

ELLORA'S CAVE *Spectrum*

*Christine
d'Abo*

*Firm
Touch*

Merry Kinkmas

Firm Touch

Christine d'Abo

Max has a secret.

Max used to like to play on the wild side. Even though those days are now behind him, he occasionally gets an itch for a particular fetish—one he would trust only Leo to scratch.

Leo would do *anything* for Max.

One night after several rounds of tequila, Max confesses his desire—to be fisted by Leo. Though he's uncertain and concerned, Leo can't get the thought out of his mind. In the end, he decides to give Max a Christmas present he won't soon forget.

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



www.ellorascave.com

Firm Touch

ISBN 9781419931710

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Firm Touch Copyright © 2010 Christine d'Abo

Edited by Briana St. James

Cover art by Darrell King

Electronic book publication December 2010

The terms Romantica® and Quickies® are registered trademarks of Ellora's Cave Publishing.

With the exception of quotes used in reviews, this book may not be reproduced or used in whole or in part by any means existing without written permission from the publisher, Ellora's Cave Publishing, Inc.® 1056 Home Avenue, Akron OH 44310-3502.

Warning: The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. No part of this book may be scanned, uploaded or distributed via the Internet or any other means, electronic or print, without the publisher's permission. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by up to 5 years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000. (<http://www.fbi.gov/ipr/>). Please purchase only authorized electronic or print editions and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted material. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

This book is a work of fiction and any resemblance to persons, living or dead, or places, events or locales is purely coincidental. The characters are productions of the author's imagination and used fictitiously.

FIRM TOUCH

Christine d'Abo

Trademark Acknowledgments

The author acknowledges the trademarked status and trademark owners of the following wordmarks mentioned in this work of fiction:

Grinch: Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. Geisel-Seuss Enterprises, Inc.

Chapter One

The entire situation was the fault of the tequila.

Leo adjusted his hold on myriad bags and parcels and took the stairs up to their condo. The cold from the snow that still clung to his clothing had seeped into his legs. As he trudged upward, bits of slush were left in his wake. He would need each and every stair to burn up his nervous energy so he would be able to do things right tonight. A special treat for Max, one he never thought he'd be able to give, and his Christmas present.

Max and his *stupid* tequila.

His purchase along with the present were buried somewhere in the bag with the stocking stuffers. It wasn't unusual in itself, but what it represented was more than Leo thought he'd ever be able to do with Max.

How their relationship had lasted after the year they'd had, Leo wasn't sure, but he was eternally grateful. Max was his rock, holding him down through the ups and downs of his job, his dad's illness and even his own foul moods.

"You know what I want for Christmas, Leo?"

"What?"

Lacing his hand in Leo's, Max downed another shot of tequila and shuffled closer. "I don't think you'll want to give it to me." His lids were heavy from the alcohol and his movements clumsy. "'Cause you're too...straight."

Leo laughed. "I'm as straight as you are. Ass."

"You like my ass."

"I love your ass."

"You know what I love?"

"What?"

"When you touch it. Push your fingers inside and open me up."

If Leo wasn't so complexly hammered, Max's words would have had him hard enough to fuck through a wall. "Yeah, love that too."

Max nodded, eyes wide. "But it's not enough."

"Whaddayah mean?"

Max shuffled closer, his voice dropping to a loud whisper. "You stop at three fingers."

Leo huffed and shifted the packages to his other hip. His neck was now sweating beneath his scarf, the fabric pulled tight under the weight of his load. Only three more flights before his level and he could be free of his coat, boots and burden. Three more flights to get his head in the game so he could make his plan work. The next ten days would be filled with family visits, social calls and general merrymaking. Leo had *tonight* to give Max his special present – that was it.

Pausing outside their condo door, Leo shifted the bags once more, chancing a look inside the closest one. Max's present was still hidden beneath the gifts for his nephews, safely out of sight. Before he chickened out, Leo pressed the doorbell with the back of his hand, listening as Max's heavy footfalls came toward the door.

Max flung the door open, narrowed his gaze and stared at Leo. It didn't take much for Leo to know Max was still pissy at him from earlier. *God, I don't even remember what it was about anymore.* The fights were becoming more frequent and the sex less so. Leo knew it was mostly his fault, Max having been more than fair. But Leo pushed and Max was stubborn. If one of them didn't give, then their four-year relationship might come to a rapid end.

He needed to make things right – his present certainly would put him on the right track.

He hoped.

It felt as if they hadn't seen each other in days. Leo soaked up the sight of his boyfriend. Max was wearing the tight, black t-shirt with *Ho-Ho-Ho* in red block letters

across the chest and a pair of low-riding jeans. Leo had given the shirt to him last year as a joke, but Max wore it with pride. He looked good enough to eat.

Leo's cock twitched.

"Are you going to tell me what you want for Christmas or not?" Leo sloppily poured two more shots, pressing one into Max's hand. "Cause I really won't be able to get it if I don't know."

Grabbing Leo's hand, Max pulled the shot glass to his lips and swallowed down the contents. "Maybe you should try to get it out of me."

"What the hell did you buy?" Max braced his arm across the doorframe. While he wasn't as tall or broad as Leo, he was every bit as in shape. Leo could stand there and stare at him all day.

Rolling his eyes, Leo peeked – a bit too obviously – into the bag. "If I told you that, it would ruin the surprise."

"We are on a budget, you know."

"I was good."

"I hope so. I need to make sure we're not in the same boat we were in last year."

Leo bit his tongue to keep the automatic defense response from coming out. "Can I come in so you can berate me there? These are heavy."

With a snort, Max turned and marched away, leaving Leo standing in the door. *He's just frustrated and lonely. You can fix this.* Taking a calming breath, Leo stepped in, kicking the door closed with his foot.

"Did you eat?" Max called from the kitchen. "You didn't say in your text."

