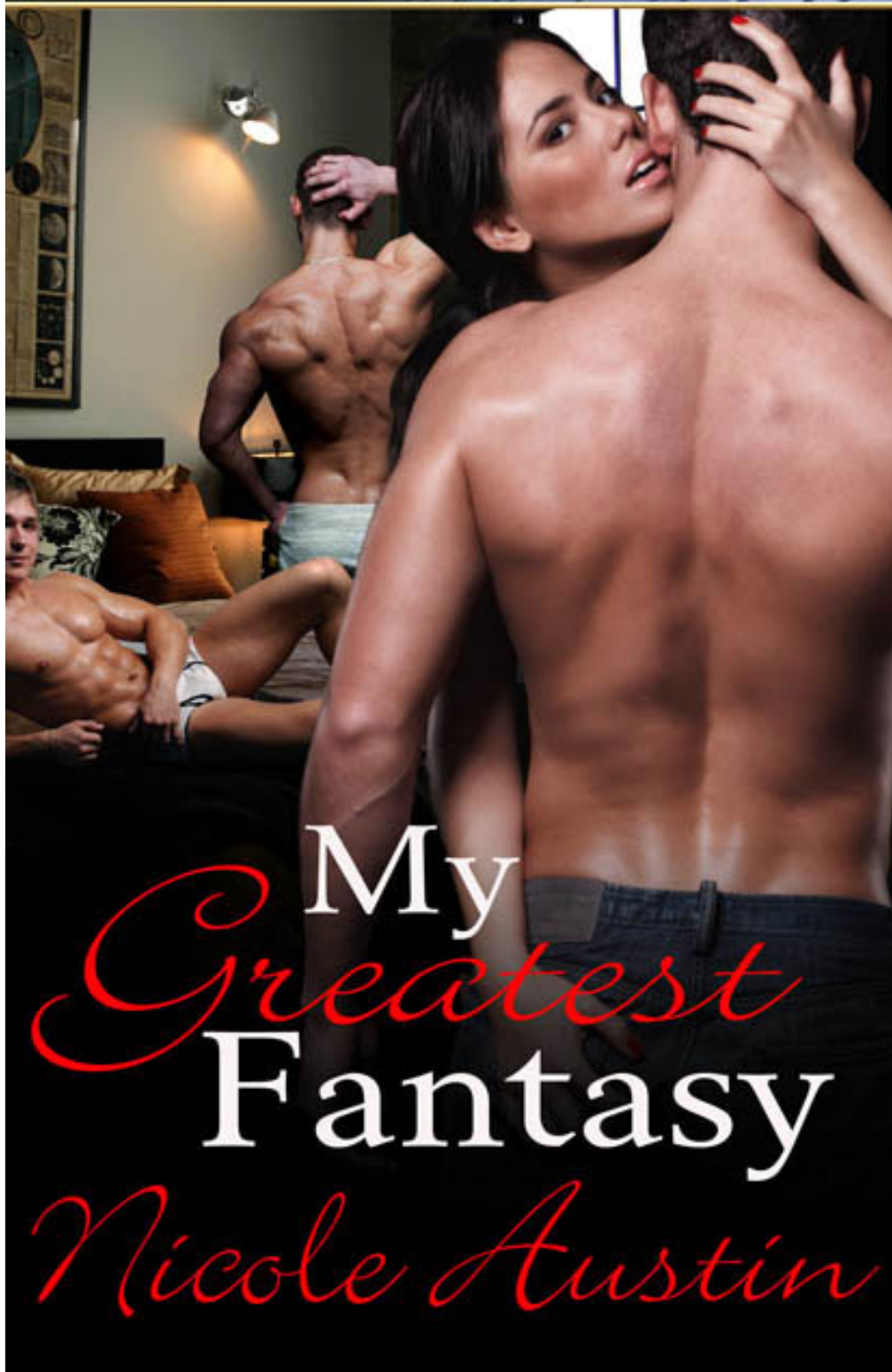


ELLORA'S CAVE *Moderne*



My
Greatest
Fantasy
Nicole Austin

My Greatest Fantasy

Nicole Austin

My name is Isabella Blackburn, and I am a voyeur. At least that's how it all began. Along the way, I've developed a taste for exhibitionism, foursomes and role-playing. Okay, I confess. I'm obsessed with sex, the more taboo the better.

If there's a cure, you can keep it. I don't want to be saved. Not when three sexy younger men are ready, willing and able to satisfy my carnal appetites. *Yeah, baby!* I'm having the time of my life and acting out all my wicked fantasies down to the most decadent details.

All three men heat me up, but one of the guys drives me absolutely wild. I might have to hang on to Rhys for a while, even if he does make me act a little crazy at times.

Don't be jealous. Surrender to temptation and leave your inhibitions at the door. Take a walk on the wild side and have some fun. We both know you want to give in and indulge your most sinful desires.

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My Greatest Fantasy

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MY GREATEST FANTASY

Nicole Austin

Dedication

To Candy, Christine, Jackie, Reba, Rachel and Teri. Thanks for always being there. I love you!

And to my editor, Jillian Bell. Thank you for bringing the thrill back.

Trademarks Acknowledgements

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Chapter One

This whole wild ride started while I was indulging my newest guilty pleasure—voyeurism. Quite the naughty habit, I know. Undertaken in secret, most often shrouded by darkness, with the dangerous potential for being discovered... Hell yeah! What a decadent thrill.

Picture a late night at the office, everyone else had gone home. Hunger pains hit, and with a handful of change I headed off to the lunchroom with visions of candy bars filling my head. Odd sounds reached me before I turned the corner to find a coworker, pants down around his ankles, bare ass flexing beneath the glare of florescent lights. He stood between the legs of a woman lying on the table where I'd eaten my lunch. With her skirt bunched up around her waist, I had a clear view as his cock, glistening with her juices, slammed into her pussy.

I was shocked and embarrassed. Not wanting to be discovered watching, my head screamed to turn and walk away. However, my body had a mind of its own and remained rooted to the spot. Like a sponge, I soaked in every nuance of their illicit encounter, not even realizing what my busy fingers had gotten up to beneath my skirt and drenched panties until an intense orgasm crashed over me.

I don't know who they were, never caught them in the act again, yet the desires formed that night changed me. I became ever vigilant in the quest for more opportunities to observe. Which brings me to my neighbors.

I'm confident enough to confess my sins. In the six weeks since the sexy trio moved in next door, they'd captured more than my passing interest. What living, breathing, red-blooded woman wouldn't take notice of three gorgeous hunks who shared a penchant for nude sunbathing? Damn straight, my hormones stood up and paid attention.

Absorbing details is a big part of my nature—an essential career skill. Not that I'd observed any naked tanning going on, damn it. A grueling caseload meant I was seldom home during daylight hours. But since the guys had moved in, I'd been hearing someone having sex on the deck behind their house at night. Husky moans and shouts that got me hotter than a three-alarm fire.

God, how I ached just from listening to them fuck. The last time I'd had sex had become way too distant a memory since putting my career first had developed into a habit.

I didn't skip out on work, leaving a high-profile case sitting on my desk, just to get a glimpse of my noisy nocturnal neighbors in the light of day, though. No way. I'd put too much work into reaching my career goals and done a lot of climbing up the ladder to reach the position of First Assistant District Attorney to become a slacker on a whim.

Because of my rowdy neighbors, insomnia had become my constant companion. If I was to succeed on this case, I needed a nap. The lack of rest and my too-vivid imagination were taking a hefty toll on my concentration. My work was suffering. Thinking about my neighbors' nighttime activities instead of being alert and focused had me making rookie mistakes, which did not go unnoticed. Tongues were wagging. Sensing I'd lost my edge, others jockeyed for position. The rat bastards. They smelled weakness and were lining up to feast on the rotten carcass. But if my coworkers thought I'd simply lie down and die, the bloodthirsty idiots had better think again.

Still, I know my limits. Some downtime and a refreshing nap would do wonders. At least, that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

With a nod, I pressed closer to the stucco wall, wedging myself in along the iron railing of the bedroom balcony.

The early spring day had brought perfect weather to the Tampa Bay area. I enjoyed the crisp and dry breeze caressing my bare skin. Any respite from the normal humidity, regardless how brief, felt wonderful.

With a deep breath of the salty air, my tension eased. Miles of clear blue sky kissing tropical green waters replenished my weary soul. Being outside at two o'clock in the afternoon on a workday stripped down to my lacy underwear had nothing to do with trying to catch the hot young guys next door in the act of nude sunbathing.

Lord knows I'd tried to get a look at what brought on the nightly serenade of moans, grunts and slapping flesh emanating from their deck. I never caught sight of pale butt cheeks in the moonlight, so they had to be out sunning themselves, naked, during the day. Solid deductive reasoning, right?

And what I wouldn't give to see *that* after too many nights alone in bed listening to them fuck. My active mind had no trouble filling in the blanks, supplying wicked visions of glorious toned and tanned male flesh as I listened to the sounds of passion. My body ached. I longed to join them, but until now I'd remained safely tucked away in my house to avoid humiliation. They wouldn't want an older woman. Not a tired, stressed-out one who'd spent her life following intellectual pursuits.

What a marvelous fantasy though. Peeping Jane and the three studs.

"Fuck me harder."

The masculine groan sent a shaft of white-hot desire straight from my scalp to my toes, which curled against the hard tile. They were outside, the three sex gods, and they weren't saving the fun and games for the cover of darkness. And if I could just squeeze my ass an inch farther into the damn corner and lean out over the edge a little more, I'd get to do more than listen. Almost there.

Rough stucco scraped against a swollen nipple and bolts of pleasure-pain zinged through my abdomen to pulse along my erect clit. The sounds they made alone were enough to get me wet and ready. The idea of actually watching them fuck drove me to desperation. Hence the high-elevation contortionists act, all in an attempt to witness their activities.

"That's it. Fuck me good."

Yes, please. Fuck him good and let me see, damn it!

Not wanting to be overanxious, I forced my gaze to glide over the coast and allowed anticipation to build before settling my attention on the wooden deck below with a sharp inhalation.

Holy shit! The view was much different than my fantasies.

Slapping a trembling hand over my mouth to prevent any further exclamations of joy from escaping, I stared in awe. Wouldn't do to call attention to myself. Not when they were finally revealed in all their glory. If they heard me and moved the fun indoors, it would be a crying damn shame.

There were no women joining the guys for sex, at least not right then. Nope, just lots of naked male flesh. My starved eyes feasted on the three hot men who'd abandoned themselves to a wild afternoon of fucking.

Praise the Lord and pass the gravy. The *Hallelujah Chorus* echoed in my head as I looked down on them. What a heathen. I'm going to Hell on the express train. There's a first-class ticket for the front row with my name engraved on it in bold red letters just waiting for me to show up. Considering that line of reasoning, I figured that I might as well have fun and enjoy the trip.

My imagination had not come close to doing justice to their hedonistic display, which took my breath away. Blood pounded through my veins. My body temperature rose and a surge of cream dampened my panties. I brought my hands to my breasts, rubbed my palms over my tightly puckered nipples. Within seconds I was on fire, burning up with sexual energy. The heat hit me so hard that sweat trickled down my spine. My clit swelled, throbbed, begged for stimulation. Not one to deny my own pleasure, after shifting my butt up against the railing, I slid a hand over my tummy and beneath the elastic edge of my panties.

Fuck, the guys got me so hot! In mere seconds they took me from tingles of arousal to volcanic meltdown.

The blond's body glistened with sweat. Golden skin rippled with the flex and play of powerful muscles along more than six feet of gorgeous, primal, dominant male in rut.

His firm ass cheeks constricted in the most delightful way as he drilled into the body caged beneath him. And I'd been right. There wasn't one tan line to be seen on his perfect bod.

The choir in my head launched into a full-out Baptist revival, clapping and shouting praise for the bountiful feast laid out at my feet. A-amen, aw-men...thank the gods for men!

What would I have to do to get some of that?

My pussy clenched and I thrust two fingers into the soaking wet channel, riding them hard. With the heel of my hand pressed against my clit, I watched the scene unfold. God, how I longed to join them.

Brief disappointment surged through me when the blond pulled away from his partner, but I was relieved to discover they were only changing positions, not stopping. He moved to the side of the lounge chair and his lover turned over. Riveted, I couldn't look away. The new arrangement allowed me to see everything.

Shocked and titillated, I fucked my hand harder. My gaze skated over the black-haired man moving onto his back, knees pulled up to his chest and spread wide to display one hell of a nice ass, cock and balls.

The position might be submissive and vulnerable, but not for a minute did I believe the man himself was in any way passive. He projected the commanding aura of an alpha male willing to bend for the sake of mutual pleasure. Neither the bright sunlight nor the frantic sex penetrated his dark and authoritative persona, though. In my estimation, he was one cool customer.

And holy hot manlove, who would've guessed they were gay? Not me. There went my visions of being fucked by the three studs in one big jumble of writhing bodies, damn it. The view almost made up for the loss of that particular fantasy, though.

The only hair on either man existed on their heads and faces—otherwise they were waxed or shaved bare. Much braver than me. That shit hurt. While I appreciated their

sacrifice, the feeling of crisp chest hair sliding between my fingers was something I enjoyed.

Once the black-haired guy got into position, the blond didn't delay. He leaned over his friend in a one-armed push-up and proceeded to fuck him. Hard. The small pucker of the other guy's anus stretched around the thick invader and both moaned, vocalizing their bliss.

Raw hunger was evident in the firm grip of large hands, the rough clash of lips and powerful thrusts of hard bodies. A clash of titans. Yet something deeper passed between them. Below the surface existed a secure foundation of...friendship? Love? I wasn't sure but sensed the strength of their connection.

And damn, they were killing me. I wanted to know how it felt to have my ass stretched, to experience the friction of a big cock shafting in and out of the tight passage. I needed to experience the wicked delight expressed on their faces.

The man on top pistoned his hips at a rapid pace. Damp skin slapped and I imagined it was my ass being reamed, fucked raw by the primal sex god. Pinching an aching nipple, I matched their rhythm with the fingers fucking my pussy. Not in my wildest moments would I have thought watching two men fuck would be such a major turn-on. Shed a whole new light on the male desire for woman-on-woman porn and exposed me to a wealth of fresh new fantasy material.

Shaking with the need to orgasm, I fought to hold back, wanting to time my release with theirs. Then a flash of movement on a portion of the deck closer to my perch caught my eye.

There, off by himself, lounged the third man. Enraptured by the pair, I'd forgotten all about and almost entirely missed him. That would have been one hell of a crime.

My elevated vantage point almost directly over his shoulders granted me an unobstructed view from the top of his head and along the perfect length of his body. Unlike the other two, a smattering of dark brown hair spread across his chest, narrowed to a thin trail down the ridges of his abdomen, and formed a lush nest surrounding the

base of the beautiful cock being stroked in his fist. He didn't join in the fun, but clearly got off on the erotic spectacle.

The other two fucked away, their masculine moans wrapping around me, but I only had eyes for the solo player. I longed to slide my fingers through thick mahogany waves of hair. To rake my nails along the corded sinew of his broad chest and tease those taut nipples.

And that cock...oh my. The things I wanted to do with his long shaft and heavy balls.

Large fingers gripped tight, his stroke sure and firm. The engorged, plum-shaped crown looked almost bruised it was so filled with blood. His other hand fondled his balls, rolling the globes in his palm before tugging the entire sac downward.

Shit, he handled himself in a rough, almost abusive manner, yet his moans sounded as if they were sparked from pleasure, not pain.

"Fuck me harder, you bastard," one of the men bellowed.

"Would you shut the fuck up," solo player grumbled. "Miss Priss will hear you."

Miss Priss? Who the hell were they talking about?

"Relax, workaholic lawyer girl's never home during the day."

Me? They were talking about me. The words took me by surprise, like a bucket of cold water poured over my head, and killed the orgasm that had been dangling just out of reach.

Sure I worked a lot and maintained proper decorum for my job, but I didn't consider myself to be prissy. Far from it. I'm one of the most liberated women I know, damn it. No, they couldn't be talking about me. I do admit to a flair for drama, though, after years of working in courtrooms.

"She's hiding a hot bod under those frumpy suits."

Frumpy? I wanted to scream, “I am not a frumpy priss”, at the top of my lungs, but refrained from doing so. After all, I didn’t want to reveal myself or have the entertainment stop before reaching its explosive finale.

Besides, they didn’t know about my sexy undergarments. No one did. A fetish for sexy lingerie is yet another of my vices. In my line of work, maintaining a professional image is essential and requires wearing boring business suits, which I detest. The soft brush of fine silk and lace beneath my courtroom clothes indulges my innate sensuality. The small reminder of my femininity while busting balls before a powerful judge was also heady as all get-out. Arguing a case and feeling my garters draw tight against my thighs was a perverse thrill.

“Need to...invite her over...for a drink,” one man panted.

“You want to fuck her.” The hard tone held accusation and recrimination. Still, the words rekindled some of my arousal.

“Hell yeah. All three of us. One in her cunt, one in that tight ass, and one stretching those red lips.”

Oh hell yeah. Bring on the ménage, baby!

I was all for it. I did wonder why they would want to fuck a woman together if they were gay, but the vivid pictures racing through my head made me weak with lust. My knees shook as I imagined how amazing it would be to have the three of them at the same time.

After a quick peek at the two men fucking, my gaze returned to the one jacking his cock. The talk of a ménage had fired him up, bringing on his climax. His hips bucked and long white ropes of cum splattered over his washboard abdomen. He continued to pump himself through the pleasure, milking every last drop of cum from his balls.

Fighting back the strong urge to race down there and lick the white trail from his skin, I panted and crawled inside the bedroom, cursing my shortsightedness. Should’ve grabbed the camcorder on my way out. Now that would have made for some great footage.

They wouldn't catch me off guard again. Next time—if there was a next time—I'd get them recorded in hi-def. Not that I didn't trust my memory. Images of the sexy studs would motivate late-night sessions with my new vibrator for a long time to come—pun intended.

I'd burned out the motor in its predecessor just from listening to the guys. Now that I had visuals to go along with the aural stimulus, I made a mental note to pick up a spare vibe, along with a supply of extra batteries. Something told me I was going to need a serious cache.

Somehow I dragged myself to the shower on rubbery legs that didn't want to cooperate. Once I was under the pounding spray, the scene from the deck played through my mind on a continual loop. A fresh wave of lust blasted me. With the help of a pulsating waterproof wonder, I brought myself off. Twice. It took the harsh edge off my immediate needs but made me want more. A lot more.

Exhausted, I took a long nap, not waking until the mouthwatering aroma of grilled meat started a grumbling in my empty stomach. Someone was having a barbecue.

