



Possessing Eleanor

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Possessing Eleanor
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For S.F. – And you thought I was kidding!

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Chapter One

"Ellie, do you have the payment ready for Royce Associates?"

"I do, Bill." Eleanor Lewis held the receiver between chin and shoulder, stretching the phone cord to maximum capacity as she moved around her desk. "I was going to drop it in the mail at lunchtime."

"No need. Jackson Royce is here. He's heading to your office to pick it up."

"No problem."

Ellie knew the check was there somewhere, but she had been frantically moving stacks of work orders over the last hour, and she couldn't exactly put her hands on it. Well, she had about a minute and a half to find it since Bill's office was right down the hall.

One second the papers were in organized chaos, the next second a pile of them went flying to spread out on the carpet and flutter under her desk.

"Damn it," she muttered, dropping down to her knees. Ruffling through and restacking the closest documents did not produce the check, so she crawled under the front of her desk. "Fine, I'll come to you if that's what you want." Thankfully, it was lying within arms reach.

Ellie shimmied out from under the furniture, clutching the trouble-making document, to find two very large black leather shoes inches away from her. She looked up, way up, while rising from all fours to sit on her heels. "That's good to know, Miss Lewis."

Being the manager of a staff of more than twenty employees, Ellie was in charge of assuring a well-functioning office environment as well as maintaining appropriate workplace behavior. Sitting on the floor was definitely not acceptable when first meeting the general contractor in charge of the warehouse project. But instead of righting herself instantly, something made her stay on the floor and assess the man.

Height, of course, was deceiving from her current vantage point, but basic physical construction was not, and this man was built to perfection. Long legs, flat stomach, broad shoulders, chiseled jaw line and strong brow, she couldn't have dreamed up a better specimen of manhood. He was clothed completely in black, and the color suited him. He exuded a quiet power, a sense of self that was palatable. He owned the space where he stood. When her eyes met his, his intense gaze held her captive and Ellie actually felt her breath catch.

Appearing to move in slow motion, he leaned down and extended his hand while a devilish grin played across his sinfully erotic lips. Ellie laid her much smaller hand in his, thoroughly shocked when a jolt of heat skittered up her arm. She kept her eyes fixed on his long fingers as his grip tightened, and she gave herself up to his strength, allowing him to help her up from the floor. As soon as she was firmly vertical on her sensibly flat shoes, she blinked rapidly a few times, and the spell was broken.

"Mr. Royce." She shook his hand respectfully before letting go to smooth down her rumpled suit jacket. She sent up a silent prayer of thanks that she had chosen to wear pants today. "I'm sorry you had to witness my paperwork explosion. Here's your check."

"Don't be ridiculous, Miss Lewis. Today is my lucky day." He wrapped his fingers tightly over hers, holding her without making any attempt to remove the check from her grasp. "The image of you prone on your office floor will stay with me for all eternity." He lifted one jet-black eyebrow, while staring down at her intently, and moved his thumb to brush over the pulse point in her wrist.

"You've got to be kidding me," Ellie scoffed with a healthy dose of cynicism. "I'm sure a line like that is very popular at the local bars, Mr. Royce, but highly inappropriate in the business office of a stranger, don't you think?" Embarrassment slammed into her when she realized she hadn't pulled away from his hold. Ellie blushed and took a few steps backwards.

"Please call me Jackson." He crossed the space Ellie had purposefully put between them in one gliding step. "And I don't pick up women in bars, Eleanor."

"Thanks for clearing that up, I guess. And it's Ellie. Nobody calls me Eleanor."

"From now on, *Eleanor*, one person does."

This guy couldn't be for real! The crystal clear image of a caveman grabbing his woman by the hair and dragging her off to his lair burst into her head so fast she had to stifle a laugh—or was it a groan? Why was her heart rate elevating? Why in the hell could she feel her hardened nipples rubbing against the material of her bra? She refused to consider any other bodily reaction

happening lower on her person. She ran her tongue over her bottom lip while contemplating this interesting turn of events but stopped when she noticed his piercing grey eyes following the movement.

“Have lunch with me, Eleanor.”

She definitely didn’t miss the fact that it was a command more than a question. By the way he was looking at her, she was afraid she might be the meal.

“I appreciate the invitation, Jackson, but I don’t date.”

Why in the world had she said that? It was true, but this man surely didn’t have the right to know it. He was scrambling her brains by the sheer force of being!

“Are you married, Eleanor?” She caught him glancing at her ring finger.

“That would be a darn good reason for not dating.” She couldn’t help giggling, and the smile he flashed in return had butterflies dancing in her stomach. “But no, I’m not married, affianced, or in any other way spoken for. I just don’t do it.”

“Why not?” The curiosity was evident in his tone.

Ellie wasn’t sure how the conversation had gotten so out of hand, but she had no intention of revealing anything more about herself to this man.

“That’s none of your business, Jackson.” She turned on her heel and moved with purpose to sit down behind her desk. “It’s been very nice to meet you, and you now have your payment.” Ellie glanced at her watch and shuffled through some papers on her desk before looking up at him with what she hoped was a firm, businesslike expression. “I am expecting someone any minute.”

“It has been much more than *nice* to meet you, Eleanor.” His deep baritone voice was pure seduction. “We *will* be seeing each other again.” Jackson winked and walked out of her office.

Ellie had no chance to catch her breath let alone time to contemplate what had just happened because her lunch partner and best friend, Judy, flew into her office.

“Oh my God, Ellie, who the hell was that guy?”

“The contractor for the warehouse project.” Ellie blew out a breath to move the wayward curl that had fallen over her forehead.

“Contractor? He looked more like the head of the Marquis de Sade academy! He’s as scary as all get out!” Judy dropped into a chair with her usual drama.

“Scary? You thought he was scary?” Ellie glanced over to her doorway. Jackson Royce was definitely masculine, gorgeous, powerful and ultra confident, but scary? “Believe it or not, he actually asked me out after knowing me for a matter of minutes.” Ellie shook her head in disbelief.

“Get out of town,” Judy gasped, leaning across the desk and propping her chin in her hands. “Now that I look at you though, you do seem a little flushy and doe eyed. Oh my God, you’re actually attracted to him!”

“Who wouldn’t be?” she remarked a bit too breathlessly.

“Anyone who doesn’t want to be whisked off in the dead of night to his evil castle, never to be seen again.” Both women laughed. “Make sure to take your cell phone and leave a trail of bread crumbs if you go anywhere with him, Ellie.”

“Don’t be ridiculous, Judy. You know I don’t date.”

Chapter Two

7:00pm, Crystal Gardens. Jackson.

Ellie picked up the little card that had accompanied a single red rose and read it for the hundredth time as she paced her small living room. The narrow box had been delivered to her office that morning, causing curious stares and whispers from her well-meaning coworkers.

Well, he was persistent. Or was he pushy. Or maybe just supremely confident? She would bet her bottom dollar that Jackson Royce didn't lack female company whenever he wanted it, so why her?

Ellie had some confidence of her own but was honest enough to admit she wasn't a raving beauty. She considered her large, expressive hazel eyes to be her best facial feature, but her shoulder-length wavy auburn hair was at times unruly. She appreciated the fact that she was five-foot-seven because she loved to eat and was never going to be a size twelve. She was comfortable in her own skin, though, and she was very proud of that.

She continued pacing the floor and checked the grandfather clock again. 6:05.

If he had known her for more than five minutes, he might have been attracted to her sense of humor or her work ethic, or her love of animals for that matter, but she kept running their brief encounter over in her mind and decided the only thing he knew about her was she had too much paperwork and she didn't date.

"Why did I ever say that to him?" she wondered aloud. How could she accept his invitation and not look like an idiot or, worse yet, feed his male ego by showing up against her own bold pronouncement?

6:15.

Ellie hadn't dated in over two years. There hadn't been any big incident. She'd simply gotten tired of unsatisfying relationships. She was financially independent, had a small group of close friends, and was happy with the life she'd built for and by herself. Sure, sometimes she was lonely, and more than sometimes, she was horny, but she had the toys and the imagination to solve the latter issue on her own. What was it about the prospect of spending time with Jackson that had her tingling all over in a way she hadn't experienced in a very long time, if ever?

6:22.

* * * *

Jackson checked his watch again. 6:55. He sat at an intimate round table for two, positioned perfectly in a corner of the room where he could watch the door to see her come in, and he was positive she would walk through that door.

There was no mistaking the instant arousal he had seen in her expressive face when she'd boldly perused him from shoe to head while kneeling at his feet on the floor. The image sent blood flowing to his already hardened cock again. Hell, he had been living in a constant state of arousal since meeting the delectable Eleanor Lewis. Thoughts of her tied spread eagle on his bed, open for the pleasure only he could give her had been highly distracting, but picturing her draped over his lap, her rounded ass pink and warmed from his hand, was driving him insane.

Jackson prided himself on his ability to read people, especially women. Eleanor intrigued him. He knew she was shocked that she had stayed on the floor at his feet longer than what would be considered acceptable to most, leading him to believe she was unaware of her natural submissive tendencies. He had every intention of being the one to teach her what heights of pleasure could be found at the hands of an experienced Dom.

God, she was sexy, from her crazy hair all the way down her lush, womanly curves. He pegged her in her mid-thirties, so the fact that she was in charge of a large office demonstrated her business acumen. However, her filing skills did leave a bit to be desired. The "I don't date" comment had thrown him for a minute, but the relief he'd felt over her being unattached had been enormous. His curiosity was definitely piqued as to why such a spectacular woman hadn't been claimed. Well, all the better for him.

* * * *

Ellie's gaze fixed on Jackson as soon as her eyes adjusted to the dim lighting of the restaurant. She couldn't help smiling as he rose from his chair and came to her. He was again dressed in all black, but tonight, his shirt and tie appeared to be silk and he wore dress slacks

instead of black jeans. Ellie noticed the other women giving him the once over, and she delighted in the fact that he never took his eyes off of her as she approached.

“Good evening, Eleanor.” He looked down at her with a killer grin. “I’m very glad you decided to join me tonight.”

“Hi, Jackson.” She gazed up at him, feeling a bit shy and uncertain now that he was standing so close. “Thank you for the beautiful rose.”

“You’re welcome, my dear, but its beauty pales in comparison to yours.”

He placed his hand on the small of her back and guided her to their table. She hoped he couldn’t hear the frantic beating of her heart or feel her slight tremble in response to his compliment.

After helping her remove her coat, he pulled out her chair, making certain she was comfortably settled before he sat down. Ellie watched him nod almost imperceptibly to the waiter before he turned his complete attention to her.

“This is one of my favorite restaurants. Have you been here before?”

“I have many times. The food is fantastic, and they do carryout. It’s really convenient for me to stop here after work. Everything is still hot by the time I get home.”

“Yes, it would be,” was his simple reply as the waiter arrived with a bottle of wine. What with opening and sniffing and tasting and approving, it took a few minutes before they were alone again.

“You know where I live?” She couldn’t keep the hint of concern from her voice.

“Of course. I wouldn’t have asked you to meet me at a location that was inconvenient for you.” He stared at her intently while continuing in a quiet tone, “Eleanor, there’s no need for you to look so worried. I just used the internet to find your address. I don’t think I like your implication that I did anything unsavory.”

The internet, who knew? Heat infused her cheeks and she dropped her eyes to the table to toy with her fork in utter embarrassment. He was absolutely right, of course. She had insulted him. He was incredibly thoughtful to have taken such care in selecting where they went.

“I’m sorry, Jackson,” she whispered.

“Apology accepted.” He laid his hand on hers, stilling her nervous fidgeting. “Look at me, Eleanor.” The low rumble of his voice was a caress in itself. When her eyes met his, they were darker, sparkling with emotion. He reached across the table and ran a finger along her cheekbone. “I love it when a woman’s skin warms and flushes pink.”

