

ELLORA'S CAVE *Moderne*

SCARLETT
SCOTT

Wicked
Dirty

ELLORA'S CAVE *Quickies*®

Wicked Dirty

Scarlett Scott

Ivy may be the odd woman out in the field of construction, but that doesn't mean she can't do a man's job. And in heels, no less. When a subcontractor runs behind on the project she's heading, Ivy's prepared to give him a proper dressing down. But when she sees the man in question, undressing him becomes far more interesting a prospect.

Jake Shaw is proud of the business he's built and isn't about to be bossed around by a sassy vixen who clips into his life in cherry red pumps. Their clash is instant, their attraction undeniable, their use of his big desk...delicious.

Before Ivy can catch her breath she's breaking all the rules with Jake. The more time she spends with him, the harder she finds it to convince herself he's all wrong for her.

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Wicked Dirty

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WICKED DIRTY

Scarlett Scott

Dedication

For Steve, who changed everything.

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Blackberry: Research In Motion Limited

Lexus: Toyota Jidosha Kabushiki Kaisha TA Toyota Motor Corporation

Missoni: Missoni S.p.A. Joint Stock Company

Chapter One

On Monday morning, a merciless headache began to thump in Ivy Denton's right temple, partially because she hadn't yet had her first cup of coffee and partially from impending stress. New to the construction industry – after quitting her marketing job a year ago, she ended up in the very last place she swore she'd ever be, the family business – even Ivy knew it was a bad sign when her foreman looked as if he'd just run over his daughter's puppy.

Bruno stopped pacing when he caught sight of her clipping into her office in cherry-red pumps. He glanced down at his dust-spattered construction boots. He was the company's best and most experienced field man and she relied on him to keep everything under control on the construction site. When he wasn't onsite, there was always a big fat problem on the horizon.

"Good morning, Bruno." She tried for a bright, cheerful smile that was likely more of a grimace. Ivy Denton was not an a.m. person. If you called her after lunch, she was yours. Before then, all bets were off. "How are you?"

"Not good, Ivy. It's the St. James Hotel site."

With a sigh, she dropped her oversized hobo bag onto her desk and sank into her leather chair. The new St. James Hotel in Baltimore, one of Denton Construction's largest and most important projects, had also become a giant, splintering thorn in her side. It was the first large account her father had entrusted her with and had caused nothing but trouble since she'd broken ground with the ceremonial golden shovel.

"There's a lot riding on this project, Bruno." Her ass, for instance. Because her father would fire her first and kill her later if she lost money on a forty million dollar account. She pressed fingers to her temples, willing the headache away. "What's going on now?"

“The excavators aren’t keeping up. They hit rock, for one thing, and for another, they’re just too damn slow. And now we’ve got other contractors digging their heels, wanting to back-charge us for delays.” Bruno frowned. “I need you to make a trip out to the site and see if you can reason with them.”

“Me?” she squeaked. Couldn’t help it. She wasn’t dressed to hit the site in her loose but short silk peasant dress. And she certainly wasn’t mentally prepared to duke it out with an excavator first thing Monday morning.

“I can get your father to come out if you don’t have time.”

Damn Bruno. He knew just what to say to get to her. Ivy straightened her shoulders. “Absolutely not. I’ll push up my meetings and be at the site around noon.”

* * * * *

At exactly 12:42, Ivy parked her Lexus next to a giant cloud of dust that hovered over a line of portable job trailers. Large, earthmoving equipment was whirring and grinding across the empty lot that in just over a year would be transformed into a five-star hotel and conference center. A few workers in white hardhats lingered here and there, one with blueprints curled under his arm, another with a lunch kettle.

As she stepped out of her car, she spotted a man that was a different breed entirely and the initial sight was enough to send a sharp stab of lust straight through her body. He wore hip-caressing blue jeans, work boots and a green bandana over black hair that peeked from beneath, a little long and wild. He didn’t have on a shirt, and God was she thankful. A sheen of sweat delineated every powerful, corded muscle beneath his golden skin. His pecs were firmly defined, his abs absolutely lickable. Not to mention he was gorgeous, all slashing cheekbones, sexy stubbled jaw and even a cleft chin.

Down, girl. Ivy closed the car door with a snap, hooking her bag over her shoulder. If she wanted to be considered a professional, a part of this mostly man’s world, she had to stop gawking. And since there was no way she could keep herself from ogling that mouthwatering slab of potent masculinity sauntering by, she busied herself with

the pretense of scrolling through her BlackBerry before depositing it safely in her purse. By the time she finished, the sex god was gone but the pulse of need between her legs wasn't. *Damn.*

Turning her mind back to business, she picked her way through the perimeter of the site, looking for her delinquent excavator's trailer. She located it not far from where she'd parked and headed up the metal stairs leading to the door. The heel of her pump got caught just as she reached the landing. *Damn it.* She paused to bend over and free it, cursing. As if she needed a reminder she wasn't dressed for a site visit. Then, to make matters worse, the door swung open as she was in the middle of balancing on one leg and rescuing her poor Missoni from the offensive metal grating. Ivy's gaze travelled up a pair of long, strong legs to a white t-shirt and an all-too-familiar face.

It was him, the sexy shirtless guy of five minutes earlier, only he was wearing a shirt and scowling down at her. "Can I help you?" His tone was ice but his voice was melting, sending a skitter of shivers through her.

"My shoe's stuck." She caught her lip between her teeth and winced. "Probably self-explanatory. The heel just went right through the hole and I can't get it out." She couldn't, either. The stubborn thing seemed to be firmly wedged.

"Not exactly the right kind of shoes for a construction site." His eyes were blue, she noted, and he was even better looking at close range than from a distance.

