



Rachel Leigh

Explicitly
ENGLISH

Explicitly English

by

Rachel Leigh

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Dedication

For Mr. Leigh, my own sexy Englishman

Explicitly English

A ripple of excitement swept low through Laura Markham's belly as she looked at her reflection in the train window. Today would be the start of her new and spontaneous future. From now on, she would make decisions with her heart—her head could wait. What good did thinking all the time do? Sometimes, good old-fashioned passion was the key to a happy life.

She had to start thinking of the future. That's what Mum and Dad would have wanted. Laura defiantly tilted her chin as the threat of tears burned the back of her eyes. They certainly wouldn't have wanted her to be paralysed by grief and unable to move forward. They were killed, and she was spared. She owed it to them to start living—big time.

Having excelled above the other designers at Intimate Interior Design through pure hard work and determination—work had been her only salvation for the last three months—Laura was now travelling to the country retreat of her new and very affluent client, Stephen Cambridge.

Rich, successful and, apparently the biggest ball-breaking stockbroker this side of the Atlantic, Stephen was reputedly a force to be reckoned with. Laura smiled. He would be putty in her hands once she showed him her ideas. She had two whole days and nights alone at the house to measure and judge, judge and measure, before Cambridge returned and saw the start of what Laura knew would be a

fantastic makeover.

Laura smoothed her hand over the portfolio lying on the table in front of her. The truth was, Cambridge's house had spoken to her from the moment Laura's boss had shown the design group the pictures of it. Forever the history nutcase, Laura's eyes had grown to the size of saucers when she'd seen the cottage dating back to the sixteenth century—she couldn't wait to get her hands on it.

Its owner was barely thirty, yet phenomenally successful. The hairs on Laura's arms tingled and she shivered. He intrigued her. Who ever heard of a young bachelor buying an old house in the middle of the countryside, and yet seemed intent on climbing the corporate ladder at a phenomenal rate?

She blew out breath through pursed lips. Maybe she should try to be more like him—determined to get what she wanted and not answering to anybody else on the road to achieving it. Who's to say where people should live? What they should do for a living? No one, that's who. And clearly Stephen Cambridge had life nailed spot-on. Laura liked him already.

Turning back to the window, she closed her eyes. Sending a silent prayer to her mum and dad, she asked for the strength to believe she could fall in love and not lose that love when her back was turned...or when she went out the door for work on a normal Tuesday morning. Like she had her parents...

Laura swallowed, forcing her mind back to the here and now. She'd dated, partied, even had sex since they'd died, but she'd yet to risk feeling that special something with someone and believe life would not always feel this...fragile.

Shifting further back in her seat, Laura closed

her eyes and let her mind wander to who that special person might be. She smiled. Well, for a start he would be tall, dark, and brooding. A man who would seek her out and coax her into a sexual frenzy every time he touched her. Her smile stretched to a grin as a bolt of sudden heat warmed her cheeks and seared her pussy. Mmm, yes, come to Mama...

Opening her eyes, she shook her head to clear it. Right now, she had no man other than Mr. Steven Cambridge to seduce. With her designs. Laura narrowed her eyes. She would walk straight into the man's gorgeous home with her head held high and her secret arsenal of designs tucked under her arm. She was bloody good at her job—she knew it and he knew it. They had been emailing back and forth for nearly two months. If he had any intuition at all, he already knew how Laura thought and, if he was really good, he'd have a pretty good idea just how passionate she was about his home too.

The colors she used in her work and the fabrics she'd chosen reflected the emotions a client's home ignited in her. And Stephen Cambridge's house ignited something absurdly sensual...and sexual. Laura had never taken such pleasure in her work as she had designing the erotic, yet tasteful, plush yet daring concepts she'd created for his cottage. Instead of maximizing the predictable 'English country look,' Laura's instinct had been to make it a gateway to the age-old battle of chastity versus lust, propriety versus passion...

Nestled in a small picturesque village, consisting of honey-colored cottages and shops, surrounded by fields of endless green grass and forests seeped in history and legend, the cottage was like something plucked from a BBC drama. Her

heart picked up speed at the thought of escaping there for the next couple of days. Or better still, for the rest of her life. Mmm...tucked away with the man of her dreams and nothing more than sex to worry about. Perfect.

Smiling wickedly to herself, Laura smoothed her pencil skirt over her stockings and adjusted the buttons of her pale pink blouse. She could do this. She could move on and grab every opportunity that presented itself. Slipping off her stilettos, Laura settled back into the seat and glanced across the aisle and flinched.

A man was blatantly staring at the exposed length of her thigh and leg. Laura narrowed her eyes and stared straight back—waiting. Another few seconds passed before he looked up. Her breath caught in her chest. His eyes were dark, almost black. They bore into hers with unashamed interest. Heat assaulted her cheeks and her nipples traitorously tightened. A hint of a smile lifted the corner of his mouth and, to Laura's chagrin, she jerked her eyes away to look down at the table in front of her.

Her mind whirled into overdrive. What was she doing? Laura Markham never looked away first. Did he think he could get the better of her? But, then again, how was he to know Laura could stare down any man she caught looking at her that way? Could he know that she was usually cool, calm, and collected? She could easily make an admirer quiver and blush, while she stared on in glee.

She swallowed. Just the way she was reacting to him right now, in fact.

Laura pulled back her shoulders and exhaled. She would stare straight back at Mr. Dark Eyes with

unbridled lust and triumph in her gaze. Maybe a saucy bit of lip-wetting will add heat to her victory. She turned...and her heart plummeted with inexplicable disappointment.

He'd turned away.

His face was buried behind his newspaper. The huge breadth of pages covered his entire face, leaving only a couple inches of silky, jet black hair showing above the edges. Frustration dropped like lead into Laura's belly. Surely there was nothing like the thrill of the unknown, the excitement of discovering somebody new to lift her out of this gloomy state of mind? The guy had looked at her with such—she shivered involuntarily as a smile tugged at her lips—desire.

