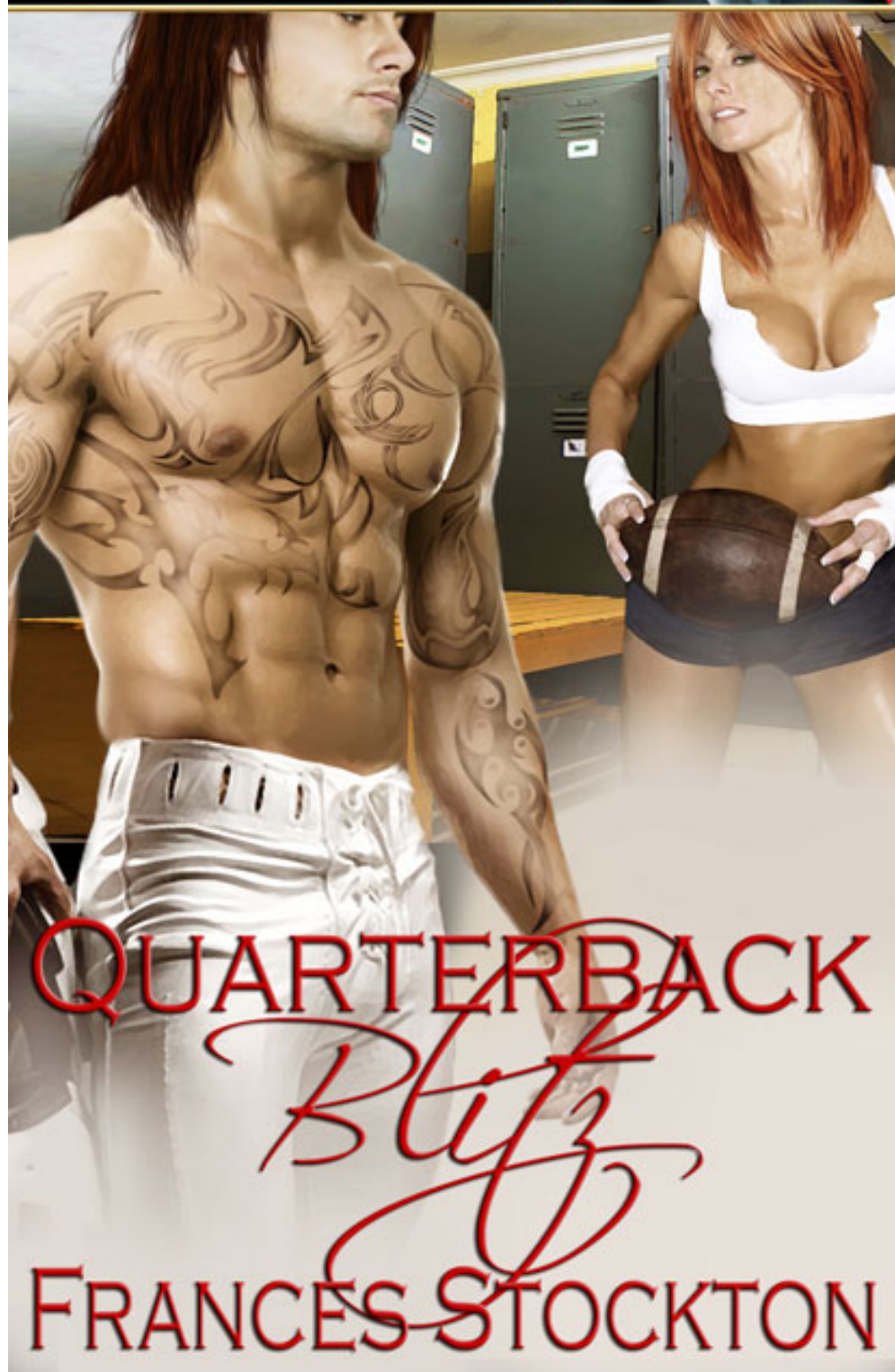


ELLORA'S CAVE *Sophisticate*



## Quarterback Blitz

Frances Stockton

All Anna wants for her fortieth birthday is a ladies' night out. Her plans are stalled when she ends up stuck in her griffin costume. The mascot for the Alexandria Griffins, she never expects to be rescued by the star of her midnight fantasies, quarterback Kyran Black. Called "The Rebel" by the press because of his long hair, tattoos and playboy stats off the field, he's everything Anna should avoid.

Kyran is gorgeous and irresistible and he suggests they celebrate her birthday together. Certain she's too old for him, she agrees to one night. Kyran's charm and dominance in bed blitz Anna's defenses, teaching her things about sex she never thought she'd experience.

But when their one-night stand turns into a relationship, his bad-boy past comes back to threaten their future.

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



[www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com)

Quarterback Blitz

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# *QUARTERBACK BLITZ*

Frances Stockton

## *Dedication*

To Wayne, you are my hero.

## *Acknowledgements*

I sincerely wish to thank my family and friends for their unwavering support throughout the twists and turns of my writing endeavors, and for being my cheerleaders.

To the members of the New England Chapter of RWA, I wouldn't have learned everything I need to get this far without you all, and I know I still have more to learn.

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And to my awesome cousin Laurie...she knows why.

## *Trademarks Acknowledgement*

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Meat Loaf: Michael Aday

## Chapter One

Anna's zipper was stuck!

No matter how hard she tugged and contorted her tall frame into a pretzel, she was stuck in her mascot's costume. Sweat covered her body, the sweltering heat of the costume one of the reasons the head piece had a little fan to cool her off when entertaining crowds. But the eagle's head and wings were already off, sitting safely in their compartment in her little nook of the cheerleaders' locker room.

The gigantic team jersey that advertised the name and number of "The Beast" sat in a heap at her feet. If she wasn't in a hurry, she might have laughed at herself hopping up and down. She'd made birthday plans with some friends and was supposed to meet them after the Alexandria Griffins Friday night televised pre-season game. Her costume was proving difficult and something she really didn't need right now.

She wanted to go out and have some fun after watching the star of her midnight fantasies perform on the field tonight. But Kyran Black was hardly going to remember his encounters with a physical education teacher from Baltimore. Then again, the last time they'd met, she had been thirty-nine. That changed when the alarm rang at seven o'clock this morning, reminding her what day it was.

"Why did I tell Tracey not to worry if I was late?" she asked herself, hopping to and fro as she tried one more attempt at the zipper.

Sweaty from her efforts, she headed out of her changing room and marched for the locker room door, only to draw up short when the tall, dark bare-chested rebel of her dreams charged inside.

Not just any rebel. "*The Rebel*", Kyran Black, the legendary quarterback recruited to calm down the high-strung starter for the Alexandria Griffins.

"Hey, sugar." He flashed his devil-may-care smile, his clean-shaven, chiseled features all the more sexy when she noticed the crooked scar that ran down the left side of his chin. Even when he smiled, the scar made it seem like he was snarling. It was sexy as hell.

His dark auburn hair fell damp and wavy to his broad shoulders. "You mind if I hide in here with you?" he asked, leaning back against the door as if he had all the time in the world.

Twin Celtic tattoos wrapped around his massive biceps, making him look more like a biker than a professional athlete. Anna's pulse went into overdrive at the memory of riding on his Harley. All that muscle and powerful, vibrating engine had almost made her come.

"Depends on what you're hiding from." Skeptical, she wrapped her arms over her chest, giving him her best "I'm the teacher. You're the kid without a hall pass" impression.

Kyran's eyes swept her from head to toe. "A piranha with a microphone wanted to know how I felt after tonight's game. I was damned lucky to pull on my jeans before she rushed into the team locker room." He looked tired, freshly showered and he'd donned a pair of worn button fly blue jeans with holes here and there. The flash of his bare knee made her toes curl inside her griffin's talons.

He was six foot six inches of ripped, athletic muscle and shoulders that would give Atlas a run for his money. His pectorals and six-pack abs were bare of chest hair, letting her appreciate the fine line of auburn hair that dusted his navel, thinning downward to disappear behind the top button of his jeans.

He was sex in faded blue jeans. But couldn't he have grabbed a shirt when he was dodging the press? Or at the very least fastened all the buttons on his fly?

Anna wouldn't study the significant bulge behind those buttons. She wouldn't notice the very nice, masculine scent that accompanied him or recall what it was like to be plastered against that hard body, so close to having that power and strength surging inside of her. Irish Spring soap and basic shampoo did nothing for her, except make her pulse race and her slit clench greedily for his attention.

She told herself she was just horny. She hadn't had sex in a while. Finding her ex-fiancé in bed with a twenty-year-old grad student made her swear off men for a while. At least she'd thought she had until she agreed to join Kyran for coffee after a game last winter. He'd been trying to ask her out a few times before that, but it wasn't until that game when she started to believe he was really interested.

"If you give the reporter a few words on tape she'll leave you alone," Anna suggested when he showed no sign of leaving.

"Rather not," Kyran said, his vivid gaze returning to her face. "Isn't that costume hot?"

"Yes. The zipper is stuck. Lend me a hand and you can stay until your piranha is gone."

Kyran's dark blue eyes narrowed. "I'll help if you tell me why you're pissed at me."

"I'm not pissed, Mr. Black. Being trapped in this costume is the last straw in the day from hell. I'd appreciate some help. I've places to go, things to do."

His mouth tightened and his brow lifted a fraction, sending white-hot lightning zinging from her heart to her clit. "Got a hot date, Anna?" He inhaled sharply, causing a trickle of arousal to slide down her inner thigh at his display of possessiveness.

Well, damn, he remembered her name. He just couldn't remember to give her a call after she'd decided not to go home with him. She'd been a fool to believe that he'd meant it when he said he wanted more than sex.

"Just meeting some friends."

Kyran watched her before pushing away from the door. Her heart tripped in her chest. "Have to admit, never thought a griffin was sexy until I met you. Tonight you were hot."

Bowing her head to hide her heated cheeks, she edged toward him. "There's nothing sexy about this costume. It's itchy. When the night is done, it's a relief to take a shower. That's what I'd like to do," she said, giving him her back.

"Don't you have someone to help you with this sort of thing after a game?"

"I share this locker room with the cheerleaders. Tonight they had a meeting. I thought I could do it alone."

"Doing it alone is never as much fun as with someone," Kyran teased, placing his hands on her puffy lion shoulders. She could have sworn she felt the heat of his touch through the foam and padding.

"Help or get out of the way so someone else can," she growled, waiting.

"Remind me never to stand in the way of your talons." He was trying to hide his laughter. She could hear it in his deep, gruff-spoken voice that tempted her to have raw sex with him right then and there.

"I'm harmless," she said. "Please help me."

"Okay, okay, you have foam and material caught in the teeth of the zipper. How did you manage to mangle it?"

"I was in a hurry."

"Wouldn't have been because you were avoiding me, right?"

"Ah, no, you weren't on my mind at all." Ha, let him think that. "Tonight's a special night. I've plans."

"Mhm, I'm curious. What are you wearing under this thing anyway?"

The change in questions made her jerk around to face him. "A dancer's leotard, satisfied?"

"Hardly. Now that I've got your attention, explain why you gave me a bogus phone number after we went out."

"That's your excuse? Ha, you're Kyran Black. If you wanted to find me, you could have."

"I tried, but didn't want to violate your privacy like that. Your home number wasn't listed and your cell was no longer in service."

"That can't be. I'd gotten a new cell earlier that day and—oh God." She just might have given him the wrong phone number. "Okay, I admit I *could* have given the wrong number. A lot happened to me that day, I was a little distracted."

"What do you mean?"

"I'd just learned that I would be the Griffins mascot. I was on cloud nine. I'm a gym teacher and my pay was cut. The money from this job was definitely welcome. Talking with you in the parking lot was icing on the cake. My favorite quarterback asked me out



for coffee and I guess I was nervous after what happened between us afterward and...I did not just say that, did I?"

Kyran smiled like he'd just won the championship game. "I'm your favorite quarterback? Tell me more."

"And feed your ego, I think *not*," Anna gave him her back again. "Fix the zipper. You don't have to worry about my phone number anymore."

"After your shower —"

"I can't take a shower in this costume."

"We'll talk," he continued. "Listen, I thought you'd brushed me off, but I did try to find you. You wouldn't be the first woman scared away by what I do for a living. Now that I know it was a mistake, can't we try to find out what's between us?"

"There's nothing between us."

"Like hell there isn't. Come on, Anna, go out with me tonight. Don't you want to see what it might be like not to stop this time?"

"How about we call a truce? I'll let you avoid the press while I finish getting dressed for the evening."

Kyran's hands brushed her back. Even through foam and fabric, she could feel the strength of his hands. He was thirty years old in a game dominated by younger talent and brutish defense and he could still stand in the pocket and deliver before an opponent plowed him into the turf.

"Relax, I'm not going to hurt you," he said when she trembled.

"Didn't think you would," she murmured.

He worked on the zipper for a minute and grunted in frustration. "Anna, don't be mad if I tear this."

"Tear it, I have a second costume. This one can be repaired."

"Can I have a kiss when I'm done?"

"Don't be ridiculous."

"Come on, it's not every day I rescue a damsel in distress."

"I'm not in distress. Fix it or I'll call for your piranha, hero."

"Ouch, okay." He suddenly tugged hard, the fabric standing no chance against his big, sure hands. "By the way, I'm getting that kiss when I'm done, Anna James. You left me with a raging hard-on the last time we met. You owe me."

"Ha, I don't owe you a thing. We had a ride on your Harley, two cups of coffee, a nice conversation and a little flirtation. It was fun, but —"

"Don't forget the two of us going at each other like a freakin' freight train when I dropped you off." The fabric gave with another tug, the metal teeth of the zipper giving way to his forceful jerks. "That wasn't flirting."

"We kissed, fooled around a bit, no big deal."

"Call it whatever you want. I almost fucked you against your SUV." More tearing followed and the suit loosened. Anna was so wet she knew her leotard was soaked. "Don't kid yourself. We wouldn't have stopped if a security guard hadn't driven by."

"Please, Kyran. I don't know what came over me that night," she whispered, embarrassed. They had made out like a couple of teenagers caught between second and third base. He was right.

"Tell me you didn't let me go that far with you because you're one of my fans."

"Never, there was something between us that night, something amazing. The last thing on my mind at the time was fame or football. At least not until the security guard gave you two thumbs up."

"Did you think that was staged?" Kyran's tearing had stopped, the suit loose around her shoulders, allowing for some of the air conditioning in the room to cool her off.

"No it reminded me of who you were and who I was. I didn't want you to think I was the kind of person who'd fuck someone just because he's famous."

Kyran brushed the costume off her shoulders, pushing it to her elbows. "Turn around, sugar. I want to know something."

"Don't call me sugar," she argued, turning anyway. He was tall and big and sexier than any man had the right to be. But he was thirty to her forty, and way out of her league. "What do you want?"

"You," he said, his full, masculine mouth curved slightly up on the left side. The overhead lights reflected his deep blue eyes and scar. He looked fierce, like a predator. She was in serious trouble. Her heart pounded so fast and hard she was certain he could hear it. "You knew that the last time we were together, so why did you really give me the wrong phone number?"

Drawing as tall as she could, she stared up at him. It wasn't every day she could do that with a man. She was six feet tall. "I'd changed my service and phone number earlier that day because a student stole my cell phone and made a bunch of calls to a phone sex company. I was still trying to remember the new number."

"And..." he prompted.

"I was afraid. I am sorry."

His big hand came to rest beneath her chin, tilting her head back. "Afraid of what?"

"You'd said you wanted to go out with me before then, that you'd come to mascot tryouts because of me. I was scared of what that meant, of being hurt when you realized I was too old for you."

"We talked for hours at that coffee shop, Anna. You were friendly, open-minded and fun. You told me about teaching self-defense to senior girls planning to go to Ocean City after graduation. I admired you for that, remember? I didn't know you were a football coach—"

"Assistant coach," she interrupted.

"Right, the point is I liked you, still like you. But yeah, I wanted to fuck you from the moment I saw you. That doesn't happen every day, you get me?"

"Kyran...talk like that, it's not for me," she argued. "I can count on one hand the men I've slept with and so far sex has been pretty disappointing. Let's call it a night, okay?" There'd been three men, but she didn't have to give him all the stats of her love life, or lack thereof.

"I can't. Anna, come home with me tonight."

Trembling, she tried to finagle her way out of the suit. "I'm getting out of this costume, taking a shower and leaving, alone."

"Thought you had plans," he replied.

She paused. "I do." What, exactly, was his point?

"Why leave alone? I could join you."

"That's not a good idea. It's a ladies' night out sort of thing."

"Planning to go to a strip club?"

"An all-male revue, so, yeah," she confessed.

"Hell no you're not." Kyran frowned, letting the costume fall to her feet and trap her in place.

Feeling cornered, she lashed out at him. "It's my birthday. My friends and I want to have some fun."

Kyran had the audacity to glare, his sexy scowl making her slit so wet, she feared he would see the wet spot on her leotard. She refused, absolutely refused to squirm and give herself away. "If you think I'm going to sit back and let you put dollar bills down some other guy's jockstrap, you're wrong."

"Think they wear G-strings or something to show off what they've got. It's not every day a woman gets to appreciate a well-endowed man for her fortieth birthday."

Kyran growled, catching her about the waist. Her heartbeat slammed inside her chest as he wrapped her closer and slanted his mouth over hers. She wrestled him and her costume for all of about two seconds before parting her lips and accepting his tongue.

He didn't just kiss, he dominated. She ignited. His tongue mimicked the thrust of his substantial, barely contained cock between her already damp thighs. The thin, stretchy material of the leotard pulled taut against her slit, causing her to gasp. He felt incredible, tasted like sin and mint and all male heat. His deep groan promised he knew exactly what he was doing to her, his hips pushing into her a little more.

He drew her top lip between his teeth and feasted. "Damn," he murmured between sucks and bites, frissons of sensation tickling her mouth. "I'd give my left nut to fuck you right now." His tongue kept her from saying a thing. All she could do was hang on and kiss him back.

With superwoman effort, she finally managed to move him back a little. "We can't. Dammit, this shouldn't be so hard!" she cried out, aware that she'd parted her thighs as

much as possible, welcoming his jean-clad thrusts. She was thrusting right back at him, the grind of his pelvis against hers mind-boggling.

If they kept grinding against each other, she'd climax. She was so close to the edge, she wanted to scream with the need to take him inside of her.

"I'm hard, Anna, been this way since I walked in here."

She'd noticed. But she wouldn't feed his ego. She had to retreat, to think, anything to keep from going too far too soon. "I'm not ready."

"Liar, you've soaked your leotard. Let me get this off you," he tempted, grasping the material at her shoulders and starting to tear.

"I like slow, patient, vanilla sex."

"Can't promise vanilla, but next time we'll go as slow as you want," he drawled, his almost-buried Southern accent coming back because he was turned-on. She'd done this to him, made him want her.

Heady with the reality of having Kyran seconds away from getting her naked, she held her breath. The leotard gave without a fuss, ripping down the center, her sports bra the only thing protecting her modesty.

A click at the door behind them brought his head up, his nostrils flaring. "What the fuck was that?"

"I don't know. Could have been security checking on us." Horrified at the thought of what they must have looked like to a guard, or anyone else, Anna wanted the floor to swallow them whole.

He reluctantly let her go and went over to the door, looking out. "No one out there, hallway's deserted."

He turned back and grinned, reminding her of an ancient conqueror who'd decided the fate of his captive as he closed the door again, leaning against it to bar the way.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm alone with the sexiest woman I've known, and no one is the wiser. Security won't interrupt us this time." He pushed away from the door, reminding her of a predator, sexual confidence dominating the room. "I intend to make you come on your birthday, many times."

"Stop right there," she ordered when he stalked toward her.

The damned costume and torn leotard hindered her for only a moment before she freed herself and fled for her dressing room. Grabbing a football jersey and holding it in front of her, she turned to find him right behind her.

"I'm hot and sweaty. I'm not ready for sex games in the locker room with a super stud," she said, gesturing toward the shower room. "I have about a half an hour before my friends start to worry."

"A little sweat doesn't bother me," Kyran claimed with that wolfish grin.

"I'm showering, alone."

"Yes ma'am," he said and took her phone, pressing buttons. "Anything I should do while you're showering?"

Blowing her tangled strawberry blonde hair out of her face, she conceded that fate didn't want her to go to an all-male strip-fest for her birthday. "Look up Tracey Adams and leave her a message if she doesn't answer."

"Anything else?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What would that be?"

"Wait out here 'til I'm done," she said, slinging her small duffel bag over her shoulder. "At some point security will come around and kick us out, don't want to be caught like this."

"Coward," he said, showing no sign of irritation at her decision.

She'd shut him down and he had to admit defeat. Anna brushed by him and closed the door to the shower room, remembering to lock the door.

## Chapter Two

Freckles!

Damn, knowing Anna James had freckles on her nicely curved shoulders, hips and long legs felt like a sucker punch to his gut. She had more freckles on her back.

His cock lengthened, pushing against his fly. God, he wanted to fuck her and lick every freckle on her soft skin.

He'd always loved redheads, especially green-eyed strawberry blondes. But damn if his school teacher wasn't a firecracker waiting for a spark. He might as well accept what he'd suspected months ago, what he'd have known if she hadn't given him the wrong phone number.

Anna James was made for sex with him.

She was as pretty as he remembered. She was tall, fit and everything he loved about a woman. Even now, minutes later, he imagined what it would be like to feel her full lips parting to receive his cock and had to adjust his fly.

Needing Anna and a condom, he frowned when her phone vibrated. Caller ID showed Tracey Adams. "Hello?"

"Ah...sorry, must have the wrong number," a woman said.

"Wait, you're a friend of Anna's, right?"

"Who is this?"

"Kyrn Black."

"No way, like the football player?"

"Only one I know of," he answered.

"Holy fucking cow, where is she? Let me talk to her."

"She's in the shower right now."

"Listen, buster, I don't care who you think you are. She's supposed to be with us, get her on the phone."

"Sorry, not going to happen right now."

"It's Anna's birthday. We wanted to treat her to a special evening and she's late." Kyrn heard voices and techno music pounding in the background. Female catcalls pierced his ears.

"She's spending her birthday with me. I'll have her call you tomorrow morning."

The woman on the other end gave up trying to argue. "She'd better. My boyfriend's a cop. If you hurt her again, you'll have him to deal with."

"Anna's safe with me. Have a nice night, Tracey." Closing the phone, he pressed the off button and tossed it in Anna's locker.

A slinky black dress hung from a hook along with lacy garters, black stockings, silk panties and a strapless bra. Trendy fuck-me high-heels rested on a shelf. Anna was six foot, with legs that went all the way to heaven. In those heels, she'd be lethal.

No way in hell was she wearing that little number to a strip club.

Curious as to what she'd look like in the dress, he listened to the shower running in the next room. His cock leapt in his pants. Humming, he opened his fly and stroked himself hard and fast. He needed more stimulation to get off, but he wasn't trying to jet, just ease the ache a little.

Looking at the shower room door, he noticed the lock. Thinking it wasn't sturdy enough to keep him out, he decided to mention it to security. Then again, he was there to keep Anna safe.

Frankly, he was glad. His late-night masturbating with Anna's name on his lips each time he'd come was over. She was showering in the next room. Would she wash herself with her bare hands or use some kind of puffy thing to scrub her pussy until it was pouting and swollen? Man, he needed to know and he needed protection.

Leaving the locker room to get his wallet was not an option. Curious, he looked around. Against a wall by the desk was a coin-operated machine filled with first-aid supplies, tampons, shower gel, deodorant, disposable razors, shampoo and condoms.

The vending machine had ribbed and extra-large ultra-thin lubricated latex. Perfect.

Reaching in his front pocket, he found a couple of dollars and bought a pack of extra-large. Kyran tossed the box in the trash and stuffed three condoms in his back pocket. Needing some restraint, he adjusted himself and buttoned most of his fly.

The water stopped running and he went to the locked door.

Damn, he'd wanted to watch. Next time, he vowed, listening to her moving around. It sounded like she was trying to hurry.

"Dammit," Anna grumbled, crashing into something.

"Careful, wouldn't want your students to hear talk like that."

"I thought you'd be gone by now," she called back.

"I was told to call Tracey and protect your modesty. She called before I found her number, by the way. I told her you'd get back to her in the morning." Looking for a key, he saw a small L-shaped wrench on top of the door.

"Kyran, I told you to—"

"Save it, Anna. I'm coming in."

"The door is locked."

Sticking the long end of the L shaped wrench in the lock, he heard the mechanism give. "Not anymore," he said, opening the door to catch a glimpse of her bare ass just as she spun around.

"Hey, get out!" Anna ordered.

Kyran couldn't move. Holy hell, she was gorgeous, hot, everything he wanted.

Pink and damp from her shower, she'd been in the middle of scrubbing a towel through her hair. Wet strawberry blonde tangles fell to the top swell of her breasts, soaking her white and gold football jersey.

Well damn, she looked sexy. Nylon and mesh hid nothing of those generous curves and her nipples pointed right at him. She wasn't wearing panties, he'd caught a glimpse of bare ass. As many times as he'd had sex, he found his hands were shaking.

"Son of a bitch," he said, so hard now he hoped he wasn't looking at irreparable damage. It was all he could do not to drop to his freakin' knees at her feet. "You've got my name and number on your back."

Anna stood as still as a statue, a towel in her left hand. She was left-handed, like him.

"You shouldn't have broken the lock," she said in the voice she probably used on her students.

"Lock's fine." He tossed the wrench aside and headed for her. "You are fine, Anna James, very fine."

"You are too arrogant to notice when a woman isn't interested."

Anna's height gave her an advantage as the Griffin's mascot. At six foot six, he was used to towering over opponents on the football field. Standing in front of her now, he felt like a conqueror.

"Not interested? Want to bet your pussy is as wet and red as your hair right now?"

"Stop it." She dropped the towel and put up her hand.

He didn't stop until her palm rested square on his chest. His heart thudded. Shit, what this woman did to him, she'd no idea.

"Stop what, sugar?"

"Talking like...*that*."

"You don't want to know that seeing you wearing my name is making me so hard I'm about to bust my fly? You're all pink, freckled and aroused. Right now I want to drop to my knees and eat your hot pussy 'til you're screaming and creaming down my throat."

Anna's eyes flared wide, her mouth parting in invitation even as she shook her head. "I'm not the kind of woman you need, Kyran."

"Why, 'cause you're a teacher?"

"No, I'm older than you and I don't date men who talk dirty."

"Maybe you need a man to talk to you this way."

"That can't be right." She wanted him. He could see it in her eyes, in the way she shifted.



"Anna, I see your inner bad girl," he told her. "Let her come out and play. I want you to be dripping wet when I fuck you."

"You're wrong. I've never been bad," she said even as she shivered and clenched her thighs. "I don't know what you expect from me. Just go. It's for the best."

"Why, are you afraid I might be right?"

"I'm too old to play sex games with you."

"You're forty, not ancient." Oh shit, it was Anna's fortieth birthday.

"Yeah, well, this morning my doctor told me I could go into perimenopause at any time. There's no way to know for sure until it happens. I cry over kitten food commercials and microwave dinners because my chances of happily ever after are dying up faster than I am. Are you going to stick around for that?"

"I'd like to have the chance," he said, knowing he was treading dangerously close to commitment.

"You're only saying that because you want to get into my pants."

"Hell, woman, I don't say anything I don't mean."

"Kyran, it's been a shitty birthday so far and...never mind." Tears filled the corner of her eyes.

If she cried, he was toast. "Anna, don't you dare cry."

"Don't shout," she warned.

Had he shouted?

"Someone could hear you."

"No one's around. Place is deserted."

"I'm just scared, Kyran. You're larger than life."

Reaching out to take her elbows, he tugged her toward him. "Want to know what I think?"

"Probably not."

"You need to forget what the doctor said. Forget everything that sucked today. Right now I'm going to make you come so hard that nothing else matters but that."

Anna shook her head, swaying toward him. "I can't. We can't. We officially went out once. I didn't think I'd ever see you again. I barely even know you."

"Get to know me. Let's have tonight, wake up tomorrow in bed and go from there. You want me. Don't deny it. Let me fuck you."

Tears slid down her cheeks and she turned away. "You can't."

"Why not?"

"Because you're not an average guy and I'll never be what you've known before."

"Thank God for that." Moving behind her, he put one arm around her waist, the other around her shoulder, splaying his hand over her right breast. Her nipple poked his palm and he tightened his hand, brushing his hand over the nub. "I want you."

Hoping she didn't know he was shaking, he stroked her, liking the way her breast spilled into his hand. His hands were big, able to handle her.

"You're crazy."

"About you, I am. I haven't slept with a woman since I met you, Anna."

"Not possible, surely women have come and gone the last few months."

"Could have had a few," he admitted "Thing was, I didn't want them. I want you. Does that tell you anything?"

She felt good in his arms. Tall as she was, her ass was pressed against his cock. Needing to feel more of her, he kept her wrapped close. Purposefully rubbing his erection between her ass cheeks, he groaned at the feel of jersey and her ass scraping his fly. His cock head was poking out the top of his jeans. He could feel her heat, her skin.

"Shit." He wanted to rip the buttons off, bend her over the nearest bench and fuck her 'til she came all over him, using her juices to wet the tight rim of her ass and finger-fuck her tight hole as his cock filled her pussy. He usually didn't get off on anal sex, he was big and he didn't want to hurt Anna. But yeah, he wouldn't mind teasing her to see how wild she'd become.

"Feel how hard I am? Every night since we met, I get off thinking of you, Anna. It's your name I call out when I jet all over the fucking place."

"That's because you didn't reach home the last time."

"Want to repeat that?"

"The security guard in the parking lot caught us at third base."

Trying not to laugh, Kyran enjoyed holding her for a minute. He couldn't remember the last time he just held a woman. Truth of it was, he didn't want to let her go. He wanted to fuck her, turn her over his knee and spank her for giving him the wrong phone number. Then fuck her again.

"You're with a football player and you're talking baseball."

"Don't tease, Kyran."

"Okay, no more teasing," he promised.

Anna sighed and leaned back against him. Surprised that he wasn't kicking and screaming for the door at the thought of what it meant to be with her, he kissed the back of her wet head and smiled. If they had sex it wouldn't be a one-night stand, no way.

He'd known it when they met. He'd been disappointed when he hadn't been able to call her, finally deciding to give her time instead of using his contacts to find her. Tonight he knew why he stayed in California for most of the spring and early summer. He was cruising for the big C, long-term commitment, maybe longer.

He'd had to get his head straight and come after her at the right time, which was now.

"You should let go. My hair's still wet and I need to finish getting dressed."

"You need to be naked. For now, let's see how wet you are."

“Kyran!”

“I’m here.” He wasn’t going anywhere. Not for a while.

## Chapter Three

Having Kyran Black's arms around her was heaven. Anna didn't want him to let go. He was so strong and she knew sex with him would never be average or disappointing.

"Kyran, wait," she murmured, unable to think with her heart slamming in her chest and her labia fluttering.

She'd felt his cock months ago with her hand. He was blessed with a big, thick circumcised penis. His glans had been so soft that she'd rubbed his pre-cum around the tip, the girth, that sensitive underside that made him hum when she touched it. He'd been so big she'd barely been able to wrap her fingers around him. Since she'd never been with a man like him, she didn't know if she could take him.

But she'd wanted to try. Damn, she'd wanted to try.

As if he knew the direction of her thoughts, he coaxed her hips into a gentle side-to-side sway. Each subtle movement shifted her jersey and his fly against her butt.

"That's it, rock with me." He nuzzled her damp hair out of his way and feathered kisses along the side of her neck. Goose bumps dotted her skin, as plentiful as the freckles she'd detested as a teen.

"You want more than this."

"Hell yeah," he whispered, his hot breath warming her neck. His mouth, tongue and teeth alternated against her throat, his sexy open-mouthed kisses thrilling her to her toes. Her skin prickled with sensation, the heat of him calming her nerves. "If you really want to stop, say so now and I'll take you home."

Something in his voice told her he meant it. He wouldn't push her if she said no.

"Oh god, I shouldn't let this happen. It's too soon."

"Let it happen, Anna. I'll keep you safe, trust me."

Incredibly enough she did trust him. She didn't know if it was the way he'd fastened a motorcycle helmet on her head and told her to hang on to him when she climbed onto his Harley. Or if she'd started to fall for him while they'd talked for hours over coffee. She only knew that being with him right now was more important than breathing.

She didn't want to go to a strip club to forget about her fortieth birthday. She wanted to spend the night fucking Kyran. Maybe with him, she would finally experience the kind of hot, passionate sex she'd fantasized about since she lost her virginity twenty years ago.

To this day she remembered the discomfort of her first time. Ted had come after a few seconds of awkward grunting and thrusting, promptly falling asleep. Her

experience since that night had been plain vanilla sex, pleasurable at times and forgettable the next day.

Kyran hummed deep in his throat, the sound whispering over her skin, and Anna rocked harder, following desire, forgetting the past. His jeans and stiff cock rasped against the dimple between her cheeks. Wicked hot lightning zapped her pussy and fluid dampened her folds and inner thighs.

"Oh," she moaned, wanting more, needing more. "More, please, Kyran."

"Whatever you want, sugar." Taking a sharp nip at her collarbone, he sucked on her skin, probably leaving a mark. She hoped he'd leave another, liking the slight sting his teeth left behind.

His right hand cupped her breast, his fingers long enough to begin scissoring her nipple, softly, slowly. Mercy, the sensation of his fingers sent a zing of pleasure from her breast to her aching clit, each clench and release reaching her core. His left, dominant hand inched down her belly. A finger dipped into her navel and Anna lifted to her toes while Kyran's thumb toyed with her. His long fingers splayed outward, pinkie teasing the triangle of hair covering her pussy.

"Hmm, trimmed, but unshaven, the way I remember, you're perfect, soft, silky. Soon I'm going to be so fucking deep inside your pussy that my balls will slap your curls." Kyran's other hand continued to play with her nipple, his fingers scratching over the material of her jersey, causing delicious friction with his blunt nails and the mesh.

"Kyran!" No man had ever spoken to her or touched her like this. More fluid trailed down the inside of her thigh. She liked it, wanted to be as bad as he'd dared her to be.

"You want that, don't you?" He thrust against her from behind, his cock jabbing her right against her anus. A wicked hot pulse of pleasure slammed her slit, leaving her breathless and weak and gushing. Refusing to think she'd just had an orgasm without a lot of work, she shook her head.

"You want me, admit it," he demanded.

"Yes," she almost shouted.

Kissing all the way up her throat to her earlobe, he tongued the delicate spot right behind her ear. "Say that again. Say yes."

"Yes," she gasped and was rewarded with another lick.

"I like that," he praised, sucking her earlobe until she lifted right to her toes. "You want more?"

Molten need raced through her veins, each draw and suction of his mouth on her earlobe sending tension and heat straight to her pussy.

"Yes," she said.

His thumb and index finger circled her nipple, pinching, twirling, tugging, sometimes hard, sometimes gently. Her hips rolled with his rocking pelvis. She wished he was naked.

"Tell me what you want next," he urged.

"You," she husked, closing her eyes to absorb the feel of his arms around her. The scent of soap and mint toothpaste and the unmistakable musk of a man and woman aroused caused her nostrils to flare.

God, even the sheen of sweat covering them both was hot. In this, Anna felt that their ages made no difference in what their bodies wanted. And they wanted each other. She had no doubt about that right now.

"Not good enough. You want me to play with your tits, your pussy or your ass? Tell me what you like, talk to me."

"All of the above, just don't hurt me." She didn't relish pain, had never wanted a man to even touch her asshole. Tensing, she almost broke away from him.

"Easy now, don't freeze. I'll play, tease, fuck, whatever you want, I will do. I won't hurt you."

His pinkie continued to swirl through her pubic hair, darting close to her slit, but not close enough for her aching clitoris. Her vaginal lips were swollen and wet, unfurled and trembling.

"You okay?" he asked.

"I'm tense."

"Let me ease that for you." Somehow he'd switched his hold, always holding her close, pressing against her backside to keep her aware of his bulge. His left hand worked its way under her jersey. His palm and calloused fingers squeezed her naked breast, his thumb circling her nipple. His other hand dove between her thighs to swipe the juice coating her labia.

"You're soaked. Want to come?" Speaking in her ear, he licked and kissed the whirls.

Afraid her legs would give out, Anna reached behind her and grasped his thighs. "Unh, yes, please."

"I will." He tweaked and twirled her nipple, his palm caressing her breast as two fingers slid between her folds, lightly at first, testing, probing. His hands were big enough to palm a football, his fingers strong, thick and calloused. She loved the way he played with her inner and outer folds, leaving no part of her pussy untouched. Discovering a true master with his hands, she spread her legs to give him better access.

"Oh my god, Kyran, that feels so good."

He groaned and sucked hard on her earlobe. "You're so hot against my hand. Your pussy is creaming. I can't wait to go down on you and swallow all that sweetness," he whispered, sliding the pad of his thumb along her swollen petals and teasing her entrance. "You're all plump and open. Imagine my cock pounding into you so hard I lift you off the damned floor. Ever felt that?"

"No," she sighed, unable to take it back.

"Good. How should I take you the first time, on all fours, face-to-face, from behind, hard and fast, slow and easy? Anything you can take, I'll do and love every fucking second of it."

His dark promises shot through her like a tidal wave, building the taut pressure deep in her belly, the need so intense she could almost orgasm with just his words. Coupled with his expert touch and his Southern rebel's voice, Anna had never wanted to fuck more than she did right then.

"I want to come, Kyran. I need it."

"You will, just don't 'til I tell you," he warned.

"What the hell does that mean?" she demanded, jerking her hips away so he couldn't reach her easily.

"Wait, let it build. You'll like it, promise." A thick finger pushed through her folds, seeking her hole to thrust inside of her, hard and deep. Again and again, he fingered her. She had to open her eyes, had to see what she could.

His hand had disappeared between her thighs, but she could hear the sound of her juices meeting his rhythmic thrusts. Her clit pulsed with each gentle slap of his palm, enticing it out of its protective hood. She'd never been this aroused, this needy.

Kyran kept fingering her, stroking her inner walls, crooking his nail so he could hit her most sensitive nerves. Before she could crest, he switched rhythm and pushed into her so slowly and precisely, she felt his whole finger taking her, keeping her clitoris from going numb.

"God, woman, I love the way you move. Take two fingers, that's it. Squeeze my hand tight, tighter. Fuck, I want you so bad right now my jeans are soaked," he said against the pounding pulse of her throat. He kissed and licked, all the while she was rocking with him, fucking his hand!

"Maybe you should take the pants off." She wished he would. His bare chest and arms felt wonderful around her, but she wanted him to be naked.

"If the jeans come off, I'm coming inside you," he warned. "I want to get you off first. Your clit's so hard and throbbing, I'm tempted to lick it into submission."

"Ohmigod, yes," she whimpered.

Her ex-fiancé would only go down on her when he watched a porn flick or if she begged. Even then, he thought contorting her into a pretzel and a few measly twirls of his tongue on her clit would be enough to please her. She'd go numb and he'd complain that he was tired and stop. Then he'd lie back and demand she give him good head in return.

"No, Anna. I don't know what you're thinking, but don't go there."

"I'm sorry."

"Relax for me. I'll make you feel so good."

"Prove it," she dared, unsure where that had come from.

Or maybe she did. Moaning as his fingers slid out of her, she was suddenly spun around. Facing him, she tilted her head back.

"Put your hands on my shoulders. Don't take them off."

"Bossy thing, aren't you?" she teased to fight her nervousness. She couldn't help it. He looked like an athletic warrior, a sex symbol. And she was a forty-year-old gym teacher who'd only experienced decent orgasms with a vibrator.

"I'll give you a real nice kiss if you do." Cocking one dark auburn brow, he looked so fierce and beautiful she almost fell in love with him.

Oh god, she couldn't love him. Lust she could handle and welcome. Anything more was impossible.

Afraid he'd know or sense how fast she tumbled, Anna combed her fingers through her damp hair, leaning back a little more. "I'd definitely like a kiss." Once her hair was out of her face, she rested her hands on his broad, muscled shoulders, hanging on.

"You're very pretty, Anna," he said, bending forward to kiss her.

Greedily, Anna parted her mouth. Their tongues met in a slow thrust and withdraw that mimicked the thrusting of their hips. Parting her thighs to take his jean-clad cock, she kissed him back, thrust for thrust. Her heart raced, letting her trip right back into a fantasy made real.

"Keep holding on," he murmured against her upper lip, licking the sensitive tissue underneath.

Kyran tongued her lower lip once, twice, kissing her deep, then dotting her chin and jaw with kisses. His hands came up to cup her face, tenderly arching her head back so he could worship her throat before skimming his hands back to her waist.

Afraid she might be dreaming, she lowered her chin when his head dipped lower. His dark auburn hair tickled her collarbone, her flesh supersensitive. Her nipples were tight and hard, demanding attention. Strong hands grasped her waist, guiding her backward until her back was braced against the concrete wall.

Once he had her secured, he started kissing his way down her sternum.

"Remove my shirt."

"Not yet, the first time I make you come, I want you wearing my name." His hands skimmed her breasts over the jersey, using the cotton and nylon to further stimulate her nipples. "I think I could suck on your nipples for hours."

"Oh Kyran," she breathed when his warm, damp breath fanned a nipple. He took the areola in his mouth, sucking her through the material.

The mesh grew as wet as her pussy. His mouth teased, his tongue playing with her erect bud, making her writhe. Anna loved his devotion to her breasts. This was not a man to do anything halfway. He sucked her like a starving man seeking sustenance.

"Holy shit," she cried out, pushing back against the wall. Kyran sucked her other nipple, drenching her shirt and breast with his warm, silken tongue. Her clit pulsed in



time with his sucking, her juices scorching her inner thighs. She was so hot, she wondered if she could get off by having her nipples sucked.

Kyran lifted his head, looking right at her face. "Like that, do you?"

She grinned, knowing she blushed, but too aroused to care. "Hell yeah," she told him.

"That's it," he praised, leaning close enough to lap at the pulse in her throat. "Let out that bad girl, Anna. This is going to be good, unless you want me to stop." His kisses progressed downward from there.

"Go all the way down," she demanded. If he stopped, she'd kick his ass.

"Keep your eyes open. Watch me eat your pussy." Her thighs clenched, her pussy so taut and ready for him she groaned.

With her hands still braced on his shoulders, she watched him fall to his knees before her, almost like a slave to her inner sex goddess. His broad, bare shoulders looked so strong and capable of bearing the clench of her fingernails, she held on tighter. His big hands shifted her jersey up to her waist. She pushed her hips out toward him, moving her legs farther apart, her feet planted firm.

"Beautiful, Anna, unbelievably beautiful," he murmured, looking right at her pussy. "You're red and swollen, so damn wet. Fucking you is going to be real, real good. But first..." His words trailed off when his head bent toward her.

Watching him, she saw his lips curve into a wicked grin, the scar on his chin making him look like a primal god about to devour her for a sacrifice. Her folds clenched in invitation. He inhaled her scent, dove forward, the flat of his tongue taking one long lick from her vaginal lips to her clit.

"Ohmigod," she gasped, the soft, evocative feel of his breath and tongue rippling through her whole body.

"Hell, Anna, you're so sweet, so hot." He hummed, the sound of his pleasure whispering over her intimate flesh. On a precipice of his control, she let him feast. He used his whole mouth, his lips, his tongue, the edges of his teeth along her creases, swallowing her juices as they flowed like honey. Clutching his shoulders, she held strong, taking his ravishment and crying out for more.

It was delicious, wicked, amazing. Kyran's tongue poked into her opening, his left hand flat against her abdomen to keep her shirt out of his way. Anna's hips jerked and he held her fast. Her entire body trembled, attuned to the lick, poke and twirl of his tongue over sensitive tissue. He dared to nibble her folds again and she damn near came without having her clitoris manipulated.

She wanted that, wanted his tongue on her clit. But he seemed to know that she needed attention on all of her pussy, not just there. His nose nuzzled her trimmed bush, his breath fanning her inner thighs. Her hips fought his attempt to keep her still. Needing to move, to enslave him if she could, she arched.

"Dammit, Kyran, that's good, so fucking good." His tongue centered on her cleft and she felt his licks all the way to her toes, he was that good.

Kyran's opposite hand caressed her bare thighs, scratching, caressing. He gave up trying to control her as she managed to hoist herself away from the wall just enough that he could squeeze her ass. The hand on her cheeks moved inward to tease at her crease until her vagina convulsed in desperate need for that forbidden temptation.

"Unh, I shouldn't want that," she cried out, knowing she did.

"Don't be afraid." Kyran's words vibrated her clit and she vaulted to the stratosphere. His tongue swiped at the painfully erect nub, gently flicking the tip around the hard nub of flesh. Tiny nerves sang, drawing her closer to the edge, only to have him dart away to penetrate the full blade of his tongue deep inside her.

"Ohmigod, ohmigod," she murmured, grasping at his shoulders, thrusting against him.

She wanted to crow, to shout, anything to keep his remarkable, agile tongue fucking her hard and deep. She'd never known a man's tongue could feel as good as a cock. Kyran managed to wedge it so far into her, he was licking her walls.

Her instinct was to fuck his face, to keep him chained between her spread thighs forever. If she could harness this pleasure, she would enslave him to her pussy for a lifetime.

His nose began nudging her clit, never too fast, always hitting the exact way that she needed. Kyran withdrew, flicking her folds and creases with quick, playful laps. With one finger, he swept her juices all the way to her asshole, wetting it.

Ever dominant, his tongue thrust back up inside of her. His nose tapped her clit. His thumb pushed against her puckered ass and he pulled back enough to growl. "Come, Anna, now," he commanded, tongue fucking her at the same time his thumb pushed deeper.

Screaming his name, she came in a hot rush, her pussy convulsing around his face, and she came and came, a flood of juices running down her thighs. Kyran didn't let up tonguing or nuzzling her. He wasn't done. He pushed her back up, withdrawing his thumb to gather more cream and press farther into her ass, breaching that tight ring of muscle. Shockingly wicked spikes rocked through her, sending her back into orbit, her cries echoing through the locker room.

Unaware that she'd dug little crescents in his skin, she crested, watching Kyran Black lick and swallow her cum.

Only after she was shaking so hard she'd have fallen if it weren't for the wall and Kyran holding her in place did she plead for mercy. "Kyran, please, god, no more, I'm going to pass out."

Kyran laughed smugly and drew back. "You need multiple orgasms more often. Lucky for you, I'm the man for the job. No more bland sex for you, beautiful." Taking his own sweet time, he hummed and lapped at the sticky cream on her inner thighs.

Anna James, high school gym teacher, Griffins' mascot, had never climaxed like that, not even with her special rabbit-eared vibrator with multiple speeds and rotating balls. Aside from a little wetness, she'd never seen the evidence of her orgasms until Kyran brought out her inner bad girl. Now she didn't want to go back to being good.

Slowly, he came back to his feet, placing his hands at her waist. Her Celtic, Southern-voiced football stud looked wickedly sexy with her cum on his chin and mouth.

"Come here, Anna, taste your honey," he commanded, taking her into his arms and fastening his salty-sweet lips over hers so that she could taste herself on him.

A quiet orgasm raced through her right then and there, just from a kiss. Anna laughed and swallowed his tongue deep into her mouth. The night was far, far from over.

## Chapter Four

Kyran fought the need to rip open his fly and fuck Anna in whatever way would have him seated inside of her the fastest. He was aching. Damn if his school teacher hadn't been amazing when she came. He wanted to feel her convulse and shudder around his cock next time.

Not to mention she was strong. He'd barely managed to hang on when she bucked and writhed in ecstasy. He'd been rewarded with the taste of her cum soaking her pussy and thighs. She'd tasted good. Better than good, she tasted like sex.

Slowly he withdrew, enjoying the sight of her flushed, freckled cheeks and dazed green eyes. Her hair was a mess of half-wet tangles and curls. She looked like she'd just gotten laid.

"Anna, I don't know how much longer I can stop myself from coming. I need to be inside you, soon."

She tensed and pulled back before he could catch her.

"I'm sorry. I've ruined it for you," she murmured. "Why do I do that?"

He scowled at her, unsure what he'd said wrong. She looked shy, worried. "My cock is about to bust my fly and you think you've done something wrong?"

"It seems like every time I'm with a guy, he loses his erection within seconds of being with me. I don't want to fail you too."

"Shit, Anna, I want to come so badly my teeth hurt." Kyran wanted to prove how much he wanted to fuck her right then, to prove that she was so freakin' hot he'd nearly jetted at the thought of taking her. To ease her mind, he hugged her close, kissing the top of her head. "But I won't until I'm buried inside you, feeling your creamy, hot pussy gripping my cock. You won't fail me because I won't fail you."

And that was the problem right there. He'd bet the men she'd been with hadn't been patient enough to tap her fire, getting themselves off but ignoring her needs. Her clit was small, but supersensitive. He'd known the second he touched it that she'd go numb fast if he zeroed in on only one spot. Her whole pussy needed attention, inside and out.

Kyran couldn't let her blame herself anymore. She needed a lover to carry her away. Good damn thing he was up for the job of working her out.

She shook her head, trying to back away. "Maybe you should be glad you're not involved with me. I'm too old for this stuff."

"Hate to break it to you, sugar, we're involved. Forget the old boyfriends. Come here," he demanded, catching her shoulders to bring her back into his arms. "Don't

defeat yourself with me. You won't have to worry about anything but the next orgasm I'm about to give you."

Anna put her arms around his waist, anchoring her hands right over his ass. She almost smiled. "I'm not sure I have it in me again so soon. I'm still shaking."

She wasn't lying. Her fingers tightened. He felt them trembling. Her whole body shook a little. "Then you'd better prepare for an earthquake, Anna." He kissed her hard, swallowing whatever she'd started to say.

Anna was the best kisser he'd known. She responded with pure, feminine skill, especially the way her tongue lured his into her mouth and sucked it almost to her throat.

Fuck yeah, she didn't gag. She swallowed once and adjusted her jaw, drawing breath. Alternately kissing softly and sucking his tongue, drawing him closer and holding on, she had him harder than a battering ram. His jeans were damp and getting wetter.

Pushing his hand between them, he started unbuttoning his fly. The moment he sprang free, she released his mouth and helped with his jeans.

"This might be a little rough the first time around," he warned, his pants falling to his ankles.

He stepped away from her long enough to pull off the jeans and toss them aside. He straightened and looked at her.

Her smile wavered then, her eyes on his cock. "I knew you were big when I touched you that first time. But seeing you, jeez, Kyran, that's never going to fit inside of me." Her voice was so deep and aroused, he felt like a king. He had eight inches of thick, hard muscle to give her.

Damn, if he didn't get inside her soon he was going to be blitzed by his own cum. No fucking way was he going to jet before getting inside her. He'd not done that since he lost his virginity in the tenth grade.

Taking a deep breath, Kyran wrapped his hand around the base of his shaft and balls. Tightening his fingers like a cock ring, he watched her watching him squeeze to avoid jetting.

"You can handle me," he promised, tightening his grip. "I need your help here."

"Me?" She took a hesitant step closer.

"Yeah, you, put your hand on me, like I'm doing. Hold on tight, real tight, when I tell you, squeeze," he urged.

"I don't want to hurt you, Kyran," she said, her eyes on his erection. Her tongue slicked out over her lips, making them very wet.

His cock leapt at the sight, pre-cum lubing the head despite his hold on his shaft. Closing his eyes briefly, he swallowed hard to regain control. "You won't hurt me."

She stepped closer and he drew her shirt up over her head with one hand, tossing it with his pants.

"Sometime in the future I'm going to take you while you're wearing my jersey, Anna. I don't mean one from a souvenir shop, one of mine."

Now that they were both naked, Kyran jerked her back to him and wrapped her close, enjoying the feel of her bare skin. She was amazingly soft. Strong and physically fit, she matched him better than any woman ever had before.

It didn't hurt that she liked football, would be great to watch game footage with. He'd welcome her advice. But his thoughts went south the moment Anna kissed him.

Taking initiative, she kissed him harder, her tongue sliding between his lips, then into his mouth. He took over by drawing her into deep kisses that were all about sex and taste and hunger. Where she nipped, he nipped. Where she licked, he did 'til they lost themselves in the pleasure of thrusting, twisting tongues, and dry humping.

Being with her wasn't just about fucking. Hell yeah, he wanted to be inside her so bad it hurt, but he enjoyed kissing and touching her. He loved the feel of her full, round breasts pressed against his chest. They were as soft and sweet as big Georgia peaches and her pointed nipples rubbed his own.

Wanting more of her, he edged back, sending biting kisses over her chin and throat. She arched as he descended, showing remarkable flexibility and strength as he tongued her nipples.

With a nudge from him, her left hand delved between them and she cupped his balls. "Sonofabitch, that feels good."

"Yes, it does," Anna murmured, using her right hand to lift her breast to him. "Kiss me, here."

Using the flat of his tongue to lap her pink silver-dollar-sized areola, the nipple as plump and pretty as a raspberry, Kyran hissed against her skin. Anna's fingers caressed his sac, her short nails lightly scratching the hair covering them.

Groaning, he sucked her nipple into his mouth and she cried out, "Kyran!"

"Yeah, talk to me." Sucking the whole of her areola into his mouth, he drew hard enough to make her buck.

"Ohmigod, Kyran..."

He sucked harder, finally releasing her nipple with a loud pop, her body trembling. "Stroke my cock, get me good and ready."

"You feel ready to me, Kyran Black," she said, her fingers curling around his shaft.

She squeezed and pulled her hand toward the head, her fingers stroking the rim, yes, right where he wanted to feel her. Anna used her whole hand, her palm, her fingers, her nails, caressing the head, then pumping and twisting with a strength he'd have used. He liked her hand a hell of a lot more than his.

