

ELLORA'S CAVE *Moderne*

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Dom NEXT
DOOR

ELLORA'S CAVE
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Dom Next Door

Reese Gabriel

Tristy's neighbor Grant is every woman's dream. He's handsome, sexy and a hero cop. They're pals, though she thinks he might want more. But Grant is a Dom and Tristy has no experience in the BDSM lifestyle. It scares her. She would *never* allow a man to control her. It's just that he's so damn hot and hard to resist.

Tristy shows up at Grant's apartment and starts pushing his sexual buttons big-time. Their chemistry is explosive. He decides to take her to bed, tie her, blindfold her and show her what he can do to her body—just the barest introduction to his dominant nature. But when Tristy finds her submissive soul...all bets are off.

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Chapter One

Tristy knocked softly on Grant's door. A part of her hoped he was still awake because of how much she needed his comfort right now, the strong and unshakable presence of the only guy in her life she'd ever really been able to trust.

But another part cringed at the thought of having to reveal to this same great guy what a mess she had made of her love life—yet again.

It wasn't as though he would ever say *I told you so*, he wasn't that kind of man. But it would so serve her right if he did.

Damn it, why didn't she ever listen?

Grant opened the door. He looked yummy as always in worn jeans and a T-shirt that showed off his biceps and impressive pectorals. He was barefoot and his hair was just a little bit tousled. Together with the five o'clock shadow he was sporting, the entire look spelled pure sexual fantasy.

Any girl's, hers included.

"It's crazy late, I know," she blurted before he could invite her in. "And I am the most horrible friend in the world, the way I make you stay up all hours to console me. Just tell me to get lost. In fact, I will tell myself."

Grant arched a brow, as always impervious to her storms of emotion. "So I gather the date with Ryan didn't go so hot? Or was it Brian?"

Tristy's lips quivered. She'd put on such a front to make it this far—from the restaurant to the cab all the way back here. And now just a few words from Grant and all of her resolve, the anger, the shock was giving way like a dam bursting.

Next thing she knew, she was in Grant's arms, blubbering and feeling even more like a fool.

Grant managed it perfectly, wrapping her shoulders with one arm as he closed the door with the other, giving them much-needed privacy.

"I'll take that as a no."

"Brian's a lying, evil scumbag." She unleashed her venom. "He's despicable and he...he's..." She couldn't even get the rest of the words out.

The man had turned out to be married, that was the main point.

Big shock, right?

As if it took a rocket scientist to figure it out, the way he was always working late, only able to see her certain days of the week, always having to excuse himself to take calls, never inviting her to his place.

"Brian is a jackass who doesn't deserve you." Grant finished her sentence for her, saying it just the right way to make her feel understood, sympathized with but not pitied or judged.

"I'm such...an idiot." She laid her head on his chest, centering herself with the sound of his heartbeat.

He said nothing now as he stroked the back of her hair, the tangled mess that had once been a beautiful perm.

Oh god, this guy was perfect—handsome, honorable, and a cop to boot. Talk about total relationship material.

Except for one little issue.

A subtle but totally crucial incompatibility between the two of them.

They'd talked it out a long time ago, when she'd first moved in down the hall from him and they'd started hanging out.

It was for the best, really, because now they were best friends and where would she be without him?

Good old Grant, her buddy. *Yeah, right, tell my body that.*

Her breasts pressed against him – needing, wanting. Her nipples were sending their own little messages, burning hot points of desire, totally at odds with the coolness of her thoughts. Not to mention the steady thrumming of her pussy inside her pretty little silk panties, the ones that were supposed to have been for Brian.

This was going to be the night she let him take her to bed.

Grant cleared his throat, letting her go.

She caught an expression in his deep-blue eyes, something she hadn't seen before. Had she just overlooked it in the past or was something new happening?

"I'll make cocoa," he said, about-facing to the kitchen to prepare their favorite beverage. "It should be more than enough to get us through the night."

"You know I'm abusing you, right?" She sniffed. "Turning you into one of my girlfriends and all."

He chuckled. "I think I can keep my masculinity intact, thank you very much."

Could he ever.

Tristy watched his tight butt as he moved like a jungle cat, every inch of him in charge of this place, his whole environment, which for the moment included her.

For one unguarded second she imagined him naked. *Don't go there girl*, she warned herself. Thinking of Grant Collins in sexual terms was one thing in the privacy of her own bedroom but doing it here, two feet away from him, was another story.

Does he know how often he has starred in my fantasies?

Lots of times she pictured him gentle and vanilla, the way she had known all her other lovers to be. But there were times when she tried to picture him as he really was – a sexual Dominant.

It was this proclivity toward BDSM that had kept her from trying to date him. In great detail, Grant had told her – after a bottle of wine they had polished off one night – how he liked his women. Submissive. Bound. Obedient. Open to his control. He was the

master of her senses, her flesh, his hands exploring, caressing, pinching...and whatever else he wanted.

He had alluded to spanking his partners and now it was almost impossible to see those big hands of his and not imagine them on a girl's hot bottom. The couple of times he had introduced her to his lovers she had blushed furiously, thinking what must go on between them.

It didn't happen often, Grant being with women, and that was another thing she wondered about. Surely there were plenty of partners to choose from, even from the narrower pool of women who were into BDSM?

Tristy had had lots of misconceptions and he had tried to set her straight. BDSM wasn't exploitation and it was not abuse. It was meant to be safe, sane and consensual, as he put it. But within those bounds he sure did paint a pretty damn interesting picture of how a woman could get turned on out of her mind by freely giving over erotic control of her body.

Grant had even hinted that such passionate intensity between Dominant and submissive could spread into all aspects of the relationship, creating something almost mystical.

She took his word on it, noting that, by his own admission, arrangements like that were rare. Even he had not experienced such a thing, which was maybe why he hadn't gotten serious with anyone in the time they'd known each other.

Overcome with the impulse to do something, Tristy made a beeline for the kitchen. "Let me do this."

"Got it covered," he said. "You go sit in the living room. Talk to me."

"Just let me get the cocoa." Even in her boots she had to go on tiptoe to reach it on the upper shelf. The motion managed to raise her short skirt just a little shorter. "You are *such* a guy. Do you have to put everything so high?"

"Discourages mice. All except for one, that is."

"Ha ha, very funny." She tried to pry the top off. It was too hard so she got a knife to use as a wedge. A moment later she was squealing in pain with a cut finger.

Grant cursed mildly, though his eyes showed only concern. "This is why I told you to sit down, you are much too agitated."

He led her by the wrist to the sink so he could run the wound under cold water.

"See, it's nothing," she proclaimed.

"Hmm." He reached for the first aid kit in a nearby drawer. His hand remained on her wrist.

Tristy bit her lip softly. He was barely squeezing her flesh but of course she was putting up no fight. An impulse, more impish than anything, told her to make it hard on him.

"I don't need a bandage."

"It's not an option. Now give me your finger."

"No," said Tristy.

He made a face, not taking her seriously. Could she take *herself* seriously?

Grant applied the small adhesive bandage without further resistance. "Keep your arm elevated."

Okay, this was going a bit far. "What am I, the Statue of Liberty?"

Grant raised her arm. "Whatever you want to call yourself, we're taking care of this cut. It's deeper than it looks."

She pushed playfully at his chest. "Brute."

"I'll tie you down if I need to," he quipped.

The remark caught them both a little off guard.

"Is that a promise," she whispered. "Or a threat?"

"Don't, Tristy."

He'd barely gotten out the words before her lips were there, meeting his, no forethought at all, just reaching out for the one thing that could possibly make sense in her world right now.

"Too late," she rasped.

"You shouldn't have done that," he murmured.

It was her turn to arch a brow. "Why? Are you going to punish me?"

There she'd said it. *Why* she'd said it, however, she had no idea.

His gaze narrowed. "We've been over this."

"I don't care." She stroked his cheek, the strong, masculine line of his jaw, the tease of his day-old beard, the tingle and promise of so much more. "Forget the BDSM, forget tomorrow, can't you? Just make love to me. I've had it up to my eyes in fucked-up liars and momma's boys. Won't you please just give me a reason not to swear off men completely?"

He laughed softly. "You always do have a way of putting things."

She reached for the thick, hard outline of his cock, covered by his jeans. "Actions speak louder than words, so do hard-ons."