He abruptly looked up and stared at her in that sexy, intimate way again. This time Laura held fast. There was no mistake—pure unadulterated yearning burned hot in those inky pools of loveliness. Laura's pussy twitched. She would bet a hundred pounds he was thinking about what he'd like to do to her. And honey, that was just fine with her.

She smiled. He lowered his paper, smiled back. And her stomach immediately executed a strange loop the loop. Maybe she should have a little fun on the way to the meeting. Let him catch a cheeky eyeful of her pussy, while appearing oblivious to the fact that her skirt had crawled way up past thigh level. She squirmed deliciously in her seat and turned her suddenly hot cheek to the cold pane of the window.

Her naughty and impossibly dirty conscience sat on her right shoulder, while her good, ambitious, and hardworking conscience teetered precariously on

her left. Laura abruptly flicked her off with a mental tip of her head. If she'd learned nothing else since her parents' death, she'd learned about living for the here and now.

Barely suppressing her grin, Laura shimmed forward and shrugged provocatively out of her jacket. She stole a surreptitious glance to the side. His gaze was locked on her breasts—his semi-erect cock pressed against the crotch of his trousers. A clear go-ahead in anyone's book.

Tipping her head back, Laura scored her fingers through her hair and shook it out as she attempted to regulate her quickened breathing and aching clit. Who was she to keep from the guy what he so clearly wanted? If nothing else, she had to know if he had the guts to see this impromptu voyeur session through. She squeezed her thighs together against the pulsing at her center.

Flicking out her tongue, Laura slowly wet her bottom lip.

His gaze followed the gesture and he shifted back in his seat. A dart of excitement shot through her abdomen. What's the matter sweetheart? Your trousers a little tight?

Time to take the plunge. She smiled. "Can I borrow your paper?"

He arched an eyebrow. "My paper?"

Oh. Good. God. His voice was deep, raspy, and totally horny. Laura stared at him, desperately reigning in the sudden urge to forget the teasing, yank her panties to the side, and jump on his lap! Forcing her trembling smile to stay in place, she tilted her head toward her crotch.

"Uh-huh."

A quick frown wrinkled his beautiful brow and

then his eyes widened. Second by second, his smile grew, forcing Laura to swallow the bubble of laughter at the back of her throat. He pushed the paper toward her with such eagerness, he might as well have slammed it straight against her slit. Not quite the cool behavior of an Adonis. But somehow, the brief vulnerability, his potential loss of control aroused her even more. Who would break first? There was every chance it could've been her, but now...

Their fingers brushed as she took the paper from him, enhancing the tense atmosphere another notch. "Thanks."

The all-knowing, all-encompassing gaze was back. "You're welcome."

With her heart racing and her pussy creaming, Laura said, "Can you do me a favor?"

His Adam's apple shifted beneath the taut skin of his throat. "Sure."

"Can you check to see if we're still alone?"

He grinned. "Are you serious about this?"

She nodded. "Aren't you?"

His gaze locked with hers for a long moment before he tipped her a wink, completely disarming her once more. Absurdly attracted to him, Laura didn't even feel nervous—just unbelievably turned on. It was like she knew him, trusted him. Attraction grew and burst into flame behind her ribcage when he levered himself up on the arms on his chair with the ease of a gymnast on the parallel bars. Her gaze hungrily fed on the tendons and muscles of his bare forearms as they tensed. Strong, capable, and incredibly sexy.

He took his time, looked first in front and then behind. No hurry. Calm personified. Laura smiled.

You'd think this kind of thing happened to him every day. But the telltale flash of color high on his cheeks and the way his hands tightly gripped the chair's arms showed he was as anxious for the party to start as she was.

He eased back into his seat. "It appears to be just you and me."

Laura smiled. "Great."

Excitement pumped blood a little faster through her veins, her pussy twitched, and her nipples tightened. Revelling in the feel of her damp panties against moist lips, Laura slid two fingers into her mouth and wet them with her tongue. Round and round, in and out. A faint smile played at his mouth but his eyes belied his feral interest. They watched her with just the right amount of sexy anger. As though he'd like to slam her up against the window and ram his rock-hard cock deep inside her...

That erotic thought had Laura eagerly shimmying her skirt to her waist. With her eyes still on his, she laid the open paper across her lap. Her heart beat like a jackhammer but she couldn't turn back now even if she wanted to. The fantasy, the naughtiness of what she was doing, was rushing her toward orgasm. She urgently slid her fingers beneath the paper and out of sight. Another look at his crotch. His erection was standing fully at attention now—like a soldier to the Queen. His hand was in his pocket, but there was a flicker of movement. Clearly she was turning him on enough for him to join her in the fun.

Rubbing her clit in her own special way, Laura teased the rigid nub until her toes curled into the carpet. Sliding her fingers on either side of her clit, she smoothed them up and down, pinching the soft

skin before skimming back over and around the top. His color darkened and his teeth clenched. She trembled as a wave of seductive power washed through her. His gaze swept from her breasts to her eyes and back again. He was clearly taking it all in—her mind, her body, everything.

And the simple truth was, Laura wanted him to take it all. Something about this moment felt so incredibly right. She wanted his eyes on her; wanted him to witness her release, her moment of absolute surrender. Licking her lips, she smoothed her other hand over her breast as the other inched lower. She spread open sodden pussy lips and plunged deep into her wetness. A small moan escaped her as she pushed another finger inside—two became three. Spreading her legs wider, Laura eased her fingers in and out, faster and faster. Aware that she had slid down in the seat, but unable to do a damn thing about it, Laura's face burned hot with excitement. Even if the ticket collector sauntered along the aisle and sat down beside her, she couldn't have stopped.

