

Cobblestone Press

www.cobblestone-press.com

Copyright ©2010 by Dee Carney

First published in 2010

NOTICE: This eBook is licensed to the original purchaser only. Duplication or distribution to any person via email, floppy disk, network, print out, or any other means is a violation of International copyright law and subjects the violator to severe fines and/or imprisonment. This notice overrides the Adobe Reader permissions which are erroneous. This eBook cannot be legally lent or given to others.

This eBook is displayed using 100% recycled electrons.

CONTENTS

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Chapter Four

Chapter Five

Author Bio

* * * *

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, organizations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

With a Cherry on Top

Copyright(C) 2010 Dee Carney

ISBN: 978-1-60088-599-0

Cover Artist: Fiona Jayde

Editor: Darcy Quinn

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced electronically or in print without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews.

Cobblestone Press, LLC www.cobblestone-press.com

* * * *

Chapter One

A whirling dervish who somehow made the rolled-into-one aroma of peach cobbler, chocolate chip cookies and key lime pie smell good, barged into Emory's office. The minute she appropriated the stark expanse of his desk with some sort of baked good he actually was curious to taste, he should have known he was in trouble.

She thrust a clenched fist at him, the paper enclosed strangled within an inch of its life. "You're the new HR consultant, Emory Dawson, right? You're the one responsible for this?"

He took a look at "this", knowing almost immediately what it was and should have known the memo wouldn't be kept a secret for long. Emory took a deep breath, rose to his feet, and sized her up. If he were a smart man, he'd be ducking from the lasers shooting from her rich brown eyes instead of admiring her plump lips. He might even consider barking outrage, rather than just shifting from the unexpected rush of interest heading south on his anatomy while he studied lush curves not hidden very well behind a white apron. "You're not supposed to have that," he said with a nod. He'd somehow managed to drag his gaze away from her hips to the bad news in her hand.

"Do you even understand the significance of my job, Mr. Dawson? What I bring to this company?"

Here we go. If he ever found out who'd let the list of people potentially slated for layoffs get out, he'd personally

add that person's name to the top. The food empire, which had hired him, needed to cut back. Those with higher salaries, and who were expendable, made the short list. "I'm sure you're a very valuable asset to Down Home Desserts, ma'am."

Those words spiked her ire. "Valuable? Valuable is what your grandma's jewelry might be. I'm the effing Mona Lisa of food. I am priceless. For God's sake, there's an insurance policy on my mouth. *My mouth*!"

Which he could barely stop staring at before. Now, he was just short of fixated on it. Emory tried to beat his attention into submission, forcing it elsewhere. The gentle slope of her rounded cheeks was a good start. Or maybe the place where a white dusting of what might have been flour caressed pretty brown skin near her temple. Too late he realized studying errant strands of silken black hair made his fingers itch with the urge to tuck them back into place. Hell, he had to shift just to keep his cock from standing to attention.

"Why not first tell me your name and then we can discuss this in a calm, rational manner?" *Please*. For the love of heaven, stop drawing his attention to her mouth and the very many things he wanted to do with it. His brain had zero problem imagining the swollen purple tip of his cock resting against her lips, or teasing him with thoughts of her moist mouth suckling him hard. "Have a seat, please."

Still standing, she shoved forward the small metal tray of food he'd completely forgotten. "Keira Bronley. Executive chef, soon to be unemployed. Nice to meet your acquaintance."

Emory winced. Now that he knew with whom he was dealing, he had to put on his game face fast, and fix his enthusiastic lower anatomy. Her position with the large baked goods distributor had been the very first he found redundant and frankly, unnecessary. Although the list of names was still considered a draft, he'd bet good money she'd be jobless in under a month. "Ma'am, you should understand that nothing on there is a done deal. It's just with the economy the way it is, I've been asked to look for places where DHD might scale back—"

"My career is not a 'scale back' for you to mess with!" She flopped down into one of the plush leather chairs. His gaze dropped just enough to catch the sway of her breasts, about palm-sized, as they settled with the rest of her. "I've been balls out since I started working here when I was seventeen and some country twanged know-it-all in Brooks Brothers isn't gonna—"

He lowered himself to the rolling desk chair, relieved she finally took a seat. "Balls out?"

"Yeah, you know, working like an Egyptian slave."

He lifted a brow, but got her meaning. "Hugo Boss."

At last her tough-as-nails armor took a ding. "Excuse me?"

Emory leaned forward, at once amused and intrigued by their exchange. "I'm wearing Boss, not Brooks."

