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Trust

By Dakota Trace

Chapter One

"Leighann Winston?" A tall man dressed in blue jeans and t-shirt entered the outer office.

"I'm Leighann." She clenched her hands as she stood. *I can't believe how nervous and excited I am about starting this new job. Douglas is just happy I have a job, but I have a feeling about this, it may just change my life.* After she'd applied for a fork lift operator position, she'd been happy when they'd called her and told that if she wanted the job, it was hers.

"Pleased to meet you, Leighann. Looking at your application here, I see you have little experience with the forklifts we use, but you've driven several other types of powered trucks?"

"Yes, sir."

"Call me Randy. I'll be your immediate supervisor. We'll be having our morning meeting shortly. I'll be pairing you up with one of our senior guys. He'll show you the ropes. I don't know if you realize it or not, but this is primarily a male dominated department. Follow me."

She nodded and followed him into a small break room.

As people started to trickle in, she was not overly shocked to note she was one of the few women present. *Out of twenty people there are only three women.* Randy

wasn't kidding when he warned me about this being a man's department. I've never seen so many young and hunky men in one place. This is definitely going to be a change from my last job.

After being introduced around the department, she was paired up with Jason Adair, a senior fork lift driver. When he joined her, she was pleasantly surprised when she had to look up at him. At five ten, she was often eye level with most men. As she followed him out on the floor she couldn't help but smile. *Well, at least this won't be an entire hardship. With that dark hair and blue eyes, he's a hunk!*

* * * *

At the end of her shift, she exited the building in high spirits. She was a bit dusty and tired, but was pleased with her first day on the job. Jason had proven to be a patient teacher and she quickly learned the intricacies of driving the equipment. *If I weren't so new, I'd fake a bit of trouble to continue having Jason work with me. I might be taken but that doesn't stop me from looking.*

As she walked out to the parking lot, she saw Douglas, her current boyfriend, waiting for her. She could tell by the look on his face he was becoming impatient. When she got into the car, she saw his nose wrinkle with distaste. Looking down at herself, she noticed how dusty and dirty she'd gotten during the course of her shift.

"Sorry, Douglas. I'm a bit of a mess. I'll take a shower as soon as we get home." She fastened her seat belt as he pulled away.

"I would hope so, you look like you have been rooting with the pigs, Leighann."

She sighed and closed her eyes. *Some things never change. He's only happy when I'm dressed to the nines and every hair is in place.*

* * * *

Time flew by quickly for Leighann and she settled into her new job like a duck to water. She, for once, was happy to go to work. But as her joy in her new job increased, at home her relationship with Douglas was getting worse. He'd become more condescending about everything she did. From her clothes to her job, nothing was left untouched, as seemed there was no pleasing him. When she was at work she was always happy and it seemed as if everyone liked her.

Eventually she was asked to go out with the rest of the department after work for drinks. She was hesitant to accept without Douglas's permission. So she made her excuses and did the right thing by going home, but she was not rewarded. Standing in her kitchen, she listened to Douglas complain about the pot roast she'd made being overdone and rubbery. *The next time they ask me , I'll go out with them. Screw what Douglas thinks, I'm white, free and over twenty one!*

* * * *

To her surprise it wasn't long before she was asked again and this time she accepted. After calling Douglas and leaving a message on their machine, she accepted Jason's offer for a lift to the bar. She rode with him in comfortable silence. Jason was

fun to be around, but he didn't need excessive chatter. As the classic rock station played softly in the background she savored the quiet. *He's comfortable with himself, just sitting with me, unlike Douglas who expects stimulating conversation every time we go out.*

When they arrived at the local hang out, she relaxed and enjoyed herself. She had a few cold ones with the guys and then called herself a cab to take her home, even though Jason protested and said he was more than willing to take her home. After reassuring him it was for the best, she left.

Seconds after entering her house, she came face to face with Douglas. Scowling and looking at her with scorn, he fairly spit his words at her.

"Just where the hell have you been?"

"Out." She brushed past him hoping he would let her go, but she had no such luck.

"Out, out where?" He sniffed the air.

"You smell of smoke and beer. You've been to a bar you fucking tramp. Who are you hanging around bars with?"

"The people from work, if it's any business of yours." The beer had made her thirsty for water, so she turned to go to the kitchen for water, but he grabbed her wrist. *Please Douglas, let me go; don't screw things up with your insane jealousy.*

Unfortunately, Douglas was consumed by his jealousy and he wouldn't let go.
"Don't you just walk away from me. Who are you fucking?"

Furious at being accused of something she hadn't even contemplated, she yanked her arm away from him, but in the process she stumbled back and lost her balance. Pain exploded in her wrist as she landed on it.

* * * *

It was a bad sprain, so Leighann missed a few days of work, but she was thrilled when Jason and the rest of the guys sent flowers. *This was Jason's idea, I just know it. He's noticed me as more than just a co-worker.*

When Leighann finally returned to work, she thanked everyone for the flowers they'd sent to her, but she was particularly interested in thanking Jason. However he acted normal toward her except by expressing concern about how she hurt herself. Over the next few weeks she found everyone seemed to be concerned about her, and why she was accumulating small injuries which always seemed to be linked to Douglas in some way. *The last thing I need is questions about Douglas and me. It wasn't Douglas's fault I fell and hurt myself, I'm just clumsy, or is it? No, he'd never hurt me intentionally.*

It came to a head the day Leighann came into work with a bruise on the side of her face. She had ended things with Douglas, but he had not taken it well. After he viciously slapped her, she'd called the police and they had taken him away, but she

found makeup didn't hide what he had done to her. *Damn it, they're all going to see and ask a million questions.*

Unfortunately Jason was the first person to see her and she saw by his furrowed brow he was not fooled by her makeup job. She flinched unintentionally as he lifted her head to take a closer look.

"What the hell happened? This was Douglas wasn't it?" He exploded with frustration for her, and she looked down to see his clenched fists shaking.

"That bastard! At least tell me you pressed charges against him." He placed his arms around her gently, and pressed her slightly to him.

Leighann felt sheltered, and rested her head on his shoulder. "I did more, which brought it on. I told him we were through. He's in jail now, but he'll be out soon."

"Good, and don't worry about him, I'll protect you." Work intruded on their moment when one of the guys yelled from behind him about a meeting starting.

* * * *

Later on standing in the bathroom, Leighann stared at her reflection in the mirror. The evidence of Douglas was there staring her in the face, but she was thinking about Jason. She could swear she still felt the tingle and feeling of safeness she'd felt when he brought her in close. His scent had mingled with her need and now she felt different toward him. *Christ, he's sexy as hell, but I'm rebounding from this mess with Douglas so I can't let things get out of control.*

She was jerked out of her thoughts when Emily, one of the few women on her shift, entered the bathroom.

“Hey Em.”

“Randy wants to see you. He and bunch of the guys are waiting in his office for you.”

Oh crap, what do they want now? Leighann didn't let on to Em she was worried.

“Leighann, I shouldn't be telling you this, but they're on the war path. I think the only thing from stopping them from finding Douglas and beating the crap out of him is Randy. He told them he would talk to you first because he doesn't want to bail half of his crew out of jail.”

“Shit!” Dropping the used paper towel in the trash can, she stormed out of the bathroom.

* * * *

Walking into her supervisor's office, she placed her hands on her hips and glared at all of them. She didn't want them getting the impression she was a weak little girl who couldn't take care of herself. She barely heard Randy ask Jason to shut the door.

"Leighann, we're not stupid. We can tell something has happened and we need to know you've taken the steps to protect yourself. You've become part of our family

now, and unless you want to help me bail these Neanderthals out of jail..." Randy trailed off, his eyes begging her to be reasonable.

"Relax guys. I kicked my problem to the curb last night via the local police, so there's no need to go off head hunting. Despite what you may or may not think, I'm no man's punching bag."

"No woman should be any man's punching bag." Jason stepped forward and placed his hands on her shoulders. "Are you going to have a restraining order placed against him?"

"Not yet, but I don't think he'll come back. His arrest was quite public and he values his public image more than anything."

"Does he still have stuff in your apartment?" Jason asked.

"A few things."

"Well, pack his stuff up and I'll take it to him, so he has no reason to come to back." Jason offered.

"I'll pack it up and take it to his office after work. He won't make a scene there. Then you won't be tempted to hurt him and end up in jail. This is my problem, guys. I'll deal with it." She crossed her arms over her chest and gave the men in the room a look daring them to argue with her.

“At least let me come over and change the locks on your doors, Leighann.”

Jason's plea set off a spark in her bringing a strong memory of how she's felt so close to him this morning. *Jason and I together at my place? How can I turn him down?* She nodded her assent.

“I'll follow you home after work.”

* * * *

Leighann watched as Jason finished installing the new locks they'd stopped and purchased on the way to her home. He locked the door and pulled it shut behind him. She leaned against the banister and listened to the scrape of the new keys in the lock. The handle turned and he came in. Looking up at her, he smiled.

“Honey, I'm home.”

She just shook her head and laughed at him. “Thanks, Jason. I already feel safer with the locks changed.”

