

ELLORA'S CAVE EXOTIKA

INK
SPOTS

LISSA
MATTHEWS

Ink Spots

Lissa Matthews

By night, Mandi is a waitress in her best friend's adult entertainment club, complete with long raven hair and bright blue eyes. By day, she's a boutique jewelry maker with a flair for the occasional naughty design. She's shy, quiet, a definitive Plain Jane—and completely in lust with the one man who wouldn't ever be interested in her. He's big, menacing, and inspires every one of her dirty girl desires. If birthday wishes came true, he would be hers.

Tattoo artist. Business owner. Lover of vintage cars. Drummer. Jaz is far from the average guy. Built like a brick wall and inked from head to toe, he can scare the faint of heart with just a look, but faint of heart isn't what interests him, isn't what fuels his fantasies and keeps him hard from dawn to dusk. It's her—the waitress, his sister's friend, the birthday girl.

Mandi is given the best present ever—Jaz. And she's got one night to make every wicked thought and erotic dream she's had about him come true.

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Chapter One

"Where is she?"

Jackie turned surprised eyes up at him. "You came. I wasn't sure you would."

"I don't know why not. You know how I feel about her." Jaspar tried to keep the censure out of his tone, but he wasn't sure he'd been all that successful. He was a mass of nervous excitement. "Her" was Mandi, the one woman who could make him harder than an aluminum softball bat and make his palms sweat with nothing more than the quirk of her lips.

"I know what you want with her doesn't necessarily have anything to do with feelings."

His gaze narrowed on her face. "Jesus, Jackie, you know me better than that."

"I do, but since I hadn't heard from you since earlier in the week..." She smiled up at him, linking her arm through his, giving it a warm squeeze of sentiment and support. "She's in the back."

"Good."

"She's not expecting you."

Jaspar winked. "Even better."

He walked down the long, dark hallway toward the changing room of Katz. The multipurpose establishment of bar, grill and adult entertainment club was hopping tonight. There wasn't an empty seat in the place. Jackie had done well for herself and he couldn't have been more proud of her.

They'd grown up as foster siblings. She had been adopted and moved away, but they'd kept in touch. Even when she'd gone off to college and he got into trouble with the law, she still wrote to him, still believed in him. She'd been the one who met him

when he got out, gave him a job at Katz and eventually introduced him to his business partners and best friends, Vinter and Dallon. She was the only family he had, and it was through her that he'd met the woman of his dreams.

Jaz laughed at his poetic thoughts. Woman of his dreams indeed, considering those dreams were wet ones, waking him up hard, horny and so goddamn hot for the raven-haired, blue-eyed minx. She was shy around him, never looking him in the eyes, barely speaking to him at all beyond asking what he wanted to eat or drink or to ask if he needed anything else after she'd brought it to him.

No, she'd given her open, beautiful smiles to his friends, to other customers, to everyone else except him. And it only made him want her more.

He stopped at the end of the hallway, in front of the black door with the single sign that stated *Kittyz Only*. He raised his hand to knock but then lowered it to the doorknob. He turned it and slipped inside the room, locking the door behind him.

The large space was empty in the middle, but along the walls were mirrors, tables, a set of moveable lockers and two clothes racks, each one filled with various types of lingerie. For a second, Jaz wasn't sure the woman in question was even in the room until he then heard the humming from behind one of the clothes racks. She emerged a second later clad in a bra and the short denim skirt that Jackie insisted all her girls wear.

"Mandi." Wide...green eyes flew up and locked with his. Green? No, she was supposed to have blue eyes. "Why do you have green eyes?" he asked, suspicious as he looked at the bright emerald color. He didn't think it was possible, but damn if his internal temp hadn't jacked up a few degrees.

"Jaz. What are you doing in here?"

"Answer me. Why are your eyes green?"

She visibly swallowed and took a step back. He silently cursed himself for the harsh demand and for startling her. He was a big man, standing six foot four, and within about six inches on either side of being as wide in the shoulders as a standard doorway,

and Mandi, well, she was a small woman, at least in stature. The curves she had though...her hips, that ass, those tits were anything but.

"Contacts. They made my eyes blue."

"Why did you wear them?"

"Jackie," she quickly blurted. "It's her club. She dictates how her girls are going to look. She already had a girl with black hair and green eyes. She wanted a girl with black hair and blue eyes."

Jaz nodded his understanding and let his gaze travel her body from head to toe. The black bra stood stark against her pretty pale skin. The slight, rounded softness of her torso, the flare of her hips inside her skirt, the strong legs that were encased in knee-high platform boots... God, what else did she have on? Was there a thong under the denim? Satin? Lace?

"Jaz?"

His dick was about to push itself out of his jeans. His hands fisted at his sides and he pressed himself hard against the door at his back. He closed his eyes, tried to think of something else beyond her half-nakedness just a few feet in front of him. He needed to get himself under control, but now that he was here, in private with her, all he could think about was...

"Jaz? Are you all right?"

She was closer. He hadn't heard her move, couldn't hear anything but the echo of her voice inside his head and the blood pounding in his ears.

He took a few deep breaths to calm his racing heart but it didn't do any good. He wouldn't be able to think clearly or function normally until he sated the lust thrumming through him. She smelled of flowers, of spice, of sweet innocence and sins.

"Jaz?"

She was even closer now, and her hand... Fuckin' A, her hand was on his arm and that was just too much. He opened his eyes a split second before he grabbed for her,

hauling her up into his body, lifting her off the floor with his arms and taking her shocked mouth with his tongue.

She was a heavy weight against him, a big girl, but shit, he loved it. He was a big man, hard-muscled, strong. She was all womanly give when she melted. And, man, did she ever melt.

Her tongue met his, tangled, dueled, tagged and finally sucked until he groaned and shifted her. One large hand gripped her ass tightly. The other fisted in her hair to hold her head steady. She wrapped her legs around his hips and wiggled her pussy against his denim-covered dick. He could have come right then had her hair not distracted him by coming off in his palm.

Ripping his mouth from hers, he all but dropped her. Again, she'd shocked him by not being what she appeared to be on the outside.

"A wig?" Her mouth was red and swollen from their kiss, and when she licked her lips, he had to try to rein in his unruly lust and not kiss her again just yet.

"Yes."

"Take the pins out of your hair. Let me see what it looks like."

She made a push at his shoulders, but he wasn't about to give. "Put me down."

"No. I had you secure when we were kissing, I can keep hold of you while you take your hair down." She stared at him and he stared right back, daring her to deny his request, though he supposed it came out more as an order. He didn't care. Her outward appearance so far wasn't altogether truthful, and he wasn't in the mood to debate if he'd asked nicely or not.

His want of her, however, hadn't diminished one iota. He still wanted her, and he was still going to have her. If she let him. In that, she would say yes or no, and he'd abide by it. But, god, he hoped she said yes. Too many months without a woman was taking its toll on his sanity, because all his body wanted was this one particular woman.

"I'm not gonna drop you," he offered gently.

He tossed the black wig over to one of the tables and angled his arm along her back, giving her more steady support. For added measure, she tightened her legs at his hips. How many nights had he thought of her like this, with her legs wrapped around his body, clad in those boots?

She lifted her arms. For a moment, he couldn't take his eyes off the way the move raised her breasts a scant few inches. The shadowed V between them tempted his tongue to slide down and taste her skin, but that would have to wait. One by one, the pins dropped from her fingers as she loosened her hair. Blonde curls touched her shoulders in some places, in others, the curls stood out at odd angles from having been held down.

She shook it out and finally leveled her gaze at him. Innocent. That was the first word that came to mind looking at her up close. Behind the somewhat heavy makeup she still wore, the natural color of her hair and eyes gave her such an innocent look that Jaz couldn't stop the growl in his throat.

"Are you disappointed?"

Her voice was a whisper and her breath fanned his face. Disappointed? As if. He hadn't thought it possible to be any more turned-on by her than before, but now... Damn, his dick was going to murder him if it didn't get to slide up between her thighs and fuck until it hurt.

"No."

"Mad?"

"No."

"Then what?"

"Horny."

Those green eyes widened, that sexy mouth formed a tight little O, but then she smiled, and horny wasn't all he was. Fuck.

Then she asked, "For me?"

Jaz was dumbfounded. How *could* she ask him that? He was standing there, holding her in his arms with her legs spread around him, and she was asking him if he was horny for her? He caught a glimpse of her eyes before she lowered her heavy-with-mascara lashes over them. There was uncertainty mixed with heat. That was all he needed to know.

"Yeah, baby. All for you."

"Is that why you're here?"

Her hands were restless against his arms and she was looking at his mouth. He found he loved holding her, cradling her, and what started out as gut-wrenching lust six months ago when she'd shown up at Katz was turning into something a whole lot more. Big, hulking, bald, tattooed, pierced ex-con Jaz was falling and falling hard.

He sure as hell hoped it didn't hurt when he hit the ground.

"Yes, that's why I'm here."

"Why?"

Jaz laughed and nipped at her chin, causing her to look up at him again. "This," he nudged her with his hips. "And..." He kissed his way along her jaw until he could tug at her ear with his teeth. She moaned softly and tilted her head. "Happy birthday," he whispered hotly, and she shivered against him. Damn.

Gonna. Be. The. Fucking. Death. Of. Him.

"Jackie told you?"

He nodded and nipped at her chin again, sliding his tongue into the dimple. "She did." He might as well lay it all out. "Truth is I've had a thing for you since the first night you showed up at my table. She picked up on it. She thought you had a bit of a thing for me as well. So, here I am..."

"I do. She knows I do. I've told her. I can't believe I'm telling you. I never imagined... Y-you're my present?"

Her smile lit up the room. The words out of her mouth weakened his knees, reminded him once more of innocence, and made his dick even harder.

"I am. For twenty-four hours, I am all yours. We can do anything, go anywhere."

"Anything?"

Her eyes flared with heat and she shimmied in his arms, pressing down on his cock. She grinned at his strangled groan. He wasn't even sure he could get words to pass through his lips. "I take it you know at least one thing you want to do?"

"Oh yes. Is that... Is that okay?"

So bold one minute, so shy the next. The blush that covered her cheeks showed even under all the makeup. "Damn, woman. I'm harder than a pole and you're asking me if it's okay to fuck?"

She ducked her head against his shoulder and laughed while nodding. A pinch on her ass had her yelping and lifting her head enough that he could capture her mouth again. Tentative for less than a moment before her tongue was between his lips and she was stealing his breath. Her arms around his neck, she pressed her bra-covered tits against his chest. Even through that layer and the layer of his t-shirt, he could feel her nipples, hard, pointing.

Jaz pushed away from the door. He walked, hobbled, stumbled as best he could to the nearest table. She lifted her mouth from his, and he allowed her to slide down his body. Those damn boots, those sexy-as-all-hell boots brought the top of her head to his shoulder where otherwise her head would fit perfect in the center of his chest.

"Turn around and put your hands on the table. Push your ass back toward me."

She did as he told her, slowly pivoting on one chunky heel, flipping her blonde hair, sending him the sexiest "Come and get me, big boy" look he'd ever seen. His jeans were unbuttoned and his cock was in his hand before she could get into position good. The woman wanted to fuck on her birthday and he was more than happy, more than willing to oblige her every minute of the next twenty-four hours.

"Bend over more, rest your weight on your elbows." He inched the skirt up over her hips with his free hand, baring her ass to his view for the first time. He ached at the sight of the lace panties she wore. He wanted to rip them from her body. "Are these special?" he asked, tugging at the waistband.

"No."

"Good. Look up in the mirror."

She did and their eyes met. He smiled and tugged sharply on the crotch of her panties, ripping a hole in the lace. The green orbs widened and he smiled while watching her. The color darkened as they started to dilate, and his fingers found her sex. And damn, she was wet, soaked inside as he parted the lips and delved deeper. A moan escaped, but she never looked away. His gaze was held captive by the hunger and arousal he saw staring back at him.

Her lips were swollen, both sets, and he parted the lower ones with his thumb to stroke her clit. His fingers were thick and he slid a second one inside her, stretching her, and slowly began to drive them upward, hard and steady.

The heels of her boots and her bent-over position had her at just the right height for him to thrust forward, for him to —

"Jaz, please... Do it. Make me..."

His fist tightened on his cock in anticipation. "Make you what?"

She pushed down on his hand, bore down on his thumb and rocked back on her heels. "Come."

"Not until I get inside you." Even as he said the words, he curled the two fingers inside her against the soft pad of her G-spot and rubbed. Her breath caught and her knuckles turned white as she pressed her hands into the table.

"Please. I'm ready. I can take it, please..."

"But maybe I'm not ready," Jaz teased.

"Liar. Fuck me."

Dear god. "Say it again."

"Liar."

"Goddamn wench." He tried to smile but it came across as something more feral and grimacing. "Say it."

"Fuck me." She rocked herself on the invading digits and he let go of his cock long enough to reach up and pop the hooks on her bra. The straps immediately slid down her arms.

"One more time. Say it, Mandi." Jaz stepped in closer, his cock brushing against her ass, sliding down toward her pussy, and as he pulled his fingers out, he drew some of her wetness across the crown. He bit back a curse of his own and touched the head to her newly vacated opening.

"Fuck. Me."

She settled farther back on her heels and impaled herself on the first half-inch. He'd have let her keep going if she'd had something to hold on to, but she didn't, so he gripped her hips, pushed forward, and her feet hit the floor again as he sank fully inside her. The lace of her torn panties added another bit of sensation to his already sensitive cock shaft, and the sight of it made his mouth dry.

Their groans, grunts, moans and sighs echoed off the concrete walls. He pulled back then pushed in again, letting go of her right hip to reach under her. She lifted and his palm closed over one of her large, oh so fucking perfect tits with the pebbled nipple tormenting him. He wanted to taste it, roll it around his tongue, nibble on it with the edges of his teeth. He wanted to grip, tug and twist it. He wanted...so many things.

Jaz leaned down over her back, pumping his hips against the softest, most-incredible out-of-this-world ass, driving his cock deep inside the hottest most divine pussy... He kissed along her shoulder, licked up her neck, and she turned her head just a small fraction so he could place a kiss on her cheek. Their eyes stayed locked in the mirror and she smiled. He answered with one of his own while dropping his other hand down between her legs, his big fingers reaching for her clit.

"Do you need this? Do you need this in order to come?" he whispered into her hair.

"Yes. Always."

"Then give it to me."

Her eyes flashed with a hint of laughter. "But... But it's my birthday."

"So. What? You think I should give it to you?"

"Yes please."

He rubbed circles around the little button, drawing moans and pulling gasps from between her lips. He lifted and watched his cock as he pulled back with his hips then watched it disappear inside her again. They were both soaked with her juices. Every time he pulled out, more pooled inside the ripped crotch of her ruined panties.

"Now that you brought up things that should be given to you on your birthday, you know what that means don't you?"

