

ELLORA'S CAVE TABOO



Managing
Macy

REESE GABRIEL

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Reese Gabriel

Book 1 in the Tall, Dark and Dominant series.

Macy wants sexy Jarit Colson in the worst way. Too bad that she has a dating code forbidding across-the-hall hook-ups. But her dating rules are shot after one look at his lean, sexy, athletic body.

Jarit is cautious for a different reason. He's a sexual Dominant and he's not sure the sweet, submissive vibes Macy is giving off are the real thing. Jarit decides to test the waters. Kisses quickly turn to talk of ropes and cuffs and spanking. Macy is intrigued and they try a little bondage. She is easily seduced but scared by how much she likes it. She ends up with buyer's remorse and begs off.

Jarit isn't satisfied with just a taste. He knows exactly what he wants and it is a whole lot more of Macy.

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Managing Macy

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MANAGING MACY

Reese Gabriel

Author's Note:

In the world of fantasy anything goes, but in reality, remember to always practice safe sex.

Chapter One

Macy's Rules for Dating, number 1: *Never get it on with thy next-door neighbor.*

She had eighty-three more, not that she was a control freak or anything.

As far as Macy Lewis was concerned, they were tried and true, especially number 1. Hot and heavy sex led to steamy relationships and relationships invariably went sour. Which left someone having to move, usually the woman, and frankly a good apartment was way harder to find in this city than a boyfriend.

But every rule had its temptations.

Jarit Colson, resident of Apartment 304 just across the hall, was hers.

It didn't help that he was standing in the doorway right now with a sheepish grin, soaked to the skin, having locked himself out of his humble abode.

"I left a message for the super," he rasped in that coffee-rich, deep-as-sin voice of his. "Could be hours. You know how Old Man Reynolds is."

Macy did know. Reynolds was a man and therefore unreliable, but a necessary evil. If women could reproduce on their own and fix pipes, who would need men?

"I could stand in the hall," he offered, just the right dose of chivalrous gentleman mixed with boyish charm.

Macy frowned and tried to keep her eyes well above the belt line. Jarit Colson was very wet and very, very hot—from his soaked T-shirt to his soggy jeans, solid thighs, rock-hard abs and biceps to die for.

She pictured him naked in a rain forest, glistening, bronzed skin, his muscles tensed ever so subtly as he prepared to make his move on her—also naked.

It would be a very short-lived wrestling match. The sort of match any woman would give her best pair of designer shoes to lose.

And what exactly would a man like Jarit do in the wake of victory? She'd sensed something different, primal about him. He would not compromise. He'd get what he wanted from a woman, giving her pleasure on his terms.

A woman could yield in his arms.

Hell, she would have to yield.

Surrender completely to his whims, his will.

He would restrain, release and —

There were other words, other images of this surrender, but she dared not go further, not here, not now.

Those words and images had to do with leather and maybe steel.

And maybe punishment.

Damn, she had to get hold of herself. Macy stopped looking at Jarit's chest in the nick of time. Unfortunately Jarit's eyes were even worse, blue—somewhere between sapphire and cobalt—and bedroom-smoldering.

Talk about making his case.

Jeez, if this was what it was like to have him want to hang out in her apartment until the super came to unlock his door, what would he be like if he were asking for...

Macy dared to think the word.

Sex.

Yes, sex with *him*, Jarit Colson and her in a bed or on the table or even the floor if they couldn't make it that far. Hell it wasn't as though she hadn't imagined it a thousand times over. Sometimes it would be slow and she would kiss every inch of his body, other times it would be breathtakingly fast as they barely took time to remove their clothes before plunging into the heat of one another's passions.

But always, always, he would take the lead, controlling.

"Don't be silly," she said now, standing aside to give him as wide a berth as possible. "You're more than welcome."

"Thanks." His entrance into her place was palpable, pure unabashed male confidence.

Their arms brushed briefly—his wet, bulging muscular one against her slender, bare one. Never had she felt so naked in a tank top and shorts and bare feet.

"My place is a mess," she apologized.

Jarrit laughed, low and easy, pure cocoa and honey that made her heat up and shiver all at the same time.

"What's so funny?"

"You women always say your homes are a mess, when honestly, I can't see a thing out of place."

"You're not looking very closely then."

He shot up a brow. "Is that an invitation?"

Macy folded her arms quickly over her breasts as the nipples tightened to needy little peaks. "Excuse me?"

He laughed again, shaking his head. "Sorry, too much rain, I guess. Made me a little soggy in the brain."

She cleared her throat. "So how exactly did you get locked out?"

Jarrit winced slightly—totally fucking adorable. "Yeah, I was afraid you'd ask. I went out to wash my car. I always do it by hand. I was just getting to the wax when the heavens opened up. See?"

He held out his hands, large and capable.

No ring.

She cursed herself for looking, though it was hardly the first time. Every time she saw him in the hallway, the elevator, at the mailbox, she was looking, always looking, wondering and waiting for the day she'd see that band of gold, officially taking him off the market.

Not that she cared.

“Would you like a towel?” Macy asked as she imagined wiping his hands clean for him, finger by finger, as she felt their pulsing power. And then, when she was done, he would be so grateful that those same fingers would touch her, running up and down her arms, grazing her flushed cheeks, tracing lines across her shoulders until he reached her upper arms and then across to the swell of her breasts.

And her nipples.

“Yeah, that would be great.” Jarit, totally sexy and wet, palmed his short, dark hair. This was the kind of guy who didn’t need to do a damn thing—just roll out of bed in the morning. Did he do that alone, roll out of bed that is? Macy had never seen anyone with him.

Maybe she could subtly inquire.

So, your girlfriend couldn’t let you in, huh? The one who lives with you? Monogamously?

But that would be both embarrassing and pointless because of rule 48, or 47, or whatever the hell it was—*never tempt a guy into wanting you.*

“You’re so wet,” she said instead. “Why don’t I dry your clothes?”

His eyes lit up, playful and maybe a little dangerous.

Did he have a rule 47 in his book?

Or didn’t he play by rules at all?

Up went the brow again, making Macy squirm.

“Are you sure? It’s not like I have any spares on me.”

Macy flushed the appropriate shade of red. “Oh yeah, what am I thinking? It’s not like I can loan you anything of mine. You could wrap yourself with a towel though.”

And I could go out of my frigging mind looking at your bare chest, your narrow waist, those thighs, knowing only a tiny knot, requiring only a tiny tug, could render you naked as the day you were born.

Was there a ten-second deal with rule 47, like if you put the guy right back where you found him fast enough it wouldn’t count against you?

What she really wanted was to feel him against her, see how their bodies fit, feel the newness of his muscles, his heartbeat, the strength of his kisses, the contours of her body freshly born and mapped by his caresses.

Oh god, how long had it been since Roger had gone out of her life? That was the one thing she so dearly missed about being in a relationship, knowing there was a man there for her, a loving set of hands, a gorgeous cock, an imagination and the will to use it.

"I could actually do with a bit of a drying out," he admitted. "I feel like something the cat dragged in."

Sure, if cats were somehow capable of snagging and retrieving real live Greek gods.

"How about if you go in the bathroom and undress, put on a towel, and hand me your wet stuff?"

Macy tried not to sound desperate and pornographic as she said the words "undress" and "wet". She would *not* be masturbating later while thinking of this, thank you very much.

Yeah, right.

"You sure you're okay with this?"

"It's no biggie."

"You're the best." He grinned, lighting her world like a firecracker. "It's Macy, right? I'm sorry we've never really talked."

Holding her feet solid to the ground and repressing the urge to shout *He remembered my name!* a million times from the rooftop, she laughed drolly. "Yeah, most people forget me. You have a good memory."

His gaze was smoldering again, seemingly without trying, those eyes speaking volumes of seriousness and intention beneath the surface conversation. "Only if it's something I want to remember."

She swallowed. There were different kinds of seriousness and many sorts of intentions. Did he intend to have her hard and fast, thrust up against the nearest wall, or did he seriously want to take off her clothes slowly and sweetly, exploring every inch until they'd both drunk their fill?

Sure, girl, and why don't you add frigging wedding bells while you're at it?

Lord, she was losing it.

"And you're Jared." She pretended not to know. "No, wait, Jarit, that's it, right?"

Jarit James Colson, to be precise, but why risk appearing too anxious or borderline creepy? Better to play it cool to the point of disinterest. For the record, she'd first seen his full name on a letter delivered mistakenly to her box. For an hour she'd pored over the decision, should she take it to him, should she make it appear as if it was all a big joke, as though she didn't care, or maybe act concerned that there was something important inside? At the kitchen table with Simon, her gray-and-white, fluff-ball cat looking on, she'd rehearsed various speeches.

Finally Macy had chickened out and put it in the outgoing box for the post lady to sort out. She'd dreamed a couple of times afterward that she would meet him and they would strike up a discussion. She would ask about the letter, which had come, incidentally, from a mysterious post-office box in New York and whether he had received it. He would realize that she had returned it and, being eternally grateful, he would reveal his identity as a long-lost Russian or English prince in search of a wife to marry in the next sixty minutes.

But there was a catch.

Wasn't there always?

For the marriage to stick and for him to get his throne, they would have to consummate immediately after the ceremony.

Which meant she would have to marry him in the nude, her hair done up on her head, a diamond choker around her neck. That would allow him to play with her during the ceremony, tweaking her nipples and thrusting his hands between her legs.

Finally she would kneel before him and take his cock into her mouth as a pledge of obedience and the justice of the peace—dressed all in leather, like the doorman at an outrageous BDSM club—would say, “You may use your bride.”

Grabbing her by the hair, sending surges of tight pleasure through her body, he would push her backward and down to the ground where, in the presence of all the royal witnesses, he would ravish her, thrusting his huge cock in and out until she was screaming at the top of her lungs—coming and screaming, screaming and coming.

“I’ll need to gag you next time,” he would say gently, kissing her mouth afterward.

“Yes, my husband.”

“Call me Master.”

The dream ended there with Macy sitting bolt upright in bed. She had dared not return to sleep. The next morning she had actually contemplated looking at apartments for rent, something out of this building but close enough so she could ask him to help her move.

Who was she kidding? Even without rule 47, who was to say he’d have any interest in her? A guy like him could have his pick of models, actresses. Accountants, even a department head like her, kind of paled in comparison.

“Jarit, that’s it exactly.” He seemed pleased. “Most everyone wants to make me a Jared or a Jake or something.”

“You’re a Jarit, definitely.” She flushed again. Great, now she was sounding like a gushing schoolgirl. “Would you like a glass of wine while we wait?” There, she had said it. Now let the universe do its worst.

He seemed momentarily surprised but not appalled. “Sure, that would be great.”

“Fine.” She smiled. “You can take off your clothes in the meantime.”

He smirked. “Shouldn’t you give me the wine before you try to seduce me out of my clothes?”

“Oh god.” She cringed. “That came out so wrong.”

"Don't worry." He winked, all dimples, making her knees go instantly weak. "What happens in Apartment 307 stays in Apartment 307."

It had better stay here. Along with her late-night masturbating, all tangled in the sheets, working her whirring vibrator, pretending it was him doing his worst, doing his best.

"Is zinfandel ok?" she tried to change the subject.

"For seduction, you mean?"

"I have Chianti too." Her heart thumped in her chest.

"With you, Macy, anything would be a delight."

Was it her imagination or had his voice lowered to a rasp? Was he interested in her? He'd never made more than a few light comments. Macy had never seen him with a woman, though they rode the elevator together at least three times a week.

