foil packets and went back to stand beside the bed. He smiled down at her and watched Summer's expression change from that of lazy cat to aroused woman. His throat closed with some unnamed emotion.

Chapter Five

He tossed the packets onto the nightstand, his muscles rigid as he realized Summer's entire concentration was on the fly of his jeans. Gage held back the need to pounce on top of her, finesse be damned. "Stand up for me, Summer."

As she slid off the bed, her poise and grace struck him like a blow to the gut. He felt raw and intense next to her calm, gentle demeanor. She deserved someone who would be tender, someone who would coax out her passion. Stopping now wasn't an option, though.

Gage picked up one of the condoms and placed the packet in her hands. "Undress me, baby, then roll the condom down my cock."

Summer stared at him for what felt like an eternity, anxiety evident in her wide eyes. His cock flexed when Summer's fingers started undoing his button fly. He stood, rock hard, holding on to his control by sheer willpower, and let her slide his jeans and black boxers down his thighs.

"Lift your foot, Gage," she softly ordered. Gage was only too happy to oblige. Soon she had him naked, the condom in her hand as she knelt in front of him. She ripped the foil with her teeth and took his dick into the palm of her other hand. He cupped the back of her head, his fingers gripping a lock of her hair. Summer's kiss-swollen lips curved upward. His cock thickened. She dipped her head and slipped his entire length into her mouth, sucking him.

"Fuck," he bit out, forcing himself to stay still, to let her play.

Gage's fingers tightened in her hair when Summer wrapped her arms around his hips. He cursed when she dug her fingers into his buttocks, her nails biting into flesh and muscle. She swirled her tongue over and around the bulbous head of his dick, and Gage let loose a curse.

He tugged, urging her to stop. "I'm too close, baby."

Summer released him, but, before he could react, she sucked him back in again, deeper this time. Her moans vibrated along the length of his shaft. She used one talented hand on his balls, fondling and caressing, squeezing just hard enough to draw another groan from deep inside his chest. As he watched her cheeks hollow, sucking harder, Gage took over. He gripped her shoulders and pulled her off him. When she looked up at him, a secret smile lighting her eyes, Gage's entire body shook with pleasure. He would remember her like this. Always.

Summer's fingers shook as she slowly rolled the condom down his pulsing shaft. It took her a few tries to get it all the way on, which only enhanced the fact that he needed to go slow with her.

She stood, her face flush with arousal. “Was that...okay?”

“Are you serious?” He was ready to self-combust!

She looked away and closed her arms over her chest. “It’s been—”

Gage placed a finger over her lips. “Don’t bring the past in here, sweetheart. This is about you and me, no one else.”

She nodded.

“And I loved every damn second of it.” He took hold of her hips and gently turned her to face away from him. As he pushed at her back, she resisted.

“I want to see you, Gage.”

“Next time.”

“But—”

“Bend over for me,” he softly demanded. “Give me that pussy.” Several seconds ticked by before she bent over the bed. With her pert, round bottom thrust out toward him like a juicy fruit, Gage gave in to his hunger. He stroked his palm over her ass cheeks, then leaned down and bit the creamy flesh.

“Gage!”

He chuckled. “Sorry, but you look so damn yummy.”

He wedged a leg between her thighs and forced her open wider. Summer’s legs trembled, and it cooled him down just enough to slip his finger inside of her to test her readiness. He needn’t have worried. She was so damn wet and slick, his mouth watered. No doubt she’d be tight, but her juices would ensure he didn’t hurt her.

Gage clutched her hips in one hand and guided his cock to her slit. Careful not to hurt her, he eased inside her cunt a few inches, then stopped. She whimpered, and he smoothed his palm up her spine, relishing her pretty, sun-kissed skin. Her moans tore at his control.

“Easy, pretty baby.”

“Oh, God, you feel so good. So full.”

His chest swelled at the confession. “You fit me like a silk glove. Your pretty cunt is hugging my cock, baby.”

She threw her head back, shiny dark hair cascading down her back, nearly touching her ass. As she reached a hand between her thighs and grasped his balls in one hand, squeezing, his thoughts scattered. “Christ, Summer.”

It was the sort of pleasure/pain that sent a man into another dimension. All Gage needed, all he craved, was hot, liquid satisfaction. His *and* Summer’s.

He thrust into her with one powerful stroke, filling her completely. She cried out his name, and it was music to his ears. He started to move, a gentle rhythm at first, then faster. Summer met him thrust for thrust. Gage lowered his body over hers, covering her smaller frame with his own. He caged her in, holding

her to him as he pushed in and out. Hard and fast. Slow and tender. He played and tormented them both with the maddening tempo.

He touched her neck with his tongue and found a particularly sensitive spot that caused Summer to lay her head to the side, giving him better access. Gage sucked at her sensitive skin, marking her. Her inner muscles clutched him like a fiery fist as her body spun out of control.

Gage wrapped his hand loosely around her neck in a dominating hold as she came loud and long for him. Only him. No other. The unsettling thought came out of nowhere. When Summer quieted and slumped against the bed, Gage released her neck and thrust his cock deep, practically fucking her into the mattress. His balls drew up close as he shouted her name.

“God, yes, come for me, Gage,” she groaned beneath him.

Her quiet demand did him in. He lifted her hips, then pushed into her snug cunt once more, fusing them together irrevocably. He exploded, warm jets of come filling the condom.

Gage collapsed on top of her, careful not to crush her. As he swept her sweat-soaked hair off her cheek and kissed her, peace stole through him.

Chapter Six

Summer's muscles burned. Damn, her pussy still throbbed. She'd never had sex like what she'd just experienced with Gage. She felt a bit guilty for thinking such a traitorous thought, but it was true nonetheless. Sex with Seth had been enjoyable, soft and easy. Comfort was high on the list, variety wasn't. Gage had just given her a taste of something sizzling and exciting. She could so easily become addicted to the delicious man.

She forced herself to remember the number one rule: Gage wasn't staying. Soon he'd go back to his life in Ohio, and she'd have to get on with living. Without him. Summer let out a breath. She simply wasn't cut out for casual summer flings. When Gage started to slip out of her, she instantly chilled. Already she wanted him buried deep again.

"Stay put, baby, I'll be right back."

She turned and sat up in time to see him enter the bathroom. A large, curving tattoo covered the top half of his back. She was too far away to see what the intricate design was, but ink on Gage was sexy as hell.

As she stood and started to pick up her discarded—and now very crinkled clothing—Gage came back into the room. He looked at the clothes she clutched in her hand and frowned.

"Going somewhere?"

A mere two words, but they were enough to make her body respond with a rush of liquid fire. Summer straightened her spine and pulled on her tank, trying to appear relaxed, as if she dressed in front of a naked man every day.

"I'm going back to my own room. I have guests who will expect breakfast in the morning."

