

ELLORA'S CAVE *Moderne*

Please Me, Tease Me

Gail DeYoung

Merry Kinkmas

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Meri has spent the last fifteen years dreaming about Johnny, her first love. Now her two best friends have arranged for her to see him, and Meri's nervous. She wonders if they'll still have the same chemistry—not to mention the same fetish, a love of sexy stockings.

Johnny's been dreaming of Meri just as long, clinging to images of making love to her while she wears sensual stockings. He can't believe his good fortune when he learns she's in town. Now he'll do whatever it takes to get her back in his bed, including playing on their mutual fetish.

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Cirque du Soleil: The Dream Merchant Company Kft Corporation

Elvis: Elvis Presley Enterprises, Inc. Corporation

Hilton: Hilton Hospitality, Inc.

Monorail: Las Vegas Monorail Company Corp.

Chapter One

"Look, Meri, we're here," Jennie said, squeezing her best friend's hand as the plane descended toward the bright lights of Las Vegas.

Meri leaned over her friend to peer out the window at the sight below. Her heartbeat quickened. Suddenly, that part of her that had the nerve to say "yes" to her two best friends' crazy scheme weeks ago turned into a big lump of fear in the pit of her stomach. Perhaps it wasn't too late to turn around and head back home to Chicago. This trip didn't seem like such a great idea anymore.

"Hurry! Grab your bags," Jennie cried as the plane's door was opened. "I can't wait to get to the Hilton." She jumped out of her seat and urged Meri and Cybil to do the same.

Cybil smiled down at Meri as she pulled her bag out of the overhead carrier. Her honey-colored eyes sparkled. "I bet you're excited, right? I know I would be if I were going to see my long-lost first love in a few hours."

Meri gave her a halfhearted smile. Oh sure, that was easy for her friend to say. She wasn't the one who had no idea what to say to a man she hadn't seen in fifteen years. What if she didn't recognize him? Worse than that, what if he didn't recognize her? Her temples pounded and she rubbed them.

"Oh why did I ever let you talk me into this?" she said as she dragged her luggage down the narrow aisle of the plane.

"Because it's our birthday gift to you and you can't give it back," Jennie said, nudging her from behind.

Meri sighed. Now she regretted her complaint that her thirty-fifth birthday was going to be no big deal, just like the last thirty-four. After all, it was hard to top an event as important as Christmas with a mere birthday that occurred on the same day. That

was when her friends decided to take matters into their own hands and make Meri's thirty-fifth birthday a day she'd never forget.

They crossed the airport terminal, passing gambling machines and brightly lit advertisements for myriad shows and casinos.

"This is so exciting. I've never been to Vegas. I want to see a show. Oh look, Cirque du Soleil. Thanks for giving me a reason to come here, Meri," Jennie said.

"I'm going to need a stiff drink to calm my nerves," Meri said as they climbed into the shuttle.

"Got that covered. It's on the top of my list of things to do." Cybil smiled. Her cocoa skin reflected the colored lights as the shuttle passed hotels and shops on the strip.

Jennie gave her a high-five above Meri's head. "That's what I mean. It's party time!"

Meri turned to look out the window and shook her head. *Thank God my friends know how to party 'cause if this turns out badly, I'm going to need all the help I can get to make it through this weekend.*

Meri's mouth dropped when the glass doors swung open automatically into the Hilton's expansive lobby. From the moment she stepped onto the highly polished checkered marble floor, she knew she was in for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Lit garland, poinsettias and Christmas trees greeted guests at every turn and Christmas songs played in the background.

"You guys, I don't know what to say. This is beyond anything I would have expected. Thank you so much. You really didn't have to do this."

Cybil laughed and ruffled Meri's long red hair. "Of course we did. We're tired of hearing you talk about the one who got away. And if you think this is great, wait until you see our room." She laced her arm through Meri's and led her toward the elevators. "Come on, girlfriend, we have to get you ready for your big reveal."

Meri stood before the bathroom mirror and sighed. The girl in her reflection was not the same one Johnny saw all those years ago. The glow was missing from this girl's cheeks; the sparkle no longer lit her eyes. An aura of sadness enveloped her and she couldn't shake it. She was keenly aware of the cause – it was him, always him.

"Oh Johnny!" She slipped her hands down her thighs over her silky black stockings and closed her eyes. As her fingertips caressed her legs, her skin tingled and her nipples began to swell. The hard beads of her nipples peaked against her satin bra. How she loved wearing stockings! Nothing else compared with the arousing effect they had on her. When she wore them, she felt sexy, beautiful and hot...oh so hot!

Overwhelmed by desire, she continued the slow, sensual strokes down to her knees and up her inner thighs. The little hairs at the back of her neck stood at attention. Goosebumps rose along the back of her arms. Time slipped away as she descended into an erotic trance, one in which she was the object of his urgent need.

Her hands were now his hands, his hunger...hers. Head spinning, she leaned back, arching her throat to accept his imaginary kisses. Heat blossomed everywhere his hands touched – across her breasts, down the valley of her stomach, over her mound.

When she encountered the intricate lace design at the elastic top of the stockings, she followed the frilly edge circling each leg. There was something very tantalizing about being so close, but not touching the aching, swollen lips. Yet she couldn't deny her burgeoning need. She moaned. *Yes, that's it, don't stop. Touch me. It feels so good.*

His hand – her hand – slipped between her moist folds and a shudder swept down her back and over her buttocks. Liquid heat oozed down her legs as her insides contracted in delicious little spasms. Dizzy with desire, she grabbed the counter with one hand to steady herself. Her breaths became labored as her fingers sought and found the ripe pleasure nub and circled it.

Lost in the heightened sensation of touch, legs trembling, she knew she was close to coming. She turned around to lean against the cool marble counter. Two fingers thrust inside her, pumping in and out along the slick vaginal walls. But in her mind, it was

Johnny's hard cock shoving in as far as it could. She heard her juices soaking her hand and smelled the fragrance of her sex. Inside, her muscles contracted around those digits and she rocked back and forth against her imaginary lover.

Yes, yes! Oh yes! Deep shudders racked her body as a strong orgasm swept her higher and higher to the ultimate precipice.

Her splayed fingers slid down her thighs to dance across the silky stockings. As the fragrant moisture glistening on her fingertips seeped into the delicate material, the air cooled it against her heated skin. Meri moaned. She was reminded of Johnny's hot, wet kisses teasing her inner thighs. Shivers of delight spread across her back. Oh what wonderful memories the stockings evoked!

She couldn't stop caressing her legs. Feather-light touches became rough, nail-raking scrapes then long, sensuous strokes. Each one provided its own delicious sensation along her skin.

They were so much more than just lovely coverings that made her legs look sexy and shapely. The stockings were her most cherished item of clothing. She wore a different pair every day, under every outfit, even her jeans. That way, no matter where she was or what she was doing, she could touch them and no one would suspect the pleasure she was experiencing.

Moments later, she opened her eyes and stared into the mirror once again. This passion—this fetish she had for stockings—was Johnny's fault. It began the night they first made love and had only gotten stronger as the years went by. Now it was as much a part of her as breathing.

Memories of the first time they made love came rushing back.

He played "Can't Help Falling in Love" to set the mood before she excused herself to go to the bathroom. She had been gazing in the mirror and trying to calm her nerves when she heard a knock at the door. With shaky hands, she smoothed her sheer negligee down over her garter belt and took a deep breath. When she opened the door,

Johnny greeted her with a smile and eyes that widened as his gaze took in her outfit. His smile grew bigger when he admired her stockings.

"Very nice." His voice was deep and rich and caused a rush of warmth to suffuse her body.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome. Come here." He reached for her and she eagerly went to him. His strong arms wrapped around her waist and pulled her into his warm embrace. Nuzzling against her hair, he inhaled her scent.

"Mmmm. You're wearing my favorite perfume."

She nodded. "I wore it tonight because I know how much you like it."