But who was counting?

She was, actually. Jarit had shared that tiny, confined little space with her a total of thirty-one times, and fool that she was, she'd made herself as out of bounds as possible.

All for the sake of rule 1, and the other ones too, many of which centered on knowing a guy's full pedigree, his relationship quotients and so on.

"You can find your way to the bathroom," she said, a little too harshly.

"Yes ma'am." He served up another wink.

Damn, he was flirting for sure. And she was egging him on, big time. This whole situation smacked of something to regret in the morning.

Wine didn't have to be about sex. It could be a polite distancing thing between them and it could dull her senses so she wouldn't want him so much—want to feel herself against his solid chest, wrapped in his powerful embrace until she was helpless and wildly crazy, ready to scream and beg, to give...and take everything.

Macy tried not to watch his ass as he moved down the hallway slowly, confidently, swaggering like a big cat.

As if this was his territory now.

And what about her rights?

He would be coming back out in a towel.

Stupid, stupid female, she chided for putting herself in this position.

Maybe she should set off the sprinkler, jump out the window.

But what did she have to fear? She knew the guy pretty well and Mr. Reynolds had vouched for him when he'd moved in, which was saying something.

It was all in her imagination.

Macy went to the kitchen and uncorked the zinfandel. She would tell him it was an already-opened bottle, nothing special. Same with the crystal glasses she'd picked up in Montreal last summer.

"Ahem."

Macy started at the sound of a throat clearing behind her. She turned to face him, jaw dropping despite her best efforts to stay cool.

Her masturbation fantasies had definitely not done the guy justice.

Jarit Colson was ripped, not in the steroid sense but in that zero-percent body fat, no-nonsense, my-body-is-my-temple kind of way. He struck her as a guy who used his body for his work, but how? A bouncer, maybe or...oh, a spy?

"The height of fashion, right?" He was referring to her big plum-purple bath towel wrapped around his waist. It looked almost puny on him. The way it was knotted at the side made him look even more predatory.

At the same time it begged fingers, eager female ones like hers, to work the material loose.

"It's...all right," she managed without sounding perverted, trying to be polite.

"You're a good liar, Macy, and a nice person. Is this for me?" He gestured to one of the glasses.

"Yes, of course." *But how do you know I'm nice?* she wanted to ask. Surely her elevator manners were less than effusive.

"Cheers." He was grinning, glass in the air. She took up her own, trembling.

What toast did you offer a near-naked guy in your kitchen, one you've had a crush on since he had moved in across the hall two months ago but was too principled – some would say narrow minded – to actually engage in real life.

Luckily, he had all the words.

"To my gorgeous neighbor and to my good luck for finding her home in my time of need," he announced.

Her fingers trembled a little. She wanted to fight him on the gorgeous part but frankly the whole thing was a little overwhelming and breath stealing.

He thought she was hot? Well, maybe not hot, but certainly attractive.

"Macy, I have a confession."

"Oh?" Her heart clenched, ready to stop, good or bad, on his next words. "Don't tell me you're a serial killer, because I really don't want blood on that towel, especially my own."

He chuckled. "Good one, Macy. Actually I need to tell you it wasn't exactly an accident, my being here."

She sucked in her lower lip, all sorts of things racing through her mind.

"It's a little complex, but you just need to know I have really wanted a chance to know you better."

"I'm certainly getting to know *you*."

She knew he caught the quick sweep of her eyes up and down his body. The wine was already making her bolder and him too, probably, not that he needed encouragement.

"Well, you can't say I'm not laying myself bare, right?"

"In a manner of speaking."

"Macy, I just have to know." He took a step closer, dangerously erasing the distance between them. "Are you involved with someone?"

"No," she said, wishing she were the sort of person who could lie about such things.

"But you're not available."

The way he said it made her sound sad, pathetic.

"How do you know? You never asked me out," she retorted, instantly regretting it. What the hell was she playing at, and with a man like him, no less?

"Would you have accepted?" Another step forward, maybe a foot left between them now, maybe less.

"No." She retreated, recovering her "safe" ground.

"Exactly, and that's why I didn't ask."

"Afraid of rejection?" she speculated.

"Not particularly, I just don't like to waste time."

"Right, so you manage to show up in a woman's kitchen dressed only in her towel, having wine, talking about your feelings?"

"Is that all it is, my feelings?" His eyes narrowed. She could feel them boring in, making her toes curl. "Or do you have any confessions of your own?"

"I stole gum out of my teacher's desk in third grade," she quipped.

He laughed gently. His hand found the side of her head, the errant chestnut curls long since escaped from her poorly placed banana clip.

He tucked them behind her ear. "You're so damn beautiful, Macy. Can you blame a guy for bending the rules a little to get with you?"

"Wh-what rules?" Had he been reading her play book or just her mind?

"The whole formal thing—asking you over and over, following like a puppy, knowing you're just too shy or insular or something. Look, I will walk out that door now, minus the towel, just say the word."

She managed a little laugh. "Nah, I'd hate to see you get arrested for indecent exposure on my account."

His expression turned passionate, fierce and possessive in that way only a lusty man can manage. "In that case..."

Jarit's words dissolved into a kiss.

His lips were like fire, instantly branding, marking, as if continuing the conversation with a whole different language.

For about a nanosecond she might have broken it off, but then she fell in with him and she was all plunging and dissolving, at once helpless and reckless as she tasted him, so strong and confident. Oh god, how she needed this, a man to love her with his lips, to run his tongue across her teeth, to penetrate her mouth with it, promising all the other things a man could do.

The full gamut of things no dildo or vibrator could ever hope to imitate no matter how amazingly advanced the latest technology.

Jarit kept control, holding them at the edge.

Macy panted, wanting more. She wanted their skin hot and naked, their bodies intertwined, him holding, twisting, restraining, liberating her all at once.

"If we don't stop now—" he warned, nibbling her ear. "You tell me, it's all...or nothing."

She groaned, as if this was a time to step up to the plate morally.

All...or nothing.

She fell back on the rules.

"We *should* stop. I don't even know you."

"That's true, then again, I live across the hall, we ride the elevator and as often as I can, I time it so we can be together."

"Oh god, you do that too?" She'd said it aloud, too late to hold back.

"Uh-huh, and that's not all, Macy." His hands slid to her waist, up under her T-shirt, just resting on the bare flesh of her rib cage. "I've had dreams about you."

"Are they nightmares?" she quipped.

"Only when I wake up and you're not there." Jarit's cock was pressing hard against her inner thigh. She imagined its size, its contours, in her, filling her, white hot, possessing her.

"I have dreams too. I imagine you coming into my bedroom," she whispered. "You...you take me."

"Be specific. Tell me everything." He lifted her arms and helped her take off the T-shirt. Dimly she was aware of still having a bra, her breasts straining against the cups, begging release.

"You crawl on top of me in bed, so I can't move and you kiss my body, my stomach, my —"

"Yes?" he urged, drawing her mouth in for a fresh ravishing.

This time she let herself go, belly pressed to belly, her hands rubbing his shoulders, sliding down to trace the lines of his massive biceps. "My nipples, oh god, Jarit, you make them ache so bad."

"Sounds like a plan." He nibbled at her lower lip. "Tell me you're ready for bed, Macy."

"But your clothes, they aren't in the dryer yet —"

"To hell with my clothes," he said as he unbuttoned her jeans shorts. "Besides, there's another wet thing around here to tend to, isn't there?"

She shivered, at once fearing and craving his touch, the peeling back of her layers. This was crazy. Every rule was being broken, even number 2.

Thou shalt not think with thy pussy.

"You are wet for me," he persisted, taking the devil's own time with her zipper. "I could tell that the minute you saw me in this towel."

Did he want to drive her insane?

Of course he does, he's a man! "You're arrogant, you know that."

"Sure," he freely admitted, "it's a vast head trip, knowing I can make you come without even being in the same bed, so now that I have the real chance, why not?"

"Jarit, don't," she pleaded, spinning on the dime of desire as he finally finished the zipper and started sliding the material down over her hips.

He whistled at the little pink panties, complete with white bow.

"Damn, woman, you know how to get a guy wound up."

"They're just underwear," she insisted, squirming. "And I most certainly didn't put them on for your benefit."

"Good," he growled, slipping his hands under the waistband to cup her bare ass cheeks. "Then you won't mind when I rip them off you."

"You wouldn't dare."

He was already grasping the waistband.

"Wait, I'll do it," she exclaimed.

"You have five seconds."

The panties slid down to her ankles. She stepped out of them, telling herself as she did so that it meant nothing, no commitment to the sexual act and certainly no surrender to him.

Her bra was slipping off. Blast it, he'd already managed to undo the strap. Just how many hands did he have anyway?

His towel was gone. His naked cock throbbed against her, she could feel the surging blood inside the rigid rod. She wanted it, needed it in her so bad.

Somehow the bra cups fell forward and his mouth touched her bosom. He used his teeth and his tongue.

She moaned, arching her back.

"We'll never make it to the bedroom," she said, or was it him?

Next thing she knew he was lifting her up onto the counter. She could feel the imitation granite on her bare butt cheeks. That and the cool air on her skin from the fan was a keen reminder.

She was naked.

And Jarit was holding her hips, positioning her in front of him, readying her for penetration.

No time for preliminaries.

She received him, wet and ready, just as he'd predicted. Jarit's huge, thick shaft slid into her, filling her, exploding her world with craving and desire.

"Yes..."

"So good, baby," he affirmed and he began to work her, thrusting evenly and efficiently, withdrawing almost to the tip then plunging back in to fill her completely. The process tormented her, teasing but also inflaming.

She wrapped her ankles around his ass, drawing him tighter. He bent his head and sank his teeth into her neck, just hard enough to awaken every nerve ending.

"Going to...come," he groaned. "Can't hold back."

"Don't, don't hold back, Jarit, fucking come inside me," she pleaded fiercely, scarcely recognizing her own voice.

Jarit shuddered as he made his mark, shooting into her, branding her with his seed. She could feel its warmth filling her. With his head back, more a roaring lion than an orgasming man, he kept thrusting, as if determined to go deeper, more powerfully than any man ever had before.

His territory.

He subsided finally and she fell against him, so close to the edge of climax and yet deliciously in limbo.

Jarit took just a moment to recover. "Your turn," he said as though they'd been planning the whole thing months in advance and not on the spur of the moment.

“Oh no, it’s all right,” she said, partially from the rote way she dealt with men, but also out of a sudden fear of having this man here, not just a stranger anymore, a neighbor in need, but as a lover. With all that entailed—the complexities, the entanglements.

She wanted it to be all right, for him to just leave with what he had come for.

But it wasn’t enough, not for Jarit Colson.

With as much defiance as gallantry, he scooped her into his arms.

“That was a statement, baby, not a question.”

Chapter Two

Jarit carried Macy, nude and trembling, down the hall. The gambit had worked, he was taking her to bed—her bed—and soon he would be pleasuring her, driving her out of her mind with the kind of pleasure she so obviously needed.

Not that he minded playing the role for her.

For one thing, she was the most voluptuous and passionate woman he'd ever run across. Even the way she tried to ignore him in the elevator all those days had screamed sex. No wonder he had done everything in his power to spend that time with her, confined in the tiny metal enclosure, stealing little peeks at her lush curves, the way her dark hair fell about her shoulders, making him want to run his fingers through it. And those lips, ever demure and pouting, craving attention and hidden ministrations.

Of course he was bound to find a way into her apartment. He'd made it fair, playing that little game of chance he'd invented when he was a kid. Whenever he wanted something, he would make it a situation of odds—in this case he had put his keys in the pocket of one of his two favorite pairs of jeans.

