

ELLORA'S CAVE **AEON**

ALIEN
BEST MAN
AMY REDWOOD

ELLORA'S CAVE **Quickies**®

Alien Best Man

Amy Redwood

When Jana leaves Earth to get married, she discovers that her fiancé has kept a secret. On his planet, the groom isn't the only one having sex with the bride. It's the best man's privilege too. And the best man is someone she knows. And fears.

The best man takes what he wants—and he wants Jana. In his bed, she embraces both males and her darkest desires. And she experiences how pleasurable the use of a riding crop can be when wielded by a dominant alien.

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Alien Best Man

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ALIEN BEST MAN

Amy Redwood

Prologue

Earth, Year 2217

“May I suggest *not* using the riding crop,” I said, keeping my voice polite.

“What, this thing?” Zyn hit the flat end of the crop against his palm.

The smacking sound startled me enough that my horse reacted with a sudden jump forward, which made me increasingly aware of the way the animal’s rolling stride rocked the saddle between my thighs.

“Just ride slowly and don’t use the crop *please*.” I couldn’t afford to piss off aliens who came from planets rich in natural resources. Still, if he broke his neck, he couldn’t sign the trade contract, could he?

“Offizzzer Jana,” he addressed me, his slight accent making me smile, “these animals would look splendid running across Dezra’s plains. It would also make our negotiations so much easier.”

My amusement vanished. To keep him entertained, I’d taken him and his delegation to see one of Earth’s rarest attractions. Horses were nearly extinct, worth the amount of a small spacecraft. But if I denied him his demand, the contract negotiations could be in danger. And making the contract happen was my job.

“The confederation will gladly ship half a dozen horses with the next trader toward Dezra,” I said, wondering if the day could get any worse.

His mouth curved to a satisfied yet cruel smile, revealing sharp canines. He exuded a sexuality so raw it made my stomach tighten.

As if he sensed my physical reaction, he twisted in the saddle toward me and ran a hand down his horse’s neck. He wore pants and a sleeveless shirt, both made from a black material. Not leather, not rubber, definitely organic and not synthetic. His bare skin shimmered as if someone had blown metallic dust all over him. He was like a copper-colored lion, big with lazy movements that hinted at lethal strength.

I shouldn’t be alone with him.

“May I suggest this way,” I said, pointing to my right. “There is an area where we can rest and wait for your delegation to catch up.”

He snorted, flicked the riding crop lightly against his horse’s flank and dirt swirled up in a huge cloud as the animal charged forward.

He was taking the *wrong* path.

I pressed my thighs together, which sent another sensuous tingle between my legs, and loosened the reins. A couple of exhilarating heartbeats later I caught up, just in time to see how his horse dug its hooves into the ground and bucked.

The sudden violent movement sent him flying through the air before he hit the ground.

I screamed, sure the fall would break his neck, but he landed on his feet like a cat. I slid from my saddle as his horse took off alone. Too rattled to stop my own horse from following his,

I looked him over for injuries. His wide shoulders shaking, he was *laughing*. He seemed to be fine. Better than fine actually. I nipped the thought in the bud, locked it away.

He was done laughing but so clearly fully aroused that it wasn't easy to keep my gaze away from the large bulge in his pants. Need pulsed between my legs, and I couldn't blame it on the saddle. Damn.

A breeze touched my face, hot and sudden, but not one leaf moved in the still summer air. Odd. I didn't back away when he stepped close, too close to me. His mouth crushed down on mine as his hand slipped around my neck. He forced his tongue between my lips, kissing me as if he were staking a claim, and I finally surged awake.

He drew me tighter until every ridge and curve and muscle of his body pressed against me while his tongue stroked the insides of my mouth in a way that made me liquid deep inside. When I moaned, he swallowed it, took my breath too. Another blast of wind hit me, moved along my body until I felt hot everywhere. The sensation of heat came from him and my eyes widened—was he trying to read my mind?

In a moment of weakness, I turned into his embrace, opened myself up, gave him a chance.

Heat sliced into my mind as he unearthed my thoughts, my *secrets* as easily as if he were turning over stones. His kiss deepened and sharp teeth nipped into my lip. And like the ghost of a touch, like a *thought*, I could feel him hard and thick between my legs, inside me, moving, thrusting, fucking.

He pulled my wrists behind me and arched me back. My hips rolled against his and the pressure mounted, and it felt so *good*. Another *thrust* and I harshly exhaled into his mouth, my climax crashing over me while he turned over more stones in my mind, finding every last depraved sexual fantasy I'd ever had about him. And I'd had many.

He broke the kiss, a satisfied gleam in the depth of his eyes.

I staggered away, seeing him lick his bottom lip as if he was still savoring my taste. Why had I allowed him this glimpse into my mind? I should know better than to give a male like him that kind of power over me.

"You allowed me to read your mind, Jana," he said quietly, as if he knew I was shaking inside. "After I sign the trade contract, you'll come to Dezra with me," he said with the conviction of a male who probably had never been denied anything. "I want your thoughts, your sex, your very soul. And you will *submit*."

Sudden fear, bone-deep and cutting, held me captive. From underneath my shirt, I pulled the phaser from its holster and aimed at him with unsteady hands. "I will not."

Chapter One

Earth, five month later

I arrived just in time at the outer rim of the space harbor. When I saw Qay standing on the platform, his delegation already onboard, I broke into a smile when our eyes locked. It was bittersweet, saying goodbye to him. Bitter, because as soon as the huge space traveler took off with him, three lonely days and nights awaited me. And sweet because I would be seeing him again after the three days—on Dezra as his bride-to-be.

I ran the last yards and into his arms, my heart dancing a jig in my chest. Drawing in his familiar scent, I buried my fingers into his thick coat and clung to him while he drew me into a tight embrace.

“You shouldn’t have come,” Qay said. “We said goodbye last night. Wasn’t that satisfying enough for you?”

“Very satisfying.” I raised my head, sought his slate-gray gaze. His eyes were cool and stern, but he was the most warm, gentle male I’d ever met. And he loved me. I still had a hard time believing it. Grinning, I rose on tiptoe to press a kiss against his chin, not tall enough to reach his mouth. “But you knew I’d come, admit it.”

“I counted on it.” He freed himself from my tight hold and reached inside his coat. “This is for you.” The book he held was as thick as my thumb.

“Thanks,” I said, taking it. I’d seen a book like this, leather-bound and cracked with age, in a museum once. There wasn’t a title and the back was blank as well. I flipped it open, scanned a couple of pages. “It’s written in high Dezrian. Not my strong suit, you know. What’s it about?”

“Dezra. The book shouldn’t be here on Earth. It’s against protocol, but we bent a few rules.”

“Who’s we?”

His gaze slid away from me, as if I made him uneasy. “I guess here, you would call him the best man.”

“Well, what do you call him on Dezra?”

He answered in high Dezrian, saying something I’d never heard before. “What’s it mean?”

“He has many names.”

“Well, pick one,” I said, laughing.

“King.”

“King?” I replied, stunned. “Are you kidding me? No? But there’s no such person on Dezra. You are Dezra’s elected ruler, aren’t you? Dezra is a democracy, right?”

“It’s a bit more complicated, Jana.”

“But he’s our best man?” I tried to stomach this new tidbit about the planet I’d soon call home. “Well, thank him for sending me this.” I grinned, hugging the book to my chest.

“Goodbye, my heart.” His lips found mine in the same tingling sensation I’d felt in our first kiss. But only now, after spending day after day, week after week together, did his kiss reach my

heart as well. I wrapped my arms around him, the feel of his hard body underneath his thick coat making need rise within me.

“Just take me with you now.” I felt every bit the lovesick fool. “Why do I have to wait?”

“You know why. Once I’m onboard, my three days of solitude and silence will start. It’s tra—”

“Tradition,” I said, defeated. “Well, I’ll let Kyra know so she can block out her schedule.”

He brushed his thumb over my cheek. “It is good that Kyra will fly you to Dezra.”

“She needs to be on Dezra anyway, being a bridesmaid and all that.”

“Listen,” he said, gripping my shoulders hard, as if he wanted to make sure I paid attention, “on Dezra, the bride always gets three days and nights to make up her mind. The traditional ceremony, our wedding, won’t happen before the three days and nights are over. Jana, don’t ever think you have to do anything you don’t want to do. Kyra can take you back to Earth anytime.”

“I love you,” I said, my throat tight. “Why would I want to leave you?”

He didn’t answer, kissed me instead, and I stared after him as he boarded. I held the book between my knees and clapped my hands over my ears to block out the noise. The platform vibrated as the traveler geared up and pulled away. Within seconds, the ship grew smaller as it navigated toward open space.

Trying not to feel abandoned, I brushed the back of my hand over my eyes and grasped the book again. I flipped it open, scanned the pages until I spotted the Dezrian word for wedding.