Johnny was a head taller than her and had to bend down to put his face next to hers. He looked at their reflection, his light blue eyes softened as another smile crossed his lips.

"A beautiful girl in my arms wearing stockings and my favorite perfume...how lucky can I get?" His voice was a low rumble in his chest vibrating against her back.

She lowered her head to hide the blush staining her cheeks, but he didn't allow her to take her gaze from his. He tilted her head back so she could see him in the mirror.

"Are you all right? You've been in here awhile." Worry lines creased his forehead.

She nodded and smiled sheepishly. "Yes, just butterflies."

He kissed her softly on the cheek. "I understand. Don't worry. I'll be gentle."

At that moment, she saw the love reflected in his eyes and her heart fluttered in her chest. Though she had only known him for six months, it felt like forever. His high cheekbones and lush lips were highlighted by the overhead light. The tanned skin of his bare arms and nicely muscled chest was a stark contrast to her fair skin. He resembled a young Elvis with light brown hair and he was so handsome that it brought tears to her eyes.

Her father had once asked if the sun rose and set on her young man's head and she couldn't deny it. The answer was yes; she loved him with every fiber of her being...his smile, his laughter, the smoldering look in his eyes. There was no one she wanted more in the entire world. He was her Johnny and she would do anything for him.

He took her hand in his and kissed the top of it. "Come. Let me show you how much I love you."

At his remark, warm juices flooded her cunt. Nervousness gave way to another feeling, one that roared through her entire being and made her extremely aware of how much she wanted this man inside her, surrendering his heart, body and soul.

He led her to stand before his bed. "Love Me Tender" played in the background and he sang along with it. She stroked his cheek and smiled at him. He loved to serenade her. It was his way of letting her know how special she was to him. She stood quietly shivering with anticipation as he slowly lowered the sheer negligee off one shoulder, then the other. She recalled how his eyes lit up when he took in her youthful form.

"Beautiful," he said as he lowered his lips to hers and teased the sides of her breasts with his fingertips. The kiss was soft and tender and full of promise. Despite her uncertainty about what to do, she melted into his embrace.

He eased her slowly down onto the bed, supporting her back, his gaze never leaving hers. The room seemed to spin around them as he left her momentarily to divest himself of his jeans. When he returned, his mouth captured hers as he lowered his body against hers. She shivered with delicious abandon as their naked flesh touched and she felt his hard cock brushing against her stomach.

"Make love to me," she begged.

"Yes," he whispered against her lips as his hands tunneled through her short, curly hair.

"Show me what you want me to do," she begged.

“Grab my cock and stroke it,” he urged. He took her hand and placed it upon his erection. Her breath caught as she encircled his living flesh for the first time, noting the heavy weight, the hard length and smooth, hot skin.

The moment she began following his instructions, the look in his eyes changed from tender to burning with sexual need. Empowered by his reaction, she licked her lips and vigorously worked her hand up and down his shaft.

Her mouth formed an “O” as his cock grew in her hand. When her thumb slipped over the mushroom head, she felt a drop of liquid seep from the top, which made it slippery.

“That’s it, love, don’t stop.” His fingers flicked and pinched the tiny nubs on her breasts, creating a firestorm in her. Every nerve ending seemed to be electrified and Meri felt more alive and aware of her body than ever before.

His hands moved slowly down her body, outlining the curve from her breasts to her slender waist and around to her buttocks. He caressed with the barest of strokes evoking goose bumps that rose in their wake. Meri trembled, breathless with anticipation, waiting for the moment his long fingers would touch the aching flesh between her legs, but instead he continued his downward path.

He lifted the elastic snaps on her garter belt and tugged gently on her stockings. The silky material caressed her skin as it moved back and forth and her core pulsed. She moaned and arched up to him. He did it again and this time her moisture trickled freely out of her and down her slit. His sly grin told her he was going to play with her this way for agonizing minutes and she bit her lip to prevent a plea from escaping.

With every stroke of his hand along the silky length of her thigh-high stockings, shivers of pleasure traveled all over her body. He paused at her feet, first massaging them, then sucking on her toes through the stockings. Meri grasped her breasts and squeezed her nipples. Her breaths came in short bursts and her blood rushed through her veins like molten lava. She was lost in a deeply sensual place where she was keenly

aware of her heightened sensation, straining to keep from exploding, yet never wanting him to stop the exquisite feeling.

His hands slid up the inside of her legs and hovered just below her quivering lips. Tentatively, his fingertips teased the outer edges, drawing the cream down her slit. She arched her back and moaned.

"Mmmm yes, baby. Do you like stocking play?" He breathed hot kisses all along her upper thighs. The moisture clung to every spot he touched and her knees wobbled. With his hands on her knees to steady her, he gently pushed her legs open. He devoured her with his eyes, slowly admiring every inch of her legs from inside the knee to her fully exposed cunt. His tongue swept over his full lips before his head dipped toward her quivering sex.

"I love you in stockings. It's such a turn-on for me. Promise me you'll always wear these when we make love." The heated look in his eyes made her shudder.

She couldn't speak, for her only thought was what it would feel like to have his broad tongue sweeping across her aching, throbbing flesh. Meri nodded her agreement.

He lifted her buttocks to bring her sex to his mouth and she propped her legs against the bed for support. The moment his tongue touched her labia and swept across her slick vagina, her lips formed an "O" and her eyes grew wide. He sucked in her flesh, playing with it between his lips until it became swollen and tender. When his tongue dipped inside to lick her juices, she pounded the bed with her fists. He looked up at her with a satisfied grin.

"Oh you like that, don't you? I thought you might."

He pressed his thumb against her clit and rolled it back and forth. She moaned and almost cried that she couldn't wait any longer.

"Ah, so eager for this," he said, holding his stiff cock and dragging it teasingly across her cunt. Her slick juices made the mushroom tip glisten. "I'll give it to you soon enough—if you're a good girl—but now I want you to tease me with your stockinged feet."

He leaned back to display his bobbing cock. She rested her weight on her elbows and lifted her foot to press against the full length of him. Meri was amazed at the strength he had as he pushed back against her. Sheathed in the silky material, her foot moved smoothly up and down over his erection. She could tell by the pained expression on his face that he was enjoying this as much as she.

Emboldened by his response, she moved close to him and wrapped her legs around his back. He pulled her against him until her breasts crushed against his hard chest and his cock pressed against her mound. She moved sensuously against him and he cocked his head and smiled.

“You’re a quick study, love. Now that you have me, what *will* you do with me?”

“I don’t know. I’ll have to think of *something*.”

Meri tossed her head back and closed her eyes. Moaning, she rocked against his body, stroking his back with her legs and teasing his cock on the forward movement. Though she thought it would only affect him, she was pleasantly surprised to realize that the stockings rubbing against him made her wetter by the minute. Breathlessly, she called to him. “Johnny, I need you!”

He pushed her back on the bed and hovered over her momentarily while quickly slipping on a condom. Lifting her legs, he pulled her close to him.

“Hug my neck with your legs, love. I want to feel your stockings against my chest and shoulders when we do this.” Tightening his grip on her legs, he paused when the tip of his cock rested against her entrance.

“No, sweetheart. Don’t close your eyes. I want you to watch.” He caressed her cheek until she opened her eyes. His beautiful blue gaze looked deeply into hers. She licked her lips nervously and was certain he could hear her blood thrumming through her veins.

“That’s it. Now raise your hips and meet me stroke for stroke.” With one swift movement, he flexed his hips and buried his thick cock inside her, piercing the thin veil

of flesh with his plunge. She moaned as he first breached that virgin territory and he pulled back to look at her, brushing her long hair from her face.

“Are you hurt?” He stroked her legs and the stockings enhanced the sensation.

Meri smiled and touched his cheek. She wanted to memorize every nuance in his tender expression so she’d remember that moment forever. “No,” she said. “You could never hurt me.”