"No."

The thought alone was going to make him come. "It means..." He leaned down again, pressed his mouth to her ear, pulled down on her clit, and whispered, "A spanking."

"Ooohhh."

She shook her head at the same moment her pussy started to spasm against his cock. She moved against his thumb and forefinger violently, nearly dislodging his cock, biting her lip and letting out only a small whimpering moan as the orgasm quaked through her.

He couldn't hold out anymore either. The sensations, the feel of her, the sight of her all contrasting differences to what he was used to seeing when he looked at her, the words "fuck me" from her lips, the fact that he was actually with her, inside her, playing with her, touching her was all too much in the face of her coming all over his dick.

He let go of her clit and held her hips as he slammed into her hard and without mercy. The sweat that had been beading on top of his bald head started to slide down the sides of his face and the back of his neck. He worked her pussy hard, rode her from behind for every ounce he was worth, pushing her up on her toes then pulling her back down on those goth-looking fuck-me bootheels.

She was his fantasy, his goddamn dream, and then he was coming. He pulled out just as the streams of ejaculate started up his cock. All over the back of her already destroyed panties, all over the underside of her denim skirt, he came.

His grunts of pleasure were incoherent, and the blood pounding in his ears was as loud as it had been the second he'd seen her when he walked into the room. She was gonna kill him with lust. And he couldn't think of a better way to go.

"Did you mean it?"

Her voice sounded very far away, given the buzzing in his brain. "Huh?"

She giggled. "Did you mean it?"

He couldn't think straight, much less string two words together, and she was giggling at his answer. Jaz took a deep breath then another and still a few more before he started to calm. "Did I mean what?"

"What you said about birthday spankings."

He met her eyes in the mirror again, and for a moment couldn't figure out what the look in hers was. Fear? Excitement? "Maybe. Why?"

"No reason."

"Liar." He stepped back and tucked his cock back in his jeans. "Can you stand?" He offered a hand and she took it, holding on tight, letting him pull her up. She started to wobble but he caught her around the waist and tugged her around to face him, holding her against his chest. It was the perfect opportunity to tilt her head up and plant a kiss on that lovely mouth. She hummed and smiled.

"Jaz?"

God but he loved hearing his name from her lips. "Hmmm?"

"I'm starving."

* * * * *

Mandi dried her freshly washed face and looked into the mirror above the sink. She was naked save for her bra, hardly able to believe Jaz was there, standing on the other side of the room, waiting for her. She could hardly believe he'd just taken her from behind against one of the tables the other girls used to put on their makeup. She could hardly believe she'd admitted to crushing on him and that he'd admitted the same thing...

Turning forty wasn't so damn bad after all.

"So, where do you want to get something to eat from? Here?"

Jaz's voice curled in her belly, warm and sexy. She'd never come across anyone like him before. He was a huge brick wall of a man, covered in tattoos, looking every inch like a man who would just as soon rip someone limb from limb as to look at them if they crossed him wrong. He had good friends, a couple of businesses, and Jackie thought the sun rose and set with him.

"No, not here."

She remembered being a little afraid to talk to him when she first met him. He looked as though he hated her on sight, but then he'd watch her intently with lust burning in his dark blue eyes. Her own reactions bothered her a little at first too. Every time she saw him, she wanted to climb up his large, solid body and never climb down. She wanted those strong arms around her, that deep voice rumbling through him into her, his lips on hers, his penis easing the ache inside her. And it all made her shy around him for fear she'd blurt out her feelings, her desires.

All that changed the minute he walked into the dressing room. He was hers for the entire twenty-four hours of her birthday. She was going to have to hug Jackie for making the move it seemed neither Jaz nor Mandi were going to make on their own.

"Then where? It's not like we've got a huge selection of places that are open after midnight here."

Mandi pulled a black sweater and a pair of jeans out of her bag, along with a new pair of panties. She always carried a duffle with her when she went to work with a change of clothes inside. Tonight she was doubly grateful for it. After snapping the jeans and pulling the sweater on over her head, she slid her bare feet into a pair of glittery flip-flops, grabbed her purse, her duffle now filled with her work clothes, her boots and her wig, and walked back out to the main area of the room to a waiting Jaz.

His gaze took her in from head to toe, stopping in the center of her chest at the v-neck of the sweater. She hadn't put any more makeup on, just a light tinted moisturizer and a little dab of lip gloss. It really wasn't until right then, standing in front of him for the first time without her boots, that she realized just how big a difference there was in their heights. He dwarfed her, and she inwardly grinned at the odd picture they would make being out together.

"Pancakes."

He raised his eyes to meet hers, one dark brown brow lifted in question. "Pancakes?"

Mandi nodded emphatically. "Yes. One of my favorite foods in all the world and a tradition on my birthday."

"Well then, if it's pancakes my birthday girl wants, then it's pancakes she shall have."

He stepped back and opened door for her in a grand gesture, sweeping his arm for her to walk out ahead of him. She couldn't help or stop the smile, knowing she must look goofy with it plastered on her face from ear to ear, but she didn't care. She also wasn't going to touch his comment, wasn't going to ask about the possessive word "my". She was just going to enjoy the unbelievable reality of having him all to herself for a while when she hadn't for a second imagined he would be interested in her.

Once in the hallway, she turned away from the noise coming from the front of the building and slipped out the back entrance to the employee parking lot. "I'll take you around to your car and I guess... Do we want to take one car?"

"Yeah. You can leave yours back here. Jackie'll make sure it's safe. I'll be your driver tonight." He took her hand and pulled her along after him. His long legs ate up the gravel lot, and it was all she could do to keep up, in flip-flops no less, until he stopped and lifted her in his arms much as he had earlier.

"Jaz, put me down."

"Nope. I like holding you and carrying you."

"I can walk."

"I know, but we'll get there faster if I have you like this. Besides, it makes my cock happy to have your pussy so near."

"Oh god," she groaned. "I can't believe you said that. Out loud. Outside." Mandi buried her face against his neck as he laughed. The sound vibrated through her and she laughed a little too. He was different than she thought he'd be—lighter, fun, easy to be around and not at all intimidating. Although the sexual side of him, the lust she'd glimpsed and briefly touched... She wanted more of it.

"I have a feeling there are going to be a few things in the course of the next hours that you won't believe I'd say or do or..." He pushed his face against her ear, sliding a hand down her ass and between her spread-around-his-waist thighs, cupping her and making her moan. "Make you do."

He came to a stop and removed his hand from her hot, moist, jeans-covered pussy. She wanted it back. She missed the heat from his palm mixing with the heat from her sex. And again, for a second time that night, he let her slide down his body until her toes touched the ground. He kissed the top of her head and took the duffle from her hand.

The car he popped the trunk on was a classic Dodge Charger, '72 or '73 from the looks of it. Damn and double damn. In awe, she walked around it, lightly dragging her

fingertip across the sparkling blue finish. It glittered in the moonlight with black gleaming wraparound pinstripes.

"You like it?"

"It's gorgeous, Jaz. What year?"

"'73."

"That's what I was thinking." He shot her a puzzled look but didn't question her. She loved being able to throw guys off with some of the inane knowledge of cars she had. She stroked the tip of her finger across the edge of the hood. "Did you do the work yourself?"

"Uh yeah. Most of it. Belonged to my foster dad and he'd always told me he wanted me to have it when he died. He kept it in amazing condition, and when he passed, I found out he'd meant what he said and left it to me. It meant everything to me, that even after all that went down between us, he kept his promise, kept his word. I knew how much he loved this car and finally realized too late how much he..."

His voice trailed off, and Mandi thought it best to let that emotional subject go. She understood what he was talking about, that thing called unconditional love. She'd had it from her parents and her brothers. She knew Jackie had it for him and...

Yeah, she needed to let that idea go for the moment too. She turned her attention, and his, back to cars. They were safe there. And with sex. Most definitely with sex.

"My one brother has a Charger too. White with reflective red stripes that fade into orange then into yellow. It has a white leather interior, dash included. My other brother has a Mustang. Red with white leather and chrome."

He beamed at her. From ear to ear, with a boyish charm and enthusiasm that transformed the usual hard countenance of his face and melted her heart. So much for not going there. Would he catch her when she fell or would he hightail it out of there, leaving her to introduce her heart to the pavement?

"That's awesome. They still have them?"

"Yeah, both. They run a garage and work on these old muscle cars nonstop."

"Amazing. I would love to see their shop."

And she'd love to take him, love to see the looks on her brothers' faces when she introduced them to Jaz. Neither would be able to match him in bulk or height, and they'd be hard-pressed to pick on her in front of him. She bet he had a protective streak as long as he was tall. But introducing him meant more than a one-night birthday present of sex and pancakes and more sex.

She let his comment go.

"I love older cars like this. The paint is custom and new. The seats are original, but I've had them recovered. I had new carpet installed, and had the dash along with the rest of the interior completely overhauled."

"What about the engine?"

"Restored. She runs like a dream."

Mandi looked inside the passenger window then did a double take, finally looking up at him. "Did the clothesbasket of towels come standard with the Charger back then or is this something new Dodge is doing for their classics?"

"Smartass." He slid the key in the lock and popped it, opening the door. He reached in and pulled the clothesbasket out, walking around to deposit it in the trunk as well as her duffle. "They're from the shop," he offered by way of explanation. "Someone has to wash them."

An image of him folding laundry flashed through her head, and for some reason she couldn't seem to wrap her brain around it. She'd love to witness it though.

"Get that smirk off your face and get in the car."

Mandi bit back a grin and slid down into the soft-as-butter leather seat. Jaz was in her face before she got the seat belt pulled around her body. He was even larger in the close confines between her chest and the dashboard. He licked at her lips before pressing forward with his tongue. One hand cupped the side of her face while the other

was braced somewhere out of sight. When he lifted his head, he was smiling. "You're a dangerous little minx, you know that? Inside Katz, you tempt and tease with that sultry voice, those expressive eyes and your curvy body that just won't stop and give a man a break. And underneath it all, with your blonde curls, your sweet, soft face... You're still anything but innocent. I'm looking forward to stripping you down until there's nothing but your hot-and-bothered soul begging me to sate your hunger."

He was gone and had closed the door before she could say a word. More than his body was big. His presence, mental and emotional and most definitely his sexual presence, was as big as his physical one.

He got in behind the wheel and started the car. "Pancakes?"

It took her a moment to gain her wits about her again. "Yeah, I think I'm gonna need my strength."

"No doubt."

Chapter Two

Sitting across from her, watching as she dug into the plate of plain pancakes, licking syrup from her lips and the fork she held, Jaz was seriously regretting the choice of going out for food. He could have taken her to his place and made her pancakes. He could have had her naked in his kitchen, well, naked but for those boots. Holy fuck those boots. Settling her up on his countertop, licking her, eating her, fucking her with his tongue.

Hell, he'd love to take her on the hood of his car, on the trunk, in the seats, up against the door. And while he was torturing himself with images of her in all manner of sexual positions, she was calmly eating her birthday treat. Or one of them.

He wanted the next piece of meat she put in her mouth to be his cock not another piece of bacon. He wanted the next drink she took to be from his cock not from the glass of milk in front of her. He wanted the next wipe of her mouth to be from his tongue not from the napkin in her lap.

He wanted to be the feast she devoured.

The hots he'd had for her all these months hadn't been tempered at all from their fuck earlier, not that he'd expected them to. He'd spent too long imagining her dark hair spread out on his pillows, those boots hooked around his hips, those blue eyes staring up at him, except now that he'd seen her without the costume, those hots were threatening to boil over. She was so real in all her reactions, so honest in her actions, and he'd finally tasted those lips he'd wanted for so long. He'd held her delectable body against his and she fit so perfect. And the spark in her eyes when she —

"What's wrong?"

Jaz wasn't sure he could find his voice. "Nothing, why?"

"You're staring at me like... It's the look you would give me at Katz, like you wanted to eat me instead of the food you were ordering."

"Like it or hate it?"

She blushed again and his dick hardened more than he thought possible.

"Kinda like it."

"Good." He took a bite of his own pancakes, blueberry with blueberry and maple syrup but minus the whipped cream. He needed to occupy his mouth so he didn't pull her across the table and scare the crap out of the waitresses and other customers.

He still watched her though, never taking his eyes from her face. He couldn't get over how much he loved seeing her this way, without all the makeup. Even at one in the morning she looked so beautiful, so fresh, and she was so wrong. He wasn't looking at her like he did at Katz on the nights she waited his table. No, he was pretty sure the look in his eyes was much stronger now, much darker, much hotter. He wanted to eat her alive, for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Then he wanted to snack on her, nibble at her lips, at the insides of her thighs, behind her knees and delve into the secrets of her bellybutton.

He needed something else to focus on. "How long have you and Jackie been friends?"

"We met in high school, were sort of friends. I helped her out with her homework and when I went off to college, she..."

"She went into adult entertainment," he finished for her. "She was supposed to be in college too but started dancing instead."

She nodded. "Yeah. She liked it though. She didn't mind being a stripper, being a dancer. She liked the money, liked the girls, liked the attention. And she had a great body, different than most. She had a figure, which made her even more money."

Jaz knew and understood all that. He'd hated Jackie working the pole, doing private parties. She'd been his sister, for shit's sake. His foster sister, but the feelings

they had toward one another were no less strong than had they shared the same blood. She'd loved what she did though, and she'd never regretted the choices she made. Hell, Katz was a booming business. She had plans to expand into the online market and was even considering a second location somewhere in Georgia.

"She talked about you, you know. In letters. While I was at college and she was working, we wrote letters a lot. She said you made her promise to take self-defense classes. I'm really glad you did. I worried about her."

Jaz shrugged. "I wasn't around to protect her, to stand up for her. I needed to know she could defend herself."

"That's what she said. That's why she did it, why she promised."

"Did she tell you why I couldn't be there for her?"

"Yes."

And she took that moment, that one serious moment to use that tongue of hers on her fork. It snaked out and licked at a drop of the liquid sugar before it could drip back onto the plate. His dick ached painfully under the table. He had to force himself not to reach down and adjust himself. The damn woman was hell on him.

"It doesn't bother you?" he managed to croak out.

"What? That you were in jail for a bit? No. Should it?"

She just kept licking syrup from the tines. Heaven help him. She dipped the fork in the syrup on her plate then lifted it to her mouth and slowly licked at it, front and back, repeating the process a few more times, making it really difficult to resist the urge to pull her across the table and shove his cock to the back of her throat. "You need to stop that."

Wide eyes flew up to lock with his gaze and that damnable blush was back. She took one more long, slow lick of the piece of silverware before putting it down. The tip of her tongue took a swipe of her lower lip before retreating back behind her teeth.

"Sorry."

She didn't look one bit contrite, so he wasn't sure he believed her on that. "How many candles?" There, he was changing the subject to something very, very safe.

"It's not polite to ask a woman her age."

