

stories of erotic romance by

Brenna Lyons



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eBook ISBN 1-59426-627-1

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Phaze is an imprint of Mundania Press, LLC.

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Also by Brenna Lyons

Enslaved: a Closer Look at Gluttony Black Sail

Dedication:

To the stories we're raised on. It's the love of hearing them, of reading them and reading them to our children that make us want to write them.

To Sissy and Dad, for reading to me and making me what I am today in the process.

Note from the author:

Why should fairy tales and nursery rhymes be only for children? I don't think they should be. Like myths, these stories often tell the stories that almost are. I'm pleased for the opportunity to tell the whole story. I hope you enjoy this look behind the pages as much as I do.

Happy reading!

Brenna

A Perfect Record

Georgie Porgy, Puddin' and Pie Kissed the girls and made them cry. When the boys came out to play, Georgie Porgy ran away.

George Beauregard Bradford spied on the group on the porch below. In a moment, the boys would go in and Becca would be alone.

She'd signal him today. He felt sure she would. Becca hadn't motioned to him in five long days, though she knew Georgie was watching every night. If he didn't know better, he'd swear she was punishing him for something, though he had no idea what Becca would want to punish him for.

He held his breath as the boys filed inside: Abe, Billy, Danny, Joel, Lewis and Nathan. Becca's six older brothers were stricter than her parents had ever been, and they were Georgie's adversaries. They were a rough bunch that few messed with, and most people in town simply called them the Shuster boys.

For a moment, Becca didn't move, and his heart sank. She was going to make him wait another day? Was she heartless?

She stirred, rising from the porch swing and ambling across the yard to the fence. Her dark hair was bound into a tight braid. He wished it was loose and blowing around her face in the wind. He wished he was close enough to see her eyes.

His breathing was harsh in his own ears. *Please. Just give me the signal.* Georgie gripped the tree bark beside his cheek until his fingers ached.

Becca smiled, but her hands remained still.

He cursed under his breath. She knew she was driving him insane. She was doing it on purpose.

Her hand crept up, a languid slide over her bare leg, then the front of her shorts.

He bit back a laugh. She wasn't going to make him wait.

She continued up her abdomen to the hollow between her breasts, teasing him now with what he'd have to wait hours to have, for the body he'd picture vividly until he could touch it.

His cock ached—but it wouldn't have to for long. A wicked smile curved his lips. So, she wanted to tease him? Two could play that game. Maybe she'd forgotten how he'd earned his nickname, but he hadn't.

Georgie charged at her, and she gaped in surprise. He grasped her cheeks and sealed his mouth to hers, taking advantage of her parted lips to make the quick kiss he'd steal count. For one glorious moment, she responded favorably.

Then common sense kicked in, and she pushed him away, her eyes wild. Georgie grinned at her and blew a kiss, turning and sprinting toward the woods as the back door burst open and the boys stumbled out after him.

"Georgie Porgy," Becca shouted, "you'll pay for that!"

He laughed heartily. The thrill of the chase and pure joy fueled his burners.

Whatever 'payment' Becca had in mind was worth it. He sobered. Unless she changed her mind about tonight.

"No. She wouldn't do that," he argued miserably. She couldn't possibly make him wait another night—or five.

He'd wanted to be above board. He'd tried to ask permission to date Becca in a respectable fashion. He still wanted to; but Abe, Billy, and Nathan had threatened Georgie's early departure from life if he dared darken their doorway again—all for one stolen kiss when he and Becca were twelve that had earned him his nickname of Georgie Porgy.

Georgie had been miserable when they'd refused. He'd moped around at the old cabin for days—until Becca had sauntered up and informed him that he'd been asking the wrong person for permission. Thus started their game.

He hadn't slept with her for the first few months, but eventually their touching led to more. Dishonorable or not, he couldn't regret a minute of it—even if the boys caught and killed him for it.

* * *

"I can't believe that bastard—"

Abe cuffed Nathan in the head, stilling his explosion. "Not in front of a lady," he growled.

Becca rolled her eyes. She'd never been a lady; and until Mama and Daddy died, Abe couldn't have cared less what language he and her other brothers introduced her to, despite Mama's complaints.

Lewis placed a hand on her shoulder, and she shook it off in annoyance.

"Aw, come on, Becca. I just want to make sure you're all right."

"I'm just fine, no thanks to you," she grumbled.

"We did our best—"

She turned on him. "If you'd let me date like a normal woman, men wouldn't feel compelled to steal kisses."

Abe stepped between them. "No respectable man steals kisses. Why can't you date a normal man like Jack or John?"

She swallowed a wave of bile, sneering at the idea. "Only you would suggest that a complete klutz and a narcoleptic are normal."

"Daddy wouldn't have approved of Georgie Porgy, and you know it."

"Why not? George Bradford is one of the most wealthy young men in the county and—"

"And one of the most randy," Danny spat. "Mary said she saw a love bite on his shoulder last week, and Tom Piper and Tommy Lin said he had claw marks on his back a month ago." He scowled. "You really want a man like that?"

She felt her cheeks heat. Giving Georgie that love bite and those scratches had been damned fun, as she recalled. "Yes," she asserted. "I do. And since when do you take the word of a contrary prude and a couple of trouble makers as Gospel?"

Billy grumbled a curse that earned him a scathing look from Abe. "We promised Mama that we'd take care of you."

"By locking me up for the last seven years?" she exploded. "You know, you push a woman too far and you won't like the results."

"Planning to put starch in our shorts again?" Danny asked.

Becca met Joel's eyes. The only one of her brothers who had a clue what she was up to, he offered a strained smile of encouragement. While he'd given up arguing her case directly three years ago, he'd supported what he termed her 'mad scheme', and she owed him for that.

She nodded. "Never you mind, Danny Boy. Just rest assured, you won't like it." She turned on her heel and stormed to her room, locking herself in.

When their parents died, Abe had insisted on giving Becca their room, so she'd have a private bath that she didn't have to share with the boys. That allowed her to take leisurely baths, primp, and dress without alerting them that she had plans. She set about it, determined to finish this maddening game tonight.

She smiled at her reflection in the mirror, then placed her challenge on the dresser, unlocked the hall door silently and slipped out the ground-floor window on the opposite side of the room. There was no sense in making Abe break the door down when Joel did his part.

Becca hurried along the trail to George's cabin, giggling to herself. Georgie didn't know it yet, but he was in for a night he'd never forget.

She smiled at the lights shining through the cabin windows, slowing her step. She still owed him for the stunt that afternoon, but with the surprise she had planned, he'd pay his dues.

Georgie turned as she opened the door, a slow smile spreading his sensuous lips. His green eyes glittered in mischief, and locks of his chestnut hair curled over his forehead. He wore only his jeans, and he was already erect.

She closed the door behind her, clucking her tongue. "Is that for me?" she teased.

"After the show you put on for me?" he countered.

* * *

Georgie felt it hard to breathe or think, let alone talk. Becca was fantastic. Her deep blue eyes cut through him. Her sleek, black hair was unbound, and the matching skimpy dress she wore was little more than a heavy slip. How she made it here on those CFM heels was a mystery even Sherlock Holmes wasn't man enough to solve.

Becca sauntered across the room to the bed, leaning over as she poured herself a glass of the wine on the table. Her bottom pressed to the black sheath, smooth and unlined.

He groaned. "Are you wearing underwear?" he asked.

She turned to him, sipping the wine, her cheeks a pretty pink. "Why don't you come find out?" she invited.

"Is this my punishment for that kiss?"

"No. That is still to come."

His patience worn thin, Georgie crossed the room, took the wine glass from her hand, gulped it down and set it on the table. He kissed her, a fierce unrestrained possession that he prayed would convince her not to torture him with waiting this long again.

Even as he did it, Georgie realized how ridiculous that wish was. Knowing how crazy she could make him would likely convince Becca to do it again. She loved to make him crazy.

He ran his hands up the backs of her thighs, cupping the globes of her ass and groaning into her mouth as he encountered the straps above her nude backside. She'd bought a thong.

"Do your brothers know you own this?" he managed, flicking the elastic.

Becca laughed heartily. "My brothers? Can you imagine my brothers following me into a lingerie department? What I wear under my jeans is definitely something they don't want to know."

"What if Ms. Swann says something? She is the biggest gossip in the county, you know." And it wouldn't do to have her brothers find out about their love affair that way.

Georgie wanted to marry her. He'd have gone to Abe long ago, if Becca hadn't

talked him out of it. Still, he intended to do at least that part in a respectable fashion.

She smiled, snuggling her body closer to his. "I didn't buy them at Ms. Swann's store. All she's seen are my cotton dailies and lacy fancy wear."

"She owns the only shop in the county where you could buy something like this." He wondered how far she'd ranged to get these. Of course, it made sense that she'd done it. It would keep her brothers in the dark, but when would she have had the time to arrange it?

As if she read his thoughts, Becca answered them. "I went to London, where no one knows and no one cares."

"London?"

She nodded, offering him a sly smile.

That was a full night's trip in Tinker's company. Georgie couldn't imagine Becca willingly submitting herself to hours with the selfish sprite, and Ms. Bell's price for the trip would have been steep. Not to mention, there was always the chance that Tinker would pull a prank and leave her stranded in that far-flung place for a few weeks.

"Why would you go to London?" Why would she chance it?

Becca pulled at his jeans, opening the buttons one after another. "I just wanted to buy a few things," she answered evasively, wrapping her fingers around him.

"Hmm. Like those shoes?" he asked.

She smiled widely. "You like those?" she replied a little too innocently.

"Oh, yeah." He was a visual man, and she knew it. Becca had devised countless tortures for him based on it.

Georgie grasped the edge of her dress and dragged it up and off, tossing it over the foot of the bed. He scanned her body slowly. "Torture," he whispered.

All she wore beneath the dress was the scrap of blue fabric over her shaved mound and those shoes. He shivered in anticipation, tracing the edges of the thong and trying to regain speech.