His stomach did a nervous flip as he kicked off his boots. "I grabbed something at the mall."

"Well, there's a plate in the fridge if you want it."

Leo was only half listening as he fought his rising nerves. "I'll get it later. Just going to put these in the bedroom."

"For God's sake, don't wrap anything, or your family will think you found it on the street. I'll do them tomorrow."

Chuckling, he dropped everything in the middle of the bed. "Yes, Mom."

Keeping his gaze locked on the bag with Max's present in it, Leo pulled his coat off and tossed it over the desk chair. He would need a few minutes to set up, make everything as perfect as he could so Max would relax.

He just needed a distraction.

"Hon?" Leo felt a little guilty about this part, but he knew Max would forgive him. Eventually. Grabbing the last roll of wrapping paper, he shoved it in the closet underneath the sweaters. "Where is the paper?"

Max's groan echoed back, chased by the thuds of his footsteps. "I told you I'd do it tomorrow."

"I know, but I can't find the paper. Just want to make sure we have everything so I don't have to go to the stores again. I hate Christmas shopping."

Leo snatched both shot glasses up and tossed them aside.

"Hey, don't spill the stuff." Max giggled, leaning across Leo's lap.

"Stuff's gone, baby." Pressing down, Leo was easily able to trap Max across his lap. He gave his boyfriend a firm slap, knowing the contact wasn't hard enough to penetrate the heavy pajama bottoms or the alcoholic haze Max wore. "Now what do you want?"

Groaning, Max bucked his hips forward. "For you to fuck me."

"That's so happening. Once I feel my dick again."

"Now."

Leo spanked him again. "Not until you tell me what you want. You never let me know and I always get you something lame."

Max pushed past him, ignoring the presents, dropped to his knees and began to root underneath the bed. "I had two rolls set aside."

"I looked, but didn't see anything."

"Where the hell..." Max's mutters were swallowed up by the void. When he pulled his head up, the look he gave Leo couldn't be described as anything less than devastated. "I know there was some here. I saw it the other day."

Needing to play his part, Leo sighed and made his way over to his coat. "I'll go back."

"No, don't. I'll go. You just got in and you've been gone all day."

"Not your presents. I should have picked up extra."

Leo was terrified for half a second Max would let him follow through as he managed to slip both arms back into his coat, before he got to his feet and placed an arm on Leo's shoulder.

"I had today off. You worked and shopped. I'll just run over to the drug store and get some. I won't be more than fifteen minutes." Leaning in, Max placed a far too chaste kiss to his cheek. "Go have a shower or something. We can watch *The Grinch* later."

Leo held Max's gaze for a moment. Unable to hide his pleased smile, Leo dropped his forehead to rest it on his shoulder. "Thank you."

"Drama queen." Max squeezed him hard. "I'll be back."

"I'll try to be awake."

Max groaned again, spreading his legs and pressing his ass into Leo's touch. "I know you won't."

"Won't what?"

"Give me what I want."

Rolling Max over so he was now flat on the floor, Leo crawled up his body, nipping and kissing the bare skin of his stomach and chest. When he finally got nose to nose with Max, Leo cupped his boyfriend's face in his hands.

This was the first night in two weeks they'd had to spend together. Max was working more mornings at the store, and Leo had been stuck on night shifts at the dispatch center. Their

conflicting schedules were playing havoc with their relationship. Leo was terrified he was losing the first person who really meant something to him.

"Tell me." He placed a soft kiss on the end of Max's nose. "Please."

Leo did his best to move slowly and look as tired as possible as Max got his boots and coat on. "I know you said you ate, but you should get something else. I doubt anything at the mall is close to healthy."

"I'll get something after my shower." Please leave soon.

Max rolled his eyes. "God, you're stubborn sometimes."

"That's why you love me."

"Maybe."

Max bit down on his bottom lip as a faint blush colored his cheeks. "Remember I told you about the guy I dated in college?"

Leo did his best to squash the flash of anger. "Justin."

"Yeah. Well, he may have been an asshole, but he was good in the sack."

Never mind that he'd smacked Max around. The jerk was damn lucky Leo had never met him. "I wouldn't call it a redeeming quality for that bastard."

"I don't. But he did something to me once that...fuck, forget it."

"You need to call your mom and see what time she wants us to come over tomorrow." Max threw his coat on as he shoved his feet into Leo's boots. "And ask her if she wants us to bring anything over."

"It's Christmas Eve. You know she'll have enough food to feed an army. But I'll ask. After my shower."

Max pointed a finger at him. "And make sure to eat."

Leo chuckled. "That's a lot to do for fifteen minutes."

"You'll manage." Max winked.

"Max, I'm going to kick your ass if you don't spit it out." Leo leaned in and bit down gently on Max's chin. "What. Do. You. Want?"

"Justin was into fisting. He did it once to me and...I'd really like you to do it for me." Max shuddered beneath him.

Leo pulled back, sure he hadn't heard correctly through is alcoholic haze. "What?"

"I want you to put your hand inside me and make me come."

Leo waited until the door to the condo was firmly shut. Taking a deep breath, he turned and marched back into the bedroom.

The clock was ticking.

Chapter Two

It took Max a lot longer than he'd anticipated at the store. While he loved living in Toronto, there were certain times of the year when he would rather have been off in a secluded cottage in the woods. The twenty-third of December was certainly one of those days.

With a roll of paper under each arm, he fumbled with his keys to the door. The condo was dark, the only light filtering across the hardwood from the bathroom in long hash marks. Frowning, Max kicked off his boots.

"I got the paper. The drug store was a frigging zoo." Sliding his coat from his shoulders, Max quickly hung it up. He couldn't shake the feeling something was wrong. "Leo?"

A mental image of Leo having slipped in the shower had him marching to the bathroom, heart pounding in his chest. "Hey are you...?"