Finding his keys in his pocket meant returning to his apartment. Not finding them meant going to hers. Today after three previous failed attempts, he'd hit pay dirt. The keys were in the other jeans, which meant, by his own rules, that he would have to leave home without them, setting in motion the chain of events. All the more interesting since it was about to rain on a Saturday when he intended to wash the car.

The stage had been set. Just stay outside awhile, wait for the cloud burst and then come in, straight to Apartment 307.

It was a pure gamble. She might have been out. She might have had company, male company even.

He doubted it because she seemed like such a loner and in the two months he'd been there it seemed that she had left only to go to work or shopping.

She had certainly shown herself to be interested in him though. There was the time she found the letter, for example.

He'd actually been the one to smuggle it into her box to see what she'd do.

So adorable, sweating over the decision, brow furrowed as she stood in front of the outgoing mailbox, to let it go or not?

Macy never did bring it to his door. She'd chickened out and put it in his box, which is why he'd stepped up the game.

The ball had still been in her court. She didn't have to offer to help with those wet clothes, or get them wine.

But she had and they'd made love.

Carrying her across the threshold, Jarit took a look around.

Macy's bedroom was sweet and sassy, like her.

A little bit paradoxical too. Ultramodern black Lucite dressers matched with Japanese paper lamps, long-stemmed lilies on either side of a surprisingly large canopy bed, the top portion made of a shimmering star-patterned material.

"I didn't get to clean," she teased and he kissed her all over her face.

She was so damn delightful, cute and perky and siren-like all at once. He could spend a lifetime exploring her, plumbing her depths.

Easy, cowboy. They had a big hurdle to cross before they could really be lovers, and nine chances out of ten, she wouldn't be up for it.

Oh well, at least he'd try.

"Forget the cleaning," he murmured. "Forget everything...but this."

This involved setting her down on the mattress and climbing astride her, his lips against hers, his hip pressing her thigh.

Gently she moaned as he parted her legs.

"That's it," he encouraged, rewarding her with deep kisses to her nipples, using his lips and tongue to excite and draw out the taut flesh.

She arched her back in reply, another positive move, but when she tried to rake her nails over his shoulders, he whispered in her ear.

"No, sweetheart, lie still for me, will you do that?"

It was her first lesson in obedience and she passed with flying colors, her arms moving to either side of her head, palms up. It was a natural surrender position and it had the desired effect on Jarit's Dominant blood.

He praised her again, trailing kisses down her flat, quivering belly, the perfect mix of muscle and smooth woman flesh.

"Open for me, baby." Calling her that felt natural, as did the way she parted her thighs, inviting his cock, his tongue, whatever he might wish to do to her.

What he had in mind was her pleasure, enough of it to drive her crazy and he knew how to do it too.

"Oh god, Jarit." She called his name, encouraging him as he moved his tongue along her crevice, that pink line of flesh, covering but not quite sealing her sex.

Damn, he wished it was his cock ramming home, pushing into her moist, warm depths. Slowly this time, working them both to agonizing frenzy before exploding in molten heat, her climax and his conjoined.

Hopefully he would have the chance.

Macy writhed. He had her clit gently between his lips, sucking, playing with it. She was ready, more than ready.

But Jarit was still playing, still testing. He lifted his head, leaned back on one elbow.

"D-don't stop," she groaned.

"I like to hear a woman ask for it." Beg, actually, but one had to work slowly into these things.

"You know I want it!"

"Do I?"

"Yes, god yes, please, make me come."

Jarrit smiled, opting to put her out of her misery – first-timer's misery to be sure, nothing like what an accomplished player of his type of games could achieve.

"Play with your nipples," he instructed. "Tease them while you are coming."

Macy gritted her teeth, grasping the hot nubs between thumbs and forefingers.

"Twist them," he said.

She cried out from the sensation even as he dabbed his tongue once more into place and felt the hot, pulsing flesh, the semisweet flow of her sex juices down the side of his mouth.

Jarrit showed no mercy, delivering a mind-numbing climax. She nearly levitated, thrusting her pelvis against his mouth as she screamed out his name, laced with a string of harmless profanities. He continued to lick and suck as she came down from her explosion, her body a hot, throbbing wreck.

At last he came up for air. They kissed, this time mouth to mouth. She seemed to relish the taste of herself on his lips.

"That was...fucking incredible," she murmured.

Starstruck and sated as she was, he felt her reaching for his cock. It was hard, as hard as the first time, if not more so.

"What have we here?" she teased.

Jarrit's jaw tensed. It was clear she wanted to take the reins, maybe have him lie on his back so she could ride him for a while. While certainly a sexy idea, it would never happen like that.

In fact, he was apt to lose that nice erection she was marveling at if he didn't say his piece. "Macy..."

"Mmm?"

"You remember we talked about fantasies?"

She nodded, clearly lost in the moment.

"I need you to know mine, the full extent of them."

"Do tell," she purred, eyes half open, cat like.

"Macy, I've imagined dominating you."

That got her attention. Her pretty eyes opened wide, focusing like a homing beacon.

"Nothing too heavy, mind you, but I have pictured you tied up...and submissive."

She bit her lower lip.

Go on, scream your fool head off, he thought, and get this over with.

"You...you're a Dominant?" Her voice was as light as a feather, distant, airy and angelic. But her body underneath him was tensing, heartbeat quickening, muscles poised for action.

"Does that freak you out?"

She blinked twice. "It depends. What makes you think I'm submissive?"

"Let's just say I'm hoping."

"But I'm independent. I've never been passive about anything."

"It's different in bed. A sexual submissive takes on a role specific to her partner. It's all negotiated in advance."

She frowned, impossible to read. "You've done this before."

"I've had submissives, yes, though none at the moment."

Her lovely brow furrowed. "And they were what, your sex slaves? Is that what you want from me?"

He brushed back errant strands of hair from her forehead. "I want you to find sexual fulfillment, whatever that looks like for you."

She laughed dryly. "That's the diplomatic answer. Now tell me what's really on your mind. You didn't storm into my life like this to start a dialogue on my sex life."

She had him dead to rights. Here it was, the moment of truth.

"I would like to see you bound," he admitted. "I would like to command you, to take possession of you in a way you've never imagined."

"And I'd call you Master, I suppose." Was she merely taunting him or trying to feel out more details?

"Personally, I prefer Jarit, but that would be negotiated."

Pushing him back, Macy turned to her side. "I think you should go."

She was facing away from him, toward the door.

He touched her shoulder. "Is that what you really want?"

She shivered. "Yes."

It didn't sound convincing. "Macy, we don't have to do anything you don't want. We can go as slowly as you like, stop at any point."

Not that stopping would be easy, as intense as the chemistry was between them.

"Please, Jarit."

His hand had strayed down her rib cage to her hip, where it rested possessively. The move had been unconscious. Never had he wanted a woman so much. It was like the dominant desires inside him had a will of their own. He just had to see where this would go.

"Please what, Macy? Do you want me to stay or go?"

She groaned in reply. He pressed his swollen shaft between her ass cheeks, reaching around to capture her breast in his hand.

"G-go," she said bravely.

"Your body is ready for me. It's ready for this."

"This" was a light pinch to her nipple, just enough to bring her to that platform of pleasure and pain, the place where every submissive was owned.

"You want to be a good girl," he said.

She whimpered.

All resistance drained away. She was all about seeking the touch, the feel of his skin, the control of his will.

"I'm going to take you, Macy, the way you have wanted me to."

Dare he hope for the best? That the gamble had paid off, that he had found a compatible soul, or at least a simpatico body?

"Jarit." She breathed the word fiercely, as though she wanted to be led, initiated. "Yes."

It was the one word he'd been longing for all along, and the rest was a blur. It was less time than a heartbeat as he turned her over on her back and put her beneath him. He clutched her wrists in his hands, pinning them.

Arching her back, she invited the conquest.

He thrust easily between her waiting thighs, plunging to the hilt.

Taking what was his.

Macy moaned, wrapping her legs about him. Never had a woman pressed so close, needed so much or ignited so much in him.

Greedily, not giving a damn who might have been with her before or if anyone else would ever touch her again, he took possession of her breast, suckling, working his tongue, his teeth, lightly over her nipple. Meanwhile he worked his surging cock in and out of her pink, soft opening, her proffered sex.

He'd never been this aroused. It was as if he hadn't come in weeks. He had so many ideas, so much he wanted to do.

For now it was about this, two bodies as close in time and space as humanly possible. He moved to her ear and whispered, "You are so...goddamn...beautiful."

She sighed and then shivered and then let go, at the very brink of orgasm. He could feel her surrounding him, pressing his cock on all sides with the oddest combination of innocence and power.

That power belonged to him and he did not intend to let go.

"Come for me, Macy. Come like you never have before."

She responded to the command, which in truth was nothing but the permission she needed to follow her own body's lead.

"Yes, Jarit, oh yes."

Her teeth dug into his shoulder. They were both beyond speech, beyond even the utterance of sound. This time, he was silent, his body arched, every muscle clenched, his cock swelled to the exploding point as he filled her and his semen pumped into her. She was coming too, her own juices flooding sweetly into a combined orgasm such as he'd never dreamed.

It went on for what felt like forever and when he finally collapsed on top of her, there was nothing left to do, no other wish on his part but to give in to the sleep, like some jungle animal, acting out the timeless ritual.

Macy. *His.*

The two best words in the English language.

Murmuring sweetly, she fell asleep against him, the sheer peace and trust almost enough to make his heart burst.

A man could get used to this, all right.

And then some.

* * * * *

Macy was the first to wake.

For several seconds she did not know where she was. Then reality came to her, the good and the bad. The good part was the beautiful man beside her stretched out like a panther on his back.

Gorgeous, hunky Jarit Colson in her bed.

I mean, how can that not be good? Fantastic, even.

Sure, there was the problem of the broken rule.

What number was it again?

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Uh-oh, here came the bad part.

Someone was banging on the door.

What the heck? She had a doorbell for a reason.

And who would be coming up here at this hour of the night?

She checked the clock over Jarit's softly snoring head.

Ten-thirty p.m.

He sure could sleep soundly.

Leave it to a man to be that content with himself after turning a woman's life upside down.

She whispered his name and then, after he failed to respond, she employed heavier artillery, shaking him lightly.

He mumbled something – her name, it sounded like.

Her toes curled.

It was not good when a man saying one's name made one feel giddy, confused, not to mention alive.

"Jarit, someone's here."

"They'll go away."

Good grief, he wanted her again. His hands were reaching.

She evaded him, his fingers grazing her hip, his lips on her neck.

"Aren't you listening? Someone's at the door."

"I heard you the first time."

"You're impossible, Jarit."

Climbing from bed, not daring to look in the mirror, she donned a silk robe and headed for the living room.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

What kind of lunatic would keep up that racket?

She got a sinking feeling.

Mr. Reynolds.

Damn. And double damn.

Yep. There he was, through the peephole, looking all gray and shriveled and miserable as ever.

"What is it, Mr. Reynolds?" she said as pleasantly as possible through the metal door.

He was all frown. "You got that fool Colson in there?"

What, was she holding him for ransom? "What makes you think that, Mr. Reynolds?"

He snorted. "I may be old and ugly but I ain't stupid. He left water stains all over the carpet in the hall and it leads straight to your door. I tried to call him, he's not answering. When he's done with the tiddlywinks or whatever you kids are up to you can tell him I opened his door for him. Fifty-dollar fee goes on his rent next month for my trouble."