"Squeeze hard, right here, now." Straightening, he put his hand over hers to show her what he meant. Anna ringed the base of his dick and circled his balls with her long fingers, squeezing enough to keep him from coming.

"Your cock is amazing, Kyran." She leaned into him, her mouth touching his. "I should be scared to death of you. But I'm not. You're so soft here, like velvet." She licked his lips, edging his teeth, her hand shifting so her thumb played with his cock head, dipping into the weeping hole before using her blunt nail along the sensitive rim.

Fuck that was good, too good, he could feel his eyes roll back, his back arched, thrusting himself into her tight fist made wet with pre-cum. "Here, you're all hard, veined muscle." She squeezed him, pumping his shaft and twisting on the way up. "Would you like for me to go down on you?"

"Oh yeah, not now, later, okay?" Kyran said, kissing her to stop the disappointment he saw in her eyes. "I need you too much. Let me catch my breath while I get a—"

"Kyran, wait, we don't have protection."

"Nothing to worry about, I've got something." Kissing her softly, he drew back. He knew it wouldn't take long to sheath himself, but it would give him enough time to ease the need to drive into her just to come.

Kyran caught her close and kissed her again before retrieving his pants.

"We're really going to do this, aren't we?" Anna spoke with the slightest tremble.

Finding one of the condoms, he stood up. "'Course we are," he said.

"I don't understand you. If you thought I gave you a bogus number, why bother finding me tonight?"

"Truth, I wanted to know if you'd done it because I moved too fast and scared you. Or if you'd fooled me into thinking there was more between us than there was. If you really weren't interested, I'd have known soon after coming in here."

She stared up at him, her eyes wide and her mouth swollen from kissing. She had one hell of a sexy mouth. "I'm sorry for giving the wrong number. I didn't do it to hurt you."

He tucked his free hand under her chin. "I didn't mean to hurt you either. I let my ego keep me from pursuing you sooner. All that's changed now." Apologizing with a kiss, he held her close and savored the taste of cinnamon toothpaste and Anna. She was spicy and sweet, sex and woman.

A little nervous, he clenched the foil packet in his left hand and let Anna's trimmed pubic hair rub against his cock and balls. Soft as silk, her hips rocked back and forth. Her hand worked magic on his shaft.

Almost lost in a haze, he realized her skin was prickled.

"Damn, baby, let me warm you up," he offered, rubbing her arms, back and shoulders as best he could.

She smiled then, a sweet grin that told him she liked what he said.

"It's the floor. Makes my feet cold," she admitted, loosening her grip on him.

"I've an idea, stay right here." He left her long enough to find her griffin costume and set it on the floor. The shower itself was tiled and partitioned with a few stalls. Where they were standing was concrete and dry.

"I'm pretty sure Griffins' management didn't have this in mind when they designed that," Anna said, laughing. She was so pretty right then his heart slammed in his chest.

"I figure it has to be fixed, might as well have it washed too."

"Has to be cleaned often, it'd stink if it isn't."

Quickly, Kyran spread the costume, stood up and held his hand out to Anna. He didn't want her to lose focus on anything else but what was going to happen.

"Step onto the magic carpet and let's see how high we can fly," he said.

Her fingers touched his, awareness spreading from his hand to his heart to his balls. She didn't hesitate to join him. The thick foam of the costume cushioned their feet and warmed their toes. Anna moved in, kissing his cheek.

Just like that, he'd lost his fight for control. He needed her, soon, now. Kissing her hard, he stepped back long enough to tackle the foil package still in his hand.

"Can I help?" she offered.

"Hell yeah," he said, tearing the packet with his teeth.

Anna took it from him, going to her knees. Her mouth was level with his groin and it took everything in him to keep from grabbing her hair and guiding that sexy mouth to his dick. Her hair was a mess, her face flushed, her gaze lifting to meet his. She was beautiful.

"You really are beautifully built," she murmured, using one hand to caress his erection.

"Careful, I'm close," he warned.

She nodded, blowing warm breath over his cock head. His head lulled back. Aching for her, he waited, anticipating her mouth.

"Anna, put the fucking condom on."

"I am." She sounded pleased. He closed his eyes. Holding his shaft steady, she used her other hand to sheath him. He helped a little, but he was so close to blowing, he didn't risk more.

"Thank you for this, Kyran," she said, kissing the head of his cock through the condom.

Hell, she was thanking him for protecting her, and he damn near fell in love with her for kissing his cock.

Groaning, he opened his eyes and grabbed her shoulders, hoisting her up.

"Thank you for this, Anna," he said, their bodies came together. His cock slid between her thighs. Sweet heat engulfed him from head to balls.

"Oh yes," she murmured, her head falling back on her shoulders. He thrust between her pussy lips but didn't enter her. The head of his cock poked at her puckered ass, causing her to jolt to her toes and moan as he seated his erection against her sex. She enveloped him, her labia fluttering all around him.



Enjoying the feel of being this close to fucking her, he thrust and pulled back. Anna's hips parried him, her vulva brushing against his balls each time he surged, the tip brushing her asshole. He didn't want to fuck her ass. Well, at least not yet, he was too big for her to take without pain. They were a long way from that level of trust. He just wanted to tease her, to make her hotter. And she was already hot as fuckin' hell.

Feeling her warmth through the thin condom, knowing her wetness would add to the lubricated, sensitizing latex, he kept kissing and caressing her.

Anna was a strong lover. She thrust and touched, moaned and scraped her nails over his shoulders. She gasped eagerly when he reached between them and began to slap his cock against her pussy lips and clit.

She seemed to like having her breasts crushed against his chest. To be taken with an edge of roughness. Her thrusting was instinctive and rhythmic. He was so turned-on he didn't know how long he'd last once he was inside her.

"You ready, sugar?" he asked, taking a deep breath.

"Yeah," she whispered.

"You're sure? There's no turning back if you say yes."

"Yes." Confidence rang in her voice and Kyran guided her to her knees. Wanting to look at her when he entered her, he nudged her until she was laid out on the mascot's costume, looking up.

Damn, she was amazing all stretched out, her knees slightly bent and thighs spread to accommodate his body, arms above her head.

"You are beautiful, Anna," he praised, catching her thighs and spreading them wider.

Her pussy was vibrant pink, her labia swollen and dripping with juices. Her clit was plump and erect. Using one hand to keep her spread open, he used the other to swipe her cream along her folds and hole.

Her whole vagina pulsed, her thighs arching. "Kyran, please," she begged, hoisting her hips up to seek out his fingers.

Answering, he plunged his middle finger deep into her, using his thumb to caress her sensitive clitoris. Jesus, she was ready, so hot and wet, it felt like she'd branded his hand.

"Hell yeah, you're soaking wet for me." He shoved a second finger into her and she writhed, tossing her head back and forth while he speared her, her hips thrusting back at his fingers. He was tempted to add a third, but she was fucking his hand hard. She needed the real thing.

"Want my cock now?" he asked, thrusting his fingers into her so she'd arch like a bow.

"You know what I want," she panted.

Loving the way her mouth parted and her breasts bounced, he withdrew his hand to lather the condom with her cum. Unable to wait, he settled on top of her, pushing his

hips between her thighs until he was seated inside of her. Holding back from going deep, he gave her just his cock head. Damn, her muscles shuddered in an attempt to get him to move deeper. To slow down, he set his hands over hers, above her head, ready to surge into her.

"Say it, Anna, tell me to fuck you."

"Fuck me, Kyran, or I'll go to that club after all!"

"Like hell you will." He drew back and plunged, parting her silken walls in one long, hard thrust.

"Ohmigod, ohmigod," she cried out, arching to catch his withdrawal and take his thrust. Her eyes had rolled back, her mouth opening and closing. Hoarse little cries escaped her kiss-swollen lips. Her murmurs made him smile.

He was made to fuck Anna James. She could take whatever he gave, demand what she wanted.

"Don't leave yet," she whimpered as he withdrew to the tip.

"It's okay." He shifted up, repositioning her by bringing her legs up and over his shoulders, lifting her ass off the costume. Wanting to drive in hard and fast, he speared her in one long thrust and held still, for a second. "I'm not going anywhere, Anna."

She clawed at him and he withdrew, thrust, loving it. He didn't take her easy. He was too far gone, but she cried out for more.

"Yes, Kyran, harder...yes."

Her inner muscles surrounded and squeezed his sheathed cock, his balls slapping her ass with every deep penetration. The condom helped stave off coming too soon, but he wasn't going to last much longer. She was too tight, too hot and too right. Slowing, he let her legs fall to his forearms and guided himself in and out of her, easy and deep, making sure she felt his eight inches as deep as her pussy could take. She took most of it, accepting the slam against her cervix, cried for more, harder. He gave it to her.

"Anna, watch me fuck you," he commanded.

Her gaze fell and he lowered himself to kiss her forehead, then did a push-up. Almost slipping out, he looked between their bodies. Seeing her arch, he groaned as she took his cum-soaked cock back into that wet, pink, silken flesh. She made his testicles draw up so tight to his body it bordered on pain. He was going to come.

"Fuck, so damn close," he growled.

"It's okay. I know you need to come." As he watched himself fill her again, he saw that her clit needed attention.

Stalling, he withdrew. "Kyran?"

"Easy there, turn over." Coaxing her to all fours, he moved behind her. Covering her back with his chest, he shifted to align his legs on either side of hers. Anna reached back and touched his thigh, inviting him to take her.

Kyran closed his eyes and pushed back into her vagina. Heat and tight inner muscles took him to the hilt. He drew back and slammed into her again, repeating,

pounding her each time, grunting at the feel of her grasping, tight pussy and the sound of slapping, wet flesh.

"Hell, woman, this is too damn right."

She needed no guidance. She fucked him right back, just as he knew she would.

With his hands free to explore, he wrapped his arms around her so he could touch her breasts, tug on her nipples. Anna trembled and groaned when he pinched.

"I need to..." she confessed, losing her rhythm and speech.

"Me too," he said.

Alternately stroking each breast with one hand, he moved his left until he found the nest of curls on her mound. Proud that he had big hands, he cupped her and rubbed her clit with his index finger and thumb.

"Ohmigod, oh," she sighed and bucked.

Kyran lost control and plunged into her so hard she collapsed to her elbows. Anna shook her damp hair, stretching and lunging like a jungle cat beneath him. She was sexy, amazing. She took everything he gave, pushing back at him with remarkable, agile strength as she came back to all fours.

Sensation and tension centered on his cock and balls. She was silken heat and rippling, tight muscle. She was perfect. "Let go, now."

Anna shuddered. "Kyran!"

He palmed her clit as spasms shook her, her vaginal walls clamping down on his cock so hard, the base of his spine locked and cum shot up his shaft to the head. "Sonofabitch, Anna, I'm coming, fuck." Spewing like a volcano, he shook with the force of it.

Thrusting into her one last time, his hot ejaculate soaked his cock while Anna's vagina gently convulsed around him. When he was finished, he wrapped his arms around her and rocked back to his knees, taking her with him.

"You just wrung me out," he whispered, nipping at her earlobe and holding her tight. He hadn't had sex without protection since he was twenty-one. For the first time since he'd been tested to make sure he was clean, he wondered what it would be like to have sex without one.

No, that wasn't it. He wanted to know what it would be like to fuck Anna without a condom. He wanted his semen filling her 'til it flowed out of her pussy and slid down her thighs.

"I've never had this many orgasms in one night," Anna confessed, her body still trembled.

"Lie beside me for a minute." He settled on the griffin costume and brought her head down to his chest.

"We should go, Kyran. Someone could find us like this."

"I know. We will." But he wasn't ready to let her go.

She'd drained him and he wanted more. Kyran vowed to make sure that Anna agreed to stay with him beyond one night. Chances were she'd start thinking about her age as soon as they left the locker room. He had to find a way to convince her that their ages didn't change the fact that he wanted her and intended to keep her.

## Chapter Five

Anna couldn't move. She just had the best sex of her life with Kyran Black! Her muscles were still limp, her skin still sensitive. Even better, she still had his arms around her. He didn't rush to pull away or grab his pants. He held her close.

She wanted more. Her heart raced at the thought of sharing more kisses, more touches and multiple orgasms with Kyran. Just thinking his name sent a spark of need zinging right to her slit, making her wonder how long it would take for him to recover.

Amazingly, the quiet that had fallen between them was sweet and uncomplicated. They just laid together on her mascot costume, ignoring the slight chill in the room as he brushed one hand over her shoulder and down her arm. She rested her head on his big, muscular chest and listened to his strong heartbeat.

For a moment she wished they could stay this way for days, months, even years. But that was simply impossible.

Kyran was so handsome, so sexy and demanding as a lover, she'd had no chance of resisting him. Though he was thirty to her forty, he was more confident and dominant during sex. Something about that had turned her on, made her want to do whatever he asked. She liked when he was a little aggressive, when he made demands of her in a voice that slid over her skin like silk.

Who'd have thought she'd want such a man? That she'd get wet by the sound of a man saying he was going to fuck her and tell her to stroke and squeeze his cock and ring his balls to keep him from coming too soon? That she'd want him to tell her when to orgasm? When he did, she came so hard fluid gushed from her pussy. Sure, she'd heard about women ejaculating. She'd just never experienced it.

Got a little sticky? Yeah sure, she'd done that with a vibrator, never with a man. Soak a man's face while riding his mouth and tongue, never, at least not until tonight!

She had to remind herself that she was Anna James, a forty-year-old high school teacher and assistant JV football coach. Football practice had already started, even though it was summer. The Griffin mascot gig was part time and she was supposed to remain anonymous. She needed to go back to work, back to her normal life tomorrow. For now she'd stay here in Kyran's arms for as long as he would hold her.

"You're getting cold again," Kyran said, doing his best to rub her arms.

"I'm all right." Reluctantly, she sat up. "I'll go clean up and get dressed."

"I'll help."

"No, I can do this on my own." She moved to her knees, her leg muscles protesting the sudden move, and her hip popped so loudly they both winced.

"Dammit, Anna, did I hurt you?" In a flash Kyran was kneeling beside her, his clever hands running over her hip.

"No, no, I'm fine." The pop of her hip was nothing compared to the sharp cramp that swept up her left calf. Instinctively, she flinched, the pain wrenched through her leg.

"Lie back down. I'll massage you." And didn't that make it worse? He knew she was creaky and cramped, even though she'd tried to fight it. Muscle cramps just didn't like to let go that easily.

"I'm fine." Shifting a bit awkwardly, she managed to grab her left foot and pulled it toward her body. It hurt for a second or two until the cramp eased, leaving behind a little ache. "There, you see, just a cramp. Guess I'm not as spry as I'd like to be."

He stayed on the costume when she stood up. He looked like a mythological god perched on a griffin-skin rug. He was naked, handsome and too damn young for her. He had more tattoos banding his thighs, tattoos she hadn't noticed until tonight. He was everything she wasn't, what was she doing with this man?

"Anna, don't go teacher on me now. I admit I'd like to fuck you while you're wearing one of those prim, white shirts and a tight, short black skirt and stiletto heels, but not tonight."

"Don't be silly. I don't wear skirts or heels to school. I'm a phys-ed teacher. I wear sweatpants, sneakers and tee shirts to work."

"Doesn't hurt to fantasize," he said. "There are quite a few fantasies I'd like to carry out with you. Add a yardstick to that teacher's uniform and I'm there, sugar."

She'd like that, yet she wondered why he returned to using sugar again. Not long ago he'd called her baby. It'd been sweet, she liked it. Rather than admit it, she shook her head. "You're impossible, Kyran. I'm going to find something to wear."

"That sexy little number you got in your locker would do."

"That dress was meant for a nightclub. Since I'm not going out for my birthday I'd rather just get my jeans."

Kyran stood then, looking gorgeous even while removing his condom. "Wear whatever you want, Anna, as long as you remember you're coming home with me."

She wasn't likely to forget that. "Kyran, really, I can't sleep over your place tonight. If you'd like to go somewhere for coffee or a drink, that'd be nice. It just isn't the best idea to carry on as we have here."

"You think what we just did was carrying on, like we're kids?" The harsh note in his normally sexy voice tugged on her heart strings. She'd hurt him and she hadn't really meant to.

"What we did was special, amazing, something I never thought I'd experience in my lifetime with someone like you."

"Then why are you pulling away from me already?"

"I'm not. I need to get dressed. I've work tomorrow." She picked up her football jersey and slipped it over her head. It felt a little damp in certain places due to Kyran's attentiveness to her breasts earlier. But she didn't see any visible wet spots.

Feeling less vulnerable and far warmer, she went over to where she'd stowed her sports bag. "Why don't you wait outside while I get dressed?"

"I'll wait here." Kyran stood by the shower room door where he'd just deposited the condom in a trashcan sitting nearby. "Mind telling me why a teacher would work on a Saturday in August?"

"I've got JV football practice tomorrow. We have a game the first week of school."

"What time's practice?"

Feeling his eyes on her, she poked through her bag looking for underwear. "Noon," she said. "Shit, I can't find my underwear." Flushing, she almost punched the bag.

"That language is going to get you into trouble, Ms. James. You have a pair of panties in your locker. Want me to get them for you?"

"Sure, why not?" They'd just had sex, why should it matter if he saw the panties she'd intended to wear with the black dress.

When he left, Anna found a brush and ran it through her hair, using the time she had alone to control the mass of tangles. Catching the brush in a knot, she yanked hard and winced at the stinging pain.

"Here, give me that." Kyran snatched the brush from her hand and handed her the lacy black panties. At least they weren't the cotton briefs she'd had on during the game. She'd have been mortified if he knew she preferred comfort to sexy thongs.

He moved in behind her and started brushing her hair, barely tugging at all.

"You're good at this," she said.

"Your hair's beautiful. Don't hurt yourself trying to detangle it."

"You don't have to do —"

"Anna, don't tell me to stop. I want to take care of you, okay?" Kyran ran the brush from root to tip, being careful not to tug beyond what was needed to loosen the knots.

"I'm sorry, Kyran. I'm used to doing things myself."

"Not anymore." The drag of the brush calmed Anna's sudden bout of nerves. There was no hurry in his actions, just a gentle cadence that she welcomed. "I want to do a lot of things with you, more than what we'll be able to do in one night. One thing I won't do is intentionally cause you any pain." He dropped the brush and gathered her hair in one hand, tugging enough to bring her head back against his bare shoulder. He was still naked. She could feel his cock harden against her butt.

"You can't want more than that," she argued.

"I can." He dropped the brush and wrapped his arm around her waist. He knew exactly how she liked him to hold her. His was so big and strong, with the defined, sculpted muscle of a quarterback, his dominant left hand centering right over the

triangle of hair covering her mound. Her panties were still in her hand and she could barely think beyond the sparks of need exploding within her pussy with only the simplest of touches. "Agree to spend the rest of your birthday with me. In the morning, I'll make you breakfast in bed."

"I can't. I have practice."

"At noon. I'll wake you up in plenty of time to make football practice."

"I'm tempted to just say yes."

"Just say yes," he insisted. "Say yes."

"Okay...yes." Kyran spun Anna around so fast her head swam.

"That's my girl," he praised, unknowingly reminding her that she wasn't a girl. She was still forty years old. Her muscles were a little sore, her clit ultra-sensitive.

"Kyran, wait, I'm not sure we should have sex again until later, much later, like hours."

"Sure we should."

"It's just that, well, you're a lot bigger than any man I've been with. I'm not sure I can keep up with you without getting sore."

"Understood, we went at each other pretty hard the first time. I'll try to slow down for the rest of the night, okay?"

"Okay," she agreed, unsure what she agreed to.

He smiled, her handsome quarterback melting her heart as he leaned in and kissed her. His tongue slicked out over her lips and her mouth parted, permitting yet another deep, open-mouthed kiss that lingered, making her knees weak.

"You taste so good I don't want to stop kissing you," he whispered against her lips, the words tickling a little. "But if I don't, we'll be back on that griffin costume using the second condom in my pocket. I promised to slow down and I aim to please."

"Do you?" she asked, smiling. At that moment he looked more human and less like a god. He was starting to look tired too. He was the one who'd been sacked and mashed into the turf during the game. He probably should have soaked in warm water, been massaged and taken care of by team trainers.

"Yes, now let's get out of here before it's too late."

He released her then and she backed up. "Tell you what. I'll finish getting dressed if you could work on stuffing the costume into the empty garment bag hanging in the other room." She pointed in the general direction of her small changing room and waited to see if he'd listen.

"All right."

Anna nodded, watching him go over and grab his jeans. He was facing away from her and she was able to appreciate his fine body. He was ripped, tight and lean, with muscles of a modern warrior. His ass was perfect, bare and squeezable.

He turned and caught her staring. "Anna James, you staring at my ass?"



"Sure am. You know, I'm glad you stopped me from going to an all-male revue. You are far sexier than any man I might have seen tonight."

Kyran grinned. "Thank you, I think."

She grinned back, feeling a bit like a teenager watching him step into his jeans and button the fly. "You're welcome."

Blushing, she turned and went back to the shower where she'd left her washcloth. She heard Kyran pick up the costume and take it to the next room. Alone, she quickly washed between her thighs, pulled on her miniscule panties and returned to her gym bag.

From the desk in the outer locker room, she heard the phone ring and a rustle of plastic. Kyran's deep voice answered the call. Briefly, Anna wondered if they'd gotten themselves in trouble.

Kyran was a legend, hopefully with a few more years to give as an experienced mentor to a young, talented first-string quarterback. As rebellious as he was perceived to be off the field, he still had a rocket arm, still had a presence that thousands of fans came to see when they flocked to a Griffins game.

And she was a teacher who needed her job as the mascot to make extra money. Most of what she made as a mascot was invested for the future, meant to supplement the pension she'd receive when she left teaching. It was a necessity and she didn't want to lose that income.

She also didn't want to think about the fact that she was ten years older than Kyran, something that didn't seem to matter when they were close. How long would it take for him to realize she wasn't anywhere near as strong or fit as he was?

"Anna, are you all right?" Kyran asked when he walked back into the shower room.

"Um, yeah, just daydreaming," she said, finding her jeans. "I'm almost ready."

"Someone from security called. He'll be here in about fifteen minutes. An alarm in one of the souvenir shops was triggered earlier and they're coming around to check everything out on this side of the stadium."

"Do you think it's dangerous?"

"No. I think some fans tried to linger inside the stadium after it was closed and got caught."

"Whew, hope you're right." She shrugged into her jeans and found some socks. Her toes were chilled and the cotton felt wonderful, but she still felt cold all of a sudden. "Kyran, this isn't going to affect you in any way, is it?"

"Affect me how?" There was a frown in his voice. She didn't dare look at him.

"Being caught in here with me," she explained. "I wouldn't want what happened here tonight to hurt your career."

"Can't see how it would. Are you ashamed to be with me, Anna?"

"Kyran, don't dare think that! I'd like to spend the rest of the night with you, but I think it's wise to be careful. Technically, I'm not supposed to bother the football players. I could get into trouble too."

"I'll make sure you don't. If management has a problem with the fact that I'm dating you, I'll handle it."

"Okay, if you think it's safe, then I won't give it another thought tonight."

"Good. What about tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow, I was promised breakfast in bed. I hope you mean to keep that promise."

He smiled. "Absolutely, come here."

All dressed except for shoes, she approached him on much warmer toes. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing, I want to kiss you before security arrives."

That she could do! Permitting him to take her into his arms, Anna offered her mouth and reveled in her sexy quarterback's dominant, sexy French kiss that quieted the last of her concerns and awakened the feminine arousal deep in her pussy.

Her panties were soaked by the time Kyran lifted his head at the sound of security pounding on the locker room door.

## Chapter Six

"Mr. Black," the guard called out. "You can leave when you want, sir. Alarm was false. Went to your locker and found the things you'd asked for."

"Thanks, Bill," Kyran called back, causing Anna to stare up at him.

"He's not coming in?"

"I told him to wait outside."

Anna was glad. Kyran had been thinking about their privacy when he contacted security. He was more thoughtful than she'd realized.

"Thank you," she said.

"Sure." He grabbed up the garment bag and slung it over his shoulder. "I'm anxious to get out of here. Ready?"

"Definitely, just let me get my shoes and the rest of my stuff."

She rushed to get her sneakers and had to sit down to put them on. As soon as she was finished, she cleaned up her locker, grabbed her dress, pulling a plastic dry cleaner bag over the hanger, and then picked up her fancy shoes. Within minutes she was all packed.

"Can I carry that for you?" Kyran offered, pointing to the gym bag.

"No, I'm okay." He already had her costume. It was bulky and awkward to carry. Her gym bag and dress were easy.

Anxious to leave, she approached him. "All set," she said with a smile, thinking that Kyran really was a nice man.

This was the man she'd met last winter, the one who'd finally convinced her to join him for coffee and talked for hours. She'd liked him a lot then. She liked him even more now, could see herself falling in love with him.

Oh lord, she wasn't falling in love with him, she couldn't. It was too soon! No matter how she looked at it or defined it, she'd had sex with him. She wasn't the type of person to give herself to a man who she didn't care about.

Yeah, she was in danger here. She knew it now with a certainty. If she wasn't very careful, Kyran would capture her heart before they left the stadium parking lot.

"You sure you're okay, Anna?" Kyran approached her, placing his free hand beneath her chin. "With us, I mean? You look scared."

"I am scared, Kyran. I'm not sure what you really expect of me."

"I think you know," he insisted. "We may have rushed the sex part, but we'll figure out everything else."

"One day at a time?" she asked.

"Yes, if that's what you want." He leaned in close for a gentle kiss, leaving her sad when he didn't kiss her deeply.

Dropping his hand from her chin to her waist, he guided her out of the locker room. Lying on the floor beside the door was a pair of shoes and a tee shirt. Kyran stepped into the well-worn sneakers and set down her costume long enough to put on his shirt.

Belatedly Anna noticed the security guard standing at the end of the hallway. "Mr. Black, everything okay?"

"We're good," Kyran said.

The guard was in his forties, starting to go bald, but he had a friendly smile and he didn't look at Anna with anything other than mild curiosity.

"Sorry about all this, Mr. Black," Bill apologized when they reached him. "The false alarm had all the guards scattered. Everything's in order now."

Kyran frowned. "You're sure it was false?"

Bill shook his head. "Seems so. What I don't understand is why someone didn't think to come and look for you guys before now. God forbid y'all get locked in down here, code violations would be the least of our problems."

"As long as we could get out without issue, shouldn't be a problem. While I'm thinking about it, you should speak to someone about the shower room lock. A child could figure out how to open it." Kyran leaned toward the guard and whispered something. Anna was pretty sure he was warning Bill to keep quiet about the two of them being there.

"I'll watch your backs," Bill said, moving around them and heading to the locker room. He checked the room, turned off the lights and closed the door. "Want me to escort you all to the parking lot? I have an electric cart right around the corner."

Kyran shook his head. "No, we'll be fine."

When they were out of earshot, Anna looked up at Kyran. "Do you find it strange that Bill doesn't know what happened with that break-in?"

"Nah, these guys are busy. Besides, if we'd been caught in here earlier, I wouldn't have had the best sex of my life, so far."

She was thankful that the overhead lights were muted, leaving just enough to see safely but also hiding the flush scorching her cheeks. "So far?"

"Sex between us is going to get better, trust me."

"If I didn't trust you, Kyran, I wouldn't have had sex with you tonight."

His arm tightened around her waist. "I know, Anna. Believe it or not, I didn't come to see you tonight expecting sex."

Blushing even more, Anna couldn't deny how good it felt to be with him. The closer they got to the exit leading to the employee parking lot, the more she wondered if having a relationship with him was possible. The security guard hadn't reacted with anything other than pleasantries when he saw her with Kyran's arm around her waist.

Maybe no one else would care, maybe no one would notice their age difference or think that she was doing anything wrong.

She'd had the best sex of her life tonight. She couldn't see why that fun had to end when the sun came up tomorrow. He'd promised breakfast in bed, she wanted that. She wanted the bed, the food, most of all, she still wanted Kyran. More now than she did before they'd had sex.

It was warm and dark when they reached the parking lot, a crescent moon hanging in the air above the darkened stadium, dim street lights glowing an eerie artificial white. A few cars were parked out back. They probably belonged to security and the cleaning crew.

Kyran led her to a big, weird-looking black SUV. The wheels had those chrome rims that spun when the vehicle was moving. "Ever been in an Escalade?"

"Can't say I have," she said. Strangely, she liked the SUV. As big as it was, it seemed appropriate for Kyran "The Rebel" Black to drive a vehicle of this size and attitude.

He dropped his arm from around her and went to the back. "Stow your bag and let's go for a ride."

"Ah, my CRV is over there," she pointed out.

That caused Kyran to look around. "I'll bring you back tomorrow morning."

"Hmm, I thought I was getting breakfast tomorrow morning."

He opened the back, put the garment bag inside and gestured for her things. "I'm going to give you a lot of things by morning. Come on, I'll make sure to get you to work on time tomorrow."

With one last look at her much smaller, dark red SUV, Anna gave up the argument and set her bag and clothes inside. "All right, you win. I need to be back here early. I'll need to go home to grab a change of clothes and get to school by noon."

"I'm an early riser," he said, a hint of promise in his voice. He came closer, pulled her into his arms and lowered his head. "There's nothing like fucking first thing in the morning."

"Somehow I think sex with you at any time of the day or night is going to be pretty good."

Kyran's lips curled in that wicked-looking crooked smile. "Pretty good," he repeated. "That sounds like a challenge. By morning, I intend to make it fantastic." Kissing her hard, he pushed his tongue between her parted lips and lured her into a long, sexy exploration.

Her heart skittered like a jack rabbit in her chest. Anna didn't care if he felt it. Right now she had the sexiest man on earth promising a night of great sex. In the back of her mind, she wondered if there'd be a time when they would make love, not just fuck.

For now, she'd enjoy getting to know him. Sighing against his mouth, Anna drew his tongue between her lips and sucked the way she knew he would like. He groaned and brushed his hands through her hair, grasping a little too harshly.

"We have to get out of here or we're not going to get home before I'm inside you again."

Grinning at the feel of his erection sliding against her, Anna reluctantly stepped back as a minivan on the far side of the parking lot backed out of its spot.

"Uh oh, think they saw something they shouldn't have?" she asked.

"Nothing wrong with kissing my woman," Kyran said.

"I'm your woman?"

"Course you are," he insisted. "Don't you already know that?"

Anna pulled away a step. "What I know is that we have something going on. I'd like to see where it leads. But I have to be careful. I could lose my mascot job for this."

Kyran walked to the passenger side of the enormous SUV. "I don't give a rat's ass if someone saw me kissing you, but you're right. We should be careful until I can make sure nothing happens to you."

A little nervous, Anna stared up at him for a moment. "Actually, I'm not even sure why I'm worried. Just because someone saw us kissing doesn't mean they know I'm the mascot. For now, let's think about the rest of tonight. It's still my birthday." She didn't want to think of it being her fortieth birthday, but that was never far from her mind.

He smiled, captured her mouth for a quick, hard kiss, then helped her into the vehicle. It took some doing, even for her. She was soon belted in and the door was closed. As he walked around to the driver's side, she watched him, belatedly noticing that he stared off after the silver van that was just now leaving the parking lot.

Wondering why he stared, Anna noticed it wasn't until the minivan was gone that Kyran opened the door and climbed into the SUV. "Everything okay, Kyran?"

"Yeah, thought I recognized that van. I'll look into it in the morning."

Curious as to why it mattered, Anna started to ask, but noticed Kyran's smile. Gone was the apprehension he'd shown seconds ago. Here now was the man who'd given her multiple orgasms with his tongue, fingers and cock. Soon enough, he'd be doing it again.

Enjoying the classic rock music playing on his satellite radio, she decided not to press Kyran to explain about the car. He'd tell her if it was something they needed to worry about.

Soon they were pulling away from the stadium. Anna had to admit she was glad. Glancing at the clock in the dashboard, she saw it was ten thirty. They still had a large part of the night left and she was looking forward to it.

## Chapter Seven

Kyran edged his Escalade out of the parking lot, wondering if he should phone his agent about the reporter who'd taken to writing about him. Not just any reporter, the van was driven by the piranha, Brenda Jamison. The woman liked to ask him questions that had nothing to do with football or sports and everything about his sex life off the field.

He knew he'd been with a lot of women at the start of his career. Even in college, he and his friends had been wild, going so far as taking two or three women at a time. But he'd grown up, changed, matured into the man he wanted to be now.

As much as he didn't care for Brenda's questions, she tended to show up at the most inconvenient times. Before he'd come to play for the Griffins, he'd been seeing a model. After Brenda wrote an inflammatory article about him and another woman, his relationship with Seville ended.

He hoped he was wrong about the driver of that damned minivan. He had nothing against reporters, male or female, as long as they kept their stories about football. Brenda was a small-time Alexandria newspaper sports columnist who wanted to see her stories syndicated for national presses.

Could this affect Anna being the mascot? He didn't want her to get in trouble for being with him. He understood that she needed the job for extra income. Maybe someday she wouldn't have to worry about money if she stayed with him.

They'd just started dating, but it didn't change how he felt about her. Yeah, they rushed into sex a bit. When it was right, it was right. Anna was worth the months he'd waited to meet up with her again. He was going to see this through as far as it could go.

"Kyran, what is it? You've been staring off into nothing for five minutes. If you're having second thoughts, turn around and take me back."

Anna's voice caught his attention. She was feeling awkward and he owed her his attention. Pushing Brenda Jamison from his mind, he shifted gears, then reached for Anna's hand.

"Everything's fine," he assured, tightening his fingers around hers.

Her hand was soft. She must use a good hand lotion to keep them soft. Her nails were kept short, with just enough white at the tips to score his shoulders. They were buffed and painted with a light pink nail polish. Rubbing his thumb over her knuckles, he set her hand on his thigh.

"You have nice hands," he complimented, meaning it. Long fingers, strong grasp, he remembered the way she cupped his balls and stroked his cock.

"Thanks," she said. "I like to have manicures and pedicures every few weeks, it's my girly thing."

"You should treat yourself as often as you like."

"Hmm, to tell you the truth, I'd love to spend a weekend at a spa. All that pampering and massaging sounds like heaven, especially after football season."

"I'd like that too."

Anna laughed, the sound overcoming the radio. "Can't imagine you getting seaweed wraps and salt-scrubs," she said. "You know, Hershey, Pennsylvania, has a spa where everything is chocolate. Now that would be really nice."

"You like chocolate, do you?" Surprised that he was interested in the simplest things about Anna, Kyran continued to stroke his thumb over her fingers and knuckles. She flexed her fingers and sighed.

"I love chocolate. How about you?"

"I like it. I'd love it if I could lick it off your raspberry nipples or from between your thighs, makes me hard thinking about licking your juicy pussy again." His cock throbbed against his buttoned jeans.

"Ha, you were hard before we climbed in this monster." Anna shifted a little closer, the seatbelt keeping her from getting too close.

Kyran wished they'd taken her smaller SUV. At least then he could reach her better. Uncomfortably hard, he freed her hand long enough to unbutton the top of his fly.

"You like going commando?" she asked, laughing softly.

"I was in a hurry to get to you, didn't think about underwear."

"Then are you a boxers or briefs kind of guy normally?"

Laughing and recalling the night they'd gone out for coffee and talked for hours, Kyran released one more button and eased back into his seat. "Boxers, when I wear them. You, on the other hand, prefer panties when you're working and sexy lingerie when you're playing."

Her breath caught. "I hate thongs, sorry. They're just not comfortable. I don't mind cute bikini panties like I'm wearing now though."

"Take them off," he suggested.

"I don't think so," she replied, sounding like a teacher. "I'm not into commando, Kyran."

Maybe not, but she liked when he told her what to do during sex. She'd gotten amazingly wet when he ordered her not to come until he permitted it.

"Take them off. Give them to me."

"That would require me to remove my jeans. We're in an SUV, not a locker room or even a bedroom."

Kyran pushed harder. He suddenly wanted her jeans off, the scrap of lace covering her pussy in his hand.



At a red light, he looked over at her. "Anna, do it for me. The windows are dark. No one can see you in here. I want you to ride home with me naked."

"Only if you undress first, stud," she dared back. She foolishly thought he wouldn't strip? Woman had a lot to learn.

As the light changed to green, he eased forward and was glad when they reached another red light. Alexandria had some tricky streets and he needed to pay attention. But he couldn't resist tempting Anna.

"Anything for you," he replied, reaching behind his back to grab a handful of tee shirt.

"Kyran, I wasn't serious."

"You dared me, Anna. Now I'm daring you. Take your clothes off."

Before the light changed to green, he tugged his shirt over his head, unbuttoned his jeans and slid them down his thighs. They were at another red light. Putting the SUV into neutral, he managed to kick off his shoes and pants before the light turned green.

He was naked and driving away before taking off for the ramp for 495. He was hard, aching and wanting her to follow his lead. "Come on, Anna, get naked."

"You're crazy, you know that, Kyran Black?" she laughed, but he noticed her face was turned toward him.

Chancing a look at her, he caught her staring at his cock. "You're staring. Makes me crazy for you when you do that," he admitted.

"Isn't that what you want?" Anna didn't wait for his answer. She kept staring at him, laughed and suddenly tugged her football jersey over her head.

Tossing it toward the back, she didn't pay much attention to where it landed. Just as he'd done, she kicked off her shoes, edged her jeans down her long, long legs and finally freed them from her feet.

"I feel like I'm sixteen," she murmured, breathless by the time she removed her panties.

Well, damn, she did it. Like him, she sat completely naked. He could smell the salty scent of sex and arousal. She was already dripping.

"Give me those," he demanded of the lacy thing she'd kept in her hand. She handed him the panties and eased back into her seat. "That's my bad girl. For the record, you don't look sixteen. You look like you want to fuck."

"A little hard to do that when you're driving and way over there," she said, gesturing to the space that separated them.

"But it's damn sexy riding around town with you like this."

"Don't get used to it," she insisted. "I'm not even sure why I did it this time."

"Cause you wanted to be a little wild? Take time out of your day job and do something for yourself?"

"Probably," she admitted. "You make me feel...young. Like it's okay to misbehave."

"Anytime you want to misbehave with me, I'm happy to oblige. And you're safe with me, Anna, always. Get that? Safe sex is wise but I'm clean, got tested with my last physical."

"Same here. You're also gorgeous and athletic. Looking at you right now isn't a hardship, believe me."

Noting a hint of worry in her voice, Kyran reached over and took her hand again. Stretching a little, he set their joined hands on her left thigh. "You are the hottest, sweetest thing I've ever known. Don't think this is hard for me either."

"You look hard to me," she said, making his cock leap and weep.

There was no denying it. He was hard as a rock. His balls were heavy, but his erection felt like a battering ram. He could smell her sex, salty, tangy and tasty. "If I could fuck you and drive at the same time, I would."

"We wouldn't be the first to try," she replied.

"Yeah and risk a head-on collision, no. Rather get you home where I can fuck you safely."

"Do you have to talk that way?"

"What way?" he asked.

"Using the 'F' word all the time." She was sounding like a teacher. It turned him on, but he didn't want the teacher right now.

"You like when I talk dirty."

"In the heat of the moment, maybe," she agreed.

"Bet you're pretty hot right now, aren't you, Anna? Knowing I want to fuck you?" he asked. "Feel it for me."

"What?"

"Your pussy, feel it for me, now. Tell me how wet you are." It was August and the air conditioning was flowing. He bet her strawberry red pussy was scorching.

"I'm not a dog, Kyran." Getting worked up, she crossed her arms over those big, round breasts, hiding the extended tips.

"Course you're not. But you're wet and getting wetter by the second. Feel it for me, tell me," he urged, wanting to do it himself.

"You're asking too much," she argued.

"Come on. Touch your sweet pussy. Don't be afraid."

"I'm not."

"Double dog dare you to, Anna James. Tell me."

Knowing he pushed her comfort zone, he saw her from the rearview mirror. Her mouth was gaped a little, her fair skin pink with arousal.

Returning his eyes to the road, he waited. She lowered her arms. He heard her rustling about, spied her thighs part just a bit.

"Um," she murmured, the shadow of her hand combing through her trimmed curls, catching his attention. "Hot, very hot."

"More," he said.

"Hot and wet."

He turned down the radio some, listening to her playing. "Push one finger inside, just one."

God, he was going to shoot off any second. He wasn't touching her, but he heard her masturbating, the juices must be coating her finger.

"Kyran, not sure I can keep doing this." She stopped, probably scared herself.

"You can. Make yourself come."

"I'd rather make you come," she admitted.

"Good," he praised. "You first, I'll follow."

"You're driving."

"Yes, I am. Touch your clit, stroke it like you'd stroke my cock."

"Um, you're a lot more substantial than my little clit."

"Thanks. Quit stalling or face the consequences later," he warned, hinting she might get punished if she didn't follow his lead.

He'd never hurt her. He sure as hell wouldn't mind binding her to his bed to do whatever he wanted. Or spank her ass 'til it was burning hot.

The sound of her seat moving back surprised him. She was lounging, thighs spread. God damn, yes! About to spurt like a teenager, he used his left hand to steer, his right to grip his penis.

"A woman's clit is more sensitive than a man's entire cock head," he told her. "Yours is ultra sensitive, needing special attention."

"Yeah, I know," she whispered, getting into it now.

With her seat back, she parted her legs more. There in the passenger seat of his Escalade, his school teacher was working her clit like a pro. Hearing her soft moans, he jerked himself harder. He extended his cock toward his abs, the tension keeping him from coming too soon.

"Come with me, Anna," he urged.

Her fingers were playing and rubbing her center. He couldn't see it. He could hear it. She wasn't shy. After she rid herself of the teacher persona, she was all open, moaning pleasure, masturbating in earnest.

"Can't believe I'm doing this, but...feels so good," she whimpered, thrusting her hips up in the neon-blue interior, lighted from his dashboard.

If Meat Loaf started to sing at that moment, Kyran would have laughed. Fortunately, Led Zeppelin's "Rock and Roll" was on, setting the stage for their sexy play.

By chance, a highway rest stop loomed about a half mile ahead. "Wait, Anna."

"Damn it, Kyran, I'm fucking close."

Well now, Ms. Anna James was getting a potty mouth. He'd have to reward her later. He stopped jerking himself off and eased onto the ramp. The rest stop was for truckers, two rigs were parked in the lot a good distance away.

Kyran didn't care. He hoped Anna didn't. Whipping the SUV into a space and slamming on the brakes, he turned off the engine, cutting the lights. Unbuckling his seatbelt, he grabbed for Anna, who'd already unfastened hers.

"Get over here and ride me, Anna." Catching her elbow, he tugged. She about leapt over the console to get to him.

Somehow she tucked her knees on either side of his hips and settled over him. His cock inched into her hot, wet sheath and they both...froze.

"Condom, quick," she commanded.

"Jeans pocket," he growled.

He'd tossed them in the back.

"Jeez, okay," she grumbled just the same, regrouping before leaving him to make an awkward dive for the backseat.

Watching her move around in the rearview mirror, he couldn't take it. They'd almost fucked without a condom. But he wanted her so bad his teeth hurt. Knowing they needed to be safe, he crawled through the seats to join her.

"Feels like we're kids," she said.

He laughed, helping to find the second foil package.

Together, they ripped open the packet, getting him sheathed in a matter of seconds. "Slow down," he said.

"Too late, you started this, you finish it."

A big backseat was a bonus. Sitting back, his feet planted on the floorboards, he grinned as Anna draped her gorgeous, naked body over him again. This time she kissed him, full on ravaged his mouth with her tongue. He took every damn thrust. Kissing back, he grabbed her waist, bringing her up, over and onto his cock.

Sure, he was big. Anna fit him like a molten glove. He felt like a god as she began to slide down his length.

Heat penetrated the thin latex, lubricating her inner walls that were already slick. Pushing up with his hips, he groaned as she took him as far as she possibly could. Most of his shaft disappeared inside her, spreading her pussy lips, causing them to flutter, her vagina gripped him.

"Holy fuck, woman, this is good." Thrusting hard as she rocked against his hips, she took him real deep, real hard, fast and a little dirty. She kissed him and clawed, explosive like dynamite.

All she'd needed was a spark. He was proud as fuck for turning her into a firecracker. He knew she would be. But then his mascot wasn't just anyone. This was Anna and he couldn't get enough of her hot, tight pussy.

No way was this going to last one night, no way. They went at it with the naughty desperation of two teenagers. Not caring about anything but the feel of Anna, Kyran ran his hands over her, breasts, arms, shoulders, ass, everything he could reach and keep pumping.

Anna suddenly reared back, her muscles clenching around his cock. She was real close to coming, her movements erratic, searching for that elusive push. Joining her in that search, he slid his hand between their thighs, finding her clit.

As he pumped into her, he pressed the top of her sex, exerting pressure where she needed it without making her go numb. She froze. Her mouth open, her cries hoarse as she came. Her inner muscles massaged his cock with such force he jetted so hard he shouted to the ceiling.

She'd just drained him, again. "Fuck me," he growled as the last of her orgasm rippled over him.

"Believe I just did," she said against his chest, her luscious body draped over him like a warm blanket.

Hugging her tight, he didn't want to let go. Afraid she'd pull the age card as she'd done in the locker room, he grasped her hair just enough to bring her head up. Kissing her, he told her with his tongue that he wasn't letting go after tonight.

Didn't matter, he had the rest of the night to make tomorrow turn into another day.

"Anna, go out..."

Headlights broke the gray darkness of the backseat. Anna buried her head into the crook of his neck.

"What the hell?" Kyran kept her guarded and looked out the window.

Lights continued to bore into the Escalade, the darkened glass protecting them from the worst of it. Thinking a trucker had come into the rest stop, Kyran set Anna on the seat to open the window a crack.

The headlights finally dimmed, drew back, a minivan drove away.

"No way," he growled.

"What is it, a trucker?" Anna asked, sitting up to see the tail lights. "Is that the same van from the stadium?"

"Yeah, I think so," he admitted.

One thing he wouldn't do is lie to Anna. She deserved better.

"You knew that van," she said.

"Possibly, Brenda Jamison drives one."

"Who's that? An ex?" she asked, frostier this time.

He watched her search the back for her jeans and jersey. Damn, she was going to dive right back into her clothes. Couldn't blame her, he was feeling exposed too.

"Not at all, sugar," he said. "Brenda's the piranha."

"The reporter you were dodging earlier?"

"That'd be the one. She's obsessed with gossip, especially about me."

"Is she a danger to you, Kyran?" Anna sat up taller, ignoring the jersey in her hand.

Amazing, as beautiful as she was sitting there half naked, he recognized genuine concern on her face. "Don't think so. She's looking for a story."

"Honestly never heard of her before, she TV or newspaper?"

"Newspaper, but the press she writes for might be closing shop. Could be hoping to write stories that are picked up nationally or by a rag magazine for top dollar," he speculated. "Not sure, I'll call my agent, Alex Grant, tomorrow."

"Call him now," Anna suggested. "I'm curious to know why she'd go so far as to follow you. What if she knows where you live?"

Sensible Anna returned and he loved her for it. Okay, maybe not love yet. Too soon for the L word, but he was falling like a rock here.

Both of them got dressed and he put the used condom in a trash receptacle stashed behind the front passenger seat. Kyran preferred to be naked next to his woman. But it wouldn't be right, not now. He was pretty sure the van belonged to Brenda Jamison. He had to nip her in the bud before she gossiped about Anna. Rag magazines could taint him in any light they wanted. Mess with Anna, they'd face a cease and desist order, maybe a lawsuit.

Anna stayed quiet as they both got back into the front seat. She was right. He called his agent. Took all of five minutes to reach Alex and explain the situation.

"Ready to go?" Anna asked when he ended the call.

"Yeah, you okay?"

"Better than okay," she said. "Not many women like me can say they had sex with Kyran Black in the back of his Escalade." She was smiling, laughing like she couldn't believe they had. Right then, he was glad that he hadn't dated seriously for a while now. Not since he met Anna had he fucked anyone.

"There's more to come," he promised, laughing.

"God, I hope so," she teased.

"Nice, my bad girl's back."

Putting the SUV into gear, he edged out of the parking spot, turned the wheel and they were shooting toward the highway. The two rigs were still in their places at the opposite end of where they'd been parked. Dark save for orange fog lights along the

trailers and the base of the trucks, the drivers were likely sleeping before a long haul. When they were cruising down the road, Kyran reached over and took Anna's hand.

## Chapter Eight

Anna didn't say much when Kyran started driving again. She couldn't. She was so close to falling head over heels in love with him she feared she'd do something really stupid.

Like saying "I love you" while coming harder than she'd ever had in her life. Ever!

They'd fucked like a couple of teenagers in the backseat of his SUV. Nothing stopped them until that minivan interrupted them. He'd been about to say something, maybe ask for a date after tonight? She didn't know.

But she wanted to know! And damn it, she was worried. The reporter Kyran mentioned was tenacious enough to follow him. The Escalade's windows were darkened, hopefully protecting them from view. But it was possible they were seen having sex.

"Anna, stop it," he said, holding her hand.

"Stop what?" She squeezed his fingers.

"Thinking," he answered.

"Hard to do that when some piranha wants a piece of you," Anna argued.

"Brenda Jamison can't hurt me. She's small-time news. Don't worry."

"But she followed you!"

"She did. Alex is going to call in some favors, see what story she's been working on. He'll handle it."

"What if she exposes our affair?" That sounded tawdry and outdated and old, a little like she did right then.

"We're not having an affair."

"We certainly aren't dating," she pointed out, biting her lip. It sounded like she was fishing for a date.

"I'm about to pull over at the next rest top," he warned. "And show you why this isn't an affair. It's your birthday, let's enjoy it."

"Okay, but it's just for tonight. Tomorrow, in the light of day, you're going to wake up and see that I'm getting gray hair and my boobs are not perfect. I'll feel like a Mack Truck hit me. Be grateful that I leave quietly." Oh good, now she sounded like a fool, complaining about her age.

"Your boobs are fantastic," he told her. "I'd fuck them."

About to argue again, Anna caught a visual of Kyran Black's big, thick cock thrusting between her breasts. "Kyran!" she tried to shout, burying a smile.



"Hey now, don't you dare laugh," he warned, grinning. "Seriously, Anna, you're smokin', don't sell yourself short."

"Am not," she denied. At least, she didn't think she was.

"I'll prove it when we get home," Kyran decided, reaching to turn the radio up a notch. "So tell me about this coaching gig you've got."

"It's football. I love football."

"Yeah, I know that. Offense, defense, which is it?"

"Would you believe offensive?"

Kyran sat up straighter. "Ah, explains why you listened when we went for coffee."

"I listened because you needed someone to talk to," she admitted. "You'd signed as the backup quarterback for the Griffins when part of you wanted to find a team that needed you as their main guy."

"You remembered that?" he asked, genuinely surprised.

"Of course," she said. "Don't forget I'd just gotten hired as the mascot and was having coffee with my favorite QB in the game today. I came to admire you for having the guts to join a team that needed your talent instead of taking the glory for yourself."

"That and the Griffins stand a good chance of getting into the playoffs, maybe a ring this year," Kyran admitted. "I was sidelined at the top of my game for a busted knee, keeping me from taking the Sharks into the playoffs. They dropped out of contention while I took time out for rehab. When I came back, football and that team had moved on without me."

"You're still talented, Kyran. They were idiots for failing to see what you had to offer," Anna said, understanding. She remembered the injury that caused him to miss a season and a half. "Remember, you did come back and the Griffins are lucky to have you."

"After three surgeries, I did," he confessed. "My ACL, MCL and PCL were torn. The blow should have sidelined me for good." Anna shuddered, thinking of that fateful game. An opposing player, a mountain of a guy, had come in on him from his blind side, catching Kyran's knee and pretty much blowing it out. Game footage after revealed the extent, the horrible pop of his ligaments tearing.

"But it didn't," she said. "You did what you had to do and you still have a rocket arm. You orchestrated a touchdown drive tonight. You were amazing."

Kyran laughed. "You're sweet. Truth is I only played the last quarter. The touchdown was a result of our running back's efforts and a pass to Wayne Grady. Ricky won the game." He was being modest, that one pass was for 50 yards for a third-down conversion. Two completions later, the running back scored from the five-yard line.

"He is good." Ricky Weathers had the right stuff. But he was impulsive and needed direction. Kyran settled him down. "Kyran, you coached him through most of the game. Ricky likes to go for the big passes and yardage. Sometimes that's not the best course. He won because of you."

"Well thanks," he said, sounding a little shy all of a sudden.

Certain Kyran "The Rebel" Black would come back soon, she relaxed against the seat. With his prodding, she told him about her JV team. Unsure how long they'd been driving, she saw him ease the Escalade off the highway, toward Silver Springs, Maryland.

"You live in Maryland?" she asked.

"Yeah, didn't like my condo in Alexandria, too small," he said.

"Wow, I live in Baltimore. Maybe I should have driven so you wouldn't have to go back to the stadium tomorrow morning."

"Tomorrow morning is hours away, don't worry about it."

He downshifted, slowing at a yield sign and turning down a street that led to a gated community. Anna was surprised. She expected a monstrosity of a high rise. It was a neighborhood.

"Thought you lived in a condo," she commented.

"These are condos. They're single units."

"Gotcha," she said.

The condos were modified Cape Cods, each having a front and backyard, a driveway and a single-car garage. They looked homey, trendy and self-contained. Kyran drove the SUV to a gate, slipped a plastic card into a slot and waved to the security guard standing in the gatehouse. As soon as his card activated, the massive gate slid open, parting just enough for one vehicle to ease through.

"Nice," she said, glad for the protection.

The security guard recognized the Escalade and Kyran had rolled down his window enough for the guy to see him.

"Hey, Phil," he greeted the guard. "Keep an eye on things tonight. Might have a reporter try to get through, don't let anyone in claiming to be my guest."