"And what does that have to do with the price of tea in China?" Her mouth—that oh, so delectable mouth—curved up in a whisper of a smile that made his heart race.

"I could do this with you all day," he said, grinning.

Keira scowled. Or at least tried to. If he said just one more word with that sexy Southern drawl, she'd melt into a puddle of brown female flesh.

Enemy! Think enemy!

But damn, he looked good. She'd never cared much for blonds, but his hair, obviously combed back with his fingers, leaned just this side of that color enough to make her wonder about his natural color. Down below.

Now, why did she even go there?

No sooner had the thought formed than her libido raced into hyper-drive, kicking up a fuss and reminding her that despite what everyone said, a year of consuming chocolate was not a suitable substitute for hot and sweaty loving. Her womb clenched in agreement, her nipples also tightening beneath her uniform. She'd caught the way he'd tried to nonchalantly look at her chest. And, truth be told, she'd liked it.

"Would you at least explain to me why a company that specializes in food would even start to think that their executive chef is expendable?"

"That's not what this means. At all. It means we're looking for jobs that might be...redundant to other positions."

"Redundant?" Mr. Southern sex just dropped in potential quite a few notches.

"The products at DHD are based on recipes handed down from the original owners. Tried and true—"

Keira's amusement bubbled up and out of her mouth before she could recall it. Indignant laughter, yes, but laughter nonetheless. "Tried and true recipes?" She was

barely able to form the words in between chortling. "Old fashioned?" When his smoky green eyes narrowed in confusion, she took deep steadying breaths. "Baby doll, you obviously have zero idea about the food business."

A very cute blush brightened the tips of Emory's ears. "I take it that my understanding you're here to oversee food production isn't quite correct."

"Like I said, I'm the Mona Lisa of food." She watched his blush creep further down his neck, dipping beneath his tightly knotted tie, which gave him the illusion of corporate conservativeness. Except she knew better. When he'd been standing, she'd seen the tailored shirt cling to a lean body, which must have been disciplined with long hours in the gym.

Based on that physique, he'd obviously never tasted the delights she had available for sampling. Or her food either. "Why don't you and I head to my kitchen so I can show you first-hand exactly what I do? Then you can decide just how redundant my job here really is."

Something mysterious flickered across his features. A decidedly carnal suggestion in his eyes. Without looking at his watch or the clock, he replied, "Ma'am, I believe I have time to accompany you. It would seem that some research is in order."

Keira had never before heard someone make the word 'research' sound like it should star in its own porn movie. It left little to the imagination just what kind of research he had in mind. Then again, she could be grasping at straws, hopeful that he might change his mind about her job.

Only one way to find out.

"Follow me, please," she said with a touch of huskiness to her voice. Two could play at this game.

Emory rose once again to his impressive height. "After you."

[Back to Table of Contents]

Chapter Two

Keira felt his hot gaze on her ass during the entire trip to the main kitchen lab. Was she appalled? Nope. Quite the contrary. She invited the cutie to watch the wiggle in her step. If the tables had been reversed, and she behind him, no doubt she'd be doing some ogling of her own.

They passed many of her coworkers heading home for the day, and she was grateful none of them noticed the burning flush in her cheeks as she led him toward her lair. Only she was aware of the dampening in her panties with every passing minute. Damn she wanted to be professional, but her body had other ideas. Soon Emory would be able to scent the subtle tang of her cream if she didn't get a rein on her raging hormones.

Lair. How apropos a word. Its connotation leaned heavily toward what she felt like—a seductress about to corrupt the innocent in the sultry, seductive ways of the bedroom.

But for crying out loud, when did that happen? She would be showing him what she did for a living, not what made her toes curl during heights of wicked pleasure. Right?

Uh, right.

After they crossed the threshold to her pride and joy, she kicked aside her burgeoning fantasies and slipped into professional mode. "What I do here, Mr. Dawson, is create the 'old fashioned' recipes that make this company millions. You know, the ones handed down through generations."

He gaped at the expansive room. Bottles of pre-made sauces, sundry kitchen utensils, and industrial machinery lined the counters and walls. "Wow."

"Sure, there might be something in the old vault worth working from, but the ultimate recipe used and then replicated for America to enjoy is born in this kitchen." She whirled, and headed for a tray of brownies she'd created just that morning. "Try this one, for example. Brownies from scratch, right? Seems simple from the outside, but wait until you taste."

His gold watch glittered under the harsh fluorescent lighting as he lifted one to his mouth. He took a bite, chewed, and then flashed chocolate covered teeth at her. She'd never seen such innocent joy on a face before. "This is heavenly."