Had to have been at least four years since I'd been to a casual beach gathering. I stretched, rolled to my side and stared out at the setting sun, imagining lying on a blanket next to a bonfire with the three hunks from next door. Cradled between one man's legs, my back to his chest, another massaging my feet, which rested on his lap. The third man swooping in from my side to share a lazy, intimate kiss, our tongues twining together, tasting the bitter flavor of hops lingering in his mouth from the beer he'd been drinking.

Mmm...my vibrator was going to get one hell of a workout.

A loud rapping rudely interrupted the peaceful daydream. Sounded as if the unwanted visitor was at my back door. How odd. Who would be looking for me at home when I'd normally be at work until well after dark? And why the back door?

Pulling on a short silk robe, I caught a glimpse of my reflection in the cheval mirror and froze.

Isabella Blackburn, go and make yourself presentable for civilized company.

The familiar chastisement rang through my mind and almost had me looking around for my mother. Would I never escape her contempt, even in my own thoughts?

Mother expected me to endure the same fate she had, a marriage into the “right” family of proper social standing. Not for love but to further wealth. A mating of two powerful families. I had no intention of toeing the line and marrying the boring son of some business mogul friend of Daddy’s. As if I’d ever sell out. Hell no!

With a derisive snort, I finger-combed my light brown hair, pleased by the rumpled temptress in the mirror. Intelligent green eyes gazed out from under thick, dark lashes. Nobody would guess I spent most of my time behind a desk. My naturally lean yet curvy body gave the appearance of someone who worked out on a regular basis.

Mother would have a stroke if she saw me looking so seductive. Perfect! If only one of the sex studs waited at the door, my day of rebellion would be a fabulous success.

I charged down the stairs, excited and anticipating a wonderful surprise, but when I reached the bottom no one stood outside the sliding glass door.

“Aw, damn!”

I looked out over nothing but blue skies, palm trees and powdery sand, feeling like the only inhabitant of a deserted island paradise. Perched on the tip of Sunset Beach, my house is part of a tropical oasis. Six miles of private residential shoreline—unmarred by the detritus of sunburned tourists and all the assorted crap they drag along on outings. The relaxed setting fostered a sense of serenity and isolation. Much better than wasting time and money sitting on a therapist’s couch, in my opinion.

The chiming of the doorbell had me twirling around and racing to the front of the house. I tightened the belt on my robe and opened the door to a virtual whirlwind.

“Hello, sexy.” The blond Adonis from next door strode past me, made a brief survey of my home, then flopped down on the couch and planted his bare, sandy feet on the coffee table as if he owned the place.

Irreverent ass!

I liked him right away. Such a refreshing change from the proper society men mother always pushed on me.

“Wow, I knew you’d look amazing out of those horrible suits. Gotta tell ya, that robe really does it for me, baby.”

Glancing down my body, feeling a bit anxious, I smoothed out imaginary wrinkles in the jade-green silk. The short garment just reached my upper thighs, revealing long and lean legs. In my humble opinion, they’re my best feature. Walking around in torturous high heels every day had the benefit of keeping my calves nicely toned.

“Maximillion, Rhys and I are having a cook out. I’m Brayden, by the way. We noticed your car in the drive and decided to invite you over. All very casual,” he said, then made a slow perusal from the top of my head to my pink-painted toenails and back again. His dark chocolate-colored eyes were heated with obvious desire and he wore an appreciative grin. “Come as you are.”

“In my robe?” I asked, finding the suggestion to be delightfully wicked.

He dismissed my concern with a negligent flip of his hand. “Covers more than a swimsuit.”

I conceded the point with a nod but, recalling my lack of panties, started to fidget.

“If you’re more comfortable changing, fine. Make it quick though. Dinner will be ready in about ten minutes.”

Not wasting a second, I raced for the stairs, calling back over my shoulder, “Okay. I’ll be over in a minute.” The next-to-the-top step creaked beneath my foot, reminding me I had yet to call someone to fix the loose board. In my excitement I pushed the thought away.

Once in my room, I yanked open a dresser drawer, pawing through my swimwear, examining and discarding the various choices. The sexier suits wouldn’t do since they were gay and it was a social invitation to meet my neighbors.

Then again, maybe not. Maybe they weren't gay after all. The possibility of being wrong had never held such appeal. After all, there had been all that naughty talk about the three of them fucking me. Well, I presumed they'd been talking about me since I wasn't aware of any other attorneys living nearby.

Brayden sure didn't act gay. And the brunet hadn't joined in the fun, so he could be straight. Of course guessing would get me nowhere so I gave up and returned to the issue of what to wear.

Putting on a prim one-piece after Brayden's comment about my business suits held zero appeal. In those few moments with him, I'd felt sexy and feminine. I decided to dress accordingly in a thin scrap of yellow that complemented my naturally dark skintone.

The suit wasn't a true bikini or one-piece. A miniscule strip of material rose from the bottom, connected with the halter-style top by three mother-of-pearl rings. Hmm...and I was developing a definite fondness for things that came in threes.

A fast glide of my fingers over my legs confirmed they remained stubble-free since my morning shave. With a sheer sarong in a matching color tied over my hips, I slid my feet into a strappy pair of wedged sandals. After a stop in the kitchen to grab a bottle of wine, I headed out the back door, giddy with delight to start what was certain to be an interesting night. The thought of spending time with the three hunks made my pulse soar and my body hum.

Too bad playing hooky from work hadn't occurred to me sooner. With such yummy enticement, doing so had the potential to become a favorite indulgence.

Chapter Two

"So, Bella." Max put his elbows on the table and leaned close. His raspy voice seduced me, turning my insides all gooey like chocolate that had been left out in the sun. "You're beautiful, smart, successful...and still single? How come?"

Boy, Max didn't say much, but when he did, he went straight for the tough questions. And he considered me to be smart? Ha, I'd been rather tongue-tied all through dinner. Who wouldn't be when surrounded by three hot men in their prime?

The romantic moonlit setting inspired intimacy and the wine helped me relax, but my awareness of what the deck signified for them kept my senses on high alert. Hell, the very real likelihood they'd had sex on the table where we'd eaten or even in the chair my ass rested on made me dizzy.

And horny. Very horny.

Nighttime shrouded us in privacy and yet the dim lights they'd turned on allowed me to drink in every wonderful detail. From a distance the three of them were handsome. Up close and personal...dayum!

In way over my head or not, I loved every second.

Max cocked his head to the side as if studying an interesting bug. Having the intent focus of his dark gaze trained on me made me antsy, even though years of enduring hard glares from ornery judges and pissed-off criminals had taught me to sit still under scrutiny, which gave me a chance to check him out.

Everything about Maximillion smoldered, from his short and sleek black hair to his deeply tanned skin, and the five-o'clock shadow along his jaw. Earlier he'd talked about competing in triathlons, and the effort sure showed in all the ripped muscles of his athletic body. Remembered details of his naked form blasted heat through my pussy.

Fuck, I'd gotten off-track and not answered his question. Taking a sip of my wine, I shrugged. "I've spent the past decade establishing my career. There's been no time for romance."

Talking about my job and lack of a sex life were not my favorite subjects so I steered the conversation in a different direction. "Tell me about the three of you. How did you wind up buying a house together? What happens when one of you wants to get married?"

Max smirked, Rhys chuckled and Brayden let loose with a full-belly laugh. Rhys' smile transformed his intense features and his sparkling brown eyes claimed my attention. He shot me a playful grin, which in turn started a fluttering in my belly.

"We met in the computer lab at the University of Florida and became friends over video games." Max's voice pulled my gaze back to him.

"We each have our own area of expertise. Rhys is a programming wiz, Max creates all the visuals, and I'm the game strategist," Brayden added.

The roles fit my impressions of the men. Rhys was the intellectual, Max the brooding artist and Brayden the devious mastermind.

"Working together is a good fit. We started the company before graduation. It wasn't an overnight success, but damn close. Since we work from home, living together makes things easier...more convenient." Braden coughed into his hand but didn't quite manage to hide a wicked grin. "I don't see any of us picking up a ball and chain anytime soon, so it's a non-issue."

Not quite what I'd been fishing for – His response left my burning questions about their sexuality unanswered. It might be wishful thinking, but I still wondered if the four of us might have some fun together.

Brayden took a long drag from the cigar dangling carelessly between his fingers and exhaled a sweet-scented stream of smoke. Then he sucked it hard, hollowing his cheeks, and winked at me. Visions of watching him blowing Max danced through my head. Fuck, I'd love to witness that.

Or better yet, I'd love to see him suck Rhys' cock, and wondered if he ever had. The way Rhys hadn't joined in earlier made me doubt he participated with Max and Brayden. The idea of the three of them at play got me even hotter and had me squirming in my seat.

Brayden leaned over, one arm sliding around my shoulders in a casual embrace, and Rhys' entire body tensed. Brayden laughed, seeming to enjoy his friend's response. As he spoke, his luscious lips brushed the shell of my ear and tingles raced straight to my core. "I could give you some pointers, baby."

Pointers? On giving oral? Juices gushed between my legs and I squeezed my thighs together.

"Brayden," Rhys warned. A vein bulged at his temple and I got the fleeting impression he'd just set a restriction or staked a claim, but my fuzzy brain wasn't sure on who or what.

Brayden knew, though. The rake wore a smug grin as he sat back in his chair. Something big had just passed between them. He'd provoked Rhys and appeared satisfied with the result. The dynamics between the three men were fascinating, but when they drew me into the middle it made me leery.

From the time Brayden had strolled through my front door, I'd had no problem recognizing the rebel in him—a kindred spirit. The man enjoyed pushing boundaries and surely challenged the others.

Over dinner, Brayden and I shared similar stories of growing up with the societal pressures of affluent parents. His total rebellion beat mine hands-down, though. He'd rejected his parents' pretentious restrictions and blazed his own trail, while I still struggled to maintain some semblance of a relationship with my parents. Most of the time I just frustrated them to no end since they didn't understand me or my need for independence.

Brayden's free and relaxed attitude called to the mutinous side I kept under tight control—most of the time. My own defection, a career in public service as a prosecuting

attorney and the beach house, were on a much smaller scale than his complete dismissal of his parents' world. I still had contact with my family and tried not to disappoint them...too badly.

No, Brayden would be the last of the guys to do something as conventional as get married or settle down with one person—man or woman. Maybe in the future, but not any time soon. He was having too much fun to be serious about anything other than living life on his own terms.

The shameless flirt had left me conflicted between my body's hunger and my uncertainty about his sexual preferences. That didn't stop me from wanting to slide my fingers over the bronze skin of his hairless chest. And it didn't ease my longing to have him fuck my ass as he had Max's. I wondered if perhaps he had bisexual tendencies and I could get fucked by all three, as they'd talked about. Just thinking about it made me shiver with need.

Rhys refilled my glass of wine. "We were surprised and a little worried to see your car here during the day."

Such a considerate gentleman. For some reason that made me want to join in Brayden's apparent attempts to shake Rhys. Too bad his comment managed to ease a bit of the sexual suspense.

I nodded. "Yes, I shocked the whole office by taking the afternoon off." Tracing my finger around the rim of my glass the way I itched to touch all three men, especially Rhys, further incited my already raging hormones. I wanted a taste of him more than I wanted to win my next big case, which was saying a lot.

Rhys existed somewhere between wild Brayden and aloof Max. The perfect center for the other men and a patient voice of reason. If only he had the same effect on me. Far from calming, he was turning me into an excited mass of exposed nerve endings.

On the surface he was clear and calm waters. He did a good job of camouflaging and keeping a lid on his passion. But deep inside lurked an intense storm, building in force. I should know. Having mastered a similar inner beast made it easy for me to

recognize the signs in him—his observant eyes and taut carriage, even his purposeful walk revealed hidden fire. You just had to know where to look. And God help me, I needed all that constrained fervor. Had to set it free and be carried away in the frenzy.

“So why *did* you skip out on work?” Rhys asked, once again drawing me back to the conversation.

“I’ve been having a difficult time sleeping lately. Just can’t seem to get my mind off...work. I needed a break.”

My comment earned a loud burst of laughter from my companions. “Damn, baby,” Brayden said. “We sort of figured watching us fuck every night might have something to do with those dark circles under your eyes.”

Oh shit! They knew I spied on them. It’s safe to say I’d never been more embarrassed in my life. Heat spread over my breasts and throat to settle high on my cheeks.

Then I chastised myself. Why should I feel ashamed? Fuck him. They were the ones having sex in public, not me. I hadn’t done anything wrong.

That thought ended my humiliation and replaced it with a healthy dose of irritation. Holding my head high, I pushed back from the table. He would not make me out to be the pervert. And I wasn’t going to sit there and take his bullshit. “I do believe it’s time I headed home. Thank you for dinner.” Oh great. Now I sounded like my mother.

I didn’t make it more than two steps from the table when my arm was taken in a firm but gentle grasp, bringing me to a stop. A big body moved in behind, holding me close. Warm breath swept across my neck as I blinked back tears I would not let fall, stubborn in my refusal to give Brayden the satisfaction.

“Don’t go, Bella. Brayden enjoys showing his ass and can be rude, but he didn’t mean to embarrass you. Knowing you were there in the dark, watching and possibly getting off...” I felt a shudder run through Rhys, the vibration of his arousal echoing within me. “It got us so hot.”

My hormones jumped for joy.

His grip changed, softened, and his other hand moved to my shoulder. In the lightest of caresses, his fingers teased along the sensitive skin of my inner arms. When he reached my hands, Rhys linked our fingers together. "Please stay and share the night with us."

Share? I tensed for only a second before my entire body turned liquid and relaxed back into his warmth. His swim trunks didn't cover much, and all that wonderful bare skin wrapped around me, along with the scent of suntan oil, sweat and his unique male essence. What a lethal combination.

"I promise, there will be no pressure and nothing will go any further than you want it to." Rhys nipped at my earlobe then sucked it between those sensual lips. His voice dropped to an intimate whisper meant only for my ears. "Or if you prefer, it can be just the two of us. We could leave right now...go to your place."

One man or three, the choice was mine. I took a breath to ease the pounding of my heart. Torn over which I'd prefer, my emotions spiraled in several different directions, creating incredible turmoil. Both options held appeal, but which did I want more? Stay or go? Be greedy and live my group sex fantasy, having all three men devoted to my ultimate pleasure? Six hands, three mouths, three cocks – all for me.

My blood boiled, racing through my veins. My nipples drew into tight beads and my clit swelled, throbbing with the beat of my pulse. I could stay and have the fantasy or lead Rhys back to my house, leaving Brayden and Max to their own naughty devices.

Sticky juices coated my thighs, and the distinct, pungent aroma of my arousal rose on the air. Rhys took a deep breath and I knew he had caught the scent of my excitement too.

Jesus, how to decide? Be a greedy slut and fulfill my ultimate sexual fantasy, or give in to the selfish demands of my heart to have Rhys all to myself. Tie him to my bed and never let him go.

My entire body went up in flames as Brayden and Max appeared next to us, sealing my fate.

“Don’t go, Bella.” Brayden eased in front of me, sandwiching me between him and Rhys. “Stay and let us show you how good it feels to be stuffed full of cock.”

A chorus of pleas rang through my mind, however something quite different escaped my lips. “B-but, aren’t you gay?”

He didn’t even flinch at my question. Brayden moved in close, real close, flattening my breasts against the solid wall of his chest. The hard ridge of his cock nestled up to my belly. The base of his huge shaft rested near my navel, and the head snuggled in just below my breasts. Impressive.

At my back, Rhys’ body went tense but he remained silent.

Brayden thrust his hips, stroking me with that big cock. “Does that feel like I’m gay? Max and I swing both ways, baby. We’ve been trying to corrupt Rhys, but so far we haven’t been able to convince him to indulge his curiosity or lust.”

“I’ll show you lust,” Rhys whispered, bent his knees and thrust his hips. His erection pressed deep into the crevice between my ass cheeks. My arousal spiked, making my head swim and my body tremble. Only their unshakable strength kept me standing when I would have melted at their feet—hot, wet and ready to be taken.

Not one to be left behind, Max came in from my left, captured the back of my head in his hand and swooped in to claim my mouth with his demanding kiss. He sucked and nipped at my parted lips before thrusting his tongue deep into my mouth to explore and consume. His tongue tasted and tempted as he swallowed my moans.

Having the sexual energy of three horny young men trained solely on me was more intense than anything I’d imagined. The overwhelming deluge of erotic enticement drove me wild. One of them—I’m not sure who—rolled my nipples between his fingers and I felt a corresponding tug between my legs. My entire body hummed and the miniscule swimsuit suddenly felt two sizes too small.

Rhys sucked my sensitive earlobe between his lips, then licked his way along the column of my neck. "What's it gonna be, Bella? A party for four? Just the two of us? Or another sleepless night...spent in bed...alone?"

Their offer might very well have been my one and only chance to indulge my wildest fantasy with three younger men. Well, not *so much* younger. The baby of the group, Rhys, was twenty-seven, a mere five-year difference.

The age disparity didn't bother me. Not then. I felt reborn in their arms. And sexy. And alive. Jesus, the three of them had me so hot and bothered.

Max and I both sucked in huge gulps of air when he broke the kiss. I couldn't catch my breath, much less speak.

Brayden's face appeared before mine and I fell into the intensity of his heated blue gaze. "You've fantasized, imagined what it would be like. I know you have, naughty girl. You've listened to us fuck and dreamed of having three lovers fill this beautiful body."

I nodded. Yes, there was no denying the truth. I felt wicked and wanton. And I had every intention of grabbing this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with both hands. No woman in her right mind would turn the three of them away.

The time had come to grab hold of everything for one night. "*Carpe Noctem*. I want it all."

Rhys tensed again, making me wonder if he had a problem with my decision, but Brayden whooped and all other thoughts fled as I followed the direction of his gaze. Max shot me a dazzling grin, then, without preamble or pause, yanked his low-riding trunks past trim hips. Licking my lips, I stared at his appetizing cock and wondered if I'd died and gone to heaven.

Thick and heavy, his cock jutted from his groin to point straight at me. Without conscious thought, I leaned in his direction, drawn to the pleasure I knew he'd soon deliver. My legs shook and I figured falling to my knees before him wouldn't be a hardship. I longed to see how much of his length I'd be able to suck down my throat.

Brayden's voice cut through the lustful fog clouding my brain. "Rhys." The sharp retort of a slap startled me. "Come on, man. Help me gather the cushions to make a bed."

Turning, I sucked in a hard breath between clenched teeth. They'd all stripped. My gaze feasted on all that beautiful, bare flesh. Rhys held his cock in a tight fist, stroking slow and steady, twisting his wrist as he neared the crown.

My legs trembled. I needed that cock in me, anywhere he wanted, as long as he gave me every perfect inch.

Rhys reached out and I placed my hand in his. He drew me to his side then guided me to the cushions Brayden moved together. "Let's see if we can't satisfy that fantasy of yours."