Pinching her nipple hard through the sheer material of her blouse, her other hand picked up speed and rubbed her aching clit with more vigor. There was no time for meandering self-appreciation, release was what Laura was frantic for and wanted so much for her mystery man to witness. She increased both the speed and the pressure. The first waves built. She bit into her bottom lip, closed her eyes, anticipating, yearning for her orgasm. Pursued it like a hunter chasing its prey. And then she was there. She exploded fast and hard. Stifling her scream, she thrust her fingers hard into her soaking wet slit and smiled as her inner walls beat out their glorious satisfaction.

After a second or two, Laura opened her heavy eyelids.

And her heart promptly leapt into her throat...

He was gone. She swallowed, panic making her eyes bulge at the empty seat. How long had she been alone? She sat bolt upright. There was nobody else aboard the train car. His ticket lay abandoned on the table. Swallowing again, she pressed the back of her hand to her burning cheeks. How could he just leave? What if someone... Bastard. She quickly smoothed down her skirt and leaned across the aisle, snatching up his ticket.

No, no, no!

There, in all its stark black glory was the name—Mr. Stephen Cambridge.

With his heart pumping and his dick pulsing, Stephen stepped from the train and into the throng of people hurrying back and forth along the platform. The sensations ripping along his bloodstream made it hard to breathe and even harder to concentrate. He had to have her. Every beautiful, sexy inch of her. She was the one. He knew it deep inside; he'd been waiting for her his whole life. But how the hell was he going to make her his? He stopped and turned back to look at the train.

He had no idea what to do next, but he was one hundred percent sure he wasn't leaving without knowing her name and phone number—at least.

Swallowing hard, he strode back toward the train just as she emerged in the doorway. She stood on the periphery, her huge blue eyes darting all around her. One look at the panicked look on her face and the rose-pink flush at her cheeks and a stab pierced Stephen's heart and his cock throbbed. She

was beautiful from the crown of her silver-blond hair to the tips of her lethal-looking high heels.

She stepped down onto the platform, pulled back her shoulders, and tilted her chin. But the telltale sign of how she really felt was clearly visible in the way she had her black leather portfolio clutched to her chest like a lifeline. He smiled. She was fooling no one. She looked as vulnerable as a kitten, yet as sleek as a panther. Stephen drew in a deep breath through flared nostrils and took a step toward her. The combination was irresistible.

She took a few steps away from the train, looking left and right. By the time Stephen reached her, she was standing still, her shoulders rising and falling as though catching her breath. His gaze lingered on the soft curve of her ass, down over perfect womanly thighs to shapely calves that he longed to kiss. He moved in behind her. Close but not so close that she'd have cause to slap him. She smelled of something musky, sexual, and damn near edible. With his heart hammering in chest, Stephen took another breath before exhaling.

She stiffened. Shit, he didn't want to frighten her. He touched a finger to her elbow.

"Are you okay?"

A second passed before she slowly turned around. And when she did, she wore a confident one hundred watt smile that lit up her face like summer sunshine. His heart missed a beat. He felt neither confident, nor particularly happy. If she walked away from him now...

He pulled himself up to his full six feet two inches and smiled. "That was a bit of a close call back there. I didn't mean to bail on you."

She stared straight into his eyes. Stephen forced

himself to keep his gaze on hers. His eyes were constantly drawn to her deliciously full lips—what he wouldn't give to feel their soft warmth against his...

Her sweet, sensuous voice filtered through his haze. "Then why did you? Couldn't stand the heat?"

His resistance faltered and his eyes lingered at her mouth. The pink tip of her tongue eased over them and his dick twitched. She was something else. He met her eyes.

"Do you really think I wanted to leave? I had no choice."

A flash of red darkened her cheeks and she grinned impishly. "Well, I did think you were a little rude," she said, arching a perfect eyebrow. "What happened to make you miss the climax?"

Their gazes locked as something tangible passed between them, a silent something that he was certain she felt too. It hung between them like an invisible thread woven from lust and desire. He blinked, hurriedly cleared his throat.

"The conductor was about eight feet away from having a cardiac arrest," he said, smiling. "If I hadn't gotten out of my seat and sent him the other way, God knows what would've happened. I saved the guy's life, I swear."

"And maybe mine too." She smiled and pushed her hair back from her eyes. "Well, saved me from a night at the police station, at least."

Suddenly feeling that too much time had elapsed without touching her, Stephen held out his hand. "Stephen. Stephen Cambridge."

She hesitated and then took his hand. It ever so slightly trembled. She glanced at their joined hands and then raised her eyes. Another flush of color at

her cheeks, “You might want to sit down for this,” she said.

Stephen felt his smile falter. “Pardon?”

“I should formally introduce myself.” She drew in a shaky breath and exhaled. “I’m Laura Markham.”

The world stood still. Feeling his eyes grow wider and wider, he stared at her. *Laura Markham. She’s Laura Markham!*

“You’re...you’re my interior designer,” he managed.

Her beautiful face screwed into a grimace. “Pleased to meet you.”

For a long moment, Stephen said nothing and then a bubble of laughter shook his diaphragm and erupted. He rubbed his free hand along his jaw. “I don’t believe this.”

She snatched her hand from his, her color darkening. “Hey, this isn’t funny,” she snapped. “I suppose you think you’re going to...”

“Um...no...” Stephen held up his hands. “There’s no way I’d think that. Look, sorry, okay? I only laughed because as soon as I saw you, before the...um...before the...”

She fisted her hands on her hips. “Masturbation?”

Stephen grinned once more, nodded. “Thank you. Before the masturbation, I thought, there she is.”

Her brow creased. “There who is?”

Here goes nothing. Stephen stared straight into her sapphire-blue eyes. “You’re the one, Laura. You’re the woman I’m going to marry. Come on. Let’s get a cab so I can show you your new home.”

“Wait. What the...”

Not quite believing what he was doing, but doing it anyway, Stephen winked, picked up her overnight bag with one hand and grabbed her hand with the other.

“Let’s go.”

And then he led her through the crowds on the platform like he was Tarzan and she, Jane. And by God, it felt like the most natural thing in the world. Stephen savored every damn minute.

