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Tuxedo Tryst

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# *TUXEDO TRYST*

**Nikki Soarde**

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## **Chapter One**

Jake balanced the champagne flute in his fingers and tucked his other hand neatly into the pocket of his trousers. He sighed with satisfaction.

The new tuxedo had been well worth the money. He savored the silky texture of the finely blended wool and the luxurious drape of the tail-length cut. The white wing-collar shirt hugged his torso, the trim-fitting vest and jacket accenting his broad shoulders and narrow waist. A tux was about far more than formality and fashion. It was about accenting the best of who and what a man was. It was all about image and success.

And that was why he had indulged himself in the Oscar de la Renta creation. It was a statement, a manifestation of what he hoped to achieve in the new year. He looked forward to a year of new beginnings, new adventures and grand successes—in the business world at least. Relationships and affairs of the heart were another matter entirely.

His eyes scanned the enormous foyer. White mini-lights glittered among the miles of white organza draped from the ceiling. Red roses and white lilies graced every corner, and a ten-foot ice sculpture depicting the nude forms of a man and woman entwined in an embrace with their faces turned hopefully skyward served as the eye-catching and provocative centerpiece for the Grand Opening Gala and Charity Ball for the newly renovated home of Valerian Enterprises. The décor and the decorations were spectacular yet not ostentatious, and in truth, Jake was impressed with a company that could strike such a delicate balance between the two.

It did take some time, however, to find his lady amidst all the faces and all the glitz and glamour of celebratory decorations and decadence, but at last he spotted Rheanne lounging by the chocolate fountain. She was engaged in animated conversation with a

gaggle of other women in glittering gowns and excessive makeup. He'd been with Rheanne long enough to recognize at least two other women from the accounting department where she worked, and he decided this was as good a time as any to rejoin his date.

He'd left her to speak to an old college friend whom he'd spotted in the sea of strange. He'd enjoyed the brief trip down memory lane, but now the respite was over – and there inlay the problem. It had felt like a *respite*. He'd needed a break from Rheanne – needed a break from the woman he was considering moving in with – and that spoke volumes.

He raked his fingers through his thick mop of ash-blond hair and sighed in resignation. He'd come to his decision and was only now allowing himself to acknowledge it. In all honesty, he'd probably known for weeks. It had just taken him a while to...accept the fact that yet another relationship of his was doomed to failure.

Not that he was a Casanova, by any means. But he rarely found himself wanting for a date, and had had his share of long-term liaisons. It was just that they all seemed destined to blow up in his face eventually. And when he'd been particularly frustrated with the female of the species, he'd even indulged in the very occasional dalliance – on the other side of the sexual fence. Not that those indulgences had been any more successful than his involvements with the fairer sex. But they had been...intriguing. And highly satisfying.

He caught himself smiling as he recalled those affairs, but then the smile fell away as he reminded himself that it was hardly the time for a stroll down memory lane. He had to deal with Rheanne, and soon. Not tonight however. He wasn't an idiot, after all. He'd break up with her tomorrow. After they had their fill of each other tonight.

He grinned. Rheanne may not have a lot of intellectual prowess or flexibility, but her physical talents were another matter entirely.

He tipped up his champagne flute and drained it in preparation for facing Rheanne's friends. He was just about to head her way when a sultry voice stopped him in his tracks.

"Not many men can wear red and pull it off."

She was a vision in gleaming green silk and sparkling emerald-cut diamonds. Jet-black hair had been swept up in a luxurious arrangement that left a cascade of curls tumbling down her back but exposed a pair of well-toned shoulders and a long, swan-like neck. Green, almond-shaped eyes held his gaze. They were hypnotic—like a cat ready to pounce on its prey. In fact everything about her reminded him of a cat. He mistrusted her immediately.

He smiled, touching the bow tie knotted snugly at his throat and skimming his hand down over the satin nipped-waist vest. "It seemed fitting for the occasion. I hoped I could, as you say, pull it off."

Even her smile was cat-like as she trailed a blood-red fingernail down his chest. "Actually, I was thinking it might be more fun if *I* pulled it off."

Honestly stunned by the blatant advance, Jake felt his mouth drop open. He was still fumbling for words when he was rescued by the whine of a microphone being turned on.

"Good evening, everyone," said a woman from the dais that had been erected in front of the large bank of south-facing windows. "Good evening and welcome to the Valerian Enterprises Grand Opening Gala and Charity Ball."

A round of enthusiastic applause followed and beside him Jake heard the woman mutter, "Oh lovely. The requisite speech from the throne."

He turned to her and whispered, "Pardon?"

"Evan Valerian," she said as if that explained everything.

He shook his head, confused.

“The CEO of the company?” she added, her tone hinting at his idiocy. “He loves giving pep talks, patting himself on the back and generally hearing the sound of his own voice.”

Jake was surprised. His impression from Rheanne was that Evan Valerian was well liked and respected by his employees. Jake ran his own business and hadn’t had to deal with employers for years. But part of the reason he had gone into business for himself was because he’d had a string of horrible experiences with inept managers and short-sighted CEOs. From what he’d heard, Valerian Enterprises was top-notch, one of the best, and he had tremendous respect for a company that did right by the people who filled its offices.

He arched his eyebrows. “Not a very nice way to talk about your boss and the man who’s footing the bill for this party and handing out profit-sharing bonuses this year.”

She snorted, raised her glass to her lips. “He’s not my boss, honey. He’s my husband.”

“Oh.” He snagged another glass of champagne from a nearby waiter. “I see.” And he did. He saw perfectly.

He turned to watch as the man of the hour ascended the dais—and promptly forgot all about the snarling cougar beside him.

Evan Valerian had style. He too wore a tux, and thanks to Jake’s own recent shopping experience, he recognized the suit as a Ralph Lauren. It was a classic cut, chosen, no doubt, to suit Evan’s somewhat more distinguished station of authority. A platinum vest set off the white pinwhale shirt and satin-notch lapels. A fine line of silver edged the white bow tie and added a most delicate touch of whimsy. Although he probably tipped the scales at close to forty, Evan boasted a full head of chestnut brown hair and the physique of a man half his age. Which the suit highlighted admirably.

But it was the vivid blue eyes set in an animated face that really caught Jake’s attention. They looked out over the crowd, taking everything in and conveying a sense of warmth and sincerity.



“Good evening, everyone,” said Evan at last, his voice commanding despite its soft timbre. “And welcome. As much as I hate long, boring thank-you speeches and have no intention of handing out gold-plated, anatomically incorrect gold statues...”

There was a ripple of laughter and the woman beside him muttered, “God spare me.”

“I do have some announcements, acknowledgements and even a few awards to hand out before we get to the good stuff like prime rib and Grand Marnier. However, before I dive into the mundane details of Christmas bonuses, profit-sharing percentages and employee recognition I would like to propose a toast.”

He continued to speak, his soft baritone commanding the absolute silence and unwavering attention of those in attendance. And Jake was no exception. He remained riveted throughout the speech and presentations, unable to drag his gaze away from a man who seemed to epitomize everything Jake had ever aspired to be.

He was almost sorry when the last plaque was handed out, the final toast made, and Evan finally handed the crowd over to the party coordinator to make sure everyone found their way to the buffet tables that had been set up while he spoke.