Gage crossed the room and stroked a finger down her cheek. "You know, when a man gives a woman an orgasm, he expects her to stick around."

"I thought men hated all that cuddling stuff."

"A myth."

Summer couldn't seem to focus on his words. His gentle caress was simply too distracting. "Huh?"

All his concentration seemed to be on the finger moving from her cheek to her lower lip, he murmured, "A man wants to slide between the sheets with the woman he's just managed to pleasure. He wants to sleep real close, hold her real tight. It sort of gives him a sense of comfort knowing she's near."

His voice lowered an octave. “Knowing she’s his to touch, to fondle, to love, and all he has to do is reach out and she’s there.”

Summer struggled to stay on track. “I-If I’m in your room, it may look bad to the other guests. I can’t stay here all night.” Oh, but how she ached to sleep in his warm, solid arms.

“I have an idea that’ll suit the both of us.” He slipped his finger away from her lips and let it travel down to her breasts. He glided the single digit over and around her nipple, sparking her nerve endings. “How about I come to your room,” Gage helpfully suggested. “That way no one will know you’ve been *naughty*.”

She smiled at his playfulness and secretly applauded his quick thinking. “Yes,” Summer readily agreed. Gage’s finger left her breast, and she wanted to beg him to put it back.

Speechless, she watched as he took her shorts out of her hand and went to his knees. “Let’s get these on you, baby. I can’t have the other male guests seeing your sweet ass. That’d seriously piss me off.”

An image of her parading around the halls buck-naked sprang to mind, and she laughed. “That really would be a sight, wouldn’t it?”

“Mmm, a very sexy sight, if you ask me.”

Summer’s face heated at the intensity of his words. She started to lift her foot when she realized he’d forgotten her panties. “Uh, Gage, I need my underwear.”

He looked up the length of her, slowly, attentively, before growling, “Uh-uh, those I’m keeping.”

She placed her hands on her hips and narrowed her eyes. “A trophy?”

He tsked. “No, silly, a reminder. A delicate, fragrant reminder of the woman who took me to heaven.”

Summer didn’t say anything else as she offered him her foot.

Chapter Seven

What the fuck am I doing? A simple hot night of sex. That was all it was supposed to be. As Gage stood behind Summer, playing with the length of her hair while she fiddled with the lock on her door, he realized his simple night of sex had just turned into more.

She shifted around and her ass snagged his attention. Damn, he loved watching her move. Summer didn't seem to realize her own sex appeal. Everything she did was sexy, alluring. He'd watched her as she sashayed down the hallway to her private quarters. His cock had lengthened at the pretty sight. He needed to be buried deep inside her cunt again.

Soon.

Summer pushed the door open and flipped on the light. Gage got his first glimpse inside Summer's private haven. He wasn't surprised in the least to find it decorated with a stylish sort of comfort. She seemed to like her comforts. Easy clothes, simple hairstyle.

A peach-and-beige-striped couch and matching love seat complemented the light pine coffee table and large entertainment cabinet. Cozy and uncluttered. He liked it.

"Do you want something to drink?"

Gage looked down at her. She had her hands clasped in front of her, as if nervous. Gage couldn't help but think about her two years of celibacy. What did a woman do with two years of no sex?

He closed the small space separating them and cupped the back of her head. "I don't want a drink, baby. I want you."

Desire darkened her eyes. A light blush stole over her cheeks and it was so fucking adorable. He kissed her, just a tender peck. Anything more and he'd lose control, take her on the living room carpet. Gage entwined his fingers with hers, enjoying the feel of her silky skin engulfed by his large hands.

"Where's your bedroom?"

She blinked as if trying to assimilate all that was happening, before pointing to a closed door. Gage dropped his hands from hers and moved behind her. He gripped her waist and nudged her forward. When her feet started to move, Gage let a grin escape. Summer didn't stop until she reached the other room. Gage's temperature spiked as he pictured Summer spread out on the king-sized sleigh bed, naked. The image wouldn't leave his brain. His cock seemed to think the door would do just fine. He could slam into her nice and hard and fast. He'd drive his dick so deep inside her, neither of them would be able to walk afterward.

Gage forced himself to stay still. “Baby, look at me.” Her expressive eyes ate him up. “Are you excited?”

“Yes.”

Her eager voice tore a path clear to his soul. His hands went to her tank. As he revealed her magnificent tits, Gage stopped, unable to drag his attention away. Damn. “You have the sweetest body.” He took her nipple between his finger and thumb, then squeezed. She arched toward him, her palms flattening on his chest.

Gage stepped back, breaking the connection, and whispered, “Undress.”

Summer stood in the room, only a tiny table lamp beside her bed illuminating her body. She stared into his eyes and Gage stared right back, waiting for her to make the next move. When she stepped back and whipped off her shorts and let them drop to the floor, his muscles bunched. He skimmed out of his shirt and shorts in a matter of seconds.

“Turn around, Gage.”

The calmly issued demand took him by surprise. “Why?”

“I want to see your tattoo.”

Gage turned and gave her his back. When her fingers traced the dragon tat, he shuddered. “Do you like it?”

“It’s beautiful. When did you get it?”

Gage tried to focus on her words, but it wasn’t easy, considering her talented fingers were stroking his skin as if she were a sculptor and he the clay to be molded. “A buddy of mine took me out drinking when I turned twenty-one. I woke with a hangover and the top half of a dragon etched into my skin. Took a few more visits to get the rest of it finished.”

“He’s so powerful and majestic. It looks right on you, Gage.”

He turned around. “I don’t want to talk about my tattoo.”

“Oh?”

He shook his head, then took his dick in a firm fist and pumped, slowly. Summer’s lips parted and her small pink tongue darted out, licking, as if imagining his taste. “You want this, pretty baby?” Summer eagerly nodded for him, pleasing him beyond measure. He moved closer. “Go to your knees and lick me.”

Summer slowly lowered herself to the floor. The submissive position had his cock swelling with need. Leaning in, she licked him from balls to tip. “Fuck, that’s sweet,” Gage gritted out. “So damn sweet.”

As she rubbed her tongue over the sensitive, bulbous head, licking up a drop of precome, her hand cupped his balls, squeezing and kneading. Gage locked his knees in an attempt to keep from falling on his ass. Damn, she made him weak as a friggin’ kitten!

“Suck it, baby.”

She sucked him in, and Gage's fingers tunneled into the thick mass of her hair. "Harder," Gage instructed, his voice strained. "Suck it harder for me."

Summer moaned and took him to the back of her throat, then suckled as if starved for the taste of his cock. She slid her wet mouth up and down his pulsing erection, making love to him with lips and tongue. One more lick and he'd be shooting his load down her throat.