The words died in his mouth at the sight of more than a dozen candles filling the bathroom. Steam still rose from the water in the tub and Max swore he could smell the spicy musk Leo normally used, hanging in the air.

"I'm glad you got held up. This took me longer than I thought it would to setup."

Max jumped at the sound of Leo's voice. Turning, Max saw his boyfriend standing in the doorway to their adjoining bedroom, a smirk on his face. Looking back to the bath, Max felt the tension in his shoulders start to melt away.

"What's this for then?" He smiled, nodding toward the bath. "Are you buttering me up for something?"

Leo shrugged, trying to look innocent and failing miserably. "Maybe. Let me help you with that, good sir."

Before he had a chance to say otherwise, Leo had snatched the two rolls of wrapping paper away, tossing them into the room unseeing. Max snorted as Leo then proceeded to manhandle him out of his clothing.

"I'll clean up. Don't worry about a thing." Leo tossed Max's shirt over his shoulder. "Right now I want you to get into the tub and relax. Enjoy the candles. I'll get you some wine as well."

"Christ, Leo, did you kill someone?" He got a smack on his now naked ass, seconds before sinking into the warm water. "Well, I need to know if I'll be looking for a new boy soon."

Leo huffed. "I didn't kill anyone. I'm not leaving you. The sky isn't falling. It's simply Christmas and I wanted to give you a little treat before the insanity of the next few days kicks in. Is that so bad?"

Surprised to feel his throat tighten, Max had to swallow before reaching out to grab Leo's hand. "Not at all. Thank you."

Smiling widely, Leo clapped his hands together and disappeared into the bedroom. Still a bit stunned by the change of events, Max found he couldn't quite relax. He loved Leo more than he could ever express, but he knew things between them hadn't been the best in recent months.

Max had tried to be flexible, knowing Leo didn't have control over his work schedule. Leo had to take any shifts they offered him in the hopes of getting a full-time job. Max had done his best to ignore the sexless nights, lonely evenings and constant worry. Things wouldn't stay this way forever and he didn't want to give up on the best relationship of his life because of some temporary timing issues.

"You don't look relaxed."

Max opened one eye, snorting when he saw Leo standing there with a glass of wine, his shirt unbuttoned down to his pants. Firm abs and bare chest peeked out from beneath the fabric, enticing Max. Not even the warmth of the water was enough to deter an interested twitch from his cock.

Accepting the wine from Leo, Max sat up straight. "Going to join me?"

"Nope." But Leo dropped to his knees and pulled off his shirt. "I have a plan."

"A plan?"

"Yup."

"One that involves wine, baths and half-naked boyfriends kneeling by a tub?"

"Sure does."

Max chuckled. "Anything else I should be aware of?"

"Not yet." Leo picked up the sponge and bath gel from the side, squeezed a generous amount into the center and kneaded it in until there was a generous amount of bubbles. "Lean forward."

Max couldn't hold back a groan as Leo pressed down hard enough to massage the muscles in his shoulder and back. The slick shower gel glided across his skin, sending a burst of scent into the air. He nearly dropped his wine, the muscles in his arm going lax under Leo's ministrations.

"Drink up," Leo whispered softly, his lips close to Max's ear. "You're going to need it."

"Right. *The plan.*" Max took a healthy swallow, belatedly realizing it was one of his favorites. "Are you sure you're not going to jail?"

"Nope. Lean back now."

Large hands traced soap bubbles across Max's chest. He gasped and bucked up his hips when Leo began to tease his nipples.

"It's been a while since we've been able to have any fun." Leo's voice was lower than normal, seductive in a way Max hadn't heard in a while. "I could just sit here and play with you all night."

"I'm not complaining." Max moaned, letting his head fall to the side, exposing his neck to Leo.

The graze of teeth against the skin connecting his neck and shoulder made Max shiver. He could barely breathe, not remembering the last time Leo was so obviously aroused and intent on seduction. The hand teasing his nipples migrated slowly south. Leo's nails scored his stomach, causing Max to tense and release beneath his firm touch. Even expecting the contact, when Leo's fingers found his cock, Max groaned.

"Water's too hot for you?" Leo chuckled against him. "Can't get it up?"

Leo didn't wait for Max to respond, turning his head and capturing his mouth in a deep kiss. Fingers teased Max's shaft and balls as Leo slowly worked him into a state of arousal. Leo pulled back enough to allow him to press a finger against Max's opening. Fighting the urge to open his eyes, Max relaxed his body as much as possible.

"It's been a while." Leo's voice was rough. "You're tight."

There was something else, a hint of concern that had Max taking another peek at his boyfriend. "You can loosen me up. You always could."

There was something else going on in Leo's mind, Max was sure of it. Still, Leo didn't seem willing to share at this point, most likely due to his mysterious *plan*. All thought quickly left his brain though, when Leo pressed a finger into Max's ass. Everything tightened for a second before the muscles relaxed under Leo's soothing strokes.

"That's it, yeah. Let all the tension from the last few days go." Leo kissed the side of Max's neck again. "I want you so relaxed you'll need me to carry you to the bed."

"Keep doing that and I'll be anything but relaxed."

One second Leo was opening him up and the next Max was blinking at his absence. "Where did you go?"

"Just enjoy yourself. I need to get a few other things ready."

"What are you —?"

"Drink your wine, Max."

Letting out a little huff, he closed his eyes again and let the heat and soft sounds of Leo moving around their apartment lull him into peace. Gentle waves lapped at his chest, tickling his nipples as his body sunk deeper.

“Are you sure you haven’t killed anyone? Dying? Leaving me?”

He felt better as he heard Leo’s chuckle filter in from the other room. Maybe he *could* indulge in a little relaxation for a while. Closing his eyes and taking a moment to enjoy the wine, Max let the stress of the past few weeks drift away.

He’d always loved Christmas. Not that his family was overly religious, but the get-togethers, the food, family spending time celebrating had all been so important to him growing up. It had come as a shock the first Christmas he’d spent with Leo when he hadn’t wanted to try to coordinate visits.