"Your favorite color," she purred. "Should I leave them here to remind you? Maybe hung over the headboard?"

The mental picture coupled with the thought of her going home nude beneath the dress was almost his undoing. "What if my father comes up here to hunt?" He raised an eyebrow, hoping for a blush that he knew wasn't forthcoming.

She tugged his jeans down. "Maybe he'll make you marry me," she suggested.

Georgie growled at that. He lived to marry her, but she kept talking him out of it. "Maybe your brothers would if they knew what we're doing." He held out little hope of that, but it sounded good.

She offered a noncommittal sound that spoke her doubts better than a full soliloquy would have. Becca eased his jeans down his hips, reminding him that their time together was limited.

He sighed and stripped his jeans off. "Aren't you ever going to marry me?" he demanded.

"Of course, I am."

"When?"

She walked her fingertips up his abdomen. "Soon."

"This is my punishment for the kiss," he grumbled.

"Now why would I punish you for a kiss?" she asked in a coy little voice.

"Hmm. I seem to remember a bowl of porridge drying in my hair," he noted.

"I was twelve, and you didn't have permission. Besides, Abe's punch had to be worse than a little bowl of porridge."

He pulled her to his body. "Nothing was more painful than you rejecting me," he

admitted.

"Then you should have asked. Remember, my brothers are refusing you because of that impetuous moment."

"You'd think they'd never made a mistake," he complained.

"Kissing me was a mistake?"

Georgie sputtered for a moment, then picked up the challenge. "Maybe I shouldn't have kissed you senseless that day. It doesn't seem to have worn off."

Before she could form an answer to that, he had lowered her onto the bed and pulled off the little blue thong. He hung it over the headboard with a smile.

Becca reached for the heels, but he guided her hand away. He lifted her feet to the edge of the mattress, spreading her knees up and far out. He took a moment to admire the view, then sank to his knees. Before he was done, Becca really would be senseless. Maybe then she'd agree to marry him.

At the first circle of his tongue over her clit, she closed her blue eyes and arched up for more. Georgie was more than happy to comply; he loved to watch her come.

She threw her head side to side and panted out pleas for him to stop playing around and make love to her. He bit back a laugh at that, anticipating his next move. Her hands fisted in his hair, alternately tugging gently as if to draw him over her and pulling him closer as if to urge him to continue.

"George, please," she all but screamed.

With one last concerted effort, she shattered. Georgie pushed to his feet, thrusting deep inside her, then gritting his teeth to stave off his own release.

Becca screamed in pleasure, wriggling beneath him, her nails raking fresh tracks on his back. He groaned. She was so physically expressive when he pleased her, he found himself planning how best to accomplish it before every meeting.

She calmed slowly, her breath coming in rapid gasps.

Georgie smiled. "Enjoy yourself?" he taunted.

"Ohhh...You...you..."

"Georgie Porgy?" he suggested.

She flushed a deep crimson.

"That's why you love me, isn't it? You love the bad boy who steals what he wants."

Becca smacked his arm, not bothering to deny that she loved him or any of the things she loved about their relationship.

He chuckled, sliding free of her body, pulling her shoes off and tossing them to the center of the floor.

"And just what do you think you're doing?" she demanded. "I'm not through with you yet."

"You're right," he agreed, lifting her to the center of the bed in his arms and pulling a quilt to their hips. He wasn't nearly through with her. Before he was through, she'd beg him to ask Abe to marry her.

A ruckus from outside made his heart stutter. "What is that?" he asked.

"Most probably my brothers," she noted calmly.

Georgie chuckled. "You wouldn't—"

The door crashed open, and his gaze locked on the double barrel of Abe's shotgun swinging toward him. His mind rebelled; even his lungs seemed to freeze in disbelief. *Dear Mother! She did.*

* * *

Becca fought to keep from laughing at the shock on Georgie's face—or on Abe's. She didn't bother to cover herself, determined to make her meddling brothers squirm as much as possible.

"Why, you—"

"Don't, Abe," Joel ordered, grasping the barrel of the shotgun and swinging it toward an empty stretch of wall.

"Are you nuts?" he thundered.

"Are you? If you shoot, you'll hit Becca."

She raised an eyebrow. "If you miss me and hit George, you'll leave me an unwed mother," she pointed out.

Georgie winced. "Egging him on is a bad idea, Becca. He'll kill me," he grumbled. "You—" He looked at her abruptly, his eyes wide. "You're serious, aren't you?"

Becca smiled. "Of course. It was your idea, you know."

"My—idea?" His voice squeaked.

"As I recall, you said a shotgun wedding would solve all our problems."

He groaned, risking a pained look at Abe. He *had* said that—in joking; he'd simply never expected Becca to latch onto a mad comment like that and run with it. He'd probably thought she was still using the preventatives she'd been using in the beginning...until now.

"You know," Joel mused. "It's really not a bad plan."

"Can't we take it out of his hide first?" Billy grumbled.

Danny scowled at them from around Abe's shoulder. "Maybe a kick in the balls to remind him—"

"Don't even think it," Becca snapped.

"You really want to marry this creep?" Lewis asked.

"Yep. I certainly do."

Nathan snorted and rolled his eyes. He pointed at Georgie with a look that promised death. "If you ever hurt her—"

"I would never," Georgie protested, obviously highly offended that her brothers would think such a thing.

"Who said I agreed to this?" Abe interrupted him.

Becca turned toward her brothers, nestling her back to Georgie's chest. "Who said you had a choice? It's my life. Last time I checked, I was an adult."

"We promised Mama and Daddy—"

"So, marry me off, and your job is done," she reasoned.

"Don't forget the baby," Joel cautioned.

"How could I forget?" Abe thundered, slipping the EPT from his pocket. "Where would you get something like this?"

"London," Georgie guessed.

"You took her to London?" He pulled at Joel's hold on the shotgun.

"Of course not! I'd never take her to someplace so dangerous!"

Becca chuckled. "Tinker took me."

"You trusted that pixie?" Abe growled.

"I wouldn't have to, if you'd stop meddling and let me marry George."

"You're going to keep doing things like this until I give in, aren't you?"

"Would I do that?" She raised an eyebrow in challenge.

Her oldest brother scowled, and the others mirrored it—all except Joel, who was busy trying to keep from laughing.

Abe lowered the barrel of his shotgun. "Yes, you would."

"Well then, since the justice of the peace isn't open, I suggest you come back in the morning when it is."

Joel smiled. "We'll be here with shotguns in hand," he promised. He clapped Abe on the shoulder. "Just imagine marching Georgie Porgy through town at gunpoint," he sighed.

"Now just a damn minute," Georgie began.

Abe laughed harshly. "I do believe I'm going to enjoy this," he decided. "In the morning, then. I do suggest you meet us dressed—unless you *want* to get marched through town as the Mother made you."

"I don't believe this," he breathed.

Her brothers filed out, closing the door behind them.

Georgie muttered a few choice curses.

"You wanted to marry me," she reminded him.

"Yes, but—"

"And you did suggest this alternative."

"Not seriously."

She turned to him, tracing the line of curls down his chest. "You don't want children?"

"You know I do!"

"Then what's the problem?" she asked innocently.

"I wanted to do this in some respectable manner," he complained.

"Oh, why break a perfect record?"

He stuttered over an answer for several long moments. "Being marched through town at gunpoint?"

Becca laid a kiss on his lips. "*That* is your punishment for the stunt this afternoon," she assured him. "I would have convinced my brothers to just let us find our way to the JP on our own if you hadn't given me reason to make you regret doing that to me again."

Georgie smiled a mischievous smile.

"What are you thinking?" she asked suspiciously.

"Only that I have the next fifty years of keeping a perfect record. You may regret being Mrs. Georgie Porgy before long."

She chuckled. "I doubt it."

"Even if I arrange to have us marched through town as the Mother made us?" he hinted.

She traced her fingertips over the scratches she'd left earlier. "I think I might enjoy the attempt."

Sweeter Than Honey

Goldie and Sammy sittin' in a tree K-I-S-S-I-N-G. First comes love. Then comes marriage. Then comes Sammy with a baby carriage.

"One more branch," Sammy called out, hoisting Goldie up to the tree house. He looked down at the three rampaging bears nervously, but they were still growling and circling the tree trunk.

He hefted himself onto the platform and followed her into the ramshackle clubhouse they'd abandoned more than a decade earlier. It was still sturdy, much to his amazement.

Goldie grumbled a curse, fussing at her torn dress, then abandoning it in annoyance. She met his eyes sheepishly. "I guess I should thank you."

"You're welcome. What did you do to piss them off, anyway?"

Her face, neck, and all he could see of her chest through the torn bodice turned a vivid red. "Well, I... Sort of... It was like this..."

He groaned, sinking to the floor across from her. "Not porridge," he begged.

Goldie was notorious for her sweet tooth. More than once, she'd dipped her finger in the wrong baker's cake or little boy's pie.

She was a stunning beauty, a woman who'd have men flocking around her—if she weren't constantly in trouble. You never knew what Goldie would do or say next. Sammy had had his own fantasies about her in those early pubescent years, even from time to time in recent years. Then she'd show her true colors, and he'd come to his senses and remember why no sane man would get into a relationship with her.

"It was just sitting there, slathered in honey, the door wide open—"

"Who would... Scratch that! Who in her right *mind* steals from bears?"

Goldie stared at him in guilty misery, twisting one of her namesake curls around her fingertip.

Sammy pushed to his feet and peeked over the edge of the platform again.

"They can't climb up," she assured him.

"Oh, really? Last I heard, bears climb trees nicely, thank you." Coming up here was probably a huge mistake, but there was nowhere else to go, and he hadn't been thinking. Maybe spending time with Goldie was having a detrimental effect on him.

"Mama Bear insists on a well-groomed and manicured family. They can't climb trees with clipped claws."

He turned to her with a raised eyebrow. "How could you know that?"

