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An Old Cake Tale

Beautiful Trouble Publishing

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Billy London



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To a dear, dear friend who has always advocated the
beauty of Welsh men. You were right.

Busy busy busy. ;) Billy

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This work of erotica contains adult language and sexually explicit scenes, which are smoking hot. This book is intended only for adults, as it is defined by the laws of the country in which the purchase is made. Keep this book out of the hands of under-aged readers.

Glossary

A&E—short for Accident & Emergency, the Emergency Room department of a hospital.

Cwtch—Welsh word for cuddle.

Dodgy mates—friends who are less than desirable in one's social circle.

Dustbin lorry—garbage truck.

Five-a-side football—casual game of soccer with five players on each team. Despite it being a casual game, British men will tend to take it very seriously.

Nick—to steal.

Stroppy—to throw a strop; to have a tantrum; someone who is easily aroused to anger, quarrelsome

To Usain Bolt—to move as quickly as the current fastest man on the planet, Jamaican athlete Usain Bolt.

Wanker—a jerk.

Chapter One

Efia had never been more pleased to see a bed in her life. Clare's wedding had been so beautiful, wickedly fun, and she hadn't laughed like that in years, but she had never worked so damn hard in her life. The next time anyone asked her to be a bridesmaid, she would laugh in her face, and say, "No! No. Did I say no? I meant no."

Sitting down on the double bed in her hotel room suite, she carefully unwrapped the piece of wedding cake she had saved from Clare's grandmother. For an eighty-year-old woman, she was a dustbin lorry. She consumed everything in sight.

Maybe it was an old wives' tale, but Efia had never stopped believing that if she slept with a piece of wedding cake under her pillow, she'd dream of her Prince Charming. At the moment, she'd settle for just getting laid, never mind Prince Charming.

Her mind flitted over Rhys, and she immediately told herself off. Arrogant son-of-a-bitch. When Clare and Aaron had first announced their engagement, she had been so happy for her friend, and then she'd realised that she'd have to endure social interaction with Aaron's best friend on a regular basis. He was six feet five inches of irritation. A safe sort of thug, his

hair shaved to a few velvet-like millimetres all over, and he wore a scar through his left brow from his days as a junior doctor in A & E. But when women found out he was a Welsh accented paediatrician, they couldn't throw their panties at him fast enough. And the smug bastard knew it.

At the engagement party, Rhys had been in charge of distributing the cupcakes and warned not to shove them down his cake hole, on Clare's say so. He brought Efa a cupcake with a picture of Aaron and Clare on the top and said, hazel eyes glowing, "You should probably make that your last one. It'll make dress fittings harder if you're accommodating for a bigger bust line."

"What the hell makes you think talking to me like that is acceptable?" she bristled, a half a second short of smashing the cupcake into his face.

"Because, Effie, we're practically family now."

His grin made her see spots of rage. "You need to be on the other side of this bar if you want to see your next birthday."

Rhys' smile deepened. He leaned down and kissed her cheek. "That's familial love speaking." He had no idea just how close he came to losing his life that night. She was used to back chat from her students, but him! If she was a porcupine, her prickles

would be standing on end every time he was around her.

Clare and Aaron, who were terrible organisers at the best of times, had relied on Efia and Rhys to help them find venues for the reception, wine tasting and the caterers—all of which meant hours of proximity to Rhys. Of course he knew people at Claridge's hotel who allowed them to rent the ballroom for a ridiculous price. Why wouldn't he, with his privileged connections? There was no hesitation as he quite brutally told Aaron and Clare to have three cakes rather than choosing one, as they were indecisive pains in his arse, and he would happily kill them if they didn't make their fucking minds up. He managed to negotiate with Clare's divorced, warring parents and their respective partners, who had elevated ideas about their involvement. Somehow he even dealt with Aaron's grandparents, who wanted an armed guard. *Slick wanker*, she thought repeatedly.

There was a family dinner about a week before the wedding, which apparently included Rhys and Efia. Aaron had revealed to Rhys that it was going to be more than just a simple dinner for the four of them, and Efia had to physically prevent him from banging his head against the nearest wall. Efia had more warning about the family ambush.

"Please!" Aaron begged Rhys. "I've never had to spend this much time with my family. I don't like any of them! It's easier to take with you around."

"I really don't like you right now," Rhys growled. "The only thing that's making this bearable is the fact that some kid has clearly taken scissors to Effie's dress."

"Hey," she protested. "This is vintage Gautier."

Rhys dismissed that with a snort and took two glasses of champagne to cope. She had worn the dress to try and distract Clare's family from asking the inevitable baby question. When are you going to start trying? It hadn't worked. They had given Efa the once-over, then jumped right in with, "You don't want to wait too long."

At dinner, Efa was forced to sit next to Rhys and studiously ignored him to make conversation with Aaron's mother, who had been an art teacher for thirty years. She was a gloriously batty woman with wild blonde ringlets, wearing a batik art-printed dress and dozens of bangles on both arms. Rhys poked her in her side.