“*Tra Mar’ge Deflar.*” My tongue tripped over the unknown words. What did it mean? Three joining? The joining of the three? I turned the finely written pages. Everywhere, the word *three* caught my eye.

My gaze fell on a sharply drawn picture, its minute details clearly visible. A huge bed, probably made from a kind of wood, was at its heart. Atop, a man and a woman—or bride and groom—were adorned with slim crowns and both buck naked. The artist had placed emphasis on how the groom plunged himself between the bride’s spread thighs.

But it wasn’t the explicit coupling that had me holding my breath.

The bride didn’t gaze at the groom, her hand didn’t rest longingly on the groom’s buttocks to guide him into her. No, she reached for a man next to the bed, a man with a ferocious smile and eyes like a cat. *Mind and heart and soul* read the caption, or something close to that, if I translated it correctly.

I lowered the book, aware that I was in danger of hyperventilating as the full meaning hit my stomach like a one-two punch. That was some wedding night tradition. One bride, one groom and one very *disturbing* best man.

Qay’s last words haunted me suddenly, “Don’t ever think you have to do anything you don’t want to.”

Like a threesome with the best man? Should I even take the book at face value, take it literal?

Mindful not to bend any pages, I closed the book. I’d find out once I was on Dezra. But I wouldn’t walk away from what I had found with Qay, the trust and love. Never. Too deep had he touched my heart with his wit and smile and words. Soon, I would board the ship that would fly me into a still unknown new world. And after three nights, I would marry Qay.

Even if I had to spread my legs for a catlike devil.

* * * * *

My stomach was grumbling, not with hunger but with a mild case of nerves. The sky was still dark except for the light beams of arriving and departing ships. I was granted access to the small docking station where private space jets and shuttles waited for their owners. I waved, spotting Kyra. Clutching an extra-large drink in one hand, Kyra wore only a plasma thermal tank top with matching black pants. She looked like a space pirate.

I probably looked ready to throw up.

"Here, drink," Kyra said by way of greeting, and pressed the drink into my hand. "Or you'll hurl for the next eight hours straight. And that's with the gravity switch pulled."

"Not funny," I muttered, but sipped. It sloshed over my tongue like liquid teeth cleaner.

"That's all you're taking with you?" Kyra looked at my bag. "After twenty-nine happy years on Earth, all you take is one lousy bag?"

"I don't need much as long as I have Qay."

"By the stars, you are in deep."

"I love him if that's what you mean," I replied, raising my voice over the hissing noise of a big-bellied trader.

"I guess his looks don't hurt either," Kyra said with a grin.

I shook my head, thinking about Qay's gorgeous body, his copper-colored skin, the tender touch of his hands. But it wasn't his looks that had gotten to me. It had been his show of character during the negotiations, during late-night meetings, and his ability to truly listen. And the way he made love to me. "He was the best thing that happened to me after...after—" I broke off, shoving the thought aside.

"After what happened with that...guy? Sorry," Kyra said quickly, "I know you don't like to talk about it."

"It's okay," I said, surprising myself. It was as if the drink not only made me sleepy but talkative. "I aimed my phaser at him, threatening I'd shoot him if he didn't back off. He not only backed off, next day he was gone. Qay came to continue the negotiations. I fell for him."

"Wow. Amazing that they didn't fire you."

"They waited until Qay signed the trade contract *then* they fired me."

"That's the confederation for you. Follow me, you haven't met my girl yet, have you?"

The sleek space glider Kyra owned gleamed chrome black under glaring white security lights. I boarded and strapped myself into a too-wide chair, which made me feel like a toddler.

"Ready?" Kyra checked if I had downed the drink.

"Can't wait." I was tired and excited at the same time. "And I can't wait to kick ass as Dezra's new trade official. My old boss is in for a surprise."

Kyra whistled. "So, Qay bagged himself a confederation insider as his wife. You sure he's not just using you?"

It was so absurd, I laughed. "Kyra, he loves me."

"Is it true that Dezrians can read minds?"

My throat closed up a little. "Qay can't. I asked."

"You fell fast for him. Maybe too fast."

“Since when are *you* the word of caution?”

“Well, Dezra is not in the allied confederation *yet*, as you know best. They don’t adhere to common laws.”

“But they will be in a couple of weeks.”

“Still, it hasn’t happened yet. On Dezra, you’re at Qay’s mercy.”

A cold shiver gripped me, why I couldn’t tell. I glanced out the cockpit screen as Kyra navigated through the checkpoints toward the open space. Kyra wasn’t telling me any news, but from her mouth it sounded as if I headed to my execution instead of my wedding.

* * * * *

“I’ll go insane if I can’t see Qay soon.” I knew from the book that some kind of feast awaited me, but damned if it had mentioned as to *when*.

Instead of being met by Qay, an apparent welcome committee—solely women—had greeted Kyra and me. They escorted us from Dezra’s docks to a large glasslike dome that was large enough to hold a small city, which in fact it did.

I spent my first night on Dezra, while not lacking for food or comfort, utterly alone. I tried to sneak out and was gently but determinedly shoved back into my rooms by the fiercest-looking female I’d ever laid eyes on. She either protected me or held me prisoner. I hoped it was the first. I assumed Kyra was well, as she was in separate rooms. Now late afternoon, women were leaving and coming into my quarters like a flock of birds. The concept of personal space seemed to be nonexistent. I let myself be washed, groomed, shaved and braided—all in the name of tradition. They didn’t address me directly—only the groom was allowed to speak to the bride before the wedding. I was given a loose-fitting dress in a material I’d never seen before. It had a silky feel to it but was even more lightweight and in alternating shades of red—from a faint pink to a rich dark purple. And they’d given me panties of a sheerness that equaled spider webs. I let out a long sigh when my guard opened the door and motioned me outside.

I was led into a hall that could easily accommodate several of Kyra’s space gliders. People were sitting at tables, eating and drinking, and if there was music, I didn’t hear it over the loud chatter of Dezrian voices. It was easy spotting Qay, who was sitting alone at a large banquet-style table. Behind him, an opaque curtain sectioned off the space like a room divider.

I caught his gaze, and my heart lifted when he broke into a smile so heartfelt and sincere all my fears and doubts dissolved.

When I walked toward Qay, there was an increase of noise, however subtle. I stood out from the crowd like a bloody thumb. Everyone was dressed in shades of gray and white and soft yellow, whereas my dress was like a beacon of fire. Even Qay was dressed in gray, wide-cut pants and a vest that showed off his broad chest. His bare arms bulged with muscles as he placed his hands on the table and stood up, his skin shimmering in copper-golden tones.

“How was your first night on Dezra?” he asked, taking my hand.

“I didn’t expect to be all *alone*.” Torn between falling around his neck and jumping him, I took the less hyper option and settled down at the table.

Qay laughed, patting my thigh. “It won’t happen again, I promise. But the first night is traditionally a night the bride has to spend alone to reflect.”

“Someone should have told me.” My gaze fell on Kyra, who was seated at a table not far away, seemingly unharmed and communicating with a couple of Dezrians. I waved, satisfied when she waved back.

I opened my mouth as Qay held something to my lips while his hand slipped beneath my dress to settle on my bare thigh. A burst of sweetness exploded on my tongue. “This is good,” I said, licking my lips for more. “Native fruit?”

“Yes, we will start trading it soon.”

I accepted another piece of the syrupy yellowish fruit, starting to really enjoy myself. “What’s behind there?” I asked, pointing to the curtain.

“Our bed,” he said, sounding so at ease, I first wondered if I’d misheard him. “This is where you’ll spend your second night.”

“Our bed,” I replied, sure that I’d misunderstood. “How do you mean?”

“Jana,” he said, pushing another piece of fruit into my mouth as if bribing me, “the people of Dezra have the right to witness their leader taking his wife. It’s tradition.”

“While we are in *bed*?”

“While we are in fact in the same room as anyone else, there won’t be any need to open the curtain. See, we tried to appease my Earth-born wife’s sensibilities. The curtain is only for your benefit. If you wish, we can remove it though.”

“It’s fine like it is. Fine.” I laughed because my nerves got the better of me.

Qay winked at me, his hand sliding even higher up my thigh. I drowned in his gray gaze until his touch on my leg became more insistent, his fingers massaging my inner thigh, and I felt myself becoming aroused by the gentle yet alluring movement. I squirmed on the chair, shot a look around as he lightly touched my clit through the sheer panties. I was seduced by my handsome fiancé while no one seemed to mind one bit. Maybe another tradition. I bit on my lip to keep from grinning.

I inched closer, rubbing my shoulder against him, and placed my hand on his thigh. “I missed you so much,” I whispered in his ear, stroking his leg from his knee up to his groin. I slipped my hand to the inside of his thigh, moved my hand up, found him hard. “Can we use the bed behind this handy curtain now?”

