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ANNE RAINEY

*A Little
Bit Naughty*

TAHOE NIGHTS

Resistance is no longer an option...

A Tahoe Nights Story

Faced with the annual family reunion in Lake Tahoe, Amanda Harding cringes inwardly like the awkward teenager she used to be, not the successful bookstore owner she is now. Once again she'll be bombarded by questions about her *dreadful* status as a single woman. And, like always, she'll feel the weight of her parents' disappointment that their only child isn't happily married and pregnant with their first grandchild.

As she relates her troubles to her good friend Leo, she's shocked to the core by his offer to pose as her soon-to-be fiancé. Then all she can think about is getting tangled up in the sheets—and with Leo's deliciously hard body.

Leo Prentice has always wondered what his quiet, bookish Amanda looked like beneath the conservative suits, but the prospect of wrecking their friendship has kept his dirty mind in check. Until their first fake kiss. Playing Amanda's lover seemed like a win-win. But the little bookworm stirs a fire in him unlike any other woman.

Soon, the teasing touches and sensual looks are all too real...and not nearly enough.

Warning: this title contains a yummy construction man, a shy bookstore owner and a very naughty weekend filled with sizzling friends-turned-lovers sex.

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A Little Bit Naughty

Anne Rainey

Dedication

For my wonderful husband. You will always be my best friend. I love you!

Chapter One

Leo pushed open the door to The Book Attic and said, “I have sweet and sour pork, hot and sour soup and egg rolls. I really hope you’re hungry.” He stopped dead in his tracks when he spotted Amanda, the owner of the bookstore and his best friend for the past three and a half years, chatting with a customer. A male customer. And the guy was flirting big time. He looked like something out of a magazine with his crisp navy blue suit and neatly trimmed dark hair. Amanda always did go for the corporate types. He looked down at his own worn jeans and black work boots and cringed. He’d forgotten to pound the dirt off. Amanda hated it when he tracked dirt through her store.

He started to head back out the door when he noticed Amanda stepping closer to the guy. She took the book he was holding and held it close to her chest, laughing at something the other man said. Damn, it wasn’t any of his business if Amanda flirted. She could flirt all she wanted, and it still wouldn’t matter. She was a friend, nothing more.

Clutching the bag of food, Leo quickly nixed the idea of cleaning off his boots. He’d run the vacuum later. Instead, he closed the distance between them. Neither of them looked over at him, too wrapped up in their conversation apparently. He rattled the bag of food for good measure, but after a few minutes of listening to Amanda talk about how fabulous some author’s books were, Leo cleared his throat—really loud. The customer looked over the top of Amanda’s head and shot him an angry *get lost* glare. Amanda turned and smiled, then sniffed the air.

“Mmm, is that sweet and sour pork I smell?”

Leo grinned. Mr. GQ might know books, but Leo knew Amanda. Nothing and no one took precedence over sweet and sour pork. “Yep, your favorite. Want me to take it to the back?”

Amanda headed toward the cash register. “That’d be great, thanks.”

Leo watched out of the corner of his eye as she rang up the man’s purchase. It was tempting to stay and see if the guy slipped her his phone number. Leo reminded himself, again, that it wasn’t any of his business if the pair made out right here in the store.

As he went through the doorway leading to the backroom, he shoved thoughts of Amanda and Mr. GQ out of his head and started setting out their lunch. They had a standing lunch date every Wednesday and Friday. It’d been that way since Leo had first met Amanda. He smiled as he remembered that day. It’d been at the grocery store. She’d grabbed the last box of caramel corn. He’d been miffed because his taste buds had been all set to dig in. Halfheartedly he’d offered up the possibility that they have lunch together

and share the box. She'd smiled up at him, and they'd been friends ever since. These days, Leo either brought lunch to her bookstore and they ate in the back, or she came and picked him up at the office of the construction company he owned. Either way, they never missed a date.

As he set out the last of the food, Leo heard footsteps. He looked up just in time to see Amanda coming into the room, a piece of paper clutched in her hand. "He gave you his number?" And why exactly did Leo have the urge to grab it and toss it in the trash?

She blushed and clutched the paper tighter. "Maybe."

He rolled his eyes. "No maybes about it, the guy was staring at you like you were an all-you-can-eat buffet."

She laughed and waved the compliment away. Why did she find it so impossible for a guy to look at her with hunger? After all these years spent telling the hardheaded woman that she had it going on, Amanda still wouldn't listen.

He took her by the shoulders and pulled her in for a hug. "How many times do I have to say it, sweetheart? You're a hottie. Men are always going to hit on you."

She pushed out of his arms and sat at the old, scarred wood table. "I'm slightly overweight, and I have zero fashion sense. Hardly a hottie, Leo."

Leo straddled the chair across from her and waited until she dug into her pork before saying, "It's like when a dog spies a juicy hamburger on the edge of the counter. I don't care how well behaved the dog is. He's going to try and get a taste. And you, sweetheart, are juicy."

She stopped chewing and frowned up at him. Swallowing back a bite, she said, "Are you saying I'm a hamburger? If you're going to compare me to beef at least make it a steak."

He chuckled and dug into his own food. "You're a filet mignon and don't you forget it."

She ate a few more bites of her pork before saying, "Right now I just feel desperate. My mother called earlier."

Leo scowled. He'd never met Amanda's parents, but he hated them for the way they treated their only daughter. They acted as if there was something flawed about her just because she wasn't married and knocked up. It pissed him off to think anyone could possibly consider Amanda flawed. "Did she give you the We're Not Going To Live Forever speech?"

She picked up her egg roll and swirled it around in the sweet and sour sauce, but he noticed she didn't take a bite. "No, this time it was to tell me the annual family reunion is coming up, and she wants to know if I plan to attend. Alone. Again."

Leo had forgotten about the Harding family reunion. Shit. Last year when Amanda had returned from that crappy trip, he'd had a hell of a time getting her out of the depression the event had put her in. Her parents had lectured her the entire damn time. *When was she going to marry? When was she going to give*

them grandchildren? Why did she have live clear across the United States and work in that dreadful little bookstore?

Leo opened the lid on the hot and sour soup and picked up a white plastic spoon. "Don't go. Skip it this year." He couldn't handle seeing them tear down her self-esteem yet again.

She shook her head as she pushed the egg roll through the orange sauce. "I can't. She's expecting me to be there. It would be so much easier if I could've brought a guy along, but I haven't dated anyone since Roger and he was such a horrible dud."

Oh, Leo remembered Roger. "The nose picker."

She grimaced. "It was so gross watching him eat too. The man had no manners at all."

Leo dropped the spoon and reached across the table. He plucked the egg roll out of her hand. "Stop drowning the thing and eat it." He held it to her lips, somewhat mesmerized as she closed them around it and took a bite. She moaned a little, her eyes drifting shut. Watching Amanda eat had turned into one of his favorite hobbies. She did it with such obvious pleasure. Each bite received special attention.

Leo cleared his throat and let her take the deep-fried roll out of his hand. He dug into his soup and they ate in silence for a while. His soup finished, Leo pushed the Styrofoam cup aside and said, "We'll figure something out about the reunion."

She dabbed her mouth with a napkin and sat back in her chair. "What's there to figure out? I'm going to have to attend this blasted thing. Alone. I'm going to have to sit there and listen to them go on and on about how disappointing I am."

Leo shrugged. "Take someone with you. It's just a weekend, Amanda. It's not like you have to make a big commitment to a guy just to spend the weekend with him."

Amanda bit her bottom lip and stared at him, as if thinking over his words. "I had thought maybe T.J. would like to go with me," she said, her voice low, a little unsure.

Leo stiffened. Was she dating someone and he didn't know about it? "Who's T.J.?"

"That customer I was talking to earlier. He comes in a lot. He's asked me out a few times. Today was the first time he gave me his number." She shook her head. "No, it'd be too bold to ask him to spend the weekend with me in Lake Tahoe. Much too bold."

Mr. GQ with Amanda for the entire weekend. Now why did the thought of that make him queasy? She took a sip of her cola, and an idea struck Leo. He smiled.

She cocked her head to the side. "Why are you grinning like that?"

"Like what?"

She narrowed her eyes and pointed her finger at him. "You have that look. The one that tells me I'm not going to like what you're thinking."

Leo leaned forward, grabbed her finger, and brought her hand to his lips. He placed a gentle kiss on her knuckles before releasing her. "What would you say if I told you I have a way for you to attend the

reunion with a man and not have to worry about the guy expecting a single thing from you except a nice little vacation?”

“You do?”

He bobbed his eyebrows and crossed his arms over his chest. “Yep.”

Amanda leaned forward. “How? Who?”

“You’re going to take me, *and* I’m going to be your soon-to-be fiancé.”

Amanda rolled her eyes and stood. “Have you lost your mind?”

She started to clear away their food, but Leo wouldn’t be deterred. The more he thought of it, the more he liked the idea. “Think about it for a second. It’s the perfect plan. We’ll play it up. Do the whole we’re so in love thing and your parents will be so thrilled they’ll leave you alone for once.”

“Great idea. There’s just one little problem here. What happens when we get back and they realize there’s no wedding on the horizon?”

Leo stood and moved around the table, helping clean their mess. “So what? People break up all the time. You can tell them I turned out to be a loser.”

After tossing napkins and plastic forks in the trash Amanda stopped and turned toward him. “This could go terribly wrong, Leo.”

Leo closed the few feet separating them and took her by the shoulders. “A weekend in Lake Tahoe with your best friend,” he whispered. “How is that wrong?”

She placed her hand on his chest and looked away. “It’s a lie though. It feels wrong to pretend we’re in love when we aren’t. Besides, I don’t think we can pull it off. They’ll see right through us, then it’ll be even more of a mess. Not to mention embarrassing.”

“See through us, huh?” She nodded and looked up at him. Their gazes caught, held. Leo cupped her chin in his palm. “Let’s see if we can’t make this look like the real deal,” he growled, as he placed his lips on hers. He tasted the sweet sauce from their lunch and something else. Something warm and spicy. He tasted Amanda. Angling his head, Leo pressed a little harder. Her plump lower lip tempted him to lick and nibble. He held back, barely. She whimpered and swayed forward, pushing her ample breasts against his ribcage. Ah, hell, that felt good. Too damn good.

Slowly, Leo lifted his head and stared down at her. Her eyes were closed and her lips, those succulent pink lips, were open a few millimeters. Enough that he could slip his tongue between them and take another, deeper, taste of her. Bad idea, he told himself. Christ, this was Amanda. His best friend. The kiss was supposed to be a way of showing her they could make it *look* real. Under no circumstances was he supposed to get a hard-on. Unfortunately his cock had other plans.

He cleared his throat. “So, still think we can’t pull this off?”

Amanda’s eyes opened. Awareness settled over her delicate features. She blushed and pushed out of his arms. “Um, yeah, this might actually work.”

To give himself something to do, Leo went back to clearing away their lunch clutter. “Good. When is the reunion?”

“This weekend. It’s short notice, I know.”

“It’s not a problem. I just finished up that remodeling job downtown so it’s good timing actually.”