Grant tensed though he did not remove her hand. "There are things you shouldn't play with Tristy. You think I don't want this too? You think I don't fantasize about you, touching you, having you in my arms, driving you wild?"

Her mouth went instantly dry. Her knees were weak. She had never wanted a man so badly. "Take me," she whispered.

His eyes lit up. "There won't be any going back," he warned.

"I don't want to go back...ever."

Grant released a barely audible, low growl.

He took her by the upper arms, lifting her to his height.

His lips sealed over hers, hot and hard.

Yes. Let him capture her now. Let her be swept away on an unstoppable tide.

He stopped abruptly, cursing himself. "This is wrong."

She said a single word, a game changer.

"Please..." Tristy meant it to sound submissive and it must have been close enough.

Grant kissed her again and this time he showed no signs of releasing her.

Oh god, he tastes good. She opened her mouth for him. His tongue was instantly there, conquering, exploring. Her pussy ached, clenched with the need to be similarly filled. Brazenly she rubbed her breasts against his chest. She wanted to undo his jeans but he took her hands pinning her wrists to her sides.

"No. It doesn't work that way for me. You have to give me control or it's a no-go. We don't have to get too much into the BDSM but you will need to let me lead."

As if he had to ask twice.

"I'm yours, Grant, I trust you totally."

He looked at her as if considering. "Tris, I am going to give you a special word. We'll use pumpkin."

"Sure." She giggled, partially out of nervousness. "What for?"

Grant stroked her cheek. "I want you to be able to relax and get into the spirit of the moment if it goes that way. This is your release cord. You say the word and it stops immediately."

Her heart slammed with forbidden desire. "What if I don't use the word?"

"I keep going."

She bit her lower lip as she considered the possibilities of a strong man pretending to take what he wanted regardless. "Even if I say no?"

"That's right. Consider it your chance to let your hair down." Grant did just that, undoing her top knot, allowing her blonde to fall about her shoulders and face.

"I'm game," she said huskily. "If you are."

"Just so we promise each other. I don't want any weirdness in the morning. Friends are way harder to find than lovers."

"Scout's honor." She raised her right hand in a mock salute.

"You're not a scout," he reminded as he busied himself with her blouse, unbuttoning it as fast as he could manage.

"I don't think I gave permission for this," she teased.

Grant pushed the material down over her shoulders. "Do you have any idea how crazy you drive me, watching you with all those idiots when I want you so bad I could burst?"

Honestly, she had missed the boat on that one. "How about if you show me?"

He bent to kiss her neck. Devour would have been a better word.

"Oh god," she moaned arching her neck. "Yes, that's it." If he thought she'd say no to any of this he must be on drugs.

Grant yanked the blouse down hard. He didn't wait to undo her bra. With brute strength, he snapped the catches.

She felt like a character in one of those TV commercials.

Cost of dream Sex with hunk down the hall: one ruined bra, ten ninety-five.

Value of impending orgasms: priceless.

In a matter of seconds Grant had bared her torso. Leaning back against the counter, she sought stability with her hands as he went to work suckling her breasts. One by one he raised the peaks of her nipples to throbbing agony.

"Fuck me, Grant. Oh god, just fuck me."

"I'll fuck you when I'm good and ready," he informed her. His hand clasped her hair. He bent back her neck. The pressure was just shy of pain and just at the edge of ecstasy. "Is that clear?"

"Yes." Tristy was panting. So this was Dominant Grant. If this was BDSM, he could keep it coming.

"Kiss me," he commanded.

She was looking up at him, needing more than anything to press her lips to his and feel his powerful lips, his teeth and his tongue.

Like a moth to flame, she lost herself, giving over her mouth and the whole of her body with it.

He took hold of one of her nipples, lightly pinching.

"Harder." She said then ground her lips against his. The combination of the two kinds of pressure sent her into orbit. Tristy whimpered. Was it appropriate to beg? Surely he would appreciate such a gesture.

His hands moved to her thighs. She spread them as best she could. He had worked his way beneath the hem of her skirt.

"Are you wet for me?" He whispered the words directly into her ear.

"You know I am."

Now he pulled her close, lifting her buttocks so she was tight against him. They still had clothes on but it was better than nothing.

At least she could feel his cock and grind against it even.

"You're a little minx," he said. "You keep it up and you're gonna get taken right here on the floor."

"As you wish."

That added boosters to his sex drive.

Carrying her like a rag doll, he took her to the table. Scattering the contents, he sat her down.

"I'm gonna fuck you so hard, Tris."

"You better," she hissed back.

"You won't walk straight for a fucking week, babe."

"Do it," she taunted. "Do me like one of your submissive sluts."

His gaze narrowed. She had definitely pushed his buttons. Which was kind of funny because didn't that mean she was controlling him and not the other way around?

Grant didn't bother taking down her panties. As soon as he had managed to lift her skirt enough he simply tore them off.

Tris' pussy flooded in reaction. To be wanted this fucking badly by a man like Grant was the greatest aphrodisiac in the world.

With one hand between her thighs he used the other to open his jeans and free his cock. He took a condom from his pocket and sheathed his hard shaft. She ached to help but there was that whole Dom thing.

Phooey. Tristy made a play for him, reaching for his engorged shaft. He took her wrist and bent it up behind her back, not painfully but enough to let her know who was boss.

"Maybe a little confinement will help you follow directions, missy."

She arched her back, whimpering, wanting her pussy to make contact again. "I beg you to use me, Grant...use me, use your helpless slave."

Grant's cock rammed into her. She took him to the hilt in one push.

"Oh yeah, oh fuck yeah," she exclaimed.

Grant pulled halfway out and penetrated her again even harder. Letting her arm go, he braced himself on the edge of the table.

Tristy moved forward, clinging to his neck. She shivered and trembled, her body already racked with the precursors to climax. He knew exactly how to work her. His teeth sank into her shoulder and his cock thrust in and out with just the right upward angle to send waves of ecstasy to her swollen clitoris.

Again and again.

Wow, was he ever a good lover.

Make that a fantastic lover. The best one she'd ever had in her life.

"Come," she cried out. "Come with me."

She squeezed her pussy muscles, feeling the sides of his swollen shaft. She could feel the heat and the surging blood. It was going to happen any minute, any second.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

She was ready. Her body was pent up and charged as if she'd been waiting a thousand years for this. She wrapped her ankles around his firm buttocks, feeling the pumping muscles.

All at once he started to growl, a low deep sound like a lion. Then he angled back his head and she saw the vein on his neck protruding.

Exactly as she'd imagined him, exactly as she'd dreamed and fantasized.

"Tristy," he called her name.

She melted as he slammed home one final time, the jets erupting hot and thick from his thrusting, conquering cock. She could feel it, even with the condom.

Tristy responded with a loud moan and a sigh as the pleasure washed over her, palpable and so intense she nearly fainted.

Explosions without sound, fire without heat, an internal world of utter absorption, on the edge of pleasure so sharp it pricked her in a million tiny places.

Never had she had an orgasm like that. Not with any man in any scenario. No matter how much she was supposed to have been in love.

If this was sex with Grant on a table top, what would it be like in a bed, taking their time?

Grant continued to come, allowing her to move into a second and finally a third orgasm. He held on to her as she came back to earth, her body tingling and hot to the touch.

His combination of gentleness and firmness made her want to cry. Why was it again that they couldn't be compatible? Was it that big a deal?

Maybe she could fake the BDSM.

She had certainly had to fake enough other things in her previous relationships.

"Wow," he whispered. "Just wow."

"You said it, hot shot," she breathed, still weak and limp against his body.

"How's your finger?" he teased.

"What finger?"

Grant chuckled, lifting her in his arms.

She felt a flash of terror. Was he going to make her get dressed and go home?

"Grant, can I stay overnight?"

He frowned. "I'm not sure that's a good idea."

"I'll sleep on the couch," she said quickly. Not that she intended to stay there.

"But your apartment is three hundred feet away."

"I don't want to be alone."

"My couch isn't any less lonely than your own bed," he pointed out.

She hugged his neck eagerly. "Is that an invitation to sleep in yours? I accept. Thanks."

He shook his head. "What am I going to do with you, girlfriend?"

Anything you want, as long as it's kinky.

Chapter Two

Grant had never felt so possessive of a woman in his life. Every fiber of his being told him to protect this fragile creature he was holding.