He tugged at her until she released him, her arousal clear in her half-lidded gaze. "I love your mouth, Summer." He lifted her into his arms and carried her to the bed. The tangy scent of her desire hit his nostrils, and he groaned. "Mmm, I'm hungry for this soft pussy again."

Placing one knee on the mattress between her thighs, Gage crawled toward her wet, welcoming cunt. He wrapped his arms beneath her thighs and urged her legs wider before pressing his mouth against her clit. He took it between his teeth and sucked greedily. Flicking his tongue over the sensitive bud, he absorbed the sounds of Summer's hoarse cries and whimpers. She bucked against his face and came in a rush, screaming his name. Gage thought it was the sweetest damn sound in the world.

He kissed her swollen nub and started to lift away. Then, a horrible thought struck. "Shit," he grumbled, causing Summer to frown. "The condoms are in my room," he explained.

"That's okay," she whispered. "Lie down."

He smoothed a hand over his head and watched as she scooted over to make room for him. "Uh, okay."

How had she managed to turn the tables on him? He could've sworn he'd been the one in control. As she lay on her side, a tempting smile curving her pretty lips, Gage knew he'd stand on his damn head if she asked.

Summer had tried to avoid falling for Gage, but it seemed to be happening anyway. He was as tender as he was rough. As sensitive to her every need as a man could be. An incredibly generous lover. Knowing he'd be leaving soon, that she was only going to get hurt in the end, should have been incentive enough to kick his sexy butt right out of her bed. She should be trying to protect her heart. Watching the hunger on his face tore down her defenses, left her open and vulnerable. She couldn't bring herself to care.

Rising over his big, hard body, she pressed her lips to his. Summer sank all her desires and emotions into the kiss. He quickly took over, pulling her in closer and wrapping his arms around her back. His tongue coaxed her open. Gage took the advantage, devouring her by small degrees. Never had a kiss made her feel as if she were being claimed. In some basic, predatory way, that was what Gage was doing. She didn't know what it meant, and she refused to analyze it to death. All Summer wanted to do was feel. To feel Gage's perfect body beneath hers, his hard cock between her thighs, pressing and insistent.

Summer broke the kiss and traveled butterfly kisses around his firm jaw, his chin, his throat, then finally to his perfectly chiseled chest. She spent a greedy amount of time licking and caressing his pectorals before drifting down over his abdomen to his jutting erection—where she most wanted to be.

Summer's gaze clashed with Gage's when she took his cock in her hand and squeezed. Raw need transformed his features. Gone was the tender lover. The hungry man staring at her now turned her blood to molten lava. His hands moved to her hair. As he grasped handfuls and pushed her toward the purple, swollen head of his cock, Summer smiled. She opened her mouth wide and sucked him deep.

Gage's hips flexed. "Fuck, baby."

Taking her time, Summer licked the slit in the tip, tasting a pearl of moisture. Gage groaned as she released his cock and then let her voracious tongue lick his balls.

"Suck on them, Summer."

Only too happy to obey his rough command, Summer cupped the soft orbs in her hand, opened wide and slipped them between her lips. Gage's fingers tightened in her hair as she sucked hard, grazing lightly with her teeth. She luxuriated in his masculine flavor.

He cursed and mashed her face against his groin. The untamed reaction had her own desire spiraling out of control. Summer wiggled, and his hold on her gentled. She released them, then brought his cock back to her mouth, playfully licking and suckling. Gage's entire attitude shifted.

"You're a tease. Do you want this hot, little mouth fucked?"

Summer let her silence speak for her.

Gage held her head and thrust. She gagged, forcing Gage to withdraw. "Relax, sweetheart. You can take me." He slid in again, slower this time. When his cock hit the back of her throat, she hollowed her cheeks and flattened her tongue, allowing his engorged cock to slip deeper. He cursed and pulled free of her hungry mouth.

"So Goddamn sweet. You like this, don't you? Say it," he demanded. "You like having your mouth fucked?"

"Yes, Gage."

"Touch your pussy and tell me if you're wet."

Summer let the fingers of one hand drift between her thighs. When she encountered the swollen, wet folds of her pussy, she let out a whimper.

"Tell me," he urged as he slid the head of his cock over her lower lip.

"Yes, I'm wet."

"Son of a bitch, I want to fuck you."

"I'm on the Pill." It was dumb to have sex without a condom. Summer knew that, but she couldn't seem to remember why. All she wanted was Gage, sinking deep.

Gage's eyes turned tender as he whispered, "Naughty temptress." When he pushed his cock between her lips once more, Summer eagerly surrendered.

"Good girl, now play with that lovely cunt for me while I fuck this pretty mouth."

Swirling her finger around her clit, Summer tried to concentrate on not coming too soon. Gage let his cock travel over her tongue. While her fingers played, Gage's rhythm increased. He held her head still as he pumped against her face, burying his cock inside her mouth. He smoothed her sweat-soaked hair back and groaned her name, then thrust once more. Summer spiraled out of control as Gage shouted her name. At the same instant, his hot come hit her tongue. She drank his salty fluid, licking him clean, before she slipped two fingers inside her pussy. Summer burst wide open. The unyielding hold his hands had on her head loosened, and she collapsed against him.

Strong hands lifted her until she blanketed his large, powerful body. "Damn, Summer. You're something, you know that?"

His hoarse voice and stunned expression pleased her.

"You aren't so bad yourself, Gage."

He pulled the throw blanket covering the foot of the bed over their heaving bodies before pressing his lips to the top of her head. "Sleep, sweetheart. You'll need your strength for tomorrow."

Unable to contain the rush of excitement, Summer buried her face against his chest. As Gage flipped off the light, plunging them into darkness, she sighed and let herself enjoy the feel of having a replete Gage Knight beneath her. "I could stay like this forever," she murmured.

For a long time, Gage didn't speak, and Summer was terribly afraid she'd ruined the mood. Just when she thought he'd fallen asleep, he said, "Me too, baby. Me too."

The words were spoken so softly, Summer was sure Gage hadn't intended for her to hear them. She feigned sleep and tried not to think about how much she would miss him once he was gone. Sleep would be a long time coming.

Chapter Eight

Summer came awake with a bright light in her eyes. Morning. As she squinted and pulled her foggy brain out of her dream world, she realized something wasn't quite right. A warm, hard body was curved up against her back, one powerful leg nestled between her thighs. The memories of the previous night flooded back.

She tried to wiggle free, but Gage only grumbled and pulled her in tighter. When he pressed his lower half into her, his erection slid along the crease of her ass.

"Don't move."

Oh, God, his gravelly voice was such a turn-on. "I'm stiff," she complained. "I need to get up."

"Give me a minute and I'll carry you to the shower."

She laughed. "I'm not that stiff. I can walk just fine."

He smoothed his hands down her belly until he cupped her mound. She trembled at the feel of his callused fingers so close to where she needed him. "Gage..." she breathed out.