Amanda brushed at her skirt, and Leo saw it for the nervous gesture it was. The kiss had gotten to both of them. “Oh, okay then. I’ll book the flight.”

Leo stiffened. “Uh-uh. I’m paying for this trip.”

Her eyes widened. “But why? It’s my family reunion, Leo. There’s no reason you should pay.”

This was one point he wouldn’t bend on. “I’m paying, Amanda.”

She frowned and smacked him on the arm. “I hate when you take that tone. Pay for your half then if you must, but I’m paying for mine.” He started to protest, but she held a hand in the air. “Or you can just stay home and I’ll go alone. Or with T.J.”

No way in hell was she going anywhere with Mr. G fucking Q. Not after that kiss. Leo wasn’t letting this woman anywhere near another man, not until he figured out what the hell was going on between them. “Fine. Just remember I’m staying with you in your cabin. We’re lovers, after all.”

“Pretend lovers, and I can’t believe I’m agreeing to this. How do I let you talk me into these things, Leo?”

He heard the vulnerability and Leo couldn’t stand it. He closed the distance and wrapped his arms around her. “It’ll be fine, sweetheart. Trust me.”

She nodded, and Leo let out a breath. He prayed he was right. Because losing Amanda’s friendship would be like using a butter knife to cut off his arm. Not a pleasant thought.

Chapter Two

Amanda couldn't get the kiss out of her head. She'd been thinking about it day and night. Leo had kissed her. It'd been fake, of course, but then why had it affected her so? They were friends, and he was going to help her out. He wasn't actually attracted to her. If that were the case then why had he had an erection? She'd felt it. Heck, there'd been no way she couldn't feel it. The man was huge.

And he was her best friend. She *so* shouldn't be thinking about the size of his cock. Right? It was Friday, and she was on her way to his office to take him to lunch. For the first time since first meeting Leo, Amanda was nervous. They'd talked since the kiss and he'd texted her a few times, but tomorrow they would be on their way to Lake Tahoe and he'd be treating her like a lover. A make-believe lover. The notion sent her heart racing.

Pulling into the parking lot of Prentice Construction, Amanda looked around for Leo's black four-wheel drive truck. She noticed it close to the back and pulled her white VW bug into the spot next to it. She shut off the engine and checked her makeup in the rearview mirror. She retouched her pale pink lipstick and glanced at her hair. She'd pulled the long, blonde, unruly mess into a ponytail. It was too hot out to wear any other way. And she'd gone without her suit jacket, opting to only wear the peach silk sleeveless blouse and dark gray skirt. The skirt was nice, a little tight through the hips and a touch shorter than most of her other skirts, but she always thought her legs looked long whenever she wore it. Considering she stood all of five foot one, long legs were a big deal.

Stop it, she chided herself. She should not be worried about her looks. *It's lunch with your best friend, not your boyfriend.* Amanda stoutly ignored the little voice in the back of her head that reminded her of the hard erection Leo had gotten while kissing her Wednesday and shoved open her car door. As she made her way to the front entrance, Jordan Lane came striding out. Jordan was a nice guy, a little too flirtatious but still sweet.

He held the door for her and grinned. "Hey, pretty lady. Picking up the boss?"

She smiled. "Yep."

He leaned closer and whispered, "Be warned, he's been a real grump lately."

Amanda clutched her purse tighter. "Oh?"

Jordan shoved a hand through his hair. "Yeah. Not sure what's got him riled but something's been eating at him."

"Thanks for the warning. I'll see if I can't get him in a better mood."

He chuckled. "Lunch with you always puts the boss in a good mood."

"You planning on talking to my employees all day or are we going to eat?" Leo stood a few feet inside the room, staring at Jordan as if he wanted to commit murder. She'd never seen Leo so short-tempered. Well, there was the one time when he'd had to go to the dentist. The root canal that followed had put him in a very sour mood. She'd ended up playing nursemaid until she'd gotten so fed up with his lousy attitude that she'd threatened to leave him to his own devices. If she remembered correctly, he'd straightened up pretty quick.

Jordan winked. "See what I mean?"

Leo moved closer and took hold of the door. "Don't you have somewhere to be, Lane?"

Jordan held up both hands as if in surrender. "I'm already gone."

Amanda watched Jordan head toward his work truck. With his six-foot-plus muscular frame, hazel eyes and dark hair, Jordan was a good-looking man but not really her type. She heard Leo clear his throat. She swiveled around only to be glared at. It set her on edge.

"If you'd rather skip lunch, that's fine with me. I've got some things to take care of anyway before I can leave the store to Robin for the weekend."

"I don't want to skip lunch," he bit out. "I'm starving."

Her temper got the better of her. "Fine, but if you plan on snapping at me the whole time then I'd just as soon you eat alone."

His gaze darkened. "I'm not snapping."

She poked him in the chest. "Yes, you are."

Leo started to speak, then paused and let out a huge breath. "Sorry. Damn, I'm just having one of those days."

Amanda smiled and patted his cheek. "You can tell me all about it over a bowl of fettuccine."

Finally she was graced with his smile. She loved Leo's smiles. He was handsome no matter what with his dark tousled hair and sun-darkened skin. It didn't hurt that he had a workingman's body either. He was truly the stuff of fantasies. But when he smiled it brightened up a room.

"Sounds like a plan." He grabbed keys from his front jeans pocket and locked up. "Have you, uh, talked to your mom yet?" he asked as they headed for his truck. Leo always insisted on driving, claiming her little Bug made him feel like he was trapped in a sardine can. Since he was six-foot-three, she supposed he had a point.

"About bringing my boyfriend along, you mean?"

"Yeah."

He held the truck door for her. "I did. She can't wait to meet you." When she made an attempt to step up, her skirt hindered her progress.

"Here, let me help."

Leo's strong, warm hands closed around her waist and he lifted her in the air. He'd done it hundreds of times, but for some reason it felt different this time. More intimate. When he placed her on the bench seat their gazes clashed. Leo had the most amazing green eyes. She found herself unable to look away. "Thanks," she murmured.

He didn't move to shut the door. Merely stood there, staring at her...mouth, she realized. "You're welcome," he growled. Was he thinking about the kiss? Suddenly he stepped back and slammed the door. When he got in behind the wheel, Amanda stayed silent. No idea at all what to say, she surreptitiously peeked over at him. Her gaze landed unerringly on his thighs, then traveled upward to the fly of his jeans. And that's when she knew the truth.

He was hard again. Hard for her. Oh, wow.

This is not real. We aren't actually dating. Stop checking out his cock for crying out loud.

All the chastising wasn't helping a damn bit though. The truth was there in plain sight. Leo had a hard-on for her. Why? Amanda wanted to ask. Be bold enough to simply blurt it out. They were friends, weren't they? They'd known each other for years. They talked about everything. Well, everything except sex. And they were about to go away for the weekend.

They'd be together.

In the same cabin.

"You're thinking it to death, aren't you?"

The sound of Leo's deep voice broke through her musings. "Huh?"

With both of his hands wrapped around the wheel, Leo spared her a quick glance. "Amanda, I can practically feel your panic. Why are you so worried about this?"

She turned in the seat so she could get a better look at him. Sure enough his cock was still a long, hard length beneath his jeans. She licked her lips. "It's not that I'm worried." He snorted, knowing her well enough to catch when she was covering. "Okay, I'm a little worried. This could end up being really weird for both of us. Beyond that, I'm not sure Mother will buy it. She's very good at getting to the truth, especially with me. On the other hand, I've never been good at lying to her."

"She won't see through us." Amanda stayed silent. Leo reached over and took her hand in his. The feel of his fingers, so big and warm, teased her senses. "I thought I proved to you on Wednesday that we could make it look plenty real."

"As to that..." Amanda hesitated, unsure how to broach the topic of his erection.

His hand tightened. "Yeah?"

"You, um, got excited when you kissed me." Amanda studiously kept her eyes on his face.

Leo cleared his throat and released her hand. He pushed his fingers through his hair, making a mess of the dark, shiny strands. Amanda had an urge to push her own fingers through Leo's gorgeous hair. "Excited. Yeah, that's one way to put it."

She frowned. "Well, how would you put it?"

He made a left hand turn. "Turned on," he bluntly stated. "Aroused. Hard as a damn rock. Ready to push you against the wall so I could get a better taste."

Amanda's face burned as an image of him doing exactly that filled her mind. The burn suddenly moved south and she couldn't breathe, let alone reply.

Leo turned into the parking lot of one of their favorite Italian restaurants. He found a spot near the front and took it, then killed the engine. When he looked over at her, Amanda was hit with the full force of his arousal. She wasn't the only one thinking naughty thoughts. That made her feel better. It also scared her. Leo was her friend. He was important to her. Tossing sex into the mix was sure to be a bad idea.

"I know. It's crazy," he said, as if reading her mind. "We've been friends so long that it feels...odd to suddenly be attracted to each other." He reached out and took her hand again. This time he entwined their fingers, and Amanda felt a jolt of pleasure run up and down her spine. "I don't want to run from this or pretend it's not there. In fact, I'd like to see where it could go. Aren't you a little curious?"

She let her gaze land on his fly again. Jeez, the man was big. "Yes, I'm curious," she admitted, tearing her gaze away from him. Looking out the windshield, she noticed a man and woman walking into the restaurant. They were holding hands. Amanda stared as the middle-aged guy held the door for the pretty redhead. When he leaned down and kissed the top of the woman's head, Amanda sighed. It was such a sweet gesture, so loving. Amanda had had nice relationships with men, but she'd never felt cherished or loved. The pang of jealousy that zipped through her in that moment wasn't a good feeling. *I'll have that someday*, she told herself. In the meantime...

"Promise me one thing, Leo."

"What is it, sweetheart?"

"Promise me that if we explore this, this...oh whatever it is that's going on between us, and it doesn't work out that we'll still be friends."

Leo leaned across the seat and cupped her cheek in his palm. "You aren't going to lose me. No matter what happens in Lake Tahoe, we'll go right back to arguing over which movie to watch on Friday night the instant we come back. Deal?"

"Deal." Then she glanced at his lap again and grinned. "Until we get to the exploring part, you might want to think about stock quotes or something equally as boring. Otherwise you're going to give all the waitresses in there something to gossip about."

Leo chuckled. "What can I say? That outfit you're wearing is doing a real number on me, sweets."

She waved a hand in the air. "Stop it. I want to eat. I'm hungry."

"Me too," he grumbled, glancing down at her chest. "That's half the problem here."

Amanda's nipples tingled from the touch of Leo's gaze. She tried to laugh, to keep things light, but it was forced. Truth was, she didn't feel like laughing. She felt like doing some of that exploring Leo mentioned.

Waiting until they were in Lake Tahoe was going to be hell.

Chapter Three

Leo reached over the arm separating his seat from Amanda's and pressed his hand against her jean-covered thigh. The thigh that wouldn't stop shaking. They'd been in the air for a little more than twenty minutes, and she had yet to relax. "Stop it."