Whatever Qay answered, it was drowned out by a loud bang as a set of wide doors flew open at the other end of the hall.

A gust of hot wind swept into my face. The chatter around me ceased as a man strode into the hall, but he was still too far away to make out his features. He held a leash in his hand and I rose to my feet as I saw what was on the end of that leash. A big, snarling cat that looked ready to kill whatever had the misfortune to stumble in its path.

Next to me, Qay gave a weary sigh. “Ah, there he is. You can count on him to stick to the most primitive of traditions.”

“Who is that?” I asked, squinting.

“Our best man.”

Even from a distance, I could see that he was tall for Qay’s people, dressed in loose-fitting pants, his chest bare. If I didn’t know better, then—

My gasp came out hoarse and I stifled the next one with my hand.

I grasped around the edge of the table, ignoring that Qay spoke to me in a soothing voice, but I failed to comprehend the meaning. All I knew was that the man holding the leash of the large cat stared at me out of hard, almost black, terribly familiar eyes.

He fell to one knee before the table, but his head was lifted, meeting my gaze square-on. "As it is tradition, I brought you a gift." He held out the leash.

My knuckles turned white around the table.

He was still on one knee, his outstretched hand holding the leash. Looking at him, looking into his demanding dark gaze made my knees weak and my body limp. All the nights I had woken up with nightmares, all the nights I had woken up, writhing with shame and fear and *lust*. As many times as I'd dreamed about how I had turned him down, as many times I'd dreamed about giving him what he wanted. Giving him myself.

Qay gave me a nudge. "Take the cat."

As if on autopilot, I pushed up from my seat and walked around the table toward Zyn. Looking thoroughly pissed, the cat was a shade of midnight blue with even darker stripes.

Zyn rose to his feet, towered over me as he gazed at me with his intense eyes. I took the leash from his outstretched hand. Something reached out to me and wrapped around my body. Like a hot whip. It prodded, pushed, and I shivered hard, my cunt clenching and unclenching in sudden need. It was as if a dozen hands stroked my body all at once. Something was sliding along my skin, sharp and hot and lethal, like a knife. A whimper shot from my mouth. My breath becoming oddly ragged, I turned on my heel and fled through the curtain behind the table.

Shielded from view, I collapsed on one of three chairs surrounding a decked-out table. The dark-tinted curtain dimmed the light, but that the table was set for three didn't escape me. Feeling cornered didn't even begin to describe my emotions. Too late, I noticed that I had tugged a snarling wild cat along. I let the leash drop, swallowing a shriek. The animal paced the expanse of the space, jumped on the huge bed. I looked at the rich red sheets and all I could think of was blood.

"Jana, let's talk."

Qay's calm voice came from behind me, but I didn't look up to meet his gaze.

"Why didn't you tell me?" I said, a feeling of betrayal rising fast within me. "And who is he? I thought he was the chief negotiator, but that's not it, is it?" Qay had said the best man was Dezra's king. I felt my world spin. "I don't want him as our best man. Order him away, send him on a mission, I don't care. Just send him away."

"I'm afraid that's not possible. He's above my command." Qay pulled me from the chair into his arms. I wanted to push him away, but his embrace felt too good, too comforting, and his hands started wandering over my body, so gently, so calmly.

I licked my suddenly dry lips. "The book...what about the best man is taken to be literal?"

"Do you trust me?"

I hesitated, acknowledging that my trust in him wasn't absolute anymore. But I did love him. The weeks with him had shown me a man worthy of every woman's love. He was intelligent and respectful and gentle, and he made me laugh. "I do love you so much. But I wish you hadn't kept that from me." I shook my head, stealing a glance at the curtain. He was there, just a thin fabric away. "Why, Qay, why not tell me?"

“Would you have come to my home if I had?” Qay asked. “Please, don’t let fear stand in the way of our happiness. Give us a chance.”

“Us?” I asked, fearing the answer.

“Us three.”

“There’s no *us* if it involves *him*.”

Zyn shouldered through the curtain into the room.

“I don’t want your gift,” I said, but it sounded like a challenge and I wished I had kept my mouth shut.

“You already accepted it, but I’ll keep her for you.” His chest muscles moved as he poured himself a drink, not wine, but a clear liquid from a glass flask. His movement was as graceful as that of the large cat. When he pulled up a chair, I backed away from the table. The cat jumped from the bed to settle at his feet as if he’d told her to.

I suddenly remembered Kyra’s words of caution. I wasn’t on Earth anymore. I had no rights whatsoever on Dezra. Who would stop Zyn from doing whatever he wanted with me? No one.

“Jana,” Qay said. “Say the word and I’ll call Kyra and she’ll take you back to Earth.”

His words relaxed the tight knot in my stomach.

Then I made the mistake of seeking out Zyn’s gaze. The expression in his eyes spoke volumes. Ever so slightly, he shook his head, looking positively evil. He wouldn’t let me go. He had me where he had wanted me all along. On Dezra, stripped of all my authority and rights. But I believed Qay, believed him with everything I held dear. I wouldn’t give him up, I wouldn’t.

Even if I had to face Zyn.

“What happens during our second night?” I looked at Qay, steeling myself. “What role does he play?”

“He will witness our joining.”

My stomach bottomed out and I grew faint. “What else? Anything else you should tell me? Because I can’t stand any more surprises tonight.”

I thought I heard Zyn chuckle but didn’t dare look at him.

Qay paced the room, looking every bit as restless as I felt inside. He settled on the edge of the bed, working his hand through his hair as if buying himself more time. “It is the best man’s right to prepare the bride for her husband.”

“Let’s get another best man then,” I said quickly, mentally crossing my fingers.

“As the king,” Qay said quietly, “he has the right to *demand* to be the best man at *any* wedding on Dezra. Not that he’s ever insisted on this right. But for *my* wedding, there’s no other option. It is trad—”

“Yes, I know,” I snapped, getting irritated. “It’s *tradition*. Will he touch me though?”

“Do you want me to?” Zyn said before Qay could answer. When I shook my head, he grinned and said, “But I’ll touch you anyway, everywhere.”

There was a small thrill running through me at his words, and I stepped in front of Zyn, between his legs as he sat on the chair, trying to ignore that I had to share this space with the cat resting there. His brows lifted as if caught by surprise by my sudden bold move.

“Strip the dress off me.” I spoke it as a command, feeling that if I took control, I wouldn’t feel as helpless. “Do whatever tradition demands.” I was aware that I was fooling myself, using

tradition as an excuse for giving in, but it was this or admitting that I wanted Zyn to touch me, dominate me. And I wasn't ready to admit to that, because it would mean I'd learned nothing from the mistake in my past.

He rose, and I didn't flinch away, not even when he stepped so close his thighs brushed against mine. I had to tip my head back to meet his gaze, to watch the expression in his eyes change from amused to cool, as if he didn't like me taking control. Leaning forward, he rested his cheek against mine, as a lover might do to whisper sweet nothings. "I will tame you," he said so quietly only I could hear. "I'll have you on your knees, on a leash, just like the cat I gave you. And you cannot run from me. I'll never let you go again."

I jerked my head back, stared into the depths of his eyes as he closed his hands around my shoulders. He brushed the shoulder straps of my dress down my arms, and then turned me around. His breath warm against my bare neck, he found the small buttons holding my dress together. I felt him reaching out to me with his thoughts. The dress fell to my feet and a wave of warmth enveloped me, like an embrace. It was strangely pleasant.

"Open your eyes," he said, and I did, hadn't even noticed that I'd closed them.

He knelt in front of me and I lifted each foot when he grasped my ankles to take off the flat shoes. I crossed my arms in front of my chest because I was naked except for the flimsy excuse of fabric that was my panties. When he rose to his feet, the tip of his nose brushed over my mound, my belly, and he breathed in deeply, as if he was trying to inhale the scent of my cunt.

When he leaned forward, as if to kiss me, I turned my head.

Zyn lowered himself to his knees again, pulling my panties down at the same time. The sight of him kneeling in front of me was odd, felt wrong, but I couldn't say why. I almost grabbed him by the shoulders to pull him up again. My breath came in hard, fast gasps as he settled his hand around my hip. "I will touch you now."

Before I had a chance to think about what he meant, he had cupped me in his palm. He pressed his hand against my clit, slipped a finger inside me. He looked up, revealing sharp canines as he grinned. It made me feel like prey.

"You're wet," he said, moving his finger ever so slowly in and out of me. "You like what I do, don't you?"

"Qa-ay." I heard the panic in my own voice. "Are you sure it's tradition that he, he—" I broke off, wondering if the best man was really allowed to make the bride almost come with his touch.

"He will prepare you for me," Qay answered, his eyes slightly hooded, his voice rough from arousal, "in every sense of the word. It is his right. And it is your right to take pleasure in it."