“Thank God that’s over,” muttered Mrs. Valerian. “I’m starving for some good beef.”

Tossing him a lascivious glance, she looped her hand through Jake’s arm even as Jake watched Evan descend from the dais and disappear into the shadows beyond. He chose not to acknowledge the double entendre in her words.

“Would you mind leading the way?” she asked when he made no move to follow the crowd.

“Uh...” He dragged his gaze back to her face. “I’m sorry, but I need to find my date.”

“Nonsense. I’m sure she’s fine. I need someone strong to hold my glass while I get my food.” She massaged his biceps. “But we have to eat quickly because I have to leave by eight. And that won’t leave a lot of time for...dessert.”

Gently, but without equivocation, he extricated his arm from hers. "I'm sorry but I really can't. I have to find my date."

She stood there, gaping at him, obviously not accustomed to being brushed off.

Jake was just bracing himself for a hefty dose of venom when, apparently having decided he wasn't worth the effort, she lifted her nose, turned on her four-inch stiletto heels and marched off.

He had barely breathed a sigh of relief when he felt a sharp fingernail jab his shoulder.

Instantly irritated, he whirled, ready to do battle, but stopped cold. "Oh. Rheanne. There you are. I was just about to —"

"What the hell was that?"

"Pardon?"

Scowling, she pointed toward Mrs. Valerian. "That. What were you doing with *her*?"

His jaw muscles clenched. "I wasn't *doing* anything. I was just talking. And I don't recall there being a law against socializing at a company *social* function."

Her scowl remained plastered in place. "An attractive man does not just *talk* to Nadine Valerian."

"Oh. So you know her then. And you would have preferred I snub the boss's wife?"

"She had her claws on you. And you didn't seem to mind."

He opened his mouth to argue the point that considering she had been almost fifty feet away he didn't quite see how she could have discerned whether he "minded" or if he was drooling down the front of his shirt. But then he stopped himself. What was he doing? He'd already decided he and Rheanne were over. Why try to patch things up when he only planned to rip it apart again tomorrow morning?

Maybe this was for the best. But how exactly to handle it? He didn't want to ruin her evening. He knew how much she'd spent on that dress, and wanted her to be able to continue to enjoy her party.

He gave her his best "I'm innocent" smile. "Well, I couldn't protest too much, since she expressed an interest in buying some wine."

Jake sold wine. That was his business. He produced a catalogue highlighting the finest vintages from around the world, and distributed them to restaurants, bars and any customer who was blessed with a discerning taste in wines and the means to indulge it.

She rolled her eyes. "Right. Sure."

"No. Really. I admit she was very flirtatious, but her interest in the newest Chilean merlot seemed sincere." He made a show of checking his watch. "She wants to meet with me in an hour to go over the catalogue."

"Tonight?"

He shrugged. "I'm still building a business, baby. I can't turn down any opportunity."

Rheanne studied him as if trying to decide if he could really be that gullible. "I know that woman, Jake. I've heard all about Nadine Valerian, and the only interest she has in your wine is if she can drink it from your navel."

He grasped her hands, brought them to his lips. "I have no doubt she has...ulterior motives. But she's a very wealthy woman, and she said she is thinking of buying a restaurant. This could be a big contract for me." He shrugged. "If I have to play her a little...so be it."

"So you're going to meet with her."

He nodded, glanced over the crowd and spotted her already licking Beluga caviar from her fingers. "I can play the game, but I'll be good, hon. I've walked through my share of cougars' dens." He grinned. "And come out unscathed."

She frowned. "That's not what I've heard."

He kissed her on the forehead, the gesture as absent and patronizing as he could manage. He released her hands. "Don't believe everything you hear, sweetheart. But right now I've got to run down to the office and pick up a catalogue and a couple of sample bottles."

"What? Now?"

"Sorry." He was already walking away. "I'll be back and finished in time to dance with my best girl." He blew her a kiss over the crowd and headed for the entrance. When he was sure he was concealed enough by the crowd he ducked down and slipped back through the milieu, heading for the stairs that led to the main offices on the upper floors.

In an hour Rheanne would see Mrs. Valerian leave and would assume she was going to meet with Jake.

Jake on the other hand would spend the next couple of hours exploring and possibly napping on one of the leather couches he knew adorned the lobby on the third floor. Then he'd come back at around ten o'clock, with his tux sufficiently rumpled to convince Rheanne that he had *not* been a man of his word and had indeed indulged in a little pussy-tussle with a friendly cougar.

She would have had a few hours of relatively worry-free enjoyment with her friends, and when he came back having proved he was exactly what she thought he was, she would be sufficiently indignant with self-righteous rage to dull the blow.

A good plan, he thought, all in all. And would save him the horror of sitting across from her in some overpriced restaurant and watching her dissolve into tears after he told her their plans to share bathroom space had evaporated in a puff of smoke.

He took the stairs two at a time and ascended into the murky half light of vacant offices and blank computer screens.

\* \* \* \* \*

Evan Valerian slapped the file folder closed and blew out a sigh of resignation. He should really get back to the party. It was his night to mix with the people he rarely saw, to pat backs and extend good wishes and generally touch base with the team of people who had made his company into the success it was today. The problem was his mind was elsewhere.

He glanced at the computer monitor, at the tiny envelope blinking on the bottom of his screen. He had mail. Important mail. Mail he needed to open. Mail he was too terrified to read.

Closing his eyes against things he had no wish to see, he rocked back in his chair and swiveled to face the window. The night was cold and crystal clear. A full moon hung in the sky, so big and bright, it seemed to hover just on the other side of the window. As if he could reach right through the glass and touch it. Its light glittered on the snow-covered streets and rooftops, all but eclipsing the effect of the thousands of mini-lights that still adorned the trees lining the streets. Christmas was a month past, but the lights remained all winter, adding much-needed sparkle to the long cold nights here in Toronto.

He smiled, unable to remain untouched by the beautiful scene spread out before him and the festive mood of the party rolling on without him downstairs.

The party.

The party reminded him of his wife.

And thinking of his wife reminded him of the e-mail.

Unable to put it off any longer, he swiveled his chair to face his computer and clicked on the cheerfully blinking icon.

## Chapter Two

"Finally!" Jake breathed the word on a sigh of relief. It had taken him almost fifteen minutes to find the lounge he'd had in mind. Of course, now that he thought about it, it made sense that the arrangement of leather couches and solid oak occasional tables would be tucked into the spacious south corner near the executive offices. There was even a mini-bar complete with a gleaming espresso machine, stainless steel fridge and stacks of heavy stoneware mugs and fashionably tiny cups.

As much as he enjoyed a good cup of espresso, he had no interest in upping his adrenaline level. He chose instead to stretch out on one of the luxurious calfskin couches. But no sooner did he remove his jacket and settle his butt on the cushion, than a loud exclamation of, "God *damn* it! God damn her to hell!" echoed through the dimly lit space.

Startled, he vaulted from the couch and glanced around the room, looking for the source of the outburst. He saw no one at first, but quickly traced the continued string of muffled epithets to the large corner office on the far side of the room. The door was open, so he indulged his curiosity and peeked inside.