Her pulse pounded as she realized her face was almost level with his crotch and that his jeans were a snug fit. Unless she was mistaken, the hard line of his cock pressed against the worn denim. "No," she agreed with him, breathless as she continued to wriggle her shoe back and forth. "Do you think you could spare me the lecture and give me a hand?"

"Stand up." He was firm, confident, accustomed to giving orders.

She stood awkwardly, balancing on one leg. He was a head taller than she, so she had to look up for a few seconds before he sank to his knees. His large, calloused hand closed around her ankle and the contact sent a pulse of heat directly to her clit. Ivy

almost toppled over at a mental image of him rucking up her dress and burying his face between her legs.

“Steady.” He glanced up. “Put your hands on my shoulders.”

Flushing, she placed her hands on his thick shoulders. His muscles bunched and moved beneath her fingers as he worked on her shoe. She stared down at his glossy black hair and realized the bandana was gone. His hand slid slowly from her ankle to her calf, leaving a tantalizing trail of heat in its wake. Was he torturing her intentionally, or had his grip merely slipped?

She couldn’t tell because in the next instant he freed her shoe, popped it back onto her foot and stood, towering over her once more. *Not very Cinderella finding her prince.* Ivy pulled her hands away from him and flashed him an uncertain smile. “Thanks for saving my shoe.”

The urge to push him back into the trailer and have her wicked way with him was strong. Until she recalled the reason she was about to enter the trailer in the first place. The excavator was ruining the construction schedule. Was he the excavator? She hoped not.

He grunted. “The next time you’re on a jobsite, don’t wear heels.”

Oh no he didn’t. Ivy couldn’t let his talk-down-to-the-stupid-chick routine fly. Sure, construction was a male-dominated industry, but that didn’t mean girls couldn’t step up to the plate and hit a homerun.

“Thanks for the advice. Has anyone ever talked to you about the importance of wearing clothing on construction sites? That would make a great Toolbox Talk.” She was gaining her momentum, her composure returning with a fresh burst of irritation. “Not to mention safety glasses, hardhat... And those don’t exactly look like steel-tips to me.”

“I didn’t get the memo that it was time to play OSHA.”

“Oh really? Could’ve fooled me with your comment about my shoes.”

He crossed his arms over that impressive chest. "Call me sexist, but I've never had to rescue anyone else from the steps before. It was a friendly suggestion."

"So was mine." She gritted her teeth when she smiled. Now she was convinced she'd found her excavator. He had pain in the ass written all over his sexy face. Mentally, she turned the switch back to business. "Let's call it even. Are you from Shaw's Excavating Services, by any chance?"

"Jake Shaw." He raised a brow, his expression turning sullen. "Who wants to know?"

"Ivy Denton." She thrust out her hand for him to shake. "I'm the project manager for Denton Construction. I believe we may have spoken on the phone prior to you signing the contract?"

Jake Shaw didn't seem happy to see her. If anything, his expression went from mad to mad as hell. He shook her hand in a quick pump. "We emailed."

"Well. It's nice to meet you in person." She hired so many contractors she couldn't possibly keep track of each one, let alone one as hot and surly as Jake Shaw. "Can we step inside to talk?"

"Sure." He stepped back and motioned for her to enter the job trailer. "Welcome to my lair."

"Thanks." *I think*. She followed him inside, taking stock of her surroundings.

A window AC unit hummed, sending cool air circulating through the narrow space. At one end of the trailer blueprints had been spread out on a drawing table and a desk sat on the other, with two chairs facing it and one behind. There was a laptop on the desk softly playing classic rock from its speakers, a few paper weights, a calendar.

Jake strode ahead of her and folded his lanky body into the chair on the opposite side of the desk, watching her with a hooded stare. Smoothing her dress down and feeling a little overheated with those vivid blue eyes on her, she sat. His gaze dropped to her mouth and she didn't think she'd ever wanted to fuck someone more in her life.

There it was, impossible and yet oh so delicious. She couldn't very well have an affair with one of her subcontractors. Not only was it a professional no-no, but her father would murder her if he ever found out about it. Besides, business didn't go with romance, and anyway, Jake Shaw didn't seem the romantic type. He was curt and arrogant, he was causing her problems on the jobsite, and yet somehow that didn't matter when she couldn't stop fantasizing about him running his tongue up her inner thigh.

She blinked. "The reason I dropped in this afternoon is that my foreman tells me you're having some trouble meeting our performance schedule."

A come-be-naughty-with-me grin kicked up the corner of his delectable mouth. "I've never had trouble with performance in my life, Ms. Denton."

Oh, she just bet he didn't. Her nipples puckered. She cleared her throat. "Be that as it may, Mr. Shaw, you seem to be having difficulty with our schedule at the moment. Specifically, you're delaying us so much that our other contractors are balking and making demands."

He rested his elbows on the desk, steepled his fingers and watched her. "I'll be honest with you. My foreman was causing a lot of problems and I had to can his ass, which is why you see me here. You have my word that we'll step it up and do everything necessary to get this project out of the ground. We're making good progress now."

She had to admire his work ethic. Not many owners would step in and get themselves dirty with physical labor. But she couldn't let him off the hook that easily. "Your word doesn't mean a whole lot to me when I have half a dozen other contractors calling me and asking for more money."

"What exactly do you want from me, Ms. Shaw?" His tone had gone husky and dark.

Now that was an interesting question, one brimming with intriguing possibilities. She pursed her lips as she considered her answer. *Your hard cock deep inside me. Your*

tongue in my mouth. A fast fuck right here on the desk. In the end, she decided to keep it G-rated. "I want to see more manpower here. Bruno tells me you don't have a large enough crew. And you could be working two shifts or weekends to make up time. Which would work better for you?"