Oh yes, please! I silently agreed.

Chapter Three

Adrenaline spiked through my veins and would have tanked out my arousal if it weren't for the sight of the three naked studs, cocks at full mast, ready to fuck...me. I entertained the ridiculous idea that perhaps I still lay tucked in bed, safe and sound, dreaming up this whole scenario.

Happily Brayden quickly shattered the illusion. "Turn up the lights, Max."

The idea that someone might witness me being taken by three men only increased my thrill in doing something so lascivious. I added exhibitionism to my growing list of illicit pleasures.

In a gradual progression, lights positioned around the deck brightened, driving back the shadows. Cemented to the spot, I stared at the mounting pile of cushions that were being tossed together.

Fantasizing was one thing; the reality of joining three men for sex was quite another. Conflicting emotions roared through me—elation, anticipation, and a whopping dose of vulnerability. The realization that it was all very real created a slight quivering in my pelvis. I didn't fear what would happen, but did feel a bit shocked by the ease of my acceptance.

I detected warmth behind me a split second before masculine hands slid around my waist, one muscular forearm coming to rest beneath my breasts, the other hand splayed over my abdomen, fingers extended toward my sex. An inch lower and the attention my clit yearned for would be possible. As torqued as I felt, it wouldn't take more than a light touch to throw me into orgasm.

"Don't be nervous, Bella. If you want to stop at any time just say the word," Rhys reassured. "We won't push you into doing anything you don't want."

Pshaw! Hell if I'd call an end to anything. I intended to relish every moment, but words failed me.

"Rhys." I breathed his name and leaned against him, wiggling my ass until his erection nestled between my cheeks, showing my approval of what would happen with actions. Tightening and relaxing my muscles, I massaged his erection while rubbing against him like an amorous feline in need of a good scratching.

He swore, hands tightening, pulling me closer, boosting my confidence. Max and Brayden watched on, seeming to be transfixed.

A wicked grin stretched my lips as feminine power surged through me. "What are you guys waiting for? Fuck me already." A husky rasp I'd never heard before lent a sultry quality to my voice. "I've waited long enough."

I don't recall how I ended up naked in the middle of the makeshift bed — that part is a blur — but all the other details of our fuckfest remain sharp in my mind. With Brayden on one side, Rhys on the other and Max between my legs, I was surrounded by male flesh, drunk on the overdose of pheromones, and generally loving being me.

"Damn, baby. I can't wait to fuck you." Brayden's lips latched on to my nipple. He sucked the nub hard and shaped my breast in his hands. He pinched, tugged, nipped and tweaked until I writhed and moaned.

Rhys took a very different approach. He licked my other nipple, teasing my skin with tender touches. The contrast drove me wild.

And then there was Max, who fell on my pussy as if he'd been starving for a taste. He spread my labia wide and ate at my drenched folds like a man who hadn't had a meal in days. Voracious sounds rose from his chest and thrummed through me, sending electric jolts out to ecstatic nerve endings.

My back arched and my hips bucked as I cried out. Jesus, it was beyond ecstasy. Far better than anything imaginable or describable. Tears rolled from my tightly clamped eyelids, and dazzling fireworks blasted through my head.

To my greedy delight, their insatiable hungers demanded appeasement in the form of my orgasms. Many amazing orgasms.

I have no clue how long they ravished me – perhaps a handful of minutes or several hours. Nothing existed beyond the frenzy of delirious bliss that rained down over me. They brought me to one screaming release after another, building me back up higher and higher with no end in sight. Hands, fingers, lips, teeth and tongues tore my world to shreds and suspended me in a surreal state of abandon.

They were so fucking good!

When they finally brought me down, I felt limp as an overcooked noodle – hot and damp. “Can’t...breathe,” I wheezed.

Rhys smoothed the damp hair back from my face and neck. He nuzzled behind my ear, whispering nonsensical reassurances, praising my responsiveness.

A wet smacking sound drew my attention. My head rolled on my listless neck and I nearly swallowed my tongue at what met my glassy eyes. Max and Brayden were engaging in some man-on-man fun.

The sight of two men having oral sex, Max hovering over Brayden in a stunning sixty-nine, sparked a tingling in my clit, which I’d thought had been sated so completely it would never again be roused. They were so rough in their handling of each other’s cocks and balls I feared they might end up doing permanent damage.

“Does it turn you on to watch them, Bella? See how hard Brayden sucks Max’s cock, hollowing his cheeks. And Max doesn’t go any easier. Just look at the way he pulls Brayden’s balls down to delay his climax. Max’s fist is so damn tight around the base of Brayden’s cock that his knuckles are turning white. Hear their growls of pleasure?”

Rhys’ voice had turned gruff and I knew the sight was affecting him too. I wondered why he didn’t join his friends, but was too involved in watching to ask.

Max pulled away first, cursing under his breath. “I need to get my dick in someone.”

Three heated gazes landed on me and I understood how a pig felt right before the apple was shoved in its mouth for roasting.

“Get her ready, Brayden.” Rhys’ harsh command set off a series of events that reshaped my views on naughty sex. I’d considered myself to be worldly, perhaps a bit kinky. I learned that I’d been downright ignorant before hooking up with the guys.

Brayden and Max crawled toward me, mischievous gleams sparkling in their eyes and striking fear in my heart. They looked like formidable predators and I was the prey. Sensing my apprehension, Rhys soothed me with tender strokes of his hands and soft-spoken words.

At my side, Max draped himself over my belly, facing toward my feet. I stared at firm muscles rippling along his strong back as he reached between my legs. He bent my knees and spread my thighs as Brayden knelt between them. Someone’s hands reached under my hips, gripped my inner thighs and held me open to them. My body trembled under the weight of Brayden’s heavy stare.

He delved between my folds, rimmed my opening and pushed a finger inside. The digit sank in slow and deep then reversed direction, maintaining the same torturous pace. When my hips started bucking, searching for more, he withdrew and trailed his finger farther back, over the shallow groove to circle around my puckered back entrance.

The first shallow penetration of a slick finger into my anus startled me. Wonderful, hidden nerve endings came alive and telegraphed erotic signals to the rest of my body. My stomach clenched, but not due to fear of the unknown or anxiety. I grew wetter, my juices dripping over his fingers as I began to anticipate one of their cocks reaming my ass.

“Relax, honey. Bear down and let him in. You’re going to love having your ass fucked.” I gasped as Rhys licked the whorls of my ear.

The penetration of Brayden’s finger brought discomfort, a sense of fullness, yet none of the pain I expected. As I began to adjust, my body relaxed around his finger

and he shafted the digit in and out, slow and easy. To my complete surprise, being fingered in the ass felt good. A little vulnerable and desperate to orgasm, but damn good.

Under Max's attention, my clit swelled to an insistent, hard and throbbing knot that felt at least twice its normal size. I began to roll my hips as the pleasure grew. Apparently this was the sign Brayden had been waiting for. On the next pass he pulled out then thrust two fingers into me, scissoring them to stretch me wide.

"Ohfuckohfuckohfuck," I moaned.

Rhys groaned and nuzzled his face against my neck, then lower to the upper curve of my breasts. Shifting farther down, he caught my nipple between his teeth and nibbled on the taut bud, sending jolts of electricity racing to my already excited core.

I gasped and arched closer, feeding him more of my breast. At the same time, Max clamped on to my clit with his teeth, held the bundle of nerves captive and lashed out with his tongue. The triple assault had my blood flowing like molten lava and pooling in my sex as they bombarded me with exquisite sensations so intense I couldn't breathe. My brain spun and my body burned with the mindless need to have a cock in me.

Any cock.

Anywhere.

I needed to come again.

"Please," I begged, shameless in my desire. "Fuck me!"

Rhys laid back and bodies shifted as the men moved us into a new position. They placed me on top of Rhys, my back cushioned by his chest, legs hanging to either side of his raised knees.

Brayden did something between our legs and Rhys growled a threat. "Make it quick."

"Relax, big boy. I've been dying to get my hands on your cock for years. I'm going to take my time and enjoy this."

I tried to push up on my elbows to see what Brayden was doing but Rhys held me firmly in place. “Wh-what’s he doing?”

A devious smile lifted the corners of Brayden’s mouth. “Just getting him nice and lubed up for you, baby.”

Oh damn, I wanted to watch Brayden’s hand wrapped around Rhys’ cock. My abdomen quivered as Brayden pressed the broad head against my anus, making the tight hole clench in an attempt to avoid the intrusion. Max’s hand rubbed soothing circles over my belly and he gentled me by whispering in my ear.

“Take a breath, Bella. Now relax and bear down. Once he gets inside, you’re going to feel so good and full.” When talking didn’t work, Max resorted to using his sinful mouth to distract me. The man is such an amazing kisser. That mouth of his is a lethal weapon.

His lips at my other ear, Rhys murmured encouragements in that raspy voice I found irresistible. My tight sphincter fluttered and opened for the cock probing my ass, sparking heat in what felt like millions of tiny nerve endings. The breath caught in my throat, smothering a moan I wasn’t sure resulted from pleasure or excitement. Both were screaming through my veins.

Brayden did something to Rhys again, causing his hips to surge forward, embedding a few more inches of his thick shaft in my ass. Our bodies moved together and I felt his chest hair tickling my upper back. Max occupied himself by toying with my breasts and suckling my nipples.

Exerting gentle pressure, Rhys fucked deeper on each stoke. When he settled balls-deep in my ass, the unfamiliar sensation felt as if he’d split me in two.

“Oh Jesus. Oh fuck,” I panted. My ass felt stretched to capacity, hypersensitive and incredible. Need slammed into me with the force of a baseball bat. I needed him to move, but Rhys held still beneath me.

Something huge and round probed my drenched pussy lips then slowly forced its way inside, filling me almost to the point of pain. Somewhere in the back of my dazed

brain, I knew it was Brayden. He grunted with the effort of coaxing my pussy to accept his cock.

I trembled as my mind fought to assimilate the barrage of astonishing new erotic impulses. There was way too much for me to take in. My body adapted much quicker, adjusting to the dual possession and responding with a rolling of my hips.

If they didn't start fucking me soon, I'd wring their necks.

Another cock nudged my lips and I opened my eyes to find Max kneeling at my shoulder. The idea of three cocks stretching me, fucking me, driving me insane with pleasure, had me shivering in delight. Then our eyes met and all thought left my head. I sucked Max's cock into my mouth, taking as much as I could and twirling my tongue around his length. His spicy flavor made my mouth water to make him come.

"God, Bella. You're so tight and hot," Brayden hissed as he thrust shallowly into my pussy.

Tight? What a severe understatement. There wasn't a part of me that wasn't overfilled with cock. Each thrust tantalized my G-spot, inundating me with wave after wave of bliss. They claimed my body, stretching and bending it to their desire, leaving me no choice other than to go along for one hell of a wild ride.

Max left my mouth, freeing me to concentrate on being fucked. Rhys tilted my head to the side to receive his feverish kiss. He and Brayden began shafting me in a well-coordinated effort, one sliding out as the other moved in. Shudders ran through them as their cocks glided together with only the very thin tissue separating my channels keeping them apart. I wondered what it felt like for them. Did they feel as though they were fucking each other?

"Aw fuck," Brayden chanted as he thrust into me faster.

Each pulse of their cocks zinged through me as the heat radiating from them burned deep into my soul. Though my eyes were closed, the moment Max entered Brayden's ass, I knew what had happened. The new stimulus was reflected in Brayden's jerky movements and the sudden clench of his fingers digging into my hips

hard enough to leave bruises. Their rough, simultaneous groans made me think of wild animals mating.

Braced above me, Brayden leaned down, resting his forehead against mine. I felt his body tremble and each hot, agonized breath blasted my face as he mumbled, “Not going to last.”

Hell if I would either. A knot of tension coiled in my belly and I reached for the building implosion. As the first spasms hit, I shivered and my entire body felt as if it was blown apart by the spectacular convulsions. A keening cry died on my lips as the men fucked me faster—relentless in the pursuit of their own climaxes—extending mine in the process.

Rhys tensed then pounded into me at the same time Brayden shouted his release. I felt the blazing heat of their semen pool in the condoms they wore—loathing the need for the protection that prevented their hot cum from bathing my well-used tissues.

Max muttered a string of curses as he collapsed to the side, where Brayden fell into his waiting embrace.

Weakened by my earthshaking orgasm, I rested back on Rhys, limp and unable to even consider moving. When he sufficiently recovered, he rolled us onto our sides. His flaccid cock sliding from my ass sent a fluttery jolt of aftershocks through my pelvis.

Spent and sated, held spooned against Rhys, my eyelids grew heavy as sleep swiftly claimed me.

* * * * *

Confusion and disorientation kicked my heart into high gear as I woke and realized I wasn’t in my bedroom. The warm breeze licking over my bare skin told me I was outside. Naked. The slow and steady heartbeat echoing in my ear let me know I wasn’t alone.

With that realization, I bolted upright, disturbing the warm bodies surrounding me in the process. A large arm snaked around my shoulders and pulled me back down.

“Were not done yet, Bella. Not by a long shot.”

Rhys! Lord, it only took a few words spoken in his sleep-roughened voice to turn me into putty in his hands, more than ready to be molded however he desired. Another wild round of sex sounded like a good idea to me. Damn good.

Someone’s soft lips enveloped my toe, sucking the digit into a moist mouth and I squealed, startled by the shockwaves of arousal racing through me. I’d never considered feet to be sexy, but found something very erotic in having my toes sucked. My mind wandered, I wondered if the sensations were anywhere close to what a man felt when getting head. If so, the male obsession with feeling the pull of lips and tongue on cocks was taking on new significance.

Within moments my pussy swelled and dampened, aching to be filled. My body bowed and I did something completely out of character—I purred. The rumble began low in my chest, vibrated through my throat and glided past parted lips.

“Mmm... I think she likes your talented mouth, Max.” Brayden chuckled and rubbed his jaw over my belly, which quivered under the chafing of his beard stubble. I yearned to discover how the same caress would affect other, more sensitive areas.

As if reading my mind, Brayden slid lower. His lips and prickly chin glided over the crease of my thigh, tickled between my legs, then turned to the delicate flesh where I wanted him. He rubbed, licked, sucked and nibbled until I writhed, restless with need.

“More,” I begged. “Please, more.”

My head rested on Rhys’ abdomen, and the guys positioned several pillows beneath my pelvis, angling my hips upward to give them easy access. Max kissed his way along my legs to join Brayden. Someone spread my folds and two fingers thrust into my drenched pussy. The calloused fingertips delivered wonderful friction to that glorious spot on the upper wall. A tongue rimmed my anus before stabbing inside and I shivered. My mind told me I should be disgusted by such a dirty kiss. My body had other ideas about the naughty stimulation.

"Oh God!" I rocked against their mouths and fingers. The men needed no other encouragement to increase their efforts.

Rhys lifted my upper body and slid out from beneath me, placing several pillows under my shoulders and head. When his erect cock bobbed into sight at my side, I wasted no time in sucking him down my throat with great enthusiasm.

The bastards took me right to the edge then stopped, leaving me hanging. I opened my eyes to meet Brayden's heated stare.

"On your hands and knees, baby."

Liking the direction things were headed, I turned over without hesitation and straddled Rhys' hips. Shimmying into position, I gasped and slid down his erection. Being on top drove him so deep I swear that I tasted him in the back of my throat.

Brayden appeared before me, fisted my hair and guided my lips to his cock. Standing on the deck, not elevated by the pile of cushions and bodies as I was, put him at the optimal height. Supporting myself with one hand braced against Rhys' chest, I sucked in what I could and stroked the rest in my free hand.

After thoroughly lubing my ass, Max joined the party to complete our foursome, giving me that wonderful feeling of being overstuffed. He started to withdraw, his movements very slow, hissing between his teeth as he did. I wanted to scream for him to move when he paused with the head of his cock poised just inside my ass.

He waited until my head moved down Brayden's length then thrust with me. Realizing he was allowing me to set the tempo, I worked Brayden faster. The three cocks filled me, stretching me wide to accommodate them. My abdomen clenched and spasmed as the friction reached the most amazing spots.

Giving in to his body's demands, Max slammed into my ass, driving me forward on Rhys and Brayden. With his knees, Max pushed my legs farther apart and grasped my hips to hold me in place to receive his cock. I gasped around Brayden's shaft in my mouth, divided between giving and receiving pleasure, besieged and unable to focus on one or the other.

A streak of fear sliced through my chest and I wondered how the hell I'd ever go back to plain vanilla sex with one man. The thought scared me, but I pushed it aside for later contemplation, determined to luxuriate in every second of my glorious fantasy night. I'd deal with the consequences at another time.

Dying for Brayden's taste, I gave my all to blowing both his cock and his mind until he trembled all over. He groaned and rewarded me with hot streams of his cum bathing my tongue. I sucked, hard and hungry, trying to draw more of his essence from his balls. Fire blazed in his eyes as he gazed down at me. A shudder racked him as he convulsed, and his harsh, panted breaths became agonized grunts as I sucked him dry.

I released his softening cock from my mouth and turned my attention to Rhys. "Come for us, beautiful Bella," he pleaded.

Seeing his face, hearing his words, tugged at my heart and made the whole thing more intimate somehow. Grinding my clit against his pelvis, I came hard, starting a chain reaction, and would have screamed if I'd had the breath. Rhys jerked, hips bucking erratically as he came. Max called out my name, announcing his climax a few seconds later.

We crumbled into a clumsy tangle of damp bodies, each fighting to recover. It didn't take long for their breathing to even out as the men fell into a relaxed sleep that did not encompass me. My skin was sticky and I probably reeked of sex and sweat. There would be no resting until I took a hot shower.

Taking great care not to disturb the guys, I untangled myself, gathered my belongings and headed for home. A welcome blast of cool air greeted my arrival as I stepped through the back door.

Showering had never felt better. I luxuriated under the hot water until I became sleepy, then toweled myself off and crawled into bed. Already, everything that had happened was starting to take on the surreal quality of a dream. An amazing dream come true.

All I knew for certain was that I'd created some great memories, and processing my emotions about my fantasy night would take some time. When the sun rose in a few hours it would be back to business as usual, but the night would forever remain in my heart.

No more hunks and decadent indulgence.

No more fantasies fulfilled.

Having forgone that road to have a career, I had to buckle down and get back to real life. It was too late to turn back from the path I'd chosen..

Chapter Four

Two days later, I pronounced myself a complete mess and gave up the pretense of working. I hadn't accomplished a damn thing. No matter what I tried to help me focus, my thoughts always circled back to how daring and free I'd been with the guys.

Brayden, Max and Rhys accepted me, all of me, which unleashed my sexual nature. They'd fucked me so good. I'd been caught humming several times and others noticed the difference in my demeanor.