"You got it, Mr. Black," Phil said. "Good game tonight, heard it on the radio."

"Thanks," Kyran said, driving on.

Anna started to worry again. This reporter was trouble, she sensed it.

"What kind of stories has Brenda Jamison printed about you, Kyran?"

A few lanes down, he turned right, slowing as he approached the third condo on the left. Easing into his drive, he punched a button and the garage door slid upward.

"Gossip, mostly," he answered when they were inside the surprisingly big garage, the door closing them in as he cut the engine.

"You said that before. I've read a lot of stories about you and your love life, why are hers different?"

"Because Brenda's vindictive," he admitted. "When I first signed with the Griffins she ruined a relationship I'd been in."

"You mean someone you were seeing before you moved here?"

"Yeah, it was Seville Davis."

"The supermodel, that Seville Davis, you mean, holy cow!" Anna squeaked, slapping her palm against her mouth. Was that her voice? She didn't squeak when she talked, until now.

"That'd be the one," Kyran said. "Don't worry. She's out of the picture."

"But...she's an underwear model!" Seville modeled lingerie. Her centerfolds sold thousands of thongs and beautiful satin bras and made men order the catalogues.

Anna wore nice, comfortable panties, bikini cut, but still panties. Not those fancy bits of lace and satin that cost a small fortune.

A little panicked wondering how she ended up going home with Kyran Black for a night of sex, Anna grabbed for the door. Escape was now her only thought.

"Anna, don't do that," Kyran said, his hand coming out of nowhere to catch her elbow and stop her.

"Just getting out," she remarked.

"You look like you're about to run for the nearest exit." Holding tight, he sat there in his SUV, waiting for her to make the next move.

"This is crazy, crazy! Do you hear me?" Refusing to cry all of a sudden, her hormones working overtime, she took a deep breath.

"A little, but it'll be okay, come on, don't be scared to follow this night through." His grip eased up a little.

"What did she do, Brenda, I mean? What did she do to ruin things between you and Seville Davis?" Anna wasn't sure why she asked. She still needed to know.

"Took pictures of me with another woman," Kyran said.

"In bed with another woman, you mean?"

"Hell no, I don't mess around like that when I'm dating someone." Sitting back some, he looked over at her, his honesty plain to see. "It was a girlfriend of Ricky's. She'd come to see him when he wasn't expecting her."

"He's the one who cheated on his girl," she guessed.

"Afraid so," he answered. "Look, honestly, I don't remember her name. She was in college and upset. Ricky asked me to take her to the airport."

"That's all?"

"Yep," Kyran insisted. "I drove her there, made sure she got something to eat, put her on a plane back home. Pictures of us together showed up in the papers the next day."

"Wait, I remember that. There were photos of you with a college co-ed in a few of those gossip magazines. The pictures were fuzzy. Headlines read that you were robbing the cradle." It had bothered her then because her ex-fiancé had taken up with a pretty grad student about that time.

"Only thing I did with that girl is give her a hug goodbye, which she initiated. I couldn't push her away, she was crying," Kyran commented.

"That's the picture I saw."

"So did Seville, who wasn't one to accept being second fiddle."

"I bet." Anna relaxed, believing Kyran didn't do anything other than help a friend of Ricky Weather's.

"Since then, Brenda Jamison has taken it upon herself to write false stories about my love life, cashing on in my rebel image."

"Let's hope your agent gets her to stop," Anna said, feeling him stare at her, his hand still on her elbow.

"You coming in or are we going to do it in the backseat again?"

She groaned. As much as she'd loved what they did on the way home, she couldn't repeat the performance. She was too old to contort herself into a pretzel like that.

"Come inside, let's get comfortable." Kyran got out of the Escalade, making a beeline for the passenger side. Anna didn't stand a chance of opening the door herself. Before she knew it he had the door open, her seatbelt released.

The gentleman in him guided her to the door and right on inside. The condo was decorated with surprising good taste. While the colors were beige, neutral and masculine, the floor was warm with thick brown carpeting in the hall and sunken great room.

"Take a look around. I'm going to put this in the laundry," he said, showing his gym bag and going off toward the kitchen. They'd left her things in the back of the Escalade with the Griffin costume. She did have her purse and she set it on a side table near the door leading to the garage.

The great room was huge. The first thing she saw was a mahogany fireplace. Complete with a massive leather sofa, recliner and entertainment center, it was perfect for Kyran. From where she stood, it looked like he had every video game system there was, along with a fancy high-definition DVD player and a huge flat-screen television.

Off to the right was a fully stocked bar. Made of the same rich mahogany of the entertainment center and fireplace, the bar was polished. Three wood and brass bar chairs sat in the front and shelves of glasses were in the back. A mirror resided between the shelves, reflecting her image back at her.

Drawn forward, she stopped in the middle of the room. Oh god, she was a mess! Her hair was a riot of curls, her skin reddened in some places from what they'd done already. The football jersey was half on, half off her shoulders and her jeans were undone. She'd forgotten to button her jeans. Where her panties were, she had no idea.

Through the mirror she saw Kyran return, his eyes on her.

"I need to get my hair straightened," she decided, turning away from her reflection.

"Why, it's gorgeous?"

"It's all frizzy," she said.

"Curly, not frizzy," he amended.

"You just want to get into my pants again."

"Actually, I intend to get you out of your pants again." Laughing softly, he edged her farther into the great room.

Feeling a little awkward, Anna scrubbed her hands over her upper arms. "Can I use your bathroom?"

"Course, follow me," he said.

She did, trailing after him down a short hall to a loft. The master bedroom sat high above the great room. Guarded by a four-foot wall and wooden staircase, the bedroom was big, much like Kyran. He was six foot six, he needed the space. An oak vaulted ceiling complemented the four poster king-sized bed. The thick mattress rested on a fat box spring. The bed was so big it needed steps to climb up into it. Steps!

"That's one big bed," she said, flushing.

"I'm not a small man."

"Nope, you're not," she agreed.

He was tall, muscled and hung. How his cock fit inside her was a miracle she'd think about in the morning. She'd be lucky to walk normally, she was certain.

"Relax, bathroom's right through there," he said, pointing to a door. "Take your time. If you need something, you'll see the closet to the right of the bathroom."

"Thanks."

Really needing to go, she almost ran to the doorway. As he'd said, she passed the closet on the way to the bathroom beyond. Like everything else in his home, the bath was breathtaking. Marbled floors enhanced the giant tiled tub that looked like it could hold three of Kyran. Next to the tub, a see-through glass shower had more faucets and showerheads than any one person needed, but they looked divine. The primary one looked to be eight inches wide.

Eight inches, much like Kyran. She was way out of her depth, but there was no turning back. They'd already had sex twice. Not to mention that he'd made her orgasm three times before that. She could take the rest of the night and leave in the morning as planned.

Refusing to look at herself in the mirror yet, Anna used the toilet, finding a box of wet bath tissues nearby. She cleaned herself up, flushed and went to the sink. Washing her hands, she scrubbed, going so far as to scrub her arms and wet her face. It felt so good, she scrubbed again.

"Anna, you okay in there?" Kyran called out, knocking.

"Yes, I'm fine." She found a hand towel, dried off and chucked it into a hamper.

"Open the door." He tried to open it, but she'd locked it.

Going to the door, she flipped the lock. "It's your place, come on in."

"Sure you're okay?" Not surprisingly, he came up real close, bridging her personal space, and she let him.

She didn't feel threatened when he was close. She liked it, welcomed his strength and his youth. Some parts of her were sore, she could admit that. But she didn't want him to know. She wanted to meet him halfway and give a lot back.

"I'm okay," she said, letting him take her face into his palms.

Big and rough, his palms were a little scratchy, his touch unforgettable. Caressing his thumbs along her jaw, he brought her up to her toes, kissing her softly. Unlike their last kiss, he didn't storm her defenses. He simply kissed her, lips to lips, tongue to tongue when she opened her mouth, taking him in. The mirror, his fame, her looks, all of it faded behind the rightness of this moment, of this kiss.

Her knees literally felt weak, her toes curled and yet he still kissed her, making it a seduction. It was the sweetest thing he'd done for her so far.

Finally, he lifted his head, smiling down at her. "Hey there, beautiful," he said, staring into her eyes, seeing her flaws. He had to see them.

"I'm not beautiful."

"We disagree on that." Stepping back, he dropped his hands to her shoulders. "And it's the last time you'll degrade yourself in front of me."

"Just being honest, Kyran. Don't you see the lines here?" she asked, pointing to the marks near her mouth, the ones by her eyes.

"I see you, Anna." His fingers tightened, reassuring her, his soft smile unwavering, confident. Her heart tripped violently in her chest, her womb clenching at his nearness. Knowing he was warm, that he was there, was enough to ease her nerves for a while.

"Want something to drink or eat, Anna? I'm kind of hungry."

Actually, she was starved. "I could eat."

"Well all right then. Let's go." Kyran took her hand, tugging her with him.

Soon enough they were downstairs in the kitchen. Steel appliances greeted them, his kitchen something a chef would envy. "Wow, this is a great kitchen."

"I like to cook when I can," he told her.

"Really, me too," she said.

"Let's see what we've got in the fridge," he suggested.

Kyran opened the double doors. The shelves were stuffed with groceries. "Know what, I've got leftover fried chicken that I made yesterday for lunch. How about I warm that up? Might be some frozen French fries in the freezer."

"Chicken would be great. Don't bother with the fries." Falling a little in love with him over his ability to cook her single most favorite food, which he couldn't even know about, she offered to help.

Together, they pulled out the plastic container of chicken, lined a tray with foil and stuck it in one of the side-by-side ovens. He set the oven to warm the chicken slowly, to prevent it from drying out.

"Want a drink while we wait?" he offered.

"Sure." More at ease, she followed him to the living area where the bar was. "If you've got soda, that'd be fine."

"Coming right up," Kyran said.

Behind the bar, he pulled down two big glasses, threw in some ice from a freezer behind the bar and then filled the glasses from a soda fountain. "I don't drink during the season. Caffeine's my primary vice if I'm not doing a workout or at practice."

"Wise move," she commented. "I tell my students not to drink soda or heavily caffeinated energy drinks if they're going to be practicing."

"Here you are, ladies first, want a cherry?"

"Yes, please." Joining him at the bar, she climbed onto one of the big brass, wooden and cushioned bar chairs. King chairs, she'd heard them called before.

He looked so good to her, real, not some athletic stud with piranhas chasing him. Not wanting to think about that, she waited while he plopped two cherries into their glasses.

"Cherry soda," he offered, pushing her glass across the bar like a bartender.

"Didn't you used to be a bartender?"

"Yeah, I'd had a scholarship for Louisiana University, but I liked working when I could. Job kept me focused on the big picture, not just football. My two best friends in college, Nick and Phalen, used to hang out most of the time." He'd also earned a degree before turning pro, something she admired. He was confident, educated and fit, making him seem older than he was.

She liked him a lot. And she was falling more in love by the second. On dangerous ground, she grabbed up her drink, taking a long sip before touching the cold glass to her cheek. Realizing he watched her, she'd given something away that she probably shouldn't have. Nervously, she took the long-stemmed cherry from the glass and stuck it in her mouth to distract him.

His eyes narrowed, zooming in on the cherry. She didn't devour it, she savored it, sucking the juice, then nipping at it slowly 'til it was gone. Remembering a little trick she'd learned when she was younger, she knotted the stem with her tongue and teeth. Revealing the result, she laughed harder when his glass shook, soda sloshing all over the bar.

"Do that for me now," he suddenly demanded, his voice Southern and deep and sexy. Just like that, she was turned-on, wet and soaking her jeans.

"Do what?" Like she didn't know what he meant, she tossed the knotted cherry stem to the bar.

"Use that mouth on my cock," he amended.

"Chicken's in the oven."

"It'll wait." He came around the bar, not stopping 'til he was standing in front of her.

"Kyran, what are you doing?"

"Waiting for you to get on your knees," he told her, unbuttoning his tented fly.

Before the last button was undone, Anna slid off the bar chair, going to her knees. Glad the floor was padded with thick, lush carpet, she reached up and parted his fly.

They were both fully clothed, yet she found it sexy. Feeling naughty and loving it, she pushed his jeans to his hips. His cock fell out, slapping her chin. He was already wet with pre-cum at the tip. Like the cherry, she wanted to savor him.

Kyran shifted his feet just wide enough to keep his thighs braced, his jeans in place where she'd put them. "Work me out, sugar."

There was an edge of command to his voice. She found she liked it, and let him place his hands behind her head. Where she might have felt vulnerable with anyone else, she knew this was safe. And his hands were gentle, his fingers massaging her skull.

Anna leaned in, touching her tongue to the drop of salty fluid. Swallowing, she licked again. Taking in the thickened ridge of his glans, she savored him like an ice cream cone. His whole body stiffened, his hips pushing toward her. His hands combed her hair and he hummed in pleasure. He smelled male, aroused, tasted like salt, a little cum and clean skin. He must have washed himself while she'd been in the bathroom upstairs.

Touched that he'd do that, she licked again, swirling around the satin smooth, plum-shaped head, licking slow and easy, hopefully driving him wild.

"Yeah, that's good," he murmured, tightening his fingers fractionally. "Open up, take me deeper." His left hand dropped to her jaw, cupping her cheek as his thumb pressed into her bottom lip. "As much as you can take, take it."

"You're so beautiful here, Kyran," she praised him, kissed his cock. Licking again, she lingered where she knew it would feel best. Parting her lips with the push of his thumb, she took the head into her mouth.

Sucking the helmet, she put her tongue to work. Like she did with the cherry, she licked and sucked, repeating it and taking him deeper with his urging. His jeans were down to his thighs, his legs spread to keep them in place. Her right hand circled his cock, holding it steady so she could enjoy him with her mouth. Ringing his girth with her fingers, she tightened and twisted as much as she could, bobbing her head and gently scratching his testicles with her other hand.

Careful not to hurt him, she let him push and pull her head, his hips joining the rhythm they'd set. In and out, deeper each time, she paused, a little afraid to gag. She'd never taken a man as big as Kyran in her mouth, much less down her throat.

"Fuck, Anna," he groaned. "Don't do anything you're not good with, you get me?"



And she did. With a little help from his hands, she relaxed her jaw, breathing deep through the nose, taking him deeper than she'd ever tried before. His cock filled her mouth, she felt like a love goddess.

"Look at me, Anna." Lifting her eyes, she saw that he'd bowed his head, his gaze intent on his wet cock sliding in and out of her mouth. She took and took, gave and gave, sucked, licked, took some more. Silken and wet and hard as steel, he was delicious.

She wanted him so badly right then she creamed her jeans. Like he knew what she wanted, he caught her by the shoulders, lifted her up and jerked her pants to her feet.

Without a word, he turned her about, then reached into his pocket. "Bend over that chair. Hold on," he told her, his voice so hoarse she barely heard.

She obeyed at the sound of foil being torn open. The empty package dropped to the floor. Half a second later, her ass in the air as she bent there waiting, his cock was covered and he came up behind her, real close. At last he was pushing inside her, feeling thick, amazingly good.

Her labia flexed, her clit pulsed. Kyran thrust another inch, going slow when she'd have thought he would push hard. The slowness made her start to come as inch by incredible inch he breached her vaginal walls, splitting her, yet fitting exactly right, exactly the way she needed him. Feminine juices sluiced out of her, covering his cock and easing the smooth, sure glide of his penetration.

"Kyran, hmm, god, I'm coming," she cried out. Her muscles clenched, the tension deep in her center pulling taut, tighter, higher, rippling from her belly outward and up to her heart.

"It's okay, come for me." He stilled, seated as far as she could take.

Anna felt stretched, feminine and full with Kyran's cock, the ache and rebuilding tension an inescapable pleasure that captivated her. Feeling raw and sexy, she pushed back into him, squeezing her muscles against his slow, deliberate withdraw, bracing her thighs for his solid thrust back inside. Kyran's hands fell to her waist, their bodies were clothed except for where they were joined, their jeans scraped, their flesh slapped.

It was noisy, wet and so fucking wonderful she thought she'd fly apart. "Damn it, you're like a liquid inferno, hot, tight as a fucking glove and so wet. I can feel it against my balls, down deep," he murmured, but she understood.

Each thrust and withdrawal became slower, purposeful. He wanted her to feel everything he had and he had quite a lot for her to take. She loved being taken as if she mattered to him. That she wasn't just an easy fuck.

"Ohmigod," she cried out, closing in on another orgasm.

Her whole being shook with the sudden force of his thrusts and she gave it right back. She wasn't afraid to take some of the pleasure, to take it all. Driving her toward the end, he curved his hand around her middle, tucking his hand between their joined bodies.

There, he brushed his thumb against her clit, scraping the knot with his blunt nail on each deep thrust. The sensations grabbed hard inside her pussy, her muscles clenching, grasping, desperate to let go. Soaring higher, she crested. Her orgasm was so powerful her legs gave out, but Kyran caught her before she embarrassed herself.

He grunted low in his throat, making certain she was okay, then took her right back to the stratosphere.

"Hell yeah, coming," he shouted, sounding like a grizzly bear. His hips surged, the pulsing of his cock telling her he was almost done. For one crazy moment she wondered what it would be like to feel his hot ejaculate filling her. She knew they couldn't do that, but maybe someday...maybe. If they stayed together beyond tonight, maybe they would fuck without a condom.

As suddenly as the sex began, they slowed. Kyran's arms came around her, how, she didn't know. He moved, pulling out to wrap something in a bar napkin and toss it in the trash. He'd removed his condom. She was lifted and turned and then her head was on his big shoulder. He held her like that, his muscled arms trembling, his lungs pumping every bit as hard as hers.

"Go to dinner with me tomorrow night," he said against her ear and she trembled again, this time because she wanted tomorrow night too.

"I want that more than you know," she whispered.

"Don't end this in the morning." Still holding her, he carried her to the huge lounge chair, sitting down and taking her with him. It couldn't have been easy for him, she wasn't exactly tiny. But he didn't complain and she liked being pampered.

"Kyran, you're going to break my heart if I'm not careful," she admitted. That scared her the most, more than her age and his youth.

"I'll do my best not to, love," he said, kissing her temple. Sweet, he was so good to her.

He probably meant it. But part of her feared that come morning he was going to see her, flaws and all.

Wait. He'd said love, not sugar. Just like that, she fell hook, line and sinker.

"Oh god," she said. "You're everything a woman could want. I do want you, Kyran Black. But it's not like you're some Joe Schmo."

"Think we covered this already," he replied. "Go on a date with me. Let's see where we end up."

She'd end up with a broken heart. To him, she raised her head, finding him utterly gorgeous. "More than likely, we'll end up in bed again."

"Damn right," he promised. "Let me spend the rest of the night making love to you. If you're not convinced that I'm your guy by morning, I won't pressure you."

"You'd walk away?"

"Didn't say that," he answered. "I'm a healthy guy, Anna. But going at a woman three times within two hours? That doesn't happen often, not really. That says something."

"You're good at sex, Kyran. It's little wonder as to how we've done this much already."

"No, we're good together." Tucking his hand behind her nape, he pulled her close, kissed her lips softly. The barest touch sent shivers of delight to her toes, a monarch taking flight in her belly.

"If you get bored, and you might, you'll leave."

"Stop right there, Anna James." Gently, he tugged her down, letting her rest against his broad, hard-bodied chest. "I'm not going anywhere. I'll stay until you decide differently."

His gentleness was her undoing and she gave in to being held, the simplicity of it exactly what she needed after what they'd just done. Her tummy chose that moment to growl, making her giggle. It roared again, so loudly she knew he heard it.

"Guess I should feed my woman," he laughed softly, helping her up to lead her back to the bar. "Sit at the bar, drink your soda. I'll be right back."

A man of his word, he buttoned his jeans part way and walked to the kitchen. At the bar, Anna rearranged her clothes. Staring into the mirror, she saw that Kyran had somehow managed to comb her hair into long, flowing curls. No longer frizzy to her estimation, it was pretty, the strawberry blonde color shining.

Jeez, she was glowing. No way, forty-year-old women didn't glow. That was sweat.

He came up behind her, placing a platter of chicken, paper plates and napkins on the bar. "Here, let me help," she offered, taking the plates. She set two places. "You prefer white or dark meat?"

"Breast man, myself," he answered, climbing onto a bar chair, a wicked grin on his face. He grabbed up his soda, took a long drink and swallowed. Even that was so sexy her womb did the crazy little flip-flop of a mini-orgasm.

Jeez, she was becoming a sex queen. And she loved it, for the moment. "Dark meat here, it's juicier," she said.

Anna placed chicken on their plates, certain to give him a breast and a leg for her.

One nibble and she groaned. "Oh god, Kyran, this is good."

"You're hungry. It's fried chicken, real easy."

"Umm, no, there's something different in your batter," she said, loving the slight bite of spices.

"It's Southern with a hint of dill, family recipe," he shared.

"You have a big family?" she asked after swallowing a bite.

He took a huge bite of meat, but his other hand went to his right knee. "Two brothers and a sister, she's the youngest," he answered. "Mom and Dad are both fine, living down in Florida after Katrina. What about you?"

"My parents are great, very supportive. Coincidentally, they just retired in Naples. My brother and sister work in Maryland. Your family is Cajun?" He had a Southern accent, although it wasn't as thick as she'd expect for a true Cajun.

"Not born and reared, no. Originally from South Carolina 'til my dad got a job managing a hotel in the French Quarter. We moved to New Orleans when I was thirteen." Kyran's tone dropped, deliberately saying New Orleans in that sexy way Dennis Quaid had in the movie *The Big Easy*. He was trying to tease, but Anna spied the way he massaged his knee.

"Kyran, you okay?" She stopped eating, bending toward him.

"A little sore, comes with the territory," he admitted.

"Maybe we should take it easy for a bit? Give us both a chance to rest?" she suggested.

"Not real sure I can keep my hands off you that long." He smiled, taking another bite. "Are you feeling all right?"

She shifted, unable to hide a slight wince. She was sore. He had to see her reaction.

"I'll be fine."

"Anna, don't hide from me."

"Truth?"

"Only," he replied.

"I'm thinking I'm as sore as your knee is," she answered. "Tell you anything?"

"Sure does, we both need a soak in the whirlpool bath."

Blushing, but loving the idea, Anna picked up her drumstick. "If you mean the bathtub upstairs, that's kick ass."

"You're going to love it, just watch the language. Virgin ears and all that," he teased, finishing up his first piece of chicken only to grab another. He gave it to her, then he took a thigh and set it on his plate.

"Tonight proves neither of us are virgins." She grinned, accepting another chicken leg.

"It's a good thing 'cause I plan to get you into bed real soon."

"Bath first?"

"Without a doubt, love," he promised, giving her a playful wink.

Heart leaping like a jackrabbit, Anna finished up the last of her chicken. When they were both finished and satisfied, they each drained their glasses. Neither one said anything about the dishes as Kyran led her back up to his loft and bathroom.

He turned on the twin faucets in the bathroom. Water gushed into the tub. He shucked his jeans. Anna followed. Her jersey was removed with a little help from her

star QB. Next thing she knew, he brought her real close and kissed her real long and slow.

Kyran stepped back, searched his vanity. "What are you doing?" she asked.

"Looking for a spare toothbrush," he said.

A little self-conscious then, she took his gift and brushed her teeth. He moved in beside her and did the same. It was so nice and easy, something Anna could get used too.

More and more inclined to stay for as long as Kyran wanted, she joined him in the tub. It was heaven, sublime, exactly what her muscles needed after the workout they'd done.

Neither said much as they eased down into the water, they didn't need to. They'd found common ground by sharing a likeness for cooking, football and even aches and pains. He didn't seem thirty anymore, he seemed like a man who'd been blitzed hard and needed to relax tired muscles.

## Chapter Nine

Anna loved Kyran's bathtub. It was simply awesome and big enough that they could both recline.

Southern gentleman that he was, he placed himself behind her back to give her a muscled cushion, doing nothing more than holding her. *He must really need the massaging heat of the whirlpool.* She would have felt guilty if she weren't sore herself. What they'd done so far was a joint effort and more was yet to come.

The hot water did wonders for her soreness. But while the water was great, it wasn't wise to hang out in a hot tub longer than fifteen or twenty minutes. When they were a little pruned, he turned off the jets, gave her some soap and they scrubbed themselves all clean. Once they were rinsed off, he helped her out.

A towel warming rack sat next to the tub. "Feel this, Anna," he said, taking one towel to wrap around her.

Insulated warmth cuddled her like a blanket, the towel so big she felt petite. Kyran grabbed the hems, parted them and stepped in, wrapping them inside the same huge towel to dry them both. Between his heat and the towel, her body was all toasty and safe.

Amazed that he could be so kind, she took initiative and kissed him soundly. A few seconds later, he groaned, drawing back. "Bedtime, you game for that?"

"Yes," she said.

Still wrapped together, he backed her slowly out of the bathroom into the master bedroom. Anna was finally going to check out that bed!

"Climb on in, I'll be right there," he promised, pushing her toward the bed but keeping the towel.

Naked, Anna turned down the dark green duvet and soft burgundy sheets, climbing up and into the king-sized bed. "This is like a throne," she called out to him, hearing him rummaging in the bathroom.

"You like it?" Returning in all his naked glory, a small box in hand, she was shocked to see he was semi-hard already.

"Let's see. Kyran Black, a huge bed, soft sheets, no feathers, yeah, I like it."

"Ah, not into feather beds?" he asked, joining her on the bed without using the steps leading up to it.

"No, they make me itch and they poke at inappropriate times like little needles."

"True, but it's a bitch to get sheets that fit this bed right. The damn corners like to spring off if I don't sleep well."

"Fucking will do that too," she teased, winking at him.

"Make no mistake, I love fucking you. I intend to many times, all kinds of ways," he said, resting against the headboard. "But right now, Anna James, I'd like to make love to you."

They were both mature adults who recognized the difference between lovemaking and fucking. She absolutely loved what they'd done so far, heck yes, she did. But this time she wanted him to make love to her. If he did, there was no way she'd be able to see tonight as a one-night stand.

All that had happened tonight was real. Maybe it was safe to let go and believe there'd be a tomorrow night, and a day after that. She could so fall in love with him. Fact was she was more than halfway there. She'd gone off the deep end.

She hoped he'd be there to keep her safe for a long time to come, despite the quickness of their relationship.

"Yes, I would like that," she agreed, grinning.

"Then come here," he lured, crooking his finger at her.

Anna gave him her hand. He tightened his fingers, bringing her up against him. Leaning back as he was, he looked so comfortable and relaxed. He pulled her in, kissed her softly. He kept kissing her, seducing her mouth, just her mouth.

His hands framed her face. His fingers caressed, his thumbs swept her jaw. Taking his time, he peppered kisses over her face, down her chin, finding the sensitive spot on her neck between her pulse and collarbone. Dragging her until she straddled his hips, he kept her right there, his big erection fitting between her pussy lips but not breaching her.

Welcoming the change, Anna sighed, leaned in and kissed him right back. Clever hands caressed her, sweeping over her back, rib cage, never rushing a thing. This was making love. A melding of mind and body in the way they began to move and rock with each other, their bodies finding an ancient rhythm while they kissed and touched. She touched him, he touched her.

Kyran was all hard, sculpted muscle, soft skin and slightly hairy legs and arms. His shoulder-length hair tangled with hers, but they didn't stop. He smelled like soap and bathwater, tasted like spearmint toothpaste.

They continued kissing. Touched in a way she'd never shared with another man. She felt alive, feminine, relaxed yet aroused. Her pussy was dripping wet with the waiting, but she made no move to take him inside. He knew. Her labia rubbed his veined shaft, bare at the moment.

How she wanted to take his big cock without a condom! She could gobble it right up he was that beautiful to her. She already had with her mouth, had felt powerful bringing him close to climax. The thought of taking him into her pussy, of feeling all that satiny steel hardness was enough to make a grown woman climax. She almost did.

Kyran shifted her to his side, draping her in such a way that her left leg remained over his hips, opening her. He surprised her then. He didn't look away from her face or rush to finger her. His green eyes were intense, focused on her pleasure. With practiced skill, his hand captured her left breast, the other played with the right.

His fingers scissoring, he played with her tight, erect nipples. Closing his thumb and index finger on one sensitive nub, he pulled gently, pushed, caressed. She got lost in the sensations, as one by one, he tore down her fears about her age and broken hearts.

Granted they didn't know each other all that well, but they'd felt a connection the first time they'd met at tryouts. She'd resisted, but ultimately went out with him. Why else would they have talked for hours in that coffee shop, with Kyran paying the barista to keep the place open just for them. They'd felt right together, odd though it seemed. She'd been scared because it was so easy being with him. She'd been herself, honest, loved the motorcycle, enjoyed hearing him talk as he'd enjoyed listening to her.

His hand descended to her pussy, silencing thoughts of what happened before tonight. They had now and she was taking it.

Wanting him, she scooted her leg up more, exposing herself. Long, thick fingers pressed into her tight hole, his thumb finding her clit. Kyran rubbed slowly, seeming to know she needed him to be careful. He was so gentle her hips arched in search of an elusive orgasm that hovered so close, she almost screamed for it.

"Touch me, Anna, please," he whispered, the first time he said please. He could be dominant. She liked when he was. At the moment, they were sharing, equals in the pursuit of pleasure.

Not wanting to deny him anything, Anna ran her palms over his biceps, magnificent abs and pecs. Knowing he needed more, she brushed her hand over his hips to his cock. Loving his size, she wrapped his glans with her hand.

Slowly she caressed, focusing on the head, where he liked it around the rim. He hummed, pushing his hips up at her. His hand between her legs delved farther, his fingers thrusting in and out of her vagina. Pushing in farther, he crooked his middle finger in just the right way, finding her G-spot.

Anna gushed immediately, her orgasm so deep and powerful, it flowed in waves of sweet juices. Crying softly because she could barely move, she was vaulted into another softer climax.

She wanted to do something for him in return. She shifted to try to go down on him, but he caught her up against him.

"Not this time, Anna," he said.

Kyran reached across to where he'd placed the box he'd taken from the bathroom. A full supply of condoms for a night of serious lovemaking, she saw. He took one out, opened the package and handed the thin latex to her. With a little help, she sheathed him.



Once they were protected, he swept her to lie beneath him on the mattress, to take her in the most basic, simplest way. Parting her thighs and bending her knees, she placed her feet flat to the bed. His cock probed her entrance, his hips flexed. She arched to meet him, taking him slowly at first until he'd penetrated as far as he could.

"God yes!" he groaned harshly. "Want to stay just like this, Anna, just like this." His whole body shook, his arms on either side of her on the mattress trembled. Like all the times they'd had sex, his cock filled her to overflowing, stretching her labia and pussy as she gloved his girth.

He didn't stay still for long. As slowly as he'd filled her, he withdrew to the tip, slid back in, his eyes hooded, his muscles flexing. Repeating the sure but gentle surge, he made her heart pound, his lovemaking bringing her near to tears. Amazing, simply amazing, she thought, felt, knew as he rocked into her again.

Together they found their rhythm, keeping their eyes on each other, following instinct. Every push of his pelvis and drag of his cock in and out of her caught her clit, giving her exactly what she needed. Orgasm rushed deep within the well of her body, flooding him, flooding her thighs. Kyran's hands caught hers and he placed them high above her head.

"Keep them there," he told her, tucking them into the cushiony pillow.

He rose up slightly so that only their sexes were touching, joined. He glanced down, she did too. It was incredibly erotic to see his cock piercing her center, his balls resting against her ass.

"Would you look at that?" he murmured. "We fit."

"You're crazy, Kyran," she teased. "And if you don't move, I'm going to hurt you."

"When a lady asks, a man delivers," he agreed, mimicking the slow pace once again.

There was some slight soreness from what they'd done before. Anna didn't mind, it made her feel like she'd had sex four times, which they had. Aware that they were beyond sex now, she waited for him to nod at her arms. She could bring them down.

Freed, she placed her hands about his neck, bringing him down to her. Kyran thrust again, harder this time, harder still. Wanting it, she lifted her legs, wrapping them tight about his hips. The angle of penetration deepened. There she crested, soaring in deep tension-releasing waves of indescribable pleasure.

His hips jerked, his thrusts urgent, driving him toward climax. She lost count of how many times she cried out, how many times he grunted and groaned. But he kept thrusting, drawing her back to a soft orgasm when he shouted. His groans filled her with satisfaction while he came, his cock pulsing with the force of it.

Kyran collapsed on top of her, heavy yet feeling perfect. Still holding him, she combed her hands through his hair then wiped the sweat from his shoulders.

That was when she saw the bruises on his shoulder. Bruises! "Kyran, you're injured."

"I'm not," he muttered into her shoulder.

"You have bruises, right here." She tapped the small crescent shapes with her fingertips, realizing exactly how they were made.

They were the same shape as her nails.

"Oh my god, did I do that to you?" she demanded, surprised.

"You're the only lover I've had for months, yeah," he answered.

He pulled out. She almost cried but didn't stop him. After he'd deposited the condom in the trashcan by the bed, he looked at her, a smile on his face.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"Don't be. I'm fine." Kyran shifted to lie beside her, taking her back into his arms. "Anna, I've had the best sex of my life with you tonight. A few bruises and scratches are a fine price to pay."

"Scratches?" she gasped. She'd scratched him? When? Checking his body, she found small red marks on his rib cage. "Jeez, I don't even remember doing that."

"Think they're a result of backseat fucking. Now come here, rest." Bringing her head to his chest, he brushed her hair with his fingers, spreading it over him.

"If I get too comfortable, I'll fall asleep."

"It's okay, fall," he said, kissing the top of her head. "I'm not going anywhere." His hand kept brushing, his steady heartbeat lulling her to eyes to close.

"Kyran, I'll go on a date with you," she murmured as sleep overcame her.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kyran woke to pale light breaking the darkness of his bedroom.

Aware of the beautiful woman sleeping quietly beside him, he shifted to look down at her. He'd had her five times in one night. Reality was that didn't happen often to any man his age. He might be thirty, but right then his body felt fifty, his knee was aching.

Apparently pain didn't affect his dick. His boner was ready to go, pre-cum wetting the head. All he had to do was reach over for the condoms, wake her and take her. Hell, he was close to being in love with her. That fast, she had him wrapped around her little pinkie. She didn't even know it.

The last time they'd made love, he awakened to her hot mouth on his cock. She'd gone under the covers, taken control. She'd worked him good with that sweet, sweet mouth, almost letting him come. He'd brought her out from the covers, put on a condom, then let her climb on top and take him for a long, slow ride instead.

She was exactly what he'd thought she would be, perfect for him.

He didn't want to wake her too soon, but had promised breakfast in bed. That he could do, as much as his rebellious cock wanted otherwise.

Carefully, he shifted out from under Anna and got out of bed. Replacing the covers over her, he treaded to the bathroom. A quick splash of cold water on his face helped some. He brushed his teeth and went back to semi-hard.

His woman was still asleep on his bed. He could easily climb right back in. But she had to be sore. He was a little raw himself. Yeah, he needed a break. He'd look for some ibuprofen for Anna when she woke up.

Cleaned up, he headed for the closet and dragged on a clean pair of jeans. In his room he saw Anna hadn't moved. A quiet snore from the bed made him smile. He'd worn out his school teacher.

In the kitchen, he felt twinges of soreness in his knee. Went with the territory, he'd told Anna last night. He was glad he'd overcome an injury that could have sidelined his career, but he wasn't getting younger. He had bruises and aches in places that had nothing to do with sex. He had a season left in his contract with the Griffins. More likely it'd be his last as a player. Plans were in the works for him to stay on with the team as a quarterback coach.

He wanted to share that with Anna. He didn't know if it was too soon to talk about that kind of future, but he knew he wanted one with her.

Kyran decided on egg omelets with cheese, bacon and whole wheat toast for breakfast. He'd chucked his cell phone on the counter when they came home last night and picked it up to check messages.

Alex Grant called eight times in the last hour. Getting out what he needed for breakfast, he listened to the calls.

"Kyran, call me. It's about Brenda Jamison," Alex said.

Next call worried him. "Kyran, seriously, she's got photos. You need to call me."

He punched speed dial. "Alex, hey, got your messages, 'sup?"

"Don't 'sup me, my man," his agent and one of his best friends said. "Don't know what you've got going with a teacher, Kyran. You need to cool your jets. She's a cougar, for god's sake."

"A cougar?" he repeated, growling it. "Watch it, Alex. Whatever Brenda has on me, I can handle. If it's on Anna, I want it canned, erased, removed, whatever. Make it happen. Anna's not a cougar, she's the team mascot. Won't let this hurt her job, you get me?"

"You know I'll do my best," Alex said. "Something's already hit the papers."

"Jamison works fast."

"You might want to check the morning paper, claims a verifiable source at Griffins Nest Stadium has seen you and your latest fling together several times. I'm already doing what I can to get the *Alexandria Journal* to recant their story on 'The Cougar' and 'The Rebel'."

"The *Journal*?" Kyran stopped breakfast prep and paid attention for real. "Brenda works for *Sentinel Press*."

"*Journal* bought out the *Sentinel* a few weeks ago. *Sentinel* is going all digital, online only. *Journal* is gradually changing its format to gain readership. Get your paper, then call me. Better yet, come down to my office by noon today. We've work to do."

"I'll do my best," he said, ending the call.

"Kyran, what's that you said about a cougar?" Anna asked behind him.

"Hey, sugar," he greeted, tossing the phone aside and going after her. Her face paled, her eyes narrowing.

"Did I do something wrong?"

"Course not, why aren't you sleeping?" Noticing she wore a shirt from his closet, and nothing else, he thought she looked fantastic.

Her wild, wavy hair was the result of all-night fucking. The skin beneath her eyes a little dark from the late night. Touching his finger to her chin, he tilted her head back.

"I was hungry," she said. "Thought I heard you talking to someone, so I came to see what was up or if you needed help with breakfast."

"How can I bring you breakfast in bed if you're in the kitchen?" he asked.

"You're sweet to make breakfast for me. Eating it here is fine," she insisted. "Can I help?"

"Only if you want," he agreed.

"Sure." She went in search of a skillet and plopped it on the gas burner.

Anna helped him gather up ingredients for the eggs. He scrambled them up for the omelet. Getting used to having her near, he wanted to think about anything except Alex's call. He wasn't ready to deal with Brenda's gossip. But he couldn't lie to Anna. If he did, he'd hurt her.

"So what's the deal with the cougar? Isn't there an expansion team with that name?"

"In Nevada, but that's not it, Anna. Alex called. Said something about Brenda running a story that showed up in the *Journal*," he admitted.

"You mean about us?"

"Believe so." He nodded, turning his attention on food. "We'll check the paper after we eat. I have a meeting with Alex at noon."

"Kyran, maybe I should call a cab. I can take it straight home, shower, change and go to team practice."

"Not happening."

"Be reasonable," she insisted. The stovetop was still off. She faced him, arms crossed over his button-down shirt.

"I am being reasonable. I'm driving you," he stated. There was no way he'd let her take a cab.

"Think about it. By the time breakfast is done, we'll be lucky to go to Alexandria, get my car and both of us reach our respective places by noon."

Kyran didn't like it. "Tell you what. Let me at least drive you home to change. Then I'll take you to your practice. From there, I'll call Alex and rearrange our meeting for a little later."

"But my car is at the stadium."

"I could have someone tow it to your high school."

Anna smiled. "That just might work."

"Course it would," he agreed. "Now that that's settled, come here, beautiful."

Catching her up against him, he kissed her good morning. She'd brushed her teeth. She was fresh and sweet.

She drew back. "Was the cougar thing in reference to me?"

"Um, yeah," he said.

Anna arched her brow. "Me? A cougar?" she laughed. "I did scratch you, didn't I?"

"You can scratch me anytime," he invited, kissing her again.

With that things went south. Anna's eyes fell to his erection and she helped unbutton his fly. He shucked his jeans in record time, flinging them to the side. Back at her, he lifted her up onto the island, pleased to see she wasn't wearing underwear.

Spreading her thighs wide, he was about to fuck her when Anna's hand appeared in front of his face. A condom, she'd brought a condom with her. She must have put it in the front pocket.

"God, I think I love you," he confessed, freezing an instant before grabbing the protection and putting it in place.

Moving back between her legs, he brought her hips forward, making her rely on his strength to hold her open and waiting. It was going to be fantastic to be inside her again.

"Put me inside you," he told her.

Anna grabbed his cock and stroked him hard. Fuck, he loved when she did that little pump and twist action.

Bold as you please, she brought him to her wet, hot pink pussy, letting him in. Water-based lubricant from the condom and her moisture took him further. He thrust hard.

She cringed. Her thighs squeezed shut, preventing him from going deeper. She was too sore for this. He felt like a jerk.

"Oh shit, Anna, I'm sorry," he growled at himself.

"Kyran, please don't stop."

"I'm hurting you," he said, resting his forehead against hers.

"It's okay. I'm a little sore. I'll recover. I can take it." With more desperation, she jerked him against her, taking his cock to the hilt, but wincing again.

"Don't ask me to do this when it hurts you," he warned, stilling her efforts.

"But you're hard and beautiful. Why waste a perfect erection?" She tried to play even as he pulled out slowly. His erection softening fast, her eyes locked in on the evidence.

Her whole face changed. From wanton to worried, she hopped off the counter.

"Don't be mad."

"Not mad," she said softly, too softly. "Like I said, that erection is going to waste. Let me work you out again."

With that, she dropped to her knees in front of him. "Don't, Anna."

She didn't listen. She grabbed his cock, condom and all, kissing the tip. Lubricant had to taste bad, she swallowed anyway. She got him hard in an instant, but he wasn't that much of an ass. He took her by the shoulders to bring her to her feet.

"I want to make you come, Kyran."

He kissed her for it. Something was wrong here and it was more than her being sore. Yeah, he'd taken her real hard a few times. But he felt her slight tremor, she was nervous again, too tense to relax and enjoy sex. "Everything's all right with us, you get me?"

"If I were younger I could take you."

That was it. The cougar tag made a hit. Making sure she was listening, he stared into her eyes. "If you were younger, you wouldn't be my Anna."

"Does that mean we have a date tonight?"

"Wild horses and piranhas wouldn't keep me away," he promised.

"Okay then, let's make breakfast."

"Coming right up," he said, removing the condom and buttoning his jeans.

They worked side by side. He cooked the omelet. She put the bacon in the microwave and fixed the toast. He had juice in the fridge, pouring some for both.

Breakfast was good. They drank juice instead of coffee. But Kyran knew she was preoccupied. Every time she looked away, blushing, he was certain that she was real close to bolting. He hadn't convinced her that he was in this with her for the long haul.

To make amends, he went to find a warm washcloth and some ibuprofen. He brought it back to where she sat at the kitchen bar. "I've got something that can help," he said.

"Think all I need is another soak in your bathtub," she said. "But that's not possible. A shower should be fine."

"This will do for now." Holding up the washcloth, he gestured for her to face him.

"You're a nice man."

"Thanks, sugar," he said.

She stiffened, like he'd hurt her again. What'd he do this time?

"Hey now, Anna, you're getting all tense. Relax, okay?"

"I'm trying."

"Good."

Anna let him kneel down and part her knees. Her vulva was still red and a little swollen. Placing the warm cloth to her folds, he pressed so the warmth would seep into her clit and labia.

"Take these," he offered.

"What is it?"

He handed her the two pills. "Ibuprofen, it'll reduce the swelling."

"Oh my god, who'd have thought I'd be sore after a night of sex with you?" she asked herself, laughing. "Amazing."

"To be sore?" he clarified.

"Yes! Since I lost my virginity, I'd wanted to have the kind of sex that's so good I was sore for days afterward. Think we did that last night."

"We went at it pretty good. For the record, I intend to fuck you again later. Better get used to that with me."

Anna took the pain reliever with her juice. Lots of water, ibuprofen and warm soaks would help sore muscles. Apparently his home remedy was working for his teacher. She loosened up.

"You got the paper?" she asked while they washed the dishes several minutes later.

"On the front porch," he answered.

"Well let's see it, hero."

Slapping her fine ass with his dishtowel, he went to get the *Alexandria Journal*. It would figure that Brenda Jamison would work for the paper he'd arranged to have delivered.

"Kyran, have you considered having Brenda investigated? I mean for, like, stalking history or something like that?"

"She's a pain in the ass," he said from the front door.

"And vindictive, you said so last night."

"Yeah, I did."

"The fact that she followed your Escalade last night, wrote a story about us, labeling it, that's beyond sports news, Kyran. It's wrong. An invasion," Anna remarked.

Kyran agreed. He'd asked Alex to look into Jamison's background after she'd printed that story that ruined his relationship with Seville. Brenda graduated top of her class in journalism, her writing was good. Something changed along the line. She'd gotten a cushier job with the *Sentinel*, covering the Griffins. The stories were fodder for gossip. Maybe she was trying to save her career or earn extra money now that the economy was tough.

"Alex had Brenda investigated before. She hasn't done anything illegal so far. Because of what I do for a living, news hounds and paparazzi show up in my life at

wrong times. I can deal with that." He returned to the kitchen, set the paper between them. "I'm not going to sit back and let her write trash about my girl."

"Hardly a girl, Kyran," Anna reminded.

"Well last night, you were bad a time or two, or three, as I recall," he said with a wink.

"Think I lost count. And I kinda liked it. But I loved being in bed with you the most, specially the lovemaking."

"Kinda?"

"Okay, I loved it, all of it."

"Then rest when you can today," he suggested. "There's no way I can be with you tonight and not want you."

"Don't you have team practice or something?" she asked.

"Monday morning. Coach gave us a few days to rest up."

"You should do that. I've seen you tense a time or two when cooking that omelet."

"I'll be good all day, Anna James, promise. Later, not so much, as long as you're not too sore," he said.

Anna drank more of her juice. Her glass was drained and he gave her more of the orange, apple and pineapple mixture that he'd made fresh yesterday morning.

"Let's see it," she finally said.

Kyran knew what she meant. He unfolded the paper, expecting to leaf through to the sports section.

"Oh my god, that's us in the locker room!" Anna shouted, punching at the front page.

Beneath the white "Cougar and Rebel" headline was a photo of Anna in Kyran's arms. It was a little blurry. Yet it was unmistakable. He was kissing her, their first of the night in the locker room. Her griffin costume was down at her ankles. Her back to the door, her flesh-toned leotard making her look nude, it was an embrace of two soon-to-be-lovers made to look tawdry.

"Fuck," he groused.

"Um, what are Furries?" she asked, as she read something in the article labeling them as Furries.

"People who enjoy being in costume, usually some type of animal or cartoon character," he answered.

"I'm the Griffins mascot. That makes me one?"

"For some, Furries are a fetish."

"Oh...oh," she repeated herself, getting it.

The article made it seem like they had gotten off because of the costume. Even if they had, what they did in private shouldn't be front page news.



Kyran was furious. Brenda Jamison claimed that when she spoke to him after Friday night's game, she'd asked if he planned to stay with the team after the season because of his newest fling. Like always, he'd seen her coming, had no idea what she'd asked, answered, "Yeah, no comment," and went to find Anna, hiding with her. He barely remembered the fling part of the question, couldn't be certain she'd asked him about it or not.

Anna took it well, but he saw her eyes glance to the article. Her face was flushed, her tension right back to where it'd been when she heard the cougar tag.

"I'm calling Alex. You're right. Brenda's messed with my private life one too many times. This time she's way out of line. This is you," he said.

"It can't get worse, right?"

He didn't know. How the fuck did Brenda get that shot? She wasn't that good of a reporter if she had to write sensationalized stories. The photo sucked yet it'd had done the damage she'd intended.

A jazz tune sounded from across the room. Kyran went to answer, recognizing Alex's ringtone. "Yeah, Alex, we read it. Make an appointment with the *Journal*. I want to know why they'd print that when they're usually a fair press."

Anna came up behind him, wrapping her arms about his waist. He listened to his agent, made some suggestions. All the while, his woman kept him close, easing the sting of Brenda Jamison's attempt to ruin something he wanted to go right.

He wasn't going to screw this up with Anna. Five times in one night was good, even for him.

## Chapter Ten

Anna let Kyran speak to his agent privately so she could get ready to go. In the loft, she found her jeans in the bathroom. Going back downstairs, she could hear Kyran's voice, the accent deeper by the minute.

He was an enigma with his auburn hair, warrior height and Celtic tats, coupled with an ingrained Southern honor that made him protect her. She believed that he'd cared enough to not hurt her just for a quick fuck.

But she was still worried. This morning, well, she hurt! Sore in places she'd not known existed, she was amazed she could walk and not reveal the aches.

Not that she'd complain, especially to Kyran. She'd wanted to have sex with him this morning, prove she was capable of taking him again. The article calling her a cougar had stung, more so than the Furry thing. She didn't want him to see her as too old to handle his sex drive.

But she couldn't deny it. She was ten years older than her boyfriend. Holy cow, she'd thought of Kyran as her boyfriend. She had, yes, she had. Somehow she'd fallen in love with her favorite QB in one night.

The fact was a decade would always separate them. If her GYN was right, she could go into perimenopause in a few years, maybe sooner. It was impossible to know for certain, but her mother had gone into menopause early. Her likelihood of not having a baby was a reality if she didn't try sooner rather than later. She didn't know if Kyran wanted kids at all, or if he intended to stick around long enough to give fatherhood a try. She also didn't want to take that chance away from him if her clock stopped ticking.

If the article damaged his career or reputation, she'd fight tooth and nail to protect him. What it hadn't done was lessen her respect for the man she learned he was, a good man. If she balked now, she might save her heart, but she'd never know whether she had a real shot at keeping Kyran Black as her man.

His career, the injury at the top of his game and the battle back made him seem older than she was. Perhaps age wasn't a big deal, even though she was feeling every bit of forty this morning. She found her jeans and pulled them on, refusing to wince at the soreness that lingered between her thighs. She liked wearing his shirt so she kept it in place.

"Here, got you something, Anna," he said.

She looked around. He didn't have the cell phone. In his hand was a football jersey. Not the one she'd worn last night. It was the real deal, one of his.

"Oh no," she said. "I can't take that."

"Yeah, you can. This one is older, see?" He showed her the jersey. It was an original Alexandria Griffins design, with his name and number on the back. "This is what I wear around the house when I want to be comfortable. Team had it made for me when I signed on."

"Then it's your favorite," she pointed out.

"Right, come on. It'd mean a lot if you'd take this from me."

She couldn't help it. She smiled. Even though he'd returned to calling her sugar and she wasn't certain why, he was sincere. "You're making me feel like I should wear this because we're going steady."

The word steady made her feel ancient. That wasn't good. Maybe the floor would swallow her up so she could hide.

Kyran didn't notice. He came up close, right into her personal space. There, he caught her shoulders, bringing her up against him. "Your face went white. What's wrong?"

"Not as young as I used to be," she said, trying to shrug. "More aware of it this morning than last night, that's all."

"Believe me, I'm feeling the effects of the game and the sex," he confided. "Anna, don't worry. I'm your guy no matter the aches we are both feeling today or piranhas waiting to bite."

Anna smiled wider. Her tummy did that little flip-flop of anticipation. "You are, huh?"

"You bet. In a few days, the *Journal's* story is going to be forgotten by someone else's fifteen minutes of fame."

"Amazing what happened in one night, really."

"No woman has worn me out before. Does that tell you anything?"

"Sure, that you're really good in bed."

"Hey, I wasn't alone last night. You were right there with me."

"Well, I did climax more times last night than I had during my entire relationship with my fiancé."

Kyran's hands tightened. "What fiancé?"

"Ex, sorry, ex-fiancé," she said. "I was engaged for two years."

"Ah, the guy that couldn't get you off," Kyran replied, grinning like the cat that ate the canary because he did, multiple times. "He wasn't right for you."

"Same one who fucked a grad student on his office desk," Anna confided.

"Damn idiot. Let me guess, wasn't the first time?"

"Honestly don't know for sure," she said. "When I caught him, he accused me of being lousy in bed. Made me feel like it was my fault he couldn't keep it up. Once I suggested ED meds. He flipped out, almost hit me, but stormed out before things got way out of hand. He apologized and seemed genuinely upset for getting violent and we

stayed together for a little while. I think that's when he started cheating on me instead of hitting. For whatever reason, he stayed hard long enough to do it with that grad student, not me."

"Is he older than you?"

"By five years," she said. "Before that, the only serious guy in my life was in college. We dated most of the way through, then went off to different cities."

"Wish I could say the same," Kyran said. "I won't knock down the women I've known before you though. Looking back, it all seems hollow. I went for sex and missed the making love part."

"If we start dating for real, I hope we do it all, make love, fucking, you name it, I want to try."

"We are way past if." Kyran leaned down, kissed her quick. "Who were you with in the locker room, Anna?" he asked.

"You, silly."

"Who fucked you in the Escalade?"

Anna scowled. "That'd be you."

"Where'd you spend the night?"

"Here with you, in your bed."

"Good, last question."

"Uh oh, better be good."

"Where will you be tonight?"

"On a date with this guy, Kyran Black," she teased. "Maybe you've heard of him, super sexy football stud, capable of giving a lady a good time."

"Well all right, you know where we stand." He kissed her again, taking time to make her toes curl and her heart pound so hard she was sure he felt it.

Sometime later, his cell phone went off in the kitchen. Kyran groaned, kissed her hard and went to answer it. Anna saw that the jersey she'd worn last night was on the bar chair where he'd taken her so hard, she'd never forget it. Quickly, she replaced the shirt she was wearing with the shirt he'd just given her.

Unlike the one she'd gotten at a store, his was amazingly soft. Obviously, it was important to him. It smelled like fresh laundry soap and an outdoorsy dryer sheet. Still uncertain where the rest of her stuff was, she headed to the kitchen.