There was another loud exclamation and he barely had time to duck out of the way of a crystal champagne flute that came whizzing toward his head and crashed against the door jamb.

"Hey!" he shouted, leaping aside. "What the fuck?"

"What?" echoed the other man's voice. "What the hell?"

Jake stood in the middle of the doorway, panting and glaring at the shards of crystal that littered the floor at his feet. "What was that for?"

"Jesus, I'm sorry."

Evan Valerian—Jake had recognized him instantly—rounded his desk and crossed the room to Jake. He placed a hand on Jake's shoulder. "Are you all right?"

"Yeah, yeah. I'm fine. Just startled." Jake took a deep breath and rolled his shoulders.

"Good." Evan gave Jake's arm a gentle squeeze before releasing him. He smiled, lighting up his face and sending a strange shiver through Jake's gut. "I'm sorry about that. I thought I was alone. I wasn't aiming at you."

Jake quirked a half smile. "Well, that's good to know. But it would hardly be the first time my head was the target of well-aimed stemware."

Evan frowned, obviously confused.

"Women." Jake gave a resigned sigh. "I tend to have that effect on them."

Evan's shoulders relaxed, a spontaneous chuckle bubbled up from his chest. "Is that so?"

"Unfortunately, yes. Fortunately, however, I have good reflexes."

Evan kept his smile. "I noticed."

Their gazes held for a moment. A moment that stretched just a little too long.

Jake cleared his throat. "So, if you don't mind my asking, what was that all about?"

Evan opened his mouth to speak but stopped himself. He shook his head in confusion. "I think maybe I should be the one asking questions here."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, for starters I know you don't work here. So what are—"

"Oh!" Jake held up a hand, disgusted with himself. "I'm sorry. I guess I don't really have any business being up here, do I?"

Evan Valerian just continued studying him, his gaze—in fact his mere presence—more than a little unsettling.

Jake cleared his throat. "I had a bit of an... issue with my girlfriend at the party, and just wanted to give her—to give both of us—some space for a while."

"Your girlfriend works here, I assume?"

"Yes. Rheanne Dumont. She works in —"

"Accounts receivable. I know. I've heard good things about her." Evan granted him a half smile. "And I guess that means I won't be calling security to haul your ass out of here."

Jake grinned. "That's good to hear." His respect for the man deepening by the moment, Jake stuffed his hands in his pockets and decided he had nothing to lose. "So?"

"So...what?"

"Who were you aiming at?"

"Pardon?"

Jake nodded toward the remnants of Evan's rage. "The glass. You confirmed that you weren't aiming at me. So who *were* you trying to hit?"

Evan chuckled softly, shook his head. "No, no. You don't want to hear my troubles."

"Sure I do."

"No you don't. You're just being polite because I decided not to inflict bodily harm."

"No, I'm not being polite." Feeling bold, Jake stepped farther into the room. "I'd really like to know."

Evan frowned. "Why?"

"I don't know. I've got two hours to kill and nothing better to do. And I have little doubt your life is far more fascinating than mine." Silently he added, *And there's no place else I'd rather be at this moment.* As true as it may be, he doubted it was a good idea to share that thought with the CEO.

"My life really isn't all that fascinating."



Jake shrugged. "Be that as it may, I'd still like to hear. If you're in the mood to tell me, that is."

Evan studied him for a moment, as if trying to discern whether he was sincere. But apparently he decided Jake was. "Would you like a drink? Some Grand Marnier, perhaps? Or sweet vermouth?"

"Sure. Sweet vermouth sounds good. I haven't had it in ages."

Evan headed to the polished oak mini-bar that lined one wall. "I grew up with it. Used to drink it with my father all the time. Now I find I reach for it whenever life seems...insurmountable."

Jake followed him, chose a seat in one of the wing-backed chairs that faced the bar. "And this is one of those times?"

"Yes. I suppose it is." Evan poured two tumblers and handed one to Jake. They clinked glasses and each took a sip. "I was aiming at my wife."

Jake caught his breath. "Oh. I see."

"You've met her, I know."

Jake's eyebrows arched. "You saw her...talking to me."

"I did. And don't worry. I'm sure I know exactly how the conversation went, and it doesn't matter to me one way or the other how it turned out."

"It doesn't?"

He shook his head. "No. It doesn't. Nadine and I have been separated for six months."

"Really? Rheanne never mentioned that."

"You're serious with Rheanne, are you?"

Jake arched an eyebrow. "Are you asking about my intentions towards one of your employees?"

"Oh. No. I just..." He shook his head in disgust. "I just put my foot in my mouth, it seems."

Jake suppressed a smile. "Well, I'll let you in on something. I've been seeing her for about six months, but it seems that tonight will mark the end of our relationship."

"Ah. I see. A lot of that going around tonight, it sounds like."

Jake nodded, waiting.

"All right. Yes. I've been very closed-mouthed about the separation. I didn't want it getting out to staff until I knew...how things would go."

"I get the feeling you just figured that out."

"You could say that, yes."

Evan sipped from his glass and stared at it, apparently lost in thought. Because Jake sensed that he wanted to talk about it, but needed encouragement, he stood and joined Evan at the bar. He helped himself to a little more vermouth and leaned against the bar facing Evan. "So did she have an affair?"

"Oh yes. Many of them. But that's not what I was upset about."

"Wow."

Evan shrugged. "The affairs were the tip of the iceberg, and the original reason for the separation. But what I found out tonight..." He drained his glass. "What I found out tonight is enough to make a man want to wrap his hands around a woman's neck and —" He closed his eyes in obvious misery. When he opened them again they were touched with a sadness that wrapped around Jake's heart. "Don't worry. I have no designs on my wife's life."

"I wasn't worried."

Evan nodded. "She stole from me. And has *been* stealing from me almost from the moment we exchanged our vows. It's not that much, really. Not enough to break me or seriously affect the welfare of the company, but it's..." He shook his head, crossed to the enormous picture windows behind his desk.

"It's the betrayal."

"Yes. That and the fact that I thought *I* was smarter than that. Maybe I'm more angry at myself than her." He leaned against the glass, stared out into the night. "I don't know."

Jake refilled the glass Evan had set down and carried both glasses over to Evan.

Evan accepted it and thanked him as Jake leaned a hip against the desk. Barely a foot separated them.

Jake gave in to impulse and placed a hand on Evan's arm. "You trusted someone who was supposed to love you. There's nothing stupid about that."

"How about marrying your secretary after your first wife runs off with the pool boy? Is that stupid?"

Jake allowed himself a small smile. "No. Cliché, maybe. But not stupid."

Evan was smiling again, and it surprised Jake how much that pleased him.

Gradually the smiles fell away, however, as the two men continued studying each other. "One thing I'll say about Nadine," said Evan at last, his voice soft and strangely hypnotic. "She has good taste. She always picked the best young men out of the crowd to sink her claws into."

In that moment something passed between them. An unspoken communication that was as clear and vibrant as the winter night beyond the glass.

Jake felt his pulse quicken. "She didn't sink them in very deep," he whispered. "I came away without even a scratch."

Evan stepped closer, positioning himself directly in front of Jake. He set his tumbler on the desk, the glass making a soft tap against the polished wood. He ran his hand lightly up Jake's arm to rest on his shoulder. His hands were large and long-fingered, his palm warming through the fabric of Jake's shirt.