Since that night I felt different—changed in some elemental way. And each memory carried an immediate physical reaction. A tingling would begin with my erogenous zones, followed by waves of heat rolling through me, a clenching in my pussy and dampening of my panties.

I was also riddled with doubt and indecision. I had no experience with the proper protocols following a one-night stand, and no frame of reference for how to behave after group sex. Would it be appropriate to smile and wave hello if I ran into the guys somewhere? Did I invite them over for drinks or would they take such action as me being clingy?

"You're only going to give yourself a headache, *mija*."

My colleague, Javier Ruiz, leaned against the wall, arms crossed over his chest, his dark gaze keen and penetrating as he watched me. We'd met in law school, started out as study partners and wound up becoming friends.

"If I didn't know better, I'd think you were having man troubles."

The sharp lawyer never missed a damn thing. "Okay, I'll bite. Why couldn't I be having man trouble?"

"Because Isabella Blackburn doesn't take men or relationships seriously."

He cocked his head to the side and studied me for another moment. Something he saw in my expression must have given me away. "Of course, this is one case in which it would please me to be wrong."

I rolled my eyes. "You can't intimidate the information out of me with that tough prosecutor stare, Javier. Hell, I'm the one who taught you how to wield that badass look."

He chuckled and straightened, closing the door as he moved farther into my office, then took a seat across the desk. "Perhaps I can help?"

The offer stunned me briefly. I'd known him for a long time, but I usually wasn't one to discuss my personal life. Not even with those closest to me.

"Ah, *querida*," he sighed. "*Rompes mi corazón*. Are we not friends? I've always thought of you as *mi estimada amiga*."

The obvious hurt in his expressive eyes made me feel about two feet tall. I'd been so blinded by trying to prove myself that I'd become isolated. It had to change, and Javier was the perfect starting point. And really, what would it hurt to let him try to help?

He started to stand and on impulse I reached out, covering his hand where it rested on the desk with mine. "No, please. I'm sorry, Javier. I'd appreciate your advice."

His whole face brightened as he eased back into the chair. "So, tell me, *querida*. What has the *sinvergüenza putrefacto* done?"

I laughed and my mood began to lighten. "What's that mean?"

Javier leaned back and his grin turned mischievous. "What has the rotten scoundrel done? I can go and turn my prosecutor stare on him, if you'd like. Play the big brother part. Make him sweat a bit."

I started to giggle in earnest upon seeing this protective side of him. "I don't think that will be necessary. At least not yet." I stumbled a little and tried to find a way to word my explanation so I didn't sound like a total slut. "Well, there's um..." In the past,

getting something difficult to say out quickly had worked best, so I blurted it out in a rush. "There are actually three rotten scoundrels."

A wicked grin spread over his lips. "Oh, *mi muchacha traviesa*. You're a very naughty girl, Bella. Not sharing such scandalous information with me. Shame on you."

The rake winked at me and I spilled the whole sordid tale, barely taking a breath until I'd laid my soul bare. "So, what do you suggest? How do I handle them?"

"First of all, stop with the recriminations. It's about time you cut loose and had some fun. I'm glad you did not turn them down."

His reassurance and lack of censure helped a lot.

"You desire all three men, but Rhys, this man is special to you."

Perceptive as always.

"Yes. I'd love to be with all three again, but I want more than casual sex with Rhys. There's something about him... I don't know how to explain it. All it takes is the sound of his voice or a heated glance from him and I crumble. My chest gets tight, my heart beats wildly and my head spins."

He nodded. "You love him."

"I...what? No. I just met him."

Javier took my hand and leaned across the desk as if imparting some big secret, his voice dropping to a conspiratorial whisper. "The heart does not care about time, *querida*. Stop listening to what your head says. Tell me what your heart says."

My heart? The impetuous organ had been doing backflips since I'd first laid eyes on Rhys. "My heart's what got me into this mess."

"Good." Javier rubbed my hand. "You must listen to your heart more often. It's shrewd, Bella. Look how long it has been patient, waiting for the right man to come along."

"I've never been such a confused mess before."

"Because you've never been in love before."

True. I'd been too busy to stop and notice anyone. Sure, I'd had my share of relationships, even live-in boyfriends, but that had been more for convenience than due to emotion. Now that I'd met the majority of my career goals, maybe I could ease up some and enjoy the benefits of all my hard work, concentrate on building a personal life.

"So what now? I doubt he thinks much of me."

"Stop right there. You are a wonderful woman. If he has any intelligence, Rhys will realize how lucky he is to have captured your attention and cherish you." He sat back, rubbing a hand over his jaw—his thinking posture. I bit my tongue and waited. There would be no rushing him.

"You have not seen him since the foursome?"

I shook my head.

He mulled things over, eyes brightening when he arrived at a conclusion. "You must be available. It's the weekend. For once, stay out of the office. You have three nights and two days. Lie on the beach and get some sun. Sit in the hot tub. Do some gardening. The activity does not matter as long as you are outside, relaxed and visible. Let him see you, *mija*. Nature will do the rest." He nodded as if agreeing with his own plan.

"Don't go to him," Javier warned. "And don't jump at the first nibble. That will make him run. You have to make him work for it, otherwise the prize is not worthwhile. Wait until the hook is secure, then reel him in slowly. Once you have got him on the line, let him see the real you."

I never would have pegged Javier as a philosophical romantic. He must have seen the doubt in my expression. I rose out of habit as he moved around the desk, letting out a squeak of surprise when he pulled me into a tight hug.

"Trust me, *querida*. That's how Miranda caught me," he confided. "Lust drew me like the bee to the flower. She stayed within my sight and pretended not to notice me."

My ego would not allow such a travesty. Her inner beauty is what won me over, though. It was devious but effective.”

I’d always liked his wife Miranda. “She’s one smart cookie.”

Love and appreciation lit up his face. He affectionately tweaked the end of my nose. “And so are you.”

My step had a new bounce as I left the office, and I was back to humming. I headed out early enough to miss rush-hour traffic. Damn if I didn’t draw a lot of male attention too. Either I didn’t notice it most of the time or this was a new development.

Chase, a stern and serious security guard, smiled at me and I nearly tripped. I’d never seen him smile before. It was such a welcome change that I stopped and chatted with him, discovering he had a great sense of humor. Huh, who would’ve guessed? Not I.

At the grocery store, a handsome man asked me out in the frozen food aisle. The lazy bag boy, who normally couldn’t be bothered, insisted on pushing the cart out to my car and loaded the bags in the trunk. Someone even honked and whistled as I walked into the liquor store. By the time I got home and had a quick bite to eat, I had a major high from all the flirtatious male attention. And I ached.

I decided to set my plan for seduction into motion without delay. Wearing one of my skimpy and sexy swimsuits, I opened a bottle of wine and went out on the patio to soak in the hot tub. To make sure Rhys noticed me if he was outside, I dragged a lounge chair across the concrete, creating a loud scraping noise that threatened to spark a headache. I positioned the chair close to the bubbling tub, taking great care to ensure it did not hamper my neighbor’s view of the show I intended to put on, and dropped my towel.

Self-confidence had never been a problem for me, yet my hands were shaky as I began a slow and deliberate striptease. Not that I had much to remove, mind you. A bikini is only two small pieces of cloth. Still, I put some shimmy into my hips as I disrobed and my swimsuit joined my towel on the chair.

I slipped into the tub with a huge sigh. The hot water had a profound effect on my tense muscles, easing away the strain of a stressful workweek. In the sky, puffy clouds became dappled with the pinks and purples of sunset. As afternoon bled into evening, the hues darkened to rich burnt oranges and deep brick reds.

Subtle sounds from the guys' house reached me. The quiet snick of the sliding door, whispered voices, soft moans of ecstasy. They were fucking again. Outside.

Without inviting me to join in.

Those miserable rat bastards! What was I doing wrong?

Not until I'd drained the bottle of wine and the sky had gone completely dark did I give up hope and head to bed—buzzed, horny and alone. How fucking pathetic.

Saturday went no better. I woke up to steel drums pounding in my head. Consuming great quantities of water and aspirin helped with the hangover but failed to cure my foul mood. Being a stubborn bitch, I didn't give up. Early in the afternoon, I put on another bikini, dragged a bucket and soap out into the driveway, and gave my car a thorough washing. Teasing the guys, I made sure to bend over with my ass up in the air, wiggling in the direction of their house.

Nothing.

Damn it, even though I repeatedly felt the weight of their gazes roving my body, I never caught them looking.

While I may have been down, I was not beat. Not by a long shot.

Digging into my bag of tricks, I walked down to the beach before staking out a spot to catch some rays. I spread out a large towel over the sand, weighing down the ends with my sandals and the book I'd brought along. Next I pulled out the big guns—suntan oil. Men loved to rub down women's bodies with oil, or so I thought.

With slow and sensual glides of my hands over every inch of skin, I slicked my body. Lying on my tummy, bikini straps unhooked to avoid tan lines, I settled in with the latest N.J. Walters erotic vampire romance.

Whew, the steamy scenes playing out in the book sure captured my imagination and intensified the heat of the midday Florida sun. While the emotional story and vivid characters drew me in, rising frustration made reading difficult. I kept glancing up to see if the guys were around. Eventually I gave up, closed the book and took a refreshing dip in the Gulf.

Dinner consisted of a chilled plate of fruit and yogurt, which I consumed while sitting on the patio. Making no effort to hide my irritation, I glowered at the empty deck behind the house next door. The insufferable jerks weren't playing nice. And damn Javier. I made a mental note never to trust his advice again. The traitor was one of *them*, after all.

Once again I remained outside until well after dark. Dejected and more than a little angry, I stormed inside, showered and went to bed.

Sleep eluded me, but I found that picturing Rhys' handsome face while pounding my pillow vented the worst of my irritation, allowing me to fall asleep sometime in the wee hours of Sunday morning. My dreams involved all the ways I would torture Javier come Monday, in part for the bad advice, but mostly for being a member of the male species.

The greenish numbers on my alarm clock read 3:16 when I woke with a start. At first I didn't know what had roused me. Then a creak of the loose board at the top of the stairs sounded, turning my blood to ice and sending shivers of dread down my spine.

An intruder was in the house!

Chapter Five

Fear may have held my body in a tight, paralyzing grip, but my mind went from zero to sixty in two seconds flat as a variety of scenarios raced around my head. I wondered if I'd even locked the back door when I had come in for the night. I had been so distracted that there was no telling. For all I knew, I could've left the damn thing standing wide open.

That train of thought took me nowhere good and I forced it aside. A mental inventory of my bedroom revealed no weapons I could use in self-defense. Considering I worked as a prosecuting attorney putting criminals behind bars, it was rather stupid. My father had lectured me time and again on the need for security measures. Too bad I hadn't listened.

The idea that I would be raped or murdered because I was too stupid to take care of myself rankled. Seizing on to the anger helped relieve a bit of the fear holding me hostage—a few moments too late. A large shadow appeared in the bedroom doorway. Broad shoulders and a v-shaped torso told me it was a man. A tall, large man.

My heart pounded in my chest and blood roared in my ears so loud I was sure he could hear the frantic beat. Conflicting messages from my brain kept my body immobile. One message screamed for me to get out of bed. Run. The other urged me to play dead. Pretend I had not seen him. Maybe he'd go away.

Yeah, right. Then Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny would arrive to save me. I was being the typical dumbass victim. That thought thrust me into action. I sat up and grabbed the cordless phone from its base on the nightstand, hoping my unsteady fingers were hitting the right buttons. "I've called the police and they can hear everything," I lied, cringing at the weak quaver in my voice.

Jamming some steel into my spine, I sat up straighter and spoke with authority. "Their typical response time is less than three minutes, so if you leave now, you just might make it out of here before they arrive."

He laughed, loud and sinister. The sound chilled my skin and raised goose flesh. "I have the same phone, Bella. All you did was turn on the speaker but you didn't hit any of the speed dial buttons. The green light didn't come on. There's no one on the other end of the line."

Fuck! I was in deep shit. He knew my name, which meant he was one of the sick fuckers I'd put in prison. Either that or some pissed-off member of a criminal's family. Neither was someone I wanted to meet in the middle of the night alone in my bedroom, for crying out loud.

Crime scene photos I'd seen over the years flashed through my mind in a gruesome slideshow. I would not become another number—a statistic. No matter what happened, I would fight back.

He lunged before I realized he'd moved. Landing on me hard, he knocked the wind from my lungs and slammed me onto my back. He held my wrists in tight fists and had them secured to the center of the slatted headboard before I took my first gasping breath.

Coarse hair covering his jaw abraded the tender flesh behind my ear. My nostrils flared as I drew his masculine scent into my lungs with each panted breath. He smelled good. I detected a subtle trace of sandalwood cologne combined with male musk. Something about his scent soothed my frazzled nerves. Then his breath warmed my ear and his familiar raspy voice cut through any residual fear.

"Tell me you haven't fantasized about this. You're alone in bed when a stranger breaks into the house. You try to determine his intentions. Does he merely want to rob you blind? Is he a sick pervert who wants to take your body, claiming things you would refuse him? Or maybe he's a warped killer who wants to feel your blood on his hands as he steals your life?"

His words made me shiver, and I wasn't sure why. Fear no longer ruled my emotions. I was shocked to realize that he'd sparked arousal in my body. I welcomed the weight of him pressing me into the mattress, his scent, his touch and his rough words.

"Tell me no, Bella, and this ends now, but I don't think you will. I think that naughty girl you like to hide from the world has dreamed of being taken by force. Don't most powerful women share that fantasy?"

Soft lips closed over my earlobe, gave a slight tug, then his teeth sunk in for a soft nibble. My late-night visitor was Rhys. The perceptive rake was once again handing me one of my most secret longings on a silver platter. All I had to do was reach out and take it. Or rather let him take me to places beyond my wildest dreams.

The ménage scenario had turned out well. Very well. Why not give in, live a little? Act on impulse instead of planning ahead.

"What's it going to be? Do I ravish you or cut you loose and leave?"

"N-no!" I squeaked. "Don't go. Please, Rhys. I want it...want you."

Where his lips were pressed beneath my ear, I felt them stretch into a wide grin. "You are my captive. There will be no names. And no lights. You will not see my face. Can't have you identifying me at some point down the road."

His tight grip on my wrists eased and warm fingers skated to my elbows, stopping to tease the crease before continuing to my shoulders. He moved into character, his tone becoming dark and menacing. I imagined the devilish gleam that had to be shining in his brown eyes.

"I'm going to fuck you, Madam Prosecutor. It won't make up for putting me behind bars, but my dick will like it. If you scream, I'll put a gag in your mouth." A single finger traced the contours of my lips. "Be a shame to fill this mouth with anything other than my cock."

Since I wholeheartedly agreed, I remained silent. He took this as a signal to continue and fell even deeper into the part he played. I don't know where he got the

knife, but I gasped as it glinted in the small shaft of moonlight filtering through a gap in the curtains.

The cold blade touched the hollow of my throat and I stopped breathing. "You act all prim and proper in that courtroom wearing those tailored suits. My dick got hard when you took off the jacket and the red lace of your bra showed through that pretty silk shirt. And every time you sat down behind the table, your skirt would rise and I got a good look at those long, beautiful legs. The straps of the red lace garters you'd hooked to the lacy top of thigh-high hose blew me away. Fucking tease. You knew I couldn't do anything about it. Not then. But now..."

His words trailed off as the knife slid slow and smooth between my breasts, sharp edge facing up, slicing my nightshirt down the center. My eyes began to adjust to the darkness and I followed his stare to where he was exposing my body one inch at a time.

"I've been dreaming of these pretty tits for months, biding my time until the guards fucked up so I could make my escape. No one will know I'm gone before sunrise. For the rest of the night, it's just you and me, baby. I'm going to introduce your tight cunt to my big dick."

His crude and raunchy language ramped up my arousal. My nipples puckered atop breasts that had swollen, becoming fuller than normal. As the blade glided over my belly, the muscles quivered.

Impatient, giving up on the slow seduction, Rhys dropped the knife to the carpeted floor, fisted my shirt and ripped it open the rest of the way. "Black panties. Nice." The fine silk barrier stood no chance against his strong hands. He balled the ruined material in a large fist and buried his nose in the crotch. "Mmm...they smell good too."

I had no trouble falling into character. "Please, I'm sorry! I was only doing my job."

His lips pulled back in a feral grin to display a line of straight white teeth. "Shut up, bitch, while I do *my* job and fuck you blind." He was really getting into his role.

Rhys shifted to the side and rolled off the bed. The loss of his warm and solid presence left me floundering, but not for long. He stood in the narrow shaft of light and

stripped the shirt over his head, tossing it to the floor. Next went the shorts. His cock, thick and full, bobbed from its trim nest of dark hair and my mouth watered.

“First I’m going to ram my dick down your throat like I imagined while watching you in court. You won’t be able to argue my actions or object then. After you suck down my cum, I’m going to hammer that cunt. If you’re a good girl, I may even save some energy to fuck your prissy ass.”

He landed on me hard, making no effort to keep any of his bulk off me. His chest compressed my breasts and I could hardly draw in a breath.

“You’re gonna like having your ass reamed. And who knows, it may just lighten up that prissy attitude, bring you down a notch or two. I’m betting you’ve never taken it up the ass. Too naughty, down and dirty. A definite taboo for such a fine upstanding citizen like you. Guess what, prissy? You’re going to scream for me, beg for more. Harder. Deeper.”

White teeth flashed in the moonlight as he grinned down at me.

“On the first thrust you’ll feel stretched beyond capacity, as if I just shoved a telephone pole up your ass. Then you’ll feel a sharp bite of pain when I pop past that narrow sphincter, which will make your muscles clamp down on my cock tighter than a vise. Once I force your body to take me and sink in balls-deep, you’re gonna be rocked by an amazing jolt of pleasure. You’ll start pushing back, meeting each thrust.

“By then we’ll both be covered in sweat. Each time my pelvis plows into that firm ass, you’ll hear and feel the slap of our bodies, heat will spread from the point of contact. Doesn’t matter to me if you are an anal virgin or not. I’m going to fuck you fast and hard, fill you up, take control, make you want it. Mark you as mine.”

The words alone had me close to orgasm. Sending me over the top wouldn’t take much effort on his part. I stared at his lips, watching the sexy curves move as he spoke, wanting those lips on me. Kissing me. He stopped talking and looked into my eyes for interminable moments, then finally dug his fingers into my hair, dragging my face to his. He opened his mouth over mine and kissed me hard, staking his claim.

Violent shudders racked my body as he plundered my mouth, tongue thrusting, taking what he wanted. He showed no consideration for my pleasure—gave nothing, only took. Damn if it didn't take my arousal to a whole new level. One far beyond anything I'd ever experienced.