Macy fumed. "Mr. Reynolds, I would thank you not to jump to conclusions about the two of us and —"

Too late, he was already lumbering off to torture someone else.

Great. Could this possibly get more embarrassing?

Surely this was her punishment.

The dating-rule gods were already casting judgment for her indiscretion.

"I'll get him out," she promised aloud. "I swear I will never stray again from the sacred code."

She padded back into the bedroom. "You have to leave. Your apartment's open, by the way."

Jarrit was on his back, his hands behind his head, the sheet barely covering him.

Unable to help herself, she traced the lines of his body with her eyes—the firm jawline, down to the left biceps, the rib cage, the lean, flat stomach, complete with a mouthwatering six-pack.

“What’s the matter, got somewhere to go?” he drawled, idly spreading his thighs to expose his half awake cock and heavy, smooth balls. “Or are you expecting more company? It stopped raining, so you can close your shelter for the night.”

“There’s no one else.” She ignored his joke. “What I mean is, I just want to be...alone.”

He didn’t seem insulted. “That’s sad.”

Macy snapped. “So I was a pity fuck?”

Jarit gave her the perplexed, amused look the comment deserved. “Where did that come from?”

“My upstairs brain, the one I should have used before.”

Jarit drew his legs lazily to the edge of the bed, as if it was his now as well as hers. The casual, possessive way he sat up pissed her off, but it kind of turned her on too.

The warning bells were sounding.

She could already feel it, the urge to move, the ritual of buying the classifieds and circling the reasonably priced apartments in good neighborhoods.

“I’ll get your clothes.”

“Thanks.”

“Don’t mention it.” *As in, literally never speak of this again.*

“Thanks,” he said several minutes later after she’d managed to hustle him to the door.

The raspy way he spoke, just standing there, obviously waiting for a kiss made her flush head to toe. “No problem. Hopefully I didn’t shrink your jeans.”

He grinned and her knees turned to spaghetti. “I didn’t mean the laundry service, babe.”

“Don’t call me —”

Jarit took full advantage of her open mouth, silencing her complaint with a joining of lips so powerful and spontaneous it took away her breath, leaving her clinging, needful, almost desperate in the desire for more.

Macy was terrified to let go, terrified to continue.

What was he doing to her?

She was supposed to be having a quiet night, eating a frozen pot pie, watching the Oprah Network.

He stroked her back, moved his hand downward, and, oh god, it was going to start all over again.

But Jarit stopped it short.

“That was the best sex I ever had.”

Her mouth stayed open.

He chuckled. “Speechless, wow, there’s a first. So long, for now.”

With a wink, he opened the door and he was gone.

WTF? Was he intending to come back? Didn’t he want her to go to him? Did he want her at all?

Because if he did, she would say no, absolutely.

But why hadn’t he said anything about the future, one way or the other?

What a bastard. Talk about your one-night-stand assholes showing up with the old wet-jeans excuse, huh?

If only she had a nickel for every time that had happened. Okay, so she would only be five cents richer.

But still.

Jerk.

She shut the door, just a little harder than necessary. That would show him. She did it with just enough disgust, but still, a lot of room for healthy indifference.

Oh whatever!

Who was she kidding? Jarit Colson had just ruined paradise.

Another sweet living arrangement turned from a righteous cave of solitude to a siege fortress, afraid to look out the door, afraid to sleep or answer the phone.

Wait, did he have her number?

Sighing, she went to find the newspaper. Sitting on the sofa with the classifieds and the pint of ale she had saved for emergencies, she went to work.

This place sucked anyway.

Bad pipes, dumb old annoying Mr. Reynolds with no respect for anyone's privacy, just thinking he could barge into people's lives, upending everything, making them feel as if they were missing something when they were just fine in the first place.

Yeah, she thought glumly, and I am so not projecting right now.

Not even a little bit.

It was at that point that she remembered the game tomorrow. Her friend Nel had been trying to get her to go all week. The guys from her office, Jackson Accounting, were playing some law firm in the city-wide professional league playoffs.

Might be just the diversion she needed. Anything it took to keep her mind and her body away from Jarit Colson.

Her ears perked as she heard a door creaking. Was that him leaving his apartment? If so, he damn sure better have his keys.

Not that a part of her, the really unhelpful part, wished he would leave them at home again.

So much for rules, huh?

* * * * *

To say that leaving Macy's apartment was easy for Jarit would be a bit like saying his firm's amateur league football team, the Legal Eagles, had a chance of making it into the NFL playoffs.

As it was, the Eagles were already twenty-point underdogs in their own playoff game Sunday against the Jackson Crushers, which embarrassingly enough was made up almost entirely of accountants.

That is not good, he thought, back in his own apartment now, nothing to amuse him but the video game station and a well-worn paddle-ball set, the only real-time game he owned.

What he really needed was a good night's sleep.

But he had a strong feeling he would be thinking of a certain sexy little neighbor, Miss Macy. A million scenarios filled his mind. Macy in handcuffs, Macy over his knee, Macy on *her* knees. The possibilities were endless.

What he needed to do was invite her out to dinner, he decided, collapsing onto the well-worn sofa and grabbing the paddle off the table and giving the ball a good whack.

What was the rule on second dates? Hell, they hadn't had a first date.

Wham, wham, wham, he hit the little rubber ball, letting it jog along his thoughts.

So was there a rule on one-night stands?

Personally, he had one rule—if it felt good and if the lady was willing and able, go for it. Otherwise, why sweat it?

Jarit had been criticized in the past for this attitude, especially by his former girlfriends. For someone who enjoyed dominance, they had told him, they found him strangely passive about the course of his own life.

Take the way he'd left it to fate when and if he showed up at Macy's door.

Well he *had* shown up and the results spoke for themselves. Would it have been one tenth as exciting if he'd gone up to her in the hall, cornered her in the elevator and asked her out right off the bat?

For one thing, she would have said no. He knew that much about her, just as he knew the way she sighed just before orgasm and the look in her eyes when she was fighting giving in to something she so badly needed.

Jarit badly needed to see her tied up, helpless, with no choice but to give in to all the pleasure, the titillation she could stand.

Grabbing his jacket, he decided to go for some fresh air. For a split second he thought of leaving his keys.

Nah.

The rest would have to come naturally. If at all. In the meantime he anticipated a steady diet of cold showers.

Chapter Three

Macy would have fallen flat on her face if she hadn't been gripping the edge of the bleachers.

"Mace, are you okay?" asked her best friend Nel, her usually angelic face a mask of sudden concern.

"It's nothing," Macy lied through clenched teeth as she watched the opposing team gather along the sidelines for the pre-game warm-up.

It was him.

In a muscle shirt and sexy shorts that did wonders for his sculpted body. Hell, it was worse than seeing him naked because now her imagination could run amok.

He was just standing there, casually laughing with some buddies from the Legal Eagles. So Jarit Colson was a lawyer. Should she be surprised? He liked to be in control, after all.

"Mace? Are you in there? Are you okay?"

"Huh?" Macy forced a smile. "Yeah, I was just...thinking, that's all."

Nel's sharp green eyes narrowed suspiciously. "You're thinking all right, about the quarterback for the Eagles."

It would be a great time for a blanket denial. Instead she said, "He's the quarterback, huh? Well, is he any good?"

Nel smirked. "You tell me."

Macy flushed. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"No? Well he does, because here he comes and he has the same goofy look on his face as you."

Sure enough, Jarit Colson was trotting over to them, having left his teammates in the dust. Lord, could he move, like a big cat—purposeful, confident and utterly unafraid of any kind of rejection.

Well, he better start to get afraid and fast too.

“Macy, I didn’t expect to see you here.”

Macy leaped to her feet, tossing most of her popcorn like confetti onto Nel’s head.
“Jarit...”

All eyes focused on Nel, who was taking it quite well.

“Sorry,” lamented Macy. “I’m such a klutz.”

“Not in my book.” Jarit winked, and to Macy’s chagrin, Nel saw the whole thing.

“I’m going to get cleaned up,” Nel announced, a definite twinkle in her eye.

Macy grabbed her arm, holding her in place. “What for? It’s just popcorn.”

Nel arched an eyebrow and Macy released her, feeling like an even bigger fool, if that was possible.

“Didn’t mean to interrupt anything,” Jarit said after the perky redhead was out of hearing range.

“Really?” she said sharply. “Because it seems like that’s your specialty.”

His eyes focused, laser sharp. She couldn’t move, couldn’t breathe. “If you’re expecting an apology for my showing up and making love to you last night, I won’t give one.”

Macy looked about nervously. “Please, I know people here.”

“And I don’t? So what are you, an accountant?”

“What was your first clue? My ‘Jackson Crunchers’ T-shirt?”

“I make no assumptions where you are concerned.”

She frowned. “You assumed you would get in my pants though.”

“Actually, I had no idea.”

"But you didn't hesitate to seize the opportunity."

"Nor did you," he pointed out with a sideways smile that brought out his dimples.

"Stop that," she demanded.

"Stop what?"

"Being so damn charming."

"I will if you agree to have dinner with me."

Nel was on her way back.

"I don't date my neighbors. It's a rule."

"You just have sex with them."

The statement, matter of fact, caught her wrong.

Nel gasped, well within range to see her friend slap the handsome quarterback.

If all eyes weren't watching them before they sure were now.

"Macy, what in blazes?" demanded John Caruthers, the balding, handlebar-mustachioed head of the firm.

About a half dozen others stood behind him, including two vice presidents.

So much for her corner-office-by-age-thirty-five strategy.

Jarit took one for the team.

"It's my fault. I was being forward." He stared earnestly at the extremely shaken Macy. "Will you accept my apology?"

A tall man stood behind Jarit, somber looking. Was it Jarit's boss?

It killed Macy that he would get in trouble. "It's my fault too," she said.

The tall man put his hand on Jarit's shoulder. "Come on, playboy, let's get you on the field where you can practice all the moves you want."

There were chuckles from some of the men on both teams.

Crisis averted.

Except now Macy owed him something, which was a far worse calamity in her mind than having run in to him in the first place.

Jarit hadn't felt so pumped for a game in ages.

Macy had slapped him.

Which meant she was anything but indifferent to his existence. Plus, he had done her a big favor and that would make her a pretty big heel if she tried to turn down an innocent dinner invitation.

He intended to celebrate his team's victory.

And the defeat of hers.

The first half was close, a lot closer than predicted. Two touchdown passes by Jarit and a field goal with seconds to go put the half-time score at seventeen for the Eagles and twenty-one for the Crunchers.

It would have been twenty-one-all except for the one time Jarit had taken his eye off the ball to look at her, naturally.

Where are her allegiances? Jarit had been wondering. Had she cared even a little for his plight—third and short at the opposition's ten-yard line?

Like an idiot, he had taken a sack. Did he want to lose the frigging game?

Kyle Bennett, the leading wide receiver and one hell of an estate planner the other six days of the week, had noticed the slip-up.

He seemed to be the only one, except for Macy's friend, the cute redhead who didn't miss a trick. What was her name? Come to think of it, they had never been introduced.

"So who's the babe?" Kyle wanted to know, tossing him a sports drink in the locker room at half-time. "And if you say 'what babe' I will make sure this conversation takes place in front of the whole team."

"She lives in my building." Jarit took a deep swallow of the cool, green liquid. "I slept with her last night."

Kyle whistled. "A man who takes love thy neighbor in a whole new direction. I like it."