"Glad to hear it. I would have no interest in sampling her leftovers."

Jake's heart was hammering now, pounding against the cage of his chest as if trying to escape. He said nothing, focusing only on breathing and savoring the touch of a man he'd never dreamed would be interested in men, let alone the likes of him.

"What's your name?" Evan's other hand traced the line of Jake's right arm, exploring and savoring and sending bolts of electricity zinging through Jake's gut.

"Jake," he breathed. "Jake Maynard."

"You have excellent taste, Jake Maynard. This tux is exquisite." His right hand remained firmly on Jake's shoulder, as if establishing possession, while his other coasted down Jake's chest, over his ribs and belly. "It suits you."

"I was afraid the red might be too much."

Evan shook his head slowly. "No. It's perfect." He unbuttoned the top button of Jake's red silk vest. Moved on to the second. "And what do you do, Jake Maynard?"

The vest fell open and Jake's eyes wanted to close with pleasure when Evan used both of those exquisite hands to bracket his rib cage. But he managed to keep them open long enough to see the knowing smile spread over Evan's face.

"Besides work out rigorously, that is," he added.

"Wine. Oh Christ." Evan had already undone several shirt buttons and his hands were on Jake's bare skin now.

Evan leaned in, his lapels brushing Jake's chest, his mouth next to Jake's ear. His breath was hot on Jake's neck. "What about wine?"

"I...I sell it."

"Really? To whom?" He drew his tongue over Jake's earlobe, his hand cruised over Jake's abs.

"To only the most discerning—fuck!" Evan had found his cock. He'd slipped his hand beneath Jake's belt and wrapped his fingers around it, the touch firm but the strokes gentle. His groan was low and throaty.

Jake lifted his gaze and found Evan's deep blue eyes locked on his. The crinkles around them conveyed his smile. "I'm one of the most discerning fucks you're going to find."

But Jake wasn't in the mood to laugh. He said only, "Please," and was rewarded with finally feeling the heat of Evan's mouth on his. The kiss was hungry, voracious. Fierce. A crush of lips and lust and passion. When they broke apart, Jake had the sudden and urgent need to expose skin. Quickly. *Now!*

But when his hands flew to the lapels of Evan's jacket, Evan caught them in mid-flight. "No. Not yet."

Some deep part of him thrilling to the torturous denial of his desires, he decided to bargain a little. "The jacket? Just let me take off the jacket."

Evan considered that a moment before nodding and allowing Jake to very slowly slip the jacket from his shoulders and toss it in a heap in the corner. They stood chest to chest, the fabric of Evan's vest a silky, and infuriating, barrier between them.

"You take very good care of yourself," observed Evan, slipping the shirt and vest from Jake's shoulders. His hands followed the path of the shirt, trailing down Jake's back in a sensual exploration of skin, muscle and sinew. "I appreciate that."

Jake swallowed, shifted his hips so that their groins touched. Jake could feel Evan's substantial erection straining against the material of his trousers, and Jake knew that Evan could feel his.

His mouth a breath from Evan's, he asked, "Do you appreciate *that*?"

Evan's fingers dug into Jake's back. "I'd like to."

"Show me."

In a heartbeat Evan had undone Jake's belt and zipper and freed his cock. Evan caught Jake's wrists and took a half step back, his grip unrelenting as he held Jake's hands still and admired. He stared, his gaze frankly hungry as he took a deep,

replenishing breath. Jake longed to see what lay beneath that shirt, but knew his time would come.

Evan dragged his gaze to Jake's, his expression a question mark.

Jake nodded and the next moment his straining cock was in Evan Valerian's talented mouth.

## **Chapter Three**

Evan had never dreamed he'd find himself here again. It had been years since he'd indulged his deviant—as his first wife had called it—passion. He'd confided it to her one night when he was particularly vulnerable after a round of intense sex and too much wine—and he'd regretted it ever since. She'd blamed the marriage breakup on his bisexual tendencies. Saying she could never look at him the same way again once she'd found out. But he suspected it had been a convenient excuse and nothing more. She'd never loved him—at least not like he thought a wife should love a husband—and her abandonment had hurt him more deeply than he cared to acknowledge even now.

Not that he had any interest in thinking about her at all right now. He had other, much more appealing things on his mind.

Jake was exactly the kind of man Evan desired. Young, fit, intelligent, with a sense of self and style. It had come through loud and clear, even from across the lobby, the classic-cut tux combined with the flamboyant red vest and tie a vivid testimony to who and what Jake Maynard was.

It didn't hurt that he had one of the most beautiful cocks Evan had ever seen. Or tasted.

He drew his tongue down the length of it, teasing and tasting and savoring the soft groans of pleasure that reverberated from Jake's chest. It was thick and hard and long enough to make a man's mouth water with envy. He wrapped his right hand around the base, which was clean-shaved and baby-smooth, massaging gently as he swirled his tongue around the tip. A bead of cum pearled at the slit and he licked it away before taking the cock deeply into his mouth and sucking gently.

He could see Jake's fingers gripping the edge of the desk, the knuckles turning white in his efforts to keep a hold on the sanity Evan suspected was beginning to slip away.

Evan raised his other hand and pressed it to Jake's chest. He thrilled to the rapid tattoo of Jake's heartbeat against his hand, to the way Jake's skin grew damp beneath his palm. The motions of Evan's mouth accelerated, and Jake's breathing raced to catch up. Jake's hand released the lip of the desk and came up to latch around Evan's wrist. He drew Evan's hand away from his chest and pulled it to his lips where he drew Evan's fingers deeply into his mouth.

Evan released a groan of raw, unexpected pleasure, and had to make an effort to concentrate on his task. Regretfully he reclaimed his hand then added its motions to the mix. Cupping Jake's balls with one hand and following the actions of his mouth with the other.

Jake's balls tightened in his fingers.

"Jesus." The word was a strangled epithet. Or perhaps a prayer.

Exercising inhuman self-control, Evan slowed the motions of his mouth and smiled to himself at Jake's "Holy fuck, what's wrong with you?" curse of frustration.

He swirled his tongue around the tip. "I'm just playing with you."

"Well fuckin' *stop it* and finish me."

"You're sexy when you're pissed."

"*Christ!*"

Enjoying himself immensely, Evan relented and picked up where he'd left off. Slow, sensual strokes of the tongue were quickly followed by firm, rapid action that took Jake's cock far into his mouth and down his throat. It didn't take long for Jake's head to loll back and his groans of satisfaction to fill the room. This time when his balls tightened and his body tensed, Evan didn't let up. He kept his strokes long and



rhythmic, sucking him hard until at last he came in a cry of fulfillment, pumping himself into Evan's mouth with the kind of exuberant energy reserved for the young.

When it was done Evan stood and reached for a tissue to wipe the excess from his lips. But Jake grabbed his hands and stopped him. "No, you sexy bastard. Let me."

Jake's kiss was hard and demanding and completely unexpected. It turned Evan's insides to jelly and all but buckled his knees beneath him. Jake's tongue was clever and unrelenting, his arms, latched around Evan's back, left no room for debate. Jake wanted him, and he wanted him badly.

"We're not done here," growled Jake, his fingers threaded through Evan's hair. "Not by a long shot."