The house was more amazing in real life than any photograph could ever portray. It was picture postcard perfect. Laura stepped from the taxi and, the moment she did, her mother’s face appeared in her mind’s eye. She would have adored the place. Laura looked up to find Stephen watching her. The inky-black depths of his eyes swam with concern, and his tanned skin was ever so slightly flushed. Laura’s heart beat faster and her skin tingled. He was so handsome.

Dragging her gaze from his, Laura swallowed. She had no idea what was happening between them, but whatever it was, it was exciting, illicit, and made her feel more alive than she had in the three months since her parents were killed in a car crash. She’d actually taken his hand in the taxi without thinking—but soon snatched it back. No doubt he already thought her a nymphomaniac let alone needy too.

But the truth was, it felt so right being there with him. Like she was meant to be there. Meant to be with him.

“Shall we go in?” His fingers were warm where they hovered at the base of her spine, his voice soft against her ear.

Forcing herself to get real—fast, she turned. “You understand that I am here to work, don’t you?”

His gaze flitted over her face. “Of course.”

Her mouth went dry. A weight dropped into her belly...it felt like disappointment. “Good,” she forced herself to say. “Because what happened on the train? It won’t happen again.”

He smiled and Laura’s toes curled inside her shoes. “Of course.”

She gave a curt nod. “This commission is a big deal to me. I love your home. I want to make it as beautiful on the inside as it is on the outside.”

His smile stretched to a grin. “Good. I want you to think of it as yours.”

Her heart skipped. “What?”

“I want you to love it as much as I do.” His smile dissolved, his gaze dropped for a second before meeting hers once more. “I want you to stay.”

Hope quivered deep in Laura’s chest. She felt it come alive and spread warmth across her muscles, leaving its brand on her heart. She drew her eyes from his and inhaled a long breath. Her eyes lingered over the butter-colored stone of the cottage, its rose-edged oak door, the multi-colored wonderment of the flowers and shrubs in the garden, and then back into his eyes.

“This isn’t right. I came here for a job.” She paused, swallowed the panic rising in her throat that he would agree. “Not to...not to...”

“Fall in love?”

Fear shot through her blood, making her teeter back on her heels. “What are you talking about? How can you say something like that?” she demanded, heat searing her cheeks. “You don’t know me. You don’t know what I like, don’t like, feel, don’t feel...”

He cupped a hand to her jaw and Laura froze. Did nothing when he leaned forward and pressed the faintest, yet most ensnaring of kisses to her lips. “Then you’ll tell me. Over dinner. I can’t ignore what’s happening here. Can you?”

Taking her hand, he led her through the gate and into the house. The moment Laura stepped across the threshold it enveloped her with a strange familiarity—as though the cottage had been waiting for her. A tangible contentment spread from the very tips of her toes to the top of her head. She’d finally come home.

Excitement fluttered its presence through her blood, filling her heart and dispelling her reservations. She tightened her fingers around his. “Fine. But just so you know, I am by no means easy and I have never ever done anything like I did on the train before. Ever.”

“That’s fine,” he said. “My only hope is the next time you have that look on your face when you orgasm, it’s me who put it there.”

Laura’s clit contracted and her smile grew. “You are a bad, bad boy, Stephen Cambridge. Very bad indeed.”

He stepped closer. “Yes. A bad boy who has never wanted a woman so much in his life.”

“Stephen—”

“I know what you’re going to say and I couldn’t agree more.” He brought her knuckles to his lips and kissed them. “I have never had any interest in settling down or even falling in love. If my friends could see me now...”

She smiled. “They’d think you’d lost your mind?”

“Exactly.”

“Mine too.”

His Adam's apple shifted beneath the skin of his neck. "My parents divorced when I was a boy, and I've watched my sister be loved by her husband's fists. I'd lost all faith in love, but when I saw you on that train..." He paused, inhaled a long breath. "When you were staring into space, looking out the window, thinking. Your face, the way your mouth moved silently as though you were having a conversation with yourself...you were the most enchanting person I'd ever seen."

The soft, sexy tone of his voice, his words, his flattery succeeded in making Laura feel beautiful. "But then I—"

He leaned forward, winked. "Revealed the real erotic vixen you are inside. And I, Miss Markham, was undone."

They laughed and Laura's body reacted. She looked into his eyes. Was it really possible? Could they be falling in love? He dropped her bag and slid his arms around her. Their laughter immediately turned to something else. The heat spiked between them like a burning flame.

Laura's portfolio thudded to the hardwood floor when his lips crushed hers. She had no idea if what she was doing was good or bad, but knew this was the freest, the happiest she had felt in a very long time. And she knew in that moment, nothing would stop her from taking what she could of this man for as long as possible.

As though reading her mind, they tumbled to the floor as one. Laura's body burned, her breasts ached.

They clawed and ripped, grasped and tore. Laura cupped his stubbled jaw in her hands, scoring her fingers into his hair. She wanted to possess him,

own him, have him. She felt fabulously petite in the span of his huge hands. She felt alive, vibrant and sexy as hell.

She writhed across the floor, and he crawled over her. Then her breath caught when he yanked open her blouse and drew her breasts from within the confines of her bra. He closed his mouth over first one nipple, then the other. The soft yet masculine scent of his shampoo wafted to her nostrils and Laura inhaled deeply. She clasped her hand to the back of his head, holding him to her as he sucked and nipped, bit and caressed the heavy weight of her breasts. The high-voltage shock of pain versus pleasure soared through her bloodstream, sensitizing every inch of her flesh. All too soon, he moved away and kneeled above her.

Laura trembled with the effort it took not to leap up and pull him back down. But then he tore off his jacket, his eyes still locked on hers, and she knew he was as desperate to be with her as she was him. Blood pounded to her pussy, pulsing and beating there. She felt the wetness of her panties. She had never wanted a guy's cock so feverishly or quickly. Her heart thudded when he took a foil packet from the inside pocket of his jacket before he tossed it aside.