Her blush darkened by several shades, but she didn't answer.

"You've done this before?" he demanded. Was she insane?

"Not—precisely. You see..."

"I don't want to know," he announced. Trouble! Goldie had been trouble when they were kids, and she was double trouble now.

He went to the doorway and peeked down at the bears again.

"I told you they can't come up!" She had the nerve to sound offended at that.

"Neither can we go down while they are there," he countered patiently, calling on the last of what he thought were his endless reserves of calm.

"They won't stay long," she offered brightly.

He sighed in relief. He wouldn't be forced to endure this madness for hours. "Good." "They should be gone by morning."

Sammy spun around to stare at her. "Morning?" he shouted.

She winced then nodded, her gray eyes stormy with near tearfall.

"Morning." He raised his hands in frustrated entreaty to the Mother. "Someone should find us before then," he assured himself. "Your parents will miss you at dinn..."

He realized he was shaking his head in time with hers and shook himself mentally.

"My...um... My parents don't seem to notice when I've gone missing," she admitted.

More likely, they revel in the reprieve! "This can't be happening," he complained to the cosmos at large.

"Oh, be a sport! One night of roughing it in a tree house won't kill you. You could look on it as an adventure."

"And have the whole town saying I spent the night with you?" he qualified. Ms. Swann would gleefully spread this story from Goose Neck to Seaside to Never Land.

She furrowed her brow. "Would that be so bad?"

Sammy stared at her in disbelief. Considering the other stories circulating about her on a weekly basis, he would think she wouldn't want to invite more. *I don't want to invite it!*

"I mean, we will be sleeping together, right?" she continued.

He panned his gaze over her, barely breathing. Goldie was frustrating, but she possessed an excellent body.

If you're going to pay the time, why not do the crime? his mind argued. What was the harm in it, really? His voice broke on his question. "Are you offering?"

* * *

Goldie rolled her eyes. How dense was the man? Where else did he expect to sleep? Outside on a limb? "Of course."

He sat down beside her, touching her curls as if in a daze. Then he leaned toward her, his lips brushing hers then exploring more purposefully.

Her eyes fluttered shut. She had no idea what brought this on, but she wasn't complaining about it. Most men found her irritating; she'd only been kissed by a precious few men in her years, and she hadn't formally dated any. She'd always known Sammy was different, and this difference was one she liked quite a bit.

His mouth left hers and trailed down her throat and shoulder. He pulled at the tear in her bodice, easing it to one side until her nipple was uncovered. Before she could reach to cover it, his mouth closed around it.

Sammy sucked gently at her, and she groaned at the heat and wetness between her legs. His tongue stroked lightly over the hardening tip, and a low pulse of desire overlaid that heat.

She fumbled at the row of pearl buttons down the bodice, popping off two in her haste, determined to see what his attention to the other nipple would feel like. He raised an eyebrow at her fumbling, and she felt her cheeks heat.

"It was already torn," she defended herself. "It's not like anyone is going to know I tore it further."

He smiled the smile that had always made her go weak-kneed and stuttering. "Very true," he conceded, his blue eyes glittering playfully.

Sammy unbuttoned the last three buttons smoothly then peeled the bodice off her shoulders, his eyes not unlike Jack Horner's when his mother was baking. He brushed his thumb over the opposite nipple as if testing how firm it had become. He sucked at it, growling as she arched her back.

Goldie pulled at his shirt, desperate to touch him as he touched her. This clarity was disconcerting. Her thoughts had always been as scattered as ranging bees in the spring. There were no tumbling thoughts now. Her mind was focused as it had never been before.

"Calm," Sammy whispered. "We have all night." A smile curved his lips.

"If you do this all night, I'll be Jell-O." She winced at her frank speech. It never caused her anything but trouble, but she couldn't seem to keep her mouth shut, even when she knew logically that she shouldn't say what was on her mind.

He chuckled, stripping her dress down to her hips. "Then I'll just have to lick you up," he replied. "After all, we'll be so hot, you'll melt."

She bit her lip at that image. With Sammy's hands on her, it wasn't hard to envision herself melting into a puddle. Goldie groaned at the thought of him licking her entire body.

"Oh, yeah," he rasped. "I definitely have to lick you up."

Before she could question that comment, her skirts were tossed into her lap. She furrowed her brow; watching him remove her shoes, stockings, and panties with rising interest.

Sammy grasped her legs and settled her knees over his shoulders. She floundered, landing on her elbows, staring up at him. Then he buried his face between her legs. She cried out in surprise as his tongue tickled at the lips of her sex. His growled comment was muffled in her body. Then his tongue returned, dancing over her body and then inside.

Blinding pleasure blocked the rest of the world. Goldie was only vaguely aware that she was laid back on the floor, making breathless little sounds while her mind was absolutely still. His mouth retreated, leaving her a shivering mass, aching for him. He placed her legs back on the floor.

"Hmmm. And what is this?" he teased.

Goldie forced her eyes open, focusing with some difficulty on the plastic bottle of honey in his hand. She vaguely noted that he must have removed it from the deep pocket in her skirt.

"I think we need to test this," he continued.

"But if you put that on me..." She felt her cheeks heat. Honey took a long, concerted effort to clean off. She really would melt.

Sammy's hungry look made her mouth go dry. "You're the one with the sweet tooth," he said. "I think it's time for us to take our clothes off."

She nodded numbly, barely achieving the last of her own undressing, rapt on the tan skin and wiry curls appearing from beneath his clothes.

Goldie stared at his cock longest of all, the throbbing intensifying at the sight. She had no doubts that Sammy meant to take this experimentation to the ultimate conclusion, nor did she question that he'd leave her aching like this for him for the rest of her life.

He sat with his back against the wall, opening the honey. "Would you care to do the honors?" he offered.

She shook her head. "I'd end up spilling it all over you," she admitted.

"Well, that would be a shame." His tone indicated that it wouldn't be.

She bit back a sigh of frustration. Why couldn't people say what they meant? She did, not that it did her any good. When no one else around you did, saying what you

meant was nearly useless.

often.

"I would just hate to have your mouth all over me."

"You're joking," she guessed. She prayed he was joking. Otherwise, why were they doing this?

As his answer, Sammy drizzled the sticky liquid down his chest and abdomen and over his cock.

Goldie shivered in anticipation, licking her lips as she dropped to her knees. "Both of my favorites in one place," she breathed.

He cocked an eyebrow in seeming amusement but made no comment about her choice of words.

She leaned over him, licking a drop off his nipple. He sucked in his breath, and his abdomen tightened. Encouraged, she traced the lines criss-crossing his body, drinking in his panted entreaties to The Mother.

Goldie paused, looking at the final trail of honey in a hunger unrelated to her sweet tooth. Sammy thrust his hips upward as if begging for her, and she smiled. In all her life, there was very little she'd done right. This, it seemed, was her strong suit.

She took the head in her mouth, and he groaned. A hint of flavor mixed with the honey; a wild, heavy, slightly-salty taste. Goldie trailed her tongue along the channel, collecting more of it.

Sammy's hands fisted in her hair. She glanced up at him, then stopped in surprise. His eyes were closed, and his face was a mask of what looked like pain. His eyes flew open, pleading with her. He raised his hips, a fine sweat coating his body and his muscles taut.

Goldie captured him in her mouth again, and a strangled groan escaped his lips. She took him deeper, no longer concerned with the honey coating him. The other flavor was a thousand times more appealing, and she instinctively knew she could make him release more.

He urged her up, sealing her mouth to his and releasing her hair to guide her astride him. His cock pressed to her core, and she settled him inside, forcing down as he thrust up.

A minute pain announced that a bit of her hymen remained despite riding and a myriad of accidents she felt sure had taken it years earlier. It was quickly forgotten, as Sammy propelled her into pleasure by way of deep thrusts inside her.

She grasped at his arms, memorizing the ripples of muscle and moaning at the feeling. Her sheath seemed to constrict until she felt every ridge of his length sliding in and out of her.

The explosion of sensation took her by surprise. For one glorious moment, everything in her mind was ordered and sensible. Of course, the only thing that mattered was Sammy and the way they moved together.

He shouted harshly, a sound she'd identify as triumph. Minutes earlier, she would have sworn under oath that she couldn't feel better. Then he released wave after wave of his heat into her, and she stared into his eyes in the fading light, the entire world seemingly existing from heartbeat to heartbeat and thrust to thrust.

Sammy collapsed, his sweat-soaked body supporting hers as they panted in the aftermath of their passion.

A smile struggled to break free. Sammy wound one of her curls around his fingertip, wondering at how enjoyable that had been. It was an experience he was eager to repeat—

Goldie shifted off him, offering a shy smile that belied the vixen she'd been only

moments earlier. She started collecting up her clothing. He hesitated to tell her it was a waste of time; he wasn't nearly done with her. If she believed he was going to let her walk away without more, she was insane.

He looked to his flaccid member, stilling in disbelief, his heart pounding. Even in the fading daylight, the streaks of blood were unmistakable.

"You were a virgin?" he demanded.

She stopped and stared at him, straightening her panties as she seemed to consider him. "That was important." Her voice made it seem that she hadn't realized it was.

"Of course," he replied in exasperation.

"But..." Her eyes darted about, and her fingers twisted at the stockings laid over her thighs. "I don't understand why," she admitted.

"If you're a virgin, it's unlikely that you're on some form of birth control," he explained patiently. Mother! Did she ever consider that? She steals from bears! Of course, she didn't. Why did I believe there was no harm in this?

"I'm not accustomed to doing this," she protested. "What's your excuse?"

Sammy growled a curse, and she flinched. "When you offered to have sex with me, I assumed you were protected. I can't believe I assumed it, but..."

For a moment, she didn't respond. He wished he could see her face clearly in the gathering darkness, but she was too deep in the shadows.

"I didn't offer to have sex with you." She sounded confused.