Evan didn't think his heart had ever beat so fast. "I never said we were."

"Good. Because now it's my turn to call the shots."

Evan swallowed. "Tell me what you want."

"I want you naked."

"Okay. I'll —"

"But I want to undress you. Slowly. At my leisure. And then I want you where and how I say. Got it?"

Evan nodded, thrilled beyond words and unable to explain why. "Where do you want me?"

"On soft, supple leather. I think you know what I have in mind."

\* \* \* \* \*

Jake hip-checked the office door closed and flipped the lock. He turned to find Evan leaning against the back of the couch they'd just dragged in from the lounge. Evan crossed his arms across his broad chest, drawing the material tight over his arms.

He gave Jake an appraising look. "You thought you had me, didn't you?"

Jake swaggered across the room, the material of his trousers making soft rustling noises as he walked. He'd put them on out of deference to Evan's need for discretion, but did not intend to leave them on long. "Oh I had you going, all right. You thought I wanted to fuck you right there—right there in the lounge where anybody could walk in on us." He stopped just a few inches from Evan, their toes almost touching. He ran a finger along the seam of Evan's platinum-toned vest. "And that scared you shitless."

"Well, I do have an image to protect. In my business image is paramount."

Jake's hand cruised up over Evan's chest to his throat where he fingered the piece of fine silver-toned silk knotted there. "Is that why you've kept the separation a secret?"

Evan shifted his gaze and for the first time Jake saw a hint of vulnerability—even embarrassment—behind the façade of power and control.

Evan said nothing as Jake tugged at the end of the tie and pulled the silk from his neck.

"It can't be easy, a man in your position—a man accustomed to success—admitting to the failure of another marriage. Especially in front of the people who are supposed to look up to him."

Evan met his gaze. "It's not nearly that complex. I was an idiot for marrying her, and I'm ashamed of myself for getting sucked in."

Jake undid the top button of the vest and then the next. "No. Being human doesn't equate being an idiot."

"You have no idea what—" Jake cut off his words with a kiss. He grabbed the lapels of the vest and dragged Evan against him, taking control of his mouth with as commanding a kiss as he could muster.

When he broke away he was pleased to see that Evan had to work at catching his breath and calming his pulse. He slid the vest from Evan's shoulders and reached for the top button that held the shirt snugly to Evan's throat. "Oh, I have an idea what I'm talking about." He undid the second button and leaned in to sample the newly exposed skin. Even on a man, the skin at the base of the throat was particularly delicate—almost

translucent—and when he put his lips there he could feel the thrum of Evan’s pulse against his lips. It quickened at his touch.

“I have plenty of ideas. About a lot of things.” He continued popping buttons.

“I have no doubt of that,” Evan said on a sigh when at last the shirt fell open and Jake put his hands on his skin. He ran his fingers across toned abs and up over a set of surprisingly buff pecs. But when he reached Evan’s shoulders and slid his hands under the material of the shirt to slip it off, Evan stopped him with a firm grip on his wrists.

“Wait.”

Jake frowned, met Evan’s gaze and saw something there that surprised—and troubled—him. “Why? What’s wrong?”

Evan didn’t reply. He urged Jake back a half a step and released his hands.

Jake waited, watching with interest as Evan pushed himself from the couch and turned around so his back faced Jake. Very slowly he allowed the shirt to slide from his shoulders and drop to the floor.

Jake sucked in his breath. “Oh. Christ.”

He stepped closer, ran his fingers over the long, lash-shaped scars. There were three of them, deep enough that it hurt Jake just to look at them.

Evan flinched at his touch.

“How?” asked Jake.

“I was young and stupid. I had just been dumped by a girl I thought I was going to marry, and got involved with an older man I met at the office where I worked that summer. It got...weird. I ended up doing things I didn’t really want to do, but didn’t know how to say no to. One night it went way too far, and he ignored me when I begged him to stop. I ended up with these scars and—”

Jake laid his hands on Evan’s shoulders but didn’t turn him around. He sensed that Evan didn’t want to be facing him at that moment. “And what?”

“And a memory that turned me off anal play for many, many years after that.”

"Fuck." Jake touched his lips to the most wicked-looking scar, then wrapped his arms around Evan's waist, his chest pressed firmly to Evan's back. "I'm so sorry that happened to you."

"Well, to be honest," Evan turned to face him, "I'm not."

"You're not?"

He shook his head. "No. That experience taught me something valuable. It taught me to not let myself be put into a position where I was vulnerable. Where I lacked control. It made me realize that I wanted to be the one calling the shots, the one in the big chair. And I was just angry enough to make sure I came back and made it happen."

Jake frowned. "Came back?"

Evan nodded. "Yes. I changed the name of the company after the takeover. But this is the same place I worked that summer."

Jake smiled, tossed a knowing glance at the executive's chair in front of the window. "And that chair?"

"Uh huh. That was his chair. And I strongly stress the *was*."

Jake ran his fingers up Evan's chest. "You're a formidable man, Mr. Valerian. Remind me not to cross you."

Evan chuckled but suddenly Jake hesitated. "Hold on. I was under the impression..." He shook his head and was about to step back when Evan caught him by the belt loops.

"What?"

"If you need to be in control, I'm cool with that. I don't have to play both sides of the coin."

Evan's gaze held his, something intense and compelling about what Jake saw there. "No. I trust you. I trusted you enough to tell you that story, and I've *never* trusted anyone with that before."

Jake was stunned, speechless. Touched beyond words.

"I want you to." Evan leaned in, his lips next to Jake's ear, and added, "I need you to."

Jake's eyes closed as a thrill of pleasure coursed through him. It made sense. It fit with everything he'd ever heard or read about men in positions of power and the BDSM community. Evan's life was all about control and decision making. It consumed his days from morning to night. And for as much as he enjoyed the challenge and the satisfaction of running his own company and running it well, he longed for someone to take that control away from time to time. To relinquish his hold and allow someone else to take the responsibility. For his pleasure, at least, if not for his life and livelihood.

It was a small thing. And it was an enormous thing. For that moment—it was everything.

"Okay." He grasped Evan's face, bracketing his jaws between his hands, the touch insistent. "You want to do this? You really want to do this right?"

Evan swallowed, nodded, his skin already clammy beneath Jake's fingers.

"Then forget this fucking office, we need to go somewhere else. A place with more space and more...options. We need room to explore."

"My condo. It's only two blocks from here and it has everything we need."

It was torture, but Jake managed to drag himself away from Evan's body and reach for his shirt. "I just need a few minutes to make things right with Rheanne."

"And I need to put in an appearance at the party. But we can meet in the parking garage. I'm on level P1. Say half an hour?"

Jake had his shirt on and was doing up buttons when he had a moment's hesitation. "Half an hour? That's fine for me, but are you sure that's long enough for you? These people want to see you. You're the man of the hour."

Evan grabbed him by the shoulders. "No. It's long enough. They see me every fucking day, and I've been waiting for this. I've been waiting too goddamn long." The kiss Evan lavished on Jake's lips was desperate and passionate. And it melted every

bone in Jake's body. His fingers curled into the material of Evan's vest and he thought may have even scraped some of the skin beneath.

Evan groaned with pleasure, deepened the kiss.