"Stop what?" Amanda swatted at his hand, but Leo wasn't about to move away. He liked the feel of her too much. He squeezed. Damn, she had such soft thighs. He wanted to know what they felt like without the jeans. Skin on skin. Christ, why couldn't he stop thinking of Amanda's curvy body? Since the moment his lips touched hers in the backroom of her bookstore, Leo had been hard as a rock and ready for action. She intrigued him. That's all it was. Had to be. They were friends, and he'd never allowed himself to see her as anything else. That kiss had opened a door. One he wasn't sure he wanted closed.

He let his hand travel up and down, massaging her, attempting to soothe her frazzled nerves. Damn, no one should be this nervous over a family reunion. What the hell were her parents like anyway? He'd never met them face-to-face. For damn sure Amanda's attitude wasn't giving him a cozy feeling. "Fidgeting."

She stilled and took a sip from her ice water. "I wasn't fidgeting," she mumbled after swallowing the rest of the cold liquid. Setting the plastic cup back on the tray, she settled back and closed her eyes.

"Was too, but there's no reason to be nervous. We'll be there before you know it, sweetheart. Everyone will get to see that you're head over heels in love. Your mom and dad will stay off your back and we'll get a nice little break from work."

She sighed and relaxed a little more. Leo kept his hand on her thigh, loath to break the connection. "I hope you're right."

He *tsked*. "I'm always right. I could've sworn you knew that."

Her eyelids popped open, and she turned to stare up at him. "You weren't right the time that mouse made its way into my kitchen. You said it wasn't necessary to kill it. You put it outside and repaired the hole, remember?"

Leo smacked her thigh lightly. "You had to bring that up, didn't you?"

She pointed a finger at him. "It came back and brought friends. I had a heck of time getting rid of those suckers."

He watched as she smiled at him, as if in triumph. He wasn't defeated yet though. "Okay, so, besides that one time, I've always been right."

“Name one time and I’ll feel better.”

Amanda crossed her arms over her breasts, drawing his attention to the large globes. Damn, the woman could sure fill out a T-shirt. He cleared his throat and tore his gaze away from the tempting sight.

Leo had to think about it, partly because his mind kept bringing up images of Amanda’s tits, naked. Did she have small pink nipples or large mauve colored tips? Damn, he wanted to find out. He ached to wrap his lips around one and suck while he teased the other. Would she moan for him? Amanda was his best friend and by far the finest woman he knew, and all he wanted to do was strip her naked and spend the entire weekend in bed. He felt like a jerk.

Bringing his mind back to their conversation, he said, “That guy you dated, Jerry something or other. I told you he was a horny ass-wipe and that he only wanted in your pants. I was right. You broke up with him like a week later. Remember?”

“Oh, I’d forgotten about Jerry. Well, not forgotten, exactly. More like blocked him out.” She laughed. “He had so many hands I couldn’t keep up with him.”

Now that he thought about it, Leo had an urge to track Jerry down and kick his ass. A woman didn’t deserve to be treated like a piece of meat. Then again, hadn’t he just been thinking of sucking her breasts? Who the hell was he to judge? He wasn’t any better than Jerry. Damn. Leo forced himself to take his hand off her thigh, putting some distance between them. “So, I win. Which means you have to listen to me when I say all will be fine.”

Amanda smiled. “Okay, you win.”

“Now relax and enjoy the rest of the flight. We should be there soon.”

“Oh, by the way, my parents are meeting us at the airport. I-I told them about you.”

“You told them I was your boyfriend?”

She nodded and bit her lip before replying, “And that you’ve been prodding me to get engaged.”

Engaged meant gold rings with sparkly diamonds. “Shit.”

“What?” Amanda straightened in her seat and clutched her hands together in her lap.

Leo reached out and tucked a stray lock of hair behind her ear. “I don’t have a ring for you. A guy who’s in love and wants to get engaged would have a ring ready and waiting for when his woman says yes. Wouldn’t he?”

She frowned. “We’ll say we’re waiting to pick it out together. That’d work, right?”

“Yeah, that’s good.” Leo sighed. “Damn, this lying stuff is hard.”

Amanda laughed. “And neither of us is very good at it.”

Leo was struck by the way her laughter changed her facial features. Her eyes slanted a little, and laugh lines appeared at the corners. She’d always been pretty to him, but when she laughed he couldn’t look away. As if the sound had some magical quality. A magic only she seemed to possess. Had he ever laughed with the women he took as lovers? Probably, but he’d never wanted to say things to them just to hear their

laughter. With Amanda he went out of his way to make her smile, to watch her let down her guard. It made his day when that happened.

At that moment the pilot announced they were about to land. Leo and Amanda both held their breaths. This was it. No going back. He'd be forced to kiss her, hold her hand, pretend to be her lover and do it all without screwing up their friendship. No problem.

As they entered the airport, Leo felt Amanda stiffen beside him. He followed her gaze and noticed a woman striding briskly toward them. She had blonde hair like Amanda's, pulled up into a twist of some sort. Petite, delicate and frowning. It was the frown that did it. It made her appear unapproachable. Amanda might have her mother's blonde hair, but as far as Leo was concerned, there's where the similarities stopped.

"Amanda, dear." She gave what appeared to be a forced smile, then hugged Amanda. If you could call the quick, loose embrace a hug. What the hell kind of greeting was that? She acted more like a stern schoolteacher rather than a mother greeting a daughter she hadn't seen for a year.

"Mother," Amanda said, her voice crisp as she stepped back, spine ramrod straight. Leo wrapped an arm around Amanda's middle and pulled her in close. She relaxed, but not nearly enough to satisfy him.

When her mother's gaze landed on the hand he had on Amanda's waist, the forced smile disappeared. "Care to introduce me, Amanda?"

Amanda cast him a wary look. "Mother, I'd like you to meet Leo Prentice. He and I are..."

As Amanda stalled out, Leo came to her rescue. "We're going to be married. Just as soon as I can talk her into it, that is." After dropping that little bomb, Leo smiled and extended his hand, hoping to soften the woman a fraction. If anything she appeared colder—and she didn't take his hand. Feeling like an idiot, Leo dropped it. Damn, cold didn't begin to cover it. Amanda's mother was a big old blast of arctic wind. He was more puzzled than ever how such an uncompromising woman could give birth to someone as warm and loving as Amanda.

She crossed her arms over her chest and arched a brow. "Pleased to meet you, Leo. I'm afraid Amanda has told me very little about you. What do you do for a living?"

"Mother, we can talk about all that later. It's late and we're anxious to get out to the cabin."

"Of course, dear." She put one hand on Amanda's arm and led her down the long corridor. "Your father is in the car. He hasn't been feeling well lately, and this heat is getting to him, I'm afraid."

"He's okay though?"

Leo heard the fear in Amanda's tone and immediately wanted to take it away. He didn't like seeing her worried.

"It's just his age. A simple cold takes weeks to get rid of these days." She spared Amanda another of those scolding glances. "We're not getting any younger, Amanda."

Amanda sighed. “Yes, I know, Mother.” She paused before adding, “Has Dad seen a doctor?”

“Yes, although he refused at first. He can be quite stubborn.”

Leo grinned at that. “So, it runs in the family then.”

For a second the woman smiled, and it appeared completely genuine. Just as quickly it was gone.

“You’ll see that you have to be strong if you hope to have any say in this family.”

“Thanks for the advice, Mrs. Harding. I will be sure to remember it.”

“Call me Ruth,” she said, surprising him further.

“Okay, Ruth it is then.” Leo looked over at Amanda. There was no mistaking her expression for anything other than total shock. Leo winked and grinned. Amanda rolled her eyes, but he noticed she did smile back. Good. He much preferred to see her smiles.

The drive to the cabin proved mentally exhausting. Amanda’s father had a million damn questions for him. Finally, Amanda put a halt to the third degree and Leo was only too relieved. It wasn’t until they were dropped at the door that Leo realized Amanda’s father never corrected him when he’d called him Mr. Harding. Christ, he was definitely going to have his work cut out for him if he hoped to impress Amanda’s parents. Then he remembered the truth. It was all fake. They weren’t lovers, and he didn’t need to impress anyone. Only save Amanda from being tortured all weekend. The thought should’ve made him happy.

It didn’t.

Chapter Four

They were inside the cabin. Alone. Amanda had stayed at Lake Tahoe before, nearly all their family reunions were held there, but it'd never seemed more intimate than it did in that moment. She knew the layout. Two bedrooms, one with a king-size bed, not to mention a Jacuzzi-style tub. There was a kitchen, already fully stocked by her mother, like always. The woman thought of everything. The living room had a fireplace—a very romantic fireplace. She could too easily see herself with Leo sprawled out in front of it, naked.

Amanda's heart rate sped up as she thought of the sleeping arrangements. Would he sleep with her or take the second room? To take her mind off all the annoying questions, she turned to him. "Thanks for putting up with my parents. I wish I could say the worst is behind us, but it's probably not. They can be really tenacious sometimes."

Leo walked down the small hall, compelling Amanda to follow. Breath caught in her throat as she watched him take their bags to the king-size bed and toss them onto the end. His and hers both. "No problem, sweetheart." He looked around the room. "So, you've stayed here before?"

Her gaze was caught on the bags. "Uh, yeah."

"With anyone?"

Amanda's gaze darted back to Leo. He stood with his hands shoved into his jean pockets, legs wide apart. Lordy, the man was fun to stare at. "What do you mean?"

With a nod he indicated the bed. "Any guys ever stay here with you, Amanda?"

She swallowed, pushing down the blasted boulder that seemed wedged in her throat. If she didn't know better she'd think Leo jealous. "No. Usually I come to these reunions alone. Remember? That's why you're here."

Leo pulled his hands out of his pockets and stepped closer. Just a few steps, but the room wasn't that large. The movement put him directly in front of her. A mere few inches of carpet separated them. She could smell his scent. Woodsy. Spicy. Male. Her temperature spiked. He cupped her face in his palm. "You and I are going to share that bed, sweetheart. Are you okay with that?"

Forcing down the tremors his touch invoked, Amanda said, "There are two rooms."

"I know, but I don't want to sleep in an empty bed. Do you?"

Did she? What would happen if she slept next to Leo all night long? Could she keep her hands off him? She didn't know, but one thing was for certain. She didn't want to waste a single second of this trip.

She had Leo to herself, and she wanted to know more about the sudden sparks flying back and forth between them. The only way to achieve that would be to act like a woman and not a silly teenager on prom night.

Feeling a little more confident, Amanda murmured, "I don't want to sleep alone."

One side of Leo's mouth kicked up into a crooked grin. "Good answer, sweets." He stepped back and dropped his hand. "Now, how about dinner? I don't know about you, but I'm starved."

He moved around her and headed toward the kitchen. Amanda took a few seconds to calm her racing heart. When she heard him call out to her, she smiled. For the first time in her life she was actually going to enjoy one of the Harding family reunions. Go figure.

Leaving the bedroom behind, Amanda went in search of Leo. She found him bent over, peering into the refrigerator. She licked her lips at the sight of his jean-covered ass. When he straightened and turned, Amanda's cheeks heated. Had he noticed where her gaze had been?