“We don’t really do much,” Leo had said with a shrug. “Just let me know what works for you.”

Max didn’t put up with that. Every year since then he’d made a point of including Leo’s family in any plans his folks had. It was great having a large group there, even though by the end of the week he was ready to be home alone with Leo once more.

As the water cooled, his thoughts drifted away into pleasant dreams. He must have fallen asleep because the next thing he realized, Leo was at his side again and his wineglass nowhere in sight. Leo pressed open mouthed kisses to his face as his fingers caressed Max’s chest.

“Wake up, sleepy-head.”

“Where’s my wine?”

“I moved it. You damn near spilled it over the mat.”

Max smiled up sleepily. “Are you all done being mysterious?”

“Nope.” Leo brushed the hair from Max’s forehead. “Still have a plan.”

“Silly plan.”

“No, good plan.”

Max snorted. "You say that about all your plans."

"Because it's true."

"And will I see anymore of this plan anytime soon?"

Leo pulled back and held out his hand. "Next phase. Out of the tub."

Max snorted, accepting Leo's helping hand to step out of the hot water. He was a bit surprised when Leo didn't step back. His wet skin came in contact with the cool cotton pants and shirt Leo had on. A shiver made Max's skin rise with goose bumps at the contrasting sensations.

Leo slid his hands across Max's wet skin, teasing as he went. Max held still, his cock reawakened by the intimate caress.

"I've missed you." Leo leaned in, his mouth a breath away from Max's. Leo cupped Max's hip as he leaned in, his mouth hovering above Max's ear. "And I have a present for you."

Without the oppressive heat from the bathwater, Max's cock snapped to attention. He bit down on his bottom lip to keep from asking what, knowing Leo would draw things out if given the option. The bastard loved to tease.

"You've been a very good boy this year. Santa told me to give you something extra special."

Max couldn't hold back his chuckle. "If you're going to dress up—"

"Nope. No red suits for me." Leo flicked the tip of Max's cock. "Now behave or else you won't get your treat."

"Is the treat the present?"

"Treat *before* the present."

Max couldn't hold back the urge to touch his lover any longer. Sliding damp fingers up along Leo's arms, he cupped his face and ran his thumbs across Leo's cheeks. "Does the treat involve bed?"

"Oh yeah."

"Will you be naked too?" Without any warning, Max pressed down on Leo's erection through the front of his pants. "I'd hate to have *all* the fun."

"Maybe if you ask me nicely." Leo cocked an eyebrow and took a step back toward their bedroom. "Coming?"

"God, I hope so."

He followed Leo into their room, but stopped once he'd gone a few paces. The ocean blue walls were glowing from the flickering light of dozens of candles. Their bed had been turned down and the heat in the room turned up. Leo had gone so far as to turn off the rest of the lights in the condo, giving the illusion that they were totally cocooned.

The curtains were parted, revealing the soft snowfall drifting past, illuminated by the Toronto city lights. Max loved nights like this, when a blanket of quiet descended as the snow covered them all.

"Come here," Leo whispered, suddenly looking nervous. "I want you to lie in the middle of the bed for me. Make sure you are comfortable."

Frowning, he did as Leo asked, not sure what caused the sudden change. "You okay?"

A nervous laugh broke from Leo. "Fine. Yeah. Just get your ass on the bed."

Max came closer, but instead of doing what he was told, he stopped next to Leo. Taking his hand, Max brought it to his lips and kissed the knuckles. "Whatever it is, you don't have anything to be nervous about. I know I'll love your present."

Leo blinked several times before finally leaning in to rub his nose along side Max's. "I just want this to be perfect."

"Leo—"

The words were swallowed up by a kiss. Max surrendered himself, knowing whatever it was, Leo would only relax if Max gave himself completely to the moment.

Once that happened it was like magic—they slotted together so perfectly it was as if they'd become one person. God, he'd missed this.

Before the kiss had a chance to grow too heated, Leo pulled back. The soft gasp from his mouth and firm bulge in his pants told him Leo was as affected as he was.

"Not that I don't love kissing you," Leo said softly. "But if I want any hope of giving you this treat, I need my head straight. So please, lie back on the middle of the bed and close your eyes."

Whether from the low tone of Leo's voice or his lover's obvious arousal, Max knew he couldn't wait any more. Trusting he would be taken care of, he slowly crawled to the center of their king size bed, rolled onto his back and spread his legs wide.

Max grinned at the look of desperate want on Leo's face. With a lick of his lips, he pulled one of his knees up and ran a single finger along the length of his shaft.

"Come and get me."

Chapter Three

Leo was sure his heart was about to explode, it was beating so quickly. As usual, Max could read him like an open book, picking up on his nervousness as easily as if he'd voiced it himself.

The night Max had first told him that he wanted him to fuck him with his hand – he really didn't like the term fisting – Leo had freaked. Sure Max had experimented before they'd hooked up, but he knew Leo was pretty vanilla when it came to sex. Hell, when he'd had started to look it up on the Internet to see what exactly was involved, his poor brain not quite able to work out the logistics, he'd nearly stopped breathing.

He couldn't do it. He'd spent too long in paramedic training to be naïve about what could happen. Leo had promptly turned off the browser before the first page loaded and pushed it to the back of his mind.

Too bad the damn idea wouldn't leave him the hell alone.

He'd gone back a few days later and done a lot of reading. What had surprised him the most was how carefully everything was executed. The image of a fast and furious encounter was what had always popped to mind when he'd heard about it – definitely not the case.

When he realized the level of trust and intimacy that was required, Leo understood what it was Max was asking.

He just hoped he was man enough to give it to him.

Max still sported his lazy smirk and raging erection, but remained still on the mattress. Pushing away his nerves, Leo knew he was fine to start simple before he worked his way up to his goal.