His jaw clenched. "Don't tell me how to run my business and I won't tell you how to run yours. Even if it means you're getting your heels caught in the steps at a hundred different construction sites."

"Let's keep my heels out of this, shall we?"

"Why? You're the one running around in the fuck-me pumps."

Just hearing the words "fuck me" uttered by that mouth was enough to make her wet. She crossed her legs to stave off another wave of unadulterated lust. "First off, if these are fuck-me pumps, I should clearly ask for a refund. And second, you didn't answer my question."

"Those are damn sexy shoes. I'd hate to see you return them." That scorching blue gaze dropped to her breasts.

Uh-oh. Suddenly the window AC unit wasn't keeping the room nearly cool enough. "You still didn't answer my question," she reminded him, breathless.

He stood with slow deliberation, sexual tension crackling off him live-electric-wire style. "What question?"

She swallowed, watching warily as he sauntered around the desk and stopped inches from where she sat, leaning his hip against the desk. What question, indeed. Ivy couldn't seem to recall it. He smelled like man, earthy and musky. Their gazes clashed, sending a searing surge of want through her hungry body. Her eyes raked down over him, recalling every mouthwatering inch of muscled skin hiding beneath that shirt, before lingering on the strong hands hooked into the belt loops on his jeans.

Think Ivy, think. "Mr. Shaw, this meeting has taken an unprofessional turn." Because really, having wild and crazy sex with one of her subcontractors in the middle of the day on a jobsite where anyone could walk through the door at any second would be

extremely unethical of her. Even if it was what she wanted to do more than anything. "Why don't you draft up a plan of action and email it to me by the end of the day?"

He stroked his jaw, wearing an expression that was equal parts seductive and thoughtful. "I'm more concerned with a different plan of action at the moment."

A shiver of anticipation swept through her. "Oh?"

The wicked grin was back on his lips again. "Oh yes, Ms. Denton." He caught her hands in his and pulled her into a standing position. His fingers tightened on hers.

"Just what plan of action are you talking about?" The words were out against her better judgment. Her breasts tingled. Her clit throbbed. He was working her into a state using nothing but suggestive looks and an innocent touch.

With a quick tug, he pulled Ivy flush against him. Her hands went to his shoulders and his found their way to her ass, kneading and molding her even closer to his hard body. The unmistakable ridge of his cock pressed against her belly. His blue gaze fastened on her lips. Their faces were so close she could taste his cinnamon-scented breath.

"The plan of action where I sit your sweet little ass on this desk, push up your dress and fuck you like crazy."

Chapter Two

Oh. *That* plan of action. It was undoubtedly a very bad idea. Wicked and dirty and exciting as hell. Maybe she was crazy. Maybe she was foolish. But the idea of Jake Shaw fucking her like crazy sounded pretty damn hot.

He was pulling her dress up her thighs in a tantalizing caress of silky fabric. His hands skimmed ass cheeks left bare by the lacy thong she'd donned on a whim that morning. "Does that plan sound acceptable to you, Ms. Denton?" His fingers trailed over the damp crotch of her panties and she let out a whimper.

"Possibly," she managed to say.

Had he read her mind? Was the connection between them as powerful as she thought? Maybe she'd been going without for too long. It had been a year since she'd broken up with her fiancé, and she had never been the kind for random hookups. So what was it about Jake Shaw that pushed every one of her buttons in the most exquisite way? That made her want to be bad with him?

"Was that a yes?" His wicked fingers danced, applying just enough pressure to her clit for delicious torture. And then he leaned down, ravaging her mouth with a hungry kiss. His tongue teased the seam of her lips and she opened to him, welcoming his spicy taste, the claiming surge of his tongue inside her mouth. He pulled away. "Or a no?"

As if her answer would be no when his hand was rubbing between her legs in that brazen yet enticing rhythm. Feeling bold, she skimmed her palm down over his chest and abs to cup his bulging hard-on. "Why don't you tell me, Mr. Shaw?"

Somehow, keeping their exchange formal heightened the pleasure of the intimate game they played. He bent his head and nipped her lower lip with his teeth, then licked and sucked his way down her neck. His tongue played between her breasts, teasing. When he glanced up at her, his eyes dark with desire, he increased the pressure and

friction of his hand on her pussy. Ivy was hovering on the brink of orgasm, her entire body tightening, breath coming fast, heart pounding.

Just when she was about to scream her release, he stilled. "Do you want me to make you come?"

She arched into his hand, rubbing herself against him, desperate for more. "Yes."

He dropped another plundering kiss on her mouth. "Ask me nicely."

"Please." Ivy reached between them to close her hand over his, pressing him against her aching center.

He sucked on her neck. "Please what?"

"Please make me come."

"Since you asked." Jake slid his fingers past the elastic waistband of her lacy thong, working her clit with expert pressure and speed. The sensation of those strong, calloused fingers on her wet flesh was mind-altering. He kissed her again and an orgasm rocked through her, sending aftershocks of pleasure from her head to her red high heels.

He pushed her thong over her hips and set her on the desk, pulling the scrap of lace down her legs. The panties disappeared into his pocket, but she was too far gone to care if he kept them as a trophy. Those magical hands were seducing their way back up her legs, over her knee to her inner thighs. She allowed him to push her legs apart and bunch her dress up around her waist. He buried his face between her legs, sucking her clit into his mouth, teasing it with his tongue. Ivy grabbed his hair, loving the texture. Moaning, she arched into him, desperate for him to give her more.

Just when she thought she was about to come out of her skin, his tongue sank into her pussy, demanding and firm. She almost shot off the desk at the excruciating thrill of it. Her sex pulsed, needing more. He seemed to sense her desperation because he stood, his face intense, strained with barely leashed desire. She went for the fly on his jeans, desperate to have his cock inside her now.