Zyn moved his hand between my legs while his dark gaze rested on my face. The onslaught of sensation was so strong, the hand between my legs so skilled, I wasn't sure how to fight the waves of arousal anymore. The emotions he stirred inside me didn't even remotely resemble a level of arousal I considered normal. Uncontrolled, a moan escaped me. Whatever he thought he needed to prepare, I wasn't sure what more it was. I was drenched, my juices covered his palm.

Abruptly, he pulled his hand back, leaving me to stagger after him. Zyn took my hand, walked me to Qay. "Your bride is ready." He added words in the high language, too fast for me to understand and spoken with an unnatural rasp to his voice. Whatever he'd said, it seemed to please Qay.

Qay rose from the bed and Zyn took off Qay's vest to bare his upper body.

I held my breath, watching how he continued to undress Qay. He did it with sure, quick movements, not the slow, caressing touch he'd used undressing me. Yet, as he untied Qay's pants and pulled them over his hips, there was a subtle sensuality between them that drew me in.

I didn't need the push against the small of my back Zyn gave me.

Qay's cock stood ready and willing as he eased himself between the sheets. I wanted him, wanted nothing sophisticated but him on top of me, his cock inside me, making us one. But we weren't one. We weren't even two. We were three and I couldn't get it out of my head. That Zyn pulled a chair to the bed to watch Qay and me more comfortably wasn't helping.

I slid my knee on top of the mattress and Qay did the rest, wrapping his hands around my waist and pulling me close. His erection nudged against my hip and I twisted in his arms, glad when he moved on top of me. I closed my eyes, focusing on the feel and taste of his kiss.

This was going to be my husband, and if he was fine with another man's presence while we had sex, so would I be. Qay kissed my neck, tiny kisses that relaxed and aroused me all at once. His mouth moved from my neck down to my breasts, and I pulled the sheets up, covering us, shielding us from view. Qay sat up between my legs, gazing down at me. "Let me look at you, my heart," he whispered, and my throat tightened. He could look all he wanted, his heated gaze leaving little shivers of pleasure on my skin.

But when I tilted my head, I saw that he wasn't the only one looking. My breath hitched and I crossed my arms over my breasts because my nipples rose to almost painful attention.

"Let me look at you—please," Qay said again, and I dropped my arms to my sides because I didn't want him to think that I felt the need to hide in front of his eyes. I focused on Qay, on the way light and shadows danced over his face as he braced himself up on his hands above me. He lowered his head to take one of my nipples into his mouth. He sucked, tenderly, and I buried my hands into his hair to tug him closer.

I heard Zyn move and opened my eyes. He stood beside the bed, his gaze resting on my face as if he tried to drink in every drop of emotion showing there. Like an exhalation, a warm breeze touched my face.

The similarity to the image in the book didn't escape me, but I didn't reach for him, I didn't want him to join in. My gaze fell to the large cat pacing the room, and I wasn't sure what was the greater danger—Zyn or this wild animal.

Qay was kissing my breasts, my stomach, working his way down between my legs. I loved it when he licked me with his clever tongue. "So wet, my heart." The first lick he gave my clit had me moaning out loud. His traced his tongue along my cunt lips and flicked my clit. It felt good, so good, but I was growing more and more anxious.

Then I heard a low, almost growling sound coming from Zyn.

I gathered the courage to meet his gaze square-on while Qay was between my legs, his tongue licking and his mouth sucking, but I knew I wouldn't be able to find pleasure if I continued to be scared.

"Do you have to look at me?" I said quietly, gazing up at him. "Surely, you can witness us from farther away."

"Why? There is nothing shameful about watching a woman enjoying the attention of a male."

It wasn't the answer I expected. Then again, he'd never done anything I expected, good or bad. I gazed at his sharply drawn face, his perfectly shaped lips. And for one weak moment, I imagined his mouth between my legs, his tongue, his kisses.

My thoughts were roughly interrupted when Zyn let out a bark of laughter. "Damn you, woman. Just ask me to. Tonight, I might just do your bidding."

Qay glanced up. "Jana, if you want him to join us, just nod and we'll both take care of you."

"Ask me," Zyn said, his voice as tempting as a long drink of water after a drought.

"No." I held my breath, wondering if they would just do it anyway. They didn't, and deep down I wasn't sure if I was glad or disappointed. Zyn stepped away from the bed and settled on the chair again.

A violent shiver went through my body, violent enough for Qay to notice. After one last kiss against my cunt, he again rose up above me, his cock nudging at my opening. I slung my arms around his strong body, the security he offered, and hid underneath him.

Qay kissed me deep and thoroughly, his tongue delving between my lips, caressing the inside of my mouth. I wrapped my legs around him, wishing for a moment I could mount him. But that would leave me overly exposed to Zyn.

"Make me yours tonight, please," I whispered against Qay's neck. I reached between our bodies, wrapped my hand around his thick cock, guiding him between my legs. I loved the feel of him, always had. The soft, velvety smoothness with a core of steel. "This night is for us, to become one."

"Yes, my heart, this night is for us. The joining of the heart and mind." He put his strength behind it as he lowered himself into me, his thick cock inching slowly into my cunt. I welcomed the stretch as he filled me, my heart lifting that we were finally one again. He slowly began moving, the friction making my breath catch. Qay was propped up on his hands, working his way in and out of my body in slow and deliberate movements. I loved this about him, the control, the way he made sure he didn't push in too hard. With him, it was always slow, a careful, orchestrated climb until I reached the crest of my arousal. I watched how his cock slid into my wet core and moved my hand to my clit, rubbing myself in slow circles to increase my pleasure. I clenched around his cock, took him deeper as I wrapped my legs around his waist.

I sought Qay's gray gaze, but he was lost in his own pleasure, his eyes closed. My head tipped back as he moved faster. The tingling in my clit increased to an aching need and my nipples stood hard and erect, begging for a touch. I closed my hand around my breast, lightly pinching my nipple.

I hesitated for only a second before I turned my head. I sought Zyn's cool, dark-eyed gaze, held it. My breath came faster as he slowly rose from the chair. He was hard, the ridge of his cock pressed against his pants. All I had to do was hold out my hand to pull him into bed. But no one had ever scared me more than this male, so big, strong, so seemingly merciless. I would have no control in his arms.

I held his gaze and pinched my nipples. The pain shot through my body, made my cunt clench around the cock inside me. I let out a harsh moan, my climax close, but I didn't want to give in yet. *Do it again*, something whispered in my mind. I didn't know if the voice was really Zyn or if I just started to lose it. I arched up against Qay and pinched my nipples again. The way the pain ebbed into pleasure was heaven.

“Jana,” Qay said, and feeling strangely guilty, I gazed at him, trying to ignore Zyn. “I love you, my heart.”

I wrapped my arms around his shoulders, nestled my face against his neck, telling him over and over again that I loved him too. I pumped my hips stronger against him, urging him on to a faster rhythm. He obliged me, his thrusts growing harder and faster. “Yes,” I whispered, “yes, there, my love, do it harder.” My head tipped back and I looked at Zyn.

I rocked myself against Qay, taking his cock deeper into my aching cunt while I kept my gaze locked with Zyn’s. A gust of wind whipped at my face, touched my mouth like a kiss.

Ask me.

I knew that it was Zyn, that he was able to touch me with his thoughts, able to read my mind and speak to me. Again he nudged me with his mind, and I gritted my teeth.

Qay brought me effortless pleasure. In his arms, I felt loved and cherished, and when he thrust inside me, I felt at one with him. I didn’t want to feel that with Zyn, but I wanted to feel myself lose control, wanted to give up every shred of thought in favor of a dark passion I didn’t dare to seek. But all I needed to do was ask him.

I mouthed *no* at him, turned my head away.

Something hot and hard pinched my nipples with invisible fingers. I screamed out, my release crashing over me unexpectedly. I clung to Qay, riding the spasms of my orgasm, feeling his thrusts becoming deeper until he came with a hoarse shout, his cock pulsing inside me as he spilled his seed.

After I could breathe again, I dug my nails into Qay’s back, not sure what just happened. “Tell him to leave.”

Qay gave a sigh, pulled out of my body in one slick motion. “He’s already gone.”

I closed my eyes, all tension draining out of me. I spooned myself against him, sighing in bliss.

“You have read the book, right, my heart?” Qay asked, and I had the feeling that not all was as well as it should be. “Did you understand everything?”

I moved in his arms, twisted my body to face him. “I understood that we wouldn’t be alone. But I got that over and done with.” When he didn’t answer, a chill crept up me back. “What more is there?”

“There’s another night,” he said quietly. “Only after the third night you’ll make your decision to accept us, to accept that you are part of three.”