She raised an eyebrow, he wiggled his. Off came his shirt and Laura's mouth dropped open and her breathing grew faster. He was perfect. Toned and muscular. His skin was tanned and smooth. From the sheer masculine strength of his mammoth chest to the six pack below...Laura wanted to bite him.

"Faster," she demanded. "I need you—right now."

"You are so bloody beautiful."

Putting the condom packet between his teeth, Stephen snapped open his trousers and tugged his boxers down. Her eyes dropped to his erection and her eyes grew wide.

Stephen smiled as male satisfaction and pride swept through him, making him want her even more than he did a second before. It was insane. This overpowering sense of wanting to make her his, to possess her, ram into her until she screamed out his name in ecstasy.

They locked eyes and he ripped open the condom packet, slowly rolled it on with expert precision. He gave her a cheeky wink and tipped a nod toward his penis as though saying he was proud of what he had—elation swept through him at her feminine tinkle of laughter.

“Idiot,” she said.

Laughing, he dropped back down on the floor beside her. Trailing a finger over the soft skin surrounding her eyes, down over her perfect nose and deliciously full lips, Stephen fell just a little deeper.

“I am so glad I found you,” he said. “So bloody glad.”

Her skin flushed pink, sending another spark of desire straight to his groin. He hungrily covered her mouth with his, moved his hands over her neck, her collarbones, lower and lower until he could grip the hem of her skirt and yank it up her thighs in one fluid motion. She gasped, further fuelling his impatience to have her.

“Stephen...”

“What? You like that?”

She grinned, her color deepening. “So damn much.”

“Then you’re going to love this.”

He shimmied down the length of her perfect torso and groaned inwardly to see the tiny scrap of black lace covering her pussy between creamy thighs above lacy stockings tops. It was more than he could stand not to thrust his throbbing cock straight into her hotness right then and there. But he didn’t. He made himself wait just a little longer.

And then she wantonly opened her thighs, spreading them further. He roughly snapped the thin strap holding her panties in place—another gasp came from above him. Stephen buried his face in her semi-shaven pubic hair. Feeding like a starving man, he licked and sucked her clit into his mouth. Her scent filled his nostrils like a soothing balm, spreading across the pores of his face and soaking deep inside. He ran his tongue over and over her hardened nub, lower, thrusting deep into her sodden slit and back out again.

Eager to taste every inch of her, he rolled his tongue around and around her while thrusting two fingers deep inside her pussy. Her breath hitched and pride soared through his body. He wanted to satisfy her so damn much.

He watched her face over the soft dip of her stomach. Her eyelids fluttered closed as she reached blindly forward. She gripped her fingers tightly into his hair, forcing his face hard against her sweet smelling honey. She mewed like a kitten—the gentle sounds filled his mind and licked at his soul. And then she lifted her ass off the floor to gyrate against his face.

The mewling stopped. “Oh, God, now, Stephen. Please!”

He took one more taste of her before pulling

away. He drew his body up the length of hers and took a moment to look at her. With his hands planted firmly either side of her head, his eyes drank in her hooded, desirous gaze as his heart slipped a little more from his control. He let one, two, three more moments pass before plunging his rock-hard cock deep inside her wetness and making her his.

He moaned. "Laura..."

Her warmth encompassed him and he thrust deeper, wanting to fill her to her core.

Her breathing came hard and fast between clenched teeth as they moved. She felt like silk around his penis, the sensation was almost too much to resist. Closing his eyes, Stephen concentrated on keeping his rhythm slow and controlled. But then he forced his eyes open. He refused to miss the sexy, lustful look on her face as she neared her orgasm. He'd sworn the next time she wore it, he'd put it there and, by God, that is just what he would do.

She lifted her hips, urging him deeper. He picked up the speed, driving his cock deeper and harder. Her nails sank into his shoulders, sending his desire for her skyrocketing with the pinch of breaking skin. The soft wetness of her beautiful pussy encapsulating his burning cock became too much and Stephen drove into her with every ounce of his being. Her head thrashed from side to side, and he watched every beautiful second. She met his eyes and he knew she was on the edge, just a few more thrusts and he'd push her over.

Harder and harder, deeper and deeper, more and more and then her mouth dropped open, her breathing turned heavy and she bucked against him until he couldn't hold back any longer.

He felt her explode around his cock, her juices

gushing against him, and then he joined her. His orgasm turning him momentarily blind, the haze burning and thriving. Stephen forced his eyes open to witness the satisfaction spread across her features and into her beautiful blue eyes.

She was more spontaneous, more sexy, more beautiful than any woman he'd ever met. And she would be his. Always.

He pressed a lingering kiss to her lips as his erection subsided and he slowly slipped from her soft beautiful slit.

"You are unbelievable," he whispered. "Unfucking believable."

She grinned, smoothing the hair from his eyes. "You're not too bad yourself."

He smiled and rolled to her side. They lay in momentary and sated silence, fingers intertwined. But then she sucked in a sharp breath as her fingers tightened around his. He turned his head to find her staring wide-eyed at the ceiling above them.

"Are you okay?" Stephen asked, fear skittering across his heart. "Laura?"

Silence.

He touched his knuckles gently to her cheek. "You're shaking," he said, scrambling onto his elbow.

She turned her head and met his gaze. Fear stared back at him. "My God, are you crying? What's wrong? Did I hurt you?" he asked.

She shook her head, her mouth spreading into a wide, wide smile. "Hurt me? No. I'm scared to death by what we just did, by how right you seem for me, and how this house is where I was meant to be."

Relief rushed through his veins on a tidal wave. "Oh, is that all?" He shrugged. "Get used to it, because you aren't going anywhere."

And then he kissed her once more before running his hand down the length of her amazing body.

“You’ve hardly touched your beef.”

“It’s delicious. I’m just not hungry.”

“You should eat.”

The tone of his voice was suggestive—and Laura couldn’t resist the bait. “Oh?”