“Any time, Minx.” Jason had given her the nickname shortly after she'd started. She thought perhaps it had to do with her sable colored hair but she wasn't quite sure.

* * * *

Jason and Leighann settled into a comfortable routine. He'd started escorting her back and forth to work despite her protests. The morning after he'd installed her locks, he showed up with the excuse he'd left his favorite screwdriver at her house. She'd

thought nothing of it until he'd followed her home, declaring he was running an errand "in the neighborhood."

When he showed up the next morning, she'd been tempted to give her sexy co worker a piece of her mind. Until he smiled at her and held up a take out bag from her favorite pastry shop. She'd accepted the sack and invited him into her home. After work that day, she'd assured him she didn't need the escort, but he'd told her he would feel guilty if something happened to her. That had been the end of first and last discussion they'd had about it.

Leighann begun to notice over time, Jason seemed to be waiting for something. She'd catch him staring at her rather intently. *I wonder what's going on in that gorgeous head of his.* Finally she got her answer about two months later. They'd been chatting on the way to her car when he dropped the bomb on her.

"Would you go out with me, Minx?"

She looked up at him in surprise not sure how to answer. *My heart wants to say yes, but my mind is screaming not to get into something when I'm on the rebound from Douglas. Oh this is crappy timing, cause he's just what I would want if I was ready for another relationship.*

"Don't act so shocked, Leighann." Jason's eyes darkened. "I know you feel the same undercurrents I do. I've just been waiting for you to get over him."

"I understand, Jason, but I don't think I am. I don't want to rush into something right now."

"Why not?" His voice betrayed his urgency, which only made her want him more.

"Well for one thing we work together. Work relationships are always hard."

"That's an excuse and it won't work with me." Jason arched an eyebrow at her.

His stubbornness surprised and delighted her. *He really does want me, but I don't feel ready yet. How do I get him to see that?*

"Excuse me? I don't have to explain myself to you, Jason." She yanked the door open, intending on getting in to her car.

"No, you don't, but don't ignore a good thing just because it follows after a bad thing." Jason leaned in and captured her mouth for a gentle kiss, or at least he intended it to be a sample. Leighann reacted with passion, and the kiss quickly flared out of control. He pulled her closer to his body as their tongues dueled. Feeling her feelings come alive and her breathing become ragged, she realized what might happen if this followed a natural course. *I have to stop this, it's too soon.*

However, before she could react, he ripped his mouth away from hers before he held her close to him as if to calm her passion which he knew was in full arousal.

"Tell me you didn't like that and I'll stop asking you for a date, but if you can't, I'll be waiting for you when you're ready, Leighann."

"Okay, I understand."

* * * *

Over the following week, Leighann heard from the police about testifying against Douglas as she tried to stand firm in the face of Jason's gentle pursuit. *He never gets overly aggressive with me. I'm assuming he doesn't want me to think he's like Douglas. Like I would ever make that mistake!*

"So what do you say, Minx?" He unlocked her car door for her.

"Jason, you're never going to give up, are you?"

"Eventually you'll run out of excuses, Leighann."

"Tell me why you keep asking me. Other than the fact you don't like the word no."

"I want you, Leighann. I don't expect you to sleep with me on the first date. Honestly, Minx, you're driving me crazy. I go to sleep wanting you. I wake up wanting you. I come to work wanting you. I go hard every time I'm around you or even think of you. My body isn't going to know any peace until I've loved you within an inch of your life."

Feeling worry rise up in her belly, she looked at him uncertainly. *Do I really want this, and if I do how long can I deny it?*

"I promise it will be good, better than you've ever had.."

She chewed on her lower lip nervously. *He seems pretty certain, which is sexy. I'm far less certain I shouldn't do it.*

He leaned down and gave her another one of his slow, passionate kisses making her come dangerously close to melting into his arms and letting him have his way with her.

"You'll say yes eventually and then you'll find out what real pleasure is." He took a deep breath before running his thumb over her wet lips.

"You're pretty confident in your abilities, sounds like you could have any woman you want, so why me?"

"Cause it's all you, Minx. We'll set the sheets on fire because you're the woman for me. Anytime you want me all you have to do is say the word and I'm yours."

There's his confidence again. It's so different than Douglas.

Chapter Two

Jason's parting words preyed on Leigh's mind through the next few days until she was about ready to crawl up the wall with desire. Leaning against the stall of her shower, she sagged weakly as her thighs trembled from the self induced orgasm she'd just given herself. Even as she stood under the pulsing spray of water, she realized it wasn't enough. *This has got to stop! I'm going crazy here. All he has to do is look my way and I'm ready for him. I'd take him up on his offer in a red-hot second if I thought I could keep it as just sex. But sure as the sun rises in the east, I'll fall in love with him, but I'm not ready for that yet.*

As she dressed for work, she wondered what Jason would be bringing over for breakfast. The man never showed up empty handed. Her stomach growled in approval as she imagined warm flaky croissants. Walking out her front door to retrieve her paper, she was shocked to see Douglas standing on her porch. She barely recognized him. He looked haggard and as if he hadn't bathed in days. Not to mention the scruffy beard gracing his jaw. Fear crawled through her and she scanned the area for Jason's familiar pick-up truck. Her heart sank when she realized he hadn't arrived yet. Clutching her paper, she tried to stay calm.

"What do you want, Douglas?"

"Where's your boyfriend, Leighann? He really shouldn't leave you unattended. No telling what kind of mischief you'll get into, or who you'll screw." His voice was mocking but she could see the anger and possessiveness in his eyes.

I'm in deep shit here. He's gone off the deep end for sure.

"I'm not in the mood for this. You don't live here anymore." She backed towards her front door intending to run inside and lock it against him.

"I need to talk to you about the trial. Don't you think I've been punished enough? Because you had me arrested, I lost my job, Leighann. You knew what kind of people I worked for and still you pressed charges."

"You were aware of how your employer would react, Douglas. You worked for the District Attorney. I'm not going to drop the charges." She fumbled for the door handle behind her.

"Yes, you are!" He rushed at her, anger written on every line of his face.

"Stay away from me!" She gave up any pretense of easing back into her house. Spinning around, she clawed the door open and ran inside. Slamming it behind her, she tried to lock it before he came in after her. "No!" Fear was pushing through her system as she struggled to keep the door closed. *I can't let him in here!*

"Bitch!"

She could hear his curse as he threw his shoulder into the door. The force of it threw her to the floor. She nearly sobbed when he pushed the door open. Victory filled his eyes while he walked into her living room as if he owned it. Kicking the door shut, he twisted the lock.

"Now, Leighann, we're going to discuss you dropping the charges against me."

Scrambling to her feet, she backed away from him, shaking her head helplessly.

"I'm not playing here anymore! Either you drop the charges or I'll make sure you don't show up in court. I won't be convicted of domestic abuse. It'll ruin my chances at the assistant district attorney position over in Clarksville."

"You should've thought of that before you were so free with your fists." She put the couch between them. She edged closer to the stand where her phone was.

"Did you honestly think I was going to let you leave me? You're nothing but a worthless bitch. I found you at the public library pouring over self help courses. You've never even gone to college and now you drive a fork lift for a living. I bet you're fucking all the guys you work with." The viciousness in his voice made her wince.

"I'm not going to discuss this again. I'm not dropping the charges so you can leave!" Her hip bumped the stand where her phone rested. She grabbed the phone and punched in the number for 911.

Douglas vaulted over the couch and yanked the phone cord out of the wall. Grabbing the receiver from her hand, he used it as a club and hit her temple with it. Stars danced in front of her eyes and she cried out. *This is so not good! I'm in deep shit here. I wonder where Jason is,* were her last coherent thoughts as she sank to the floor again, vaguely aware he was standing over her.

“That was rather stupid of you, Leighann. Did you honestly think I’d let you call the cops again? Foolish girl. The way I see this is: either you drop the charges against me and recant your testimony or...”

“Or what?” She had to squint to see him through the bright spots blocking her vision.

“I’ll simply find away to make sure you never make it to the trial and that damn man you were kissing in the parking lot will never find you!” Then a crafty look entered his eyes. “Or something bad might happen to him. Perhaps the brakes in his truck might fail.”

She paled as she realized without intending to and despite her best efforts not to, she'd still managed to drag Jason into the nightmare of her life.

* * * *

Jason pulled up in front of Leighann's home. The brown paper sack next to him teased his nose when he grabbed it and headed up the walk. Thanks to his neighbor having a dead battery, he'd gotten a late start this morning. He'd just stepped on the porch when he heard a crash come from inside the house. The pastries he'd bought fell to the ground unnoticed.

“What the hell?” Digging into his pocket, he palmed the key Leighann had given him the day he'd installed the new locks. He didn't bother checking to see if the door was locked before he slid the key home and turned the handle. Rushing inside, he saw

a disheveled man standing over Leighann. waving around the bloodied end of a phone receiver. As the man lifted his arm to strike once more, Jason sprung into action.

Rushing the man, he grabbed his arm in mid swing.

“You son of a bitch!” Jason tried desperately to control the anger rushing through him as he wrestled the phone away from Douglas.