“Part of three,” I repeated. “Okay, so tomorrow I’ll sleep with you and he gets to prepare me again?”

“No, my heart,” he whispered. “Tomorrow night, I will prepare you for him.”

Chapter Two

“You look beautiful.” Qay held out his hand. “Ready?”

No, I wasn’t ready to see Zyn tonight, but if he was the path to Qay, I was willing to follow it.

I smoothed my dress down—a deep black fabric with shades of gray made from the same silky material I already knew. I had wondered how the women dressing me had known that it matched my mood perfectly. I even liked the dark high-heeled shoes, which gave me the necessary height to kiss Qay without rising to my toes.

I lost track of direction as Qay led me through a labyrinth of hallways, but the general direction was up. He pushed open a set of wide doors and led me inside. The room resembled my own quarters, only less furnished, almost barren. Harsh, like Zyn.

But it had a bed, and I intended to get it over with quickly.

I turned to Qay. “And you are sure you want me to sleep with him?”

Qay smiled, his eyes crinkling. “You take a moment and ask yourself what *you* want.”

“You, I want you,” I said without hesitation. I took his hand, placed it against my chest, letting him feel the rhythm of my heartbeat. “This is what I want. You and me, beat after beat, year after year, together.”

“We all need balance in life,” Qay said. “We all need something more. And there is nothing more perfect than the joining of heart, mind and soul.”

I bit my lip. “There’s something else you’re not telling me, right?”

“Zyn is Dezra’s ruler by birth,” Qay said quietly, “and he has abilities no one else has. I was *elected* to rule at his side. He’s Dezra’s soul, and I am the mind. It is a law that we must find one woman to complete us. We both love you. But if you don’t choose us in return—”

“Stop,” I said, holding up my hand. “He does *not* love me, so there’s that.”

I searched the room for Zyn, but I only found the large cat roaming restlessly. “Where is he?” I asked, shivering slightly.

The cat prowled toward me, ears flat to the head. I took one step back then another. The cat leaped, snarling. I froze in fear, sure that I’d feel teeth sinking into my skin any second, when a rush of heat whipped past my face. In an instant, the cat collapsed and sprinted into the far corner of the room.

“Miss me?” Zyn’s voice came from behind me and my heart jumped into my throat. I swiveled around then took a step back because he was so close.

“That cat. I don’t want her. Set her free.” Clearly, he hadn’t tamed the animal but only controlled her with his mind. “It’s not right to keep her captive.”

Zyn regarded me with a cool expression, his thoughts impossible to guess. Then I saw what he held in his hand and I couldn’t stop myself from staring. “I guess...I guess they came with the horses.” I went cold then so hot my face felt on fire.

“What, this thing?” Zyn hit the flat end of the riding crop against his palm. “Interesting sound, don’t you think?”

I lowered my gaze because the gleam in Zyn’s eyes made my heart skip a beat.

“Let’s save your answer for later,” Zyn said, holding a polished dark wooden box under my nose. “In the meantime, open your present.”

“You open it,” I said, and when he did, flipping the box open, I sucked in a breath. A copper-colored necklace engraved with a three-leaved flower pattern rested against the polished wood. He took the piece from the box. Cold metal greeted my skin as he wound the choker around my neck. I touched it, traced the engraved pattern.

He leaned forward, his mouth close to my ear as he brushed a strand of hair away from my face. “Now you look like the cat after I caught her and put a collar around her neck. Are you going for my throat too? Or will you kneel at my feet?”

My stomach curled tight. I caught Qay’s gaze, sure he would take off the necklace because it was such a blatant sign of ownership.

But he didn’t.

Instead, Qay stepped to me to unlace my dress. It pooled to my feet and I froze, caught unaware that I suddenly found myself wearing only a pair of panties and shoes. The high heels forced my back into an arc that pushed my breasts forward and I found both men staring.

“Let’s get this over with,” I said, sounding bolder than I felt. I just needed to spread my legs for Zyn, it should be easy. But I’d make sure I wouldn’t give him the satisfaction of climaxing in his arms. I tugged the panties over my hips, tossed them aside.

Zyn laughed—a low, infuriatingly sexy laugh that sent my body all the wrong signals. He took me by the elbow and led me to the bed. I climbed on, flipped on my back. “Ready when you are.” I decided that it was best to handle the affair matter-of-factly.

I saw the two men exchange a glance, almost felt a whisper of thoughts cross through the room. Were they talking about me?

Zyn climbed onto the bed, hooked my leg over his arm, spreading me. The sight of him between my legs was more than startling, it was terrifying. He gazed at me, and the spark gleaming in the depths of his eyes was even more discomfiting. He knew I wanted to get it over quickly, but what could he do against it? What?

Qay leaned forward, his fingers slipping between my thighs. The back of his hand brushed my clit. A low moan escaped me as I realized how wet I already was. I would prefer it to hurt when Zyn thrust his cock inside me. Taking pleasure from his touch was wrong. There was only one male who was allowed to bring me pleasure and that was my future husband. That was how I’d dreamed it to be, as a girl, gazing at the stars and seeing spaceships sailing across the sky. I’d wished upon them to bring me a kind, gentle and loving husband. Something had heard my wish and sent me Qay, and that was all I’d ever asked for.

Qay slipped inside me, working his finger in and out of my cunt until I writhed with lust. I swallowed as Zyn pulled his pants over his hips, freeing his erect cock. His hand came to brace itself next to my head, and Qay’s hand was still on one of my knees, as if he was trying to prevent me from closing my thighs.

“I told you you’d be mine,” Zyn said to me quietly, guiding the thick head of his cock between my folds. He thrust forward in one hard shove. My breath came in a sharp gasp at the

feeling of him. My muscles clenched as he spread me. It was a shock to feel him penetrate me, and all my intentions to be snide and blasé evaporated as he pushed his thick cock deeper inside my cunt. I had thought I knew how it would feel, having him inside me.

He'd kissed me. He'd read my mind. He'd even brought me to an orgasm. But he'd never penetrated me. He'd never really fucked me before. I gazed at him, the reality of the act sinking in with sharp clarity as he moved his hips flush against mine. Then he said something that sent my entire being into a spasm of fright.

"Qay, leave us alone."

"No," I yelled, trying to get up, but the movement alone wrought a startled moan from my lips. Zyn's weight pinned me to the bed, almost crushed me. Already I couldn't feel Qay's hand on my knee anymore, already I saw him turning away.

"But, but..." I raked me mind. "You *have* to stay. It's tradition."

"I already witnessed the joining of heart and soul."

And I watched him leave the room, my heart breaking. How could I ever forgive him?

When the door clicked shut, the silence in the room grew thicker with each second. I closed my eyes, knowing it made no sense to fight. Zyn was too strong. When he moved on top of me, I bit back a moan. I loathed that the friction of his cock stroking my insides brought me pleasure.

"I don't care," I said, trying to hide my broken heart in sarcasm. "Feel free to fuck me any way you want to."

"Your permission, my heart, is something I won't need tonight."

My damn breasts tightened as he pulled his cock out of me, the movement wringing a sharp intake of breath from my lungs. I grit my teeth, waiting for him to thrust in again, waiting for him to fuck me like the savage he was.

When he moved from the mattress, making me bounce on top of it, I stared after him. He'd pulled his pants up, walked to a small table and poured himself a glass of clear liquid.

"Thirsty?" he asked, carrying the glass over to me.

"Trying to make me drunk?"

"Sit up," he said, and like a puppet on strings I did, didn't even think about it. My throat tightened, seeing him loom above me while I was at his mercy on his bed, wearing nothing but a pair of shoes. "Now drink."

I took the glass. Water ran down my throat. I actually would have preferred something stronger. When the glass was empty, I flung it across the room. "You did that on purpose, you bastard."

"I thought it would be best to get past all that tradition first, so I could send your lover away."

"What the *hell* do you want from me?"

"You know," he said quietly. "You know what we both want from one another."

"What?" I whispered, knowing what he meant but not ready to admit it.

"I will give you the pleasure you crave," he said. "The kind of pleasure Qay can't give you because he loves you too much. He has mastered your heart, but not your body. I'll master both."

"I won't let you." I got up from the bed, had already crossed the room when a heavy hand fell on my shoulder. "I want to leave."

“You don’t want to leave.” The cruel edge to his voice sent shivers down my back. His hand came around my neck, held me still. He lifted my hair and something cold slid along my skin and snapped shut around the necklace. He gave a tug at the leash. “Now we’ll play.”

Chapter Three

He had clipped a leash to the choker, and if I was honest with myself, I'd known from the start he would. He'd been inside my head, knew what I craved, and he was giving it to me, one cruel move at a time.

Zyn returned my gaze, leisurely checking me out, holding the leash in one hand, and in the other—the riding crop.