With his gaze locked on Max's, Leo slowly undid each button of his shirt. He loved the way Max's nostrils flared—it was his sign that he was aroused. Knowing this had Leo's cock twitching in the confines of his pants.

"Are you going to fuck me?" Max whispered, his fingers teasing the tip of his cock.

Leo loved hearing him talk dirty during sex. It was one of his kinks. "No. I have something else in mind."

That had Max frowning. "What?"

Now free from his shirt, Leo moved around the side of the bed, keeping his gaze fixed on Max. "I'm not going to fuck you. Not now at least."

"Then what—"

"You need to be quiet, Max. Don't force me to gag you."

Moaning, Max bit down on his bottom lip. Not wanting to give him time to think, Leo climbed onto the bed and stretched out beside him. Max's body still held the heat from the tub. His water-soft skin was smooth as Leo traced a path from Max's hip, across his stomach and up to circle a peaked nipple.

Max turned his head toward Leo and pressed a kiss to the side of his neck. It was Leo's turn to moan as his hips bucked, pressing his cock hard against Max's thigh. Shit, he needed to get things moving if he wanted any hope of seeing this through to the end.

Reaching down, Leo lifted Max's chin with a finger. Their gazes locked and Leo couldn't help a small smile.

"Do you trust me?" Leo whispered.

He knew the answer, but needed the reassurance before things went any further.

Max nodded, moving his face to nip at the tip of Leo's finger. "You know I do."

"Then I want you to lie back and close your eyes. Relax and let me look after you."

Not waiting for a response, Leo started kissing his way down his boyfriend's body. He paused long enough to tease Max's nipples with his teeth and tongue. Max reached up and pressed Leo's head down hard, telling him exactly what he wanted. Who was

Leo to deny him? Sucking the peak into his mouth, Leo reached over and tweaked the other tip until Max groaned loud and long.

That was Leo's hint to move on. Kissing his way down Max's sternum, he stopped long enough to explore Max's bellybutton. Swirling his tongue around the hole, Leo didn't stop until he heard Max giggle.

But with his prize in sight, Leo wasn't going to deny himself any longer.

Moving so he now lay between Max's legs, Leo licked a long swipe up Max's cock. Ignoring the moan, Leo continued to tease, savoring the taste and feel of hot skin and soap. Lapping at the moisture coming from the tip, Leo blindly reached out and fished out the lube he'd place beneath the folded duvet.

The snap of the cap being opened had Max moaning again and spreading his legs wider in invitation. Leo chuckled with his mouth around Max's shaft. Normally, he'd call Max a slut, but he didn't want to take away from the moment. Moving so he could suck on Max's balls, Leo relaxed as much as he could. He had to be in complete control.

Moving up, he sucked Max's cock, swallowing him halfway down his throat, at the same time he pressed his finger into Max's ass. Muscles tightened around his digit, pulling it deeper into Max's body. The velvety softness had Leo's cock pulsing in appreciation.

Leo moved carefully, making sure his thrusts were nothing more than teasing. He wanted Max aroused, but not ready to come. Not yet.

"I'm not a virgin," Max muttered.

Pulling back so he could smile, Leo pulled his hand out and added more lube. "I know you're not."

"So why are you going easy?"

"Just shut up and enjoy yourself." Leo bit down gently on Max's inner thigh. "I'm looking after you."

"Yes sir."

Not wanting to hold back too long, Leo pressed two fingers in, making sure to spread as much lube around as he could. Max groaned as he pulled his knees up to his chest.

"I know how much you love me playing down here." Leo twisted his hand, corkscrewing his fingers in deeper. "I love how your body squeezes me."

"More," Max muttered.

Leo let out a small huff and reached for the lube once more. "You're so relaxed. I bet you won't even feel three fingers."

"I'll take that bet."

"You're far too coherent." Leo knew if he was going to pull this off, Max needed to be taken to a far different head space than he currently was in. He needed to give himself completely to Leo – mentally and physically.

"Put your legs down. I want you to relax, Max."

As Max stretched out, Leo bunched three of his fingers together and pressed into Max, who gasped at the intrusion. Leo waited several moments before he started to pressing short thrusts forward. It was awkward, but once he felt Max loosen, Leo scissored his fingers, spreading Max as much as he could.

Leo's cock was pressed painfully to the mattress, trapped in his clothing prison and threatening to distract him from his task. It would take nothing to kick his pants free, but then Leo wasn't sure he would have the resolve to continue. It would be so much easier to simply fuck Max and leave him a quivering mess.

It wasn't supposed to be easy.

No, the pants stayed on.

Leo bit down on his bottom lip, trying to work out in his head what to say to Max. He didn't want to spring four fingers on him, even though Max would love it. Thankfully, the matter was taken out of his hands when Max reached down to squeeze

Leo's arm. When he looked into Max's brown eyes, Leo knew he would have given his lover the world.

"One more?" Max's whispered plea had Leo's hips bucking into the mattress.

"I'll...ah, need more lube." Fumbling, Leo didn't wait to see Max's reaction. He carefully withdrew his hand and dumped more gel than was strictly necessary onto his waiting hand. Making sure to coat everything, Leo took extra time to add lube even to the webbing in between his fingers.

"Fuck, baby." Max chuckled breathlessly. "You should see how turned-on you look right now."

Leo didn't respond, knowing he'd just say the wrong thing. Instead he pulled all his fingers together and held them close to Max's ass. For now he kept his thumb up and away, using it to tease Max's balls.

Their gazes locked. Leo placed one hand on Max's stomach and positioned his fingers at his opening. Without looking away, he breached Max's body, first with two, then three and finally four fingers. He didn't want to miss a single look.

Brown eyes rolled back into Max's head as Leo pressed past the first ring of muscles. "You really love that, don't you?"

"It's...I feel...full."