"Take the day with me," he said in a coaxing tone. "Let me show you how to play."

She moaned as his hands continued their journey. He slipped his fingers between her legs and stroked her slit. She whimpered.

"Yeah, okay."

He chuckled against her hair. She could feel the rumble of it all along her spine. Summer's heartbeat sped up. She looked at the bedside clock and groaned. "I need to see if Tory's available to fill in for me first."

Gage pulled his fingers away from her pussy, which was a damn shame considering she was already wet and ready for him, then reached over and grabbed the phone. "Call her."

Who was she to argue? Summer dialed Tory's cell phone. It was early still and she fully expected it to go to voicemail.

"Hello?"

Not voicemail. "Hey, it's Summer."

"Let me guess, you want to know if I can fill in for you, right?"

"How'd you know?"

"I thought maybe you'd be, uh, distracted today. I took the initiative and let myself in."

Gage shifted positions so she was flat on her back, his body pinning hers to the mattress. She nearly lost track of the conversation as he dipped his head and kissed her nipple. "You're already downstairs?"

"Yep. Now quit jabbering and go have fun with that sexy hunk."

Damn good idea, Summer thought, ending the call. "Looks like I have the day free," she explained to Gage as he moved off the bed and pulled her into his arms.

"Good, because I want you again, but I think a shower would do us both some good." He stopped, then stared at two closed doors. "Which is the bathroom?"

"The one on the left," she mumbled as she rested her head against his chest and allowed him to carry her off.

The day had progressed from playing together in the shower to watching an old black and white movie. At least they'd *tried* to watch the movie. Gage kept distracting her with his lips and hands. After he'd sprinted back to his room to retrieve the condoms, they'd made love on the living room carpet. She'd never known a man to be so insatiable, so unrestrained. Summer thought maybe she even had a rug burn on her ass, but she'd loved every second of it and simply couldn't bring herself to complain about the minor sore.

They'd talked a lot too. Gage shared his life with her. He told her about his job as a private investigator, filling her in on some of his more interesting cases. He'd led such a fascinating life, and she couldn't help but wonder why he was spending time with a woman who'd never been outside the state of New Jersey.

Gage had asked tons of questions about her parents, her friends, her dreams. Finally the conversation had turned to her marriage. She'd shared some of the grief she'd felt when she'd gotten the call about Seth's car accident. Gage had listened intently to all of it. The day had slipped by in a whirl of excitement.

Now, as she stood in her bathing suit on her private porch, mere feet from her hot tub, which contained her drop-dead sexy lover, Summer's temperature spiked.

"Come on, pretty baby, no one can see you. Slip out of that swimsuit and let me see that sweet body."

Gage sat in the water, his arms spread out over the back of the hot tub, tempting her. He hadn't even bothered with swim trunks. She couldn't see below the water's bubbling surface, but she knew the heavy erection that awaited her. Summer hooked her fingers beneath the straps of her turquoise suit and slid them down her shoulders. As her breasts sprang free, the night air hit her nipples. They hardened to painful peaks. She groaned and covered her face with her hands. "I cannot believe I'm doing this."

"It's just me," Gage whispered, the deep baritone an invitation no woman could resist. "No one can see you."

She removed her hands and looked around. The only light came from the many candles they'd placed around the patio and the full moon that lit up the sky. "I'm really glad I had the privacy fence built."

Water splashed around as Gage slowly stood and came toward her. "Me too. So, what's the problem?"

"I've never done anything like this. It feels so...wicked."

The caress of his nearly black gaze had her buzzing with anticipation. "I like you a bit wicked, sweetheart."

Summer took a deep breath before shimmying out of the suit entirely. The breeze coming off the ocean raised goose bumps along her arms. Gage held out a hand and helped her into the tub. The warm water chased away the cold and pulled her further into the erotic web Gage so effortlessly weaved around them. She shook a fraction when Gage took her in his arms. "Cold?"

She sank into the warmth and comfort of his embrace. "Not really."

Gage cupped her chin and forced her to look at him. "Excited?"

She nodded, unable to speak past the lump forming in her throat. He leaned down and teased her with his lips. The kiss was light and quick. Enough to entice, but not enough to satisfy.

"I'm damned excited too. Feel." He took her hand and drew it under the surface of the water. She cupped his cock in her palm and squeezed. Summer's pussy throbbed with need.

He removed her hand and chuckled. "Too much of that and this party will be cut short." He moved to sit on one of the benches, then pulled her down so she straddled him. "Mmm, such a pretty sight," he said as his gaze zeroed in on her breasts. Her nipples tingled, as if begging for Gage's attention. With the sole purpose of driving the man crazy, Summer cupped her breasts and started massaging the sensitive orbs. A slow curving of his lips filled Summer with a sense of feminine satisfaction.

"Allow me," Gage murmured as he removed Summer's hands and replaced them with his own.

Gage's eyes took in the bounty before him, from her puffy pink nipples to her nipped-in waist. He wanted to lick her from head to toe. As he drifted his fingers over her nipples, watching them harden and pebble, Gage's hunger intensified. "The first time I saw you, I wanted to fuck you, Summer." She licked her lips and flexed her hands against his chest. "I watched you walk," he admitted. "Your sexy ass beckoned me to squeeze. And these pretty, round tits." He cupped one and groaned. "God, you have the most magnificent breasts I've ever seen. I imagined licking your nipples. My mouth waters for the taste of your sweet flesh, baby." He shifted slightly and placed his cock between her slick folds, rubbing up and down, creating a firestorm of need.

"Gage, you're driving me crazy."

He moved his cock in a rhythm that nearly had him rocketing out of control. "You don't get to come yet. First, I get to have a taste of these pretty tits." He pinched her nipple and demanded, "Bring them to my mouth."

Summer bit her lip and lifted a few inches, then pushed one engorged nipple against his lips. Gage groaned and opened wide, sucking as much of the creamy flesh as he could. Summer cupped the back of his head and mashed her breasts against his face. He flicked his tongue over and around the raspberry tip, then released her. "Such a sweet treat you are."

He licked and nibbled at her other breast, and Summer's moans turned to cries of need as he teased her to a fever pitch. Gage cupped both her tits and squeezed them together, licking hungrily at the valley they created. When he wrapped his arms around her, hugging her close, Summer's needy cries fueled his raging libido.

Releasing her flesh with an audible pop, Gage started to move away, but Summer's fingers stiffened against his smooth scalp, as if loath to let him go. He pulled her off his lap and put her on her feet, enthralled by the rivulets of water traveling down the graceful curve of her belly, rounded hips and to the sweet pussy he so badly ached to lick and fuck.

She was somewhat unsteady at first, but quickly recovered her balance. He turned her around and nudged her to the bench opposite them. "Get on the seat, sweetheart, facing away."