"No love, just..." Just what? Jarit knew sex inside and out and he'd dated plenty of women. This was different, as though it needed its own zip code.

"Don't tell me the mighty Jarinator has fallen for a hundred-ten-pound brunette with laser-blue eyes?"

"What are you doing looking at her eyes?" Jarit demanded.

Kyle arched a brow. "Jealous too. Now I am really intrigued. So she must play all your little dark games, right? Ropes and chains and cuffs. Oh my?"

"There's kink in her, for sure, but I wouldn't call her a sub."

"There's a difference?"

"A kinky chick will do anything she wants. A submissive does anything you want, within limits, of course."

Kyle shook his head. "This is way too complicated for me. Sex is supposed to be fun, not like a frigging merger and acquisition."

Jarit patted his shoulder, laughing. "Amen, now let's go out there and kick some pencil-pushing ass."

Kyle gave him a high five. "Now you're talking!"

* * * * *

The clock said ten seconds to go in the game.

The scoreboard showed the Eagles down by five. It had been like that for a lifetime.

Football was like this, very fast at some moments, ridiculously slow at others.

Jarit's team had the ball.

"Is that enough time?" Macy asked, grabbing Nel's arm. "They have to go so far down the field."

"Your boy just has to air it out. No worries. Now if you wouldn't mind, before my arm turns blue."

Macy was mortified. "Oh god, I am going to kill you before this night is through, aren't I?"

"I'll live."

Jarit had the ball. He was getting ready to throw it. Macy leaped to her feet.

"That's it! Go! Go! Score a home run!"

Nel buried her face in her hands.

"It's not a home run, you dizzy broad," one of her company's janitors yelled. "And you're rooting for the wrong team *again*."

The ball had made it into the end zone—a huge, arcing pass. Players bobbled for it, jumping like Harlem Globetrotters. Macy couldn't see who had it as they went down.

The striped shirted referee dove into the pile, sorting the mess. Another one raced in holding both hands over his head in the shape of a goal post.

"That's good, right, Nel?"

"It means the Eagles won," Nel said. "Assuming you think that is good."

Macy didn't know what to think except that she needed to get out of there fast. She grabbed Nel's hand, pulling her like a rag doll.

Jarit caught up to the two of them in the parking lot.

"Wait up!"

Nel rolled her eyes. "Here we go again."

"There's nothing to talk about, Jarit," Macy said. "Congratulations, by the way."

"Thanks, but we do need to talk."

"My ride is leaving, I have to go."

"Um, actually," said Nel with a sheepish grin, "I was hoping to stay and do some shameless flirting."

"I'll take you home," Jarit said to Macy.

She made a face. "With all that sweat on you?"

"There are showers here. I clean up pretty good."

As if she didn't know that already.

"Don't talk about showers." She thought of him standing under the water—the rivulets, the tiny drops off the edge of his cock, the tip of his nose, the flex of his muscles as he put the shampoo in his hair and the bubbles sluicing over him as he applied soap over his rock-hard abdomen.

He grinned. "You want to take one with me?"

"I want to go home to bed."

"That can be arranged." He reached out, touching her cheek, leaning forward for a gentle kiss.

"My cue to get lost." Nel put out her hand for a quick introduction. "I'm Nellie by the way, not that anyone asked."

Macy cringed, knowing she'd just added insult to all the earlier injuries. "Oh gosh, I'm sorry. Nel is my friend *and* our office manager, the best there ever was."

Jarit extended his hand, unfazed. "I'm Jarit, and I owe you both big time for saving my butt back there."

"Not half as much as she owes me," said Nel, "but don't worry, I'll get her back the next time *I* act like a total spaz around a hot guy *I* like."

"Nel!"

Jarit was trying not to laugh.

Nel, meanwhile, was hard at work making herself scarce, taking long strides across the asphalt.

"It's not funny, Jarit."

"Yes, it is."

The smug look, the total way he was projecting himself, in control, able to push her buttons, was really too much. It was time to turn the tables, to show him what a woman could do with her sexual prowess.

"You think *this* is funny?" Arching up on tiptoe, she matched her lips to his. It was intended to be a get-even smooch but it left her in the most precarious place, unbalanced, pulse racing, heart palpitating.

She had told herself there was nothing special about those full, masculine lips, what they did to her, how they made her feel, and those hands of his and the lean body that fit so perfectly against hers.

Evidently she was wrong.

Stoic, impossible to read, he handed her his car keys. "What I think is, you should wait in my car until I'm done with my shower."

"I'll take your car and leave you." She snatched them from his hand.

"And deprive me of another one of the best kisses of my life?"

So he *had* noticed.

"Please." She rolled her eyes, trying to play it cool and savvy like Nel would have. Instead she came across like a dork. Not that he seemed to mind.

She could feel his eyes on her as she walked away.

I really will take the car. Let him catch a cab. It would serve him right.

Unfortunately she could not drive a stick shift. And then there was the other problem. She wanted more of Jarit Colson, the kinkier the better.

She wanted it all, starting tonight.

The question was, could she handle it?

The minutes passed even slower than the football game. She debated waiting in the car but it would have felt way weird. As a compromise, she leaned against it, the

smooth, powerful metal of the fender so like the man himself, indomitable, with all that power under the hood.

Finally he came back to the car, squeaky clean in fresh jeans and a T-shirt, his hair dark and wet, his cheeks slightly colored by a day's growth of beard.

It wasn't fair that a man didn't have to do anything to look gorgeous. At least not a man like Jarit Colson.

"I want to set the record straight," she began. "I should not have kissed you before, it was inappropriate."

"No, it wasn't."

She tried to resist, tried to stay back, but he was so close and he had that power about him, like some kind of magnet.

"And neither is this," he said, taking her easily into his arms.

She tried to push him off, well aware of the hypocrisy of her action, given her earlier initiation of the impromptu lip lock. "Not here."

"Why? We've nothing to hide."

"I'm not hiding," she insisted.

"Then stop fighting, unless you're scared of how you'll react."

Macy steeled herself, determined to show she wasn't afraid. But as he moved his hands up and down her rib cage, his lips hot on her neck, she remembered just how scary it could be with this man.

Scary and hot.

"Baby, tonight will be a whole other level," he whispered. "Beginning with a couple of surprises I have in the glove box."

She groaned, melting against him. This was not the time for weakness. She needed strength, resolve and the ability to say no.

"I should be getting home."

"We will, eventually."

Her spine tingled and her blood ran hot and cold simultaneously.

“Go on, touch me, you want to,” he said.

“No, I can’t.”

His eyes bore down on her. “Did that sound like a request to you?”

Her knees went weak. With a trembling hand she found his chest, her fingertips pressed. The sun was just about gone now, recessed behind the green of the ball field, behind the leafy trees and the snack shack that sold the popcorn she’d dumped all over Nel, her supposed friend who had as much as abandoned her to this man’s clutches.

“Did it?” he asked again.

Of course it didn’t. Nothing ever did with this man.

“No,” she conceded, rubbing her finger along the side of his arm, tracing the line of his biceps.

He laughed, a low rumble. “Get real, Macy.”

She knew what he meant. This wasn’t the kind of touching he had in mind.

“Someone could come along.”

“That’s not your concern.” He kissed her neck. “That’s the privilege of the submissive role—you get to relax and be. Now I want your hand on my crotch, right now.”

Macy shuddered with the scandal of it, the way he voiced the words. She let her eyes slide shut as her hand lowered. He moved a little bit away from her, giving her room.

Oh god, it was huge, bulging against his jeans.

“That’s what you do to me, honey. That’s what happens when I think of being inside you, controlling you.”

Her fingers tingled with the heat even through the thick denim material.

“Rub it,” he encouraged.

Her breath went shallow. He was so hot, so full. She could feel the pulsing veins and the stiff hardness like steel just below the surface of his skin.

"The question is, what do I do with you now that I have you, darling."

Macy exhaled.

"Over the hood of my car, down in the grass, in the backseat of the car? So many possibilities." He took hold of her breast, his hand under her T-shirt, molding, caressing the smooth globe of flesh. "Are you wet for me? Are you ready to be taken?"

He had her nipple, now swollen with the tell-tale signs of arousal.

Macy moaned.

"Are you?" He punished her for her delayed response with a smack of his hand.

He used the free one, the one not exploring and manipulating her breasts. The spank was like nothing she'd ever felt as the flesh on her ass reverberated, warm, ready and wicked.

"Y-yes," she hissed.

"Then say it, spell it out."

"I'm ready...to be taken."

He released her nipple and kissed her on the cheek. "I think we'll take a little drive."

She stood there, unable to move for a moment until he took her hand, leading her. He helped her to the passenger seat, the one she'd been too afraid to occupy while waiting for him.

"Buckle up," he said. "I like to go fast."

No shit.

Jarit Colson had a dilemma on his hands.

The woman sitting next to him, wide eyed and flushed, squirmy and shy all at once was the most amazing creature he had ever had in his car — hell, in his entire life.

And she was absolutely his for the night, to play with, to tease and titillate and utterly dominate in every conceivable, consensual way.

He could blow her mind, yes, but where would that leave him tomorrow?

A D/s relationship too quickly brought to a head could fizzle.

She could see him as some kind of manipulator, a Svengali. She could even hate herself for giving in and then he'd be left with nothing but a few hours of memories.

A few very hot hours, to be precise.

Hell, why was he thinking about a relationship, anyway? This was all about kismet, the fun of fate bringing them together one explosive moment at a time. That was the problem with domination. A Dom could become super-possessive, overthink his sweet prey.

"Open the glove box," he said, pulling out of the parking lot.

She was trying her best to look confident, disdainful even. It made him smile.

"Go on, girl, nothing in there will bite you, much."

"I know what guys are like. You could have something gross in there."

Macy stared open mouthed as she flipped the small latch. What he did have stored away was a shiny pair of handcuffs and a clear plastic dildo, gleaming and new in its package.

"For now, take out the handcuffs," he instructed.

She did so, editorializing. "Like I would touch anything *else*."

"Just hold them, weigh them."

"You happy?" she said, balancing one wrist-size circle on each palm, the chain clinking between.

He'd be happier to have them on her.

"Tell me what they make you feel."

"Nothing."

She'd shot her eyebrow up, which he had already figured out was a clue she was lying. Everyone had their little giveaways. Attorneys read them like second nature.

"So if I told you to put them on you wouldn't be afraid?"

She took one cuff and enclosed her wrist, the metal clicking. "Does this answer your question? Do I look afraid?"

He licked his lips. She looked damn good in steel. Now if only she had on nothing else. "What you look like is a petulant child with a lot to prove."

Jarrit was deliberately provoking, another lawyer's trick. It was also an excellent technique for Dominants.

"Screw you," she declared. "And the horse you rode in on."

"Is that supposed to put me in my place?"

She snorted. "A man like you doesn't know his place."

"Oh that's where you're wrong. My place is over you—in the bedroom, anyways—giving you the orders you crave, making you be my good little girl, or, if I want, my naughty girl."

"I'd slap you again if you weren't driving."

"I want to see you play with yourself."

"Excuse me?"

"While we're driving."

"Are you nuts?"

"Probably, but I think you like that about me, among other things."

Her lip curled into defiance but her eyes were another story.

"Show me yours," he rasped. "I'll show you mine."

With one hand on the wheel, the other in his crotch he began to undo his zipper.

"Jarrit, you'll crash the car!"

"I know what I'm doing."

"I'm sure you do. You're just not doing it with me."

He took her hand and put it in place of his. He had no underwear on. She gasped at the feel of his naked skin.

"I told you, you do things to me."