"What?" she hissed.

"What does Clare think about strippers?"

Efa stared at him. "What is wrong with you?"

"I didn't say prostitute, I said stripper. He's my best friend—do you really think I wouldn't help him

see another woman naked before he never gets to see one again?—Other than Clare? I'm not saying she doesn't have a nice figure; she's lovely. But he needs to see skin."

"They're getting married next week! You had a week-long stag party!"

Rhys laughed. "Yeah, we can't talk about that. What happens on stag stays on stag. I'm not even allowed to mention it during my speech. But would Clare mind?"

She stared at him in disbelief. "Yes! Yes, she would!"

Rhys made a face, "Hmm. Who knew? I thought you were all into that, empowerment of your sex by reclaiming stripping from greasy, dirty old men."

She shuddered in disgust. "You need help."

"I'm a doctor—I am the help."

"Urgh." Efia sighed, turning back to Aaron's mother before Rhys poked her again. "What now?"

"Do you need antidepressants?"

"Not if I stab you in the eye," she suggested sweetly.

He slid both hands around her waist, turning her to him firmly. "All this aggression isn't good for you, especially when you spend time with children. You'll damage them."

"I'll damage you!" she threatened, her face mercury hot from feel of his palms, warm and dry on the naked skin of her waist.

"No you won't. You're a midget—a pretty midget, but a midget all the same."

"You like having hands, don't you?"

He shrugged, glancing downwards with an appreciative smile. "Quite like them where they are at the moment."

"Get your hands off my flabby bits."

He roared with laughter. "They're nowhere near your breasts."

"Off! Now!"

He relented and pushed her glass of champagne toward her. "Here. Stop looking like a stropky spinster."

She gritted her teeth and excused herself to the ladies before he lost anything that he was seriously attached to.

The night before the wedding, Efa was painting Clare's nails, a ritual they had followed since their mothers allowed them anywhere near a makeup box, when Clare tilted her head. "What's going on with you and Rhys?"

Efa tried not to tense at the mention of the arrogant son of a bitch's name. "What on earth do you mean?"

“Don't give me the Bambi eyes—you know he likes you.”

“Probably because I'm the only female in the entire country who thinks he's a dick.”

Clare's eyes narrowed knowingly. “No you don't.”

“He is.”

“He's actually very sweet. You know he's paid for all our alcohol.”

“Well done.”

“And Aaron didn't pay for a single thing for his stag do.”

“Great.”

“And that poem in our wedding invitations—you know he wrote that.”

“Amazing,” she replied drolly.

“And when we told him we were engaged, he asked if you were going to be bridesmaid so he could legitimately do something about you.”

“He's still a dick,” Efiá insisted, despite the embarrassing warmth touching her tummy. Do what about me? she thought. Her mind strayed, considering where his hands would need to be in order to “do something about” her. His hands seemed big enough to encircle her waist, making her feel tiny.

“No, it's true. Aaron told me the other day.”

“Oh, stop. It would be very convenient for the both of you if your two best friends got together. Then you wouldn't have any awkward wedding photos.”

“He's not bringing a date...” Clare trailed off. Nail varnish smeared over Clare's thumb as Efa lost her concentration.

“That's considerate of him.” She coughed the squeak from her voice.

Clare took a remover-soaked cotton pad and wiped the varnish from her skin. “You're just seeing one side of him. Besides, he's Aaron's friend, and Aaron doesn't have dodgy mates.”

Efa gave her a look. “You're saying that because you're in love.”

Clare squeezed her hand. “Aaron's amazing. I love him so much, even though I can count on my hand the number of times I've spent Saturday with him because of five-a-side football. He can't iron to save his life, and he thinks everything in our house can be sorted out with a hammer and rock salt. I can't wait to be his wife.”

Efa squeezed her right back. “I'm so happy for you. I couldn't wish anything more for you.”

Clare beamed. “Now if you just looked past the arrogant doctor thing with Rhys, you'd be the same!”

“You're getting married tomorrow. Why are you trying to match-make?”

“Because it’ll make my photographs so much better,” Clare sighed. “You’ll look so pretty together. He’ll just pick you up and put you in his pocket, and just think how your mum will be. She will die if you marry a doctor.”

“She’ll die if I get married, full stop,” Efia grumbled.

“Well, give Rhys a chance and then you’ll get your wish!”

“Clare...”

“You say it all the time. It’s the only thing your mum has on you now. You’ve got your own home, car, you’re a fantastic teacher, and you don’t need a weave in your hair.”

“God bless Redken,” they murmured simultaneously.

“So it’s the last piece in the puzzle.” Clare sighed once more, looking around their suite at Claridge’s. “I’m stealing towels here, by the way.”

“I didn’t hear that,” Efia said in a stern voice, screwing the nail polish back in place. “Look, I’ll see how he behaves tomorrow, and I’ll let you know.”