She took a bite too, almost moaning with pleasure as the taste and feel of gooey caramel melted on her tongue. "I know."

"But what about the pictures of the family? The grandma and grandpa portraits are on every box."

"Have you looked closely at that picture?" She snorted. "That woman can't weigh more than a hundred and five pounds, dripping wet. You can't trust a skinny cook."

His eyes devoured her in a head to toe sweep that would have made a pole dancer blush. "No," he murmured, "skinny doesn't do a thing for me."

Whoa, she thought, reflecting on her own plus-size figure. What the hell did she do with that?

Keira's scalp tingled as more heat overtook her face, spreading outward like butter on a hot roll. She cleared her

throat. "Well, um, yes..." Thoughts tumbled on each other as she tried to form a coherent sentence, some snappy comeback to the suggestive quality of his words. He kept studying her mouth, his eyes hooded beneath drowsy lids, distracting her even further. "I have other recipes either in testing or in development. I'm sure I could find something else for you to taste around here."

Did that sound just as suggestive as she thought it did? He crooked a finger at her. "Come here, Miss Bronley. You've got some caramel on your face."

Unconsciously, she licked her lips. "Hazard of the job," she said. Her nervous laugh betrayed her racing pulse. She tightened her thighs together, silently willing her libido under control. "I've always got some chocolate on my shirt, or frosting caked on my fingers..."

Emory moved closer, and she forgot how to breathe. When his finger brushed just above her chin, she'd bet money her heart stopped.

His pink tongue swiped the caramel from his retreating finger, and her eyebrows shot up as she watched. Her throat went dry and her pussy moistened as he pinned her with another look of wanton decadence. "Or flour on your face," he added, caressing her temple with the gentlest touch.

The room went hazy, reminding her body to start breathing and circulating blood. She gripped the metal countertop to keep from toppling over, once again trying to get her mind to respond with some semblance of intelligence and the English language. "Uh, let me show you one of my latest creations. Wait here, please."

She turned, heading for the freezer where she could cool off. Whew!

Emory withdrew his Blackberry and typed in a quick email. After a check for typos, he pressed send. No one might read it until Monday morning, but that wasn't his current predicament. No, instead he concentrated on making his erection deflate. How could tasting a rich dessert in the presence of the attractive yet career-driven chef make him harder than steel?

Well, perhaps it wasn't her presence alone that did it. The insane urge to lean forward and lick that drop directly off her skin had led to more licentious thoughts about other places he wanted to lick on her body—with or without caramel. For a split second, all he could think about was kneeling between her spread legs, tonguing her softness and savoring the tang of pure Keira.

The object of his growing affection came sauntering back to where he waited, holding two plates in her hand. So focused on the vanilla ice cream beginning to wilt beneath the kitchen lights, he almost missed the change. He glanced up though and noted a difference about her. Something he couldn't quite put his finger on at first.

"Try this," she said. "It's a new frontier for DHD, but I'm going to propose we look into frozen desserts too."

When she set one of the plates in front of him and held out a spoon, he spotted it. Emory ignored the food. "I liked it better before."

She looked up with startled eyes. "What? You haven't even tasted it."

"Your hair." He wrestled with himself, torn between oldfashioned manners and lust for a woman he'd met less than an hour ago.

Lust won.

During her few minutes away from him, she'd pulled back the errant strands he'd previously wanted to tidy. He preferred the kiss-my-ass-world, carefree attitude, including the traces of flour and chocolate decorating her person that further proclaimed her passion in the kitchen. Her previous appearance led him down paths of wondering what she might look like after a mind-blowing orgasm, sweaty and satisfied. Now she appeared pristine and unmussed, and nothing like the woman who'd come storming into his office.

He had every intention of destroying that look.

Emory reached behind her, and tugged on the tight bun of Keira's upswept hair. Hastily she covered his hands with hers, putting an end to what he'd started. Seconds passed by as he waited for her to tear him a new one. When she didn't, he considered whether he'd misjudged the sparks arcing between them. When she tossed her hair back, freeing it to feather onto her shoulders, however, he released an inaudible sigh of relief.

"What are you doing?" she asked softly.

With a bold step, Emory invaded her personal space, the rich scent of baking spices coming from her making him insane with want. The erection he'd managed to subdue before came roaring back with a vengeance. "My version of a corporate takeover."

Amusement flickered in the gaze that met his. "Is this takeover hostile or friendly?"