Leo slowed the pace, keeping the thrust of his fingers shallow. Everything he'd read told him not to rush this part, that the build up was as important as the main event. More so.

"Keep your eyes closed," Leo whispered. "Let your mind go and float. I don't want you thinking about anything other than my fingers in your ass. I want you to concentrate on how it feels."

It must have been the right thing to say. Tension Leo hadn't realized was there immediately bled from Max's body. His stomach muscles relaxed beneath Leo's hand

and the tension in Max's legs left them boneless beside him. Leo gasped when his fingers slid in deeper, seemingly swallowed by the heat, up to his second knuckles.

"So good for me," Leo encouraged. "Your body is telling me what you want, you know that? It likes what I'm doing to it. Do you like it?"

"Yes." The word left Max as softly as the snow falling outside.

"Tell me what you want."

Max's chest hitched. "More."

"More of my fingers?"

"Yes."

"Like this?" Leo pressed forward until he sunk his digits in deeper.

"Yes."

With deliberate care, Leo slowly expanded his fingers, opening Max up wide. "And this?"

Max turned his head, forcing his face deep into the pillow, and groaned. Leo's hand on his stomach was the only thing that kept him from coming up off the bed.

"Take it you like that." Leo kept his hold firm and fanned out his fingers again. Max's groan was swallowed up by a sharp intake of air. With each twitch of his hand, Leo saw Max sinking deeper into the sensations.

Not able to hold himself back any longer, Leo kept his arm steady and leaned in to lick a long swipe up Max's cock. The salty taste of pre-cum exploded on his tongue. Before he realized what he was doing, Leo leaned up enough to take Max halfway down his throat.

Fuck, he loved the weight and taste of Max's cock in his mouth. Leo would have loved nothing more than to have spent hours teasing and tormenting his boyfriend that way. Shifting a bit lower, he buried his nose against the side of Max's balls, licking and breathing in deep.

"One day I'm going to take an hour and suck you off," he muttered against the junction of Max's groin. "But not today."

With regret, Leo placed a kiss to the base of Max's shaft and sat up a bit straighter. "Today I'm going to give you a big treat."

Max was beyond words. His brown eyes were barely visible from the narrow slots of his lids. Instead of his normal breathing, Max pulled in slow breaths that Leo was sure would make him lightheaded.

"Do you want to know what your treat is?" Leo pushed his fingers in a bit deeper, fanning them open once more. "Or do you just want me to show you?"

Max licked his lips. The saliva made the skin shine in the candle light. The nod was barely any movement at all and probably took more effort than his normally exuberant boyfriend would have otherwise felt. A rush of pleasure rippled through Leo. He'd done that to Max, brought him to a place beyond words with little more than a firm touch on his body.

"God, I want to fuck you so badly." *No, don't go down that road.*

Leo shifted up, denying himself the pleasure of rubbing his cock against the mattress, and snagged the bottle of lube once more. If he was really going to do this, the last thing he wanted was to risk anything happening to Max.

Once again he removed his fingers and poured as much lube as he could, coating every inch of skin. He paid extra attention to his thumb and back of his hand, knowing they would be the hard part. This time, Max didn't protest, his gaze fixed on Leo's hand, watching intently as Leo worked. Using his free hand, Leo teased Max's skin, playing with the hairs on his stomach and around his cock.

Swallowing, Leo smiled and gave Max's shaft a squeeze. "You need to talk to me. If I'm doing something you don't like or that doesn't feel good, you need to tell me. Right away. I don't want to hurt you."

"You won't." Max smiled softly at him.

The laugh that escaped Leo was shaky. "Relax and breathe. Whatever you do, don't fight against me or the sensations."

He started again from the beginning. One finger, pushed in as deep as Max's body would allow, meeting no resistance. Leo let Max set the pace, waiting until he was thrusting back against his hand and the muscles surrounding him were relaxed. A second and third finger quickly joined the first. They were met with the same lax resistance, encouraging Leo on.

Time dropped away. Nothing mattered beyond Max. What he was feeling, the looks on his face, the soft noises escaping him—Leo's attention locked onto everything. A rush of power flowed over him, the knowledge that Max had given up complete control, trusted him to do something that could seriously hurt him if done wrong...fuck, Leo wouldn't have believed anyone who'd told him how much of a turn on it would be.

Clearing his mind from distractions, Leo shifted closer to give himself better leverage. Sliding his pinky in, he tried to make the bundle of his fingers as small as possible.

"Relax," he whispered, pleased when he saw Max's head roll to the side. "Good boy."

Pushing firmer than before, Leo was relieved to see Max easily take his fingers past the second knuckle. Holding at that depth when there was a hitch to Max's breathing, Leo carefully leaned up and pressed a kiss to his mouth.

"That's it. You're stretched right out for me. If I do this..." Fanning his fingers out had Max groaning instantly. "Yeah, that's good. But I know what you want."

Max opened his eyes and stared at Leo with surprised wonder. "Please."

"I will. I will. Nice deep breaths and don't fight me. Okay? I need to know that you're not going to get hurt."

Leo held his gaze for seconds that could have been hours. He waited, needing to see it, the faraway look of utter contentment that made Max look serene. When Leo knew Max had reached that place, he couldn't believe how unbelievably gorgeous he looked.

It was far harder to pull away from Max that time than Leo would have thought, but there was no way he would stop now.

Making sure he was comfortable, Leo placed his free hand back on Max's stomach. *Now for the hard part.* He pulled his hand out enough to give his thumb space to be tucked inside his bundled fingers. Making the grouping as small as he could manage, Leo began to rub small circles on Max's belly.

"I want you to take a nice deep breath in. When you let it out, I want you to push back on my hand." Leo kept his voice soft and soothing. It was completely at odds with his spiraling arousal. "That's it, bear down onto me."

Leo had half a second of doubt when they reached the widest point of his hand. Once second he was about to pull away and the next Max's body had swallowed his hand whole. He wasn't sure which one of them had gasped—probably both—but their eyes locked and they both stilled.