I wrapped my arms around my chest. But my stupid shoes forced my back into an arc, pushing my breasts forward and my ass backward. I could deal with nakedness, but those shoes turned me into his plaything, his object. Blood rushed to my face and shame crept up my spine under his scrutinizing gaze.

I was glad that he had sent Qay away.

He stepped behind me and swung the riding crop at my ass. I bit my lip, catching the moan that wanted to escape at the sound of leather meeting my bare skin with a satisfying snap. And there was the sting, the pain that his smack had evoked.

It hadn't really hurt—the smack. Not nearly enough. But the implications of him swatting at my bare ass while I stood before him, wearing those shoes, the choker, the leash. It brought me to my knees. Lust tugged at me, intensified by the humiliation he put me through.

Crouching, he seized me by my neck and tugged my head up, forcing me to look at him. Calmly, he said, "I didn't allow you to kneel. The next time you do anything without being given permission, I'll punish you."

This was when I stopped pretending that I didn't long for Zyn.

He stroked the riding crop lightly over my breasts. My cunt spasmed as he gave each nipple a sharp little flick. I didn't know how much he could sense of my desires. But he licked his lips like a snake tasting the air when I let out a long moan. He didn't penetrate my thoughts, hadn't tried to. But I was astutely aware that he still sensed something about me. My inner thighs were damp and I noticed how his gaze was drawn to the juncture between my legs. I spread my thighs, just a little, giving him more to look at. My move didn't fool him. He knew exactly that I was baiting him.

The flat tip of the riding crop traveled over my stomach and a breathless surge of excitement gripped me. I wanted to lose myself in his touch, in his cruelty, but couldn't. Something was holding me back, and I realized that if I ever wanted to find mindless pleasure with him, he would need to earn my limitless trust. How, I couldn't say. But I found myself wanting him to find a way for me to submit completely and utterly to his wishes.

I wanted him to rope me, spank me. I wanted his sadistic eyes on me as he shamed me into tears. I craved this rough treatment, it made me feel alive. And I wanted him to fuck me, never knowing what he would do or demand next.

Pointing with the riding crop to the bed, he said, "Get over there."

I rose to one knee, attempting to stand, when a hard tug at the choker brought me down on my knees again. Wincing, tears shot into my eyes as the metal choker bit into my neck.

The smack he wielded had me crying out. There was nothing teasing about how he had brought the crop against my ass.

“Why did you try to stand?”

I shook my head, my movement restricted by him holding the leash. “I just thought—”

“Don’t,” he said. “Now get over to the bed.”

He stayed behind me, leash in hand, and I felt his gaze against my ass as I crawled on all fours toward the bed.

“Stop,” he said, giving me a light tap with the crop. He grabbed one, two thick pillows and stacked them on top of each other in the middle of the bed. “Up,” he said, nodding toward the pile of cushions.

I slid myself onto it, resting my upper body on the length of the cushions, keeping my knees on the hard floor. I hugged my arms around the pillows, enjoying the softness at my breasts while my knees already hurt from kneeling on the floor.

“Spread those legs,” he said, slapping my inner thighs with the crop. “Don’t get up from this position until I tell you to. If you ever feel the need to scream, you can muffle the sound by biting into the pillow.” He laughed, a truly dark sound that had my nipples hardening into aching points. I rubbed against the pillow until a tug at the leash had me gasping. “Stop that,” he said. “You will not touch yourself or bring yourself pleasure in any way.”

He tugged harder at the leash, putting pressure on my throat, making me gasp for breath. I wanted to rise to ease the strain but couldn’t. He hadn’t allowed me to move, and obeying him was more pleasurable than getting oxygen.

When I stopped rubbing against the pillow, the pressure of the choker against my throat eased.

The riding crop traveled up my inner thigh. “Spread more so I can spank your cunt.” He dealt my ass another slap, softer this time.

A hard shiver gripped my body, fear rising to the surface like the blush surely blossoming on my face. I arched my back, pushing up my ass, and spread my legs more for him. I couldn’t see him standing behind me, I kept my face buried in the soft pillow, but I felt his hot gaze until my entire body burned with lust. Would he be able to see my shaved cunt, how wet I was? Wasn’t he tempted to run his hand through my folds? I rocked my hips, stopped when he smacked me. Heat bloomed beneath my skin and I bit into the pillow, desperate for release.

When he stroked the tip of the crop over the slick folds of my cunt, I cried out with relief.

He grazed the crop up and down my bare lips. “You like spreading your legs for me, making me see how wet you are, don’t you?”

When I didn’t answer, he flicked the crop against my clit. The touch raced along my body like a current, enflaming every nerve. I bit into the pillow because the moan I let out was one of pure lust and I didn’t want him to know for fear he would stop punishing me this way.

“Answer.”

“Yes,” I whispered. “I want you to see me spread open.”

“Why?”

This time, I controlled my hips, controlled my urge to jump up and hump the pillow if need be to find my orgasm. “I want you to fuck me.”

“Maybe I don’t want to fuck you,” he said quietly. “What I want is to see you writhe on the floor, until all you can think of is how you can please me.” He slipped the crop’s small leather paddle between my folds and turned it, spreading me open. “You do want to please me, don’t you?”

My throat was too tight to speak. Then I heard something that forced me to freeze, made my heart stop for a second or two.

Footsteps, but not Zyn’s, who always moved silently like a cat.

“Who is that?” I quickly closed my eyes. I didn’t want to see who was watching me, on my knees, submitting to Zyn. But I knew it had to be Qay—it had to be. Shame crept up my spine, leaving me breathless. And so aroused and needy for some form of release, I’d do anything for Zyn to get it.

“Answer.” He dealt my ass another slap, softer this time, ignoring my question. “You do want to please me, don’t you?”

“You know I do,” I whispered, and the knowledge that Qay might look on, might be in the same room sent my awareness into overdrive.

“Yes, I do know what you crave; know exactly what you need too.” He slapped the crop down on the small of my back. “Close your eyes.”

They already were. I sensed rather than heard him walking through the room. When he came back, his hand settled on my shoulder. Then he slipped something in front of my eyes, blindfolding me. He smacked me, nothing more than a light tap. “Push your ass higher.”

I arched my back, biting back a sob when he said, “Not good enough.” Air went into my lungs in a sharp hiss as a series of rapid smacks landed on my cheeks, each stroke a little harder. I felt flushed and swollen and I breathed out with a sob that turned into a high-pitched cry every time the riding crop smacked my ass.

Pain and lust clouded my mind until I only heard his harsh breath and my own moans of pleasure. Stars exploded before my eyes when a slap landed between my legs, the small paddle hitting my clit. Then a hand slipped between my legs, rubbing my throbbing cunt. I bit down on the pillow as a sudden orgasm rocked through my body in quick convulsions. My inner thighs were still quivering when I opened my eyes behind the blindfold, and I rested the side of my face against the pillow.

“Did I give you permission?” He gave my cunt another surprisingly gentle slap, but it still felt as if I had touched a bolt of lightning.

“No,” I whispered, fearing he’d stop playing with me. “Let me please you. Let me show you I can be good.”

He made a rough sound in his throat. “Fine. We’ll see if you can make it up to me.” The crop hit the floor, and I heard him walking through the room and opening something with sliding hinges. I knew he would come back with something to punish me for climaxing without permission, and I scrambled to wrap my mind around what it might be.

“I’ll be enjoying this.” He gathered my wrists behind my back, wrapped something that felt like a rope around them. His groin pressed against my ass as if he were about to fuck me from behind. I could only wish. My orgasm had left me wetter than before. When he pulled the ropes tight, securing my wrists behind my back, the material warmed against my skin. “I’ll take my pleasure with you now.”

I couldn't suppress a yelp as he grabbed me by the rope around my wrists and yanked me up and off the bed. On the floor, I sat up on my heels, aware that my entire body trembled. I felt watched as I sat there, blindfolded, and I started to wonder whose hand had reached between my legs to make me come. Had it been Zyn or Qay?

I tensed as a hand closed around my breast and twisted my nipple, and another hand came to rest on top of my head. I heard how fabric slid to the floor, and I imagined Zyn taking off his pants, imagined his erect cock resting against his stomach. I licked my lips, anticipating, knowing what Zyn would make me do.

Still, I jumped when a third hand settled on my shoulder.

"Qay," I whispered, sure that I'd die of humiliation that he saw me like this. But even stronger was my need, my wish to be dominated. "Qay, talk to me, please."

Zyn laughed quietly, the tone in his laugh giving me pause. "Maybe it's just a complete stranger, my heart. Maybe I'll make you suck him off. Maybe I'll let him fuck you. Do you want to be used like this?"

I shook my head, his words both repulsing and arousing me, I couldn't help it. He was playing with me, he wouldn't let a stranger fuck me. But I didn't know, I didn't *know*.