Kyran had a fresh cup of juice waiting for her. He'd finished his call. "We have to go, Anna. There's more stuff that came up with Brenda. I'm going to take you home and to practice, then make my way to Alex's office."

"Okay," she said.

The night officially over, she watched him gather up his wallet, cell and keys. In the garage, he helped her into the monstrous SUV. Her gym bag and costume were in the

back. He'd remembered to grab her purse and placed it on the floor of the passenger seat.

"You know, I'm not a real fan of commando," she admitted when he was in the driver's side. She didn't have on panties and wondered if he'd skipped the boxers.

Garage door went up, the SUV came to life. "Not giving the panties back, Anna," he said, winking as he backed out. "Whatever you're thinking, answer's probably yes."

Anna said nothing. The condo community was quiet. It was just past eight. They had time before football practice.

"Kyran, have a question."

"Shoot," he said.

"What did you do in the off season? I feel awful that I didn't ask 'til now."

He shifted, heading for the main gate. "That's an answer that stays with you, get me?"

"Goes without saying," she replied.

"We went out on a Friday, remember?"

"Sure do, best date of my life 'til now."

Kyran grinned, shifting again. "That following Sunday was the Griffins last game of the season."

"That's right. You played the last quarter. Griffins won. I was so happy for you, hoped you would call to ask me out." It still kinda hurt to think that he hadn't. But she realized she was partly to blame for the misunderstanding.

"Oh sugar, I'm sorry I didn't."

"It's okay, you explained why."

"What I didn't say last night was that I was confused about the bogus number."

"A mistake," she reminded.

"Cause you were afraid," he said. "Same for me, Anna."

"You were afraid of me?"

"Yeah, going home alone was the hardest thing I'd ever done. I jerked off most of the night, thinking of getting you into my bed. Scared the hell out of me, Anna, I admit it. I called you on Saturday and got that message about the number. Thought you did it to avoid me the next day. It's happened before, with other women. Didn't want you to be like them or get hurt."

"Oh no, I can see now why you'd think that," she said.

"Let's be honest. I came on pretty strong. I scared you."

"You did. But it's your personality, Kyran. You're prime A-type."

"Can't deny it," he said. "I'd planned to ask Alex to help me find you Sunday after the game. Got sacked in my last drive, strained my knee, changing everything."

"Oh my god, Kyran, I had no idea!" The Griffins had won by seven points, but his last pass of that game was intercepted. The defense came onto the field and kept the score where it was 'til the end. No one had known he'd been injured.

"Only the team docs and trainers knew. They sent me to my orthopedic specialist for an MRI and rehab."

"Wise move on their part. How bad were you injured?"

"Not enough to require surgery, just needed serious PT." The SUV slid out of the gate and they were heading for the highway. "I stayed in California for a while, reconditioned, got ready for this season."

"Makes sense," Anna commented.

"Thing is, the time away made me realize I wanted to see you when I came home."

"When did you come back?"

"A week before practice began. I waited 'til last night to see you again."

Kyran was being honest. She was grateful. "You were preoccupied. I understand."

"Thanks," he replied. "It's still not an excuse."

"You were dealing with your knee. It's okay."

"Yeah, and I was still nervous. If I found out you weren't interested it would have been my fault for not trying harder to reach you. I knew that, but had to take a chance."

"I'm really glad you came to the locker room, Kyran. Last night was the best night of my life, so far. I hope to have more with you."

"Me too," he said.

He concentrated on driving for a bit, maneuvering about the highway with ease. A few minutes later he handed her his cell phone.

It was one of the fanciest things she'd ever seen. "Hit the navigation app. Plug in your home address."

"I could just tell you," she said with a grin, laughing as she fiddled with it.

"When you're done, put in your phone number."

"Ha, caught you. That's what you really want."

"You bet. If it's the wrong number, I'll know where to find you," he teased.

"Won't do that again," she promised.

"Good to know," he said.

Anna put in the information. Amazing little device started talking, a female voice giving directions to her house in Baltimore.

They reached her small, rented cottage in Baltimore County. Located in a suburb near Towson University, her neighborhood consisted of commuters to Baltimore City, D.C. and college grad students interning in the area. Her school wasn't far from her house. It wouldn't be too far out of Kyran's way to take her there.

He parked his SUV in her paved driveway. Gentleman that he was, he helped her inside the house. "You go get ready for practice. I'll bring your stuff in."

"That'd be great," she said.

Anna did exactly what she needed most. She showered, using the hot water to ease her tense muscles. Kyran's remedy with the washcloth had helped reduce the soreness she'd felt between her legs. She copied what he'd done and felt much better. The ibuprofen helped too.

Half an hour later, she was drying her hair. Kyran knocked on her bathroom door.

"Hey, Anna, where should I have your car towed?"

"Team practice is at the school," she answered. "Remember the name of it?"

"Sure do," he said, footsteps walking away.

When she was done, makeup in place, wearing workout pants and a tee shirt with her school's name and logo, she went to find Kyran. He was waiting in the family room, flipping through TV channels.

"Sorry my TV isn't as nice as yours," she said.

"It's fine. Ready?" He was distracted, probably because they needed to get moving. It was going on ten o'clock. Practice was at noon, but she'd like to get to school, talk to the coaches and the boys.

Anna had an extra gym bag she used for school. It was already packed with what she'd need for the day.

"Wait, I need one thing." She hustled to the kitchen, plucking a bottle of water from the fridge. She stuck the bottle in her bag and they were on their way back to his SUV.

The drive took all of ten minutes. She had him drive around to the gymnasium and team locker rooms. A few cars were in the lot, looked like Manny Sullivan's, head coach, and Brian Givens, defensive coach. Anna made sure the offense knew the playbook cover to cover, implemented it during the game.

Frankly, she thought she was a good coach. She hoped to be made the head coach when Manny retired.

A few more cars came into the lot. Kyran parked. "You need me to come in with you?" he offered.

"Nah, I can handle it from here." She grinned at him. "You'll call me later? I want to know how your meeting goes."

"Promise, not sure when," he said. "Think about where you'd like to go tonight."

"A movie would be nice."

"Movie it is, dinner after?"

"Sure, sounds good."

"It's a date." He sent her that cat that ate the canary grin. Her pulse lit up, thumping wildly. "Rest up later. I've got plans for you."

"Same for you," she teased.

"Come a little bit closer," he bid.

Anna leaned over the console, stretching a bit. She blushed, recalling how she'd leapt over the thing last night. She'd felt like a super hero.

Kyran caught her chin, keeping her steady for his kiss. "Be good, love," he said against her lips.

She kissed him back, slipping her tongue deep into his mouth, letting him know she really did have plans for him later.

Finally she eased back. "See you tonight." With that, she grabbed her bag and hopped out.

He waited until she opened the entrance to the locker rooms. She looked back, waving as he backed up. Inside, the hallway was concrete and cinderblocks, painted blue and yellow. The closer she was to the locker room, the more aware she was of voices in the team offices ahead.

Manny's voice carried down the hall, as usual. Feeling like something was wrong, she opened the office door.

Manny and Brian were there, reading the *Alexandria Journal*. "Oh my god, you two know," she said, grimacing as Manny chuckled the paper to his desk.

"Care to explain?" he asked.

"That's my business, no one else's."

"Listen, Anna, we're not faulting you for having a love life. But did you have to make the front page?" Manny punched his finger on the photo. It looked seedier than it really was, solidifying Brenda Jamison's intent.

"Look, guys, this will blow over."

"Are you dating Kyran Black?" Brian chimed in.

"Um, yes, as a matter of fact."

"Strange, yesterday you were going out with some friends for your birthday. When did you start dating this guy?"

"Brian, you knew about the mascot gig. I met Kyran a few months ago, just before the Griffins last game. We hit it off. He's a good man, Manny."

"Good enough to protect you come Monday morning?"

"Protect me from what?"

"A Board of Ed meeting," Manny said. "Superintendent wants you to explain your actions."

"I'm not a teenager. I can have relationships with anyone I want."

"Under normal circumstances, that'd be true. Today you're front page news. It's already brought reporters to the school."

"No way," she gasped.

"Security ran them off. And I've been fielding calls for you. They want to interview 'The Cougar' who snared 'The Rebel'."



"Not going to happen," she said, channeling Kyran. "If the board wants to talk to me, so be it."

"Until then, go home," Brian said.

"Practice starts at noon. Besides, I'm stuck here 'til my car arrives."

"No practice for you," Manny decided. "If the players see this picture of you two, they're going to ask questions. And they may not see you as their coach anymore."

"I'm a good coach. This is wrong. Those boys see far worse on TV these days than that."

"You're an excellent coach," he amended. "But I still can't let you work today."

"Can I stay here in the office for a while? I'd like to make some calls." It was unfair of the board to require her to explain herself as if she were a kid caught shoplifting. She wondered if they'd ask the same of Manny or Brian if they were caught with their pants down.

Her pants, or in this case her griffin costume, was down. Kyran had shoved the thing to her feet. Her back looked bare because of her flesh-colored leotard, they were clenched together. He'd been about to tear it, she recalled. Uncertain now when he'd actually done so, she was glad that the sound at the door slowed them down for a bit. Good thing Brenda hadn't gotten a shot of what happened after her shower.

Anna remembered the way Kyran's cock had pushed between her thighs, catching her clit. He'd made her so wet she'd dampened the leotard. She got wet now thinking about it.

"Take all the time you need, Anna." Manny stood up, folding the paper and sticking it in his desk.

"You guys think the players saw that photo? I mean, really, that paper is the *Journal*. It's not a Baltimore press."

"This was sent to me here by an overnight courier. Article claims the Cougar, a forty-year-old physical education teacher and football coach for Baltimore County, snagged veteran Griffins quarterback Kyran 'The Rebel' Black. Someone did some checking, found out where you work."

"I read the front page. Brenda Jamison, she's the reporter who wrote that trash, claimed to have a source within the Griffins, from the stadium. Someone there gave her the means to take that photo and verify her sources for the article."

"She also managed to get this here at the crack of dawn," Brian warned. "You might want a lawyer to talk to her."

"I'll do what I can," she promised. "This isn't right. Kyran and I have a right to date."

"Normally, I'd agree with you." Manny walked up, tapped her on the shoulder. "For what it's worth, I did talk to the superintendant before you arrived. I told him you were a fine coach and teacher."

"Ha, isn't it ironic that a member of the school board is my ex?" Anna laughed bitterly.

Until Kyran, she never told anyone about finding Will with his grad student. She'd thought she was the reason he'd cheated, had been embarrassed. He was a political science professor at a local college and joined the school board before they'd broken their engagement. He was still on the board as a silent way of getting back at her for giving back his ring.

"Maybe he'll come to bat for you," Brian suggested.

"I doubt it." Anna didn't want Will's help. Fact was, she'd have to see him and the board Monday. She'd deal with him then.

Right now, she had a piranha to catch and stop. The men left her to make some calls. She had no idea how long she worked, but by the time she talked to a lawyer, the locker room was filled with students.

Manny and Brian kept the boys from the office. From time to time, they looked in, stared, poked at each other. She couldn't hear their whispers, but knew they were talking about her. The football team knew about the story.

The day after her first night with Kyran had turned into a freakin' disaster.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kyran was ready to punch a wall!

The article in the paper was a catalyst that had him and Alex turning away interviews. If they'd wanted to talk to him, he could have written up a statement repudiating Brenda's take on his relationship with Anna. He'd admit they were dating, but the rest was not up for speculation or reporting.

But rag magazine paparazzi wanted to interview Anna to find out how she'd gotten him. Worse, he'd gotten a text from Seville on his cell phone half an hour ago.

He hadn't heard from her in months. He'd spent the better part of the summer in California, ten miles from Seville's trendy Beverly Hills condo. He'd avoided crossing her path and refused her calls when he was in there.

Here she was, texting him again. With a few easy clicks, he blocked her from contacting him. He couldn't deal with Seville when Anna needed him more.

He was falling in love with his school teacher. In one night, they'd made up for the time he'd been in Los Angeles. He'd had to stay there for rehab, but they could have worked out a way to see each other if he'd gotten off his ass and asked her out again.

Kyran had been wrong about that. He wasn't going to back out now or make the same mistakes.

"Kyran, tell me about this picture," Alex said, breaking into his thoughts.

"Think it's obvious, Alex."

"Okay, it is. But in the locker room?"

"Told you, Anna's one of the team mascots, part time. I'd found out she was working last night's game and went to find her. We were alone, things got carried away."

"This is the woman you'd met late last winter."

"Yeah."

"The same one who gave you the wrong number," Alex said.

"What's the point?" Kyran didn't like the questions.

"You sure she didn't set you up?" Alex asked.

"No, fuck no. Anna's not like that." He knew Alex had been burned in a relationship when he'd gone to Europe. Since he was a few years older than Phalen or Kyran, he'd graduated before them and suddenly needed to explore the world. But whatever happened to him then, he refused to talk about it. Unfortunately it made him seem distant when he really wasn't and neither Kyran or Phalen pressed for answers. If he ever offered, they'd listen.

"You say that with conviction, yet here you are on the front page. How'd it happen that you were in that room and a photo came out this morning?"

"We heard a click. I was dodging Brenda when I got there, she could have followed me. She followed us halfway home last night, remember?"

"You really like this one, huh," Alex stated more than asked.

"Anna's amazing."

Alex was Kyran's polar opposite in an Italian business suit, short blond hair and clean-shaven face. When he went in to make a deal or talk to a client, he was always dressed as Alexander Grant, professional from head to toe. Whatever happened when he'd been in Europe had hardened him, but he was a competent, business-savvy agent.

"So how'd this picture come about? That's what I want to know," Alex said.

"Looks to me like Brenda took it from the door."

"You'd mentioned a break-in at the stadium. Maybe she tripped the alarm to catch you two alone. She's tenacious, I'll give her that."

"Maybe, makes sense. A guard came and got us later, he was a nice guy. Let's call the stadium and talk to him."

"Will do, pronto," Alex agreed. "How long were you two in there?"

"Not sure, about an hour or so. Wasn't thinking about the time," Kyran said.

He didn't say anything about why they'd stayed there. Alex figured it out. "Let's hope no more photos show up. Until we talk to security, stay low."

"And avoid the *Journal*," Kyran said. "Find out why they'd print an article like that on the first page."

"Already know why," Alex answered. "Money, always look at the money. The *Journal* bought out the *Sentinel*, which is more about gossip, but has a good following

online. The *Sentinel* can be read from anywhere and the *Journal* wanted more business. I checked and that same photo is headline news on the *Sentinel*'s home page."

"Cancel my subscription to the *Journal* then. They print shit like that, I'm not reading it."

"Done, did the same. Talked to the Griffins' owner this morning," Alex continued. "He's contacted his legal department and is having all ad spots for the team removed from the *Alexandria Journal*. They're also checking the *Sentinel*."

"You work fast, Alex."

"There is that," his friend agreed. "Derek Billings likes you enough that he doesn't want his team to associate with this kind of publicity. No one's saying the *Journal* can't run the stories they choose. Management wants to make a deal with you to get into coaching. I'm still negotiating the contract. Billings doesn't want that to interfere with this season. He was also concerned about your Ms. James and her role in this whole thing."

"This'll blow over by Monday," Kyran said. "Anna doesn't deserve that photo and headline. I wouldn't have gone after her if I thought for a second she'd set up a story like that."

"Anything else I should tell him?"

"Only that Anna's a high school teacher and assistant football coach, full time. The mascot gig is for extra savings. I don't want that article jeopardizing her jobs."

"Football coach, nice, not many female coaches these days."

"Yeah, she coaches the JV team, ninth and ten graders, offense."

"Okay, I like her. She looks real into you there," Alex said, pointing to the *Journal*.

"On the phone earlier, you said there were more pictures. Should we get a legal team to confiscate Brenda's camera?"

"First Amendment protects her right to run a story."

"First Amendment doesn't allow her to write something that could lead to trouble or danger to Anna. You can't just walk into a crowded room and shout 'Fire' as an intentional false alarm and start a stampede."

"That's true enough. But while this is a nuisance, nothing threatening has happened to Anna as far as we know."

"I intend to keep it that way. In the article, Brenda claims to have a source at the stadium. Wonder who'd help her?"

"You're a professional football player who's made news on and off the field. Some would say that puts you in the public eye, therefore photos are common. A fan straying down that way could easily capture a few digital shots on his cell phone."

"Doesn't give Jamison the right to smear Anna's reputation with them," Kyran argued.

"You're technically on Griffins' property. The cheerleader locker room should be off limits to press when the stadium's cleared. I'll speak to the lawyers, see what we can do."

"The photos you'd mentioned, where are they?" Kyran asked again.

"The article continues in the sports section. There are a few of the mascot entertaining the crowds and a repeat of the headlining photo. Jamison revealed Anna's the mascot. It also implies the two of you have a fetish for the animal costume thing," Alex supplied.

"We read that part. Her costume was stuck and I helped unzip it. This is blown out of proportion and we need to nip it in the bud, today."

"I'm on it. While we're at it, call Derek Billings. Let him know about the costume. Griffins management prefers the identity of the people playing the mascot be kept secret. It's possible Anna could be suspended or let go if she signed a contract for anonymity."

"Then I'll fight that for her," Kyran promised.

Brenda's article had turned the best night of his life yet into some sex fetish in the locker room with a Furry mascot.

Aw shit, they'd fucked on that costume, but she'd been cold and they were too far gone to stop.

The day after the best sex of his life had turned into a fucking disaster.

## Chapter Eleven

Two hours later, Anna was home taking a long, hot bubble bath.

Granted she'd taken a shower that morning and hadn't broken much of a sweat since she couldn't be part of practice, but she needed the bath. She took her time, letting the water cleanse and ease her tension.

Not surprisingly, Tracey called when she'd finished. She assured her friend that she was fine and didn't need to worry. Her best friend offered the assistance of her cop boyfriend. It was nice. It wasn't necessary.

She was making a sandwich when her phone played a rock song. Grabbing it from the counter, she saw it was Kyran. Her heart slammed excitedly. Part of her had been afraid he might not call.

"Hey," she greeted.

"Hey," he said back, a little distracted. "You got your car okay?"

"Yes I did. Thank you. How are things with your agent?"

"We're wrapping things up soon. How about you, how was practice?"

"Um, didn't get much done." Anna didn't want to ruin the phone call. She'd tell Kyran about the school board meeting when she saw him.

"Sorry to hear that. Tell me why later," he said. "Was wondering if I could come and pick you up about five?"

"Sure, that would work."

"Well all right, looking forward to it." A man's deep, cultured baritone broke through the connection. "Listen, Anna, I have to go. Do me a favor 'til I see you."

"What's that?"

"Rest up," he whispered.

"Ha, you too," she teased.

Kyran ended the call with a promise to see her soon. Anna was glad. The day had been pretty crappy. Seeing him would make everything okay.

Halfway through eating her sandwich, her landline phone rang. Swallowing a bite, she went to get it. Caller ID showed "Out of Area".

"Hello?" she answered.

"Is this Anna James' residence?"

Not recognizing the woman's voice, Anna's instincts went on full alert. Her number was unlisted. Rather than saying anything, she replaced the receiver.

Two minutes later, the phone rang again. "Damn, no way." Another "Out of Area" call was listed on the screen.

This time, Anna didn't answer it. Five minutes after the second call, the phone jingled, it was a 900 number. She still didn't answer it.

Her voice mail was set up that she had to call a number other than her actual phone number, and then put in a PIN when asked. She could access her messages from any phone, anywhere. Using her cell, she dialed the number and plugged in the code.

The first caller had indeed called back. "Hello, if this is Anna James' residence have her contact me. We have a mutual friend." The caller didn't identify herself, just left a number.

A 900 number was weird. A man asked if she'd like to be part of his online network for costumed characters. All she had to do was field some calls from members of his social network for Furies. Like she'd do that? She was not a Furry, a mascot yes, into the costume as a fetish, no.

Anna clicked off her cell phone and went in search of something to wear for her date with Kyran Black. A date! An actual go to the movies and dinner date, with the man who'd starred in her fantasies since they met.

So they jumped into the sex part pretty quick. She wouldn't change a thing. Last night had been amazing. She'd felt younger, sophisticated and worldly in his arms, more daring. He could still hurt her and the decade between them would always be there, but she wasn't going to ignore how she felt.

Uncertain if she should dress up or down, she searched through her closet. They were going to the movies and likely having a casual dinner afterward.

Wanting to wear something better than jeans and a tee shirt, even though she'd slipped back into Kyran's shirt after her bath, she found a pair of tan linen pants and an olive green, short-sleeved blouse with a scooped-neck. Matching sandals with modest heels would work. Out of habit from work, she rarely wore jewelry and didn't bother now.

She had an hour before he arrived, but she was nervous. If she dressed now, she'd be ready. Then she'd end up with nothing to do other than wait. If she dressed later, she'd rush. While she decided which to do, she could always work on her hair.

In the bathroom, she plugged in a flat iron. Since she'd washed her hair earlier that morning, she'd tucked it all up into a hair comb. She applied her makeup, using a little more for her lips and cheeks, but not enough to look like a clown. She thought she looked pretty, especially after running the flat iron through her hair to tame some of the waves. It wasn't perfectly straight when she'd finished, but it did look nice and smooth and soft. The straightening always made her feel younger.

Maybe she'd get it professionally straightened or add some highlights instead. She'd talked to her hairdresser once about the chemical process to make it pin straight and learned she'd have to forgo highlighting it at the same time. It would simply burn her hair and make it break.

For now, she'd just stick with the flat iron. Did Kyran like the color, she wondered? Would he notice if she added some blonde streaks to cover the gray hair beginning to show? Telling herself not to worry about it, she concentrated on being herself. If he ultimately didn't accept what she looked like now, without chemicals and bleach, she'd sell herself short by changing something about herself just to keep him.

Done with the prep and about to change, the phone rang. There was a phone on her bedside table. She didn't answer the call. The ID thing called out the 900 number for the Furry network.

"Tenacious, aren't they?" she said to no one.

The phone continued to ring off and on for the next hour. She didn't listen to a single call. She let them all go to voice mail. She finally dressed at quarter 'til five.

A little before five she heard a familiar grumble of a big truck outside her cottage. Glancing out of her bedroom window, she saw her man climbing out of the imposing black SUV.

He looked good dressed in gray pants, black shirt and casual loafers. From where she stood, she could see his hair was still damp from a shower. Heart racing in her chest, she took off for the stairs.

She reached the front door as he knocked. "Hey now, don't you look nice," he said when she opened the door.

"Same back at you," Anna greeted. "Come on in, I want you to hear something."

"Yeah, what's up?" Kyran followed her to the kitchen.

She dialed her voice mail and PIN, handing the cell phone to him. "This is what I've dealt with since I spoke to you on the phone."

Kyran waited, tensing as he listened. "Holy fuck, how'd she reach you?"

"How did who reach me?" she clarified, but he put up one finger.

Kyran's face tightened more with each message. "Did you listen to all of them?"

"Only the first few, gave up on the rest."

It took him ten minutes to listen to the messages. Ten! When he closed the cell, he looked up at her.

"Hell," he groused. "That article is a pain in the ass."

"Figured that's what triggered the costume network one."

"Along with two interview requests for rag magazines, offering quite a bit of money for a featured story on me."

"Kyran, no way would I answer those calls or tell them a thing," Anna reassured.

"Didn't think you would," he said. "What bothers me most is Seville, she called three times."

"Really, thought you two were done."

"We are done." Kyran handed the phone to her. "When I was in L.A. for rehab, she called me. I blocked her after that."



"You had to deal with your knee, understandable."

"That and I told her I'd met someone back here, wanted to see where it would lead. She's as much a pain in my ass as Brenda." He paced to the family room, staring at the blank television. "Obviously the *Journal's* article reached Seville. She's not happy."

"Well, Seville doesn't worry me. You said she's an ex. I believe you."

"Thanks." He looked back at her, smiling again. "You're still in the kitchen. Come on over here, sugar."

She grinned, this was her Kyran. Tossing her phone to the counter, she walked over to him, putting herself right up close.

"Hey there, gorgeous, come here often?" she asked.

"Second time, actually. Nice place you have here, Ms. Anna James, all oak and antique furniture and a woman waiting at home. Makes a man feel comfortable," he said, Southern accent dipping right down to her toes, her whole body quivering rather nicely. His arm came up, his hand going behind her head to her nape. "Miss me?"

"An understatement," she admitted, letting him pull her into his big, protective frame.

There weren't many men she could look up at. With Kyran, she had to tiptoe a little. The view was breathtaking. He made her feel alive, feminine, carefree.

"Hey now, that's real nice to know," he whispered, dipping toward her, his mouth just above hers.

Meeting him partway, she kissed him. The impact of their lips touching jolted right to her toes, her stomach coiling with sweet tension as his mouth lingered, played. It felt like ages since they'd last made love.

Kyran groaned, bringing her closer to deepen their kiss. Always confident, his tongue plunged deep, tangling with hers, learning the depths of her mouth. When he withdrew, her tongue chased his, drawing him back so she could suckle on him. He tasted like mint, like him.

Part of her had been worried that their desire might weaken after last night. Or she'd be too sore for a while. Fortunately she wasn't and he still wanted her.

She could tell in the way his arms tightened, in the feel of his heavy erection prodding between her legs. Remembering how amazing he felt inside her, any lingering soreness was minor. Wanting him to know, she parted her legs more, bracing herself for his short, rhythmic thrusts.

"Hmm, Anna, you're making me hard." Just like that, Anna's panties were damp.

"We keep this up, I'm going to have to change," she said, not really caring.

"Why waste a perfectly good wet pussy?" he teased, mimicking her from earlier that morning.

"Or that big hard cock," she replied. "What time's the movie?"

Kyran kissed her again, licking the seam of her lips to nip the top and then the bottom. No matter how much they'd kissed since they met, she couldn't get enough. Each one was new, its own passionate exploration of mouth, tongue, teeth and desire.

"When we get there," he answered as he peppered kisses to her chin, down her throat. "I want to fuck you so bad."

"Fuck me good, Kyran Black. I expect no less." Intentionally giving her teacher's attitude, she knew it would reach him.

"Hell yeah, wanted you to say that." His hands started to move, caressing along her back to push beneath the waistband of her pants. Tightening his long fingers on her ass, he hoisted her up against his cock, the thickness catching her clit just right.

Kyran drew back for a second, looked around. His gaze landed on a recliner and he drew her toward it.

"Undress, quick," he said, already working on the buttons of his shirt.

"Want help?" she offered, slipping her blouse up over her head. She laid it on the tan and green sofa. He kicked his loafers off, his socks followed.

"Anna, hurry." Kyran tossed his shirt next to hers. His boxers dropped to the floor.

Faster now, Anna shucked her sandals and pants. Her bra fastened in the front and she'd begun to unclip it when Kyran's hands caught her wrists. "On second thought, a gentleman is obligated to help a lady out of her clothes."

"You're just trying to get into my pants. And I really like the rebel in you."

"Out of your pants," he corrected, flicking the bra open.

The satin D-cups sprang open, catching on her erect nipples. Looking down at herself, she felt sexy. Kyran's big hands parted the cups, tugged on the tips. He didn't seem to care that she needed underwire for comfort and support. He liked her breasts, let her know it the way he plucked and pinched her nipples exactly the way she needed. Each squeeze of his big fingers sent sparks to her center, making her deliciously wet and ready.

He played for a bit, teasing, tugging, scraping with his blunt nails, caressing. "You like when I do this, love," he said, scissoring the way she needed. His hands tugged the bra straps down her arms until they fell to the floor. "Your breasts are perfect for playing and sucking."

He swooped down, his dark auburn head a shadow of movement. His clever mouth found one nipple, licking, sucking. He'd shaved, the smoothness of his jaw scraping her skin, sending goose bumps of sensation all over. Repeating the play on the right, then the left, he kept her on the edge. Hands of a QB went back to clutch her ass, beneath her panties, pushing them down.

When they were both naked, their sexes pressed so close the head of his cock kissed her opening. Anna wanted to push him back on the recliner and feast on that splendid erection. But he wouldn't budge.

Finally, he lifted her up, carrying her. "Condom," she reminded.

"Stay right there," Kyran said, laying her on the recliner. He went over to his pants, found his wallet and protection.

He came back to her sheathed and ready, his cock rampant, veined along the thick stem, pre-cum dripping from the slit along the purpled head, dampening the reservoir tip.

"Spread your legs for me. Use the arms of the chair," he said.

Knowing this would leave her wide open, Anna grew wetter. She wasn't really sure what to do next. She was game to try anything for Kyran.

Resting her legs on the arms of the chair, she watched him go down on his knees. For a second she worried he might hurt himself. He didn't seem injured or bothered though. Matter of fact, he growled hungrily as he reached between her legs, parting her vaginal lips wide.

"Beautiful pussy," he praised. "All pink, wet and ready for my cock, you want that?"

"Fuck me, Kyran."

"Mhm," he murmured. "First, I need to taste you."

"Kyran, please!"

"Please you, yeah, I will."

He shifted inward, his head bent between her spread thighs. She couldn't remember being so open and vulnerable, but she loved looking at his face when he glanced up to watch her. He was turned-on, flushed. His hand shook where he'd rested it on her leg. One of his fingers swiped the well of her vagina, drawing her juices up to paint her clit. Arching her hips, she gasped. His finger moved, his tongue touching her clit, lapping it to make it dripping wet. Soft hair teased her inner thighs, tickling like feathers.

His penis pointed toward her, so hard now, his balls drawn tight to his body.

"Kyran...I need you."

"Soon," he promised against her pussy, licking vulva, clit, vulva and the hard ridge of her flesh between her vulva and anus that drove her insane with pleasure. He repeated it, shifting his left hand to join his mouth between her legs. His tongue and fingers played, alternating between finger thrusting and licking. His middle finger felt thick and long, stretching her a little, pushing in to find that spot.

His tongue felt velvety soft against her folds, teasing her clit from its hood. Her whole body trembled, her hips arced to meet him, fucking him right back. Vaguely she heard herself cry out. "Oh god, Kyran, let me come, please, please!"

He intentionally drew back. She was so hot and needy, she damn near screamed.

"You come with me this time." He kissed his way up her belly, over her breasts, nipples, tugging, climbing onto the recliner. The recliner had never been used this way.

Kyran quickly rearranged them so that he sat behind her, her back against his muscular chest. He'd draped her legs over the arms of the chair again. How, she had no

idea. Nor did it matter because he was leading her on a heady, erotic journey and she trusted him with her pleasure.

He grasped her waist, lifting her up. "Who's going to fuck you, Anna?" he demanded, his erection notched inside of her enough for her to feel it, but he denied her from taking the plunge.

"Kyran Black," she answered, waiting, wanting.

"Good girl," he whispered, his cock pushing into her a little deeper. "Feel that? Feel my cock going inside you." Anna jerked her hips, nodding. Kyran brought her down, spearing her in one smooth glide, filling her to overflowing.

"Ohmigod," she breathed out, amazed she could take him. Amazed that he could feel so good her inner muscles clutched to keep him rooted there, permanently.

Kyran's cock was incredible, heavy, thick, caressing her most intimate walls. But as much as she wanted him to stay, she had to get him to move, to thrust and take. Lifting herself, she dropped back down, taking him hard. She didn't just want to be taken. She wanted to take him, equally.

She'd always thought porn stars were the only ones who could fuck like this. Here she was pushing back with her hips, taking control, thrusting back at him until a spiral of heat condensed in her belly, pulling so taut, she thought she might splinter.

Losing rhythm, she needed help. Kyran was right there, taking her waist, raising her up, jamming her back down over him. Filling her, pleasing her beyond her wildest dreams, his balls slapped her folds with each powerful thrust. Her wetness coating his erection, easing his way, echoes of their joining warring with their hoarse cries.

His arms came around her when she found the pace she needed. One hand played with her breasts, nipples, going back and forth, jolts of fire zapping her deep inside. Her slit gushed, his taking that much sweeter. His throwing hand delved between her legs, still spread incredibly wide. His thumb rubbed her clitoris, stroking with each rock and roll of her hips.

"I'm coming," she cried out, inner muscles clutching deep, forcing her to grind her hips harder and harder.

"Holy fuck, woman," he growled, his hard thrusts driving into her now. At last she flew apart, the force of her orgasm starting at her navel and rocketing through her muscles, stilling her movements as she came and came, drenching them.

"Hell, Anna, I'm drained and I'll want you again in a few minutes." His voice was a croak of sound, his breathing rapid. The room smelled of salty cum and sweat, Anna drew it in, relishing it the fact that they'd just fucked each other's brains out.

She'd not known she had it in her to keep up with a man like Kyran. But she had, yes, she had. She sure hoped there'd be more experiences like this, only getting better each time.

"We have to work on your language," Anna chuckled.

"You going teacher on me again?" he asked.

"You love that I'm a teacher," she challenged.

He pulled out, still semi-hard. He shifted to the side, resting her along his side, holding her close. His heart slammed in his chest. She could feel it against her ribs, knew hers was racing, her body melting into him.

"There's a lot about you I'm starting to love."

Feeling herself smile like a lovesick teenager, she was about to reply when her phone rang again.

"Oh no," she grimaced, hearing the electronic Caller ID upstairs repeating the numbers.

She knew that number.

"Anna, you just went stiff as a board."

"It's Will, my ex."

"You're still in touch with him?"

"Not really. We see each other occasionally, but we don't socialize or anything." Suddenly aware of being naked and chilled, Anna pushed against Kyran, getting up from the recliner.

Quickly, she found her clothes and got dressed. The warmth didn't return.

"Anna, you okay?"

"I'll be fine," she said, finding her sandals. "He's probably calling about the school board meeting on Monday."

Kyran dressed with the same urgency. He placed their used condom in a trashcan in the kitchen and returned fast.

"Anna, what aren't you telling me? Your practice didn't go well today and now there's a meeting. Your ex is calling."

"It's nothing serious, Kyran." Anna crossed her arms, feeling defensive. They'd just had sex. She didn't want to ruin the afterglow because of Will and school. Too late, she felt exposed and raw, angry that she was being called in to defend herself for kissing a man.

"Tell me," he insisted.

"The *Journal* article was sent to my school," Anna told him. "Manny, the JV head coach, found it, along with the defensive coach."

"What the hell?" Kyran grouched.

"Worse, the superintendent was made aware of it. Kids seemed to know too. I'm to appear before the board of ed on Monday," Anna explained.

"That's bullshit."

"You know that. I know that. The board isn't so happy. Couldn't even participate in practice today," Anna complained. "I don't think it'll mean suspension, but I'm feeling like a kid caught with her hand in a cookie jar. I talked to a lawyer today. It's not fair

and I'm letting the teachers' union know about it if this meeting turns into something serious."

"Come Monday, I'm going with you."

"Don't you have practice Monday morning?"

"Yeah, Coach Matthews will understand."

"You can't miss practice." Punching her fists at her hips, she meant every word. "They're mandatory at this point, right?"

"Nothing I can't work around," Kyran argued.

"I can handle the school board."

"Anna, it isn't right that you're in trouble because of last night."

Walking up to him, she put her hands on his hips, wanting him to listen. The warrior he was wanted to defend her. She appreciated it, could love him for it. But she wouldn't let herself get carried away with the reality of her feelings. She needed to be sensible.

"Kyran, being with you last night was the most impulsive thing I've ever done. And I wouldn't change a thing! But let's be sensible here."

"Not sure I can be when it comes to you," he said, wrapping his arms about her waist. "Our exes are calling, meetings arranged. The pot's being stirred. Why, because I'm younger, famous, we jumped into bed?"

"It's more than our ages. Older women with younger men aren't that uncommon," she said. "When you didn't call me after we met, I was certain you'd realized I was too old. Last night, I worried about it too."

"I know, love. And there's no reason for you to worry. I want to be with you, no one else, you get me?" He kept her close, but he was tense, ready to defend her.

"Let's face it. I'm not getting any younger. I get cranky when I see gray hairs and wrinkles! You could regret getting involved with me. But the truth is I hope you don't."

"Anna, I'm your guy, haven't I convinced you of that?"

"And I like that you're my guy," she admitted. She wouldn't lie to either of them.

"Then don't worry. Don't forget, I spied you at the stadium during the mascot interview process and tried to get you to go out with me." He touched his finger to her chin, tilting her head back. "Why do you think I came back so often?"

"Should have accepted, I know that now," she replied. "I was shocked that you spent time watching while we learned the routines. When I got the job, we found each other."

"And went out on our first date," he added, relaxing, his hold confident.

"A date that closed the coffee shop at two in the morning," she smiled, remembering. "If I'd not given you the wrong number, where do you think we'd be by now?"

"Based on what I'm feeling now, I'd have a ring on your finger." He eased back, placing his hand at her chin. "I want to find out how far we can go together, Anna. Last night wasn't a one-night stand, never intended it to be."

"So what would you have done if I'd stood my ground?" she asked.

"I'd have tried for another date, been patient, whatever you needed. Don't forget, we have a date tonight."

"Yes, we do." She went up on her toes and kissed him. A minute or so later, she eased back, smiling, savoring the taste of him on her tongue. "Hope my hair didn't get all messed up."

"You're beautiful." He didn't really look at her hair. He looked at her face, into her eyes. He'd seen every inch of her, from head to toe. He knew where her faults were and he was still here. "One question before we leave."

"Uh oh," she said.

"We coming back here or going to my place?"

Anna thought about it. Her phone rang again, answering for her. "Yours, if that's okay."

"More than okay," he said. "Run up and grab an overnight bag. Tomorrow's Sunday. We can go to the Harbor or D.C. for the day."

"Either sounds lovely," she agreed.

"Anna," he called out when she was halfway up the stairs. "What does your ex have to do with the school board?"

"Oh, he's on it."

"What the hell?" he growled again.

"Will's harmless."

"The guy fucked a student on his desk. And he's going to hear you defend yourself for that photo? That's messed up." Kyran reached into his pocket, snagged his cell phone. "Go on, get your stuff, got a call to make."

Anna went on to her room. In the distance she heard Kyran say his agent's name.

What bothered her most about Brenda's article was how quickly the woman spread her venom. Sure, getting information about Anna's background wasn't that hard. But it would have taken some time to follow them last night, find out about her teaching job, write the article, get it printed and make sure the powers that be at her school read about it.

Not for the first time, Anna worried that the reporter was stalking Kyran. Brenda's actions were like a jealous, jilted lover, malicious. Then again, she wondered if the piranha had some inside help. Security or someone within the Griffins organization would have access to just about anywhere in the stadium.

Trying to think, she packed an overnight bag with her brushes, toothbrush, makeup, a nightshirt, which she doubted she'd wear, change of panties and bra and

some clothes. It was August so she chose a pair of nice shorts and a matching top she could wear with sandals.

Done, she returned to the kitchen where Kyran paced. He saw her, said bye to his agent and clicked off the phone. "Ready to go?" he asked.

"Sure am," she agreed.

He took her bag from her, escorting her to the door. "Alex's arranging to have your home phone number changed. He also wants you to have today's phone calls on record with the police, in case someone becomes threatening. It'll be done by Monday morning."

"Oh wow, thank you for thinking of that."

"Anytime," he said. "Let's go."

Outside, his black SUV looked menacing in her driveway. She liked that.

Anna let him stow her bag in the back and help her into the front passenger seat. The gentleman in him had him buckling her seatbelt. The rebel had him stepping up into the passenger side to give her a mouthwatering, toe-tingling kiss that went on and on. Her head spun and her pulse raced by the time he drew back.

"What was that for?" she asked as he dropped back to the pavement.

"After-sex kiss, something I forgot when the phone rang."

"Well aren't you sweet," she said, flushing all over. Licking her lips where they tingled, she tasted a hint of saltiness, from her sex.

Kyran drew back, heading around the SUV. He was at the driver's side when his whole body tensed. He looked back at the street.

"What the fuck are you doing?" he shouted, leaving the door wide open and running flat out.

Anna scrambled around, seeing a white, non-descript sedan. Glad it wasn't a minivan, she didn't understand what was going on until Kyran reached the car and nearly wrenched the driver's door from its hinges. He leaned in, grabbed something and jerked it back. The guy inside tried to fight him for it, but Kyran easily fended him off.

In his throwing hand was a big digital camera with a telescopic lens. He studied it, clicked a few things. He made a loud roaring sound. The whole neighborhood could have heard it. Then he suddenly hefted the camera up and smashed it to the ground.

"Asshole, that'll cost you plenty," the guy inside the sedan warned. Wisely the man stayed in the car. Anna was sure that if he got out, Kyran would tear him limb from limb.

"Like I fucking care," Kyran said. "Even one of those photos shows up in print or on the 'net, there'll be hell to pay, you get me, fucker?"

"You smashed the fucking camera," the man cursed back.

"Right, that's Kyran Black you should send the bill to. Want to file a complaint, call the cops right now." Kyran offered his cell phone, ready to dial.



"Know who you are, just doing my job, man. I got rights, you know."

"Yeah, tell Jamison that I filed for a restraining order against her coming around me or my girlfriend. Judge is expected to sign the order Monday. It'll be delivered when it's signed."

Kyran crushed the camera with his heavy foot. It snapped like a kid's toy. He searched through the rubble, found a piece of plastic and tucked it into his pocket.

"Don't give a rat's ass about Jamison. Tell her yourself. You can't take that," the other guy warned.

"Watch me," Kyran dared. "Already told you about the lawyers, bring on yours if you want to take me on. Since you won't call the police, I will. Stay put."

"Fuck off, man, you can't keep me here," the stranger claimed, slamming his car door shut and taking off.

Kyran spun around, snapping photos of the sedan with his cell phone, then he punched numbers on the handy little device.

As the sedan sped down the street, Kyran spoke in his phone, sounded like he'd dialed the police. She'd no idea what was going on, but didn't say a thing until he got back to the SUV.

"Kyran, what's going on? Who was that man?"

"Rag reporter. He was spying on you most of the day, Anna. He had tons of pictures of you."

"What?" Anna gasped, blinking. There was more to it.

"I'll explain more in a sec, cop's coming. Stay in the SUV," he advised her, turning away.

A minute later, a police cruiser pulled into the driveway. Kyran spoke to the officer, showed the man his phone. The two gestured back and forth.

Finally the uniformed officer came up to her. "Ma'am, I'm told there was a reporter outside your house, taking intrusive photos. Did you notice the sedan Mr. Black mentioned?"

"No sir, I didn't. I've been home for the better part of the afternoon. I don't know who he was."

"Would you mind coming down to make a statement of what you witnessed when Mr. Black approached him?"

"Yes, of course, I'm glad to help."

The cop spoke to Kyran again, took some notes, spoke into the lapel mic and left a few minutes later. Once they were alone, Kyran climbed into his SUV.

Kyran was angry, his face red hot, his knuckles white from clenching his fists.

"Kyran, you okay?" she wanted to touch him, calm him.

He drew a breath, finally looking at her.

"Yeah, I'll be okay. It's you I'm worried about. Officer Brown took my statement and sent a cruiser looking for that sedan. Fortunately, I got that asshole's license plate, gave it to the officer. Soon as I can, I'm sending it to Alex and my lawyer," he grumbled, hitting send on the phone. He tossed the phone aside and punched the key into the ignition. The Escalade roared to life. Working the clutch and stick shift like he was a racecar driver, he slowly backed up, careful to check behind him.

"Wait 'til we get on the highway, Anna. We'll talk more when I can think straight."

Anna could barely speak herself. Kyran took on the paparazzi for her. She hoped he didn't get in trouble for it. He'd been magnificent putting that guy in his place.

When they were cruising down the highway, Anna placed her hand over his where it rested on the column between them. "If it helps, you were quite the conquering warrior."

"Yeah, it does. I'm still fucking pissed. We'll have to go to the police station tomorrow morning to make our statements official."

"Are you really going to send in your lawyers against Brenda too?"

"Count on it," Kyran said. "Judge was called this afternoon. That call I took before the cop arrived? It was a detective helping us find information or evidence on her for stalking."

"Did you know that reporter, Kyran? Does she work with him?"

"Think so, I'd seen him with her once at Griffins' Nest Stadium. Officer Brown's going to check their connection and assist the detective. Doesn't matter, that idiot's camera had been aimed at your front window."

"But...but there's a curtain," she reminded, even though she already knew what kind of photos the guy took.

"A curtain parted enough that the camera caught us, you know...fucking."

"Oh my god, what is wrong with these reporters? Did you date Jamison once or something, that why she keeps hounding you?"

"Never," Kyran stated. "She was vaguely familiar to me when I saw her the first time, that's it. A judge should take care of further incidents with her, at least. If she hired that bozo it was a step too far out of bounds."

"We won't know if she did until the cops investigate," Anna said.

"Fortunately, I ruined the camera and got the memory card. I had to turn it over for evidence."

"Nice thinking." Anna leaned back in her seat. More photos, like they needed more trouble with the press. "You know, Kyran, I'm not sure I'm in the mood to go see a movie."

"Tell you what, how about we go home and watch any movie you'd like?" he suggested. "I've got a ton of DVDs or we could rent one from my cable company."

"That sounds nice, actually. Do you think we could put the article and this stuff with Brenda on hold for the rest of the evening?"

"You sure? There are a few things you'll need to know."

"I'd rather enjoy being with you. That camera guy left a sour taste in my mouth. I want to think of something nice."

"All right, how about letting me cook for you, okay?"

"That'd be great," she said.

"Well all right then." Kyran let go of her hand to shift. He reclaimed her hand within seconds.

"Should you call Alex now and tell him about the reporter guy?"

"We'll deal with it at home," he said.

Anna turned up the radio a little. It would be nice to be in Kyran's condo again. It occurred to her sometime later that he referred to his place as home, as if it were hers too.

## Chapter Twelve

Kyran was angry and worried. He didn't want to take Anna back to her house tomorrow night, not now.

Flashes of those photos were ingrained in his retinas. Various angles, from his face buried in Anna's hot, juicy pussy to the moment he'd climbed into that chair, turned her around and fucked her senseless had been on that camera.

The sex had been epic. The aftermath scared him. He didn't know if that guy had another camera. At least he'd taken the memory card and turned it over to the cop.

The problem was Brenda Jamison wasn't in the car. He had no proof that she sent that guy in. Kyran had seen the camera, the pictures and flipped.

Fucker was lucky he didn't get his face smashed in.

"Kyran, it'll be okay," Anna said beside him.

She'd placed her hand in his, totally trusting him. He'd take care of her. Anna was facing a lot of flak for last night. She'd accepted the consequences better than any woman he knew. Hell, he was proud of her.

And yeah, he was falling like a rock. Not that he was complaining. He had Anna James. That made him feel invincible, but even the invincible had an Achilles' heel. His were reporters.

"I'm sorry about that guy, Anna."

"You aren't responsible for his actions."

"If I'd stopped to check the window, I might have caught the bastard sooner."

"We were too far gone to think about the curtain," Anna said.

Smiling at that, he caught the image of her sweet folds, opening and pulsing for him. He couldn't have resisted her. "I'll make it all up to you later. Movies and dinner in the privacy of home sounds like a perfect date to me."

"Got to agree on that," she laughed. "Besides, despite those pictures, you were incredible on that recliner."

"Well thanks, I aim to please." Tightening his hand, he drove with his left.

"And modest too," she teased.

He wasn't modest. He was impulsive. Nudity wasn't a big deal. If it were just him in those photos, he'd have walked away. Had he not acted on impulse last night, she wouldn't be facing a school board.

His phone rang and he let it go to voice mail. It was Alex's ringtone. He'd call back when he could drive without wanting to hit something.

A rest stop came up and he pulled in to park. "Just take a sec," he told Anna.

He hit voice mail on the cell. Alex had gotten a call from the officer who'd come to Anna's house. The officer wanted them to come down to the police station Sunday morning.

Tucking the phone away, he looked at Anna. "You okay with stopping at the police station tomorrow? They need us to make a statement."

"Of course, I already said I would."

"Good, I'll send a text to Alex later. After we go to the station, we'll go out. Sound good?"

"A date with you, you bet."

Back on the road, Kyran decided to treat her like a queen. Good food, great movies, fantastic sex, sounded like a plan to him.

"What are you plotting over there, Kyran?" she asked.

"Your seduction," he answered.

"Um, hate to break it to you," she warned, laughing softly. "I've been seduced many times already."

"Then expect some more," he told her. "I've got you for the remainder of the weekend."

"Don't forget I've got you too."

"Yeah, you do," he promised.

They drove on, his left hand steady on the wheel, holding Anna's hand with his right. Anxious to get home, he kept his eyes on the road. He couldn't see anyone tailing them. By luck, he'd thought to get the guy's plate number and gave it to the officer. It should help find him.

They reached Silver Spring half an hour later. Getting to his condo took five more minutes. He was glad he'd chosen the gated community.

"This is a convenient place to hide when dodging the press," Anna said. "I can't wait to see your condo again."

"I'm not the only celebrity type living here," Kyran replied. "There are security cameras at the main and back gates, with guards posted twenty-four-seven at each post. No visitor gets through security without permission from a resident."

"Kind of a hassle if you want Chinese takeout or pizza, don't you think?"

"Eh, it's necessary. There are politicians here too." He used his card and waved to the guard that stepped out. Recognizing the man, Kyran nodded and drove on. "If I want takeout, I phone down to the gatehouse. I'll either go pick up my order from there or have the guy that drives around in a golf cart bring it to my door."

"Nice," Anna said.

"It works out for everyone."

Kyran steered his SUV into his drive, heading for the garage door. Anna timed it perfectly and hit the opener. It didn't take long to get inside. "Head on in. I'll get your stuff."

"Thanks." Anna went inside like she belonged there. She looked back for a second, the light from the hallway catching her face. She looked so pretty right then he felt sucker punched in the gut by one thought.

*Mine!*

"Something wrong, Kyran?"

"Not at all, Anna James," he answered. "Make yourself at home. I'll be right in."

"Okay." She went on, turning on some lights.

His heart pounding, Kyran jogged to get her bag and purse. He put them in the hall leading up to his loft.

"Check out the DVDs," he suggested. "If you find something you like, we'll go with that. I'll work on dinner prep."

"I can help if you need it," she offered.

"Movie first," he decided. "Come see me after you find one. If not, there's the 'net, pay-per-view or all the movie channels you can think of."

"Got to admit, I can't wait to see a movie on that big screen," she said.

Kyran headed for the kitchen. Anna mentioned Chinese takeout. He could do better.

Kicking off his shoes, he set to work. In the pantry, he found the makings for Pad Thai. "Hey, Anna, you have allergies to nuts?"

"Nope, can eat most anything," she answered absently.

Chalking that up in the "good to know" category, he found Thai noodles and peanuts in the pantry. Diced chicken in the freezer. His spice rack was filled with all he'd need to make Thai, Chinese, Italian, Cajun, Creole or whatever flavor he wanted. Fresh herbs were grown in a small garden on the kitchen windowsill.

Setting out everything he'd need, he put the frozen chicken in a tub of cool water to defrost it. Everything else could wait. He'd rather go find Anna.

He found her bent over, staring at the movies he had on a low shelf. Her fine ass was right there, in his view.

Not usually an ass man, he had to say there was something about Anna's that drove him crazy. He didn't get off on anal sex normally. Women got scared about his size. He didn't like to hurt them, especially not Anna. He did like to play with her and there were toys he'd use on his school teacher in the future.

"You going to stay all the way over there?" she asked, glancing back at him. "Or let that erection go to waste."

Hot damn, the coil in his groin drew so tight he almost spewed.

He was halfway to her, his eyes on her ass. His heart tripped the way it had when he lost his virginity. "Keep teasing me and I'll spank that pretty ass of yours."

She straightened, turning fast. Her hair flipped back a little. It was cute.

"Just you try it, stud," she dared, her face flame red.

He'd bet his left nut Anna was wet. "Never wave a red flag in front of a bull."

"Ha, you'd never hurt me," she said, trust in her eyes.

She had him there. "Yeah, well, be prepared for what comes next."

"Hope you come next," she replied. Minx emphasized the verb, standing her ground.

Kyran was on her in a flash. She kissed him as fiercely as he kissed her. No woman kissed like her. Her soft lips parted, letting his tongue fill her mouth. She'd deep throated him last night, worked his cock like she'd been born for it. She worked his tongue now, sucking him.

He let her stop the kiss. Anna didn't disappoint. She licked his lips.

"Strip," he told her, stepping back. "Now."

"Bossy again," she chided, but went for the top button of her pants.

"Slow it down." Unlike when they were in her family room, he wanted to savor this.

She looked like what she was, a pretty teacher about to be taken hard. Flushing more, she slowly worked her pants down her legs, stepped out of them. Her blouse came up and off. She went slower with her bra.

"Play with them."

"Them?"

"Your tits, play, pinch those nipples the way you like."

Bravely, she arched one brow, pretending defiance. But her hand went to her right breast, cupping it. She was a D-cup, generously curved and only slightly bowed due to being fit. She lifted her breast, squeezed. She added her other hand to the right, presenting them.

"More," he directed. Her eyes widened, her mouth parted.

She continued to play with her breasts. Her nipples became raspberry red, rigid with arousal. They looked so juicy his mouth watered.

Feeling a little shaky, he sat back on the sofa. Anna didn't skip a beat. She drew her bra off completely, slid her panties to her feet. Bent over as she was, he couldn't see her pussy. Her breasts swayed. Nice!

"Turn around, face the bar." Getting an idea, he waited until she obeyed then took off his clothes. "Look at the mirror there."

"I see it," she said, a hitch in her voice. She was seeing her age again.

He didn't care if she was forty. She was sexy. They matched, that's all he needed to know. He came up quickly, took one of the king chairs and turned it 'til the back was against the bar.

"Put your feet on the base of the chair and your hands on the bar. Don't let go," he said, searching his wallet for a condom while she climbed onto the chair as told.