When he pulled back, I gasped. Something in his expression told me Rhys held himself in check by a fine leash that was coming close to snapping. I craved him losing his restraint and taking me.

Wiry hairs on his legs rasped against my nipples as he slid up my body until he knelt over my chest, knees at my armpits, that gorgeous cock bobbing before my face. Raw emotions burned in his eyes. Bracing himself with one hand on the headboard, he reached down and cupped the back of my head in the other. The broad tip of his cock tapped against my mouth. A drop of fluid escaped the slit to roll down the crown and moisten my lips.

"Open," he demanded. His tone was harsh but his eyes pleaded.

I followed his orders and opened, swiping my tongue over his cock as he thrust all the way to the back of my throat. He fucked my mouth in a rapid, punishing rhythm—at first watching to be sure I was okay, then closing his eyes on a moan.

A raw and primitive passion lurked beneath his smooth veneer. I wanted it. All of it. I wanted him to unleash his desires, to see him give up any semblance of civility. To fuck me with a carnal abandon he'd never unleashed with anyone else. It was mine and I intended to have it.

On his next withdrawal, I used my teeth, letting them scrape his hard length. His eyes snapped open and shot to mine. Whatever he saw in their depths must have been the deciding factor—the impetus that set him free.

"You'll fucking take it. All of it."

My lips stretched to accommodate his girth with his forward thrusts, his balls slapping against my chin. I sucked with everything I had during each retreat. Fisting

my hands, I tugged at my bonds, longing to stroke him. Being denied the ability to touch made what he did give me that much sweeter.

His fingers tightened, pulling the hair at my nape. Pre-cum dripped down my throat and gave me a small taste of what was yet to come. Anticipation built with his rough use of my mouth and I was shocked to find that I loved every second. All my previous lovers had treated me with tender care, never just taking what they needed.

To my surprise and delight, I preferred Rhys' rough handling. Hot juices flowed between my legs, no doubt soaking the sheets beneath me. I didn't care. All that mattered was the pleasure derived from giving Rhys this freedom, taking him someplace I hoped no other had.

"Here it comes," he gritted from between clenched teeth. "Take every fucking drop."

His movements became uncoordinated, erratic. His already large cock swelled even more and my jaw almost came unhinged while trying to accept him. A sharp jerk of his cock preceded the first blast of his seed hitting the back of my tongue. I could either swallow or choke.

Reflexes took over. I swallowed convulsively around the head of his cock as his essence exploded over my taste buds and flowed down my throat. I drank him down, swallowed him whole until he had nothing left to give. Still, I hungered for more.

Rhys leaned forward, rested his head on the arm still extended to grip the headboard, panted for breath. I wondered how long it would take him to recover and anticipated what his next move would be, how he would take me.

Even then, on a subconscious level, I understood that nothing would ever be the same. His forceful passion had changed me, turned me into a different woman. One I couldn't wait to explore.

Chapter Six

Rhys cursed under his breath and crumpled to the bed. "Damn. You are good."

I needed to come so bad. He had to give me some attention soon or I'd go insane. "Rhys, please. I need —"

"No," he interrupted. Rhys pushed up on his forearms, gaze fixated on my lips. "That's a shame. I told you there'd be no names. And you know what, prissy? This isn't about *you* getting off." His expression turned sad as he shook his head. "Nope, this is about me getting satisfaction."

Leaning on his side, Rhys rubbed his chin and appeared to consider the situation. "This is punishment for being a prissy cock tease."

Ah, so my efforts had not been wasted. He had watched me over the weekend. Wanted me. A spike of triumph raced through my veins, but his next words quashed any brief surge of victory I felt.

"Cock teases don't deserve orgasms. All your provocation earned is to be tantalized and tempted in return. For hours. Serving my pleasure, not your own. There will be no O's for you, prissy."

"Oh Lord," I groaned. The fiend meant to torture me, keep me hanging on the edge and pulling back before I could topple over. I'd read about orgasm denial but never indulged in the practice. Saw no reason to deny my needs even if the purported result would be a massive culmination beyond my wildest dreams when finally permitted to crest the peak. "You wouldn't!"

The most devious grin spread his lips and displayed his pearly whites. I didn't need to hear the words to know the answer. He would, and the jerk would enjoy doing so.

If my arms had been free, I would have crossed them over my chest. Instead I settled for poking my lower lip out in a pout. Instinct told me not to say another word. The more I argued, the more likely he'd be to extend the agony of forbearance.

Rhys moved between my legs, shouldering my thighs apart, and settled on his stomach. His thumbs traced the crease at the top of my legs before moving inward to spread the slick folds. For the space of several heartbeats he stared at my pussy, making me squirm with uncomfortable embarrassment.

"Ah, ah, ah," he scolded. "I'll have none of that." He pinned me down, holding me still beneath muscular arms. "I want to see what I'm getting. All these puffy pink layers are mine." His thumbs stroked my outer folds. "Damn, you're so wet. Your little clit is peeking out from under its hood, all stiff and needy. I can see your pulse ripple through it." He pulled my lips wider apart. "And your tiny hole... Fuck! It's fluttering like a little mouth, dying for something to suck on."

My hips bucked, but he held me with ease. Without further preamble, just as I blew out a frustrated breath of air, he thrust two fingers in deep. A twist of his wrist and deft fingertips located my sweet spot, which he began to torment.

Needing to thrust and roll with the motion, I fought his hold as my orgasm drew closer. His warm breath wafted over my clit as he stroked my G-spot from side-to-side. Almost there. Another second and I'd soar. My back arched off the bed and a keening cry built in my throat as the first tingles of orgasm spread through me then came to an abrupt halt when his fingers withdrew, leaving me empty and bereft.

Gasping, stunned, I stared between my breasts and down my body to find that wicked grin shining up at me, bright and full of mirth. I was learning to hate that grin. "Bastard!"

He nodded. "I do believe you're beginning to understand, prissy."

Oh, I understood all right. My mind began to scheme and construct complicated plans for bringing Rhys to his knees. I would tie him up, make him watch me

masturbate and orgasm multiple times. He'd beg for release and I would get the last laugh.

"I can see the wheels in that overachiever's brain of yours turning, Madam Prosecutor. You won't win this round. By the time someone frees you from this bed, I'll be long gone. I'm going to disappear to a country with no extradition treaty. You'll never find me, prissy. I'll be nothing more than a memory."

He leaned forward and ran his hot tongue from the bottom of my slit upward, coming to a stop just below my clit. The devil never tired. He licked and sucked at my labia, nibbling here and there for what were surely hours on end. I begged, pleaded, threatened and cried. He ignored my complaints and carried on, devouring the flesh between my legs. When his nimble tongue circled my anus, I cursed him.

There are no words strong enough to describe the sinful bliss I derived from his tongue fucking my ass. I may have been class valedictorian and a card-carrying member of Mensa, but my intelligence failed me and my brains took a hike. I don't know what I was trying to communicate, but I only managed incoherent muttering. My head thrashed within the small space between my outstretched arms, and I have no doubt he had a difficult time holding me down.

I knew there was one quick way to end my torture. During the barbecue, when I'd talked about my job, Rhys had expressed extreme abhorrence and condemnation for rapists and sex offenders. He'd gone on to declare the punishment for such crimes to be too lenient. His fervent rant gave me an out. I could toss down the rape card and everything would cease immediately and without question.

What an ironic predicament to find oneself in—damned to suffer regardless. If I called an end to our fun and games, there would be no orgasm. If I allowed him to continue, he would deny my release until it suited him or possibly even walk away and leave me hanging.

The odds of me getting off were better with the later prospect so I suppressed any objections, shoved my mile-wide independent streak out of the way and surrendered myself into his capable hands.

He must have sensed the change in my demeanor, felt the fight go out of me. Rhys rose to his knees, leaned over the side of the bed and fumbled around. Seconds later the quiet was broken by the crinkle and rip of a foil wrapper. I peeked out from beneath heavy eyelids to watch him roll a condom over his cock.

Finally! A shudder raced down my spine. He scooted closer, sat back on his heels, slid his hands beneath my hips and settled my lower body on his thighs. My legs fell to either side, leaving me open and vulnerable. He pumped his cock then aligned the head with my entrance. The position rendered me immobile. I wanted to buck and force him inside, but could only lie back and take what he offered, when he offered.

Rhys stirred, his gaze captured mine and he slammed forward. I cried out as his crown knocked against my womb. So deep and full. He mumbled curses as he withdrew and my pussy clenched, trying to prevent his retreat.

Primal and brutal are the only words for the hard fucking that followed, and even those descriptors fall short of the mark. Rhys trembled and grunted. His hips pistoned, muscles compressed and propelled him forward, hammering his cock into my pussy without mercy or reprieve. Not that I sought any respite. I loved every aggressive plunge. His fingers bit into the curves of my hips. No doubt I'd have bruises. Not that I cared.

Each thrust slamming into my pelvis sent shock waves ripping through my body. I clenched my jaw to keep my teeth from smacking together and would have bashed into the headboard if he hadn't been holding me so tightly.

The man was a machine, pounding away without pause. Taking me to dizzying heights. Bright lights burst behind my eyelids as the tension built. When this pressure cooker reached its limits, I'd be going for one hell of a flight.

I reached for it, welcomed the blast that would catapult me to the heavens. If he would just touch my clit, it would be mine.

With the intention of encouraging him to stimulate the aching bundle of nerves, I opened my lips, falling mute as he pulled all the way out. My mouth hung open, my chin on my chest, as I watched him rip off the condom and stroke his shaft in a meaty fist. Anger and insult chased away the shock when his cum shot from the tip of his cock to splatter over my torso.

Streams of putrid, vile invectives spewed from my mouth. I'd learned a lot of creative insults in my career and had vast ammunition, yet none of the obscenities fazed Rhys. Neither did his climax have any effect on his erection. His cock remained hard.

He gazed down at me, calm as could be. "I told you this is not for your enjoyment, prissy. This is payback." He continued to pump his cock. "And what did I tell you I'd do after fucking your cunt?"

My mind raced, tried to catch up. I replayed the details of his plan, gasping when his intentions became clear. "My ass..." My voice came out a cracked whisper. After clearing my throat, I started again. "You're going to fuck my ass."

The room spun and my arms were pulled tighter as the bonds crossed. The only thing keeping me from faceplanting into the wooden headboard were my forearms crashing against the unyielding surface first. I scrambled to get my knees up under me. Rhys showed no concern for my predicament—he simply nudged my knees apart and moved into the space he'd created.

Reaching past me, he snagged a bottle of lube from the nightstand. Where it had come from or how it had escaped my notice earlier was beyond comprehension.

"The legal system has classified me as a sex offender, but I am not without compassion or consideration. I used a condom to prevent pregnancy." He chuckled. "Lord knows the last thing this world needs is any miniature versions of me running around."

How he managed to stay within his role, I was unable to figure out. Later I'd ponder it, but not then. At that moment it was difficult enough just trying to follow what he said.

"I will not take your ass without adequate lubrication, but I will be fucking it bareback. I'm going to deflower your ass, fill it with cum, then watch as it drips from your narrow hole."

Random thoughts battered my mind, like the fact that I was going to need therapy after he finished with me. Lots of intense therapy. Delving into my psyche to determine why the fuck his pronouncement turned me on would take one hell of a skilled analyst.

I almost laughed over my thoughts and held back my hysteria by biting my lip. Hard. The metallic tang of blood barely pulled me back from the brink. I needed to orgasm so bad it hurt.

I had to focus on reality instead of the fantasy he was weaving with great skill. This was a consensual game between two adults. My anal cherry had been popped...by Rhys. There was nothing virgin or dangerous in our play. And that's what it amounted to—playtime. Someone out for payback sure as hell wouldn't use lube.

A cool rivulet of liquid dribbled down the crease of my ass and I started. Rhys soothed me with gentle hands and soft praise. A finger breached my anus and eased inside. He stroked me slow and sure until I began to push back, seeking more, which he didn't hesitate to provide. One finger became two and then three as he tailored my channel to fit his cock.

When the broad head settled against the small pucker, my muscles clenched. "Take a deep breath. Good," he praised. "Now blow it out and bear down."

I followed his instructions with blind faith, trusting Rhys not to hurt me. And I prayed. Yes, I know it's a terrible cliché to find God during sex, but I was too far gone to reject anything that might help. I had one goal—a carrot dangling just out of reach—and I intended to grab hold with whatever was available. So I prayed that with the fucking of my ass the torment would come to an end and I'd finally be granted an

orgasm. My hazy mind was clear on this one point—I would die if I did not come. Preferably I'd be granted an orgasm sooner rather than later.

His first thrust embedded him in my ass and left me gasping, filled with his thick cock and stretched to the point of pain. He'd been right, I felt as if I'd been impaled by a huge pole. He popped past the ring of tissue and, holding nothing back, I screamed and arched into him, taking him deeper. All the way to the hilt.

I risked a glance over my shoulder as my body spasmed and tightened on him. A pained look hardened Rhys' face. His pupils had dilated, turning his eyes black with desire. A muscle ticked in his clenched jaw.

"Fuck!" he barked. "Don't move."

Don't move? My mind and body rejected the command and said to hell with that. I wrapped my fingers around the slats of wood and used my arms to first pull forward then push back. Pleasure beyond comprehension blasted into me, sparking multiple contractions. I needed more. Needed it all.

"Sweet Jesus," Rhys cried, also having found religion.

"I want it. What you said," I panted. "Give it to me."

He stopped playing then and fucked my ass, hammering into me. I met each thrust and demanded more. "Come on, you bastard. Fuck me. Harder...faster...more."

The exact verbiage is inconsequential. Fortunately my words had the desired effect on Rhys. His pelvis rammed into my ass, making the fleshy globes jiggle. His balls slapped against my quivering clit. My breasts swung, nipples abraded by the sheets, and my knuckles turned white where I was gripping the bed.

Faster and faster he propelled me higher. I whimpered when his cock swelled, knowing he was about to climax and leave me behind again. "Fucking rat bastard. Keep going. Stop now...I'll kill you."

He let go of my hip, snaked his hand around to my pussy and pressed the tiny bundle of nerves. The compression by his finger finally set my body sailing. The orgasm exploded over me.

Every muscle tensed then convulsed. My throat closed, choking back my blissed-out scream. The orgasm shook my whole body from head to tightly curled toes and went on for endless minutes.

At one point Rhys gave a pained yelp as my ass constricted around his cock tighter than a python strangling its prey. Served him right for letting me get so strung-out.

I don't remember him unfastening my bonds or rubbing ointment into the flesh that had been abraded during my struggles. I do have a vague impression of lying spooned together, feeling sated and content. But he left sometime during the morning hours and I woke up Sunday afternoon alone in my bed, wondering if it had all been some crazy dream.

Until I tried to stand.

Every nerve ending in my body still smoldered from his lavish attention and the hard fucking. Seldom-used muscles ached. The bathroom mirror didn't lie either. My hair was tangled as a rat's nest, and various marks of rough play marred my skin.

The hickey I spotted on my neck proved to be incontrovertible evidence, although inadmissible in court, that I had been well and truly fucked.

Chapter Seven

All that spring, through summer and well into fall, Rhys and I danced around each other in an on-again, off-again relationship. I admit most of the fault rested with me. There were times I relaxed and went with the flow and others when I froze up, sending him mixed signals.

On one hand I wanted to kick back with Rhys and enjoy the benefits of all my hard work in building a career. I'd climbed up the ladder to First Assistant District Attorney. There was a higher rung, but I had no aspirations of running a campaign to become the elected DA. My job carried enough stress without adding the ultimate responsibility of the lofty position.

On the other hand, I worked in a very competitive field and had to keep my guard up against those seeking to knock me off my perch. The other Assistant DAs coveted my job. If I relaxed too much, I'd be minus one career.

My feelings for Rhys were no more resolved than my angst over work. There were occasions I wanted it all—marriage, picket fence, a dog. Not kids, though. I had no desire to raise children in our screwed-up society and had seen plenty of messed-up teenagers to turn me off the whole prospect. Since Rhys harbored no biological imperative to reproduce, we were a perfect match in that respect.

Being with him felt good all the way down to my soul. We connected on many levels—from the earth-shattering sex to our late night debates. He had a sharp mind and quick wit. One minute we'd be locking horns—taking opposite sides of a moral or ethical issue for the sheer buzz of arguing a point—the next he'd have me laughing so hard tears streamed down my cheeks. And when we acted out our fantasies...wowza! Rhys rocked at role-playing. He would get wound up in the character, making me forget it was a game and not real.

The trouble nudged its way in with my doubts. Could I really spend the rest of my life with him? He had some annoying habits that were difficult to tolerate, like stealing all the covers or turning so his ass faced me and farting in the middle of the night when I was trying to sleep. Bastard never failed to shoot those stink bombs in my direction. I also couldn't ignore the fact that I was older than him and had to wonder if he'd still want me when age began to catch up with me.

For the most part, we kept things loose and played it by ear. We didn't spend every night together, and once in a while, Max and Brayden were invited to join us. While the foursomes made for wild and fun sex, it was the nights we were alone I cherished and lived for. Even though we didn't set down any rules, they were implied, and both of us remained monogamous in our semipermanent relationship, with the exception of the *ménages*.

At least, I'd thought monogamy was a given, until a new neighbor moved in on the other side of the guys. I hated the skinny bitch on first sight. Younger than me, I pegged Suzie to be in the low- to mid-twenties. With the body of a *Swimsuit Illustrated* cover model, there wasn't much to like. I despised the incompetent, too-stupid-for-words bimbo, from the top of her bleached-blond head to her big fake boobs, perfect ass and killer legs.

Not a day went by that she wasn't knocking on *my* guys' door for help with one thing or another. I mean really, how freakin' obvious could one desperate woman be? Her toilet constantly stopped up and no amount of instruction with a plunger made her capable of resolving the issue herself. She'd arrive on the doorstep wearing a top that failed to cover her extra large bust, batting her eyelashes and flashing a come-fuck-me smile.

To make matters worse, the stupid men fell for her act every damn time. I tried to warn them and they blew off my concerns.

"Suzie is sweet and innocent." Coming from Max, nicknamed Mad Max for his sullen moodiness, the statement floored me. I couldn't believe her silly charms had worked on him too.

In the past, I'd never had a jealous bone in my body. Being with Rhys changed me. I felt possessive and that damn green-eyed monster kept surfacing to drive me insane.

Case in point, the precarious position I'd wound up in while trying to keep an eye on what happened after Suzie-Q had shown up at the door one particular day. Max and Brayden weren't home—they'd taken their boat out. Rhys and I were having lunch at their place when the slut sashayed on over in a scandalous pair of Daisy Dukes, crop top and skyscraper heels. I almost choked on my tongue when I opened the door.