Ellie had the strangest sensation his words held a deeper meaning, one that she couldn't quite grasp with him staring into her eyes with such intensity.

"I ordered our meal, and here comes the appetizer," he announced matter-of-factly as the waiter arrived.

Ellie couldn't initially decide if she was annoyed by his actions or intrigued by his take-charge demeanor, but as the perfectly selected courses proceeded, she stopped thinking about it. Jackson put her completely at ease, guiding the conversation so they could begin to learn about each other. They both liked sci-fi movies, visiting museums of all kinds, and the current crisp fall weather. They both read voraciously, but disagreed good-naturedly over subject matter. Their political beliefs were similar enough to not cause undue upset, and they shared a strong pride in their individual career successes.

When the waiter arrived to clear away the dessert dishes, signaling the impending end of one of the best nights Ellie had spent in her life, she couldn't help her little sigh as she looked at Jackson. She was relatively certain her warm and fuzzy feelings weren't due solely to the bottle of wine they had shared.

Ellie became lost in her own thoughts as Jackson settled the bill with the waiter. Her gaze wandered to his lips, and she wondered if he was going to kiss her goodnight, or maybe more? Ellie was positive he would know what he was doing in the bedroom, and the thought of surrendering to his expertise was sending her heartbeat racing. He wouldn't be a cautious lover. There was nothing cautious or hesitant about Jackson Royce. Her nipples tingled, but it was nothing compared to that in her pussy, and she squirmed slightly in her chair.

"I've had the best time tonight, Jackson. Thank you very much," she whispered somewhat raggedly.

"As have I, Eleanor." He pushed back his chair, collected her coat and moved to help her up from the table. His hand tightened slightly on her shoulders as he helped her settle the garment in place. He leaned close to her ear, his warm breath tickling her lobe. "But our evening isn't over yet."

Ellie shivered with excitement and swayed back slightly into his hold. The hard evidence of his arousal pressed firmly against her. What an intoxicating feeling to know this incredible man reacted to her with the same sexual intensity she had for him.

They left the restaurant in silence. When they arrived at her car, she steadied herself against the door while searching through her purse. It took a minute to find her keys with a trembling hand. She finally pulled them out and looked up at him expectantly.

"I'm going to follow you home, Eleanor."

Okay, she had been hoping against hope there would be some lip locking here in the parking lot, but him *telling* her they were going back to her house was a bit too much of the macho, alpha male thing. The moisture soaking her panties was absolutely an unrelated freak occurrence she refused to acknowledge. She hit the remote, unlocking her car door.

"Dinner was wonderful, Jackson, and I really enjoyed being with you." She hoped he caught the annoyance in her tone. "But I do not take men home on a first date." She pulled on the door handle, but it didn't open due to Jackson's large palm pushing against it. She glared up at him and, for some unknown reason, was compelled to keep talking. "And if I ever decide to make an exception to that rule, I will invite the gentleman to my home. He will not order it done."

Had she somehow come across as easy to him?

"I just spent hours talking with you, Eleanor. I am very well aware you have extremely high standards of behavior, which I approve of completely."

"How wonderful," she spat back at him.

"Your sarcasm is unnecessary." He leaned down, his breath feathering along her pursed lips. "I have my own rules of behavior, and one of them is I do not start to make love to a woman in a public parking lot."

When Ellie's mouth dropped open in complete shock, he chuckled and chastely kissed her forehead before allowing her to open her door.

She could have yelled at him, calling him every kind of arrogant male bastard. She could have tried to talk to him rationally about the strange feelings swirling through her. But instead, she silently got into her car and pulled out of the parking lot.

Ellie's nervous agitation had amplified tenfold by the time she pulled into her garage barely six minutes later. She closed the automatic door and went into the house, making her way slowly through the laundry room and kitchen. She dropped her purse on the table before crossing the living room to the front door. She leaned her head against the wood and took a shaky breath. With trembling fingers, she turned the knob. She was smart enough to realize letting this man into her home could have dangerous consequences where her heart was concerned. Not surprisingly, however, potential sexual fulfillment won out over rational thought.

"Come in." Ellie stayed rooted where she stood as Jackson's monumental presence swept into her home.

Moving across the room with deliberate purpose, he removed his long black overcoat and laid it neatly on the back of the couch. He turned toward her, locking her gaze with his while he slowly removed his tie, set it on top of his coat and unbuttoned his top shirt button.

"Eleanor." He held his hand out to her.

An invitation? A command? Certainly a promise of things to come. The one word hung in the air between them. What had she expected? She knew why he was here. All of a sudden, the reality of the man hit her like a ton of bricks. He wasn't going to settle for anything less than her total acceptance of the situation, her desire and his control.

"I don't think I can do this." It was barely a whisper. "You... I... I'm kind of afraid of you right this moment."

"I'm well aware of your unease and of your desire." He didn't move a muscle.

"And you're getting off on it, aren't you?" She chewed on her lower lip, both dreading and anxiously awaiting his answer.

He lowered his arm, clasped his hands behind his back and widened his stance a bit, affecting the perfect military pose. Emotions played across his face, an odd but endearing mix of humor, pure sexual need and, as always, power.

"I am aroused by your dawning recognition of who I am and what I want. First, you ignored your own rule of no dating and agreed to meet me at a time and place of my choosing. Next, you enjoyed dinner tonight despite your reluctance regarding my orchestrating the meal down to the last detail. Most importantly, you have allowed me into your home with the full understanding that I will make love to you. You're not afraid of me, Eleanor. You're afraid of what you perceive as weakness in yourself, the desire to give up control."

"The fact that you think you know me enough to make such a statement is crazy."

"I'm only being honest, and it's vitally important you admit what's already happening between us."

"But that's the problem, Jackson." She took a few tentative steps in his direction. "I don't understand anything that's happened since you walked into my office."

His cocky, I-know-I'm-irresistible nod helped restore some of her natural confidence.

"Besides your obvious physical attributes," she ran her eyes along his body as she continued her cautious approach, "you personify every archaic male quality I loathe."

The distance between them continued to lessen.

"Really?" He devilishly raised an eyebrow with the question.

"I'm thirty-four years old. Everything I have, everything I am, I have built and earned on my own. No man will ever take that away from me." She had to look up in order to meet his eyes now that they were standing toe to toe.

"I'm not here to take anything away from you." His hands gently cupped her cheeks. "I'm going to give you everything you need." Jackson lowered his head toward her.

When their lips met, Ellie could do nothing but close her eyes and savor the heat traveling through her body. He gave her mere seconds before his tongue demanded entrance, which she granted him with an eager sigh. He tasted and teased while moving his hands to press her tightly against his solid frame. Ellie wrapped her arms around his back and held on for dear life. Jackson began devouring her in a way she had never experienced, and she reveled in it. Their tongues dueled seductively, and when Ellie caught his to suck gently, his hips moved against her. She ran her hands over the corded muscles of his back, loving the contrast between hardened male and cool silk shirt. When she made her way down to his tight ass and squeezed, Jackson growled against her lips before breaking the kiss.

With the little bit of space now between them, Ellie started popping open his buttons with shaking fingers. She was desperate to feel his skin and, in her eagerness, instead of finishing the job, she opened and pushed the material off of his shoulders far enough to expose his glorious chest. She touched him reverently before leaning in to run her tongue across a taut nipple.

Jackson placed one hand at the back of her head, cradling her to his body, as he used the other to untuck the ends of his shirt from his pants.

Ellie loved the taste of his skin. She licked from nipple to nipple then to his collarbone before nuzzling into the side of his neck.

Jackson fisted a handful of her curls and tipped back her head to stare down at her. The expression in his eyes, coupled with the tiny tug of pain at the back of her head, turned her legs to rubber and sent a shiver coursing through her body. Had he not been holding her so tightly, she would have slid down to the floor.

"The bedroom, Eleanor," was all he said while sweeping her up into his arms in one fluid motion.

Ellie pointed silently to the hallway. She laid her head on his shoulder and gave herself up to the incredible sensation of being carried in Jackson's strong arms. When he set her on her feet

once more, she tried to snuggle close and hold him again. She instantly missed his warmth and strength, but he placed her arms down at her sides and held them there by her wrists.

"I want you to hold still for a moment." When she shot him a defiant, questioning look, he chuckled. "So that I can undress you. There's way too much clothing between you and me."

How she stayed standing, she had no idea. In her limited experience, getting undressed before making love was a chaotic thing to be done quickly, but Jackson turned it into an art form all of its own. She felt like a treasured gift being opened as buttons slid agonizingly slowly through buttonholes before the blouse was drawn off of her shoulders and allowed to rub down her skin on its way to the floor. Instead of going straight for the bra, he reached around her waist to unbutton her skirt, sliding the zipper down, tooth by tooth, then gliding the garment over her hips and thighs, sending goose bumps rising in its wake.

He held her hand as she stepped out of the clothes at her feet. He then went down on one knee, trailing his finger along her leg. He took one ankle and lifted the foot to remove one shoe then repeated the torture on the other leg. Ellie was a quivering mass of need by the time his warm hands started to roll down her pantyhose.

"Jackson, *please*," she begged as she reached down to run her hands through his jet-black hair. She couldn't take this much longer. He needed to speed things up.

Instantly, he stopped what he was doing. "You were told to stay still."

He didn't look at her. He didn't move.

Okay, he had said that, but was it really necessary to carry the not moving thing so far? She just wanted to touch him, to let him know how she was aching for him. Her pussy was on fire, and her breasts were heavy and aching, but there was so much more. Every nerve ending was strung taut with anticipation. Her skin tingled. Her heart was racing, and her frantic pulse was beating in her ears.

"Fine, be that way," she grumbled and let her hands drop back to her sides.

Immediately, Jackson finished removing her pantyhose. His hands tickled and tantalized her from ankles to thighs. He wrapped his fingers around her butt cheeks and kissed her mound lightly through her panties. Ellie's hips bucked uncontrollably. She gasped loudly and froze, fearing her movement would cause him to stop again. She clenched her hands into tight little fists.

"I knew you were a fast learner, Eleanor. I'll let that little infraction slide...this time." He leered up at her as he whisked her panties down her legs. When he tangled a finger through her soft, damp curls without touching what they hid, she moaned in frustration.

"Now you're just being mean," she sighed as he stood up from the floor.

"On the contrary, my dear. Now, we're just getting started."

With one flick, her bra was undone, the lacy fabric skimming across her pebbled nipples. Jackson walked a complete circle around her, perusing her body with such intensity she dropped her eyes in embarrassment. He came to a stop in front of her, tilted up her chin with the tip of a finger and kissed the end of her nose.

"You are incredibly beautiful, Eleanor." He took her hand and placed it on his massive erection so they cradled it together. "Feel what you've done to me."

Ellie ran her tongue along her lips while she moved her fingers over and around his cock. "Could I maybe see what I've done to you?" she asked playfully on the last squeeze. His deep laugh was her reward.

"Sit there on the edge of the bed."

Ellie didn't need to be convinced to follow that particular direction. She sat down with a little bounce, crossed her hands demurely in her lap and wiggled her eyebrows at him in encouragement. Apparently, the torturously slow disrobing adventure was about to continue, but she was only allowed to observe.

Jackson finished removing his shirt. He bent down and collected her clothes from the floor and moved over to the chair by the bedside table. He took his sweet time folding and arranging the clothes on the table before sitting down to remove his shoes and socks. Standing back up, he unbuckled and removed his belt, but before laying it down, he pulled it tight between his outstretched arms with a snap.

Ellie flinched. *What the hell is that about?* She squirmed on the comforter, noting that more warm cream flowed from her pussy. Had she lost her mind? She was sitting naked with a big, determined, highly aroused man playing with a leather belt, and she was getting more turned on by the second.

Next, he unbuttoned his pants and slid them down his narrow hips. He pulled a condom from his pocket before setting his pants with the other clothes. Now in only his boxers—black, of course—he came back to stand at the side of the bed. He tossed the condom up by the pillows before bending and sweeping Ellie's legs up onto the mattress. She squealed and scooted up

toward the headboard. In one swift jerk, the boxers were off and he was standing over her in all of his naked, aroused glory.