His cock head was soaking wet. He jerked himself watching her, coated his penis with fluid. As pretty as she'd been when looking for a movie, she was bare-assed naked and waiting for him. He could see her face in the mirror, she watched him put on the condom, walk up behind her.

The way she was positioned forced her to keep steady by holding the bar. Her legs were spread. Gently, he stroked her hair, taking his time. He wanted to fuck hard. He went slow, letting her wait. She smelled like sex and woman, aroused.

Kyran ran his fingers down the curvature of her spine, felt the ridges. Nearing her rear, he cupped her cheeks.

"This," he warned, leaning in to give her a gentle kiss, "is for daring me. 'Cause it's what you want, isn't it?"

Flattening his palm, he lightly spanked her right cheek, the left. Repeating it in quick, short taps, keeping her guessing where he'd spank next. She gasped, bucked, her juices sluicing down her thighs.

"Kyran," she cried, shoving her hips back at him. She was getting off on it. Hell yeah, he'd thought she might.

"Well well, my bad girl's back," he praised, kissing her nape as he gently stroked her fine, warm ass. Being certain he didn't cause real pain, he swatted her again. "You want my cock, Anna?"

"You know I do," she almost grunted.

"Say it." Stinging the opposite cheek, he saw it was pretty and pink with heat. "Want to be bad with me, sugar, say you want my cock."

"Jeez, yes, I want your cock," she whispered, presenting her backside to him.

She almost lost her balance. Catching her, he spoke in her ear. "You okay, love?"

"Yeah, this isn't easy though," she admitted, wobbling on the chair base.

His college roommate had given him the set that had been part of a real Boston bar. Kyran refinished the mahogany masterpiece. Big, solid, it was something that required dismantling whenever he moved, but the base wasn't big enough.

An idea came to him. "Try climbing up and kneeling on one of the chairs." He helped her get onto the solid bar chair, bending her across the bar. "Hold on."

She was a little high for sex this way. But her pussy was presented like a gift. Leaning forward, he swiped his tongue along her vulva. Anna cried out, creamed for him. She was so fucking wet he saw it dripping.



Lapping her thighs clean, he tasted her feminine saltiness. She was delicious. He did it again, honing in on her pussy for good long while. Her hips ground backward against his face. Getting a good angle, he tongued her clit, circling it, drinking her.

He could get off on giving oral to her. To keep from coming, he grabbed himself and kept at her. She had the hottest honey on the planet. Drinking her in, he ran his tongue along her folds, nipping before pushing inside her hole. Inner muscles clutched at his tongue. She fucked him right back, squirming to find her release.

Purposefully keeping her on that precipice, he slowed down, giving one lick from her vulva to her puckered ass. "Kyran," she gulped, spurting more cum, her thighs shaking from the climax.

There was a step unit on the other side of the bar. Stopping long enough to get it, he placed it on the floor and stepped up behind her. At the right level now, he enjoyed the view. She was all about sex laid across his bar.

"Ms. Anna James, do you permit me to fuck you now?"

"If you don't, I might hurt you."

Grinning like a fool, he moved in closer. "Will you try something different, love?"

"For you, yes."

"Brace your arms on the bar and keep your knees on the chair, so you're on all fours," he said.

"Doggie?" she asked, doing as he'd asked.

"Look at you, Anna. Beautiful." Totally trusting him to keep her from falling off the bar, she was like a goddess there. He moved in nice and close. Her pink butt felt warm against his groin.

Widening his legs so her thighs fit between his, he drew back enough to aim his cock at her pussy. Thrusting and pressing her legs closed with his hands, he drove into her. She was so tight this way he almost lost it. Gloved heat wrapped around him, massaged the glans and shaft to pull him in deep and he waited.

So good, he started sawing into her so hard she shouted for more.

"Yes, oh god, yes, Kyran, harder!" she called out, taking every long thrust.

Using his left hand to brace her, he ran his other through her hair, tugging enough that she had to watch the mirror. She looked wild, nothing like the teacher.

"Sometime soon I'm going to make love to you bare, woman." The thought had him pushing into her so hard, the whole bar moved. "Right now, watch us fuck."

Not really sure how he kept her on the chair and bar while thrusting, he slowed long enough to hear her. "Yes, yes, bare, oh my god, I'm coming thinking about it." Her inner grip swallowed his cock, pulsing, drenching him from helmet to balls.

Even though they'd continue to be safe, Kyran knew there'd be a time when they wouldn't worry about condoms. His balls slapped her ass each time he went deep. Her butt cheeks were still warm from his palms. This was too good, too right. The tightness

blowing his mind, she was incredible. She took what he gave, hard and fast or with slower, more deliberate depth.

Her kegels clenched, his cock caught so deep, her spasms massaged him 'til cum curled from his groin and exploded out of him, coating his cock head. Easing them both through orgasm, he shortened his thrusts until neither could move.

"Jeez, maybe next time we can try the bed again?" she said, breathless.

"Was that too much for you, Anna?" Drawing back, he slipped out, slightly softened.

"Oh no, I loved it, was like you got even bigger than you already are." She righted herself, letting him help her down. "I've always had plain vanilla sex with varied positions. I mean, I've never let a guy have control or want to teach me things I'd only seen in porn flicks. With you I can't get enough, makes me feel beautiful."

"Anna, you are beautiful. Anytime you want to call the shots when we're having sex, say so."

"That mean you'd let me tie you up sometime, blindfold you and feast?"

He wouldn't have said yes to anyone else. Giving control to another wasn't easy for him. He could with Anna. "Yeah, if it got you off."

Kyran turned her around to kiss her deeply. "After we rest up and have dinner we'll watch a movie."

"What, no more sex?"

"Didn't say that. I've got a surprise before the movie. Afterward, I'll take you upstairs and make love to you."

"Fair warning, Kyran," she said. "If we do too much tonight, I won't be good in the morning."

"Next time, I'll satisfy you so good, it'll last 'til morning."

"Promises, promises," she teased.

Kyran let her go. "Count on it. You're going to be begging for it when I take you later."

"Well, there's a plan. How about dinner then? I can help."

"Find a movie first. You know where I'll be."

Anna went to get her clothes, redressing.

"Shirt and panties only," he said.

"Then boxers for you."

Nodding, he got rid of the condom and found his boxers. At ease with Anna, he was shocked at how fast they'd fallen into a routine. She didn't balk when it came to sex with him. She hadn't flaked out after the *Journal* article and cameraman.

He went to the kitchen and Anna joined him. She wore her green blouse, only halfway buttoned, and lace panties. They prepared the Pad Thai.

While he worked on the food, he asked Anna to set the table in his small dining room. She found it off to the right of the kitchen. The left went to the great room. A breakfast bar separated the kitchen from the living area but allowed him to see everything. He'd always liked the open feel of his condo.

Anna fit right in. She padded around with ease, half naked. She was open, willing, gutsy and sexy.

He hadn't lived here when he first signed with the Griffins. His place in Alexandria had been smaller, trendier. Central to the wealthiest sections in the area, his ex had loved it. Seville liked to be seen dining in the fanciest places Alexandria, D.C. and Fairfax had to offer, especially with him. Gorgeous, she could strike a pose for a camera one minute and off the paparazzi the next. The news hounds loved her, connecting her with him on their front pages.

Once he'd read a headline that he'd bought her a ring worth a hundred grand. He'd just come off rehab and signed with his current contract, was about to move to Virginia. Seville didn't take kindly to his statement to a reporter that he hadn't bought the ring. She'd actually hauled off and bitch slapped him. He didn't hit women, so he walked away, left the next day. He should have ended things then, but she'd apologized and she'd helped him through his rehab. He'd given it a try again, didn't work out.

Maybe his piranha had done him one favor. Because of that photo with Ricky's girlfriend, Seville had threatened to scratch his eyes out. He broke things off for good. Between then and now, she'd found another guy. Some model as beautiful as she was and willing to be towed along on her walk of fame. Odd that she'd contacted him in L.A and here. More so, that she called Anna.

Taking note of that, Kyran was pulled back to Anna with a touch of her hand. He looked down. Saw her left hand on his shoulder. Visions of an emerald and diamond ring claiming that hand took over. Not just any ring, his ring.

"Fuck," he whispered, wheeling around to pull Anna against him.

"What's wrong?" She hugged him. "Kyran, you're shaking."

"No worries, just hungry." He didn't want to scare her or rush her. He'd always been the kind of guy who accepted that when you had something good, that worked, you took care of it. He and Anna worked, simple as that.

"Hope it's that and not too much sex," she said against his shoulder.

He tucked her closer. "Nah, everything's fine." His cock hardened between them.

"Mhm, something's come up here," she teased, rubbing against him, intentionally.

Little minx continued to rub herself against his erection. "You want to eat, behave!" Playfully spanking her fine ass, he backed up.

Even he needed to eat. In a few, he had plans for her pussy that had everything to do with sex later.

"Spoilsport," she griped with a smile on her face.

"Necessary if I want to make you come so many times after dinner, you'll be grateful we're in bed."

"Grateful, huh, I'll hold you to that, hero."

Laughing softly, he placed his hand behind her neck and held her steady long enough to be kissed. "Want some music while we eat?"

"Sure."

"There's a remote on the sideboard in the dining room. Hit play, then random. I'll bring dinner."

"Okay," she agreed, walking away.

Music came on over the hidden speaker system. He had everything from jazz and blues to rock and alternative, even some classical. He served up two big bowls of Pad Thai noodles with crushed peanuts, oriental spices, vegetables and chicken. Anna had set the table, pouring ice water into their glasses.

She remembered he didn't drink alcohol during the season.

"Come have a seat," he invited, putting the bowls on the table.

"Smells divine," she said, eagerly claiming the chair he'd held out for her.

Pushing her in, he kissed the side of her neck. "Yeah, it does."

"Sit, eat, you're starving, remember."

"Now who's bossy?"

He took his seat across from her. She'd placed chopsticks out but didn't use them.

"I can never use those," she said, gesturing with her fork to the chopsticks.

"Ah, here," he offered, showing her how he held them.

After a few tries, she laughed. "Think it's best to use a fork."

They dug in. It tasted good. He'd added the right amount of spice and peanuts.

"Holy smoke, Kyran, this is fantastic!" she praised, digging in again.

"Thanks," he said.

They ate for a while, occasionally talking about food. Anna liked to cook, but mainly kept her dishes simple. For the most part, he was a meat and potatoes kind of guy, yet he liked experimenting with food.

The whole time he thought this was how he'd talk with Nick or Phalen. Relaxed, no worries, just nice conversation that was so easy they lost track of time.

"What did you do over the summer, Anna?" he asked curiously.

"Tested for my black belt," she answered.

"Really, in Taekwondo?" he responded. "Last winter you'd mentioned a brown belt. You'd taught some of your students self-defense."

"True, and yes, Taekwondo," she said. "I probably could have earned the belt sooner, but due to school and football practice, I had to take a break until classes ended."

Felt really good to pass. Plus the choreographer loves the fact that he can work martial arts into my routines."

"Congrats, black belt, guess I better watch out. You can kick my ass." He laughed, watching Anna smile easily.

"Believe it," she warned. "If you don't live up to that promise you made before cooking, I will."

"You could try. There's a thing or two I could do to defend myself."

"Such as..."

"Judo and kickboxing," he said. "Both great ways to remain in shape, along with conditioning required to play for the Griffins. Team trainers can be tough, you know."

"Well, what do you know? Martial artist, football hero, nice guy, all in one sexy package."

"Think I'm nice, huh," he said. "With you I seem to be, can't say the same for everyone."

"Can't say I'm all that fond of reporters and cameramen right now," Anna admitted.

"I can't either. Let's change the subject." He took another bite, swallowed.

"Good call," she agreed.

She took a drink and they went back to talking about karate.

"This is nice," Anna said sometime later. Plates were empty. They'd rocked back, relaxed.

"I think so too."

"Can I ask you something?" Her face tightened, her shoulders straight. "You keep saying you're my guy. I need to know that you mean it."

"Of course, Anna, as long as it's what you want. If not, say so and I'll slow down."

"It may be impulsive, but it feels...um...right being with you. Once in a while I worry that you'll see my age and lose interest."

Kyran put his hand on hers. "When something feels right, might as well accept it and take care of it."

"Well, since I'm falling for you fast, I guess I've got a boyfriend."

Glad she wasn't balking, he brought her hand up to his mouth. Kissing the back, he watched her face. "Keep something in mind."

"You're a little bossy sometimes?" she guessed.

"Only when you want me to be," he said. "Thing is, I don't screw around. I want the same promise from you."

"Kyran, I never once cheated on a guy I was dating. No way would I do that to you."

"Good to know," he said, pleased.

"Then you believe me," she stated.

"Course I do. Just know I take care of what's mine."

She smiled, looked happy. "Am I yours?"

He'd thought he'd said she was. Anna could be shy sometimes, too worried about being forty. He understood the concern. It didn't matter to him. He was attracted to her and he didn't see that changing anytime soon.

"Yeah," he said, kissing her knuckles again. "I'll do a lot for you, Anna. But I won't make you stay if it's not what you want."

"Me either," she replied. "Be honest with me, okay? I'll do the same for you."

"Count on it. How about we clean up and get ready for a movie?"

"Sounds good," she said.

They removed the dishes from the table and went to the kitchen. Between them, they filled the dishwasher in a matter of five minutes. Everything went back to normal in his kitchen and they headed out to the great room.

"Tell you what, how about sitting right there," Kyran suggested.

"Okay."

His big leather sofa reclined in two places, the center folding down as a table. She sat on one side. "Rock back, relax."

She did, using the wooden lever on the side. "Join me." She patted the other spot.

"In a minute," he said, heading up to the loft.

"Whatever you're doing, Kyran Black, better be worth it," she said loud enough for him to hear. "I've picked an action flick with Christian Bale."

Liking their easy banter, he searched his bedside table for his surprise. He'd bought them on his way home from Alex's office, Anna in mind. She was amazingly sexual, capable of multiple orgasms. Whoever she dated before him hadn't touched that part of her or recognized it. He'd bet his salary that she'd masturbated during sex just to get off, the guys going too fast to notice. She didn't want to be responsible for achieving them or working so hard to come on her own.

Not that he minded helping her masturbate. Hearing her rub herself off in his SUV last night, he'd had to park and fuck her. It'd been mutual then, hot.

Hard thinking about it, he remembered a small package of lubricant, purposefully ignoring the strip of condoms. They'd use them later.

For now, he took the square wooden box and made his way back downstairs. Anna remained on the sofa.

"You're up to no good, I can tell." She leaned forward a little to see what was in his hand.

"I'm up all right." He pointed to his tented boxers.

"Well now, isn't that a lovely sight to see." Boldly, she licked her lips. "Can I take a bite?"

"No, no biting." She gave fantastic head, no reason to add teeth marks. "But you can have some fun if you sit back. Open your mind and those gorgeous legs."

"We'll need a condom," she reminded.

"They're upstairs. We won't need them yet." Anna watched him approach, curious and a little shy. "Come on, sugar, trust me. Open up."

Parting her thighs, she waited there. Kyran knelt before her. Half tempted to lick her through the pink panties she wore, he didn't. He drew the silk down her legs, kissing her ankles. Tossing the scrap of material aside, he looked up at her.

"You're always wet for me," he said, proud.

"I can't get enough when I'm with you. Sex has never been this good for me, ever."

"That's 'cause it's right, Anna." He slipped his hands up along her thighs, parting her wider. She was silky smooth, freshly shaven, her muff still trimmed, soft looking.

"Tilt your hips forward a little, that's it."

Strong as she was, she obeyed. Able to see her vulva, he tested the wetness. He gathered some, took it to his mouth. She watched, swallowed hard.

Tasting her thick essence, he sucked his finger, smelling her sweetness.

Finally he opened the box. "For you."

"Umm...are they Ben-Wah balls?"

"Close enough," he answered. "These are better."

Bound together with a nylon string, two small metallic eggs sat in the velvet box.

"I'm going to use those now?"

Kyran leaned in. "Only if you want to, Anna. Always remember you can say no to anything that you aren't good with, you get me?"

"I'd like to try." She relaxed, parting her legs more.

He broke open the lubricant, putting it on his finger. Playfully, he fingered her pussy, lining her vagina and vulva with the water-based lube. Anna squirmed, naturally chasing the light fucking he gave with his hand.

"Oh god," she whispered, her head falling back.

"There's more," he promised, lubricating the eggs.

"Yes."

"Close your eyes and breathe deep when I tell you."

Anna flushed but didn't balk. Spread for him and ready, she looked very pretty.

"Eyes and breathe," he reminded.

Her eyes drifted closed. Carefully he touched her sex, letting her know he was there. He took the eggs, rested them against her clit. She jolted a little.

"You good?" he asked.

"Yeah, I'm good."

He played, parting her feminine lips with one hand, gently inserting the first egg. "Oh..." she whispered, more out of curiosity than concern.

The warmth of her body and juices drew him deeper, letting him push the metal toy in further. "Kyran!"

"Easy, love," he whispered. "There's more, take both."

Kyran repeated with the second egg, leaving the string outside of her body. Experimenting, he tugged until one rested against her G-spot. Anna's hips arched. Her legs wide, the eggs worked their magic.

"There you go, Anna. Ease into it, feel it, rock your hips back and forth. That's it."

"Don't know if...I...can," she said. She moved whether she knew it or not. Exactly as he'd told her, her hips rocked with the small metallic eggs. Each had a smaller ball inside that would shift with her movements when she did, causing little vibrations.

"I'm coming," she moaned. "Ohmigod..." He smelled her cum, saw her labia pulse.

"Yeah, do it. As much as you want, when you want, let yourself go." Kyran moved back, closed her legs. "If you want to get off during the movie, rock those sweet hips or tug on the string."

"No way can I watch a movie like this," she growled. "Take them out!"

"You sure you want that?" Her face was beautiful, her eyes half open now. She'd yet to stop rocking.

"No, god, no, again," she cried out, rocking herself through another O.

Finally she stilled, letting the toy settle back into place. "Now I'll start the movie."

"Fair warning, I might jump you during the show," she warned.

"Something tells me you're going to get lucky soon enough."

Smiling, Kyran stood, reached for the remote and the DVD case sitting on the coffee table.



## **Chapter Thirteen**

Kyran was as good as his word. He clicked the remote, went over and got them two sodas and lowered the lights.

Mission accomplished, he sat next to her on the sofa. There was a snack table that separated them, which was convenient for the drinks. The gigantic flat-screen television lit up the room, showcasing the dramatic special effects and dozens of colors.

It was fantastic for watching blockbusters. Except for one thing. Anna had no idea what they were watching. Anytime she moved, even a little, the metallic eggs inside her vagina rocked or shifted and she'd spike.

She couldn't explain why it was the most breathtaking toy she'd ever experienced. They seemed so simple and harmless and smooth. They didn't have multiple settings or vibrating bunny ears or fingers. Now she wasn't going back to only her vibrator. These things were simply amazing. She bet using the vibe with the eggs would be explosive.

"Anna, you okay?" Kyran moved the half-full sodas to a coffee table, folding the snack tray back into the back of the sofa.

"Ah, I'm good," she answered, unmistakably shifting to find that continuous fullness that would set her off. "So good, in fact, I might never have to have sex again to get off."

There was no way she'd give up sex with him though. He made her daring and sexy, she wanted to experience everything there was, every position. But only with him, she realized. She wouldn't experiment with toys or think beyond vanilla with any of her exes. They made her feel older, unsophisticated and responsible.

Sometimes she wanted to be wild, free. Kyran let her fly. Staying with her to make sure she didn't crash.

"Hey now, we can't have that." He shifted closer, distracting her by easing right up beside her, his shoulder against her shoulder. "Like the movie?"

"Christian Bale is in it, heck yeah," she said, grinning.

Actually Kyran was far more exciting. He smelled really sexy with a little Oriental spice from dinner. His dark auburn hair needed to be touched.

Shifting, she turned into him, rocking the eggs again. A mini-earthquake set off deep inside, trembling outward from her center to her toes. "Jeez!"

"Good, aren't they?"

"Amazing, wouldn't have thought they'd work."

"Try this," he suggested. "Come sit between my legs, lie back against me."

Anna moved over, clenching her thighs tight to hold the eggs deep. She'd heard women could walk around with these things inside their bodies. How, she'd no clue. Personally, rocking was enough.

Kyran helped her settle back against him, his legs parted, aligned alongside hers. Big, muscular arms came around her waist, his fingers splayed out over her abs. One pressed against her bellybutton, helping her rock real slow.

"There you go, love," he whispered, kissing the side of her neck. "Rock as much as you need."

His left hand delved between her thighs. The little string was tucked between her folds. He found it, tugging.

"No, please leave them in."

The tugging stopped as he swept his thumb over her clit. It was a tease that sent her into orbit. Her whole body stiffened, her climax causing a spurt of juices to shoot out.

Embarrassed, she tried to close her legs. Kyran kept her steady. "No, don't hide. You're beautiful when you come like that." He hummed proudly against the back of her head, brushing a kiss there. "When you're ready, I'll take them out."

Her heart was racing, her clit sensitive. "Just need to relax a little," she said.

"Okay." Kyran caressed her thighs, running his hands back to her belly.

Their attention went to the movie...for about ten minutes. Kyran's penis lengthened, getting harder whenever she shifted. Long fingers etched from her belly to her shoulder, swiping her hair out of his way. Warm, moist lips touched the back of her neck, then her collarbone, a swirl of his tongue causing her to arch. Her clit grew impossibly sensitive, erect. She felt it protrude from the little hood, her labia blossoming.

The eggs shifted, connecting together to send a tremor through her, vaginal walls clutching at them. She didn't come that time, just hung on the edge, close, tense. He kept it really slow, simple kisses along her neck, sometimes licking her earlobe, sucking.

"Kyran, the movie," she reminded, completely uncaring about Christian on the big screen.

"Is good," he said.

"Should I have picked a porn flick or something?" She hadn't seen any in his collection. Of course, he was really good in bed. Maybe he had watched his share of how-to guides. Better that than thinking of how he'd most likely learned how to please a woman.

"Nah, Anna, not tonight. This spot right here." The tip of his tongue swiped her collarbone. "It needs attention."

Anna couldn't take it. She had to face him a little, easing herself between the arm of the sofa and Kyran's side to rest her head on his bare chest. His cock had extended beyond the waistband of his boxers, the tip visible.

If he could kiss, she could touch. Still able to see the TV, she felt like purring as she began to stroke him. He was beautifully made, his cock a powerful muscle, satin at the head, steel at the girth.

Purposefully, she teased enough to keep his attention. His penis was so hard and heavy, it pointed toward his navel as she shoved her hand down his front to play with his testicles.

"This is nice," she whispered.

"Mhm," he murmured.

Kyran stroked his left hand over her belly, the steady rise and fall of his chest relaxing. His heartbeat rhythmic in her ear, she watched the movie, caressing as he stroked.

At some point, his fingers went to a button of her shirt. A simple flick of his wrist and the button released. The next one down parted like a hot knife through butter.

"Anna." Saying just her name, he drew her gaze to his face. The high-definition screen sent myriad colors over his cheekbones. He looked beautiful. His concentration only on her sent her heart racing.

"Kyran." Uttering his name, she watched him dip his head. His mouth touched hers, softly at first. Lips upon lips, his tongue licked the top, bottom, pushing against her teeth.

After the amazing sex on the bar, the slowness of his kiss took her breath away. Even though he'd had her twice already today, kissing touched her heart. Burying the giggle in her throat, she kissed him just as slow, pressing really close, letting him lead.

"Are you laughing?" he asked, finally lifting his head.

"Caught," she confessed, laughing softly. "Not sure I've made out on a sofa like this since I was in high school." For a second she tensed. Monday she'd face the board of ed.

"Easy now, don't go where I think you did. Monday will turn out all right."

He guessed why she'd tensed. "I hope so."

"I'm going to be there for you, Anna." She tensed even more.

"You can't. Practice, remember?"

"You'll need to trust me on how to deal with football," he said. "I can't let you get in trouble for that photo."

"That's sweet. I mean, what can they do? The article wasn't our fault. The picture is us kissing. It's not pornographic, not really."

Well, okay, the kiss had been toe-tingling, skyrocketing amazing and her clothes were disheveled. It could have been worse, like the camera guy outside her house.

Kyran rescued those photos, thank God.

"Hey, let's not think about that, all right?" Kyran swiped his hand to the last button, parting her shirt wide open. "We can talk about it tomorrow. Let me find a way to help."

"Good enough," she agreed, wanting to go back to the gentle intimacy they'd fallen into over dinner.

He kissed her again and Anna stopped worrying. Kyran was here with her, awakening her sensuality. She wanted this, wanted him. To let him know, she wet her fingertip and ran it over the head of his cock. Joined with pre-cum, she kept the touch light and wet, not wanting to rush.

His gut clenched, telling her he liked it. She really wanted to suck him, but decided to savor that feast upstairs in bed. Dominantly left-handed, he kept that hand roaming over her abdomen and rib cage, gliding all the way up to her breasts. Weighing one, then the other, he squeezed and played.

"Kyran..." she breathed out, suddenly needing more, like a bed.

"Gotcha, love," was all he said. "Stand up for a second."

She did. Kyran reached for the handy remote. The big screen went dark. Light from the loft spilled down into the great room.

"Make love to me, please," she asked when he turned back.

"Have every intention of pleasing you," he answered.

"Can't wait to get in that bed again," she admitted, grinning.

Could he hear her heart pounding in her chest?

Kyran's hand touched her chin, tilting her head back. They kissed. Anna went up on her toes to wrap her arms about his neck. He made her feel tiny when she knew she wasn't. Beautiful when in reality she was average.

"Come on," he invited, drawing back.

Walking took effort, the eggs rolled inside her, inducing another mini-climax that left her knees wobbly. He didn't miss a beat when he swung her up in his arms.

"Kyran, I can walk," she argued, though maybe not.

"Let me take care of you," he said, taking the stairs to the loft.

The bedside lamps glowed with soft, low lighting. She'd thought he would take her to the bed. Instead, he carried her into the bath, hitting a light switch with his elbow en route.

Carefully, he set her on the double sink marble-top vanity. The marble was cold. Anna jumped.

Kyran went over and grabbed one of the warm towels by the tub.

"Are we taking a bath?"

"Maybe later," he said.

He came back with the towel, helping her move about so she could sit on the warm towel. "Wow, you are a nice guy."

Both of his hands came to her face. "With you, guess I am, love." This time, she tugged him to her, rewarding him with a long, deep kiss, sucking on his tongue. He liked that. She loved how he tasted.

Finally easing their kiss, she let him pull back when his hands came to her thighs. With a little pressure, he pushed them apart. Understanding what he was about, she parted them wider, leveraging her hips at the edge of the vanity.

Clever fingers touched her vulva. Warm and steady, he spread her vaginal lips. Anna wanted to know how to use the eggs, so she put her hand to her sex and tugged the string.

Together, they worked them from her body. She pushed. He pulled. The first slid out, a smooth, easy glide. Kyran's thumb stroked her clit as the second reached her opening. She came hard, her inner muscles grasping, unexpectedly gushing from within as the egg slipped free.

Breathless, she could barely move until he wrapped his arms around her waist to steady her. "Okay, love. It's okay," he crooned, his mouth pressed to her ear. "Think it's safe to say you like your present."

"Think it's safe to say it's payback time," she promised.

She totally surprised him by sliding her hand down and smacking him playfully on the butt. He recoiled, but his cock pushed his boxers so far out, they began to slip down.

"Vixen," he growled, kissing her hard even as she helped him out of his boxers.

Insides quieting down some, Anna breathed deep. Kyran stepped back, helping her down from the counter. He led the way back to the bedroom, not stopping until they reached the bed.

"Sit here, love," he said, patting the high mattress.

She climbed up, sitting on the edge. Naturally, his hands came to her hips, then her thighs, wanting to spread them for her.

"No, Kyran, I want to give to you, at the same time," she said, sensing what he was about. Not that she didn't want oral. She loved it. He knew exactly how to suck and lick every inch of her pussy without making her clit go numb.

A smile stole across his face, brightening his eyes like a light bulb went off over his head.

"I love the way you think, Anna." He crawled up onto the bed.

"Oh god yes," she almost squealed. Kyran's cock in her mouth while he tongued her would be wonderfully wicked.

"Let's get that shirt off," he suggested, tugging the blouse down her arms.

Anna wiggled a little to help. The blouse went flying off the bed.

His silk boxers were already gone, thank god. Jeez, the man was sex on a stick! His cock was rampant, thick, the head purpled with lust. She couldn't wait to play. She immediately went to touch him, but was stopped.

"Hold on a sec," he said. "Turn to your side."

Choosing to lie with her head facing the pillows, she rose up a little by resting on her forearm. Her heart did a double flip when he unexpectedly leaned over and kissed her temple. Then he shifted to face the footboard.

Drawn by the need to touch, they melded together. Kyran's arms braced her thighs, spreading her open, one leg draped over his shoulder. His cock tapped her mouth. She licked the tip, delved into the slit for a taste of his fluid. Warm breath bathed her inner thighs, the first lick of his tongue on the folds of her sex made her cry out. He worked her labia, altering between licking and sucking.

"Hmm," he hummed, licking deeper, slower, running through her petals, dipping inside, circling her clit. His tonguing was fantastic, sweetly ravishing her folds like he could drink her up and keep swallowing.

Anna honed in on his glans, licking, making him good and wet. His hips surged on a thrust, his cock entering her mouth as his tongue stroked her inner walls, drew out, up, lapping at her clit rapidly. Their bodies began undulating as lips and tongues worked simultaneously. Kyran's talent for oral invited her to suck him as deep as she possibly could.

Sideways as they were, she couldn't quite take him down her throat.

Their breaths grew heavy, the smell of sex everywhere, all over them. Anna feasted on his erection, bobbing her head in time with Kyran's tongue thrusting into her hole.

Closing in on another orgasm, she wanted to suck him dry. He caught her before she came, maneuvering her around to lie on her back. Once she was comfortable, he climbed on, top to tail, going right back to work between her legs.

His arms were strong enough to keep his heavy body from crushing her or pushing his cock too far in when she took him back into her mouth. Movement for both of them slowed, the thrusting and pulsing more about experimenting on what worked for the other.

As soon as they returned to a sexy rhythm, Anna eased her jaw and took him really deep. Miraculously, she'd grown more comfortable with his size, enabling her to suck him to the back of her throat.

He liked when she deep-throated him, his hips surged, his abs tightened, his hands losing their grip because he couldn't stop fucking her mouth. Easing up on him, she sucked and licked on his glans, especially the sensitive underside.

He kept licking her pussy, sending delightfully delicious spirals of heat through her clit, to her heart. She liked the way he flicked his tongue over her knot rapidly. Her hips canted up, off the bed as his tongue parted her for a long, slow, deep thrust inside. He touched her heart with each tongue thrust.

Slowing himself down, he regained control to caress her thighs, holding, stroking. She anchored one of her hands on his firm ass. Her left hand dipped into the crease.

Kyran groaned into her pussy, licking harder inside her. She became so lost on what she was doing she didn't stop herself from fucking his face. One last long lick from her folds to her clit had her whole body tensing with the need to come. Pleasure,

indescribable and incandescent, exploded, spreading out, coming so hard she lifted herself right off the bed.

Kyran had to pull out of her mouth or risk getting bit.

"Oh god," she cried, every muscle in her body melting. But she'd wanted him to come with her. "Lie back, let me get you off."

"It's all right, Anna." Kyran moved again, facing her. "I want to be inside you when I come."

"I need you so bad," she admitted.

Kyran leaned over, kissing her. His face was damp from her sex. She tasted pre-cum and her juices, knew he tasted the same thing. He stayed on top of her, his legs outside of hers.

"You're beautiful," he told her.

"Why thank you, sir," she accepted, thinking maybe it was safe to believe him.

"You're welcome, ma'am. Now if you wouldn't mind, I'm going to get something that'll help us both out."

"Not going anywhere." He pretty much had her pinned there.

Gently, he took the pillow out from under her head then reached into the night stand. A packet of condoms plopped on the bed nearby, one in his hand. With confidence, he sheathed himself, easing back into position.

"Willing to try something for me?" he asked.

"Of course," she said.

"Reach back behind you," he said.

She did, her hands touching the mattress.

"Press your hands against the headboard. Relax and let me do the work for you," he murmured.

Curious, she nodded. He whispered kisses over her face, neck, shoulders, making love to her as slowly now as he'd started downstairs.

Enjoying the kisses, but loving him more, Anna used the headboard to brace herself. Kyran knew how to lick and kiss and nibble places on her body she didn't know existed. His chest pressed against her breasts, his subtle movements creating delicious friction.

His cock rocked against her belly, sliding with his shallow hip thrusts. When the time seemed right, she parted her thighs only as far as his legs allowed, his cock finding that narrow space. He surged into her, the lubricated condom paving the way until he was fully seated.

Her instinct was to squeeze him tight. Hold him there, keep him. He felt even bigger like this and he was endowed. Anna groaned, welcoming the fullness.

"Fuck, Anna, so fucking tight," he growled like an animal, thrusting, his penis scraping her inner thighs and labia with every push and glide. He'd been right to have

her hold on to the headboard. The angle of her arms helped her brace for his taking, keeping her from thrusting back. She simply took him. It was incredible to feel that satin-over-steel hardness filling her, withdrawing, filling, pushing her higher and higher.

"Kyran, I want to hold you," she called out.

"Come here then," he agreed.

Still buried deep in her, he rose up, unclamped her fingers from the board and brought them down around his rib cage. In accord, they eased over to lie side to side, facing each other. Their hands roamed, squeezed. He played her breasts like a maestro, tweaking and pinching her nipples. She grabbed his firm ass, stroked his thighs.

They explored one another, never rushing. Finally, his left hand swept down her ass to her thigh, bringing her leg over his so that his penis found her core. On a mutual surge of hips and thrusts, she took him as he pushed.

"Mhm, Anna, so hot, so pretty," he whispered, bending toward her to kiss her forehead while he eased in and out, a slow, gentle lovemaking that matched what she needed after the intensity of force of their fucking earlier.

Enjoying the intimacy, she cherished the feel of their bodies surging together, loved the way their eyes locked together. Not once daring to look away. Anna saw his flushed, handsome face, his hair soft and flowing to his shoulders and bed, amazing. Right then and there, she knew. She loved him.

Whether he loved her, she couldn't say, but she felt more confident in him than she'd ever had with another man. He might still break her heart. Or realize she wasn't getting any younger. But maybe it was safe to risk it. If she didn't go with her heart here, she'd never know how far they could go.

"Climb on top, love," he finally invited, easing out of her to rest back on the bed. She moved onto him, grasping his soaking wet, latex-covered cock to guide him into her.

Sliding down his length, she let go, making love to him, swirling her hips, rocking, swaying. Keeping him guessing as to how she'd switch her hips or squeeze him tight, she slowed, appreciating the depth of penetration and thickness. It constantly amazed her that she could take his big cock into her body.

But she did each time, with abandon, wanting more. His hand came to her clit. With gentle pressure, she rolled her hips forward. Her skin tingled, her sex clenching, coiling in a hot rush that catapulted her into orgasm, careening her right into heaven.

His hips surged up off the bed. "Fuck yeah," he muttered, his face contorted. His erection felt impossibly bigger, swelling with his erratic thrusts as he shook with the force of his pending orgasm.

Arms came around her and she folded down to lie on top of him, cradling him inside of her as he shook and shook. Only after he settled did she push up to look at him.



His erection softened some, but they stayed joined. Like her, he enjoyed the connection, the slowness of not having to draw out too soon.

They rested like that, she on top, he on the bottom, their hearts beating steady.

Completely relaxed again, Kyran wedged the covers out from under them, slipping out. He removed the condom and settled back next to her.

"Come here, Anna," he encouraged, putting the pillow back behind her head.

She stretched like a contented cat. Kyran kissed her before turning her onto her side, his arm at her hip tugging her so he could spoon close against her back. Just like that, she closed her eyes, smiling, content, feeling tired and loved.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kyran woke to Anna's sweet ass pressed against his cock.

Unaware of the time, he saw it was dark. After they'd made love, they'd fallen asleep. He'd gotten up once to pee, brush his teeth and turn off the lights around the house.

Climbing back into bed with her had been easy, a comfort he didn't want to give up anytime soon. Anna had nestled right back against him. She'd woken sometime later and gone to the bathroom. She smelled minty when she returned and fell back to sleep.

He'd worn her out. Fuck, she'd worn him out too. Sleeping with her afterward was nice. But Anna was subtly rubbing his erection.

"Anna," he whispered, testing to see if she was awake.

"Hmm," she mumbled back.

Feeling himself grin, he pushed the covers down and nudged his penis into the vee of her crotch. He didn't enter, kept his hips gently pumping. "Feel that, love? Feel my bare cock against your pussy."

"Mhm." She liked it, rolling her hips with his short thrusts. His cock head notched her clit.

As much as he wanted her, he wouldn't do it bare until she was ready. Right now, this was what he could give her. His cock between her folds, sliding against her pussy, but not breaching it, she trusted him to give her this.

Anna's hand slipped between their joined thighs, her fingers wrapping around his cock head. On his thrust, she squeezed the helmet, his shaft dragging against her clit on the backstroke. He shifted closer, pushing against her warm ass, his balls pressed against her rosy hole.

"Play with my breasts," she breathed harshly.

He kissed the back of her neck, nibbled the muscle along her collarbone. Sucking her skin, his left hand found her gorgeous tits. Erect nipples prodded his palms. He squeezed her, his index and middle fingers pinching like nipple clamps.

"Mhm, Kyran," she muttered, appreciating what he was doing.

It didn't surprise him. Anna liked the sharper bite of pleasure when it came to her raspberry-pretty nipples. They needed a lot of attention. Kyran was up to the task.

His cock was big enough to poke up between her thighs. Her hand worked him out. She let go once, dipped her fingers into her pussy then coated his cock with it. Easing the friction to keep from chafing him, she tightened her fist, her palm a glove of hot skin and cream.

"Come, baby, come," she implored, pumping him good.

Holy fuck, this woman could get him off like nothing he'd expected. Thrusting into her harder, he loved the way his cock filled her as his balls slapped her sweet ass, but he needed more. He flipped her over to lie face down on the bed. Anna naturally arched her hips to leave an opening wide enough for him to find.

Kyran climbed on top, intentionally pushing her butt down 'til her pussy lips kissed his cock. Like that, he thrust his hips in and out. His penis slid between her vulva and the soft bed sheets, his effort to keep her ass down forcing her clit to rub against the bed.

It was curiously sexy to fuck her without being inside her. The feel of her wet folds and tightening thigh muscles drew him to saw faster. Anna gave back thrust for thrust, grinding herself against his cock and mattress.

"Kyran!" she roared like a lioness, bucking back, taking what he gave. "I want you inside me, now!"

"Can't yet," he soothed. "Take me like this."

Anna lifted, making him rear back and plunge hard between her labia and clit. Finally she ground herself into him, her cum drenching him. Her cries echoed to the ceiling.

"Fuck, sugar, fuck," he shouted, his head back, shoulders quivering. His balls drew inward, his hips pulsing. Release unstoppable, hot spurts jetted out, coating her thighs and the sheets.

Spent from their efforts, he collapsed over her. His heart pounded like he'd run ten miles. Anna, god she was perfect, kept trembling, moaning into the pillows.

The bedroom was beginning to get gray when he could move again. Dawn was close.

Not willing to give up their intimacy, he led Anna to the bathroom for a shower.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kyran Black was an incredible lover. More than that, he was thoughtful, Anna realized while she stood in the kitchen watching him make scrambled eggs. He'd fried up some bacon and the whole room smelled of hickory smoke.

After making love to her last night and waking her before first light, he'd taken her to his magnificent shower. There, he'd washed her hair, using his quarterback fingers to

massage the shampoo into her scalp and lather her long tresses. He made it foreplay. One of the many shower heads was on a flexible cord and he'd used it to rinse her hair.

He did the same with conditioner, making certain to comb it from roots to ends. When her hair was rinsed clean, he let her wash his hair. While she'd worked, he scrubbed her skin with his soap, carefully cleaning between her thighs with a warm wash cloth.

Fortunately she wasn't as sore that morning as she'd been yesterday, however she was definitely feeling the aftermath of the night. He was gentle, easy, unhurried. By the time they were both wrinkled, the sun was up.

They dried with warmed towels. He'd surprised her by picking up a wash cloth he'd laid on the warmer, using the softness on her pussy to further reduce lingering tenderness.

Anna got her overnight bag, brushed her teeth and put on some makeup. Kyran brushed his teeth and shaved at the second sink while she dried her hair. With his towel wrapped around his waist, she remembered seeing him in an ad he'd done for a disposable razor for men. The television commercial for the razor had been of him shaving, visible from the waist up, his chest bare. Behind him, a woman peeked around his arm, her hands on around his middle, like she owned him.

Seville Davis had been the model. A cold shiver went down Anna's spine thinking of it. His ex was gorgeous, extremely fit, with willow-thin angles that looked great on camera. Her abs beyond flat, they were ripped due to the workouts she must do on a daily basis. At the age of twenty-seven, Seville's career might have tanked. But so far, she remained a cover girl.

"Hey, Anna, you still with me?" he called out, breaking her thoughts.

"Mhm, I am," she said, not wanting to think of his ex-girlfriend.

He wore boxers and jeans now. Anna wore the shirt and shorts she'd brought with her. "You up for D.C. or the Inner Harbor?" he asked.

"Actually, I wouldn't mind seeing a movie, at a theater. We have to go to the police station and it would save drive time."

"There's always the movie we didn't finish last night."

"And we'll end up in bed again," she supplied. "Not that I'm complaining, but I need a little break."

"Understand, I could use one too," he replied. "All right, we'll go to the movies. There's a diner close to the theater complex. We could see a matinee, then go there afterward."

"That's sounds nice," she agreed. "I love diners, so much food for a fair price."

"Almost bought one when I was out of football for a while," he shared.

"Really, why?"

"I like to cook." Kyran was an excellent cook, working with the ease of someone who could be a chef. "And my mom worked as a short-order cook for years while my

brothers and sister and I went to school. She ended up going to culinary arts college later on, became a chef."

"So cooking for a lot of people must come naturally to you," she surmised.

"Seems so," he said, shrugging. "As a kid, I'd go with my mom and watch her work. She could make anything taste good, except liver. Never did get why folks wanted liver and onions."

"Ugh, okay, can't say I'd want that either."

"When I was injured, there was no guarantee I'd make it back to the pros so I looked into investing in a diner near New Orleans. I'd wanted to offer Cajun and Creole cooking, along with American staples."

"Wow, you do know food, Kyran. Ever think about buying a restaurant when you retire?" Wondering if she offended him by speaking of retiring when he still had a season left in his contract, she bit her lip. Truth was, he could be offered a new contract elsewhere and could go.

"Anna," he said, bringing her eyes up to his face. He'd faced her, his smile certain. "You can ask about football. It's what I do. I love the game, true. But I won't always be able to play."

"I just know you have a season left here. What if you go play in another city after that?"

Kyran set something aside and walked up to her. "There's a good chance that I'll stay with the Griffins as a coach or in management. Alex's negotiating that. If I decide not to coach and sign with another team, we'll talk about moving, assuming we're still together."

"Do you think we won't be?" She gulped, her throat tightening. More aware of her aches, she tried to think rationally.

His hands came to her shoulders. "We are still new together. And you're not quite ready to let go of the age difference."

"No, no, I'm good now," she rushed.

"What were you thinking about before?" he tested.

"Nothing, daydreaming," she said.

"About, come on, be honest. Tell me."

"Seems so stupid," she warned. "When I saw you shaving, I thought of that commercial with you and your ex."

"Seville's history."

"But she looked so good with you, beautiful. The two of you dynamic in a way I can't compare to. I'm...boring, average." She left off older, though she had to ignore the minor aches in her joints and muscles.

Gently, he cupped her chin. "You don't ever have to compare yourself to her. Anna, I love you, not Seville. Let's enjoy being together now and see what happens."

Had she heard him right?

Heart pounding, tummy flipping wildly, she reached up to grab his wrists. "You...love me, already?"

"Yeah, 'course I do." He drew her close, snuggling her against his hard body. "I'm not going anywhere, you get me?"

"Okay, I got you." Unable to stop smiling, Anna wanted to shout. Instead, she eased in close, whispering against his masculine lips, "I love you, Kyran Black."

Might be it was a little fast. Anna wouldn't deny it. Her heart had known long before her head accepted it during the night. Common sense told her to slow down and enjoy the ride.

"Good damn thing, woman," he teased, tagging her butt with the flat of his hand. "'Cause I'm starved and the bacon's calling my name."

The kitchen did smell good. "I think it's calling mine."

Anna kissed him quick, hugging him tight. He went back to whipping the eggs and tossed them into the iron skillet he'd used for the bacon. She made wheat toast, finding preserves in the fridge.

They ate at the breakfast bar.

Just when they finished, Kyran's cell phone rang. Anna's gut clenched. "Oh no."

Kyran picked it up, checked the ID. "It's a friend of mine."

"Male or female?"

"Male, college roommate," he said.

He accepted the call. "Phalen, 'sup, man." He listened for a second. "Yeah, she's with me now. No way, bro, this one's mine."

Anna waited, curious about the man on the other end. "You saw the *Journal*?"

"Jeez," she grumbled. Everyone saw it, even Kyran's college roommate.

"Nah, that reporter is a pain in my ass," Kyran continued. "Alex's having my lawyers send a cease and desist letter against any articles involving me without express permission from Griffins management and a restraining order keeping her and the press away from Anna. Trouble came up for her as a result of that *Journal* piece. I can handle everything else."

While Kyran explained the situation to his friend, Anna cleared the dishes. She heard bits and pieces of their conversation. Mainly, Kyran murmured or agreed to whatever Phalen was saying.

He surprised her with his next words. "Hey listen, the reason I emailed you yesterday? I need some PI work done. Some asshole parked in front of Anna's house, took pictures. Cops are on it, but I want to know exactly who he is and who sent him to spy on her."

He listened again. "Yeah, already have someone investigating Brenda Jamison and her boyfriend, a guard at Griffins' Nest Stadium. By the way, I attached a picture I'd snapped of that guy's license plate. Can you run it?"

Kyran listened again. A few minutes later, he ended the call.

"What was all that about?" Anna asked.

"Phalen became a PI after a stint in the military," Kyran told her. "He worked part time for an ADA in Boston, did tattoo work to make ends meet."

"Interesting guy, eclectic," she said. "He's not a private investigator anymore?"

"Still has a license, moved to Salem to open his own tat business." Kyran pointed to the Celtic symbols on his biceps. "These are his work, wouldn't trust a tat to anyone but Phalen, actually."

"I'd like to meet him sometime."

"After the season we can go up to New England," he suggested. "You'll like Phalen, but he'll want to tattoo you."

Anna shivered. "I don't think so."

"Can be addicting if you're not careful," Kyran admitted. "Fortunately for me, Phalen doesn't overdo it. Anyway, he still has PI resources and instincts. Something about that guy at your house chafes my ass. Sure, the officer we talked to yesterday is investigating and will turn it over to the detective working with Alex. But I want answers faster."

"Kyran, you really think he was that dangerous?"

"Not sure. I don't want him near you or your place ever again."

"He didn't hurt you, right? I mean, what if he charges you with something because you broke his camera?"

"I'd love for him to charge me for it," Kyran conspired. "If he does, he can't get away with taking snapshots he'd probably intended for the 'net."

"You don't think...really?"

"Something's not right there. You were called eight times by some guy wanting you to be a phone sex operator for his club. Could have been the same guy who'd called you," he said.

"Oh shit," Anna gasped. "I'd forgotten all about that."

"Hey now, I'm sorry. There are a lot of kettles being stirred here. I'd like to turn your phone records over when we go to the police station today."

Kyran got up and walked over to her, his arm going around her. "I'm not going to let more pictures of us come out. Brenda went quiet after that one shot. Alex and I talked to head of security at Griffins' Nest Stadium. Stationary camera in the locker room aimed at the doorway shows a woman's hand holding a cell phone. Flash snapped off twice, we don't know about the second photo."

"So you don't know if it was her," Anna said.

"No, it's a guess."

"But she'd written the article."

"It's her byline. The detective checked ownership of off-white minivans in the D.C., Virginia, Maryland area and found that Brenda Jamison owns the same make and model, right down to the color."

"Okay, good, then she's done. She can't hurt us if you send the lawyers in."

"That's the plan. But she does have the right to write her sports articles, not sure I can infringe on that. She'll need verifiable resources from here on out, corroboration from anyone on the team if she wants to write anything about the Griffins."

"You could have told me this last night," she remarked sharply, an uneasy feeling curdling in her stomach like bad milk.

"After that idiot took those photos, we'd agreed to put all this aside last night." He tightened his hold. "I had every intention of telling you everything. Don't be mad, okay?"

"All right," Anna said, remaining in his arms. "I'm sorry I snapped at you. I even asked not to think about it all."

This was a good thing, she thought. Being here with him, safe, well fed and thoroughly satisfied. Kyran was telling her what he knew and she had to trust that he'd protect them from further trouble.

"Hey, let's take care of business with the cops and go to the movies," he suggested. "We have a date and I aim to keep it."

"Yes, we do, hero," she agreed, glad they talked, but something still didn't feel right.

It wasn't Kyran she doubted. It was the *Journal* article and the repercussions. Part of her was worried about him. The other, about her job as the mascot, she still didn't know what was going to happen with that.

Kyran kissed her softly, reminding her that he was there and he'd look out for her. Everything else would turn out just fine.

## Chapter Fourteen

"That movie was great," Anna told Kyran, then sipped some iced tea. At the diner they awaited their food orders.

Their day had turned out ten times better than the day before, even after having stopped at the police station. The man in the sedan had not been found, but they'd lodged a complaint and he would be investigated.

Kyran had ordered an open-faced, hot roast beef sandwich and fries. Anna chose the hot turkey and gravy with all the trimmings.

"Glad you liked it, love," he said, taking the paper off his plastic straw. It was bendable. Like a kid, he flexed it a few times.

"And we made it through the end without attacking each other," she pointed out, grinning. They'd shared popcorn and a soda, held hands.

When they went into the cinema, she'd expected Kyran to be recognized instantly. He'd purposefully chosen a time when the crowds were low, walked her inside and bought the tickets without much fuss. The ticket clerk recognized him but remained professional. The theater itself had about eight people in it. It had arena seating so it felt like the eight people were miles apart. A few more trickled in during the previews.

But it had been a date, easy, fun.

"Have to admit it's been awhile since I felt up a girl in a dark theater," he admitted.

"Ha, maybe next time we could see if there's a drive-in around," she suggested. "Then we could do what we liked."

"Ms. Anna James, what would you like to do if there is?" Kyran plunked his straw into the thick chocolate shake he'd ordered.

Anna sipped her drink, eyeing him. "If I told you that now, it won't be a surprise when it happens."

They sat at a booth toward the back of the diner. It was crowded, yet no one paid a lick of attention to them.

Feeling brave, she kicked off her sandal, shifting her foot to the opposite cushion and tucking it right up between his spread thighs. Kyran's brow lifted, his eyes darting to the waitress bringing their orders.

While she laid down plates heaping with turkey, roast beef, stuffing, vegetables and bowls of hot cinnamon apples, Anna let her toes play with Kyran's warm inner thigh. He'd worn khaki shorts and a navy blue polo shirt. His hair was tied back in a ponytail.



His green eyes on her, he thanked the waitress. As soon as the woman shuffled off with a promise to check on them in a bit, he put one hand on her ankle. Massaging her ankle and the bottom of her calf, he picked up his fork with his left hand.

"Remember, bad girls get punished," he whispered, pushing her foot up against his groin, inside the leg of his shorts.

He was hard! "For what, teasing?" she asked.

"I think you know what," he said, shifting her foot for her. While his fingers massaged her arch, he moved her foot against his cock. It was curiously exciting to feel his satiny helmet brush the arch. Her toes curled as she slid her foot up and down his length.

"Guess I'll take my chances," she replied, taking over the rubbing. His hand caressed to her ankle and stayed.

Amazingly, she was able to eat, all while feeling him with her foot. Usually ticklish, she didn't flinch. It was a good thing too. She didn't want to kick him.

"Anna, you sure you want to go home tonight?" Kyran asked, hefting a huge forkful of beef and gravy into his mouth. Politely, he chewed with his mouth closed.

"We talked about it, Kyran," she said. "I've got to be at that meeting at eight a.m. It doesn't seem possible for me to make it there from Silver Spring unless we woke up by six."

"Now see," he began, having swallowed. "There's this thing called an alarm clock."

"I'm well aware of that." Still playing with his fantastic erection, she took a smaller bite. When she could, she spoke. "It's still a long ride. There's traffic to consider. And..."

And she didn't want to get dependant on him too soon. Instead of saying so, she tried to distract him with her foot.

Kyran wasn't deterred. "I'm not real happy with you staying home alone."

"Are you looking for an invitation to sleep over?"

"Yeah, think about it. I'm already going to that board meeting. Might as well stay the night with you, right?"

"That worries me. You can't miss practice."

"No need to worry. I'll talk to my coach."

"Oh god," she groaned, a little embarrassed.

"Easy now, he knows we're dating. He'll understand that I want to help. I won't miss practice."

"You'll be late and I don't want you to get in trouble for that," Anna corrected.

"Not going to happen," he said with such conviction she believed him. "Anna, let me be there for you tomorrow. I'll make practice."

"So you'll stay the night at my house?"

"If it's what you want. It's just a matter of picking up some overnight stuff."

"Okay, stay," she decided.

"Look, there's something you should know. I've got some travel coming up."

"An away preseason game," she recalled.