He knew it was wrong, though. This was a dangerous road and he should have stopped tonight from happening before it started.

If she had any idea what it did to him, watching the way all those jerks treated her, seeing her come over here time and again after getting her heart trampled on.

The mutual attraction had been clear since the beginning. But she wasn't his kind.

Or was she?

For play-acting Tris had done pretty damn good as the novice submissive finding herself in the arms of her Dominant.

Maybe it was more than an act. Deep down, what if she was a sub? Grant pushed the thought from his mind as he carried the sleepy, purring blonde down the hall to his bedroom where he was about to put her in his bed.

Real genius idea that was.

Tristy was already half asleep by the time he laid her down. She was flushed and so totally sweet and sexy looking. She barely stirred as he took off her skirt and put her under the covers.

The hell of it was, she was such a terrific girl—funny, smart, no drama, total relationship material.

If not for the one little thing between them. Grant couldn't be with a woman without a D/s component. He might lust after Tristy and fantasize over her, both of which he had done a hundred times over, but he could never be with her in real life.

And yet he just had been.

Consider it an anomaly. Something never to be repeated.

Grant considered putting her in one of his old T-shirts but he decided against it for fear of waking her up. Best to let her be. Let her sleep off the sex.

And in the morning everything would look clear.

Or so he hoped.

He debated leaving her there and going to the couch himself. In the end he stayed with her though he kept well over to his side of the bed, making sure not to risk touching her.

Because if he did there was no telling what might happen next.

* * * * *

Tristy had not meant to fall asleep. When she awoke again it was dark, pitch black with only a sliver of light coming through the curtains to illuminate the room.

It was silvery and terribly romantic.

For a minute she thought she was alone and then she heard him breathing—the strong masculine sounds beside her.

Her heart raced and her breathing went shallow. So she had made it to his bed after all. Turning over softly so as not to wake him, Tristy appraised the situation.

Grant was on his side facing away from her. His back was bare. The sheet had gathered at his solid, narrow waist, emphasizing even more the god-like dimensions of his body—powerful thighs outlined under the white silk, an arm casually tossed behind him. The man was a vision of male perfection.

And a short while ago he had made love to her.

With any luck it would happen again. Soon.

She was tempted to reach right out and touch him but she had to plan it right. If he woke too soon it would be game over. She had to string him along, seduce him in his sleep.

Slowly, quietly she inched over. Conveniently he had left her naked. Her nipples peaked in anticipation of contact. She could feel the heat between her thighs.

This time would be so much better. If it was possible to improve on what had already felt so damn good. The best sex of her life. Who could blame her for wanting more? Least of all the man who'd given it to her.

Lightly, delicately, she leaned across and kissed his shoulder blade. He barely stirred as he made a low sound, like the masculine version of a sigh.

Was he dreaming?

It had better be about her.

Tristy bit her lower lip. Feeling bolder she trailed her fingertips down his arm. He made more noises and stirred.

That was when she made her move, kissing his back and pressing her breasts against him. With one hand at his waist she lifted herself to whisper in his ear.

She told him what she would like to do to him and what she would like him to do to her. Tris moved her hand forward, wanting to reach his cock. Her fingers itched. She knew he was already aroused, she just needed the evidence.

Grant moved so fast she never saw him coming.

Before she could think of drawing another breath he had her pinned on her back, her wrists over her head.

He regarded her, eye brow raised.

"Tristy, what exactly do you think you're doing?"

Tristy gave him her best gotta-love-me-because-I'm-so-cute smile. "Would you believe I was looking for a contact lens?"

"You don't wear contacts."

"Oh yeah, I forgot."

Honestly, he looked adorable trying to be so stern. She could just kiss him to death.

"I knew this was a mistake, letting you stay."

"Oh come on, Grant. I promise I'll be good. Pretty please?"

"You can't help yourself and you know it, Tris."

"Okay fine," she acknowledged. "Then I promise to be bad."

"That I can believe."

Tristy lifted her leg and rubbed it against his thigh. "You just need to stop fighting so much."

"I'm doing this for both of us."

"Why? Because you're worried your super sex powers will turn me into a walking zombie?"

"I don't want you to get hurt."

She laughed. "Trust me, you could never hurt me. It's not in your nature."

"You aren't submissive."

"I sure liked what we did before," she countered.

"That was...different."

He was trying to avoid the movements of her body, the press of her pelvis. The sheet was bunched between them but that was little protection. He might have her pinned but the price was a forced closeness between them. Grant was as trapped as she was.

"I'm serious, Tris."

The way he talked—the stern but loving tone—made her even wetter. He cared about her. Outside of bed and in it.

"Make love to me again," she said.

"No. And don't try to change my mind."

"Tie me," she said. "Spank me, whatever you have to."

"Damn it, Tris."

Was she making it hard on him? Good. She wanted it to be impossible.

"We owe each other tonight. The *whole* night," she pointed out their semi-agreement from earlier. "No weirdness in the morning."

He frowned but she could tell he was thinking.

"There is one thing we could try."

"Anything," she urged.

"Don't move," he said as he released her and lifted off her.

"Where am I going to go? It's not like I have any hot dates." She giggled, nervous excitement getting the better of her again.

"Lucky for both of us, we barely survived your last one."

Which is why I need to start dating you. "I ought to have you go after some of these losers. Or better still put the fear of God into them ahead of time."

"I would rather they not come around at all," he said.

She watched him at his dresser, the broad shoulders, the tight waist and perfectly formed buttocks. More than enough to scare off one of her dates from hell.

The fact that he was a cop on top of everything else didn't hurt either. Every morning Tristy would listen, hear him leaving and she would say a quick, secret prayer and hope he'd be okay.

And she would try to be around when he got back too. He worked odd hours. She tried to keep track of shifts without letting him know she was doing it. It was kind of sad that no one was there to welcome him home each time and kiss him goodbye. No police officer should have to go out there alone like that.

But he seemed to like it just fine.

And she wasn't his type so she didn't push it. So why did she miss him when they weren't together and why did she feel herself light up when they were?

Grant came back from the dresser with a blindfold and some silk cords.

"What?" he said.

She must have been staring. "Nothing," she said, moist eyed.

"If you want to go, say the word."

"No," she said forcefully. "I want to stay."

"Okay then. I need you to close your eyes and lift your head."

The blindfold was velvet and it felt exquisite going on. The material smoothed over her eyes, bathing her world in total darkness.

And total vulnerability too.

Now she was dependent.

And helpless.

Oh god, it was exquisite.

She could hear Grant—his steady breathing, the warmth of his body—her every sense heightened. He was sitting on the edge of the bed right beside her. "This is some light bondage, to give you an idea."

The cords were slipped over each of her wrists. It was a gentle but tight sensation, a strange mix. She could feel the ropes pulling tight. He must have been tying them to the bedposts.

What about my legs? Tristy wondered. *Will he tie them as well?*

No. He had a different plan in mind for them.

A different, more subtle kind of bondage.

He made her *pretend*.

Not being tied was just as bad, if not worse, than being tied. Because as he began to touch and tease her above the waist she wanted to move below but he kept telling her no.

His voice was the real bondage.

The real domination of her flesh.

Grant trailed kisses down her arms to her shoulders. He nuzzled her neck, he touched her cheeks, stroking. She never knew where he'd strike next and he was relentless.

When he laid the flat of his hand on her belly, she moaned aloud. Her breath quickened. She undulated, lifting her stomach.

“Be still,” he whispered, his words stinging hot in her ear.

She moaned, her mouth dry as a desert, needing his kisses. There was so much she needed, so much to beg for.

The first time his fingers found her breasts she went through the roof, like explosives going off. Her nipples felt tight and throbbing.

He knew how to work her perfectly. She dug her heels in, lifting her pelvis, desperate to be touched between her legs.

His hand found her buttock instead and delivered a light slap.

She gasped in surprise.

So this was erotic punishment.

Not at all what she’d imagined, the mild sting was mixed with pleasure.

Curious, she wanted more.

“Down,” he warned.

Tristy obeyed and her body was instantly filled with a thrill of a different kind. Surrender, delicious and sweet, but within safe boundaries. She had the word to stop things, plus she trusted Grant to never even come close to making her use it.

It was like this win-win situation, and she was walking the line of utter possession by a strong alpha male.