Tears filled her eyes. “You could never hurt me” echoed in her mind. Oh God! But she had hurt *him*. She’d never forget the look of shock, disbelief and pain on his face the last time she saw him. At the time, she felt she had every reason to tell him goodbye. She thought he loved her, but instead he joined the Marines and left her alone. For that, she told him she hated him and never wanted to see him again. But what did she know? They were just kids. Now she wondered if he still remembered her harsh words.

Meri studied her reflection. Who was the woman in the mirror now? Lines of worry tracked across her forehead. Where did that beautiful young woman go? Her hand shook as she brushed her long, straight hair. What would he think about her new hairdo? He had told her that he loved to wrap her short, curly hair around his finger.

At least she had kept her shape, for the most part. Yes, she had matured and put on a few pounds up top and in her buttocks, but she still had curves in the right places. She hoped he wouldn’t be disappointed that she had a little more to love.

Oh who was she kidding? This wasn’t a fairytale romance. This was...well, she wasn’t sure. He had gone to war and she headed off to college and they never heard from one another again. She wasn’t even certain why he had agreed to see her. How could she have the nerve to face him now? She dropped the brush and shook her head.

She walked out of the bathroom wearing her black bra, matching thong and black thigh-high stockings. With her hands on her hips, she announced to her friends, “I can’t do this. Please give Johnny my apologies.”

Jennie jumped from the bed and turned off the television.

"Oh no!" She grabbed Meri's hand and dragged her to the bed. "Sorry, no can do. You have no idea what we went through to find him and to convince him that he had to see you. You're at the point of no return, girlfriend. You have to go through with this."

Cybil grabbed the little black dress hanging on the back of the door and held it in front of Meri. "You are a total knockout in this get-up, girl. He is going to be drooling all over you when he sees you. A case of the nerves is natural. But it's certainly no reason to back out. You have to do this, not for us, but because *you* need closure so you can get on with your life. You haven't stopped talking about him for years."

Tears once again clouded Meri's vision. Her friends knew her all too well. They were right. She had divorced her husband because she couldn't love him like she had loved Johnny. She hadn't been on a real date in years because every man she dated after she got divorced just didn't share her enthusiasm about stockings.

To add insult to injury, she wasn't getting a restful night's sleep because her dreams were filled with erotic scenes of her dressed in stockings making love to Johnny. Despite the many years that separated them, she couldn't get him out of her mind. It was time to find out whether or not the flame still burned.

Jennie wrapped her arm around Meri's shoulder. "We wouldn't have proposed this if we didn't feel it was important. We'll be right here if you need us. Just give it a try. What's the worst thing that could happen? If you find there's no spark when you talk and shake hands, you'll say goodbye. At least you'll see him impersonate Elvis, which you said should be amazing since he looks and sounds just like him. Then we'll go to a few casinos and shows and have a great time on our vacation before we head home. Doesn't that sound like a good plan?"

Meri sniffed and smiled weakly. Taking a deep breath and exhaling, she said, "Yes, I guess so. Okay. You win. I can do this."

They both hugged her. "That's our girl," Cybil said. "Oh we have one other surprise for you." She ran to the closet and came back with a large box wrapped in Christmas paper. "This is for you, Meri, from both of us."

“Honestly, you didn’t have to get me a gift. This vacation is more than enough.”

She tore into the paper, ripping it into shreds so she could get to the contents of the box. Pulling back the tissue paper, she revealed a beautiful black body stocking with a trellis design of holly and berries up the sides. The material shimmered with an iridescent glow. Her hands shook as she lifted it from the box. Just holding the sparkling material made her pussy clench and cream.

“Isn’t it awesome? We couldn’t resist. We know how much you love stockings,” Jennie said.

“This is amazing. Thank you so much.” Meri walked over to the mirror and held it up in front of her. Talk about sexy!

“Hmmm. I was thinking that if he invited you back to his room, you’d want to wear something, um, Christmassy, seein’ as how this is Christmas Day and all. Oh and we also got you a matching Santa hat.” Cybil pulled aside more tissue paper and uncovered the hat. “Here.” She walked over to Meri and plopped it on her head. “You look like an adorable little elf!”

Meri contemplated the outfit. Oh yeah! She would definitely wear this tonight under her little black dress instead of what she currently wore. It would add an edge of excitement knowing that underneath her dress she was totally naked with the exception of a stocking to cover her curves. With her hair tucked behind her one pointed ear, she’d certainly look the part of an elf. And he did have a thing for her in stockings. It just might work in her favor.

If we get that far.

Chapter Two

Meri tried to take it all in as they entered the huge, crowded hall and followed the usher to a table right near the stage. Voices filled the air and excitement flowed through the room like electricity. The band tuned their instruments and the lights flickered. They had arrived just in time. A cocktail waitress stopped by to take their drink order and Meri was grateful that she had time to purchase a strong drink to calm her nerves.

An expectant hush filled the room as the band played "See See Rider". The curtain rose and Meri's heart did a flip-flop when she saw Johnny enter the stage. The crowd burst into applause and screams. Several girls rushed to the edge of the stage and were held back by security guards.

Attired in a replica of the white sequined jumpsuit that Elvis wore during his 1972 "Aloha from Hawaii" concert, Johnny epitomized his idol. When he belted out the tune, she closed her eyes and smiled. Yes, that was exactly as she remembered him, without all the glitz and glamour.

"That's him, right?" Jennie said, squeezing Meri's hand. Jennie had to yell to be heard over the loud music.

She nodded. His figure had acquired the defined musculature of a man, but other than that, he had not changed much since she saw him last. "Yes definitely, although his hair is much darker than it was back then and he never wore highly starched collars or that many rings."

"Wow! He looks and sounds authentic. If I didn't know better, I'd swear that is the real Elvis on stage. And he's so handsome. Meri, if it doesn't work out between the two of you, can I have a shot at him?" Cybil winked.

"We'll know soon enough," Meri said nonchalantly, yet the thought gnawed at her for the rest of the concert.

During the next hour, Meri fidgeted in her seat, trying to concentrate on the music but always conscious of the fact that when his performance was over, he would be coming to see her. When he sang "I'll Remember You", Meri swore he found her in the audience and sang directly to her. Tears stung her eyes. *Does he remember me?*

Meri chewed her nail, contemplating the handsome man on stage. *What if he doesn't still share the same fetish for stockings that I have?* A shiver of trepidation slid down her back. If the answer was no, it would be a deal breaker, despite how strongly they felt toward one another years ago. She knew it deep inside. Indeed, it was the reason she had agreed to this trip; she needed to satisfy her curiosity.

She had been searching for years for the one who shared her passion, for a relationship that accepted and incorporated her stocking fetish. Anything less was unacceptable.

After his last song, he took a bow and the audience's applause was deafening. Girls once again rushed to the edge of the stage, eager to shake his hand or offer him a tissue to wipe the sweat from his brow. He was gracious, but seemed preoccupied, searching over the audience's heads to locate her seat.

Jennie stood and waved to him. At five-foot-ten, she hovered over many of the people surrounding them and was able to catch his attention. He looked visibly relieved to discover her and excused himself from the tangle of arms wanting to snare him.

Jennie grabbed her purse and tugged at Cybil to stand alongside her. "I think this is our cue to head to the casino for some fun of our own. Come on, Cybil. Let's ride the Monorail." She linked her arm to Cybil's and smiled at Meri.

"If you need us, we're only a phone call away. I'll have my cell phone on vibrate and we'll meet you wherever you want. If we don't hear from you, we'll assume you've got plans for the night." She winked and a wide smile creased her face.

"Good luck!" Cybil tossed her a kiss as she joined Jennie.

Meri watched her friends blend into the crowd leaving the room. She turned around and swallowed hard. Johnny was walking toward her. This was it...the moment

she had been waiting for during the last fifteen years. Now that it had arrived, she didn't know if she had the strength to endure it.

Weakness set into her bones. The temperature in the room seemed to have risen and she wiped droplets of perspiration off her lip. She squirmed in her seat, nervous and anxious to meet him.