"In Phoenix, yeah."

"When do you leave for Arizona?"

"Wednesday, with practice all day Thursday, game Friday evening," he explained. "I should be back early Saturday morning."

"Then we probably won't see each other after tomorrow. Until you get back, I mean."

Anna's stomach tightened a little. She'd known that Kyran's schedule would catch up to them.

"We could go out tomorrow night or Tuesday. Practice on Tuesday is earlier than usual, seven a.m., to prep before Wednesday's travel day."

"Kyran, as much as I'd love to see you, I can wait until next Saturday."

"There's still the matter of not wanting you to be alone." He'd eaten some, but his concern was on her.

"I could call my friend Tracey. I'm sure she'd stay with me until you come home."

Kyran's eyes brightened, his fork resuming its plunder of his gravy-covered sandwich. "That'll work. Fair warning, come Saturday you're mine for the remainder of the weekend."

Anna smiled easier, letting her foot continue massaging his slightly softened penis. With a little footwork, she got him rock-hard again. "Like I'd complain about that? You're on, hero. Just watch out, I've got some ideas for you."

"Do you, now that's something to look forward to." Kyran dug in while Anna worked on her turkey. It was delicious. She bet if he'd made it, it'd be even better.

After a few minutes, Kyran put his fork down. "Anna, I want you to think about something."

"Okay," she agreed.

"For the rest of August, Coach gives the players Saturdays and Sundays off. But the weekdays will get busier, with practices starting early and going late. We'll have to work out how to see each other during the week. For now, how about living with me on the weekends?" he suggested.

"Only the weekends?" she asked, wondering where they'd go from there.

"Well now, I'm really not comfortable with you living alone," he said. "If I had my way, I'd have you move in with me now."

"I don't know if I'm ready for that." She did love him, but living together after one weekend of mind-blowing sex might be rushing things.

"Which is why I'm asking for your weekends," he replied.

She was aware that the Alexandria Griffins' season opener was set for the second Friday in September. His travel would become more frequent when the season was in full swing, as the team would be away on alternate Friday nights. They still had a few weeks before school started. Hopefully she'd clear up the situation with the school board tomorrow and resume coaching. She had to deal with the mascot job. Time was going to get tighter. They'd have to adjust their schedules and appreciate the time when they could be alone.

"Your condo or my cottage?" she asked, thinking.

"I'd prefer my condo since it's more secure," he said. "We could go out, make love, cook, whatever you'd like, make the weekends just for us. Football, school, everything else takes a backseat."

"No more sex in the back of that SUV then?" she asked real softly.

"Why limit ourselves to a vehicle? Sex in a car has its rewards. Just as it would if we went into the bathroom right here and fucked each other's brains out."

"Ah, no, can't risk another spread in a gossip rag."

"True! Anna, don't you want to keep seeing each other?"

"Of course I do, Kyran."

"Football season is probably the worst time to start dating someone. I'm not the easiest person to live with when the team loses or I make mistakes. Yet I want to date you, find out where we are heading."

"I'm not easy to live with either. Dating takes adjustment, I know that," she said. "Don't forget, I'll be at the stadium working the crowds when you're in town." Unless Griffins management pulled the plug on her job, something she'd worry about tomorrow.

"And I'm glad," he added. "What do you think?"

"I'd like to stay at your place on the weekends," she admitted. "We'll need to be honest with each other. If you decide you want out, tell me, okay?"

"Same goes. Understand something, this means we're exclusive. I won't fuck around on you, get me?"

"Told you, I won't do that to you either," she said, glad.

"We fell into step together real easy the last few days. Things won't always be this easy."

"You know," she began. "Crazy as it sounds, I think we can figure a way around the bad days."

Kyran grinned, looking satisfied.

"You've got a touch of gravy there," he suddenly said, leaning over to swipe her lip. There wasn't any gravy. He used the motion to tuck his hand under her chin and pull her across the table.

Miraculously, she didn't get any gravy on her elbows or shirt as Kyran kissed her softly right there in the diner! A few patrons chuckled, then continued on with their own conversations.

As they finished their dinner, Anna stroked him under the table with her foot, teasing him real good. Kyran paid the waitress, leaving an excellent tip.

When he stood, he drew Anna out of the booth, keeping her in front of him. "I'm so going to make you pay for this," he warned under his breath, poking her in the butt with his tented fly.

They got into his black monstrosity and were on the road before they really spoke. Anna was very aware that Kyran was hard, his attention on driving. She was also aware that she was so wet he might actually smell it.

Because they needed to pick up some overnight stuff for Kyran, he cruised into his condo, doing the usual salute to the gatehouse guard and driving through with ease.

They were parked, SUV off, garage door down, still in the front seat.

Without saying a word, he unhooked the belt and looked at her. Brow arched in a dare, he flicked open the top button of his shorts.

The drag of his zipper invited her to unbuckle her belt and kneel on her seat to see him. Kyran's fly was open, his shorts and boxers pushed down his hips. His big, thick cock was waiting for her.

He still hadn't said a word. He didn't have to. She knew what she wanted to do to this gorgeous man's erection. Without saying a thing, she shifted around and draped her body over the consol. A little uncomfortable, she relaxed when she came face-to-face with his cock.

Aware that she'd gotten him to that state with her foot, she licked him, root to tip. Lapping at the head, she played and sucked the way he liked, adding her hand to pump him and work him harder. His harsh breaths rewarded her. Pre-cum splashed her tongue, all hot male and salty. Seeking more, she tongued the opening, sipping more of him.

The flex of his abs enticed her to take him deep, then draw back to suck his glans. Easing her grip, she caressed his testicles, their softness fascinating to her. Breathing him in, he smelled masculine, earthy, but clean. She tongued his sacs, had him growling. Pleased, she played, licking one, then the other, sucking ever so gently, never threatening pain.

Kyran's hand came to rest at her nape, moving her head back to his penis. Parting her jaw, she lowered her mouth over him, letting him thrust in and out. Pulling up, she toyed with the rim, swirling her tongue around and around, savoring him, sucking the plum-shaped head.

"Yeah, suck me. Like that, so good." Anna worked him, her fingers sliding beneath his balls, cradling them, knowing how sensitive they were. Testing his responsiveness, she caressed him. His thighs widened as far as the front seat and his shorts allowed. Greater access given, Anna explored his cock, scrotum and perineum.

His cock was drenched. She swiped some saliva onto her finger, teasing it around the rim of his puckered ass. Sucking him, she pressed the way he'd done to her before, right on the rim without causing discomfort.

"Pull back, gonna jet if you do that," he grumbled, so hoarse he barely made a sound. His abs taut, legs splayed, he was beautiful.

She didn't pull away. She sucked, bobbed, played. Breaching his tight rim with her finger, she drew on his glans, felt his balls tighten. Inching into him up to her first knuckle, he bore down. Taking her thrust further, until her middle finger sank in as far as it could go, he damn near bucked her off on a violent surge of his hips.

"Dammit! Fuck me. Yeah, baby, fuck!" Pushing a bit more, she fingered his ass, not afraid because this was Kyran. His ass was wet from her saliva and his fluid.

Never once thinking she'd do this to a man, she took charge of his pleasure. And he loved it! Loved the way she sucked him and fucked him with her longest finger.

His whole body bowed in a beautiful arc, his muscles shook, head rolled back. Hot, quick bursts of semen splashed her tongue, filling her mouth. As he thrust erratically, his hand on her head kept her steady.

She took it down. Completely unafraid to take his seed and keep licking him through his orgasm, she didn't miss a single salty drop.

Finally, Kyran's hands went to her shoulders. He still shook.

"Fuck me," he whispered.

"Think I kinda did," she murmured, turning her face to look up from his lap.

"God, I love you, baby," he said, helping move her over the consol, letting her rest against his warm chest.

"You're saying that because I swallowed."

"Nah, real deal here."

"Real for me too," she said, meaning it. "And I really liked being called baby, more than sugar to be honest. Made me feel special, connected to you." She didn't say young, but she was gaining confidence in him, more so, in herself as his lover.

"Anna, we're going to work out, you know?"

"I do," she agreed.

"Good, then go on inside and head upstairs. I'm going to make love to you. Then we'll go to your place."

Anna shifted up, let him rearrange himself. She still tasted him.

Inside his condo a few minutes later, Kyran let her run upstairs long enough to wash and brush her teeth. When she came out of the bath, he was there, carrying her to bed.

"For what you just did for me, I'm going to reward your pussy. This time, you'll need to trust me."

Anna waited, watching him fish inside his bedside table. Quickly, he found a black satin cloth.

"Um, Kyran, is that what I think it is?"

He looked up, his mouth set, his eyes on her face. "Think you can take this blindfolded?"

She'd never tried. He'd already introduced her to anal, spanking and mild control during their sex play. She'd like to give her pleasure totally to him this way. He'd willingly let her handle him in the SUV. She could give right back.

"Yes," she answered, very aware that they were venturing toward bondage. She wasn't quite ready for the hard stuff though. He must have guessed, introducing her one step at a time.

Kyran knelt on the bed, reaching out to stroke her face. "If you get uncomfortable at any time, you let me know. I want you to have this pleasure all for yourself. I'll never hurt you, Anna."

"I know," she agreed.

He bent forward, kissed her softly, caressing her jaw. The blindfold was hidden from her, though she knew where it was. He placed it by her thigh. Feeling more relaxed after his kiss, she let him put the blindfold over her eyes.

It was soft, dark, intimate. Curious, Anna caught her breath as he stroked only her face at first, his calloused fingers sweeping over her forehead, nose, cheeks, chin, up her jaw and back to her forehead. Her breathing eased, her body softening.

"If I were a painter, I would like to paint you," he told her.

"That would be nice," she murmured, thinking he was talented enough with his hands to be an artist. "Do you draw at all?"

"Not what I meant. I'd like to paint you, your body, just to see the colors and twists and turns of your skin. You're fair and soft, those freckles deserve loving." His stroking moved down her throat to her shirt. With a little awkward shifting, he removed her blouse, then shorts, leaving her in bra and panties.

"Speaking of freckles..." His lips replaced his fingers and swept over the little freckles on her nose and cheeks. Kisses continued, but she couldn't see. She could feel the press of his lips, the touch of his tongue over the freckles along her shoulder, down her arm. Once she thought she knew his pattern, he switched angles, kissing the vulnerable junction between thigh and hip, tickling a little. Hands joined lips and tongue, slightly rough, sometimes wet from his mouth.

Squirming, Anna had never felt more treasured. She wanted him to take her. Yet if he did now, she realized it would be too soon. This was what she craved, this intimacy and selfless loving from a man who wanted her. It was completely right to give her body and pleasure over to Kyran like this. She loved it, loved him.

Taking his time, he kissed and caressed her from head to toe. From what she could feel, she was certain he didn't miss a freckle. Clever lover that he was, he knew when to

open his mouth, when to nibble or touch with his quarterback's hand. Soon, he was easing her bra and panties off. The shift of the mattress told her that he'd tossed them off the bed.

Then he kissed her mouth, taking her higher with need. His tongue drove between her teeth, skimmed inside, seduced. She knew he was clothed, could feel the slight abrasion of his shirt and shorts against her naked skin.

"Take your clothes off," she said.

"Not yet," he whispered against her lips.

Warm from his body, she let him spread her thighs. Unable to see exactly what he was doing, it took a tap of his hand at her knee to know she should bend her legs. Using the position to brace herself, she wondered what he could see, hoped he liked it.

"You're beautiful, baby," he praised, the brush of his hair against her inner thigh warning of his intent. Even better, he'd taken to heart what she'd said about his nicknames for her. He did use them a lot, it was his way. She liked when he used them. But he'd listened and adjusted to what she preferred.

A breath of air touched her clit, compelling her to widen her legs more for him, bracing her feet on the bed. Broad shoulders fit perfectly between, keeping her spread wide and open. He kissed her center softly, a barely there sweep of his tongue. The gentleness against her ultrasensitive clit and vulva was exactly what she needed after a long day.

Remaining gentle, his tongue parted her vaginal lips, drawing her flesh into his mouth. He suckled each side, leaving no part of her unattended. Then he settled in for a long, slow tongue thrust into her vaginal slit. In and out, up and down, sometimes driving her hard, sometimes so slow and tender it was like a butterfly's wings whispering there.

Orgasm gripped her suddenly, unexpectedly, blessedly beautiful. She canted toward his mouth, his tongue licking inside her walls to catch her wetness.

Easing back down, she'd thought he would stop. He didn't, he continued, returning to the slow, patient caresses and loving he started with. Head to toe, he made love to her with his mouth and hands, leaving nothing untouched or unloved.

Two orgasms later, Anna was hoarse from screaming. He paused long enough to let her hear the shuffle of clothing and tear of a condom wrapper.

"I'm coming inside you now, Anna." At last he settled into where he belonged, finding her sex to slowly flex and pump, each pulse pushing him a little deeper.

As his cock ultimately settled deep inside, he grabbed the blindfold and tugged.

Blinking rapidly, she smiled. He was looking down at her, leaning in to kiss her mouth, chin, breasts and throat. Anna's legs went around his waist, holding him as deep as she could, letting him take her for a long, slow ride.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following morning at six, Anna's bedside alarm woke them at first light. Unlike Sunday morning, they didn't shower together. Kyran made coffee and hearty oatmeal for breakfast. It was good, old-fashioned, calming.

It was nice to have him in her cottage. His presence kept her safe since the phone company hadn't gotten around to changing her number yet. Her voice mail had forty-seven messages. Some from paparazzi reporters, some were just weird. There'd been a few that asked Anna's secret for keeping up with a guy like Kyran Black, especially at her age. One had been from team management. They wanted to see her as soon as possible.

She'd been worried, wondering. But her man calmed her, letting her know that everything was fine between them, reporters be damned. He'd take care of her mascot situation, protecting her with the help of his agent, Alexander Grant.

When they'd arrived late the night before, she'd called Tracey, who'd agreed to come and stay with her during the week. Now they had to face reality.

A school board meeting and the possibility of being suspended from her job. Anna hadn't wanted to think about it.

While Anna dressed, Kyran called Alex. The two men talked for a good fifteen minutes.

By seven, they were cleaning dishes when he said, "Alex told me our lawyer got the restraining order signed by a judge late last night. Brenda Jamison will be served first thing this morning. She can't come anywhere near the two of us."

"That's something positive to think of," Anna said.

"Yeah, that, and the fact that Detective Johnson found out that Brenda's security guard boyfriend helped her Friday night by setting off that alarm to keep the guards concentrating on the other side of the stadium. He's claiming to be her source. The guy's suspended until further investigation is done. Apparently, he told the editor-in-chief at the *Journal* that he saw the two of us together on at least one other occasion."

"He's the one who saw us together in the parking lot last winter, right?" Anna asked. Kyran nodded. "The boyfriend wasn't that nice guy we met, right?"

"Nah, he's on our side," Kyran said. "He gave a statement that helped the judge sign the restraining order. He'd watched us walk to my SUV. Saw Brenda rushing to her mini-van and jumping in like she was after a hot story or something."

"Did he see her leave?"

"She left ahead of us, remember?"

"Yes, by a few seconds. Wonder how she ended up following us."

"Easy, she drove slower once she was out of sight. We were distracted, parked at that rest stop, got sidetracked."

"God, let's hope that's the end of the pictures."

"If she tried to take any while we were in the SUV, they couldn't have turned out well. Her boyfriend said he gave her access to whatever she wanted at Griffins' Nest."



"Any word from the *Journal*?" she asked.

"A new reporter there would like to run a story apologizing for any trouble that article has caused us. Normally, she's a crime reporter, but is worried that Brenda's gossip might have dangerous consequences for you. She was made aware of the ramifications against your teaching job and the phone calls. I haven't consented to that."

"Not sure I trust anyone there," Anna said. "I mean, they let Brenda run the article without checking with either of us to verify anything. She had time to follow us, type up the story, get some facts on me and get it into print by the morning edition. That's fast."

"See, that's what bothers me. A reporter has sources, sure. But it's almost as if she'd already had information on you."

"What makes you say that?"

"Thought you read the continuation of the article in the sports section," he said.

"Couldn't look past the front page," she admitted. "I haven't looked at it since."

"She put in the fact that you'd once been questioned by school authorities in connection to a stolen cell phone and improper use by a student. She didn't name your school specifically. She did give enough that anyone with a decent computer can find private information about a Baltimore County teacher who'd had a problem in the past."

"Oh my god, that was last year! I was cleared right away. The phone was stolen, pure and simple. The kid that took it stole a bunch of phones, did the same thing with them. Called 900 numbers because he thought it'd be funny."

"Thing is, I didn't know about the phone until Friday night. I suppose she could have found meeting minutes or something," Kyran speculated. "Still doesn't feel right. I'm not going to trust her ever. Until I know she's done writing about us, we're staying with the plan and away from her."

"Tracey stays with me during the week. I stay with you on the weekends," Anna said. "Neither of us speaks to the press."

"For now," he replied. "Sure am hoping that come September, my baby agrees to live with me full time. Once you do, I don't give a damn if everyone knows we're together."

"Yours, huh, seems like you have a lot of nicknames for me."

"You called me baby first. Name kinda stuck with me, it fits you."

"I did?" If she had, she didn't remember.

"I didn't mind. I tend to do that, use nicknames."

"I know. Don't mind either," she admitted.

"Good, we better go. I'll follow you." He'd cleaned up the dishes after he'd taken his turn in the shower and gotten dressed. He wore khakis and a nice shirt for the meeting.

Anna wore a green dress and ivory pumps. After the meeting, she hoped she had a job. She wanted to start preparing her office for classes to start in September and work on offensive plays for the JV team. She also needed to take her costume to have it repaired. The Griffins used a tailor and dry cleaner in Alexandria. It was her obligation to make the costume right before the next preseason game, no matter what they decided about her part-time job.

Finally they had to go. Kyran helped her into her car, looking around the neighborhood for unwanted spies. Satisfied that most milling about were on their way to work, he leaned in. "Drive carefully, Anna. I'll be right behind you.

"Okay, you too," she said, waiting for him to make a move.

Like he always did, he gave her a kiss that sent her heart skyrocketing. He closed her door after withdrawing, waiting until she turned on the CRV before going to his bigger vehicle.

His SUV was huge compared to hers, but it was nice to see it in her rearview mirror. The drive to school took ten minutes, like before. This time when they parked there were ten cars in the back lot. Manny had told her to report to the coach's office before the meeting.

The meeting itself would take place in the administrative office of the school. Anna wasn't sure why they weren't meeting at the superintendent's office or board of education building down the road. She found going to the principal's office at age forty rather ironic.

Not once in her life had she done anything to deserve getting sent to the principal's office. Here she was about to answer for a photograph that was taken by a spiteful, gossip-hungry reporter.

Anna and Kyran found Manny and Brian in the coach's office. At first, they eyed Kyran like he had a disease. Fortunately, he charmed them with ease, shaking hands, including Anna in their conversation about football.

"Let's go to the principal's office," Manny suggested a few minutes later.

"You two realize that the next big headline is going to wash Saturday morning's edition off the public's radar?" Kyran asked, falling into step beside Anna.

"We trust Anna's judgment where you're concerned," Manny said. "This meeting was called because someone on the board wasn't happy with the article. He wants answers."

"Someone being Will Simmons," Anna guessed.

"That'd be the guy," Brian answered. "Superintendent isn't coming, by the way. He thinks this can be cleared up without much trouble."

"Thank God," Anna breathed out.

"Karen Donnelly and the school's administrative staff will be there, along with Brian and me," Manny said. "There's a chance our alarm on Saturday was misplaced, Anna, apologies."

"Accepted as long as I can keep working," she replied.

Relieved that things were better, she let Kyran take her elbow and walk her alongside her co-workers. They entered the administrative offices, heading straight for Karen Donnelly's office. The principal of the school, Karen was a fair person.

Brian was right. The superintendent of Baltimore County Schools was not present. But the two assistant principals were there, along with Karen and the board's representative, Will Simmons. Appointed to his position when they were engaged, Anna wished he'd have resigned.

"Ms. James, thank you for coming to see us today," Karen welcomed with a generous smile. "I believe we haven't been introduced to your...um...friend."

"Kyran Black," Anna supplied, looking at the man she was dating. "This is Karen Donnelly, the principal here at Central Technical High School. Our school features specialized, technical studies for students, such as mechanics, carpentry, cosmetology, culinary arts, that sort of thing."

"Nice," Kyran said, turning his focus on the principal. "Ms. Donnelly, pleasure to meet you, although I wish it was under different circumstances."

Karen Donnelly smiled. "It seems the two of you created a bit of a stir."

"Because of an article that had no business reaching the eyes of our students," Will interjected.

Anna glanced at her ex. She was glad things ended when they did. Will was a good-looking man. Polished, professional, looking every bit the college professor in his gray pinstriped suit, he barely managed to blink for all the staring he was doing at Kyran. He was jealous. But what surprised her was the fact that she could now see Will lacked character and depth.

"That was not our intention," Anna told him. "A reporter caught Kyran and I sharing a moment alone. I'm never named specifically, just labeled unfairly."

"A moment caught on camera that gives enough to show us all who you are," Will added, nostrils flaring when he said "moment".

"The problem isn't so much the article, it's how much the reporter knew about you as a teacher here at Central Tech," Karen explained. "It's true the school isn't named, but the county, your job title and assistant coaching job allowed people to find out who you are. The fact that the *Alexandria Journal* was deliberately sent to Manny, Dr. Will Simmons and the superintendent worries the administration. Are the students going to care? Will it impact them or cause trouble?"

"Ms. Donnelly, they are high school students. They apply here and the boys I coach are in the tenth grade. They've seen sexier images on their laptops and TVs," Anna said. "It would be a mistake to make more out of the newspaper than what it was, a gossip piece. If we all settle down, the photo and article will be forgotten," Anna insisted.

"When it comes to teenagers, it's best not to make a mountain out of a molehill," Karen agreed. "I'm still concerned for student safety, as well as yours, Ms. James."

"As am I," Will complained. He'd aged a good bit since she'd seen him last. Forty-five to her forty, he looked at her and Kyran like they were beneath him.

Kyran faced Anna's ex-fiancé, keeping his attention focused. "Its meetings and questions about Anna's conduct that allow story hunters to find out who she is. Fact is, Dr. Simmons, I'm dating Anna. That's not going to change because you brought her into the principal's office."

"This isn't a personal vendetta against her," Will remarked, looking irked that anyone would think otherwise.

"Isn't it?" Kyran challenged, stepping toward the man.

"Easy, hero," Anna whispered. "It'll be okay."

"Don't like the guy, can't help it," he confided so only she'd hear him.

"Listen, Kyran has lawyers taking steps to assure something like this doesn't happen again," Anna said to everyone. "Will more articles come out? We doubt it, but we don't know. If another comes out, Kyran and I will deal with it. We won't let anything jeopardize the students here."

"I'm making sure Anna is safe," Kyran added. "Her job and ability to do that job should not be in question."

"We assure you, it's not." Karen Donnelly remained firm on that. "Ms. James, you'll be able to resume your coaching duties and preparations for the start of school."

"And if the board objects?" Will questioned.

"Then the superintendent can address the situation, if it comes to that," Karen decided. "It's a ridiculous waste of time to give gossip a reason to stick. That's all the article was, Dr. Simmons. These two are together, can't you see it?"

"What of the personal information exposed about Ms. James?" he insisted.

"We've taken that into consideration," Kyran answered. "Anna is taking precautions with her phone number and staying with a friend when I can't be with her. We've got it under control. My lawyers and my agent will make sure this school stays unaffected by a story."

"Is it possible that you'd come and speak to our team?" Manny asked Kyran. "I mean, if they see you interact with Ms. James in a professional manner, they may forget the article altogether."

"They probably won't care as much as you think. Sure they'll speculate. They're teenagers. Wouldn't you have at their age? Whatever, I'm more than glad to talk to football players. The more they see me with their coach, the sooner they'll see that we're the real deal."

Will perked up from where he'd been sitting behind Karen Donnelly's desk. Everyone else was standing. "Real deal, you say? How long have you two been dating?"

"That is not the purpose of this meeting, Dr. Simmons," Karen jumped in. "After viewing the article, I can understand safety concerns for Ms. James. I'm satisfied that Mr. Black is looking out for her."

"Does that mean I can go back to work today?" Anna asked, making sure she wasn't in further trouble.

"It does. If an issue arises with the students, we'll have to deal with that. They must not be dragged through the mud or exposed in any articles."

"That article was about me and Kyran. No one here should be affected by it," Anna said. "Truth is, I don't think the reporter who wrote it meant to cause harm to the students."

"Good enough for me," Karen replied.

The vice-principals agreed, leaving only Will Simmons unhappy.

"Dr. Simmons, your concerns seem to be grounded in personal grievances with Ms. James," Karen observed. "Knowing your history, it would be best that either the superintendent or another board member address any further situations that might arise regarding Ms. James and Mr. Black."

"If more comes out about them, what will the school do?" Will asked.

"You're like a dog with a bone. If more comes out, we'll deal with it," Kyran stated.

"Does that mean you'll stop seeing each other if it comes down to it?" Will questioned.

Anna had enough. "Hey, that's too much. Ms. Donnelly is right. You brought me here today as a personal gripe. You're not concerned about student safety or mine."

"That doesn't answer the question," Will remarked, standing and bracing his hands on the desk. Kyran took another step toward him.

"It's the answer you're getting. I've nothing further to say in the matter of the article. It was written and it's done. Let's not give it more than what it deserves." Again, Kyran came to her rescue. She loved him for it.

"I can't agree more," Karen decided. "We're done here. Dr. Simmons, if you've nothing further, we all have things to do today."

Will looked like he wanted to vent. He was known for long-winded lectures and manic blowups with university staff.

Kyran shifted closer to Anna, deliberately placing his arm around her waist as a show of support. She believed it was genuine.

One by one, the administrative staff left, leaving Anna and Kyran alone with Will. He hadn't moved from the desk. "I'm really concerned for you, Anna," he finally said. "Are you sure this guy you're seeing is going to watch out for you?"

"I'm sure," she said.

Kyran kept his arm around Anna's waist. "In the future, Dr. Simmons, don't question Anna like she's a kid caught shoplifting."

"By the looks of that photo, it's more like she was caught with her pants down," Will remarked. "Think teenage boys aren't going to notice?"

"Probably," Anna answered. "Like Kyran said, they're teenagers. But if you look, Will, you'll see that I'm wearing a leotard. All the public really saw was the two of us kissing, that's it."

"Anna, you don't have to explain anything to him," Kyran assured.

"But you see, Kyran, I want Will to know that we're together now."

"That serious already, wow," Will said vindictively. "You've learned to work fast, Anna. How long did it take me to get you in bed, four months? What'd he do? Get you off by making you feel young? A pro athlete, that's a coup, especially for you."

Kyran was across the office before Anna could speak.

Refraining from actually touching Will Simmons, Kyran stood so close that her ex had to look up. "You have something against me, fine, take it up with me. Disrespect my woman and we're going to have a problem, you get me?"

"Understood," Will answered, backing off. He had to know he was way out of line.

"Good call," Kyran said.

Will bent behind the desk and got his leather briefcase. He barely looked at them until he was at the door. "I've got to warn you, Anna. This guy might have broken my jaw if I'd pressed you too much. Let's hope he means it when the sex gets old and you can't keep up with him anymore. Whatever happens, don't expect me to sit back and let him drag you through the mud if he ends up tossing you aside for another underwear model."

Anna stared after Will Simmons, genuinely shocked. Kyran started after him. She caught her man and brought him back. "Let him go. He can't hurt us." She wasn't worried about Will's comment.

"Thank you, Kyran Black," she murmured into his shoulder blade the second Will disappeared. "You are a hero."

"Say that again later." Turning around, he remained a respectful distance in the principal's office. "After practice, I'd like to swing by your place, make sure you're okay and Tracey gets there safely."

"Okay, I'll make spaghetti for the three of us," Anna agreed.

"Sounds good, how about I walk you to your office, Coach James?"

"I'm still a coach, still a teacher. I was worried about my job until we spoke with Manny earlier," she admitted.

"That's why I wouldn't let you come here alone, love."

"How'd I get so lucky in finding you?" she pondered.

"Think we're both lucky," he insisted. "Come on, time to work."

Kyran walked Anna down the hall, waving to Manny and Brian as she waited outside the coach's office. She was still wearing her dress for the meeting, but had brought a gym bag with a change of clothes. The JV team had football practice at noon.

After practice, she'd work on inventory of gym equipment. Anna still had her job and things were right again in her world.

At least one problem was nipped in the bud. She still had to speak to Griffins management. "You know, I'm surprised the Griffins haven't contacted me again after all this."

"They might have," Kyran said. "We turned off the phone so any calls would go straight to voice mail. Did you check your cell?"

Anna had forgotten. "Can you wait while I do?"

"Course, baby," he assured.

They went inside the office where Anna had stored her things in a locker. She opened it and got out her purse and phone.

The Griffins' manager had contacted her again that morning, asking that she call and make an appointment within the week. She also had a new message dated this morning from the phone company. They were going to switch her home number and she needed to contact them as soon as possible.

Anna made an appointment for Tuesday morning with the Griffins. "I think I'm going to lose the mascot job," she speculated to Kyran when she put the phone down.

"Try not to worry. I'll have Alex go with you."

"I'm not supposed to fraternize with the players. Anyone who read the article will know I'm the mascot."

"Then let Alex help you," Kyran insisted. "At least let him see your contract."

"Okay, I'll do that. Can I call him?"

Kyran gave Anna his cell phone. Anna found Alexander Grant on Kyran's contact list. Within a minute, a smooth, cultured baritone answered. Alex sounded every bit the professional agent, with coolness in his tone that warned not to mess with one of his clients.

Trusting Kyran's friend, Anna made an appointment for later that afternoon.

"All set, I'll worry about the mascot gig later," Anna commented, giving Kyran his phone back. "I'm going to call the phone company and straighten out my new number."

"If there's anything I can do, you let me know. I've got to get moving."

"Yes, you do." Anna pointed to the door. "Go on to practice. I'll see you tonight at my place, spaghetti."

"Sounds good, see you then," Kyran said, strolling to the door. He didn't try to kiss her goodbye since Manny and Brian were watching. "Manny, I'll be in touch about coming to see your players."

"Awesome, until then," Manny said.

Kyran glanced back at Anna, smiling a familiar warrior's grin, promise in his eyes as he left.

He'd helped her slay one problem, the board and Will Simmons. Now Anna had to hope Alexander Grant could help with the Griffins.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kyran started his SUV, staring over at the row of cars in the lot. He didn't want to drive if he couldn't think straight. He'd been real close to decking Anna's ex for that slight he'd given her.

He was glad he hadn't. That would have caused trouble for her, probably Will Simmons' intent.

Taking out his cell phone, he dialed Alex. "Can you help her?" he asked his friend.

"Once I see the contract," Alex said. "My concern is the fact that the management prefers their mascots to be anonymous. She's exposed. Most will forget her after the next big headline, but some might not."

"Just do what you can. Thanks for looking out for my woman."

"Sure thing, Kyran," Alex assured. "Listen, I think the worst of this media storm is over. The *Alexandria Journal* is going to run an apology to the Griffins for Saturday's article. I know the reporter they hired, she's decent, fair. She'll bring Brenda's article to a close. When I spoke to the *Journal's* editor-in-chief, he said he'd been told Brenda Jamison had a new article about Kyran Black's future with the Griffins and his single status. He'd been told there'd been a scoop on you that no one else had yet, and someone higher on the food chain had him run it. Brenda claimed to have verifiable sources, she'd written plenty of stories where her facts were accurate. He did what he was told."

"How high?"

"High as Frontline Multi-Media," Alex said.

"You lost me."

"The *Journal* and the *Sentinel* are owned by a much larger media corporation," Alex explained. "The two presses are considered small markets for them, especially given that the *Sentinel* is all online."

"I understand that, I think. Why did Frontline want an article to run in a small press?"

"Frontline Multi-Media hosts a cable network that runs continuous stories about celebrities," Alex continued. "It's on the 'net and television and anyone wanting details of the latest celebrity relationships and mishaps can gain access to it. You've made headlines before for the media and paparazzi, guess they wanted more."

"Anna, how does this affect her?"



"That guy you caught spying on Anna was working for Frontline News, the primary television news show on the cable network. He doesn't work for Brenda Jamison or the *Journal*, specifically."

"Great, I knew he was slime. Did he report that I smashed his camera?"

"Not yet. I've had our lawyers try to contact the reporter, goes by the name Max Henderson. He hasn't responded to any calls."

"I want to hire a bodyguard for Anna," Kyran decided. "I'll explain it to her and pay for the cost."

"Good deal, I'll make some calls on that. Go to practice."

"On my way." Kyran ended the call, unsettled about the paparazzi hanging out at Anna's house.

At least Alex would hire security for Anna and she'd not be alone at night. Kyran was relieved. Calmer, he started his SUV, headed out. Halfway to practice, he pulled over at a strip mall, dialing Phalen Maddox.

Phalen answered. "Hey, bro, glad you called. Got some info for you on the license plate you gave me. Your guy's name is John Brown, aka Max Henderson, reporter for Frontline News."

"That's why I'm calling," Kyran said, quickly explaining what Alex had learned about Frontline. "My gut tells me to follow the money where the paparazzi reporter is concerned. It seems to me that a small-time news press shouldn't generate that much interest from a cable network reporter hoping to take advantage of Anna's fifteen minutes of fame, unless they planned to take pictures with the intent of extortion or something."

"I see your point," Phalen replied. "I'll see what I can find out about Frontline Multi-Media. Most of what I know is what you already said. They trade in on celebrity notoriety. Fortunately, you and Anna are yesterday's news in terms of national attention. Frontline's latest scandal is all about your ex and her boyfriend. The two were seen at some fetish club, Seville being the Master to the guy's slave."

"Doesn't surprise me, given her aggressiveness," Kyran said. "Sure am glad I'm out of that relationship."

"Based on the pictures I've seen, they were staged for the attention. That woman doesn't know a damn thing about mastering anyone." Phalen spoke from experience in a world Kyran didn't subscribe to. "I thought you should know the pics on the 'net are pretty graphic. You worry about football and your girlfriend. I'll call as soon as I have anything substantial."

"Thanks, Phalen, I knew I could count on you." Kyran ended the call and edged back into traffic.

By the time he reached Griffins' Nest Stadium, he was an hour late for practice, but had phoned ahead about the schedule. He rushed to his locker room, changed into his gear and jogged to the field.

He and Anna were going to be okay. She'd agreed to live with him on the weekends and he'd make sure she was safe when he couldn't be around her. Before the official start of the football season, he hoped to convince his school teacher to move in with him on a full-time basis.

One step at a time, he reminded himself. He had Anna and wouldn't ruin a good thing, a damn good thing that happened to be just right for him.

## **Chapter Fifteen**

### *Five Weeks Later*

Anna rushed around her bedroom gathering last-minute things for another weekend at Kyran's house.

Nervously, she let her eyes dart to the surprise she'd received in the mail earlier that morning. Except for when she'd gotten her period, they'd done things in bed she'd never dared with anyone else. She'd never felt more daring, sexy or able to handle Kyran Black's sexuality. Tonight, she wanted to stretch her wings and see if she could fly.

He was more dominant regarding their sex play, having discovered early on that Anna loved turning her pleasure over to him. He was never brutal or mean. Last weekend when she submitted to a night bound to his gigantic bed, at his mercy, he'd taken her to heights of ecstasy she still hadn't recovered from five days later.

She'd been a little nervous at first. But her lover didn't rush her, not for a second pressuring her into anything she wasn't ready for.

And the toys! The man did love to use them on her, sometimes on himself. During their fantasy bondage night, he'd teased her to multiple orgasms with a small vibrator before securing it around his waist with a thin strap so it vibrated against his groin and her clit and vulva.

Anna had exploded. Kyran shouted right to the rooftops, his massive cock trembling deep in her with the vibrations, filling his condom with cum. After they'd rested, he massaged her shoulders, calves and ankles, then repositioned her, still bound. What he'd done after that with a jelly-filled, tapered plug and his penis sent her into orbit.

Spectacular, she recalled now, looking at the gift. Tonight, she was going to be the one in control, assuming he wouldn't object and she knew how to use the surprise.

She picked up the thin "how to use" manual that came with it. Sure wouldn't do if she couldn't perform. It was weird sometimes to think he was younger, but far more experienced than she was. There were still moments when she wondered if he'd realize she wasn't always capable of bedroom gymnastics. He'd eased her worries when he'd make love to her so tenderly she'd wept, assuring her that he wasn't trying to reinvent the Kama Sutra or porn flick fucking. He was simply trying to please her, always.

Part of her reserve when they'd met during mascot tryouts was because he wasn't an average man. Sure, he was younger and part of her used it as an excuse to avoid seeing his genuine interest. Their first date revealed their attraction and even misunderstanding hadn't changed his interest. Now she knew. His career, onetime bad-

boy rebel persona and recovery from near tragic injury had matured him into a great man.

Besides, she was grateful to him. Because of Kyran, his agent Alex and his PI buddy Phalen, most of the media attention had faded away. The only trouble they'd had outside their relationship was Seville Davis.

She'd gotten herself into a media storm with her actor-model boyfriend and wanted Kyran to come to L.A. to rescue her. Even though he'd changed the number, she'd obtained it several times, causing Alex to get him a phone that only he, Phalen and Anna knew about. The other, he kept for everyone else, rarely using it when he was with her.

Anna had been relieved. They'd been able to spend time together as a certified couple. Her jobs were safe. Brenda wasn't welcome at the stadium and couldn't hound them anymore. Even Will had backed off regarding his concerns with the school board. In fact, he'd resigned. She hadn't seen him since.

Downstairs, the doorbell dinged. She'd been so lost in thought she didn't hear the loud growl of his SUV. Dropping everything she was doing, she raced for the stairs. Eagerly, she threw open the door.

The tall, dark auburn-haired rebel of her midnight fantasies stood there. Instead of the casual slacks or jeans, loafers and polo shirts he liked to wear on their dates, he wore a business suit. He looked, well, scrumptious in tailored charcoal gray pants, coat, gray shirt and matching striped tie.

So good, Anna could eat him up, but something wasn't right.

"Kyran, what's going on?" she asked, seeing the way he shifted as if something was on his mind.

"Hey now," he said. "Not into the suit, huh, baby?"

"You look very dashing, hero. But why are you dressed like that? Should I go change?" She wore a navy shirt and khaki shorts. Her feet were bare.

"Can I come in first?" he asked, raising his brow.

"Of course, sorry," she apologized and stepped back.

Kyran shut the door, leaning back against it. She guessed what was wrong. They weren't spending the weekend together.

"Ricky pulled a hamstring. Good news is, it's minor and he should be back on the field by the first Griffins home game of the season."

"And?"

"Better news, I'm starting next Friday night. Only thing is, keep that under your hat, okay? Coach wants to release it to the press on his terms."

"That is great news and understandable," Anna said, proud for him. He was an excellent mentor and second-string QB, but his preference was to play as much as he could, especially if this was his last season as a player.

He was still in negotiations about extending his association with the team as a coach, though. She thought he'd do a great job.

"Bad news, team's going wheels up on a red-eye tonight," he revealed. "We weren't supposed to leave until Sunday. Coach wants us to get to Malibu and acclimate for the time change. I'm sorry, Anna. I wanted to spend the weekend with you."

Disappointed, she wouldn't complain. This was what he did for a living. Team practices were getting longer, more intense, more focused on the start of the season. She knew that, knew there would be cancellations and obligations. She just hoped they'd have a little more time.

"Oh Kyran, I'm happy for you, really," Anna assured, moving in closer. His big arms came around her, familiar and warm, safe. "I knew you had a game next week and it's the season opener! That's huge for you to start." And since the mascot and cheerleaders didn't travel to away games often, she wasn't going to be there.

"Thanks, love," he murmured, kissing the top of her head. "Have to admit that'll be nice to get out on that field and show that I'm not done yet."

"You'll wow them with that rocket arm, Kyran Black, no doubt." Glad to have him with her for even a little while, she relaxed. "So what time do you have to be at the airport?"

"Got four hours," he answered. "I'm planning to spend them here with you, get me?"

"Definitely got you, but fair warning, I may not let you out of bed 'til then." She leaned back to look up at him. Despite the premature end to their weekend date, she still had him for what was left of the night. "Not to mention you do look rather edible tonight."

"Speaking of eating, you hungry?" she asked after they stood together, simply enjoying the closeness and familiarity.

He'd been right at the diner. They'd fallen into step real easy from the first. Only once in a while Anna felt the little aches resulting from Kyran's frequent lovemaking. He was a tiger at times. She knew it, understood, loved it. No one on the team spoke against her or called her a cougar. The players were good to her when she attended a few practices with their wives and girlfriends.

Plus, they spent most of their free time together. Weekends exclusively, with date nights during the week when they could.

"Hungry for something, yeah, but not food," he said, grinning down at her.

"Well in that case, it seems you've gotten yourself into some trouble as of late." Going into teacher mode, she jerked herself out of his arms to punch her fists at her hips.

"You going to do something about that?" he countered, crossing his arms. In the suit, he looked imposing, bigger, all male and gorgeous. The scar on his face looked menacing, delicious.

"You bet, young man." Facing off with him, she stood her ground. He stood his. "You are to march upstairs immediately."

"If I don't?"

Moving right up to him, being certain to remain focused on his face, she lifted a brow. "Excuse me? Did you not hear me? Get upstairs. Your teacher's about to show you some manners," she warned, faking a sneer.

Kyran's grin was wicked, devilish, promising retribution some other time. He winked, pushing off the door.

When he reached the stairway she stopped him. "Hold. Remove your coat and tie."

He did, quickly. Hanging the clothing on the railing, he looked back. "Anything else?"

"Shoes, pants, off," she ordered flicking her left hand absently.

As directed, he kicked off the shoes and unfastened his belt and pants, sliding them to the floor. He wore boxer-briefs, his heavy erection filling out the front rather nicely.

"Very good, you may proceed with the socks." His socks joined the stuff on the rail. "Now go on up and wait for me. Need I say where?"

"No ma'am," he grumbled as if he were really in trouble.

Oh he was, she thought wickedly. She was about to fuck his brains out.

Whether he knew exactly what she planned, she couldn't say. She hadn't told him about her gift. From what they'd done so far, she was sure he would enjoy it.

Pointing upstairs, she waited. Kyran turned, obediently going where she directed.

It wasn't his norm to relinquish their play to her. But Anna wanted this, for him, for them. He was about to set off on one of the most important games in his career with the Griffins. An opening game win would be a major coup for the Griffins, especially on Sharks turf.

Deliberately making him wait a bit, she walked up the steps. Purposefully slowing when she rounded the top and went into her bedroom, there she paused.

He was laid out for her on the bed, totally, splendidly naked.

"What took you so long, Ms. James?" he asked, aroused and ready. "Am I to be punished?"

"Not at all, Mr. Black," she remarked, wanting him so badly she was creaming in her panties.

She didn't need to look to know her shorts had a telltale wet spot. Kyran's eyes went to her crotch, his smile grew wider.

"Not punished, loved. By me, understand?" she asked.

"I am all yours, baby," he answered, easing his arms back behind his head.

Anna approached the bed, slowly. "In that case, who is your lover?"

"Name's Anna, might have heard of her," he said. "Smokin' hot, amazing, sexy...smart too, I get off just looking at her."

"Would you let her teach you lessons in love sometimes?" At the bed now, she stood there, enjoying the sight of him.

His bed was two times bigger than her queen-sized mattress and frame. But there'd be plenty of room for them in hers.

"As long as she's enjoying it. It's what she deserves, pleasure. There's nothing I wouldn't do for her to achieve it."

"Why is that, do you think?"

"Cause I love her, simple as that, really," he admitted.

She didn't tell him to do a thing. He just laid there looking wickedly handsome and huge. His rock-hard cock twitched against his abdomen. Pointing to his navel, the purpled head wept, leaving a wet spot. It made her a little nervous thinking she might change her mind when it came down to putting her plan into action.

"Anna, do whatever you want to do to me, okay?" He pushed himself up to his elbows, waiting for her.

"I want to fuck you, Kyran," she said, hoping, no, wanting him to know what she meant.

Then she saw it. The toy that arrived that morning was moved from the bed to the side table. While she'd delayed downstairs, he'd added a few things to the array, including packets of lube.

Kyran knew. He wasn't turned off by it. He wanted her the way she'd fantasized about since she bought the kit.

Her love for him expanded, becoming more and more real.

"Then do it, baby, here I am," he invited, dropping back to the pillows to re-tuck his hands behind his head.

Anna didn't know what came over her. As if in a race, she jerked off her clothes, tossing them aside. Naked, she climbed onto the bottom of the bed, slowly, methodically stalking him on hands and knees.

"Well, would you look at what I've found," she purred, straddling his thighs.

"Nah, look what I've found," he said, easing back a little more. "You've taught me a lot since we got together, Anna, you get me?"

"Think I do," she answered, letting her body relax into him.

Folding herself over him, she absorbed the sensation of being there. His skin was warm, muscles hard. He'd taken his arms out from behind him and put them at her waist. Like always, he made her feel special, loved, she loved him back.

One hand came to her chin, bringing her head up. "Wasn't 'til I met you at tryouts that I thought about settling down with anyone, I'm not seeing any other course for us."

"That your way of saying you love me?"

"Goes without saying, yeah, definitely love you," he assured. "It's more. You taught me how to love. Thought I understood before. Wasn't 'til you that I found out how

wrong I was." He never spoke ill or down about any women he'd known before her, but Anna was aware that his love life off the field was legendary.

"That's good. It means you won't go running to rescue your ex when you go to California," she pointed out, wishing she hadn't done that.

Kyran frowned, his eyes narrowed. "Fuck no, I'm not going anywhere near her, swear on my cock." He took pride in his size, knew darned well how to use it. If he brought his penis into the conversation, he meant it.

"Then there's only one thing to do right now."

"What would that be?" His arms shifted, holding her tighter.

"It begins with a kiss." Hefting herself up, her hands flat to the bed by his arms, she bent down.

Brushing her mouth over his, she concentrated only there. His mouth was masculine, but soft where it needed to be. Loving the feel of it, she ran her tongue over the shape and definition, dipping into the scar.

"How'd you get this?" she suddenly asked.

"Blitzed during a college game," he answered. "Guy was the size of a mountain, knocked my helmet clean off. Think a cleat caught my face."

"Poor baby," she murmured, kissing him in earnest.

"Ladies like it," he teased.

Drawing back, she scowled. "No ladies in this bed except me, understand?"

"Only you," he growled, jerking her back down for another kiss.

Anna gave up trying to be stern as their mouths clung. Forcing away the need to check the clock for time, she remembered they had hours. There was plenty of time to play.

Taking in his taste, his familiar soapy scent and smoothness of his clean-shaven jaw, she let the kiss go on and on. Pushing her tongue between his lips, she explored the silken depth. His tongue caught hers, she sucked him.

Confidence grew, especially in herself. She was his lover. No one else, no exes or paparazzi headlines were going to change it. Enjoying the ride, she savored the texture of his chin, jaw, tip of his nose, forehead.

His skin was soft yet firm. Her breasts squished against his chest, her nipples meeting his. Deliberately, she widened her legs to accommodate his girth between her thighs. Very aware she was drenching him, she rocked her hips as she'd learned from using the metallic eggs.

"Take me in you," he implored.

Anna wanted to. She had other plans.

"Soon I'll be in you," she promised, peppering kisses down his throat. His hands clutched at her back, pushing her up and down his erection.



Loving the feel of him, she was tempted to adjust her hips, take him in. She waited, continuing to kiss his collarbone, building on the pleased tension curling deep in her core. Many times he'd loved her from head to toe. It was her turn to give it back. Truth was Kyran liked control. When he gave it to her, he was showing his trust.

By the time she kissed his nipples, he was squirming and moaning. The sounds so masculine, they tripped through her heart, turning her on like crazy.

"Umm, your skin tastes good," she praised, lapping his left nipple and pectoral. Muscles twitched, enticing her to lick the copper areola. Nipping shy of pain, she brought his hips off the bed. Suckling on him gently, she had him panting. His small, pointed nipple felt hard against her tongue.

Clever hands smoothed up and down her back, sending sweet sensations through her spine to her sex. The familiarity of his calluses, the length and size of his hands, felt amazing, right. All the while, she rocked her hips, rubbing her wet vulva along his length.

Shifting, he made it so the head brushed her clit with each thrust of her hips. He didn't force the movements. He gave them back to her, letting her set the pace.

"Oh god," she purred, feeling all of him against her pussy. "No one fits me like you, Kyran. If you find someone else, I don't think I could go back to regular sex with another guy."

A playful smack on her bottom startled her, causing thick, warm juices to drip from her pussy. "You're not going anywhere. Say that again, I'm turning you over my knee."

"Can't do that, hero, I'm a little busy here."

"Yeah, you are." He drew an imaginary line down the center of her back, cupping her butt cheek where he'd spanked her. "Sorry, baby, want me to kiss it?"

"I want you to shush while I work you out," she commanded, going south with her lips, tongue and teeth.

Skimming his ribs, abs and navel, she dipped her tongue into the indentation, then hummed along his six-pack. Jeez, he was ripped. Amazing, truly amazing, she thought, licking and kissing, occasionally nipping

Kyran bucked with each nibble. Murmured deeply with each kiss and caress until she moved herself far enough to encase his cock with her breasts. Intentionally, she lifted so she could push her breasts close together, trapping him. His hips surged forward, then pulled back, repeating, his erection sawing between the vee of her breasts.

"Stay still," she warned, biting him just shy of leaving a mark. Then she nuzzled the tender skin between his hip and inner thigh.

Something in her wanted to brand him, *hers*. Sucking the skin there, she drew hard enough to leave a small, circular mark.

"Bad girl," he growled roughly.

"You like when I'm bad," she teased.

“Wrong. I love when you’re bad.”

Smiling, she moved to where she really wanted to be. Face to face with his beautiful erection, she rubbed her lips over him. His hands slipped behind her head, staying still. With her face and hair, she continued to rub his length. His abs grew taut and she licked him, tip to groin.

He bucked. Anna licked him again, repeating up and down, all along his girth. Paying special attention to the rim, she flicked her tongue over the ridge. Taking him in one hand, she guided his heavy length into her mouth, sucking the head gently.

How she loved Kyran’s warm, salty male taste, the pleasure of exciting him with her mouth indescribable, powerful. Slowly, she made love to him, swallowing him to her throat.

“Careful, we got hours, slow down.”

Anna nodded, withdrew, capturing pre-cum spilling out. “Hmm,” she praised, licking it all off.

Sitting up, she straddled him, discovering she didn’t quite know what to do next. The harness and dildo set were nearby. She’d read the manual. Putting it to use was a whole other story.

“You can, Anna,” he said, showing he understood her hesitation. “I trust you. But if you want, I can help equal this out ‘til you’re ready to take over. It’s your call.”

“Need help,” she decided.

Gently, he tapped her thigh. She moved off him, waiting in the center of the bed.

Kyran knelt near her, reaching for the silk and leather harness and two of the dildos that came with it. The first was about three inches long with the thickness of a woman’s middle and index fingers, textured and filled with flexible jelly. The second was shaped the exact size of a normal man’s penis, made of the same jellied substance. It took him a minute, but he fastened them to the harness.

“Come here and kiss me,” he invited.

Anna went with an ease that belied the nerves she’d felt at the beginning. Trusting him, she placed her mouth against his, letting him control the kiss. She’d wanted to do this right for him. The best way was to let him teach her how to please him the most.

As they knelt there kissing, Kyran’s hands went around her middle. Soft material skimmed her thigh. Thicker, harder leather scraped her skin, thrilling her from head to toe. She relaxed and he eased her back, running his hand to her core, testing her readiness.

With just his finger, he fucked her. She was soaking, ready, thrusting back at him.

“Here we go,” he said, sliding the harness up her hips.

He’d fastened the penis-sized dildo to the middle hole of the strap, designed to go inside her. He kissed her as he centered it between her pussy lips. Then she felt the cool jellied thickness being pushed into her vagina, filling her slowly until it was seated.

“Yes,” she moaned, liking the fullness but wishing there was more.

"Ease back. Look down."

Anna obeyed. She'd known what she'd bought. She just didn't expect the thrill of seeing the pretty pink, slender dildo protruding from her waist. She had a cock strapped to her mound.

With help from the leather and silk harness, it jutted out, though it wasn't huge and only as thick as two of her fingers.

"Jeez," she gulped.

"Sexy as hell," he praised, reaching out to stroke the dildo so that the harness made the penis inside her surge up and down.

She sighed softly, enjoying the patient, rhythmic thrusts. Kyran knelt there, arms going around her, kissing her. Her jellied shaft prodded his abdomen, meeting his giant erection.

"Hell yeah," he growled, circling his hips against her. "Wait, bend over for me for a minute."

Anna did what he asked. He assisted, maneuvering her around so that she was on her hands and knees with her butt raised.

"Lower," he suggested, touching her shoulders.

She went face down to the mattress, rump still presented. The middle strap of the harness was open along the crack of her ass. The cock inside of her and the dildo shifted. One pushed deep into her, the other bouncing.

It was curiously exciting.

The room smelled of them, faintly of sex, salt and sweat. She didn't mind. Her heart was in this, her mind somewhere in the stratosphere because it was actually going to happen. As often as they'd had sex, she'd wanted to teach him what it felt like for her to take him into her body. She didn't know if she could take his cock anally. He was very big and thick, she didn't know if she could take him without a lot of pain. However he sure knew how to use the toys in ways that made her come every time.

Anticipating, her body trembled. Zings of sensitive nerve endings magnified the simplest touch, making her eager for the next step.