Clare grinned. “I get to pick out your first-date outfit. Because of all the days for Rhys to behave like an absolute picture of a man, it’ll be tomorrow. Aaron will castrate him otherwise—that and if he fucks you over.”

At five eight, Aaron was barely the same height as his wife-to-be, but Efa supposed he'd use his short stature as an advantage to attempt to dispose of Rhys' family jewels.

But damn him, Rhys had behaved impeccably. He remembered the rings, hadn't coughed when the registrar asked if there was any reason Clare and Aaron should not be married, and he hadn't done a thing to make her want to scalp him. He'd tucked tissues into her hand when Clare's vows made her cry like her dog had been run over, and hadn't batted an eyelid when he caught her and Clare swigging from a hip flask full of rum at eleven in the morning. He'd maintained a respectable distance when they had to join in with the couple on a slow dance. She could have kicked herself for the disappointment that flashed through her. But then he'd made it all better by dragging her into a House Party-style dance-off that earned them a round of applause. They'd sorted the guestbook, packed and sent the presents to Aaron and Clare's suite and made sure everyone got a piece of cake and home safely.

"Banging job." He'd smiled at her as they made their way to their hotel rooms.

"You too," she'd admitted.

"Fuck me, was that a compliment?"

“Fuck off,” she’d retorted, storming to her room without even looking back, and that had been it—all build up, and then the batteries died. There was no need for pointless wishes, as a small vibrator was hidden away in her weekend case. The scent of the rich chocolate cake wafted toward her. Okay, she told herself, just a little bit, then the rest goes under the pillow.

A knock at the door startled her so that the cake landed in a crumbled pile on the floor. Goddammit, who the hell just lost her a potential prince charming, peace and quiet with her vibrator and the remainder of a damn good piece of cake? She picked the spoiled ruins from the carpet and with a huff of disappointment, threw it in the bin and made her way to answer the door.

Chapter Two

Rhys had the perfect excuse to knock on Efia's hotel room door. But it was two in the morning now, and Efia on a good day would slap the stubble from his jawline. Having been awake for most likely twenty-odd hours, she'd probably stab him.

It'd be worth it. Even when she was furious, the flash of dimples in her cheeks always made him smile. He didn't know why he kept winding her up, but she was so serious all the time. She was probably the youngest child trying to prove herself. He would eventually stop acting like the boy in the playground pulling on her pigtails, but not while she was still threatening him with the loss of his limbs. It was far too amusing.

Fuck it, he thought, tucking his key card into his pocket and standing outside Efia's door. He knocked twice gently. It was opened a crack by Efia, still in her bridesmaid dress, but four inches shorter without her heels.

“Mate, give me a break.”

“I need help,” he murmured, tugging at his cuffs. She gave an exasperated sigh and stood to one side. He edged inside and sat on her bed.

“This is nicer than my room.”

She didn't answer, only crouched in front of him and deftly removed his cuff links. "There. Night."

He leaned forward and cupped her face. "What's wrong, Effie? You look so sad."

"What are you talking about?" she muttered, pulling her face from his hands and standing up.

"Are you feeling abandoned? You do know you'll be seeing Clare tomorrow?"

Her shoulders dropped. "You're a guy—you don't understand. When a woman gets married, it changes everything. Any woman who says otherwise is deluding herself."

"You really don't know your own friend. Have you checked your phone?"

Efia's eyebrows rose imperiously. "I don't even know where it is. I haven't seen it since yesterday evening."

Rhys toed off his dress shoes and swung his feet onto her bed. "Trust me. Have a look."

She spent a good five minutes hunting for her mobile as Rhys turned on the television and started skimming through the football results. "Found it yet?" he asked.

"Why don't you help me look?"

He caught her eye. "I don't think you'd appreciate me getting my paws on your little pieces of lace underwear."

He heard her growling under her breath and chuckled to himself. Eventually she crowed triumphantly and scrolled through her messages. The expression on her face changed abruptly as he assumed she'd seen what Clare had sent her about an hour ago. He had been standing next to Clare when she had done so. Clare had said that Efia was *the bestest* friend in the whole wide world, a friend who had been there for everything. And she had to text her before the idea of sleep got her overexcited and she forgot.

"What does it say?" he asked Efia, who was still staring at her phone.

"It says... I love you. I've already booked us dinner for when I come back. I may be Adam's wife, but I'm still your girl." Efia's voice wobbled. "She's so soppy."

She turned away from him, her hand under her eye. He turned the TV off. "Effie," he insisted, "come here."

"Shut up. You were the one calling me the stroppy spinster."

"Come here," he repeated firmly.

She huffed and stood next to the bed. "What?"

"What?" he mimicked. "You sound like a moody teenager," he tutted, catching her hand and pulling her

onto the bed with him. "You clearly spend too much time with children."

"What are you doing?"