When she released him, his engorged dick rose stiffly from his jeans, proud and beautiful. Ivy wasn't sure what she wanted more—to take him into her hand, her mouth, or deep into her aching depths. She took him in her hand first, closing her fingers around the thick shaft, circling the weeping head, applying just enough twist and pressure to wring a moan from him.

It occurred to her that the door to the office trailer was unlocked and that at any moment anyone could walk through and get an eyeful. “What if someone sees us?”

A dark smile curved his lips. “Let them watch.”

For some reason, the thought made her want him even more. There was an element of danger that called to her. Everything about Jake Shaw and this moment of insanity turned her on like she'd never experienced before.

“It's your turn to be polite,” she told him, her voice throaty even to her own ears.

“I want to fuck your brains out,” he growled. “Please.”

“Hmm.” She pretended to think it over as she tightened her grip on him. “I'm not sure. You're going to have to be a little more polite, Mr. Shaw.”

“Damn. I'm going to give you the best fuck of your life. Pretty please with a cherry on top?”

Their mouths met in a ravenous kiss. She broke away and rubbed her cheek on his stubble, ran her fingers up along the tempting planes of his abs. “Fuck me.”

Jake pulled a condom out of his jeans, tore the wrapper open with his teeth and tossed the trash on the floor. He sheathed himself with practiced ease before probing her with his fingers. “Your wish is my command, boss lady.”

She was wet and on fire. No further need for foreplay. “Now,” she demanded, wrapping her legs around his hips. Ivy flattened her palms on the desk's cool surface to brace herself and rubbed her pussy up and down, up and down in delicious friction over his cock until they were both mad for it.

He jerked his hips and entered her in one fluid motion. She clenched her muscles and brought him deeper, moaning with a heady combination of pleasure-pain. Her body was telling her she was about to come again, but she wanted to make it last longer. She wanted to savor the way his cock stretched her wide, the way he surged so deep that she couldn't keep herself from crying out, moaning, frantically rising off the desk to meet his thrusts and take more of him, all of him.

He worked her breasts, palming them, reaching inside her dress to tease her painfully sensitized nipples. It was all she needed to push her over the edge. She came again, more violently this time, her spasms milking him until he was coming too, driving into her again and again. He threw back his head and cried out his pleasure. She leaned forward, licking and sucking on his neck, as hungry for the taste of his skin as she was for his cock. She wanted to bruise him, mark him, brand him as hers. The sensation of him deep inside her as her pussy continued to tremor and she licked his salty skin was incredibly erotic.

Gradually, their breathing returned to normal and he withdrew from her, flipping her dress down over her legs. He removed the condom and tossed it into a nearby trashcan before adjusting himself back into his jeans. Silence stretched between them. What could they say after something so potent and primitive had just exploded between them? Words seemed horribly inadequate.

She cleared her throat. "I'll still expect a plan of action by the end of the day."

He raised a brow, a mocking smile on his lips. "You'll have it. I don't fuck my way out of contractual obligations, Ms. Denton."

"That's good to hear." She was careful to put the ice back into her voice. After all, business was always business and it was her ass on the line, her reputation and livelihood at stake. "You have a job to do and I want it to be done well and on time."

With that parting shot, she snatched up her purse and clipped from the trailer. The blast of hot July air outside combined with the dust and noise of the construction site abruptly returned her to reality. Her heel got caught in the metal steps again, but this

time she rescued herself, irritatingly aware of the fact that Jake Shaw probably watched from the blinds-covered window of his trailer. She could feel his eyes on her back as she walked away and had the distinct impression he was laughing. It was only when she got into her car that she realized he'd kept her panties.

Chapter Three

The plan of action sailed into her inbox at quarter to five, accompanied by one sentence. *At least you didn't need a refund on your shoes.* Ivy tried to summon up some anger at his nerve, but in the end, thinking about him only made her hot and bothered all over again. It was nearly the end of the day and she was trying in vain to tie up some loose ends and pretend that fantasies of Jake Shaw giving her the best fuck of her life weren't intruding on her normally rational brain. But they were.

His email signature included his cell number. She couldn't be sure if he'd put it there for her sake or if it was standard. Feeling like a clumsy teenager, she rummaged through her inbox, trying to find previous correspondence with him. Apparently, she'd either archived or deleted it, and it was long gone, lying somewhere in the vast cyber dump of her computer's hard drive.

Ivy looked at the number on the computer screen. It taunted her. Teased her. How was it that staring at those numbers made her wet? She wanted him again. Their frenzied lovemaking session in the job trailer had only served to whet her appetite for him, not to satiate it. The man was like an addiction.

Pushing aside her pride, she dialed his number. One ring. Two. Three. She was about to hang up when he answered. Suddenly every witty, sexy comeback she'd been rehearsing evaporated. "Mr. Shaw?"

"I think we've advanced to first names, Ivy."

As if on cue, her body thrummed with a warm, delicious tension. "How did you know it was me?"

"Either ESP or I have your office number programmed into my cell." There was a wry grin in his voice.

“Oh.” That had been a stupid question, she had to admit. But what could she say to him? *Come over to my place tonight. I want to tie you to my bed and lick you everywhere.* No, she didn’t think she could be that forthright. Could she? It shouldn’t be possible to feel shy after what they’d done together, but she wanted to make certain she played her cards right. Not that she was looking for Mr. Forever—everything about Jake Shaw screamed he wasn’t the type—but she wouldn’t mind scoring some additional one-on-one time with Mr. Right Now.