With his heart pounding, Leo licked his lips and looked down in awe to see his hand completely hidden within Max. He gave up a nervous chuckle at the sight.

"My God, Max. I'm inside you."

"Don't stop." The plea was barely audible.

"I won't. Promise. I'm going to start moving my fingers down now. Stay still, okay?"

He didn't wait for any acknowledgement. Instead, Leo closed his eyes and concentrated on carefully curling his fingers down across his thumb. He shifted his free hand, ignoring the way it shook.

Once his hand was in place, Leo knew it wouldn't take Max long to come. At the rate he was going, Leo wouldn't be far behind him. "Holy shit, you're so hot. I can feel your...Christ, I can feel your heartbeat. Are you okay?"

Max nodded frantically.

"Good." Leo bit down on his lip and hoped his heart wouldn't explode from the frantic pounding. "I'm going to move a bit now."

Another nod.

Careful not to put too much stress on the hand inside Max, Leo leaned up and sucked on his nipple. Max thrust down on Leo's hand at the same time that he reached up and pulled Leo's hair.

"Fuck!"

Leo bit down on the sensitive skin while he turned his fist half a turn. Max's cry was nearly deafening. The body beneath Leo shook and he knew the build up from the evening was finally taking its toll on Max.

"I'm going to suck you," Leo whispered against Max's chest. "You're going to come so hard down my throat I'm going to be able to taste you for days."

He knew from what he'd read it wouldn't take Max long to come. The look on his boyfriend's face and the deep flush across his skin told him much the same. What Leo hadn't counted on was how far gone he was himself.

Shifting once more so his head was close to Max's cock, Leo twitched his hand, shifting it to press a bit firmer against the inside wall. Max choked out a sob as he squeezed the bed sheets in his grip.

"Oh fuck, oh fuck, oh fuck." Max's litany rose in volume when Leo teased the tip of his cock with his tongue. "I can...feel." Max swallowed hard. "Everything."

Knowing it wouldn't be much longer, Leo very carefully pulled his hand down while pressing to the opposite wall. He knew Max's prostate would be somewhere close.

Leo didn't get his mouth on Max's cock fast enough. Cum hit his cheek and chin before he caught the next pulse on his tongue. Max screamed and his body went ramrod straight as his orgasm hit. For a moment, Leo thought Max was going to lose his voice.

As suddenly as he started, Max fell back down to the bed, gasping for air. "Stop, stop, fuck. It's too much."

Leo pulled back and looked up at Max's face. Sweat covered his skin and his eyes were glassed over. It was the most stunning Leo had ever seen him. Bucking his hips against Max's leg, Leo knew he had to get out of Max before he did something that would hurt him.

"I'm going to pull out now. Just a minute longer and you can relax."

Max whimpered, but held still. Leo slowly uncurled his fingers and did his best to bunch them together once more. Mindful of his thumb, Leo pulled his hand back at a pace he didn't think he had the patience for, yet still somehow managed.

"I need you to help push me out," he said and placed a kiss on the inside of Max's thigh. "That's it."

Coordinating their efforts, it was easier for him to work his way free than Leo had thought. With a slight jump, he pulled his hand away. Max's body relaxed into the mattress as his cock softened against his belly.

Leo's entire body was on fire.

The fabric of his pants and underwear pulled painfully tight across his cock. He needed to get free from the restriction. He needed to come. Fumbling with slick fingers on the button and zipper, Leo nearly came from the anticipation. Not bothering to pull pants all the way off, he jerked the fabric of his underwear down his hips just enough to let his cock pop free.

Wrapping his hand around his shaft, Leo leaned over Max. "You looked so hot. And messy. And you screamed for me." His hand flew over his cock as he pumped himself.

Max moaned. "Come on me, baby. Just fucking lose it on me."

Leo clamped his eyes shut and cried out as he came. Pleasure rolled through his body like he hadn't experienced before. Everything was amplified – the smell of sex in the room, the air against his hot skin, the feel of Max squeezing his arm. Finally, Leo's body gave out on him and he collapsed on top of Max.

Chapter Four

Max knew he'd fallen asleep shortly after Leo's orgasm. From the heavy weight still resting on his chest, he knew Leo must have as well. Or passed out. He'd never seen his boyfriend come quite that hard before.

The quiet was good, giving Max time to think. Leo had always been so dead set against doing anything like that before, Max was a bit concerned something was wrong for him to do it now. Leo was a planner. And while they had always balanced each other out in the past, always seeming to find themselves on the same page, Max wasn't quite so sure now.

Still, this experience had been completely different from when Justin had taken him there. Max had been wild in university and Justin liked to do things just to see how far he could push Max. The night Justin had fisted him was wild and the hardest Max had ever come. Until just now.

Tonight with Leo – it had been intense.

Something beyond sex had happened, Max was sure of it.

Leo mumbled something in his sleep, turned his head and pressed his nose against Max's neck. The soft puffs of breath against his skin brought a smile to Max's lips. God, he loved Leo.

"Baby?" Max pressed a kiss to Leo's temple. "You need to wake up."

There was another mumble before a muttered, "No."

"We're going to be stuck together. You didn't clean us up before you had your nap."

"Don't care."

"You're the one with stomach hair. It's going to be a bitch to clean the mess out of it."

Leo groaned and lifted his head. Bleary-eyed, he smiled. "Hey."

Max pushed a piece of Leo's black hair from his forehead. Leo's blue eyes were glassy and somewhat vacant. "Hey yourself. Let's have a shower."

"Together?"

Chuckling, Max leaned in and kissed him. "I think that's going to be mandatory. I'm going to need you to help me stand."

It was apparently the wrong thing to say. Leo rolled off him to prop his body up over Max. Leo pressed a hand to Max's stomach and frowned. "Did I hurt you? You're not in pain or anything, right?"