Suzie breezed right past me, latched on to Rhys' arm and dragged him over to her house on the pretense of fixing a broken garbage disposal.

Yeah, right! I didn't buy it for a second. My newfound jealous streak prompted me to act. Since I couldn't see her house, I had to be creative. At first, I tried standing on a deck chair. When that failed to put me at the right angle, I climbed a tree.

Yes, I had completely lost it.

With each branch I climbed, I told myself I wouldn't go any higher. Stubborn to a fault, I refused to concede defeat until I clung to a narrow branch that swayed in the breeze. Visions of falling, breaking something and then having to explain what I'd been doing finally had an impact.

That's when the real fun began—getting down.

My understanding of gravity got blown all to hell. The concept of what goes up must come down is true, but what no one tells you is that while wiggling yourself into a tight spot may be easy, getting out is inversely more difficult. The same holds true for coming down. How had I lived more than thirty years without knowing I had a problem with heights?

Before my feet touched good old solid terra firma, I'd bent a fingernail backward, sustained various cuts and abrasions, as well as torn my top. Add in that the effort had

been wasted since I didn't see a damn thing, and my mood had turned to shit by the time Rhys returned to find me brushing tree bark from my clothes.

His brow furrowed and he shot me a quizzical look. "What the hell happened to you?"

I had to think fast and my response was rather lame. "I, um...there was some kid flying a kite on the beach. It got caught up in the tree. I was helping get the damn thing free." There, brilliant!

"A kid with a kite?" He moved down the deck and looked around the deserted beach. Oh yeah, fucking brilliant explanation. "I don't see anyone."

"Well, he's gone now, of course. He went home to have his mother fix the string. You missed him."

Clearly he wasn't buying it, but I switched topics to throw him off track. Pitching my voice high, I fluttered my eyelashes. "Did you fix little Suzie Pooh's sink?"

His eyes went squinty and the intense scrutiny made me feel like a crook being interrogated. He mumbled something under his breath I didn't catch. Then louder, he said, "Damn, Bella. You've got a serious impulse-control problem."

My back stiffened and I snapped at him. "No I don't. I can control my impulses just fine, thank you very much."

"Yeah sure, Madam Impetuous. When's the last time you stopped and thought about something before jumping in feetfirst?"

Before hooking up with Rhys, I'd had no problem with planning out my actions. In fact, I'd been accused of lacking spontaneity. Not anymore. He screwed with my equilibrium and I found myself doing the stupidest things.

Ugh, I hated getting all introspective, even if the smug jerk was right. To avoid the argument we were headed toward, I got the hell out of there. "I've gotta get back to the house and prep for tomorrow. Javier and I are working together on a big case—serial rapist. I want to nail the sick fuck to the wall."

He nodded and I hauled ass out of there. It had been a pathetic excuse, but to my great relief, he left the issue drop.

* * * * *

Sitting at my desk a few days later, ignoring the paperwork spread out around me, I could only think about Rhys. He had not come over since the Suzie incident and I'd become a basket case. My mind wandered and I kept forgetting important meetings.

A loud clatter drew my attention back to my surroundings. My gaze cast around, settling on Javier's tumultuous expression.

"You didn't hear a word I said. Again." He sighed and shook his head in disgust. "Damn it, *querida*. I don't want to watch this *pervertido* get off on a technicality because you can't pay attention."

"Shit!" I planted my elbows on the table and dropped my face into my hands. "I'm sorry."

He moved around the table, knelt at my side and rubbed soothing circles over my back with the palm of his hand. "Why are you putting yourself through this misery?"

I didn't have any answers and kept quiet.

"Look at me, *amiga*."

He waited until I dropped my hands and met his gaze before continuing. "We are friends, *sí*. I must tell you, the staff they have started calling you silly names because you have become so forgetful." He reached out and traced his fingers over my cheek. "They are right, *querida*. You know the story of the absent-minded professor?"

I nodded.

"Ah, and do you remember why he was distracted?"

"Javier, I don't see what this has to do with—"

He placed two fingers over my lips. "The story, it could have been written about you, Bella. Like the professor your mind concentrates on one thing and you pay little

attention to anything else. The good news is there's a cure. As soon as you stop running around like the headless chicken and tell Rhys you love him, then you can let it go. It is a heavy weight on your mind, *querida*."

I hated being transparent to everyone. And I despised admitting Javier was right. Until I stopped being a wishy-washy nitwit and told Rhys I wanted more, I would remain distracted.

Javier flashed a smug smile showing lots of teeth. "Now you know the problem and can set matters right. *Por favor*, go fix it today. Now. When that exceptional brain of yours is working again, you hightail it back here and help me convict that *híbrido* up the river for a long time."

"I can't leave in the middle of a case."

"*Querida*, I insist. Otherwise, I won't be responsible when I lose patience and strangle you."

"Smart-ass," I said, with the utmost affection.

"There's a bit of the Bella I know and love. Go resurrect the rest of her."

I pulled him into a tight bear hug, gathered my things and raced out the door, wondering when Javier had become a relationship expert. During the drive home, I thought up ways to broach the subject of what I wanted...needed from Rhys. While we had no problem discussing a wide variety of topics, we both tended to avoid emotions.

After arriving home, I showered and changed into comfortable shorts and a T-shirt, taking some extra time to primp before heading next door. Although nervous over how he would react, I felt light and happy for the first time in ages.

Because the sandals I was wearing had a slight heel and the sun had gone down, I skipped walking on the beach and went out front. Knowing the beautiful fall night would bring the guys out on the deck, I took the flagstone pathway alongside their house.

The full moon provided sufficient light and, thanks to Florida's tropical temperatures, the evening primrose I'd planted over the summer was in bloom. Its light, sweet scent carried on a gentle breeze, rejuvenating my senses after I'd been cooped up inside all day.

Soft voices drifted back to me, urging me down the path. I turned the corner wearing a bright smile and almost fell flat on my face. My chest tightened until I couldn't breathe, cold sweat broke out over my torso and my stomach turned to stone over the sight that greeted me.

Taking a few slow breaths, I forced the nausea down and tried not to cry. Fucking Suzie-Q had her silicone boobs smashed against Rhys' chest and her arms wrapped around his neck, fingers tangled in his hair. The skinny bitch shimmied, rubbed all over him, then pulled his head down to hers and kissed him. Not a chaste peck either—I saw tongue action. And Rhys didn't offer any resistance.

Trembling, tears blurring my vision, I turned back the way I'd come and ran. I may be a fearsome fighter in the courtroom, never turning away from confrontation, but seeing Rhys with another woman wrapped around him closer than a second skin was not something I could face head-on. Fuck if I'd let Suzie derive a moment of pleasure from witnessing my pain, either.

I ran straight into someone, a big someone, and was caught up in a strong pair of arms.

"Bella, what's wrong? Are you okay?"

Great, Mad Max. Just what I didn't need. His normal scowl was firmly in place, shadowed jaw tense, but his eyes were different. The dark pools radiated concern.

"I'll kill the son of a bitch—"

"No!" If he confronted Rhys it would only make a bad situation worse. "Max, I was never here. You never saw me. Understand?"

"Bella, what happened? Let me help."

"Nothing happened. I'm fine, but you have to promise me. Don't tell anyone I was here tonight."

His tone became clipped and tight. "Fine. I won't say anything...for now. But be clear on this, Bella. I won't wait forever. I won't stand for him hurting you."

"I'm okay. Really. Just got taken by surprise. No worries." On impulse, I rose up and kissed his cheek. "Thank you, Max."

I forced myself to walk the rest of the way home, and for the first time since I'd given Rhys a key to the front door, engaged the deadbolt before crawling upstairs and crying myself to sleep.

The next morning I called in sick to work. I spent the day on the couch watching soap operas and eating my way through two pints of mocha almond fudge.

Max showed up to check on me. He wasn't sure what had happened but had his suspicions, which I would neither confirm nor deny. After growling a few more threats to kick his friend's ass, he left me to wallow in my misery in peace.

I'm not a very good wallower.

Instead I gathered myself together and self-medicated with work. Pulling all-nighters was a common occurrence in our office. I showed up with a few dozen donuts and a big container of strong coffee to find Javier well-ensconced in the conference room, surrounded by thick volumes on case law.

Sensing my mood, he didn't ask any questions when I threw myself into preparing for the trial.

Chapter Eight

For two solid weeks, I seldom left the office or took a break. I worked around the clock, lived on takeout and brief naps on the lumpy couch in my office. I ignored the troubled glances Javier sent my way, along with the rumors the grapevine generated about me. They were nothing new.

It was on one of my sporadic trips to the house for clean clothes that Rhys caught up with me. No sooner had I made it through the front door than he barged his way inside. His rigid posture let me know he was good and pissed. He looked haggard and stressed. His normally neat clothes were rumpled and his hair stuck up in tufts as if he'd been raking his fingers through the short brown strands.

"I'm only stopping long enough to pick up some clothes, then I'm headed back to the office." I turned and walked into the den to collect the books I needed.

Rhys followed close in my wake. "You're just going to have to change your plans, Bella, because we're going to talk."

"I don't have time for this right now. I've got this case—"

"Look at me," he growled. "Do I look like I give a shit about your case?"

"Rhys, please."

His hands were balled in tight fists at his sides and he vibrated with rage. "Uh-uh. I want to know what the fuck is happening and I'm not leaving until you give me a satisfactory explanation."

I sighed and plopped down on the loveseat in an exhausted sprawl. My chest ached. God, it hurt to see him and know the man I loved had lost his patience with me and given his affections to another woman.

“Look, I know it’s rather hypocritical considering our foursomes, but I won’t share you with another woman and I don’t put up with cheaters. You’re the one who moved on, not me. I’m the one who should feel slighted.”

He was across the room before the last word left my lips. He wrapped his hands around my upper arms, firm yet not hurting, as he lifted me to my feet. The violence in his dark gaze stole my breath. I trembled with fear but refused to back away. Even though he was scaring me, I knew he’d never physically hurt me. I gave him my best hard-assed prosecutor glare and waited for him to say his piece.

“Damn it, Bella. Don’t look at me like that.” He pulled me into his arms, hugging me tight enough to crush bones, and surprised a squeak out of me. He took several calming breaths, eased his hold and encouraged me to sit back down.

He startled me again by dropping to his knees. Rhys’ hands shook as he cupped my face and stared into my eyes, his searching gaze penetrating all the way to my soul. “What are you talking about, anyway? I never asked you to share. And don’t think for a minute that it’s easy for me to watch Brayden and Max touch you, even if they are my best friends.”

“I-I don’t understand. Then why do you keep inviting them to join us?”

He blew out a hard breath and averted his gaze while collecting his thoughts. When he looked at me again, his eyes smoldered with desire. “You are always beautiful, but when the three of us take you, overwhelm you with pleasure...you are transformed. Your face glows, and when we connect in those moments, you’re completely mine. You let go of everything, transcend time, place and the tight restrictions you’ve placed on yourself. In those precious moments, I feel loved.”

It took a few seconds for the words to sink in, worming their way beneath the barriers protecting my heart. “Oh, Rhys.” I threw myself at him, reveled in the security of his arms wrapped around me. Nuzzling his neck, I drank in his scent—coconut suntan lotion combined with his unique masculine musk. He rocked me while I cried, then eased back to kiss away my tears.

"Tell me what happened."

I did, spilled everything. "I saw you...with Suzie...wrapped in your arms." I sniffed and rubbed a shaky hand over my eyes. "You didn't stop her from kissing you, Rhys. You kissed her back."

"Oh, Jesus. Why didn't you talk to me? Let me explain?" Between words he placed hungry kisses all over my face. "Bella, she'd just learned her grandfather had died. I hugged her to offer comfort."

Our eyes met and I saw love and sincerity reflected back at me. "Yes, at first I returned her kiss. I was in shock. But when she started shoving her tongue down my throat, I pushed her away. I've never wanted Suzie." He gave a tentative smile. "I prefer strong, independent women who actually use their brains...sometimes."

A misunderstanding? I'd wasted all that time and anxiety over a stupid misunderstanding. "Really," I teased. "You like stubborn, insanely jealous workaholics?"

"You forgot commitment phobic, prissy —"

"Ugh!" I playfully smacked his arm. "I am not prissy." And not particularly commitment phobic since that's what I wanted, Rhys committed to me.

He laughed and the genuine, happy sound came as a great relief. The stiffness and tension in his large frame eased. "You're perfect...for me."

My heart soared and I knew the moment I'd dreaded had arrived. "Rhys, I have a confession to make."

"Mmm," he hummed, trailing soft kisses down my neck and across my collarbone.

"Rhys," I cried in a high-pitched squeal. "Th-this is serious." I shoved hard, with both hands, until he stopped.

"What is it, Bella?"

Oh, just get on with it, I silently chastised. "I was coming over that night to tell you I needed more."

His head jerked back and he turned that penetrating stare on me, giving me his undivided attention. "More? More than me?"

"No," I rushed to reassure. "Not more than you...more from you." I was on a roll and charged ahead, ripped the bandage off quickly to get it over with. "I love you and need this...us to make this real...permanent." There, I'd said it.

His brow quirked up. "Permanent...how?" A million different emotions crossed his handsome face, the most prevalent—hope. "You love me? Bella, are you asking me to marry you?"

"I...uh..." I gulped, floundered, mentally kicked myself for being insecure again. God, he had such an impact on my emotions. "Yes, I am. Rhys, I don't know how or when it happened, but when I wasn't looking, I fell in love with you. I want to know you're mine. Only mine."

His eyelids shuttered, hiding his response, and he muttered a colorful expletive.

Oh God. I'd screwed up. Said the damn *L* word. My heart lodged somewhere in my throat and I relived the feeling of finding another woman in his arms. Chest tightening, cold sweat, nausea—the whole works. His gaze remained averted. Bile burned my throat and saliva flooded my mouth.

"I'm going to be sick." I slapped a hand over my mouth, prepared to race for the bathroom.

Rhys slid to the floor on bended knee and slowly lifted his head. I was knocked back, stunned by the powerful love shining on his humbled face. "No way am I telling people you asked me." He struggled to maintain a serious visage, but I saw the humor reflected in his dark eyes. Then he took my hands and made the sweetest proposal.

I fell into his arms, fresh tears prickling behind my eyes, saying yes over and over. Our kiss, which began affectionate, heated up fast. We were both gasping when finally giving in to the need for oxygen.

"So what now? What comes next?"

“Oh, baby.” His voice grew raspy with emotion, turning my insides to Jell-O. “Next is the make-up sex.”

“I do so love the sinful way your mind works.”

“I’ll show you just how sinful my mind can be,” he mumbled against the upper slope of my breast as he began stripping away my clothes.

We had not been together for weeks, but Rhys was a man on a mission and would not be persuaded to pick up the pace, regardless of how much I begged him to do so. He made slow and sultry love to me, first with his talented mouth and fingers, driving me to distraction and fervid need. I writhed and bucked until he closed his mouth over my aching clit. Rhys sucked with an absorbed dedication that made the room spin around me.

Planting my heels in the carpet, I angled my hips to receive his fingers. The position had him rubbing over my sweet spot, creating powerful convulsions within my pussy. My muscles seized as I flew over the precipice, calling his name.

He propelled me from one peak to the next, delivering me to ecstasy two more times. Rhys didn’t allow my third orgasm to end. His cock forged its way past my still-spasming walls, thrusting deep and steady, sustaining my pleasure. I clutched at his back, dug my nails into his flesh and wrapped my legs around his waist. Each rocking motion ground his pelvis into my hypersensitive clit.

He swelled inside me and I felt everything—every ridge and vein over his length, every tremble and pulsation, along with each heated blast of semen bathing my womb. I got caught up in his release and carried away joining him in paradise.

The divine scent of our lovemaking and the heat of his body enveloped me. I wanted to crawl inside him—turn two into one—integrate our bodies and souls. As we lay entwined, I favored myself to be one very lucky woman.

After the floor in the den, we christened the kitchen counter then the staircase, followed by the shower wall, all before falling into bed. I woke in the morning to Rhys’ cock slipping into me from behind. With his amazing idea of what constituted make-up

sex, I decided to instigate a great many disagreements in the future. And wouldn't you know, I'd studied arguing in college and made a career of practicing the fine art.

I giggled, giddy with delight, wondering if it were possible to overdose on happiness.

Chapter Nine

"God, it's good to be home." Rhys turned off the engine, but neither of us made a move to get out of the car. We simply took a moment to breathe.

The past six weeks had gone by in a blur. Our wedding was a new beginning in more ways than I could have ever anticipated. To say our parents surprised the hell out of us is an extreme understatement. We expected arguments and instant dislike.

Celia, Rhys' mother, and my parents, although complete and total opposites, became the best of friends. Our mothers did an amazing job of planning the small, intimate affair, and cemented a lasting bond in the process. Then my father rocked my world. It's a moment I will never forget. Before walking me down the aisle on that beautiful fall day, he reached out, cupped my cheek in his hand and told me what a fine daughter I'd turned out to be and how proud he was of me. Me—his rebel. Wow!

For our honeymoon, Rhys and I spent a wonderful week in Paris. With my caseload there was no way I could get away for longer. We even managed to make it out of the hotel room long enough to take in some of the sights.

"Don't get me wrong," he said, interrupting my introspection, "Paris was great. But damn did I miss our bed and my pillow."

A broad smile spread over his lips as Brayden and Max appeared on the path between the two houses.

"Why the hell are they sitting in the car staring at the house?" Brayden voiced his confusion loud enough for us to hear.

Max shrugged. "Who the hell knows with those two?"

"And those two aggravating boneheads." Rhys sighed. "I really missed them."

"Me too."

The boneheads in question welcomed us home with open arms and a barbecue dinner. We ate a great meal, laughed and joked, and nature provided a dazzling sunset. On the surface it seemed to be a perfect evening shared with our closest friends. But something wasn't right. A strange undercurrent kept everyone on edge.

The time had arrived to point out the huge purple elephant everyone ignored. I set my beer down on the table with a loud bang. "I can't take it anymore so whatever it is, just spill it."

Max leaned back in his chair with a heavy sigh and closed his eyes. "Go ahead and tell them."

Our attention turned to Brayden, who stared at the stars for several excruciating moments before he finally spoke. "Everything is different now." He turned to face us. "You guys are married. You have a new life—together. Max and I are going to do some traveling."

"That's cool," Rhys said. "You guys deserve a vacation. I can handle the workload for a few weeks. Maybe work out a new timeline for the fantasy game."

"No." Max raked his hand through his hair. "You don't understand."

Brayden's chair scraped back and he paced the length of the deck, then leaned against the table in front of Rhys. "Look, we're not talking about a vacation. We're dissolving the partnership."

Rhys was out of his chair so fast it fell backward. "What? Why the hell would we do that?"