Jake was the one to pull away first. "No. Don't start that again. We have to go."

Evan nodded, his hands fisted against Jake's back. "Yes. We definitely have to go."

## Chapter Four

The elevator eased to a stop and the doors slid open.

"Holy shit." Jake's voice was hushed as he followed Evan across the threshold. "The penthouse? Are you kidding?"

Evan kept walking, leading Jake through the entryway with its ridiculous lamp posts and gurgling fountain, past the living room with its seven-foot-tall bronze sculpture of something completely indefinable, and its pristine white couches and black marble end tables.

"Wow," muttered Jake behind him. "I mean, I don't mean to sound like a complete hick but...wow."

"You're not a hick," said Evan, his tone more harsh than he intended. "But, in all honesty, this place is a bit of an embarrassment to me." He headed to the refrigerator in search of a snack. He'd missed the dinner at the party and hadn't really eaten anything since the egg and cheese bagel he'd had at ten that morning. He pulled open the double-sided stainless steel fridge and studied the contents.

"What? Why? It's beautiful."

"It's beautiful, all right. The kind of beautiful you find in a pretentious home fashion magazine. It's also sterile, untouchable and uncomfortable. It is not the kind of warm, welcoming environment I would prefer to come home to at night."

Jake leaned that long, lean frame against the kitchen counter and watched him as he studied the fridge contents. "I take it this was Nadine's doing."

"Yes. Nadine was the consummate gold digger. Completely enamored with the image and the façade of power that went along with a six-figure income. She picked out this condo and decorated it from top to bottom with the help of the most coveted and — needless to say — overpriced decorator in the city."

"Don't you mean interior designer?" asked Jake with an irreverent grin.

Evan tossed an irritated glance over his shoulder. "At any rate..." He returned to his search, wondering why the hell there wasn't anything the least bit appetizing in his fridge. "I live here because I need a place in town and I haven't had time to sell it yet. But I'm much more comfortable at my cabin by the lake."

He was surprised to feel Jake's hand on his shoulder. "Get out of there."

"Huh?"

"You're hungry?"

"Starving. I haven't eaten since—"

"Well then, get out of the fridge and let me."

Evan stepped back. "Let you what?"

"Feed you."

Evan's eyebrows arched in surprise. "Oh really?" He crossed his arms over his chest. "Well, I don't know about that."

Very slowly, Jake turned to gaze at him over his shoulder. His eyes narrowed. "Take off your tie."

"What?"

Jake straightened, closed the refrigerator door and leaned against it. He crossed his arms as well. "You heard me. Take it off."

There was a glint in Jake's eye and a certain set to his shoulders that sent an odd thrill coursing through Evan's gut. Without saying a word he tugged at the knot that held the silver bow tie in place. It slid out from beneath his collar and dangled from his fingers. He held it out to Jake.

Jake nodded toward the piece of fine silk. "Now tie it over your eyes."

"You're kidding."

But Jake's stance remained rigid, his eyes level. He was quite obviously *not* kidding.



Evan considered his options for all of three seconds before securing the tie snugly over his eyes.

"Can you see anything?"

"No."

But apparently Jake didn't trust him, because the next moment, Evan felt Jake's hands on his face, checking the knot and making sure it fit snugly over his eyes. "That looks pretty good." His fingers traced Evan's jaw and Evan could feel Jake's breath on his face. "How does it feel?"

"Good. It feels good." He had the sense that Jake's lips were hovering mere millimeters from his and when he moved forward in search of tasting them it was more reflex than free will.

But Jake evaded the kiss, pressing his hands against Evan's chest and holding him back. "No, no. We'll get to that. Right now we have other...business."

"Right. You intend to feed me."

"Indeed." He heard Jake move away, heard the refrigerator door open and something rattling. It was an odd sensation, not being able to see what was going on around him. But at the moment it was a curiosity, nothing more.

"Take off your jacket and vest." Jake's words startled him. Jake was very close and Evan hadn't heard his approach.

Frowning, but having no reason to refuse, Evan complied. Jake took the garments from him and, Evan assumed, laid them neatly aside.

The next moment he felt something pressed to his lips. One sniff told him it was a hunk of cheese. He opened his mouth and was rewarded with a bit of brie. The creamy texture and subtle nutty flavor making his mouth water with a need for more.

"Good, eh?" asked Jake when he'd swallowed.

"Yes. I forgot I had it."

He was about to ask if there was any more when Jake said, "Now take off your shirt."

"But —"

"You'll get more when I say you get more. Now take off your shirt."

Evan tamped down his irritation at being denied something he so desperately wanted, and reached for the top button. He was on the third when Jake interrupted him with a hand on his. "Slow down." He drew his tongue along Evan's exposed collarbone. "I want to enjoy this."

Evan nodded and when Jake had moved away he resumed what he was doing, opening one button after another but doing so with slow, methodical precision.

"Very good," encouraged Jake, his voice slightly muffled as if he were chewing something. "Fuck, you're hot."

Evan's irritation over Jake enjoying food when he was being denied it was overshadowed by his reaction to Jake's attentions. There was something surprisingly erotic about knowing he was being watched so intently. And knowing how much pleasure Jake was deriving from watching him.

The last button was undone and the shirt fell open.

"Very nice." He was still chewing. "Now undo the cuffs, slip it off and drop it to the floor."

Evan did so, the cool air a mild shock to his skin.

But he didn't have time to shiver because the next moment, Jake's hot hands were on him. "Mmm." They ran up and down his chest, around his waist and up his back.

Jake pulled him close, the silk of his vest rubbing sensuously against Evan's bare skin, and the hard ridge of his erection an enticing temptation that he could feel through the lightweight wool of their trousers.

"I think that deserves a reward," said Jake and then his mouth was on Evan's.

Evan tasted heat and sex—and the sugar-coated strawberry Jake had thrust into his mouth. They shared the succulent fruit, the juice coating both of their tongues as they indulged in a decadent, deeply voracious kiss. It left him breathless and when Jake asked if he'd like another, he nodded with enthusiasm.

"What do you say?" asked Jake, the teasing evident in his voice.

"Please," breathed Evan without hesitation. "More please."

And Jake fed him another one in exactly the same way. The heat built quickly this time, the desire grew more intense. But when Evan brought up his hands to wrap them around Jake's waist he was stopped cold.

"Oh no." Jake grasped his wrists and pressed them back to his sides. "You don't get to touch me. Not until I say."

Evan swallowed, his senses confused by the sudden interruption of a building need.

"Now undo your belt and remove your pants."

Evan was suddenly and disproportionately irritated. "I need more food. I'm way too hungry for this shit."

"I see." There was something low and deadly about Jake's response, and Evan wished he could take back his words. Instead he remained silent.

Evan heard the fridge door open and close, and he thought, finally, he would get a taste of something truly satisfying.

Instead he felt an intense shock of cold as an ice cube touched his nipple. "Hey!" he exclaimed, his hands flying up to ward off the attack.

But Jake caught his wrists. "Fight me and I won't give you *anything* else to eat."

Evan swallowed, forced his hands to relax at his sides, and nodded.

"Good." The ice cube touched his nipple again, ran across his chest and circled the other nipple. "Very good."