She heard a squirt of lube, felt Kyran move up behind her. "You look real pretty like this, Ms. James. Beautiful ass, that tight pussy that I know is filled with cock is dripping wet, feels sexy, doesn't it?"

"Yes, yes," she moaned.

"Good, 'cause we're both about to be filled. Everything, all parts connected, get me?"

"Oh yeah, been waiting for just that."

Kyran's warmth whispered through her backside, the brush of his lips at the small of her back reassuring. A cool, wet finger rimmed her asshole, the only part of her not completed yet.

"We'll use a plug, Anna. You've taken this size before. When I tell you, breathe out and push down."

His lubed finger slipped past the first tight ring of her ass. Intense, sharp-edged pleasure sparked within her as he pushed in farther. Anna squirmed, seeking the forbidden exhalation of being taken in such a primal way. Breathing, she lunged back against him, taking him knuckle deep. Ultrasensitive nerves ignited, clutching at the penetration.

While he waited for her to relax and adjust, he encouraged her to roll with his slow, deliberate finger thrusting. "Ohmigod," she cried out, liking the slight burn that drew her willingly into something that had been forbidden to anyone else.

Just when she thought she'd orgasm, he withdrew his finger. "Now, breathe and push, baby." Something soft and middle finger thick slid through her puckered rim, made easier with the coating of lubricant on both the toy and his finger play. She breathed, pushed, the plug graduating from thin to thick as it breached the tightest part, filling her, thrilling her. Finally seated, white-hot lightning licked from her ass to her pussy.

"Holy...ohmigod..." Crazy-hot, indescribable sensation tore through her being. She felt so loved, overflowing, aware of the dildo and plug wedged inside, only a thin membrane separating them. Impulsively, she pumped her hips, shifting and pushing both, desperately wanting to come.

Kyran wrapped himself along her back, moving with her so the penis-sized toy in her vagina felt bigger. His cock rubbed along her butt. Orgasm jolted her so unexpectedly fast that every muscle locked her as she was, her lover holding her through the onslaught.

"Fuck, woman, I want you," he grunted into her ear.

Anna breathed in, out, enjoying the tremors of coming down from climax, feeling weightless, free. "When I can move, Mr. Black, this woman is going to blitz you."

"Better believe it," he laughed. "You did that when we met, love."

It took almost five minutes for Anna to move again. Anytime she did, the toys set her off. Even the thin, sleek cock on her mound meant for Kyran would bob in such a way that she kinda liked it. Although when it bent awkwardly as she collapsed to the bed, she wondered how men handled these things.

And Kyran, jeez! He was enormous compared to the three-inch dildo she wore. He was so strong, so capable and confident, the more dominant in bed, but he was able to switch for her when she needed it.

He was really going to let her take him. The power of it made her breathless.

Getting up to kneel, body shaking from the aftershocks of movement in her pussy and ass, she commanded, "Get up here and kneel before me, Mr. Black."

Kyran ran his hands from her thighs to hips, kneeling as told. "Ms. James, I am at your service. How may I please you?"

"You may kiss me," she granted.

"Yes ma'am." He leaned against her, his heavy erection poking out from an auburn nest of curls. Pre-cum glistened on the tip, raining down his length.

He kissed her, giving her tongue. Her front dildo flexed upward toward her belly when she thrust her hips. Still kissing, they undulated together, combining their movements to strike each other's cock.

"You have the most splendid penis," she complimented against his lips.

"As do you, Ms. James." He ground against her, cock to dildo, the tight, dark hairs of his balls brushing her curls. The penis inside of her slid up and down in a slow, gentle fucking. The plug kept her backside filled, continuous intense heat zinging through the tight passage.

Instead of touching Kyran's cock, she guided the jellied dildo between his spread thighs. Carefully, she thrust. Falling into rhythm with her, she thrust and he parried. It was heaven, amazing, all parts of her full, overflowing and yet there was more thrills to come.

Tension swirled deep down in the soul of her sex. Kyran kept kissing her, his tongue making love to her mouth while his hips rocked in time with hers.

Mutually, they scooted back. "Very good, you definitely know how to kiss."

"Why thank you, ma'am, it is my pleasure to do as you request."

"Then you must face the headboard." He crawled around, presenting his back. "Nicely done, lie down."

Obediently, he spread himself across her bed. The tight, defined muscles of his ass, hips and legs invited her to touch. Patiently, she appreciated the dips and curves of his masculine build, watching the play of movement under his skin. The tattoos around his thighs drew her attention.

"You like tattoos, I see," she said, stroking inside the Celtic markings and up to his fine ass. His whole body trembled just from her touch.

"I do, Ms. James. Do you?"

"I like them on you," she answered, smoothing her hands back down both thighs.

"No chance of getting one, huh?"

Deliberately, she grabbed his cheeks, giving a gentle squeeze with a little bit of nails. "Back to the task at hand," she said.

She massaged him all over, ass to shoulders, back down, loving the way he arched or groaned, skin and muscle flexing beneath her fingertips. As soon as she felt more comfortable, she playfully buzzed the curve of his spine with a kiss, licking down to his firm rump.

"Hmm, yeah," he grumbled, his voice muffled by pillow.

Taking a pillow, she stuffed it beneath his hips. "Lift up." He did, providing enough space for the pillow to push his ass right up at her. Perfect.

"I've a question, Mr. Black," she broached, seeing a packet of lubricant.

"And that would be?"

She grabbed the lube, tore open the foil and poured it in her palm. "Has anyone done this to you before? I ask not because of jealousy, but to be certain I'm not going to hurt you."

Kyran leaned over to the side, looking up at her. "Except for your fingers, there's been no one to dare try."

Then Anna had to be sure he was okay with it. "Then you're ready to try?"

He dropped back to where he'd been, ass presenting higher. He scooted his knees just enough to brace himself. "I'm yours."

Generously applying lube to the dildo with her palm, she made certain it was covered head to her mound. Heart pounding with renewed desire, she straddled his hips. The toy cock flopped a little, touching his backside.

Wanting to hold him, she stretched herself out, covering him with her body. She nuzzled his hair off his shoulders, kissing the back of his neck. He wasn't one to stay still. He murmured, shifted, enabling the harness toys to do their magic within her body.

Humming contentedly, she felt unquestionable love for Kyran Black. Months ago, she'd not thought she'd ever be here with him. Not as his girlfriend and certainly not this way.

"It's okay, baby, don't hesitate."

Scooting her hand between them, she palmed more lubricant to the crack of his ass, fingering some into the puckered muscle. To be sure, she sat up and grabbed hold of the packet, dripping more onto him.

His hips pushed back at her. "Fuck, cold," he growled, the thick gel glistening where she wanted to be.

Regaining her balance on top, she rubbed for a minute to warm him, then eased forward, positioning the dildo into the crease. Pumping her hips, the harness held her tight to his body and slipped inside, barely an inch.

Kyran braced his shoulders, breathing as he'd taught her, easing back against her with every slide and glide of her hips and cock. Then he began a subtle, circular pattern with his hips as she surged in farther, the friction of the soft cotton pillow working his cock.

"Holy fuck," he cursed, growling and thrusting back at her for more.

Anna couldn't hold back. She wanted him too much. With her coaxing, she brought him to his hands and knees and fell out. Though it took a little effort, she repositioned herself until the smooth-headed dildo pressed against his asshole again. Not wanting to inflict pain, she began to push into him in earnest, watching the well-lubed head breach his back passage.

He reared his head like a wild mustang, grunting, bucking. "Fuck, woman, yeah."

His whole body shook with his willingness to be taken as deep as she could go. Her own ass was filled with a plug and her pussy filled with cock. It was amazing to know that they were connected in such a way. Then she was seated to the hilt, truly a part of him now.

Incredibly turned-on, Anna reached around his waist to stroke his soaking wet cock. She needed to complete the connection of her pussy, their asses and cocks.

Pre-cum covering his girth, he was so close to blowing Anna knew she had to slow down. Aware of what it felt like to be completely taken by Kyran, she melded with him, shared the white-hot slivers of tension and pleasure that raced from the sensitive nerves in her ass and pussy, knowing he was right there with her.

Kyran's hips surged back against her. "Hell, Anna, fuck me."

Feeling sexy and wickedly bad, Anna pumped in and out, her toys still fucking her. He suddenly reared up, easing them both back so she was kneeling, the dildo still buried in him when her thighs became his chair.

"Take me, baby, teach me," he encouraged, his body shaking.

Anna put her hands at his waist. He put his hands over hers, guiding fingers around his erection and squeezing tight. Together they surged and thrust, coaxing him up and down her shaft. She pumped his cock vigorously. Wildness overtook them, compelling them, rocking them.

Everything feminine and sweet inside of Anna flew apart, flying, soaring, climax ripping through her muscles, veins, toes to fingertips. Kyran growled, grunting, easing his movements to let her have her fill, letting her make love to him.

Heady with it, she came. The thrill of a fantasy made real rushed through her in a wave of love. Here, with him in her arms, was exactly where she wanted to be for the rest of her life.

Kyran suddenly reared up and almost pulled off her. Somehow steadying him, she pumped her hands up and down his heavily veined shaft. She knew he was about to come. Heard his breaths, felt his frantic heartbeat. Warm sperm splashed her thighs and hand, coating them, his body trembling with the force. Touched, she hugged him close, rocking him back down to earth.

For a moment, neither one could move. Anna had been so lost in his orgasm she went to lie back, but stopped as ripples of tension ebbed outward from her vulva, clit and ass, breaking through her so hard, she came again. Finally she collapsed to the bed, taking him with her.

She'd done it, introduced something new and exciting into their bed.

And her hero had let her love him. "I love you, Kyran," she told him, kissing his shoulder.

"Love you, Anna," he whispered, a little hoarse. "Come here. Let's get this stuff off you. I want to hold you with nothing separating us."

She let him assist her out of the harness. As soon as the toys were removed and set aside to be cleaned later, he withdrew the plug from her body, placing it with the rest, and then tumbled her back to the bed.

"You okay?" she asked.

"Better than okay, I feel like Superman."

"Have to admit, I was a little nervous about trying it," she admitted.

"Anna, you were great. Don't worry, there's nothing in our bed I won't like except pain."

He drew her to his side, holding her close. He felt safe, his heart pounding a steady, familiar beat. Big, strong arms encircled her. Warm, happy and feeling mushy, she laid her head on his shoulder.

"I'd never hurt you, you know?" she assured.

"I know. We're good together, don't you think?"

"Better than good, amazing," she said, breathing him in, relaxing.

"Then maybe you'll move in with me when I get home," he suggested. "And I don't mean weekends only. I'm talking full time here, Anna."

"You think we're ready for that? I mean, what about practice, you're up to fifteen hours a day, sometimes later. You'll travel every other weekend."

"Told you, when something works, you take care of it. We work. Fact is, moving in with me won't be easy. You're right, I'll have to travel and the season will be busy, but I think we can handle it. Think about it, when I come home at night, I'll be coming home to you. Let's give it a test run by moving your things to my place."

"You realize if I do we're likely to have sex without using a condom? For me, having unprotected sex requires commitment. I want that with you, as long as you're ready, Kyran. Besides, I want you to feel good when we're together. I know latex, though sensitized, decreases some of the sensation for you."

"Yeah, I'd like that too. I know my history with women. I want you to always feel safe with me. I'll get tested again, just to be sure. When you move in, we go bare, you get me?"

"Yes, I think I do this time."

"So is that a yes?"

"I want to, but..." Anna hesitated, wanting to ask him what he thought about kids, more so if he might consider marrying her sometime in the future.

She was about to bring it up when Alex Grant's ringtone sounded from somewhere downstairs.

"Fuck no," Kyran growled, looking over at the clock. They'd not even had an hour and something told Anna that time had been cut short. She hadn't even agreed to move in with him yet.

"Guess you should go talk to him," Anna said.



"I'll call him back," he decided. "I'm not done loving you tonight."

"Well, Mr. Black, someday I hope you'll love me forever." Fearing she gave away too much too soon, she fought against covering her face.

He'd asked to move in together. It was a good step toward forever, wasn't it?

"Ms. James, I intend to." Turning into her, he rested his arm over her bare hip, drawing her into his big body. "Love you." He kissed her forehead, hugging her close.

"Same deal," she said, relaxing only to be startled by the phone jingling again. "But you should call Alex. He's persistent, isn't he?"

"He looks out for his clients."

"Then call him. I'll be here."

"Better be," Kyran warned.

"What happens if I'm not?"

He crawled out of bed, turned to her, brow raised. She really did love him. "A whole lot of fucking happens."

"And if I stay?"

"We'll slow it down, make love 'til I leave."

Either way, Anna figured it was a win-win situation. They'd both end up thoroughly satisfied by the time he left. She dropped back on the bed, deciding to wait in bed for her reward.

At some point, she must have fallen asleep. Awakened by masculine lips against hers, she grinned. Kyran climbed back into bed, this time taking the lead.

Laughing softly, she gave it back to him. Alternating between gentleness and deep, soul-scorching tongue kisses, he made love to her mouth.

Anna melted further into the mattress, welcoming Kyran's weight as he climbed on top. Putting her arms up on either side of her head, she grinned at the way he placed his hands over hers and knotted their fingers together. When she couldn't take waiting anymore, she parted her legs, letting him settle between her thighs, positioned right at her entrance. She could feel the wetness of his condom, knew he'd protected them both.

She was glad he thought of it. But if she said yes to living with him, they'd forgo the condom and maybe have a real future together.

With a whispered kiss to her brow, he said, "Love you, baby." And slowly, gently began to penetrate, his cock sinking into her inch by inch.

"Love you right back, hero." Clenching her fingers to maintain the connection, she arched her hips as he pushed in as far as she could take.

Just like that, face-to-face, man to woman, they made love. He was so beautiful, his thrusts perfect, his length filling her far better than any toy or fantasy.

He was real. His love evident in his eyes, she gave it right back, trusting him to protect her.

Soon they surged together, their intimate dance continuing when he turned them side to side, all the while thrusting in and out, taking her with a slowness that was the polar opposite of what they'd done that night.

They crested as one, each gasping and kissing, rocking each other through the all-consuming pleasure. They stayed like that for a while, side to side, joined.

Anna grinned, closing her eyes. When she woke sometime later, she was alone. The bed sheets had cooled. The room was dark, but a sliver of light shown from the closed bathroom door.

"Kyran?" she called out.

He came out naked, a big, satisfied grin on his face. "Hey now, baby, sorry to scare you there. Had to take a quick shower," he said.

"You have to leave already?"

"Afraid so, I'd planned for longer. I'm sorry."

"It's okay. Go on, just be safe."

"You'll think about moving in?" he asked.

"Said I would," she answered, wishing he was back in bed with her. She suddenly didn't want him to go, worried that something was about to change between them.

"Good. I'll call you when I land in L.A. If you're asleep, I'll leave a message."

"Okay, sounds good."

He came up, still naked, bent close and kissed her goodbye. Watching him go, she almost told him she'd made her choice, that she'd live with him.

His phone downstairs went off again. Anna held her tongue. Her answer could wait until he came home.

## **Chapter Sixteen**

*One Week Later*

"So has he called yet?" Tracey asked from the kitchen, where she stirred a pot of chili.

"No, but I don't expect him to call 'til later. Kyran's getting ready for the season opener," Anna answered absently, tuned in to the giant television he'd bought for her a few days before leaving town. "At least next Friday's game is home."

"Have to admit, chili, a Griffins game and cold beer is almost like our own tailgate party," Tracey said, still in Anna's kitchen.

"Speaking of beer, can you bring me a fresh one?"

"You bet," her friend answered.

Tracey came out of the kitchen, handing Anna a long-neck bottle. The beer was cold, tasted great.

"How's the chili?" Anna asked.

"Almost ready," Tracey said, taking a seat on the sofa.

Anna rocked back in her recliner, remembering how creative Kyran Black could be when it came to the recliner. Actually, when it came to anything they did in bed he continuously amazed her. She lived out a fantasy the night he left, but it was the lovemaking afterward that had truly stolen her heart. If she hadn't already been in love with him, she'd have fallen twice.

She was seriously considering moving in with him, would have said yes last Friday night. But as much as she hated to admit it, a shiver of doubt had kicked in when he left. He'd had another phone call that sounded like Alex's ringtone.

It hadn't been. Seville managed to contact him, using the phone no one but his inner circle was supposed to know about. She heard him threaten a restraining order if she continued to contact him. Anna still worried that something bad was going to happen in L.A. that would change their future. It was a feeling she hadn't been able to shake, probably because she didn't know for certain where Seville was or if she'd pull any crazy stunts.

Of course he called whenever he could. Talking to him on the phone had been as easy as ever and she especially liked when he shared his progress during practice, as well as Ricky Weathers'. Ricky's injury was minor, but he would be listed as a probable starter for the first Griffins home game in two weeks. Kyran was working with the younger QB to help him recover from the hamstring pull, as he was well aware of dealing with an injury that could sideline a great player.

The bright spot over the week had been when he called to let her know that Brenda Jamison resigned. The gossip she'd attempted to create by rushing her story to print had backfired against her. The security guard she'd been dating at Griffins' Nest Stadium exposed that Brenda had been attempting to find damaging evidence against several of the football players with the intent to extort them to keep quiet.

Whether that had been true when it came to Brenda's Cougar and Rebel byline, no one could say. But apparently she told the editor-in-chief at the *Journal* that she'd used more sources than just the security guard in that article, hinting at someone within Anna and Kyran's camp.

It was a little disconcerting wondering if one of Kyran's friends had been Brenda Jamison's other source. She was pretty confident in her own friends, as most except Tracey were unaware that she'd gone out with him months ago when she'd won the mascot job. Only her co-workers at school, the board and Tracey knew she had won that gig and they were supposed to keep quiet about it.

Still, even though she'd begun to question whether it was the right time to move in with him, she did love him. Kyran was extremely attentive. Not once had he made her feel old or that he was too young. When they were together, they felt like equals.

Plus after they dealt with the school board, he'd stopped by twice during her weekday practices, bringing players from the offensive line and the defense to run drills with the team. He'd actually taught Anna a few things about play calling and she saw that he had real skill at coaching. His visits to the school turned out to be awesome, as the JV team was frequently teased by the older varsity squad and benefited from the pros' knowledge of the game. Now the older kids didn't tease. As a result, the JV and varsity were set to play a fundraiser for Central Tech. They'd put the funds toward the sports program at the high school.

Kyran had been fantastic with the JV boys, showing fatherhood potential. Anna wanted that with him. Kids, family, the whole nine yards, everything they could be.

Every once in a while she wondered if he'd see her as too old or if his ex would manage to worm her way back into his life. She'd have to trust Kyran while he was in California. As far as she knew, he'd not seen Seville or attempted to rescue her from her self-induced media storm.

No matter the outcome of tonight's game, the Griffins would fly home tomorrow morning. He'd promised to come straight to her house in Baltimore when he got off the plane.

"You're thinking about Kyran now, aren't you?" Tracey asked, setting her long neck on the coffee table.

"Yep, he's a good guy. I still feel terrible about giving him the wrong number that first time we went out."

"Hey, you shouldn't. You were nervous. I sure as heck would have been. I'm still wondering why a guy like Kyran Black couldn't manage to find you, regardless of the phone mishap."

"He didn't want to scare me off. If he'd used his agent or his contacts to find me, it would have. I'd admired his work ethic and his stats for years, never once thinking I'd get a chance with Kyran 'The Rebel' Black. When he started hanging out at tryouts, I was sure he was there to watch the cheerleaders do their thing. I was surprised that he wanted to go out with me. I'm still surprised by it all."

"It's obvious the man's in love with you, Anna." Tracey smiled. "And to think I'd wanted you to go see male dancers for your birthday. Glad you didn't."

"So am I!" Anna took a long swallow of her beer, anxious for the Griffins game to start. Tracey leaned over and grabbed her beer again.

"And here's to Alexander Grant for making sure you kept your mascot job," Tracey added with a salute, drinking some.

"Amen!" Anna was really glad about that.

The Griffins management had decided to hire someone to work as a mascot along with Anna. There'd been a pregame played where she did entertain the crowds and no one seemed to call her out or worry about her identity beneath the uniform. Primarily because the new mascot, one of the male cheerleaders that knew the routines, shared duties with her and made it much easier to deal with the heat.

During their home opener, a Friday night game under the lights, Anna and the new hire would reveal that there were two of them by running ahead of the players when they came onto the field. After the opening ceremonies, one would go to the crowd. One would work with the cheerleaders.

It was seven o'clock now and time to think about Kyran and football. Even though the game didn't start for an hour, Anna hadn't been able to resist the cable network's pregame coverage. There was a lot of hype since the Sharks had a new stadium and the press was anxious to see how things would unfold with Kyran Black playing for the Griffins. There'd been some grumbles among his former fans in Malibu that he'd turned on them by signing with another team.

The fact that the Malibu Sharks management hadn't thought Kyran was capable of coming back from an injury that might have ended another man's career didn't seem to matter to them.

"Hey look, there's your guy," Tracey pointed out.

Anna grinned. There he was, Kyran Black, dressed in his tight gold uniform pants and a white undershirt, tape around his knee and football cleats on his feet. He was standing outside the visiting team's locker room with Griffins star QB Ricky Weathers. They were surrounded by reporters.

"The cameras do love Kyran," Tracey said.

"Definitely," Anna agreed. More of the cameras were pointed toward Kyran than Ricky Weathers.

If Ricky said something, the microphones went to him, as did the cameras. But more often they swung back to Kyran. Ricky was a little smaller, not quite as gorgeous,

but good-looking in his own right. Kyran's image as "The Rebel" had given him some notoriety, whereas Ricky was still being tested by the media.

As Anna watched the interview, she noticed a woman pushing her way through the crowd of reporters. Not just any woman. Seville Davis crashed into a cameraman.

"Apologies," she murmured toward the mic. "I have to get to him, thank him. Without Kyran Black, my career, my life's work, might have ended." Then she pushed her way to Kyran!

Anna's heart clenched. She couldn't breathe. Seville launched herself at Kyran, grabbing him about the neck and hanging on. Cameras rolling and bulbs flashing, the media circus ate it up as his arms went around her.

Anna told herself he did it to stop Seville from hurting herself or risk being blitzed by the model. It still hurt, no matter what she wanted to believe. Seeing how beautiful Seville looked in some black, expensive dress that didn't belong at a football stadium. The cameras devoured her long, angular limbs and facial structure, making Anna feel frumpy...and old.

"Kyran, I'm sorry about the mistakes I've made. If the cougar's history, my boy toy is. Swear to God, I'll wear this all the time," Seville pronounced for the benefit of the cameras, flashing her left hand, sporting a humongous pink diamond ring.

For what seemed forever, he didn't move. He looked stunned, like he'd never seen her before.

Seville took his silence as permission to actually try to kiss him. He stopped her, easily hoisting her off him and setting her carefully on her feet.

"Have you lost your mind? We aren't anything, get it?" Kyran glared down at her, his temper clearly going through the roof. He lowered his voice, speaking only to Seville, but from the look of her posture, fury was gripping her.

Some of the Sharks players had come out of their locker room, trying to see the commotion. They headed straight for Kyran and Ricky when they saw Seville and Kyran arguing.

Something drew Kyran's eye past Seville, past the reporters and the big men marching toward the visitors' locker room.

"How'd he get down here? Fucker's crazy! Cut the cams, call security, ASAP." He pushed Seville toward Ricky.

Ricky pushed Seville behind him and the main camera feed went out. The audio feed remained and continued picking up on heated shouts and warnings too chaotic to understand. Leave it to the media to find a story, probably another gossip-fed headline waiting for them, Anna thought, but something was terribly wrong.

Then she sat bolt upright. A fight was going on, she was sure of it. It sounded like everyone was in a panic, one voice rising above the commotion. A man yelled, "All those photos, you bitch, you'll pay!"

"Seville, get the fuck out of the way," Kyran shouted in warning. His fury cut through the audio, damn near killing Anna with dread.

Someone male growled something, his voice eerily familiar, but too strange to make any sense to her. "For Anna," he wailed.

The sound of a bat cracked into something equally hard, ricocheting, the cry of agony that ensued horrendous, making absolutely no sense to Anna. That sounded like Kyran!

The network finally cut the live audio, the silence both welcome and horrible because she didn't know what happened.

It took a minute to go to commercial.

"What was that?" Tracey asked.

"I have no idea," Anna said when she could breathe again. She checked her watch. That had to have taken all of a minute to go down and despite what they'd heard, it didn't make sense. "There's bad blood between the Sharks and Griffins, ever since Kyran signed with Alexandria. Maybe the Sharks got in some early punches or something? If one of them hurt him, I will tear him limb from limb, slowly."

"Seemed to me things got weird when that psycho woman jumped on your guy. Who was that? She came out of their locker room."

"She did? That's Seville Davis, by the way."

"The one in the underwear catalogues?" Tracey clarified.

"Yes. She's Kyran's ex."

"Explains why she looked familiar. Someone should clue her in to the ex part," Tracey said. "She was ready to eat Kyran for dinner."

Not an image Anna wanted to have right then, she took a really long pull of her beer.

"Kyran told me she had a nasty jealous streak back when they were dating. Apparently she'd liked being seen with him because it gave her more notice with the paparazzi, which she loves. She didn't like not having the attention when he left California. They'd ended things soon after Brenda Jamison ran a story about him with another woman. Turned out he was just helping a friend of Ricky Weathers."

"It's very strange, not to mention the story thing from Brenda," Tracey commented. "You sure Seville's aware they are done? I mean, I like Kyran and all that, but what was that dig about a cougar?"

"Not sure. She's a bitch. Her latest antics feature her boyfriend taking her to some sex club. They were caught in an embarrassing situation and the photos went viral. She called Kyran a few times to see if he'd get Alexander Grant to help her out of the media storm. He hasn't taken the bait. Plus she has her own agent and lawyers."

"Good call for both men. Stay out of it."

"You know, something's not right. I really want to concentrate on the network going black. You'd think if the teams had a fight, the cameras would have kept rolling. Reporters love fodder ratings."

"Cameras went out on Kyran's command. The rest was like listening to a train wreck and not knowing how to stop it. Not sure you noticed the audio sucked, as if only one mic was still on at the time of the fight." That was why the sounds came out so distorted and awkward. She'd not known, her heart had been in her throat.

Anna frowned. She loved Kyran Black, was considering living with him. Part of her really wanted the kind of commitment that came with an engagement ring, but maybe that was far too soon for either of them to think about.

Trust him, she told herself. Trust Kyran to do the right thing and not have further contact with Seville. He'd looked genuinely surprised to see her. He'd pushed her away. Or had Anna seen what she wanted to see? She'd heard it said that five witnesses to a crime scene can see five different things.

"Anna, don't worry," Tracey said after a few seconds. "It sure didn't look to me like he wanted her to jump him. He set Seville on her feet, remember? He was not into her at all. My money's on you keeping him for the long haul, know what I mean?"

"Sure do," Anna said. She glad Tracey was with her. "Let's check that chili before I chew my lip off with worry."

"Your man is an incredible cook. Remind me to have my Jeremy learn from a master."

"Ha, I'll do that. At least our boyfriends like each other," Anna commented.

The two headed for the kitchen. Kyran had made her a huge batch of chili and froze it for her. He'd left instructions to heat it up in the crock pot. The spicy flavors would improve with the slow cooking, he'd claimed.

Anna tested it. He was right, spicy and hot and just about perfect. By game time, dinner would be served in big soup bowls with chunks of cheddar cheese and cornbread.

While Anna and Tracey talked, they each got another beer. From the kitchen they could hear the sports commentators conversing about the two teams set to play that night. It was more a comparison of players and strategy than anything regarding the strange appearance of Seville Davis a few minutes ago.

Maybe there hadn't been a fight and Anna had imagined hearing a man shouting threats and using her name? Couldn't be right, could it? Surely the news would have said something about it. Her kitchen land line rang before she could go see what was happening on TV.

"Hello?" Anna answered, recognizing the number.

"Anna, darlin', Phalen here," Kyran's college roommate replied.

As much as she loved Kyran, Phalen Maddox had the deepest, sexiest voice with a touch of a Bostonian accent. "Hey, are you watching the game?"



"Planning on it," Phalen said. "Doesn't start 'til eight, right?"

"Ah, guess I'm overly excited. There was a fight or something during an interview with Kyran and Ricky Weathers. The cameras were filming, then cut out. A mic picked up the chaos, but my friend Tracey and I have no idea what happened."

"I'll turn on the coverage, see what's up." There was a shuffle and she heard the television turn on. "Listen, the reason I'm calling. Kyran asked me to track a reporter for him. Gave me info on the guy's car and plate," he said, "car" sounding like "cah".

"The one who goes by Max Henderson," Anna said, recalling Kyran's concern about the man who'd spied on them through her front window.

"He went missing shortly after his stunt in front of your house and hasn't been seen at work since that evening."

"He'd taken photos he shouldn't have," Anna said.

"Here's the deal, Anna. He's been found, dead. Looks like a suicide, but homicide hasn't been ruled out. Investigation is ongoing."

"Oh my god, you don't think Kyran had something to do with that, surely!"

"No way in hell," Phalen assured. "John Brown, aka Max Henderson, lived in Hollywood, California. He was found in his apartment three days ago. From what I can tell from the ME records, he died of a gunshot wound to the head. No sign of struggle or anything, not even a note."

"Is there anything you or the police need from me or Kyran?"

"Don't think so. I wanted the two of you to know what's happened. I don't think you'll have another reporter snooping outside your house."

"Let's hope not. I sure didn't want something like this to happen to the man."

"Could you have Kyran call me later?"

"You bet I will," Anna said. "Have you heard anything about Brenda Jamison, Phalen? She resigned from her job."

"So I've heard. Have to admit I wasn't looking to find anything on her. Kyran's agent and lawyers were taking care of that."

Anna had to admit she was a little worried about Brenda. Even if Max's death was a suicide, it was disconcerting. She didn't want to think that man's death had anything to do with her or Kyran.

"Could you try to find her? Just to make sure she's okay?"

"I can do that for you," Phalen agreed.

"I'll pay for your time."

"No fucking way. Kyran would tan my hide if I let you. I'll take care of it, Anna. You watch the Griffins kick the Sharks' ass and I'll do my part."

"Thanks, I can't wait to meet you sometime soon."

"Ditto, Anna James. We'll talk soon, darlin'." Phalen clicked off his phone and Anna hung up. She'd not asked for one, but maybe she'd come around if Kyran held her hand.

"Who was that?" Tracey asked.

"Phalen Maddox, friend of Kyran's from way back. Um, you remember the cameraman who took pictures through my front window?" Anna reminded, gesturing toward the family room.

"Kyran broke his camera. Don't tell me photos turned up."

"Thankfully, not this time. That guy was a paparazzi reporter for Frontline News. Can you imagine the trouble that would cause?"

"Isn't that the news show that feeds mostly celebrity gossip to cable TV and the internet?"

"That's the one. Phalen's a PI. He discovered that the reporter died three days ago."

"Oh no."

"Yes, police think it's a suicide, but they're investigating whether it was something more."

"Like a murder, you think?"

"Possible," Anna said. "It's really creepy thinking about it. The man was spying into my home, taking photos that might have been used for porn or something. Now that he's gone, I somehow feel responsible."

"If he took his own life, he's responsible for that. Let's not think about it. The game starts in fifteen."

Anna stirred the chili again, suddenly not as hungry. She really did hope Brenda Jamison was okay. It was too crazy to know that the man in the nondescript sedan was now dead.

No one had wanted that or wished it, certainly not Anna or Kyran.

Back in game mode, Anna claimed her place in the recliner and Tracey went back to the sofa. They chatted a little. The Malibu Sharks stadium filled the big screen, the commentary giving way to a bird's-eye view of a huge crowd. Didn't look like an empty seat in the house, however the seats were painted in such a way that the blend would keep the cameras from seeing spaces between the fans.

Former professional football players took the screen as the play-by-play callers for the network covering the night's game. The anchor of the three-man team was a familiar sports presence for football coverage on the All-Sports Network. Behind the men, Sharks cheerleaders were wowing the crowd with their choreography, not to mention their outfits.

The anchor suddenly clutched his earpiece. The former players turned to him, their expressions serious. When the anchor received his news feed, he looked into the camera.

"Welcome to All-Sports Network coverage of the season opener between the visiting Alexandria Griffins and the Malibu Sharks." The anchor listened to his earpiece again. "Word just came in to us here at the sports desk. Griffins' coach, Brian Cahill, told reporters that his starting QB for tonight's game has been injured in a pregame disturbance and taken in for x-rays. Cahill promised to comment on the cause and extent of the injury after the game."

"Oh no, that can't be right! Kyran was supposed to start tonight," Anna confided, the dread she'd tried to ignore coming to life.

"I thought the starter is Ricky Weathers."

"Normally, yes," Anna said. "Ricky's been nursing a minor hamstring pull. Coach Cahill wanted him to rest tonight."

Her cell phone jingled a snazzy jazz tune. Throat tight with worry, she rushed to the kitchen, grabbing the phone.

That was Alexander Grant's ringtone.

"Mr. Grant?" Anna said into the phone.

"It's Alex," he replied absently. "Don't have time to explain, Anna. I'm heading to L.A. right now."

"The report on the news, it's about Kyran, isn't it?"

"Derek Billings called. Press showed what looked like a fight outside of the Griffins' locker room. When the camera feed was cut, audio was examined closer and it became clear the players were trying to protect Kyran and Seville Davis from an attacker. The man was crazed, like he was on some major meth or acid trip. He went after Seville with a crowbar. Kyran took the brunt of it."

"Oh no, that can't be," Anna gasped, tears running in a hot stream down her face.

"Try not to worry, Anna," Alex said, sounding rushed. "I'll contact you when I know anything more."

"Let me come with you. I want to be with him."

"No, you stay put. Once I know it's safe, I'll call you and arrange a flight."

Anna understood, even though she wanted desperately to fly to California on the first flight out. But why would she be in danger? She could only assume that Alexander Grant knew more about the attacker than he was willing or able to share right then.

\* \* \* \* \*

Pain splintered through Kyran's immobilized knee. Pain that went with broken bones and meant he was fucked.

Being fucked made him think of Anna's new toy. She'd given it to him pretty good. Damn if he hadn't liked the way she switched on him. Better had been the way she took his cock afterward, so open and wet and tight. Sex with her was nothing short of mind blowing.

Had it been a week ago that he'd been with her? Yeah, pretty fucking sure it was.

The scrap of a hospital gown they'd put on him was a joke. No way was he getting a boner thinking of fucking his woman while his knee felt like a crowbar had taken him out.

Matter of fact, it had.

Moving hurt like a son of a bitch, pretty much killed his hard-on. Whatever the docs had given him to deaden the pain made him forget which hospital he was in. The pain was still there.

Last he knew, he'd demanded to talk to Anna as paramedics worked on him. They gave him an elephant's dose of tranquilizers to shut him up.

When he'd woken, nurses and physicians were surrounding him. He'd already been poked, prodded, x-rayed and examined. Here he was, stuck on a gurney in an ER hundreds of miles away from Anna.

Fuck him for leaving her without getting her to say yes to living with him. He should have convinced her. Nah, Anna deserved better. He should have asked for more.

"Mr. Black," his orthopedic doc came into his private cubical. "It seems you've caused a bit of a stir here at Malibu General."

"Was hoping not to see you for a while, Doc." Kyran's throat felt like he'd eaten concrete. Hell, he needed to piss too. But that wasn't a problem. A catheter was up his cock, doing the work for him.

"Dr. Jenkins informed me of what happened," Dr. Hathaway said, closing the door behind him. "Not a lot of men would have done what you did."

"Couldn't let someone hurt her."

"Understandable. There are some detectives outside that want to talk to you about the suspect. They think you might know him."

"I can't deal with that now." His leg felt like it'd been mashed in a meat grinder. "My knee's fucked up, huh?"

"Your patella is shattered."

"Guess my season is done."

"Not going to sugarcoat this for you, Kyran. You're fortunate in that the patella has three pieces large enough that I can repair with wires. The smaller pieces should come together with a cast for about five weeks. The problem we need to watch is keeping your knee immobilized for too long, so you're looking at intensive physical therapy. Given your previous history with major surgical repairs and infections, I don't know how much more your knee can take once it's healed."

"Are you saying I'll need a knee replacement?" Kyran asked, thinking of the long haul.

"That we'll worry about down the road," his doc said. "Let's worry about the kneecap, fix it and get you home."

Kyran grumbled, wanting Anna with him. Dr. Hathaway didn't have to say it outright. His playing days were over. He knew it the second that bar smashed his knee. She needed to know now. "When should we do this?"

"Derek Billings wants it done tonight. Dr. Jenkins, the sports injury specialist for the Sharks, will be there to assist if you're okay with that. Malibu General has everything I need for the surgery. We can have you under within an hour."

"Let's do it. Need my phone first."

"Think the nurses took it," Hathaway said. "Reporters and cops have made their way here, all demanding to talk to the hero."

"Not a hero, I feel like shit. What time is it?"

"Almost eleven, they kept you sedated because you kept asking for your girlfriend. I'll tell the police you'll talk to them in the morning and see what I can do about your phone. Should I call your agent?"

"Nah, my lady is Anna James, she lives in Baltimore. Call her. Tell her not to worry, but she needs to get here."

"Anything else?"

"What you told me, she can know."

"You sure, might want to check with Griffins management first."

"I'm sure. Let's face it, Doc, my playing days are over." Hathaway nodded once. Kyran lifted his arm to argue, but was snagged by an IV line. "Hey, tell her I love her and to be careful."

"Will do, relax, you'll be in surgery soon."

Kyran made another painful attempt to grab Hathaway's arm. "It's important, Doc, get her here. She has to hear who did this from me. Then I'll talk to the cops." Anna in danger, surgery and his career flashed before him.

Kyran wanted to slam his fist into Will Simmons' face again, damn psycho.

Angry, he didn't notice Doc Hathaway leave. Seconds, maybe hours, later the guy returned.

"Seville Davis is at the front desk demanding to see you. She's flashing a rock the size of a mountain, told a nurse she's your fiancée."

"Don't have one," Kyran shouted painfully. "If I did, it'd be Anna."

"You took on a guy with a crowbar for Seville. You sure you don't want to see her before your surgery?"

"If I do, I'll fucking puke, Doc." The idea of seeing her made him reach for a kidney basin.

Hathaway helped him out and pushed a button on his IV machine. A second or two later, Kyran relaxed a little. The juice in the IV was starting to work better this time.

"I'll have the nurses get rid of her. You rest." His doctor left to take care of Seville.

Kyran was glad he didn't puke up his dinner. Would have gone great with his hospital gown and busted knee.

Why the hell was that bitch claiming to be his fiancée? If she hadn't called out for Sharks players to come to her fucking rescue, he might have seen Will Simmons sooner. Sur-fucking-real!

Will had gone for Seville. But it'd been Anna's name he shouted.

Kyran blocked his path with a roundhouse. His body locked, knee exploded with such force, he was on the floor before the pain kicked his ass. Next thing he knew, Sharks and Griffin players were all around him, medics working on him.

Fuck, he hurt. Hurt so badly that the pain in his knee was secondary. Reality check, he was not crying. The drips on his cheek were sweat. His career was fucked, but he still had Anna.

Yeah, he still had her.

Something in his IV kicked in. Anna's face came to mind. She was so pretty, calming, a lady. Wiping his eyes, he kept focused on her.

Maybe he should buy Anna a ring. He'd do that when he got home. Then he wouldn't have to convince her to move in with him. She'd be his wife and wacked-out exes wouldn't bother them anymore.

\* \* \* \* \*

Anna clutched her cell phone. Looking at the screen, she told herself not to fly to L.A.

Alex Grant had promised to call. There was no telling if the agent had reached California yet, so she had to wait.

"Anna, you should try to eat," Tracey urged, coming from the kitchen with two bowls of chili.

"I can't." She was afraid to move. Eating required letting go of the phone, wasn't happening.

"It's been hours. The game ended. Coach Cahill gave a statement about Kyran. He'll be okay."

Anna cringed. Cahill revealed during a short press conference that Kyran Black had suffered a severe injury to his left knee when a man rushed into a crowd of reporters and Sharks players, wielding a crowbar. He went for Kyran, deliberately aiming at his knee.

The suspect had been apprehended and was said to have been sedated and taken away in an ambulance. When asked the extent of Kyran's injury, the head coach could only say that the best surgeons and medical specialists in California were attending him, but he was expected to make a full recovery. Further information would not be given until Kyran Black's orthopedic specialist held a news conference in the morning.

Anna had heard of celebrities and sports figures being attacked by fans or stalkers, sometimes to maim them, sometimes to make a statement or objection. There'd been some anger from Sharks fans against Kyran, but to actually do that? To attack someone with a crowbar was so cruel that she cried.

The reporters on TV were now glossing over Kyran's record and career as a professional football player with the Sharks and the Griffins. They were painting him like he was a hero who'd sacrificed the rest of his career to save someone else.

But Anna suspected the witnesses were right. Kyran had been targeted and she was scared for him.

"Anna, look," Tracey prodded, gesturing to the television.

Anna looked, wishing she hadn't.

There on the screen was Seville Davis, posing for the plethora of flashing cameras and pushy reporters. Still in her fancy dress, she clutched a microphone in one hand, that diamond ring she'd worn earlier on clear display. It was so big it flashed a bright, eerie pink hue that seemed to wink triumphantly.

"I've a statement for you. Contrary to rumors, Malibu Sharks players did not storm the hallway earlier to cause a fight against the Griffins. They'd mistakenly thought Kyran Black and Ricky Weathers were hurting me. How wrong they'd been and how fortunate for *me* that Kyran was there. He took on a madman fully intending to attack me with a crowbar! Now he's in surgery...possibly crippled, because he is a hero. He doesn't need further hassle from the paparazzi. I'd personally appreciate if the media would wait until morning to speculate about the rest of his career." Seville kept the camera glued to her, huge crocodile tears creating twin paths through her makeup.

If Anna had cried like that, she'd look like a clown. Seville looked tragic, yet beautiful. And so damn fake, it was all Anna could do not to crawl through the screen and kick her ass. If there was one thing she could do, it was that, a snap of her foot to the woman's left cheek to shut her up.

"Are the two of you dating again, Ms. Davis?" a reporter called out. "We've all been under the impression that Kyran Black has a pretty serious girlfriend back home. And we all saw how he rejected you outside the locker room. Care to explain?"

"What's this tell you? Gave it back to me the day he returned to Malibu. We had a fight early this morning that carried over to the game," the model answered, showing the crowd her left hand. The damned diamond flashed again.

A paparazzo wasn't letting up on the inquest. "And this mysterious woman in Baltimore, she's nothing, that what you're saying?"

"That old bitch trapped him into a story of her own making, needing rescue. Kyran is gallant at heart and did what he could for her. I mean, come on, do you really think he'd give up what we had together for a forty-year-old scheming cougar? That's the only answer you'll get regarding his affair with her. She is done."

Seville turned away, pushing through the doors of Malibu General Hospital, reporters rushing out after her.

Anna wanted to hit something, scream at the reporters that Seville was lying. She was lying! Couldn't they see it? Then again, the cameras loved Seville's severe, angular beauty that worked great on magazine covers and lingerie commercials. She could dazzle with those darn tears and that humongous diamond ring.

"That's fucked up," Tracey growled at the screen. "She's a bitch to make up those lies."

"At least you see the truth," Anna said, grateful for that. She knew the truth, that's what counted, right?

"I think the only thing she said truthfully was about the crowbar."

"Well he's the kind of guy who'd defend a woman, no matter who she is," Anna said. For that, she was proud of him. She was still pissed at Seville, but she wasn't going to let herself doubt Kyran. Not now, especially not when the man was in surgery as she sat there doing absolutely nothing and feeling helpless.

"She sure likes to show off that ring. Were they engaged or something? Maybe that's where she got it."

"Not that I'm aware of."

"I hope that's true. Don't misunderstand, Anna. But Seville made a beeline for your man and no one stopped her."

"But he did. He pushed her away, you saw that too. Seville's a celebrity and media darling. People know who she is and that they were once a super couple," Anna supplied. "Why would they stop her?"

"Hmm, were the two of them together when he played in Malibu?"

"I...don't know for sure." Anna wouldn't doubt Kyran. She would not. He'd told her he'd ended things with Seville soon after he came to play for the Alexandria Griffins. There was no reason to think he'd lied.

Shivers of doubt raced through Anna's heart and she locked them away and tossed out the key when the phone suddenly played Led Zeppelin's "Rock and Roll". It was Kyran's ringtone, the one he'd set because it was playing in his SUV when they'd had sex in the backseat.

"Kyran, thank God, I've been so worried," she answered, longing for his voice.

"You can thank God later," a woman replied. She'd heard that woman's voice less than two minutes ago. "I'm calling to tell you to stay away from my man. After what you pulled with your ex and the press in Alexandria, you can expect the police to call soon."

Totally confused, Anna growled into the phone. "Seville, why are you using Kyran's cell?"

"Why do you think?" Seville countered. "Don't be stupid on top of being pathetic. For some reason, Kyran has a soft spot for you over the other women on his contact list."



"Kyran's doesn't have a contact list," Anna defended. She knew him. Except for work and practices, they'd been practically inseparable since they got together.

"Ms. James, you are naïve if you think that. Think I don't know how many women he's been with, how many wait for him in whatever city he travels to? You're just the sugar of the month for him," Seville cooed, dipping her voice in a Southern accent that mocked Kyran's nickname for her. "I've got documented proof. Check your phone, pictures are on the way. Come near him and they'll go public."

"You can't...do that," Anna said to a silent phone. Seville was gone. "Holy fuck."

"Anna, what was that about?" Tracey demanded.

"Seville Davis called from Kyran's phone."

"You're sure?"

"It's his ringtone and number," Anna answered. "Kyran's in surgery and I feel helpless and angry and suspicious."

"Of Kyran, you think he's been lying to you?"

"I don't want to think so."

"But you're in doubt?"

"Yeah, God forgive me. I've only been with him for little more than six weeks. He's always seemed genuine to me. But his reputation with the ladies started long before he came to play for the Griffins. He got his rebellious reputation off the field, it started with the Sharks."

"You know, I'm pulling for Kyran," Tracey said. "Some dude attacked him. That's got to be scary, even for him."

"I know. I'm so pissed at myself for even listening to Seville spout off her crap." It was all lies, all a trick. Seville had resources and used them to find Kyran's cell phone number every time he changed it. It was possible that she figured out his ringtone.

Tracey was right. Kyran had stood by her when Brenda Jamison's article came out. He'd taken on the paparazzi and protected her in front of Will Simmons. If she doubted him now she didn't deserve him. They were good together. He loved her, was committed. She had to think about that and Kyran right now.

Drop Kick Murphy's "Dirty Water" played on her phone. "Phalen?" she answered, recognizing the Bostonian native's ringtone.

"Hey, darlin', I heard there's been some trouble for Kyran out in Malibu."

"You heard right. Given what happened to him tonight and Max Henderson, I'm really worried."

"Figured as much," Phalen said. "I am too."

"I'm thinking about flying there on the next available flight to L.A."

"I'll join you," Phalen told her. "Call when you have flight plans."

"Will do," Anna said. "It looks like we'll meet sooner than expected."

"Looks like and don't listen to that shit Seville Davis spouted to the press. Hit me back when you get a flight. You got the number."

Anna closed her phone, decision made.

"I'm coming with you too," Tracey insisted.

As fast as she could, Anna went to her laptop, found some airlines, made the calls. They'd leave on the first flight out of BWI at six a.m.

"Let's pack a few things and head to the airport. It's two a.m. now," Anna suggested.

She was already on her way to her bedroom before Tracey could agree. As she packed, she called Phalen as promised. They'd meet him at John Wayne Airport in the morning and go to the hospital together. He'd already rented a car.

It wasn't until she and Tracey were at the gate at BWI that Led Zeppelin played again. Anna didn't want to look, yet couldn't resist. There were a ton of photos being texted to her phone. She closed her eyes. Almost passing out when she opened her eyes to look, she thumbed through each one.

The photos were grainy yet left no doubt that the man in them was Kyran Black, a different woman on his arm or in his bed. As graphic in nature as the ones Kyran found on reporter Max Henderson's camera, it didn't look like he or the women were aware of the photos being taken.

As much as she hated Seville for sending them, they broke her heart. One by one, her heart tore a little more until she feared it would never beat the same again, especially after she came to the last photo.

It was Kyran and Anna going at each other against her small SUV. Vaguely she remembered the security cart going by and the thumbs-up gesture by the guard. The guard could have snapped the picture and given it to Seville.

Why would Seville want such a picture? Why did the previous photos carry so much weight and worry, further breaking Anna's heart?

"Oh Kyran, no, don't let all this be true," she whispered, unaware that she cried.

## **Chapter Seventeen**

Given time changes, their flight landed at John Wayne Airport at ten a.m. Both heavy-hearted, Anna and Tracey took their carry-on bags to a pub and sat down for breakfast.

Anna was starving, but didn't know if she could eat. Tracey looked around the terminal, finding a flight schedule on the wall outside the pub.

"Phalen Maddox was taking the same airline, right?" she asked when she came back.

"That's what he said."

"Looks like a plane's due in from Boston in thirty minutes."

"Guess we should eat," Anna said. "I told him to check the restaurants along the concourse or text me when he got in."

She hadn't shown Tracey the photos. Her best friend had seen her look at the phone at BWI and start crying. To her credit, she didn't ask. She gave Anna time to cry, letting her know she was there with a hand on her shoulder. It was the best thing her friend could do. It gave her time to think and figure out what to do next.

She honestly didn't know whether to vomit or scream after seeing the pictures Seville deliberately sent to her phone a second time. She didn't want to expose Kyran or the women in them to scrutiny or detectives, but she suspected she would have to.

For their safety, more so for Kyran's, she needed legal guidance. She didn't have the connections or knowledge to protect someone like Kyran Black without help.

Tracey sat with her at the table, flagging a waitress. "Can we get some coffee and toast? We're expecting someone, so an extra mug and dishes would be great too."

"Sure, ma'am," the young woman said. "White, wheat or whole grain?"

"All three," Anna answered. "And oatmeal if you have it."

"Have it, want raisins?"

"Yes."

The waitress walked off, scribbling on her notepad. "Since when did you start liking oatmeal?"

"Since Kyran made it for me the morning he defended me against Will Simmons."

"Wow, domestic, athletic, sexy and heroic, all in one."

"Tracey, do you think Jeremy could help me with legal advice?"

"If it's law in Maryland or Baltimore City, he might. Why?"

"This whole thing with Seville and a man with a crowbar, it scares me."

"He went after her. Kyran saved her," Tracey supplied.

"That's what's been said. But the attacker went for Kyran's knee, like he knew that would take him out."

"It would have taken anyone out."

"True," Anna agreed. "Listen, something's not right with that ex of his, maybe she's a narcissist or just plain selfish. Whatever, she's messed up. She sent photos of him with women, lots of women. I'm not going to show them to you because they are graphic and I'm in one of them. I didn't say anything because I didn't know what to do and I thought I might puke any second."

"No way, that's cruel."

"Yes."

"And scary, Kyran's dated all those women?"

"More than dated," Anna admitted. "Believe me, when I first saw them I was angry, hurt. Thank you for letting me cry, Tracey. If you hadn't, I wouldn't have looked closer. When I did a second time, I dreaded it, but then saw that all but mine were grainy, older, maybe transferred from print to digital. And more importantly, they're of Kyran when he was younger. His hair wasn't as long. He only had tattoos on his biceps. Now he has them on his thighs. He got those during his rehab over the summer."

"Okay, very strange. What's important is that you know they are from the past, Anna."

"Thank God." It didn't change the fact that Kyran had been sexually involved with at least six women in those photos. The other six shots weren't as graphic, fortunately. They'd shown him at dinner, dancing and partying with his dates like they'd mattered to him at the time. Hers was graphic enough, but her body parts were mostly hidden by Kyran's naked backside, his jeans shoved down to his hips.

Since his return to football, he'd settled down. He'd admitted he'd played the field in his younger days. She knew it. Knowing someone managed to spy on him during all those dates scared the shit out of her. Since they were waiting on Phalen Maddox, Anna decided to call Alexander Grant. He might have some answers.

"I'm going to call Alexander Grant," Anna told her friend. She dialed his number, but was immediately sent to voicemail. She left a message letting him know she needed to speak with him and that she was in California waiting for Phalen Maddox to arrive.

"No luck?" Tracey asked. "Talk to Phalen Maddox when he gets here. He's a PI, right?"

"And Kyran's college roommate," Anna added.

"Which means he knows Kyran pretty well," Tracey said.

"Tracey, I'm ashamed to admit I was angry at Kyran for this, doubted his integrity. I believed Seville's photos. For half the flight, I was torn between decking him and sacking him for good. He's going through hell right now, he was attacked by someone

wielding a crowbar and I feel horrible for getting angry for things that happened before he met me.”

“Don’t beat yourself up for that. Heck, if I’d seen old photos of Jeremy with a few ex-girlfriends, I’d be furious. If your phone rings and you think it’s Seville, give it to me. I’ll be glad to set her ass straight.”

Anna was going to take the phone off vibrate, then noticed the voice mail icon on her cell showed six missed calls. She listened.

The first was from Phalen Maddox. He’d made his connection and was scheduled to land earlier than he’d thought. The second was from Detective Ron Smith from the Baltimore County Police Department, insisting that it was urgent she call him. He’d called again, same message. The fourth was Detective Joshua Noble from the Malibu Police. He had some questions about the suspect in custody for the attack on Kyran.

Anna frowned and played it back. Why he’d want to question her, she didn’t know. She didn’t have time to call him back when the sixth message played. It’d been Alexander Grant, letting her know she should come to California ASAP.