"Giving you a much-needed cwtch." He wrapped his arms around her tightly and held her to his chest. Aaron had told him once that a hug with the right girl was almost as good as sex. At the time, Rhys had been trying not to give himself a hernia from laughing so hard. He would hate to give Aaron any credit for being right, but the short arse was indeed correct. Rather he was enjoying the feel of Efia's soft breasts against his ribcage, her hand carelessly curled on his shoulder and her legs pressed to his own. Closing his eyes for a moment, he inhaled the subtle scent of flowers on her skin and in her hair. Could get used to this, he thought.

"I'm getting makeup on your shirt," he heard her grumble as she attempted to remove herself from his embrace.

"I have a very good dry cleaner on speed dial," he replied, tightening his arms around her so she had to stay put. He soothingly stroked his hand along her silk-covered back. She looked incredibly beautiful in her bright fuchsia floor-length dress. Only Efia, with her rich skin that glowed like polished oak, could carry such a colour in a full block without looking clownish. As she had walked up the aisle of the ballroom that

had been transformed for the ceremony, Rhys had felt his heart give a crazy twist at the thought of Efa walking toward him to be his wife. She hadn't scowled at him for once but given him a bright, dimpled grin instead.

I want her, his whole body had demanded right then. Casting his gaze around the guests, he noted how many men were looking at her admiringly—and not just her face. He did send Clare a mental thank you for making Efa wear a full-length dress. That colour with her legs on display would have started a riot.

Efa broke his clasp around her, lifting herself up onto her elbow. “Shouldn't you go to your room?”

“Why? I'm comfortable where I am.”

She shook her head at him with a wry smile. The fuchsia lipstick had faded from her full lips. “What do you want from me?” she demanded.

His brows hit his hairline. “That's a loaded question.” She poked him in the stomach. “Ouch, woman! I thought we were having a good time.”

“Because we did the Kid 'n Play cross kicks?”

He laughed at the thought. “That was genius. My running man was better.”

“Doing it on one leg does not make it better.”

“Yes it does. I'll teach you one day.”

She slapped his stomach with a teacher's firmness. “That's for being rude.”

"I'm not!" He stroked his palm over her bare arm and watched with surprise as she shivered. "Are you cold?"

"No, I'm fine," she said abruptly. "Maybe you should go."

"Why are you so eager to get rid of me?"

"Why are you here at two in the morning? Weren't there enough women for the orgy?"

He leaned back and crossed his arms behind his head. "Are you calling me a whore?"

"Well..."

He rolled his eyes. "That's a very short-sighted thing for a teacher to say."

"Aren't you?"

"No. I'm not an angel—who the hell is, this day and age? But I don't hand it out to every woman who looks my way. First, I don't have the time, and second, I have some standards."

She gave him a disbelieving glance. "I find that very hard to swallow."

Damn, too easy. "Hmm. Did you get my present?"

"What present?"

"I asked the concierge to make sure you have silk pillow covers. I know how you are about your hair."

She touched a nervous hand to her sleek bob, one side tucked behind her ear with pink diamanté slides.

“You should have ginger beer in your mini bar, and Yorkshire Tea with your breakfast things.”

“I did this morning...” she said mutely. “But I thought Clare...”

“This being the same Clare who had to have a quart of rum to speak any sense this morning?” he mocked lightly. “Look, let me get something from my room and I’ll be back. One minute, okay?”

He jumped lightly to his feet and left the room after snatching her key card from the side table, so she’d have to let him back in.

Chapter Three

No one knows about the silk pillow thing! Am I that weird about my hair? No, I can't be. I'm just black. A Usain Bolt to the bathroom, she grabbed her toothbrush to clean her teeth. A look at her expression in the mirror made her stop—she was all little-kid-at-her-first-Christmas. God, she needed to calm down. She was only excited because Clare had put the idea that he liked her in her head.

Would it be that bad? Just for tonight? Yes it would, she told herself firmly, despite the tingling sensation travelling slowly downwards. What was wrong with her? He would be in her life forever. If it went wrong it'd be awkward and horrible and...

“Effie?” he called.

How the hell did he get back in her room? Argh, he'd nicked her key card! She hurriedly finished her teeth, smoothed on some lip balm and told herself to get a fucking grip.

She emerged from the bathroom and saw him standing there with a bag from Fortnum and Mason. Nodding toward it, she asked, “What's in that?”

“This is for us, for all our hard work.” He pulled out a bottle of champagne. “I thought I couldn't drink any more, but it'll be a shame for this to go to waste.”

Efia sat back on the bed, tucking her hands beneath her thighs. Rhys glanced at her. “Don't you want any?”

“Rhys, we can't mess around.”

His lashes lowered for a moment. He put the bottle down on the floor and sat next to her. “Do you know how much men care about their friend's wedding?”

He held his thumb a millimetre from his index finger. “About this much. You really think I wanted to know about the cake, or the room dimensions or why Clare's grandmother wasn't allowed to be seated near the fucking cakes fucking plural? I wanted the excuse to talk to you. To call you. To text you. To get to stand next to you—even if you were threatening me with the loss of my manhood.”