Ellie held her arms out to him in an invitation as old as time.

"With pleasure," he growled and climbed up onto the bed.

Finally, Jackson's delicious weight covered her body. He started at the top of her head and kissed his way down her chest. He circled each nipple with the tip of his tongue while gliding his fingers around and under the ultra-sensitized skin of her breasts. He suckled her pebbled nipples, gently at first, then with increasing pressure that sent waves of pleasure straight to her weeping pussy. Her hips moved restlessly in an effort to relieve the delicious sensations pulsing through her core.

"So responsive, so beautiful, so perfect." His voice was muffled against her skin, and the vibrations of it had her spreading her thighs in wild abandon.

Jackson seemed to pay no attention to her silent plea as he switched to continue his ministrations to her other breast. He used his tongue and his lips and his hands to stroke her internal fire to catastrophic levels. When his teeth closed none too lightly around her distended nipple, Ellie's back arched and a startled whimper escaped. He soothed her with moist sweeps of his tongue.

"No more playing, Jackson, please. I need more!" Ellie pleaded as she tried to push him off of her breast and down her body. Her hips bucked wildly. This was almost beyond pleasure. Every part of her was on fire, desperate for release. Her inner muscles contracted in preparation for orgasm, despite the fact he hadn't come near her pussy yet.

He lifted his head from her breast and their eyes met. A grin tugged at the corners of his mouth. "I'm not playing, Eleanor. I'm worshipping your incredible body. Why in the world would I want to rush through such a magnificent experience?"

"Rush?" she chuckled with a hint of whine. "You're torturing me with your *lack* of rushing! I swear I can't take any more...please!"

"Oh, I plan on teaching you exactly how much more you can take."

When she whimpered in protest, he ran the pad of his thumb along her lower lip.

"But because you've asked so nicely, let me see what I can do to ease your suffering." He kissed a trail down her ribcage and over her rounded belly. When he reached her soaked pussy, one hand pressed on her inner thigh, while his other hand spread her nether lips wide. He nuzzled his nose in her soft curls and drew in a deep breath.

“So sweet and hot,” he whispered.

Ellie flinched in surprise and barely contained need at the first sweep of his tongue along her swollen pussy lips. He used just the tip, lightly running it in and around her folds before spearing it briefly into her soaked channel. Ellie grabbed two fistfuls of his hair as little spasms fluttered through her womb. Jackson chuckled against her, and her hips lifted off the mattress at the decadent sensation.

“You aren’t easing anything,” she pleaded while shamelessly trying to move his head toward her aching clit. He moved his hands underneath her butt cheeks and spread her impossibly wider. He hesitated for a fraction of a second before flattening his tongue against her hardened nub and expertly applying the perfect combination of pressure and motion to cause her entire lower body to tremble.

“Come for me, Eleanor,” he demanded before his tongue surged deep into her channel.

Ellie couldn’t have stopped the orgasm that crashed into her if her life had depended on it. Shards of light flashed behind her closed eyelids and her head thrashed on the pillow. Jackson plundered her pussy with a vengeance, drawing out her release until she felt tears well up.

She was still being racked with aftershocks when she felt him move to loom above her again. Opening her eyes required too much effort. She preferred to drift on waves of pleasure. She heard the foil packet open, and somewhere in her clouded mind, it started to register that he wasn’t finished with her. Well, given adequate time to recover, she was sure that she could go for some more.

“Open your eyes.”

So much for adequate time. Jackson’s cock nudged at her still quivering entry. What she saw when her eyes snapped open made her breath catch in her lungs. Her juices glistened on his lips. His hair was tousled, and his eyes were black with passion.

He grabbed onto her hips and entered her in one smooth movement. Ellie’s body welcomed him, her muscles grabbing onto his steely length and urging him forward. When he was fully seated, he dropped his forehead to rest against hers. Ellie smiled to hear that she wasn’t the only one having trouble breathing.

“My God, Eleanor, you are heaven on Earth.”

And then he was leaving her, pulling back until his cock was barely in her body, and Ellie wrapped her legs around his hips. She’d be damned if he was going to turn this into torture, too. She dug her heel into his ass cheeks and ran her fingernails along his shoulders and down his arms.

“Trying to tell me something?” he asked through gritted teeth as he stayed perfectly still, braced on his trembling arms.

“Fuck me, Jackson. I want everything you have to give. Please don’t make me wait any longer!”

Never in her life had she begged a man, and she didn’t get the chance to ponder the ramifications of the fact that she had been begging Jackson all night because he wrapped her in his powerful arms and took her, body and soul. With each masterful stroke, she was possessed by him, branded forever by the way he filled her completely. The mattress squeaked and the headboard banged against the wall as he drove in and out of her body. He swelled unbelievably bigger just before he roared his release. Her body answered his and splintered into a million pieces, again.

Sometime later, Ellie was surprised to find herself snuggled warmly under a pile of covers, but not so surprised at the long legs tangled with hers and the muscled arms holding her close. She nuzzled into his chest and listened to his steady heartbeat.

“I am staying here tonight, Eleanor,” he whispered against her hair.

“Yes, Jackson.” She brushed his skin with her lips. “Please stay.”

Chapter Three

"You took him back to your house?" Judy's voice rose a bit higher than it should have in the crowded diner.

"Shh!" Ellie glanced around, happy that no one seemed to be paying any attention to them. "It's not like I had much of a choice." She ran her fork around the salad she wasn't eating.

"How about not telling him where you live? Or, here's a crazy thought, not inviting him over?"

"He already knew where I live, Judy, and he told me that he was coming over."

"He *forced* himself into your house?" Judy's anger and concern were instant and intense.

"No, I definitely invited him in," Ellie blushed. "But I've never met a man like Jackson, Judy. I swear power and control radiate from him."

"You'd better tell me what happened. I'll be the judge of whether or not the authorities need to be contacted."

They had been best friends for years, so Ellie proceeded to describe her night with Jackson in vivid detail. By the time, she was finished reliving the most intense sexual experience of her life, her body was strung tighter than a bow. Judy sat back in her chair and dramatically mopped her brow with a napkin.

"I'm impressed you can walk without a limp, let alone have the strength to be at work today, but what happened when the sun came up? Any morning after weirdness?"

"Actually, no, he was incredible. Apparently, he set my alarm before falling asleep so I wouldn't be late for work. When I got out of the shower, I could smell coffee, and as soon as I walked into the kitchen, he put breakfast on the table. We talked and laughed and, not only is Jackson a damn good cook, but he cleaned up while I finished getting ready. He took care of everything."

“After all this time, Ellie, I’ve never pictured you to be into the Dom/sub thing.”

When Ellie gasped, Judy held up her hand to stop her from interrupting.

“I’m not saying that as if it’s a bad thing, and Lord, this guy sounds like he’s a master of the craft, but I think you just need to be really careful. One evening out, a night of wild monkey sex and a morning after of pampering goodness doesn’t negate the reality that he’s still a virtual stranger. The Marquis might want to take things farther than you’re willing to go.”

At Judy’s raised eyebrow and ridiculous leering grin, both women dissolved into peals of laughter. This time people did pay attention.

* * * *

Jackson cast a glance at the uncharacteristically silent woman who sat next to him in the car. They’d spent the most marvelous day wandering leisurely through the art museum. At times, they’d been locked in heated debate over style or theme, and at other times, they’d settled into companionable silences in order to study and appreciate particular works. Pizza and beer afterwards at a local bar had been casual, and they’d chatted easily about a vast array of subjects. At forty-two years old, he’d dated his share of women, but never had he felt such a deep emotional connection so quickly. It was as if they had known each other for months instead of days.

Eleanor had eagerly accepted his invitation to come back to his house for a nightcap, but now, as they drove through the night, he felt her pulling away from him.

“Penny for your thoughts?” he asked, turning the car into a neighborhood of spectacular homes.

“Nice neighborhood.”

“I’m relatively sure that’s not what you’ve been stewing about the entire trip out here but thanks. I was the contractor for the development.” Pride without arrogance was evident in his tone. Much of his childhood had been spent moving from one rundown dump to the next and wondering if there would be food to eat on any given day. As soon as he was old enough to get a job, Jackson had worked with single-minded purpose to make a better life for himself.

“Seriously? How many homes are there?”

“Fifty-three, Eleanor,” he replied as they drove up his winding driveway. “And your attempt to dodge my original question is feeble at best.”

He parked the car, went around and opened her door and held out his hand. She hesitated, looking first out at the house then down at his outstretched palm. His heart pounded in

his chest. What was holding her back? Was she going to change her mind? After what seemed an eternity, she placed her hand in his, and they walked into the house.

Jackson hung their coats in the foyer closet before guiding Eleanor into the living room. Despite her obvious and as yet unexplained hesitance, it simply felt right to have this woman in his home.

"How about a brandy?" he asked, heading to the wet bar in the far corner.

"I'd like that," she answered quietly.

He contemplated how to handle her unease as he filled two crystal snifters and decided that getting directly to the root of any problem she was having was the best course of action.

"Okay, Eleanor..." He handed her a glass of the amber liquid when they'd settled on the oversized couch. "What's going on in that pretty head of yours that has you so wary all of a sudden?"

"Nothing. I had a wonderful day. Maybe I'm just a bit tired, that's all." She smiled slightly but never met his eyes. She made a small production of taking a healthy sip of her drink before placing it on the coffee table.

Jackson leaned across the small distance between them and drew her into a gentle kiss. When he felt her relax in his embrace, he lifted his lips and smiled playfully. "I will happily take you to my bed once you tell me what's bothering you. You're a terrible liar, another fine quality I approve of." When she slapped him on the arm and harrumphed, he took her hand and kissed each of her fingers. "Come on, spill it."

"I was thinking about a conversation I had with my friend Judy." She toyed with the buttons of his shirt. "She was the one you passed on the way out of my office after we met."

"And this conversation was about?"

"Well, it was just girl talk, a bit about you and me and just, I don't know, regular stuff. Judy's my best friend, and she worries."

"So you told her about our evening together." His voice was quiet and cautious. "What exactly is she, or maybe more precisely, are *you* worried about?" He didn't like that she wasn't looking at him.

"Things are moving really quickly with us, and that's not my normal way. Not to mention you are so *not* like any other man I've ever been with. I guess I'm a bit overwhelmed and confused and..." Her voice trailed off.

“Then let’s figure this out together.” He easily repositioned her, laying her head in his lap so he could stroke her forehead and watch her reactions. “Do you agree that we share many common interests and opinions? That we converse together easily and enjoy spending time together?”

“Absolutely.”

“And do you agree we experienced an instant, intense sexual attraction to one another?”

“I think that goes without saying.” She grinned up at him and a deep blush flamed her cheeks.

“Ah, now we are getting someplace.” He ran his thumb over her heated skin. “So it’s something in the way we made love that has you and your friend concerned?”

He phrased it as a question, but his serious expression left no doubt he was deliberately steering the conversation to this particular subject. He watched the color travel down from her cheeks, along her neck to the gentle swell of her breasts that was visible above the collar of her blouse.

“I don’t want to talk about this anymore.” She tried to sit up. He made sure that she couldn’t by draping one arm heavily across her middle and snaking one hand into her hair.

“But we’re going to talk about it, Eleanor, because if we can’t be open and honest with each other, we will never work out.” He stared down at her, his eyes dark with emotion. “And I want us to work out very badly.”

He brought her head up for a searing kiss. When he finished, she was panting.

“When we made love you came apart for me, and we haven’t even scratched the surface of what I want to do to and with you. Very few people in this world are lucky enough to find their true match, and when it happens, there’s no denying it. I believe that’s happened with us.” His certainty was unmistakable.

“But you made me behave, for lack of a better word, in a way that goes against who I am.”