She didn't budge. "I want to see you."

He gripped her hip with one hand, vying for control, and let the fingers of his other hand play over the damp flesh of her ass for a few tantalizing seconds. He slipped his middle finger into the cleft separating the firm globes. "I want this." He circled her anus for emphasis, and his cock grew another inch in anticipation of being buried inside the tight, little hole. "Will you give it to me, baby?"

"I-I haven't done that for a very long time."

His cock jumped for joy at her admission. "Not since Seth?"

"No. And only Seth. That's not for just anyone."

The nervous tension in her voice was easy enough to grasp. "I'm not just anyone. I won't hurt you. I promise." Gage pushed his finger a bare inch past the ring of muscles protecting the snug entrance, and Summer moaned his name. "I think this ass needs a good fucking."

"Yes."

At her acquiescence, Gage pulled his finger free and grasped her around the waist. He lifted her to the bench and moved behind her, caging her in with his larger body. He nudged her ass with the head of his dick and bit back the need to sink into her, balls-deep. His hand stroked her long, wet hair, smoothing it to one side until he revealed her vulnerable nape. As he leaned in and licked a water droplet off the delicate skin of her collarbone, Summer dropped her head to the side, giving him her complete surrender. Gage placed barely-there kisses up her neck to the back of her ear, while he used his other hand to guide his cock between the cleft of her ass. He took his time, teasing her with the slick, bulbous head as his lips sucked gently at her tender skin.

"Gage, please. I need you inside me. I can't stand it anymore!"

He lifted his mouth an inch, his breathing ragged as he said, "Slow, Summer. It's not a race."

He grabbed the lubricated condom he'd placed on the side of the hot tub earlier and rolled it on. Careful not to hurt her, Gage pushed his dick inside her ass. No more than an inch and already his cock wanted to erupt. She spread her thighs wider, accepting and trusting. When she clutched the edge of the hot tub in a white-knuckle grip, he slipped in another inch. Summer shouted his name.

Gage took hold of her hips, holding her still. "Tell me what you feel."

"Full," she moaned. "I feel utterly filled by you."

Another inch deeper and Gage had to tell himself to breathe. "Good girl."

Summer pushed her ass backward, as if trying to force more of his dick inside the silky passage. "Be still," he snapped, holding on to his control by sheer will.

He leaned down and kissed her shoulder, hoping to take some of the sting out of his harsh command. Summer relaxed, and Gage allowed more of his thick cock to sink deep. A tiny whimper from the wanton nearly shredded his sanity. In that instant, he knew she'd wrapped herself around his heart. As he watched her, Gage knew he wouldn't be letting her go. No matter what it took, he would come back. He wouldn't let her slip away from him.

Gage used his right hand to toy with the tempting bud of her clitoris. Her back arched and her ass clenched around him tighter than before. Jesus H, one squeeze and he'd be filling the condom with his come. He pinched her clit and put his mouth to the shell of her ear. "Come for me, pretty baby."

As if she'd been waiting for permission, Summer screamed his name and arched her back as her orgasm took hold.

"Damn," Gage whispered. "You are *so* hot."

A rumbling growl escaped him as he pushed himself the rest of the way inside her ass. Pleasure mingled with pain as her body clamped around him.

"Baby, I'm not going to last if you don't relax."

Summer only shook her head, as if too lost in her own sensations to comprehend his words. Gage folded himself around her protectively and kissed the top of her head. Her inner muscles relaxed a measure, and Gage began a gentle glide. Soon the tempo picked up as he fucked her harder, faster, the water splashing around them as flesh slapped against flesh.

"Mine," he bit out between clenched teeth.

"Gage," Summer cried.

His cock swelled. Two more thrusts and his dick erupted deep inside her, filling the rubber with hot jets of his come. He'd never hated the use of a rubber more than he did in that moment. He stroked her clit, then grasped the bundle of nerves between his thumb and finger and gently pumped. Summer shouted his name as she joined him with another climactic finish.

Gage kissed the side of her cheek, then reached up and took her hands in his own, locking the two of them together. Gage hated having to pull out. In fact he could stay inside her snug body for about a century.

Summer collapsed against the side of the tub, exhausted and spent. Gage sighed and pulled his cock free of her in one smooth stroke. Goddamn, already he missed the connection. As he stood, he slid his arm behind her knees and neck, then swung her into his arms. Summer roused and looked up at him, and her dreamy expression zipped clear to his soul.

“First, I’m going to dry you from head to toe, then I’m going to give you one of my special massages.”

“A massage?”

He smiled at her husky voice. “A full body massage. By the time I’m through, you’ll sleep like a baby.”

“I think you’ve already got that part covered, Gage.”

He stepped carefully out of the tub and put her on her feet. He got rid of the condom before grabbing one of the towels from the lounge. He started on her feet and worked his way up. By the time he’d reached her breasts, he was semi-erect. Christ Almighty, would he ever get enough of the sexy vixen? But he already knew the answer to that question. Now to fix it so he could keep his very delightful Summer treat.

Chapter Nine

He was gone. It'd been a week—seven days, four hours and three minutes actually, but who was counting? Crap, Summer could still feel his kiss, his gentle stroke, the fullness of him inside her. His woodsy scent seemed to linger in the air. It didn't matter where she was or what she was doing, she could still smell his intoxicating maleness.

He'd called her every night and during the day he sent her text messages, little teasers meant to keep her thinking about him. It worked like a charm. She woke with him in her mind and, when she went to bed at night, she hugged the pillow, wishing he were holding her in his arms. In the hot tub, he'd promised to come back. Or had he? Not in so many words. Was it just the sex speaking?

Try as she might, Summer couldn't see it working. His life was in Ohio, and that was that. Summer hadn't let on that she missed him, had tried to act chipper when he called, pushing her aching heart into a small corner. It wasn't his fault she'd fallen for him in such a short time.

Instead of wallowing in self-pity, she worked, stopping only when her body grew too exhausted to stand. As she cleaned one of the suites, a sense of pride filled Summer. She liked the work, enjoyed seeing the rooms all neat and ready for the next guest. The downside was all the quiet time. That was when her thoughts strayed to Gage the most. As she dusted the top of the entertainment cabinet, she thought of the way Gage had talked her into playing in the nude in her hot tub, how he'd taken her and how connected he'd made her feel. She couldn't look at it now without feeling as if she'd just gotten kicked in the gut.

Summer tossed her dust rag into the cleaning cart before pushing it out of the room and down the hall to the next vacant room. To Gage's room. She stopped and stared at the door, willing him to appear. Nothing happened, of course.

"You really need to hire some help, sweetheart."

Oh, God, that voice! Summer whirled around and nearly fainted as she came face-to-face with Gage, a grin as wide as Texas on his handsome face. He grabbed her up and swung her into his arms, then strode down the hall.