She opened her mouth to protest. Then he stroked his thumb along her bottom lip and she lost brain activity, her mouth tingling in the wake of his touch. “Don't argue with me. Not about the way I feel.”

“Rhys, that sounds almost human,” she teased weakly, wondering if this was some sort of out-of-body experience.

He firmly pulled her hand from beneath her thigh as he undid the buttons of his shirt. Her breath caught in her throat as he placed her hand on his bare chest, right over his heart. Holy hell, he's serious.

“Believe me?” he murmured, the beat of his heart tapping furiously against her fingertips. “Clare and Aaron both told me I wasn’t allowed to even touch you unless I was deadly serious about you. You may have noticed, I’m rather attached to my body parts.”

His hand was still on top of hers, the heat of his skin blooming through her own. “May I kiss you now?”

It was the politest she had ever heard him, and it made her laughingly accept. “Yes, you may.”

She closed her eyes before he touched his mouth lightly to hers. “See,” he said quietly, “No apocalypse.”

She tasted mint on his lips. “No. No apocalypse. But you cleaned your teeth.”

“So did you.”

His lips brushed over her cheekbones, both dimples and each corner of her mouth. She allowed her hand to move upwards to gently cup his neck, pulling him toward her until her mouth was firmly on his. His muted growl of surprise vibrated over her lips before he wrapped his arms around her waist and laid her firmly on the bed. The weight of him partly on top of her was near enough to the sensation of being pushed from a bridge.

A soft sigh escaped from her as she parted her lips for him. She hadn’t been kissed like this in so long—maybe never. Her hand slid just inside his open

shirt to feel his heartbeat again, as his arms tightened around her ribs.

He lifted his head. "You're shaking."

"I know. I can't help it."

The back of his hand trailed over her cheek, his eyes more green than brown. He looked so sincere. She'd have to remember his eyes changed colour when he was being honest. "I want you to trust me," he said softly.

"If you've brought condoms, you're halfway there," she muttered. He laughed, drifting kisses over her neck.

"Yes, that too." He lifted his head, watching her carefully. "Will you let me?"

Satisfied that he would lose any prospect of procreating if he fucked with her, she asked, "What have you got?"

He tugged his tie from his neck and eased her into sitting up. Before she knew what was happening, he had gently tied the silk over her eyes. Whatever she had been expecting, it would never in a million years have been that.

She tried to blink under the silk. There was no light even under the edge of the tie. *Boyo's done this before...*

"Are you going to rob me?" she asked.

His laughter seemed louder than before, amplified without her sight. “Yeah, I need more eyelash curlers.” In the artificial darkness she felt his mouth move over hers again, and the trace of his words. Trust me.

“Okay,” she whispered back, opening her arms toward him.

Chapter Four

This was one step from his perfect fantasy, Rhys realised. Efa on a bed, blindfolded, her lips swollen from his kisses. He caught her arms in his hands and wrapped them around his neck, leaning down to kiss her. It should have surprised him to learn how soft she was; for a woman with such a sharp tongue, she was melted-chocolate sweet. His hand sketched the flare of her hip. She was too fucking sexy, he thought, his lips trailing over the warm brown skin above the tops of her dress. God, she smelled incredible. He paused for a moment, his face buried in her neck as he savoured the scent of her, not just her perfume but that tell-tale musk of arousal.

Lifting his head, he caught her in another kiss, pulling her down on top of him, stroking his hands over the silk softness of her arms until she shuddered again. Then he released her mouth to rub his jaw slowly over her neck, enjoying the way she breathed a little sharper, pressed her body harder against his. The zip at the side of her dress gave way with the gentlest of tugs, just like his resolve. He wanted to patiently enjoy every moment, but she was going to make it impossible. Turning her onto her back, he slipped the

dress from her body. "Thank you God," he murmured at what he had revealed.

"Why?" she asked.

"You in lace." Her body was lovingly cupped by a black lace corset. He had to rein in some self-control before he unhooked the eyelets that ran down to her navel, exposing a figure that didn't even need the corset to fake an hourglass. The dip at her waist was all natural. He threw the corset over his shoulder, leaving a gingerbread trail of kisses from between her breasts to the lace edge of her panties.

"Okay, Effie?"

"Hm-hum," she agreed dreamily, arching into his touch when his hands cupped and moulded her breasts. He was struck by how much lighter the skin was there than the rest of her body, almost as rich as the chocolate wedding cake next to his tanned fingers.

He had too many damn clothes on. No wonder he was bloody sweating. Determinedly, he got up from the bed and threw off every piece of clothing, then grabbed the condom and placed it within easy reach.

"Where are you?" Efia asked, reaching toward him.

"I'm here," he answered, the bed dipping with his weight. Efia looked like a burlesque dancer at the end of her show, in her sheer panties with the pink silk over her eyes. He lay beside her and smiled at the

gasping cry she gave when he pulled her firmly against his naked body, his cock fully hard and pressing demandingly between the cheeks of her round bottom. His teeth nipped at her neck as he smoothed a broad palm over her belly, slipping inside her sheer panties.