So many names and thoughts flew through Anna’s brain. It was enough to give her a headache. When the coffee came she was grateful. She’d wait until Phalen got there before calling the police.

“Two cops want to talk to me, one about Kyran’s attack,” Anna told Tracey. “Something is terribly wrong around here.”

“Maybe you don’t need a cop. You need a lawyer and Kyran needs a bodyguard.”

Anna didn’t respond. As much as she loved Kyran, she couldn’t look away from the big, smoking hot blond guy that just came into the pub. Nearly as hard-bodied as Kyran and at least two inches taller, his hair was almost to his shoulders, slightly wavy. He wore a Red Sox cap and a faded brown aviator jacket. He looked around.

The back of his coat had Airborne written across it. He looked big, bad and as rebellious as Kyran Black with an air of a soldier rather than athlete. The worn Sox hat gave him away. So did the worn leather carry-on bag in his right hand.

“Phalen?” Anna called out. She and Tracey were in a booth and not easily seen from the entrance.

He swung around, smiled in relief and strode toward her. God, he was bigger than Anna’s man. Her man, wow! Despite Seville, photos, men with crowbars and reporters, she still thought of Kyran as hers.

“Hey, darlin’,” Phalen said. “Plane landed early, you ready to go? I rented a car. We need to go to the rental lots.”

“We just got coffee and breakfast,” Tracey said. “Come sit for a minute, Mr. Maddox. There’s stuff going down here you need to know.”

“Coffee sounds good.” Phalen climbed into the booth, taking Anna’s side. “Nice to meet you, Anna James, who’s your friend?”

"Tracey Harding," Anna introduced. Tracey was a brunette who packed a giant's loyalty in a petite frame. "And there's no need to tack on the James."

"Sounds good," he said. "I've known of you for months anyway, seems fitting."

"You did?" Anna almost squeaked. "Why?"

"Truth?"

"Yes."

"Kyran met a woman last winter, fell damn hard, fast. Took him a few weeks to convince her to go out with him, drove him wicked crazy. She was different, not gaga over his fame. He was determined to catch her. She finally agreed to a date. When he couldn't reach her the next day, he asked me to help."

Anna clenched her fists. "Kyran had me investigated by you?"

"Cool down, darlin'. Not in the way you'd think. He wanted me or his agent, Alex Grant, to find you. He ended up calling off the search. Thought it might offend you and he'd wanted to find you himself."

Kyran had told her about that. He'd not lied.

"He was really that interested in me back then?"

"Sure enough, he was pretty vocal to me and Alex about it."

Anna smiled. Kyran had been genuine the night they first had sex. She'd let what she thought would only be a one-night stand become the love of her life. It hadn't been a mistake to trust him.

"Phalen, you need to see something," Anna decided.

The waitress returned with a pot of coffee, a mug for Phalen and a basket of toast. She also plopped down three bowls of oatmeal with raisins and left.

"Oatmeal?" Phalen stared at it like it might bite him.

"Kyran likes it," Anna told him.

"He used to make tons of it in college."

"His mom was a short-order cook when he was a kid. Maybe it's a good memory for him."

"Suzanna Black is an amazing lady. You'll like her. She raised her boy right."

Anna had to agree. Taking that into account, she thumbed her touch screen to find the photos. It was hard to let go, only because she wanted to protect the women and Kyran from scrutiny.

"What the fuck?" Phalen grumbled as he took a sip of his coffee and the phone at the same time.

Anna rolled her eyes. Regardless of the Boston accent and blond hair, Phalen reminded her of Kyran. Kyran was raised in the South, but both had Irish-Celtic roots somewhere in their gorgeous genes. She was certain of it.

"Best that I don't look at those, I assume," Tracey said, picking up a piece of toast.

"Afraid so," Phalen answered for Anna. Talk about bossy, this guy was certifiably Alpha from head to toe.

His expression went from surprised to furious, each photo he flipped through increasing the frown. "Anna, these look bad," he said, thumbing the screen. "They're not what you think."

"They're old. Except for the one of, umm, me and Kyran," Anna sipped coffee, surprised that she swallowed without feeling sick. She grabbed her spoon and dipped into the oatmeal.

It was bland, heavy as lead and exactly what she needed.

"Good call," Phalen murmured, still looking. "These were taken when he played for the Malibu Sharks. This is what he looked like then. I didn't do the tats on his thighs until last summer and added more detail to the ones on his biceps."

"You're a tattoo artist?" Tracey interrupted. "I thought you were a PI."

"I'm both. Anna, I remember the women he dated back when he lived in Malibu. They're all here."

"He definitely dated a lot of women before I met him," Anna said. "I know that's in the past. It's still difficult to see those pics."

"It's fair to say he remained loyal to the one he was with. When things ended, he'd move on, probably broke a few hearts. He was a fifth-round draft pick out of college, a second-string QB when he first signed with the Sharks. By twenty-three, he was leading that team. Women loved him and he got caught up in the fame."

"And by twenty-seven, he faced a near career-ending injury," Anna commented, knowing the details. "He came back and signed with the Griffins, changed, settled."

"More like he was before he became a legend. I know it's hard to see the women. That lifestyle ended long before he signed with the Griffins." Phalen fiddled with the phone. "I'm going to need these. There's a way to find out who took them and transferred them to digital."

"You think you know who it was?"

"We have a dead paparazzo who happened to have dozens of photographs and images on his computer of Kyran and Seville Davis when they were together. I've been in contact with the police in Hollywood three times since last night. They think Max Henderson has been following Kyran for at least five years, got caught or scared and flipped out. Wouldn't be surprised if he took these shots."

"That's creepy," Tracey said, shivering openly.

"Yeah, it is." Anna plunked down her spoon. She was sick for Kyran. "Oh god, Phalen, do you think Max was outside my house because he was actually spying on Kyran, not me?"

"Afraid so."

"You're supposed to humor me and say no."

"I don't lie," Phalen stated.

"But why was he obsessed with Kyran?"

"Not sure he was. Given what else the police discovered in that apartment, Max had an IT set up that a hacker would be jonesing for. That took some skill and money. Kyran wasn't the only celeb he had on his setup. Someone was paying him, bet my next tat on it."

"Money, it's always about money," Anna said.

"If it's about money, someone should find out who was paying his bills," Tracey said, setting her half-eaten oatmeal aside for a second to sip coffee.

Phalen sat up, tucking Anna's phone into his pocket. "I'm working on that. Have a brother with the Boston police. He's making some calls for us."

"On the phone last night you'd said you would check on Brenda Jamison."

"Now see, I got to thinking. Her name was familiar when Kyran mentioned it awhile back. Did some research and found out why. She went to college with Kyran, Alex Grant and me."

"Kyran told me that he went to school with you and Alex. I don't think he remembers Brenda." Anna liked Alexander Grant, but there was coolness to his personality that kept him a little detached. She figured it was the agent's constant need to remain at the top of his game in a crowded field of competition. Representing superstar athletes and their sometimes inflated egos couldn't be easy either.

"Have to admit the three of us broke some hearts in college, but not every girl was on our radar. Even though he was older, Alex was more rebellious than me or Kyran, that's for sure. His family is mega-rich. Their blood runs blue, feel what I'm saying? Think he was trying to lash out at their ultra-conservative views back then. He went hiking through Europe after he'd graduated and later came back to open his business. The sports agency made his mama and daddy real proud. He's a fine agent. Doesn't go for the biggest bucks, but what's best for his clients."

"What'd you do when you graduated?" Tracey chimed in.

"Joined the Army, Special Ops, became an L.T." The Airborne label written on his jacket was the real deal.

"Please tell me Alex isn't somehow involved in any of this," Anna asked, thinking of what she learned about him.

"Not a fucking chance," Phalen said. "He's always had Kyran's back. He'd do the same for me if I asked. A couple years ago, I got hurt, real bad. My shoulder's more metal than bone now. Bottom half of my legs, crushed. Alex made sure I had the best Army docs in the country working on me so I'd walk again."

"That's a relief, I mean to know he helped you and is looking out for Kyran. So Brenda Jamison went to the same college with you guys, weird," Anna said.

Phalen refilled the coffee mugs, pouring his own last. "Not as weird as the text from my bro when I got off the plane. Jamison's first cousin is Seville Davis."



Anna almost spilled hers. "Jeez, that woman turns up like a bad penny. Phalen, when did Kyran meet her?"

"While she was with the cheerleaders," he said. "He became the Sharks' star QB soon after she signed a modeling contract. Now she's a media darling. She loves the attention, good or bad."

"Explains why she got in and out of the Sharks stadium so easily," Tracey supplied.

"I didn't think he dated her while he played for them," Anna commented.

"Far as I knew, they hung out a bit. Dating? Not 'til he was sidelined. Kinda felt like she used his injury to worm her way into his life." Phalen shifted, his long legs bumping the table. "Alex and I both warned him, but it was Kyran's call on who he dated. He came to his senses soon enough."

"Remind me not to hurt that woman," Tracey grouched.

Anna was so tempted to beat the stuffing out of Seville. Doing that would only provoke a woman who was unstable.

Tracey sat forward, gesturing with her left hand. "Wonder if a former cheerleader turned supermodel could have sway over another team's cheerleading squad, who'd then give a cousin of that former cheerleader access to inside info on another team or player."

"Can't answer that," Phalen said. "Don't know a damn thing about cheerleaders."

"In all fairness, the cheerleaders I work out with for the Griffins squad are all pretty nice," Anna replied. "The guy sharing mascot duties with me was one. Oh god, speaking of work, I didn't call school."

"You've got the weekend to worry," Tracey said. "It's Saturday."

"And Kyran's at the hospital," Anna added. "I need to see him."

"Anna, your phone is buzzing my ass like crazy." Phalen took it back out. "It's a doctor's office. Looks like you have messages waiting."

"I listened to them." Anna leaned closer to Phalen, reading the display. "They were detectives, you and Alex Grant. One of the cops wanted to talk to me about the attack last night. The other was from Baltimore."

"Why you?"

She couldn't answer him. Her phone vibrated again. Phalen gave her the phone.

"Hello?" she answered.

A man responded. "Ms. Anna James?"

"Yes, speaking."

"This is Dr. Ryan Hathaway," he continued. "My sincere apology for not calling sooner, but my nurses couldn't access your phone number as it's unlisted. Alexander Grant gave it to me."

"I'm sorry, doctor. What is this about?"

"Kyran Black, I'm his surgeon."

Anna gripped the phone, shoving all but her man to the back of her mind. "Is he okay? Please, I'm here at John Wayne Airport. I want to see him."

"He'll be relieved to know that. Come to Malibu General Hospital as soon as you can manage."

"Is he okay?" she repeated.

"He's going to be. I'm afraid I can't give further details over the phone."

"I'll be there soon. I'm bringing two friends, as support." Anna closed the phone, handing it back to Phalen.

He looked relieved not to finish his oatmeal even though he'd eaten most of it. Tracey finished her bowl.

At least they all had something in their stomachs for the next round. Anna grabbed a piece of toast while fishing in her purse for bills and a disposable mini toothbrush with cleanser you didn't have to spit out. She had three, gave two away. It was weird and awkward to use it. They all did anyway. She felt much better when she was done.

Phalen gave back her cash, placing money on the table to cover the check.

"Let's go," he directed, showing his keys. "Damn phone of yours is a pain in my ass."

"Vibrating again, huh?"

"You can look in the car."

"Jeez, you're as bossy as Kyran."

"No mistake, darlin', I'm worse." Phalen grinned without a single dose of remorse. In fact, he looked to be the kind of guy to take charge. She was really glad he'd come to L.A.

From there, Phalen led them to the rental car garage. It took a few minutes, but they were soon escorted to a blue midsize sedan.

Phalen pulled a netbook from his bag and stowed the rest of their things in the trunk. He hustled them into the car, placing the small computer on the front seat.

"Been working on the plane, so it seems," Anna said, noticing the wireless card in place.

Tracey climbed into the backseat. "I want one of those things."

"Does what I need it to on the road," Phalen told them.

He got the sedan moving, his right hand on the wheel. "Anna, click my email account. See if my little brother sent anything."

She clicked the email icon. "There's an unread message from Maddox2."

"That's him."

Anna opened it. Read it, shock making her read it again. "Oh shit, no way! There's no way."

Tracey leaned over the seat. "What's wrong?"

"Seatbelt, Tracey, now," Phalen ordered.

Tracey fell back, fastening it quickly. "There. What is it, Anna?"

There had to be a mistake. "According to this, in return for her work as a columnist for the *Alexandria Journal* and the *Sentinel*, Brenda Jamison was going to get her own show on Frontline's affiliate All-Sports Network. We thought she'd just resigned. She was after a much bigger market."

"Doesn't surprise me, there had to be a reason she tailed Kyran so much. He may have been the backup for Ricky Weathers, but he's the Griffins powerhouse personality and her bylines about him made the front page." Phalen spoke while he drove. His eyes were on the road.

An electronic voice spoke to them on the GPS, giving directions.

"She was gossip hungry," Anna said. "And she's going to get a show?"

"Read it again, slowly," Phalen advised.

Anna thought she'd read it that way. "It says she was going to get her own show...wait, *was* as in past tense. Your brother attached something."

She opened the attachment. Chills went right down her spine. "Dear God, it's an obituary notice." She read it, shocked, sad. "Brenda committed suicide after a rival reporter at the *Journal* ran a counter article exposing her as a fraud with questionable sources to back up her stories. Kyran and I never saw the article or knew. We didn't want to buy another *Journal*."

"Two suicides, shit." Phalen grumbled something under his breath.

"People are dying and Kyran's attacked by a guy with a crowbar, Seville's threatening to expose private photos of my guy, this is seriously messed up," Anna surmised, wheels churning in her head.

"And connected," Phalen pointed out. "If Max Henderson took the photos that Seville sent to you, she might have been his meal ticket. Her cousin coincidentally went to school with us and trailed Kyran when he went to the Griffins."

"Yet cops are calling me," Anna said.

On a hunch, she asked for her phone. Phalen let her reach into his coat pocket where he'd shifted it when they got in the car. She called the detective from Baltimore.

"Detective Ron Smith," he answered.

"Hi, Detective Smith, this is Anna James returning your call. I'm sorry for the delay. I'm on my way to visit my boyfriend, Kyran Black. You've been helping him."

"Yes, yes, thank you for calling, ma'am," he returned. "Considering the trouble that went down with you and Kyran a few weeks back, I thought you should know that the reporter died."

"I learned that today," Anna admitted. "Kyran and I never wished such a thing."

"That's not why I wanted to speak with you," the man said. "During the investigation into her death, we discovered dozens of texts and messages on her phone

to someone we believe to be connected to you, Ms. James. I felt you needed to know for your own safety."

"I'm afraid I don't understand."

"The contact on her phone was Dr. Will Simmons. The calls were made on and off for two weeks before that *Journal* article came out. We are doubly concerned because this man has disappeared."

"I was engaged to Will Simmons over two years ago. We called it off. I don't associate with him much now."

"He's on the board for the school system you belong to."

"Actually, he resigned."

"Can you come and talk to us, Ms. James? I assure you, you're not in any trouble."

"Of course I will, just as soon as I return to Baltimore. I'm in L.A now, heading for Malibu. Kyran comes first, Detective Smith. Surely you've seen the news? When I know how he is, we'll call you."

Anna ended the call, puzzled. Quickly she told Phalen and Tracey about it.

"Anna, think about what we know," Phalen advised. "Max Henderson was more hacker than a decent reporter. Kyran told me and Alex about you. Your name is in our records. He could easily have found out info on you and given it to Brenda."

"Henderson hacked you guys. Why would Brenda research me before I even got together with Kyran?"

"You'd gone out once already, remember, were caught on cam. I'm pretty sure Seville was trying to call him when he went to L.A. over the summer. Maybe Kyran warned her off by telling her he was really into you. She's got contacts with Max and Brenda, told them to find out who you were."

"This is crazy, really crazy."

"If anyone can deal with it, it's Kyran. You too, Anna," Phalen complimented her. "I don't know many who could deal with all this as calmly as you are now."

"I love him. He's a good man who's straightened himself out. He doesn't need all this on top of what happened to him last night." Anna didn't say it. She had the feeling that the result of his heroics to save his ex-girlfriend from an attacker would have ramifications far beyond surgery.

It was his left knee that the guy went for. Anna hated to think his playing career had ended with a swing of a man's arm and a bar.

"Lucky son of a bitch," Phalen remarked loud enough for her to hear.

The GPS continued to give directions. Phalen drove through L.A. like he'd done it a hundred times. Traffic sucked, but they reached the outskirts of Malibu safely, turning into the drive leading up to the hospital.

Cleverly designed to take in the hills of Malibu, yet not fall prey to mudslides or beach erosion, the building was ultra modern, high tech and a leading facility for emergency medicine. They parked and went into the main entrance together.

On the news late last night, the camera feed had been of the emergency center. Seville had taken the limelight, then split, the reporters following her.

Anna wasn't sure how Seville called her from Kyran's phone. She figured there was an explanation. She'd have to wait and see.

Phalen took over upon their arrival. Charming the front desk clerk, he introduced them all in order. Anna gave the clerk Dr. Ryan Hathaway's number, insisting that the surgeon requested they come in.

After some finagling, the woman made a phone call. "You may proceed up to orthopedics on the third floor. Dr. Hathaway will meet you at the elevator."

Anna noticed increased security in the hospital lobby. They had to show some ID to a guard at the elevator. The front desk clerk gave the go-ahead and the guard swiped a key card to let them in.

Being the first to step out on the third floor, Anna almost collided with a gigantic man. Recognizing Griffins center Brian Wolf, she was glad Phalen caught her.

Brian weighed a good three hundred pounds and could move like a running back. He swung around.

"Anna," he greeted, grinning wide.

"Hi, Brian," she said. "Didn't expect to see you in a place like this."

"Me either," he replied. "How are your boys doing?"

Brian had been one of the offensive linemen Kyran brought to her school. "They're getting ready to take on varsity as a fundraiser."

"You be sure to give me the details. My wife and I will come to the game."

"I'll do that," Anna promised. "Have you seen Kyran yet?"

"None of us have," Brian answered. "Only Alexander Grant and Derek Billings have been in to see him."

"He's not in surgery. His doctor called me."

"Took a couple hours to repair his knee, from what we're told."

"Then you know more than I do," Anna replied. She introduced Brian to Tracey and Phalen. Phalen shook the center's hand. "Do you know what happened? All we saw was news footage. Lately, I don't trust them."

"The only Griffin player who witnessed it was Ricky," Brian told them. "He told Detective Noble the same thing that the reporters and Sharks did. They'd come out when they heard Seville shouting, thought she needed rescuing from Kyran and Ricky. A man came down the hall before a fight broke out, looking like he'd attack Seville Davis. Guy was drugged or something, charged through the Sharks like they were Pop Warner or something. Kyran stepped into his path with a kick. The suspect shouted

what sounded like 'Anna' and struck his knee. How he got in through security is still being investigated. The fight Seville provoked distracted everyone enough to let him reach Kyran."

"No, that's crazy. I mean, professional athletes shouldn't be fighting like that," Anna whispered.

"Yeah, you'd think so. Sometimes the heat of a game or pregame smack talk causes trouble, news hounds love it. Think they'll get ratings, I guess. We're lucky that they came out of the locker room. The Sharks players finally subdued the guy and held him 'til security got there."

"Who was the man?"

The elevator opened behind them all.

"Police aren't giving out his name yet," Brian said, frowning at the person in the elevator and moving to stand in front of Anna. "You're not supposed to be here."

Anna knew. She looked back.

Seville stepped out. "I'm here to take care of Kyran. He needs me."

What surprised Anna was that Seville didn't notice anyone around her. The model's eyes were on Brian. There was coldness in her eyes, a sort of madness, that wouldn't let her see that she was not welcome.

Today she wore designer jeans, ungodly ugly platform heels and some kind of slinky gold top with tassels on it. Seville made it look like a million bucks. The shoes made her nearly as tall as Anna. Her hair was long, straight, golden blonde. Her eyes were an unnatural shade of purple thanks to contacts.

"Ma'am, you've been told to stay away from the hospital," someone warned, coming up fast. A hospital security guard barred Seville from getting around him. "Go or I'll have you taken into custody."

"Do you know who I am?" she countered, again flashing that ring she loved so much. "Kyran gave me this!"

Anna saw red. "You will go nowhere near him," she ordered, stepping around Brian like she owned the world. "He's mine."

At the same time, an elevator dinged. Doors opened, an ER team rushing in. "Ma'am, you came in complaining of chest pains. Let us take you back downstairs to trauma," a nurse insisted in Seville's direction.

The model blanched, looked left to right and screamed, pointing at Anna. "It's her fault. Hers and her fucked-up boyfriend! She knows him. You hear? She's the one who should be banned." And she passed out.

Phalen kept her from crashing to the floor. Nurses rushed to assist.

A man wearing green scrubs and a white lab coat came out from a room way down the hall. He saw the commotion and jogged forward. He bent, checked Seville. He whispered something to the closest nurse. The woman nodded and went to the nurse's station.

Seville opened her eyes, blinking and rolling her head back and forth.

"He's always been mine," she cried with huge tears rolling down her cheeks.

Anna didn't buy the drama queen act. Not for a second. Still, the staff couldn't ignore her. The efficient medical team had her on a gurney in less than thirty seconds, wheeling her away.

"Ms. James?" the doctor said to Anna.

"Yes."

He offered his hand. "I'm Dr. Hathaway. Can you follow me? I'm afraid your friends will have to stay here."

Anna looked at Phalen and Tracey. They nodded. "Of course," she agreed, following the surgeon.

He was average in height, looked about thirtyish, but was male model handsome with dark brown hair that was just turning gray at the temples. He was fit too. He either played a lot of golf or he worked out in a gym.

"Dr. Hathaway, can you please tell me what that was about back there?"

"Not really sure," he admitted. "Kyran specifically requested to see you and told Griffins security and hospital security to keep Seville Davis away from him."

"She's not all there," Anna confided. "I'm sorry, that's not very nice of me to say."

"I ordered her to be taken back to the ER for evaluation and tests. She's faking to stay in the hospital. But at least we'll all know where she is and she can't cause trouble for a while."

"You didn't ask for my ID or anything," Anna noted, surprised.

"Based on Kyran's description of you while on painkillers, I couldn't mistake you for anyone else. He's awake and anxious to see you."

"He's medicated now?"

"Morphine drip to be eased off by the end of the day. A broken patella isn't life threatening, but it requires surgical repair and it'll hurt for a while." The doctor stopped in front of a door. To Anna, he looked a little young for a surgeon, but the way he carried himself reflected the confidence required for using a scalpel. "With the appropriate care and PT, he'll recover. We'll keep his knee immobile for three to five weeks, then get that PT started."

"The cops arrested the man who did this. What happened to him?"

"They still have the suspect in custody. Kyran wanted you to get here before he talked to the detective working the case."

Dr. Hathaway opened the door, gesturing for Anna to precede him. She went inside the giant private hospital room. Tucked slightly out of sight from the door, Kyran reclined on a bed, hooked up to all kinds of medical machines and IVs. His leg was elevated on pillows and a fancy, heavy Velcro brace immobilized his left knee from

thigh to calf. His hair was hanging in all directions and his eyes bore dark purple bruises.

Sitting partially up in a hospital gown and sheets that covered all but his leg, he looked awful. Yet he was the most amazing sight she'd ever seen.

"Kyran," she choked out, her throat turned to stone.

"Hey now, baby," he murmured, his Southern accent stronger because he wasn't thinking about it. "You look beautiful, know that?"

Anna didn't think so. She hadn't had a shower since yesterday. She had no idea what her hair looked like or if she had a trace of makeup on. What she did know was Kyran was alive and he smiled so softly she knew in her heart of hearts that he loved her.

"Come here," he whispered, lifting his left hand.

She rushed to his bedside, carefully taking his hand. "I'm so sorry this happened to you." About all she could think to say, she bent close and kissed his forehead.

"You can do better than that," he teased, winking when it had to hurt. Bruises like that on his face came from trauma. He'd been through his share.

"When you're a little better, I'll jump you, okay?"

"I'll hold you to that, Ms. James." Tired and pained as he looked, he was thinking about their last night together. Anna fought back a laugh.

"You got it, hero," she promised, just to him.

Kyran glanced over to the opposite corner of the room. "I'm ready."

Wasn't until then she noticed three men were standing about the room. Derek Billings, his agent, Alexander Grant, and a man dressed in slightly wrinkled gray trousers and a white long sleeved shirt, looking as frazzled as she felt.

"Take your time, Mr. Black," the third man cautioned. "I have several witnesses from last night, the primaries being your teammate Ricky Weathers, Jason Moore and Mark Wells of the Malibu Sharks. What I need is your confirmation. Is this the man who attacked you?"

He showed Kyran a photo. Anna tried to see it. It was a mug shot. That wasn't...no...no, couldn't be. "Oh god, no, no, no, can't be him!"

"Anna, it's okay." Kyran checked the photo again, looked to the detective. "Yes, that's the man."

"It's not okay," she grimaced, wanting to cry and run.

"You know this man, Ms. James?" The detective swung toward her, showing the shot in full view. Will Simmons glared at the camera with a hatred she'd never seen before.

Anna let go of Kyran's hand, backed up. "It's my fault. She wasn't lying. I'm going to be sick."



Someone pushed her into a chair, bent her over and stuck a kidney-shaped pan in her lap. Anna threw up oatmeal and toast until there was only dry heaves. Someone touched the top of her head, calming her.

Dr. Hathaway took the pan away, then handed her something. A breath mint, which she sucked on, afraid to look up and face what she'd done.

"Anna, marry me," Kyran husked out, his hand on her head tightening.

## Chapter Eighteen

Kyran's Hail Mary proposal was intercepted by Anna's silence. Dammit, he'd meant it.

She lifted her head to look at Noble. Not him. She didn't look at him.

She stood up and held out her arms to the officer. "I know the man that did this to Kyran. Arrest me if necessary."

Noble held up his hands. "No need, ma'am."

"There's every need." She growled and shook like a mad thing. Fuck him, she was beautiful. "I'm responsible for the man I love lying in that bed with his knee braced in some sort of modern medical contraption. Arrest me or I'm going to punch you and make you do it."

Maybe she hadn't heard him. Thanks to the tube Doc took out of his throat after surgery, his throat felt like he'd swallowed lead.

"Anna, marry me," he said, loud as he could.

Anna finally looked at him. She frowned. "You don't mean that."

"Do too." He'd try again 'til she believed him. "Do I need to get up and do it right?"

That's when he had her. She went teacher on him. One hand flew to her waist. The other hand flailed in a "no-no" gesture that made him fight a smile. Cute as hell, that's what she was. "You get out of that bed, I will personally put your ass back in."

"Oh baby, you'd better." His whole body felt kinda numb from the pain meds. His knee felt scrambled and itchy. But that didn't stop him from knowing he still wanted to fuck Anna. "Might be the only place we can do it for a while. We follow what Doc says, we'll be fine."

"That's not a visual I need right now, thanks." Alex came forward. "Anna, I think he means it."

"Course," Kyran said.

Anna punched both fists at her hips, still in teacher mode. "I'm the reason you're there."

"Not your fault."

"Well, you're drugged, be real."

"I had my ass handed to me by a drugged-up coward with a crowbar, I know reality."

She thought about it, lowered her arms. "Jeez, Kyran, you asked me to marry you after I'd puked. Ask me when you really mean it."

"A catheter is making me pee without standing up." He groaned thinking about it. "That trumps puking. Marry me."

Alex groaned. "If that gets her to say yes, take note."

Her mouth dropped open, flapping a bit like a fish for a sec. Her eyes darted to his waist. She knew why he brought up the tube going up his dick. He nodded once. Thought he did anyway.

"Ohmigod, you do mean it." Anna looked around, back at him and slumped into the chair, head down. Her shoulders shook.

"Anna! Doc, help her."

Hathaway moved.

She held up a hand, snorted. "Peeing...trumps...puking, who knew?" She was laughing now, loudly.

"The method of peeing does." Why were they talking about this? Oh yeah, he'd brought it up. "Look at me."

She raised her head, looking right into his eyes. Good. "You really mean it, Kyran? This isn't the meds talking?"

Doing what he could to reassure her, he stared back. "Everyone but Anna out 'til she calls you back in." He needed a minute with her.

Without a word, Hathaway cleared the room. Anna stood by the bed. She'd not answered yet.

"I mean it, baby." He'd thought about buying her a ring when he flew into L.A., but worried that it might be too soon for her. He thought about it again when he went under, came out with the same decision. "Should have manned up and asked you to marry me a week ago."

"You're going to resent me," she said.

"Not sure how you figure that."

"Will did this."

"Right, he did this."

"I was going to marry him. He's messed up."

"So is my ex."

"Oh god, they have to know." She suddenly rushed to the door.

"Anna, stop."

"Your ex called me," she said, whirling back around. "Last night, she called, spewed something about Will and then threatened me to stay away from you with photos. She's been acting all crazy, spouting off to the press about the two of you. Someone should stop her."

"Not following. It can wait," Kyran said.

Anna paced nervously. For a sec, he thought he'd puke next 'cause she made him dizzy. "It can't wait. Seville knew him."

"Anna, come here."

Her pacing halted. She came up to the bed. "What is it? You need the doctor?"

Kyran held out his left hand. "I need you to listen."

"What, tell me?"

"My playing days are done."

Anna took his hand, sitting herself on the edge of his bed. The bed dipped. His body didn't move. The pillows kept his leg still.

"Kyran, are they sure? The doctors, I mean." To her credit, she stayed focused on him, her hand clenching, but not hurting. Her support, yeah, it was there in her eyes.

"They are. It might've been different if I hadn't had massive surgery on this knee already. Thing is, I'm going to need PT and time to heal. I'm going to be a bear to deal with in coming weeks, but I'll be okay as long as you're with me. Can't go forward without you, you get me?"

"I do get you. I'm so sorry," she suddenly cried, resting her forehead against his. Her tears splashed his face. "I love you, Kyran. So much that I'd take your pain and make it mine if I could."

"That mean yes?"

"Yes."

"Hey now, better kiss me before Doc brings in the troops."

Anna shifted, her nose brushing his. Being careful, she kissed him twice, slipping her tongue into his mouth to give him a taste of her. She drew back, he grinned.

"I can't believe you trumped me with your cock."

"Hey, I take pleasing you with it rather seriously. Too bad I can't move right now, I'd show you." His plan worked, he wasn't going to complain. He'd hurt for a while. He wouldn't complain. "Love you, woman."

"Right back at you, hero." She was smiling now. He'd done something right. "I'll get the others."

She stood up, proud again. Back in teacher mode, she took charge of who came in. Alex, Derek, Doc, her friend Tracey, the cop and Phalen Maddox.

"Hey man, 'sup?" Phalen spoke first, coming to the bed.

"Just asked my woman to marry me," he answered.

"What do you know? The catheter line worked," Alex said, standing by Phalen.

"Swept her off her feet," he claimed.

Alex shook his head. "More like doubled her over."

"Are you feeling better now, Ms. James?" Doc Hathaway went to her and touched her head. "No fever."

"I'm good."

"You got sick?" Tracey asked.

"A little bit."

"Way to go, Romeo," Phalen chuckled.

"Not my fault, asked her after."

Anna returned to his left side, claimed her place. "I was sick because Detective Noble showed a mug shot of the suspect, Will Simmons."

"Are you willing to verify that, Ms. James?" Noble asked. "You aren't a witness to last night. We'd like to confirm his identity, along with Kyran Black's statement."

"Whatever you need, Detective Noble, I'll help. You might also look into Seville Davis' association with Will Simmons. Somehow the two knew each other before last night. There's also a Detective Ron Smith in Baltimore who told me Will was missing."

"He was going for Seville," Kyran stated.

Noble nodded. "Witnesses said it looked that way. When he struck you, Ricky Weathers was sure Will Simmons screamed the name Anna or 'for Anna'. He said Simmons was completely strung out on something, not even the other players could stop him."

"Best to ask him what he meant by that," Kyran said. "If I hadn't kicked him, he'd have reached Seville first. My knee exploded. About all I knew after that."

Anna held his hand. Tracey parked it in a chair.

"I think I have enough for now." Noble stuffed his pen inside his notebook. "Mr. Maddox, you'd mentioned a phone for me to look at."

"That okay with you, Anna?" Phalen asked her.

"What phone?" Kyran's meds were wearing thin.

"Um, Seville sent photos to me late last night after appearing on the news. She'd flashed a huge ring. It's weird. I think she's convinced herself that she's untouchable and you really are hers. Doesn't matter what she needs to do to make everyone else think it too."

"Fucking wacked-out exes," Kyran thought. "Said that aloud, huh?"

Anna patted his hand. She was being good, gentle. He'd rather she be bad. Thinking of that, he watched her talk, wanted that mouth on him when he was out of this bed. "Anyway, the photos are of you with women. Lots of them, from when you played with the Sharks."

He didn't get it.

"Phalen, show Kyran."

Ms. Anna James was back. She was amazing. He loved this woman.

Phalen flashed something flat and black before his eyes. He blinked. It was Anna's phone. He'd bought it for her. The screen flashed, pictures came up.

"Fuck me."

He tried to sit up. Anna wouldn't let him budge.

The pictures showed him with twelve women. Six were explicit, lots of fucking and naked bodies. He'd only dated the others because they'd left him before things got serious. He didn't remember why, they'd just stopped taking his calls or changed their numbers a few weeks after they'd started going out.

Shit, Anna must think he was a dog. "Anna, love, these must have hurt you. I'm not like this now, won't cheat on you. Swear on my c...ah, check, paycheck."

"I knew about your reputation when we met. I sensed then what I know for certain now. You're not Kyran 'The Rebel' Black anymore. You are Kyran Black, the man. A good man, anyone says otherwise, they can go to hell." She pushed the phone away. "Thing is, I started wondering about something. The women in the photos, did you date them before you went out with Seville?"

"Yeah, mainly the ones in the graphic shots," he said, growing cold.

"My fear is that Seville's been stalking you for years, maybe even before you dated her. I think she used Max Henderson to spy on you, got these photos."

"How you figure?"

"Phalen's been doing some checking. Brenda Jamison, that paparazzo Max Henderson and Seville Davis go back a long time. Brenda was Seville's cousin."

"Was?" Detective Noble interrupted.

"We learned Max and Brenda died, by suicide according to reports. Their connections to Seville are beyond creepy."

"Not to mention the connection to Will Simmons," Phalen added. "That cop from Baltimore told Anna about text messages between Simmons and Jamison. Frankly, I'm thinking those suicides could have been hits made to look that way."

Kyran felt sick. He'd started dating Seville when he'd gone into rehab for his surgically repaired knee. He'd known her before then, but hadn't really thought of her as more than a Sharks cheerleader. She'd become a sensation, headlined magazines. At first, they dated casually. Then his knee got infected. Seville contacted Alex Grant, who found Doc Hathaway. After another round of surgery, she helped him with the best sports therapists in the country. He fell for her more because she'd been there for him. He saw that now.

If she hadn't become needy and jealous, he might not have taken more interest in talking to the Griffins when they called. The decision to sign had ultimately saved him from a major fuck-up.

Hell, if he didn't have an IV pumping meds into his arm and Anna at his side, he'd have puked for missing the truth that was as clear as day to him now.

"You okay?" Anna whispered, bringing him back.

"Yeah, I will be." He squeezed her hand. "Guess our exes really are messed up."

"Looks like," she agreed. "Kyran, where's your phone?"

"Have no idea. Doc was supposed to call you."

"Both Dr. Hathaway and Alex called this morning. Not from your phone though."

Phalen moved away from the bed. "Got an idea," he said. He checked Anna's phone, hit something.

"What's he doing?" Tracey asked.

"I'm calling Kyran." Phalen kept the phone to his ear. He grinned like he'd struck gold. "Detective Noble, take this to the ER and keep dialing. It's going to voicemail. If you follow the ringtone, bet you'll find it."

"Bet I will," Noble agreed, rushing out with the phone.

"That being done, it's time for you all to go." Hathaway spoke up. "My patient needs rest." He punched something on the IV machine. Nurses had come in a little while ago and changed the bags, the drips of fluids slow and steady.

"Kyran, you take care now," Derek Billings said. "We'll be in touch when you get back home. Take your time thinking about my offer. If you need anything from me or the organization, you say the word. It'll be done."

"Thank you, sir." Kyran watched the Griffins owner leave.

"I'm going for something to eat that's not oatmeal," Phalen announced. "Who's with me?"

Anna's stomach growled.

Tracey stood. "I am. Anna, I'll get us a hotel room and bring back a burger or something for you. Want me to call your school?"

"Please," Anna said.

"I'll join you all, anything's better than oatmeal." Alex walked with them, everyone but Hathaway leaving. For a second, he stopped and looked at Doc. "Care to join us, Doctor?"

"My patient comes first," Hathaway said. Everyone left but Anna and his doctor.

"What's wrong with oatmeal?" Kyran asked.

"Not a damn thing," Anna said. "Except in a kidney basin, then it's pretty gross."

Kyran laughed. It hurt. "I love oatmeal."

"Me too," Anna said.

She smiled again. She was happy.

He hadn't fucked things up yet, didn't plan on it.

"I'll be back to check on you later," Doc said. "I'll sign for you to eat more than broth and gelatin."

"You sure that's okay?" Anna asked.

"If Kyran can convince you to marry him while laid up like this, he can eat solid food." At the door, he paused. "I'll sign for a resident to take the catheter out. We'll get you out of that bed when you wake up."

"Amen to that." Anna pumped her fist a little. He wished he could kiss her again.

Doc left. Anna stayed. "Anna?"

"I'm still here."

"Yeah." Kyran's meds were working real fine. "Love you."

"I know." She got up, moved around and climbed onto the bed.

"Hey." He liked her on the left side.

"Don't worry, not going anywhere." She scooted close, all careful like, laid alongside of him.

This was good. His left side wasn't so happy, but that was fine. Anna grabbed a TV remote.

"You know, I kinda like having you helpless," she admitted.

"Not helpless. Give me an hour, we'll fuck."

"Ha, give me a lifetime. I'll do more than that with you, Kyran Black."

"Deal, Anna James. Sometime soon, that'll be Mrs. Anna Black, by the way." Not sure that he said that aloud, he eased back some.

Anna's left hand took his right, careful not to touch his IV. "Someday soon, I'll be honored to have your name." She shifted around some, trying to get comfortable. "After a sleepless night, I'm definitely feeling my age right now. I should fix my makeup before they all come back."

"Anna." He closed his eyes.

"What?"

"You're perfect, you get me?"

"Why thank you."

"Welcome, now kiss me."

"Still bossy, even with tubes," she chuckled.

She did something, he didn't know what. Felt like she faced him. "Love you," she whispered against his cheek.

Wasn't what he'd wanted. But it would do. His IV thing beeped, Anna snored softly.

Yeah, things weren't so bad after all. He had Anna. She was safe. He was safe.

Kyran slept.



## **Chapter Nineteen**

*Five Weeks Later*

Taking off the griffin head, Anna struggled to dig inside the now front-zipped bodice of her costume to find the keycard dangling from a lanyard around her neck. Before she could find it, the door to the new mascot dressing room opened, the man of her dreams standing inside.

Pretending her heart wasn't beating a mile a minute and her hair wasn't a sweaty mess, she stepped inside. The door closed, her fantasy man using his crutches to back up a few paces.

Amazing, the man was injured and still managed to look part athlete, part Celtic warrior.

"If you're hiding from a reporter, Mr. Black, be assured you are safe here," she said, holding onto the griffin head. "My talons are in working order." Flashing a grin and curling her fingers, she emphasized the length of the foam talons.

With an ease that belied the thinner, more mobile knee brace, Kyran maneuvered himself to the recliner installed in the dressing room. Granted, the mascots shared the room. At the moment, she and her man were alone.

"Not worried," Kyran answered from the seat. "No one's getting back here anymore without going through security or being derailed into a press room."

Anna was relieved for the safety of players, cheerleaders, mascots, management and coaching staff. "I heard the Sharks did the same thing with their stadium."

"As most in the league will do or have done already." Kyran looked good in khaki pants and dark green polo shirt, a gold griffin over his left pectoral. "Come here, baby."

Anna dumped the griffin head and shed her wings. With only the lion half left on, she walked toward him slowly. "I missed you, Kyran Black. How'd your doctor's appointment go?"

"Things are good. We're ready to get serious about PT," he answered, cringing some.

She smiled, hopefully conveying her sympathy. She knew he was already working hard to recover. His new brace allowed for more flexibility, especially during the light post-surgery rehab he'd started two weeks ago. He did need the crutches to get around, but she bet he'd use a cane within a week. He was determined to get out to the field and do his job on the sidelines.

"You need ibuprofen or anything?" He'd ditched the serious meds since he didn't like to rely on narcotic painkillers.

"No, I'm good," he answered. "Hold up."

Anna stayed a foot away. "Something wrong?"

"Yeah, you're wearing too many clothes." Even with a knee brace and in a recliner, Kyran looked sexy and confident when he gestured to her costume. "Much as I like it, the costume needs to go."

Anna's heart raced faster. "You realize if the suit comes off, trouble's going to follow."

"That's the plan. We've got two quarters before anyone comes looking for us."

She punched her hands into her hips. "Surely you're not hinting that I should engage in a quickie right here and now."

"With these two teams playing, thirty minutes will become an hour, there's time for more than a quick fuck." Reclining back a little, he gestured again. "Come on, Ms. James, be a little bad with me."

"That a dare?" she asked, arching her brow.

"Hell yeah, dare."

Unable to resist him, Anna unzipped the costume, loving the new design. The costume was lighter, allowing for freer movements. Two more people were hired to be mascots, splitting duties so it was difficult to tell who engaged the crowd and who worked with the cheerleaders.

Tonight against the visiting Malibu Sharks, Anna had been on the sidelines for the first half, trading off with one of the guys for the second half.

Watching Kyran, she parted the front, the material easily slipping off her shoulders to the floor. With security so tight and the door closed, she felt bold enough to step out. In her flesh-colored leotard, she stood still.

"Anna, you're beautiful," was all Kyran had to say to make her blush. His eyes were on her face, his mouth parted. "Hurry, I've got something for you."

She noticed his erection tenting his khakis. She was one lucky woman to have access to this man's gorgeous cock. And he was hers! Still amazed that she'd taken him inside her body many times now, she relived last night. Holy cow, he'd...wait.

Just like that, she was aroused. Removing the leotard, but leaving on a sports bra and bikini panties, she waited for his signal. Clearly he was calling the plays right now.

"Come a little bit closer, baby."

"You never call me sugar anymore," she commented.

"Much as I hate to admit it, I called too many women that," he said. "I never thought of it as a bad thing until you told me your preference. Really glad you did. You deserve my respect in all things, Anna, especially a name meant only for you."

"Your intention was in the right place," Anna said, believing him.

She knew he'd want to remove the rest of her clothes. Since their return to Maryland, he savored the times they made love by undressing her so slowly he'd left

her breathless and willing to do anything for him. His healing knee required extra patience and care, but sex remained passionate, beautiful.

"Is something wrong, Kyran?" She sensed a change in him.

"Nothing's wrong," he answered. "We need to talk a minute."

Anna stood close, letting him run his hands up to just below her breasts. The material of her bra was thick, pressing her breasts somewhat flat. With care, he lifted it up and over her head. She flung it aside.

"So talk," she urged.

"Soon as you're naked, we will."

He smoothed his hands over her breasts, massaging where the bra had left red marks. When she squirmed, loving the attention and the way her tummy did a little back flip, he worked her panties down her legs.

Naked now, she grinned. Licking his lips, he patted his lap. "Climb on up here."

"I don't want to hurt you."

"You know how not to," he said.

Remembering that time in the recliner, she climbed on, this time facing Kyran. Tucking her knees on either side of his legs and being certain she kept pressure off his left knee, she eased down.

"Umm, want me to take care of your khakis?" She was dripping wet. His pants were going to get damp if she stayed like this.

"In a bit," he said. "Listen, Anna, Alex called. Seville pled guilty. There won't be a trial, but she'll serve time, including an extensive psych evaluation."

"Really? God, I didn't expect her to do that so easily."

"In return for his complete cooperation and a lighter sentence at a minimum security detention center, Will Simmons made a deal. He'll serve his time in Baltimore, according to Alex. Will was Brenda's contact for any information on you in that *Journal* article. He'd apparently gotten himself hooked on prescription meds and was bankrupt from paying all the docs some serious cash to write prescriptions. She threatened to expose his habit if he didn't bring about that board meeting. Seville stepped in later, said she'd expose more than his habit and debt if he didn't help her come between us."

"Explains why the *Journal* was sent to Manny and the school superintendent so soon after it came out," Anna commented.

"Yeah, and Brenda trailed me because she thought she'd get her own talk show on Frontline's sports network, simple as that. Seville paid Will Simmons five thousand to attack me. It was supposed to look like he'd attacked her and you were to be blamed as some kind of jealous revenge. It's complicated. Phalen, Detective Noble and police in Hollywood found out that Max Henderson started spying on me when I played in Malibu. All set up by Seville."

"We knew that. How did she know about Will though? I'm still confused."

"Honestly, when I was in California for that rehab over the summer, she called me, asking for another chance. I'd already told her I'd met someone back home and wanted to make a go of it. Pretty sure Max gave her our photo from the parking lot and she had him hack Alex's records, found your name and figured it out. Alex is hiring Phalen to overhaul the security of his whole network."

"Considering who Seville is and the power players she knows, it's scary and sad to think about," Anna said. "I mean she's a beautiful woman and had so much going for her. If she hadn't sent those pictures or pointed her finger at me the way she had on the phone or in the hospital, she might have gotten away with it. She played her hand too quickly, thought too much of herself to see her errors."

"What I didn't know 'til today was Seville's ties to Frontline News. She's the majority stockholder. She made certain she was featured as much as possible."

"Yikes! At least it's over. She can't hurt you anymore or scare me away," Anna said, relieved. "Were Brenda and Max's deaths really suicide, you think?"

"Not sure about Max. Police don't have any suspects if it was murder. However I wasn't the only celebrity type he'd been spying on. Autopsy reports on Brenda show she did kill herself. She'd found out she wasn't going to get that sports talk show. Seville made sure she was fired, didn't receive a dime or a contract."

"Her own cousin stabbed her in the back," Anna murmured. "That's so sad. I never wanted that to happen to her, never."

"Me either," Kyran agreed. "Seville's going to answer for what she did, so is Will."

"Then why do you still look serious?" Leaning a little closer, she noticed the slight darkness under his eyes. The secret worry that Seville would get away with what she'd done had been weighing on him. When Detective Noble questioned Seville in the ER, she'd coldly denied doing anything wrong. Insisted Kyran had given her the ring she loved so much and he'd forgive her for scaring off other women to keep him.

Anna and Kyran had no idea what happened to the model boyfriend she'd claimed to be dating. They both hoped the man was safe.

Kyran had also worried that those raunchy photos would somehow change how Anna saw him. They hadn't, not a bit. Sure, she'd been upset at first. But he was a good man. She respected him because he hadn't cast any of those women in a negative light and made certain his lawyers would protect their identities.

He'd admitted a few had broken his heart. They'd been the ones who'd changed their numbers without his knowing why. Two told him that his fame scared them. He'd backed off, let them go. Had Anna balked when they connected in August, he would have pursued her more cautiously. He wouldn't have walked away. He'd loved her even then, as she loved him.

"I'm serious because now that Seville and Will are out of our lives, I want to ask you something," he said, swallowing hard.

Kyran was nervous? Anna wasn't sure why.

"Please tell me that you're not having second thoughts," she insisted. "Phalen's coming tomorrow with his brothers. They're helping me move my stuff into your place. Tracey and Jeremy are moving in together."

Kyran's eyes met hers. She calmed down, waiting.

"Anna, I love you. I'm not going anywhere without you, you get me?" She nodded. "Do me a favor and lift your left leg."

Anna did, allowing Kyran to stuff his hand between the arm of the recliner and his hip. He pulled something out. It was a box, a small black velvet box.

"Ms. Anna James, will you be my wife?" Slowly, he opened the box. There, nestled in a plush ring box was an enormous emerald surrounded by shining diamond baguettes. Smaller emeralds and diamonds encircled a gold band.

It was lovely, gorgeous, and Anna couldn't look away. "But you already asked. I said yes."

"I need to hear you say yes again, this time with my ring on your hand."

"Oh Kyran, that's so sweet." Anna's heart pounded like a wild thing. He loved her enough to put a ring on her finger and make it real.

With a devilish grin, he took the ring out of the box, sliding it onto her left ring finger. It fit perfectly. It was beautiful.

"Yes, yes, I will be your wife."

"I love you, woman. You know what this means, right?"

"That everyone will see that we're engaged," she answered.

It wasn't like they hadn't shared the news. Along with Alex and the Griffins PR manager, they'd placed the announcement in the right newspapers. Additionally, the Alexandria Griffins ran a spread featuring Kyran's accomplishments as a professional football player with them and the Malibu Sharks, revealing he was retiring as a player. When he could walk onto the field with only a cane, he would wear the headset and clothes of a coach, working the remainder of the season specifically with the quarterbacks. If it was the right fit for him and the team, next season he would become an assistant offensive coach with the potential of becoming the offensive coordinator.

Until he was proficient with a cane, he'd work with Ricky Weathers and third string turned second string QB, Mathew Stillwater, in practice. The Griffins were already scouting colleges for another quarterback and he'd assist in the off season. A new career was ahead of him and while Anna didn't think it would be an easy adjustment, he would make an excellent coach.

"It means you are the woman I plan to spend the rest of my life with," Kyran said. "And with this ring and lab results in my pocket, we can make love bare."

Trembles raced through Anna's entire body. Given the racy, sexual nature of the photos Seville had sent, Kyran felt obligated to be tested again. Even though he used condoms and had several HIV tests as part of his physicals, he needed to be sure he would never bring something into their future that resulted from his past.

"Kyran, I wasn't worried," she assured. "I love you."

"Love you too. But you have to admit, it's nice to know."

Yes, it was. He loved her enough to protect her that much. "Then how about getting rid of these khakis that are soaked and tented rather nicely."

"Kind of need help with that," he admitted.

Anna grinned, feeling like the cat about to eat a canary. His face, brightened with commitment and love, becoming that of her fantasy lover made real deal. With a little maneuvering, she lifted herself up. Kyran unzipped his khakis and pushed down his pants and boxers as far as he could.

When he settled her over him, he didn't push inside. "Hey, I need you, Kyran."

"Kiss me first," he said.

Anna dipped closer, resting her mouth over his. Kyran took over. Ever dominant and sexy, his tongue flicked across her lips, dipped inside, kissing her nice and deep and long. The way she liked, needed. They kissed again, their mouths and tongues mimicking what they were about to do, losing themselves in each other.

Outside the dressing room, they could hear the roar of the crowd and the boom and pop of fireworks indicating the home team had made a touchdown. Griffins were in control of the game.

That was great, but all either of them cared about was kissing.

Caressing her left hand through his long dark auburn hair, she loved the feel of her engagement ring snug on her finger. Kyran's hands began to wander, exploring her curves, her shoulders, hips, ribs, breasts, she lost track. Her skin vibrated with a sweet, delicious heat that only he could stoke. Wherever he touched, a zap of excitement zinged to her sex, sending her heart tripping a mile a minute, her pussy quivering in anticipation.

Kyran's magnificent erection slid between her folds, still not inside, just rocking back and forth, the head notching against her clit, withdrawing, setting an easy pace.

"Fuck me, you're all wet and pulsing around my cock, feels so good, baby," he muttered when a sudden orgasm had her folds fluttering against him.

"Mr. Black, if you will hold yourself still just a minute, I'd like to fuck you now," she promised.

"That's my bad girl," he praised, spanking her butt.

She rose to her knees, her thighs spread wide.

"This means we can try for kids," she murmured, the head of his erection notching inside. "Or we could adopt if I can't get pregnant."

"We can try for both." His hand came to her chin, holding her steady. "Anna, I'm going to enjoy making love to you 'til our kids have kids. Whatever we need to do, we'll do it. We'll have a family, you get me?"

"Yes, I get you very well, Kyran Black."

They kissed. He caught her hips, controlling Anna's descent. His cock pierced her center, pushing through her wet walls, coating him, paving the way. Being on top, she took him as far as she dared.

Anna thought fucking had never been this wonderful or raw. She could feel his girth, his veined hardness, the satin smoothness of his glans, all of him. Heart soaring, she squeezed with her thighs and kegels. Finding a pace they both needed, she rose and fell, rose and fell, taking him for a long, hard ride.

"Hell, Anna, nothing's ever been this good," he growled, his head thrown back, eyes narrowed on her face. "Mine. You're all mine now."

"Mine too," she murmured.

His ring on her hand, his cock in her pussy and his hands at her waist let her know it was safe for a slightly older teacher and part-time mascot to belong with Kyran "The Rebel" Black, for now and the rest of her life.

## About the Author

My love for storytelling began when I created my first fictional characters in kindergarten, convincing my family and friends that Red Henry and Green Henry were identical twin brothers in my school. They were mischievous, rarely did their homework, and even had girlfriends! Years later, I started to write, completing my first manuscript in middle school. I confess the heroine was a cross between a contemporary Laura Ingalls Wilder and Nancy Drew, who'd been dating one of the Hardy Boys, but when I wrote "the end" I'd known I had more stories to tell. Of course, life intervened, but whether I was in high school, working as a Veterinary Technician, earning a degree in history and secondary education, or teaching, I was always writing and reading romances.

Finally, I met and married my hero and moved to New England. Shortly after, I joined RWA and the New England Chapter and have been writing faithfully ever since. Now I am proud to be an author with Ellora's Cave Publishing.

Frances welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

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