Jackson didn’t miss her pleading tone or the confusion mirrored in her expressive eyes.

“You responded to me exactly as you wanted to. We’ve shared unbelievable joy and satisfaction of more than just our bodies. You knew the moment we met that I am a Dominant and you responded immediately, whether you were aware of it or not.” He smoothed her hair back from her face.

“But I am not a submissive.” She ground out the last word with obvious distaste. “I am in charge of my life, Jackson. I don’t need a man to take care of me.”

“Being submissive is not synonymous with weakness. Your individuality, your strong sense of self, your independence are all things that enhance our experience of exploring control or the lack there of. You have as much power as I do. You allowed me to take charge of more than just the lovemaking, but I forced nothing. I simply showed you some of the benefits of giving yourself over to another person. To come together the way we have involves the utmost trust between both people.” He resumed stroking her hair and forehead.

“I don’t understand how you can be so certain we’re meant for each other after such a short time.” She reached up and touched his chin gently. “I’m not the type of woman who has regular men professing instant attraction and desire for my person. It’s a little hard for me to believe coming from a studly, yummy, manly specimen like you.” Her shy, playful smile, coupled with the warm sweep of her fingertips along his jaw line had his cock hardening instantly.

“First of all, every man you have met before me is an idiot.” He traced lazy circles around the tip of her nipple that was now poking against the fabric of her shirt. “Second of all, never question that what I tell you is the truth, especially when it comes to my feelings for you.” He massaged the underside of her breast before moving his hand to tickle along her rib cage. “And, finally, thank you for the compliment, but you forgot ‘unquestionably in control’.” He raised an eyebrow and grinned down at her with decadent promise.

“I’ve been on my own for a long time, Jackson. If you’re looking for a woman who will allow you to dictate every aspect of a relationship, well, it’s not me.”

“What I have found is a confident, successful, independent, smart and sexy as hell woman who can hold her own with any man, in any situation. The ‘shrinking violet’ personality has no appeal for me. Believe it or not, I can sometimes be a bit overbearing, and I have every confidence you won’t let me get away with it.”

“Count on it,” she chuckled.

“Call me old-fashioned, but I enjoy pampering a woman, seeing to her pleasure and happiness. When you allow me to take charge of our lovemaking, you’re allowing us both to share and experience passion at the most intense levels possible.”

“So are you into whips and chains and stuff? Are you going to expect me to call you Master?” She laughed up at him.

With a sinister tilt of his lips, Jackson fisted his hand in her hair, locking her head so she couldn’t look away from him. He expertly popped the button of her jeans. He didn’t take the time to lower her zipper, but instead, slid his large hand into the tight space between skin and

denim, driving his fingers unerringly straight to her swollen clit. He tickled around it momentarily before continuing through her wet heat to the entrance of her vagina. He dipped inside her body and moaned quietly when her muscles attempted to draw him deeper. Ellie squirmed, spread her legs and grabbed onto his upper arm. He shook his head in the negative when she attempted to guide his movements and she loosened her grip with an exaggerated sigh.

“Chains are bulky and tend to get in the way. I prefer silk.” He added a second finger, slowly stretching and stroking deep in her channel. “Whips are definitely a favored choice of mine, which I will demonstrate when I think you’re ready for them.” Noting her labored breathing and the light trembling of her thighs, he increased the pace of his seduction. “And as for the last part of your smartass comment, I see no reason for you to have to say out loud what we both know is true.”

His lips crashed down over hers at the same moment he pressed hard against her clit. Ellie exploded in his arms, and he swallowed her cry of surprise. Her body convulsed around his fingers and bathed his hand in warm honey. He continued to kiss and stroke her, prolonging her orgasm until she whimpered against his mouth. When he was positive his point had been thoroughly made, he released her mouth and let her head rest back down in his lap. He pulled his fingers from her pants and licked each one clean.

“What the hell have I gotten myself into?” she laughed in sated joy while gently rubbing the back of her head against his raging hard-on. “Am I allowed to attend to this impressive problem?” She looked up at him with anticipation and mischief in her eyes.

“By all means.” His voice was strained. “On your knees, just like you were the first time I saw you.”

She was off the couch and on her knees between his now wide-open thighs in a flash. She impatiently unfastened his jeans, and Jackson helpfully lifted his hips so she could drag them to his ankles. When she pulled his shoes off without untying and quickly pulled his pants off the rest of the way, he couldn’t stop a groan of anticipation. Ellie glanced up at him, her barely restrained desire and enthusiasm evident in her passion-filled expression, but instead of diving onto his steely erection, she lowered her eyes and waited.

“Very good, Eleanor,” he growled as he took in the picture of her kneeling between his thighs, anxious to go down but waiting for his direction. “Do you want to taste my cock?”

“Yes.” Her breath tickled his thigh.

Jackson wrapped his hand around his dick and stroked it slowly. “Lick my balls first.”

Ellie loved the taste and feel of the soft skin covered by tiny hairs as she gently sucked his testicles into her warm mouth. When she started to slide a hand up his thigh, strong fingers grabbed her wrist.

“Only your mouth.”

Unable to touch with her hands, Ellie closed her eyes and concentrated on the sensations caused by swirling her tongue over and around his heavy balls. His body tightened and swelled under her skilled attention and answering cream flowed from her core. She squirmed a bit, at first glad for the pressure of the tight denim against her soaked panties then frustrated that it wasn't enough. She whimpered slightly and drew him more deeply into her mouth.

Jackson exhaled loudly and rocked his hips upwards, sending his balls deeper into her mouth. When she sucked greedily, he grasped the base of his cock with one hand and stilled her movements with the other.

“Okay, your skill knows no bounds,” he chuckled deeply and eased her up, cradling her chin gently. He laid his penis against her moist lips. “Open up, Eleanor. I'm going to fuck that beautiful mouth of yours.” This time he let her slide her hands up to nestle in the creases of his thighs so she could steady herself as she came down on the engorged head of his penis.

Ellie savored the drop of liquid seeping from his slit before relaxing her muscles and sliding down his length. When he touched the back of her throat, she held him there, delighting in the fact that she was fully impaled on her lover. His cock throbbed along her tongue when she pressed against a bulging vein on the trip back to the top. She played around the tip, tickling the rim and sucking lightly.

When his hands cupped both sides of her face she knew what was coming, and she was more than ready. Digging her fingers into the corded muscles of his thighs, she held on as Jackson set a fevered pace. Each moan of pleasure that rumbled in his chest heated her blood further and encouraged her to suck harder.

Jackson's eyes slammed shut, and his hips jerked frantically when Ellie increased the wickedly intense suction on his cock. Even though he had been the one to increase the pace, she was now going down on him with abandon. All he was doing was holding onto her head so that she didn't hurt herself.

Ellie was completely in tune with his body and knew he was close to release, so she let her teeth carefully rake across his dick. Instantly, hot, spicy cum flooded her mouth, and his shout

of satisfaction filled her ears and her heart. She continued to gently worship his cock as the tremors lessened, not stopping until he collapsed back and dropped his hands from her face to the couch cushions.

“Jesus Christ, that was incredible.” Jackson stroked her back.

“Yes, it was,” she purred, “but Jackson?” She fixed him with pleading eyes, “I’m *really* horny.”

“That’s convenient, Eleanor,” he pulled her off of her knees and dragged her up his chest, “because you haven’t even begun to experience my kind of play.”

Chapter Four

The sensation of stepping back in time flowed over Ellie as she took in all that was Jackson's bedroom. Dark, rich wood was everywhere. Instead of lamps or ceiling fixtures, sconces hung on each wall, glowing mutely as Jackson touched each one while he moved silently around the room. Burgundy velvet drapes cascaded down from thick metal rods to pool on the floor in front of the two windows. A large, ornate armoire and long chest of drawers were the only other pieces of furniture besides the bed, and what a bed it was. Raised off of the floor on a low platform, the four intricately carved posts reached almost to the ceiling and the thick mattress was draped with plush satin coverings in gold, burgundy and black. A shiver ran along her spine when she noticed the lengths of silk dangling seductively from each bedpost.

She turned her attention to Jackson who knelt in front of the stone fireplace.

She'd been severely depressed when he'd put his pants back on before they'd moved upstairs, but now, as she battled to control her rising emotions, she was relieved. Watching him stoke the now roaring fire that bathed the room in warmth and shifting illumination, she was keenly aware of the sense of walking straight into the lion's den. When he stood and turned toward her, a pang of unease joined her mounting desire. Jackson was the epitome of the Dominant male. Strength, power and confidence radiated from him.

"When we are in this room, I am in complete control of everything that happens." He unbuttoned his shirt and tossed it aside.

"Okay?" she whispered with a healthy dose of "I'm not sure what I'm agreeing to" in her voice. With his gorgeous chest displayed magnificently in the flickering firelight, she would have agreed to almost anything if it meant she could run her hands and lips over the muscled flesh.

"I won't deny that your immediate, although tentative, agreement to my statement is highly arousing," he swept her with an appreciative gaze, "but you need to understand exactly

what I expect.” When she didn’t attempt to speak but instead simply watched him and waited, Jackson continued, “I decide what we do and how we do it. You will not question me. You will do what I say without argument or hesitation. Failure to follow the rules will result in punishment.”

“Punishment? What kind of punishment?” Her eyes widened as she licked her suddenly dry lips.

“Anything I deem necessary, Eleanor, and that question just earned you your first one, should you decide to play by my rules.” A sinister grin punctuated his point. “You’ll pick a safe word, which you can use if you feel things have gone too far, and I will stop immediately. Understand, however, the strength and finality of that word. Once it is spoken, playtime is over, period.”

Relief, increasing interest, arousal and budding annoyance warred inside Ellie. Her hands balled into fists at her sides, and she curled and uncurled her toes in the thick fur rug as she fought the urge to blurt out what swirled through her mind. The whole unknown punishment thing was intimidating to be sure, but the desire to tell him to get over himself and quit issuing ultimatums was strong. She wasn’t so naïve as to not get what he was talking about in theory, and a very big part of her wanted to explore what he offered, but he was being awfully light on the details and heavy on the macho. So far, this sounded as if it were all about him. She blatantly scowled at him.

“You have my permission to speak, Eleanor.”

“So then you’ll be *mad* at me if I stop things?” Ellie groaned inwardly as soon as the question tumbled out. Where was the well-deserved rebuke? Where was the counterproposal of acceptable behavior? *Where was her backbone?*

“Not in the least.” In a few purposeful strides, he was close enough that she could breathe in his intoxicating scent. “It’s imperative you understand my rules. The safe word is a last resort, not to be used in an effort to attempt to control what’s happening.” He brushed his lips across her forehead. “Of course, I will be monumentally disappointed if you don’t trust me to know your limits and what will bring you ultimate pleasure, but what goes on in this room stays in this room.”

Taking stock of her throbbing core, not to mention her racing pulse and tingling nipples, there was no denying how much his proposal aroused her. Ellie studied the muscled perfection of the man while she contemplated her situation. Again, Jackson was opening himself to her, being

honest about who he was and trusting her to accept him. And caution be damned, she did trust him, with her body and her heart.

“Pumpnickel.”

Ellie’s heart jumped at Jackson’s look of sheer male satisfaction.

“Very good.” He went and sat on the edge of the bed. “I want you naked, now.”

With her fingers shaking from both adrenaline and self-consciousness, the job of getting undressed was just that, work. Once she’d finished, she wasn’t sure what she was supposed to do next. Jackson wasn’t being much help, what with sitting stone silent and eating her up with his smoky eyes. God, how she wanted to ask him, but rules were rules.

After what seemed an eternity, he patted the mattress next to his thigh. Without hesitation, Ellie crossed the room, anticipation rising with each footstep. She smiled shyly when she arrived at the bed, but only for a second because, to her utter shock, he grabbed her wrist and pulled her flat across his lap. One hand pressed heavily between her shoulder blades while the other caressed the cheeks of her ass. When a finger tickled along her crack, she wiggled her hips, discovering that in her current position, her clit could make perfect contact with his denim-clad thigh. She relaxed, let her head loll forward and savored his gentle touch.