“I’m thinking there’s every possibility of a long night ahead, don’t you?”

She picked up her glass and huffed out a breath. “No, not really. Once you finally get around to asking me about interior design—the reason why I’m actually here, remember? I will answer your questions, pick up my portfolio, and go straight to bed. Alone.”

“No, you won’t.”

Excitement churned rapidly in her belly. “Yes, I will.”

Stephen shook his head and lifted his glass to sinful lips. “When you go to bed, you’ll be going with me.”

Silently cursing the urgent pull between her legs, Laura laughed. “Will I now?”

He put his glass down on the table, placed his knife and fork side by side on his plate, and took her hand. The instantaneous bolt of electricity was potent. Laura shivered. After years of wanting to discover this unnameable thing with someone, how was it possible it could be this strong after such a short time? But there it was, humming back and forth between her and a man who’d seen her masturbating for crying out loud.

He looked at her across the table, his dark eyes

sparked with blue. Laura couldn't fight her smile. His cheeky smile made it downright impossible. Forcing herself to keep her eyes on his, even though her cheeks were on fire, Laura whispered,

"This is crazy."

"What is?"

She threw out her hand to encompass the room. "This. I'm supposed to be here alone. Working. Instead, I'm sitting with you having a romantic meal—"

"...and wondering when I'm going to take you to bed."

She laughed. "Nooo. Wondering when I'm going to wake up. This isn't real, things like this just don't happen."

Stephen reached across the table and took her hand. "It's real, Laura. It's real and we're going to enjoy it."

Even though nothing but sincerity stared back at her from those inky-black eyes, Stephen was quite clearly stuck on the fantasy from the train. Maybe she was too. People—men especially—do not fall in love the way he claimed to be. They fall head-long—or dick-long—in lust. Laura didn't want to spoil the moment, but they both needed a dose of reality.

And as long as she accepted that this was all part of her fantasy, they could enjoy their time together without either of them getting hurt. She swallowed as his gaze lingered on her mouth. Even if her heart already belonged to him.

Stephen squeezed her fingers. "I know what you're thinking, you know."

Laura forced a grin. "No, you don't."

"You're thinking, all I want to do is rip your clothes off and fuck you over and over again."

Was it wrong that her pussy immediately throbbed at such a crass, animalistic way of putting it? She tilted her chin as her excitement made itself known by the dampness in her panties. His eyes flashed with feral interest.

“Am I right?” he pressed.

Laura slid her hand from his and picked up her wineglass. “Maybe.”

“You’re wrong.”

Her eyes widened as disappointment dropped traitorously into her belly. “I’m wrong? You don’t want to fuck me?”

He laughed. “Oh, yes, but you’re wrong that my interest in you is purely sexual.”

She took a drink, watching him over its rim. “You don’t need to do this, you know. I’m a grown-up. I can handle casual sex without losing my head.”

“Only because you don’t want to.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean you’re scared. The same as me. But unfortunately, I for one can’t resist it. I can’t resist you. Do you really want to take the risk this may never happen again?”

Laura swallowed as her skin heated beneath a gaze so determined that it buckled her resolve. The look in his eyes silenced any argument. He’d asserted his authority; the power was firmly in his court. Excitement churned through Laura’s body as his fortitude swept over her nerve endings, increasing her sexual desire for him tenfold. Oh, she didn’t doubt there was part of him deep-down that knew this couldn’t work between them. But from the firm clench of his jaw and the raw animal lust burning in his eyes, it was clear she was challenging a man used to controlling his own destiny.

And his current destiny appeared to be her.

Her heartbeat picked up speed as a slow smile curved her lips. "Do you believe in love at first sight?"

Stephen grinned wolfishly. "I didn't until I looked across the aisle on the train."

"Me neither."

"But now?"

"Maybe."

His gaze bored into hers, making her tremble. With fear, lust, or love, Laura had no idea. But, by God, she wanted him. All of him.

"I'm going to make you very happy, Laura Markham," he said.

"Stephen, listen to me."

"I am listening. I always will."

The heat of her body cooled. She had to make him understand what was going on with her. That she was too far from okay to take this any further. She put down her glass. "You should know that I'm not in a good place right now. I recently lost my parents in a car crash." She paused, waited for her heart rate to slow. "I'm trying my best to just find my way. The last thing I need is—"

"Someone to love and care for you? Support you in your ideas and dreams, to travel back home when you need to. I will do whatever you want, Laura. I want to take care of you." He grasped her hand across the table. "Let me. Let me do that. Give me a chance to show you that I mean what I say."

Laura met his eyes, his face blurred. "But..."

His fingers tightened on hers. "Trust the feeling inside you. I am. And you do feel it, don't you? Tell me I'm not wrong about this."

She stared at him for a long moment. But

finally, she nodded. “I feel it, Stephen. I feel it so much.”

He pushed away from the table and stood up. Held out his hand. “Shall we?”

Her mind raced as she grappled for a biting response, a quick one-liner to wipe the confidence from his face. How could he know everything would be all right? Nobody can know that. Yet... She opened her mouth again, shut it. As it appeared her larynx had malfunctioned, Laura had no choice but to hold her head high and brush past him toward the stairs.

And she sensed his delicious gaze on her ass every step of the way and loved every damn second. But still the doubt lingered, still her fear pulsed through her veins that she was right and he was wrong. She didn’t want to lose him. The reality crashed into her chest, making her suck in a breath. Maybe she could have just one more mind-numbing sex session with a man hotter than English mustard and as suave as Prince William in a polo uniform, and then she would leave. Go back to London where she’d find another commission—working for a female boss. No sexual attraction, no risk of her heart being broken into even smaller pieces.

Stephen closed the door behind Laura.

She jumped when he cupped a hand to her elbow. “Come. Sit on the bed.”

They sat down and Stephen drew in a long breath as he took in every tiny detail of her bewitching face—just in case he didn’t convince her—just in case he wasn’t enough for her...