"This isn't...fair," she moaned.

"You were watching me during the football game," he said. "You thought about me, didn't you?"

She had her fingers wrapped around his cock. He was fully exposed now, throbbing, doing his best to hold back. This was not the time to come. He needed his control, now more than ever.

"Yes," she whispered, putting her neck back against the head rest. "I...I couldn't stop."

Jarit caressed her thigh. He seriously wished he had a robot to drive right now. "What did you think?"

"I couldn't take my eyes off you," she confessed. "The way you moved, the way you controlled that ball, moving the ball up and down the field, everyone depending on you to win the game for them."

"I would have exchanged it all to be alone with you, to have you on that field, at my mercy, staked out on your back, no one else in the whole world as I slowly ravished you, your body utterly at my mercy, my fingers, my lips...my cock."

"Oh god, Jarit."

"More than anything, you would want to move, to turn the tables, but you would be able to do nothing but writhe, your clothes in rags around you, your wrists and ankles tied, your sex, your breasts, every inch of you exposed. You would be mine, Macy, completely mine."

"Yes..."

"Say it."

"I would be...yours."

"To conquer and have."

She sighed, greedy to squeeze and expose him even more. "We should stop somewhere."

"When I say so, we will. For now you are going to take that dildo, baby, and put it right inside your hot, amazing, dripping pussy."

Here it was, the moment of decision.

Would she take this next step? Would she let him raise the bar yet again?

Macy removed her hand from his cock. "I don't think so. Besides, I have clothes on."

"Then you'll have to take off your shorts and panties."

She waited for the punch line. Hearing none, she said, "Over someone's dead body."

"I could threaten to crash the car," he teased.

"And kill us both? I don't think so."

"You're right, but I might just pull over and haul you in the backseat for a spanking."

She glared at him. He knew, if he could take her pulse, it would be off the charts.

"You're bluffing," she said, a distinct edge to her voice. Besides, I have too many clothes on."

His turn to laugh. "Oh you should not have said that."

Her mouth gaped. "If you think I'm stripping..."

"I don't think, Macy, I know."

"You don't know squat."

Jarit could sense it in her body, the combination of utter terror and wild desire. The deepest he'd ever seen. Was she wanting permission? Or did she need an order? Both, clearly.

"People will see," she said. "Truckers, even."

"The glass is pretty well tinted."

"Pretty well may work for you but not for me. Besides..."

Jarit grinned as she trailed off. "Admit it. It excites you a little, the prospect of exposing yourself."

Macy confirmed his suspicions with her silence.

"Well here's your chance, because you can absolve yourself of all responsibility. I am telling you to do it, I am commanding you. Me, the man who can do things to your body no one else can."

She was squirming, he nearly had her.

"I'll regret this. I know I will," she muttered, taking the dildo out of the package.

"Kiss it for me," he said.

Macy bit her lip.

"Now."

She put her tongue out, ever so slightly. Lifting the dildo, she touched it to her mouth, sweetly, gently.

He told her to lick it and she became bolder, running her tongue up and down, leaving a glistening trail, as if it were the perfect ice cream cone on a summer's day.

Jarit tried to keep from exploding, the sight of her was so damn arousing.

"It's time," he said. "Put the dildo where we both want it."

"I can't," she said, her voice a fierce whisper.

Jarit lowered the pitch of his voice ever so slightly. It was a proven technique even on newbie subs. "This isn't a debate. No one will see, and so what if they did. Remove the shorts, Macy, and the panties. I want you bare-assed."

She went visibly weak, as if his words had somehow touched her, the way a crop would, teasing, smacking. "Yes," she said.

Lifting up, she tugged both garments down at once.

He nearly veered off the road as her gleaming thighs came into view.

"Watch the flipping road," she cried.

Jarit spared half an eye. The rest of his vision was way too preoccupied watching that pink sweetness come into view, those petal-like lips, the delicately oozing sex juice hinting of so much more beneath the surface.

So much pleasure.

So much to conquer.

She had a little trouble getting the panties and the modest shorts off, but at last she managed, leaving both garments and shoes in a pile between her legs.

"The leather," she sighed, putting her butt down solidly on the buttery black material. "It feels..."

"Like sex?"

"Yes and..."

"And slavery, darling." His fingers trailed up her thigh, bidding her open for him. "You're mine, Macy. In this car, now, I own every sweet inch of you."

She groaned. "You're incorrigible."

"And you're magnificent."

Macy was busy watching his cock, the pulsing vein covered flesh so fully erect it threatened to steer the wheel all by itself.

"You're the magnificent one," she said, eyes transfixed.

He chuckled. "I do hope you like me for more than my dick."

"Sure, I love your balls too."

"You'll pay for that," he teased.

"I hope so."

"Legs apart," he commanded. "Wide."

She did so, planting her bare feet on either side of the floor mat.

"Nice and slow," he said, stroking his cock in kind. "For both of us."

Macy touched the dildo to her puffy sex lips, just barely grazing the engorged ridge, the perfect tease, as she induced the little droplets of lubrication to ooze their way free from her hot and pulsing sheath.

A soft moan escaped her as she pushed it in, ever so slightly, beckoning, causing her pussy to visibly contract in anticipation.

"Damn," he muttered. "You sure you've never done this for a living?"

"Done what?" she breathed. "Perform live sex shows in foreign automobiles?"

"No, drive men crazy in general. And by the way," he announced, "you may not come without permission."

She gasped. "You're kidding."

"Do I sound like I'm kidding?"

"No..."

It was his courtroom tone, no mistake.

"Disobey me, young lady, and I'll paddle your bare ass. And don't think I'm bluffing because I have a paddle in the trunk."

"Of course you do, *Sir*."

He chuckled. She was relaxing into her torment, a little edgy, but slipping nicely into the role.

Give it another hour. They'd be clear up to his favorite getaway place by then.

The Silver Cuff Dungeon.

How long was this torture going to go on?

Macy could barely stand it. Over and over she shuddered against the resilience of the artificial penis, the plastic somehow hard and soft at the same time, confusing her senses, painful and pleasurable as she tried to maneuver around the main sensations, ignoring the one overwhelming need as she pushed the thing in and out, in and out.

She just had to come.

Her clit had reached its swollen maximum what felt like hours ago and somehow, like the hot-blooded, cool-tempered machine he was, Jarit Colson kept right on stroking himself and driving.

It was well past dark now and in the back of her mind was the knowledge that this was Sunday, to be followed by Monday, the first day of the new week.

And a busy one it would be. Ten new corporate audits to get her department started on and that didn't begin to cover the internal meetings and routine reports.

"What is it you want?" he coaxed now as he pulled off the expressway onto some godforsaken exit past the suburbs. "I want to hear it."

"I want...to go home...work in the morning," she managed, the words coming in short stabs.

He let go of his cock long enough to palm her breast.

She arched her back, inclining into him, giving herself to his touch, the burning caress, the squeezing of his fingers through the material of her shirt and bra.

"No, don't," she pleaded.

"Tell me what you really want, Macy."

Her teeth chattered. "I want...I need...I...I can't stop."

The orgasm flooded through her, no power in the cosmos to stop her. It had come against Jarit's orders and yet it was anything but under her control. Like a tsunami it slammed her senses, robbing her of self will, dignity and any ability to conceal.

She bucked against the dildo, grinding it deep and hard. Her eyes slid shut as she called him every name she could think of.

The first orgasm gave way to a second, deeper and even fuller. She tried to support herself but she could feel her body slipping, as though a flood was taking her over, the rising, swirling waters following the initial tidal wave.

The entire car seemed to be swirling with her, the entire world even.

Only Jarit was constant, in the center of everything, playing and manipulating, getting from her exactly what he wanted, from the ends of her nerve fibers to the deepest core of her spine.

She might have screamed, she wasn't sure.

Sometime later, maybe an hour, a year, she woke up and found herself slumped against Jarit, his strong shoulder supporting her head.

"Where are we?" she mumbled, noting the vehicle had stopped.

"We've reached our destination, my pretty little slave."

The way he said the words so matter-of-factly made her pussy clench, the spasms starting all over again.

She had reacted the same way before when he had talked about owning her body in the car. But this involved getting out and going to this new place.

It was huge and made of stone. An old house, a castle really. A chill went down her spine. The house was creepy, intriguing, like *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

"Tomorrow's a work day," she said, trying not to sound overly lame.

"I know. And I can have you back home by ten if that's what you want. Or we can stay here a few hours. You may have to be late in the morning. You may miss the whole day. What do you say? It's your call."

Macy looked at Jarit's cock, so luscious and proud, standing tall. This was not a fair call. It was foul. "How am I supposed to refuse you?"

"Easy." He brushed the hair from in front of her face. "You just say 'no'."

"You know I wouldn't," she accused. "That's why you kidnapped me."

He arched a brow. "That's a stretch, don't you think? Look, I took advantage a little and sure I'm doing my best to convince you but the fact is, BDSM is about the submissive's power. You run the show, not me."

"In that case," she said, reaching for his cock, "we'll change the rules a little, huh?"

Jarit pushed her hand away. "Sorry, that isn't an option. This will be on my terms, if and when I decide anything happens tonight. Look, I promised you dinner and believe it or not, the chef is exquisite. We can eat supper, catch one of the private shows, no pressure. But if you still want, I can turn us around and have you home for the eleven o'clock news in your dinosaur jammies."

"I do not have dinosaur jammies."

"Bunnies then." He was grinning but she wasn't appreciating the banter.

She felt the pink in her cheeks. "Change the subject please."

"There's only one subject, Macy. Either you submit to me, allow me to take you on this journey tonight, or it all ends now."

Her heart skipped a beat. She shouldn't care about such a threat but she did. "What are you talking about?"

"We go back to polite nods on the elevator, avoiding each other at the mailbox."

"But that's not fair."

He shrugged. "Macy, life isn't fair."

"Fine," she blurted. "Take me home." Tears welled, just behind her eyes, stinging as she watched the mystery mansion disappear, smaller and smaller in the front window. Jarit said nothing as he backed the car down the long, winding driveway. He was concentrating, his arm over the backseat behind her. She could see his cock shrinking, along with the building...and any chance of a relationship with a really nice guy.

Way to go, Macy.

Chapter Four

Monday was hell, all the more so because Macy had spent most of the previous night self-exiled on her own couch, tossing and turning like a flapjack. It beat the alternative though, which was lying in bed thinking of him. His memory had been in everything. She'd sworn she could even catch the scent of his cologne, the deep musk mingled with sheer manhood. The way her body touched the silk sheets, the way the pillow curved beneath her neck, the sheet twisting subtly about her torso, all of it reminded her of his touch, the distinct commanding presence of Jarit Colson, the one man who'd ever broken through every rule, shattering her every expectation.

And she'd let him go. Correction, he had forced her hand, leaving her no option but to sever ties lest he take too much.

Slave for a night in some kind of dark house. What did that mean? Why hadn't he explained better?

Because you said no right off the bat. You didn't trust him.

"I did too trust him. He's the one who broke faith."

He even offered to keep it platonic, a little dinner and a show.

"A BDSM show," she corrected.

"What? Huh?" said Cal Dugan the resident IT guy who, at the moment, was stooped under her desk looking at her hard drive.

Macy had forgotten he was there. Frankly she'd forgotten everything. "Never mind."

Cal shook his head, brushed off his pants. "I don't see anything. You said you hit refresh, right?"

She tried not to sound cross. "Yes, Cal, for the hundredth time. Here I'll even show you."

The screen went blank, half a second and it was back.

