



*Tess Lamont*  
**Bound  
to  
Ignite**

Bound To Ignite  
*by Tess Lamont*

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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales, is entirely coincidental.

Bound to Ignite

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Bound To Ignite  
*by Tess Lamont*

Ocean's 11: Warner Brothers Entertainment, Inc.

## **Dedication**

To Anke, who read the very first version

of this story and said

"Stop being embarrassed and go with it."

Thank you.

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## **PRAISE FOR AUTHOR**

*Tess Lamont*

### *AND HER BOOKS*

Bound to Surrender

"This story is definitely a 5 Tea Cup and 3 heat index. The story makes you realize that submission and trust is needed to fulfill all your sexual desires."

*~Wendy, Happily Ever After Reviews*

"Tess Lamont has done an excellent job with this story. It is well written and holds your interest from page one. If you are looking for a quick read pick up this one. It's worth it. Great job."

*~Gemstone Review*

Bound to be Mine

"Their chemistry is sizzling, the sexual tension palpable. A thoroughly sexy read."

*~Bella, Fallen Angel Review*

"The chemistry between Lisa and Ben gives the reader a taste of what can happen when two people are ultimately suited to meet each other's needs...Needless to say, the bedroom activities in this book are not for the faint of heart, but contain lessons in loving we can all learn from. Ultimately, the question remains, can Lisa and Ben get past their past?"



Bound To Ignite  
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You will have to read this book to find out, but as smoothly written as it is, that will be no chore."

*~Sky, The Romance Studio*

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## Bound To Ignite

Under the table, Gillian slid her stocking-clad feet from nasty pink bridesmaid shoes. She sighed. Her shoes were dyed to match an equally nasty dress, making her plan to seduce the best man difficult.

*...if not impossible.*

Her pulse thudded as she slowly smiled and stretched her legs onto the opposite diner booth. She rested her feet against her target's thigh and wiggled her toes.

Eric glanced down and grinned. His salt-and-pepper hair spilled across his forehead. Gillian's chest tightened and a tremor tripped up her thigh. Even though laugh lines accented his pale green eyes, he was strikingly handsome. She wanted him just as much as—*no, even more than*—she did back in high school.

This time, she meant to have him.

There had always been something between them, even though she'd never acted on her desire. In fact, she'd run and kept running. But, spending time with him during her friend Lisa's wedding had rekindled all those buried feelings. She'd bet *anything*, even her pair of sling-back pumps that made her feel powerful and look all leg, that Eric wanted her too. But power wasn't the feeling she craved when she looked into Eric's eyes. All she wanted was to crawl across his lap, with her skirt up and ass bare.

She took a deep breath as her pussy moistened.

She wanted Eric to slide his hands across her body in sensual caresses, but she also wanted him to be the first man to spank her.

Gillian had two goals for the night. First, see her best friend Lisa married—*done*. Second, coax Eric into fulfilling the secret fantasy that kept Gillian sweating in the night—the thought of a hard, erotic *spanking*. She craved a strong man's palm across her ass, even though the thought of a man hitting a woman in anger horrified her.

But she knew that no sadistic web-lurker could satisfy her, nor was she interested in fully entering the BDSM scene. She trusted Eric and she'd wanted him for, well, forever. He was the perfect solution. She wasn't looking for a way of life—just one smoking-hot night when she could finally let loose.

Her lips curved into the barest quirk of a smile.

"We look like two kids just back from prom." She laughed louder than she'd intended.

"No offense, Gil, but I don't think any self-respecting teen would choose *that* dress."

Gillian glanced down at the gauzy ruffle frothing from her neckline as Eric shook his head.

"Awful, isn't it?" Gillian asked.

"*Bloody Mary* meets *Bride of Frankenstein*," he said, leaning across the table to finger the lace at her neckline, "with a bit of Disney princess thrown in for fun."

Eric's knuckles brushed Gillian's bare skin, sending erotic shocks throughout her body. He'd touched her frequently this evening. In fact, they'd been flirting outrageously all weekend. As maid of honor and best man, they'd had plenty

of time for it. Annoyingly, though, they hadn't found time alone. *Until now*. She shoved her hands between her thighs to accent her cleavage and leaned toward Eric.

"Yes, I'm pathetic in pink." She smirked and arched a brow. "While you get to look all *Ocean's 11* in your black tie."

"*Ocean's 11*?" Eric's eyebrows sprung up. "Sinatra or Clooney?"

"Let me see." Gillian worked her shaking fingers beneath the bow tie knotted at Eric's throat and tugged at the corner of the slippery, black fabric. She released the knot and left her palm resting against his chest. His body heat radiated through the fine cotton weave of his shirt. His heart beat fast—too fast.

"Definitely Clooney," she murmured.

Eric's laugh rumbled through his chest. "Do you really think I look like George Clooney?"

She rolled her eyes, playfully running a knuckle beneath his chin. "Oh, don't gimme that—you know you're hot."

"Well, I know *some* women find me attractive." Eric's gaze was unreadable and his voice husky. "But I didn't know what *you* thought."

"Now you do." Gillian shrugged. She licked and bit her bottom lip, then looked away. Putting her feelings out there made her feel vulnerable.

"I think they do it on purpose," Eric said, breaking the awkward silence.

"Who?"

"Brides. I think they pick out the fugliest bridesmaid dresses so they look the best."

Gillian snorted. Letting him believe his assertion was unfair to Lisa, but she wasn't about to tell him they'd bought cheap dresses so Lisa could buy some special *toys* for her wedding night. She wondered which Ben had chosen to use first—the thick leather strap or the soft leather flogger. She shivered.

Clearing her throat, she said, "I wouldn't know."

"Why is that, exactly?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, why don't you have a boyfriend or husband or something?"

"I *could* ask you the same question," Gillian gritted out defiantly.

He dimpled. "I've been busy with work."

*His words didn't quite ring true.*

"Same here." She eased back into the comfort of the booth.

If she told him the truth—that none of her boyfriends measured up to him—he might guess how deep her feelings for him ran and then be too freaked to agree to a hard-core weekend of spanking and sex.

Truth was, she needed more than a spanking. Gillian's pulsing desire was for Eric to *take* her, to dominate her body. She craved him until her need bordered on pain.

"Well then," he said.

"Awkward, huh?" she asked.

"A little," he agreed. "But I'm glad you asked me to join you. I thought you were going to change before we left the hotel."

"I was. But I didn't think it was fair, since you didn't have time to go home and change. Besides, my room backs to the happy couple's and the sounds were..." Gillian glanced up through her lashes, "well, let's just say I needed to get out of there."

Gillian hoped Eric would take the bait. After all, the groom, Ben, was his best friend. He *had* to know about Ben and Lisa's relationship. Why, right now, Lisa was most likely clad in her wedding bustier, locked in her favorite black, fuzzy handcuffs, and letting out a hiss of bone-deep pleasure with every smack of whichever implement Ben had chosen.

Eric smirked, but said nothing.

*This should be easier. Didn't all men want sex? Didn't all men fantasize about their female friends?* She bit her lower lip. How many nights had she indulged in dreams of Eric, conjuring images of them together from some strange and powerful need at her core? She inhaled deeply, summoning all her courage. To get what she wanted, she was going to have to be direct.

"So what *do* you think of Lisa and Ben?" Her tone was deceptively light. "I mean, I know what you think of *them*, but I just wondered what you thought of their *lifestyle*."

*Lifestyle*—the word hung in the air, wafting between them like stale cigarette smoke. Desire hazed her vision, but her words left her heart naked and her longing exposed. Gillian's pulse beat with the intensity of an 80s power ballad. She stroked his arm to its rhythm, silently willing him to understand, to unlock the need she believed was in him, a need that mirrored hers. She parted her lips in anticipation.

Eric tilted his head, showing the hard, even line of his chin. His gaze shifted from Gillian's face to her hand and back.

"I'd say if they've found happiness, well then, that's rare enough, isn't it? I don't judge." He spoke slowly, as if he were unsure of her opinion and choosing each word carefully. Boldness drew a smile on Gillian's lips.

"You know, Eric, sometimes I find myself just *a little bit* curious. I wonder what it'd be like to play like Lisa and Ben play." Her mouth dried and as she finished her sentence. Eric's arm tensed under her hand. He glanced to the side and surveyed the mostly empty diner.

Gillie kept her gaze on him, knowing no one could hear them. She'd slipped a twenty to the hostess on the way in, just to make sure they wouldn't be disturbed. She held her breath until Eric's dilating eyes returned to hers. The soft flesh between her breasts quivered.

"I suppose every couple is different," Eric replied, betraying nothing.

"My fantasies make me hot. And...and I was wondering if..." *breathe*, "...you might be interested in exploring with me?"

Eric blinked a few times before clearing his throat.

"Are you asking...if I would...if you and I could...?" His eyebrows were high and his voice sounded low and gravelly.

Gillian nodded, never breaking eye contact. She shivered from her spine down to her hips as Eric searched her face. She left herself open, tilting her chin. Emotions played on his features, thoughts Gillie couldn't hope to read and, if she were honest, didn't really want to understand.

*Of course*, it was complicated. *Of course*, it would change things. Those details didn't concern her, not anymore. She would have him, even if it were just for one night.

"Gillian, I—" Eric looked away.

"Don't." She gripped his arm.

He stiffened. Panic jolted in her belly. She let go. *Consent can't be forced*. She shoved her hands back under the table so she wouldn't be tempted to touch him again.

"Eric," she made her voice even and sure, "I don't want any promises, really, I don't. I don't want to talk about the past or the future—not even next week or next month. I just need one night. I *need* this. It's all I can think about, and," she took a deep breath, "I think you want it, too."

She'd done it. No matter what he said, things would never be the same.

She looked out across the diner, trying to give Eric time and privacy to think. Gillie closed her eyes. If Eric walked out, she didn't want to watch.

Her heart jerked as the diner bench creaked. He hadn't left, however, he'd come round to her bench and settled in next to her. Rough heat radiated from his fingertips as he slid them, slowly and lightly, from her cheek to her chin. His knuckle touched the bottom of her chin and urged her face up.

When she opened her eyes, she found a lingering reserve reflected in his. Her gaze fell to the opening of his shirt. A few dark hairs peeked out and she imagined how he would look when naked. Light curls would spread across his chest, tapering off lower to a taut stomach and then...*Oh God*. She



licked her lips. Closing her eyes again, she focused on the sensation of his finger on her chin.

"Tell me more about your needs." His baritone broke her reverie.

Light as an eyelash-kiss, his knuckle retraced its path across her cheek. Gillian couldn't call forth a single sound, though her breath returned in a rush. There was a vast gap between suggesting a fantasy and actually spelling one out. She edged toward the precipice.

"I...I..." Gillian peeked around him. The diner was empty except for a few old men reading papers at the far counter.

Eric wrapped one arm about her waist. She snuggled into his hard, athletic body and inhaled. His soothing scent filled her, dissolving the tension from her shoulders. He stroked her hair to a gentle rhythm and effervescent bubbling tingled in her chest like cold champagne.

"Better?" he asked, his lips muffled by her hair.

"Yes," she sighed. His warmth eased through her and her heartbeat slowed until it matched his, steady and strong.