"I didn't. I asked how many candles. You could say one, two, thirty."

"Uh-huh." She smirked and he winked. "Forty."

"You're shittin' me."

"No."

"You don't look a day over thirty. Not that I've ever been good with guessing people's ages, but you don't look any older than me."

"How old are you?"

"Thirty-five."

"Well, I'm not too much older than you and Jackie is my age."

"I know, but she doesn't look it either, and if I had to guess her age, I wouldn't think she's forty."

"Forty is the new thirty, you know."

"Age really doesn't mean a whole lot to me."

"What does? And if age doesn't mean anything to you, why'd you ask?"

"So, I'd know how many birthday swats you get. And at the moment? You. You naked means a whole hell of a lot to me."

The last blush hadn't completely faded before another took its place, and he couldn't stop himself. He pushed his plate then hers out of the way and leaned across the table. His intent was to give her a small kiss, but the second his lips touched hers, his tongue was inside her mouth, tasting sweetness that had him on the brink of a whole lot of improper public displays of affection.

When he pulled back, her eyes were dilated and her pulse was visibly throbbing in her neck. Reluctantly he nudged her back down and he sat, both frustrated and pleased

with himself at the reactions he could cause in her. "Can't very well do that here in the pancake place though."

"Then I guess we need to go."

Her words caused his dick to jerk in his jeans and Jaz couldn't blame it for wanting at her as soon as possible. He looked around the very busy and full-for-one-thirty-in-the-morning restaurant and lifted his hand when he spotted their waitress. She nodded and would eventually make her way over to them.

Mandi picked up her fork again and was drawing designs in the syrup with it. He could think of a lot of things he would like to do with the syrup and her body. He cleared his throat and took a sip of his water. For not even trying, the woman had him so horny, so damn ready to fuck on the table. He couldn't remember the last time a woman had made him feel that way.

Every time he saw her at Katz, he was ready to throw down and fuck her. Right now, in the middle of a family restaurant, was no different. There weren't really any families to speak of at the moment, but... Even he didn't know what it was about her that had him so tied up in knots, but that was quite all right with him. He didn't need to know. He just needed to make sure she never forgot him, never forgot anything he did to her earlier, or would do to her later. He wanted to imprint himself on her body, on her mind, eventually on her heart.

"You really don't care about age?"

"Nope. It's just a number."

"Good. I have a confession to make then."

"I'm all ears."

"I've been crushing on you since my first night at Katz. I argued with Jackie when she wanted to seat you and your friends at one of my tables."

"Why were you arguing?"

"Lust at first sight, I think. I don't know. I saw you walk in behind Vinter and Dallon and..." She shook her head and looked away. Hell if he wasn't going to make her finish that statement.

"And?"

"I can't say it."

"Oh yes you can. Spill it."

"No, I can't."

He couldn't tell if she was just being a tease or if she really was embarrassed because she still wasn't looking at him. "What do you want to do after we leave here?"

That got her attention. She turned back to him. "Ummm...you."

"Good. I wanna do you too. But we're not leaving here until you tell me what comes after the 'and'."

Her mouth dropped open for a split second before she closed it. "That's not nice."

"I didn't say anything about nice."

"You make me wetter than any man I've ever known."

"Is that what —"

"Yes. I creamed my panties when I saw you. Felt them get all wet as I watched you looking around. Every other guy paled in comparison. I told Jackie I couldn't wait on you. That I couldn't talk to you. She just smiled and said she understood."

"So she was matchmaking from the very beginning."

"Yes."

"We need to go. Now." And lucky for them, their waitress chose that moment to stop and drop off the check. Jaz didn't hesitate in picking it up. He tossed a few bills down for the tip and held his hand out for Mandi. When she took it, he pulled her up against him. "And we're even too."

"What do you mean?"

"You give me more hard-ons than any woman I've ever known."

The surprise in her eyes and the smile that crossed her lips tried his composure. There was no doubt he was going to screw her, fuck her, make love to her for the rest of the night, but if she kept looking at him as though she'd just won a big prize, he was going to take her up against the wall right outside the restaurant.

"Stop it. Put that look away." Jaz took her hand and tugged her along after him. He stopped at the front counter and waited as the cashier rang up the order and took his money.

Mandi put her hand on his shoulder and leaned up against his side. One of her nipples rubbed against his arm, and he had to bite back a groan. "Keep the change," he ground out around a smile that probably scared the crap out of the poor woman and steered Mandi out the doors. "You're such a tease."

He pressed her against the trunk of his car, ground his cock against the V of her thighs and crushed his lips against hers. He worked at her mouth, which still tasted of syrup, and gripped her body in his hands, itching to get his dick inside her. He wasn't going to be able to wait until they got back to... He didn't even know where the hell they were going. He just knew he needed someplace close and private.

"In the car. Get those jeans down to your ankles and spread those sexy legs when you get in. Now."

"Jaz, I..."

"Oh hell no. Don't pull that innocent shit with me. You've been doing it all night, one minute the hot-as-fuck vixen, the next the sweet girl next door. I'm on to you and I'm going to be in you." He propelled her to the passenger side and opened the door for her. "Now, Mandi. I can't hold on much longer, and I want that heat, that wetness on my fingers."

"That's likely not going to help you hold on."

He was going to lose his mind. He popped the button on her jeans and slid the zipper down. "We'll see, won't we?"

He ushered her into the seat for the second time that night and shut the door, watching as she lifted her hips and did exactly as he'd asked, except... Goddamn she pushed her panties down too. She spread those lush thighs apart as far as she could and turned her head to look up at him, that sexy smile on her mouth.

She was going to leak all over his brand-spanking-new vinyl seat.

His cock was going to leak all over the inside of his jeans.

He slid across the hood of the car in his best Bo Duke imitation and was behind the steering wheel within seconds. He slid the key home in the ignition at the same time he leaned over in Mandi's direction. "Kiss me."

And dear god did she. She ravished his mouth with the most blatant kiss, holding nothing back. She was having sex with him through it. Her tongue thrusting, her lips devouring. The scent of her arousal filled the car, and his hand found its way to her sex, to the juices that were going to make his fingers and his seat all slippery.

She raised up to his touch but didn't stop kissing him. Instead, she filled his mouth with moans and whimpers and pleading. Her hips pumped into his hand as he explored her, the folds of her pussy opening for him, inviting him in. And explore was just what he intended to do.

He cupped her and his middle finger slid easily, effortlessly between her ass cheeks she was so wet. Pulling back from the kiss, she opened her eyes at the same moment she gripped his wrist and held his hand against her.

"Make me come again, Jaz."

She breathed the words while her other hand grabbed the front of his t-shirt.

"We're still in the parking lot, baby. You sure?"

"I'm sure. I don't care. You say things that just turn me on so much that I can't think straight, can't want anything but to come apart with you. I don't care, just please..."

As she talked, she kept up the motion of her hips. He felt her bear down, press against the pads of his fingers and he pressed back. She shuddered and whimpered but

she never lost eye contact with him. He kept watching her eyes, her face, but his peripheral vision was sharp. Only a few people walking through the small lot had glanced their way, but it had been nothing more than cursory as far as he could tell.

Her hand on his wrist tightened. "Hold your fingers still. Let me..."

He did as she wanted, and it was the best hand job he'd ever received. It wasn't her hand on his dick but it was a hand job just the same. His hand, her pussy, and the job of making her come.

She masturbated herself on his fingers and her own. She guided his hand where she wanted it, when she wanted different pressure in a different place. Through the soaking-wet lips, inside her tight cunt, onto her hot and hard clit, she used his whole hand to bring herself off with.

"Jaz..."

"I'm here, baby. Let go. I'm right here..." And he was. He wouldn't miss it for the world.

She pushed into his fingers and together they got her off. She moaned and bucked and worked one of her fingers under his, rubbing for all she was worth.

"Put your fingers inside me. Fuck me with them."

He'd had no damn idea she was this kind of woman. So utterly open and scorching in her sexuality.

Jaz dropped two digits inside her, and before he'd thrust them three times, she was coming on them. She literally dripped juices down his palm, his wrist, and likely to the seat below.

She didn't scream or yell. She squealed a little, moaned, and the groan that left her throat was like that of a wild animal. In pain or in heat, he couldn't tell, but the muscles that squeezed and pulsed and caged him inside her channel...

Then she kissed him. Through the last stages of her orgasm she kissed him. Just as hot as she had before but softer, more intense.

"Damn, woman," he whispered against her lips, flexing his fingers inside her.

"Damn, man," she whispered back, pushing against his hand.

"Damn straight."

He was still fondling her. As he drove to wherever it was he was taking her, he was still fondling her. Soft flicks of his fingertips over her clit, long, slow slides through her labia then dips inside her to draw out more of her wetness and moans.

Nothing was said in the car. Nothing needed to be said. She said it all with her legs spread and his hand between them, cupping her, holding her, tempting and teasing her.

She didn't feel a stitch of embarrassment or shame either. All she felt was heat flowing through her, lust, need unlike anything before. Never wanted it to stop or go away. She wanted to always feel this hunger, this tension right on the edge of her nerves, simmering, waiting for just the right moment, for just the right touch.

Jaz pulled into a parking spot in front his tattoo shop. She'd never been in it, but she'd known what he did for a living. She knew a lot about him from Jackie.

Jackie. She was the absolute best, *best* friend a girl could ask for. Mandi would have never gone after Jaz on her own, and she had to thank Jackie for knowing that.

Mandi looked over at him when he turned the car off. "You really are turning out to be the best birthday present I could have ever wished for."

His brows quirked up and he waggled them. He smiled and leaned over, kissing just under her earlobe. "Good. I plan to keep showing you that for the rest of the night and day. I plan to be the best fucking present you've ever gotten."

Fire curled in her belly at his words, at his breath fanning her skin. For the first time since they'd gotten in the car at the restaurant, he removed his hand from between her thighs. She didn't like it. She wanted him back.

"I'll let you unwrap me when we get inside. Kick off your flip-flops and shuck your jeans and panties, sweater and bra too."

"Outside?"

"No. You can strip inside the car here then you can scurry your sexy little ass across the sidewalk to the door."

"You want me to walk across the sidewalk naked?"

"I do."

"Jaz..." she started to protest, but he wagged a finger in her face that had her biting back a laugh.

"Oh no. Don't even, Mandi. Not with the way you got off a little while ago. Don't even think about pulling that shy act with me again."

"But that was different."

He had her. He knew he had her. *She* knew he had her. She'd strip naked and walk proudly from the car into his shop so long as he walked with her. She'd had all sorts of naughty fantasies about him since meeting him at Katz. She hadn't known what kind of woman he was attracted to, but she knew *she* wanted him. He had tattoos, and the most interesting and amazing blue glass tunnels in his earlobes in which the holes had been stretched to accommodate them. His head was shaved and he usually came in wearing baggy shorts to the knees or cargo pants and high-top Converse. Each time she saw him, he wore a different color and she didn't think she'd seen him wearing the same pair twice. His t-shirts were always just as colorful as his shoes too. But it was his bright eyes that drew her in, his full mouth, easy laugh. His big muscles didn't hurt either. He had the size that would make a girl feel safe, protected, adored.

He was the kind of fantasy she'd always hoped for but who never looked her way. Now he was, thanks to Jackie bringing them together all those months ago and right now, tonight.

And he wanted her to walk about thirty feet. Naked.

"Do it, Mandi. Be even naughtier and get naked for me."

For him. Anything at all for him. She slid her feet free of her shoes and then worked them free of her jeans and panties. The sweater and bra were next, and though she probably should feel a little self-conscious about being naked with him, she didn't. He wanted her. Curves, pudge and extra padding. He wanted her. His eyes said it. His mouth said it. His actions said it.

Right then, in the way his breath stopped and his gaze raked her body from head to toe, stopping at different points, like her breasts. The longer he stared at them, the harder her nipples became, as though reaching out for him. Every part of her was reaching out for him, wanting him, wanting his touch again.

"Ready?" He didn't say anything, just kept looking at her.

"Jaz?"

Slowly those brilliant eyes looked up into her face. "I've never seen anything more beautiful than a woman so open and willing."

"It's my birthday. I can be and do anything on this one day."

"More than this one day, Mandi."

She wasn't going to ask what he meant by that. She was afraid to. She just wanted to enjoy him for as long as she was allowed. "I'm ready to open my present, Jaz."

He winked. "I'll meet you at the door."

Together they exited the car. She walked up to the door of his shop leisurely, as though her heart weren't pounding in her chest and her pulse racing, as though she hadn't a care in the world. She heard his car door shut and then he was there behind her, pulling her into his body, and she couldn't stop the moan from escaping her lips.

The feel of his hard, completely clothed body while she was naked was more of a turn-on than she'd ever imagined it would be. She rubbed herself against him, and when she went to turn around, he held her tighter. "No. Stay just like that but stop moving or we'll be fucking out here. I'm pretty sure Mac wouldn't let me get away with that."

“Who’s Mac?”

“Cop on duty tonight. We need to get inside. He should be making a pass soon.”

Something about being caught teased her, but not enough to try it out right then. She didn’t want to spend the rest of her birthday in jail. The arm that wasn’t holding her against him reached out and slid the key home, turned it to the left with his wrist and slid the lock from its mooring. He nudged her inside the building and had her backed against the door with his mouth on hers.

For a split second, she wondered how this was much different than being naked outside when anyone who passed by could see her bare ass through the glass, but she quickly didn’t care. Jaz’s mouth devoured hers much as hers had done to him in the car. She couldn’t get enough of his tongue, his taste, his feel, and then he was licking a trail down her throat, the center of her chest, and when she thought he might take a nip at her nipples, he just kept going. He teased her bellybutton and then he was there, between her legs, sucking mercilessly at her mound. She looked down to find his eyes were trained on her face. She didn’t think there could be anything more arousing, more erotic than that predatory, all-encompassing possessive stare.

Slowly, oh so slowly Jaz pulled away, sucking on her flesh until the last possible moment. She’d always wondered about those sucking devices, the ones meant to make the clit bigger, more sensitive, but she knew nothing could compare to a hot, wet mouth on a hot, hard bad boy.

He knelt on the floor and took his shirt off then settled himself closer to her. He had tattoos everywhere and one nipple pierced. She wanted to explore those designs on his body but pushed the thought aside as he slid a hand under one of her thighs. “Over my shoulder.” He reached up and locked the door. “Brace your hands on the bar at your back and put your legs over my shoulders.”

“Jaz, I...”

“Do it, Mandi. I’ve got you.” He flicked the tip of his tongue over her clit and her knees trembled. “I’ve got you,” he whispered against her sex.

And she knew he did.

With his help, she lifted first one leg over his shoulder and then the other. He slid his hands up her backside and squeezed, held her and feasted on her like a starving man. How long had she waited for a man like him to go at her like this? How long had she waited for *this* man to go at her like this?