Macy swallowed hard.

"You have to hit refresh," he said.

"Sorry," she muttered.

"No problem." He winked, no doubt thinking he had one more leg up on his one-sided campaign to make the two of them an item. "If you want, I can give you a *refresher* after work."

Macy ignored the pun. "I have plans, but thank you."

She planned to sleep. She planned to dig a hole. She planned a lot of things. None of which included her presumptuous, arrogant, impossible neighbor.

"Another time," said Cal, crestfallen.

Just as Cal shuffled off, along came Riana to take his place in the Most Annoying Human on Earth Competition.

"Ry, I can't do this right now."

"Do what?"

"Whatever you have, it doesn't matter," Macy exclaimed.

Riana, unfazed, marched into her office and took her hand. "Oh no, you don't get to brush me off. You and I are heading to lunch."

"It's only nine-thirty."

"Honey, where's your sense of adventure? It's twelve o'clock somewhere."

Riana could do such things because she was sleeping with the boss. She didn't consider it sleazy, just insurance.

"Let them try to lay me off, my boyfriend Caruthers knows I will go straight to his wife and the bishop of his church, in that order," she was fond of saying.

Order was everything for Macy too, but it didn't involve sex.

Not on the job or off it.

Not anymore.

"Riana, give Macy a break will you?"

It was Nel, back from her Danish run. Thanks be to the sugar gods.

"Hey, I'm just trying to help. I know a lovesick puppy when I see one."

"Don't be ridiculous," snapped Macy, loud enough to be heard out in the cubicle area and probably down to the corner offices as well, one of which she hoped to occupy one day.

Not that she was doing herself much good these days.

"We are bailing," Nel said, taking Macy's arm. Five minutes later they were in the parking lot, leaning on Nel's squeaky-clean, vintage, lime-punch-colored Bug, sipping green tea from a cooler she kept in her trunk.

"So how did this Jarit guy get you all twisted around?" asked Nel, as usual getting straight to the point.

"I'm not twisted," Macy insisted.

Nel snorted. "You forget who you are talking to. I saw how you acted with that dude yesterday. It's got love-hate written all over it."

Macy gulped some tranquility tea, fat lot of good it would do her. "Okay, so every time I'm near the man I want to rip his clothes off."

"And that's a problem because..."

Where did Macy start?

"We have nothing in common, for one thing."

"You both like fucking, don't you?"

Macy rolled her eyes. "Wow, hang out a shingle. You could be a therapist, or a private detective."

Nel shrugged. "Compatibility in bed is important. Everything else follows."

"But we aren't—compatible I mean."

"Are you kidding? You guys gave off more chemistry than a science fair yesterday."

"But he's...different."

She'd almost said *Dominant*.

It was Nel's turn to chug her tea. "Yeah, he's into spanking and so on. What of it?"

Macy felt her stomach drop. "How did you know?"

"I can tell a Dom, just like I can tell a subbie. So can he, if he was able to sniff you out like that."

"No one sniffed me and I'm not submissive."

"It's not an insult, Mace, it's a preference. It's in your genes. Some women like a man who will take them down, grab them hard, let them see the beast, you know? With some couples, it's about whips and chains, others play mind games. The point is, being slave and Master gives them pleasure."

Macy sighed. "Oh what's the use? It's true, the way he touches me puts me over the top. I feel so raw. And then when he tells me what to do, I let go, I come alive, you know?"

"I can certainly imagine," said Nel. "My only question is why aren't you beating a path to his door this very minute?"

"I shouldn't have to do that. If he's a real Dominant then he will—" Macy realized her mistake, cutting her sentence short.

"If he's a real Dominant, you know he would never force anything. That's the truth, isn't it?" Nel finished it for her.

Macy shook her head, trying not to cry. What was with all the frigging emotions lately?

"You don't know the whole story," said Macy.

"Try me."

Nel listened patiently as Macy recounted everything from that fateful knock on the door to the slamming of that same door last night.

When Macy was done Nel said, "You need to talk to him. If nothing else happens between you, at least you can make peace."

Macy exhaled now, trying to appreciate the irony of ending a relationship she had never wanted in the first place. "The two of us aren't real good at talking though, at least not with our clothes on."

Nel grinned. "Would it be the worst thing in the world if you took them off again just for old time's sake?"

"We didn't do it enough to have any old times to relive," Macy countered. "And yes, for the record, it would be the worst thing for both of us."

Or maybe it was just her.

Either way, the only thing she needed to do was get the man to understand the meaning of goodbye. Macy was feeling a little better, at least until she got back to her office and saw the flowers on her desk.

A dozen red roses.

"They came while you were gone," said Riana. "Somebody likes you, even if you don't like them."

They were from *him* of course. There was a note, a long one, apologizing if he'd pushed too hard, taking full responsibility for the way the night had ended, the rough and silent car ride home, the way they had both closed their doors to one another at the end—cold, awkward and so damn final, as if whatever winds of fate had brought them together would never again blow him across the hall to her world.

"Farewell, my sweet Macy," the note concluded. "May you never forget me, as I will surely never forget you."

Nel took the note from Macy's shaking hand.

"I guess that's that," said Macy.

Nel eyed her. "You don't look like 'that's that', you look like your world just caved in."

Macy's lower lip trembled. "I don't know what's wrong with me. I'm supposed to be the strong one."

"You're not made of iron. And has it occurred to you, if you are feeling this out of sorts with the guy, it's because maybe you know he's strong enough to take it? You know he'll care for you and himself. You've guessed he's not another Roger and that scares you."

"I don't know anything," Macy whispered, thinking of the man who'd promised her the sun, moon and stars only to run off with one of his undergraduates when the "pressure" of the relationship got a little too much for him.

Nel gave her a hug. "I think admitting what you don't know is a great start. Now how about you get out of here? I'll cover for you."

"Fine, but I'm not going after the guy if that's what you think."

"Oh I don't think you'll have to do much chasing, do you?"

The trip home was an eternity. Macy went over in her mind what to do. Pick up and move to another zip code, doubling her commute time, or maybe take to wearing disguises in the hallway. She could do a pretty good impression of Old Man Reynolds if it came right down to it.

At least she was coming home in the middle of the day. For sure Jarit would still be at work.

Not.

Her heart skipped a beat as she pulled into the parking lot and saw his little roadster, the very one in which she'd been so blissfully tormented the night before.

So he'd stayed home, or had he come home early like her? Maybe he'd lost sleep as well. Not that she cared. Not that she could afford to care.

Then it occurred to her, out of the blue, something he'd said to her, offhandedly, about how he'd managed to find her in the first place.

Fate.

As if she believed in such a thing.

As if she could afford to believe.

"Better to live alone than live a lie," she said aloud, though no one was there to buy it, not even herself.

* * * * *

Jarit tried not to strain his ears to hear. Lying on his couch in the silence, which had been the greatest mistake of all because now he could tell her comings and goings. She had headed off to work about half past seven and he'd been waiting ever since.

Now she was back, at half past eleven.

Something didn't add up.

He resisted the urge to go and knock on her door. She was a grown-up, she could take care of herself. Except for the fact that she had been so upset last night, unable to even speak to him as they parted ways.

Jarit hadn't helped matters, turning inward and giving her the silent treatment. He hadn't been angry with her, just disappointed in himself. With a little more forethought he could have handled matters so much better.

What kind of Dominant let himself get so intoxicated with a sub that he pushed her to her limits, forcing her to retreat?

But no woman he'd ever met had been like Macy. No one else had felt so good in his arms and no one else had consumed his thoughts. It was as though he was the submissive one, caving to her beauty, her fire, the taste of her flesh and her spirit.

He longed to see her squirm, her buttocks bright red from a spanking and then to see her on her knees, her lush lips at the tip of his cock, opening, begging to please him.

Damn it, that was what had kept him awake – all those sexual thoughts. Every time he had so much as closed his eyes she was there, whispering in his ear, her sweet voice melodic and singing of their passion.

A twisted, confused passion that obviously caused both of them more pain than it was worth.

The least he could do was set her free.

The flowers were designed with that very purpose in mind. Red roses to make it clear the feelings of his heart and with it the note, letting her know he had clearly offended and frankly he would likely do so again if left to his own devices. Better to quit while they were ahead or at least not so terribly far behind.

He had seen relationships go that way and he had no intention of reaching the point of hatred between them. They might never be lovers again or friends but they'd never be enemies.

It was only half past eleven and she was home.

He heard her sniffing in the hallway. Damnation, was she...crying? Jarit went to his door, fists clenched, listening, deciding.

He had to do something. But what? Hadn't fate already spoken?

"Screw fate," he declared aloud.

A second later he was in the hallway.

Macy had already closed and locked her door behind her. Without thinking, giving himself no chance to reconsider his actions, he walked across the hall and knocked.

No way back. I've gone around the bend, Jarit thought. His feet were bare. He wore nothing but a pair of boxer shorts.

And the biggest grin on his face.

Either he had just done the smartest thing in his life...or the dumbest.

* * * * *

Macy had just tossed her purse on the sofa when she heard the knock on her door. Who the hell would be bothering her in the middle of the day? Reynolds, or maybe Mrs. Lyons from down the hall wanting some more sugar? She was always doing that. It was as if the stores had somehow stopped selling the stuff.

"Just a minute!" She managed her best happy-go-lucky voice.

With the chain still on, she opened the door. "Yes, Mrs. Ly—" Macy stopped midstream. "Jarit, what in blazes—"

"I seem to have locked myself out of my apartment," he said gravely.

"You're...you're..." she was about to say naked when she realized he was wearing boxer shorts. Not that it was much of an improvement over full frontal nudity.

"Are you going to let me come in?"

"You are insane," she pronounced.

"Probably," he acknowledged. "Hopefully I won't be arrested, not that you would care."

Ushering him in, she said, "Fine, come in, but for the record, I consider this blackmail, plain and simple."

Jarit filled the room with his presence, like the big cat he resembled, instantly taking over fresh territory.

Her territory.

"If you are implying that I took advantage of your feelings for me, I'm flattered...about your feelings, that is."

"I didn't want you to humiliate yourself. That's hardly a feeling," she retorted.

"It's a start."

"Let go of me."

Jarit was holding her, his hands gentle but still wrapping much of her upper arms. She knew he could lift her, pull her tight against his chest so she'd never break free. But

he wouldn't do that, ever. She was sure of it, the same way she knew how well they fit together. But that still left too much up for grabs.

"What are you afraid of, Macy, really?"

She cursed herself for relaxing, for letting him win that crucial first round.
"Nothing."

His hands moved to her wrists. "It isn't wrong to want to surrender, to want to serve."

"You're an egomaniac," she declared. "Thinking a woman lives to cater to your whims."

"Not any woman. Just you."

Her knees went weak.

"I tried to figure out why I did what I did, coming over here like a damn fool, dripping wet, Macy, and I realize it was because I had nothing to lose. I was in love with you, still am."

She laughed. "Don't be ridiculous."

His cock was rock hard, pointing right at her.

"I want to be inside you, Macy. I want your body. I demand it."

Macy moaned as he took her hard against him, kissing her neck, immobilizing her, hands behind her back.

"Say the words," he breathed. "Surrender to me."

"I...can't."

"Can't or won't?" Jarit's sudden grip on her hair caught her off guard.

Taking a fistful of her dark curls, he bent her neck back and planted his lips hard and fast on hers. The kiss was as punishing as it was educative. The longer and harder he made it the more she responded, yielding, pressing and finally inviting his tongue, his teeth.