"Your mom thinks of everything doesn't she?"

Okay, so he hadn't seen her eyeballing his butt. Whew. "Uh, yeah, pretty much."

"She's left us hamburger meat, hot dogs and there's even potato salad in there. Looks homemade too."

At the mention of her mother, Amanda relaxed a little more. Moving toward a cupboard, Amanda found two plastic cups, took them out and placed them on the little table in the center of the room. "Mother wouldn't have us eating store-bought potato salad. In her opinion that'd be tacky."

Leo leaned against the counter, as if content to quietly watch as she took out plates, utensils and napkins. It wasn't until Amanda opened the refrigerator and took out two cans of pop that he finally spoke. "So, what are you in the mood for?"

You, she ached to admit. Instead she said, "How about hot dogs?"

"Sounds good to me."

"There's a grill out back, but that's a lot of work and we're both tired. How about we just nuke them?"

"That's fine by me." He pushed away from the counter and took her by the shoulders, turning her to face him. "In fact, how about you go take a nice long bath. I'll get this."

Amanda thought of the Jacuzzi and practically moaned. Massaging jets of hot water? Oh, yes, definitely what she needed to relax her frayed nerves. "Are you sure?"

Leo chuckled. "I'm not helpless, Amanda. I can microwave a few hotdogs without help." Leo reached around her body and swatted her on the bottom. "Go. Relax and enjoy. Let me take care of this."

Amanda stiffened. Leo had delivered a friendly little spank before. It didn't mean anything. Except this time his hand had lingered a second longer than usual. And, Amanda admitted, she liked it. Too much.

Unable to speak without possibly revealing how easily his touch affected her, Amanda silently and swiftly left the room.

A bath. That's what she needed. A hot soak, some food to settle her rumbling stomach and a good night's rest. Tomorrow she'd feel more like herself. As she stepped inside the bedroom, Amanda's gaze strayed to their luggage. Why had she agreed to share the same bed? How in God's name was she supposed to actually sleep knowing Leo lay mere inches away?

Crap.

Leo's cock hardened. He'd knocked. Twice. He'd even called her name a few times. Entering the bathroom uninvited had been his only option. Hell, she could've drowned, right? What else could he do but check on her? As he stared at the bubbling water, Amanda's head back, eyes closed, he knew a moment's guilt. He should look away. At the wall, the sink, the damn toilet, anywhere but at his friend's naked body, which, by the way, just happened to be barely covered by hot, bubbly water. He couldn't really make out anything, he told himself.

Liar.

Pink. Bubble gum pink to be more accurate. Now he knew what shade her nipples were. And there went his cock, again. More of that and he'd have a friggin' zipper print tattooed permanently on his dick.

"Amanda?" he called out, unwilling to wake the sleeping beauty, but much more of this and he wouldn't be able to keep from reaching out and stroking something. Anything. Everything.

A slow smile spread over her face. "Hmm?"

Christ, that was a sexy look. "Uh, sweetheart, you need to get out of the tub now."

Her eyelids shot wide, and she yelped. "Leo!" Slick, feminine hands covered round, firm breasts as water sloshed over the sides of the tub. "What are you doing in here?"

Quickly turning away, he rushed to say, "I'm sorry, but I tried knocking and you didn't answer. I was worried." *Yeah, look away now, asshole, after you've had a good eyeful.* "Uh, dinner's ready."

"I... You—"

"You'll be right out. Got it," he helpfully supplied.

"Yes," she squeaked. "Right out. Yes."

Leo left the room, and the slick, sleek goddess behind. It was no easy feat. In fact, he would have rather stood under a beehive covered in honey than leave Amanda in that moment. Damn, what he wouldn't give to go back in there. To watch her rising out of the water. Little droplets streaming down her voluptuous body. She wouldn't even need a towel—he could just lick her dry. Leo glanced down at his crotch and groaned. "Christ, you need to chill, bud. She needs time."

"What?"

The feminine voice had him stiffening, and not just his spine either. He sent up a silent prayer that Amanda was naked, that she'd decided to put him out of his misery after all. He turned slowly and then Leo's hopes fell. She wasn't nude. 'Course, the little pink tank top and black cotton shorts did wonders for her curves. His cock sure as hell approved. Large, round breasts and wide hips had his mouth watering. *A bite, a suck, that's all I'm asking. Is it so much?*

With her hair wrapped up in a towel and feet bare, she looked sweet, adorable, innocent. He was none of those things. And it didn't matter because she wasn't going anywhere. Before the weekend was over he'd have her naked and in that great big bed. And he'd finally get to taste all that creamy satin.

"Leo?"

Too late Leo realized he was just standing there, staring, probably making her nervous as hell. "Uh, the hotdogs are probably cold. But the rest is ready. Hungry?"

She smiled and looked down at the floor. "Yeah."

Was she embarrassed? Okay, that was a stupid question. Of course she's embarrassed. Leo stepped forward and cupped her chin in his palm, forcing her to look at him. "Sweets, it's okay. I didn't see anything except a boatload of bubbles. It's cool." A lie, but he figured he could be forgiven this time. He didn't want Amanda uncomfortable.

She grinned. "Leo, your body language is telegraphing the fact that you definitely did too see something." She patted him on the cheek. "But thanks for saying you didn't."

Shifting like a schoolboy caught looking at the popular girl in class, Leo asked, "You noticed that, huh?"

She shrugged. "It seems to be happening quite a bit lately."

No way could he go down that road, not unless the woman was ready to be tossed onto the bed and ravished from head to toe. And he really didn't think she was ready for what he had in mind. *Soon*, Leo consoled himself.

Taking her by the shoulders, Leo steered her out of the room. "Food, woman."

"I'm famished. I feel like I haven't eaten in weeks."

He'd known she was hungry. Amanda didn't function well on an empty stomach. "You didn't eat on the plane."

After entering the kitchen, she sat at the table and picked up a fork, then dug into the potato salad. "I was too worried."

Leo took the seat across from her and dug into his own food. "And now?"

She swallowed, then picked up her glass of pop. "This might sound crazy, but I think this weekend is going to work."

He waited for her to take several drinks before replying, "You doubted me?" He slapped his palm over his chest. "I'm crushed."

She laughed and shook her head before turning her attention back to her plate. By the time she finished it off Leo had cleared his plate. He sat back in his chair, happy to watch her devour her meal one delicate nibble at a time.

“This pie is heavenly,” she said, spooning up some of the cherry treat.

“It was tucked in the back on the bottom shelf. I could kiss your mom for thinking of it.” Leo rubbed his stomach and said, “Cherry is my favorite.”

Amanda peeked up at him, then winked. “I know, silly. I told her that on the phone.”

Leo sat up straighter. “So the pie was your idea?”

Dabbing at her lips, Amanda said, “Yep,” clearly pleased with herself.

Leo pushed the plates aside, then leaned across the small round table. “Then maybe I should kiss you instead.”

Amanda licked a stray crumb. Her brown gaze seemed glued to his mouth. “Maybe you should.”

Ah, Leo thought, the magic words. “Close your eyes for me, sweetheart.” When she obeyed without question, Leo’s cock saluted. He wanted to play. To drive her so wild she’d do everything he wished. Her lashes began to flutter open, but he touched each lid with a kiss, effectively keeping them closed. “No. I haven’t thanked you properly yet.”

She remained quiet, her eyes staying closed, thrilling the hell out of him by her gentle submission. Leo reached out and took the towel wrapped around her head and tugged. It loosened and fell to the floor freeing her long, golden blonde hair, still damp from the bath. He caressed the shiny wet strands, letting them filter through his fingers. “You have such beautiful hair, Amanda. So soft and baby fine.”

Leo trailed his hand down the length of it, then smoothed one finger over her neck. Her head fell to one side and she let out a breathless moan. When he touched the pulse beating wildly in her throat it seemed to quicken right under his fingertip. He leaned in closer, as close as the table would allow, then inhaled her feminine fragrance. “You always smell like cinnamon rolls.” He inhaled, then adjusted his assessment. “No, that’s not it. It’s the icing on the cinnamon rolls. Tasty. Makes me want to lick you from head to toe.”

“Leo, please,” she begged, leaning toward him, as if as turned on as he.

“I’ve been thinking of this, sweetheart. Every second since that kiss in your backroom. Kissing these pretty lips and hoping it won’t stop there.”

Amanda’s mouth fell open. As if to protest? He wasn’t going to wait to find out. Covering her mouth with his own, Leo tasted the sweetness of the cherry pie, and if he wasn’t mistaken, hot womanly arousal. He kept it quick, a gentle touch of lips and tongue. Damn, he really didn’t want it to be quick, but there were things that needed to be settled before they moved further. *If* they moved further.

“Do you know what I want, Amanda? Can you guess?”

Her eyes slowly opened, and she bit her lip. The heat of her espresso colored gaze tore a path straight to his groin. "What do you want, Leo?"

The huskiness of her voice nearly did him in. Hell yeah, she was most assuredly aroused. But was she ready for more than a few tame kisses in the kitchen? "You're sure you want to know?"

She bobbed her head and reached a hand across the table, covering his fist with her palm. "Please, tell me."

Opening his hand, Leo entwined their fingers. The act seemed as natural as breathing. "I want you lying under me in that king-sized bed, baby. Naked," he answered. Amanda's fingers tightened. It urged him on. "Your soft, curvy body pressed against mine while I sink my cock deep. I'll be slow and easy, sweetheart. I promise. All I can think about is watching you come all around me. I want to touch you. Suck you. Fuck you."

"God, Leo."

She started to release him, but he held firm. "Do I stop?" He badly wanted to continue. "Tell me. Whatever you ask, it's yours, Amanda. I won't push. Not unless it's what you want."

"It's shocking to hear the words coming from you of all people. But I'm not going to sit here and pretend I don't like them all the same. Everything you said, it's what I've been imagining too."

He shook his head and murmured, "Christ, baby, you can't know what's been going through my head. I have a hell of a dirty mind, sweets. And I've had my fair share of hot, sweaty dreams of you these last few nights." His voice grew raspier with the fever that ran through his veins. "There's nothing I want more than to drag you off to the bedroom and make love to you until dawn. But you have to know I'm feeling pretty damn intense about you lately. I don't want a fling here. This isn't a *what happens in Lake Tahoe stays in Lake Tahoe* sort of thing. Not for me." He bent his lips to her pulse and licked the length of the vein pounding beneath her satiny skin.

"I-I've never been the fling sort, Leo."

It wasn't exactly the answer he wanted, but for now he'd make it work. He'd just have to prove to her how good they could be together. That their friendship had been nothing more than foreplay to the main event. That there could be so much more between them. Leo knew it in his gut.

Chapter Five

Walking into the bedroom, Amanda felt an immediate sense of panic. What had prompted her to say yes to Leo? Her nerves were frayed, and she was sure he could see her trembling. Even her anxiety couldn't hinder the zing of anticipation that ran through her bloodstream though. She'd known this moment would come. Deep down she'd known what would happen if Leo came along with her on this trip. She'd nearly convinced herself it would all be make-believe but her body had known the truth.