* * * *

Opening her eyes, Leighann saw Jason wrestling with Douglas. She tried to sit up and moaned as pain raced through her. Lifting her hand, she touched her head. She winced as she noticed the blood coating her fingers. *Damn, that hurts. I wonder if I'm gonna need stitches.*

"Let me look."

She looked up to see Jason kneeling next to her.

“Where's Douglas?” Her voice hurt her own ears.

“Don't worry about him. Let me look at your head, Minx. I need to see how bad it is.” He tipped her head up to get a better look at it. “Damn, I think you're going to need a few stitches, Leighann.”

“Great.” When she moved to stand up, Jason stopped her.

"Don't move. Just sit still. You might have a concussion. The police are on their way to deal with asshole over there. We need to take you to a clinic and have that looked at."

"Okay." She nodded and then moaned when the pain hit her once again.

* * * *

"You know he really is a bastard. You're going to file for that restraining order now, aren't you?" Jason settled down on the hospital bed next to her. The nurse had just settled her into a room. They'd decided to keep her overnight for observation.

"I thought pressing charges would be enough to keep him away. His public opinion is everything to him. I'll talk to the judge in the morning about getting one."

"What set him off?"

"I refused to drop the charges against him."

"Don't. Don't let him win, Minx. He deserves to spend time in jail."

"I know." She yawned as the painkillers the nurse had given her started to kick in.

"I'm going to leave so you can rest." He leaned over her and pressed a kiss against her forehead.

"Be careful." Leighann fought the drugs. She needed to warn him.

"Why do you say that, Minx?" He stared down at her.

"Douglas saw you kiss me..."

"So what? I'm gonna kiss you any chance I get, Minx. I'm not going to stop kissing you because some lunatic doesn't like it." He pressed a quick kiss to her startled lips. "Now don't worry your pretty little head over it. Rest and I'll be back in the morning."

She nodded as she snuggled down into the blankets. He soothed the blankets up around her before leaving the room.

* * * *

Unwrapping a peppermint, Jason popped it into his mouth while he waited for the light to change. *Damn, I wish I could've beat the hell out of that asshole instead of just knocking his ass out. It scared the hell out of me when I saw him standing over her like that. Doesn't he realize what a treasure she is? If she were mine I'd cherish her and protect her forever.* He rubbed his chest trying to will the tightness away. His cell phone rang next to him.

"Hello?"

"Hey, Jason. How soon can you get over here?"

It was Gloria, Leighann's best friend, whom he'd met earlier in the hospital. They'd planned on cleaning up the mess Douglas had made. Plus he was going to stay with her until the trial was over. He'd tossed a bag of clothes in his truck without nary a thought. *I'll protect her. He'll never hurt her again.*

"I'm less than fifteen minutes away."

* * * *

The next morning, Leighann took the hand Jason offered her and slid into the front seat of his truck. *My head still aches but not as bad as it did yesterday. Thank God Gloria is going to stay with me though or the doctor's would've never let me come home.*

"Thanks for the lift, Jason."

"It's no problem, Minx. Aside from that Gloria had to work late and I'll be staying with you, so it made sense to have me pick you up."

When they arrived at her house, she entered her house expecting to see the mess from the day before. She was pleasantly surprised to see everything in order. Someone had replaced the broken table and she noticed her phone was once more in working order. She turned to Jason. *I detect his handiwork here. It sure as hell wasn't Gloria who fixed everything. I love her to death but my best friend is no handyman.*

"Thank you, Jason. I wasn't looking forward to cleaning up this mess."

"It was my pleasure, Minx." He pulled her close and gave her a quick kiss before heading off to the kitchen.

* * * *

She wasn't thanking him later that night when she found out he was staying.

“Jason, you're not staying here with me. Gloria will be here shortly. You've been great, but I don't expect you to give up your social life to hold my hand. I'm a big girl.”

Jason leaned back against the couch and crossed his arms over his chest.

“I never said you weren't a big girl, Leighann. But I'd feel much better if I knew you were safe until the trial starts. A friend of mine works down at the courthouse and told me Douglas made bail this morning. He's assaulted you twice and somehow, I don't think a restraining order will keep him away. Unless you want a police escort everywhere, you're stuck with me.”

“But I don't have to like it!”

“Your protest is duly noted.” Jason uncrossed his arms and headed back to the kitchen. “You want some popcorn, Minx?”

“Don't you ever get full?” she yelled at his retreating back.

He turned and winked at her. “You'll find I can be insatiable about some things, and food is one of them.”

* * * *

Over the next few days, Leighann became accustomed to having Jason as her shadow, but it was as if the attack from Douglas had made him lose romantic interest somewhat. She felt some relief he was not pursuing her so hotly, but a part of her definitely missed his attention. *Maybe living at my place has caused him to lose interest*

in me, or change his mind? When he dropped her off at the entrance of the mall, she headed off to meet Gloria at their favorite cafe.

After ordering, they sat chatting when Jason caught up with her.

"Hey, Jason, are you going to join us for lunch?" Gloria took a sip of her drink.

"Naw, thanks for the offer, but I have a bit of shopping to do. I have to buy a birthday present for my niece. I'll be back to check on you afterwards. I trust Gloria can keep you out of trouble until then. Have a good lunch, Minx." He brushed a kiss across her forehead before winking at Gloria. After he left, Gloria pounced on Leighann.

"Girlfriend, when are you gonna put him outta of his misery?"

"Misery?"

"It's as obvious as the nose on your face, he wants you."

Was I only kidding myself about his abated interest? "He's just looking out for me, Gloria. He's a wonderful friend."

"Friend, my ass! If you could only see how he looks at you when you're not watching. You really should give him a chance. He's not Douglas."

"Hey! Whose side are you on?" Leighann asked after the waiter gave them their salads.

"Yours, of course, sweetheart. I just don't want to see you lock your heart away because some asshole tromped on it. If I were to pick a guy out for you, he'd be the one I'd choose."

"I don't know, Gloria. I just don't trust myself yet. I don't know how I could be so wrong about Douglas. He was charming, debonair, and worked for the District Attorney. Quite the catch as my mother would say."

"You had no way of knowing he'd be so controlling."

"True, but honestly I don't know if I'm ready to risk another relationship this soon, and the fact that we work together makes me leery."

"What does he say about it?"

"That she needs to find another excuse." Coming up from behind them, Jason pulled out the chair next to Gloria. Leighann blushed when he winked at her before turning to greet Gloria.

"Really?"

"She'll eventually run out of excuses and then she'll make me the happiest man in the world and give me a chance to show her how a real man treats his woman."

If asked, Leighann couldn't deny pulsing with raw excitement at his statement.

* * * *

As Leighann got ready for bed that night, she couldn't help but dwell on the fact Jason was still interested in dating her. *He hasn't lost interest, and his confidence, it's still so sexy.*

"I'm getting ready to bunk down on the couch, Leighann. Is there anything else you need before I lay down?"

"No, I'm fine, Jason. Sleep tight."

"Good night, Minx."

However Jason couldn't sleep and soon he stood outside her door with his hand pressed against the wood. *Her couch smells like her making me spend another restless night wrestling with a cock that won't go down. I'm a guest here, so I don't want to jerk off all over, or let her see me like this, but I'm barely able to control my need.*

Taking a deep breath, he tried to control what his mind conjured up; the thought of Leighann getting hot and bothered as she watched him stroke himself off. His cock surged to an erection he had to satisfy, so he cursed under his breath and headed to the shower. *Do I take another cold shower, or satisfy the urge?*

Stripping his clothes off, he stepped into the shower having decided what he would do.

* * * *

Leighann heard the shower turn on and she was just about to investigate when her cell phone rang. Glancing at the display, she saw it was Gloria.

“Hey.”

“I won't be home tonight, girl. I met this absolutely dreamy guy down at Antonio's.” A giggle escaped her and Leighann could hear the dark murmurs of man's voice begging Gloria to hurry up.

“Okay.”

“Jason's still there isn't he...Frank, quit. I have to talk to her, then we'll go...please tell me he's still there.”

“He's here, go have fun and I'll see you tomorrow.” Ending the call, she again heard the shower. *Why is he showering now, I thought he was going to bed? Wait, duh, what am I thinking, cold showers alleviate hard-ons.*

The thought aroused her, and not just a little. The thought of him in her shower stroking his erection he got because he was thinking about her. Before she could lose her courage, she was up, down the hall, and tightening her hand on the bathroom door knob. *Do I dare do this? Will I be able to resist climbing into the shower with him if he's doing what I think he's doing? Will opening this door put us in a relationship?* She reluctantly released the knob and made her way back down the hall to her room.

* * * *

Jason braced one arm against the tile of the shower as his fist flew up and down his cock. The soap slickened flesh between his thighs had become a throbbing wound which needed release. Even the soap he was using reminded him of her. As the need for release grew in his balls, his breath came faster and he couldn't help but think about her, imagining her in here with him, watching his every move and licking those tempting lips.