"Gage! What on earth?" She tried to sound firm, but her body had already begun to react to his, and she couldn't think straight. The man was positively addictive.

"I've missed you, baby."

Emotions clogged her throat at his declaration. When he pushed his way into her suite and set her on her feet, he frowned. “Why do you look like someone just kicked your puppy? I thought you’d be happy to see me.”

She bit her lip and shook her head.

“What is it, pretty baby?”

“I-I’ve missed you too.”

He stepped closer, pinning her between his large body and the door, then he leaned down until he was a mere breath away. “When I come within ten feet of you I bet your heart races, doesn’t it? Your eyes turn drowsy and your nipples peak for me.” He paused, tipped up her chin and forced her to look at him. “I know I turn you on, and I sort of had the feeling you were beginning to care about me.” The finger resting under her chin moved down to her neck. He massaged her jumping pulse. “Now I have this crazy feeling that you’d rather I’d stayed in Ohio. Is that it, baby?”

She couldn’t think with him so close, touching her. As she breathed in his musky male scent, Summer blurted out the first thing to pop into her head. “Your life is in Ohio, Gage. Mine’s here. How can that possibly work?”

“Things can change.” He stroked her throbbing pulse once more before moving lower. That devastating finger touched the top swells of her breasts and dipped beneath her blouse, stroking her overheated skin. “I need you, and not just for a roll in the hay, either.”

“Gage, please.” Summer wasn’t even sure what she was begging him for.

He moved his finger down her body, leaving her breasts heaving and aching for more. When he came to the waistband of her shorts, Gage slipped his hand beneath and cupped her through her soaked panties.

“I enjoyed everything we did together. That much is obvious as hell. But I want— No, I *need* more than sex from you.”

For the first time hope began to bloom. “More?”

His gaze scorched her everywhere it touched. “Yeah, more, baby.”

Concentrating on his words wasn’t easy with his finger teasing her clit. Summer tugged his hand free and pushed at his chest. He stepped back, albeit reluctantly. She counted to ten before she felt confident enough to speak without stuttering.

“Why me, Gage? How can you be sure I’m not just a passing fancy? What if you realize you’ve made a terrible mistake after a few months?” Her heart twisted just thinking about it.

Gage rubbed a hand over his scalp. God, she loved his shaved head. It was just so damn sexy. “Nothing in life is set in stone, sweetheart. All I know for sure is I’ve never felt this way.”

Fear kept her from leaping into his arms. “I loved Seth. When I lost him, it tore me apart. I can’t go through it again, I can’t.”

He looked at her with such overwhelming compassion, tears sprang to her eyes. “My guts are churning here. I’m terrified you won’t give me a chance to love you.” He held his hands straight out, palms up. “My damn fingers are shaking because I want to touch you, feel you, hold you in my arms and never let go.”

Gage closed the gap between them and took her in his arms. Oh God, it felt so good to be there. So right. After all the worrying she’d done throughout the week, Summer wanted only to curl up in his arms and stay there.

“I know you’re scared,” he said against the top of her head. “How you lost Seth. You’re afraid of going through that again. But don’t you think you deserve a second chance?” His voice was so soft, so tender, and Summer melted as she listened. “I’m falling for you, Summer.”

Her heart sped up, and tears began to trickle down her cheeks, soaking the front of his shirt. Everything he’d said was true. She’d tried to take the easy way out, but that road led to heartbreak. “I care about you,” she admitted, laying her own heart on the line. “I’ve thought about you every second since you left.”

“I missed you too. And soon I’ll be back for good.”

She pushed backward so she could see his face. “But what about your business? Your family?”

He pressed his lips to hers briefly before saying, “I already talked to Aunt Bev about you. I think she’s planning our future even now. As to the business, I’ve set things into motion. I’m going to get a New Jersey license, open my investigation business here. Unless you’d rather I didn’t?”

She frowned. “That’s a huge decision. Are you sure this is what you want?”

Gage cupped her cheek in both palms. “I’ve never been more sure of anything in my life, but I need to know this is what you want too.”

Summer wrapped her arms around his shoulders and hugged him hard. “It’s what I want. God, this week has been pure hell.”

Gage tugged at the hem of her blouse. “Take these clothes off, baby. I need to feel you.”

Summer pushed out of his arms and slowly undressed. Gage’s intense gaze ate her alive.

“Mmm, my sweet Summer treat.” His voice was a rumble of sound in the quiet room.

In that moment, Summer knew she’d always have a warm place in her heart for Seth and could see that moving on didn’t necessarily mean forgetting about her past.

“Gage?”

“Yeah?” he ground out.

She reached out her hand and stroked it over his cheek. “I’ve been thinking a lot about what we did in the hot tub. I’d really like to do it again.”

Summer watched, transfixed, as Gage stripped out of his clothes. She nearly drooled as he took her by the hand and led her to the glass patio doors. “Come on, Summer. It’s time I showed you how fun a spanking can be.”

Her pussy creamed. “A spanking?”

His answer was a grin and a wink.

About the Author

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Tempting Grace

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The Vaughn series, Book 4

Since a car accident left her unable to have children, Grace Vaughn has hidden her heart behind a wall. So far it's held strong, and no one complains much—except the few men she dates.

Now that fortress is crumbling thanks to Jackson Hill, an annoyingly attractive man who makes her imagination go wild just watching him in the office. He's practically bullied her into attending a Vegas conference with him. Three days alone with the delicious Jackson—in Sin City, no less—is sure to push her right over the edge.

With a loving family, a decent bank account, a nice set of clubs, Jackson's life is almost complete. Except for the missing piece. Grace. She sets a fire in his blood, and the conference is the perfect crowbar to get past her defense mechanisms. It's time to see if the bump-and-grind potential in that booty of hers can be channeled into something a little more satisfying than *looking*.

He's got just the tactic to get her to let down her guard—and hopefully her panties. A wicked bet. Because if there's one thing he knows about Grace, she can't resist a double-dog-dare...

Warning: This title contains graphic sex, rope bondage, anal sex, and a deliciously inventive hero who just happens to be really good with knots and a doling out spankings.

Enjoy the following excerpt for Tempting Grace:

He winked and wrapped his arm around her shoulders, pulling her closer. "You're too stubborn to let percentages keep you from having what you want. Even I know that much."

"Thanks...I think," she said.

He leaned toward her, noting the way her lips parted and her breathing increased. "You know what I think, Gracie?"

"W-What?"

"I think if I don't kiss you, I'll die," he murmured as he closed the gap between them and pressed his lips to hers. Jackson inhaled her gasp of surprise and pulled her close. As his tongue dipped inside her mouth, Jackson knew he'd been right about one thing: Grace's kiss was definitely potent.