She was still just as wet as she'd been in the car. His breath on her heated skin... She couldn't do anything but enjoy it. She couldn't let go of the handrail at her back. She couldn't grip him or hold on to him. She could only rock her pussy on his mouth and fuck the tongue that was fucking her.

"Jaz..."

He nodded his head and caressed her with his whole mouth. He breathed her in and then blew out the breath, heating her further, sending goose bumps up and down her body, making her shiver in spite of the incredible fire flowing through her veins.

The slide of his tongue from her sex down and back toward her ass made her shudder. He teased her with the tip then licked back toward her clit until he took the little button between his teeth and nibbled, bit, tugged. He soothed it with a long, slow laving.

She couldn't tell if he was teasing her or just trying to draw it out, but she needed that orgasm. She could feel it, could even see it hovering just on the outer edges of her vision.

He let go of her clit and blew a hot breath out against her. "You on the Pill?"

"Wha—" Mandi licked her lips and tried to find the right answer to his question. Her brain was all fogged from being on the verge of her third come of the night, something she hadn't experienced in longer than she cared to remember. The Pill. He was asking about the Pill. "Yeah. Yeah, I'm on it. Jackie required it of her girls who handled customers."

He went at her clit again, driving her, pushing her, taking her over. Then he backed off, giving her short, sharp licks. "You've got the best fucking pussy. Anyone ever tell

you that?" He punctuated his words with stabs of his tongue...teasing, tormenting stabs of his tongue making her quake and tighten the backs of her thighs on his shoulders.

"N-no."

"Damn dumbasses. It's so sweet, so pretty and smooth. I love that you've got it all smooth. God, it's so fucking sexy, and you're so fucking wet."

He took another swipe at her, dragged his wicked tongue from stem to stern then moved. He lowered her legs, slowly, one at a time, keeping his hold on her. She was shaking with arousal, and without him she couldn't stand, couldn't hold her own. "What the hell are you doing? Jaz... I need..."

He stood up against her body and was so close she could have been wearing him as a second skin. "I know what you need. I need it too. I need that hot cunt coming all over my dick."

He turned them and walked her backward to the glass counter then turned her at the last moment. The friction of his clothes rubbing her naked body was... "Please..." she whimpered again.

"I'll please you, baby. Lean over the counter, up on the balls of your feet, use it to hold you up until I get inside you. Oh yeah, good girl. Hold on to the far edge over there, push that ass at me. Damn, Mandi."

He nudged her legs farther apart and whispered for her to bend her knees. It was like some obscene squatting exercise and the exposed feeling she had... It was different than before in the dressing room. There she'd been in boots and just bent over, the table and his groin and her heels all making it the perfect height for him to slide inside her. This was just open, and she was naked and dripping her own juices. She loved and hated that he could see everything. She wanted him so much right then that the hate was more a love if he'd just fill her.

His zipper sounded amid their heavy breathing and then he was there, lifting her up off the floor as he pushed up inside her pussy. He slid her up farther over the glass

and raised her so her knees cradled his hips. She'd never been taken this way, from behind, ridden up off the floor, held hard while he drove inside her.

"Fuck, woman, you're so tight." His hands didn't let go of her, and the angle he held her at was going to make her come without any clit action. She breathed a sigh of relief, of frustrated arousal, of eager anticipation for that floating feeling.

He didn't stop or slow down, and the movement slid her back and forth on the counter, her own perspiration acting as a lube for the slide, the pull.

It was almost a mirror of earlier, but it was still so different and she wondered if sex with him would always feel that way, same positions, different sensations.

"Can you come like this? I've got you, I swear, and, Jesus, you're... Can you?"

Mandi nodded, pretty sure if he kept up the pistoning of his hips, the thrusting of his cock against the place inside her that had her tingling, that yeah, she could come.

"Good. Then come. Come on my cock again, birthday girl."

That was all she really needed. His voice around her.

Her body shuddered and she could feel it travel all through her muscles from her feet to her neck. The minute the spasms started, he tightened his hold on her hips and fucked her hard into the glass box she was holding onto.

The orgasm kept going, kept flowing through her, something else she'd never experienced before. The harder he fucked her, the more drawn out the sensations from inside her body, the more she fell over the cliff.

"Fuck it, Mandi..."

He pulled out, thrust back in. He did it again, sharply spearing her, and he stilled, pulling her off the countertop, wrapping his arms around her middle and her chest, holding her down on his cock with her legs still folded backward on his thighs, and he grunted as he came.

He kissed her hair, her neck, her shoulder. His harsh breathing sounded loud in the empty shop, and it was a damn good thing he was holding her because she couldn't have stood on her own. Again.

But he took care of her, just as he said he would.

He pressed her against the solidity of the glass once more and pulled out of her, letting go of her legs and easing her down until she was on her feet. When he turned her in the circle of his arms, she clung to him, weak but no less sated and satisfied than before they started.

He picked her up and held her, her toes tickling the hairs on his shins, and gave her the softest, sweetest kiss on the forehead. She squeezed his shoulders in her hands and felt a smile on his lips.

Oh yeah, best damn birthday present ever.

Chapter Three

Jaz held her in his lap and she was curled up like a kitten across his thighs in one of the chairs used for tattoos. It was attached to the floor in such a way that they'd have to rip up the tile flooring to get the chair out. The shop had a variety of seating for a variety of positions and tattoos and now, well, he could definitely see other possibilities for them.

He liked having her in his arms. She protested more than once that she was too heavy for him, but he just laughed at that. He'd held her more tonight than he'd ever dreamed he'd get the chance to in one lifetime, and they both knew she wasn't too heavy for him. She might not be the long-legged skinny pole dancer or the short tight-bodied bartender, but she wasn't fat. She wasn't anything other than perfect for him. He knew fucking her wouldn't break her, that he could be on her body and it not hurt her. He was hard and she was soft, and he couldn't think of wanting her any different than the way she was.

And yeah, even though she had hips, a bigger-than-a-size-eight ass, big tits and a slightly rounded belly, she was incredible to him. She was made the way a woman was intended to be...full and curvy. He didn't want to see his lover's bones or rib cage. He didn't want to feel caverns and hollows under her skin when he held her. He wanted to feel flesh, soft and giving. He wanted to feel her weight on his body, letting him know his woman was there.

Mandi was all that and more, and once he'd convinced her to settle in his lap, she'd found comfort in his arms the way he'd always imagined a woman might, the way for six months he'd imagined she might.

"Do you enjoy working at Katz?"

"It's been okay. I've been able to help out my friend and try something new for a while. It's the first time waitressing for me. I've found that the lower cut the shirt is or the higher hem of the skirt, the better the tips."

He unconsciously tensed under her. "How long are you going to keep working there?"

"Why?" She licked his chin and sank her teeth into it, just enough for him to feel the edges. "Jealous?"

"Not a bit." Just a tiny white lie. He had no problem with her dressing in a skimpy outfit while she served food. The problem he would have was if someone else touched her, fondled her, insisted on meeting her outside work. But she and Jaz, they weren't there yet, and for all he knew, after today was over, they wouldn't ever be there.

And he wasn't going to think about it. "No. Just curious."

He stroked her hair, sifting his fingers through it, letting it fall back down against her naked shoulders. She smelled of sex, of him, and he liked it. A lot. He wanted to coat her body in his come, rub it into her skin, become a part of her inside and out.

Okay, so maybe he was going to think about it. But only a little.

"I have a boutique handmade jewelry business. I started it a few years ago when handmade things started coming back in popularity. Working at Katz has allowed me to build my business online with a better web presence, and I now have some steady work coming in. A lot of people like custom work, custom designs."

"Do they design it or do you when they want custom?"

"Sometimes me, sometimes them. I've met a few really good, independent designers and artists at trade shows who help me out when I need it. Working for Jackie has paid the bills, and she even had me design some custom chains for nipple rings."

"Did she now?" He wouldn't mind seeing Mandi's nipples pierced with a pretty chain hanging between them, one he could tug on until she gasped from the mingled pain and pleasure.

"Yes she did. Some of the dancers and waitresses and even customers have given me business I wouldn't have otherwise had. It's been a good experience."

His hand rubbed her arm, her shoulder, her hand, down the side of her neck to the top of her chest. He caressed her and she mewled just as a little kitten might have purred at the attention. She relaxed deeper into him too, and though he wasn't sure she was aware of the move, he was. Her weight was now more even between his chest and legs. Her hip pressed into his cock, and if she noticed the way it nudged her, she didn't let on. That was fine with him. He liked this. There was no pressure to have sex again, but they would. A ton of it. Until well past dawn. It was enough though, in those moments, in the dark of his shop, to sit with her, learn about her, connect with her in other ways.

"Other than the chains, what do you make?"

"Hmmm. Most just want earrings, bracelets, normal things, but made just for them. I've done a few chokers, necklaces."

"Can you make other things?"

"Like what?"

She was teasing him with her fingers, running them up and down his side, his shoulder, his arm, his hip. She was exploring him. He knew because she hadn't once looked up at his face. She was so focused on his body, on touching him, feeding her crush on him.

She'd tugged more than once on the barbell in his nipple, sending a jolt straight to his cock, and she'd given a lot of silent, almost reverent attention to the tattoos on his shoulder and chest. He had no doubt she'd give the same attention to the ones on his back if she could reach them.

Her crush on him. Damn but that was so unbelievably hot. It made his heart race and his mouth unable to stop smiling. The sex with her was intensified by the crush they shared on one another. It was something he couldn't remember feeling for anyone

else, but then the Mandi he'd known for all this time wasn't exactly the same Mandi he held in his arms. She was more and she was knocking his entire world right on its side.

"Like nipple rings? Belly rings? Tunnels for ears?" Even as he said the words, he wondered if she would ever get her nipples or her bellybutton pierced. Or...her clit. He had to bite back a groan at that thought. He knew she wouldn't do something like body piercing to make a statement but rather because she'd simply want it. He didn't imagine Mandi did anything she didn't want to do. But she'd be even more scorching, smoking-hot with piercings. Her already sensitive nipples and clit would become even more so.

"I suppose I could. There's a glass bead making series of classes being offered in a few months that I want to take and a metalsmithing class coming up too. Right now I just embellish, add to and enhance. I take wire and shape it. I add to chains and links. I use beads and crystals, but I want to actually learn how to create more unique designs, my own signature designs. And the more I learn how to do on my own, the more custom pieces I can make for people."

As she talked, her face became animated and her eyes brightened. She had that same spark, that same fire for her art that he had for his. "I understand. I'm the same way. I'm always wanting to know more about tattooing, about the new technology in the business, about new ways to make the ink come to life. I don't want it to simply sit on the skin, I want it to move, to reach out and grab you."

"Kind of like 3D?"

"Yeah, exactly. A whole new dimension of art for the body. Some people can do it already. I've got some contacts with artists who can, so like you, I'll be learning new things to give my customers more custom work."

Her eyes became serious then. They were still animated but had turned serious and heated. "Maybe..."

She licked her lips and Jaz bit back yet another groan. She pressed herself closer to his body, though how she could get any closer was beyond him. She was already so deep under his skin... "Maybe what?"

"Maybe we should consider working together some."

As soon as the words were out of her mouth, she ducked her head under his chin and he had to force it back up so he could see those eyes again. "Yes. We should. You should make some things for the shop, and I should mark you." *As mine.*

He didn't say those last two words. He just let them hang in the air silently before he lowered his lips to hers and slipped his tongue between them. In his arms, she shifted, turned, cupped her hands around his neck and took control of the kiss.

She was all over him, straddling his lap in the chair. There were armrests, which were movable, and he lifted them so she had more room without any limitations. She pressed her belly against his with his hard cock sandwiched between them.

"Is it okay?" she whispered against his mouth, her lips still in contact with his, their breath shared, pussy and maple syrup scented.

"Everything is okay. You can have anything you want, everything you need."

One hand left his neck and wedged its way between their bodies to wrap around the thickness of his dick. Dear god.

"This." She squeezed him, emphasizing what "this" meant. "I want this. I've wanted this — you — for so long. Months. Weeks. Days."

She smacked a kiss to his mouth then slid from his lap to kneel on the hard floor. He started to offer her a towel for cushion, but then his cock was between her lips, behind her teeth, against her tongue, and he completely forgot every thought inside his head save for the one that said the second best place on Earth was Mandi's mouth.

She moaned in pleasure and it was the most exquisite feeling bordering on painful. The head was still sensitive but the shaft was raring to go, jumping against her tongue and his balls... Damn, they wanted attention too.

She opened her mouth and drool slid down to the base of his cock. She immediately wrapped her hand around him again and used it as lube to jack him, to stroke him, to drive him insane. With her other hand, she formed a tight circle in the nest of hair surrounding his cock. The palm around the shaft... She used it to pull the skin taut in very slow motion.

Over and over she did this, switching hands, switching fingers, using her spit to lubricate his cock when she needed to. She kept the flesh tight, tingling, every so often licking at the crown or dropping her head to lick at his balls that were beginning to ache.

"Where... God, woman. Where did you learn to do that?"

"Do what?" she whispered against his pole, sending shivers all up and down his body. He was about ready to crawl out of his skin, the sensations of her hands and mouth on his privates was mind-blowing.

"Do that. What you're doing. Torturing me." He could hardly keep still, could barely stay upright in the chair. He pulled the arm rests back down and gripped them with his hands until his knuckles turned white.

"Is that what I'm doing? Torturing you?"

She engulfed his cock between her lips, right to the back of her throat, and he all but shot up out of his seated position. The edges of her teeth touched him, her cheeks squeezed him, her throat sucked him. He wasn't sure he would survive the sheer and beautiful hell of her oral work.

She wasn't slow. She wasn't exactly what anyone would consider graceful about it. She was dirty and hard on him. She slurped at him, breathed around him, ground her upper body against his legs, and let his dick go with a wet plop from between her lips before she took him again. Only this time, she suckled the head with tenderness, with such perfect gentleness while pumping his rod with the circle of her forefinger and thumb, and that one little move, those two digits were enough to drive him crazy.

"Goddammit, Mandi," he managed to grind out from a clenched jaw.

She fondled his nuts, stroked his cock, sucked on the tiptop, and he just couldn't take it anymore.

He sat up on the edge of the chair, grabbed her hair in one hand and pushed her head down until she'd swallowed him whole again. He used his other hand to tug and pull on one of her nipples. He bucked his hips and fucked her mouth, felt the reflex at the back of her throat and used her hair to pull her off his dick. He gave her a second to catch her breath before he pushed her back down. One. Two. Three hard thrusts up into the mouth of the woman kneeling at his feet, between the lips of the fantasy he'd had for months, and he unloaded on the back of her tongue.

"Swallow it, Mandi." She nodded as best she could while working to take every drop from the cock filling the second of her three holes. God, he couldn't wait to take her ass later. Just the thought of it sent one more stream of come up from his balls into her belly.