As he drew closer, Meri held her breath. Her vision focused only on him and suddenly there was no one else in the room but the two of them. The background noises faded. Nothing mattered but the handsome man heading toward her. He closed the distance between them, and with every step he took, Meri heard her heart beating in her ears. Her mouth became dry and she took a quick sip of her drink.

Oh God! Where are my friends now? I need someone to pinch me and tell me this is really happening.

Then he was standing before her—the man of her dreams, the man who had told her a million or so years ago that he loved her more than anything else.

"Hello, Meri."

That voice, those eyes, those lips. Memories came rushing back as if it had only happened yesterday. She nearly fainted. When she opened her mouth, nothing came out. *Breathe, Meri, breathe.*

"It's good to see you again. I've missed you," he said as he pulled out a chair to sit next to her. Guards immediately surrounded them.

Tears pooled in her eyes.

"I've missed you too." Her throat was so constricted by emotion that her voice sounded odd.

Johnny smoothed away a tear that trickled down her cheek.

She smiled weakly. "I'm sorry. I didn't expect to feel such strong emotions when I saw you again."

His eyes grew wide at her confession and he looked visibly relieved. "It's all right. I was nervous about meeting you." His voice was deep and sexy and resonated inside her.

"You aren't the only one." She blinked away the tears.

"It's been a long time." He reached over and held her hand. "I'm glad you came."

He sounded sincere. Her heart fluttered. She nodded. "I am too."

While he rubbed his thumb across the top of her hand, his gaze slowly took in the features of her face before lowering to the rest of her body. It seemed as though he could see everything underneath her little black dress. A warm flush followed in the wake of his inspection and a gush of womanly juices escaped.

Amazing. After all these years, he still has the same effect on me.

"You look incredible." His eyes focused on hers and the intensity she saw in them made her swallow hard. Meri knew there was much more to that statement than was spoken. His expressive eyes had the ability to convey his deepest feelings without saying a word. But they had been apart too long for her to guess at his true meaning.

"Thank you." She reached over and touched his hair. Though the thick waves appeared soft, they were held stiffly in place with hairspray. Meri sighed. It used to be so wonderful to run her fingers through his hair.

"You dyed your hair," she said, remembering his natural light color.

He chuckled. "I had to...for the show."

"Of course. For the show."

Her cheeks grew warm. *He must think I sound like a foolish schoolgirl. I wish this awkward moment would pass quickly.*

She shifted in her seat, aware that her body was tense with anticipation and need — a need that suddenly overcame her in his presence. Her leg shook nervously.

His hand landed on her knee to stop the shaking and a sly grin lifted the corner of his mouth. Goosebumps danced up her leg and her body hummed to life with an ache that centered in her core.

"I see you remembered how much I love to see you in stockings. Do they still turn you on like they used to?"

Tension drained from her body like the air in a popped balloon. The breath she had been holding eased out and her thoughts no longer focused on whether he'd get around to talking about stockings. She sensed that was his way of telling her to relax and be herself.

Meri slipped off her high-heeled shoe and wrapped her leg around his calf. She rubbed her foot up and down his leg.

"What do *you* think?" She made sure to put enough emphasis on her statement to let him know that her libido had just spiked at his comment. Her lips pouted and she licked them.

A dark eyebrow perked up and he leaned in to her. His pupils grew wide. "I think if you keep that up, we're going to have to get a room. You're driving me wild," he replied, his voice low and sexy.

One of the guards turned and smiled at her. When Meri tossed him an arched brow, Johnny confronted the man. "This isn't any of your business, Craig." The red-faced guard swiveled around to resume his staunch position.

Johnny turned his attention back to her. "As I was saying..."

"Yes, something about my driving you wild. That's good to know."

He nodded. "And does it have the same impact on you?"

Meri smiled and drew a polished fingernail across the top of his hand. "Absolutely. It's become an important part of my life, thanks to you."

His smile, complete with dimples and a sparkle in his eye dazzled her. "It's nice to know that I made such a big impression on you."

"Oh you have *no* idea." She winked.

"Really?" His eyes widened and his brows rose in unison. "I'd love to hear more."

Ah, she had piqued his interest. Her heart skipped a beat. If the conversation continued any further down this path, she'd need a cold shower just to get out of her seat.

She leaned across the table and he moved in to meet her. "I'd love to tell you more, perhaps even *show* you...if you're interested." An eyebrow lifted to emphasize the word *show*. Meri imagined taking off her dress and sitting in his lap, straddling his legs. She'd rock her stockinged body sensually against his until he stripped off his clothes and did her right there. Oh yeah, that would take the edge off and be great for starters.

Johnny leaned back to study her. She wished she could read his mind, but it was hard enough to hear him over the women begging to talk to him and the security guards hovering close in a circle around them. He looked around.

"You know, there's no privacy here. We have a lot of catching up to do, preferably without an audience. Would you like to go back to my room? It's a more intimate setting and I could slip into something more comfortable." He tugged at the high starched collar.

Excitement coursed through Meri's veins and she smiled.

"Intimate is good. I would love to be alone with you." A blush flooded her cheeks. The comment didn't come out exactly as she had expected, but she realized that was how she felt. Seeing him, talking with him, touching him again...it was all she needed to reconnect with forgotten feelings.

He grabbed her hand. "Come with me."

They threaded their way through back areas of the hotel to avoid dealing with adoring fans. The security guards were close on their heels. At the door leading from the kitchen to a rarely used hallway, Johnny paused and opened the door. He looked both ways.

"It's clear. Okay, fellas, I'm good. Thanks."

The security guards filtered past them and down the empty hall.

Johnny turned to Meri and tilted her face toward his. "Alone at last."

He focused on her lips as his face lowered to hers and her heartbeat went into overdrive. Meri knew a kiss was imminent and wrapped her arms around his waist. The moment their lips made contact, memories of every kiss they ever shared came rushing back. But all of those paled next to the intensity and passion he put into this kiss. It seemed as though he wanted her to know that he remembered everything, that he was still attracted to her, that he still *wanted* her badly.

He leaned her against the wall and wove his fingers through her hair while grasping her head. Her hands automatically rose up his back to pull him close into her. His lips were as soft and full as she remembered. They slid back and forth across hers, tasting her, teasing her, crushing her mouth with such fervor that she could barely catch her breath. His tongue sought the seam and slipped along it until she parted her lips to allow it entrance. She remembered the taste of that tongue, its depth and breadth, of how it felt against the sides of her mouth. Oh yes, even how it felt against her cunt. Meri moaned.

He pulled back and looked at her, his heavy-lidded eyes dark with passion. She recognized that emotion, for it was rushing through her veins at the speed of light. Already her pussy was hot and soaking. She swallowed hard. At that moment, she desired him more than she ever thought possible.

"I'm sorry. I couldn't wait any longer. I've wanted to do that since the moment I sat down next to you at the table."

Meri breathed deeply. This was more than she could have ever hoped for.

"Don't apologize. The feeling is mutual." She pulled him back for more.

He lifted her leg and wrapped it around his waist, pushing the hem of her dress up high on her thigh so he could stroke the upper part of her leg. When his hand reached her buttocks, his fingers searched momentarily, then stopped.

"Are you wearing a thong?" he asked, his labored voice like a heavy breath in her ear.

Meri looked up at him and smiled. "Do you really want to know what I'm wearing?" She gave him one of her sexiest smiles and licked her lips. The thrill of watching his expression when she unveiled her body stocking made her blood run hot.

"I certainly do." His eyes flashed dangerously while his fingers reached between her legs to locate the opening in the material. Two fingers slipped between her moist folds. Meri sucked in a breath as he explored her slick insides. Her inner muscles clamped around his probing fingers and she closed her eyes and breathed deeply.

"Oh yeah. I love what you have on."

By the heated look in his eyes, Meri could tell he was seriously considering throwing caution to the wind and ripping her clothes off right there. She slipped her hand down his pants and squeezed his cock. His eyes widened.

"Oh Johnny!"