She wanted it—the ravishing, the utter merciless masculinity—tugging at her soul just as his fingers pulled at the roots of her hair, tight to the point of near pain, not enough to make her cry but more than enough to have her attention.

More than anything now, she wanted ravishment, to be pushed to the floor and taken so it would be known once and for all what she was and what she craved.

But Jarit was not letting her off so easily.

Just as abruptly as the kiss began, it ended.

Expressionless, he pushed her away. She looked at him, bewildered and angry.

“You need discipline,” he said.

“Go to hell.”

Jarit smiled thinly. “Take off your clothes, Macy. I am going to punish you.”

She crossed her arms over her breasts. “No.”

“Would you like that pretty outfit ripped off instead?”

His eyes left no room for doubt. He would do it. In the back of her mind she thought of running to her bedroom to lock the door but something held her, like a moth, terribly fascinated and drawn to the light. Oblivious of the destructive heat, the true violence of fire.

“Does this turn you on?” She tried to shame him. “Bullying a female?”

He smiled grimly. “I think you know the answer. It isn’t bullying if there’s consent.”

Macy unzipped her skirt and wriggled it over her hips. “And you think I consent?”

“I think you’ve no idea what a spanking feels like, what it will do to you, how it will make you act differently, but you’re curious, too curious to throw me out.”

“I couldn’t force you out and you know it.”

“And yet I would go the moment you said the word.”

“Don’t think I won’t.”

"Leave the heels on," he said.

"Pervert," she hissed, her heart slamming in her chest, thinking what it must be doing to him to see her like this, his cock already so huge under the tent of his boxers.

"You're in heat," he observed as she slid down her panties. "I can smell it."

"I won't let you talk to me that way, you hear me?" she said defiantly.

He laughed lightly. "Oh lover, we've a long way to go."

"You promised me your goodbye," she reminded, sliding the tiny white garment, silky and moist, over her ankles. "Were the flowers a lie?"

"You tempted me back. No man can resist the helpless maiden."

"I'm hardly helpless."

"Slowly," he chastised as she began whipping open the buttons on her blouse.

It was an attempt on her part to cheat him of his cheap thrills, but he was having none of it. Trying not to let her chest rise and fall too enticingly, Macy obeyed. "I feel sorry for you, I do, Jarit."

"Why's that?"

"You play games instead of really dealing with life."

"Those seem pretty real to me," he teased as she slipped the blouse over her shoulders, arching her back in the process.

"Very funny."

He was watching so intently. She'd never seen a man so focused and so unabashed. He did truly want her more than anything, at least for the moment.

"You're hesitating," he noted.

"Well, wouldn't *you*?"

"I've no idea."

She snorted. "So much for you being a sensitive Dominant."

He asked the question again, the one he'd asked when he first came in. "What are you afraid of?"

"That you will talk me to death." Macy put her hands behind her back and undid her bra. Defiantly, with all the will of a human sacrifice, she let the cups fall, her twin globes proud and her nipples taut and peaked.

"Over here." He pointed to the sofa. She watched him sit down first, making a place for her on his lap.

This was not happening.

She was not moving toward him of her own volition. She was not taking his outstretched hand. She was not lowering herself in accord with his will, not feeling the knitted material of the cushions against her skin, her knee caps and her palms.

As she lowered onto his lap, she most especially was not feeling his cock as it pressed against the vee of her thighs or his hand as it began to massage her butt cheeks.

"Don't move around so much," he urged. "It won't feel as good."

"I thought it was punishment."

"It is...and I want you to enjoy every moment."

Jarrit forced himself to take his time, relaxing Macy, letting her feel comfortable stretched on his lap, her sweet ass upturned, her cheek pressed to the sofa, palms down. God, what a target she made, what a sweet, perfect tableaux for what BDSM should be, the caring and the intimacy between two people.

"You're so beautiful," he said, stroking her soft hair.

"And you are just buttering me up."

"Does this feel like buttering up?" Raising his hand, he delivered a soft blow, enough to draw her attention.

It was also enough to draw heat to the affected area.

Rubbing the affected globe, he waited for her to focus.

"Son of a bitch," she said.

He smacked her again crisply, harder.

She released a groaning noise.

Now he showed her the true deviance, the mixing of good and evil. Jarit's fingers found her clit almost immediately, playing it, owning it, making it swell.

"What the — Oh god it's..."

He spanked her again and then played with her some more, showing her the alternation, the way pain could bleed into pleasure, creating an irascible need for both.

His fingers plunged deeply into her dripping pussy. She was hot and pulsing, instinctively clenching at him with her strong pelvic muscles.

"I hope you aren't coming, young lady." He pinched her bottom, drawing a squeal. Damn, how he loved this woman's sounds. "Unauthorized orgasms got you in trouble before, which is one of the reasons you are here now."

"Fuck it," she groaned. "Why did I open the door for you?"

"Which time?"

"Any of them!"

"Technically, it was only twice."

"Well, it feels like more."

He laughed, causing his cock to poke free of the thin covering of the underwear.

Now it was his turn to groan.

"Serves you right," she said, obviously sensing the torture he was in, so close to her body and yet so far.

But he could do something about that. Lifting her by the hips, he maneuvered her sideways.

"Beg for it," he said in a voice as hard as steel.

She bit her lip. Her pussy was just at the edge of penetration—he needed to lower her just a few more inches.

“Beg.”

“Please,” she said.

“You’ll have to do better.”

“Please, let me...fuck you.”

“You see how easy it is to turn the tables?”

“But it’s always in your favor, no matter what.”

“That’s not a problem as far as I’m concerned,” Jarit said, impaling her inch by inch until he was fully inside her, every inch of his cock sheathed in the pulsing, throbbing warmth.

“Oh...yes,” she moaned. “That’s it.”

Jarit lifted her again, manipulating her with the ease of a rag doll. He waited until she was whimpering, her pussy nearly empty again.

“Touch your breasts,” he commanded. “Play with them.”

Eagerly she grasped the fleshy mounds, pressing with her fingers, molding and manipulating the pink flesh.

“Pinch your nipples.”

She hesitated not at all, squeezing the rubbery nubs between thumbs and forefingers, arching her back as she did.

“Harder.”

Macy writhed and Jarit pulled her forward, once again fusing their bodies together. Up and down he moved her now—his pacing and his will.

Her pussy muscles squeezed him, spasms so deliciously helpless, needy and utterly female.

“You will come...now.”

His words growled in her ear were all the incentive she needed. Grinding her flesh against him, she allowed the flood to give way at his command. He felt the heat surging through her body. She shuddered and as her hands fell away from her breasts Jarit moved in, taking her left breast into his mouth, suckling, nibbling.

She screamed out, a fire within a fire. He moved to the right breast, aiming directly for her sweet nipple. As her second orgasm came, Jarit was right there, releasing his cum inside her body in a surge – thick, warm jets, the essence of his body.

Jarit cried out her name.

* * * * *

Afterwards... What afterwards? thought Macy, when everything felt spent, one world destroyed, another born? She had her head against his chest. He was stroking her hair and holding her so tightly.

Thank God, or she might have fallen off the couch, off the edge of the earth.

“That was... How did you...?” She didn’t even know what to ask much less how to get the words out.

“Don’t speak,” he whispered.

She kissed his chest softly, all those powerful muscles, the torso of a quarterback.

The body of a Dominant.

So that was submission?

BDSM.

It had definite possibilities.

Sometime later, still dreamy and sleepy, she let him carry her to the bathtub. It was large enough for two.

Jarit had her lean back against him in the warm, soapy water, his hands moving up and down across her flesh, the suds arousing and calming even as fresh passion came to the tips of her nipples, the tips of her toes.

They talked for a long time about why it had taken so long and just what had been on the minds of each of them during all those near misses.

"I confess," said Jarit, nibbling at her earlobe. "I'd imagined you in the elevator, on your knees, brought down by the snap of my fingers."

Macy could feel his cock swelling behind her as he spoke. "Your little slave girl," she whispered.

"Indeed."

"And I thought of you at the mailboxes," she said. "Pushing me back against the wall, telling me if I was going to keep on staring at you like I was, then I might as well pay the price of entry."

Jarit chuckled. "And I'm sure you hated that."

"I tried my best to get away." She arched her back, turning toward him, craning her neck until he gave the kiss she craved.

"But it didn't work," he breathed, when their lips had finished, tongues unsheathed, exploring, greedy, craving another fusion of flesh.

"No..."

"You were fucked, like you deserved."

"Yes. Your cock rammed inside me, teaching me, showing me what females get when they mess with Dominants."

"They get as much as they can handle...and more."

Jarit showed her the more as he set her on the edge of the tub, facing him.

"Brace yourself, legs apart," he ordered.

She set her hands on the cool ceramic and planted her feet. Jarit was already draining the tub.

Oh god, he was going to kiss her down there.

Taking a handful of fresh warm water from the spigot, he rinsed her clean and then he moved in, his tongue light and teasing.

He moved immediately toward her clitoris.

Swelling the tiny bud of flesh, preparing her, even as his fingers began to move inside her, making her move in response, like a million cocks inside her, a million men commanding her body, but there was only one, only Jarit.

He did not let her come.

"It's your turn," he said.

And he rose to his feet, his magnificent manhood before her, as thick and hard as she'd ever seen it, as if he hadn't come in a month.

"You may begin by kissing the tip of my cock."

"Yes," she whispered. "Master." Leaning forward, she trembled, her entire body primed in anticipation to serve, and give pleasure. His foreskin tasted salty-sweet and a little soapy.

"Hands behind your back," he commanded. She did so, watching as he rinsed the soap away from his erection with a cloth. "That's better."

Ever thoughtful.

"You may begin." He was in front of her, agonizingly close, once more. He made her go slowly, kissing the length of his shaft, running her tongue along the underside, the thick veins and the thick base, just at the edge of his testicles, which were swollen with need.

Finally he let her form her lips around his shaft and take him deep into her mouth.

He sighed and put his hands on her shoulders. A good sign in her book. Delicately, tentatively, she took more of him, swallowing another inch and another after that.

Extending her tongue, she did her best to bathe the whole of his cock. His hands moved to the side of her head, guiding her.

Yes. He was pleasuring himself, using her as she craved. This was what he wanted, what he would have from her, no compromise.

How could a woman accept less from a man?

Jarit thrust himself forward, fucking her mouth. She felt his cock swelling and awaited the inevitable. He was going to come.

She wanted to swallow, she craved it even, the feeling of his hot semen shooting down her throat, testifying to the reality of the act, the consummation of his drive.

But Jarit had something else in mind.

Pulling out his cock, he took hold of it himself.

Macy was momentarily disappointed but as she watched him stroking himself, sliding his fingers up and down the length of his swollen shaft, she understood.

“Hold up your breasts,” he said. “Hold them out to me.”

She did so, cupping them, pressing the flesh together, making of them an offering.

“Mark me,” she begged. “Come all over your property.”

Jarit’s eyes were wild as his gaze moved to her face and down to her proffered breasts and back again. Taking perfect aim, running his hand up and down one more time, he came, shooting a jet of hot come directly onto the middle of her chest.

Macy whimpered in pleasure and heat as his come sprayed her, dripping over her nipples, bathing her, cleansing her.

When Jarit was done, he gave an extra squeeze and then he ordered her to stand. This time they kissed and everything was understood – past, present and future.

“I have a feeling I’m going to be forgetting my keys a lot more in the future.”

“You’d better,” she said huskily. “Or I will have to start stealing them.”

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 address on the [author bio page](#) at www.ellorascave.com.

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