Forcing a smile, he pressed a quick kiss to her lips and brushed the hair back from her cheek. “Talk

to me.”

She swallowed. “What?”

“Talk to me.” He gently put his palm to her heart. “What’s going on in there?”

The electricity between them was unbearable—it was so potent—he knew she must feel it too. His gaze wandered to his hand and a bolt of desire shot straight to his cock. Her nipples strained against the thin cotton of her dress. He licked his lips—what he wouldn’t give to rip the buttons open and feed on her tits right there and then...but he wouldn’t. He wanted to know what she was thinking as much as he wanted her body.

He forced his eyes to hers. Her face was flushed and a faint smile played on her lips. She’d seen him look at her chest. She’d read his thoughts and, from the look in her eyes, she didn’t mind one tiny bit. In fact, if he didn’t know better...

Stephen gave himself a mental shake. No - first they talk. They had to if she was ever going to believe just how serious he was. How much he wanted forever with her, not just a day, a week or a month. It wouldn’t be enough.

“Well?” he pressed.

She let out a brief, almost nervous laugh. “You know what I’m thinking, Stephen. I’ve told you. Surely you have a good idea of just how honest I can be. I was hardly holding back on the train, was I?”

“The train is in the past,” he said, lowering his hand from her chest and taking her hand in his. “I want you to believe we can do this. This can work, Laura.”

She stared at him, pursed her lips tightly together. Could they? The longer she looked into his eyes, the more she started to believe it was true. She

inhaled a shaky breath, released it—and with that breath, a weight lifted from her shoulders. *Take a risk. Take a risk.* The words echoed over and over in her mind. Even though she was afraid, Laura instinctively knew there was nothing to fear. Wasn't being with him worth the risk?

“Laura?”

She swallowed. “I’m scared.”

Stephen laughed. “Me too.”

Laura smiled. “How can you be scared? You’re a stockbroker. Taking risks is an everyday occurrence for you.”

“This isn’t money, this is love. I’ve never been anywhere near love in my life. I’ve avoided it. But with you...” He let the sentence drift off, looking to their joined hands. “I just want this so much and I don’t want to question why. I’m going to love you, want you, satisfy you. I’m going to make you laugh and cry, talk and listen.” He gazed at her mouth. “I’m going to give you everything. I am going to make you happy.”

She stared wide-eyed at him as her heart hammered hard inside her chest. This was no easier for him than it was her. So her parents had died - did that give her a monopoly on the fear to love?

“Okay.”

His gaze darted over her face, her hair, her lips. “Are you serious?”

Laura laughed. “I have never been more serious in my life.”

Stephen pressed a hard kiss to her lips before pulling away and looking to the ceiling. “Thank God.”

She tipped her head back and laughed, suddenly drunk on the craziness of how she felt. “Now what?”

His eyes darkened. "Now, my fair lady," he growled, "we fuck like we've never fucked before."

Another bubble of laughter burned inside her chest. "I say, Mr. Cambridge, I really think—"

He drew her to her feet. "Clothes. Off. Now."

A fast and furious heat surged to her nipples and pussy like a chemical reaction.

His eyes were wild with love and lust. A burst of butterflies took flight in Laura's stomach and the urge to laugh vanished as she accepted that he was the one she'd been waiting for—Stephen Cambridge was her perfect English hero. Why not live the fantasy? Laura's mouth curved into a full blown grin.

"Come on, then Big Boy," she said, sliding the spaghetti straps of her dress provocatively over her shoulders. "You're not all talk and no action, are you?"

He growled and lunged toward her. Laura's scream was muffled by his mouth covering hers as Stephen swung her into his arms. They kissed urgently. Tongues seeking and conquering, her need for him and his for hers battled for supremacy.

Stephen eased away and Laura's breath rasped in her throat as their eyes locked. There was nothing else she wanted more right then than him and his hard, rigid penis thrusting deep inside her aching pussy. Without a word passing between them, Stephen once more crushed his lips to hers. They fell back onto the bed and Laura clung to the strong expanse of his thick biceps as their tongues tangled and their teeth nipped.

He murmured her name over and over, causing her clit to contract with impatient desire. His hands smoothed down over her thighs to the hem of her

dress and then all the way back up again. She felt the blessed pressure of his lips running over the curve of her neck, while his hands caressed her breasts above the neckline of her dress. She shook with the desperate need to thrust her nipples into his mouth, to have him suck and suck until she screamed for mercy.

His fingers searched for the zipper running down the side of her dress. Laura moved to help him, but he grasped her tighter. The domination felt good. The surrender liberating. He found the zipper and inched it down. Laura drew in the musky scent of his aftershave like an airborne drug. Stephen. The cool air hit her breasts as, at last, they were freed. He hovered above her, gazing at her with adoration and lust, making Laura feel as though she was the sexiest woman alive. Her pussy throbbed with increasing impatience as her panties clung tighter to her weeping wetness.

“You are everything,” he murmured, before leaning lower to suck and tease her nipples, his hot tongue exciting and thrilling.

Laura scored her fingers through his soft dark hair, urging him on. Second by beautiful second rushed by. He edged her dress up over her thighs, fingers sliding back and forth across her thighs and the burning hot skin of her hips and ass. Her breasts rose and fell as her breathing became more labored. The scent of him filled her nostrils, sending her senses into overdrive. Laura clamped her hand to the back of his neck, keeping him as close as possible, suddenly fearful that he would move away.

Once her skirt was a screwed up and forgotten mess at her waist, Stephen shimmied down. He eased her sodden panties down over her thighs, her

legs, her calves, the tips of her toes before tossing them away. His growl of lust at the sight of her pussy glistening with moisture was like a flint to the burning hot spark of his arousal. Quivering beneath his hands, Laura felt wanton and didn't care. In fact, she was barely containing the desire to slam his face hard against her, insisting he sucked her dry.

"Please," she begged. "Touch me. Lick me."