"Fuck!" Brayden grumbled and turned away again.

Grabbing his biceps, Rhys spun him around. "What the fuck is going on?" he demanded.

"You have Bella now." Rhys' mouth opened but Brayden put his fingers over Rhys' lips. "No, listen. We are happy for you—" He glanced down at me, his blue eyes pleading for understanding. "Both of you. Now it's our turn. Max and I have talked

about this for a long time. He—we want to try and find a woman for ourselves. To complete us.”

I glanced over at Max. He hadn’t budged or said a word. “Max?” Damn, I’d hoped to sound stronger, but the hurt came through in my voice loud and clear. Not sure how he’d react, I tentatively reached out, relieved when he twined his fingers with mine.

My heart ached for the pair of them. To me it was obvious the two belonged together and didn’t need anyone else to complete them. From the pain in Brayden’s expression, he felt the same way. But Max still refused to accept what they had.

“We’ve already got the papers drawn up. We’re leaving as soon as everything is sorted out.”

Max’s matter-of-fact statement took the fight out of Rhys. Appearing defeated, he plopped down in the chair I had fortunately taken the time to right.

“You can’t tell me that you didn’t see this coming,” Brayden stated. “Hell, Rhys. We even talked about it when you first told us you and Bella were getting married. You were excited about the possibilities of starting your own company.”

Rhys laughed but the sound lacked any real humor. “Yeah, sure. I had all kinds of ideas for another company but I never imagined dissolving the one we have now. I thought of it as a fun sideline, a second job.”

The guys discussed the future, how to wrap up their current projects and proceed. My mind drifted. I couldn’t imagine life without all three of my men. I wanted to be selfish, demand they stay. Cry, scream, throw a fit. Anything to keep us all together. Not because of the wicked ménages. I didn’t need those anymore. Because I loved them and wanted to see them happy. Deep down in my heart, I knew Max would not find what he was searching for until he accepted his love for Brayden. Keeping my thoughts to myself, I instead offered support and encouragement while secretly wishing there was something I could do to open Max’s eyes.

It was a somber homecoming. With heavy hearts, Rhys and I held each other tight and talked long into the night. We both hoped Brayden and Max would find what they

needed and come back home soon, because we already were feeling their absence in our lives.

I was glad they'd decided not to sell the house. The guys had already bought Rhys out when he'd moved in with me, but the fact they'd decided to keep it as a home base meant they wouldn't be gone for good. And their time away would give Rhys and me time to make the adjustment to our new lives as a married couple.

Chapter Ten

Married only one year and I've come to see the truth of the phrase, "Into every life some rain must fall". No union is complete without its share of both happiness and misery. How else is a relationship to strengthen or a couple to develop an appreciation of the good, if not for living through the bad?

Staring out blindly into the darkness from my balcony, reliving the past, I should feel blessed, for in my life the sunny days far outnumbered the stormy ones.

Somehow the metaphor failed to banish the misery that engulfed me. The signs were all there, classic and easy to recognize. Late nights spent "working", missed dinners, mysterious charges on the credit card bill. All irrefutable proof of guilt. Add in a forgotten anniversary, our first, and I'm left with one clear conclusion.

My husband's having an affair.

Probably with a younger woman.

Javier advised me to sit down calmly and rationally and share my fears with Rhys. I pride myself on being confident and reasonable in all things, however, my husband is the big exception to the rule. I don't doubt his love and don't want to doubt Rhys, but I do tend to get rather foolish where he's concerned. There's this niggling voice in the back of my mind telling me he's too good for me and someone more worthy will steal him away. He's smart, funny, charming, gorgeous and wealthy—what woman wouldn't want him? The man grows even more handsome and sexy with age, while I just grow older.

I admit that at one time, fueled by erratic emotions, I jumped to pass judgment and arrived at a mistaken verdict without investigating the facts. I was naïve and impetuous, but not in this case. The evidence has stacked up over months.

At first I dug my head in the sand, refused to see and learned the hard way that denial and ignorance do not equal bliss. I could no longer ignore the smoking gun staring me in the face.

God, how I wished Brayden and Max were here to help me through this!

Suddenly, strong arms encircled me from behind. I jerked in surprise and clutched at my chest in an effort to keep my frantically pounding heart from bursting forth.

"Jesus! Are you trying to give me a heart attack?" That insidious voice in my head chimed in, making me cringe. *If he kills off the old battle-axe, he's free to have the young nymph.*

"Damn, hon. I can see those wheels spinning. What are you concentrating on so hard that you didn't hear me come in?"

His warm breath feathered over my neck and I breathed in his scent. Helpless to resist, I leaned back into the strength of a body that had always made me feel protected and sheltered. Only now I felt as if I'd been set adrift in a turbulent sea without an anchor.

All this waxing poetic shit was wearing my already frayed nerves thin and leaving me with bitterness, anger and betrayal, which I turned on him. "Oh, nothing much. Just wondering when you'll grow some balls and tell me you're leaving."

"Leaving?"

The spineless phony had the audacity to feign confusion, crinkling his brow and squinting at me.

Previously I'd admired his ability to sink his teeth into a role. Not anymore. Not when the subject was so very real and serious. "Yes, you cheating bastard. When the fuck are you moving out? I can't survive the knife being twisted in my back any longer. You need to man up and stick a fork in this marriage, because it's done."

I shook with rage as he gaped at me, his confused expression ripping my heart to shreds.

"Bella?" As he reached out for me, I took a step back.

"Damn, hon. What the hell is going on? That overactive brain of yours take a vacation or something?"

That did it. My temper flared then snapped as I advanced on him. "Don't you dare treat me as if I'm blind, deaf and dumb." I wanted to punch him in the mouth, but settled for poking him in the chest with my index finger. Reacting with violence would only bring me down to his level, the gutter.

Filled with disgust, I narrowed my eyes and curled my upper lip. "I know, Rhys, okay. So drop the fucking games."

I have to give him credit. His eyes bulged and he appeared to suffer from genuine shock. Yet not one to stand down from a fight, he widened his stance and crossed his arms over his chest. Those arms had held me close, loved me. They were no longer mine. Now they belonged to some nameless, faceless other woman. The bitch!

"You have me at a distinct disadvantage as I seem to be missing some vital information you alone possess. What the hell has you so riled up?"

God, he was killing me. "Thrust the knife a little deeper, dearest. Then you can reach in and finish the job of ripping my heart out."

Somewhere in the dark cave a light came on. I saw it happen. He started to understand I wasn't playing a game, had not picked a theatrical fight to initiate make-up sex. My righteous indignation, my hurt was real. Genuine concern caused his brow to crinkle.

"Bella..." He began to reach out then let his hand drop. "You're scaring me, baby."

I could read him like a book, and was surprised to detect honest-to-goodness fear. His pupils dilated and he blinked in rapid succession. His lips thinned into a fine white line and a hard swallow made his Adam's apple jump. An increase in his breathing rate was reflected in the fast rise and fall of his broad chest.

Scaring *him*? “Good!” I snorted. “Serves you right for what I’ve been through over the past few months.” I squared my shoulders and stiffened my resolve, refusing to let him get to me, chanting to myself, *I will not cry*.

“Help me out here. Clue me in to what’s happening.”

Damn him. That brought on the waterworks. Two months of pent-up vile emotions had turned into a river of raw sewage, which spewed from my body in the form of tears. With a few simple words, my husband succeeded in doing what judges, defense attorneys and depraved criminals had never accomplished.

My knees shook as all the energy drained from my body. Rhys didn’t falter. Stepping forward, he drew me in tight, offering unconditional support. “I’ve got you.”

He was always there to catch me when I surrendered and fell. Who would be there to catch me once he’d gone?

“I’m sorry, Bella. I don’t know what I’ve done to make you believe I’m leaving, but whatever it is, I’ll make it right. Tell me what it will take to make it...*us*, right.”

Fortunately the bold and dauntless courtroom bitch managed to subdue the basket case and take charge. I latched on to the lawyer and, with eerie calm, laid out the evidence, ticking off points on my fingers as I built my case.

“All those late nights at work progressively getting later. By the time you fall into *our* bed, you have no interest in making love to *me*. Broken promises of spending time together. Missed dinners. Forgotten dates.” I reached into my hip pocket and extracted exhibit one, the credit card bill. “Extraneous travel, dining and retail expenses.”

Waving the bill under his nose with a grand flourish, I refused to speak the words screaming through my mind. *You know I check all the entries on the bill so the credit card company doesn’t fuck us over, idiot!* Then I went in for the kill, psycho woman sneaking back in and managing to push lawyer bitch out of the way.

“Do you even know what day it is, *dearest*?” I put a lot of emphasis on the last word, my tone syrupy sweet, and gave him no chance to answer. “You seem to have forgotten a day that’s *supposed* to be a big deal...to both of us. Our fucking wedding

anniversary. The first and you've already developed a rampant case of the seven-year itch."

After laying all my cards on the table, I rested my case, gaining no satisfaction from the strong sense of having won. There are no winners when it comes to infidelity.

"Are you done?" he gritted out from between clenched teeth.

I nodded, unsure of the change in his demeanor.

Rhys stared into my eyes for several long moments, shook his head, then burst out laughing. He laughed long and hard, doubling over and clutching at his belly.

Okay, he'd lost his freakin' mind. I failed to find humor in any of this. I glared at the buffoon, let him wear himself out then slowly regain his composure. "Is there a history of mental instability in your family you've neglected to mention?"

He had the gall to flash the patented boyish grin that had gotten me into this whole mess in the first place. Yup, definite mental case. Like that would work now. I huffed and shook my head.

"Oh, Bella. Jesus, you scared the crap out of me. I'm so damn relieved to know I didn't fuck up and do something to drive you away."

I huffed. "You've lost me here. Did I not state a clear-cut case? Are you going to deny your affair in the face of all the evidence?"

He rose up to his full height and glared down at me. I almost got whiplash with the suddenness of his switch from maniacal, relieved laughter to complete and total seriousness.

"This is another Suzie episode."

A Suzie episode. Uh-uh. I had proof. This wasn't a mistake—a jealous fit. And he thought he knew me so well.

"For the record," he held me captive with a hard stare and took me to school. "Building a new business often requires the boss to put in extra time. I did explain how important landing this government contract is, and that things would settle down

afterward. It has been exhausting, but I intended to make it up to you tonight with a special surprise for our anniversary."

The first tendrils of dread reached out and squeezed my chest. Had I really let my insecurities get the better of me...again? Allowed myself to get carried away? Perhaps Rhys did have me pegged.

"I am sorry about the missed dinners and dates I've had to break in order to meet deadlines. That's over now because I closed the deal about an hour ago."

He gently removed the bill from my numb fingers. "The travel expenses are for flights to Tallahassee, arranged so I'd make it back home the same day and not leave you alone all night. Wining and dining goes hand in hand with wooing the client. As for the retail charges..."

He moved to the bureau, dug beneath a stack of boxers and extracted a slim velvet case. "You won't find this on the bill." I slapped a shaky hand over my mouth and felt the wet trail of fresh tears beneath my fingertips. I mentally reached out and slapped the prosecuting attorney for building her case on paranoia.

"I didn't forget, Bella." Rhys stepped forward, turned the case toward me and lifted the lid. Inside laid the most spectacular necklace I'd ever seen. An unending circle of brilliant diamonds encased in silky platinum. Fiery colors exploded from the dazzling stones, but it was the proud expression on Rhys' handsome face that took my breath away.

"I wanted you to have something spectacular for putting up with all the hours I've had to put in over the past year since branching out on my own. Something fantastic that would measure up to your beauty, but everything I found pales in comparison. I settled for this humble token to express my love for you, which has grown so huge there are no adequate words to represent how I feel."

What a complete and total fool love turned me into. I backed up and plopped down on the bed, lowering my face into my hands, my body racked with sobs. "I don't deserve it," I managed to squeeze out of my tight throat. "I don't deserve you."

As he'd done on the day he proposed, Rhys went down on one knee before me. With gentle fingers he lifted my chin until our eyes met. "Everything I want...everything I need...I have with you, Bella. No other woman could possibly compare. I've never strayed, baby." The sincerity in his eyes made my heart clench. "I'm so sorry for neglecting you to the point you believed I cheated. If it takes the rest of my life, I will make it up to you."

His selflessness knew no bounds. I'd made wild assumptions, doubted and acted like a crazed woman, yet he took the blame, apologized and vowed to make it up to me. I don't come close to deserving his love.

Throwing myself into his arms, I took him by surprise, knocking him flat. "I'm sorry for ever doubting you. For letting my cynical, jaded mind take such huge leaps." I placed frantic kisses all over his face.

"Since the first time we touched, I've been waiting for the rug to be pulled out from under me...for the other shoe to drop. I've known all along that I am not worthy of you, and still find it hard to believe that you're here...with me. Prissy, hard-nosed Isabella Blackburn Stillman."

"Aw, Bella." He wiped away my tears and traced the contours of my face. "This just proves how perfect we are for each other. Nobody else could put up with either of us."

We shared a good laugh. "We're both certifiable," I confirmed.

"Let me get up, make a few quick calls to cancel the rest of what I set up for tonight. We'll crawl into bed and not come out before noon."

I shook my head frantically, not deterred by my hair whipping into my eyes. "No! Don't cancel anything. I want to have the night you planned."

"We don't have to —"

I put my hand over his lips. "Just give me a half hour. I'm not going to look great with the red, puffy eyes, but if you can handle that —"

“Bella,” he interrupted, “you are more beautiful to me now than you were when we first met. Back then you were merely magnificent. Now, in my eyes, you are extraordinary. I’m going to say it over and over until you finally start believing me.”

“Honey, you make the sweetest pillow talk.”

We fell into each other, devouring with lips, teeth and tongues. Our temperatures rose with our desire, but we somehow managed to separate long enough for me to do a quick repair job on my tear-streaked face and change clothes. Before we slipped out the door, Rhys clasped the necklace at my nape with fingers that trembled.

Chapter Eleven

A flurry of questions about where we were going and what he'd planned raced through my mind but I kept them to myself. The night had been diverted from the heartbreaking course on which it had begun. That was what mattered. The surge of emotions from despair to elation left me unsteady and drained, yet anxious to see what Rhys had in store for me.

We drove along the coast in silence until he stopped the car at the entrance of the five-star historic resort where we'd been married. I figured he must have made dinner reservations for one of the restaurants. The romantic gesture made my heart sing. I also felt another sharp spike of guilt for having sunk low enough to have thought he'd been cheating on me. What a dunce I became where he was concerned. It still blew me away that somehow I had managed to win his enduring love.

The resort, painted a shocking pink with white accents, is an amazing sight to behold. An exotic castle rising up from a gorgeous stretch of powdery shoreline, complete with bell towers and turrets, it's a place of decadent grandeur, a playground of the rich where the cheapest room fetched around five hundred bucks a night.

I looped my arm through Rhys' as we walked through the opulent and pretentious European-styled lobby, decked out with candelabra and crystal chandeliers. He strolled right by the restaurants and lounges, heading instead to the elevators. Once inside the car, he inserted a gold key in the lock beneath a button marked P2 and it lit up.

"Don't ask," he said as questions formed in my mind. "It's a surprise."

The elevator opened to a spacious townhouse rivaling the ritziest abodes featured on *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*. The rental fee had to be astronomical.

Rhys drew me into the palatial room, but the fine furnishings and appointments were lost on me as two hunks walked through the open French doors from a private terrace. One light, one dark, and both sexy as hell.

There was no holding back my goofy grin as I charged forward and threw myself into their arms. Brayden and Max sandwiched me between their muscular bodies. I rubbed my face against Brayden's chest, letting his warmth and characteristic scent flood my senses before turning to absorb Max. Lord, I'd missed them so much over the past six months they'd been traveling.

Tender fingers lifted my chin. I met Max's sharp gaze and saw anger rise in his expression. "You've been crying," he grumbled. "What did he do?"

"My faithful guardian," I teased. "It wasn't him, Max." A shadow of doubt clouded his eyes. I lifted up, nuzzled his neck, and whispered in his ear. "You know I get a little crazy when it comes to Rhys. Everything's fine. We're fine."

Max squeezed me tight. "Okay, but I'm here for you. If he ever hurts you...if you're ever free...come to me."

"Oh please. You wouldn't leave Brayden for me." The two of them had been searching for the perfect woman to complete them. I hoped and prayed that soon they'd come to realize they didn't need anyone else. The pair were even more reluctant to believe in their love than I had been with Rhys.

Max frowned and the cords in his neck stood out. "I know you've never taken my offers seriously, but I would drop everyone and everything to be with you. In a heartbeat."

His tone, expression, even the way he held on to me as if reluctant to ever let go, spoke to his sincerity. His genuine affection and desire had an astounding effect on my entire reality, but I felt Brayden's pain as he tensed.

"I know that I don't stand a chance, though, since Rhys has your heart and you've claimed his. There's no way he'd ever give you up, not that I blame him. I wouldn't either."

Max's words got through to me, touching a place deep inside. That Rhys loved me had never been in doubt. I just got my mind stuck on the idea he was too good to be real and couldn't see past it to the truth.

Rhys took a vow to be mine. It didn't matter if other women wanted him, noticing my handsome man the minute he walked into a room. His heart belonged to me, Isabella Stillman, the luckiest woman alive. And he was pretty damn fortunate to have me too.

Why hadn't I allowed myself to believe it before? With a few simple words, Max reshaped my way of thinking, of seeing my relationship with Rhys. I felt like a different woman.

"I know you love Rhys, and it's obvious you are his world, but if you ever need me – Ow!" Max turned toward Brayden, his tone indignant. "She bit me."

As distractions go, I thought it was a pretty good one.

Brayden's warmth enveloped me from behind. "Mmm... I love it when you get feisty, baby." His hand smoothed over my hair. "And he's being honest, so stop selling yourself short."

"You're going to turn me into a blubbering idiot if you two don't stop with all the icky emotional stuff." I went for humor to lighten what had become a very tense moment.

Apparently Rhys was not amused. "That's enough. Don't make me change my mind about inviting you two to play." He shoved his way past Max and shouldered Brayden aside. "Let's move this celebration to the bedroom."

He placed a possessive hand at the small of my back and guided me to a staircase I hadn't noticed. The guys hung back as if sensing our need for a private moment.

"Happy anniversary, Bella. I love you."

"I love you too. Thank you for being so understanding and for staying by my side. I promise not to be such a basket case anymore, Rhys."

“We’ve got at least fifty more years to look forward to, and I don’t mind when you act love-crazed, hon. It proves how much I mean to you.”

The naughty voice in my head, finally getting a clue, sighed in awe. Lucky didn’t cut it. I’d been blessed the day Rhys came into my life. Was blessed every day we were together.