"Tell me what you want, Gillie. Tell me *everything*," he whispered against her ear. His tone held just a hint of command. Gillian sucked in her bottom lip. She *loved* that tone.

Where should she start?

Whenever she looked at Eric, she wanted to be naked, arching her back and begging for his stiff, hard cock or bending over his lap, preparing to be spanked. His strong hands fascinated her. His grip would be unyielding, as he

pinned her against his knee. She sighed, imagining one of his calloused palms coming down hard on her ass.

She shifted in the booth as her ass tingled.

"Gillian, if you want my...*help*...you have to trust me," Eric breathed.

"I can't explain. It's like I have an ache for you, for your hands..." She bit her lips together, as a wave of mortification flowed through her. "It's kinky."

Eric's teeth grazed her earlobe, ending in a rough pinch. Sharp shards of desire pricked her thighs; she sucked in.

"Trust me, Gillian. Tell me what you ache for," he murmured.

Eric bent and rubbed his mouth against her neck. His soft lips contrasted with his iron grip on her waist. He brushed a long, biting kiss from her nape to her shoulder. She almost moaned aloud as he drew his other hand across her stomach. His breath scattered chills across her heated flesh. Of their own accord, Gillian's legs relaxed and fell open.

God, it was happening...it was *truly happening*. And, it was better than she had even fantasized.

Hot desire radiated from the base of her spine, pumping her with courage and certainty. Her need, perhaps, wasn't quite normal, but she was safe with Eric. She'd made her choice.

She twisted her head around and whispered, "I want you in me, Eric. But more than that, I want you on top of me, *I want you to take command of me*...I want you to pull me over your knee..." she took a deep breath, "...and spank me."

Eric growled as he nestled her body against the wall so his back and the booth sheltered her from view. He splayed his hand across her ribs with his thumb nestled between her breasts, and pressed her back into the crook of his arm.

His hands were warm. His breath tickled and aroused her. "This will change things," he said. He lightly bit her neck. "Are you sure?"

"God, yes." She wanted his fingers to soothe her erect and aching nipples.

His laugh rumbled deep in his chest. Gillie twisted in his grasp, but he dug his fingers into her waist, keeping her firmly in place.

"Shh, shh, Gillie," Eric coaxed. "I'm not laughing at you. I'm fucking amazed, that's all. You've been a very good girl...asking for what you want."

His approval sent a surge of elation through her, heightening every sense. Though being called a 'good girl' caused her to blush, scalding heat lit Gillian's clit. Her pussy felt like fire...no, not fire...lava...fucking molten lava. She gasped and hid her face against his chest.

"Open your legs for me, Gil."

Gillian let her legs fall wide.

Fabric caressed her legs as Eric crinkled her dress in his fist. Inch by slow inch, he exposed her, though his body kept his movements private.

At Lisa's urging, she had worn thigh-high stockings. Gillie and Christina—Lisa's other bridesmaid—had each vowed to go panty-less during the wedding to build anticipation for the seductions they had both planned tonight. Now, Gillie was

glad—*so glad*. She ached to feel Eric's fingers stroke her engorged clit.

"Ah, yeah." His chest vibrated with a carnal hum of lust when he realized she was bare. He slid his fingers—quick and light—against her wetness.

She rode the sensation, shivering.

"You are so hot, Gil," he whispered. "I can feel how wet you are."

Gillian's breath caught in her throat. She parted her lips and closed her eyes. His hands felt so good.

Thank God they were in the back corner and the table was bolted to the floor. *At last*, her body sighed. She moaned, low and quiet. Again, Eric pressed his lips to her ear. "I want you to come for me. No one can see."

He breathed in unison with her. Tension climbed down her legs and spiraled up through her stiffened nipples. God, how she wanted to come...she'd waited so long.

She pulsed there, just at the edge of release, but needing something more.

"Talk to me Eric, please."

"Let go, Gillie. Come for me. That's it..."

He pinched a nipple through her dress and she whimpered.

"I want you to come. Now."

His words, whispered in a rush of heated breath, triggered her orgasm. She pressed her head back into his chest and twisted. All the tension that had coiled deep in her belly exploded in vibrating tremors of warm pleasure. Gasping, she allowed her climax to wash over her. It sank through her

body like wet waves on dry sand, shaking her to the core. She quivered in his arms.

She tilted toward him, curling her legs up onto his lap. She panted as the after-shock trickled down her legs and up her spine. How could she have just come, and still crave him? She rocked one thigh gently up toward his stomach, not stopping until her fingers met the bulge of his cock.

God, but she wanted to slide his cock between her fingers. She wanted to feel his soft, stretched skin against her hands. She wanted to cup his balls, flick her tongue over his cock's twitching head, and listen to him groan with the kind of pleasure he had just given her.

Eric grabbed her hand. "Soon enough, Gillie," he said with the confidence of a man who knows what he has to offer.

"When?" Gillie asked, her voice heavy with need.

"I want to take you home right now, but I have a few things I have to do first," Eric grasped her by the chin. "Can you meet me at my place in about two hours?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Oh, and can you change your dress?" He smiled.

"Definitely!" she laughed.

"I'll pay," Eric leaned forward to remove his wallet from his back pocket. "You go back to the hotel and get changed. I'll be waiting."

"Thank you." Her breath hitched.

"You don't have anything to thank me for." He gave her a lopsided smile. "Yet."

Dirt crackled under Gillian's tires as she pulled into Eric's drive. Her headlights lit the darkness, spilling through the hot,

humid night and lighting the simple lines of Eric's lakefront log cabin.

In high school, the group of friends had spent many lazy Saturdays either lounging on the public beaches in this area or swimming in the cedar water. She turned off the ignition and admired his home. As a successful architect, he'd renovated the house to his taste and the cabin served as office, home and advertisement. Pride swelled in her chest; he was a man that went after what he wanted.

Now, he wanted her.

She pulled back her shoulders, smiled, and opened her car door.

The hot Jersey night engulfed her, stealing her breath. The air was alive with the chirping of crickets and other night creatures. She wriggled her toes in her flip-flops, and then decided to slip her shoes off altogether. The gravel warmed her feet.

*Tonight is all about sensation.* The ache in her pussy intensified. Earlier, she'd tried to ease her desire with a shower head. Although the pulsing warm water of the massage function brought her to shivering orgasm, her frustration had quickly returned. She just couldn't seem to come enough. *Strange*—usually it took a while for her to ramp back up after an orgasm. However, she'd had two this evening and she wasn't even close to satisfied.

Gillian walked toward the door, swinging her flip-flops and swaying. Her cotton sundress swirled around her. With nothing but a pair of light pink panties beneath, every movement felt sensual, womanly.

Once on the porch, she rang the bell and waited with a small, seductive smile playing across her lips. As he approached the door, she could see him silhouetted through the curtain, and wondered what he'd be wearing. They were shielded from the neighbors by the scrubby pines, so it was possible he'd be naked. Her heart beat a little faster.

He opened up the door: jeans and a linen button-down shirt. Not naked, but nice. At least he'd rolled up his sleeves. She was a sucker for a rippling forearm.

"Wine?" he asked in greeting.

Gillian grinned. "Yes, thank you." As she followed him into his kitchen, she murmured, "Your driveway is warm."

Eric stopped and pivoted. His eyes were smiling as he noticed her bare feet.

"You walked barefoot across the gravel?"

"Yup," she answered.

"Impressive pain tolerance," he chuckled.

Gillie laughed too, but she felt a blush creep up her neck.

Eric seemed taller than she remembered. Was that possible? No, of course it wasn't. He was about to take possession of her body and everything about him radiated masculine power and confidence. Everything in her responded.

She slid onto a stool by his kitchen bar. His forearm flexed as he poured her drink. Her heart pattered like a hard August rain. She couldn't believe she was so nervous. This was Eric! Still, as he sauntered toward her and handed her a glass, her body trembled with a delicious mix of fear and excitement. He towered above her, looking every inch a man in charge.

She took a sip of her wine: cold, wet, and welcome.

"Aren't you going to have a drink?" she asked.

"No, I need..." he puckered his lips, then smiled, "to concentrate. But I thought some wine might help you relax."

Gillie snorted, "Got Vodka?"

Eric laughed low.

"I don't want you *too* relaxed..." his voice trailed as he re-corked the wine and bent to put it in the fridge.

*Nice ass.*

"This is a little strange," she coughed.

Eric closed the door of the fridge and rounded the counter to stand behind her. His stomach heated the small of her back as his hands gripped her shoulders and massaged. The strong iron of his fingers eased her tension with deep, precise circles.

"Of course it's strange, Gil. You're still on board though, right?"

She caught one of his hands, rubbed his fingers against her cheek and then guided his palm back to her shoulder.

"Absolutely," she replied.

"Good."

The wine—and Eric's hands—spread heat throughout her body and her uneasiness melted. He molded her muscles and, little by little, she sank backward against his chest until her only thoughts were of his body and where his hands might go next.

"Better?" he asked.

Gillian closed her eyes and rolled her head against his heartbeat.

"Ummm," was all she could manage.



Eric admired the view from above.

He was aware that Gillian had spent all week using any excuse to touch him. How could he not have been aware? She was hotter than she'd ever been—and he'd been lusting after her for years. He'd suspected she was building to something and had even hoped tonight would end with some long-overdue action. But he couldn't have guessed what she had planned. She'd thrown him one hell of a curve ball.

When she'd told him she wanted to be spanked, some primitive, archaic urge within him uncoiled, shocking the shit out of him. His eyes had finally focused, and Gillian was all he could see. Though he was in charge in his work and life, he'd never played games of dominance and submission in the bedroom. Still, Eric planned to take full possession of her, and he'd be damned if he wasn't going to watch, listen and learn as she showed him exactly how she wanted him to do it.

"How about you describe some more of those fantasies of yours?" he suggested.

Gillian's hand disappeared into her dress pocket and she withdrew a print.

"They say a picture is worth a thousand words," she said with bravado, though the paper shook as she thrust it in his direction.

The picture was black and white—circa 1950—or pretending to be from that era, anyway. A man, buff, though not unnaturally so, held a woman across his knees. He had pinned one of her arms beneath her and the other, he held behind her back. Her skirt was tossed up above her hips and her panties were slung hastily around her thighs. Her bare

ass was directly in line with his raised hand. When Eric looked closer, he saw a hint of a smile on the woman's downcast face.

Eric breathed a sigh of relief. The photo did not depict any sort of hard-core BDSM fantasy—no whips, no chains, no collars. Eric admitted some relief that Gillian didn't need an all-out staging. His breath steadied. If the scene in the picture was what she wanted, he could more than handle Gillie's needs.

At least his cock was sure he could, anyway.

"I can look at that picture," Gillian's eyelids fluttered, "for hours, just imagining."

Eric set aside the picture and placed his lips against the soft satin of her hair. He tightened his arms as she snuggled into his neck. Never had a woman fit so nicely in his arms.

"And what, exactly, do you think about when you are looking at the picture?"

"I imagine how it would feel to be pinned against your knees."

*Your* knees, she said, not *someone's* knees. Eric didn't miss the distinction. The rich, husky hunger in her voice made his cock heavy and thick in his jeans. If they didn't start soon, the pitch was going to be in the air before the batter even stepped up to the plate.