She pressed her chest against him and rubbed slowly back and forth. How she wanted to free his cock from the confines of his slacks and wrap her lips around it! But the thought never came to fruition, for he stilled her hand.

"Meri, stop. Not here. Not like this."

Her breaths came hard as he pulled away. Though she realized he was right, that this back hallway was no place to do "it", her body still vibrated. He reached into his pocket and pressed a room key into her hand.

"My room. 630. Meet me there in fifteen minutes."

He disappeared into an adjacent elevator, leaving Meri breathless and trembling with need.

Chapter Three

Fifteen minutes seemed like a lifetime. Meri paced the hallway in front of the elevator and glanced at her watch every few seconds. *Hurry please.* She had never acted so wantonly with a man. But then she hadn't been with Johnny for a long, long time. She hoped he wasn't put off by her actions.

After thirteen minutes, she couldn't wait any longer. She pressed the elevator button and the silver doors slid open. *It's now or never.* Meri smiled. How appropriate that thought should cross her mind now, for he sang that to her from the stage just an hour ago.

At the door to his room, she paused and took a deep breath. Should she knock or just walk in? *You're analyzing this way too much, girl. Just do it.* Meri straightened her shoulders. *Okay, here goes.* She slid the room key into the slot and waited for the green light.

The room was dark except for the multicolored lights on the decorated Christmas tree sitting in the corner. She walked toward the source of light, hoping to find Johnny. It took a moment for Meri's eyes to adjust to the dim lighting, but when they did she was pleasantly surprised.

A stark-naked Johnny sat cross-legged under the tree dressed only in a big, red ribbon with a bow and a candy cane placed strategically over his manhood.

"Merry Christmas, Meri," he said as he reached toward her.

Tears of joy flooded her eyes and she brushed them away. As she walked over to him, she smiled and shook her head. Leave it to Johnny to do something so clever for her. She ran her fingers over the satiny ribbon on his shoulder.

"That's the most creative package wrapping I've ever seen. I love it."

"I'm glad. You have no idea how long it took me to get it just right. The bow in my lap wouldn't stay in place so I had to fix it." His boyish smile took her breath away.

"I can't wait to unwrap my gift."

"I was hoping you'd say that." He stood and pulled her into his arms. She giggled as she fumbled with the bow.

"Ouch."

"I'm sorry. What's that?" she said, tugging again on the bow.

"Careful. That's double-sided sticky tape. It's the only thing I could use to hold the bow in place. I think it's stuck to my pubic hairs. You're pulling them out."

She laughed. "I'm sorry. It's really not funny, but I can't help myself. I'm sure it stings. Perhaps if we just yanked quickly..."

One good tug and the bow came off. He grabbed his cock.

"Ahhh! Boy, you sure know how to deflate a man's ego. So much for being prepared for romance. Now we'll have to start over."

She stepped back and smiled. "I think I might have something to put you back in the mood. Sit on the bed for a moment while I show you *your* Christmas present."

Meri opened her purse and pulled out the Santa hat Cybil gave her, then tossed the purse on an adjacent rocker. She propped the hat on her head and tucked her hair behind her pointed ear.

"Just call me Santa's little helper. Have you been a good boy this year?" She pointed a finger at his chest.

"It depends upon your definition of 'good'," he said, smirking.

"You look like you'd be *very* good," she said while unbuttoning the top button.

"I am. Would you like a demonstration?" He lifted a brow.

"Don't worry. It's a requirement to receive your gift."

While Johnny sat transfixed upon the bed, Meri slowly unbuttoned her dress. Memories of the first time she stood naked before him came rushing back and she

swallowed hard. Would he still think she was beautiful? She lowered the dress off her shoulders and let it drop to the floor. Though she was encased in the lovely body stocking, she was still totally exposed to his inspection. He inhaled deeply and she wondered if he recognized her cologne. She wore the same one he loved fifteen years ago. A smile crossed his face.

"Nice body stocking. What a great present," he said, a hungry look in his eyes.

"Thanks. I hoped you'd say that," she purred, propping her foot upon the bed next to his leg.

The moment his hand landed on her calf and gently worked its way up her leg, she was lost in a world of sensation. Warmth clung to every spot he touched as if the silky material remembered where he had been, enhancing the length of his strokes. His eyes followed every movement.

He wrapped his arms around her waist and positioned her to stand between his legs. His face was directly in front of her breasts and he nuzzled against each one while running his hands along the column of her back and across her buttocks.

"Yes, this is *definitely* working."

"Uh-huh." Meri's head was swooning. She closed her eyes and tossed her head back to focus on his touch. Johnny's hands were so warm, so gentle. He left no part undiscovered as he roamed freely over every inch of the body stocking. His tongue swirled over her areola until her nipples became ripe. Heat and moisture became locked in the stocking as his mouth placed wet kisses across her stomach. She shivered when the cool air conditioning brushed against the wet stocking. As if he sensed her slight discomfort, he tossed her down on the bed and rested the full length of his body upon hers. She opened her eyes to stare into his.

"Comfy?"

She smiled. "I like the way you feel against me."

"Ditto."

He placed a row of tiny kisses across her forehead, then looked deeply into her eyes. "How is it possible that you're even more beautiful than you were back then?"

Tears stung her eyes. Now she knew this was a dream. She was going to wake up in her bed to discover she was alone on her thirty-fifth birthday.

"Meri? What's the matter? I didn't mean to make you cry. I want this to be a happy reunion."

She stroked his cheek. This was the face she swore she'd never forget, yet she had forgotten little nuances, like the slight scar under his eye that he got when he was ten and the way one eyebrow was higher than the other...things that made him uniquely Johnny.

"Your eyes are brown. I just remembered they are blue."

"Is that why you're crying? I can take the contacts out if that's disturbing you." Concern was written all over his face.

She shook her head. "No, no. It's...just that...this all seems so unreal—you in my arms, the soft Elvis music in the background and you telling me I'm beautiful. What year is it?"

He laughed as he massaged her scalp. "Meri, Meri, Meri. That's what I love about you. You were always so serious and analytical. It made me laugh. You still do."

"I'm a teacher. Those are very important traits to have." She raised her chin in defiance.

"They certainly are. But for now, I want you to put aside those thoughts and just enjoy this moment. It's a gift. That's why it's called the present." He trapped her hands above her head with one hand.

"I heard that somewhere."

"I'm sure you did." His mouth came down upon hers then, coaxing her to forget everything but his soft lips upon hers, his masculine scent and his hands working their

magic across her breasts. She wiggled beneath him, not only to let him know how much she enjoyed his slight dominance but to feel his cock upon her stomach.

His other hand grasped her left breast. He feasted upon the tip, licking, sucking and nipping gently, then did the same to her right breast. Meri arched her back and moaned. Tiny spasms clenched her core and she felt her womanly juices flowing out of her. She could only feel the tip of his cock resting against her mound and knew he had raised his buttocks. But that wasn't what she wanted. Her legs rose up to hug his waist and draw him down against her.

He stopped tonguing her nipples to give her a stern look. "I know what you're doing. You've always been eager. I'm sorry, Meri. You're just going to have to wait. I've spent fifteen years dreaming about what I'm going to do to this body and I haven't even begun. I love stocking play. So lie back and enjoy. There's no prize for crossing the finish line early."

"But..."

"No buts, unless you're referring to this one," he said, turning her on her side and smacking her rear end. "In fact, you're right. I haven't paid enough attention to that side of your body. Roll over."

She sighed and complied with his request. Her pussy lips throbbed against the stocking. She hoped he would find the access hole and relieve that ache soon.

The moment she got into a comfortable position, she felt his hands upon her back. A back massage—how she loved it! He drew long strokes down her back and over her buttocks. His long fingers slipped over the edge of her body, tickling the sides of her breasts all the way to the nipples and swooping down the curve of her abdomen. It was heavenly and exquisite torture at the same time. Meri didn't want him to go slow. Her pussy needed attention and it seemed like he was deliberately dragging out the moment of consummation. Moments passed while he continued the excruciating teasing.