He shuddered as the last bit left him and he let go of her hair and nipple. He slumped back into the seat and the most beautiful eyes in the world looked up at him. There was no shyness, no coy looks, no shame, no uncertainty in her gaze. It was nothing but lust, hungry and sexy. She licked at her lips and laid her head on his thigh.

"Thank you," she whispered.

"For?"

She tilted her head and smiled up at him. "For letting me blow out my candle."

Jaz laughed so hard it hurt.

* * * * *

Mandi sat backward in the chair, straddling the seat, and reclined so she was in a near prone position on her belly. She hadn't planned on a tattoo for her birthday, but then she hadn't planned on Jaz for her birthday either.

They'd agreed on her shoulder for the placement and he'd asked her to trust him as to what the design would be since she couldn't seem to decide on anything herself. She

hadn't said she wanted to think about it, but he knew if he gave her a chance to do so, she'd likely never do it. He was so in love with ink and what it looked like on a body, on the beautiful canvas of skin, that he had a hard time understanding others who didn't see the same beauty in it. His words.

He'd delivered on every other promise he'd given her that night, and she'd found she couldn't deny him this. To give her something she'd have forever, something she'd always remember him by, remember this birthday and how very special and sexually awakening it was. And, man oh man, was it awakening her. She was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, she was so fully awakened. She —

"Owww."

Behind her, Jaz chuckled. She didn't know how long he'd been working on her, how long she'd been tense through the stinging pins and needles, how long she'd been trying to relax and breathe every time he told her to, how long she'd been riding the wet vinyl of the seat.

"You need to stay still."

"I'm trying."

"I know. I love that you're aroused by this."

"I'm not."

He slid a gloved finger under her ass to tease and stroke her. "Liar," he whispered.

She groaned her humiliation at being caught. At the same time, there was no way she could hide it. The entire shop smelled of sex and orgasms and the best birthday she'd had in years. She groaned again when he wiped her juice off on her butt cheeks and went back to tattooing.

"Maybe it's not this that has me so aroused."

"No doubt it's not the only thing."

"You think you might have something to do with it?"

"Only a few inches worth."

It was her turn now. She giggled into the headrest her arms were wrapped around.
“More than.”

“Good then.”

Silence ensued for some minutes while Jaz worked. There was something profoundly intimate about getting a tattoo. She’d never given it much thought before obviously or she’d probably have gotten one. Though, at the same time, she’d have probably chickened out as she’d tried to do tonight.

It was permanent. It would always be there. And though she’d made the final decision, fully understanding, fully comprehending what she was doing, she wasn’t usually impulsive.

She smiled. But then, the last few hours had been anything but usual and every bit of it entirely impulsive.

Glancing around the small tattoo parlor, Mandi took in everything she could from the small bit of light coming from the lamp shining on her back.

It was a quaint shop with three mirrored stations, like one would find in a hair salon.

“How many people work with you?”

“One other full-time employee and three part-time. There’s always three people here at a time. Some tattoos take hours and I want someone to be available at all times to help other clients.”

“Makes sense.”

There was a large picture window at the front of the store with the name of the business emblazoned from one end to the other. On the wall beside the front door hung a corkboard with instant pictures pinned to it. She assumed they were images Jaz or his employees had taken of freshly inked tattoos.

While she'd never been in a tattoo shop, she hadn't expected one to feel so open and comfortable. She always thought to the uninitiated that the atmosphere would be intimidating and maybe during regular business hours it was, but right then, no.

"Why were you in jail?" Jaz tensed behind her and she turned her head to look over her shoulder. His normally open gaze was now slightly shuttered. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked."

"No. It's fine."

"You don't have to answer. I know it's personal."

"Yes, but then everything about the last hours we've spent together has been personal. Do you really want to know?"

"Yes," she answered without hesitation.

"I snuck out of the house one night. I'd gotten into it with my foster dad and he pretty much grounded me. I was just barely eighteen and way too big for my britches. I went over to my buddy's house with the intention just to hang out for a while. We were broke as shit and he wanted beer. There was only one option left. Stealing that beer and the packs of smokes all those years ago was about the dumbest thing I'd ever done or ever have done since. What really cinched it for the cops was that my buddy was packin'. I didn't know but they didn't care."

"Did your friend go to jail too?"

"Yep. He got a couple years more than me and we've not spoken since."

"I'm sorry." She didn't know what else to say. She definitely hadn't done anything like stealing, never even so much as thought about shoplifting. She couldn't imagine what it must have been like for him.

"I am too. I lost a few years that way, but from the second I got in to the second I got out and every second since I've tried hard to walk the straight and narrow. As far as illegal activities go. I don't want to screw things up because they're really good for me.

I'm part owner in a couple of businesses, I've got good friends and a job I just lucked into being damn good at."

And you've got me. She didn't actually say those last words but they fairly shouted inside her head. She'd like to see him again, after her birthday. Jaz had admitted to having a crush on her, wanting her for as long as she'd wanted him, so maybe...

"You ready to see your ink?"

"You're done?"

"I am. It's just a little thing. I told you I wasn't going to do anything fancy or big. Just a little reminder."

He got up from the stool he was sitting on and offered a hand to help her up. "Let's get you up out of that chair and over to the mirror."

"I think I'm stuck."

"Not all of you is stuck. Just use your legs and slide off."

"Ass."

"Yes, and you've got a fine one."

She smiled in spite of herself and slowly slid backward off the chair. Her inner thigh muscles were sore from being stretched and used in ways that weren't normal for her, and she had a hard time walking without Jaz's steady weight next to her.

He turned her around and thrust a handheld mirror out to her. Over her shoulder, in the reflection, she saw the fresh tattoo. A small white and light purple swirled birthday candle with a tiny yellow flame. Under the candle was the date and beside that was the name *Jaz*.

She couldn't have been more in love with it. "Th-thank you. It's... I don't know what I expected, but it's perfect." She raised her gaze to meet his and found him smiling from ear to ear.

"I'm glad you like it."

"I love it."

"Good. Birthday girls should always love their birthday presents and get immense joy from them."

Her eyes were drawn down his body, settling between his legs. "Immensely joyful is definitely one way I would describe this birthday."

"Damn, woman. Can't you stop thinking about sex for one minute?"

There was no heat in his words and she grinned. "Damn, man. Evidently I can't."

"Damn good thing then. Let me get that cared for with a little ointment and a square of plastic wrap. I'll get things cleaned up and squared away then we can see about some more. Sex, that is."

* * * * *

The baby oil dripped down her back and flowed in a stream into the crack of her ass, making her squirm. Some slid down the insides of her thighs, but some pooled between her legs as though waiting to be rubbed into her sex. Jaz's hands were there then, massaging her clit with the fingers of one hand and massaging the tight ring of her hole with the fingers of his other hand. The dual sensations had her teetering on the brink of yet another orgasm.

She'd never had so many in one night and she wasn't sure she'd be able to walk if she had any more, but she couldn't escape them, didn't want to escape them. Jaz's touch, his nearness turned her on and kept her engine revved.

"Just a little more, darlin', and I think we'll be good to start playin'."

"We haven't been playing?"

One finger at her asshole pushed inside. It was tight, but as much as she'd been expecting pain, she felt nothing but a slow-building pressure.

"Not like I want to." He pulled out and slowly pushed back in, rotating his finger. "Ready for a second finger?"

"Yeah."

There was pain, a slight pinch of pain as he added another finger to the first. More baby oil eased the passage and the pressure began to build again. The more he fucked and stretched her ass with the two digits, the more she began to moan and push back for more.

"Too much?"

As the question filled the air, he began slipping in a third finger and she choked on her answer, forgetting what it was she was going to say, think or do. The fingers on her clit kept manipulating, and the fingers in her ass pulled out then sank back in with a twist, sliding out, twisting the other way and sliding in.

"You okay? Is it too much? Does it hurt?"

"N-no," she choked out.

"You sure?"

He repeated the twisting motion, right then left, in then out. He tapped at the bundle of nerves between her legs until she quivered.

"I can't, Jaz." She thrust her backside at him. "I can't hold on."

"Of course you can."

Mandi shook her head. "Please."

"Impatient girl," he sighed. "Only because it's your special day."

He stopped playing, and all she could feel was the heaviness of impending orgasm, the need crawling through her system, the heated anticipation of what was to come.

She turned her head and looked over her shoulder. He was standing behind her, his eyes closed, his breathing hard, his face scrunched in a kind of pain mixed with ecstasy as he stroked his cock. She watched as he poured baby oil in his palm and coated the crown and shaft. When he opened his eyes and stepped closer, Mandi did her best to stay focused on his face, but the second he started filling her ass, she closed her eyes and moaned.

"Breathe," he panted.

And she did. She was. She tried.

She felt the pinch this time the farther he pressed inside, but it wasn't nearly as bad as she thought it would be, given his size. She sent up a silent prayer for sex toys and lovers who'd enjoyed anal sex.

"Try to relax, baby."

Yeah, okay, easy for him to say. Then... Then his finger was back on her clit, rubbing with steady insistent pressure, and she concentrated on the pleasure coursing through her.

"That's it. That's right."

His words sounded as though they were being uttered through cut glass. His voice was raw and jagged, rough and hot. That turned her on as much as the manipulation of her pussy.

He stopped moving. His large legs were spread open over hers, which were only spread as far as the chair would allow. Her arms were wrapped around the headrest again and she was on her knees and he was deep inside her ass. Dear. Heaven.

He kept up the play on her clit, his fingers wicked and wet and determined.

"You're tight, hot. Damn, it feels as though you might just choke the hell out of my dick."

She wanted to ask him if that was a good thing, but she didn't think she'd be able to form the words so she didn't even try. She wiggled her ass, squeezed her inner muscles tight around him, and the growl that came from him was all the answer she needed.

He pulled back, and she hissed at the friction and tug of her flesh. Then she gasped and reached for him with her behind when he pushed inside again.

"You're gonna come for me."

Mandi nodded and rolled her hips in time with his strokes on her clit. He held himself still inside her ass and let her move, gyrate, hump, thrust and rock within the

confines of the reclining tattoo chair. He didn't hurry her, didn't rush her, and she let go, focused on the orgasm she craved at his hands.

And then his lips were at the middle of her back, feathering kissing caresses across her skin and she sighed on a moan. He kissed the edge of the plastic that was plastered to her skin. "I love my ink on you. Your skin is so creamy, so smooth, the perfect canvas for art and expression."

His voice, the rasp of his arousal heating her flesh and sinking beneath to flow through her blood had her jerking against his fingers. It was time.

He knew it too. His fingers dug in against her clit and her breath hitched in her throat as the first ripples let loose. "Oh. God."

"C'mon, baby, more..."

More she gave too. She didn't know where it came from, the more, but it was there. His answering groan was the proof.

"Fuck yes, Mandi." He started moving, short thrusts forward and short retreats back, and his fingers never let up on her clit. "Your ass is tighter, clutching my dick like a goddamn vise."

And through it all, she never made a sound, her scream lost somewhere amidst the flash of overwhelming emotion and thrill of his attentions.

His fucking of her ass sped up and he drove hard into her, jacking his cock inside the confines of her anal channel. If he wasn't careful, she might come to want this again and again and, oh dear god, again. The pad of a finger stroked softly over her clit before he pulled his hand from between her legs to grab at her hip.

His thighs pressed on her legs. "Close your legs a little more."

She did and the muscles once again protested at having been in one position too long but soon recovered and settled.

"Yeah, good. So good." Then he was out of her. Then he was back in, all the way to the hilt, hard enough that his balls smacked against her sex. "I'm gonna... Here it..."

He never finished the words, instead grunting through his orgasm and the small tremors that still racked her body in the aftermath of her orgasm, turned up again, answering the throb of his cock as it pulsed come inside her.

He lowered himself onto her back, his arms wrapping under her belly and chest, his breath harsh against her neck, his heartbeat pounding through to hers.

"Best fucking night."

"No doubt about it, but..."

He rested his chin on her shoulder but lifted most of his weight off her body. "But?"

Mandi laughed as she formed the words in her head to come out the right way through her mouth. She turned her head in his direction and was rewarded with a soft kiss at the corner of her lips. He was rough, tough and tumble, a little gruff too. She was so head over heels for him it wasn't funny. Sh—

He pinched her nipple. "Owww."

"Tell me what the 'but' is."

What had she been thinking before? She thought for a moment... "Oh right. If we do this again, can w— Ouch. Dammit." He pinched her nipple again, this time a little harder and kept up the pressure, the slight pain, and damn if arousal didn't start weaving its way down her belly to her clit again.

"What do you mean 'if'?"

He sounded a little offended, and that hadn't been her intention at all. "Well, I didn't want to assume anything. It is almost dawn and..."

"Your birthday ends at 11:59 p.m. We still have hours and hours yet to spend together."

Technically he was right. "Oh well, in that case, every time we've had sex, it's been from behind."

He chuckled next to her ear and the sound was warm and sexy as sin. She could get so damn used to being around him, and she wasn't sure that spending the rest of the

day with him was the best idea even though she didn't want to spend her birthday any other way. "Yeah, it has, but can I help it that you have the sexiest backside? I used to watch you walk away from my table and get hard."

"I thought you were hard no matter if you were staring at my frontside or my backside."

He smacked her on the ass. "Brat." He kissed her shoulder and lifted the rest of the way off her body, slowly, carefully sliding out of her ass. "Stay put."

Moments later she heard water running and then there was warm, moist heat between her cheeks and legs. He again helped her to stand, this time tilting her face up to receive a kiss so sweet, her heart tightened in her chest.

"Now what was it you were saying before?"

Before? Yes, what had she been saying? Mandi had to think about it for a second again before her suddenly tired brain flitted back around to their conversation. She grinned. "I was saying, before you started interrupting me, that I'd like to have sex the next time looking at you."

"From the frontside, you mean?"

He was teasing her and she loved when he teased her. Hell, she was learning how much she loved when he did anything to her, with her, in her, on her. "Jerk," she muttered. "Yes, from the frontside."

"I want that too."

She tried to stifle a yawn but didn't succeed. The need for sleep was catching up to her. "I'm sorry. I'm not used to being up all night."

"Honestly, me neither." He nuzzled her neck and she shivered, snuggling closer to him. "Let's get out of here, get a shower and take a little nap."

"You don't mind?"

"No, baby, not at all. This way, I can personally attend to your tattoo." He winked and took her by the hand, leading her to the front of the store. He picked up his clothes

along the way and watched her as he dressed, smirking the entire time knowing her clothes were in the car.

“Damn man.”

“You know it.”

Chapter Four

The coffee woke him. He reached out and found emptiness beside him. How long had she been gone from the bed? Jaz opened his eyes to bright sunlight streaming in through dark purple sheers. He glanced around, slowly focusing. The walls of Mandi's bedroom were painted a very light purple, almost the same shade as the tattoo on her shoulder. He smiled at the memory of inking her. Had it only been a few short hours ago?