Gillie covered her face with her hands, but continued to speak from between her fingers. "I think about how it would feel to have your hand come down hard on my ass."

Eric pulled her hand from her face and drew her to her feet. He turned her around.

"Gillie, look at me," he urged. "It's me, okay? No matter what happens, I want you to remember that there's no need to be embarrassed."

She peeked up at him as he cradled her face between his hands. "Okay."

"We should set boundaries and choose a safe word," he said.

"A safe word?" she asked, swallowing. "Do we need one?"

Gillian's lips quivered. Was it fear? Was it excitement? Eric wasn't sure. He was damn well feeling both.

"I want you to pick a word you can use if you change your mind. I don't want to push you too far."

"You wouldn't."

Gillian's trust warmed him. Still, she played with a fire inside him that even he didn't understand. She had a right to be forewarned.

"You have no idea what is inside of me...I don't even know," he said. "I don't know how much either of us can take. A safe word only makes sense."

Eric frowned as Gillie's eyes fell toward the floor. Well, she wanted him to take charge, didn't she? He straightened his spine and grabbed Gillian's chin, forcing her face back up.

"Gillian, enough," he ordered. "Pick a safe word. It's not a request this time, it's a command."

She shook in his arms—*actually shook*—and her cheeks tinged pink. His breath caught and the muscles in his stomach clenched.

"Peaches," she breathed, with her gaze averted.

Okay, she was fine. He took a deep breath. She was just nervous as hell.

"Peaches," he repeated. "Sweet and juicy, like you."

Eric released her chin and settled his lips against her hair and stroking the length of the sweet-smelling softness. "Let's go into the living room."

He took her by her hand and led her to a stuffed chair in the middle of the room. Could he do this? He closed his eyes for a moment. *Fuck, yes.* He could do this. He wanted and needed to do this. The throb in his cock increased. He wasn't sure he could turn back, even if she wanted him to.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes," she whispered. "I'm ready."

"I'm going to spank you, Gillian."

Gillian's knees buckled, and Eric caught her. As she sagged against his body, his cock jutted into her soft belly. Blue balls didn't begin to describe the ache. He eased them both down into the chair.

Gillian looked up at him and her wide eyes sparkled. "I want this so bad."

"Then, bend over my knee," he said. Excitement, power and desire tensed every muscle. He was so ready.

She arched across his legs in a perfect, inverted triangle. He gathered her dress to her waist, revealing the most spankable set of buns he'd ever seen. Sheer cotton panties strained to cover her full, round cheeks. Not one porn pic on the web could compare to the inviting sweetness of her ass across his lap.

Eric ran his hand over Gillian's ass while flexing his knee and accustoming himself to her weight. Her skin was as smooth as a work of art, perfection. He could see veins running beneath her pale skin. Her quick pants made his palm itch to begin.

For a split second, the room swam around him. Was he man enough to answer her most intimate need?

*Hell, yeah.*

He held her in place with one hand and spread his legs so the underside of her breasts curved above his thigh. He ran his finger just under the elastic of her panties.

Yes, he'd give her everything she wanted, and then more.

Eric understood what Gillian had yet to learn—once they crossed this line, they could never go back. Gillie already burned like a brand on his soul. Tonight, Eric meant to make sure he burned within hers.

"Pretty pink panties..." He yanked them to her thighs.

Gillian made a sound that was half-moan and half-giggle.

"Please," she whispered against his knees.

Eric had felt dizzy before, but this was beyond anything he had ever imagined. He'd planned a staging and planned to start out slowly, but, when Gillian's body jerked forward with the first, sweet slap, he lost all memory of the research and the planning he'd done while waiting for her to arrive.

She squirmed against his fly, tempting his already bulging cock and shooting fire through his chest. He spread his fingers wide and rubbed along the curve of her reddening cheek, allowing her to process the sensation and giving her one, last chance to back out. Gillian's body twisted, wringing

a soulful sound from her throat. She pushed her ass back into his hand.

He whacked again—three cupped slaps in quick succession. Gillie bucked and shook on his lap, moaning.

Eric's hand stung; his heart pounded. He lifted his hand, watching Gillie struggle to push her ass up, silently begging for another.

*Whack.*

A wave of pure pain fired up his arm. She squirmed, so he pressed harder, pinning her in place.

*Whack, whack, whack*—with each stroke, Eric's hand landed faster. His mind steamed and he barreled ahead. Something from far away reminded him that he should be leaving time between strokes, but logic had shut down and he heard nothing.

Gillian struggled and twisted, in earnest, then. Her arms flailed behind her as she grabbed for his shirt and clawed at his face. Still, he continued with full-force slaps.

"Eric, Eric, Stop. STOP IT, ERIC!" she shrieked. The true fear in her voice cut through his haze.

Eric jerked back, raising both hands in the air. He fought to control his deep and heavy breath.

"You want me to stop?" he asked, breathing heavy. She hadn't used her safe word. Was this part of the scene, or was she truly frightened?

"Yes," she yelled. "Yes, I want you to stop." Gillian tumbled from his lap and scooted away from him. She brought her knees up to cover her chest, and rested on her

hip. She hadn't said *peaches*, but, clearly, she was more than freaked.

"That hurt," she said. Her face twisted with pain as she rubbed her ass.

Eric blinked at her, struggling to process the emotions raging in him. Her fear was a betrayal—biting and direct. But, he hated himself for going too fast, and her pained expression chafed against his gnawing conscience. He shook his head to clear his mind and ran his fingers through his hair.

"Spanking hurts, Gillian," he said sarcastically. "I think that's the point."

"I *know* that." She frowned. "It was just *too fast*..." Her face grew burgundy. "I know I asked you to take charge...but...but...Hell, Eric, it's my first time."

He blinked at her rose-pink, shivering body. *Damn it*. He'd really fucked up. He stood and took a step toward the kitchen.

"Wait!"

Gillie's voice froze him in place.

"Don't go." Her voice cracked.

There weren't fucking words for the emotions that rocked him, but Eric looked down at Gillie and knew he couldn't leave. He slid to his knees.

Gillian's chest heaved. She turned her head, but didn't pull away. Slowly, gently, he brushed the sweat-dampened strands of hair from her forehead.

Eric counted his breaths, trying to remind himself that they were both novices. Their needs would take time to fully understand, let alone master. Did couples new to BDSM

sometimes fuck up their scenes? He hadn't a God-damned clue.

"Do you want to call this off?" he asked, not sure what he'd do if she said yes. He'd put himself out there, laid himself bare before her, and if she rejected him now...

She faced him, searching his gaze as she sniffled. "I said *stop*, but I didn't say *peaches*."

He blinked at her, trying to understand. "What do you mean?"

She was so vulnerable, and yet *he* was the one feeling scared.

"It's different than I thought it would be." She hiccupped.

Thinking was hard—so hard. He concentrated on her face and asked, "What were you expecting?"

"I'm not sure." Gillian's laugh was harsh. "It's pretty intense. I'm angry *and* aroused, I feel embarrassed *and* sexy." She shook her head as if to clear the contradictions, "I don't understand it and, *fuck*, I'm scared."

Her honesty cut through his emotions and deflated his anger. *We are going to be okay*. Lightheaded, he pulled her back into his arms.

It was too soon...too *fucking* soon to tell her he loved her. He'd always loved her. There was nowhere on earth she could be more safe than in his arms. He buried his face in her hair as his mind raced through ways to coax her back, ways to show her that she'd never need to be frightened or ashamed of her needs or her limits—not with him.



Gillie's sniffles slowed. She nestled her head in his neck and sighed—in her sigh was everything he needed to understand.

"God, Gillie...I'm so sorry. I went too fast," he said. "You were laying there, your luscious weight on my legs, your beautiful little ass bouncing under my hand...I lost it."

"Really?" She pressed her face into his chest as she had earlier, but this time she giggled.

"I already told you, Gil. You don't need to be embarrassed. If anyone should be embarrassed, it's me."

She pulled away, looking up at him. Her eyes were bright with unshed tears.

"Does spanking me turn you on?" she asked.

"Yes, damn it," he said. "Can't you tell?"

"No...not for sure. I thought it might be something you were into," she sighed, glancing up at him through her lashes. "Do I really have 'a beautiful little ass'?"

"Uh huh," He replied. The memory of her swam in his mind and he had to shift to accommodate the returning swell of his cock.

"The most beautiful little butt cheeks in south Jersey," he said, pinching one of them.

"Ouch! Just *south* Jersey?" Gillian's laughter started as a snort, but progressed to an hysterical giggle.

"I wouldn't know about the nasty asses in the north," he teased.

"I suppose I should be impressed, given the breadth of your experience." She laughed hard now.

"I've seen my share of bare ass-cheeks, but I've never had any across my lap."

Gillian's laughter died at that. What, did she think he was some kind of ass-spanking man-ho?

"You've never spanked anyone before?" she asked quietly.

Eric frowned and shook his head no.

Gillian tried to read Eric's reaction. His gaze was veiled. She shifted on her aching bottom, but Eric's eyes caused her the most discomfort.

Eric was a bit of a player. She'd just assumed he'd done a bit of everything, sexually speaking.

She had thought she could just ask him and he'd provide. But, if he'd never spanked before...well, that made her plan to use him seem suddenly selfish and ugly.

She scowled. "But, you date tons of women..."

"True," he said slowly, "but I don't go around spanking them. The women in my life tend to be looking for a diversion between boyfriends or husbands. Developing trust for this sort of thing takes time. That is, unless you troll for it at clubs or online, which I don't. And, I've never been interested in exploring fantasies—or the feelings they might create—with someone who has," he raised a brow, "one foot out the door."

A pang shot through Gillian. The rebuke in his tone was plain. He *knew* she'd intended to use him.

"But," she stammered, "You just said it turns you on..."

"Fuck, yeah. Spanking *you* turns me on. *You* telling me you wanted me to spank *you* turned me on. Hell, *everything* about you turns me on." He rubbed the back of his neck. "I may have played at a little bondage in my day—used a scarf

or a tie to spice things up a bit—but it's not a lifestyle for me. Did you think it was?"

"Uh...uh...um..." Yes. Actually, she had thought it might be a lifestyle for him. She had thought she could ask him to play, and he'd perform.

Butterflies whooshed freely through her gut. Another truth tugged at her soul. Perhaps she had wanted something more from Eric all long. Maybe her elation at the diner wasn't anticipation, but hope...

No. *No*. She *had* to stay away from intimacy. Gillian already loved Eric as a friend; it would take a little more than one small push for her to slide head-over-heels into full-on infatuation. And men like him never settled down. He'd break her heart, she knew he would.

"Maybe this was a bad idea, maybe I should go." She floundered, trying to rise.

His hand bit into her shoulder, forcing her to stay put.

"Oh, no, you don't, Gillian Louisa Daniels." His voice was harsh and commanding. "You wanted something, you needed something. You gave me a promise."

A telltale wetness seeped into Gillian's pussy. God, but that tone in his voice made her want to crawl back over his knees. She was weird...*weird*! She wanted *more*...

"I did not promise you anything," she protested.

"You absolutely did."

She winced as he trapped her chin between his fingers.

"Not with words, but with your body," he said, voice stern, unyielding. "And you're not going anywhere until you fulfill that promise."