I licked my lips, wound so tight I thought I might burst, when the thick head of a cock pushed at my mouth. Then a hand fisted into my hair, pulled me forward.

"Open your mouth," Zyn said quietly from above my head.

For him, I did, and he pushed his cock between my lips. I sucked him in and out of my mouth, my eyes watering behind the blindfold as he shoved his erection deeper.

"Deeper," he growled, withdrew when I began to gag, gave me a moment to concentrate and then pushed his cock in even farther. "Take me, take me all in."

He fucked my mouth, his thrusts growing faster and brutal, his hoarse groans arousing me. I could feel him swell against my tongue, knew he was about to come in my mouth, welcomed it too when he pulled out.

I made a noise of protest when I felt Zyn stepping away from me. My heart beat faster, my breath leaving my lungs in hard gasps when a hand stroked my cheek tenderly. I opened my mouth as a cock pressed against my lips. Not Zyn's, and I knew that it was Qay, it had to be him, the size, his taste so familiar. I pulled away and whispered, "I want to taste you," and took his cock deep again, knowing that Qay couldn't resist me, and sure enough, I heard his familiar deep groan as he started fucking my mouth.

Zyn's hands wrapped around me from behind, covering my breasts in his palms, kneading and teasing, and it was his voice telling me to suck harder, faster while his cock pressed against my bound hands. I tasted the saltiness of Qay's arousal and I licked the thick head, taking my time to pleasure him while I rocked my hips, wishing I had my hands free to make myself come.

"That's enough," Zyn said against my neck, pushing me back on my ass. I licked my lips, feeling bereft of the pleasure of tasting Qay's come in my mouth.

"Get back on the bed, same position as before." Zyn gave me a push against my shoulder, not hard, but I fell against the edge of the bed because it was difficult to keep my balance with my arms bound.

I came up on my knees, my heart racing as I leaned myself onto the pillows again. I fully realized that I had stopped fighting Zyn's dominance, but wondered what it meant for my

relationship with Qay when a flat palm spanked the right cheek of my ass. My ability to analyze vanished when the pain from his slap wrapped around my senses.

“I think I’ll have that tight tail of yours now.” Zyn reached between my legs, finding my wetness, spreading it. His slick finger traced lightly over my anus, slowly pushing harder and harder until I relaxed enough to allow its entry, making me shiver in anticipation. “How do you feel about that, my heart? Do you want me to fuck your ass?”

“If...if it pleases you.” I thought of Qay watching me, watching me with Zyn. I moaned, rocking my hips, the need to be filled increasing with every move of Zyn’s finger.

“Yes,” he said, “you please me.” He ran his other hand up and down my back, stroking me, giving me chills. “There was a wound here, once.” He sounded oddly detached, as if he were only thinking out loud. Once more, he ran the tips of his fingers along my back, crisscrossing back and forth. “Many wounds. I didn’t know...”

I swallowed, the gentle touch of his fingers throwing me for a loop. Looked as if he hadn’t unearthed all my thoughts and secrets that day. But I knew what he meant of course. I had paid good money to have the wounds healed and the resulting scars removed. I would have altered my memory too, but preferred to never forget the mistake I had made.

“Who did that?” Zyn asked, getting up and moving away from me, which was absolutely frustrating.

“A man I used to...date.” I kept my voice neutral while I fought to control my emotions. “He cut me.”

“Yes,” Zyn said quietly. “I can see that now.” I heard the snap of the leather crop as if he had flicked it against his palm, and then felt how he traced the crop down my back. “You didn’t like that,” he said. “You don’t like to be cut. You don’t like that kind of pain. Why did he do it if you didn’t like it?” He sounded so genuinely puzzled, I almost laughed.

“No, I didn’t like it one bit. He did it because I agreed to, agreed to...” I shut my mouth. The memory wasn’t as hurtful anymore, yet I didn’t like to think back to the evening where I had agreed to let this guy tie me up. It had excited me, I had longed for it. I had longed to submit to him. I should have stayed in a virtual room with him, but I had wanted the real deal. And paid for it in blood.

But it was long ago—what girl had never made an error in judgment when it came to trusting a man? My throat closed and my limbs started to shake the longer I thought about it. The guy had eventually stopped torturing me and I had moved cities and changed jobs. But here I was again, bound and helpless on the bed of a male a hundred times more frightening than the bastard who had used the knife on me.

I bit back a whimper when Zyn growled behind me. A sharp slap from the crop landed on my ass that made me scream out. Pain blurred my mind, blurred the images and the memory of the night where I had thought I would die. Another slap landed on my other buttock, softer this time, and he made a hushing sound as if I were an animal he was trying to soothe.

If he had said, “You can trust me,” I probably would have started to cry. Because that was what I had heard before a blade sliced my skin open. But Zyn didn’t say those words. Instead, he trailed the crop from my neck down my ass, tickling me. And when he knelt behind me, his hands wrapping around my middle, I felt only need cursing through my veins, not fear.

Zyn already knew what I wanted, what I craved. And I wasn’t sure anymore if that was reason to fear or to trust him.

His hands slipped between my legs, finding my cunt, and he plunged his fingers inside me. "I want you wet and ready and begging for me. Do you understand? Please me."

I let out a strangled cry, aroused at his demanding touch, but it was his words that got to me most. I wanted to please him. My breath came hard as his cock slipped between my legs, rubbing over my clit. I rocked myself against the hard ridge as he pushed his knee between my legs, spreading me wider. He guided the thick head of his cock into me, just the tip, but the sudden invasion left me desperate for more.

"Do it," I pressed through my teeth, my body shaking with suppressed need. "Fuck me."

His low laugh sent shivers down my spine as he raked his fingernails across my back. It hurt, and fear clouded my senses. I barely sensed him getting up, but what I felt when he returned had me holding my breath. Cold metal pressed against my back, the tip of a knife.

I bowed away from the bed, instinctively. The rope holding my wrists dug into my skin as I tried to break free.

Grabbing me by the neck as if I were a cat, he pressed me into the mattress. It was as if all my senses increased tenfold as fear slammed into my body. He ran the metal tip up and down my back, and it was so terribly familiar, I knew that any moment now he would use the knife to slice my skin open.

It took me another second or two to get what he was doing. He cut the rope holding my wrists. When my hands came free, he reminded me with a tug at the leash that I was still wearing his choker.

"On the floor," he said, and I obeyed without thinking. Sliding from the bed, coming up on hands and knees on the floor. He took off the blindfold.

I lifted my head, looked at him towering over me, the crop in his hand. He flicked it against his leg in steady rhythm.

Then I saw Qay, his clothes stripped off, showing how aroused he was. He looked at me with the same love, the same tenderness in his gaze. I swallowed, reached out to him, yet he remained a couple of feet away, maintaining his distance.

"Bow your head to the ground."

I did, rested my forehead against the smooth, cold floor, even though it meant losing sight of Qay. A light slap landed against my flank.

"Raise your ass."

I wanted to spread my legs but didn't in fear he would notice how desperately I wanted his touch, wanted the release of tension, fear and sexual arousal.

He stepped behind me, lowered himself to one knee, pushed my legs farther apart. He thrust the length of his cock into my wet heat in one hard stroke. Making sure he filled me completely, he pulled me hard against his groin. Everything inside me coiled tight as he began to fuck me in raw and hard strokes. I heard myself say his name, even if I hadn't meant to.

He reached forward and wrapped his arms around me, covering my breasts in his hands. He rolled my nipples in his fingers while he pumped his cock into my cunt. And with each stroke he twisted my breasts a little harder, and the pain twisted my lust into an unbearable need for release.

He fucked me almost brutally, as I wanted him to. When he pinched my nipple again, I groaned out, my internal muscles clenching around him while he worked his cock deep into me.

Helplessly, I surrendered to his thrusts and pinches and the twisted way he played with my lust. The way he played with my fear. Closing my eyes, I reveled in the feeling of his thick cock pounding into me. His hand closed around my neck, grasping the collar, reminding me that he had put it around my neck, and that I had let him. That I was his.

I was close, so close, but he pulled out of me, rose to his feet while I rested my cheek against the cool floor, cursing him, thanking him for his cruelty of not giving me satisfaction.

Slowly, my heartbeat calmed, my breathing too. I glanced up at him. His skin glowed, his cock rested hard against his stomach, glistened from my juices.

He hadn't come inside me, and I had the sudden fear that I hadn't pleased him enough. From the corner of my eyes I saw Qay watching me, and shame hit me, shame that I wanted Zyn in the first place. I was in love with Qay. It wasn't okay to crave Zyn as well, was it?

"I know what you need, know what you fear too," Zyn said quietly. He reached down, brushed his hand against my cheek, removed the leash from the choker. "I'll push you to the edge, but I'll never let you fall. Do you understand?"

I lowered my gaze. "Yes."