There were no pictures on the walls and the furniture wasn't overly girly, though the crystal drawer pulls and doorknobs gave him pause.

He stretched. The bed protested under his weight and his feet hung off the end. They needed to go to his place tonight to sleep.

Tonight. After 11:59 p.m. Would she want to spend the night with him? Would she want to see him after this? Because he sure as hell wanted to see her. He'd gotten a taste of his fantasy and he wasn't ready to give her up yet. They'd fucked, they'd played and teased, they'd talked, they'd shared pancakes. And she was making coffee. It was so much like dating that he was surprised at the lack of awkwardness. It hadn't been planned like that, nothing at all about the events leading up to him being in her bed had been planned. Everything just happened as though it were the natural order of things when he normally wouldn't believe in anything quite so evolved. Yet there it was. Being with Mandi was so smooth, so easy and so goddamn fucking arousing.

The way she walked, talked, smiled, laughed, moaned, gasped. The way she creamed so sweet and hot for him. The way she slid into comfort with her nakedness, with his. The way she fit against his body and the way she fit his cock... The word "right" screamed and blinked in blinding neon in his mind, and while part of him was hesitant to go there, to even consider believing such a thing, another part of him

couldn't help it. He'd not been searching, looking or thinking about finding a woman. His friends had found them in recent months, but though he was happy for Vin and Dallan, he wasn't in a hurry to meet anyone and had only thought of Mandi as a fantasy.

Then Jackie had called and revealed that she thought Mandi might have a little crush on him, that she didn't have plans for her upcoming birthday, and Jaz jumped on it. All bets were off. He was going after her and the timing, though he hadn't given it much thought at the time, the timing couldn't have been more perfect than a birthday. Jackie agreed and the plan was set in motion.

Except, instead of one night, he wanted to keep her.

His heart thumped hard at the notion, but he didn't take it as panic or uncertainty or fear. It was excitement.

Oh yeah, it was so on.

Jaz flipped back the sheet and slid his legs over the side of the bed. He stood, stretched again and padded naked into the bathroom. A few minutes later he emerged and considered pulling his jeans on but decided against it and went in search of his woman.

Possession. His. The thought thrilled him. He just had to contain his thrill long enough to let her catch up.

She stood at the kitchen counter. Or rather she was bent over at the kitchen counter. Her arms were crossed over one another on the tile with her head resting on them. One foot was crossed over the other and she was naked.

She wanted to have sex face-to-face, but how in the hell did she expect him to live up to his end of that bargain when she looked so delectable in her current position?

He couldn't decide if he should clear his throat to alert her to his being there or perhaps say hello quietly so as not to startle her. What he wanted to do was slide up behind her, run his hands up her sides and under her to cup her perfect, heavy tits in

his palms. He wanted to urge her to turn around so he could put her on top of the counter and slip his cock inside her while they waited for the coffee to finish.

And then he heard the snore. She'd fallen asleep. He held the chuckle inside and walked over to her. A light hand to her back and she didn't even alter her breathing. He'd never seen anything so cute.

He bent and picked her up in his arms, and she purred, curling into his chest. The coffee would have to wait. After laying her in bed, he pulled the sheet up over her and went to take a shower. He was one of those who once awake he was awake for a while. Mandi evidently wasn't and he'd worn her out.

The shower went further toward waking him up fully, and by the time he got out, he was hoping she was awake, but one look out the door... She hadn't moved a muscle.

He needed a change of clothes and to throw the towels in the wash. There were more than enough towels at the shop, and the load he had in his car wouldn't be needed for another couple of days, but he was also a bit anal, which usually drove everyone around him nuts. Why wait until the last minute when it could be done now? He got that part from his foster parents and part from jail. When either one said jump, they meant right then, not when he felt like it.

His jeans and t-shirt on, he hunted down his shoes in the mess of clothes at the foot of the bed. He didn't bother putting them on, just grabbed them up and went in search of a piece of paper and a pen. In a basket by the fridge, he found both. Jotting a note to Mandi, he made sure to tell her he'd be back after he ran home and then to Katz to pick up her car. It'd been sitting there all night and he didn't want to leave it the rest of the day.

He checked on her one more time to see if she was still sleeping, and sure enough, she was. Her face was pillowed under her hand, and that little snore curled warm and deep in the pit of his stomach. Unable to resist, he walked over and kissed her softly on her temple, brushed back her hair and simply stared at her. One night with her had flipped him inside out and he had to have more...

He grabbed the keys he'd seen her hang on the little hook by the door this morning and made a quick exit of her little house before he decided to strip and climb on top of her. The inside of the car smelled like her, like sex, like her sex, and his cock protested leaving the warm and very willing woman alone. The sooner he left, the sooner he'd be back.

Backing out of her drive, his first stop was his own place. It took less than ten minutes to get there, and not much more to change into some other clothes and brush his teeth, shave. On his way back out, he grabbed his bag of drumsticks from the spare room. He would need them later.

Next stop was the shop. He needed to check in and remind them he wouldn't be working today. He might own the place, but usually when the door was unlocked, he was there. Not today. Once he was sure everything was going well and that he'd not left anything out or unattended or disturbed when he and Mandi left earlier in the morning, he told his people he'd see them on Monday.

His last stop before heading back to Mandi's was Katz. He'd asked Dallan to meet him there to pick up Mandi's car and drive his back. Dallan's place wasn't too far from Katz and he had agreed to help out.

When Jaz pulled into the employee parking area, only two vehicles were sitting there. One was Dallan's truck, which no one could mistake around town with its flames of hell painted all over the tailgate. The other one though... "Shit."

"What's wrong?" Dallan asked, coming up beside him.

"She didn't say she drove a classic too."

"It's pretty."

Mandi's classic was a Ford Torino, '69 or '70, maybe even '71. Man, he hadn't seen one in such pristine condition in years. Her brothers must have done the work. If so, they'd done an amazing job. Light blue that it was almost white body with a midnight blue roof.

He pulled the keys he'd picked up from his pocket and unlocked the car. The unblemished interior was dark blue with wood accents, and the newest thing in the vintage car was the stereo system, though it appeared they'd found a faceplate that fit in with the rest of the retro dash.

He reached in to slide the seat back and then got behind the wheel. Damn. He was tempted to pop the hood to take a look under it, but he'd do that later. At the moment, he was more tempted to get back to the owner of the car.

"You sure you don't want me to drive her car back to her place?"

"Yeah. I'll trust you not to kill mine on the way."

"I have excellent driving skills."

"Uh-huh. Remind me to ask Mac about that."

"Screw you."

"Not on your life. Your girl over there, on the other hand..."

"No way. Don't even let her hear you suggest such a thing or she'll be begging me to take her someplace she can watch men get it on. No thanks."

"She still wearing you out?"

"Hell. Every chance she gets. Can't get her off me. She's turned into a damn nympho."

"Don't sound like you're tired of it either."

"Fuck no."

Dallon walked away, grinning like the cat that ate the canary, and Jaz closed the car door, cranking the engine, which hummed to life. He pulled on the old-time gearshift and put the Torino in reverse. It only took a little gas to get it moving, and once he pulled it out onto the street, it drove like a wet dream.

Then he heard the screeching tires behind him. "Shit."

* * * * *

Mandi stretched and rolled over. She slid her hand to the other side of the bed, only to come up empty. She opened her eyes, held herself really still and listened for any movement, any sound at all, any indication that Jaz hadn't left. She heard nothing.

Lifting her head, she moved the pillow he'd slept on out of the way and looked at the clock. Crap. No wonder he'd left. It was well after three in the afternoon. She'd slept the damn day away.

With a grumpy sigh, she crawled across the mattress, winced and got out of bed. A hot shower would ease the aches in all the places she wasn't used to having aches. She'd not had an all-night sex session in more years than she cared to think about, and the lovers she'd had prior to working at Katz and moving to the little town weren't the "let's go all night and sleep all day" kind. No, they were fun and some were quite creative, but they were usually asleep hours and hours before dawn. And... Wait. She looked down at the bed. How had she gotten there? She turned around in a circle, taking in the room, trying to jog her memory.

She'd gotten out of bed and gone to make coffee earlier. She didn't remember drinking the coffee or going back to sleep, so how...

"Dammit." She stomped into the bathroom and slammed the door in frustration. Jaz must have put her back in bed. She'd fallen asleep at the friggin' counter. What a delightful date she was turning out to be. Give her the best sex of her life all night, a sweet tattoo that she was already in love with, and how did she thank her amazing birthday present of a guy? She slept all day.

She turned on the water, and while she waited for it to heat up, she turned her back to the mirror and looked over her shoulder at the ink. The candle was so perfect, so very pretty and delicate. He'd added a swirl design, and the fancy script the date and his name were in was just so...

She was gonna fall so hard for him. There was no way to avoid it. He'd turned out to be even more awesome than she'd ever dreamed.

Stepping over the edge of the bathtub, she was careful not to get the tattoo wet, gingerly washing and rinsing every other part of her body. She'd have to wash her hair in the kitchen sink. After she was all clean and shiny and fresh, she would need to try to find Jaz. She owed him an apology for being so lazy when he'd planned to spend the entire day with her. If he could suck up being exhausted, so could she. It wasn't as if she couldn't find ways to keep herself occupied.

She shut the water off and pulled the curtain back. "Coffee," she groaned. She took a deep breath. It was close, fresh and... She stepped out, grabbed a towel to hold in front of her body and left the bathroom. She came to stop with a smile crossing her lips. Jaz sat on the edge of her bed, holding a cup of her very best friend in the world save for Jackie...coffee.

"I don't know how you take it," he said, nodding to the cup.

"Two tablespoons of creamer. It's in the door of the refrigerator." She stepped closer to him. "Jaz, I am so sorry I fell back asleep. I didn't mean to. I just... I'm surprised you're still here."

He set the cup down on the nightstand and took the towel from her fisted hands. He stood, dragging the soft fluffiness across her body, drying her skin, turning her on, making her feel more special than she probably deserved at the moment.

"Don't worry about it. You were tired. How long had you been up?"

"By the time we got into bed this morning, close to twenty-four hours."

"Yeah, no wonder you were so beat. Anyone would be without all the extracurricular activities we were busy with." He punctuated his words with a kiss to her neck, leading to more kisses down her spine until he was kneeling behind her, drying her legs and feet. He slid the towel up the backs of her thighs. "Bend over and spread your legs."

"Jaz..."

"Go on. Bend over and open your legs. Let me in."

She did as he said and then his mouth was there, licking up the inside of her thighs, teasing her by not touching her pussy. Her hands fisted in the sheet when that wicked tongue drove up inside her, slid out and tickled her clit, only to dive back inside. Back and forth between her clit and the entrance to her body he ate at her, sucked at the juices he inspired, and gave her the most exquisite, quick-to-flare-up orgasm she'd ever had.

With him, she was learning it didn't take much. All he had to do was touch her, speak to her, hell, even just look at her and she was more than halfway ready to come.

He laved the tingling button of her clit until she stopped quivering and sank to her knees. He pulled her back against him and simply held her for a few minutes.

"I went and got your car from Katz."

"You did? When?"

"While you were sleeping. I left you a note in the kitchen next to the coffeepot in case you woke up while I was gone. I didn't want you to think I'd left without intending to come back."

"How did you know where to find the keys?"

"I saw you hang them up this morning."

"Thank you. I appreciate it." She tilted her head up and looked in his face. "So you know what I drive now."

"I do. Man, she's a sweet car. I haven't seen one like her in such great condition in ages."

"My brothers did a fantastic job. My grandmother used to have one and when I saw this one, I bought it and my brothers fixed it up for me. It was my birthday present a few years ago."

"You seem to get big-ticket items for your birthday."

She lifted an eyebrow in query. "Are you a big-ticket item?"

"Have you failed to notice just how big I am? And no, I'm not talking about my dick, though it's nothing small either."

He tweaked her nose and then kissed the tip. The gesture was affectionate, sweet, tender, and it made her chest ache.

"Come on, get up, lazy bones."

"But I like it right here."

"Tough. I need to put some lotion on your tat."

She sighed and used the edge of the mattress to pull herself up. "I need to wash my hair anyway."

"Where? Weren't you just in the shower?"

"Yes, but I didn't think I was supposed to get the tattoo wet. I figured I'd wash it in the kitchen sink."

"Okay then. Let's go wash your hair."

"You don't have to help."

"Oh I know, but maybe I'd like to." He got down in her face until they were nose to nose. "In case you hadn't noticed, I really like touching you and I'll use any excuse I have to."

"Oh."

"Yeah. Oh."

"Okay, well, let me get dressed and you can help me wash my hair."

"You can do it naked."

"You're not naked."

"I'm not washing my hair."

"Perv." Mandi laughed, completely at ease with her nudity, his being fully clothed, and their light, teasing banter. There was no gonna fall because she was already so far gone for him. If she hadn't had a crush on him before, she certainly would have one by now. He made it so simple to like him, to want to be with him.

He licked his lips and thrust his hips at her. "Every inch, baby."

* * * * *

"You made all these?" Jaz called from the living room. He was flipping through a notebook full of pictures of jewelry.

"Yeah," she said from the doorway of her bedroom.

She'd been searching for a while for something to wear that wouldn't rub on the candle tattoo. She'd put her hair up in two little clips and she looked amazing. Except she was still topless.

Jaz pointed to her bare breasts. "You going like that?"

Mandi put her hands on her hips and pushed her shoulders back, thrusting her chest forward. Those tits stood out proudly, capped by the tightest, prettiest nipples. She shot him a smug look, full of female power and feminine knowing. "I might."

If his grin mirrored his thoughts... "I don't think so. I don't share." *Damn, man. Could you sound just a little more possessive?*

"Oh well." She shrugged and dropped her hands. "I don't either."

Not a problem with him. He didn't want to be shared with anyone. He had a feeling Mandi was more than enough to wear his ass out. She disappeared back into her room and he could hear her muttering about nothing to wear.

"How about this?" she asked, stepping back into the living room.

"This" was a black top. It covered her back to just under her shoulder blades, tied around her neck from the front while leaving a deep plunging scoop neckline. It worked. His dick said so. Though her being naked worked too. However, where they were going and what they were going to be doing, naked was the last thing she needed to be.

"I like it. Gonna wear those sexy-ass boots I can't stop thinking about?"

She laughed, and it sank deep beneath his skin. "Would you like me to leave you alone with my boots for a while?"

"Not unless you're in 'em."

"Hadn't planned on wearing those, no, but I do have another pair you might like just as much."

"Honey, any boots on you, any heels at all, and I'm a happy man."

She disappeared but returned quickly, carrying a pair of ankle boots, almost the mirror image of the knee-high ones he was so in lust with. Hot damn.