Gillian's nipples sprang to life, clearly peaking beneath her thin dress. She couldn't breathe.

A muscle worked in his jaw. Then, his eyes gentled. He placed his hands on either side of her face. "This is what you wanted, Gil, isn't it? You wanted the whole scene: the scold, the commands, and the spanking. You want it to feel real."

He'd flung open the door to the inner sanctum, the most shameful core of her spanking fantasy.

"Yes," she said, wavering. She inhaled, quick, painful and deep. "I don't understand why, but when you talk to me in that commanding tone I get wet. When you scold me, it turns my body to jelly."

The lines in Eric's faced relaxed. He ran his heated hand down her cheek and exhaled. Her heart fluttered at the base of her throat as he stood and commanded her to rise to her knees.

"Where was I?" He arched a brow in a wickedly seductive expression. "Oh yes, you aren't leaving here until you give me what you promised...and you get what you deserve, do you understand me, *young lady*?"

The self-possessed woman in her balked. But every nerve tingled. She focused on the restrictive pinch of her pink panties, still wrapped round her thighs, and the beautiful, smoldering heat of her rear. Despite his words, she knew she could leave, she read it in his eyes.

"I'll ask one more time, and if I don't get an answer, you'll face the consequences. *Do. You. Understand. Me?*" Eric demanded.

Her bottom prickled, begging for attention—no matter what the type. She was ready to resume the game.

"I understand, sir."

His lips quirked at the honorific, then he scowled.

"You aren't leaving until you've submitted—fully."

God, her pussy was sopping. Eric loomed large: all male, all ready. Gillian took a peek upward, searching Eric's face for the vulnerability she'd glimpsed when they were talking, but any unease had vanished. She swallowed through a dry, lump-filled throat.

"Yes, sir." She took his palm between her hands, lifting its red heat to her lips and kissing the hot center. She placed his hand on her cheek and lowered her chin.

Eric compelled her to look at him again.

"You're going to burn, young lady," he repeated, slower this time, lacing his dark intent through the syllables.

Her pussy pulsed as if Eric had whispered his words directly against her clit. If he repeated them one more time, she was in danger of coming right there, without even a touch.

"Oh God..." she moaned. "I mean, ah, yes, sir," she replied. She was unable to stop the tremble in her legs.

"Good," he said. "Let's do it right, this time."

Gillian started to rise, so she could position herself again across his lap.

"Who told you that you could move?"

She froze, partly embarrassed, partly turned on and throbbing so hard in her pussy that she could have doubled over.

"Stay right where you are," he decreed. Eric began to pace in front of her, his body large, his muscles tense. He gave off the raw energy of an angry beast...and Gillie savored every second of it. "You've been a very, very bad girl, and bad girls never feel better until they've been disciplined."

"Yes, sir." Goose bumps spread like a cold breeze down Gillian's back before trickling between her thighs.

"I want you to think *hard* about what you did, what you were about to do."

Gillian drew her brows together in confusion.

"You," he stopped pacing and stood over her like a furious army sergeant, "barged into *my* home and thought you could just curl me around your little finger...and use me for your own enjoyment, without any thought to the consequences or to my feelings."

Gillian sucked in jagged air. Eric's accusations were true. Raw and caustic feelings of shame burned through her body. Were they playing or not?

"Eric, you know I would never, I mean, you know how much I care," she stammered, trying to catch her breath. She could feel a dark red blush spread like spilled wine over her cheeks.

He placed a tender hand against the back of her head, leaned down and whispered into her ear, "Trust me."

She nodded, sniffing. Inside, she struggled to reconcile her conflicting desires: to run, to tell him off, to lay with her forehead to the floor and plead for him to touch her in whatever way he wished.

He stood tall and placed both hands behind his back. "You came dangerously close to taking advantage of me and abusing our friendship."

Gillie held her breath and followed his feet as he stalked back and forth.

"You owe me more than just an apology. I think I'm going to have to prove it to you."

Gillian shivered. It's a game, *a game*. She reassured herself.

"Now, put your face down and your ass up."

Gillian collapsed like a marionette on strings, folding onto her wrists. Gillian could feel the cool air on her ass as her dress spilled around her shoulders. She drew each breath up from the base of her being, the bottom of her gut.

"You've been a very bad girl," he said. "Haven't you?"

His voice made her vibrate; she rode the sound of it, and her need to be spanked crested.

"Yes, sir," she choked.

"Yes, what?"

"I've been a bad girl," Gillian croaked, wiggling. Her throat was tight with shame; but she could feel her wetness against her inner thighs.

"And now, are you ready to learn your lesson?"

Eric knelt by her side.

"Yes, sir." *Please*.

Again, the flesh of his palm met the flesh of her ass; pain whizzed through her like an electric shock. She gasped, clenching her hands together tight over her head and stretching her back as her breasts swung freely.

As each strike landed, the war between her two natures raged. *No, this is insane...* part of her screamed. *Another, please,* her heart begged in silence.

Gillian's mind bounced in confusion; her body tensed. Soon there was pain, only pain. Even in the pain, she was more sensually alive than she'd ever been in her life. She couldn't deny it—*whack*—this was everything she'd wanted—*whack*—under Eric's hand was exactly where she wanted to be.

Gillian held her breath. The pain was unbearable, but she didn't dare pull away again...besides, she was so close, so close to something she could not define.

She groaned from her gut and whimpered.

"You are taking in the pain," Eric said. "Stretch out, let it go."

*What the hell was he talking about?* She obeyed, anyway, spreading her fingers wide and stretching out her arms in full. She felt the burn on her ass and a pulse in her sopping pussy. *Whack*—the pain slipped from her grasp and she stumbled into a place of near-bliss.

Whack. *Gasp.* Shiver. She moaned.

"That's it, Gillie, let go."

Whack. *Gasp.* *Sigh.*

Gillian eased into the strange and building pleasure-pain. Her ass hurt, yes, but the pain rang through her in satisfying tremors. Each spank brought her closer to a liberation she could sense, but not yet understand.

Yes. This was exactly what she wanted.

Every inch of her ass and thighs pounded with delicious intensity. Her body made an instinctive, wave-like motion



between each blow until nothing remained inside of her to offer resistance. The fissures in her heart spread. She could feel her body *glow*. Pain was everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Sexual need pulsed between her legs and she spun in every direction, loosing pieces of her resistance as she whirled. Tears wet the space between her lashes.

She released her embarrassment, her fear. She released everything but the feel of Eric's hand and her own building orgasm. She groaned in full abandon.

Eric stopped spanking and dropped his heated fingers between her legs. The turbulent ocean of sensation settled into regular, rhythmic waves.

"Now, Gillie. Come," he said. "You are so wet and ready."

He stroked her clit with his thumb and dipped his fingers into her ready pussy. He leaned over her body and caressed her aching nipples with his other hand. The sting made it as if he was in three places at once. She was surrounded by Eric, dominated by the sensations he created. His thumb circled her clit until her moans became sighs and she coasted into shivering orgasm on the sound of his heavy breath.

*Fucking amazing.*

A tear wet her cheek.

Eric pulled her against his body.

"Let it out, Gillian." His breath fanned against her ear in a soothing swish. He held her as if she were precious beyond comprehension. He said other things—things about devotion, things about acceptance. She couldn't quite understand. His voice was far away.

Her backside was on fire. *Literal* fire. But she was floating on a deeply satisfied cloud of release and intimacy like she'd never known in her life.

He sagged against her, as if he were as spent as she. She buried her head in the crook of his arm and she relaxed into the sway of his body while he rained kisses over her cheeks.

Perhaps what they'd just experienced was weird, but it didn't matter to Gillie. Security pooled around her like warm water, washing away the sense of separateness and feeling very much like love. She couldn't deny the visceral feeling of belonging, the incredible intimacy of the moment.

She was guided back to the present by his heartbeat's steady thud and the rise and fall of his chest.

"Better?" he asked, all authority was gone from his voice.

She managed an affirmative gurgle.

Eric kissed her forehead and lay back against his couch, drawing her with him. He eased her between his legs so her bottom wasn't touching anything. His small gesture, as most small gestures do, spoke volumes.

She wound her fingers in the softness of his hair, and shimmied up to place a demure kiss on his lips. She rested her head against his shoulder.

He'd been wonderful. Perfect, really—commanding, but thoughtful, punishing, but tender.

She blissed out against his shoulder, experiencing the strange sensations, unwrapping them one by one: pinching tenderness in her butt-cheeks, pulsing fire in her pussy, cooling tears against her face, the heat of Eric's body. She ran her fingers up and down his arm.

She was so grateful, but soon gratitude wasn't the only emotion floating through the endorphins clogging her mind. Between her legs, liquid anticipation again dripped from her pussy. A new sense of sensuality stunned her.

Eric peeked over Gillian's shoulder to examine her rosy backside. He held his hand a half-inch from her ass, but didn't touch. Even from the distance, heat radiated.

*Fuck*, he was aroused.

But she had cried, so he had checked his raging desire. Sooner or later they'd get to the rest. Right now, Eric was certain Gillie was too spent for sex, and there was no way he'd take it until she offered, especially not now. Her plaintive sighs against his chest made her seem so gut-wrenchingly vulnerable.

During the two hours after they'd parted at Olga's Diner, he'd surfed the net. He had devoured information, and had taught himself the basics of a good spank: how to be safe physically, what to watch out for emotionally. To his surprise, the information had been quite easy to find. There were scores of spank-happy women who, apparently, liked to blog about their adventures. They weren't shy about the physical details of their life or the emotions a session could unleash. Though, for him, the experience made him want to fuck like a bunny in spring, it was possible Gillian wouldn't be interested in anything else tonight.

God, he hoped not.

She balanced on his body with a lightness he thought physically impossible. He set aside thoughts of screwing and concentrated on experiencing her weight against his

thighs...and distracting himself. *Damn.* He couldn't even remember the Phillies' most recent line-up.

He stroked her hair. Her sniffles were fewer now and her breath, deeper and more even. Quite honestly, she'd disappointed him when she'd admitted she thought this was a one-time deal. He wanted her in his life and he'd thought when she had shared her fantasy, that she wanted the same thing.

He'd improvised and used some of that disappointment to create the "scene" she told him she needed. But then, they'd both fallen into a kind of crevasse and, now, not a scrap of negative feeling remained.

She couldn't mean to just walk away now, could she?

Was she happy? Had he scared her?

"How do you feel?" he asked.

She giggled.

Relief tingled up his neck. "I take that to mean you are okay?"

She giggled harder. He thought she muttered, "yes, sir" into his shirt.

*Well then.* He was still *sir*.

He maneuvered one hand free and cleared the last clumps of tangled hair from her face. Her large gray eyes stared up at him with complete trust, and something else...

Gillian murmured something incomprehensible. She shifted in his lap and her ass brushed against the carpet.

"Oooooo!" She winced, arching over his legs. She started to laugh. "I'm so sorry...I don't know what's wrong with me...I just can't get enough."

"Oh, you'll get enough," he smiled.

She settled back onto his lap and fondled the buttons of his shirt.

"Eric?" she said his name as a question, uncertainty filling her voice. "Sir?"