"Raise your hips," he commanded and she was eager to obey. If he wanted to get a view of both entrances, she was more than willing to accommodate his request. Perhaps he wanted it doggie style. *That works for me.*

He reached over her to grasp her breasts and squeeze them while his cock rested in the cradle of her buttocks. She heard him moaning his pleasure while he rocked back and forth against the crack, stroking his long, hard cock against her lower back. *He's as much of a freak as I am when it comes to loving the feeling of stockings against naked flesh. Oh yes!*

"Don't stop," she sighed, not sure which sensation to concentrate upon because her flesh was tingling all over.

One hand slipped lower, pressing against her mound, the fingers searching for her clit. Her wetness dampened the silky material and his movements only made her wetter. She jumped when he found her sensitive nub and pinched it. Her legs wobbled.

"God yes!" he cried when she moaned and wiggled against him. "Turn over now."

She flipped onto her back and his head dipped toward the apex between her legs. She watched him lift her hips to bring her pussy to his mouth. He glanced at her once, a sultry, heated look in his eyes. She shivered in excitement and reached for his head to hold it while he went down on her. Meri eagerly raised her hips and opened her legs in anticipation of the moment she would feel his tongue against her aroused flesh.

But he did not part the material that opened between her legs. Instead, his mouth covered her cunt and began a rhythmic movement up and down her slit, seeking to drench her in her own cream. She heard the sound of her juices as he sucked them through the nylon and her arousal ratcheted up a notch. If she died and went to heaven at that moment, she would have a big smile on her face. When he finally stuck his fingers between the nylon to expose her quivering pussy lips to the talents of his tongue, she whimpered.

He latched onto her lips and tugged gently outward. She gasped and arched her back off the bed. When his mouth wrapped around her clit and his tongue teased it, she

moaned while running her hands through his hair. Every lap of his talented tongue brought an open-mouthed groan from her. Anxiously, she grasped her breasts, kneading them, pinching her nipples, gushing into his mouth. He lapped her juices like a man hungry for sustenance. She squirmed and grabbed the sheets with both fists, twisting and dragging them away from the corners of the mattress.

As her ardor spiked, she raised her hips higher against his mouth, a silent cry of ecstasy forming on her lips. Every so often, she looked down to watch him, but she was so aroused by his exploring the inside and outside of her pussy lips that she couldn't stop thrashing her head back and forth.

This was what she craved, what she longed for. It had been an eternity since she had someone do this to her, someone who knew exactly what to do to put her in touch with her kinky side. She grabbed the pillow and squeezed it tightly as the urge to explode heightened.

"Oh Johnny!" she cried as her body tensed.

"Come for me!" he urged and she gratefully obliged.

The orgasm was so strong she nearly passed out. Lights exploded behind her closed eyelids. Blood pounding in her head gave her a momentary headache. She came and came and came, her juices spilling into his mouth. She heard him sucking and swallowing vigorously to keep up with her.

Drained, her body went limp and a deep shuddering sigh swept through her. He rose up to lay his body against hers and kissed her deeply, tonguing her so she could taste herself. The musky scent of their lovemaking was all over his face.

"So was I as good as I said?" he asked, pushing her hair back from her forehead.

She smiled weakly. "Oh yes. You were incredible. I'll make sure that Santa knows. I have never had such an explosive orgasm. Thank you."

A broad grin creased his face. He wiped the sweat from her brow. "And thank you. I haven't been this turned-on in fifteen years. But we're hardly finished. I'm ready for an encore. Come with me." He led her to the Christmas tree and placed a pillow on the

floor for her to rest her head upon. "I've always wanted to make love under a Christmas tree."

Meri smiled as she looked up at him. Tiny multicolored lights flickered above his head. The romantic undertone was not lost on her. He was doing everything in his power to ensure that she would never forget this birthday and especially not him. She knew this night would be hard to top. He leaned down and pressed an open-mouthed kiss on her bare shoulder while his fingers deftly tickled the side of her breast. She shivered with delight.

"You really do love wearing stockings, don't you?"

She sighed. "I admit it. I'm hooked. But I wasn't always this way. It's your fault. I was a naïve young girl who thought sex was a simple act. You turned me into a freak who needs the stimulation of nylon against my skin to achieve ultimate sexual satisfaction. I'm not normal anymore."

He pulled her into his arms and kissed her forehead. "My dear, there's nothing wrong with you. I just brought out your natural inclination. Now you're much more interesting. Not to mention sexy as all holy hell. Anyone who tells you different just doesn't deserve you." He nuzzled against her neck and she giggled.

"Oh Johnny!" She caught herself from blurting out "I love you". Scared that he would gather her clothes and show her the door, she tucked that crazy thought into a corner of her mind. What had come over her? She couldn't possibly be in love with him. That was the old Meri talking. Not her. No, this was simply a night of reconnecting and remembering. She could deal with that. Anything more was simply out of the question.

Meri woke to the sound of water splashing against a glass door in the shower. She walked over to the bathroom and pushed the door slowly open. There, silhouetted against a foggy window, stood the man with whom she just spent the most incredible night of her life. He must have realized she'd entered the room, for he slid the shower door open.

"Good morning. Come. Join me." He reached toward her and she eagerly complied.

He pulled her into his embrace and gave her a wet kiss. His cheeks were rough with a day's new beard growth. She rubbed against his soapy body and felt his cock jump against her. Her clit responded similarly.

"You're up early," she purred as she grabbed his erection and squeezed lightly.

He grimaced. "In more ways than one, as you've discovered."

She stroked up and down, enjoying the way his cock blossomed under her tender ministrations. The soap made it slippery and so easy to caress. How she loved the length and breadth of him! He was the perfect size for her.

He sucked in a deep breath. "If you don't stop soon, I'm going to take you back to bed and ravish your body."

Her clit jumped.

"Promises, promises." She giggled.

He pressed her back against the cool tile, the spray from the shower head sprinkling on his shoulders. He rubbed his cock against her mound.

"I always keep my promises." There was a dangerous edge to his voice, a double entendre to his statement. She didn't want to pursue it for she knew old wounds would reopen. He probably thought she hadn't kept her promise to love him forever, no matter what happened.

She turned her head to the side to prevent him from seeing the tears stinging her eyes. Oh no! Maybe this wasn't such a good idea. Her breasts heaved up and down heavily against him.

He pushed her hair aside and sucked on the sensitive spot on her throat where her pulse beat harshly. Her legs wobbled and she closed her eyes to concentrate on his tongue.

"I was recalling how sexy you looked in that body stocking last night."

Immediately, the vision of his face looking up at her from between her legs came to mind. Her body released a trickle of moisture down her leg.

“Can I assume you own one in every color of the rainbow?”

Meri laughed nervously. *Oh God! He knows me so well.*

He pulled back to look at her, a mischievous grin crossing his face.

“I take that as a yes. Mmmm, what color would you look best in? Red? White? I’m definitely going to have to fuck you in every one to see which turns me on the most.”

“That could take a long time. I have quite a collection.”

“Really? I have plenty of time.” She had piqued his interest and she smiled.

“Let me put it this way – I have more stockings in my wardrobe than any other item of clothing. In fact, if it was socially acceptable, that would be the only thing in my collection. I would wear them everywhere without anything else so I could show them off.”

“Stop. You’re a terrible tease and you’re making me crazy.” He smacked her wet butt and it stung.

“Maybe that’s exactly what I’m trying to do.” She licked the curve of his ear.

“Then you’re doing a damn good job of it.”

“Good.”

He pulled her tightly against him and stroked up and down her back. His face was so close to hers that it seemed like he wanted to whisper in her ear. “I love your body covered in nylon. It adds a whole other dimension to touching and being touched. I just want to fuck the living daylights out of you when you’re wearing a stocking.”

Meri melted. The man really knew the right things to say to make her horny as hell. She rubbed her body against his, running her hands over the definition he had carved out at the gym. His abs were tightly drawn, his arms sculpted and his buttocks were so picture perfect that she didn’t ever want him to cover them.