The best way to hold his interest, she had a feeling, was to maintain her cool. Keep it professional, she told herself. If she started wanting to spoon, he’d run as fast as he could in the opposite direction. “I need some clarification on your plan of action.”

“You didn’t find my plan of action satisfying?” There was a wicked note in his voice that told her he didn’t mean the one he’d typed up into a fancy document.

More than satisfying, actually. “You weren’t clear on how you would make up for lost hours.” She did her best to stall.

He chuckled, a rough yet oh-so-sexy rumble. “I can make it up to you any way you want.”

Now that response had possibilities. “I’m leaving work in about ten minutes.” She paused. “Do you know where my office is?”

“I’m a few blocks away. I’ll swing by and pick you up,” he offered, sparing her the embarrassment of having to beg.

“I’ll be waiting.” She hung up before she could change her mind.

Part of Ivy felt guilty about breaking a cardinal rule of business. For a woman in the construction industry, it was difficult enough to gain respect without having to deal with the complications of sex. Hadn’t she promised herself she’d never allow her private life to interfere in her work? And wasn’t that exactly what she was doing?

Her father would be livid. She should be ashamed. She should call Jake back and tell him she’d changed her mind, that she had a dinner engagement, that she had to paint her nails, anything to avoid him and his potently male appeal. But she didn’t. The

other part of her, the wicked part, knew that she wanted him at any cost, ethics and her father be damned.

* * * * *

She asked Jake to drive to her apartment, thinking they could share dinner and hopefully a whole lot more afterward. They barely cleared the doorway before he caught her around the waist and pressed himself against her, his mouth open and wet on her neck. She reached back, raking her fingers through his thick hair. Lust slammed through her.

"I thought we could have dinner," she protested, halfhearted. After all, she was trying to be good. It was just that he made her want to be so bad.

"I want you," he whispered against her skin.

How could she argue with that? She wanted him, too. Forget salad and spaghetti with a bottle of wine—the best she could whip up without preparation. Jake's hands were traveling up and down her bare arms and his huge cock was pressing against her bottom.

"Where?" Ivy spun around to face him, lifting her face for his devouring kiss.

"Shower. I'm hot and coated in dust from the construction site." He nipped at her lips. "And I want you slippery and naked against me."

"Yes." She sucked on his lower lip then slid her tongue into his mouth, hungry for him. "Follow me."

They left a trail of discarded clothing on their way to her bathroom. Heels, boots, jeans, bra...everything fell away. Ivy had splurged on remodeling her bathroom—there was a large, walk-in shower on one side of the room, a deep hot tub on the other and shiny granite counter tops, marble floors. But she had yet to put it to good use.

She skimmed her palms over the deliciously hard muscles of his chest, loving the crispness of his chest hair. "Shower or bath?"

“Mmm.” He dipped his head and closed his mouth around one of her aching nipples. “I’d like to fuck you standing up, darling.”

Yes please. Her pussy was wet and throbbing already. When he talked dirty, she started to melt. Backing toward the shower, she pulled him with her. A flick of her wrist and a spray of warm water began cascading over their naked bodies, slicking them with a decadent sheen. He licked down her neck, between her breasts, teasingly around her navel. Then he was on his knees, pushing her flat against the cool tile wall and spreading her thighs.

Jake’s tongue delved into her pussy. Her hips bucked against his gorgeous face, wanting more. He looked up at her, making eye contact as he devoured her. He spread her lips, revealing her clit, and worked the sensitized bud with his tongue. Water poured down over them, glossing his black hair onto his strong back. She hooked her leg up over his shoulder and opened herself to him completely, arching into him and taking advantage of his mouth. The man knew his way around a woman’s body, knew how to bring her to the brink and then make her wait, trembling on the edge of a violent orgasm.

She was frantic now, needing to fill herself with his cock. Ivy gripped his shoulders, trying to bring him to his feet. “Please. I need you.”

“Shhhh.” He glanced back up at her. “I want to make you come with just my mouth.” His tongue was inside her again.

No man had ever wanted to satisfy her so completely. It made her want him even more, but also made her willing to endure more of his sweet torture. She slid her fingers into his wet hair, prompting his head to adjust to the optimum angle for penetration. With her other hand, she cupped her breasts, toyed with her nipples. Steam began swirling around them, enveloping them in a sensual mist. She became aware of the seductive sound of her own ragged breathing and low moans. Everything became heightened, hypersensitive.

With a few more strokes over her clit, her pussy tightened in a series of spasms. She came, clutching him between her legs, crying out. Jake pushed her leg from his shoulder and stood, branding her mouth in a hungry kiss that tasted of her own juices. Their tongues tangled, played. His fingers dipped into her, then withdrew to toy with her clit.

Ivy wasn't satisfied. She was determined to have his lovely cock. It rose hard and silky smooth against her belly. Lacing her hands together, she formed a tight sheath and reached between them to slip it over the head of his penis. She drew her hands up and down with enough pressure and speed to wring a moan from him. His eyes went smoky and dark with passion, his expression one of pure, decadent desire. She paused at the tip of his erection and increased the pressure, heightening the pleasure for him. And then it was her turn to get on her knees.

She took him in her mouth, sucking almost the entire length of him as she worked him with her hands. Just as she had him where she wanted him—about to bring him to a body-shuddering climax—he grabbed her elbows and yanked her to her feet. His hard, wet dick slid against her swollen folds. They kissed. He grabbed her ass with both hands and was inside her in the next breath, stretching her and filling her as she'd been aching for him to do. Jake pumped into her again and again, pinning her to the wall, getting deeper and deeper. She tightened her muscles and greedily pulled him in, holding him there until she came. The tremors that pulsed through her brought him to a pounding release. As the shower pelted the tiles around them, they sank against one another in a mindless haze of sated pleasure.