"Um hum?" He caught the scent of her musky juice. *What was that Phillie line up?*

"I, ah, don't think I can lie down just yet, but..." she said, the side of her lips curving up into a shy, inviting smile.

"Gil, you don't have to be embarrassed when you are with me," Eric said. He'd say it a thousand times if he had to, any number it took for her to believe—nothing she revealed would change how he felt about her.

"I'm not embarrassed," she whispered. "I want you so badly."

*You don't have to ask me twice.* Eric dropped his fingers between Gillian's legs. Her wetness covered his hand as she shimmied against him.

Her legs fell wider, allowing him better access. Her soft, moist folds soothed the heat and ache in his palm. He stared down into the dark, unfocused blur of her body. Part of him could hardly believe this was Gillian lying in his arms, Gillian offering him her body and the darkest secrets in complete trust.

His damn dick couldn't get any harder; his balls were so tight against his body. Fuck it all, he was *ready*. He'd waited so damn long...years...

"I want to suck your cock," Gillie panted. "I want to pleasure you like you've pleased me."

He stopped breathing. *Thank God.*

Gillian's gaze slid to his pants; she bit her lower lip. She grasped his hand and sucked his ring finger into her mouth. His palm still tingled; her mouth was like a cold beer on a hot summer day. Her lips puckered at the taste of her own juice, but one by one she took each finger into her mouth, sucking and licking. She appeared to be making a case.

Gillie held his palm to her breast. Through the thin cotton, he could feel the hard extension of her nipple. He brushed it with his thumb. Her soft moan, mewed across his slick finger, was almost the final straw...almost, but not quite.

He pulled his finger from her lips and cupped her face. Tenderly, he kissed the softness of her parted lips. *Peaches.* She tasted better than a summer peach. Her tongue swirled around his, stoking his lust. Eric wanted to flood her every sense—taste, smell, touch, sound, and sight—until she gasped and moaned with a need only he and his cock could deliver.

He worked her mouth more urgently, deeper. He probed with his kisses, grazing her lips with his teeth. He tilted her head until her jaw opened wide and still he ground down in intimate challenge.

The harder he kissed, the closer she strained.

His cock throbbed and twitched in his jeans, but he wasn't ready to take her up on her offer. *Not yet.* First, he wanted her drunk with need. He wanted her to beg, not ask sweetly, for his cock.

He didn't stop kissing her until she went limp in his arms.

"You've been a very good girl," he said, breathless, "but I set the pace, remember?"

He ran a knuckle down her cheek as she blushed and nodded. Playing *master* felt natural, right. He bent and kissed her forehead, pleased by the way her eyes stayed closed and her face relaxed with trust.

"Now, Gil, you may take off your dress."

She held his gaze as she rose to her knees. She had to wiggle a little to get her dress up. Her breasts swayed freely, seductively as, finally, she pulled it over her head.

Eric swallowed.

They'd skinny-dipped as teens, but the dark night had concealed everything he most craved to see, and he had been, *then*, too shy to ask. He was not shy anymore; he drank his fill of her body...naked but for the pink panties still binding her thighs.

Her tits were small but in perfect form. Her taut nipples tilted slightly upward. They were nipples that begged to be touched, suckled. He wanted her to arch so he could see them even better.

He sat up on his shins, matching her kneel. He took both of her arms and pinned them at the small of her back. He tugged downward on her wrists, forcing her breasts out and up.

He could feel his pulse at the base of his throat.

Yes. His Gillie. *His. Now. Forever.*

He feasted on her flesh. First, he wet the skin at the base of her throat with a soft, lingering kiss. Next, he drew his mouth down. He took one nipple into his mouth, swirling it

like candy. Her moans betrayed her growing frustration...a sound he could enjoy all night.

He sucked, nipped, and teased, knowing she couldn't...and wouldn't...do a thing to stop him.

Gillian groaned and shivered. She floated in the bliss of his touch, suspended. While a part of her longed for another sweet release, an even bigger part of her simply wanted his cock in her mouth.

*Since when did I get so damned slutty?*

His teeth grazed her nipple. Her pussy clenched. She threw her head back and cried out, fierce and guttural.

His lips spread in a smile against her skin. He ran his tongue one last time over the tip of her throbbing nipple before he released her from his delightful torture. He nudged her panties down to where her knees met the floor, and then stood, placing his foot between her legs and over the fabric of the crotch. He offered his hand to her.

"Time for a change in venue," he said.

His gaze burned against her cheeks as she stood, less gracefully than she intended. His foot ensured that her underwear remained on the floor.

Gillian grasped Eric's warm fingers and allowed him to lead her up the spiral stairs to the balcony. He was fully clothed, and she, completely naked. She kind of liked it that way, for now. She examined the way his ass filled out his jeans and smiled.

They reached the landing and he flung open his door. She'd never been in his room before. Hesitantly, she glanced around. He had an old-fashioned brass bed with a plain black



comforter. There were two end tables, and a small dresser with a mirror. The effect was spartan and definitely male, but his style was soothing in its lack of pretense, and the room was both neat and clean.

*Eric cares for what is his.*

*He's certainly claimed me.* Unease mixed with excitement and anticipation.

Still holding her with one hand, he opened a drawer and produced a crumpled tie.

"It's got a few snags, so I don't wear it anymore...but I just thought of an excellent way to recycle." He wiggled his eyebrows before sliding the drawer shut with his knee and pivoting in search.

"Now...where?"

Gillian almost sank to the floor, her knees weakened by just the thought of being tied.

"The footboard?" she suggested.

He tilted his head, grinned and yanked her to his side.

"You're fantastic," he murmured, before bending her back until her knees buckled. She clung to his neck and he kissed her so deeply, breathing became impossible. He clutched her aching ass and she yelped. She lurched toward him, feeling his stiff cock against her belly.

Pain and pleasure—need and desire—melded into one. She reveled in her nakedness, ready to serve in *any* capacity. She craved his dick with a need so fierce she could barely swallow.

He told her to kneel on the floor at the foot of the bed, and she did, facing away from the footboard, placing her wrists behind her.

He kissed the top of her head and went to work.

Silk caressed her skin as he wove the tie around and between her wrists. His tie was the only thing touching her but for the softness of the carpet beneath her shins. Like an instrument ready to be played, her body curved into a sensuous bow when he fastened her bound wrists to the base of the footboard.

"Pull, Gillian. I want to see how much you can move."

Gillian wiggled her hands. To her surprise, she couldn't move at all. She yanked harder, feeling her breasts swing with her movement.

"I can't get out," she said.

"Does it hurt?"

"No," she said, unable to hide a smile.

He raised his brows and puckered his lips. She flinched as he flicked her thigh with his forefinger.

"No, what?"

"No, sir." Again, he had her exactly where she longed to be: part curious, part nervous, and *fully* fucking aroused.

"Now, there was something you were begging to do earlier..."

As Eric unbuckled his belt and she stopped hearing him all together. Gillian bet his belt could give her bottom some nasty pleasure. She quivered between her legs. Quickly, she regained her focus. This time was going to be all about him.

Tonight, she was, at last, alive with raw desire. She wanted his cock everywhere—she wanted to take him in every way possible. Even then, she wasn't sure it would be enough.

His thrust his pelvis forward as he raised his arms to remove his shirt. His bulge stopped within inches of her mouth. She sucked in her bottom lip and bit, almost writhing with impatience.

He cast his shirt aside and smiled. "Eager little thing, aren't you? I never would have guessed."

She narrowed her eyes and strained toward him as far as her binds would allow. "Bull. You always knew I was hot for you."

"You might be right in part," he laughed, "I might have guessed. I might have even hoped. But I never knew for certain. And, your sass is gonna cost you later. That is, unless you work your mouth hard enough to make me forget all about it."

He silenced her reply by placing a finger into her mouth. She sucked and shuddered.

"Patience, Gillie. Wait for the real thing." He tugged off his jeans and boxers and flung them both to his side.

"All yours," he said, smirking.

Eric's stiff, bulging cock jutted out, gently bouncing. His musky male scent stoked her desire.

She stretched her bindings until her fingers tingled. She rubbed her cheek against the soft skin of his member. His body convulsed and he groaned, shifting his groin closer. She parted her lips and took in his cock's head. Closing her eyes,

she sucked. Feeling sexual and naughty, she pushed her lips down, licking figure eights on the bottom of his shaft as she took him almost to the back of her throat. Then, she slid the firm ring of her lips backward.

He was just the right size for her mouth: not so big her jaw would lock, but big enough to make her work for it. Again and again she repeated the gyration, freeing her mind and relaxing her jaw. She read his pleasure in the small, involuntary jerking of his hips.

She was tied to his bed and burning with his punishment, but goddess-like ecstasy filled her. She possessed all the power she could ever desire...the power to make him frantic with yearning.

She opened her mouth and wiggled her tongue, pretending to release him. His displeased growl sent a shivering thrill through her legs. She arched upward, attempting to brush her tingling nipples against his thighs. The silken pull of her bindings reminded her not to seek too much of her own pleasure. As if to emphasize the point, his hand cradled the back of her head and forced her to stay put.

She lowered her lashes and licked around the edge of the bulb, then, she grazed her teeth ever so lightly over the head.

Eric rasped, hoarse and impassioned. His pleasure became Gillian's ecstasy, transforming a standard cock-sucking into something more like a ritual.

She ran her tongue down his shaft toward its base. She inhaled before darting her tongue up and down his balls. The skin of his sack supplied a new and odd sensation—rough and malleable—but the guttural noises he made spurred her to

more explicit exploration. She sucked, swishing her tongue in every direction. Before she lost breath, she shimmied her way back to the tip, inhaled and took him full into her mouth.

She pumped him in and out, faster and faster until he was bent and gasping.

"Gillie, I need to pull out." His voice was desperate.

No. She didn't want to stop. She tightened her lips and swayed—in and out and in and out.

"Gil, if you don't stop, I'm going to come in your mouth..." he panted.

Giving silent permission, Gillian sucked in her cheeks and sucked his member so far back into her throat she wouldn't have any choice but to swallow when he came. His hand locked her into place, and his cock pulsed against her lips.

He burst in mindless quakes. Gillian imbibed the tart, salty taste of him and swallowed as Eric called out her name.

She waited for his passion to subside with a smile on her lips and heat in her belly.

Eric was lightheaded with bliss. He hadn't planned to shoot his load so soon, but he'd never forget the feel of her convulsively swallowing around his cock. Gillie had taken him so deep in her throat that he thought she might gag. Eric had heard of women who could deep-throat but never experienced it before.

Still, he shouldn't have acted so green! He meant to save his cream for a proper fucking. In utter exhaustion, he collapsed onto the floor. He leaned back on his elbows to admire his Gil. Her lips were smeared with saliva and the

remnants of semen. Her hair clung to her cheeks in sweaty disarray. She was gorgeous.

She stretched and bent with a small flush of triumph dusting her skin even as she was tied like a naughty harem wench. He wanted to savor the image of Gillie as his beautiful little serf. He wasn't ready to end the game. If Gillian was, he'd just have to convince her otherwise.

She strained against his tie; she wanted to be released. *Fat chance.* He stood.

"Very good, Gil," Eric stroked her head and strode without even a hint of modesty toward the bathroom.

"Sir?" she queried. Then, a little louder, "Eric?"