“What the *hell*?” she cried out as his hand slapped one butt cheek with authority. She tried to turn her head, but he was now holding her at the back of her neck, making it impossible for her to see anything but the floor. His fingers tightened noticeably in her soft flesh as she tried to squirm off of his lap.

“That was definitely a question,” he stated sternly, swatting her other cheek with equal intensity. “Bad girls who can’t behave get punished. Didn’t I make that clear to you?”

Once, twice, three times, his hand connected with her ass, sending stinging heat radiating down her legs, up her spine and straight to her pussy. Ellie wasn’t sure what was more shocking, the fact he was paddling her like an errant child, or the fact it was turning her on big time. When his tongue touched her sensitized flesh, she wantonly raised her hips.

“See, Eleanor? A little pain can be highly stimulating if applied properly.”

His teeth nipped, and Ellie squealed.

“You have the perfect ass.” He slid his hand between her thighs, finding her soaked and swollen. Gathering some of her cream, he slid his fingers back to her puckered anus. “Have you ever taken anything here?” He tapped gently.

“No, Jackson.” She squeezed shut her eyes and her entire body tensed.

“Relax.” His finger began to press. “You definitely want my fingers before my cock.”

Ellie drew a ragged breath and grabbed two handfuls of bed covers when he slowly breached her virgin channel, but she didn't stop him. She whimpered at the unknown sensation of something wiggling and rotating in her anus. It definitely wasn't unpleasant, as evidenced by the moisture building in her pussy, but she was keenly aware one finger was a far cry from Jackson's fully erect penis. She pushed that reality from her mind in order to concentrate on the heat racing through her system. When he pulled almost all the way out, only to return with two fingers, she blew out a breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding and pressed up into his hand.

“That's it, Eleanor. Ride my fingers while they fuck your ass.” He steadily increased his pressure and tempo, causing her pussy to move against his leg. “Imagine how intense it's going to be when I slide my dick deep.” He added a third finger.

Her hips bucked wildly, and she couldn't help the little mewling sounds she made.

“Tell me what you're feeling.”

“Oh my God, Jackson!” She met him stroke for stroke, desperately needing to end this incredible torture with the orgasm that fluttered just out of her reach. “That feels incredible. *Please* make me come. I have to come! I'm so close!”

Again, she was begging him, and again, she didn't give a damn. Her world was completely focused on her body's catastrophic level of arousal and the man who was orchestrating it. Ellie was on fire from her hair follicles to the tips of her toes. She knew, without a doubt, any second now, he would bring her to glorious fulfillment.

Her disappointment was dizzying when his fingers retreated from her ass and he lifted her up by the shoulders to sit shakily next to him on the bed. She stared dumbfounded as Jackson stood. Tears of utter frustration shimmered in her eyes.

“Wh...” was all she said before remembering the rules and slamming her mouth closed so fast her teeth knocked together painfully.

“Nice save,” he chuckled, cradling her flushed cheek and rubbing her pouting lower lip. “As much as paddling that ass again would be fun for both of us,” he pressed his thumb between her lips, and she sucked greedily, “I have other plans.”

Jackson removed his jeans. When he was gloriously naked, he leisurely stroked his engorged cock.

Ellie reached out, the need to touch his body so strong that her hands shook with it. When Jackson moved away from her right before she made contact, she whined loudly. How

long would he drag out this game, this sweet torture? He crossed the room to the armoire and swung open its heavy doors. With his back to her, she simply gazed at his corded muscles and tight buns, getting hotter by the second.

“Do you trust me?” He came back to her, holding a wide piece of black silk.

“Yes, I do.”

She kept eye contact with him until he secured the soft blindfold around her head. Sitting perfectly still, she tried to adjust to the strange sensation of losing her sight. Although he wasn't touching her, Ellie knew Jackson hadn't moved. She heard his ragged breathing. The unique spicy scent that was his alone wrapped around her. The sounds of wood splintering in the fireplace seemed unusually loud, and in her mind's eye, she pictured the glowing embers sparking.

As she waited for Jackson to do something, *anything*, she couldn't believe how attuned she became to her own body. Her skin prickled with almost unbearable anticipation. Her nipples were so hard that the slightest brush of air across them bordered on painful. Her pussy was wet and warm and throbbed deeply, rhythmically. Not knowing if she was allowed to touch herself, Ellie dug her fingers into the thick covers and rotated her hips enough to bring some friction to her aching clit.

Jackson studied Eleanor with fascination, taking note of every nuance of her body's reaction to her current situation. Goose bumps dotted her arms and legs. The delicate scent of her arousal wafted around him. A pale pink blush colored her from neck to the tips of her breasts, which quivered with each breath she took. Her nipples strained toward him, begging to be sucked and teased. Every seductive movement of her hips elicited an answering twitch from his cock. She embodied every fantasy he'd had in his lifetime, and she was here, waiting for him.

“Absolute perfection,” he whispered as he feathered his finger along her collarbone. “I've waited my entire life for you, Eleanor.” He kissed her mouth lightly while caressing down her body, coming to a stop when he cupped her shins. “Bring your legs up and roll over onto your stomach. Yes, right like this.”

Ellie scooted and moved to his direction, ending up spread out in his bed on her tummy with her face turned to rest on some of the cool, satin pillows. Jackson positioned more pillows under her hips until her backside was raised and displayed at the perfect angle. He carefully spread her legs so the glistening lips of her pussy were also exposed. Jackson forced himself to take a few precious moments to experience the exquisite torture of waiting to claim the woman

who was completely at his mercy. His blood heated to near lava temperatures as it pounded through his veins.

“Hold onto these, Eleanor.” Jackson tickled her palms with the silk restraints.

She followed his direction, and he tied the ends loosely around each of her wrists, taking his sweet time to enjoy the erotic picture she made. He would make certain what was to come was the most intense, moving, powerful experience she’d ever had. It was mandatory to him that, from this moment forward, Eleanor never, ever wanted another man, sexually or any other way. He was possessive by nature, but where she was concerned, his emotions were fierce. He understood she didn’t yet share his conviction that they were meant to be together forever, but he was supremely confident in his powers of persuasion.

He left her again just long enough to grab lubrication and a condom and, after sheathing himself, climbed onto the bed between her legs. He used his knees to further spread her thighs, and when he rested his palm at the small of her back, she whimpered and rose to his touch.

“Talk to me now.” He spread her cheeks, drizzling lubrication slowly over her exposed anus. “You know what I’m going to do. Are you ready for me?” He massaged the cool gel all the way to her weeping pussy and back before teasing her puckered rear hole.

“I can’t take any more.” She wiggled her body and pulled on her silk restraints. “Please make love to me. I need to feel you inside me.”

“Inside you where? Here?” He plunged two fingers deep into her pussy, careful not to touch her clit, knowing how tightly she was strung and not wanting her to come until his cock was deep inside her. “Or do you want something here?” Carefully, he breached her ass with two other fingers.

“Either, both, my *God*, I don’t care. Just let me come!”

“Well, if you don’t care...” He removed all of his fingers and sat back on his heels far enough to let her feel his retreat. “Maybe I haven’t prepared you properly, and we should start again?”

“In my ass,” she panted while writhing in complete abandon. “Please!”

Jackson could barely contain a shout of joy at her honesty and her surrender. He spread her wide and began his entry into her virgin asshole. With infinite care, he filled her, stretched her and possessed her, not stopping until he was buried to the hilt in her snug warmth.

Ellie's fingers throbbed as she pulled on her restraints. At first, she worried there was no way her body would accept such an invasion, that Jackson would split her in two. But, after the first painful shock of his penetration, heat spread through her body as he continued his entry. Now with his heavy balls lying against her pussy and his body as tight to hers as physically possible, she gloried in the intimacy of their connection.

"Are you okay, Eleanor?" He groaned the question close to her ear.

"Love me, Jackson. Hard, fast, take me the way I know you want to." She ground her hips against him in encouragement.

He responded immediately. Holding onto her waist tightly, he pulled back then took her body with purposeful strokes, each time burying his cock to the hilt only to withdraw and return again, faster and harder.

Ellie cried out in ecstasy when he finally let go and fucked her with every ounce of strength and passion he had. She matched his powerful rhythm, wanting him to understand she was his in every sense of the word. His fevered pace, his moans of pleasure, the slickness of his heated flesh against hers, all combined to bring her to a level of arousal she had never dreamed possible.

When her body exploded into a million shattering pieces, she screamed in joy and bucked uncontrollably. She couldn't get him close enough or deep enough. She wanted this to last forever. She vaguely registered that one of her arms was no longer supported by the silk, and she grabbed blindly at the headboard for leverage. Jackson pounded into her at a frenzied pace until he stiffened and shouted triumphantly.

Sated, exhausted and a bit overwhelmed, Ellie drifted on a wave of pure emotion. Ragged breathing and logs splitting in the fireplace were the only sounds in the room. Finally, Ellie moved a little, loving the feel of Jackson draped across her back while still deeply embedded in her body, but feeling a tingle of discomfort in one of her shoulders.

"I may have pulled a muscle," she commented quietly, turning her one still-tethered wrist gingerly. She smiled to herself as Jackson immediately rose up, threw her blindfold onto the floor and untangled her wrist from the silk. He rolled over and gathered her close. Seeing worry in his beautiful eyes, she touched his cheek. "It's not a mortal wound, Jackson. I think I'll survive." She dropped a delicate kiss on his neck and snuggled close.

“Was I too rough?” He searched her face. “I shouldn’t have lost control like that, but you drove me crazy, spread out like a goddess, waiting for me. When you let go with all of the passion I knew was inside you, I lost my mind.” He gathered her in his arms and stroked her heated skin.

“In case you missed it, I ripped one of your restraints right off the bedpost.” She poked him playfully in the chest. “Give me a little while, and I think I would like to find out what other games you like to play.”

“That’s music to my ears, sweetheart, because, since we met, I’ve spent a hell of a lot of time dreaming up some very interesting scenarios.”

“Oh, do tell,” she chuckled, entwining her leg with his. “I think I can feel my strength returning already.”

Chapter Five

Ellie stood under the steaming water, trying to wake up as her thoughts drifted back over the last two weeks spent with Jackson. Time had flown by on an incredible mix of discovering shared interests, learning each other's dreams, and exploring heights of desire and fulfillment she'd never dreamed possible.

This morning, she'd gotten out of bed on the first buzz of the alarm clock in an effort not to disturb him. He had loved her long and well last night, and was leaving today on a business trip. He needed his beauty rest.

She picked up the bar of soap and was working up a good lather when a flutter of cold air in the small bathroom signaled Jackson's arrival. The flower-patterned shower curtain opened, and he stepped into the tub in all of his naked glory. Ellie grinned up at him as she placed her soapy hands on his shoulders and rose up on her toes to kiss him.

"Good morning, beautiful," he whispered.

"I didn't mean to wake you," she said, watching a trail of bubbles glide down his chest. "But I'm very glad you decided to join me." She ran her hands along his body in lazy circles, delighting in the contrast of slippery soap over hard muscle. She took her sweet time cleaning and teasing his upper body, getting more turned on by the second as his cock lengthened and hardened. Unable to resist, she reached around and massaged soap between the tight cheeks of his ass. He groaned loudly and pulled her into his embrace.

"Exactly what are you hoping to accomplish with those devilish hands of yours, Eleanor?" He poured shampoo into his palms and massaged it gently into her scalp. Ellie squealed each time he rubbed his erection along her tummy.

"This," she giggled, taking his length in her hands and cradling him. He widened his stance a bit, allowing Ellie perfect access to his heavy balls. She fondled and soaped and teased him until his legs trembled. She flinched when shampoo ran down her forehead and into her eyes.