The bottom line was Grant’s absolute undivided attention, his guidance in making her what he wanted and needed for this experience. But he wasn’t trying to change her or get in her head.

This was just a game.

But Grant was anything but a player.

“Good girl.” For a reward he touched her clit.

She moaned at the pleasure radiating from her center like concentric waves that reached from the tips of her toes all the way to the top of her head and pooled in the hot lush spaces in between.

"Spread your legs wider," he said.

Tristy complied, baring herself completely.

He applied his fingers then sank them deep inside her.

"You are so fucking incredible," he said, making her well up with emotion in reply.

He was pretty incredible too.

"It's time to focus on your pleasure," he said. "And I want you to come as often and as loud as you like."

Tristy tensed at first, wondering what he intended to do. Then she felt his body sliding down hers, his hands traveling the length of her thighs.

He wasn't going to...

Yes he was.

He kissed her inner thigh, rocketing her with anticipation. The sensation was hot and cold at once, hard and soft.

She clenched her fists, unable to budge her arms an inch.

Grant moved between her legs. Then he moved his mouth to touch her delicate labia.

Tristy wanted to cry out from the sweet joy.

She'd had only two other guys willing to do this and they hadn't been very good. One was way too tentative, as if she would break if he touched too hard and the other kept checking his watch. Talk about a turn off.

Not Grant. He was here with her because he wanted to be. His every action showed tenderness.

"Don't fight the pleasure," he warned.

As if she would turn down a free orgasm?

Grant rolled his tongue and dabbed her clit. It felt like a tiny cock, probing, pressing. Then he worked her sex lips, lightly tracing along the rim, up and down. She orgasmed in response, the sweet liquid dripping from her pussy.

He lapped it up.

She cried as he pressed harder, burying his face. Her thighs clenched the sides of his head, greedily pulling him into her. At the same time, she wanted him to slow down.

It was all happening so fast. Like a tsunami crashing down. Grant was relentless, assaulting her with pleasure.

“Oh god I’m going to...”

She never had time to say the word as the orgasm ripped into her, tearing her body asunder, the cascading waves of ecstasy almost too much to bear.

But Grant had only begun to punish her with pleasure. No sooner had she caught her breath than he began all over again, lightly stroking with his tongue, pressing, licking and nibbling.

Out of her mind, she begged but she had no choice but to come and come again.

Grant left her wasted, limp and sweating in her bonds.

All this without ever touching her with his cock.

“Fuck me?” she whispered.

“Not yet.”

A chill passed down her spine. What did he intend?

She could make a few educated guesses. For a moment she felt his weight shift and fear gripped her as she thought of being left alone like this.

But he was only shifting positions, sliding up her body again, this time getting his cock level with her chin. She could feel the heat and weight of his balls. Instinctively she licked her lips in preparation.

“I want you to do a good job,” he rasped. “Suck me like a good little slave and maybe I’ll fuck you.”

"Oh yes," she said more than happy to get into the role.

She felt the tip of his cock at her lips. She kissed it reverently. He was kneeling astride her.

Obediently she opened and he fed his cock to her. She sucked it lightly, allowing her tongue to run along the ridge underneath. He sighed in obvious satisfaction and she could feel him swelling. She wanted to take more, all of him if she could but he was too big.

She would do her best.

"That's it, girl. Give me my pleasure."

She took as much of him as she could, greedily suctioning his swollen shaft and swallowing it as deep as she could.

He grunted, moving up and down, sliding his cock smoothly and efficiently in and out of her mouth.

She could feel his raw heat, the built-up tension, the sheer pleasure he was experiencing.

She'd never been so eager for a man's come in her life.

But he had something else in mind. Tristy whimpered in disappointment as he deprived her of her toy. There was a soft suctioning sound, a popping noise as he pulled out.

It was sheer agony.

She could feel the emptiness, the intense need to remain connected to him in any fashion possible.

"I'm gonna come on your breasts," he growled, his voice low and fierce. "I'm gonna explode all over your beautiful breasts."

Tristy felt his desire, sensed his need and she latched on to it, making it her own.

"Yes, please come on me, I am your slave, please...come."

She could hear his ragged breathing. She tried to imagine him stroking himself above her, unabashedly giving his body the pleasure he needed. Oh yes, he was getting what he needed, and she was only too happy to supply it.

Tristy felt the moments stretch into hours as if it would last forever and then abruptly he made a loud, victorious roaring noise and she felt the first of the warm gush, thick and creamy, splashing across her breasts. There was so much of it. It got on her face, her cheeks. She wanted more.

“Thank you, thank you,” she groaned. “Your slave thanks you.” She felt Grant’s muscles tensing and flexing as he finished masturbating, until finally he collapsed beside her.

Yes. It was everything she had hoped for. He had marked her.

His territory.

His property.

Wow! And this wasn't supposed to be weird in the morning?

Chapter Three

Grant had never felt that kind of release. It was the most amazing orgasm of his life and totally unexpected. A few hours ago he had been minding his own business cleaning one of his old pistols, watching the Yankees and Red Sox...and thinking about Tristy.

He was always thinking of Tristy.

Worrying about her, wondering about her. Fantasizing. Tristy was the hottest, most beautiful woman in the building. In his or any other building.

But it wasn't about her looks. Plenty of pretty girls happened across Grant's path. He was a cop and single and there were always opportunities.

Even for a man with his specific predilections.

No, Tristy was special. She was a free spirit, this walking hot mess, so very together in some ways and like a child in others.

He hated the way men took advantage of her. Over and over she assumed the best of men only to have her heart stomped all over. Men were jackasses.

They wanted sex. Then they wanted to run.

Up to now he had done everything in his power not to have sex with Tristy but here she was, nude in his bed, blindfolded and helpless. He had her in the palm of his hand.

Now what? That was the question.

Grant could hear her soft breathing. She had allowed him to "work his will". He had come all over her, covering her gorgeous breasts.

Oh god, he was getting hard again already. He wanted to fuck her. He needed to fuck her.

The blindfold made her look so hot. He stroked her damp blonde hair. She moaned softly and called his name. Her legs were wide apart just as he'd commanded. She belonged to him.

She was his slave. For the night at least. Got to think clearly, Grant.

He needed to send her home before things got much deeper. If they waited until morning it would be too late.

Tristy sighed. Her soft lips kissed his shoulder. That did not help.

"We need to get to you a shower, sweetheart."

"Yes..." she murmured.

Definitely not helping.

"Come on," he said. She showed no signs of movement. "You want me to carry you?"

"Uh-huh," she replied.

His turn to sigh. He had intended the remark to bring her to her senses. He would do it, though, as long as it brought her one step closer to going home. There was no way he would let her stay. She deserved better than a walk of shame from him.

Grant rose to his feet, giving himself another minute to enjoy the sight of the blindfold just hugging her cheekbones, the absolute trust, the sheer beauty.

Her nipples remained peaked. He could smell the scent of her arousal still. No longer the friend he had loved and trusted but a lover. A woman who had been to his bed, who had entered his world.

Was she really submissive or just playing at the game? Many women did – play that is – taking on the role for variety.

But Grant needed more than that. He needed a woman who would go all the way and allow him the room he needed to be the lion, the sensual beast who could – would – take a woman for the deepest, most amazing journey of her life not just once but over and over.

Grant had no patience for “topping from the bottom”, which meant trying to control one’s own submission. He demanded more. He required more. Either a woman trusted him or she didn’t. Either she wanted to yield to him or not.

Tristy was an unknown. She was his friend first and should have stayed that way. He had felt guilty more than once about being aroused by her when she in one of her emotional states. Seeing her so hurt would make him want to take control, to step in and deal with her mess and make it right. Every time she came to the door it only got harder.

Tonight had been the hardest of all. The way she’d looked in that cute little party dress, obviously ready to cry her eyes out. That son of a bitch hadn’t deserved the time of day from her, much less a date.

Why was Tristy so blind to these assholes? She was such a smart woman. The smartest he had ever known. If she was submissive he might easily...

But he had to let that go. It was not meant to be.

Grant bent down and removed the blindfold and untied her. He scooped her up. She was nothing to carry, light as a feather. His heart clenched as she snuggled against him, naturally resting her cheek on his chest, so instinctively and unabashedly relying on him. As though she knew he would carry her to the ends of the earth. And he would too. Without faltering. If it killed him.