Eric smiled as he closed the bathroom door behind him. *Ah, let her wiggle a bit.* He washed his hands, running cool water over his still—smarting palm. He cupped his hand and splashed dampness into his hair. He shook his head at his refection.

*All George Clooney in your black tie.*

He chuckled. Somehow, his salt-and-pepper hair didn't bother him as much anymore.

Gillian had always been unpredictable, but this took the cake. Since he'd moved back to Jersey, he'd resolved to have her. But he'd meant to take his time, to do it right. He never would have thought *she* would end up seducing *him*.

Eric turned on the hot water. While he waited for his old water heater to cough up a suitable temperature, he opened his medicine cabinet and looked for something to soothe Gillian's blistered butt.

He decided against cortisone. He chose instead some aloe vera cream left over from a fishing trip last fall that had left him with a nasty burn. He soaked two towels in the steaming hot stream of water, then rung them out.

"Sir?" Gillian called. Then, with frustration, "Eric!"

*So much for pure submission.* He smiled.

Lording over Gil like some depraved, medieval knight made Eric hot and carnal, but he would never hurt her or even try and break her. He loved her; she was as necessary to his existence as breath. Eric wasn't even sure where the scolding he had given her earlier came from. He certainly hadn't planned it. He frowned into the mirror. How far could they take this?

He shrugged off the question. Right now his woman was tied to the foot of his bed and needed some TLC.

"There now," he called, kicking open the door. "Patience, remember?"

She scowled.

"What's the problem, Gil?"

"I'm getting cold...and I thought you might leave me here," she cast her eyes down, "while you took a shower...or something."

"I wasn't going to leave my good girl for long, especially after she did such a fantastic job." He crouched on his haunches and wiped her face. "But, you aren't to question me, remember?"

"Yes." She swallowed as if there were a lump in her throat. "Sir."

Eric cradled her head against his chest and smirked, away from her view.

"I'm going to untie you and then I want you to lie on the bed—on your stomach. Do you understand? It will be too painful any other way."

He released her wrists and Gillie undulated across his sheets exactly as he directed.

Eric's blood surged. The sight of her glowing red ass made him crazy happy. Over the years, he'd strategized many different ways to get Gillian into this very bed, but soothing her after a spanking had never been one of them. *Ain't life grand?* First, Eric wiped the back of Gillie's neck and then he eased the towel down her back. He lifted it and wiped the back of her legs, making sure the towel was cool enough not to cause discomfort by the time he draped it over ass. She gasped, and then sighed.

Eric crawled onto the bed and leaned onto his elbow, giving time for the warmth to do its work. The towel sagged into her ass crack as she relaxed. He ran an idle hand up the skin of her inner thigh as he listened to her breathe.

*My God, Gillian Louisa Daniels is spread eagle, face down on my bed.*

Sparks of a second stirring shot through his groin. Impossible...after only, what, fifteen minutes?

He meant to keep her in his bed for quite some time. He wanted to straddle her like a dominant lion and bite into her exposed neck. He shook off the notion: *too far*.



Clearing his throat, he gently removed the towel and squirted a cool mass of aloe vera into his palm. He kneaded the gel into her smooth, round, wiggling curves.

"Feel good?" he asked.

"Umm hum," she murmured into the mattress.

Her ass sure felt good to him. And the aloe did double work on his smarting palm. He hoped she wouldn't want sessions like the one they shared earlier too often, or he'd have to start using implements. After all, his palm had a hell of a lot less cushioning than her ass.

He let his hand glide into the darkness of her crack. He shook his head. She was wet and ready, again. Her ass may not be able to take the friction, but her body was aching for release.

Eric glanced down at his dick, already at half-mast. He flopped onto his back and placed his hands behind his head. A wedding, a spanking, two orgasms given and one received. *So much for a good day's work.* He smiled. Would he ever get enough of Gillian? He wasn't sure.

"Straddle me, love," he murmured. "When you are ready."

Gillian stretched to her side and smiled seductively. A sight that made his cock tingle and his chest tighten. She rose to her knees and flung her leg over his thigh. Her shy eyes were submissive, yet coy.

Eric traced her breasts with his fingertips, painting slow, spiraling sixes.

"Do you know what I think?" he asked.

"No..." she gurgled, "But I can guess where your mind is right now."

"Sass!" He swatted her rump, very lightly.

"Ow!" Gillian yelped, shivering throughout her body, then sighing.

Eric rolled Gillian's nipple between the tips of his fingers, locking his eyes to hers.

"I think that your nipples are so sensitive..." Eric said.

Gillian's thighs squeezed as he continued to rub her breasts.

"...I bet you could come by stimulation here alone." He feigned a lazy, academic interest. "What do you think?"

"Umm," she moaned, "I don't think so. I think I'll just get wetter and wetter." She closed her eyes and parted her lips.

He burned that image of her into his mind. "Let's try."

"No...it's too much."

He raised a brow and frowned.

She sighed. "Yes, sir."

Desire flashed across the curve of Gillian's lips. He taught himself her preferences by noting which rubs and pinches caused small, involuntary jerks of her thighs. Eric nibbled and licked his way around one darkened nipple while rolling the other between his thumb and forefinger.

"Eric, sir. Oh, God, please...please..." she whined. "I need your cock."

Eric smiled and focused on her shivering lower lip. He squeezed her nipples until she wailed with frustrated need. The sound sliced through his stomach.

He wanted to fuck...*now*. He couldn't massage both his testicles and her breasts, so he abandoned his nipple torture experiment to another day.

"I need a condom." His voice was hoarse and thin.

"I'm on the pill," she panted.

He froze. She offered something huge. Did she mean to say she wanted a relationship after all? Maybe, but now was definitely not the time to talk and he wasn't going to allow any risk until he was sure.

He reached over his head, and without looking, pulled a condom from his drawer. "Pill or no, I won't put you at risk for pregnancy or anything else."

He handed her the package and she ripped it open.

"But thank you," he said, pulling her face down so he could kiss her.

She nodded. With careful fingers, she rolled the rubber down over his erection.

He cupped the back of Gillian's upper thigh, urging her up. Her juice spilled, hot and slick, over his knuckles. Between her legs and just below her engorged labia, his cock pulsed.

Gillian's breasts bounced with each quick, light pant. She stared down at him, exposed by passion.

"I need you inside me," Gillie whispered.

"No movement until I say," he commanded, guiding his cock into position. "Is that clear?"

"Yes, sir." She nodded, poised but trembling.

"Lock your arms behind your back."

Her shoulders straightened and her palms clasped as she threaded her fingers together. Once she stilled, Eric spread the lips of her cunt apart with two careful fingers.

"Now," Eric purred, "lower your pretty little snatch over my dick."

She smiled. "Yes, sir," she whispered.

As Gillian eased downward, her pussy clutched his cock.  
Again, heaven.

He steadied her with his grip on her thigh.

"Ride me."

She slid up and down, propelled by the power of her thighs. The blinding sense of pleasure that exploded through his body wasn't enough for Eric. He pulled her upper body against his, wanting to feel the pebbly scrape of her nipples against his chest. She moaned as her hot, damp skin met his.

With the last of his concentration, he made sure he angled so her clit skimmed against the base of his shaft. Then, he stopped thinking altogether. Only her skin's silken heat and the sound of her breath as she mounted toward climax remained. Her muff clenched, milking his cock with unbelievable pulses of heat and wetness.

Eric held on as long as he could, but his sense of time and movement ceased. With his harshest, grinding thrust, he felt her break into orgasm. Her body sagged into his.

"Ah...ah...ah," she sobbed, shaking.

One last, hard, upward drive was all Eric needed.

Drifts of tingling shock rippled through his abdomen, stiffening his legs. In a dark, still place his body suspended. He was trapped without air.

"Gillie," he gasped as he came in a burst of burning, rapid-fire sparks.

Growling, he closed his eyes and he clasped her against the light perspiration on his chest and buried his face between her breast and arm. Her heart beat in his ear.

*I love you, Gillian.* Eric's soul stretched to transparency and offered his heart the words, but they died in his throat. He could not find his voice.

Gillian relaxed on Eric's body, moving with his breath, rocking rhythmically like a ship on soft and rolling waves. She clung to his shoulders like a woman afraid of drowning.

She blinked against his skin, focusing on the wood paneling and fighting the desire to tell him she loved him.

She had come into his home for a spanking and, perhaps, a fuck, but what happened was more than either of those things. Her reaction was still too new to parse. Her thoughts were more scattered than her clothing.

She sighed. What did she know? The man cradling her so tenderly was one of her oldest friends, yet they might as well have been strangers. A cord binding them always existed, but tonight she was aware of a new and stronger connection. Unfortunately, she didn't know what the hell to do with it.

Entangled in his muscled limbs, peace stole over her. Eric's warm arms crossed her protectively. Sleep weighted her eyelids. There would be time to think, later.

"Gillie, Gillie, wake up," Eric's deep voice rolled over Gillian.

His lips grazed her neck. She smiled.

"Gillian, we have to get your things from the hotel," Eric prodded.

Gillian's groggy senses sprang to life.

"The hotel?" she murmured. "I don't have to check out until morning."

"It *is* morning, love," Eric said.

"Shit!" She sat up in a flash, forgetting her bruises. "Ah *Shit!*"

She rolled to her side. Her bottom still smarted, but Eric winced as if he were the one in pain.

"Do you want some more aloe?"

Concern marked Eric's face. Despite her panic, her heart flipped.

"No. No thank you." Gillian swallowed. "I just have to be careful how I sit today. What time is it?"

"Almost nine."

"You're kidding! Why didn't you wake me? I've got to check out by eleven. There's wedding stuff all over the room!"

He snorted. "It wasn't some nefarious plan. I just woke up myself."

"Sorry," she said, shaking her head. Why did she feel so embarrassed now, when she had no shame last night? "Um, thank you for letting me sleep here. I guess we kind of fell asleep by accident."

"I wouldn't have let you go, even if we hadn't fallen asleep."

Let her go? Her cheeks pinked. "Excuse me."

She walked to the bathroom fully aware of his gaze on her ass.

"Do you have a robe or something I can borrow?" she called from inside the safety of the door.

"I have a robe, but you can't borrow it."

She peeked at him around the door through narrow eyes.

His raised a brow as his half-grin mocked. "I prefer you naked."

She shut the door, quick. Squinting into the mirror, she gathered her hair into a fist-ponytail. Her lips were deep red, her skin still splotchy from friction. Anyone seeing her would know. That was before she even tried to sit! And, to think, she had made fun of her friend Christina when she'd been in a similar situation!

Her nipples ached; her ass twinged. She squinted into the mirror. *Is that a hickey on my neck? Damn.* He might as well have written *Eric's* in permanent marker all over her body.

A panicky feeling quaked in her chest. What was she going to do?

Last night, she'd truly felt like she was falling in love. When he'd cared for her, Eric had been so tender. She'd been sure he felt something deep for her as well. This morning, however, everything seemed complicated yet again. Where could it go from here? Surely, they couldn't sustain this for very long. If they grew bored with one another, she'd lose this precious thread to her past, and she was old enough to know childhood friendships should be cherished—they were irreplaceable.