"Definitely the friendly kind." He brought his hands to her face, resting his thumbs lightly beneath the delicate frame of her jaw. The contrast of her skin against his sent a thrill through him. "Unless you're into the kinky, hostile type."

This time she laughed out loud. "Well, there's nothing wrong with kinky."

"No," he murmured. He lowered his head, thinking *thank God*. "Nothing at all."

[Back to Table of Contents]

Chapter Three

Keira tilted her face to meet Emory's, anticipation coiling tightly through her body. His lips touched hers like a whisper before it turned into a roar. His mouth was hard and demanding, setting her body aflame with growing urgency. Undeniable need.

She rested her hand against his chest, felt the punch of his heart against his ribcage and tried to slow down her own racing mind. Good girls didn't kiss virtual strangers. Good girls definitely didn't moan beneath the weight of bruising lips.

But bad girls did. And right now, Keira delighted in being very, *very* bad.

Emory trapped her body between his and the cold metal of a prep station. Just as she'd suspected, he was nothing but firm muscle everywhere she had the pleasure of feeling. If the bulge pressing against her abdomen was any indication, there wasn't an inch of the man that wasn't rock hard.

He dragged his mouth over her bottom lip. Nipping. Tasting. It stung in the most sensual way, making her fingers tighten on the silk fabric of his tie in a knee-jerk response. For every bit of hurt, his tongue followed to soothe away the pain. Appealing hints of chocolate lingered on her mouth, on her lips, trailing behind his kisses.

"Please," he whispered, "touch me, baby."

With trembling fingers, she unraveled the knot of his tie, unfastened the smooth buttons holding his shirt together.

Starched cotton fell open, exposing a hint of curls. The hard tips of his nipples greeted her fingertips, and she reveled in the little moan that rumbled from his throat. He'd probably meant he wanted to be touched elsewhere, but she hadn't worked up the nerve to go there just yet.

The clock above them ticked. A rhythmic, insistent reminder.

"Wait, wait..." Despite her words, her hands had a mind of their own, continuing to undress him. He went still, his searching mouth the only part of his anatomy as willful as her hands. "We need to leave. Or lock the door. Or turn off the lights. Or something."

"Oh, thank God. I thought..." Emory thinned his lips and pressed a desperate kiss against her mouth. He pushed away from her and then crossed the room in a few determined strides. The click of the lock amplified a moment later, followed by the flick of the light switch.

Keira stood panting. Waiting. Needing. And in the dark.

"Emory?" Okay, yes, it was her suggestion to lock the door or turn off the lights. But now she stood in absolute darkness, the light from surrounding kitchen gadgets barely enough to see by.

"Take your clothes off, baby."

She turned in the direction of his voice, but only the maddening sound of the clock reached her ears. Her hands were curled around the cool metal behind her, supporting legs that had gone boneless during his kiss. She elevated her chin. "You first."

The rich sound of his chuckle came from her left. "What makes you think I haven't already finished what you started?"

It was a damned good thing the table held her up. "Prove it."

"Are you sure you want to defy me?"

Her nipples tightened. "I'm not really defying—"

"Take them off, baby. Don't make me tell you a third time."

She chewed on her bottom lip, very tempted to see what would happen, but with her panties damp, cream almost running down her thighs, what was the point? Discarding her clothing took less than a minute, even without the benefit of bright lights. "There. Happy?"

The sound that echoed in the room next was something between a purr and a groan.

Yeah. She'd say he was happy.

Her nipples beaded in the cool air of the room. The heat between her legs reached a molten proportion. The vague thought she severely put her job on the line by doing this crossed her mind, but face it, if one Emory Dawson had his way, she'd be on the streets in no time anyhow. Might as well go out with a bang. Literally.

"What now?" Keira still searched blindly in the dark for him, not knowing if he stood a foot away, if he could see her in the darkness, or what.

Emory's low timbre sent a wave of sensuality crashing over her. "I have an object in my left hand, and one in my right. The one in my left hand is very erotic. The one in my right

hand is, let's just say, kinky. I think you'll enjoy either so I'll leave the decision of which one to use with you."

Erotic versus kinky. Was there truly a difference? Since he hadn't brought anything with him into the kitchen, something already here had spiked his creativity. That, in turn, piqued her curiosity. "How about both?"

"Oh, sweet Jesus, a lady after my own heart." His voice neared, making her heart thud with anticipation. "Turn around, hands on the table."