Few were the women who understood or cared about such commitments anymore and few were the men who wanted to give them. He had known plenty of guys on the force who were divorced once, twice— had never given it a second thought what it really meant to make that kind of promise and pledge.

Funny how BDSM was called a kink, a perversion and yet what it had taught him was how to hold on to his honor, his absolute determination to do right by a woman.

Tristy’s skin was so soft, her muscles so smooth and slight in comparison to his own. He couldn’t imagine a finer specimen of femininity, a better woman.

Grant took her down the hall to the bathroom. It had to be after three by now. He hadn't bothered checking the clock in the bedroom. It didn't matter now. This was the night time space when two lovers belonged to each other.

Was it so wrong to want a little more time? A little more touching, a little more love?

The first time she had come to his door she had just moved in. She had been wearing a pair of torn jeans shorts and a tank top. She'd had her lustrous golden hair pulled back in a ponytail, a few strands loose and gracing her forehead.

"Hi, I'm Tristy, I'm your new neighbor," she'd said with a beaming smile, half apology and half mischief. Looking back at it, he had fallen for her that very first instant. What man wouldn't have?

"I'm not really sure why this isn't working," she had announced holding up a gooseneck lamp.

His first instinct had been to try comedy. "Have you tried plugging it in?"

"There's a thought," she'd said, not missing a beat. "Could I be any more blonde?"

As it turned out, she'd tried the plug and she'd checked the bulb too. The problem had been a loose wire, which he had promptly fixed.

There had been a million more things after that, all of which he tended to as well, everything from rearranging furniture to hanging pictures. He half suspected her of making up stuff just so they could get together but who was he to complain? They had formed a fast friendship on a number of levels.

Turned out her dad was on the job, too, along with a couple of uncles. She never gave out a lot of details but that's how it was with cop families. Grant respected that.

He had a feeling there was more to the story about her and her father but she would tell him when she was ready. For now it was all about getting her in the shower and then getting her home.

Grant had to drape her about his neck as he set about turning on the water. She was not helping by kissing him. She was not helping at all.

"Honey, I can't do both things at once."

"So screw the shower," she breathed hotly in his ear.

Grant's cock was full again, erect to the bursting point. Tristy had her fingers on it, playing across the veins crisscrossing the surface.

"Damn it, girl."

"Fuck me?" she begged.

Next thing he knew *she* was tugging *him* down to the floor.

The shower water poured down on them through the half-open curtain. Tristy negotiated her body on the smooth tile of the bathroom floor, getting into place beneath Grant, cushioning him...playing the slave girl. *Grant*. Oh god, just saying his name in her mind felt so good. Was this really happening? Was she really here in his apartment with him doing this?

As he landed on top of her, she raised her legs, encircled him and pulled him in. His cock went deep inside her, filling her hard and fast, her wet sex desperate and needy for his powerfully pulsing heat. His teeth sank into her shoulder and then he found her breast.

"Have you any idea?" he murmured after suckling to his heart's content. "What you are doing?"

"I've been to enough sex education classes..."

Grant extracted his cock nearly to the tip.

She whimpered from the emptiness.

"You think you can just control what happens?"

"No..."

"No, Sir."

"No, Sir." She wriggled underneath him, trying to impale herself again.

"Don't move." Grant pinched her ass hard.

Tristy squealed in mild protest. "You bastard."

"Who started this?" he reminded her.

She was panting. Beyond herself, outside herself with pleasure and deep, utterly mind-blowing need. "Who cares who started it? Just finish it like a man."

Grant chuckled. "I'm not like the other men you know, remember?"

Something about his question put her off. It was a reminder, maybe to bring her down to reality or maybe it was about coming up for air. Suddenly she saw herself through his eyes, or at least what she feared she might look like.

She tried to push him away. "You make me sound like a slut."

He held her fast. "That's not what I mean and you know it. I mean that the other guys you've known were too scared to start or finish. You've needed love, Tristy, warmth, caring. Have you gotten any of that?"

"None of your business."

As if he didn't know her love life as well as she did. Maybe even better.

"I want to go home," she said.

He laughed. "So use the safe word."

"I'm not playing games, Grant."

Grant's eyes held something new, something she had never seen before. Was she hurting his feelings? The rough, tough cop? The sure and steady neighbor? Suddenly she saw it going down like a house of cards, the whole basis of their friendship.

"I mean it, Grant, get the fuck off me."

He swore under his breath. Something about knowing it was a fucking mistake all along.

It was all she needed to hear.

"I'm not your goddamn mistake! You hear me?" The tears poured out. He held her until they stopped, which could have been minutes or an hour later for all the difference it made.

Somehow he had the wisdom not to say anything. As if he knew a single word would destroy it all. *Damn it, what a good guy he is.* Why did she have to go and fuck it up with him too? "I want to be alone," she said.

He cleared his throat. "Are you sure?"

"I just need a shower, a little privacy?" She forced a smile.

He frowned. No need for pretense between them.

"I'll be just outside the door."

And that's where she found him a half hour later, just standing there, leaning against the wall, waiting for her.

It almost broke her heart to walk away. They didn't say another word. It was close to five a.m. when she got back to her apartment. The first thing she saw was the gooseneck lamp on her nightstand.

Everything else was a blur.

She held on to the lamp, bawling like a child.

What have I done? What have I done?

Then the realization came crashing in.

She loved him.

Yes, she was in love with Grant, she knew that now, but had she ruined things? Hard to imagine that happening when they'd never had a chance to begin with.

They'd been buddies. That was it.

Now they were...neighbors. Politely greeting each other in the hallway every couple of weeks, maybe a hello for Christmas.

Nothing more.

Oh well. Such was life. No biggie.

So why did she feel like a huge corkscrew had just twisted up her insides? Why was it like losing her daddy all over again?

Except Grant wasn't a father figure. He was anything but. He was the man she cared about.

The love of her life.

The thought terrified her. It had to be wrong. Because if it were true it would mean she was one of those women destined never to be happy. She would die alone. They would find her wandering the streets one day in her bathrobe, carrying a gooseneck lamp. That thought made her laugh. Which was a damn sight better than crying.

Plenty of time for that tomorrow.

Chapter Four

Grant spent the rest of the night and half the next morning trying to figure out what had happened. He was halfway tempted to go straight to her door and ask.

Had it all been some bizarre dream? Had she come to his door at all? Maybe he'd imagined it the way he had so many times before—Tristy in his arms, Tristy in his bonds, Tristy...his.

Ordinarily he would have been pissed to be called in for an extra shift but when the phone rang at ten-thirty that morning for a noon-to-eight, he was only too happy to oblige.

Suiting up and strapping on his firearm was just the distraction he needed. He would have a welcome respite from Grant the individual, Grant the neighbor of Tristy.

He paused momentarily by her door. Hearing nothing, he resisted the impulse to check on her and continued down the hallway. As he reached the elevator he heard a chain sliding across a lock. He looked back. She was there poking her head out and then she was gone.

So we are down to that? Juvenile tricks of hide and seek. Wonderful. He clenched his fists. How could he have been so stupid? He should never have let it happen. He ought to have shut her down cold, sent her packing the minute she got too flirtatious.

Right. As if he could ever refuse Tristy anything.

That was the problem. He couldn't dominate her. He lusted after her, he wanted and needed her but he couldn't control her.

It was a recipe for disaster.

But a sweet one nonetheless.

Grant left the building still thinking. Still aching. With any luck he'd be asked to pull a double and be too tired to think straight by the time he got home. Then he'd be sure not to go and check on her.

Climbing into his squad car he felt the familiar rush. He was on the job and everything else was history.

For now.

* * * * *

Tristy watched the Grant's police car pull away from the curb, a lump in her throat the size of Cleveland. She had wanted to poke her head out the door and tell him to be safe. That was all, just for him to watch out. Cops got shot at, they got killed, people tried to run them over and that didn't begin to cover all the accidents that could happen.

She remembered, as a little girl, the ritual of watching her daddy get ready for work, handing him his cap and his badge and walking him out to his car.

Once, while she and her mother had been listening on the police scanner, they had heard his number, Greenville Unit 14 responding to a Code 34 which was a bank robbery. Hadn't seemed like the end of the world but Tristy could always tell from the expressions on her mother's face, the way her cheeks tensed and her eyes focused, whether she worried or not.