"You did so," he snapped. Was she scatterbrained?

"I didn't. I only offered..." She groaned, and he vaguely made out her pressing a hand to her forehead.

"Goldie?" he questioned. Surely, she remembered saying it.

"Sleep! Mother lives! I said we'd sleep—I never said sex. I didn't."

Sammy felt the blood drain from his face. It had been an honest mistake, but still... "You don't offer to *sleep* with a man unless you mean it," he growled. "Don't you know that?"

"I did mean it," she shouted. Goldie started collecting up her clothing again. "I said what I meant," she grumbled.

"What are you doing?" he asked. "You can't leave with the bears down there."

"I haven't heard them. I think they left." She pushed to her feet and strode to the doorway.

Sammy scrambled after her. "You can't take that chance," he protested.

"I can't stay here, either."

He grasped her arm. "Why are you doing this?"

She pulled away and stepped toward the edge. The roar from below seemed to shake the floorboards, and Goldie lost her footing. Sammy grasped her arms and dragged her back. Her clothes slipped from her hands, and she lunged after them, shouting a protest as he held her back and they slipped over the edge of the platform.

Goldie crumpled to the floor with a sob. He sighed, easing down beside her, cradling her to his chest. Her entire body convulsed in sobs, and tears splashed onto his chest.

Sammy smoothed her hair, feeling abruptly awkward. Why had he yelled at her in the first place? It *was* an understandable error, and it had been *his* error, not hers. "It's all right," he soothed her.

"No," she choked. "It's not. It's never okay."

He didn't know how to answer that. It had never occurred to him that Goldie's incompetence bothered her. She always seemed unaffected by the chaos she created with her mad antics.

"Now look at me," she complained miserably. "Nearly naked in a tree with a man, trapped by bears and blocks from home. I don't even want to consider what new jokes will come of this one. What do you think they'll say? Three bears chased Goldie up a tree. Isn't she a spaz? Her sweet tooth got her in this mess, screwing out what little brains she has."

He had to admit it wasn't a bad rhyme, though he winced at the fact that it probably wasn't far from the truth of what someone would come up with. "It could be worse," he offered, realizing it was a lame line even as he uttered it.

"How? And don't say I could be dead. I'll probably wish I was before this is over with."

He winced at that.

"Do you have any idea...? No, of course you don't. How could you possibly understand what it's like to never do *anything* right in your entire life?"

"I'm sure you do some things right," he argued. "Actually, I know you do at least one thing very right." His cock rose, seconding the motion with gusto.

"Nothing! I make bad choices. I don't think before I act—or speak. Even when I fall in love with a man, I botch it." She groaned. "See! I shouldn't have said that, either."

"Yes. Yes, you should." If she loved him, she should definitely say it.

"What's the point?" she grumbled. "You don't even like me."

"Maybe you're right. Maybe you are always wrong."

She sniffed back more tears. "Gee, thanks."

"You're not thinking again."

"I get the point," she shouted, pulling at his grip.

"No. I don't think you do." He captured her hand and guided it to his aching length, hissing out a breath as she touched him. "I don't make a habit of *sleeping* with women I don't like, Goldie."

She swallowed hard. Sammy sought her mouth blindly, and she responded with fervor. He followed her down to the floor, dragging her panties off and tossing them after the rest of her clothes.

Goldie trembled. "You—really don't hate me, do you?" she whispered uncertainly.

"Whom do you love?" he countered.

"You.'

Sammy surged into her, smiling at her choked cry. "Then you won't balk at marrying me."

"Because..." She faltered as he thrust again.

"If you're asking if I love you..." He set a slow, comfortable pace, reliving all the time they'd spent together and his current situation. "Yes. I think it's safe to say I do."

"But I'm..."

He stilled inside her. "Infuriating and klutzy?" Sammy slid to the hilt, groaning with her. "You're also honest, caring..." He started punctuating his words with rolls of his hips. "Unassuming, giving, and hot—in—bed."

"We haven't been in bed together," she replied automatically.

He chuckled. Why had he never noticed how literally she spoke and interpreted before? It was charming, once you realized what she was doing. "You'll be hot there, too," he assured her. "I still have to turn you into that puddle of Jell-O."

Goldie groaned.

"Tomorrow morning, you'll wear my shirt..." He shivered in the memory of tossing her panties over the edge. "*Just* my shirt. We'll go to Ms. Swann's shop and—"

"Ms. Swann's? Are you insane?" she squeaked.

"Not at all. We'll be buying you a wedding dress, underclothes, and new shoes."

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"In your shirt?"
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"Think? While you're—"

He kissed her. "Making love to you? Try."

"About..." She arched up to him, her fingertips digging into his hips. "Sammy, I don't—"

"To get home—or to my house..." He trailed off, hoping she'd pick up the hint. Some corner of his mind hoped she'd react to the offer of going to his place instead of home

She groaned. "I'd have to pass Ms. Swann's. There's no way she'd miss me. She'll be outside knitting at sunup, without fail."

"Now you're thinking," he complimented her.

"I always think better when you... Oh, dear Mother! What am I saying?"

Sammy laughed heartily. "Keep talking."

"You don't mind?"

"I'm starting to appreciate your honesty. It certainly makes it easy on a man to know where he stands." He closed his eyes, trying to stave off his release. "Now. Ms. Swann—"

"I'm doomed," she grumbled.

"No. I am—if you want to look at it that way. I prefer to think of it as being immortalized in rhyme."

"What?" Her voice was thick and breathless. Her hands tightened, and her fingernails bit into his back.

Good. A few scratches will lend credence to the story. "I intend to do a little bragging," he informed her. The whole town will know before I'm done.

"About?" she inquired, though it was hard to tell if she really wanted an answer with her hips meeting his smoothly, seemingly completely immersed in the experience.

"How I threw your clothing out of the tree house and made love to you until you agreed to marry me."

She gasped. "You're going to lie like that?"

"No. I did throw the last of your clothing over, and it was my fault that you lost the rest. So... Who's going to know that I didn't throw it all?"

"But—But—"

He kissed her again, groaning as she responded in wild abandon. Sammy broke off the kiss, smiling at her sharply in-drawn breath.

"Don't argue," he ordered.

"But the rest," she reasoned.

"It won't be a lie. We're buying a wedding dress, remember? And the JP opens at nine."

"Ohhh Oh!"

He groaned as she climaxed around him, following her over in just a few more deep thrusts. The silence was broken only by their ragged breathing.

"Goldie?"

"Yes?" her voice was hesitant.

"I asked you to marry me," he reminded her.

Her chest heaved once then again. Sammy's stomach rebelled. She was crying? He brushed his fingertips over her cheek then stopped when he found no tears.

"You're laughing?" he demanded.

Goldie choked out laughter, her cheek heating under his hand.

"What is so damned funny?"

[&]quot;Goldie, think—"

"If I said I wasn't convinced yet, you'd have to convince me," she managed.

Sammy found himself laughing with her. "I wouldn't want to be called a liar," he agreed. "And, I would hate to have to piss those bears off to get you up here for another night. I don't suggest you make me do that."

"You wouldn't!"

"I never bluff." He did, but he wasn't about to admit it.

She hesitated. "You would really do that?"

"Yes. I will stock the cabinets with honey and—"

Goldie purred. "Forget the honey."

"What? You're turning down sweets?"

"I've found something better," she protested. "How come no one ever tells you how good..." She groaned. "There I go again."

He smiled. "Looks like there are a lot of things I have to teach you. So, are you going to marry me?"

"Well, I certainly don't want to get stuck up here another night. We'd get hungry and..."

"And?"

"Well, I think I have a splinter."

"I'll take it out. Is that a yes?"

"Yes, but I wonder..."

"Wonder what?" he asked honestly.

"With the story you intend to tell, what rhyme do you think people are going to make up?"

"Why don't we beat them to it and make our own?"

"Like what?"

"Goldie and Sammy, sittin' in a tree...K-I-S-S-I-N-G..."

"We're doing more than kissing," she pointed out.

"Yes, we are." He remembered her lack of protection. "You do want kids, right?"

"Yes. I do."

He smiled.

"First comes love," she ventured, obviously still trying to complete their rhyme. "Then comes marriage. Then comes Sammy with a baby carriage?"

"You know what that means, don't you?" he teased.

"Uh... I'm sure you're about to tell me."

"I think I'd rather show you."

When She Was Good

There was a little girl
Who had a little curl
Right in the middle of her forehead.
When she was good,
She was very, very good,
And when she was bad,
She was horrid.

Davey watched Lady Thereasa hungrily, reminding himself not to be caught at it and looking away only when she or one of her family turned his direction. Though the woman was sex personified and definitely the girl in town he'd most like to find adventure with, she was a lady and the heir to the Gosling fortune.

It was a shame that she was such a good girl, but what else would one expect from the jewel of her social-conscious family. For years, she'd been taught nothing but proper etiquette and ladylike manners, and she was an adept student, the best her masters had ever encountered. It was never questioned that she would be the one her aunt named as heir. Of all her sisters, Thereasa was undeniably the finest example of nobility in the land.

And now, he was charged with carrying her to her dowager Great Aunt Goosie's home to take her place as lady of the manor. She was twenty now, the age when such things occurred in Goose Neck.

In preparation for the trip, her father and elder brother had drilled the laws of the faraway realm into Davey, fairly threatening his life if he dared stray from them in the slightest. The laws of Goose Neck were many and rigid, especially the ones dealing with relations between a man and woman. It was no wonder Lady Thereasa had been chosen to lead. None of her sisters could ever hope to live up to the laws that would bind them.

The trip would be arduous, a three-day journey by carriage from Seaside to Goose Neck, but the length of the journey was only half the battle to be fought. They hadn't even left her home, and already the strain of her company wore on Davey, tempted him almost to his endurance. How he would survive the trip was beyond him.

Thereasa leaned into the carriage, her smile warm. "Ready?" she asked.