As Leo turned on the little lamp next to the bed, Amanda clasped her hands in front of her and waited, suddenly unsure. Determination appeared to be stamped into his untamed features as he watched her from the other side of the bed. She took in the sight of him, from his mussed dark hair, to the way his hands fisted at his sides. In that moment, he seemed large and dangerous—and more man than she knew what to do with. The teasing friend she'd come to know was no longer present. In his place was an unyielding and dominant man hungry for sex. Amanda shivered.

As she stood there, Leo began to make his way around the side of the bed, each step bringing them closer together. A rush of feminine pleasure went through her when he took her in his arms and pressed his lips to hers.

This kiss wasn't the delicate touching of flesh that it had been before. This time Leo took her mouth in wild abandon, dipping his tongue inside the wet cavern, then back out again, teasing and tasting. Amanda melted against him, moaning as she wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him back with everything she had. Never in her life had anything been so good. So deep and all consuming. His lips demanded. His tongue teased and dueled with hers. Butterflies sprang to life in her stomach, and a quick burst of damp heat flooded her pussy.

Without warning, Leo pulled back, his green gaze fierce with arousal. "You're scared, aren't you, sweetheart?"

How could he know that from a single kiss? Unable to look him in the eye, Amanda's gaze shot to his chest. "A little."

Leo cupped the back of her neck and used his thumb to tip her chin up. "I'm going to make you feel so damn good. There won't be time for fear, sweets." He smiled, and his hands smoothed their way down her back to her bottom where they cupped and squeezed. Her flesh molded to his hands as if made for him.

"I fucking love your ass, Amanda. I've watched you walk. Did you know that?"

She shook her head, her throat dry as dirt.

He bent at the knees and pulled her so close that her pelvis cradled his rather impressive hard-on. "Good. I never wanted you to know."

"Why?"

"Because we were friends and I didn't want to make you uncomfortable around me."

Always Mister Nice Guy, that was her Leo. "Well, it worked. I had no idea you ever looked at me, not like that."

He licked his lips and stared at her chest, as if mentally picturing her naked breasts. "Mmm, you can bet I did, sweets. And now I want a better look. May I?"

Amanda swallowed hard as his hands began to massage her backside through the thin material of her shorts. Leo had somehow managed to wiggle the material higher, exposing the tiniest amount of her cotton panties. His rough fingers were there, teasing. Just as she was about to shout, "Take me!" he spoke again, driving her a little closer to insanity.

"Jesus, Amanda, the thought of being inside your soft, tight cunt is enough to make me come in my jeans here."

"I'd really rather you didn't, Leo."

His eyes darkened. "You're such a sweet surprise."

She frowned in confusion. "What do you mean?"

"I was all set to sleep in the other room. I didn't think you'd let me anywhere near you tonight. I hoped. Hell, I prayed that wouldn't be the case, but I never figured it'd be answered."

She snorted. "Great, so now you're saying I'm easy?"

He chuckled. "Not at all. I'm just glad I'm not the only one feeling desperate and hungry here."

Amanda pushed out of his arms and let her gaze take in the male perfection in front of her. "No, you aren't the only one hungry."

"Then maybe you'll take those clothes off for me?"

After taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly, Amanda began to inch the tank top up over her belly. She was plumper than the average woman. Would Leo be turned off when he saw her in the flesh? Only one way to find out. With Leo's gaze zeroed in on her every move, Amanda tugged the top up and off. Tossing it to the floor, she tried to force herself to remain still. Not to cover herself from his roving gaze. When she'd put the tank top on she'd been thinking of sleeping in it, which meant no bra. Now, Amanda sort of wished she'd worn one anyway.

"I pegged it earlier," Leo said, his voice low and deep.

Unsure what he meant, Amanda asked, "Pegged it?"

"You're a goddess, pure and simple," he murmured. "My sweet, fair-haired goddess."

The way he said it, so sincere, it gave Amanda the confidence she needed to stand there, in the dimly lit room and let him look. In the meantime, there was certainly no harm in her doing a little looking of her

own. From Leo's short, dark hair, which curled up around his collar, to the jeans pulled tight over his straining erection, he was all male. Sexy and masculine and completely edible. Amanda licked her lips, her entire body vibrating with tension and excitement.

"The shorts and panties, pretty goddess," Leo quietly commanded.

Her clit swelled and her fingers trembled as Amanda continued to strip out of her clothes. Within seconds she was completely nude. With Leo still fully clothed, Amanda was all too aware that she'd quite effectively given him the upper hand.

Leo tried to maintain a modicum of control, but it was damn hard. Literally. Son of a bitch, she was prettier than he'd imagined. Her hair, long and full, hung straight and unfettered past her shoulders, gleaming in the soft glow of the table lamp. Her tight black shorts had driven him to distraction. He kept imagining what she looked like *sans* the clothes, but his imagination hadn't done her justice. She had curves in all the right places, and the neatly trimmed blonde curls covering her pussy were damp with her need. All he wanted to do was lap up every drop of her sweet cream. His mind came to a stuttering halt when his gaze settled on her breasts. Perfect, high, full tits he wanted to lick and suckle for hours. Damn, enough was enough.

Leo stepped closer and cupped her chin in his palm. "I swear I'm going to make you feel so damn good, baby."

Amanda wrapped her arms around his neck. Leo groaned and covered her lips with his own. He licked and nibbled at her succulent bottom lip, hungry to take all he could. Scooping her up into his arms, Leo carried her to the bed. He laid her on top of the cool quilt, then stood back and started to strip out of his jeans. Amanda kept her eyes on his face—that was, until the last of his clothes joined hers on the floor. Finally she appeared to give in and let herself have a good long look. Her pretty gaze wandered down his body in a journey that left him singed. Her curious look stopped on his cock, and he watched her lick her lips.

Christ, he couldn't take any more.

Leo wrapped a tight fist around the length of his dick, then moved toward her. When his knees hit the side of the mattress, he whispered, "Come here and suck it for me, sweets. Let me feel that pretty mouth wrapped tight around my cock."

Her eyes widened as if shocked. Hell, if he didn't know better he'd think she was a virgin. Suddenly, just as he was a heartbeat away from grabbing a handful of her silky hair and thrusting her onto his aching hard cock, Amanda smiled and moved closer.

Leaning up on one elbow, she appeared to inhale. "I love the way you smell, Leo. All musky and male. It makes me want a taste."

“Jesus, you can have more than a taste. In fact, you can have whatever you want. I’m yours to feast on, sweetheart.”

She hummed and licked the swollen head. “Mmm, I like that thought.” Her tongue darted out and licked again. Leo cursed and took her face in both hands—all too aware of how easily he could come. A single lick and he was ready to shoot his load all over lips and tongue, watch her swallow every last drop.

As she rubbed her tongue over the sensitive, bulbous tip once more, Leo threw his head back. He had to grit his teeth against the need to fuck her mouth. One satiny soft hand cupped and squeezed his balls and Leo damn near fell to his knees. “Fuck yeah, Amanda. Play with me, sweets.”

Amanda followed his lead and started to suck him in, but he halted her movements. She went rigid. “Did I do something wrong?”

“You’re doing everything exactly right, baby.” Leo’s voice roughened as he admitted, “The thing is, if you suck me right now I’ll come. So, how about you just open wide for me and give me your tongue.”

Amanda’s gaze never wavered from his as she followed his command and opened her mouth. “God, sweetheart,” Leo groaned. Taking the advantage, he guided his cock onto her waiting tongue, rubbing the swollen head back and forth. A drop of pre-come appeared. “Go ahead, lick it off, pretty goddess.”

His eyes narrowed and his jaw clenched tight when Amanda’s tongue swirled over the head, teasing and licking. “Mmm you’re being such a good girl, Amanda. Now you can suck. Deep. As deep as you can take me.”

Leo pushed inside the tiniest bit before Amanda took over. She slid her mouth down his length until it hit the back of her throat. She swallowed around his cock, and Leo’s balls drew up tight and hard. She moved up and down his pulsing erection, making love to him with her mouth. Ah, hell, too close. Leo pushed her away and Amanda let out the sweetest little whimper, as if unhappy at being denied his come.

“You can swallow later,” he murmured. “I promise.”

Amanda smiled and laid back. “I’ll hold you to that, Leo.”

Leo could only stare at the bounty before him. When it came to sex, he’d experienced nearly everything there was to experience, but with Amanda it was as if everything suddenly took on new meaning. Damn, he’d been ready to explode after only a few pulls from her mouth. Never had he been so quick on the draw. Then again, Amanda wasn’t just any woman. She was *the* woman. And it was going to take more than one hot night in Lake Tahoe to get her fully out of his system.

If he even wanted her out of his system.

Instead of pouncing like he wanted, he took a moment to calm down and looked at her again. He’d never get tired of looking at Amanda. Her skin, the gentlest shade of ivory, seemed so soft—he could so easily bruise her. And the large pillows of her breasts had his mouth watering. They were pure perfection. Fat, pink nipples he desperately wanted to pop into his mouth.

Placing one knee between her thighs, Leo braced himself on his fist beside her head. Dipping low, he licked at the candied confection, savoring the sweet taste of her. This moment would be forever imprinted onto his brain. He'd never forget the moment he'd made love to Amanda, his goddess, the first time.

Her nipple hardened against his tongue as he leisurely flicked it back and forth. She moaned and arched upward, thrusting even more of her sensitized flesh into his mouth. When he gently bit down, Leo was forced to wrap an arm around her to keep her from collapsing back to the bed. She moaned and thrashed around, provoking him to do it all over again to her other pretty tit. This time he took his time, savoring the unique flavor of her.

As he lifted away, Amanda collapsed against the mattress, eyes closed. His cock swelled another inch when he noticed her nipples glistening wet from his ministrations. "Open your eyes for me, sweetheart." Her lashes fluttered and Leo witnessed the heat in her brown eyes. It scorched him. "You're hot and ready for me right now, aren't you?"

She nodded as if too overwhelmed to speak. He smiled, understanding exactly. "Then open your legs for me," he urged. "Invite me in, baby." At first he was afraid she'd balk, too modest to expose herself so blatantly, but she only hesitated for a split second before moving her legs apart. She spread herself wide for him. Leo finally saw the satiny softness of her sex. God, he wanted her. He'd never ached for a woman the way he did Amanda. She made him feel things as she lay there, staring up at him with a trusting smile that curved her kiss-swollen lips.

Leo moved between her smooth, fleshy thighs and looked his fill. Her clit and plump pussy lips were totally exposed to his view. After licking his lips, he whispered, "If I don't get me a taste of some of that sweet cream I'll surely die, Amanda."

"W-we certainly wouldn't want that."

Leo chuckled and lowered his head. With the first swipe of his tongue over her clit, she moaned. "Mmm, so sensitive."

"Leo, please."

"Shh, you had a chance to play. My turn."

"Oh, God."