“Minx!” His muffled growl was followed by his release. He sagged against the wall of the shower as his temporarily sated cock softened. *Damn, this has got to stop. I've never jerked off as much as I have this last week. Hopefully, she'll see the light soon and give in.*

Chapter Three

When Leighann awoke the next morning, she stumbled into the bathroom, only to bump into Jason as he was getting ready to walk out. He had a towel wrapped around his neck and was wearing a pair of half buttoned jeans. As she watched a drop of water run down his chest, across his belly and into the open waistband of his jeans, she came to a decision. *I'll try it. I can't stand this anymore. Jason wasn't the type to press me for more than what I can give him. I'll take baby steps even if my body wants more. I've got to start trusting myself sometime.*

"Whoa, careful there, Minx." His hands steadied her.

Leighann's gaze flew up to meet his.

"You're wet..."

He smiled at her. "I would hope so. I just got out of the shower."

Heat filled her face as she remembered the night before. Her nipples tightened and she shivered as tension filled the air between them.

"Leighann?" His voice was hoarse as if he was somehow knew what she was thinking.

"I...I..." She ducked her head as embarrassment warred with desire.

"Look at me."

His demand made her nervous. She lifted her head and met his eyes, surprised to see the understanding in them.

“You feel it now, don't you? How strong it is?”

“I need...” Her gaze darted back and forth before landing on the steam covered shower door. Knowing she was chicken, she took the easy way out. “...a shower.”

A sigh escaped his lips and she knew she had disappointed him . “Fine, take your shower, I'll be waiting downstairs.”

* * * *

Jason stood at the counter and waited for the coffee to finish brewing. More than anything he wanted to go back upstairs and make Leighann acknowledge the attraction which was building between them. Raking a hand through his hair, he sighed with frustration. *Patience. I just need to be patient.*

After pouring himself a cup of coffee, he leaned back against the counter and waited for Leighann to join him. He'd just poured his second cup when she entered the kitchen, her hair damp against her shoulders. He swallowed as she focused on the cup in his hand. He knew that particular look well. Wordlessly, he handed his cup to her. His eyes darkened when she took it and placed her mouth in the same spot he'd been drinking from.

“Thank you, Jason.” She took the cup back to the breakfast nook, but she let her eyes tell him she wanted him to follow.

They sat there a while. Long enough for Jason to think he should say something, but something inside him told him she was processing, and getting herself ready to say something important.

“Jason, I want you.” She didn’t continue right away, and he had all he could do not to say something.

Setting down his cup, he let his desire for her wash over him. *At least she said this much, but she’s gonna qualify it, I know she is.*

There was a natural hesitancy in her voice as she started again. “I won’t lie about it, but I’m not completely comfortable with the idea of jumping into another relationship. If I do this, we have to take it slow.” The last part seemed to rush out of her.

If we do this. She’s considering it. He couldn’t help himself, he touched her cheek.

“Minx.” His pet name came out a rough exhale. Tracing his finger across her face, which was so beautiful to him, he continued.

“All I’ve ever asked for is a chance. I’m willing to go as slow or fast as you need.”

“And there will be sex?”

“As much or as little as you decide. I want you like hell on fire, but it will all be up to you.”

She took a deep breath and nodded to him.

“Then we’ll try it, but now let’s get to work before we’re late.”

* * * *

Leighann paced back and forth. A mound of clothes were scattered across her bed.

“Settle down, Leighann. I’m sure he’ll love anything you decide to wear.” Gloria was standing in front of Leighann’s open closet. She’d just applied the finishing touches on her make up, now all she had left to do was decide on what to wear.

“I can’t believe Jason actually wants to take me out when we can eat right here at home.”

“Of course he’s gonna want to take you out. Nobody likes having a third wheel on their first date.”

“I’m just nervous and you wouldn’t be a third wheel.”

Gloria walked over to her and placed her hands on Leighann’s shoulders. “Yes, I would. Now, lets find you something to wear before that hunk of man comes up here to see what’s taking you so long.”

“I don’t even know where he’s taking me, so how do I know what to wear?”

“Do you still have your gypsy outfit?”

“Yeah, I think it’s buried in the back of the closet. Douglas didn’t...”

“Screw Douglas. I like it on you and I'm sure Jason will be falling over his tongue when he sees you in it.” Gloria marched back over to the closet.

“Do you think so?” She chewed on her lip as Gloria unearthed the outfit.

“I know so. Now go put it on and I'll help you with your hair.” She shoved the outfit at Leighann.

“All right, all right. Jeez, Mom, I'll wear it.”

“Now!” Gloria pushed her towards the connecting bathroom.

* * * *

Jason paced back and forth in the living room. *What the hell was taking her so long?* He was about to head up the stairs to find her when she came down the steps. He nearly swallowed his tongue when he saw her. The outfit was simple, but sent his blood pressure sky rocketing. A long tunic covered her flowing skirt. The light blue runes printed on the fabric with black accents gave her lush figure a slimming effect and with the light behind her, it showed off all her curves.

“Damn, you look fantastic.” He stopped at the bottom of the stairs.

“Is this okay? You didn't say where we were going...”

“Relax, you're perfect.” His boyish grin seemed to relax her.

* * * *

Leigh laughed as Jason led her back up the walk to her house. She had a wonderful time with him tonight. Even with all the undercurrents, she could feel tugging between them, she'd still enjoyed herself. *I wonder where he got the tickets to see Robin Williams. I don't think I've ever laughed so hard in my life.*

As they approached the porch, she noticed the porch light was out. She frowned.

"Jason, didn't we turn the porch light on when we left?"

"Yeah. Maybe Gloria, shut it off?"

"I doubt it, she told me she had a date with the guy she met at Antonio's the other night."

"Maybe it just burned out, Minx." He guided her up the porch. As they stopped by her door, she stared up at him through the shadows.

"I know I promised I wouldn't push for anything, but I would give anything to kiss you again, Minx."

"I think I can handle a kiss or two without falling apart."

"Good." His head dipped and he pressed his mouth against hers. She went up on her toes, as his tongue teased the seam of her lips, begging for entrance. With a soft moan, she granted him access. When his tongue rubbed against hers, she pressed up against him. He took her weight easily before turning to press her against the door.

She felt her feet bump something and she nearly toppled over. She wrenched her mouth from his.

“Whoa.” She clung to his wide shoulders. “You pack quite the punch, Mr. Adair. I almost fell over.”

He groaned and dragged her mouth back up to his. She sighed into the kiss and leaned into him once more. Just as his thumb brushed against the underside of her breast they were interrupted.

“Jeez, couldn't you guys get a room?” Gloria's laughter startled Leighann.

Jason lifted his head with a groan of frustration before pressing his forehead against hers.

“Gloria, you've got lousy timing.” He turned to look over his shoulder at the other woman.

She lifted her hands in a gesture of helplessness. “Hey, it's not my fault you two decide to neck out here in the dark. If you went inside to shut the light off why didn't you simply go upstairs?”

“We haven't been inside.” Leighann pulled away from Jason and nearly fell on her ass if it hadn't been for Jason's quick reflexes.

“Whoa, Minx. What did you trip over? My big feet?”

“No.” Leighann peered down through the darkness, trying to see what it was she tripped on. All she could make out was a lumpy shadow.

“It looks like there’s something on the porch. Did you order something Gloria?”

“No.”

“I wonder what it is.” Leighann sidestepped around the object and, as she went to unlock the door, she realized it wasn't locked. She reached in to flip on the porch light. She frowned when nothing happened. “Must be burnt out.” She flipped the other switch next to the porch light switch and sighed as light flooded the open door way, illuminating the porch. She turned back to see what it was she'd tripped over when she heard a scream from behind her.

“Leighann, call the cops.”

“Why?” Fear crawled through her as she remembered the door being unlocked.

“Some sick bastard left a dead cat on your doorstep.”

“Gloria, did you lock the door behind you?” Her scared whisper barely reached them.

“Yes, why?”

Her friend's answer made her fear intensify. She scrambled backwards. She nearly screamed when she bumped into Jason.

“What is it? What's wrong, Leighann?” His harsh demand barely cut through her panic.

“The door was unlocked.”

“Son of bitch. Go sit in my truck and lock the door. Both of you.” He grabbed Leighann's shoulders and turned her to face his truck. Giving her a quick kiss, he tried to reassure her. “Everything will be fine, Minx. I'll be careful. Take Gloria and wait for me. Lock the doors.”

She nodded as Gloria grabbed her hand and dragged her to the truck.

* * * *

Jason cursed as he entered Leighann's house. *How had the bastard gotten in her house? We changed the locks.* His curses got louder as he saw the mess in what'd once been Leighann's homey living room. Not only had the bastard slashed her couch, he'd also slashed all of Jason's clothes. He reached in and retrieved his cell phone. Dialing the police, he made a quick tour of the house, making sure not to touch anything. After giving the information to the dispatcher, and ascertaining that the house was empty, he went back out to his truck to wait for the cops.

His heart tightened painfully as he saw Gloria trying to comfort Leighann. He'd give anything to erase the fear he could see on her expressive face. He slid in next to her after Gloria unlocked the passenger door. He wordlessly pulled Leighann to his lap. He wrapped his arms around her and let her cry against his broad chest. *Damn, she*

didn't even see the house, but she knew the bastard had been there. Thank God we were gone.