"As you wish, Lady Thereasa." Davey bowed his head slowly, noting her father's wary attention to every move he made.

She scowled at him then took her place on the seat beside him.

Davey whistled the horses up to a trot and nodded to her parents as they were away. There had been no warnings this morning. Even her father must have realized that none were necessary.

For leagues, they rode in an uncomfortable silence. He glanced at Lady Thereasa, unable to take his eyes off of her for long. She didn't seem to notice, and for that he was grateful. It wouldn't do to have a fine lady like her catch him ogling her.

She sighed and loosened the ties on her cape, letting it fall to the seat at her back. Davey glanced her direction again then stared, his mouth going dry.

Her dress was a form-fitting creation that barely held to the join of her shoulder and arm, shelved her breasts so the ample globes mounded neatly in soft cups, and her back was nude to a man's hand width below the center line of her breasts, announcing her lack of typical underclothes definitively.

"You like my dress," she noted.

Davey snapped his eyes back to the road, grinding his teeth at the weight of his erect member. He nodded, gasping out his answer. "It's—striking, Lady Thereasa."

"Yes. It is, at that."

He ventured a look at her face, studiously avoiding the deep cleavage so close to his arm. She didn't appear angered by his reaction. In fact, her dark eyes glittered under a corkscrew curl that escaped the pins in her hair.

"A step in the right direction," she purred.

Davey shook his head in confusion. "What is?"

"You're looking at my face instead of my feet."

He took a calming breath. If he looked at her feet, a much more arousing sight would capture his attention. "Does your father know you own that dress?" he inquired. The lord was hardly known for his patience with impropriety.

Thereasa stretched her arms over her head. "It was a gift from my Aunt Goosie," she confided.

"Really?" he managed, confining himself to a single peek at her chest.

"She sent me a half dozen of them. Not all like this, but close enough." She lowered her arms, leaning toward him so as to maximize the effect of the dress. "You might as well enjoy yourself."

"Enjoy?" What in the Mother's name was she talking about?

"You want to look," she stated calmly.

He did, but hearing her say it didn't put him any more at ease. "You want me to look?" he asked, searching for solid ground.

Lady Thereasa smiled. "For a start."

Davey flicked his eyes to the pale skin of her chest then away, returning to stare hungrily. Had she just invited him to touch her? No. That wasn't possible. Was it?

Her hand settled on his leg, and he swallowed a groan. "Did you know that I requested you as my escort?" she asked.

"No." He hadn't known it. Davey had assumed her father had chosen him, trusting him not to do what he ached to do.

"What have you heard about my Aunt Goosie?" Thankfully, she changed the subject.

Her palm slipped up his leg a hand length, and he cleared his throat, thinking coherent thoughts and forming speech abruptly tedious.

"That she is very wealthy." Little was publicly known about the dowager. She was a very reclusive person.

"Did you know that I am her chosen heir?" Her fingertips traced circles on his inner thigh, scattering his thoughts.

"Yes. Your father mentioned it." *A few hundred times*. He met her eyes, forcing himself not to lean in for a kiss.

"I thought I should tell you that."

"What—what difference would your fortune make to me?" He was no fortune hunter.

"My fortune isn't the important factor, Davey."

"What is?"

She stroked his erection through his trousers, her eyes wide in what appeared to be wonder. "The rules I live by," she whispered. "I am not in my father's house now."

Davey pulled the horses to a halt, panting back the urge to do something insanely stupid. Her aunt's rules or not, the laws of Goose Neck had something to say in the matter. True, they didn't forbid her to take a lover, but they did forbid her marrying without her aunt's permission. They also frowned upon lovers without that permission.

"You want to," she teased him.

He didn't answer—wasn't capable of answering.

Her hand cupped him, her thumb stroking over the sensitive head. "Do you want me to stop?"

Yes. He couldn't say it. "We shouldn't," he grumbled. If your father ever found out, I would be beaten within a fingerwidth of my life!

"You're right. Not here. Bargain with me." Her fingers continued their exploration, and she gasped as his sac tightened.

"Bargain?" He couldn't even think, and she wanted him to bargain?

"Kiss me, and I'll stop—until a more appropriate time."

He looked to her lips, shivering in anticipation.

"A real kiss," she qualified. "Kiss me as you would a maid or washwoman."

Mother, but she had him ready to fall on her as if she were a common streetwalker. Davey nodded, lowering his face to hers and groaning as she met him with parted lips. There was an awkward moment before they found a comfortable rhythm.

He took her mouth in a ravenous haze, dropping the reins and turning to her, tracing the neckline of her dress, her bosom like silk. Thereas moaned, arching to him and shaking him out of the trance he seemed trapped in.

Davey opened his eyes, guiltily taking in their positions. Lady Thereasa was reclined into the corner of the cushioned seat; he was over her, his cock pressed to her thigh. Her hair was mussed, her lips plumped with passion, and her dress rumpled. He released her breast, grimacing that he'd gone so far.

She arched her back with a lazy smile, nearly sending the tops of her breasts into close contact with his chin. "You see? That wasn't so difficult, was it?"

"No," he admitted. "It wasn't difficult." He could have done much more with very little enticement.

"Well, then...I must live to my end of the bargain. I will not press for more from you until we are at a more suitable location."

He nearly groaned at that. Half of him wanted to take her here and now. The other half prayed they wouldn't reach their first stop until she was too exhausted to continue her seduction.

Davey sat back as she straightened, grasping for the reins with numb fingers. She put the cape back on, and he winced at the sense of loss that plagued him. He should not want what he did. Her father trusted him to deliver her unmolested.

He whistled the horses up to a trot again then slowed them, determined to reach Pumpkin Corners as late as possible.

"It won't matter," she informed him, chuckling openly at some secret joke.

His stomach crawled in apprehension. "What won't?"

"We'll be stopping at Piper's Glen for the night."

Davey stared at her. "What? Why?" It would only take four hours to reach Piper's Glen. "We can make Pumpkin Corners easily."

She smiled. "And we will...tomorrow. Aunt Goosie made the arrangements."

* * *

Terri smiled at Davey across the table, easing her foot out of the low slippers Aunt Goosie had provided. He was trying to avoid her eyes, but he wouldn't be able to avoid this.

He stiffened, as she trailed her stockinged foot up his inner thigh, rattling his bowl of soup. His blue eyes were hot, but she couldn't decide if they were hot in passion or anger. His face flushed as she traced his rock-hard member, and her core heated in the knowledge that he enjoyed her touch.

"Is there a problem, sir?" the matron asked brightly.

Terri smiled, raising an eyebrow at his hesitation.

"No," he grumbled. "All is well."

"Very well. Call if you need anything." She ambled away, speaking to other patrons.

"An appropriate time," he whispered in a voice edged in the promise of violence.

"The tablecloth hides us," she reasoned.

Despite his reservations, he thickened at that. He pushed a hand through his honey-colored hair, creating more spikes than he smoothed with the motion.

"I could make your meal very enjoyable," she offered, stroking him. Terri wondered if she could make him climax. She wondered what he would look like if he did.

"Not here," he pleaded.

"A more appropriate place?" she suggested. "Bargain with me."

"No. No more bargains."

She pulled at the ties on her bodice, loosening them and baring more of her cleavage. His eyes went wide at the unspoken threat; he shook his head.

"Bargain with me," she repeated in a voice so low he would practically have to read the movements of her lips.

Davey closed his eyes, though his member strained against her toes. "What bargain?" he managed in a rough voice.

"I will come to you tonight, and we will touch. Just touch, nothing more. You do want to touch my breasts. Do you not?"

He looked to the cleavage this style of dress exposed then away. "Yes," he admitted. "You know I do."

"Then you agree?" If Davey agreed, he wouldn't renege.

"Yes. I agree." He met her eyes, seemingly tortured by his hunger.

Terri pulled her foot back, sliding her slipper on. "Until tonight, then."

She forced down food, though she hardly felt like eating. Her stomach roiled in excitement. If she succeeded in her quest, she'd have everything she'd ever wanted: a home away from her father's endless rules, her fortune, and Davey.

* * *

Davey paced his room, his heart pounding. He'd agreed to touch her? He ached to touch her, but this bargain was madness. It might mean madness!

He pulled at his tunic as if to remove it, then thought better of it. The more clothes he wore, the better. That way, he was less likely to end up screwing her.

He looked to the door miserably, wondering what he'd do if someone saw her enter his rooms and told her father the tale. Whether Lady Thereasa was her Aunt's heir or not, the lord would make Davey pay for this.

A sound behind him made him jump and whirl about in surprise. He gaped at the open door and the room beyond. The rooms connected, and he never realized it. He'd assumed it was the door to a closet, and since they'd only be here for the night, he'd never opened it. If he had, what delights would he have seen?

Davey looked at Thereasa, his mouth watering. She wore a knee-length gown of translucent peach-colored material with matching panties beneath. Her nipples were

clearly visible, as was the fact that her feminine curls had been shorn off.

Nude, yet not. His body responded to it, demanding what he staunchly argued he could not indulge in.

Thereasa glided toward him, shamelessly offering herself. She didn't speak. She took his hand and led him further into the room. He went without question, not daring to examine his actions for fear that he'd realize he'd lost control.

She laid back on the bed, pulling gently at his hand to urge him down beside her.

Davey sank to the soft surface, rapt on the dark circles that capped her breasts. He touched them, watching them come to points as if he'd never seen a woman's bosom before. He licked at the tips, closing his eyes to her moan of pleasure. It was madness, and he was lost. He sucked at her, needing more.

Her hand pressed to his aching length, and he went still. Madness or not, he couldn't go that far.

"Not yet," she whispered in what sounded like a promise. "Kiss me. Please, Davey."

He straightened, pressing his lips to hers then parting them, tasting her mouth slowly then more urgently as she started to explore his own.

Her hands were everywhere over his clothes, then beneath his tunic. She enflamed him and he joined in the dance, his fingers tracing the damp expanse of her inner thighs to the wet fire at her apex.