A Code 34 was serious and that time it *was* the end of the world. The bank robbers had come from Los Angeles and they had been well armed, far better equipped than the local police. A teller had tripped the silent alarm. When the robbers left the cops were waiting for them.

Three lay dead before it was over, including Tristy's father.

From that day forward no officer in Greenville travelled without an automatic rifle in the trunk of the unit but that was too late for him and the others.

What Tristy remembered from the blur of events that followed was the funeral—so many blue suits and not just from their department. They came from L.A. and San Francisco. There was even a representative from the governor's office and a motorcycle detachment all the way from Washington State.

Under the gleaming sun they lined up with their white gloves and so many shook her little hand that it began to hurt, became sore, like her eyes. Funny, she didn't actually remember crying but she must have because everyone had told her not to, that her dad had died a hero, a lifesaver. Someone, a hostage from the bank, had given her a huge hug.

That had just freaked Tristy out. Guns had been fired at the service and that had been scary too. A priest had said everything was all right. Just the way it was supposed to be.

But that was bullshit and everyone knew it.

Especially when a few weeks later a woman showed up at the house drunk very late on a Friday night. Turned out the hero had feet of clay. The woman had wanted to see Tristy. She claimed Jack used to talk about her all the time and had always said if anything happened to him she should go and see his little girl.

It had been fucked-up to be sure.

Tristy's mom called had the cops who were all Dad's friends and the woman disappeared, a one-way bus ticket across the state line into someone else's jurisdiction she later learned, but the damage had been done.

Tristy's mother was never the same again. She died several years later of a brain embolism. Tristy suspected it was her mother's one consolation in life, that some scrap of dignity, some little bit of her husband's honor had been protected by his fellow officers...for Tristy's sake.

There was so much she would have told her dad.

Now watching Grant drive away, she wished she could say those things to him, all those things she would have said to her dad about honor and courage and love if there had been time, if she had been old enough.

But now history was repeating itself and again it was too late. *I've ruined everything*, she thought. *I've destroyed my friendship with Grant, the best guy on the planet.*

Now who would she talk to when it got tough? She had girlfriends but that wasn't the same. Tristy had never cared much for the company of other females. They seemed catty to her, spending way too much time talking about guys and stabbing each other in the back.

Not that she had much more luck with guys.

Except Grant.

Tristy hugged herself tightly. She was wearing her old track suit, the one she wore when she was feeling down and wanted to hide from the world. Grant had been the only person in the world to see it. He had told her he felt honored.

What a goof ball. She smiled through her tears.

Grant would know what to do to make her feel better. He would hold her way tighter than she could hold herself and he would kiss the troubles away. And he'd play games with her, wicked BDSM games.

Tristy felt instant tension at the thought of Grant's games. What would he do with her right now if he had her all to himself? Would he strip her nude, would he tie her? Or maybe even spank her?

Her heart leaped in her chest.

She couldn't resist the urge to touch herself, to rub her palm over her belly. Instantly her abdominal muscles tightened as though it were Grant's hand. Gasping softly she let her fingers travel northward along the zipper of the jacket. She grasped the catch and tugged it slightly. Her nipples peaked in response. Tristy arched her back. Down came the zipper until it reached the bottom.

The jacket was open and she had no bra underneath, no T-shirt either. Moaning, she felt the material rub against her nipples. Her eyes slid shut as she pulled the jacket over her shoulders. Just like that she was nude from the waist up.

Greedily, her fingers found the waistband of her sweatpants. She was dying to touch her pussy but something told her to wait. In her mind, she heard Grant's dominating voice.

You'll touch when I say so.

"Yes," she whispered. "Yes..." As if unbidden the tips of her fingers found her left nipple. She squeezed hard. Just enough to make herself whimper – the threshold of her pain.

Then she did something most unexpected. It made her bite her lower lip. She slapped her hand against her behind.

And then a second time, harder. Ouch. That smarted!

Grant laughed in her ear, ever the invisible presence. *What did you expect, girl?*

"I know," she said aloud. "Spanking hurts."

But there were rewards too as she soon discovered. Like getting to rub her hot bottom as her other hand slid surreptitiously down inside the front panel of her panties until her fingers reached her clitoris.

The button of pleasure was already swollen and eager to be touched. Juices dripped from her pussy down her inner thighs. She could feel the raw heat of her sex lips, the aching canal that needed more than anything to be filled. And there was only one thing to fit the bill.

Grant.

She couldn't even think of another man if she tried. *But, since he isn't here I'll have to make do with the dildo.* Assuming Grant gave his "permission".

"Please," she begged aloud.

On your knees, slave girl.

Tristy dropped to the floor. Oh, how she wished he was above her, in front of her, over her.

"Please..." she repeated, listening in the light, sweet silence for his reply.

Why should I let you pleasure yourself? the phantom Grant wanted to know.

"I need to," she rasped. "I can't stand it any longer."

Should have thought of that when you ran out on me.

"I didn't run out," she protested.

But she had. It had been too overwhelming. If only she could have explained it all.

What you deserve is to suck my cock.

"Yes, Grant, yes, I would love to do that."

You know what to do. Crawl into bed and show me.

Tristy did not bother to rise from her knees. She crawled, playing the part of the slave girl, commanded as if against her will.

Correction—commanded as if she had no will but his.

It was a sweet and delicious difference and she loved it. Tristy crawled into bed and reached for the dildo she kept in her nightstand. She called it Old Faithful because it was always there, it never disappointed and it was not married to anyone else to her knowledge. In some ways OF was perfect if not for its singular lack of conversation.

But she had Grant for that or at least she used to, up until last night. Now there was only the memory and the fantasy.

Lying flat on her back, she yanked down the sweat pants and panties. Naked, she spread her legs wide.

At last.

It would be better tied up though. She would have to imagine.

You will not come without permission.

Tristy gritted her teeth. She was so close already. This was going to be maddening. Groaning, she pushed the dildo against the ridge of her sex lips. Her whole body throbbed in anticipation. Little zaps of electricity ran up and down her spine.

Tristy lifted onto her heels. She thrust the dildo deep.

Oh yes, oh, fucking yes. She was so hot and filled and desperate for more.

“Grant...” She said his name, calling out into the empty room. Dimly she wondered where he might be at that moment. He belonged with her. Naked and on top of her conducting things, not just his voice conjured in her ear.

The shudders began to overtake her.

“Can’t stop.” Her teeth chattered. It was like a hurricane and she was just a tiny boat trying to stop it, trying to stay afloat in the midst of it.

How did one stop that kind of force?

The orgasm was so strong it poured over her defenses and before she could catch her breath a second one came, even bigger than the first. She lost track of time, of reality itself as the third one followed. Tristy felt the warm, familiar glow.

Grant was here. He’d been part of this, he’d made it happen.

And now he would punish her.

You were told not to come, slave girl.

“I know, Sir, please, I beg your forgiveness.”

He laughed. *Oh, you’ll have plenty of chances to beg, trust me on that.*

Shuddering, she smiled. If nothing else, she would not be bored the rest of the day.

* * * * *

Grant sized up the two-seater as it roared past, fifteen miles over the speed limit according to the radar. From the look of the occupants—two girls with long flowing hair and over-privileged smiles—they were from the college in town. Nineteen, maybe

twenty years old. Kids like these were used to getting away with murder, especially the pretty ones.

He'd give anything for a car like that, a classic British roadster in mint condition. He'd have to settle for pulling it over.

The girls looked nervous but not panicked. Drugs and alcohol were always a possibility.

"Officer, is there a problem?" the driver wanted to know. She punctuated her question with a flip of her over-treated, platinum-blond hair.

The passenger slumped in her seat, not so boisterous. She reminded him of a younger version of Tristy.

Grant would have given anything to have known Tristy when she was in her teens. All that spunk and energy but he knew there had been pain too. She'd alluded to it here and there. He knew her dad had been killed on the job when she was just a kid. It had been a bloodbath, one that had changed police procedure all over the state if not the nation.

Gone were the days of complacency. Now any situation had to be viewed as potentially violent. The cops were outnumbered and outgunned as well. And that didn't begin to cover the terrorists.

There was more to Tristy's father's death, though, something bigger than the job. Something had been revealed in the aftermath which had shaken her faith in him and in men in general. Had he been a cheater?