He placed a tender kiss to her opening before licking her dewy lips. Her legs started to close, but Leo was bigger, stronger. He clutched her thighs and held her firmly in place. "You want me to stop?"

"No," she whimpered. "Please, no."

"Be still then and let me have this pussy."

Not bothering to wait for a reply, Leo dipped his tongue into her cunt, tasting her tangy flavor. He'd never sampled anything so fucking good, so addicting. He inhaled her womanly scent, then sucked her clit in between his teeth and nibbled. Amanda's hands flew to his head, clutching and grasping handfuls of his hair as she cried out for more. When his tongue thrust between her folds, she lost it completely and pushed

against his face, undulating as he tongue-fucked her. A few more licks to her clit and she burst wide, screaming and straining against the unyielding hold his hands had on her soft, supple thighs. Her orgasm seemed to go on and on. Her flavor hit his tongue, and Leo couldn't get enough. Needed more. He suckled and licked until she collapsed back, the muscles in her thighs going slack as they fell open, her hands dropping back to the bed. Leo was loath to pull away as he kept his tongue and lips against her sopping wet mound while she gained control.

After several seconds, Leo lifted up and stared down at the sexy temptress. She looked nearly asleep already, exhausted from her climax, no doubt, but when he dipped his finger into her slippery cunt her eyes flew open. With her chocolate gaze on him, Leo brought his finger to her mouth and rubbed her lube over her bottom lip. Leaning down, he kissed her clean. She moaned and wrapped her arms around his neck, pulling him down on top of her. As her breasts came into contact with his chest, he caught himself and stopped.

"Condom," he explained as he left the bed and grabbed his jeans from the pile of clothes littering the floor. Locating one, he ripped the packet open and rolled the condom down his hard, throbbing dick. Damn, he was ready. He'd be lucky if he didn't come the instant he was seated inside her tight hot pussy.

When he came back to the bed, he positioned himself between her thighs and gave her one last chance to back out. "Are you certain, sweetheart?"

She cupped his cheek and smiled. "Please make love to me, Leo."

"Mmm, as you wish, my goddess."

Chapter Six

He guided his cock slowly inside Amanda's hot pussy. A mere few inches, but the squeeze had Leo's mind going blank. He could see by the way she chewed at her lower lip and clenched her eyes closed that she wasn't exactly having the time of her life.

"You're tight, baby," he muttered as he pulled back an inch. Yeah, as if she needed the reminder.

"You're...big," she countered.

She wiggled a little, as if to get him moving along. Leaning down, he licked at the wound she was causing on her lip, then very slowly began rocking his hips back and forth. He controlled his every motion, waiting for the tight fist of her cunt to accommodate his intimate invasion. It wasn't easy, not when all he really wanted to do was thrust, hard and fast and deep. To bury his cock inside her where he belonged. Where he would always belong. But Amanda deserved better. She deserved to feel nothing but sweet pleasure. And if it killed him he would deliver.

"Ease up for me, sweets," he whispered against the shell of her ear. "Just a little." She relaxed a fraction, and Leo pushed in another inch. "That's it. Just like that, baby. See how good that is?"

"Leo, please, more."

"You'll get it all, but slowly." He kissed his way over her face to her neck where he found that same jumping vein he'd teased earlier. He gently bit down on it. Amanda groaned and started moving her hips, thrusting against his lower body. "Christ, yeah. You feel so damn good hugging my cock."

"Please, Leo," she cried out. "I need you inside me. All of you."

Her pleading almost did him in, but he wouldn't be persuaded. "Slow, damn it," he ground out in a voice rougher than he intended. "You're tight as hell. I don't want to hurt you."

She capitulated at last, relaxing her flexing hips. "Fine," she mumbled, "but next time we do it my way."

He chuckled at her disgruntled tone, all too thrilled that she was already planning a next time. "Next time I'll be your sex slave," Leo promised. "You can have your wicked way with me, goddess."

Resuming his slow, torturous movements, Leo took his time, wanting, needing to make it as good as possible. For Amanda. He wrapped a hand around one gorgeous tit and feasted, suckling and fondling. When her inner muscles relaxed for him, Leo moved into her farther. A few more gentle thrusts and he was seated deep, her cunt gripping, milking him as he rocked in and out of her.

His mouth came down over hers, swallowing her cries with his kisses. Soon, their bodies were fused together, moving in unison. Leo braced himself on his elbows beside her head and watched as her desire spiked anew. He pushed as deep as he could possibly go and together they flew out of control, their shouts of ecstasy mingling as Leo filled the condom with hot jets of come and Amanda exploded all around his cock.

Exhausted, sweating, Leo very nearly collapsed on top of her. Only the thought of her tender body kept his muscles from going lax. He wanted to comfort her. He wanted her to have nothing but sweet memories of her first time with him.

Leo slid out of her boneless body and went to the bathroom to dispose of the condom. He grabbed a washcloth, ran warm water over it and brought it out to Amanda. Her eyes were closed, and she had a dreamy smile on her lips. The sight of her made his body burn all over again. As he bent down and pressed the cloth to the juncture of her thighs, her eyes flew open and her mouth formed a startled O.

Nothing was said by either of them as he cleaned and soothed her sore flesh. Leo tossed the washcloth to the floor, beyond caring that the carpet would get soaked, then came down on the bed beside her. Pulling her pliant body up against his, Leo realized, not for the first time, just how big he was in comparison to her. He was practically twice her size. It was easy to wrap his arm around her middle and pull her in close until her round bottom cradled his dick. Damn, he wanted to fuck her there too. To brand every inch of her body with his own. And yet she slept blissfully on, unaware that his cock was already fully charged and ready to party.

Something about the woman made him ravenous. Then again, what did he expect? That he could have sex with her and walk away? Go back to being *buddies*? As she lay beside him like the blonde goddess she was, not a care in the world, Leo plotted.

He'd gotten her this far, right? He'd just have to get her a little farther. Because from this moment on she belonged to him. She might not know it, but she'd definitely just been claimed.

Amanda couldn't stop staring. He was so delicious—and so oblivious to her roving gaze. But really, this might be her only chance to look at the man without him knowing. She couldn't pass that up.

He slept on his stomach, which she found sexy as hell. The sleek, powerful muscles of his back made her think of an artist's canvas. So much skin just waiting for her to paint him with her tongue and fingers. Sun-drenched skin to be exact. Yes, definitely lots of places for her to play—if only she had the guts. And farther down, where he'd kicked the blanket off, a tight, perfectly shaped ass that brought Amanda perilously close to drooling all over herself. Would he think she was mad if she leaned down and took a bite? Suddenly he shifted. Amanda quickly shut her eyes, feigning sleep.

"You can touch, too, you know. It's not like I'm going to shout rape or anything."

That yummy voice, raspy from sleep, had her eyes opening. He was propped up on his elbow, grinning down at her. Her cheeks heated. God, how lame. After everything they'd done and she blushed? What the heck? "How long have you been awake?"

"Long enough to know you denied yourself."

Amanda laughed. Too late she noticed his gaze wasn't on her face. She looked down and realized one breast was exposed. She pulled the blanket higher, covering her upper half completely. Leo frowned. "How do you know I denied myself? Maybe I was content to watch you sleep."

He reached out and touched the end of her nose with his index finger. "Because I know you, Amanda. You wanted to touch." That same finger drifted down over her lips, smoothing back and forth. "My skin is tingling right now, sweets, hoping you'll change your mind and take what you want."

"Your skin is tingling?" She badly wanted to touch. To simply reach out and stroke his lips the same way he stroked hers. But she was only a shy bookstore owner. What did she know about being bold?

"Mhmm," he murmured, as he dipped the exploratory finger into her cleavage, caressing and playing. "It's only been a few hours, but already I miss you."

Amanda leaned closer. "I haven't gone anywhere."

"You're right next to me, that much is true, but you may as well be miles away because you aren't on top of me, taking what you want."

"You'll let me have my way?"

His gaze shot to hers. Green sparks lit her on fire. "Yes, I'll lay here like a good sex slave and let my goddess have her wicked way. After all, I did promise."

Amanda closed the gap separating them and placed a barely-there kiss to his lips. "I like that you call me your goddess."

Leo dropped back to the bed, placed his hands behind his head and grinned. "Climb up here. Put me out of my misery."

When he put it like that, Amanda didn't have it in her to refuse. He was giving her unhindered access to his hot bod. No way was she missing out on that opportunity. Not giving herself time to think it to death, Amanda flung the blanket off and lifted to her knees. Straddling him wasn't easy. He was a big man, and she was short. Once she was on top, he wrapped his hands around her hips and tugged her down a few inches. She could feel his cock nestled up against her bottom and her pussy grew damp with need.

"There we go," he whispered, "that's better."

She placed her palms against his ribs and stared down at him. She'd never been crazy about being on top. Her bulky figure usually made her feel, well, bulky. And she was completely on display. But the way Leo looked at her, as if he couldn't get enough of the sight of her nude body, had her dropping her insecurities. Okay, not all her insecurities, but enough to keep her seat.

"You're a beautiful man, Leo." It was nothing short of the truth. From his messy dark hair to the powerful chest sprinkled with curls the same shade. Ripped abs. Strong corded arms. Truth be told, he was more man than Amanda knew what to do with.

Leo chuckled. "Beautiful?"

"It's true. I could stare at you for hours. I've always thought you were handsome. Rugged, hard and so well-built it takes my breath away." She ran her palms over his chest, tweaking one nipple before adding, "Now that I've seen all of you I'm even more convinced."

"Rugged and hard. I like those words. Beautiful is pretty damn girly though. Beautiful is for Mr. GQ."

She frowned, not following him. "GQ?"

His hands on her hips tightened. "The guy in your store. The one who gave you his number."

In an instant, Amanda saw the change in Leo. His eyes hardened, and a muscle in his jaw twitched. Had he been jealous? "His name is T.J."

"It doesn't matter because he's there and I'm here." He pushed his cock into the crease separating her buttocks. "And I want to be even closer."

Her gaze widened. "There? You mean anal sex?" The muscles in her ass, what few she had, tautened.

Leo cursed. "Do that again, sweets. Flex that ass for me."

Amanda followed his command, gripping his cock in a tight squeeze.

"Damn, woman." Leo groaned. His hands came away from her hips to massage and knead her breasts. "I could come, and I'm not even inside you yet. You're a little minx."

She did it again, relishing in her newfound power. "No. I'm a goddess, remember? And you have to do as I say."

"Anything, baby," he promised, lifting at the waist to lick one nipple. "Anything at all."

She buried her fingers into his hair and held him against her breasts. Leo murmured sweet words to her as he laved one peak, then the other. When he bit one, Amanda cried out and flexed her ass once more. Leo pulled back, spearing her in place with the intensity of his stare. "We need a condom and some lube, sweets. I want this ass," he growled as he patted her backside.

She nodded, too far gone to form actual words, and moved off him. On shaky legs, she stood and searched around the room for the wallet she'd seen him toss aside earlier. She found it several feet away, against the far wall. Of course it couldn't be close. Walking across the room naked made Amanda hyperaware of her every flaw, her too plump curves. It didn't help that she could practically feel the heat of Leo's gaze on her backside. She bent and picked up the worn leather, then brought it back to the bed. Leo took it and placed it on the mattress beside him.