Thereasa arched against him, begging him to touch her in a gasping voice.

Davey took stock of their situation, forcing his mind to function when it wanted to stay submerged in the pool of his arousal. If he didn't stop now, he wouldn't be able to. "No more," he managed, his voice strained. "We've touched." *More than enough. Not nearly enough!* "You should go."

For a moment, she seemed hurt by his proclamation. Then Thereasa smiled. "You kept your word," she agreed. "Until tomorrow, then." She straightened the gown that was pooled around her hips and pushed to her feet, heading to the door to her room, her head high and her back stiff.

He swallowed a groan at the scent of arousal on his sheets. "Lady Thereasa?" he called out.

"Yes?" she inquired sweetly.

"There will be no more bargains between us."

She turned back to him, raising an eyebrow, looking much as her father did when he was about to offer correction. "Indeed," she offered cryptically. Then she disappeared through the door.

* * *

Davey nodded curtly as Lady Thereasa took her seat beside him in the carriage. He ground his teeth at the errant thought that she certainly hadn't acted the noble lady the night before. She'd acted more the maid or washwoman she'd wanted him to pretend she was in the carriage, despite her fine sleeping gown, a gown designed to make certain no man lying next to her could sleep—as he hadn't slept more than two hours of the preceding night, lying instead in aching discomfort and sorely tempted to bring her back to his bed.

He tried not to look at her, then gave up and examined her from head to toe.

I'm just making certain she shows no signs of use. He called himself a liar before the thought was fully formed.

She wore a double-skirted dress with a cape about her shoulders. He bit back another groan at what surely lay beneath the cape, what she would undoubtedly reveal to him when they were out of the village.

Davey returned to his assessment. Thereasa's skin fairly glowed, and her lips were

lush and dark, but her hair... Ringlets of deep coal-colored hair hugged her cheeks and cascaded over her shoulders and down her back.

The sassy curl over her forehead drew his eyes. He wondered if she styled it there or it fell there naturally. Her hair had always been tightly restrained at home, so he'd never seen the enchanting curl before. *Much as she'd been restrained, and I'd never seen the wanton in her.* He pushed that thought away, well aware that he'd left propriety behind.

"Comfortable?" he asked.

"Very, thank you. Shall we be on our way?"

"Of course." He whistled the horses to a trot and watched the village fall away.

Thereasa made no move toward her cape; her hands rested primly in her lap. Davey found himself glancing at her more and more often, anticipating seeing what she'd hidden from him, longing for it.

Damn it! Why can't I find relief in this reprieve?

"Is there a problem?" Thereasa asked in what he'd lay high odds was mock innocence.

"Not at all," he lied.

"Then you aren't waiting for me to continue my seduction?"

He cleared his throat, feeling his cheeks heat. "No. Of course not." His voice cracked, and he winced.

She smiled. "Well, you aren't a good liar," she noted. "I'm glad of it. A woman always prefers a man who can't lie to her."

Davey ground his teeth. There was no safe answer to that. If he admitted he was lying, it meant he wanted her to seduce him. *Dear Mother!* If he tried to insist he wasn't... She was correct. He'd never been a good liar.

Which meant he wanted to be seduced. He glanced at her and away again. Of course, he wanted her. He'd always wanted her.

"Well, since you've waited so patiently—"

"No!" He grimaced at how desperate he sounded. "I mean..."

"I know what you mean. You could bargain—"

"No!" That was out of the question. He lost ground every time he bargained with her.

Her tinkling laughter warmed places that needed cooled. She untied the cape and dropped it to the seat.

Davey shook his head, cursing under his breath as he looked at her, needing to look at her. He pulled the horses to a halt, gasping for breath, searching for signs of other travelers frantically.

"Is there a problem, Davey?" she purred.

"Problem?" he shouted. "You're..." He motioned at her dress hopelessly.

Half a dress! At least, the dress the day before had covered the essentials. This one had panels of the translucent material in place of a proper bodice. No one passing could miss seeing her perfect breasts.

She stroked her fingertips over one nipple, making it harden—and him with it. "I quite like it," she announced.

Davey tried to pull her cape around her shoulders, but she shrugged it off with a look of warning.

"Please, Thereasa," he begged, ignoring the nagging voice chiding him for not addressing her by her title.

"Terri," she said calmly.

"What?"

"My name. Aunt Goosie calls me Terri. I rather like that, too."

The sound of a horse made his heart stutter. "Please, Terri. Cover yourself," he whispered, praying the rider was further away than it sounded.

"Bargain with me."

"I can't!" But, it was close, a horse-drawn buggy or carriage.

She crossed her arms under her breasts, shelving them and making her nipples more prominent.

"I won't take your barrier," he blurted out. Anything else was worth her covering herself before the approaching traveler could see her this way.

Terri seemed uncertain. She nodded, sweeping her hair forward, covering her chest effectively.

Davey breathed a sigh of relief as another carriage rounded the corner toward them. The gentleman inside tipped his hat to them. Terri waved with a bright smile, and the carriage continued on, disappearing from view.

He squeezed his eyes shut. What had he done? He hadn't even set terms to their agreement. The Mother only knew what she'd ask of him, and he was honor bound to bend to anything but taking her barrier. His cock throbbed at the idea of going to his knees before her, licking his way up her thighs...

"Don't worry, Davey," she assured him. "You'll enjoy yourself."

He nodded. That was the problem. He'd enjoy it far too much for his own good.

* * *

Terri smiled, noting Davey's stiff posture. "This isn't a punishment," she chided him. He managed a weak smile, though he still looked as if he faced the Reaper's blade.

She ambled to him, reaching for his trousers.

"No." Davey moved away, shaking his head.

"It's not what you think," she soothed him. "If you refuse to remove your clothing, I suppose I'll have to remove mine."

His eyes widened and he pulled at his clothes frantically, peeling off layer after layer until he stood naked before her.

Mother! She wanted him, and he obviously wanted her. Terri stroked a finger along his length, her heart hammering as it bobbed its appreciation of her touch.

Davey stiffened. "I won't—"

She kissed him. "I won't ask." Yet. "But, I will touch."

He nipped at her lips, his breathing deep but erratic. "Yes. Touch."

"Come to the bed," she whispered. Whether his legs would hold him through what she planned or not, her own would surely fail her.

He didn't question her, didn't argue. Davey took her hand and led her to the bed as she had him the night before. He flopped down, pulling her over him and seeking her mouth. She pulled back slightly, licking her lips, her whole body tingling.

"You want," he managed in a strangled voice.

She collected up the folds of her sheer sleeping gown, wrapping them around his erect length. He stilled, meeting her eyes as she started working the blue silk that nearly matched his darkened eyes up and down him with her fist.

Davey turned, leaning half-over her, his mouth closing on hers, a slow mating of lips and tongue that became more heated as he neared release. Gasps and groans passed between them. His hands traced her back then squeezed her ass.

"Don't stop," he pleaded, his eyes closed.

"Come," she begged, watching his expression avidly.

He dropped to his back, panted, licked his lip, groaned. Sweat beaded on his forehead. She could almost taste how close he was.

Then it happened. His length pulsed between her fingers. His hands tightened on

her, and a strangled cry escaped his lips. Rivulets of milky semen spurted from him, and his entire body tensed.

"Oh, yes," he whispered, his muscles relaxing and the pulsing slowing.

Terri kissed his chest.

He groaned deeply, jerking again in her hand. "Please. No more." His eyes remained closed, and his breathing took up a deep, measured cadence.

She eased away from him, brushing a kiss over his lips. "Until tomorrow," she promised.

"I cannot take your barrier," he grumbled. "You cannot ask it of me."

Terri winced, retreating to her room and the bath she'd ordered before she went to Davey. She soaked in the warm water, wishing she could take heart in her successes so far.

She couldn't. Not while he so doggedly refused to take that final step.

I cannot take your barrier.

She gasped. Of course! It wasn't hopeless after all.

* * *

Davey opened his eyes, running a hand over his morning stubble. Something was wrong, but he couldn't put a name to it—until he moved to get up.

Nude! "Oh, Mother! It wasn't a dream." How could he let it go so far?

He pushed from the bed, wincing at the sticky proof of his misdeeds. *How could I? Worse, how far would she 'bargain' to take it tonight?* He moaned.

It couldn't be allowed. There had to be limits, a line they couldn't cross. *Her barrier*. It was a physical line, one that had so far been easy to keep in mind. He could play at love with her, but he could not consummate with her.

Not unless we married.

He stood at the washstand, the cloth in one hand. Would her aunt permit that? If she wouldn't, he couldn't live with just a taste of Terri, and he refused to be her kept man. If he couldn't have her permanently and openly...

There was no way to know if her aunt would permit her to marry a servant until they reached Goose Neck. Terri would have to go to Lady Goosie virginal. It was the only way.

Yes. That was it. He would have to bargain with her again. He'd promise her any pleasure—any play, if she'd agree not to cross that line with him. Now, he just had to figure out a way to convince himself to stop in the heat of the moment.

Davey considered that as he washed and dressed. Terri had kept her word so far. If he made the bargain, she'd keep her word. He knew she would.

* * *

Terri looked up from the remnants of her plate of pancakes and eggs as Davey came to the table. To her surprise, he met her eyes directly. There was no hesitation, no evasive tactics or embarrassment.

He leaned across to her. "Are you finished?" he asked.

"I am. You don't want to eat?"

His hungry look made her full stomach flutter uncomfortably. She was abruptly uncertain. This was wrong. She was supposed to seduce Davey. He wasn't supposed to be in charge.

"If you've finished, we'll be on our way," he informed her.

She forced a superior look to her face. One thing her father taught her well was the poker face he used in negotiations. "Of course. The sooner we leave, the sooner we'll reach Banbury Cross."

Davey smiled and pushed back to his feet. "The carriage is ready," he reported. "At

your leisure." He turned and left the inn.