"Serves you right," Jackson chuckled as he disengaged himself from her talented fingers and turned her around to rinse her hair. "See what happens when you mercilessly tease your man?"

Ellie raised her face into the water, gasping when his slippery penis rubbed between her legs. She wantonly pushed back against him, rotating her hips and was instantly rewarded with his skillful hands cupping her breasts. He pinched and rolled her nipples until they stood at attention.

She leaned both hands against the tile wall and bent forward as far as the small space allowed in an effort to provide Jackson greater access to her needy parts. His cock head nudged at her pussy lips as he gently inserted his still soapy thumb into her ass.

"No, Jackson," Ellie whimpered, contradicting the invitation being issued by her writhing body.

"No Jackson?" He mocked her tone playfully and pressed further into both of her throbbing channels.

"We're going to run out of hot water right when we get to the good parts again." They both laughed at the shared memory of their last bathing experience, which had been rudely interrupted at a most pivotal time when her old water heater had made three loud banging noises at the same time icy cold water pelted them.

"Then I suggest we rinse off quickly, because I am more than ready to get to the good parts."

They stepped out into the steam-filled room and rubbed each other dry with fluffy, oversized towels. Truth be told, they both rubbed more than was strictly necessary over a few erogenous zones, but it wasn't more than a few minutes before Jackson ripped the towel out of her hand and lifted her to perch on the edge of the counter. He yanked open a drawer and handed her a foil packet.

"Since when are there condoms in my bathroom?"

"I've put condoms in every room of both of our houses," Jackson ground out as she rolled the latex over his straining penis. "I don't ever want us to have to slow down long enough to search for one when the mood strikes. And in case you haven't been paying attention, when we're together, the mood strikes a lot."

He grabbed her thighs and pulled her onto his cock. She shimmied around on the counter for a second, trying to find the right position and the right angle to take him in all the way. She muttered a frustrated curse.

"This isn't working," she complained while wrapping her arms around his neck. "I can't get the right leverage." She was frantic to have him fucking her with abandon.

Jackson's lips claimed hers in a searing, desperate kiss as his hands scooped under her bottom. He easily lifted her from the counter, and she wrapped her legs around his hips. His cock slid deep, and he swallowed her satisfied sigh. She delighted in the delicious sensation of being impaled more deeply with each step he took while carrying her into the bedroom. When it became evident he was going to pull out of her at the side of the bed, she tried to lock her ankles behind his back.

"Let go, Eleanor," he commanded. When she fixed him with a serious pout and didn't immediately follow his direction, he swatted her ass cheek with authority. "My plan was to fuck you senseless as soon as you hit the mattress, but I see you need a reminder of who's in charge?"

She instantly dropped her legs and crawled onto the bed. "I'm sorry, Jackson," she apologized quietly, seductively. She fixed him with a sultry smile before lowering her eyes in submission. "How do you want me?" She couldn't help the chuckle that punctuated her words.

"Flat on your back, legs spread." He put his fists on his hips and stared down at her.

Ellie's pulse sped up as she lay down and opened herself to his slow, appreciative perusal. Jackson was at his Dominant best, fully aroused and proving his utter control over the situation by making her wait until he was damn good and ready to give her what she needed. She ran her tongue over the tip of a finger and then swirled it around her puckered nipple. Jackson's hiss was her reward.

"So it's teasing you're into this morning?" He knelt between her outstretched legs. "One of my favorite games." He ran his finger along her pussy lips. "Grab onto the headboard. Do not let go unless I give you permission."

Ellie did as she was told, grateful the pillows were piled underneath her head so she could watch as Jackson administered his special brand of sweet torture.

"You're always so wet, so responsive." He dipped into her, gathering some of her warm cream and slowly drew his thumb back to her puckered anus. She bent her knees, planted her feet flat on the mattress and spread herself as wide as she could. "Perfect. If memory serves, this is what got you going in the shower." He wiggled his thumb into her rear channel.

“More Jackson, more,” she writhed into his hand. “Your cock, too, now, *please!*”

“By definition, teasing is the drawing out of an experience, directly the opposite of ‘more now.’” He tapped her clit in time with the rhythm he set in her ass. “What do you want for breakfast this morning? It’s my turn to cook.”

“Bastard,” she hissed out through clenched teeth. He answered with a quick pinch to her swollen nub. “Okay, okay...omelet.”

“What kind?” He thrust two thick fingers into her pussy.

“Cheese, ham, artichoke...who the hell cares?” Her voice rose as her body rushed towards release. She wanted Jackson to see the desire in her eyes, but he was completely focused on what he was doing between her legs.

“Your pussy is clenching my fingers so tightly, throbbing and pulsing around me. You aren’t thinking about coming yet, are you?” She didn’t miss his warning tone.

“I can’t think at all right now, and you know it. I’m so horny. Please don’t make me wait any longer.”

He looked up at her with barely leashed passion etched in the taut lines of his face and flashed a sinister grin. “Despite all of my skillful instruction, you still have trouble controlling your climaxes. Should I see that as an insult or a compliment?”

“Compliment, damn it! I can get off just thinking about making love to you. How the hell am I supposed to control myself when you’re actually touching me?”

“Compliment it is then.”

One second he was teasing her beyond reason, the next he surged into her pussy with purpose. He planted his muscled arms on the mattress on either side of her head. He pumped once, and Ellie’s eyes slammed closed in ecstasy.

“Look at me, Eleanor.”

When she did, she knew that she was lost. His eyes were black with passion, his hair damp and wild, and his neck and shoulder muscles stretched tight. Her pussy clutched around his cock, causing his eyes to widen in surprise.

“Hold onto my arms. Wrap your legs around me, too. I want you attached to me in every way possible.” He shook with the effort of his control but only for a moment.

Mercifully, he stopped teasing and fucked her hard and fast. Perspiration broke out on her forehead, and she ground her teeth together but never broke eye contact. Her release exploded with such force she cried out and dug her nails into his flesh. She ground herself against him

wildly, and he unbelievably increased the speed and power of his thrusts. When he shouted out his orgasm, she tried to hold him even closer. His heart pounded against her breasts, and his labored breathing was loud.

"I think we need to take another shower," he whispered in her ear as they settled down together in the rumpled sheets.

* * * *

Ellie savored not only the last bite of the veggie omelet Jackson had made for her, but the cozy, comfortable ambiance of his presence in her home and her life. Despite the fact they'd been together such a short time, it simply felt right.

"Are you sure you won't change your mind and come with me?" Jackson got up from the kitchen table to set his empty coffee cup in the sink. "Traverse City in the fall is beautiful, and I won't be on the job site all the time." He wiggled an eyebrow suggestively and leaned against the counter.

Ellie leisurely assessed him from the tips of his work boots, up the denim that hugged his legs perfectly and over the flannel shirt that did nothing to hide his defined chest, not stopping until she captured his eyes with her own playful leer. "The thought of 'coming' anywhere with you is tantalizing indeed, but I can't be away from the office right now." She let out a dramatic sigh of disappointment. "We've been together every day since we met. Don't you need a break from me?" She saw that her attempt at lighthearted humor was a complete miss when his expression darkened noticeably.

"Do you need one from me?" His posture stiffened and his voice was stern.

"I was just trying to be funny. You need to learn how to lighten up." She went to him, leaning fully against his hard body and wrapping her arms around his neck. She planted a quick kiss on his closed lips. "I'm going to pine for you every second you're gone." She giggled when he cupped her ass cheeks and pressed her against his erection. After the way the day had started, she was amazed at his ability to be ready to go again. It warmed her right down to her toes that he desired her so much.

"What else do you have planned besides pining and working?"

"It's really very exciting. I'm going to catch up on some house cleaning, add in some laundry for a thrill, and oh yeah, I'm going out with some friends for dinner."

"Really, who are you going out with?" He stared down at her intensely.

“Judy, her fiancé Dale, and our friend, Ted. I’ve been woefully neglectful of my buddies since we’ve been together. I’m looking forward to seeing them.”

“If I was going to be in town, would you have invited me along?”

“What a silly question. Of course, I would have.” He was so serious, so quiet, she couldn’t figure out what his problem was, but she didn’t appreciate his tone. “I do have friends you know, as I’m sure you do. I love being with you, but I think it’s healthy for both of us to interact with other humans on a social level, don’t you?”

“And your way of doing that is by going out on a date the first chance you get?”

“What in the world are you talking about?” She pulled away from him and set her hands on her hips. “What date?”

“A committed couple, you and *Ted*. Sounds like a double date to me, Eleanor.”

“You’re kidding me, right?”

His expression was anything but humorous, instantly raising Ellie’s hackles.

“What happened to trusting each other completely and being true mates for life, Jackson? Does that mean you control who my friends are and where I go? Jump into the twenty-first century. Men and women can have a platonic relationship.”

“So you admit that you and Ted have a *relationship*? I don’t share my woman with another man.”

“Oh my God, you did not just say that to me.” Ellie stormed over to the table, picked up her dishes and stomped back to the sink. She tossed them in with a loud clank. Swinging around to face him, she opened her mouth then quickly slammed it shut, trying to tone down her fury and her hurt. After everything they had shared, every supposedly heartfelt declaration of his affection for her, he had the nerve to accuse her of cheating on him?

“I’m going to work, Jackson. Have a great trip. Oh, and lock the door behind yourself with the key to my house that I gave you because I thought we were in a *trusting* relationship,” she spat out as she left the kitchen. Under no circumstances would she let him see the tears pooling in her eyes. She wiped her hand across her face.

Throwing open the hall closet door, she ripped her coat off the hanger, well aware by the thudding sound of Jackson’s boots that he now stood behind her.

“Eleanor, you will not walk out. I simply questioned you about what you plan to do while I’m gone. That I don’t want you spending time with another man seems pretty normal to me. Wouldn’t it bother you if I spent time with another woman?”

She turned towards him while fighting the urge to scream. Jackson Royce hadn't ever come across to her as unintelligent, but at this moment, he was quite possibly the dumbest man to walk the planet. The scariest part was, by the look on his face, he truly didn't understand why she was so upset.

"You know what, Jackson? I have always assumed you do spend time with other women, clients, co-workers and *friends*. I'm not threatened by that. Shame on me, but up until this moment, I was completely confident we were in an exclusive relationship. I will certainly rethink my position now, since apparently, you believe if a man and a woman are together in the same space, it's sex or nothing."

"You are deliberately misinterpreting what I'm trying to say." He ran a hand through his hair and rubbed the back of his neck. "If you tell me there's nothing between you and this Ted person, of course, I'll believe you."

"I shouldn't have to tell you anything." She silently cursed herself when a single tear rolled down her cheek. "And you know what else? You were absolutely right a minute ago. I definitely need a break from you!"

Ellie walked out of her home on shaky legs, got into her car and made a concerted effort not to peel down the driveway. The sight of Jackson standing on the front porch with a look of utter shock stayed with her the entire drive to the office.

Chapter Six

"So you and the Marquis had your first fight over me?" Ted asked while pointing at himself and raising an eyebrow.

"First of all, don't call him that." Ellie shot a good-humored scowl across the table to Judy. She wasn't surprised in the least that Judy had filled in both Ted and Dale regarding her relationship with Jackson, but the stupid nickname had to go. "And second of all, Ted, have you not been listening to what I've been babbling on about for like an hour? Our disagreement went much deeper than you." Ellie couldn't help but smile at Ted's pained, overly dramatic sigh.

"I'm still unclear why you jerked him around in the first place, Ellie."

"Yeah, me too." Dale finished his beer before continuing. "If Judy told me she was going to hang out with another guy I knew nothing about while I was out of town, it would piss me off big time."

"Are you telling me you don't trust your fiancée?"

"Yes, Dale, is that what you're telling us?" Judy put her arm around Dale's neck and pinched him playfully.