"You sure you don't want me to leave you alone with my boots?"

"No." Another laugh from her had him turning his back on her. He was ready to tackle her to the floor and feel those heels digging into his ass. Before the night was over, he was going to do just that. He went back to flipping through her notebook, trying to ignore the urge. "You do really nice work."

"Thank you."

"In all seriousness, you should consider making some things for the shop. I'd love to carry a display."

"I'll think about it. Especially after I take some of those classes I was telling you about. There's so much I want to learn, to expand on, to perfect, you know?"

She'd come to stand at his shoulder and her breath on his skin... Dear god, around her he was a walking hard-on. Her body was so close that the clothes she wore brushed against him and there was only so much a man like him could take.

"Yeah..." She placed a kiss between his shoulder blades and his words died in his throat.

"Do your tattoos mean anything?"

She'd dropped her hands to the hem of his t-shirt and was sliding them up along his back, lifting the shirt as she went. He swallowed hard and snapped the notebook shut. "Everything. They mean everything." Her tongue was licking in different places, and he couldn't help the shudder that went through him. "Each..." He licked his lips

and forced himself to keep his hands to himself, to let her explore his body as she wanted. "Each one tells a story."

"The bars down the center of your back?" She traced the lines from top to bottom with both lips and fingertips.

"Jail."

"Eagle on your shoulder?"

"Freedom."

"Music note? Self-explanatory, I guess." Her fingers moved to his side. "Is this...?"

Another breath shuddered through him. She was stroking the rainbow of intertwining colors. "Crayons. Yes. Love color. Tattoos."

"I love it, Jaz. And the design at the base of your back that travels?"

"Tribal." It did travel and she traced every inch she could reach without him turning around.

"Who did your ink?"

"The man who taught me. I met him when I was inside. He used to come with Jackie sometimes when she'd visit me. We talked quite a bit and he told me to look him up when I got out. I did. When I wasn't working at Katz, I was here in the shop, learning. I could always draw, always create, and so it kind of gave me a way to focus that. He was in a motorcycle accident and died a few years back. He left me his part of the shop. His partner didn't want to keep the business and I couldn't afford to buy him out on my own, but Vin and Dallan and I were already friends and we went in together."

"Good friends."

"The best. The cross of skulls on my right arm is for him."

She wrapped her arms around him and laid her head against his back. He covered her hands with his then slid them back and grabbed hold of her hips, pulling her as flush as he could get her. The feel of her warmth, her softness, her... Just her made him

ache, made him hard, made him want to simultaneously curl her into him and nuzzle her with all kinds of affection it was probably not manly for him to feel.

But the woman brought out all the naughty lust along with all the need to care for.

"I like your tattoos."

"Damn good thing 'cause they aren't coming off."

"Mmm. I really like the one that goes down your hip to your knee. The roller coaster. I'd like to lick that one."

Jaz groaned. The pain between his legs was becoming unbearable. His balls were no doubt purple by now, and though she hadn't meant to turn him on—or maybe she had. Hell, it didn't matter. He was hard and hurting and wanted to be so deep inside her...

"You ready to go?" How he managed to get those words to come out sounding normal, he'd never know.

"Yeah. Just gotta grab my purse. Where are we going? I hope what I'm wearing is okay."

He looked over his shoulder and watched her move around the room, turning on a lamp, picking her purse up from the table beside the door, checking her makeup in the little mirror that hung there. What she wore was, "Perfect."

She flashed him a smile so beautiful that more than his cock and balls were feeling the pain of torture.

"Okay then, let's go. I'm starving."

So was he.

Chapter Five

Mandi glanced around when Jaz pulled into the Katz parking lot. "What are we doing here? I don't work tonight." The lot was fairly empty save for a few cars she recognized, a few trucks she didn't and a few bikes she'd like to get to know really well.

"No, you don't, but... I sorta do."

She turned surprised eyes on him. "You do? Since when did Jackie hire you back on?"

He shrugged. "It's a special event. I won't be working long, and when I'm done, we can go if you want."

Uh-huh. "So let me get this straight. Jackie gives me the awesome birthday present of you and the weekend off, but then she asks you to work a special event?"

"Yeah." He pulled into a spot in front of the building and put the Charger in park. "Feel free to take it up with her."

"I will be happy to."

Jaz grinned across at her and got out of the car. He was acting a little weird, and truth be told, it was making her a little uneasy. He walked around and opened her door, helping her out, and kept hold of her hand.

His palm was a little clammy and there was a slight tremble in his fingers, but when she chanced a glance up to his face, it betrayed nothing. Yeah, something was going on. That uneasy feeling was churning in her belly and she didn't like it.

Jaz opened the door to Katz for her and followed her inside. It was dark, there was no sound, there were no people, no —

"SURPRISE!"

Okay, there were people. Lots of them. And lights and noise and... Her hands flew to her mouth and she took an unconscious step back and found the solid body of Jaz behind her. He wrapped an arm around the front of her shoulders and held her tight against him. "Oh god."

Mandi's heart skittered to a stop then picked up speed. A surprise party. For her.

"Gotcha."

Jackie and her megawatt smile had come to hug her, and Mandi wrapped her arms tight around her friend. "I can't believe you did this."

"I don't know why not. You've never had a surprise party and, well, now you have."

It was true. She'd never had one, and while a small part of her had always secretly hoped for one, she'd truly never expected one. Ever. "How long have you been planning this?"

"Since you said you'd come work for me for a while."

"You couldn't have known I'd fall for him."

"No, I had no idea you'd rather have a badass than a buttoned-up suit, but I should have. He was just the icing on the cake, so to speak, once I realized the attraction ran both ways."

Mandi looked in the direction Jaz had gone. As soon as Jackie had come forward, he'd squeezed Mandi and kissed the top of her head, telling her he'd be back shortly. He went off to talk to his friends and they were... She turned her attention back to Jackie. "What are they doing?"

"It's part of your surprise. You didn't know they had a band?"

A band? "No. I didn't know."

"Oh yeah. Jaz is their drummer. He's pretty damn good too. Hell, he's pretty damn good at everything he's ever tried. Creative little shit. No matter what it is, he can turn it into gold. He's got so much talent. He couldn't sit still when he got out of jail."

Between working for me and tattooing at the shop, there were still hours left in the day. Usually the middle of the night or the crack of dawn. I don't think he slept more than a couple hours at a time.

"He came to me a few months after he got out and said he would like to learn to play the drums. I bought him his first set, which we had to have custom designed because of his size, and I guess you could say the rest is history. He started taking lessons early mornings from the local high school music teacher, and after awhile, he was on his own with it. The teacher said he didn't have anything else to teach him. Jaz had the technique. He also has an ear that can hear any beat, any cadence, and play it after only a few bars of listening to it. About a year or so ago, he and Vinter and Dallan came up with the band idea. They're not bad for a garage band."

"I had no idea." He was a musician, a drummer no less. That explained a few things, she thought with an inner smile. It especially explained his coordination when he played with her body using both hands. How he could touch her with such finesse, with such precision. Just thinking about it, the way he could manipulate her responses...

Jackie was right. Jaz was a creative little shit.

"He's been fucking nervous too."

Jackie's comment drew Mandi's undivided attention. "Why?"

"Girl, he's got it so bad for you."

"Well, that's no reason to be nervous."

"I think for him it is. He might look gruff and mean, but he's a marshmallow inside."

A damn lusty-hot-as-fucking-hell-she-was-surprised-he-hadn't-melted-from-the-inside-out marshmallow. "I'm not sure he'd appreciate you saying that."

Jackie laughed. "No, probably not, but so long as only you and I know I said it, it's all good." She took Mandi by the hand and started walking. "Let's introduce you to a few people."

"Might be a good idea."

She was summarily introduced to Elise who was Vinter's girlfriend and Carrie who was Dallan's. Mandi had met both Vinter and Dallan over the past few months, but hadn't met the women in their lives. Turned out, Elise had just moved closer to the small town after meeting Vinter in his bar, or was it Dallan's bar?

"They all own it. Just like they all own the tattoo parlor. They split it three ways."

"Oh. Well, what does Vinter do if Jaz runs the tattoo place and Dallan runs the bar?"

The blush that covered Elise from the opening in the low-cut blouse to her sweet, heart-shaped face was priceless. And telling. Mandi couldn't help but blush herself, feeling the heat creep up. She couldn't stop herself from glancing around for Jaz. Her eyes locked onto his from across the room and how the hell she read what his look said, she'd never know.

He was in front of her before she caught her breath, and he didn't even give her the chance to excuse herself from the conversation she'd been having. He had her down the back hallway and his mouth on hers, his tongue between her lips, her body hiked up the wall and her legs wrapped around him...

Damn, but he took her breath away.

"You can't look at me like that," he growled at her.

"Like what?"

"Like you can't get enough."

"Well, I can't, but I didn't think that's what that look said."

"Trust me, that's exactly what that look said."

"Okay, so does that mean I can't look at you at all then? 'Cause I'm pretty sure I always look at you like I can't get enough."

Jaz laughed and thrust upward slightly, rubbing his hard cock against the crotch of her jeans. Damn they both had way too many clothes on.

"You're doing it again."

"Maybe you should blindfold me."

"Maybe I should. And tie you up."

Desire flowed like lava through her veins. "Maybe you should."

"I still owe you birthday spankings."

"Yes you do."

"Damn, woman." He buried his face in her neck and licked at the pulse throbbing there.

She quivered in his arms and rocked her hips. She wanted him. Now. Would anyone see? Would anyone notice? Would she give a crap if they did? "Damn, man."

"Damn, you two. We got a show to do for the lady. Let her down, you animal. You can maul her later."

They both looked up and found Vinter standing at the end of the hall. He was shirtless and his jeans rode indiscreetly low on his hips. He wore a pair of black boots, and had Jaz not been holding her up against the wall, she'd have certainly melted into the floor.

She'd known Vinter had tats but she never knew they covered him everywhere. At least everywhere she could see at the moment. They were so brightly colored and so detailed. Both his nipples were pierced and the man was nothing but pure walking sex.

No wonder Elise blushed the color of a fire engine when Mandi had asked what Vinter did. She'd meant for work though, but maybe that didn't really matter given the man's...magnetism.

Vinter winked at her, shot a look of knowing and a scowl at Jaz and walked away.

"Is it true what they say?"

"About what?"

"You know, about him. About all the piercings up and down his...penis." She whispered the last word, and it made her feel kind of naughty thinking about it, however brief and fleeting the thought.

"I am not discussing some other man's dick with you."

Vinter was out of sight, but she was still looking at the spot he'd vacated. "I was just curious. It's not like I can ask Elise about it."

"Oh, but you can ask the man you're sleeping with about it? Shit. And stop staring after him. Remember, girly, he's taken."

Mandi could barely contain the smile threatening to spill over her lips at the grousing from Jaz. As if he could doubt her lust for him. "I know he is."

"Well, then put your tongue back in your mouth."

She turned her head to look back at Jaz. There was laughter and heat in his eyes and not a bit of censure. "Why don't I put it back in your mouth?"

* * * * *

She tried to look as casual as possible when she walked back to the table. She wasn't quite sure she'd pulled it off, what with readjusting her top and bending over to tug the legs of her jeans back down over her boots. Most things were a little out of focus, and for a few seconds, all she could stare at with any sense of clarity was the backside of Jaz walking away from her.

"So, you get manhandled too?"

Mandi looked at Carrie and nodded. Was that the word for it? Did he just manhandle her? Because if that's what it was... She'd like for him to do a lot more of it. "It appears so."

"They seem to like doing that at the most inappropriate of times," Elise muttered.

"Speak for yourself. Anytime Dallan manhandles me is an appropriate time."

"You're as bad as they are."

Carried just smiled. Her face had that angelic look, but her eyes were full of wicked intent. "It's that church upbringing and all."

Elise snorted. "I'm sure it's more than that."

"I'll never tell."

Mandi watched the two women banter back and forth and laughed. It was good to be among friends, even though she didn't know they'd be friends, even though she had only met them a short while ago.

Jackie stopped at the high table they'd taken over and pulled up a chair. She nudged Mandi. "You having fun?"

"I am. Thank you."

"I'm not all to blame. Jaz helped. I called your brothers but they couldn't get away this weekend. Something about a car show."

"Yeah. It always falls on my birthday or on the weekend of. I don't get to see them unless I go to them. Besides, I'm not sure they're ready to meet Jaz."

Jackie looked her square in the face and Mandi fought not to squirm under the stare. "Are you ready for them to meet him?"

"I don't know. I don't know what's gonna happen tomorrow."

"You're both like blood to me."

"I know. I—"

And she was gone. Mandi followed Jackie's movement toward the front door of the building where she now stood toe to toe with a tall man in uniform. Cop uniform. Jackie's chin jutted out when the cop got in her face, the tip of his nose touching hers. When he stepped around her and walked away, Jackie stayed where she was, her hand covering her chest. Mandi started to get up and go to her, but that's when her friend came back to their table, more flushed and flustered than Mandi had ever seen her.

"You okay? Who was that? I've not seen him in here before."

"That's Mac."

"Oh." She didn't know what else to say and followed Jackie's gaze toward the stage. Mac had stepped up and was shaking hands with Jaz. He said something that made Jaz look up and right at her. Had Mac seen them in the tattoo shop after all?

"He plays rhythm guitar in their little band," Jackie informed her.

"Are you sure you're all right?"

"I'm fine. Mac and I have been at each other since I opened up."

"Then why haven't I ever seen him?"

"He usually comes in the back and we meet in my office. The dancers don't like cops hanging around."

"I can understand that."

"I'm good. I promise." She squeezed Mandi's hand and stood up. "Who wants a drink? On the house since it's my girl Mandi's birthday?"

* * * * *

A collective gasp went up through the ladies in the small crowd and an equally collective groan went down through the men when Vinter stepped up to a microphone.

A small smile played about Elise's mouth. Carrie's eyes nearly bugged out of her head. Jackie was glaring daggers at Mac. And Mandi just couldn't stop staring between the man center stage and the one directly behind him sitting at a drum set.

Vinter was still shirtless, and the ink covering his body just took her breath away. Jaz had shucked his shirt as well, and the muscles of his chest and those traveling his arms, his own inked skin... Her mouth was dry despite the glass of water in front of her. She didn't drink alcohol and she didn't have a taste for soda at the moment, so water was her friend.

At least until she'd looked up at the men onstage.

"Now, for those of you who don't know me and, well, if you don't, you should. My name is Vinter." He spoke with a huge grin on his face that was open and welcoming and entirely mischievous. People laughed and the men still groaned.

Elise leaned toward the center of the table. "The man's ego and sex appeal knows no bounds."

"Maybe you should put a leash on him," Carrie whispered, loud enough to be heard over Vinter talking into the mic.

"What fun would that be?"

"Hey, girls." He was speaking and pointing in their direction. "Got something you want to share with the rest of us?"