“I know. I feel the same way.”

"So what are we waiting for? Let's wash off and have breakfast so we can go back to bed for another round of our favorite sport."

Breakfast had already been delivered by the time they finished their shower. A cart with four silver domes, a coffee pot, two cups and a large bowl of strawberries and whipped cream sat in the dining area.

Johnny went before her and lifted the domes. "I ordered what you used to like to eat. I hope your taste hasn't changed too much." He displayed scrambled eggs, home fries, toast, waffles and sausages.

"It's perfect. Thank you."

He pulled out a chair and waited until she sat before pushing it against the table, then sat in a chair next to her. While they ate, he sucked on a strawberry, glancing her way and smiling. Meri felt right at home, as though they did this every day of their lives. The years melted away. She wondered if this was the right time to bring up the past.

"Johnny, about what happened back then," she began.

He breathed heavily and grasped her hand. The look in his eyes was soft and tender.

"I know this has probably been weighing heavily on your mind. Look, it's the past. It really has no relevance now. There's no need to dredge up old feelings that are better left to rest. What happened, happened. All that matters is that we're together now."

She smiled hesitantly. That certainly was not how she pictured the conversation would go, but relief flooded her veins knowing he had put it behind him. She had needed closure on that part of her life and he had graciously given it to her. She nodded.

"Thank you."

He picked up her hand and kissed her knuckles. "You're welcome. Come, let's go back to bed and snuggle for a while. Let's take the strawberries and whipped cream with us. I have an idea that I think you'll enjoy."

"All right." Visions of him dipping strawberries into the whipped cream and feeding them to her after he had rubbed them against her pussy came to mind. She slipped into her body stocking, then snuggled into the crook of his arm, content to just lie there and hear his heart beating. She sighed.

"Happy?"

"Extremely. This has been the best birthday of my life. Thank you, Johnny."

"You're welcome. I can't believe we've waited this long, but I suppose there's a reason for everything that happens."

"Yes, I guess so."

"So, how long are you in town?"

Meri sighed. *All good things must come to an end.* "We leave tomorrow morning at nine." She felt his body go tense as he gripped her arm.

"So soon? I was hoping to have a few days to show you my favorite places on the strip. Can't you change your reservations?"

She shook her head. "No, I'm sorry. The girls and I just came for the weekend. It is Christmas break and I have to prepare the curriculum for next semester when the kids come back to school. Besides, I wasn't expecting to stay long, so I didn't bring a lot of clothes with me."

He shifted his weight and pulled her down under him so he could capture her arms above her head. "What if I make you my prisoner and won't let you go? Then you'd have to stay."

Meri laughed. The serious expression on his face was too adorable. He could be such a tease when he wanted to.

"Oh Johnny! Don't be silly. I know you wouldn't do that." She wiggled against him.

"But I want to." She was surprised at the passion in his voice. He pressed her hard against the bed to hold her still. The intense look in his eyes took her breath away. He dipped down to kiss her and it was much rougher than she had anticipated. His lips ground into hers, his tongue seared its way into her mouth and sought a dance with her own. She couldn't think, couldn't protest, for desire churned deep inside.

He tasted of sweet strawberries and smelled like coconut body wash. She tunneled her hands through his still-damp hair, relishing at how soft and full it was. Oh she was going to miss his sweet loving and the way he pampered her. She was so glad her girlfriends suggested that she make this trip.

"Then promise me you'll come back soon. I've got a great place off the strip. There's plenty of room for both of us."

"I can't make any promises on how often I can come back here, Johnny. I've got a life in Chicago – friends, family and commitments."

He let out a deep sigh and a pained expression crossed his features. "Oh I see. So there's someone else back home waiting for you."

She shook her head. "No, I didn't say that. It's just...complicated."

"Then un-complicate it. Move here, with me. I know it sounds crazy, but my feelings for you haven't changed. I want you in my life."

Meri swallowed hard. What he offered was more than she ever imagined. But she hadn't thought about what would happen *after* they got together. This was just supposed to be a weekend to have some fun. It wasn't supposed to get this serious this soon.

"Can't we just leave it the way it is? I'll come and visit and we'll see where it goes from there."

"Then how often will you visit?"

"I don't know. It's hard to say. Maybe once or twice a year."

"That's not good enough. Meri, you know long distance relationships don't survive. You're finally back in my life and I want to go forward."

"Johnny, I don't know what to say. We really don't even know each other. I can't just pack up my life and move here. That's the best I can do."

"Maybe I have something that will change your mind." He kissed her on the forehead. "Don't move...I'll be right back. I want to give you something."

He got out of bed and walked to the dresser and pulled out the top drawer. When he came back beside her, he had a small box wrapped in birthday paper in his hand.

"I would have given this to you yesterday on your actual birthday, but I thought it might be a little premature since we hadn't had enough time to get reacquainted. But now that you're leaving tomorrow morning, this is probably my only chance to give this to you before you leave. Happy birthday, Meri."

She looked at the present in his hand and swallowed hard. There was only one thing that would fit in a box that small. Her heart skipped a beat. *No, no, no. Please don't let it be that.*

When she didn't take it from him, Johnny picked up her hand and deposited the tiny box into her palm. "I've been carrying this around for fifteen years. I haven't found anyone else who I wanted to ask this question. Will you marry me, Meri?"

Her hand shook. She didn't want to look at it, but knew he would be terribly disappointed if she didn't. Tears blurred her vision as she tore off the wrapping paper and opened the box to uncover the beautiful oval-cut one-carat diamond. He had found the exact ring she would have wanted to wear. It sparkled in the sunlight streaking through the window. *Dear lord, why is he doing this now?*

"It's lovely, Johnny."

He smiled and let out a deep sigh. "Then you accept?"

She shook her head slowly back and forth. "I don't want to hurt you again, Johnny, but I can't...I just can't. I'm no good at commitment." She snapped the top of the box

closed so she wouldn't have to look at it any longer and handed it back to him. "I'm sorry. Truly, truly sorry. I have to go."

He grabbed her hand as she jumped off the bed.

"Don't do this again, Meri, I'm begging you." The rich timbre of his voice was tinged with raw, aching need.

She squeezed her eyes shut to stop the burning tears that threatened to expose her true feelings.

Before he had a chance to beg her any more, she put on her dress and high heels, grabbed the Santa hat and purse and made a dash for the door. Relieved that he hadn't followed her, she turned to see him sitting on the bed, his head lowered and the tiny box in his hand. She had hurt him again. *I must leave now!* The sound of the door lock clicking behind her rang loudly in her ears.

Please forgive me, she prayed.

Chapter Four

“So let me get this straight,” Jennie said, pacing back and forth in front of Meri with her arms crossed over her chest. “You discovered you still have the hots for each other, you just had off-the-charts sex, better than anything you experienced in the last fifteen years, and he’s asked you to marry him. And you said no because...”

Meri looked up from folding her clothing on the bed, tears glistening in her eyes. “Because it won’t work. Every relationship I’ve had has ended in disaster. If I walk away now, I’ll have the satisfaction of knowing that at least I didn’t ruin this one. Look, I did what you said. I came, I saw, I fucked and now I am leaving. End of story.”

Jennie grabbed Meri by the arms so she would be forced to look her straight in the eyes.

“Okay. I understand it’s not my life, it’s yours, and I am not the one who will have to live with regret over this decision some day. Cybil and I are going home and we can say we had a great vacation because that’s all it was for us—a vacation. But you! This was so much more than a vacation. What will you say, Meri?”

Meri sighed heavily and shook her head. “I’ll say it was a goddamn perfect weekend where all of my dreams came true. But it wasn’t reality, Jennie, and you know it! You’re smarter than that. Life is messy and complicated enough without adding love into the mix. Besides, I’ve got a life back in Chicago. I can’t just walk away from my responsibilities. For God’s sake! I have friends and family there, people who rely on me. The kids need me.”