Was that what had led her unwittingly to find one cheater after another? Was she somehow punishing herself for her father's behavior, forcing herself to be as unhappy as she'd implied her mother had been?

Cheating was a complex thing.

Grant had been cheated on before. He'd had his heart broken more than once as a matter of fact. But that was in the past.

Grant was armored these days, just as his chest was armored, the vest neatly tucked up under his uniform shirt. He was bulletproof. *Yeah, right*, he thought as he robotically asked the blonde for her license and registration.

Tristy had shot him deep and true this morning.

"I'm not your goddamn mistake," she'd said. "You hear me?"

Is that how he'd treated her, even if only subconsciously? The act might have been an error but not her. She had to know that.

Damn it! He'd handled it all wrong.

Tristy needed to know there wasn't a thing wrong or immoral about her. She was lovely and beautiful and absolutely honest and innocent. She was the best thing to come into his life in...well, ever.

The realization made his stomach clench. He handed back the license.

"Watch your speed next time," he said.

The blonde regarded him, open-mouthed. She seemed more surprised than he was.

"You mean I'm free to go?"

"That's what it means. Now go before I change my mind."

The girl in the passenger seat frowned. Was it his imagination or was there a tinge of disapproval in her eyes? As though she knew her girlfriend deserved a ticket.

He walked woodenly back to his patrol car. Grant was going to have to talk to Tristy right after his shift was over.

It would be evening by then—Saturday night. He could only hope she would stay in tonight. In her current state of mind she would pose a real danger to herself if she went out.

Too bad he couldn't arrest her. He did have his handcuffs though. And he knew how to use them.

Chapter Five

Tristy awoke disoriented, her body aching and still tingling from the games she had been playing with herself. She had not been able to give herself a proper spanking but she had managed to tie her wrists together with a scarf for a nice sensation of bondage. From there it had been easy enough to taunt her nipples and tease her pussy from orgasm to orgasm.

Finally she had fallen asleep utterly exhausted.

She might have lain there forever if not for the doorbell. Tristy blinked, looking at the clock radio. The LED display read 9:30.

Was that p.m. or a.m.? It was dark so it must be p.m. Yes, that was it. She had left Grant's that morning. She had been playing all day.

Tristy sat up. Good grief, was that ringing going to go on forever? *Take a hint. I'm not home. Or I want to be left alone.*

Her heart seized.

Grant.

If anybody would keep on like that it would be him. What would she say to him? Nothing. He could just wear out his finger if he liked.

She sighed.

That wasn't very mature. She would at least go out there and tell him to his face.

Sort of.

By the time she reached the living room she could hear him calling her name.

"Tristy, I know you're in there."

How, Tristy wanted to know? Clutching the robe tightly about her nude form, as if he could see through solid wood, she went to the door.

"Grant, stop making a spectacle of yourself. You are going to freak everyone out."

"I'm a cop. They'll understand."

"But this isn't police business."

"Maybe it should be."

"Why? Did I break the law?"

"Just open the door and let me apologize."

She swallowed hard. She unlocked and opened the door as far as the chain would allow. She saw his gleaming badge, his broad chest, his solid chin.

"Tristy, you're leaving the chain on? Seriously?"

How could she explain that it wasn't him she distrusted but her own libido? "I'm tired," she said. "It's late."

"It's not even ten. And you look like you've been sleeping all day."

"Stop acting like a know it all," she snapped. "It's annoying."

"I don't know it all. I just know you."

"Whatever."

"Look, what happened this morning —"

"Hush, you want the neighbors to hear?"

"So let me in."

"I told you, I'm tired."

"What you are is stubborn. I can get a search warrant you know."

She suppressed a smile. "No, you can't." He was clearly teasing and it was not helping her maintain her defensive walls. "Come back in half an hour," she said.

"Why the hell would I do that?" he asked suspiciously.

"So I have a chance to, you know, get presentable." Actually she planned to be long gone.

"You are plenty presentable to me. Besides it's not like I haven't seen it all before."

"I mean it, Grant, give me thirty minutes and don't you go cheating by spying on me."

He sighed loudly. She could just make out that deliberative frown of his. Of course he didn't like the idea but he was a gentleman. "Thirty minutes, not a minute more."

"Fine."

Tristy's heart pounded. A half hour was nothing. How the hell would she get ready to go clubbing and sneak out of the building by then? There was one way though. And that would be to call someone up. Invite them over. A guy maybe.

That would show Grant.

Then again given the guys she knew... *Yuk. Smart, Tristy. Real smart.* Maybe she could invite a female friend. If she had any. No, there was only one option.

Laundry room here I come.

* * * * *

Grant knew Tristy was up to something, he just didn't know what.

She might be planning to invite a girlfriend by or maybe she would try to sneak off to some club. The one thing she would not do would be to sit quietly by and wait for him to come back and explain himself.

For whatever reason, she did not want an apology. That was fine, he was a patient man. They had all the time in the world. The only thing that really worried him was the prospect of her running off tonight and doing something she might regret.

The city was a dangerous place and Tristy had a way of finding trouble. Maybe it was the cop in him. He was overprotective and more than a little suspicious of everyone and everything.

Not that he let it show.

He had been secretly thankful to find she was still at home in the first place and he intended to keep it that way. But it would be done on the down low.

Changing as quickly as he could into jeans and sneakers and his favorite gray T-shirt, Grant grabbed the bag he'd been meaning to take downstairs. It was full by now and what a great excuse to do laundry.

He had promised not to spy but he'd said nothing about staying in his apartment. And the great thing about the laundry room was its location. No one came in or out of the building without passing it. Which made it the perfect place for a stakeout.

Grant had gotten as far as putting the quarters in the washing machine when he heard the elevator beep.

So soon? He hid behind the door.

Sure enough there she was, wearing her track suit. The one she would never wear outside to save her life.

"You forgot something," he said.

Tristy nearly leaped out of her skin.

He folded his arms.

She regarded him open mouthed. "You!"

"Last I looked, yes I am me."

"But what are you doing here?"

"Same as you, I would assume." He inclined his head to her empty hands. "Except in my case I actually brought my dirty clothes."

"Fine," she blurted. "I don't have any laundry, are you happy? You're right as usual and you're superior, etcetera, etcetera. I'm just Tristy the fuck up and —"

Next thing he knew, he was holding her in his arms. He hadn't expected her to break down so quickly but with Tristy you never quite knew what to expect.

"I'm the one who's supposed to feel bad," he murmured, stroking her hair.

"What for? You are...perfect as always."

He laughed. "Hardly, kiddo."

She shook her head. "I messed everything up."

Grant held her at arm's length, determined to get through to her with good solid eye contact. "Nothing important between us can be messed up, you got it?"

"So we're...still friends?" She sniffed, exhaling the words and though he should have felt joy at the prospect, he was consumed by blackness.

Friends...

That had meant the world to him twenty-four hours ago. And now? It wasn't enough.

"Of course we are," he soothed. "You think I am going to cut you off and unleash you on society?"

Tristy laughed softly, making his heart sing. What a terrifying place to be, so dependent on her reactions, her joy. Was this what love felt like? It had been so long and even then it hadn't shown itself like this, like a delicate butterfly as magnificent as it was vulnerable.

Any sudden moves and the thing would take flight.

"I am a danger, aren't I?"

If only you knew.

"You're not on the top ten most-wanted list if that's what you mean," he quipped.

"I'm a danger to myself," she decided.

He said nothing as they kept looking into each other's eyes. Too long. *Talk about danger.*

"I should go get some laundry," she whispered.

"And I should check on mine." *Did I even put it in?* Why couldn't he remember anything before this conversation?

"All right then," she said.

"All right," he repeated though it was anything but right.

They tried to walk around each other. It was awkward at best. Nearly bumping his nose on hers, he diverted slightly and found himself with his lips on hers.

She moaned in shock and then in startled acceptance. Her arms reached for his body and his reached for hers. The embrace was painfully familiar but charged with new possibility.

Tristy sighed and relaxed as his tongue worked its way into her mouth.

This is a mistake, another fucking mistake. But he couldn't say a word. He didn't dare hurt her again. Besides his cock had never been so hard.

She touched it. Just as she had before. But this was not the same shy, tentative Tristy.

"Let me..." she whispered.

He knew what she wanted and this was not the time or the place.

"No," he told her, though it was too late.