*Excuses.*

She gulped some mouthwash and swished. She just couldn't talk to him about it. She couldn't! How could she look at him after calling him '*sir*' all night long? What must he think of her now?

As she finished rinsing, a gentle rap sounded against the door.

"Gillie?" His call was playful and suggestive.

"You can't come in." Her voice was high-pitched and whiny. She winced.

"You're wrong, there is no lock."

*Shit.*

"There is no reason to hide. Open the door."

She scowled. She was *not* hiding. Well, maybe a little. She opened the door.

"Do you have to pee or something?" She grasped at the annoyance in her heart, but she was too aware of his nakedness, and her resolve to keep him at arm's length melted away.

"Nope, took care of it before I woke you. I just thought we could get ready faster if we showered together."

She highly doubted the efficiency of his plan, but the idea of a soothing, warm shower in his arms tantalized. He had the most amazing shoulders...

*Fuck*, she was lost. "Ah, okay."

He smiled and touched a finger to her forehead. He stepped around her and turned on the water. "It takes a moment for it to get hot. I should have replaced the water heater during the renovation, but I didn't. It's in the area meant for..." He shut his mouth abruptly and turned away.

*Interesting.* What didn't he want to tell her?

He cleared his throat. "I'm guessing you like it hot, but, ah, warm water would be better for your—"

"Warm is fine."

He grinned and flipped on a heat lamp. The small bathroom warmed instantly under the glowing red light.



He guided her hand into the stream of water. "Is the temperature good?"

"It's good," she said. She stepped into the tiled bath and he joined her. She reached for the soap, but—

"Stay still." He placed his hands on her shoulders. "Let me wash you."

She gave up fighting. She closed her eyes and let the warm water trickle over her skin. He ran the sudsy bar all over her body, slithering bubbles and massaging her skin. She reveled in the slippery, sensual sensation.

Her legs wobbled when his hands swept across her thighs. Sweet satisfaction made her sigh as he slid the soap back and forth against her pussy.

She laughed low in her throat. "I think I'm clean by now."

"I'm not so sure. I think I should do a closer inspection." He angled the showerhead to rinse her and then he sank to his heels.

She listened to the water splash against his back as his tongue flicked against her clit with expert efficiency. The warm water heated the small enclosure. She gasped into the mist as his swirling tongue caused pleasure-tension to coil up her legs. She tilted her hips and opened, letting him explore without resistance. She pressed her back into the travertine for support. Her body chilled as she shivered in a sweet, rolling release that left her body fully relaxed. "Now," he smiled up at her, blinking as the water splashed around his face, "I think you're clean enough."

Water had flattened the hair against his scalp and dripped over his cheeks, but when he grinned, he was adorable.

He rose to his feet and curled his arms about her body. The water snuck between them, running in countless rivulets down her face, her breasts and even her back. He kissed her until she could feel nothing but his mouth.

She pulled away, breathless. "You're quite good with your tongue," she teased. "But you still need to wash..."

"Would you like to help me?"

Her fingers slipped over the bar of soap as she took it from his palm. She placed her hands, and the soap, against his chest and explored his body the way he had hers.

She could feel a breeze of cool air against her wet skin, but the warmth of the water and the heat radiating from the lamp kept her from being cold.

She worked her way around his body, teasing until his cock strained with obvious need for attention. She sank to her knees.

He gasped as she worked her lips around his sensitive skin. She was learning the moans and sighs that told her he was pleased. He jerked his pelvis as he approached orgasm. She pressed her hands against his ass when she knew he was building and drew her fingers in a soft, light, repetitive tickle across his tightened balls. His cry was long, guttural and strangled as he came with strong pulses. Once again, she swallowed. She could hardly believe it, but she liked his taste.

He rinsed off, shaking and grinning like a kid with candy. They stepped out of the shower and he wrapped her in a thick, soft towel before shutting off the water and then grabbing a towel for himself. She smiled at his thoughtfulness.

"I don't want to go," she said.

"I can go with you," he offered.

She cocked her head to the side. Her orgasm—and his—had taken the edge off her nerves and brought back some of the magic of the prior night. Still, she craved some privacy.

"Eric," she said softly, "I need some time alone."

The light of love and teasing in his gaze shuttered. He bit his lips and cocked his head. She could have sworn he paled.

"I understand," he said as he turned away.

Her heart lurched. She couldn't leave it like this, she just couldn't.

Almost as if he heard the plea of her heart, he turned. "You could come back for breakfast when you've collected your things."

"All right." She sighed with relief. "I'll come back."

Christina and Lisa had removed most of the mess left from preparing for the wedding, and so there wasn't much to pack in her hotel room. Gillian moved as if molasses filled her veins. Her emotions were torn between wanting to return to Eric and wanting to hit the highway, to just push aside all the confusion and just run.

When a knock sounded on the door, she jumped.

"Gillie, are you in there?" Lisa called.

"She is not in there," Christina muttered. "She wasn't there earlier either. I told you, she's off at Eric's, all strewn across his bed and probably getting some decent after-care. Which, by the way, I could use. Come on...I gotta get back to Bryce. And, hey, I'm surprised Ben even let you out this morning."

Lisa giggled. "I wore him out. Ben's fast asleep."

Gillian toyed with the idea of not answering, but her curiosity got the better of her. She wanted to hear about their nights too. She opened the door.

"You're here," Christina said in surprise.

"But the bed hasn't been slept in!" Lisa crowed. "You stayed at his place, don't lie!"

"Yes." Gillie made a sound between a sniffle and a snort. "Come in."

Christina sat on the bed, but then jumped up with a yelp.

Gillie rolled her eyes. "I can see you had fun."

"As a matter of fact I did." Christina smiled wide and rubbed her ass. "After some serious action with the new riding crop I gave him, Bryce told me he loved me."

"Wonderful!" Lisa exclaimed.

Gillie fought the pang of jealousy that stabbed at her chest. She was truly happy for Christina but painfully aware that Eric had mentioned nothing of love.

"That's great news, Christina," Gillie said.

"Thanks. I think I'll keep him," Christina laughed. "You really helped me get through my fear, Gillie. And your adventure? How did it go?"

Gillie tried to smile, but her lips quivered.

"Oh honey, I'm sorry," Lisa rushed to her side and rubbed her back. "It didn't go well?"

"It went plenty fine, but I'm nervous and embarrassed...and I don't think I want it to end."

"Oh, Hon," Lisa soothed, "part of you knew this was going to be your reaction. Hell, you pretty much had it all planned out."

"I didn't think I would feel this strongly," Gillian said defensively.

Lisa challenged her with a look of disbelief.

Christina took Gillie's hand. "Lisa doesn't know how far back your crush goes. She didn't know you back then."

Gillie looked at Christina with surprise. "You know? Am I that obvious?"

Christina nodded. "Since you were about twelve. How does he feel?"

"That's the problem." Gillian threw up her hands. "I don't know."

Lisa piped up. "I suggest you ask him, then. You asked him for a spanking—how much harder could it be to ask him how he feels?"

"A lot!" Gillie said. "He's such a player—how could I even trust him if he tells me he has feelings for me?"

"Honey, what's important here is you finally broke through your fear," Christina said. "I hate to tell you this, but I'm going to be honest. This was never just about the spanking. It was about you and Eric all along. Don't lose courage now."

Christina smoothed Gillian's hair from her forehead and cupped the side of her cheek in a way that reminded Gillie that Christina was a mother. "Look, you aren't going to know all the answers right away, so deal with it."

"You told me when I was confused about Ben to trust myself and to go and get him," Lisa reminded.

"What are you waiting for, Gil?" Christina asked.

"Go and get him," Lisa said.

Eric turned down the gas on the stove and checked his beeping cell.

*On my way*, the text from Gil flashed.

He smiled. The trip from Route 73 should give him just about enough time to finish up his specialty—eggs with rosemary and onions. He guessed they were his specialty, anyway. He'd never actually made them for anyone but himself. But cooking for Gillie felt normal. Having Gil in his home was right.

He broke a few eggs into a bowl and added the fresh herbs.

He stirred. He never felt domestic after sex—*bizarre*. But was it really? Whenever he'd had a woman over before, he was always a little relieved when she left. But when Gillie left this morning, the spirit of his house was no longer peaceful and still. The house felt empty and waiting for Gillie, like the pond outside waited to thaw in spring.

The butter started to crackle and he poured the eggs into the pan.

It wasn't as if his feelings for Gillie were new. On their senior trip, somewhere out in the godforsaken wilderness of the Pine Barrens, they'd snuck out into the night with some friends to roam the woods. He remembered seeing her shiver and so he had placed his coat around her shoulders. Absurd, but the sight of her in his jacket had made him hard. As if by folding herself in his clothes, she was folding into *him*. He smiled ruefully—eighteen-year-old wood was damn hard to

get rid of. It had taken him a long time to get to sleep in a bunk room with ten other guys.

Even a kiss had been just a fantasy then. He'd been too afraid of her rejection and too worried he'd fuck it up. A break up would have meant parting their small group of friends. And change enough had been in store for them all.

He folded his arms across his chest.

Maybe something within him warned him to wait. They had lives to build, different directions to take. They had needed time to mature...apart from each other.

The eggs sizzled. He snapped back to the present.

*So, what is next?*

He picked up the pan and swirled.

They supported one another, trusted and cared for another, and now...

He bristled at the thought of any other man with Gillian.

After sliding the finished eggs onto a dish, he covered them and leaned against the counter, sipping his coffee.

Gillie had to be in his life. He could try and deny it, but what would be the point? *Forever* had snuck up on him last night.

Marriage ceased to be a scary prospect long ago. In fact, he'd already drawn up plans to expand the cabin. He'd almost slipped up and told Gillie in the bathroom this morning. He stopped himself though, because she was acting very un-Gillie like, very skittish. She wouldn't have believed him.

The door rattled as she stepped inside.

"Hey, there," he said softly.

She smiled. *God*. She was sweet as summer fruit and just as luscious.

"Hi." Her gaze was fixed on the stove.

"I made you eggs."

"Thanks. I haven't had eggs for breakfast in a long time. I'm a terrible cook. I burn everything."

"That's fine." He shrugged. "I rock." *Whoops*. He unintentionally hinted at the future he'd been envisioning.

"Your humility is impressive," she laughed, though her eyebrows were raised.

"If you think my humility is impressive, you should try my eggs," he joked.

She eased onto a stool at the counter. He dished out their servings, and then he grabbed two forks and hit the drawer closed with his hip. He sat down by her side.

*Nope, no doubt. Gillie belongs here.*

He slid his fork over to her plate and scooped up a forkful of her food.

"Hey!" she said.

"Open." He hovered the fork near her mouth, circling in front of her lips.

"Eric, I think I can feed myself."

"Of course you can, love," he coaxed. "Humor me."

Gillian closed her eyes and savored the taste of Eric's eggs. He wasn't kidding. The eggs *were* delicious. He'd added something...fresh rosemary, maybe? *Damn, and a good cook, too*. He was definitely going to break her heart.

"I'll make you breakfast every morning."



His voice was so low; she told herself for a split-second that he hadn't said what she thought he said.

"What was that?" She swallowed with difficulty.

"When you move in, I'll cook." He had a calm but searching expression in his beautiful, green eyes. "It relaxes me. Cooking, that is. But you relax me, too."