That caught him off guard, just how hot and wet she was under his fingers. His arm tightened around her, his fingers sliding back and over the length of her pussy, pressing rhythmically over her clit. Her hand felt blindly for his cheek, drawing his mouth down to her own, her thighs trapping his hand. He could sense her arc toward a climax, could feel it in the shake of her legs, the rock of her hips against his fingers, the taste of each moan inside his mouth.

“Say my name,” he insisted gruffly. He needed her to say out loud who was making her feel like this, to confirm it was all him. For her. “I want to hear you say it when you come.”

He slipped two fingers inside her, and his hand was suddenly drenched as she tightened around him. She gave a short, sharp cry quickly followed by a reverent, sighing, “Oh my God, Rhys...”

He needed that sensation all around his cock, right now. With one arm, he caught her completely beneath him. The condom was smoothed on, and then he ripped off her panties.

“Did you just...?” she asked in a startled voice.

“You'll forgive me in just a minute,” he promised. He guided himself into her with his hand and slowly drove the full length of his cock deeply within the tightest pussy he had ever been blessed to touch.

“Flaming, Jesus, God,” she yelled. “Is that all you or prosthetic?”

He burst out laughing. “Efia, you beautiful complimentary woman. I'd let you take a peek, but it'd defeat the purpose of the exercise.”

“That's a lot of exercise,” she murmured, her thighs digging into him. He didn't want to leave her, but the intense pull of her pussy on his cock took over any sensible thought. Moving slowly, he allowed her to become used to him, and when she stopped digging her nails into his biceps and started to give little cooing sounds, he had her just right.

His hands moved into her hair, tugging gently so she arched into him, her hips locked firmly against his, rotating hard into him. Goddamn, he muttered against her neck, her pulse beating at his lips. She wrapped her legs and hooked her ankles around his waist, moaning his name every time he hit her deep and hard.

There was a fleeting moment when he realised they were making a lot of noise, but he couldn't give a flying fuck. He had endured place settings for this moment right now, and God, it was all worth it. When

he pressed his thumb to her lips she bit him gently, before drawing her tongue over the little indent as his hand slipped down to the top of her thighs and he rubbed his wet thumb into her clit. Her pussy started to pulsate around him, sending him into a frenzy, making him pound into her. She shivered underneath him, the bed shaking with the force of his thrusts, his cock swelling. He lightly pinched her clit and she melted around him, triggering his own release. His whole body went rigid as he came and came again, his groan almost animalistic. *Effie*, he thought. *You beautiful girl...*

Although his arms were shaking, he didn't want to put all his weight on her. Never need sex again, he thought with a grin. Efa hadn't moved, but there was a dreamy smile on her lips. Yeah, he could definitely get used to putting that on her face on an hourly basis.

Chapter Five

Rhys peeled the tie from Efa's face, and she blinked at the lights until the film cleared from her eyes. He had a rosy blush on his high cheekbones, his skin damp under her thighs and her palms, which were curled around his shoulders. Her inner left elbow tingled, a sensation she only ever experienced when she had really good orgasms. "Hi," he said, touching his lips to hers, his eyes not leaving hers for a second.

What the fuck just happened? Did I really let Rhys Lloyd blind fuck me? She was dreaming—she had to be. The way he'd owned her body, coaxing every little peak of pleasure from her...it couldn't have been real. Awkwardly, she wriggled from underneath him and tugged the edges of the sheets around her nude body. She looked at her fuchsia-tipped toenails while he dealt with the condom.

Rhys leaned over and removed the sheet. "Don't. Lights on, we both get to look."

He held her hands away from her body, and she was able to see him in three-D high definition. She liked the idea that he was hiding such well-sculpted beauty underneath a suit and a doctor's coat every day. He lay next to her and patiently allowed her to touch him everywhere with the tips of her fingers and a

brush of her lips. Even soft, the length of his cock was intimidatingly impressive. It was probably a good thing she had been blindfolded.

“Do you trust me now?” he asked.

Other than the very real prospect that he had the details for every single girl at the wedding and she'd been ticked off his New Year's Bang list? Yeah, completely. That wasn't fair—he hadn't been anything but adorable and orgasmically attentive towards her.

He saw the confusion on her face. “You don't need to worry about me. I know you think I'm an arrogant son of a bitch, but I'm your arrogant son of a bitch.”

She blinked in surprise. Okay, sold. The man knew her. “I won't,” she said honestly. “I won't need to.”

He narrowed his eyes. “Is that because you're going to dump me in a minute?”

“No! You wanted me to trust you. So I will.”

He curled a hand around her neck and pulled her down for a possessive and deep kiss that she rather enjoyed—until a light ringing noise disturbed them. Rhys looked furious. “Who the fuck is calling your room at three in the morning?”