Keira licked her lips as she got into position. *Erotic and kinky*. The two words echoed in her ears, at once making her feel languid. Sensual. She had the compelling urge to make her lover lose some of the stoic control he exuded in the way he spoke and stood. Knowing he planned on taking their first time together to the next level encouraged her runaway thoughts.

Fine hair rose on the back of her neck and she realized he'd come closer. He stood behind her, not saying a word; his presence alone was enough to make her clench her thighs. She licked her lips again, anticipation and need forming in the back of her throat, ready to erupt in a moan.

Warm hands found her hips, massaged some of the building tension, and worked up her lower back. She arched under Emory's expertise, allowing a whimper of simple pleasure to rise. Hot breath caressed her skin, his lips igniting a trail of fire, the moisture from his tongue cooling her down only slightly. His mouth parted in a smile against her back, and she turned her head. "You taste like chocolate. Like honest to goodness, God damned chocolate."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Let's turn it up a notch."

She felt him jerk, and then cool liquid poured over her flesh. It slid down her backside and she tilted her hips in response. Then Emory was there, his flattened tongue sliding through the liquid, following it with the most decadent, glacial pace. He started near the top of one rounded cheek, followed an up-down path on her tailbone before following the trail once more on her other cheek. By then the liquid had rolled so far down, he tasted the top of her right thigh.

He rose, the firm length of him grazing her back, and used a hand to tip her face toward his. Keira closed her eyes, reveling in finding his mouth in the dark, and thrust her tongue out to meet and twine with his. Tasting...

Vanilla?

"Is that my good vanilla sauce you're using?"
He kissed her again. "Goes so well with chocolate."

That she couldn't deny, so she agreed with a moan as his greedy mouth covered hers again. His tongue pushed inside and curled around hers. She sucked on it, pulling all of the luscious vanilla flavor and the taste of aroused male into her mouth.

He pulled away, dropped a brief kiss on her shoulder before his body jerked again. "What am I doing?"

The room-temperature liquid fell on her back. This time in one long trail starting mid-back and snaking its way down to the top of her cleft. He spread more of the vanilla sauce at the top and bottom of the line with two short motions.

"I don't know." She tried to picture his actions behind her and failed.

"Think about it. Feel what I'm doing."

Keira's fingers curled into fists when his mouth touched down again, consuming the sauce in between such obvious sounds of glee, she didn't know whether to moan or smile. She imagined him back there, following the lines with deliberate intent.

An idea sparked from concentrating on the trail of his tongue. "Letters?"

He chuckled. "Right."

By the time he finished writing and removing the last two letters with his mouth, the perfume of her sex overrode the subtle hint of vanilla coming from her skin. It wasn't until he finished tasting the last line, the one that spurred him to dip his tongue and find the dark entrance to her bottom that she began to shudder. The tight grip of his hands opened her to his viewing and questing pleasure, offering no room for timidity. His bold licks explored her rear as if she belonged to him, and him alone. This hint of possessiveness made her wonder about the next hour to come, but she had to admit it was sexy as hell. "What's the matter college boy, four letter words the only ones you know?"

"They're the only kind I need right now."

"Yeah?" Spelling *m-i-n-e* definitely lived in the land of erotic. Using the sauce to do it on her skin was a little kinky. "So, tell me. Was that the erotic surprise or the kinky one?"

"Erotic. We haven't even begun to approach kinky yet."

[Back to Table of Contents]

Chapter Four

Emory ached to bury himself inside her. And for some strange reason, he couldn't stop thinking about her declaration that there was an insurance policy on her mouth. That delectable, full-lipped, very kissable mouth. The things he imagined doing with it no insurance company would ever conceive of covering.

He reached for the other bottle he'd confiscated, his pulse trumpeting in his ears from his fevered mind's lustful imaginings. Walking behind Keira earlier had set his mind on such paths of deviant debauchery, he'd bitten back a curse when she'd given him permission to venture into kink. Her beauty kept him captivated; the tools of her trade left him inspired.

"I can't wait to touch you," he said.

Her voice came muffled against the tabletop, where she'd draped herself in repose. "The only thing stopping you is you."

"You're not quite ready yet."

"Me?"

He drizzled some of the vegetable oil onto her back. "You." She inhaled sharply then let out a soft sigh. "That wasn't a letter."

"No, it wasn't." His hands shook as he put them on her skin, slowly massaging in the oil, cooling down his insane want. What was it about this woman that turned his normal confidence into hesitant uncertainty? Then again, smoothing

over the cups of her ass left his heart pounding as he glided over her delicate skin. So soft. Supple.

All his for now.