Chapter Four

Ivy was just completing a call with the mechanical contractor for the St. James Hotel project when her father arrived unannounced in her office. She watched him over the rim of her coffee cup, an unsettling feeling unwinding in her stomach. He didn't just drop in during work hours, which could only mean one thing. There was a problem.

She took a deep breath and completed her telephone conversation. "I forwarded your request for information to the architect, Bob. Thanks again for the call. I'll let you know as soon as we hear anything."

The phone hit the cradle and an ominous silence descended. "Dad." She attempted a bright smile. "Please have a seat."

"Ivy, I need to have a talk with you." His tone was as serious as his expression. He crossed the room and sat opposite her, imposing even in his silence.

She hoped like hell he didn't know about her and Jake. Three months had passed since she'd tossed aside every rule she'd ever made for herself—no sex with other contractors, no business with pleasure, just to name a few—but it had been three months of bliss. She and Jake had been taking turns spending the night at one another's places. He had a lovely house on a few acres outside of the city, but what it lacked in convenience, it made up for in its tranquil, beautiful setting. She fell in love with his golden retriever, Buttercup, but was terrified that it wasn't just Buttercup she'd fallen for with the ease of a summer day.

"What did you want to talk about?" She hoped she didn't sound as nervous as she felt.

"This is difficult." He pressed his fingers to the bridge of his nose, searching for words. "Bruno stopped in to see me."

Instant irritation shot through her that her foreman would go over her head, directly to her father. She sat up straighter. "Is there a problem at the St. James I'm not aware of? Why wouldn't he come to me first?"

"He didn't feel comfortable discussing it with you. Hell. Neither do I." He stood and began pacing. "Apparently, there's been talk at the site about a bet."

"A bet? What's so earth shattering about that?"

"Ivy, the bet was about you."

It couldn't be. *Oh, God.* She shook her head, ready to deny it, needing to deny what she feared he was about to say. "No. It couldn't have been. What kind of bet?"

"The bet was about how quickly Jake Shaw could... I don't want to have to say it." He ran a hand through his graying hair. "Damn it, Ivy. This is as embarrassing as it is infuriating. You know how I feel about mixing business with your personal life."

Her stomach bottomed out. How could he? Had everything been a lie? She couldn't face her father, so she kept her eyes trained on her coffee cup. The bastard. How dare he brag about the passion they'd shared? It was mortifying.

She swallowed, head lowered. "I'm sorry, Dad. I didn't think it would get out of hand."

"Well it has." He cleared his throat. "Do you want me to handle it?"

"No." That would be even worse. Besides, she knew in her heart that she had to face Jake herself. He owed her some answers.

* * * * *

Ivy pulled up to the office trailer on the St. James Hotel site in a haze of angry dust. This time, she wasn't lost. She knew exactly where she was headed and who she was looking for. Jake Shaw was sitting behind the same desk they'd made love on weeks before, looking just as impossibly sexy as always. He gave her a come-to-bed-with-me smile when he caught site of her. Until she slammed the door so hard it almost broke off its hinges.

“Something wrong, sweetheart?” His tone was wry, his eyebrow quirked in question.

Anger roiled through her, so potent her hands shook as she crossed her arms over her breasts. “You tell me, *sweetheart*. It’s not every day I learn from my own father that the man I’m sleeping with is using me to win some stupid bet.”

“Son of a bitch.” He swiped a hand over his face and rose to his feet.

“My thought exactly.”

“Ivy, calm down.”

“Was there a bet?” she demanded.

“Ivy.”

“Tell me!” The expression he wore said enough. “How much did you win for fucking me? Fifty dollars? A hundred?”

He strode across the trailer, reaching for her. “It wasn’t like that. Just hear me out.”

She shrugged his hands off. There had been a bet, and obviously he’d cashed in or he wouldn’t be acting so damn guilty. She wanted to hate him for it, but deep inside, all she felt was drained. Hollow. “Whatever it was, I hope it was worth it. Because I wouldn’t touch you again if you begged.”

Then she turned around and walked out.

* * * * *

That night, Ivy headed home with a bag full of pity supplies – three bottles of wine, mocha fudge ice cream, whipped cream, candy bars and corn dogs. Not exactly a dieter’s delight, but she didn’t care how many bonus calories she racked up. What she needed most was to forget the black-haired bad boy who had turned her world upside down with his wicked hands and mouth only to let her plunge headfirst back into the real world. No doubt about it. The real world sucked. She wouldn’t have minded hanging just a little bit longer before he shattered her illusions.

As furious and hurt as she was, she had to admit that she would miss him. Not just the life-altering sex—but that was reason enough on its own—she would miss his company. He had a wry sense of humor and a quick wit that perfectly matched hers. He was hard working, intelligent, down to earth...everything she could have asked for in a man. But not trustworthy. Not with her heart, it would seem, or with her body.

Just as she started in on her self-indulgent pity fest, her phone started ringing. Her landline went to the answering machine five times in a row, the first Jake, the following hang ups, all presumably Jake as well. Too late. She dug into her grocery bag with gusto and flipped on the television, determined to put him out of her mind.

An hour later, her cell rang mid-spoonful of chocolate ice cream. Jake again. She hit the end-call button and powered off the phone. There. No more interruptions. She wasn't interested in hearing his apologies. Didn't want to give him a second chance. How could he explain away a bet to get her in his bed? There was no excuse good enough. No cause that would sway her opinion of him—the best lay she'd ever had but a coldhearted bastard. A great sex life was one thing, sleeping with a man who was only using her as another woman he'd gotten to say *yes* was something else entirely. She didn't play that game, didn't need to.