The cold was shocking yet stimulating at the same time. It stole his breath, and the sensuous movement of the cube across his skin made his cock throb. The water droplets began to slip down toward his belly and Jake caught one on his tongue.

Evan sucked in a breath in renewed surprise.

"Mmm." Jake's voice reverberated through his gut. He sank in his teeth and Evan's groan of pleasure joined his. "I can't seem to keep my mouth off you."

Evan concentrated on breathing and savoring the way Jake's mouth cruised over his chest and belly, lapping up the water and making his blood hum with desire.

His lips stopped just shy of Evan's belt. And then he moved away.

"Fuck." Jake's breathing was as labored as Evan's, and that pleased Evan no end. "Okay, now take off your trousers. And the Jockeys. Everything."

Although his desire screamed for him to rush, he forced himself to take his time. Because he sensed it would torture Jake and he savored that.

"There's what I wanted to see," said Jake when at last every last item of clothing lay in a puddle at Evan's feet.

Jake's hand touched Evan's cock and just about sent him through the roof.

"Here." Something touched Evan's lips and he opened his mouth to accept it. It was another hunk of brie, larger this time, and he chewed it greedily. "And then you can have this." A hunk of bread was pressed into his hand. "While I do this."

When Jake's mouth closed around Evan's cock, Evan almost choked on the brie and dropped the hunk of bread.

"Christ," he said, struggling to swallow the cheese.

Jake's tongue and lips were cold, wet and intensely shocking. Evan thought at first he'd merely been sucking on the ice cube—that is until he felt the intense cold of the ice cube itself touch the tip of his cock.

His breath caught in his throat. "Fuck!" was all he could manage to say.

Jake paused just long enough to instruct, “Keep eating,” before he returned to his task. His tongue took long, languorous strokes in between taking him deep and sucking him hard. Eventually the ice cube melted away, leaving only the warm, wet heat of Jake’s mouth—Jake’s very talented and unrelenting mouth.

Evan wanted nothing more than to sink his fingers into that mop of thick, blond hair and direct the motions of Jake’s onslaught, but he had no doubt that would not meet with Jake’s approval.

He had to concentrate on chewing and swallowing even as Jake drove him mad and made him want to sink to the floor and let the sensations wash over him without interference.

He swallowed the last of the bread and gripped the edge of the kitchen counter for support. He was on the verge of coming, the climax building low in his balls like a tsunami about to break on the shore when, abruptly, Jake’s mouth was gone.

His tongue trailed up over Evan’s belly and chest to his throat and neck until finally stopping at his ear. The silky fabric of his shirt rubbed against Evan’s chest, the barrier at once frustrating and exciting.

“Not yet,” whispered Jake. His hands bracketed Evan’s face. “Not quite yet.” And then Jake kissed him.

## Chapter Five

Jake was in awe. Had been in awe ever since stepping into Evan's condo. The elegance, the style—the sheer scale of the way Evan lived had set him back on his heels. In all honesty, it had been a bit startling and he had been relieved to hear that such decadence was not really suited to Evan's taste. This room, however, was another story.

It was the epitome of decadence—sexual decadence. And Jake took it all in with relish.

Mirrors lined the walls. Toys of every style and description hung from the walls and adorned the shelves. There were dildos and remote-controlled vibrators. Handcuffs and blindfolds. There were bottles of lube and massage oil. A sex swing dangled from the ceiling and in the far corner sat what could only be described as a giant spider's web. Apparently you bound your partner to the cross-strands in whatever position was desired, leaving them completely helpless and vulnerable—the fly awaiting the spider's bite.

"So this was her idea, eh?" asked Jake as his eyes scanned the shelf in search of just the right fragrant oil.

"Yes. It took us months to find everything and furnish it just as we wanted."

Jake picked up a bottle and sniffed. Cinnamon. It made his mouth water. "And you made use of it?"

"Oh yeah. For months. We played and explored each other for hours. And when that got blasé we brought in...playmates. The last year, however, even that got old as we couldn't stand to be in the same room together."

Jake's eyebrows arched and he glanced at Evan over his shoulder. Damn, he looked amazing like that. His wrists cuffed together in soft leather and suspended above his

head. He was nude, bathed in the light of a heat lamp recessed in the ceiling and standing on a plush towel. Ready for whatever exquisite tortures Jake chose to inflict.

"Really?" he asked. "What kind of playmates?"

"Women, of course. And a couple of men, but they were entirely focused on her. I would have never trusted her with this. I learned my lesson with the first wife."

Jake understood, of course. "Still..." He took a leisurely stroll across the room to stand in front of Evan. He had stripped now as well, and in the background a heavy rock beat pulsed. Just loud enough to add an ambiance of drama to the room. "That's pretty kinky stuff for a temp from the secretarial pool."

"It got even kinkier."

Jake poured a dollop of oil into his palm and spread it across Evan's chest. His skin was smooth, the muscles tensed from the position they were forced to hold. "Oh? How so?"

Evan laid his head to the side, resting it against his arm. "I don't know, really. I only heard vague allusions to it. All well after the fact."

Jake stopped. "She wanted to make you jealous."

"I think it was more along the lines of wanting to make me feel inadequate. But by then it was far too late for that. She could've fucked an entire football team for all I cared. I had lost interest."

Jake shook his head sadly, ran his oil-slicked hand down over Evan's abs and back up over his chest and shoulder. "She was a fool, you know. An idiot for screwing around on you and screwing everything up."

"She'll get her half million as per the prenup. I don't think she feels overly foolish."

Jake felt a flash of anger. "That's not what I'm talking about."

Evan's eyebrows arched. He said nothing.

"But I'm through talking. I'd rather *show* you what I'm talking about."

He took the bottle of oil and proceeded to drizzle it over Evan's shoulders and chest, being generous and thoroughly enjoying the way the droplets trickled lazily over each ridge of muscle and thread of sinew. Evan closed his eyes in pleasure as Jake rubbed the oil into his skin, leaving a fine, slick film over every inch and making his skin gleam in the muted light of the heat lamp.

When Jake moved around to Evan's back, he took a moment to trace the three scars with a gentle finger, and then with his lips and tongue before rubbing in the oil. He took his time over the rest of Evan's back, taking extra care when he got to the enticing curve of Evan's ass.

His oil-slicked finger slipped into the crease and he sensed Evan tug at the restraints.

Jake paused. "Are you all right?"

Evan nodded, his shoulders relaxed, and Jake pressed his lips to Jake's back as he slipped his finger deeper to toy with the edges of Evan's anus. He penetrated him with a fingertip, felt the muscles tense briefly and then relax as Jake's other hand came around to grip his cock. He pressed deeper, assuring himself that Evan was enjoying the pressure, before gently withdrawing and reaching for the toy he'd set aside.

"I want to try something," he said quietly. "Just say the word if you don't like it."

Evan craned his head, trying to see what Jake had in his hands, but he couldn't see, and that was exactly what Jake had intended.

With the deep bass beat pounding in the background, he pressed the tip of the oil-slicked plug against Evan's anus. "Relax," he said quietly, working it in a little bit and withdrawing before urging it deeper. "Relax and let me do the work."

Evan nodded, his body liquid gold beneath Jake's hands. He eased it in, pulled back and eased it in deeper until at last the plug penetrated completely and only the safety handle remained.