Stephen dragged his eyes from her pussy to look at her. "Do you have any idea how beautiful you are?"

"Stephen, please."

"Answer me," he demanded.

"I..."

"You are beautiful, intelligent, talented, and all mine. What are you?"

Another bolt of excitement thrust through Laura's body. So damn sexy. Their eyes locked as life, hope, and Laura's future grew bright inside her. She gave a soft smile. "I am all yours."

The raw need to come all over his handsome face was so strong that Laura was willing to do whatever he wanted. Any doubts she had of them not working out evaporated as she gave way to the inexplicable trust she had for a man she didn't really know, but desperately wanted to. A man she wanted to sleep with, talk with, laugh with. This was it. They were in love and, come what may, they would both enjoy every minute.

Laura waited for him to possess her, but then he stood and pulled her to her feet. She stared down at the bulge fighting for release behind the buttons of his jeans. She cupped a hand there.

"Mmm..."

He tipped his head back, his Adam's apple

moving rapidly. "I didn't mean for you...you don't have to..."

She clamped her fingers to his chin and met his eyes. "Shh, my turn to be in control."

He groaned when she dropped to her knees and busied her hands at the buckle of his belt. His fingers slid into the thick mass of her blonde hair and her scalp tingled. She was desperate to taste him, to feel his dewy moisture at the back of her throat. She snapped open the buttons, one, two, three, four, slid his jeans and boxers down over muscular thighs.

His bulging cock sprung forward, eager to play. She held it in her hands, smoothed her fingers down the silky length, circled the base, and enjoyed the weight of his heavy, tight balls. Her toes curled behind her as she eased his rigid member between her waiting lips. She flicked her tongue back and forth over the tip before taking him in long, deep strokes into the dark abyss of her wet warm mouth.

A groan rumbled from the pit of his stomach. "Laura..." His breath caught.

Her own wetness trickled from her pussy to the soft skin of her thigh and she squeezed her pelvic muscles in an attempt to stem her excitement. His cock throbbed and pulsed against her tongue, she lapped and licked the length of him right to the salty end. Her breasts rose and fell, aching to be fondled and kissed. She sucked him deeper and his grip tightened in her hair. The jolt of pain versus pleasure made her groan around his enormous girth, she felt like a goddamn vixen!

"Laura, please, not like this," he panted. "I want to be inside you. If you carry on doing that, I'll..."

He was right. They had declared an allegiance, a

trust in each other. She wanted to celebrate their grand beginning with even grander sex. There would be plenty of other times. Oh, but he tasted so good. She fed a moment longer, massaging his balls while rubbing back and forth along his rock-hard shaft...

“Laura, please.”

Slowly, she eased him from her mouth and stood up. His eyes were hooded, heavy with desire. She kissed him and pressed her breasts against his unyielding chest, but the kiss was cut short when he gripped her shoulders and spun her around. He slammed her back against him, his erection pressed against the base of her spine.

Her heart raced as unbearable anticipation rocketed through her veins. “What are you—?”

“Trust me.”

Laura squeezed her eyes shut. She already did. So much. She dropped her head back and bit down on her bottom lip. The sweet taste of her own blood caressed the tip of her tongue as his fingers smoothed over the slight bump of her belly, lower and lower toward her clit. Laura automatically spread her legs as wide as possible and arched her back. Opening her eyes, she cupped her breasts and pinched the nipples. He slid two, no, three fingers deep inside her soaking wet slit as she curled a hand around one of the bed posts for support.

“More?” he growled.

And even though she heard the torment, the enjoyment in his voice, Laura frantically nodded. “Oh, God, more.”

He slid out his fingers and stroked them back and forth through her pubic hair until a desperate sob escaped her. “Stephen. Please. What are you...?”

He kissed the tender skin behind her ear. “What

do you want, Laura? What do you want me to do to you?"

"Everything," she said, between clenched teeth. "I want everything from of you."

"And I you, my love."

Laura heard the smile, the relief in his voice, and her own mouth curved into a smile that filled her entire soul. His fingers slid again to her clit, over the tender nub, and straight into her throbbing pussy, before sliding them back out again to smear her lips with her warm juices. She practically purred.

Closing her eyes, Laura pushed against him.

The sensations built as his thumb brushed frantically over her clit, while his fingers pushed deeper and deeper inside her pussy. Laura panted with longing upon the blessed sound of his zipper and the hurried rip of a packet. His fingers left her wetness and she waited while he sheathed his cock, her legs trembling, her body screaming for release.

Sliding his hands to her waist, he rammed his rock hard cock deep inside her happy, happy pussy. Thrusting, branding, stabbing, and taking...

"Oh, my God. Oh, my God," she panted.

His cock filled her core, forcing Laura to grip another hand onto the poster of the bed. Her ass cheeks quivered as he picked up speed. Her heavy breasts bounced back and forth with the force of his passion. Laura relished the delicious wantonness of Stephen fucking her from behind while standing spread-eagled with her tits on display. As though reading her mind, one of his hands left her waist and he reached around to grab one of her aching breasts. Laura moaned over and over again as her pussy tightened with the telltale sign of her climax.

“Stephen, I’m going to...I’m going...”

“Go on, Laura, take it. Take it all.”

“Oh, my, oh...” Laura loved every damn stroke, but then she was coming, screaming, coming, laughing, and shaking. He held her harder against him, stopping her from crumbling to the floor just by the strength of his hands holding her. Only another few seconds passed before Stephen’s shuddered breath and the heaving sound of her name as it fell from his lips told Laura he was right beside her in paradise.

They’d found it. And when she turned around within the circle of his arms and looked into his eyes, Laura knew there was little chance of either of them leaving that little cottage anytime soon.

About the author...

This is Rachel Leigh's first Scarlet Rosette but she enjoyed writing it so much, she can't wait to submit her next for consideration. When Rachel isn't writing, you can find her reading, running around after her two daughters...or playing with her husband.

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