* * * *

"Ms. Winston?" The balding cop stopped next to the truck where she'd been watching the officers enter her house.

"Yes."

"I hate to ask this of you, but we need you to come inside and tell us if anything is missing. I don't know if you'll be able to tell, but we'd like to have you look around."

"I.." She focused on the man as she tried to get her emotions under control. "I don't wanna go in there. He destroyed my house, didn't he?"

The police officer winced and then nodded. "It's nothing that can't be put to rights, Ms. Winston. But we need to know if anything was taken. If this was a burglary or..."

"It wasn't a burglary, Officer. It was a warning. He wants me to drop the charges and is willing to go as far as he needs to make sure I do it. Maybe I should..."

"Don't even think about it, Minx. If you drop the charges, he could do this to another woman. Don't give in to him. He deserves to pay for this." Jason rubbed her back. "Come on let's go see if there's anything missing and pack a bag for you."

"A bag?" She looked up at him confusion in her dark eyes.

“Yes, you're going to do what the officer needs you to do and then I'm taking you home with me.”

“I can't stay with you, Jason. I'll go to Gloria's.”

“Does he know where Gloria lives, Minx?”

“Well yeah.”

“Then it's probably not a safe place for you to stay if this indeed is the man who attacked you twice already, Ms. Winston.” The officer turned to Jason. “Does he know where your home is, Mr. Adair?”

“No. Leighann broke up with him shortly after she started working with me. He's never been to my house or even met me until the day I stopped him from attacking her. Since then I've been staying with her and her best friend.”

“Then it might be in your best interests to stay with Mr. Adair. I doubt the man will attack you again tonight. Do you have a restraining order against him?”

She nodded.

“Good. If he breaks the restraining order, call us, but frankly Ms Winston, if the violence inside is any indication we may not arrive in time to keep you from being hurt. I would take Mr. Adair up on his offer. If he can't find you, he can't hurt you.”

* * * *

After they arrived at Jason's house Leighann brought her bag into the house. Setting it down on the floor next to her, she gazed around his home. Most of the interior was done in warm earth tones. When he shut the door behind them, she was very aware of him. Even with the shock to her system, her desire for him was keeping her right on the edge.

"Welcome to my home, Minx. " He locked the door after flipping the lights on. He walked over to her when he noticed her trembling. "Everything will be all right. I won't let anything happen to you. I'm sorry we came home to such a mess but, I 'm glad you weren't there by yourself."

She nodded and wrapped her arms around herself.

"Come on, Minx. You look like you're almost asleep on your feet. Let me show you where you can crash."

As he led her down the hall, she tried to keep her eyes off his ass. *Snap out of it, Leighann! You shouldn't be lusting after him, especially after what happened at your house earlier. He's gonna think you done lost your ever loving mind.*

"This is my guest room, Minx. It has its own bathroom. I'll let you settle in. If you need me, my room is right across the hall. I sleep fairly light, so don't worry about waking me if you need me." He gestured to the open door across the hall before flipping the light on in the guest room. She waited for him to back up, but when he didn't, she brushed by him, wanting him to feel her. *Is it the shock of what Douglas has done, or am I just wanting him more?*

“Good night, Minx.” She turned to ask him to stay with her longer, but found he'd vanished into his own room.

* * * *

Jason stood in front of the sink in the master bathroom and looked at his reflection. He looked like a man on the edge of losing control. *I've finally have her under my roof, but I can't take advantage of it no matter how much I want to. Get a grip on yourself man.* He twisted the faucet on and splashed cold water on his face. It was going to be a long night. *Even being home and in my own bed isn't going to help.*

* * * *

Leighann lay quietly and stared at the ceiling. It'd been several hours since Jason had left her in the guest room. She rolled over and punched her pillow. The need racing in her body was no closer to subsiding than it had been when she first laid down. And to make matters worse it was warring with her need for comfort. *Well, Leighann, that's what you get for stealing one of his t-shirts to sleep in.* When Jason had been preoccupied with the officer, she'd managed to save one of his shirts she'd found in her hamper. She'd dug it out and made the mistake of wearing it to bed, hoping it would give her the same sense of security his arms often gave her.

“Fuck this!” She shoved the covers off the bed. When she opened her door, she saw he'd left his open. Standing in the hall, she fought an internal battle with herself. *It's not time yet. He doesn't deserve just my body and tonight that's all I can offer.* Wrapping

her arms around her waist, she sneaked down the steps. After pulling the throw off the back of the couch she wrapped it around her and curled up against one arm of it.

* * * *

Opening his eyes when he heard the creak of someone on the stairs, Jason slipped out of his bed and followed, after sliding a pair of shorts on. Stopping on the landing which over looked the living room, he saw Leighann pull the throw over her and snuggle into the corner of his couch. The defeated looks on her face made him want to do nothing more than hold her.

“Minx, is everything okay? Did you have a bad dream?”

A small squeak escaped her before she finally located him. When she didn't answer him, he joined her. After sitting down next to her, he tried again. “Come on, Leighann, talk to me. Maybe I can help.”

“I don't want to make you mad, Jason. Or take advantage of you.”

Perhaps this is the issue which she's been struggling with. Discussing it should stop her from pulling away from what we could have.

“I'm not angry and the only way you could take advantage of me is if I let you. Let me help you.”

* * * *

Seeing the sincerity and confidence in his eyes reassured her he'd listen to her concerns and not condemn them. *I've been fighting my own insecurities about this for so long. Damn Douglas for influencing me this way*

She tucked her knees up under her chin before responding. "You know I want you, right?"

"Yes and as I said before it's your call."

"I realize that when I keep pulling away from what it's so obvious I want, it has to be frustrating for you."

"It is. Can you explain why?"

Looking into his eyes, she knew the moment of truth had come. *Either I trust him or I don't.* Closing her eyes she made her decision.

"I'm scared. I want you like hell but I'm afraid of falling in love with you and being hurt again." Opening her eyes, she expected to see surprise, anger or even smugness in his gaze. Instead what she found was approval.

"Admitting it was hard, wasn't it?"

"Yes." Uncertainty flowed over her. *This is not the response I expected.*

"I can't promise I won't hurt you but if I do it won't be intentional. There is that chance in every relationship, especially the kind I want to have with you."

“Then why do you seem so pleased?”

“Because now you've faced your fear, and we can find a way to deal with it.”

“What if I just end up wanting sex and nothing more?” Tears of fear brightened her eyes at the thought of not being able to conquer her fear.

“I'll be disappointed but I have the utmost faith in you. Now come here.” Pulling her on his lap, he covered them both with the throw and gave her the comfort he instinctively knew she had wanted earlier. “Sleep Minx. We'll tackle this in the morning.”

If only I could be so confident, was her last thought before she drifted off to sleep, her body still needy but her heart somewhat lighter.

Chapter Four

"You told me if I ever wanted you, all I had to do was ask." Taking a deep breath, she stopped a breath's width from him. "Well, I'm asking." She went up on tiptoes and brushed her lips against his.

"Are you serious, Minx? You want to make love. Please don't tease me if you're not serious."

She could see in his dark eyes how excited he was about pleasing her, and she wondered if she had ever had a lover so dedicated to her. "I'm serious, Mister, so you better please me." These were words she's never said to a man, being so demanding, but with him she felt so comfortable.

"Don't you worry, you'll get what you need, and more." He lifted her off her feet with ease and carried her towards his bed. She trembled with anticipation when he pulled her over his hard body and reached for the hem of her t-shirt. When he started to undress her she was bold again.

"Can I do you?"

"Of course, nothing would please me more than to feel your hot, little hands on me."

Not quite believing she was doing it, she reached out and stroked her hand over the impressive length straining against denim of his pants.

"Minx, you're waking it up. I hope you know what you're doing." With her hands still feeling his stiffness, he grabbed the hem of her shirt and pulled it up and off her. Now he pulled her to him so he could feel her erect, pink nipples through the peach lace of her bra.

"You're beautiful, more beautiful than I ever imagined." Slipping his mouth to her breast, he took her nipple, lace and all into his mouth. As he tongued it, she whimpered and shivered as she was moving much faster than she had expected to. It was almost inconceivable to her, but his tonguing of her nipples had her far too near the ragged edge of orgasm.

"Ohhhhh, noooo!" It was only her panic over climaxing too soon, but to Jason it seemed momentarily like she had changed her mind.

"No?" His voice was barely above a whisper as he questioned what she was doing. "Not now, please."

"No, not no as in stop, it's just that I'm so close and I want this to last."

"Last, don't worry, Minx, it will last." He flicked open the front clasp of her bra, which only added to her raging lust..

She barely believed how her desired pulsed and quivered within her as he took first one and then the other of her tender nipples into his mouth before laying her back on the bed.

"Please, Jason, slow down." Sounding breathless, she knew she was begging, but he ignored her.

"Close to coming, are you? Well, let's give you one to take the edge off, and then we can work to another." He continued to tease her nipples with his tongue, sucking them strongly, but he brought her to the brink by simply touching her pussy.