He picked up the bottle again, squirting more of the viscous liquid into his palm. This time when he dribbled it onto her back, he let the excess run between her cheeks. Waiting for any protest on her part, he rested his thumbs just above the sexy dip of her lower back. He began to stroke slowly, feeling the tension ease out of her body. The up down motion would be hypnotic, the eventual dips of his thumbs near the dark entrance to her body, intense.

"What are you doing, Emory?" she asked softly.

Heart kicking against his ribs, he stilled. "Any time you want me to stop..."

"No. Just go...slow."

Need and thrill warring within him, he resumed stroking. Touching the lush curves of her body, memorizing the way she felt. Her hushed whimpers grew as he probed, first one searching digit and then two, opening her to him. Readying her.

Tight. Hot. Slick. It would be his absolute pleasure to seat himself in her depths. First, he had other plans.

Emory reached behind him and located the cool ceramic instrument on the opposite table. Thank God for a near photographic memory. It had its uses, especially in a time like this. When he lubricated the end with more vegetable oil, and then pressed it against her entrance, Keira cried out, a soft sound of surprise.

"Shh, baby. Relax for me. Let me in."

She hissed out a sound, something that sounded like "yes" or perhaps, "please." His cock jumped at the one-word response. By the time he'd inserted the pestle as far as he dared, he thought long and hard about fiscal year budgets, accounting 101, and expense accounts in an effort to calm down.

"On your back," he said, helping her to stand. His tone darkened. "And whatever you do, don't let it fall out."

"But-"

"You can do it, Keira." The slick ceramic and vegetable oil would force her to struggle to keep it in, but he lived for this. When a lover submitted to his desire. He could not apologize for this dominance. Would not.

Yes, there had been a moment's hesitation when he gauged whether she'd turn her pleasure over to him, but now, as she moved carefully into his preferred position, there was little doubt. The only thing that would have made this more perfect would be to watch his effort spelled out on her face in better lighting. But there would be time for that later this weekend, though. He'd see to it.

He let the anticipation build. To her this might feel like an hour's hesitation instead of the fifteen seconds it took for him to unroll a condom onto his shaft. Her thighs trembled when he touched their soft interiors. Her groan filled the room. Gloriously erotic.

"Just a minute more," he muttered as he lowered his head.

The sweet suggestion of her cream exploded on his tongue.

Keira cried out as he used his mouth to tease her. To taste. He kissed the folds of her cleft, his tongue inserting and retreating, lapping at the delicate softness. A groan escaped him as he found her rigid bud, worrying at it with his lips, her thighs tightening around his head. When she cried out again, his name erupted from the back of her throat. Her muscles locked as an orgasm consumed her, and he had the very distinct thought that this would not be the last time he pleasured one executive chef, Keira Bronley.

Keira struggled to catch her breath, but her dry mouth made it an almost impossible task. Have mercy, when was the last time she'd come so hard? She'd been so focused on keeping Emory's toy in her ass, the orgasm had snuck up on her, taking her fast and furious. Completely by surprise.

"Oh, my God, Emory." She sat up. "What the hell just happened?"

He kissed her again, his tongue gentle against hers, the tangy taste of herself a luxurious addition. "I believe it's called an orgasm," he said after pulling away.

"Tell me there's another one on its way."

"So greedy. But, if you ask me nicely..."

She blinked at his general direction. "Pretty please with a cherry on top?"

His answer made her moan.

Grasping her hips, Emory pulled her toward him, the tip of him unerringly finding a home in her damp curls. He surged forward and then withdrew, short jabbing strokes that went deeper and deeper with every thrust. Already impaled by his toy, the addition of his cock made her forget to breathe. The

only command her body knew to follow was the urgent demand that she accept all of him, inch by inch.

"Emory," she said with a sigh. It was so much to handle.

"You feel so good, baby. So tight for me."

Yes, he filled her so good, too. The hard lines of his body molded against the soft curves of hers. Keira rolled her hips, and Emory increased his pace. His lightly furred chest pressed against the tight buds of her nipples, sparking delicate bolts of pleasure down through her core.

"Pretty please, huh?" His mouth found hers, his kisses increasingly erotic.

She threw her head back, unable to handle the overload of stimulation. His cock. His toy. His tongue. "God, yes..."

It wasn't what she meant. What she *meant* was it was too much. And that she needed more. That her body was no longer hers and had turned into a receptacle of sensation. Of desire.