"Not at all, sweetheart. It's the unknown guy I wouldn't trust. What's his motive? Is he trying to move in on my territory?"

"Territory?" both women squawked quietly in unison.

"You know what I mean." Dale fidgeted in his chair. "Most guys are possessive of the woman they care about whether they admit it out loud or not. From what I've heard about Jackson, he's all macho, caveman-guy when it comes to you, Ellie. And you like it...a lot." He raised an eyebrow and grinned mischievously, causing Ellie to make a mental note to discuss with Judy the level of private details she used when talking to Dale.

“And that takes us back to my original statement, people.” Ted scanned the table and waited to continue until all eyes were fixed on him. “All you had to do was explain I date Edwards not Eleanors. You deliberately misled him.”

“I did not,” she replied without as much conviction as she would have liked. “Don’t you understand? He thought he had the right to dictate who I spend time with. He questioned my loyalty to our relationship. He called me *his woman*!”

“He asked a couple honest questions based on the little bit of information you gave him, then declared, in his own rough around the edges way, just how much you mean to him,” Judy stated matter-of-factly.

“And all he wanted was an assurance he had nothing to worry about from said unknown guy,” Dale added quickly.

“And, up until this little incident, you’ve been totally getting off on his ‘I want to take care of you in every way’ approach to your relationship. You *are* his woman Ellie, in every sense of the word.” Leave it to Ted to cut right to heart of the matter.

Ellie stared openmouthed at Judy first then Dale and finally Ted. “I can’t believe you all are taking his side!”

At that, all eyebrows raised in her direction.

“Honey, we’re just trying to get you to see the big picture.” Ted patted the back of Ellie’s hand. “Do you understand how lucky you are to have a man who has been honest and open about his feelings for you from the very beginning? He’s devoted to you and seems to want nothing more than to cherish you in every way possible. You two are meant to be together. Don’t mess up a once-in-a-lifetime relationship by pushing his buttons out of sheer stubbornness.”

Reality slammed into Ellie like a ton of bricks. Thank God, she was sitting down. She was head over heels in love with Jackson. How could it have happened in such a short time and without her realizing it until this moment? The three days he had been gone had been the longest three days of her life. She thought about him constantly and missed his companionship. Why the hell hadn’t she called him and explained herself?

“Oh my God,” Ellie whispered as she cradled her head in her hands and leaned on the table. “What if I’ve ruined everything? We haven’t talked since I stormed out of the house. I kept figuring he would call me once he saw the error of his ways. I’m such an idiot! He’s not going to call me first after what I said to him. But if I make the first move, it’s as if I’m admitting it was wrong to get mad, and I wasn’t, because he didn’t trust me and he should and—”

"Deep breath, Ellie," Ted chuckled. "When's the Marquis due back in town?"

"Tonight, actually." Ellie checked her watch. "He's probably already home."

"Well then, let's get down to the business at hand." Ted signaled for another round of cocktails. "This situation calls for serious damage control."

* * * *

"This is absolutely ridiculous," Jackson grumbled as he pushed the blueprints across his desk and turned to stare out his office window. Four days! It had been four days since he had heard Eleanor's sweet voice and, more importantly, felt her melt in his arms. Each day he'd been gone he'd waited for her to call, to explain what the hell had happened between them that morning. He had every right to be upset. Just the mention of her spending time with another man had gotten his blood boiling, and when she'd refused to elaborate on the situation, he'd feared his head might explode.

Fine, if she wasn't going to call him, then so be it. Her stubbornness was cute at times, but this wasn't one of them. They were going to hash out this little bump in the road and move on. Whatever the hell was going on with this Ted person couldn't possibly be a threat to their relationship. Eleanor wasn't capable of that kind of deception. He would stake his life on it.

She was the woman he'd been waiting for forever. Beautiful, smart as a whip and passionate beyond belief. They were destined to be together. She was his, damn it. She had proven that every time she'd given herself so completely to him. Could he be wrong, though? Maybe she didn't feel as strongly about him? His gut clenched painfully.

"Bullshit." He slammed his hand down on the desk simultaneously with the knock on his closed door. "What?" he barked loudly at the interruption.

"I was getting ready to leave, Mr. Royce," Linda, his secretary, poked her head cautiously into his office.

"Sorry, Linda." He ran a hand through his hair and tried not to scowl. "I didn't mean to snap at you. Go on home. I'll see you Monday." When she didn't move and stared at him with concern, he managed a feeble smile. "Everything's fine. I'm just in a foul mood."

"Well, if that's the case, maybe I should go home, too?"

Ellie stepped into view behind Linda. Jackson's pulse rate increased instantly at the sight of her. God, she was breathtaking, dressed to the nines in a silk blouse, a narrow, black, knee-length skirt and peep-toed pumps. He slowly eased back his chair then stood. He nodded to Linda who, after glancing warily at the two of them, silently left.

“Eleanor. What a pleasant surprise.” He held her gaze with his but didn’t move as she entered his office and closed the door. She walked slowly across the carpeted floor to stand behind one of the leather chairs positioned in front of his desk. After dropping her purse, she smiled shyly at him.

“I missed you.”

“And I, you.” His cock thickened at the sultry tone of her voice.

“Ted is gay.”

Jackson coughed briefly in surprise before recovering himself. “An interesting way to start a conversation, I must admit.”

He moved slowly around the desk to perch on the front edge. He crossed his legs at the ankle and his arms across his chest, hoping he affected a casual pose despite the relief coursing through him.

“Why didn’t you tell me that in the first place, Eleanor? Wouldn’t it have saved both of us a great deal of upset?” He fixed her with a serious glare and was immensely pleased when she had the good sense to look mildly uncomfortable.

“Yes, you’re absolutely right. I should have been honest with you from the beginning.”

He smiled broadly, satisfied completely with her apology, but he wasn’t given more than a second before she continued.

“But you need to understand why I got so upset.”

“We aren’t going to just let it go with that?” He raised an eyebrow and tried not to chuckle when her expression intensified.

“No, we are not,” she replied quickly. “It seemed to me you were questioning my loyalty, my trustworthiness, and it hurt me, Jackson. But I was wrong to try to hurt you back instead of explaining what I was feeling. I get now why you reacted the way you did. I’m not mad anymore.”

“And what, pray tell, do you ‘get’ about me now that you didn’t a few days ago?”

“I have it on very good authority that your behavior the other day was your somewhat unpolished way of demonstrating how much you care about me.” She grinned at him with amusement dancing in her wide eyes.

“Unpolished?”

“Lacked finesse? Rough around the edges?”

“I know what unpolished means. So who’s the authority?”

“Actually, I got a hard comeuppance from Judy, Dale and Ted. They all delighted in taking your side of things and telling me exactly where I’d gone wrong.”

“I, now, completely approve of any time you spend with your friends.”

She rolled her eyes at him, and his deep laughter filled the room.

“Let me see if I can better articulate my feelings, sweetheart. Come here.”

He uncrossed his arms and legs, and warmth spread through his body as she came to him without hesitation. When she stood between his legs with her hands braced on the tops of his thighs, he held onto her hips gently and stared deeply into her eyes.

“The last few days have been agony for me. We aren’t ever going to waste hours, let alone days, not speaking to each other again. We belong together.”

The emotion sparkling in her eyes sent his pulse racing, and he struggled to keep his mind on the conversation at hand as she pressed more tightly between his legs.

“I know there are going to be times where things get complicated between us. We’re both somewhat set in our ways and headstrong.” He began to slowly run his hands along her thighs, carefully working up the material of her skirt. “But nothing is more important to me than making us work out. I love you, Eleanor. I want us to share the rest of our lives together.”

Joy, relief, adrenaline and shock all slammed into Ellie simultaneously, causing her fingers to tighten, most likely painfully, on Jackson’s thighs. She had been rehearsing her apology slash declaration of love speech for hours. With the help of her friends, she’d tried to anticipate every possible scenario, come up with creative explanations, formulate intelligent arguments to insure she kept this incredible man in her life, and to what end? He’d beaten her to the punch. He’d missed her. He loved her. He wanted a future with her. She hadn’t ruined everything!

“I love you too, Jackson.” Ellie threw her arms around his neck and started kissing his forehead, moving frantically to his eyelids and his cheekbones before he grabbed her hair tightly and drew her back far enough to regain eye contact. He held her still just long enough for her to almost drown in the emotions reflected in his expression then his lips claimed hers in a kiss that left no doubt about the depth of his feelings. He plundered, dominated and possessed her mouth as he yanked her skirt to bunch on her hips. When his warm palms caressed her naked ass cheeks, they both groaned at the sensation.

He tore his mouth away from hers and peered over her shoulder. “What the hell is this?”

"I figured if I wasn't able to apologize properly with words," she rubbed her breasts against his chest and stroked the back of his neck, "maybe I could tantalize you into not being mad at me anymore in a nonverbal way." When she rotated her hips seductively, he squeezed her exposed flesh with enthusiasm.

"You tantalize me simply by being." Jackson stood and crushed her deliciously against his solid frame. "And right now, you're playing with fire." He lifted and held her effortlessly. She ground herself shamelessly across his erection and whimpered in anticipation when he swung her around to lean over his desk. He pressed his large hand between her shoulder blades, and she braced herself on her arms. The sound of him ripping down his zipper was music to her ears.

"Door locking?" Ellie breathed out when his skillful finger found her core.

"Unnecessary."

She wiggled herself backwards in an effort to allow him better access. "I do not want to meet your co-workers in this position, Jackson." Her pussy spasmed and her hips jerked when he carefully inserted two more fingers. With one purposeful stroke, he took her breath away.

"Nobody will walk into this office without permission."

His certainty, his complete command of his environment, enflamed her as much as his skillful mastery of her body.

"My pussy," he declared forcefully as he set a fevered pace, touching, stroking, inflaming her from the inside out. "My woman." He leaned over her back and rotated his hips in rhythm with his hand. "Mine."

"Yes, Jackson, yes." Her legs trembled as waves of pleasure raced from her heated core outwards. "Please, more... I need your cock. I need to have you inside of me." His fingers slid from her. She moaned desperately, both at the temporary loss of his touch and in anticipation of being filled and possessed completely. She attempted to turn around.

"No, don't move."

She immediately followed his direction, letting her forehead drop to rest on the desktop.

"You are exquisite, spread open waiting for me, begging me to take you. I will always give you everything you need."

The sound of his belt hitting the floor and a foil packet being torn open intensified her need until it was almost painful. She was so empty without him that it seemed an eternity before his sheathed penis nudged at her weeping entrance. His hands slid up her sides and wrapped

firmly around her aching breasts. He pinched and rolled her pebbled nipples at the same moment his hips surged forward.

“On my God, yes!” she cried out in relief and ecstasy as her body joyfully accepted Jackson’s powerful thrust. Her eyes slammed shut, and her fingernails raked across the smooth wood of the desk when Jackson, fully seated, held perfectly still instead of stroking in and out of her body in the way she so desperately needed. She flexed her inner muscles and wiggled in encouragement as best she could while being cradled so tightly, so lovingly in his strong embrace.

“Jesus, Eleanor, stay still.” Jackson practically growled out the words and his hands trembled against her breasts.

Ellie thrilled at the knowledge his desire for her drove him to the brink of losing his precious control.

“I want to make love to you for hours, worship your incredible body until you can’t think straight, but damn,” a shiver ran down his body, “it’s been too long. Your pussy is so tight and warm, and I’ve missed you so much.”

Her heart swelled at the emotion evident in Jackson’s tone. “I can’t think straight already, and we can make love for hours later,” she panted out with ragged breaths. “I’m about to get off whether you move or not, but I’d rather if—”

She was given no more warning than a low growl and the tightening of his fingers on her delicate flesh before Jackson fucked her mercilessly. Somehow, despite the almost violent force of his movements, he never thrust too deep or let her be pressed too hard against the edge of the desk. Ellie trusted him completely, and she gave herself without reservation into his care. When her body exploded with an orgasm of epic proportion, she screamed his name.