"Jason!" As she teetered on the edge, she heard the room fill with his soft laughter, and then he blew on her wet pussy.

"Come for me, Minx, and then we can get started." He used his fingers to rub her nipples while letting his tongue ever so gently flick her sex bud. While her orgasm rolled over her like a tidal wave, he unbuckled his belt and let his hardness loose.

"Hell, yeah, Minx, come for me!" With his unstoppable confidence, he was running his shaft up and down over her slit as he prepared to fuck her silly. When she came out of her pleasure, she looked up and could barely believe what a lover she had found.

"Jason, you're unbelievable. Fuck me, please!"

Leighann woke up when she felt a pair of strong hands grab her hips. Opening her eyes, she was still wrapped in the coils of her dream. She tried to take in her surroundings. Jason's flushed face came in to focus. His jaw was dark with his five o'clock shadow and he looked as if he hadn't slept. They were both laying length wise

across the couch, Jason holding her across his chest with his head pillowed against one plush arm of it.

“Jason, did you get any sleep?”

“No.” His voice was husky while his body was tense.

Under her body she could feel the impressive length of his erection through his shorts. Desire even stronger than what she'd felt the night before flooded through her.

“Did I keep you awake? If I did I'm sorry.” She leaned forward to kiss his stubble-covered chin. He cupped the back of her head with his hand.

“Don't worry about it.” He covered her mouth with his.

She dove eagerly into the kiss. *I need this. No matter what happens I need to find out if we're as good together as he's promised.*

Jason tore his mouth away. “Minx, I promised I wait...”

“The waiting is over. Claim me.” Seeing the flare of desire, she knew she'd made the right decision and his following words proved it.

“Take the shirt off.”

Sitting up, straddling him, she grabbed the hem of her borrowed shirt and it up and over her head. Before she even had it completely off, his hands cupped her pert breasts and squeezed.

“Oh!”

“Lean down here.” His command sent shivers through her.

“But the shirt...” It had cleared her head but her arms were still inside the sleeves. Her protest died in her throat as she recognized the look in his eyes. It was the same look he'd given her when she'd told him no in her dream. Bracing her arms on the arm of the couch above his head., she brought her breasts level with his face.

“Hold still.”

She cried out as his lips wrapped around one of her nipples. She clung to the arm of the couch with the shirt tangled around her lower arms effectively limiting any movement. Pleasure swamped her as she struggled to obey his order. When his hand found the bare flesh of her ass, she trembled and waited to see what he was going to do. Her nipple popped free of his sucking mouth as his hand squeezed , then rubbed the left cheek of her ass.

“Such a naughty girl, Minx. Wearing my shirt with no panties.”

“I didn't think you'd...”

“Notice that you swiped it. Such a little thief.” His hand stopped rubbing before giving her ass a light tap.

“Jason?” The slight sting sent her careening towards orgasm. *Oh, god, that's so hot!* Opening her thighs, she settled over his hard abs and rocked against him.

“Patience.” His hand gripped her thigh, before his hand slid behind her. “Lift.”

When she did, he guided her back. She tried to sit up.

“No.” He held her place as the head of his cock brushed her drenched folds. Moaning she wiggled trying to join their bodies. “Not yet.” His hand swatted at her wiggling ass.

“Why not?” Looking down at him, she was immediately captured by the lust in his eyes.

“I want you hotter.” Dragging his cock through her folds, he held her gaze.

“Not possible.” Her breath was coming faster as she skated along the edge of exploding. Arms trembling she fought for the extra sensation she needed to force her over.

“We’ll see about that.”

With strength that made her envious, he rolled her off him and she found herself draped over the coffee table in front of the couch. She whimpered as the cool wood teased her erect nipples. His hand slid between her thighs and tugged at the curls covering her opening.

“So wet.” His voice was approving.

She gripped the edge of the table hard as he slid two fingers inside her to test her readiness.

“More, please, I need to come!” Looking over her shoulder at him, she pleaded with him to finish it.

“Do you? That's good because you're going to come now.” Flexing his hips, he buried himself as deep as he possibly could.

Arching in his arms, she screamed as her world exploded around her. The only thing constant was the furious thrust of his digging cock.

* * * *

With his heart thundering in his chest and his hands clenching Leighann's sweaty hips, he rode her through what was obviously was a powerful orgasm. *I want to see her come again.*

“Again, Minx. Come again.” Gritting his teeth against his own imminent release, he strummed her clit with his thumb. He was rewarded by her sheath tightening and releasing on his cock. His hand strayed from her clit to rub through the wetness which coated the base of his cock. Wetting his fingers, he relished her responsiveness, before moving his hand from their joining to place it against her undefended rosebud. When his finger popped through, she groaned and pushed back against him.

Damn, she's everything I want. So responsive.

“Fuck!” The tight grip she had on both his cock and fingers drove him over the edge and he took her with him.

* * * *

Leighann savored the heavy weight of Jason over her. Her heart was finally slowing but her blood still rang with her orgasm. *I've never come so hard in my entire life. He was right, we would've set the sheets on fire if we'd actually been in a bed.* A soft laugh escaped her at the thought.

"What's so funny, Minx?" His voice was sleepy.

"Something you told me earlier about setting the sheets on fire. We didn't even have any sheets to catch."

"Next time, Minx. Next time." Straightening he gave her an affectionate swat on the ass before untangling himself from her. Standing beside her, he offered his hand and drew her to her feet after stripping the shirt off her arms.

* * * *

Later that week, Leighann was curled up on the couch with Jason.

"I can't believe Douglas is still evading the cops."

"They'll catch him, Minx. Then we can put this behind us."

"Us?" Hope shined from her eyes.

"Yes. After the trial, I want you to move in with me."

Whatever she was going to say was interrupted by a brisk knock at the front door.

“That's probably just the pizza, Minx. I'll get it.” He untangled himself and headed to the front door. He glanced over his shoulder and watched as she settled deeper into the couch. Over the past week, she seemed to be opening up to him. *I do believe we're making progress. Getting her to discuss her fears seems to have lifted the burden off her shoulders. Now they just need to apprehend that asshole so we can put this where it belongs.*

Pulling his wallet out, he opened the door. Instead of the pizza delivery person, he was totally unprepared to see Douglas holding the pizza he'd ordered in one hand and a sleek pistol in the other. Jason could see the delivery guy laying crumpled on his porch.

I have to protect Leighann! Jason slammed the front door. He turned to go to her when searing pain engulfed his shoulder. Reaching back, he felt the blood coating his fingers. Black spots danced in front of his eyes. *I've got to warn Leighann.*

* * * *

A muffled retort of a gun going off made Leighann scramble off the couch.

“Jason?” Fear crawled through her as she saw him stagger into the living room, his normally tan skin a pasty white as he pressed a hand over his shoulder. Collapsing on the couch, he tried to reach the phone on the table next to him.

“I want you to go upstairs and lock yourself into my bathroom.”

“Oh my God, Jason, you've been shot!” Tearing her shirt off, she pressed it against the wound. Due to where the bullet struck, he hadn't been able to apply the right amount of pressure to slow the bleeding. Before he could answer another round of shots rang out.

“Fuck. He just shot out the lock on the door. Go!” Pushed her away from him.

“Now without you!” She refused to budge.

“Damn it, Leighann...”

“He's already shot you once. I'm not going to lose you!”

“Where is she!” Douglas's roar echoed through the house. “Leighann, you bitch, hiding behind your boy friend is only going to get him killed. You're mine!”

“Go, now.” Jason's breathing was coming faster. He struggled to his feet.

“Sit down!” Giving him a gentle push, she pressed him against the back of the couch. “Stay there. Use your body weight to keep pressure against my shirt.”

“But Douglas...”

“I'll deal with him. Stop arguing with me, Jason.” Jumping to her feet she grabbed the heavy crystal candy dish of the coffee table. Moving to one side of the doorway, she waited until she heard the footsteps coming down the hall. Tightening her

grip on the dish, she struck him in the back of the head when he passed her. With a grunt he fell to his knees and dropped the gun. Seeing her opportunity, she kicked the gun away from him. Grabbing the sash off one of the curtains, she was in the process of tying his arms behind him when she heard the sirens in the distance.

“Thank god!” Scrambling off of him, she rushed back to his side.

Jason opened his eyes and focused on her. The pain in them was tempered by pride. “You took care of him didn't you?”

She nodded as she leaned him forward and pressed her hand against his wound. Within a few moments the cops were swarming into Jason's house.

* * * *

Jason opened his eyes when he felt the blanket being tucked around him. Opening his eyes, he tried to focus. Someone was smoothing the blanket over his chest. His shoulder ached like hell but at least it wasn't the searing pain he'd been in earlier. *Damn they must have me on some potent drugs. I hope they caught the bastard this time.*

“Minx.” Swallowing he winced at the soreness of his throat.

“Jason. You're awake!”

"I feel like I've been shot." As her face paled at his feeble attempt at humor, he realized how worried she was. "Sorry, Minx. I shouldn't have joked about it. Is he in jail?"