After finishing her ice cream, she moved on to the wine, which she considered appropriate in the general food chain of life. Some time passed—she wasn't certain how much, watching a women's channel movie about a crazy ex-girlfriend with an evil plot to steal back her man—and the room began to get a little fuzzy around the edges. Then she crossed the divide in breakup meltdown. She started talking to herself.

Ivy grabbed her glass of wine and gulped a few more sips down. "There's plenty of man fish in the man sea." That didn't sound quite right. "There's plenty more fish men in the sea of men." No, not right either. Hmm. Perhaps she'd had a few too many glasses of Pinot Grigio.

A sound interrupted her inner musings. A buzzer? Her washing machine? Her oven? Ah. Her doorbell. "Go away," she yelled, not wanting to see anyone at the moment.

"Ivy, it's Jake. Let me in." He hadn't needed to identify himself—she'd recognize that velvet rough voice anywhere, damn him.

She didn't want to see *him* in particular. "Go to hell!"

"Ivy, please."

"Get lost."

"I'll wait out here until you let me in. All your neighbors are going to hear everything I say."

That was cruel of him. Apparently, he knew her better than she'd thought. Because those were the exact words he needed to say in order to gain entrance. Cursing him, she rose from her comfy perch on her sofa, glass in hand.

"This better be good, Jake Shaw," she called en route. "You're lucky I'm even bothering to talk to your pathetic hide."

She opened the door and there he was, gorgeous and sexy as ever. She wanted to devour him on sight. *Down, girl. Remember, he betrayed you.* She narrowed her eyes and pinned him with a glare. "Well? What do you want? Round two? Did you bring a video camera this time so you have evidence?"

His jaw clenched. "I'll admit that I probably deserve that. Are you going to let me in to belittle me, or are you going to make me stand out in the hallway?"

"Belittle you?" Oh, the man had nerve. And a wicked mouth. And a dirty mind. And hands that could make her come in fifteen seconds flat. But that was not the point. "You're the one who made a bet about me with the whole construction site and now I'm the one belittling *you*?"

"You didn't give me the chance to explain."

"I didn't need to. Guilt was oozing from your pores."

A half-grin kicked up the corner of his sulky mouth. "That was sweat, darling. I'm a hard worker."

He was hard, all right. Damn and double damn. She wasn't supposed to be thinking this way. Ivy closed her eyes for a moment and forced herself to think about puppies and kittens. Decorating Easter eggs. Something innocent. Anything to keep her mind off of That Which She Should Not Be Thinking.

Her eyes flew open and she took a sip of wine to regroup. "Why did you come here, Jake?"

"Isn't it obvious?" He held out his arms, encouraging her to inspect his mouthwatering body. Which she did, right down to the scuffed boots on his feet. "I'm here to make a fool of myself. To put myself on the line by asking you to trust me. To make a jackass out of myself by standing here in the hallway begging you to let me into your place so that your neighbors don't think I'm just some crazy stalker."

A smile was threatening to ruin her glare. Why did he have to be so charming in his own, offhand, rough-and-tumble way? Why did he have to know exactly what to say to make her give in to him? "Why did you do it?"

His blue eyes scorched hers. "Let me in, Ivy."

With an exaggerated sigh, she stepped aside. "Have it your way."

As she closed the door, she became aware of his warm, solid body close to her back. He leaned in, lips nearly grazing her ear. "If we were having it my way, you'd be up against the wall and I'd be inside you right now."

A shiver of awareness coursed through her. She spun to face him, putting some much-needed distance between them. "And I'm supposed to happily forgive you for making a spectacle out of me and calling my integrity into question?"

He grimaced. "The bet was bullshit. It happened before I even met you, and it was a stupid joke between me and one of the guys." He paused, raked a hand through his hair. "Look, when we heard there was a woman running the show, we had fun with it. I'm not proud of that, but I never expected what happened between us to happen. One

of the guys guessed after he saw you leave the job trailer the other day, and I didn't deny it fast enough. The next thing I knew, I was getting hit with fifty-dollar bills and half the crew was coming up to me to pat me on the back."

That certainly put things in perspective. She felt sick. "So I'm a trophy to you."

"No." He strode forward and gripped her arms, pulling her against him. "Ivy, you've been with me these last few weeks. You know you mean more to me than that. When you stormed in today and wouldn't even give me a chance to explain, I was mad as hell. I realized that you and I both need to learn to trust each other. And I know just the way."

He was right, she grudgingly had to admit. Jake had never treated her as anything less than a goddess. He'd been kind, caring and an extremely sensitive lover. He had not seemed the kind of man who bedded women because he could brag about it. The explanation, even if she didn't like it, actually made sense in a weird, man-logic sort of way.

"You know how we can get better at trusting each other?"

She wanted to kiss him so badly she ached with it. Her entire body was pulsing and thrumming at his nearness, traitor that it was. Her sex was drenched and tingling. Her gaze homed in on his sexy mouth. "What way is that?"

"I'll show you."

He led her to her bedroom, planting a delicious kiss on her that plumbed more than just her sensitive lips. His lean, hard body pressed against her in all the right places, rigid cock to her belly, pecs to breasts. She rose on her tiptoes and rubbed herself against him cat style. When she went for the fly on his jeans, he stopped her and leaned away.

"Not yet."

"No?" She was almost panting, wanting him and not caring now about stupid bets or pride. She was impatient. Starving.

Jake gave her a slow, knowing grin and shook his head. "No, Ivy. Not yet. First, you have to prove that you trust me."

"Oh?" She quirked a brow, titillated. "How am I going to do that?" *And please-please-please let it involve you sliding your big cock into me until I can't think anymore.*

"First, you're going to close your eyes."