We reached the landing, stopping before a closed door. He turned to me with love and anticipation sparkling in his eyes. “We’ve discussed this elaborate fantasy in great detail. I hope I’ve done it justice.” He leaned in and kissed the corner of my mouth before continuing.

“Tonight, my queen, you rule over three humble servants who are ready to serve your will. Whatever you want—your greatest desire—is yours. No request is too big or too small. Anything you want, Bella. Understand?”

Butterflies flitted around in my belly. “Oooh, Rhys.” My body hummed with sexual excitement. He meant to provide my ultimate fantasy of being Cleopatra and having sex slaves anxious to follow my every command.

And Rhys had just given me the key to part of my ultimate fantasy for him.

We’d often discussed Brayden and Max’s desire to draw Rhys into their play. I’d encouraged him to indulge, but Rhys had been reluctant. Having grown up believing it was wrong for men to want each other—to share a sexual connection—wasn’t easy to overcome. Had he finally reached a point where he felt comfortable enough to experiment?

He nodded, guessing where my thoughts had gone and acknowledging my unasked question. “We’ll give you a chance to get changed, then join you shortly, my queen. Whatever you want will be yours.”

A rush of excitement and arousal zinged through me. I’d anticipated seeing the three friends make love for a long time. Gotten as turned-on by watching Brayden and Max together as Rhys had been. This was going to be one hell of a night.

A thought tickled the back of mind. I'd finally managed it. If Rhys was going to give in and take what he wanted, satisfy his lust, maybe there was still hope Max would give in and accept his love for Brayden.

Rhys turned and opened the door. My hand flew to my mouth as I stared in awe, speechless for once in my life. He ushered me inside, kissed my cheek. I barely registered the door closing behind him as he left.

A large bed had been placed on an elevated platform at the center of a room decorated in the vibrant colors of sunset. Large columns at each corner of the platform were draped with blood-red cloth. The walls were covered with murals depicting the Egyptian landscape and pyramids. Two large stuffed jaguars stood guard near the bed. The overall effect was breathtaking.

I moved farther into the spectacular room, running my fingers along the plush silk bedding. At the foot of the bed, a costume had been laid out. After stripping out of my clothes, I put on a long white halter dress with a slit running from hem to hip. Draping a gauzy shawl over my arms, I felt seductive.

Rhys had thought of every detail, including a black wig and gold beaded headpiece, as well as a turquoise sequined collar and matching wrist cuffs. There was also a gold bracelet fashioned into a snake to adorn my biceps. The gold platform shoes with six-inch spiked heels didn't fit with the time period, but made my legs look fabulous.

Lying on the bed, I struck a provocative pose facing the doorway, eager to see the guys' outfits. Stiff nipples pressed against the silky material and moisture pooled between my legs, which I restlessly shifted.

They didn't keep me waiting. I'd barely gotten settled when the door opened and in strolled my three sex gods. Bare-chested, they wore white slave skirts slung low on lean hips and leather Roman sandals with the straps wrapped around their calves. Gold bands around their thick biceps had turquoise and black accents.

Damn, three delicious hunks at my beck and call. So many delightful possibilities. I didn't need to think about it, I knew exactly what I wanted. I'd fantasized about how I'd like to see the three of them together since my first glimpse of Brayden fucking Max, fueling all new fantasies.

"Damn, Bella. You look good enough to eat," Brayden said. Rhys and Max nodded in agreement.

"Maybe later. There's something I've wanted to see for a long time, and since you're mine to command, you have no choice but to give me what I desire."

I met Rhys' gaze, not continuing until he gave an almost imperceptible nod, letting me know he hadn't changed his mind. Rubbing my hands together in anticipation, I began setting the scene. A hardbacked chair across the room would suit my intentions.

"Slave Maximillion, bring that chair over here," I directed. He carried the chair across the room, placing it a few feet away from where I lay. I had him turn the chair to face sideways. My breathing quickened and my palms grew damp. I knew this was going to be so good.

"Good. Now, Slaves Max and Brayden, undress slave Rhys."

Brayden and Max shot Rhys questioning glances. Rhys squared his shoulders and held his arms out from his sides, tacitly giving permission for them to follow my orders.

I caught a hopeful look passing between Brayden and Max. They appeared unsure, but more than willing to proceed.

They didn't rush. Finally free to touch Rhys as they'd longed to, both men let their fingers linger and caress. Hunger filled their eyes as the costume fell to the floor, baring my husband's erect cock, a small droplet of moisture clinging to the crown. It jerked under the intent inspection, and Brayden licked his lips while Max dropped to his knees, slowly unwrapping the leather ties and massaging Rhys' firm calves.

Brayden stepped in front of Rhys, blocking me from his view. His voice cracked, husky with arousal. "Rhys, stop us now if this is just a tease and you don't intend to follow through. We've wanted this too long to survive being toyed with."

"I suggest you follow our queen's commands if you don't want to be whipped, slave." Rhys said it loud enough for me to hear then dropped his voice. Whatever else he said must have been adequate reassurance, because Brayden moved back to await further instructions.

My heartbeat echoed in my ears. I wanted to rush them into position and savor every nuance at the same time. Taking a deep breath, I offered guidance to get them started. "Slave Rhys, sit on the chair."

Once he complied, I glanced between Brayden and Max. "He is so magnificent. Which of you two slaves wants to suck that big cock for your queen?" I suspected Brayden was dying for the opportunity, but left the choice up to them. A silent communication passed between the two men and Brayden stepped forward.

"It will be my pleasure." His voice quavered and I noticed his hands shook. His eyes were dilated to the point the blue all but disappeared.

I nodded. "Very well. Do a good job and you'll be rewarded for your effort."

Rhys swallowed hard as his friend knelt between his knees. His cock stood tall, extending to his navel, a thin line of pre-cum stretching between the crown and his abdomen.

Not wanting to leave Max out of the equation, I had Brayden move to Rhys' side and face toward me so Max could take his place between my husband's legs. "Slave Max, you will attend to his balls while slave Brayden sees to that wonderful sword. I want to hear Rhys moan in ecstasy."

"Yes, my Queen." Max's voice deepened and oozed lust. Grasping Rhys' hips, Max encouraged him to scoot forward on the chair.

I palmed my aching breasts, massaging the full globes while tweaking diamond-hard nipples between my fingers. My gaze never strayed from the erotic tableau.

Rhys looked first at Brayden and then Max, his dark gaze finally settling on me. We connected and he mouthed, *I love you*.

My imagination didn't do the reality of watching the three of them together justice. Three sculpted male bodies, all hard planes and angles, moving in sinful concert.

Broad strokes of Brayden's tongue gathered up Rhys' salty fluids before delving into the slit. "Oh shit," Rhys moaned. His jaw tensed, a line of sweat broke out above his upper lip.

Brayden's eyes closed as, without further preamble, he sucked Rhys' cock. His blissful expression made me think of a fallen angel. His cheeks hollowed and he devoured the friend he'd longed for. Both men used their mouths and hands on Rhys, who moaned and bucked his hips, fighting the pleasure.

Knowing dirty talk turned on all three men, I held nothing back, giving voice to all the thoughts running through my mind. "God, that's hot. Let go, Rhys. It may be Brayden and Max's mouths and hands, but the pleasure comes from me. Feel the warmth surrounding your cock and balls. The powerful suction. Those wicked fingers that know right where to touch you."

Lifting my hips, I pulled the dress up over my waist and thrust two fingers between my sopping wet folds. Watching them was driving me wild. I wanted to join in, but didn't want to distract them or miss the heady visual stimulus.

Rhys' pelvis came up off the chair and he howled with pleasure because of something Max had done. "Whatever you're doing, Max, keep going." I wasn't going to last long and wanted Rhys with me when I came.

"Listen, Rhys. Hear Brayden slurping your delicious cock? He's so hungry for you he can't get enough. Watch their heads bobbing as they devour you. They've waited so long they're both starving for you, darling. Don't hold back. I want you to give them everything. Let them hear how much you enjoy what they're doing. Mmm... I could come from the exquisite scent of testosterone and sex alone. Damn, the three of you are so sexy!"

I worked my hand faster, the wet sounds of my fingers penetrating my pussy joining the sexual symphony. "It's completely different than being sucked off by a

woman, isn't it? So raw and primal. Dominant and forceful. Fuck yeah. I wish you could see your face, the combination of agonized torment and excruciating pleasure."

I bit my lip, trying to keep the orgasm from carrying me away. I put everything into my verbal seduction, wanting to bring Rhys along with me. "Brayden is dying to taste you. He's working so hard for it. Give him your cum, Rhys. Do it for me, honey. Come for me now."

Rhys' resistance and control broke. He tossed back his head, shouting out his extreme gratification. Brayden sucked harder, swallowing every drop and working to draw out more.

Max leaned back, Rhys' saliva-covered balls slipping from his mouth. His hand never stopped moving, though, and his eyes were full of love. "Aw, Jesus," Max groaned. "Your ass is squeezing my fingers so tight. I wish it was my dick in this hot hole."

Rhys bucked with abandon, knuckles white where he was fisting the chair. Somehow Brayden stayed with him, moving as if he were a bull rider determined not to be unseated.

"Happy anniversary, Rhys. I love you." My orgasm threatened to pull me under the powerful wave, but I refused to close my eyes on the one fantasy I never imagined would be fulfilled.

My pussy spasmed but was far from satisfied. If anything, watching the guys made me ravenous. The empty ache became a living, breathing entity demanding satisfaction. Demanding the attention of my men.

Brayden let go of Rhys' now flaccid cock and ran his hands through his hair. "Fuck, I need to come." He looked at Max then turned his greedy gaze to me. "I'm going to fuck you so hard, Bella."

Rhys' weakened voice cut through the lustful fog clouding my brain. "I want to watch while Max and Brayden fuck you, Bella. One stretching your ass, the other pounding your tight cunt."

“Rhys,” I gasped. He’d never suggested or permitted them to touch or fuck me unless he was part of it too. “Without you?” Shock made my voice higher than normal.

He nodded. “Just the two of them now that you know. Now that you understand what it’s like to see the person you love as they writhe with euphoria. It’s intoxicating to witness. To know you gave the pleasure to them. God, Bella,” he groaned as he sat up straighter. “I love you so much I’ll do whatever it takes, including share you, to give you that bliss.”

“Me too, baby,” Brayden chimed in. He shot Max a devilish grin. “You want her pussy or her ass, lover?”

Max’s brilliant smile lit up the room. “I don’t care as long as I get to be on the bottom.”

Brayden rose, grabbed Rhys’ head in both hands and locked their lips. Rhys struggled against the kiss and I rushed to reassure him. “Holy shit, that’s so fucking hot.”

At my encouragement, Rhys relaxed into the kiss and they devoured each other, tongues fighting for supremacy. Not one to be left behind, Max joined them, making it a three-way kiss that nearly blew my mind and left me shaking with need.

I coughed, cleared my throat. They kept kissing. “Someone needs to get over her and fuck me. Now!”

When they pulled apart, all three were gasping for air. “You heard your queen, boys,” said Rhys, “go fuck her senseless.”

Chapter Twelve

A large hand molded my breast and I snuggled back against the warm body lying behind me. Cocooned in Rhys' distinctive scent, I luxuriated in the loving stroke of his hands, the soft rasp of chest hair against my back sensitizing my skin. His erect cock pressed between my ass cheeks.

The rapid thump of a heartbeat echoed through the chest pillowing my head. I nuzzled the lean muscles of Max's chest, delighting in the sexy sounds rumbling through him. A hand squeezed my hip—probably Brayden—at the same pace Max's hard cock rocked against my thigh.

What a way to wake up, surrounded my firm male flesh, feeling spoiled and loved, the fragrance of sex and testosterone filling my lungs, firing my arousal. “Damn, Brayden. Didn't you get enough last night?” I teased.

“I'll never get my fill of fucking this fine ass, baby.” Choked with emotion, Brayden's voice chased away the morning lassitude. Shaking off sleep, I lifted my head to take in the rapture radiating from Max's face.

In direct contrast, Brayden's expression as he fucked his lover was tense and conflicted. I knew what was causing the disharmony wearing him down. We'd had many talks about Max's stubborn refusal to accept his love. Brayden put his heart and soul out there to no avail, and was ready to throw in the towel. If Max didn't open his eyes and stop rejecting Brayden's love soon, their friendship wouldn't survive the fallout.

My emotions became a jumbled mess. I loved them both and wanted to see them happy with each other. I wanted to soothe and comfort Brayden while smacking Max upside the head, the aloof jerk. Why shouldn't I be the one to do it since he'd help me realize how stupid I'd been?

Last night, with a few simple words and his love, Max had started me on the path to finally setting aside my fears of rejection. I didn't kid myself into thinking there wasn't still work to be done, but already I felt better and more deserving of my husband's love.

I wanted to help Max, too, and decided to take a risk by setting my anger free. It was the only thing I could think of to help them. Rising up on an elbow, I grasped his chin and squeezed hard. "Stop it." Max's heavy-lidded eyes sprung open. Behind him, Brayden froze midstroke.

"The running ends now, Max. So does the sharing. No more. Rhys and I don't need it and neither do you. It's past time for you to stop hurting Brayden. You're going to stop denying the amazing bond you two share and accept his love before you rip his heart to shreds. Watching you keep him at a distance while he showers you with affection is killing me. I can't take it anymore."

Softening my tone, I glanced at Brayden. His lips trembled. There was both shock and terror in his wide gaze. He looked vulnerable, ready to break.

"Neither can he."

Brayden shot his lover a glance that spoke volumes. I knew he longed for Max to accept what they had. Perhaps without our *ménages* to distract him, Max would see it too.

I turned my DA glare back on Max. "Look at him," I demanded and shoved his chin. "Take a good hard look past the surface. He tries to play all cool and unaffected, but it's tearing him up inside. It's time to admit the two of you are perfect together, that you love each other."

Rhys had risen behind me. He placed a restraining hand on my shoulder. "Bella," he warned.

I shook off his concern. "No, Rhys. I'm not going to pussyfoot around anymore, pretending everything is fine while Brayden suffers." I pleaded with my eyes for Max to

see the truth. "Brayden doesn't want to find a woman for you to share. He only wants you, Max. Do you honestly believe you need more? Isn't his love enough?"

My anger eased, allowing sadness to slide into its place. As best I could with the awkward position, I leaned into Max, wrapping my arms around him and Brayden. "I love you both and I want you to be happy."

"Get off me, Bella," Max growled, and I felt Rhys grow tense as I eased back into him.

Tears spilled down my cheeks as I watched Max pull away from Brayden. Max sat up, gave me a soft kiss and wiped away my tears. "I'm sorry, Bella," he whispered. "Don't cry, baby. We'll work it out."

Brayden's entire body was shaking when Max turned to face him. My heart raced as they stared into each other's eyes for the space of several long beats. I felt as if Rhys and I were intruding on what should be a private moment, but I couldn't look away.

Max rolled Brayden onto his back, flattening him into the mattress, and cupped his lover's face in hands that shook. He rested his forehead against Brayden's and spoke softly.

"Why didn't you tell me? Let me drag you on a search for something you don't even want? Damn it, I thought you needed more than me to be happy." He sighed, and the last words were a mere whisper but they cut straight to my heart. "I was determined to give you everything you need."

Rhys wrapped his arms around me, held me tight as we watched Max and Brayden share a poignant kiss. "I think they're going to be okay now, Bella," he breathed in my ear. I just nodded, too choked up to speak.

Brayden flung his arms around Max, holding on tight. When the kiss ended, Brayden's heartfelt reply made me cry harder. "You're all I've ever needed."

Max climbed from the bed and held a hand out to Brayden. "Let's get out of here." He shot me a tentative grin. "No offense, but we need to be alone."

They dressed quickly and wished us a happy anniversary, both wearing huge smiles as they left the room hand in hand. My heart soared for them. There would still be problems to work out, but I had faith their love would see them through.

Rhys laid me back down, curling himself around my back as I wondered about the future. "Do you think they'll make it work?"

"They've got a good shot at it, hon." He nibbled at my neck, knowing how it drives me wild, and I felt the firm nudge of his cock between my legs. Rhys lifted my thigh over his, spreading me open and allowing his cock entrance to my slick pussy.

God, he felt so good. I sighed in contentment. "I love you."

"I love you too, Bella." With tender care, he eased his way inside. "How do you feel? Not too sore, are you?"

"Mmm... I'm good. So good, darling."

He slid back, then filled me once again with a sensual glide. "Looks like it's going to be just the two of us from now on. Disappointed?"

Far from it, I felt relieved. I wouldn't deny the ménages were wonderful or that I enjoyed them...a lot. But when it was just us, those were the times I cherished. "No. As hot as it was to watch you with Brayden and Max or to have three men fucking me, I prefer having you all to myself."

"Mmm..." he purred. "No matter how much I enjoy seeing you overcome with pleasure, this is much better. He gave a hard thrust then paused. "So...are we okay, Bella?"

Turning my head, I tried to read his expression and squirmed in his arms. "Let me turn around. I need to see you."

He withdrew and I shifted to face him. I wrapped my leg over his hip and guided him back inside my body before resuming the conversation. Cupping his cheek, I stared into his beloved eyes.

"We're better than okay. I love you so much it makes me delirious, Rhys. Think you can handle my neurotic emotions for the rest of your life?"

He chuckled. "It's one of the many things I love about you, gorgeous."

Our kiss started out a tender press of lips, an affirmation. Before long, his tongue brushed against mine, the intimate caress making my spine tingle and curling my toes.

We made slow and sweet love, staring into each other's eyes, expressing with our bodies a depth of emotion words could not convey. I lost all sense of time and place, intent on our joining, wanting to make it unforgettable for both of us.

It was still hard to believe this incredible man belonged to me, heart and soul. "I want every day to begin and end in your arms."

"Then that's what you'll have, Bella, queen of my heart."

Fire engulfed me as he rocked my world so hard, the magnitude of our sexual energy spike released in a ground-shaking climax, surely registering at least an eight on the Richter scale.

"You...you're all I need, Rhys. You will always be my greatest fantasy."

About the Author

Nicole Austin lives on the sheltered Gulf Coast of Florida, where inspiration can be readily found sitting under a big shade umbrella on the beach while sipping cold margaritas. A voracious reader, she never goes anywhere without a book. All those delicious romances combined with a vivid imagination naturally created steamy fantasies and characters in her mind.

Discovering Ellora's Cave paved the path to freeing them, as well as manifesting an intoxicating passion for Romantica®. The positive response of family and friends to her stories propelled Nicole into an incredible world where fantasy comes boldly to life. Now she stays busy working as a certified CT scan technologist, finishing her third college degree, reading, writing and keeping up with family. Oh yeah, and did we mention all the hard work involved with research? Well, that's the fun job—certainly a labor of love.

Nicole welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at www.ellorascave.com.

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