"Leo, hon, I'm fine. You just made my head explode and my legs go on vacation."

"Oh. Okay, good." Leo ran his hand down along Max's chest. "I was a bit nervous that I'd do something wrong."

"No, you did everything exactly right." Kissing Leo's forehead, Max ignored the butterflies in his stomach and screwed up his courage. "Not that I'm complaining even a little, but what brought that on tonight?"

Leo shifted away and sat up. He didn't make eye contact, but Max felt better when Leo reached over and took his hand. Max squeezed it gently, hoping it would be enough to encourage Leo to say whatever it was he needed to—for good or bad.

"It's been hard the last little bit. Hasn't it?" Leo smiled sadly. "We've both been so busy, it's felt like we're living separate lives."

Something soured in Max's stomach. "It won't be like that forever. You'll get something full-time and you'll have a more stable rotation for shifts."

Leo nodded once. Looking up, he smiled at Max. "Actually, that was one of the things I wanted to talk to you about."

"Your shifts?"

“Changes.”

Max couldn’t take it anymore. Sitting up, he moved next to Leo and wrapped his arm around him. “What changes? You’re scaring me.”

“What?” Leo frowned before his face morphed into a startled expression. “Oh no! Not like that. I meant...shit. I’m screwing this up.”

Leo got to his feet and shimmied out of his pants so he could pad naked over to their dresser. Digging around for a few seconds, Leo turned back to face him, his hands hid behind his back.

“So I mentioned I had a treat *and* a present for you.”

Max wanted to laugh at the nervous expression on his face. “You look like you’re about to go in front of a firing squad.”

Leo huffed out a laugh. “Shut up or I’m not going to get through this.”

“Well don’t take all night. We still need a shower.”

Leo took two steps forward, but stayed outside of touching distance. “I know you’re going to think this is hokey, but I wanted to do this now. Things *have* been a bit strained between us. But I wanted to let you know that’s going to change. I got hired on full-time with the ambulance service.”

“Oh my God, that’s awesome!”

Leo held up his hand. “Yes it is. But not just because I’ll have some stability with the hours. It also means we’ll have a steady income and that we can really start to make a home for ourselves. Plus, I now feel comfortable doing this.”

Max frowned when Leo dropped to his knee. When he pulled out the small box from behind his back, Max had to blink several times before he registered what he was seeing.

“I know some people debate that proposing at Christmas is either the most romantic or dumbest thing a person could do. And while I know how much you hate things that are cheesy, I hoping this will fall on the romantic side. We’ve been together a

while now and while it hasn't always been roses, I can't imagine spending my life with another man. I was hoping, Max Bryan Douglas, that you would do me the honor of being my husband."

Words were locked in his throat and tears filled his eyes. He slid from the bed and shuffled close so he knelt in front of Leo. The gold band was simple—perfect in every way.

"Yes," Max whispered, leaned in and kissed Leo gently. "I would...love that."

The grin that split Leo's face stripped away the last of Max's restraint. He lost himself in their kiss, soaking up every caress and sound from his fiancé. When the need for oxygen became too great, Max pulled back and chuckled.

"So, the earlier thing?" He didn't want to ruin it by calling it fisting. It had been so much more. "Why?"

Leo shrugged. "I wanted to prove to you that while we might not always agree on everything, that while I might have some reservations about the things we do, I love you more than anything. I would be willing to do whatever you asked if I thought it would make you happy."

God, how was I lucky enough to have found him? "You make me happy without any of that stuff."

"I'm glad. I need you to help push me to do things that I would otherwise chicken out on. You keep me grounded and encourage me so much, I can't begin to explain."

Unable to fight back the tears any longer, Max let them roll down his cheek. "Me too."

Leo pulled the ring out and pressed it to the center of Max's palm. "You can't wear it properly yet, but I want you to hold onto this. We can figure out the details tomorrow."

Max slipped it onto his ring finger on his right hand. "I'll keep it here for now."

"Perfect." Leo got to his feet, tugging Max along with him. "Come on. We need to get cleaned up and get to bed. Tomorrow is going to be nuts."

"I'll have to call Mom and Dad. Let them know you're going to make an honest man out of me." Leo stopped Max in doorway of the bathroom. Max turned, frowning. "What?"

"I trust you that much, you know." Leo crowded into Max. "I'd...be willing to...do something like...you know, as long as you were the one looking after me."

"Thank you." Something swelled inside Max's chest. Reaching up, he cupped Leo's face. "I promise I'll take you where you need to be."

About the Author

It took Christine a lot longer than the average bear to figure out what she wanted to be when she grew up. When she was home on maternity leave, she decided to take a stab at saving her sanity and sat down to write a romance novel. After dabbling with various sub-genres, she realized she really enjoyed creating strange new worlds and writing about sex. Whether due to the pregnancy hormones or sleep deprivation, she thought this was a great combination.

Many years later her kids are in school and she's back at her day job, but the writing bug is here to stay. When not torturing her characters, she's busy playing with her children or conducting "research" with her husband.

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

Tell Us What You Think

We appreciate hearing reader opinions about our books. You can email us at Comments@EllorasCave.com.

Also by Christine d'Abo

Chasing Phoenix

Commanding Acquisitions

Eternal Bonds 1: The Bond That Ties Us

Eternal Bonds 2: The Bond That Heals Us

Eternal Bonds 3: The Bond That Consumes Us

Eternal Bonds 4: The Bond That Saves Us

Mistress Rules

No Quarter

No Remedy

Primal Elements

Sweet & Spicy Spells *with Renee Field*

Wizard's Thief



Discover for yourself why readers can't get enough of the multiple award-winning publisher Ellora's Cave. Whether you prefer e-books or paperbacks, be sure to visit EC on the web at www.ellorascave.com for an erotic reading experience that will leave you breathless.

www.ellorascave.com