Droplets of her perspiration that slid down her neck and rolled off of her breasts. The dripping moisture forced her to grip the edge harder, her knuckles burning from the effort. Emory lifted her hips, angled her toward him, his pelvis rocking harder and faster.

Some keening cry, a desperate, hoarse sound issued forth, her only warning for her lover that she was close, so close to yet another soul-shattering orgasm. Emory's head rested against the soft curve of her neck, his breath sawing in and out, brushing her skin in harsh puffs. "Emory...God!"

"Come on me, baby. Let me feel you..." He nibbled on her flesh, his tongue as teasing as the tiny bites.

The pressure built, an intense series of waves rising through her body, spreading at breakneck speed until she thought the pleasure would consume her, drown her bodily and leave nothing behind.

She cried out, scrambled to find purchase on the table, to let Emory know it was too much. Too much sensation. Too much feeling.

He plunged and withdrew, each stroke more overwhelming than the last. His cock was so large inside of her. Filling her. Completing her.

"Sweet Jesus, baby...that's it."

Keira's back arched and ecstasy amplified, her entire body bowing beneath its weight. She went rigid, submitting to the breathtaking power and allowing it to flow freely. Emory made a low sound of triumph. Split seconds later, his body shuddered as he released his tight rein of control.

Chest heaving, Keira panted her satisfaction and threaded her fingers through his damp hair. She found his lips and captured them in a bruising kiss. He wrapped his arms around her, holding her to his chest as the world around them came into focus.

The problem that brought them together hadn't been solved, but if this was going to be her last hurrah before leaving DHD, what a way to go.

[Back to Table of Contents]

Chapter Five

He stood at the sink, washing the ceramic pestle she only now recognized. "I'll buy another one to replace this," he said with a grin. His shirt gaped, revealing a chest Keira wished she'd had the chance to admire beneath lights a short while ago.

She stepped into her shoes, and pulled her hair back as best she could with her fingers. *Odd*. Her utilitarian scrunchy had gone missing. With a sigh, she released her hold, and let her hair fall where it may. She had the disconcerting feeling that if she managed to run into anyone who knew her right now, between the disheveled clothing, the smile doing its damnedest to take root, and her sex hair, they'd peg her for someone who'd just gotten some.

What had she done? In her workplace, no less? Her face flushed from the conflicting feelings that surfaced. The harsh glare of fluorescent lighting probably highlighted her embarrassment.

"You're awfully quiet." Emory sidled closer, drying his hands on a paper towel.

"I just had a lot of work to do today before I left." None of it had anything to do with getting sexed up on a workstation that she'd now have to spend the next hour cleaning and sanitizing.

She glanced up in time to see his eyebrows furrow. "Listen, Keira, I don't do one night stands. If you're thinking that's what this is—"

"No, that's not it." Of course it was. What kind of woman met a man—true, an insanely gorgeous man—and found herself doing the nasty with him less than an hour later? "I should have been finalizing that brownie recipe and the dessert I got out is melted all over the place and I have a lot of clean up to do. So, I guess..." They were done. They had to be done. He needed to go his way and she would go hers. If the universe smiled down on her, they'd never cross paths again.

"It's late. Too late for you to start working on any of that stuff. I'll help you clean up and we'll grab some dinner, okay?"

That's exactly what she needed. To sit across from him, discover they have zero in common and then have to find some way to bungle through an obligatory meal. "You know, Emory, thanks, but really, I'm tired. I appreciate the offer, I do, but maybe some other time."

He started buttoning his shirt, covering up the beautiful chest she hadn't had nearly enough time to admire. Looking down, his attention on his task, he quietly asked, "This is it, isn't it?"

Her blush of embarrassment burned hotter. "Yeah, I think it is. I had a lovely time. Thank you."

He looked up and she saw the disappointment in his green eyes. "At least tell me this, why'd you do it?"

"I didn't think." A nonexistent sex-life, a chance opportunity... Both of them conspired against her. She did not want to contemplate that maybe, just maybe the fact he held

her job in his hands might have influenced her too. "As stupid as it sounds on talk shows, it just happened."

"Oh, Keira." He swayed as if he wanted to come to her, but then decided against it.

A sudden realization hit her in the solar plexus, almost to the point she wanted to double over. Her throat tightened, and she prayed a wavering voice wouldn't give away her growing surprise or anger. "You said you don't do one night stands. What made *you* go for it, Emory?"

Please. Please don't mention her job. Be a nice guy, the kind a woman wanted to see a second time, the kind taken home to meet the parents, the kind a woman wanted to marry... Be a nice guy and don't insinuate that sexual favors might save her job from the chopping block.