“That’s it, come for me.” He held her jerking hips tightly against his groin. “God, I can’t wait, you’re milking my cock so hard...”

Jackson bucked wildly and despite the condom, the pulses of his warm cum so deep in her body wrenched another shattering climax from her overly sensitized nerve endings.

Time had no meaning as their frenzied passion dissipated to sated exhaustion. Was it a moment or an hour that he laid against her back, covering her with his size and strength, whispering words of love and dreams of the future? All of her doubts simply floated away, replaced by unimaginable excitement for the life that awaited them. Jackson was right. They were destined to be together. When two people were able to come together so completely, so

passionately, there was no reason to question it. They could work out any problems that threatened to get in their way.

"I know the market is down right now, but your house is in a great location and should sell relatively easily." Jackson's matter-of-fact comment was in utter conflict with the gentleness of his motions as he eased out of Ellie's body and turned her around to face him. She tried to focus as he continued to talk.

"We're not going to need all of our combined furniture, but I don't think November is a great month for a yard sale. Maybe we'll get a storage unit so we can take our time deciding how to meld our two households."

He dropped a kiss on the end of her nose before padding across the office to disappear into a connecting bathroom. When he emerged, he had a cloth in his hand and a very male, very satisfied grin on his face. He came back to her with determined purpose.

"Earth to Eleanor," he chuckled, positioning himself in a chair right in front of her. He patted his bare thigh in invitation for her to join him.

"I'm sorry? I'm selling my house?" She blinked rapidly, realizing she was still perched on the edge of his desk with her lady parts fully exposed. When had they gone from cries of passion to the real estate market? What happened to little afterglow? She slid down into his lap and laid her head against his shoulder, sighing contentedly as he used the warm cloth with expertise to clean and soothe her.

"Well, my house is bigger, of course, and we'll need the extra bedrooms for the kids."

"Kids? Whose kids?" she sputtered in a most unladylike manner. "I'm sorry, but I may not have been paying as close attention to what you've been talking about as I should have." She fixed him with a pleading stare.

"See? That's why it is so important that we get married as soon as possible. You need me to take care of little details like this."

"Married?" Her euphoria was officially replaced with confusion. "I didn't hear a proposal. A girl doesn't miss a thing like that."

"She does if she is screaming in wild, sexual abandon." He grinned down at her and cupped her cheek. "I definitely heard 'Yes, Jackson, I'll marry you' as you came apart in my arms."

"Then it must be so," she sighed and closed her eyes, barely aware that the purr of contentment was her own.

About the Author

Tessie Bradford lives in Michigan with her husband of twenty-three years, two rescued pit bulls, a geriatric cat and a freakishly personality filled Parrot fish named Fred. When her youngest went off to college, she knew the time was right to pursue her passion for writing with the same fervor her characters pursue their passion for each other.

Author loves to talk to her readers and can be found at www.tessiebradford.com

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Carnal Reunions

***Training Randi* by Tessie Bradford**

Miranda Ellson graduated from college with a degree in design in one hand and a ticket to London in the other. Ten years, five job changes and three boring, unfulfilling relationships later she's back at WIU to re-connect with old friends, enjoy the campus activities and take a break from...oh who the hell is she kidding?

Jeff Briggs, former college neighbor and best bud, now successful gym owner, lives in town. He's the only guy she has ever known who could set her panties on fire by simply walking into a room and Randi is sick and tired of only hooking up with him in her dreams. This may be her only chance to discover exactly what kind of personal training he has to offer.

***Smokin' Ace* by Regina Carlisle**

A college reunion and seeing her best 'gal pals' is just the thing widow and single mom, Chloe Wells needs to put a little oomph back into her boring, routine life. For her, those carefree years and the friendships she made with six other women in the old Victorian were unforgettable and, hey, what's wrong with revisiting a past that was fun and full of laughter? But when she bumps into Michael "Ace" Banner other memories surface. Memories of hot nights and rumpled bed sheets. Memories of the loss of the one man who burned her to ash.

Former college tennis star, Ace Banner, now a renowned sports photographer, has just one chance to regain the love of pretty, sweet, very sexy Chloe. Yeah, he blew it years ago by walking away but he's a man now and not about to let her get away again. Ace is prepared to pull out all the stops in reclaiming what he lost all those years ago. It'll take a slow hand and an easy touch but he's up for the challenge.

***First and Ten* by Fran Lee**

What Fran Jamison and Jack Gerrard have in common, you could balance on the head of a pin. And to make things worse, Jack blew his chances to hell back in High School with the BBW.

Neither goes to their 10th college reunion expecting sparks to fly, but when they collide in the airport, painful old memories quickly evaporate to make way for two people desperately needing to scratch 12-year-old itches.

Jack royally blew it when he let other people's opinions stop him from pursuing the 5'11" bombshell so many years back, and by the time he realized he was a jackass and tried to

apologize, a traumatized and hurt Fran had shredded his ego in public, leaving him to lick his wounds and move on.

She thought she would hate him on sight. She didn't. She thought she could walk away. She couldn't. She certainly didn't expect to find herself making out like a madwoman on the hood of a borrowed car in the airport parking ramp. But she did expect one thing...she was not going to walk away again. Not when he was so damn good at scratching those itches...

***Nailed* by Cindy Spencer Pape**

When shy scientist Karen Sikorski meets up with her college crush, Warner Beckett, sparks fly, but she knows the handsome contractor would never fall for a plain nerd like her. Warner, though, has other ideas. Smart, voluptuous Karen is everything he's ever wanted in a woman, and this time around, he's enough of a grown up to appreciate it. Now all he has to do is convince the lady he really does want her—in every way possible.

***IOU* by Paris Brandon**

The morning after her final exams, Bliss Harper woke up in her own bed wearing only her underwear. She's never remembered how she got there or why she found an I.O.U. tucked into her panties for one night of "Bad Boy Sex," signed by her favorite pizza delivery guy, Nick Santucci. But she had a ten-year plan that didn't include any more bad decisions and handsome men. But all work and no play make for a dull life and she's headed to her ten-year college reunion with every intention of collecting on a debt that's long overdue.

Ten years ago, bad boy Nick hadn't usually looked twice at shy, thrift-store fashion reject Bliss Harper. He just hadn't been able to avoid it when she'd started doing a tabletop, drunken striptease at a frat party the police were raiding. These days Nick's not delivering pizza, he's delivering deals and he's headed to his ten-year college reunion determined to negotiate one night into many with the woman who holds the marker on his heart.

***Prisoner of the Heart* by Anny Cook**

When Rebecca Iversen graduated from college, she headed home with nothing on her mind but wedding plans. Less than a month later, her plans were in ruins when she discovered she was pregnant the same week her fiancé was arrested for selling drugs. Anxious to provide legitimacy for her child, she married Tom while he was still in jail. Years later, Becky finally divorced him, resolved to make a peaceful life for her children and herself.

When the reunion invitation from Karen arrived in her e-mail, her Aunt Mary urged her to take the time to enjoy a little adult time at the reunion.

Young Joe Harris lived across the street from the old Victorian where Becky lived during college.

He spent those years secretly yearning for the “older woman”. Now that Becky is back and single, Joe plans to do everything in his power to convince her that he’s exactly the man she needs.

***G-Spot* by Taylor Tryst**

Lily Sutherland—no—Detective Lily Sutherland, a title she worked her ass off to earn, has returned to Heartwood Indiana for her ten-year college reunion. An ex-Lady Hawk, and a star athlete on the volleyball team, Lily used her competitive edge to win on the court. She dove into the male dominated world of law enforcement where she once again rocked the foundation and shot up the ranks to homicide detective in record time. As far as Lily is concerned, she’s just one of the boys until she reunites with Dakota Reese, the love of her life.

Special Agent Dakota Reese has always been too smart for his own damn good. Specializing in serial cases, Dakota attends his college reunion at Western Indiana University for what he believes will be a reprieve, only to discover that his life just became much harder...literally, when he see’s Lily Sutherland at the grand old Victorian down the street. Dakota and Lily had split amicably ten years prior, each of them marrying for all of the right reasons. Unfortunately, they married someone else, and were now both divorced. There’s a natural animosity between the cops and the feebbs, but can Lily put their differences aside long enough for her ‘G Man’ to find her g spot and rock her world, forever?

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***Binding Gillian* by Melinda Barron**

In college, Brad Claybourne and Gillian York were soul mates. But their relationship could not survive the manipulations of a conniving woman, and ended in heartbreak.

Now Brad is a world-famous journalist and Gillian is an on-the-rise author. When her agent unwittingly sets Gillian up to be interviewed by Brad, Gillian vows that she will not allow old feelings to surface.

But Brad has other ideas. He intends to remind Gillian of how good they were together. All he will need is a little bit of holiday magic...and a few feet of rope.

***Punished* by Brynn Paulin**

Prim Natalia Cooper lives life on the straight and narrow, never veering into naughty territory. But she wants to. One night, years ago, her boyfriend gave her a few swats on the rear as part of their sex play and she loved it. She wants more. But he's long gone and she hasn't been spanked since. When she learns of a club where she can get exactly what she needs—anononymously—she's so turned on and ready she can hardly bear it.

For Ethan Tavish, The Dungeon has served as a place to exert his dominance without making lasting commitments. He can hardly believe his eyes when he enters the play area to find his secretary, Natalia, bent over the spanking bench in a schoolgirl uniform. They're both masked, but he'd recognize her anywhere. In an instant, he has a plan to give them what they both want...and perhaps a whole lot more.

***Red Ribbons and Blue Balls* by Tia Fanning**

After Nicolas punishes her for being naughty, the usually nice but now sexually frustrated Winter arrives at their secluded mountain cabin bearing gifts—special gifts that will ensure his submission and her revenge.

With only seven days left until Christmas, Nicolas expects to spend the night decorating the house for the approaching holiday, but Winter has other plans... Christmas might be coming, but if Winter gets her way, Nicolas won't be.

***Body of Art* by Bronwyn Green**

Art professor Seth Granger has two problems—an absentee life drawing models and a case of unrequited lust. Luckily his troubles have the same answer—his colleague, Dr. Callie Sullivan.

The trick will be getting her out of her clothes and into his studio...and hopefully into his bed. However, she's intent on keeping her mind on her art and ignoring him. Now he just needs to convince her she should be his body of art.

***Transparent Illusions* by Melinda Barron**

Freelance writer Saffron Tyler needs work. When she offers her journalistic skills to Steele Publications, they suggest that she spend two weeks as a submissive at Fingertip Fantasies, an exclusive BDSM resort that caters to the ultimate fantasies of any customer willing to pay for the high-end service. She's been tasked to come back with a titillating exposé guaranteed to enthrall the readers of Steele's underground magazine, *Salacious*.

But when Saffron arrives at the resort, she realizes nothing is as it seems, from the fact she doesn't know where the resort is located, or anything about the man she is submitting to—except she's to call him Master, with a capital M.

What starts out as an undercover assignment soon becomes so much more. Immersed in the lifestyle, Saffron finds herself no longer acting the role of the submissive, but actually wanting to be the perfect sub her Master believes she can be. When all is said and done, will Saffron take her experience and her story and never look back? Or will she choose to stay with the man who commands her mind, body, and soul.

***Chance Encounters* by Mia Jae**

Seven short, erotic stories to whet your appetite, packaged in one collection. Whether the couples meet on a glance, make a split second decision or take a chance to be together, the encounters change their lives, for a minute, or for a lifetime.

You'll find a plumber who gets into more than a little hot water, a housewife tangled up in a cyber relationship, a cowboy trio attempting to brand a bartender for their very own, and a woman experimenting with a same-sex relationship. Then there is naughty Rose, who dances naked in front of her bedroom window, a chance sexual encounter in a taxi that turns the tables, and a woman who finds herself doing exactly what she thinks she shouldn't...and liking it.

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