He was so handsome, so divinely sexy, that she wanted to lick him. So she did. She leaned into him, inhaling his spicy masculine scent, and ran her tongue over the tanned skin of his neck. "Mmm."

"Naughty." He cupped her face and kissed her swiftly. "But you have to play nice to get what you want. Close your eyes."

"Fine. I can play nice with the best of them." With a sigh, she rocked back on her heels and shut her eyes.

"Good."

Something silky and cool slipped over her eyes and she felt him tying a knot at the back of her head. "What do you have up your sleeve?"

"I bet..." he dropped a kiss on her neck just below her ear, "that you were the kind of kid who peeked at her Christmas presents weeks before she opened them."

His mouth moved to her ear, catching the lobe and giving it a soft tug. Blindfolded, she realized all of her senses were incredibly heightened. It was as if each touch of him on her skin was magnified a hundred times. She shivered, torn between wanting to tear the scrap of fabric away to regain control of the situation and allowing herself to trust in him, in the moment.

"How'd you know I peeked at all my presents?" she asked, trying to distract herself from the seductive torture.

"A good guess." His tongue flicked over the shell of her ear. "You're a control freak."

"I like to be in charge."

"You're good at being the boss lady." His voice was sincere, admiring. He kissed a path to the base of her throat. "But tonight, I want you to let me..."

"Let you?" She scarcely recognized her own voice. Her entire body was threatening to spontaneously combust. *Oh yes, please.*

"I want you to trust me." His strong hands were unbuttoning her shirt. "To let me pleasure you."

"I think that's a no-brainer," she murmured.

"Is it?"

She felt her shirt slipping from her shoulders, falling to the floor near her bare feet. "Isn't it?"

"Do you trust me, Ivy?"

Did she? The truth was that if she didn't, she wouldn't be here with him in her bedroom, letting him undress her. This had never been about a quick, satisfying hookup for her. The fact he had come to her tonight proved that it hadn't for him either.

"I do trust you," she breathed as he flicked her bra away and took a nipple in his mouth.

"Good." He caught her wrists in his grasp, drew them together and slid another cool slip of silk around both, pulling it tight.

He'd bound her, she realized. Her hands were tied together. "What are you doing to me?" The not knowing was frightening yet seductive. She liked being at his mercy, being open to every lick, abrasion, sweep of breath on her hungry flesh. But she wanted to regain control.

"Pleasuring you, sweetheart." He sucked her other nipple into his mouth, dragging, raking his teeth over the tight bud.

"Why tie my wrists together?"

"To prove to both of us that you trust me." He kissed the side of her breast. His fingers undid the zipper on her jeans.

“Do we need to prove it?” Good Lord, it may make her shatter into a million quivering pieces.

“Hell yes.” His large hands slid her jeans in a lengthy caress down over her hips to her knees. He kissed her flat stomach, tongued her belly button, ran his tongue to the string of elastic on her lace panties. “Step out.”

“What?” She wasn’t even certain she could understand English any more. Her entire being was homed in on the feel of his warm breath so close to her pussy.

“Step out of your jeans, sweetheart.” He yanked her panties down in one rough motion, leaving her completely naked.

“Oh.” While his fingers were grazing her ankles, pulling away the rest of her clothing, his mouth sank into her, his tongue working her swollen clit. He sucked it into his mouth, worked the underside, put his tongue inside her.

Her knees gave out and he caught her up in his arms, carrying her backward. She could hear his boots on her wooden floor. Three steps took them to her bed where he deposited her on her plush quilt. His clothed body pressed down on hers. She could feel every inch of him, from the cold snap on his jeans to the worn cotton of his shirt. He took her hands in his and raised them over her head. She felt gentle pressure, then heard the sound of another knot being tied and realized he’d tied her wrists to the bars on her wrought iron bed. She was all his now. She was, in every sense, completely at his mercy.

“Still trust me, Ivy?” Jake’s voice was a soft grumble. He trailed his fingers down over her breasts, teasing her nipples, over her stomach, her hips. He parted her thighs and she opened for him, feeling his breath warm and wet on her sex.

“Yes,” she hissed, hips bucking toward him and the promise of fulfillment.

“Say it.” He dipped a finger inside her, then pulled it out, drawing dew up over the lush folds, circling her clit.

“I trust you.” And she did, she actually did. True, he was driving her body insane with wicked teasing. But if she took a moment to catch her breath and focus on

something other than Jake Shaw's mouth on her inner thigh, she had to admit to herself that she trusted him. She wanted him in her life. On a permanent basis. There it was. "I trust you," she said again. But she had to know. "Do you trust me?"

"With my heart."

He said it so quietly she almost didn't hear. Her whole body stilled, never mind that his mouth was perilously close to her. "What?"

"I think I'm falling for you, Ivy Denton."

"Take off your jeans," she ordered.

"Not enough time," he muttered.

"Then unbutton them. Now."

She heard him fumbling with his clothing, then felt the hot, hard head of his cock probing her slick entrance. Ivy arched into him, welcoming him inside her body, her life. He pulled the blindfold from her eyes so she could see his face. Their eyes met for a searing moment before his lips claimed hers in a soul-shattering kiss as he pounded into her.

It was a long time later that she lay curled up against his well-muscled chest and looked up at him with a sleepy grin. "I think I'm falling for you, Jake Shaw."

He gave her a wicked, dirty devil's grin. "Then take me, boss lady. I'm all yours."

About the Author

Scarlett Scott has loved romance novels ever since she was eleven and swiped her older sister's books to read by flashlight in her closet. Her mother caught her, but she remained undeterred. A self-described promiscuous writer, she dabbles in all sorts of genres but loves erotic romance best. She lives with her hero and their adorable but occasionally evil puppy and spends too much time lurking on her blog.

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