"There was a beautiful woman in my office, one I wanted to get to know. One I still want to know."

Keira exhaled, releasing the breath he didn't realize she held.

"We should have lunch on Monday," he continued, "discuss the careers at DHD that I obviously need more information about, and..."

She saw red. Literally red.

Maybe she was stroking out, or maybe her blood pressure had elevated to a point her body couldn't handle, but just like in the movies, she saw red.

"You asshole! I can't believe..." She stormed up and down the aisle, afraid to look toward one of the counters and spy a knife or frying pan within easy reach. "I can't believe I thought you were a nice guy. I'm so stupid. So stupid!"

Emory elevated his hands. "Whoa. Where is this coming from?"

"You think I would sink so low, get a little friendly with the person dangling my job like a carrot, and he just might be willing to remove my name from his little list?" She hoped the venom in her voice could strike a man down.

"Keira-"

"If that's the kind of woman you think I am mister, you've got another think coming. I've worked hard for my job and will work hard for another one. I didn't sleep my way to the top before and I won't do so now!" To hell with the kitchen and to hell with Emory Dawson. She strode toward the exit, her rubber-soled shoes squeaking their own form of indignation on her behalf. "I don't need this job, or *any* job, that badly."

"Keira, wait. Wait a minute." Why did this seem so damned familiar to him? An angry woman, a whirling dervish, storming in and hurling accusations while he tried to dodge the lasers in her eyes. They'd somehow come full circle.

"Why should I wait? What am I waiting on?"

"Baby..." He saw her soften at the use of that word, watched the fight flicker for a brief moment in her eyes. "I would never think that of you. I wouldn't put it past you to murder your competitors while they sleep, but never, ever would I think you would use sex to make your way to the top."

"But..."

Emory heard the uncertainty in her voice and pressed his advantage. "Check your email. I'll wait, but I can tell you what you're going to find."

Her gaze drifted to a computer station sitting a few feet away. "What?"

"An email from me to the CEO, copying you. Sent before I'd even kissed you the very first time. I suggested that my layoff list was based on insufficient information. I told him that perhaps cost savings would come best from material resources and not human resources. If he had to lay people off, it should be after all other possibilities had been explored, and after all the players involved had a very thorough understanding of the positions they proposed removing. After a very brief interview with you, I knew I had no idea about the importance of just one of those positions. I shudder to think about the others.

"I'm sorry you would think I'd stoop to something so underhanded. I didn't plan this, Keira. It was impulsive and reckless and wonderful and yes, just sort of happened."

She canted her head, the suspicion on her face slowly ebbing. "So this had nothing to do with my job?"

"Nothing."

"And it was just an impulse?"

"Never acted this way with a woman before in my life."

Her voice dropped to just above a whisper. "And you really want to take me out for dinner?"

He groaned, releasing his frustration and some of the tension building in his shoulders. "I'm dying to."

A hesitant smile grew on Keira's face and he knew he'd met her challenge. Leaped over it, in fact. He crossed the room, unwilling to give her a second chance to doubt him, and pulled her into his arms. The gentle kiss he placed on her lips warmed him through. "What would it take to convince you?"

She lifted those beautiful eyes to meet his, humor dancing in her irises. She hesitated for a few seconds, but her cheeks pushed up when she smiled. "Just say pretty please."

After the amazing time he'd just spent with her, dinner was in order, and a very long weekend of getting to know each other. Maybe some more kissing and touching. More indulging in food, and in each other.

Emory lowered his head, and brushed his mouth over hers again. He had no qualms about giving in to her request. Would even do it one more. "Pretty please, baby? Pretty please with a cherry on top?"

The End

[Back to Table of Contents]

Author Bio

Dee Carney began writing short stories in middle school, but did not attempt completion of a novel until almost ten years later—which, despite good intentions, she never finished. Almost ten years later, she challenged herself to begin writing again, and her love for storytelling was rekindled.

Now, Dee is a best-selling, award-winning author who lives at home in Georgia with her husband, two dogs, and a cat. When not writing, Dee is usually curled up on the couch with a good book!

To learn more about all of Dee's books, please visit her on the web at www.deecarney.com.

* * * *

VISIT COBBLESTONE PRESS, LLC

WWW.COBBLESTONE-PRESS.COM

ROMANTIC FANTASIES FOR EVERY READER!

MAINSTREAM, SENSUAL, AND EROTIC ROMANCE

LIT, PDF, HTML, AND MOBI FORMATS AVAILABLE

* * * *