"Yes. There was an officer here earlier. He wants to know if you're going to press charges against Douglas."

"Of course." He fought to keep his eyes open.

"Sleep, Jason." She moved to leave.

Fear coursed through him. *I don't want her to leave!*

"*Stay.*" His words were slurred as the drug fought to pull him back under.

"Shh. I'm not going anywhere. Ever."

With a sigh of relief, he closed his eyes and let the pain meds do their job.

Chapter Five

As the morning of the trial dawned, Jason lay on his side watching the sunshine pour over Leighann. *I don't think I've ever slept as well as I do with her in my arms. Even with the decision to forgo sex until my shoulder healed, I've enjoyed holding her every night.*

When she stirred in his arms, a moan of pleasure escaped him when her ass rubbed against his morning erection. *I shouldn't.* Easing his hand down over her hip, his intention was to put some distance between them. It fell to the wayside as she gave a sleepy moan at his touch. He pulled her closer to him instead.. Nuzzling the side of her neck, he relished the closeness before dipping his tongue into the shell of her ear.

"Jason?"

"Hmm..." His fingernails scraped over her hip bone as he strung kisses down her throat.

"I thought you wanted to wait." She gasped as he gave the curls guarding her womanhood a light tug.

"I can't wait. I need you."

She stared into his heated eyes before she gave him a slow nod. He lifted her leg over his and slowly buried himself with in her. "Damn, I could wake up every morning like this, Minx."

“Oh, god.” Throwing her head back at the incredible feel of him in her snug folds she tried to answer him. “...so could I...”

Holding her leg up, he used short thrusts to pleasure her. Strumming her clit with his free hand, he forced her to climax.

“No!” Her scream of release was ripped from her as his devious fingers continued to milk her hard clit and forced her orgasm to continue.

“Damn, do you know how hot that makes me when you try to deny it, Minx?”

Shaking her head, she slumped as her climax eased. Rolling onto his back, he brought her with him.

“It makes me want to fuck you 'til you're screaming with your need for release and can't fight it anymore.” Holding onto her thighs, he fucked up into her, forcing her orgasm to return with a vengeance.

“Jason!”

His groan of release was ripped from his chest as her convulsing body dragged him over the edge with her.

* * * *

Sitting in the breakfast nook, she accepted the plate of steaming food from Jason. They were both dressed and after they ate they were leaving for the trial.

“Quit pouting, Minx.” Jason set her breakfast in front of her. Her stomach growled in response to the fragrant smells coming from the plate. She picked up the fork and dug into the steaming eggs. “I can't wait until this over.”

“Have you given any thought to my idea?” Sitting down across from her, he dug into his own food.

“About moving in here with you?”

“Yes.”

“I...”

“What's the problem, Minx? I can't imagine not holding you every night and waking up with you every morning. If you're not ready yet, I can wait.”

“I'll think about it. I promise.”

* * * *

Leighann was scheduled to testify at ten that morning. As she walked into the room wearing a smart suit with low heeled pumps, she could feel Douglas's eyes on her. She felt her skin crawl with revulsion when she saw the look on his face. It was his possessive glare. She sat patiently and waited for the doctor on the stand to finish giving his testimony. She could barely believe her ears. *I had no idea Douglas was on medication for bipolar disorder. How the hell did I miss that?*

“When was the last time Mr. Crane had his prescription of Seroquel filled, Dr. Armswell?”

“It's been at least four months since I've written him a script for it.”

“And why would you know if he wasn't getting it filled? Surely there are refills on said prescription?”

“Due to the laws of this state, all controlled narcotics such as the one, Mr. Crane is on, require they be picked up at my office with proper proof of identification. There are no refills. I have to write a fresh script each month. The pharmacy isn't allowed to legally fill it without Mr. Crane following this procedure.”

“Thank you, Dr Armswell. I have no further questions for this witness.”

“Do you have any further witnesses?”

“Yes. I'd like to call Leighann Winston.”

Leighann stiffened as she heard her name called. Beside her, Jason squeezed her hand in reassurance. “You'll be fine, Minx. He can't hurt you here.” She nodded as she stood on trembling legs and was escorted by the bailiff to the witness stand. She placed her hand on the bible and raised her other hand.

“Ms. Winston, do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?”

"I do." The bailiff smiled at her reassuringly before stepping aside. She drew a deep breath

"Ms. Winston, the man who attacked you on said date, is he here in this courtroom?" The prosecuting attorney smiled at her and waited for her answer patiently.

"Yes."

"Can you point him out for the jury?"

"Yes. That's him, right there." She pointed to Douglas calmly.

"Let the record show Ms. Winston identified Douglas Crane as her attacker."

"You bitch! You lying whore!" Douglas surged out of his chair. The bailiff rushed over and grabbed him before he could reach Leighann.

"Order in the court!" The judge banged the gavel on the podium. Leighann flinched at the sound. As Douglas was forced back into his seat, the judge gave him a final warning. "One more outburst like that, Mr. Crane, and I'll have you removed from the courtroom and you'll be watching the rest of the proceedings from your jail cell."

* * * *

"Douglas Crane, please rise." The judge took the piece of paper from the bailiff. He scanned it before giving it back to the bailiff. The bailiff returned it to the jury foreperson. "Has the jury reached a verdict?"

"We have, Your Honor. We find the defendant, Douglas Crane, guilty on the charge of assault in the first degree. And on the second count of destruction of property, we find the defendant guilty." The foreperson finished reading the verdict.

Instead of happiness and contentment knowing Douglas was going to pay for his crimes, all Leighann could feel was a vague sense of disappointment. She'd wasted her time on Douglas. She felt only a small sense of closure as he was led from the courtroom. It's as if one chapter of my life has closed and another has opened. She turned to take Jason's offered hand. Now it's time to take my life back and I can't imagine having anything better than sharing it with Jason.

"Minx, is everything okay?" Concern darkened his eyes.

"Yes, it is."

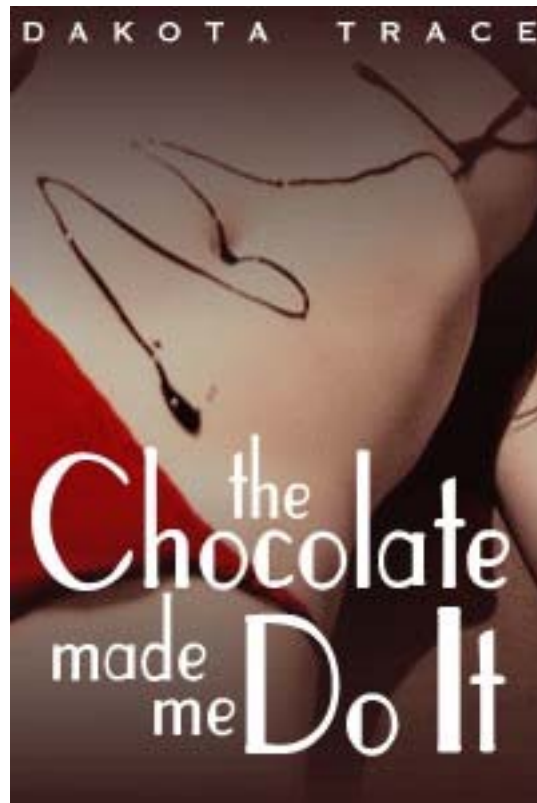
The End

ABOUT DAKOTA TRACE

Dakota hails from the home state of the Hawkeyes, corn and pigs. Surrounded by children's laughter and the corn fields, she crafts her stories. She enjoys writing romances and sci-fi/fantasy stories. She is a romantic at heart, so even the sci-fi stories have an underlying romantic plot. She started writing at the tender age of fourteen and hasn't stopped since. Although it is a mystery to most where she finds the time to write. Aside from being a full time wife and mother, she also works the dreaded overnight shift at a clothing company.

To find out more about Dakota visit her at <http://dakotatrace.wordpress.com/>

If you enjoyed TRUST, you might also enjoy:



THE CHOCOLATE MADE ME DO IT

By Dakota Trace

Annabelle is in love with the creamy chocolate confections Zephyrus Raincloud crafts in his shop, “The Delights”. While it wouldn’t take much for Annabelle to fall in love with him, she’s leery of risking her heart on a man who can’t see past the color of her skin to the warm affectionate woman she is. After one brief encounter, she swears it can’t happen again. But Zephyrus has decided she now belongs to him. How far will this chocolate maker go to seduce her into his way of thinking?

Dark Angel Review by Frost, 5/5 ANGELS!

...(S)mooth and tasty, a delight to enjoy. A truly romantic story with a sensual subtext and hope for a happy ending propels the reader through this scintillating and delicious read. A light touch with the sexuality and a strong emphasis on romance and affection make this a fine addition to the Chick Lit genre, a read-at-one-sitting enjoyment which will leave readers hungering for both good chocolate and a good man.

Warning: This title contains graphic language and sex.

Excerpt From THE CHOCOLATE MADE ME DO IT:

“Zephyr.”

“What?” He turned away from the door to look at her impatiently.

“She’s locked us in.”