Three of the four women shook their heads. Jackie did nothing as she was still glaring at Mac.

Mandi hadn't been so embarrassed or had so much fun in years. It had been so very long since she'd had close female friends who were local rather than long distance. And the long distance one was Jackie. Most of her friends were actually business contacts and not people she'd had dinner with or a drink outside of a tradeshow hotel. However... Elise and Carrie, yeah she could see going out for pizza and a movie with them or just having them over for wine and girls' nights. She and Jackie had done that a couple of times, but Jackie was most often at Katz, so those girls' nights were far and few between.

At the same time, she didn't know how awkward it would be hanging out with Jaz's friends' girlfriends if the two of them weren't seeing one another.

"I think our birthday girl is off in space."

Mandi blinked and focused at the mention of birthday girl to find that everyone was looking at her. Okay, this was probably the most embarrassed she'd ever been.

"Ah, she's back with us. Missed ya, girl. Were you someplace fun?" Vinter was teasing her and it actually made the humiliation easier to take, what with his wicked smile and his even more wicked body half visible.

"Back to what I was saying... Mandi has been in our little community for a few months now and I think this plan was hatched the minute she got to town. Jackie had come to us, asking if we'd play for this shindig and, well, we optimistically said yes. We've not played in public for anyone before, but we don't sound like a bunch of screeching cats either. And who knew our man Jaz up here would take a fancy to the guest of honor."

Oh god, he didn't. Mandi buried her face in her hands, both cringing and laughing.

"Then again, who knew she'd take a shine to Jaz, but man oh man, if y'all had seen what I saw earlier between these two, you'd know they were meant to be."

"Remind me to kick your ass after the party."

Vinter laughed at the grouchiness in Jaz's voice and turned his head to look at his drummer. "Remind me to let you try." He looked back at the small crowd of people gathered. "He actually could kick my ass. Okay, so we have it on Jackie's authority that one of Mandi's favorite groups is Nickelback. And yeah, they kick ass too. We do a pretty decent job at covering them and Mac here doesn't sound half-bad so, without further rambling from me... Mandi, we wish you a very happy birthday."

* * * * *

"You okay?" Jaz wasn't sure about the look on Mandi's face at the moment. He didn't know if she was ready to cry, laugh or jump his bones. He brushed the hair from the side of her face and curled it behind her ear. "Mandi?"

She crooked her finger and he leaned down, thinking she wanted to whisper something in his ear. He was wrong. She wrapped her arms around his neck and took his mouth in a plundering kiss. She flicked the tip of her tongue between his lips until he opened.

The ravishing had him leaking in his jeans.

He stood up to his full height but she didn't let go. That was fine with him. He liked the way she unabashedly, unashamedly, openly clung to him and wrapped her legs around him when he lifted her. Damn, but he'd been holding her a lot the last twenty hours or so – from behind, from the front, against the door, against the wall.

Somewhere in the back of his mind he knew people were watching, and from somewhere far away he could hear the whistles and cat calls and whooping from the people left inside Katz. He didn't care. He didn't care about anything but Mandi and getting inside her, sleeping with her, getting through the night and starting fresh with her tomorrow.

He bit her tongue lightly. She retreated and raised her head. He understood the look on her face all too well right then. He knew exactly how she felt. "I need you. Right now. I want you real bad, so unless you want an audience, we need to get the hell out of here."

Her gaze roamed over his face, as though searching for something before she smiled and asked, "Can you walk?"

"Brat. I could walk with my dick buried so deep inside your cunt you felt it in your throat."

"Yeah?"

"Wanna try me?"

She seemed to contemplate it, the little wench. He squeezed her ass and pulled her even closer, both of them completely uncaring about their captive audience. He'd take her on the bar if Mac wasn't still there. He had no interest in getting them arrested for indecent exposure and lewd acts in a public place.

"Yes, but not here."

He feigned disappointment. "Damn. Okay. Wave to all your well-wishers." Instead she buried her head in his neck and squeezed her arms tight around him, shaking her

head. He just smiled. She was seductive and naughty and gave as good as she got, but evidently being confronted by her own very public display of affection brought out her shyness.

He tossed a good night over his shoulder and kissed Jackie on the cheek as she opened the door for him and his embarrassed piece of birthday goodness to walk through. "How the hell are you ever gonna go back in there to work after that little performance if you wouldn't even grin and tell them good night?"

"I don't know," she mumbled.

"You know they know exactly what we are going to do once we leave here."

"Yes."

"And you couldn't contain yourself long enough to get back to the car?"

"Obviously not. Complaining?"

He set her on the hood of his car and bracketed her between his hands as he leaned down, face level with hers. "Not a bit. You can jump me like that anytime the urge strikes you."

"Even after tonight?"

The second the words were out of her mouth, she looked down and clamped a hand over her lips. He licked at her fingers, sliding his tongue between each one until he could kiss her and she was once again looking at him. "Yes. Especially after tonight." He pushed into the space separating them until she was flat against the metal. "I'm all about wanting to see you a lot. I want you, Mandi. I want to get so deep under your skin, just like you've gotten under mine."

Her legs slid up along his, slow, sensual, until they were wrapped around his lower back and her hips were tilted upward, open and welcoming him between her thighs. "You are. I just didn't want to hope for more. I mean, come on... I'm, well, I don't know what I am, but, you're hot and...well, you're you. God, Jaz, what would you want with

me for anything longer than a night and a day and another night of really damn good sex?"

"Oh, I can't think of a lot of things I want with you that have nothing to do with really damn good sex."

"You can't?"

Why did she look so sad at that comment? "Yeah, but every one of those things begins and ends with really damn good sex. Sometimes some of those things would contain really damn good sex in the middle too."

"You're teasing me."

The pout was adorable and oh so fake. "Yeah. I am. Baby, there are so many reasons for me to want you. I'll be glad to spell them all out in great detail for you later, but right now is not the time." He kissed the tip of her nose and sadly tugged at her legs until they dropped down. He stood and pulled her up and off the car. "Now let's get to a bed. I still have a few hours of being the best goddamn birthday present ever."

"Oh yeah, you are definitely that."

She sashayed her way to the passenger side of the car and he could do nothing more than watch with his mouth hanging open as she untied the halter part of her top. "Mandi..."

She let the two ends of the tie drop and he was helpless as the fabric dropped too, one side catching on the end of her nipple. She took a deep breath and it fell the rest of the way, exposing her completely to him and to anyone who might walk out of Katz at that moment.

"Fuckin' tease. Brave when no one's watchin', huh?"

She just smiled at him and popped the snap on her jeans. Holy. Hell. "So," she inquired as she slid the zipper down, one metal tooth at a time, "which boots should I wear when we get back to my place? These or...?"

"Dammit, woman, get in the car," he growled over his shoulder. He yanked his door open and slid in behind the wheel as she started to push her pants down. She was tryin' her best to kill him. His dick hurt. His balls hurt. His gut hurt from wanting her so friggin' much.

He jammed the key in the ignition and turned it, cranking the car and revving the engine. He leaned across the center console and rolled the window down in the passenger side door. "Get in the car, Mandi, or I swear to god I will fuck you where you stand."

"Oh that sounds promising." But she got in the car anyway.

"Chicken shit," he whispered, his voice raw and full of affection.

"A little."

Her mix of shyness and bravado clawed and clutched at him. He never knew what he was going to get from her from one minute to the next. He was constantly watching her, wondering which side of her was going to emerge first, and he was always surprised. She'd shown him so many different facets of her personality in the last six months and even more in the hours that he'd spent with her today.

And he wanted more. He couldn't get enough of wanting more.

He pulled out of the parking spot and turned around, heading in the direction of his place.

"Where are we going?"

"I want you in my bed."

"Oh."

"Yours is too small. I hang off the end."

"I'm kinda hanging out right now."

"Stop teasing me already."

"Why? It's fun."

Jaz sighed through the pained chuckle. "Do you have any idea how long I've been hard for you tonight?"

"No. How long?"

"Since before we ever left your place."

"Really? Why didn't you say something?"

"Because I had to get you to Katz or Jackie would have sent over a search party."

She didn't say anything in response, and he really hadn't expected her to, but when she started to pull her top up, he thrust a hand out and stopped her. "I like them bare." He tugged on one of her nipples until she arched in the seat. "They're gorgeous and we're almost there."

And he didn't let go. Not even when she raised her hand and tugged on her other nipple. Not even when she slid her free hand down between her legs and rubbed herself through her jeans and moaned in his seat. Not even when she looked over at him with hooded eyes and whispered his name with a catch in her voice that had him doing a double take and nearly driving off the road.

"Don't you dare come without me inside you."

"Then get inside me."

She was dry humping her hand, but he had to rethink the dry part. He knew she was soaked. She'd been wet since he'd held her against the wall in the club, since he'd been between her legs on the hood. He knew she was hot, wet, feeling the itch beneath her skin. He knew because he was feeling the same itch, the same greedy need beneath his.

"Just a few more minutes. Hold on, baby."

"I can't, Jaz..."

"You can if you stop fucking with yourself."

"I don't want to... It feels too good... I'm almost there..."

Shit. "It'll feel better if I bring you off." He took the next corner faster than he should have and floored it. Damn good thing the dirt on the road was packed and as smooth as it could be. He could see the outline of his house as he rounded the bend and then he was pulling into the drive.

Mandi's eyes were closed and her mouth was open, gasping. He pulled hard on her nipple until she whimpered and looked at him. He pinched the tortured bud in between his fingers once more before letting go and covering it with his mouth, wrapping his tongue around it, toying with it. She purred her approval, and when he snaked his hand down her still undone jeans, down inside her panties to touch the smooth, silky heat of her sex, her purr turned into a full-blown growl.

Jaz worried her nipple between his teeth and slid two long fingers inside her already clutching channel. It wasn't going to take much and she'd be coming, and much as he wanted her to come like this, right now he wanted her to come on his cock while he was watching her beautiful face even more. He ground the heel of his palm against her clit, driving her higher until she was on the edge, until she was writhing in the seat...

He kissed his way up her chest and whispered against her mouth, "Not until I get inside you."

* * * * *

Mandi watched as Jaz re-tied the laces of her boots. He had them resting on his chest and they were all she had on. He'd gotten her out of the car and had carried her inside his house, straight through to his bedroom, and stripped her without a word. Not that she'd needed words then or now. All she needed was him inside her. His hands on her only heightened her desire, her insatiable appetite for him.

When the last loop was secure, he coasted his fingers up her legs to her knees and back down again, stroking her, caressing her, driving her crazy.

"Now who's the tease?"

"Takes one."

"I'd love you to take me."

He let her feet fall to the bed and spread her legs none too gently. She couldn't have cared less. He was manhandling her again and, god, she loved it. When he was gentle, rough, insistent or patient...

He shoved his own jeans down his hips and dropped to his knees on the end of the mattress. Then he was on her, in her, sliding his arms under her legs, lifting them over his shoulders.

"Happy?"

"Ecstatic," she whispered once she caught her breath. She'd had sex with him more in one day than she'd had in the last year with anyone and, dear heavens, she wasn't sure she'd ever tire of his size, his weight on her. He was sex personified and he wanted her.

He. Wanted. Her.

The phrase played over and over in her brain, until he started fucking. Nothing at all crossed her mind after that except for how incredibly sensitive her body was to his, how accommodating her pussy was to his cock, how if she used her legs and pressed on his shoulders she could fuck him even as he fucked her.

"That's it, baby. Fuck me."

His arms were beside her head and she wrapped her hands around the thickness of his wrists and continued to lift herself on him, continued to leverage her body up, swallowing his hard length. "God, Jaz..."

"I know. Give it to me. Come for me. You know you want to."

Oh yeah, she sure did. She wanted to give him anything he wanted. His blue eyes pierced her and held her enthralled, captive. His hips punched forward and he plunged deep even as she thrust up.

"Give it up to me, Mandi."

Faster. Harder. Her heels dug into his back, she could feel them connect and he growled but didn't urge her to stop or let up.

"That's it. More."

And then she was there, staring up into his eyes, seeing the grimace of a smile cross his lips as he bared his teeth. He moved her legs off his shoulders and dropped on her, rolling her until she was on top of him, up on her knees, riding him.

Her hands on his hard-as-steel chest, she held herself on them while she rocked her pussy on the length of his cock, scraping her clit against the coarse thatch of his pubes. Over and over, she pulled and pushed and fucked the shaft penetrating her, invading her, impaling her.

With one hand he grasped her nipple.

With the other he grabbed her hair, made a fist and tugged. She creamed all over him. She uttered a strangled cry as his hips bucked under her, pumping his come inside her claspings cunt.

"Told you," he gasped, drawing her down for a kiss and nestling her head in the curve of his shoulder, "not until I'm inside you."

Mandi nodded, completely unable to speak, form a thought or do much more than exist.

It was some moments before she could focus on anything, but once she could, she lifted her head and looked at the bedside clock.

"Hmmm."

"What?"

"It's almost midnight. My birthday is almost over."

"I'm sorry, baby."

She looked down at him. "Why?"

"You sounded sad."

"No, not sad. It's been the best, remember?"

"Yeah? Then what's wrong?"

"You promised me something and you haven't delivered."

His brow furrowed, which, with his bald head, gave him an even more imposing, sinister look. When his look cleared, she suddenly wished she hadn't said anything. Wicked intent dawned in the dark blue irises of his eyes.

"You're right, I did." He lifted her off his body and deposited her on the bed beside him. "Up on your hands and knees."

He didn't wait for her to get into position but arranged her exactly as he wanted. Manhandling her. Heat started to curl in her belly.

"I think we've got just enough time for the forty I promised you earlier."

"Jaz, it really isn't necessary." But she secretly hoped he thought it was. It was a little naughty play that she'd never engaged in before, however she couldn't deny the curious excitement flowing through her.

"Of course it is. Every birthday girl needs a spanking. Now, before we begin, I want to you make one last birthday wish."

She looked over her shoulder at him. "No one makes birthday wishes before spankings."

"How do you know?"

"I don't know, just... I've never heard of it."

"Doesn't mean it isn't done. C'mon, make a wish. Let me know when you've got it."

She thought for a second about what she should wish for, what she might want to come true in the next year, and the only thing she could come up with was the man standing behind her, waiting to spank her.

Him, and a chance to be with him for her next birthday was all she wanted. "I've got it."

"Will I like it if it comes true?"

"Yes."

"Will it make you happy if it comes true?"

"Oh yes."

"Good. Then let's get to work on fulfilling it. Spankings first... Ready?"

Mandi nodded. When the first slap fell against her ass, the heat in her belly unfurled and spiraled down between her legs...

Oh fuck yeah, *the* best birthday present. Ever.

About the Author

Lissa is a full-time and multi-published author living in North Carolina. For more information and news, visit her website or email her. She loves to hear from fans.

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