I couldn't see his smile, but I heard it in his voice. "That will do—for tonight."

Rising to my feet, I wrapped my arms around myself as I met Qay's gaze, knowing I had stripped more than just my clothes in front of both men. Zyn had always known my wish to submit at least sexually to him. But now, meeting Qay's gaze as he walked toward me, blood rushed into my face.

"You stayed," I said, entirely unnecessarily.

"I'd never leave you." Qay closed his arms around me and I leaned my head against his chest. "You don't have to decide between us, only embrace that we are meant to be together." He kissed me slowly and lovingly, and I rubbed my hips against him, against his hard cock, slicking him with my juices. Zyn had brought me close, but he hadn't made me come. Qay wouldn't do that.

I wrapped my arms around Qay's shoulders, my leg around one of his until he swept me into his arms and carried me to bed. I climbed on top of him, his cock hot and hard between my legs. I leaned forward, took him into my mouth to taste him. Working my tongue up and down his shaft, hearing his hoarse groans, I realized I had no control left. My body demanded release. I straddled Qay, taking his cock, inch by inch, into my eager cunt.

I paused, enjoying the feeling of having Qay inside me, then I sought Zyn's gaze. He stood beside the bed, watching me. I followed his lazy movements as he ran his hand up and down his cock. It didn't escape me how similar this was to the scene I had seen in the book.

"Come to us," I whispered, reaching out to him, and took his hand to pull him close. "After all, it's tradition."

Zyn smiled, his dark eyes lighting up, and he moved behind me on the bed, between Qay's legs. Kneeling there, he closed his hands around my hips. He guided me up and down, controlling my movements, then reached between my legs. I looked, closed my eyes with a strangled moan. I moved my hips faster, holding on to the image of Zyn's hand between my legs as he touched me and Qay's cock at the same time.

Qay began to knead my breasts, gently, teasingly, sending hot sparks from his fingertips all over my skin. My nipples hardened under his skilled fingers. I fell against Zyn's chest to enjoy, who bit into my shoulder, sending a firework of lust straight between my legs.

Qay trailed his fingers across my cheek, across my mouth. "Kiss me, Jana," he said, and I leaned forward, seeking his mouth, my hands splayed over his hard chest.

I lost myself in the hands of both men, their fingers, their mouths. Lost myself in touching Qay, tracing every curve of his body, lost myself in the rough touches Zyn gave me until touching and being touched blurred to one feeling. Hands roamed my body, leaving nothing left to explore.

A hard slap landed on my ass, taking away my breath, and Qay wrapped his arms around me, pulled me down against his chest until I rested with my nose nestled at the side of his neck, inhaling his scent. Zyn used some kind of cool lube, fingering my ass. I gasped as the thick head of a cock replaced his fingers. I clenched around Qay's cock while Zyn pushed slowly into me.

"I'm going to fuck your sweet ass," Zyn said, and his cock inched deeper, stretching me wide, making my thoughts spiral away. It didn't hurt, but it was so intense I closed my eyes, digging my fingers into Qay's chest, who wrapped his hands around my face, kissing me.

"Push back," Zyn ordered, his voice rough, and I did what he told me. My breath faltered then I moved, adjusting to the tighter sensation, knowing that both men could feel each other.

Zyn's hands came around my hips, rocking me against him. The friction, the sensation of having two cocks buried deep inside of me turned me mindless with desire. I groaned, pleasure rippling through me as Zyn thrust into my ass while Qay's cock inside my cunt rubbed against my clit.

I felt Qay's heart beating against my flat palm, making me seek his gaze. I moved against him, working the two cocks sliding in and out of me, moaning at the bliss of being filled so completely. It was a careful dance, three bodies, moving in sync, back and forth, each thrust and pull wringing a sound from me until Qay pulled my hips against his groin, shouting out his release as his cock pulsed inside my cunt.

Zyn reached for me with his mind, his heat wrapping around my senses. I screamed as heat blazed through my every nerve, white stars erupting behind my closed eyelids. I climaxed, my release erupting from my core, and I clung to the shivers and spasms convulsing through my body, feeling Zyn coming inside of me, his cock jerking as he spilled his seed.

* * * * *

I opened one eye, sliding off Qay, who was sleeping soundly. I must have fallen asleep on top of him—but it was still night. Zyn was nowhere in sight, so I slipped out of the bed, moving quietly.

"I can't believe I did that," I murmured, searching for my dress, the choker around my neck suddenly too tight. I took it off, left it on the bed. When I found my dress, I slipped it on, turned toward the door. And stopped short.

The cat was sprawled in front of it, tail moving lazily up and down.

I silently cursed Zyn.

I searched for a different exit, found a second door. Keeping my gaze on the cat, I tiptoed toward the door that would lead me away from the two males I just had sex with.

I needed time to think, and I couldn't with them close.

"Where do you think you're going?"

Zyn's voice came from behind me, entirely too loud and surely waking Qay.

I rotated on my heel, struck speechless as I gazed into Zyn's stormy eyes.

"Come to bed," Qay said, sounding sleepy but looking at me.

Any moment now Qay would say something sensible and make everything seem normal. But I'd spent the night with two men, and one of them had lured me onto his planet with the promise of marriage. I should have read the fine print.

My gaze traveled back and forth between the two males, both similar-looking with their copper-colored skin, their sharp features, their strong, muscled bodies. But they couldn't be more different. Still, both felt so *right*.

Zyn moved toward me, and I held my hand up, which did *not* stop him in his tracks, so I backed away. "I can't deal with this right now," I said, addressing Qay.

"We will see you in the morning then. Or," Qay said wearily, "or you can decide not to attend the ceremony."

I let out a long sigh. "What happens at the ceremony?"

"We will propose," Zyn said quietly. "Qay's pledge will be different from mine because he is your husband, but we will both ask you to choose us." His dark eyes swept over my body in an all-encompassing gaze, as if he was prepared to pounce if I started running. "And we will do so in front of my people. And you will *accept us*."

Qay let out a series of harsh words from which I understood only a few, but I gathered that Qay wasn't happy with Zyn at all.

I grinned. "So, the ceremony is the actual wedding? A big deal, right? And I can decide if I want to accept both of you? Because I can't have one without the other." It wasn't a question. They'd both spoon-fed me the truth, but it was still up to me if I wanted to embrace it. "Or I can return to Earth, right?"

"Yes," Qay said simply. "It's your decision."

I looked at Zyn, waiting for him to acknowledge that I had a choice. He didn't.

I looked at Qay. "Did Zyn send you to Earth to seduce me?"

"I fell in love with you, Jana," Qay answered quietly. "But yes, he told me he'd found Dezra's heart but that he lost his cool in the heat of the moment and scared you away. So he asked me to go and get you. If it helps, I didn't believe him at first, until I met you."

I turned, heading toward the door. "Considering all things in the past, I might choose to return to Earth."

As I had expected, Zyn stepped in my way, the cat trailing at his footsteps. "I won't let you leave," he said. "You are mine." He held the choker in his hand, the metal glinting softly.

I lifted my head, meeting his gaze square-on even though inside I was trembling. "You will await my decision. Or do you want to enslave me, control me with your mind, like you do with this cat?"

"I'll set the cat free."

“That’s a good start,” I said, stepping around him, but his hand landed on my shoulder, stopping me again. I caught Qay’s gaze, saw him smile, and I was sure that he knew what went on in my head. Zyn, however, was for once clueless.

“You are *mine*, woman.”

“Set me free,” I whispered, “and when I return to you, I’ll be yours forever.”

A vein throbbed in his temple, and I knew he struggled with the concept of giving me the freedom of making my own decision. Then he stepped away from me, giving me enough space to step through the door.

The only way I would ever leave Dezra—and both men—would be kicking and screaming. But they needn’t know that yet.

Well, I hadn’t fooled Qay—about that I was sure. But I was messing with Zyn, and that was curiously satisfying. I walked on, slowly, my heart lifting when I heard Zyn’s voice behind my back.

“Catch,” he said, and I turned, instinctively raising my hand as something flew toward me.

When I opened my hand, I stared at the choker, and I traced along the three-leaved flower pattern. Zyn kept his distance, but his gaze was on my face as I raised the choker and closed it around my neck.

“Never take it off again,” Zyn said, and I bit my lip, already looking forward to my punishment, and admitting that it took a whole lot more to fool the best man when it came to his woman.

About the Author

Amy Redwood lives in Vancouver, Canada. This wasn't always the case. She grew up in Europe, moved to New Zealand and then explored China before settling down on the west coast of Canada. She likes nothing better than dark chocolate, autumn rain and curling up on the couch reading a great story. But what she loves is writing about smart heroines and sexy heroes enjoying hot nights, hotter days and a happily ever after. After all, nothing beats a happy end.

Amy 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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