“I know, but I don’t understand.”

“Here.” She handed the dry erase board to him. She watched as he read the note. “I guess there’s one good thing.”

“What’s that?” He looked at her warily.

“Well, two actually. One is that I’m locked in my favorite chocolate shop which means you get to feed me all kinds of yummy things. And two, I’ll have time to finish the rest of your paperwork.”

“Wait a minute. What do you know about doing financial or accounting paperwork?” He frowned.

“Everything! Where you may be the master of chocolate, Zephyrus, I am the master of finance.”

When he continued to look at her as if she had grown three heads, she frowned, “What? I’m a financial advisor, and yes, I am degreed and licensed.”

“Okay.” He watched her turn back towards the kitchen. “Where are you going?”

“To get my fee.”

“What!” He reluctantly followed her into the kitchen. He found her at the work counter where he had just finished coating his raspberry brownies. She had one in her hand and had it halfway to her temptingly open mouth.

“What do you think you are doing?” He watched her take a bite out of the brownie. When she moaned softly, he stilled. Was this how she always reacted to his brownies? Annabelle turned towards the shocked man standing in the doorway, swallowed her little taste of heaven first, then smiled broadly at him.

“You make the best brownies I’ve ever tasted. As for what I’m doing, well, your sister and I made an agreement—I do your books and get the financial details in order and she feeds me your chocolates.”

“Is this how you always react to my brownies?” His eyes turned darker as desire flared in them.

“You mean as if I’ve died and gone to heaven? I’m sure I’m not the first to tell you that. You know that you are damn good at making chocolate delights and other yummys.” She caught her breath in response to his heated stare.

“Well, I try.” He watched her take another bite out of the brownie; when she moaned again, he felt himself harden behind the fly of his jeans.

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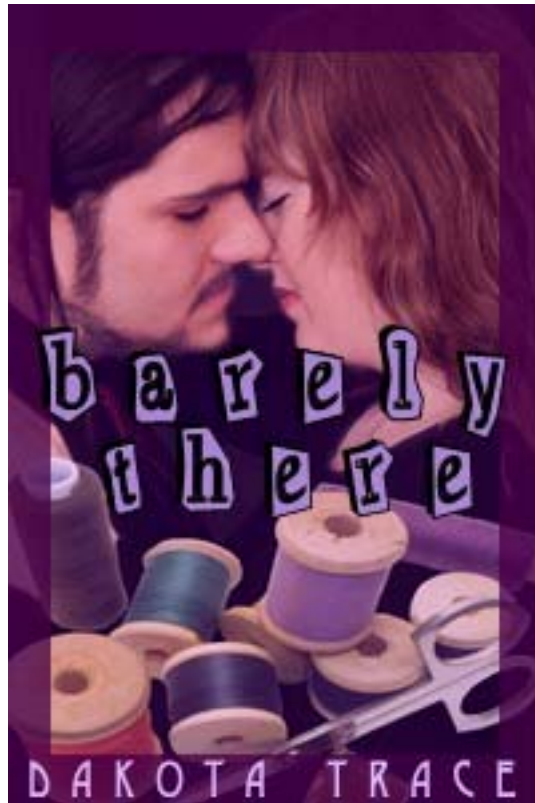
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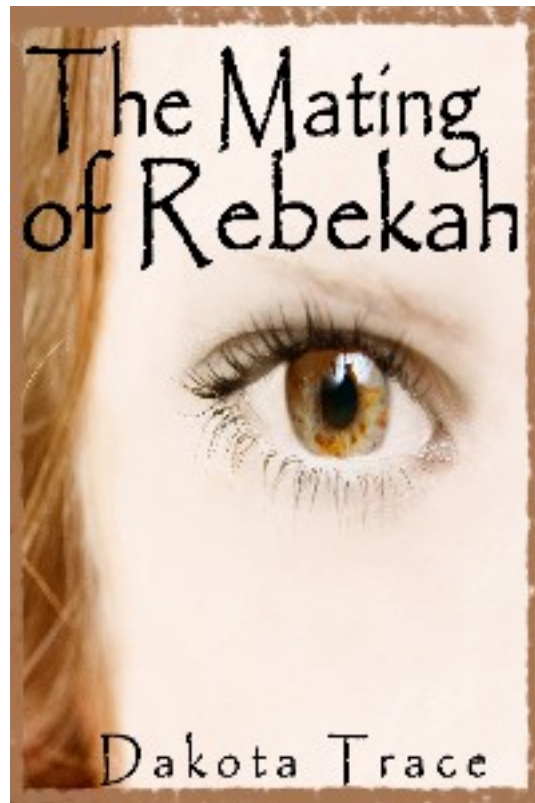


BARELY THERE

By Dakota Trace

When Nicola Rambaudi approaches Empress Chikowski, a plus size ladies clothing store owner, with his new clothing design, sparks fly. While she thinks the design is too risque for her customers, he's convinced it isn't. In fact, he offers her a chance to put him in his place: a focus group on his design. If the group agrees with her, he takes his designs elsewhere...but if they agree with him, he wins the contract and gets to see Empress personally model it!

Warnings: This title contains public nudity, graphic language and sex.

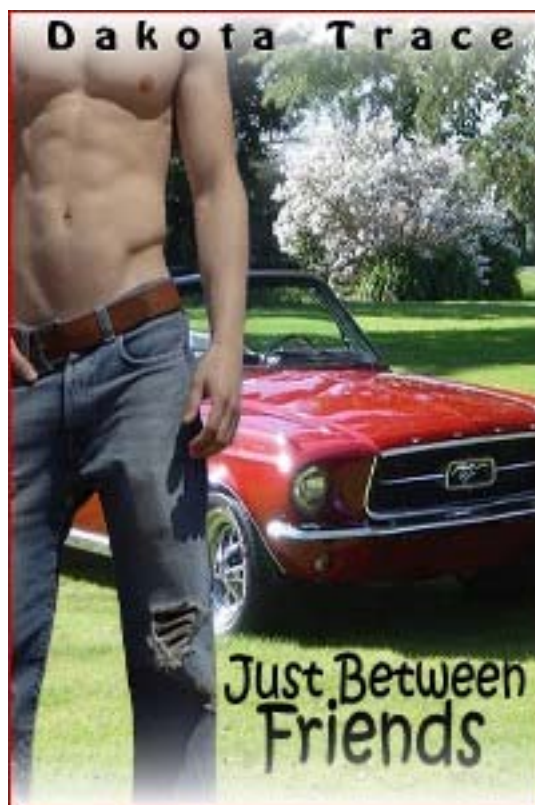


THE MATING OF REBEKAH

By Dakota Trace

Rebekah comes from a long line of women who have pledged to serve Diana, the Goddess of Hunt. Diana's latest summoning has Rebekah racing to stop a mass demon possession on All Hallows Eve. Rebekah is warned however, if she doesn't find her mates, failure is imminent. Diana also conveniently forgets to mention that Pluto, the God of the Underworld, is behind the mass possession, in an effort to reclaim the huntress Diana has stolen from him. The same huntress Diana merged with Rebekah as a newborn. When Rebekah finds out the only way to not have her huntress taken from her is to allow herself to be mated, she is livid. Not knowing where to find the Sons of Apollo, who are to be her mates, she enlists the help from her best friends, Jase and Dustin, never dreaming they are the mates she is looking for. When Rebekah finds out, she refuses to allow the brothers to mate her. Will time run out or will the brothers claim her before Pluto comes for her huntress?

Warnings: This title contains graphic language, anal sex, menage and violence.



JUST BETWEEN FRIENDS

By Dakota Trace

Seth Anderson and Isabella Carnetti have been best friends since grade school. They live and work next to each other and are content with the status quo until the day that Seth realizes that Isabella is a desirable woman. She is leery of a relationship with him especially when she finds out he's into tying up his lovers. He won't rest until he has her in his bed. Then his ex shows up wanting to him back. Can Seth and Is have a relationship or will Seth's ex be enough to tear them apart?

Night Owl Romance Review by Terri - Reviewer TOP PICK! 4.5/5!

The plot was excellent. The sexual scenes while graphic were well written. The emotional ties that were needed were present making Seth and Bella's relationship come to life. ...a fun book with great characters.

Warnings: This title contains graphic language, light bondage, toys and exhibitionism.



AN OFFICER AND AN ITALIAN

By Dakota Trace

Sergio Rambaudi is enchanted when he's pulled over by the feisty K-9 police officer, Rachel Arnsworth. Getting close to Rachel is proving to be a challenge for the Italian. When cookies and flowers aren't working he's willing to try anything, including find a nude beach to get his chance to woo Rachel.

While Rachel finds the transplanted Italian very sexy, she's leery of having a relationship with a man who will be as possessive and domineering as her father. When her father's girl-friend shows up and tells Rachel, she's leaving Rachel's dad, her life becomes even more complicated. When Smerelda, her dad's girl-friend becomes Sergio's staunchest supporter, Rachel knows she's in trouble. How is a girl to resist a sexy Italian bent on seduction when even Rambo, her partner finds him irresistible?

Warnings: This title contains graphic language and sex.