Terri smoothed her dress and stood, striding to the door, feigning much more confidence than she felt. She took her place in the carriage, watching the leagues pass in silence.

Something had changed. She'd lost control of this situation somehow, and she had to get it back. But, how did she go about that?

"Aren't you going to bargain with me?" he asked suddenly.

"You said you wouldn't bargain," she noted uneasily.

"Then I did. Surely, you remember our bargain for last night."

The memory of his face as he climaxed made her breathing hitch. "I do." What was his game? Why did he want to bargain with her?

"Then bargain with me."

Terri affected a coy smile. "No. I don't think I will."

He stared at her, his eyes narrowed. "Why not?"

"It doesn't please me to," she informed him. "From time to time, a woman changes her mind."

Davey pulled the horses to a stop and turned to her, bringing his mouth down on hers. His kiss was hot and hard, and his hands traveled beneath her cape to cup the breasts shelved with no covering in the half-bodice. He pulled away, panting an entreaty to the Mother, stroking the nipple slowly.

"You want more of this?" he inquired.

"You know I do."

He smiled, turning from her and taking up the reins. "Then you'll damned well bargain with me for it."

Terri gasped.

"What is it?" he taunted. "The bad girl has never heard coarse language before?" He whistled a signal to the horses, and they set out promptly.

She felt her cheeks heat. She hadn't; not even from her father and brother, and she knew *they* used such language often. "Not at all," she lied. "I was only surprised that you used it. You seem so concerned with my *other* purities."

It was his turn to blush. "Will you at least hear my bargain?" he asked.

"I will consider it," she replied carefully. That promised nothing.

"I will not take your barrier," he began.

Terri bit the inside of her cheek to keep from smiling. She raised an eyebrow as if she intended to fight that.

"I will not," he insisted. "In return..." He ranged his eyes over her hungrily, stopping them on the covered bodice of her gown. "I will show you every other pleasure. We will touch, taste...I will teach you."

"You will do anything *but* take my barrier?" she repeated. "Any other pleasure either of us desires, you will agree to? I have your vow?"

"You do, but I will have your vow that you will use no trickery or coercion to make me take the barrier."

"You have it," she promised.

He smiled, scooping the edge of the cape back long enough to latch his mouth around her nipple, sucking hard as if in seal of their bargain. Just as she moved to wind her fingers in his thick hair, he pulled back, smoothing the cape over her sensitive flesh and looking back to the road. He whistled a new tone, speeding the horses.

Terri grasped the edge of the seat, looking at the passing scenery wildly. "What are you doing?" she shrieked.

Davey chuckled. "Reaching Banbury Cross as quickly as I can."

"Why?"

"Do you have that sheer gown in green, Terri?"

"What? Why? Davey!" She tensed as he barreled around a tight turn like a young, racing rake.

"Do you?" he insisted.

"Yes! Why? Davey, please slow down," she begged. Many a rake had died or been maimed in this foolishness.

"Bargain with me."

"What? Are you insane?" Had she driven him too far?

"Convince me to slow. Convince me to—wait." A smile curved his lips.

"Anything that doesn't violate our previous bargain." She wouldn't do that.

Davey dragged back on the reins, slowing the carriage to a rocking gait. He grasped her head, laying a kiss on her lips, then smiled smugly.

"You will wear the green gown for me, and I..." He trailed his fingertips over her mound through her skirt. "I will taste you to my heart's content. I am not the only one who can be brought to climax."

Terri fought for a decent breath. "Until tonight, then."

"No, Terri. Until we reach our destination. We will claim fatigue and have our meals sent to our rooms." He pushed her cape back, his eyes feasting on her breasts and his tongue wetting his lips slowly. "Or I could take you here," he offered.

She shook her head, numb in disbelief. "The inn will be fine."

He pulled the cape shut again, turning from her. "Quickly," he managed.

* * *

Terri startled at the knock on the door, reminding herself that this was what she wanted. She squared her shoulders, strode to the door and opened it. She trailed her eyes down his body, memorizing every fingerwidth of his naked flesh, considering his erect length. The man was more than prepared for her. Her body responded as if he was already touching her.

"Your bed or mine?" he quipped.

"Yours." Her voice was rough. Terri cleared her throat and repeated herself.

Davey took her hand and kissed it gently. "Don't worry, Terri. I'm simply showing you how good it can feel to be a bad girl."

She brushed the curls off of her forehead, looking at the one stubborn holdout in exasperation. How could a woman seduce a man when she looked like a little girl?

He turned her into his arms, pinching her already tightened nipples lightly, as if proving her arousal to her. "You do want to be a bad girl for me, don't you?"

"Yes." More than anything.

"Then lay on the bed."

She eased down, careful not to trap too much of her gown beneath her, watching every breath he took avidly.

Davey clicked his tongue at her with a shake of his head. "I said you were to wear the gown, not the panties. Remove them."

Terri felt her skin flush all over her body. Standing before him in this outfit hadn't made her self-conscious. Stripping herself nude for him as she'd threatened wouldn't have. But now, he was directing her, and as stimulating as she found it, it made her awareness of her near nudity more acute.

She eased the gown up slowly, smiling as his gaze locked onto the movement and his cock surged upward in readiness. The panties slid down under that hot stare, warm even against her heated body.

His breathing was harsh and his voice gravelly. "You shaved for this?" he asked.

"My aunt... She arranged a treatment of wax," she admitted. And what an adventure that had been! Thankfully, her aunt had hinted to her father that a young lady about to become lady of a manor should have certain privacies, including rooms that men were not welcome to enter.

Aunt Goosie had been most helpful in planning this seduction. She'd visited seasonally for the last year on the pretense of schooling her heir in the expectations to be placed upon her at Goose Neck. She'd brought books about the act of love, discussed schedules for their journey, imparted memories and information that Terri might find useful, taken measurements for the dresses and gowns she used in her quest...any number of things that were invaluable in this venture.

He nodded as she slipped off the panties and laid her legs down again, spreading them for him. Terri hesitated then presented the panties to him.

Davey took them with a smile. "I believe I'll keep these," he murmured.

Her head spun at the idea of him carrying her panties in his pocket while they traveled. "Perhaps I should wear none beneath my dress tomorrow," she offered.

He sank to the bed between her ankles, tossing the panties to the bedside table. "If you do that, you will learn how stealthily I can make you climax while we drive."

"Then I will."

Terri swallowed hard as he lowered his body and laid a kiss over her clit.

"You intrigue me," he breathed, kissing it again.

"How so?" she managed.

"You are so intent on this course." His tongue stroked a slow circle around the nub, then over it, and she moaned. "And your aunt obviously supports it. That is more surprising."

"Aunt—" She gasped as he traced her seam with the tip of his tongue. "Goosie is unconventional," she reminded him.

And she wanted her heir to have her heart's desire. She insisted on it. Before Terri could claim her estate, she had to marry for love, and Davey was the only man she'd ever wanted to marry.

He drew her knees over his shoulders, his hot breath making her shiver in anticipation. "Why?"

Terri tipped her hips, begging silently for him to continue.

"Later," he growled. "We will discuss this later."

Her body exploded in pleasure as he traced every corner of her most intimate center. He licked, sucked, stroked and nibbled, murmuring endearments into her body as he took her higher.

Her breath caught as he sucked one of her outer lips into his mouth. His tongue slid just inside, and she cried out harshly. Her body pulsed in heat, and waves of delight coursed through her veins and over her nerves.

Then Davey was over her, his mouth parting hers, his cock pressed hard to her mound while his tongue delved inside. She wrapped her legs around his hips and her hands around his head, rubbing against him in invitation, offering herself fully.

She needed him. Even in climax, her body ached for him to fill it. It would never be enough until he did.

He laid a gentle kiss on her lips and eased her hands down. His eyes were half-mad in what she assumed was need, but he smiled. "You have to return to your room now," he stated calmly.

"But—"

"No arguments. In an hour, I'll call for you again—once our bodies have cooled. I'll taste the rest of you, and then..."

"Then?" she asked.

Davey ran a fingertip along her lower lip, looking as if he wished to devour her. "Any pleasure either of us wishes... Tell me you're willing to use your sweet mouth as you did your hand last night," he requested.

"Oh, yes." Her aunt told her that a man thus motivated would do nearly anything for his lady.

* * *

Aunt Goosie was wrong. Either her lover had been a most biddable man or Davey possessed an iron will. He'd brought her to bliss a second time, then came in her mouth, his seed a potent elixir that made her want him all the more—and still he sent her away, aching and needing. They never had resumed their discussion.

She'd worn no panties that morning as she'd promised, and he'd tortured her nearly the whole way from Banbury Cross to the Dove and Wren Inn at Plum Pasture. His hands had been glorious, stroking her core with her skirts folded neatly in her lap, uncovered to the sun and wind save when another carriage neared and she'd cover up with a lap quilt.

He knew how to please a woman and how to leave one wanting. In the long hours—the beast tarried horribly!—until they reached their stop, he'd only allowed her release once, capturing her scream in a kiss and smiling his victory. He'd stilled every other time she'd neared climax, his hand laid on her thigh, fending off her attempts to please herself until her body unwound.

Now the knock came again. She rushed to it, determined to convince him to consummate with her tonight. She'd go insane if they didn't. Worse, they were running out of time. Even with their slowed pace, they had only their stops at Reigate and Dawson of Dover Inn left before they reached her aunt's home. After that, things became much more complex, her aunt needing to find reasons for him to stay on for a few days, explaining his presence in the main house...

She couldn't trick him into the deed. Not only had she promised not to use subterfuge, but what sort of relationship would they have if she resorted to that? No. She had to offer herself and allow him to follow through on his needs.

Terri pulled the door wide, throwing herself into Davey's arms and enticing him into a passionate kiss. They backed into his room, heading for the bed in a haze of touching. He lay down and reached to pull her over him. She hesitated, dragging off the red gown and dropping it to the floor.