Grace couldn't think, couldn't move. Jackson pressed his lips to hers. His tongue played and teased. Her body turned to liquid fire in two seconds flat. She should push him away, send him home. Instead, she lifted her arms and wrapped them around his neck. Jackson groaned as if pleased with her response, slid his arm beneath her knees and pulled her into his lap. Her body seemed so light against so much power and strength. It devastated her senses.

He lifted his mouth from hers and whispered something against her skin, then moved his lips downward, teasing her beyond measure. Grace leaned back, giving him permission to lick a fiery path along her chin and collarbone, before he zeroed in on the V of her ivory colored blouse. He kissed her cleavage and dipped his talented tongue beneath her white satin bra. She arched against him, desperate for more, so hungry for his touch all over.

Jackson chuckled and stopped long enough to murmur, "Easy, Gracie. We'll get there, I promise."

She didn't like that answer to her body's demands. "Faster or you can leave, damn it."

Jackson stopped his ministrations and stared at her in the brightly lit room. What went through his head in that moment was anyone's guess. When he touched her cheek, she practically melted at the tender caress.

"Is that what you really want, baby? Do you want me to leave?"

She hadn't expected him to take her seriously. She'd only been trying to get him moving along, to quit dawdling.

"No. I'm just..."

"Anxious?" he helpfully supplied.

She clenched her eyelids shut and admitted, "Yes."

Jackson's lips against her forehead forced her to open her eyes once more. His gaze held a wealth of tenderness. Butterflies came to life inside her. An entire swarm of them fluttered around in there.

"I like you like this. Anxious, wanting me. I've wanted you for months, but you were so damn good at evading me." He paused as if carefully choosing his next words. "Rushing isn't an option, baby. I like to take my time with a woman. A good, long time."

"You talk too much, Jackson. That's always been your downfall. All talk, no action."

"You're mean when you're horny." He grinned and let his gaze travel over her torso. "Fuck, you're a vision. I think I'd like to keep you for my pet."

She smacked him on the chest. "That's the most sexist thing I've ever—"

He effectively cut her off with a press of his lips to the pulse in her neck.

"Oh, my God," Grace moaned as she dug her fingers into his closely cropped dark hair, holding him firmly while he suckled her skin. She ached to feel those lips and that tongue lower. Much lower.

As if she'd spoken the thought aloud, Jackson inched downward, touching off several spasms as he went. Air brushed against her stomach, and she realized he'd somehow managed to unbutton her blouse and pull it down her shoulders, exposing her torso. When his tongue flicked over one hard nipple through the soft material of her bra, Grace nearly shot off the couch. She forgot her misgivings. Her body craved his touch. It'd been so long since she'd had sex. So damn long since she'd derived any real pleasure from a man's body.

As if afraid she would break, Jackson lightly ran his tongue back and forth over her areola seconds before sucking her nipple into his warm mouth, satin and all. He hummed in satisfaction, and the raspy vibration of his voice tormented her. Somehow Grace found herself sprawled, Jackson's hands on either side of her body, effectively pinning her to the cushions. He surrounded her. His lethal strength and intoxicating scent filled her vision and her senses.

While he switched to the other breast, Grace marveled at his patience. He sipped at her skin and toyed with erogenous zones she hadn't been aware she possessed. When he appeared to be settling in for a damned meal, Grace urged him lower with a tug on his hair. He obliged and moved his loving torture south. Her body reacted with a flow of moisture to her center. Every inch of her was ready for him to take her. To fuck her. He'd be hard and savage; she knew it in her bones.

"Please, Jackson."

A grunt was the only indication he'd even heard her plea. By tiny increments, he tugged her slacks down, and with each piece of flesh he exposed he sprinkled her with kisses. By the time the material was all the way off, Grace's pussy throbbed.

He sat back on his haunches, his gaze devouring her. "You don't wear panties?"

Grace didn't like embarrassment, and at that moment, she seemed to be swimming in it. "Wow, pretty observant. No wonder you're the VP."

"All night you sat here chatting with Jordan and you weren't wearing panties." He passed a hand over his face and grumbled, "Damn, Grace. You sure know how to drive a man crazy."

"Oh, gee, such a sweet talker you are."

He reached down and cupped her mound. "You're a real smart ass. One of these days I'm going to spank you for it too."

"Spanking my ass. Sounds kinky."

"Who said anything about your ass?" he growled. "I think I'd rather tie up these pretty tits and spank those instead."

His words brought an image to her mind, a totally forbidden image. Her clit swelled. She tried to maintain her cool composure, but when his middle finger found its way through her curls and sank all the way to the knuckle inside her heat, she gave up any pretense of control.

"Mmm, just look at you. Your cunt is ripe for the plucking. I think I'm going to really enjoy making you scream with pleasure."

When a second finger joined the first, her hips began to move, matching his pumping rhythm. After thrusting several times, Jackson brought both fingers all the way out. She wanted to beg him to come back, but her words died on her tongue as she watched him suck her juices off each digit.

"Tangy, but I'm going to need a little more to be sure." He spread her wide and dipped his head between her thighs and swept his tongue over her swollen clit.

Spicing up her sex life sounds exciting...until the fantasy hits the fan.

The Bottom Line

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When Maggie Drummond buys an erotic romance novel by mistake, she gets more than an unexpected eyeful. She gets an introduction to a world that arouses her to a fever pitch: Spanking.

Her boyfriend isn't interested in pushing his vanilla-flavored sexual boundaries. Then there's Connor Grey, who haunts her fantasies like a magical genie. As a source of masculine advice for her and her female friends, he's off limits. The only safe place to explore her fetish is her anonymous blog.

The recent changes in Maggie don't escape Connor's notice. Now that her boyfriend has dropped her, he can finally—carefully—make his move. Given his family history, laying a hand on any woman, even in fun, is a line he's reluctant to cross. But for Maggie? Anything the lady wants.

As Maggie gives in to the temptation to let Connor add some sin to her life, she finds herself juggling lies, half-truths, friendship and sensual delights. Her job is in jeopardy—and she's falling in love. Exploring her fantasy is one thing, but she's beginning to question if indulging her own pleasure is worth the cost to everyone around her. Especially Connor...

Warning: contains explicit sex, spanking, and the good, the bad and the ugly about friendship.

Enjoy the following excerpt for The Bottom Line:

A grin formed on Connor's face when he read the blog entry. Most people would label it a smirk. Hell, he knew exactly where Maggie could find a man. *He* was that man. Damn, he couldn't take this. He had to talk to her today, come to an understanding.

Half an hour later, he leaned on the intercom button, and a curious neighbor let him inside—probably to stop the racket at such an ungodly hour on a Sunday morning.