Tristy was already sinking to her knees. Grant had the good sense to reach out and lock the laundry-room door. He grabbed her shoulders as she reached for his zipper. She worked fast and he was hardly in a position to resist.

Some domination.

Deftly she reached inside his pants and pulled his cock through the opening in his jeans. Luckily for her, and unluckily for him, he had worn no underwear.

Moaning softly, Tristy licked her lips.

This was insanity. They were in a public place and he was a law-enforcement officer. Tristy kissed the tip of his cock, taking the time to lick away a drip of pre-come from his uncircumcised head.

"You're so beautiful," she said.

"And you are so naughty," he replied.

"I want to please you...want..."

He groaned, feeling the sensation of her tongue along the underside of his shaft, along the thick vein. Looking down seeing this gorgeous creature serving at his feet, he couldn't help but be moved to the point of utter ecstasy.

In fact, this was not going to last long. Grant would never be able to hold out. He could feel his cock swelling already. He leaned forward slightly as he arched his neck. The roaring sound started deep in his chest. He was able to keep it mostly silent but it was full of emotion as the orgasm overtook him.

A powerful rush of sensation washed over him as the hot, thick jets of semen poured from the end of his cock into Tristy's waiting and willing mouth.

"Tristy," he said, "you don't have to..."

But she was already doing it, swallowing down every little bit as fast as he could produce it. She continued sucking him and holding him fast, her hands wrapped around his waist.

Finally she released him, having licked him clean.

Grant pulled her to her feet. "And what exactly was that supposed to be?" he asked, finding it more than a little difficult to muster any real discontent over her actions.

"If you don't know by now," she teased, "we're both in trouble."

"We're supposed to be friends," he reminded her.

"So I was just doing a solid for my good pal." She offered a grin and a wink. "You could say thanks."

Grant arched a brow. "You know what we call girls like you?"

"I can hardly imagine."

"We call them brats. They are submissives who try to manipulate a man into taking control."

"Sounds complicated."

"It can be. If the couple doesn't work together."

"And how would we be, as a couple, I mean?"

"Like fire and ice," he said without hesitation.

"Which one am I?"

"It depends."

Tristy put out her hand. "Still friends?"

"Always."

Her hand was small in his, so easily enveloped. He felt such a strange combination of desires – to protect, to consume, to possess.

"I will hold you to it," she declared as she turned toward the door.

He unlocked the door for her and let her out. Quickly he closed it behind her. Before she could see the expression on his face. There was pain there and he knew it. Not the sort of thing you showed a friend.

At least not the ones you were in love with.

* * * * *

Tristy didn't look back. When she was safely inside her apartment she locked the door, not that it would protect her. Not from the things she was feeling. She felt foolish and stupid and...betrayed.

Not by Grant.

How could she blame him? He had done nothing to her. He was the perfect gentleman always, ever above board, never deceiving or leading her on.

He was and always would be a friend.

But why not more? What the hell kept them apart?

Was it just the BDSM, which she played at but still feared, or were they both afraid of a real relationship? Did they feel unworthy of happiness?

She needed time to think. And her life back on track. She definitely needed some non-Grant time. Some nice long baths, pay-per-view movies. Maybe get to know herself a little better.

Then maybe she could look for someone else. Someone not in her building. It was a good solid idea.

So why was she wiping tears from her eyes?

* * * * *

It was well after midnight when the knock came on Tristy's door. Bleary eyed, she looked at the television and realized she had fallen asleep on the couch.

In a flash it all came back to her, the memories of the last twenty-four hours, the excruciating highs and lows.

Grant.

Was it him knocking? It had to be. Should she answer?

Her heart pounded. She wanted to tell him to go away. Then again she wanted to let him in and tell him off. Didn't he realize what time it was? Decent people were trying to sleep. Not that she felt very decent.

Resisting the urge to slide the chain across the door, Tristy used the peephole. A quick gasp followed. It most certainly was not Grant.

Brian. Of hello-let-me-lead-you-on-and-then-tell-you-all-about-my-lovely-wife-and-kids fame. Not that he had even had the decency to tell her himself. She'd had to find the information on his cell phone. The suspicion had obviously been there. She had just been ignoring it all along.

"Tristy, I know you're in there, I can hear you breathing."

Just barely, she thought. "Go away, Brian, you shouldn't have come."

"I know. I'm an even bigger ass than I already was, but look, I came to apologize," he said.

Tristy waited for the hidden agenda.

Five...four...three...two...one.

"And...and maybe to talk a little?"

Blast off! "There isn't anything to talk about."

"I just want to make it right." She could hear the slur in his voice.

"You've been drinking."

"A little," he confessed. "But it just makes me bolder. Tristy, I'm separated now and I love you."

"Go away, Brian, or I will call the cops." *One of whom lives right down the hall.* Not that she wanted to involve Grant any further in her sorry excuse for a life.

"Go ahead," he said, emboldened by the scotch or whatever else was in his system. "I'll shout it to the world here or in jail. I love Tristy! I love Tristy!"

That was it. Enough was enough. She really didn't want him to be arrested. He was harmless enough but she had to get him home. Undoing the chain, she turned the deadbolt and opened the door. Brian looked even worse than he had through the peephole.

"You look good," he slurred, practically falling on her. "You look like a million bucks."

"Brian, get off me!"

He was still clinging when she heard the door fling open down the hall.

Grant had heard enough.

He had been willing to let the situation go provided Tristy was up to dealing with it herself. But now she had gone and done the worst thing by opening her door to an obviously drunken punk.

One look at him said he was a potential threat to her now that the alcohol had removed whatever tenuous morals he might have possessed.

"Can I help you with something?" asked the surly, soused Brian.

"Sure," said Grant. "You can drop your ass to the floor before I do it for you."

Brian was laughing but he had that wary look in his eye. He'd also managed to release his grip on Tristy's arm.

"You know this character?" Brian asked Tristy.

Grant's teeth clenched. The very idea of Brian talking to Tristy any further, much less touching her again, was more than he could stand.

"I'm an interested third party, bud, and right now my interest is in getting you away from this young woman."

"Grant, I can speak for myself," Tristy snapped, as though he were the aggressor and not the one trying to save her ass.

Brian laughed, sniffing a potential wedge in the situation. He reached out again for Tristy and that was all she wrote.

"Wanna grab somebody, how about me?" Grant asked as he took Brian by the collar, pivoting him about and setting him on his feet a safe distance from Tristy.

It was at that point that Brian revealed just how stupid he was. Grant easily blocked the punch and landed one of his own in Brian's solar plexus. The man ended up on his knees, groaning and looking skyward.

Grant pulled him back to his feet. "How about you hit the road, pal?"

Brian didn't need to be asked again. Still holding his stomach, he staggered down the hall muttering the whole way about crazy bitches and psycho boyfriends.

"He's not my boyfriend," Tristy called after him.

Grant shook his head. "Heaven forbid."

"I suppose you want me to thank you?" She whirled on him.

"I want you to be all right, that's all."

"I'm fine."

"Good."

"Good," she echoed. "Well, good night then."

"Goodnight."

Neither one of them moved. A second later they fell into a kiss. It was hard to tell who moved first. Grant's arms snaked around Tristy and she collapsed into him. He could feel the tension releasing from her.

He wanted to hold her like that forever. At the same time there were so many other things he wanted to do with her, things he wanted to show her and teach her.

"Come with me," he murmured. "Back to my apartment. There are some things I want to tell you. Beginning with...I'm pretty damn sure I love you."

The words caught them both off guard. But they had been building and building. In a way it made sense...though it surely opened a whole new path, something other than friends with benefits.

Her face lit, dreamy and filled with desire. His heart clenched in response.

"Yes," she said. "*Master.*"

About the Author

Reese Gabriel is a born romantic with a taste for the edgier side of love. Having traveled the world and sampled many of the finer things, Reese now enjoys the greater simplicities—barefoot walks by the ocean, kisses under moonlight and whispers of passion in the darkness with that one special person.

Preferring to remain behind the scenes, cherished by a precious few, Reese hopes to awaken in the lives of many the possibilities of true love through stories of far off places and enchanted lives.

For the sake of love and hope and imagination, these stories are told. May they be enjoyed as much in the reading as in the writing.

Reese welcomes comments from readers. You can find Reese's website and email addresses on the [author bio page](#) at www.ellorascave.com.

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