Davey stared at her, his eyes wide, nodding stiffly. She sank to the bed over him, pressing her hips to his. He hissed out a breath, his muscles going taut beneath her.

She pressed her lips to his chest. He loved that, and she loved to hear him moan. He didn't disappoint her.

In moments, they'd resumed their frantic pace. Hands and mouths explored, mated, moved on to other pursuits then returned again. Bodies slid against each other. Whispers teased lips and skin. Limbs and fingers entwined, and bodies turned and arched against each other.

Finally, Terri made her move. She stroked him, guiding him to her body, capturing his length between her thighs and moving against it, spreading her moisture over him and using the lubricant to its best effect.

"Mother alive," he breathed. "It's so good."

"Please, Davey." She'd promise anything, if he'd agree.

He pushed away, dragging a hand through his already-mussed honey hair, shaking his head adamantly though his cock pulsed in excitement. "We can't. Return to your room. I'll... In an hour."

"As you wish." She managed a smile that felt strained and pushed from the bed, sauntering to her room without donning the translucent gown, giving him a full view of her backside. Terri looked back at the doorway, smiling at his pained expression. "I won't ask you to take my barrier again," she vowed.

Davey let out his breath in a rush of air. "Thank you."

She closed the door behind her, looking at the vibrating dildo in misery. How many times had she come to this moment and backed away? At least after each time he'd proclaimed the hour wait. How many hours had she stared at the damnable toys her aunt had arranged and inwardly shuddered at what she was considering? At least half the night.

"Too many," she decided. Davey was what she wanted. He wanted her, as well. It screamed in every touch and every kiss. If this was the only hurdle between them, she would do what he wouldn't.

Terri stretched out on the bed, considering how best to accomplish the task. The books said it was less painful when a woman was highly aroused. That should be the first step.

In her already sensitized state, that wasn't difficult. Terri took the dildo in her hand, switching it onto the lowest setting and rubbing it along the cleft where Davey had been minutes earlier. She closed her eyes, imagining his body next to hers, his hand following the paths and doing the things her free hand did.

She could almost imagine his voice, urging her on, telling her how he'd make her come. Then she was there, awash in bliss yet aching for him. That time, there was no resistance when she eased the head into her—until the searing pain registered.

Terri pulled the toy free with a yelp of pain, pressing her thighs together and curling to her side, her eyes shut tight. The book lied! Arousal did nothing to relieve the pain; or if it did, she would wish taking a barrier without benefit of it on no woman.

She opened her eyes and stared at the bloodied toy in exhaustion, switching the vibrator off. She'd done it. She just prayed it would work.

* * *

Davey groaned at the soft sounds coming from Terri's room. She was trying to drive him stark raving mad, and she was doing an excellent job of it. She was pleasuring herself, a good show of it by the sounds he could make out through the door.

This hour was supposed to allow me to cool the fire for her, but her antics are making that impossible. "It would serve her right if I made her wait an extra hour," he grumbled.

But, he wouldn't do that. Even if he steeled himself to the wait, chances were good that Terri would do this to him again, and a two-hour erection wasn't his idea of a good time.

A wild image of him striding into her room and presenting his aching cock for her to suck dry taunted him. He rejected it. If he walked into that room and saw her pleasuring herself, he would be on her in a trice and deep inside her to boot. No. His self-control would only stand so much.

Davey considered stroking himself, letting her hear his climax. He rejected that, too. He wasn't blind to the fact that he wanted *her*. He couldn't imagine beating off when he could have Terri.

I can't have her! Damn it all! Until he knew for certain that her aunt would approve of the match, he couldn't have her. By the laws of...

She yelped, and he jumped in response, his heart pounding. That was pain. It had to be pain.

He vaulted to his feet, hesitating for just a moment. "Terri?" he called out, praying

she'd answer.

She didn't. He headed for her room, cursing himself as a fool. In this state of mind, seeing her naked again would be deadly to his tenuous control. Davey opened the door between them without knocking, frustrated and wary of some trick. He stopped, staring at her in shock.

Terri was curled on her side on the bed, a blood-streaked sex toy fisted in her hand.

He darted to her side, pulling the foul thing from her fingers and tossing it toward the fire. He eased her to her back, spreading her legs gently and wincing at the trickle of blood from her sex.

"Dear Mother! What have you done?" he asked, reaching automatically for a washcloth and the pitcher of water. He wished that it was warmed, but even room-temperature water was better than none.

"I took my barrier," she replied in a meek voice, as if he needed her to tell him that.

Well, I did ask, he reminded himself. He wiped away the blood tenderly. "Why did you do this?" he asked, forcing back his anger and confusion studiously. She was in pain, and his fury would only frighten her.

A deep flush tinted her body. "You said you wouldn't. You said anything else—"

"Terri!" He reined in his upset again. "Have you no concept of what you've done?"

"You said--"

"I *said* I wouldn't take your barrier, because I will not compromise you. Unless I am certain your aunt will permit a marriage—"

"Is that what your objection is?" she asked in seeming amusement.

"Of course! Mother alive, woman! By the laws of Goose Neck—and by your position as heir, that law does apply—you may not enter into a union—"

"I know."

"Then, whv—"

She touched his face, laughing heartily.

"Terri," he barked. "This is not amusing. I will not compromise you, and I will not live as a kept man. Without your aunt's approval—"

She laughed harder. "It is funny," she assured him. "We should have finished the discussion last night."

"I don't understand," he admitted.

"You realized my aunt supported this seduction. Aunt Goosie is unconventional, but she is not in the habit of endorsing empty relationships, Davey."

He fought for a decent breath.

Terri smiled, touching his lips. "I already have her permission to marry you."

"In writing?" he asked urgently.

"In my case." She was positively gleeful about it.

"Why? Why would she approve your marriage to a servant?"

Her smile faltered. "Do you know why Aunt Goosie has no children of her own?" she asked solemnly.

Davey shook his head. "I told you that I know almost nothing about her. No one does."

"She loved a man her father disapproved of, a simple farmer who lived outside Goose Neck. Since he would not grant her permission to marry whom she wished, she refused to wed at all. She saw her love in secret for many years. Sadly, he was lost to an accident before her father died. She never had the chance to marry him, and she loved him dearly.

"So, you see... As her heir, I am not..." She glanced at him, wringing her hands.

"Not?" he prompted her.

"In order to inherit, I must do what Aunt Goosie never did."

"Marry?" he guessed. Was he a means to an end?

She shook her head frantically, her eyes wide. "Marry for love. Only for love."

He started to speak then hesitated, fighting back a wide grin. "You love me?"

"Why else would I do all the foolish things I've done in the last few days?" She grimaced. "Good Lady! When I threatened to expose my breasts to the passing carriage, I thought I'd die. And—" She motioned to the sex toy in misery. "I would have given anything to have you—"

Davey kissed her, a slow, solemn kiss. "I will."

"But I've already—"

"We shall see." If she pulled back from the pain early and any of her barrier remained, it was his to take. If not, he'd still gift her with the pleasure she'd not felt with that damned toy.

* * *

Terri wound her hands in his hair as Davey settled over her. He tossed the washcloth away then kissed her again. As in his room, they touched and kissed, rolled and held to each other.

"Davey," she pleaded. "When—"

"You will know when," he vowed.

His stamina astounded her. Long after she ached for him, he still made no move to enter her.

She gasped, closing her eyes as her body exploded in pleasure. "Please," she begged. "Davey, I'll die if—"

He thrust into her, one slow slide punctuated by a stab of pain. She jumped in response. He stilled, crooning to her. Terri moaned, the pulse beat in her sheath overwhelming the pain and washing it away.

"So full," she whispered.

Davey chuckled. "Not yet. I'll fill you, if you're ready for me."

She opened her eyes. "More?"

"As you wish."

He eased back then returned, deeper but gently. There was no pain, no discomfort.

"Are you ready for me?" he asked, a crooked smile lighting his eyes.

"Yes."

Davey lifted her knees over his forearms, fitting her tight to his hips. "We shall see." He hesitated, seemingly stunned.

"What is it?"

"You said you love me," he breathed.

"Yes. I did." Her heart ached. What did his shock mean?

"I didn't tell you I love you in return. I won't do this until you know I do. I can't. I—" She laughed and sobbed at the same time. "I know. Please..."

His smile returned, and he started moving again. Terri screamed in pleasure as the new position allowed him to thrust deeper.

Davey groaned, moving faster, deeper, his hands caressing her thighs. Then she felt it. His seed was hot, drugging. They cried out together.

He cradled her to his chest, pressing kisses to her forehead, stroking the curl over her eyes. "I love this curl," he murmured. "When you pin your hair up to play lady of the manor, you *will* ensure that this curl always escapes—for me."

She chuckled. "Shall we bargain for so odd a request?" she teased.

"There are other positions that will allow me to take you deeper," he offered.

"I believe we have struck a bargain."

"I believe we have."

About the Author

With a BS in accounting and computer programming, backgrounds in everything from teaching to tracking fraud suspects, it is a strange irony that Brenna Lyons will become best known for her first love, writing. Brenna is an award-winning bestseller in the field of e-published and independent fantasy/science fantasy, straight genre fiction through dark romance and sensual/erotic romance, journalism and poetry.

She became the youngest Taproot winner of her time at age eleven, earned an externship in poetry at the University of Pittsburgh at age fifteen and took first place in a competitive essay contest at seventeen. In her first three years published in novels, Brenna has finaled for five EPPIES, three PEARLS (taking Ho norable Mention, second to Angela Knight), two CAPAS, a DREAM REALM AWARD and a lucky thirteen P&E Top Tens.

A former Navy wife, Brenna now lives with her husband, three children and a zoo of pets in Haverhill, MA. She's the current president of EPIC and belongs to WRW, EWAG, ERWA and Broad Universe. She loves talking to readers and can be reached via her site at http://www.brennalyons.com.