“Calm down, Welsh boy.” She picked up the hotel room phone. “Hello?”

“Oh Effie, thank God you're awake. This is really embarrassing. But... Aaron is sort of stuck in my zip.”

“What do you mean?”

Rhys started laughing. “Please tell me it's his most treasured anatomy.”

“Is that Rhys in your room?”

Efia's face flamed with shame, despite the fact she had been moaning the hotel down a few moments ago. “Erm... What do you mean Aaron's stuck?”

“Well, we got overexcited and had sex fully dressed. And when I went to unzip the dress, Aaron's sleeve got stuck. Now neither of us can move. Do you have scissors or something? I couldn't bear to call the concierge. It'll end up in some horrible kiss-and-tell book of hotels.”

“Okay. Give me a minute.”

“Thank you, thank you. I love you! By the way, really, is Rhys with you?”

“Yes I am,” Rhys said loudly. “And I don't want her to move.”

“Both of you stop that. I'll be a minute.”

Efia put the phone down and slipped from the bed. “Rhys, where did you throw my dress?”

She turned around and saw him stuffing it under the mattress. He glanced over his shoulder and gave her a boyish grin. “I like you naked?”

She shook her head and picked up his shirt instead, buttoning it and scrambling through her open weekend case for some underwear and the sewing kit she had brought with her. When she straightened, Rhys had rather disappointingly pulled the sheets over his lower body and turned the television on. "What?" he asked, catching her staring at him. "You want to get back into bed, don't you?"

Uh huh! "I'm scared of what I'm going to see."

"So am I." He winced. "Good luck with that, darling."

"Did you just pet name me?" she squeaked, clutching the sewing kit to her chest.

His head tilted to one side as he watched her for a moment. "Yes, I did. Don't worry, I haven't forgotten your name." He got out of bed and lifted her into his arms. She felt very far from the carpet. "Efia Grace Amoah," he started, to her gasp of breath that he knew her full name, "you are my darling. Just don't make me get it tattooed on my left nut."

Urgh, she thought, rolling her eyes. "How do you manage to ruin a perfectly beautiful, romantic statement by mentioning your nuts?"

He kissed her neck for a lingering moment. "Because I'm a man." Her feet finally touched carpet, and he sent her toward the door with a pat on her bottom. "You've got five minutes. If you see anything

you really shouldn't, don't tell me. I don't want to know. I'll just pay for your therapy."

She found herself on the other side of the hotel room door, wondering how she had gone from wanting to stab Rhys Lloyd in the eye to wearing his shirt after the best sex she'd ever had—With him. Maybe Clare drugged her. Maybe Clare had more in her room. Maybe she didn't really need the drugs at all.

She padded to the honeymoon suite, which was another floor up. The briefest glance at her reflection in the mirrors that lined the lift told a whole story that Clare would be laughing at for the next ten years.

She reached the suite and knocked firmly three times. Aaron opened the door, and Efa put her hands over her eyes.

"God, Aaron! I can see the baby maker." She winced.

"Sorry, I can't zip up with one hand. I could have hurt myself!"

She edged past Aaron, and Clare was right behind him, edging backwards.

"Thank you, this is probably more... Is that Rhys' shirt?" she demanded.

Efa glared at her. "Do you want out of this mess or not?"

Clare took a sniff. "You smell like him."

"Oh my God, I'm leaving."

"No, no, no!" Aaron begged. "We can't stay like this. We've got to have breakfast with the family tomorrow."

Efia put the sewing kit on the nearest table and removed a pair of scissors. Aaron held up a hand. "You don't want to see if you can just untangle us?"

"No."

Thankful that at least the tails of his shirt covered his bottom, Efia edged around Aaron's arm. She cut through the shirt and with a gentle shove, sent Aaron away.

"Can you get out of the dress if I don't try anything else?"

"Yes, I'll be fine," Clare said with happy relief. "Now, I think you should be wearing pink on your first date. Or will it be a little like shutting the stable door after the horse has been given a good ride?"

Efia turned on her heel to collect her kit. "Good night."

"I'm sure you've had one already." Clare laughed.

"Nice to know others are sharing in the honeymoon," Aaron murmured. "So are you two... What? Come on, Effie!"

She held up her hands. "Okay, look. Fine." This was the most bizarre night of her life. "Aaron, please pull up your trousers!"

He did as she asked and looked at her expectantly. "Well?"

"We're just...trying to get along," she said lamely.

"What, naked?" Clare asked.

Oh God, help me! The phone rang and Clare answered. "Mrs. Douglas speaking... Yes, she's finished. All right!" Clare put the phone down. "Rhys told us to stop interrogating you and to tell you to go back downstairs. You have a minute."

"Who the hell does he think he is?" she raged, slamming her scissors back inside the sewing kit.

"Kill each other in a month?" Aaron suggested to his wife.

"My money's on Effie. She's got African anger."