Cybil jumped off the couch to stand next to Jennie and confront her best friend. “They’re third graders, Meri. They’ll get over it. Can you honestly say you remember your third grade teacher?” She propped her hands on her hips.

"That's not the point." Meri shook out of Jennie's grasp and threw her hands in the air. Why were they doing this to her? Didn't they realize her heart was breaking? "You two don't get it. It would never work. I've already got one divorce on my resume. I don't need two. Now please, I don't want to discuss this anymore. I've made up my mind. I'm going home. So let's just pack our clothes and get out of this hotel room. We have a plane to catch."

She walked toward the closet and pulled out her luggage. On her way back to the bed, she saw Jennie and Cybil standing in the corner speaking softly and shaking their heads. *I don't care. It's my life, my decision. I'll live with the consequences.* She clenched her teeth firmly together, set the luggage on the bed and tossed her clothing into it.

The ride to the airport was eerily quiet. Neither Jennie nor Cybil spoke to Meri and she decided it was best that way. She knew they were disappointed with her choice. She also knew they wouldn't hold a grudge very long. Once they were in Chicago, they would go back to their daily routine and forget this ever happened. Meri made a mental note to never mention Johnny's name again around them and hoped that would put a stop to any nagging on their part. Life would resume and her heart would stop aching.

She hoped.

She couldn't visit him ever again. All she could do was look forward, not back. It could work. It *had* to work.

They boarded the plane and sat mid-way down the cabin. Meri was grateful that she had been assigned the aisle seat as she didn't want to see Vegas as it slipped away on takeoff. The plane was noisy with passengers talking as they filtered down the aisle to find their seats. Others were shoving their bags into the overhead compartment. Someone walked by wearing the same cologne that Johnny wore last night. Her heart skipped a beat.

Meri's head swiveled to see who wore that cologne. Had Johnny boarded the plane? There wasn't a familiar face in the crowd. No, it was just her imagination. She

shook her head. Dear lord! Would this be her life from now on – searching every crowd for his face because she thought she smelled him? Could she ever hear another Elvis song without envisioning him singing it to her?

His absence might just be her undoing. Now that she had found her perfect sexual partner, how could she ever make love to another man? The comparison would drive her insane.

“Most people only get one chance at love with the same person,” Cybil had told her, “and you’ve had two.” *What are the odds of him taking me back a third time? Slim to none?* Meri swallowed hard. *Am I sure this is the right thing to do?*

Memories of every failed relationship floated through her mind. They were all a mismatch. None of the men understood her stocking fetish. But Johnny wasn’t like all of the rest of them. He understood how she felt; in fact, he encouraged her to explore it fully. Tears streamed down her face. *I admit it. I’m scared of losing him again.*

Precious moments ticked by. Soon it would be too late.

Mustering courage she didn’t know she had, Meri stood and took her luggage out of the overhead compartment. Cybil noticed first and tapped Jennie’s hand. Jennie turned away from the window to see what was going on. A wide smile crossed her face.

“It’s about time you came to your senses. Get going, girl! They’re about to close the door.”

Meri tossed the luggage on the floor behind her and pulled up the handle.

“Gotta run. I love you two! I’ll call you.”

“You better,” she heard them yell as she raced down the aisle.

“Hold that door!”

Johnny glanced out the window at the wide expanse of desert before him. Tall mountains lined the horizon. His hand gripped the little box tightly.

I’m such a fool! I should never have pressed her so hard. Now she’s gone.

Fifteen years wasted. Fifteen years of singing love songs. It suddenly became clear why he had chosen this career. Those songs were his way of keeping her memory alive, of keeping his love for her alive. But Elvis was dead and so was her love for him.

She didn't want him. It was only the dreamer in him that kept hope alive all those years. He shuddered as he exhaled. Though his eyes stung, he wouldn't give in to tears. He tossed the little box across the room, never wanting to see it again.

"You can't go back." All of his friends had warned him, but he thought he knew better. He had dredged up the past and it came back to life with a passion long buried. A passion he only vaguely remembered until Meri smiled at him after the show.

Sitting upon the bed, he stared at the telephone. The desire to run away was strong. How could he possibly sing love songs tonight when his heart was not in it? Did he even believe in love anymore? Now that Meri was gone, he couldn't feel anything. He picked up the phone and called his friend and associate, Brad Taylor. Brad was a fellow Elvis impersonator and he needed him tonight. He was calling in a big favor.

"Brad, buddy. How's it going?" Small talk, not something he wanted to do, but he needed to feel out his friend before breaking the news. "Say, what do you have planned tonight? Nothing? How do you feel about subbing for me? I know it's last minute and all. You can? Thanks, buddy. I owe you."

He hung up the phone and breathed a sigh of relief. Now all that was left to do was relay the information to his manager so he could change the marquee.

"Not a problem, Johnny," Jeff Orson told him after hearing that Brad would substitute for him. "If you need any more time, we can swing it as long as you promise to come back."

"You know I will, Jeff. I appreciate your understanding."

With the necessary arrangements taken care of, he moved on to the next phase of his escape. He wanted out; no, it was more than that. He needed to get away—far, far away from this place. The memories were too strong, too fresh. Her scent still clung to the sheets. Maybe he could go to a place where they didn't know him and he could

have some peace. He needed time to be alone to think about what to do next, to think about anything but her. He had to get her off his mind for good. It was time.

With a heavy heart, he folded his clothing and placed it into his luggage. He left to gather his toiletries from the bathroom and when he came back, he thought he heard a knock at the door. *Wow, that is quick. I just called for room service to help with the bags a minute ago.*

Johnny opened the door without a backward glance at who was there. He walked toward the bed to retrieve his luggage. When he realized no one followed, he swung around to find out why they hadn't entered the room.

Meri!

Standing in the doorway, luggage in hand, tears in her eyes—oh God—she had returned. He ran toward her and she dropped her luggage with a loud thud on the floor. Johnny swept her into his arms and kissed her and this time, he gave in to his tears.

"I'm sorry, so sorry," she sobbed. "I couldn't leave. I knew if I did, you would never understand why I left you again."

He chuckled and shook his head. He didn't care why she left; he only cared that she came back to him.

"It's okay. It doesn't matter. I thought I lost you for good. But you're here now."

"Yes, I am and I promise you, I'll never leave again. I love you, Johnny. More than I ever thought possible. Please forgive me for being so foolish. Will you take me back?"

He released her to grab her luggage and closed the door just in case someone came by. They didn't need an audience at that moment.

Meri's tear-streaked face told him everything he needed to know. She had finally accepted that they were meant for one another. It had only taken her fifteen years to admit it.

Johnny pulled her to the bed and pushed his luggage off the edge.

"I could tell you how much I love you, but I'd rather show you. Since you don't seem to be impressed with diamond rings, there's only one other thing that I can think of that will make you understand the depth of my feelings for you."

He popped every button down the front of her coat and saw a big smile brighten her face. It took him less than a minute to get her down to her black bra and thong. But that wasn't what caught his eye. It was the thigh-high stockings and garter belt. His cock got immediately hard. He pushed her down on the bed and spread her long, curvy legs wide so he could see those delicious lips pouting when he pulled aside her thong.

"Make love to me, Johnny."

She had come back to him. All of the years melted away and he was a young man again wanting to make love to his girl for the first time. His libido was on fire and his cock swelled to an almost painful size. He dipped down to kiss her, but was interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Go away. I've changed my mind. I'm staying!" he yelled.

Meri looked up at him with such love in her eyes that it took his breath away. He started at the inside of her knee and worked his way down, sucking and placing kisses as he went. She closed her eyes and arched up into him.

Oh yeah, this was the way it was going to be until they died. He was certain of it.

About the Author

Gail DeYoung is a multi-published author who loves to write books that stir emotions and make her audience hot, hot, hot! She truly believes in the healing power of stories—that by escaping into the lives of fictional characters, readers will be able to briefly step outside their reality and worry about a hero and heroine they really care about.

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

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