Taking the stairs two at a time, he raced up to the second floor and thumped on Maggie's door. It took her a long time to answer. Finally, the door flew open. Maggie...her hair. It was the first time he'd ever seen it loose, and it rippled all the way down her back, stopping just above the curve of her ass.

"Hey." *Weak, Connor.* He cleared the lump from his throat and sought something witty to say. His gaze slipped to her breasts. Rounded and sexy. Tempting. A distraction.

"Connor!" A soft blush crept over her cheeks and down her neck. "Having a good look?"

Connor wanted to explore the pink glow with his lips. "You shouldn't answer the door dressed like that."

"You're early." Maggie scowled, crossing her arms over her chest.

Watching her butt, he followed her into the kitchenette, mesmerized by the dark locks glinting under the artificial light. It took him another four steps before he realized all she wore was an oversize T-shirt. He glanced down. Great legs. Normally she hid them beneath ankle length skirts or baggy sweats.

“Should I make coffee?”

“Yes. I need a shower.” She padded down the passage and disappeared into a room at the end. Connor didn’t move until he heard the rattle of pipes and the distant spray of water. A visual formed in his mind. Dark hair dripping wet, nipples playing peek-a-boo while Maggie lazily soaped her body... *Hell*. The last thing he needed right now was to imagine her naked.

Coffee. Yeah. He forced himself to walk into the kitchen, arousal shooting through his veins and pooling in his groin. He needed to stick to the plan he’d formulated in the early hours of this morning, after he’d seen her blog entry. *Talk to her today*. Part A of the plan. Part B was keeping her permanently, but that was on a need-to-know basis.

Spanking—that might cause a few problems too, but first things first.

Coffee...

Connor was familiar with the layout of Maggie’s apartment since the Tight Five often hung out at her place. It didn’t take him long to make coffee. By the time the shower stopped, water dripped through the coffee filter and the fragrant scent of ground beans filled the kitchen.

He waited. Where was she? Five minutes passed, then five more. He imagined her drying her body, smoothing on her body lotion smelling of old-fashioned lavender, brushing the knots from her long hair and restraining it into the braid she favored.

He grasped the edge of the table until his knuckles whitened. Damn, he had to get his lust under control. He couldn’t touch her, except on a friendly basis. Not yet. *Patience, man*. Cursing softly, he grabbed two white china mugs from the cupboard and poured coffee into them. He steeled himself when he heard footsteps. Seconds later he smelled lavender, and Maggie breezed into the kitchen.

“Why are you so early?” she asked. “Didn’t you see Gwen or whoever you’re going out with last night?”

“I’m not dating Gwen anymore. I’m solo for the moment.” As soon as he said the words, he regretted them. Damn, why did he sound like Romeo between Juliets? Despite public opinion, his bedroom didn’t have a revolving door.

“Since when? Won’t you walk lopsided now without a babe to balance you?” Maggie grinned and dropped into a stool beside him at the breakfast bar. She leaned over to switch on the stereo, her V-neck T-shirt gaping to display creamy white curves. His mind blanked, his fingers itching to touch her. Instead, he wrapped his hands around his mug and took a sip of coffee. *Baby steps and patience*.

“I thought you liked Gwen,” she added.

“I *do* like her, but I felt like I was dating my sister.”

Maggie's brown eyes widened. "Ouch. You didn't tell her that, did you?"

"No. Our parting was amicable." Her compassion made his heart melt. He wanted to hug her for caring about a woman she'd met only once.

"Do you have your eye on someone else?" She sipped her coffee and glanced at him over the rim of her mug.

"Not really," he said, seeing an opening. "Gwen was always complaining about rugby season during winter. With training and Saturday games, I don't have many free nights. I'm not desperate for a replacement. Why do you ask?"

"It's just that you always have a woman." White teeth nibbled her bottom lip. A cute furrow formed and vanished between her eyes, as if she didn't believe him.

"Maggie, contrary to public opinion I don't always have a woman around."

"Can I ask a personal question?"

"Sure." He wouldn't guarantee a reply, but her expression told him she knew that.

"What about sex? I mean, I like sex. The closeness and sleeping with a guy." She paused, looked him straight in the eye. "Do you miss sex when you're not going out with someone?"

Connor laughed. This conversation couldn't have gone better if he'd scripted it. "Sure, I miss sex." He hesitated, wondering how honest he should be with her. "This is just between us, right?"

"Of course. I would never share a private conversation with any of the others."

Connor knew it was true. While their other friends did gossip amongst themselves, he'd never heard Maggie repeat anything confidential. Not once. "Yeah, I miss sex," he said. "I love to explore a woman's body, her scent and taste, her soft curves. Masturbation doesn't bring the same pleasure. My hand never feels quite the same as tight, hot pussy."

Color shaded her cheeks, although she nodded. "I know what you mean. It's the empty feeling inside afterward that gets to me." Her smile was rueful. "I'm probably every man's nightmare because I like to cuddle. Sleeping alone and self-pleasuring isn't the same."

He was going to ask her. *Right now*. The timing couldn't be better.

A feeling he recognized as terror speared his gut. A lot rode on her reaction to his next question. Connor placed his coffee mug on the counter. "Will you kiss me?"

"A kiss?" A surprised laugh escaped her. "Why?"

"I have an idea, but I need a kiss first."

Smiling, Maggie leaned close and pressed her lips against his cheek. She moved back before he had a chance to react.

"That wasn't quite what I had in mind." Blood rushed through his veins, his heart thudding against his ribs in an erratic manner. Hell, sex between them would be good, if this innocent little kiss was any indication. "A real kiss."

Connor closed the distance between them and grasped her head firmly in his hands. She jumped at his touch, stared at him, a spark of indefinable emotion darkening the golden brown of her eyes to chocolate. His gaze dropped to her mouth. God, he'd always loved her mouth, fanaticized about kissing it, seeing her lips wrapped around his cock. He snorted inwardly. Like that idea would score him points. Connor brushed his lips against hers. Soft. So soft. The rest of his body went on high alert, cock filling to press against his fly.

She sighed and he took advantage, slipping his tongue inside to taste her. Coffee and a faint minty flavor danced across his taste buds. At first he kept the kiss slow and gentle, then he lifted his head to study her. He liked the dreamy expression on her face, but he enjoyed kissing her more. He wanted her to respond to his kiss, needed to know she felt even a little like he did. Her eager lips and the hands threading through his hair, holding him in place as he wrapped his arms around her again, shot all his doubts to hell.

Slowly, he pulled back. They were both breathing fast. "Okay. That answered my question."

Maggie smoothed her tongue over her bottom lip and watched him with a touch of confusion. Judging by her expression, she thought she'd taken a wrong turn from the bathroom and stepped into an alternative reality. "What question?"

"Would you be interested in a *friends with benefits* deal with me?" He held his breath and waited for her answer, knowing he'd never wanted something so much in all his life.

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