"There's a tube of lube in my suitcase, outside pocket."

Amanda quickly retrieved it and placed it on the nightstand. "You sure came prepared."

Leo only grinned, reached out with both hands and lifted her into the air as if she weighed no more than a child.

She yelped.

He winked.

Once she was seated on top of him, Leo said, "Your sexy ass twitches when you walk."

Her face flamed so hot Amanda was afraid she'd catch fire. "It does not."

"Hell it doesn't. Makes me want to bend you over and fuck you from behind. Damn, I love your ass, Amanda."

Wow, he really did have a thing for that particular body part of hers. The thought sent her embarrassment into hiding. "But then I wouldn't be in charge," she said, leaning down to swipe her tongue over one heavily muscled pec. "And I'm supposed to be in charge."

He grabbed the back of her head and brought her face up for a kiss. It was hard, fast, and if she didn't miss her guess, claiming. "We'll save it for later then," he offered, before snatching the wallet and retrieving the condom. He handed it to her and whispered, "Put it on me, goddess."

Amanda sat up, ripped open the foil and tried to do just that. Really. The blasted thing was too small or something because it kept getting stuck. His cock was too thick, too long, the rubber was sure to snap. And that would *so* ruin the mood. "I don't think it's going to fit."

Leo chuckled. "It fits just fine." He held out a hand. "Here, let me."

Amanda shook her head. "No, I can do it."

"Yes, but I can do it faster and right now I need fast."

Well, when he put it like that... Amanda handed over the condom. He had it on within seconds. There was clearly an art to that, and she didn't want to know how he'd managed to perfect it. Next, he opened the tube of lubricant and spread a small amount over his index and middle fingers. Before Amanda could blink, she felt his fingers drifting over her tight pucker, back and forth, spreading the lube, preparing her. Her entire body shuddered as a single digit dipped inside. Tight muscles clenched around him.

"Ah, hell that's sweet," Leo groaned.

Amanda couldn't speak, could only feel.

After he pulled his finger free, Leo squirted more lube onto his fingers. "When I get my dick inside you, you'll feel nothing but white-hot pleasure."

Sliding two fingers into her this time, Leo stretched and opened her. She writhed atop him, unable to control the feelings rioting inside her. "Leo," she moaned.

"That's it, moan for me, sweets." He thrust deep, so deep his fingers were buried clear to the knuckles. After pumping in and out several times, Leo slowly pulled free. "There, now you're ready. Guide my cock in, Amanda."

Unable to deny him, Amanda reached behind and took hold of his cock, gripping it in a tight fist. Leo cursed and wrapped his hands around her buttocks and opened her.

Amanda scooted her bottom backward until she bumped up against the head of his cock, then positioned it against her tight rosette. Leo held her in a firm grip and pushed his hips off the mattress, but her body refused him entrance. She groaned, needing him inside but unable to figure out how to achieve her goal.

“Shh, baby,” he soothed, “Let me.”

Amanda nodded and allowed Leo to pull her down until her body was draped over his. “That’s it, just relax and let me make you feel good. That’s a sex slave’s job, remember?”

And with that, Amanda surrendered.

Chapter Seven

Careful not to hurt her, Leo pushed the head of his cock in, past the ring of muscles protecting the tight passage. She moaned and clutched the bedspread beside his head, burying her face against the side of his neck. As he slipped in another inch, she tried to force him in farther.

He held her hips in place. "Easy. We'll get there. I promise."

Another inch and Amanda tried to take control of their lovemaking once more by pushing herself onto him. His cock slipped in another inch. "Jesus," Leo groaned.

Amanda let loose a needy little whimper. The desperate sound had Leo pushing deeper, giving her another thick inch of his hard flesh. "So, damn hot and tight. I'm going to come. Right here. Inside this beautiful ass." Leo reached between them and used his right hand to toy with the sweet bud of her clitoris. Amanda's back arched, her hands clutching onto the sheet beside his head.

"Leo."

The sound of his name coming from Amanda's lips drove him past the brink. He flicked her clit, back and forth. "Come," he softly ordered. "Do it now."

As if waiting for permission, Amanda pushed against him, moving her hips in little circles. Inner muscles clamped down tight around his cock as her orgasm took her. Torture and pleasure mingled, became one.

"All of it," he snarled. "Every inch." A rumbling growl escaped Leo as he pushed himself the rest of the way inside the tight fist of her ass. Reaching up, he stroked the tangled length of blonde hair away from her face, then kissed the satin skin of one cheek. When she hummed in satisfaction, Leo continued loving her. Licking, suckling her ivory neck. She began to move again, up and down, pulling his cock nearly all the way out, then driving it back in so deep Leo's mind filled with nothing but white-hot pleasure. She built the pace, slow at first, then faster. Soon flesh slapped against flesh.

"Mine." Fuck, he hadn't meant to say it aloud, but to hell with wishing it back. It was true and it was time she knew it.

Thankfully, Amanda didn't seem to mind, only pushed against him harder, fucking him into oblivion. Soon he felt his cock swell, thicken, all the blood in his body rushing to his balls. One more thrust from his sweet goddess and Leo was there, a rush of hot fluid filling the condom.

Amanda cried out, threw her head back and joined him.

Leo's arms tightened around her, holding her in place. He didn't want it to end. He never wanted it to end. "You amaze me." It wasn't the words he wanted to give her, but he didn't think she wasn't ready to hear anything more heartfelt. Yet.

"As it happens I feel the same way about you."

He smiled at her husky tone. "You're going to end up with a sore throat if we keep this up."

"It'll be worth it," she murmured as she lifted and placed a little peck to his nose.

Leo could only stare. So smart, so pretty and she'd somehow managed to steal his heart. He wasn't sure when it had happened. Probably when she'd grabbed the last box of caramel corn. He was just too dense to realize it until now.

Leo drew his cock from the warm haven of her body, then lifted her off him. When he stood he held a hand out. "Shower?"

"Uh-uh." She snuggled into his pillow. "No way am I budging."

He chuckled. "No way am I showering alone." Bending at the knees, Leo slid his hands beneath her pliant body and lifted her against his chest.

"Sleep. I need sleep, Leo."

He started for the bathroom. "A quick wash, then you can sleep."

She buried her nose against his chest and muttered something.

Leo frowned and stopped midstride. "Huh?"

She lifted her head and stared up at him. Seeing the worry in her brown eyes didn't give him a warm fuzzy feeling. Shit, had he been too rough on her? "What is it, sweetheart?"

"I said I don't want to go to the reunion."

Leo breathed a sigh of relief and continued into the bathroom. It was dark. Amanda reached over and flipped on the light, bringing the big Jacuzzi tub into view. Nice. Just enough room to play. He took her to the sink and sat her atop the counter before discarding the condom.

Smoothing Amanda's hair out of her face, Leo pressed his lips to her forehead. "That's what's got you looking like someone kicked your puppy?"

Her fingers sifted through his chest hair, and she wouldn't meet his gaze. "I don't have a puppy, but yes."

He tipped up her chin, forcing her to face him. "Do you want a puppy? I'll buy you a puppy."

She laughed and smacked his chest. "That's not the point."

Yeah, he knew exactly what was weighing on her and it pissed him off. "Your family makes you so damn nervous."

She slumped, as if sinking into herself. "It's not my family. It's my mother. She's going to expect things."

“Things like us setting a date for a wedding?” He prodded, knowing they needed to talk. In his way of thinking the original plan had been scratched the instant he’d taken her to bed. But that didn’t mean she felt the same way.

Amanda covered her eyes with her hand. “Yes,” she bit out. “Things like that.”

“Amanda, look at me.” Leo waited until she removed her hand, until her gaze was once again meeting his. “We’re adults, not kids. We make the decisions here, not your mom.”

She threw her arms out to the sides and shouted, “What decision is there to make? You and I aren’t dating, much less engaged. Have you forgotten this is all pretend?”

Leo let his gaze travel down her body. When he saw the red rash marring the creamy flesh of her breasts, he wanted to kick himself. Damn, she was so fair, and he’d gotten carried away. He’d have to be more careful in the future. “Here’s the way I see it. When we hatched this scheme it was fake. That changed and you know it. This is not pretend anymore, Amanda.”

“What are you saying?”

“You want it spelled out?” When she nodded, Leo ground out, “Fine, I care about you. We’ve been dancing around this for years, if you ask me.” He pointed at the doorway. “What happened in there, it was more than sex. A hell of a lot more.”

“It was wonderful,” she admitted, her voice so quiet it took Leo a second to register the words.

He pulled her thighs open, exposing her damp pussy to his view, then stepped between them. Cupping her cheeks in his palms, he whispered, “You’re mine, Amanda. I don’t want to lose you. I want more. I want to see where this could lead.”

One side of her mouth kicked up into a sideways grin. “I was really afraid I was the only one getting all territorial.”

Now they were getting somewhere. “You feel territorial toward me?”

She closed her legs around his hips—the movement put his cock in direct line with her wet cunt. “I don’t want to give you up. Not now. I want more too.”

He dipped his head and let his lips drift over hers before saying, “Then maybe we ought to see where this could lead.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck and sank into him. “Mmm, yes, we definitely ought.”

They were on their way home, and Leo couldn’t help but feel a sense of anticipation. Amanda had agreed to give their budding relationship a try. He’d damn well make her glad she did too. He reached over the armrest and took her hand in his. “Well, that wasn’t so bad.”

She smiled up at him. “Actually, I think she likes you.”

He snorted. “Your mom didn’t crack a smile all weekend.”

She shrugged and looked down at their entwined fingers. “Her exact words were, ‘you’ll do’.”

Leo brought her hand to his mouth for a gentle kiss. He didn't think he'd ever get tired of kissing Amanda. "I'll do, huh? That's her vote of approval?"

Amanda licked her lips and tried to pull her hand back, but he wouldn't let her. Eventually she gave in and let him kiss and tease each of her fingers. Finally, she spoke, her voice a little breathless. "It's as close as we're going to get, I'm afraid."

He teased her thumb and sucked it into his mouth, enjoying the way her breath hitched. "Well, if she approves then that means she'll lay off you for awhile. So, all in all a happy ending to pretty damn great weekend."

Amanda leaned close, so close her mouth was against the shell of his ear. "No, the happy ending came when you gave me that massage."

Leo's cock stiffened beneath the fly of his jeans. "Ah, the massage. You liked that, did you?"

"Yes and unless I'm mistaken, so did you."

After they'd spent all day Saturday with her family, which was huge, Amanda had been exhausted. He'd taken her into the living room and stripped her bare, then he'd laid her out on the living room carpet and gone to work on her tense muscles. It hadn't been long before he'd gotten pleasantly distracted with her voluptuous body. And it hadn't been long before desire had replaced Amanda's fatigue.

They'd ended up in the sixty-nine position. Leo's body still buzzed from the erotic interlude.