"How does that feel?" asked Jake, his hand tracing the curve of Evan's ass with appreciation.



“Good,” breathed Evan. His head lolled forward. “Yeah. Good.”

“Good.” Smiling to himself, Jake reached for the stereo remote. He quickly turned up the volume until the beat pounded deep in the pit of his stomach and then he reached for the *other* remote control that he’d set aside.

He walked around to stand before Evan. He pressed a hand to Evan’s chest even as he pressed a kiss to Evan’s lips. Then he flicked the switch.

Evan’s body jolted. “What the fuck?”

Jake had set the vibrations to the lowest setting, but immediately he turned it up a notch. His hand wrapped around Evan’s cock, which was already so hard Jake suspected it could drive nails.

“Jake...” Evan’s breath came in labored gasps. “Please.”

“Please what?” He massaged that cock, the movement gentle so as not to overwhelm.

“D-don’t. It’s too—” He sucked in a breath and groaned. “Too much.”

“I don’t think so.” Evan hadn’t used the safe word they’d agreed on. “I think you like it.” He turned it up another notch. “And I think you need to come hard.” And that was why he’d chosen to cuff Evan. He suspected Evan’s hands would just...get in the way.

“No, I—” Jake cranked it up to the last setting that he intended to use, and increased his massage of Evan’s cock.

Evan groaned with pleasure but then he said something that surprised Jake. Suddenly Jake shut down the vibrations. “What did you say?”

Evan sucked in a breath. “But I want to come inside you.”

Jake smiled, the thought of that piston of a cock inside him making his own cock twitch with anticipation. “Really? You want to fuck me?” That surprised Jake. He’d understood that Evan preferred to be the recipient of anal play. Jake enjoyed both giving and receiving, but had been quite content to focus all his attentions on Evan. He

enjoyed the thrill of being in control and of giving such exquisite pleasures. "You want to fuck me with that thing inside you?"

"Oh yeah." Evan's eyes opened. "Please."

"Fuck." Jake laughed. "You got it."

Two minutes later Evan's hands were freed and the cuffs lay in a heap on the floor. They'd chosen to make use of the tantric sex chair that had occupied one corner of the room, dragging it into the light of the heat lamp to enhance the effect. The soft curves and erotic shapes of the chair were designed to facilitate and enhance a variety of sexual activities and positions. The soft foam and silk brocade upholstery were as erotic to Jake's skin as the shape was to his eyes. Because they wanted to face each other, he lay with his back supported by the lower curve of the chair. Evan knelt before him on one knee with the other leg bent, his foot placed securely on the floor for support. Jake held the remote control for the vibrator but had not yet turned it on. That control would remain with him, at his absolute discretion.

Evan's hands cruised over Jake's chest and belly with obvious enjoyment. "I want to suck you first."

Jake's cock was already engorged and eager for Evan's attentions. He nodded and sighed with pleasure when Evan's lips closed over the head and slid sweetly down the shaft.

He allowed his head to loll against the cushiony support of the chair and languished in Evan's talented mouth. He flicked the switch and turned on the vibrations. He was rewarded by a low moan from Evan that sent its own brand of vibrations coursing through Jake's cock.

Jake turned it up another notch and was rewarded with the feeling of Evan's fingers cupping and toying with his balls. Then one oil-slicked finger slid inside him.

Jake sucked in a breath of pleased surprise.

He turned up the control to level three.

The motions of Jake's mouth increased and he added another finger to Jake's ass. Working them in and out until it was all Jake could do to keep his grip on the remote.

He turned the control up to four, and apparently Evan had had his fill.

"Fuck!" He withdrew his fingers and lifted one of Jake's legs to loop his knee over Evan's shoulder. His cock, already sheathed in a red condom, touched Jake's ass and slid easily inside. Deep.

Jake turned the dial to the final setting and Evan's thrusts turned urgent. He grasped Jake's hips and pounded into him with all his might, the vibrations of the toy a subtle enhancement that reached Jake even through the barrier of Evan's body.

Sweat broke out on Evan's chest, every one of his muscles standing out in rigid contrast to his gleaming skin. Jake thrilled to the view, to the hunger he saw in Evan's eyes. To the hardness of his cock and to the knowledge that he'd had a part in releasing Evan from something that had held him back from experiencing his ultimate sexual pleasure for years.

The internal pressure was exquisite and an orgasm loomed. He wrapped his hand around his own cock and massaged himself toward orgasm.

"Come on me," ground out Evan, his voice so tight it sent shivers skittering up Jake's spine.

It wasn't hard to comply. Jake let go of his control, the climax pumping through him and releasing his cum in a milky jet of pleasure that struck Evan in the chest and drizzled down his belly. His ass contracting around Evan's cock so hard Jake almost feared he would hurt him.

Suddenly Evan stopped, his cock buried so deep in Jake's ass it verged on painful.

But Evan's head reared back and he let out a cry of release as his body convulsed in as intense an orgasm as Jake had ever seen.

The moment it was over Jake switched off the toy and dropped the remote to the floor, reaching for Evan as he withdrew from Jake's body and collapsed over him.

"Jesus," moaned Evan as Jake gently eased the toy from his body and dropped it on the floor beside the remote.

"Yeah," was all Jake could think to respond. "Jesus."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Thank you."

Evan's voice was a soft echo in the darkness. Outside, snow fluttered through the air and pelted the window of Evan's bedroom, each giant flake making a soft swishing noise as it hit.

"I hardly need thanks," said Jake, rolling onto his side and facing Evan. "I'm pretty sure it was entirely mutual."

Evan glanced at him and smiled. But then the smile fell away, leaving his eyes looking sad and strangely haunted. "So what now?"

Jake rolled onto his back, stacking his hands beneath his head and staring into the darkness. "What do you mean?"

"I don't know, really. I guess—" He shrugged. "I don't know."

Jake hesitated. This had started as something that he was sure they both thought would begin and end that night. It was going to be a brief tryst, a few hours of decadent and deviant pleasure shared by a couple of like-minded men. This was not the kind of relationship that was destined for long-term success. Or, heaven forbid, commitment. And yet...

There had been surprises. Evan was more of a man than Jake had ever imagined. Intelligent and sensitive with ambitions and hidden complexities that intrigued Jake. And would be very hard to walk away from. He suspected he had held some surprises for Evan as well.

In fact, he was sure of it.

He took the plunge. "I'd like to see you again."

Evan nodded. "So would I."

Surprise and relief flooded through Jake. But now they had some decisions to make. But before Jake could ask the question Evan answered it.

"I have that cottage on the lake." He turned his head to face Jake.

"Yeah." Jake nodded, smiled and rolled over to lie on top of his new lover, covering that hard, sinewy body with his own. He bracketed Evan's surprised face in his hands and lavished a brief kiss on his lips. The grin never faltered. "You certainly do."

## About the Author

Nikki lives in a small town in Ontario, Canada. In the midst of the chaos that comes with raising three small boys, working part-time as a lab tech in a hospital blood bank, and caring for her ever-adoring husband, she dreams up her stories. Nikki's work is an eclectic combination of romance, mystery, suspense and humor with characters that have plenty of room to grow.

Nikki welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

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