*Breathe*, she told herself. Her emotions blared in her mind at full volume and she didn't trust herself to acknowledge him. She took the fork from his hands.

"Your eggs are good," she squeaked.

He stared at her for a long, hard moment, and then turned abruptly and shoveled a forkful in his mouth.

"Yup, not bad," he said.

She peeked at him. His face was so familiar, yet almost new. *If you want him, go and get him.* Warm affection stole over Gillian like a mist in the night, and her eyes started to fill. She sniffled and he jerked back.

"What is it, baby?" he asked, his face full of alarm.

"It's just," she hesitated, "I'm scared. Last night was pretty wild."

"This morning, too," he pointed out.

"Unhelpful." She rolled her eyes and slumped, but he took her face into his hands and drew her close.

"We have this thing between us. It's fun, it's interesting and it's hot. But it's not everything. We have our friendship, too."

"There was more than just role-play in there." She motioned to the living room.

His eye glittered and he didn't deny it.

"I liked spanking you," he said. "And, yes, maybe I like to take charge." He took both of her hands into his before continuing, "Your happiness, though, is as important to me as my own. I'm pretty certain one depends on the other."

"I'm pretty independent." She glanced at her hands. "Most of the time, that is."

"Be whatever you want to be, out there. Do whatever you want to do. I'll cheer you on. But in here," he placed his hand over her heart, "beats the heart of a submissive. What's more, last night you granted its keeping to me."

She wrinkled her forehead. "I'm not sure what that means."

"To be honest, neither to I...yet." He shrugged. "We'll learn. I intend to find out. I don't want to let this go."

"I don't want to tie you down," her voice squeaked.

"Funny, I want to tie *you* down very much."

"Don't joke."

"It may be a double entendre, but both meanings are true. If you don't believe that I'm ready to settle down, I can prove it. I have plans for a second renovation upstairs to expand this place into a house for two...or more?"

"Really?" Her heart skipped a beat.

"We'll work it out," he said confidently. He grabbed her wrist and, when he had pulled her close enough, he embraced her. "Look, last night, at first we got it all wrong—but we tried again and we figured out what was right for us."

She smiled weakly, but her heart warmed. "True."

She sighed. They couldn't have all the answers just yet. When he held her the way he did, she thought they had enough.

"I think I may love you," she said.

"I already know you do," he replied.

She sighed and shook her head. "And you say I have sass."

He grinned. "What's more," he added, "I *know* I love you."

"Why?" she whispered.

"You're smart, fun and easy to talk to, not to mention hot and wild." He leaned forward and kissed her forehead before resting his cheek against her hair. "But mostly because you've been the most important person in my life since we were kids."

He brought her hands to his lips and kissed her knuckles. His breath hitched in his throat and he began, "So, what do you say Gillian Louisa Daniels..." The slight crack in his voice melted her heart. "Do you want to jump through the rabbit hole with me?"

"Yes." Breathless, she wove her arms around his neck and curled her fingers into his hair. "Yes, yes, yes."

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## **About the Author**

Tess Lamont tried to be a good girl. Really. But despite her best efforts, her imagination kept right on wresting her away to places where powerful men appear to dominate, but willing women keep them both guessing and enthralled.

Tess has been writing stories since she can remember; however, only within the last 2 years did she finally summon the courage to take her dream seriously and banish her inner censor. Tess lives in New York City with an often incredulous, but marvelously supportive husband. She enjoys writing romance, reading romance, web surfing, laughing with her best friend 'til her sides hurt, wine and cheese. She hopes her tales of wicked, lusty love leave her readers breathless.

Visit Tess Lamont at

[www.tesslamont.blogspot.com](http://www.tesslamont.blogspot.com)

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Bound To Ignite  
*by Tess Lamont*

## **Also Available**

\* \* \* \*

Bound To Surrender

by

Tess Lamont

Though single motherhood taught Christina Welch ruthless self-denial, in her heart she secretly craves a man who'll drive her wild in bed. Now that her son is spending the summer with his father, she can't keep her mind off the one man who haunts her dreams—her son's baseball coach.

Bryce Walker lusts after the sexy librarian who never missed her son's home games. Respect and caution held him back, but every time she peeks at him under her lashes, instinct tells him she needs what he has to offer.

When Bryce meets Christina by chance on her birthday, desire smolders hotter than the early summer heat wave. He buys her ice cream, but they both know only one thing will cool them down. As Bryce leads Christina into a world of sensual pain and pleasure, she discovers heights of emotion she never knew existed. She learns to trust Bryce with her body, but can she trust him with her heart? Summer doesn't last forever...

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## **Bound To Surrender**

Christina Welch thrust the key into the ignition of her 1999 Jetta and turned her wrist. The motor hummed, the air conditioner sputtered to life, and she sighed in relief.

The short walk from the bank to her car had left her panting. Hot, still air stuck to the back of her throat like cotton candy. She shuddered. It must be more than 100 degrees, she thought. With the usual South Jersey humidity, the temperature felt closer to 120.

She closed her eyes and stretched the long, thin column of her neck. Cold air wafted over her. The engine caused her seat to vibrate and a cool breeze swirled about her damp skin. A chill filtered through the thin, silk fabric of her blouse, perking her nipples. Shifting, she cursed her hormones. It didn't take much these days. Lately, her body maintained a constant state of high alert. Her doctor told her that heightened arousal was normal at her age. But if a man walked by right then, she would consider eating him alive—at least once he was hard and ready.

How normal could *that* be?

Christina crushed her arousal and opened her eyes. Life as a single mother made ruthless self-denial second nature. Besides, she harbored no hope of getting any action tonight, even if it was her birthday and she didn't believe in dwelling on what she didn't have. She had more than most: a job she loved, a great kid, a house she could afford, and friends she could rely on. So what if she hadn't experienced true sexual

satisfaction in five *long* years? So what if today was her birthday, and she planned to celebrate alone? It wasn't as if she didn't have plans. Summer vacation only began last week. Tomorrow, she would lunch with her friends Lisa and Gillian. Then, she could look forward to Lisa's bachelorette party and then the wedding. After that, well, maybe she'd head down to the shore and rent a room somewhere in Ocean City or Brigantine. Warm ocean breezes might just help clear her head and soothe her body.

She sighed and pulled her grocery list from her glove compartment.

*Milk, frozen pizza, cereal, bananas...*

Shopping when her son was at his father's was never fun, but today, the thought of pushing around a half-empty cart just to cook for one seemed downright unbearable. She crumpled the list and threw it onto the passenger seat. What she needed was some small way to celebrate. She squared her shoulders. Grocery shopping could wait another day. Instead, she decided on a birthday treat: ice cream from Coneheads and then home for iced sangria, a racy novel, and a long, uninterrupted session with her ever-ready vibrating friend.

Christina shrugged off any remnants of self-pity and eased out of the bank parking lot.

*God, damn, it was hot.*

Bryce Walker braked, stopping at a traffic light. He leaned over his steering wheel and scanned for any sign of possible relief. No, not one single cloud marred the summer-blue sky. Muggy South Jersey air...he'd *never* get used to it. Although

he didn't miss the congestion and pollution of Orange County, California, the weather in Jersey was far from ideal. A damp, frigid, misty-gray winter gave way to a bright, sweltering summer with almost no medium in between.

Despite the humidity, Jersey wasn't all bad. He liked his teaching and coaching job, and now he could look forward to the less demanding schedule of summer break. Still, transitions left him restless. Bryce flexed his right shoulder and then tensed his muscles to ease the strain. Was the start of summer break why he overworked at the gym?

His pecs ached from his workout. His body still hadn't cooled, though, from the few extra minutes in the gym shower where he allowed water to cascade over his well-worked muscles. Of course, his car's broken air conditioner wasn't helping.

He drummed his hands on his steering wheel, impatient for the light to change. Haze rose from the asphalt. The prospect of a long, lonesome summer loomed before him like a stretch of desert highway, without even a *mirage* of a woman to make things interesting.

Bryce pursed his lips. During the school year, he didn't have time for dating. Sexless nights trailed behind him. Worse still, every school day since September, the school librarian Christina Welch managed to stoke his lust. She flushed under his gaze in the teacher's lounge and, more than once, he'd caught her eyeing him with barely concealed interest. *She'd be a rotten poker player.*

He shook his head. He'd decided months ago not to pursue Christina. He didn't want to risk his new job. Besides, she was



a single mother, and he had too much respect to trifle with her. He couldn't help, however, that the obviously undersexed librarian stole into his fantasies from time to time. He had lubed and stroked to the thought of her more times than he cared to admit.

The light shifted to green. Bryce clutched the wheel and eased forward with traffic.

There was no way to hide from heat...not without air conditioning. He frowned. His open window wasn't any help at all. He should have fixed the AC when the temperature was normal. As it was, the AC in his car wasn't the only one broken...so was the one in his bedroom. Between coaching the school's baseball team and grading finals, he hadn't had an afternoon to spare in the past two months.

The turn for his apartment complex came into view but he hesitated. Living in cramped quarters during the school year was one thing. At least then, there were things to plan and do for school. With the year over, however, his efficiency seemed way too small, and, if he was honest, too damned empty.

No, he did not want to go home just yet. He drove past the gate. There had to be something *e/se* he could do, something cooling...

His eyes settled on a sign ahead—Coneheads Ice Cream. He'd never been there; ice cream wasn't his kind of indulgence. Still, he'd noticed the shop, with its clever moniker, almost every day. One of his students told him it was the best...who was it? Ah yes, Michael. *The librarian's son.*

He groaned.

*Why can't I keep that woman out of my head?*

Bryce rolled his Mazda into the last available space in the strip mall's parking lot. He strode through the wall of heat toward the entrance, yanked open the door, and stepped inside. Bells jingled as the door closed behind him.

*Ah...*his mind sighed as the chill of air conditioning and the smell of sugar charged his senses. *Perfect.*

Then, he noticed a woman bending over the counter. He'd recognize that round, full posterior anywhere—the ass he'd been avoiding all year. The corner of Bryce's mouth twitched.

*Fate's a bitch.*

Fate: the topic of the final exams he'd just finished grading. *Discuss the modern, Freudian idea that there are no accidents referencing Homer's The Odyssey and any other work of art, film, or literature.*

He rocked back on his heels, glad he wore sunglasses. From his position, he could admire her shape at leisure while she considered the different flavors through the glass. He thought of the nervous way she ran her hand through her hair when he stepped too close in the halls, the way she jingled her keys and stuck out her hip when they chatted after games.

She needed flavor, all right. *Flavor of a Walker kind.*

Any man in his right mind would find her attractive, but instinct told him they may be compatible on other levels.

He grasped the back of his neck and massaged. Michael told him he would be spending the summer with his father. And if Michael was away, then the librarian was likely *alone*.

What harm could it cause to flirt a bit? Summer lasted a long time. With school out and Michael away, time was on his side. Bryce ignored the little voice in his head telling him that his cock made the decisions. *One little advance couldn't hurt.* If she shut him down, he swore, that would be the end of it. He stepped beside Christina and mirrored her lean.

"I hear the vanilla here is very good, but if I were you, I'd be a bit more adventurous."

\* \* \* \*

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