"Yeah, I liked it," he growled. "And just as soon as I get you home I'm going to repeat it all over again."

"You're insatiable."

The blush that stole over her cheeks captured his full attention. He was so hooked. "Only for you," he told her, giving her nothing but the truth. "Only for my sweet goddess."

She cocked her head to the side. "Leo?"

"Yeah, sweetheart?"

"I'm very glad we shared that box of caramel corn. I'm pretty sure it was the luckiest day of my life."

"Me too, sweets. Me too."

About the Author

Anne Rainey grew up in a small town in central Ohio, the only girl with three rowdy, older brothers. When she wasn't playing tackle football with them she could be found tucked away in her mother's book room getting lost in mysterious worlds. She's had a variety of odd jobs including chiropractic assistant, frame stylist, restaurant hostess and nail technician. Anne now lives with her fabulous husband, two gorgeous teenage daughters, two ornery dogs and three snooty cats. When she's not dressing, feeding, cleaning or spending time with them, she can be found at the computer writing stories hot enough to make your toes curl!

You can visit Anne on her Facebook Fan Page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Anne-Rainey-Fan-Page/121274891238824>

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A hard man is good to find...and impossible to resist.

Tempting Grace

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The Vaughn Series, Book 4

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

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

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

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

Enjoy the following excerpt for Tempting Grace:

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

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

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

"W-What?"

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

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

He lifted his mouth from hers and whispered something against her skin, then moved his lips downward, teasing her beyond measure. Grace leaned back, giving him permission to lick a fiery path

along her chin and collarbone, before he zeroed in on the V of her ivory colored blouse. He kissed her cleavage and dipped his talented tongue beneath her white satin bra. She arched against him, desperate for more, so hungry for his touch all over.

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

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

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

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

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

"No. I'm just..."

"Anxious?" he helpfully supplied.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As if afraid she would break, Jackson lightly ran his tongue back and forth over her areola seconds before sucking her nipple into his warm mouth, satin and all. He hummed in satisfaction, and the raspy vibration of his voice tormented her. Somehow Grace found herself sprawled, Jackson's hands on either

side of her body effectively pinning her to the cushions. He surrounded her. His lethal strength and intoxicating scent filled her vision and her senses.

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

"Please, Jackson."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Spanking my ass. Sounds kinky."

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

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

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

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

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

In a world where everything's for sale, some things simply can't be bought.

Need You Now

© 2010 S. L. Carpenter

A Tahoe Nights Story

Janice hadn't planned to take her long-awaited getaway alone, but when a girl catches her boyfriend with his pants around his ankles...well, let's just say that at age thirty, there aren't many princes waiting in line to take the frog's place.

She arrives in Reno ready to break out of all the molds life has crammed her into. In short order she's not only getting lucky at the blackjack table, she's hit the jackpot with Mr. Sex-On-A-Stick. A man who seduces her with his eyes and shows her how a woman should be treated.

Aaron is living the dream. His gift for pleasuring women brings him everything a man could want: a home in the beautiful Lake Tahoe basin, money, gorgeous, rich ladies vying for his very expensive time. Yet there's a void that haunts him as he lies alone in bed at night. At first, Janice is just another empty job. Then she opens a door and fills his empty life with something he never dared to imagine, let alone want.

Enjoy the following excerpt for Need You Now:

She awoke to a loud thumping sound. She tried to open her eyes, but it hurt to even move. The thumping was her heart pumping blood to her painfully confused brain. Her head pounded with every beat of her heart.

"Oh fuck...this is horrible." She squinted enough to see she was in her bedroom. Doing a quick check, she noticed she wasn't wearing anything except a T-shirt. Her body was fine and nothing felt violated. The room appeared exactly as she had left it so nothing was stolen. "Oh my God, what did I do?"

She had a blurry memory of the three guys at the bar and a very large bear.

The only thing she knew for sure was she had to pee right away. Her bladder was filled like a water balloon and ready to burst.

After what seemed like a solid fifteen-minute pee, Janice walked out to the kitchen area. The scent of coffee filled the dark air. She took a cup from the small cupboard and poured some coffee. She figured having it black would clear her head of the foggy haze still looming in her mind. There was a flickering light in the living room area from a fire burning. She was puzzled because she didn't remember making coffee or starting a fire.

"How are you feeling?"

She nearly jumped out of her skin, hearing a voice speak from the darkness, and almost ended up wearing the hot coffee she'd just poured. The chair in front of the fireplace turned and there was Aaron, sitting in her bathrobe.

"You doing okay?"

"Well...I'm basically naked with a cup of coffee in a dark house and don't remember anything, so I'd have to say no. My head is pounding like a damn drum. What the hell happened?"

"I think my T-shirt looks good on you."

She sipped her coffee and looked at Aaron. "Why are you wearing my bathrobe?"

"Because you threw up on my Armani suit. I don't remember seeing anyone throw up that rainbow of colors quite like that before. By the way, cosmopolitans and roofies are a bad combination."

"*Roofies*?"

"Yep, those guys spiked your drink with a roofie. They could have taken everything from you and done anything they wanted to you. You wouldn't have remembered a thing."

"Jesus." She gulped. "All I remember is seeing you talking to a woman and getting a little jealous. Then there was one guy that was flirting with me and bought me a few drinks. No wonder they hit me so quick. I was feeling really woozy. Who was the bear I saw?"

"Bear? Oh, you mean Leslie." Aaron smiled. "He's a friend of mine. Used to be an All-Pro offensive lineman. He's as big as a house and stronger than a bull, but the nicest guy in the world unless you piss him off. He's gotten me out of a couple of jams before."

"Sounds like your *Mother*-person has a soft spot for football players."

Aaron turned and looked back at the fire. "Yes, she does. She helped Leslie out of a really bad pain killer drug habit, and he became her bodyguard. Everyone knows if they fuck with Mother, Leslie will come pay a visit. The man shows no mercy when it comes to people messing with her. A few people have ended up missing."

"Good guy to have in your corner."

"Oh yeah, but you don't want to be on his bad side. So, are you feeling a little better?"

"Actually things are getting less fuzzy and just blurred now."

Aaron moved over in the chair and motioned for Janice to sit with him.

She cuddled up to him comfortably, staring into the flickering flames and smiling. This was nice.

"I'm sorry you had to come be Prince Charming and rescue me. I saw you were working." She was too exhausted to feel much of anything.

"I was? Oh no, that was Mother. I was talking to her about a few things. It's okay."

“I can pay you if you want. I know you could be out working or whatever, and I had another run of luck today. It’s why I was out celebrating.”

Aaron sighed. “No, I came here on my own. For some reason I just wanted to relax tonight.” He paused. “Actually, I *am* going to charge you.”

“For what?”

“The cost of dry cleaning my suit and car upholstery.”

Somebody's sleeping in her bed...

My Favorite Mistake

© 2010 Karen Erickson

A Tahoe Nights Story

There's only one way for busy PR executive Julie Lancaster to get her mother off her back—cave in and take a weekend break at the family cabin in Tahoe. After all, Mom won't know she's sneaking her laptop along to get a little work done.

Not only the cabin is a blast from the past, so is the occupant of her bedroom. Tyler Nichols, a guy she remembers as quiet and nerdy...*nothing* like the drop-dead gorgeous hunk who knows how to fill out his underwear.

One look at all-grown-up Julie refuels Tyler's memories of long, lazy summer vacations, and the crush he was too shy to admit. It would be gentlemanly of him to leave, but the amazing woman in front of him elicits visions of the wickedly lusty things he'd like to do with her.

With work pushed to the back burner and a weekend indulging with Tyler on high simmer, Julie makes a startling discovery. Tyler is the real deal. And maybe, if he agrees, she might have time for a life after all...

Enjoy the following excerpt for My Favorite Mistake:

Damn, she looked sexy. The sun warmed her skin, making it appear golden and creamy. She shifted her long, bare legs, the already-short shorts riding up her thighs and giving him a glimpse of pure heaven. Images of those shapely thighs wrapped around his waist as he pounded his cock deep inside her flashed through his mind, and he shifted. Afraid she might catch sight of his sudden erection.

"I could sit out here all day," she murmured, her voice so soft it almost got carried away with the breeze. "I can't remember the last time I sat outside and just did...nothing. I don't even have my Blackberry on me."

"Is it normally attached permanently to your hand?" He could relate. He thought his iPhone was the greatest invention ever created.

"Oh, yeah." She laughed, then paused. A look of panic crossed her face. "Maybe I should go back and check it. People are always emailing me, texting me, whatever. Clients, employees, I've always told them I'm on call twenty-four/seven."

Julie started to get up but he grabbed her hand, stopping her. "Relax. They can wait for a few hours. Nothing could be that urgent, could it? Especially on a weekend."

Her fingers flexed within his grip and she slowly sat back down next to him. "You're right. I think I just urged myself right into a panic attack."

“Over nothing,” he agreed. They still hadn’t let go of each other’s hand, and he gave hers a gentle squeeze. “Just enjoy the day. The lake is the fullest it’s been in years, you know.”

She nodded, wisps of fiery hair brushing against her face. “From all the rain and snow we had this winter, I’m sure.”

“Exactly. Imagine how cold that water is.” He leaned in close, his mouth hovering just by her ear. The delicate shell dotted by a single pearl earring tempted him. To kiss, to nibble, to lick. “What do you think you’d do if I pushed you in?”

Julie turned toward him, eyes wide with surprise. “You wouldn’t dare.”

With a chuckle, Tyler shook his head. “Nah, I wouldn’t. I’m afraid of what you might do to me if I did.”

She laughed as well and released his hand, nudging his shoulder with the tips of her fingers. “You’d probably like to see me come out of the water all wet like a drowned rat.”

All wet...wrong choice of words on her part. He immediately thought of her T-shirt clinging to her like a second skin, hard nipples poking against the soaked fabric, goose bumps dotting her flesh as the water dripped down her body.

Yeah, his dick was really getting eager now.

“You’d be in a lot of trouble,” she agreed, the laughter dying on her lips as her gaze zeroed in on his mouth.

He was leaning in closer, as if he wanted to kiss her. Which he did. The past years of longing, the more recent years of curiosity, all of them came crashing down upon him at this very moment, and he decided he didn’t want to wait any longer.

Tentatively, he set his lips upon hers, not wanting to push for fear she might not react the way he hoped. But she didn’t pull away. She scooted closer, her lips parting from his for the briefest moment before she returned. Soft and plump, damp and clinging to his, she kissed him, her mouth opening for his more and more until he teased her with his tongue.

A little groan escaped her, and he slipped his arm around her shoulders, hauling her to him. They sat on the edge of the dock, their legs swinging over the ledge, lips locked and arms around each other. Just as he’d envisioned so long ago in his teenage dreams.

He wasn’t one to be sentimental but this was getting to him. Their tongues touched, danced against each other and he slipped a hand into her hair to anchor her close. The strands were silky soft, clinging to his fingers and he stroked her, reveled in the softness. The beauty of her.

Julie broke the kiss first, her breath accelerated, her eyes bright with what he hoped was lust. “Wow,” she whispered.

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