Seething, Efa left the suite and made her way back to her own room. She patted herself and realized that she didn't have her keycard. With a sigh of resignation, she knocked on the door. Rhys opened it slowly.

"Why is my dress around your waist?" she asked in a neutral tone, mentally running through any solicitors she may know who would help her get bail.

He leaned against the doorframe. "I thought you had your key with you. I don't go around answering doors naked, and it was the first thing that came to hand. Did you see Aaron's baby maker?"

"Can I come inside my own room, please?"

He gave her a cheeky smile. "You did that earlier."

"You have a will, don't you?" she said between clenched teeth.

Hooking a finger between the buttons of his shirt, he pulled her forward into the room and gently closed the door behind her. "You can always give me a reason to leave you something."

Her irritation slowly started to fade away as he pressed her against the door, unbuttoning the shirt. "You're such a..."

"Arrogant son of a bitch, I know. All yours, though," he promised, lowering his mouth to hers.

Yeah, she could kill him later.

Epilogue

Rhys had booked the same suite for their anniversary, Efia realised as she checked in. It was a sweet surprise—almost as surprising as them making it a full year. He was still alive. Just. She still had sensation in the cheeks of her bottom. Just.

His parents had been incredibly lovely toward her when they'd travelled to Wales to visit them. Her mother couldn't understand a word he said, because he was just that Welsh. Efia assured him it was nothing more than the very best thing that could have ever happened to him.

Every once in a while, Efia would pick one of his ties, drop it in his lap and make her way to the bedroom. She'd only ever seen him move faster when a traffic warden had been about to give his beloved car a ticket.

She checked her watch. Where was this man? A cake box edged into her sight. “That's for ruining the last one I gave you.”

“Thank you.” She grinned up at Rhys, rather soberly dressed in a suit. The box had inside it a single cupcake with an Oreo cookie half buried in the icing. “Good choice!”

He claimed a kiss for his present. “Shall we go?”

“Absolutely.” He picked up both their bags in one hand and caught her hand in his other. “Which colour tie did you pick?” she asked. His thumb caressed slow circles over her skin as they waited for the lift to take them to their suite.

“Sort of defeats the purpose of the game if I tell you now.”

“What if I tell you what colour underwear I’ve got on?” she offered.

He glanced down at her. “Cheat.”

She giggled as he lowered his head for a kiss. The lift pinged open.

“That’s just wrong.” Rhys sighed.

Aaron and Clare peeled themselves apart and stepped out of the lift, joining them outside the doors. “Well.” Aaron smiled, Clare’s peach lipstick all over his face. “This is awkward.”

“Just a little bit,” Efa said. “Which room are you in?”

“Not the honeymoon suite,” Clare pouted. She gave the room number and watched Rhys and Efa exhale in relief.

Aaron gave a loud clap. “Good news all round then, given Effie defies soundproofing.”

Efa turned slowly to Rhys as a blush stained his cheekbones. “Why do you do it?” she asked mildly, pressing the button to call the lift again.

“I dunno. Maybe I like the challenge of convincing you to forgive me.” His eyes glinted at Aaron. “I don't know what you're talking about—Clare broke glass once.”

The doors opened, and Rhys hustled Efia inside before Clare could start to argue. Rhys was giving her a guilty don't-be-mad-at-me look.

“It doesn't matter.” She shrugged, a shameless glint in her eyes. “Fair enough, really, as Clare knows your dimensions. Length and girth.”

Cheeky mare, Rhys thought. He'd let it go. Coaxing Efia out of a mood would drain all his energy. With the ring burning a hole in his pocket, he was going to concentrate on one proposal at a time.

****Billy****

Billy London

Ah, poor Billy. The only girl between two boys who each have nearly a foot on her. Didn't stop her from starting physical fights with them. She still thinks she can take them. So while she used to hide away in her wardrobe to read a book or four, she started to question why the heroines in those books would just lie there and take it. No, not just sex, but downright James-Bond-backhand-slapping, do-as-you're-told-woman, inappropriate lie there and take it.

She couldn't understand it. These women were just playing that mental woman from *Coming to America*, Miss "Whatever You Like" who barked like a dog and hopped on one foot. Billy didn't want to do that. Definitely not because one empty-headed fool with different anatomy told her to. So she started to create characters and worlds where the women could own their sexuality, their intelligence, their right to turn around and say "jog on, mate" without apology.

The small problem was that other people wanted to read what she was had written. "Er...why?" didn't cut it as an answer. After years of prodding and pleading and come on and for goodness' sake, what's the point otherwise, she closed her eyes and pressed "submit." Actually, she had Prosecco, limencello and white wine, then pressed "submit." Who would have thought people would actually enjoy reading about the crazy characters who live in her head? But they have done, and Billy feels rather proud of that connection with her fellow man. Billy lives in London with the most patient family in the world and doesn't forget for a minute how lucky she is. Well, she wouldn't mind a BBC adaptation of one of her novels... Ooh, with Richard Armitage!